

Emotional Intelligence, Career Decision Self-Efficacy, Proactive Personality: Study on Indonesian Vocational Students

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Abstract

Indonesian vocational school graduates known to have lack of confidence in making career decisions. To overcome this issue, further review of the factors affecting career decision self-efficacy (CDSE) is needed. Emotional Intelligence (EI) and proactive personality (PP) are known to have role on CDSE. This study examines the effect of EI on CDSE mediated by PP on vocational students using a quantitative method. Data analysis using regression technique shows that PP mediates the effect of EI on CDSE. The result of this study can be used in an intervention program in order to increase the student's CDSE, by taking the factors of EI and PP on students into account.

Introduction

Vocational School (SMK) is a secondary education program equivalent to High School (SMA) which prepares students to work in certain fields (Damarjati, 2016). The Vocational School program in Indonesia provides opportunities for students to focus on learning and honing abilities in specific fields according to their interests, have higher proportion of learning through practice than regular high school, and have internship opportunities that are suitable for their fields (Apriliyadi, 2018). Therefore, vocational school graduates are expected to be able to land on a job right away because they had focused on studying their chosen vocational course. But in reality, the Central Agency on Statistics Indonesia (BPS) shows that vocational school graduates had actually become the highest contributor to unemployment rate compared to other levels of education. Until year 2018, there were 11,24% of unemployed vocational school graduates (BPS, 2018).

One of the causes of the high unemployment rate in vocational school graduates is that vocational school graduates are considered lacking confidence in their abilities, such as planning, evaluating, leadership skills, joint communications, and the ability to influence other people (Abdi, 2019). Students who feel that they do not have sufficient abilities, in the utmost they are unsure of the situation especially when they have to carry out a career-decision making (Ardiyanti & Alsa, 2015). In fact, one's confidence and beliefs in his ability will affect the behavior, performance, and career choices (Creed et al., 2002).

In career intervention-based research, the existence of confidence in making career decisions (CDSE) is known to reduce the level of career uncertainty and difficulty in making career decisions (Jiang, 2014; Lam & Santos, 2017). Conversely, study showed that students with a low CDSE will potentially avoid their career decision-making tasks, such as choosing majors, getting to know their interests and talents, and looking for career information that is relevant to their interests and talents (Taylor & Betz, 1983). Based on these findings and how relevant they are to the current phenomenon, the CDSE needs to be improved in vocational school students.

CDSE is a person's belief that he can carry out a task needed to make career decisions (Taylor & Betz, 1983). CDSE has been an important factor affecting the career development process for adolescents (Huang, 2015), such as vocational school students. Individuals with a low CDSE will make them unprepared to make career decisions, as well as more likely for them to change their career goals when they are confronted with various challenges (Burns et al., 2013). They will experience confusion in choosing a career, as well as experiencing difficulties in acting with their lives (Eryilmaz & Mutlu, 2017).

Confusion in facing career challenges may be related to emotional stability, where emotions vocational school students have as adolescents are experiencing a development related to the stability and regulation of their emotions (Curtis, 2015). Based on Albion and Forgaty (2002), a person will be able to deal with difficulties in the career decision-making process much better when he has a good emotional stability. Research also showed that the ability of individuals to understand and manage emotions or also called as emotional intelligence (EI) is related to career decision-making (Emmerling & Cherniss, 2003). Individuals who have a high EI tend to better understand their emotions and are able to integrate their emotional experiences into thoughts and actions, so individuals will become more confident when making career decisions (Di Fabio & Saklofske, 2014).

EI is specifically defined as the ability to perceive, understand, regulate, and handle emotions (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Every individual needs to have a high emotional intelligence, because the higher emotional intelligence a person has, he is more likely to obtain higher social welfare and emotional well-being, personal growth, and other psychological benefits in his career development (Puffer, 2011).

EI is divided into 2 constructs, namely EI as trait and ability (Petrides, 2011). The trait of EI illustrates the broader concept of intelligence, including traits, social skills, and behavior. Meanwhile, the ability of EI identifies emotional intelligence as a set of skills, such as the ability to understand, access, produce, interpret, and regulate emotions. Both constructs have been used in various studies as variables that are significantly related to CDSE (Brown & Smith, 2003; Di Fabio & Kenny, 2011; Di Fabio & Saklofske, 2014) but in Di Fabio

and Saklofske (2014) it was found that EI trait ($\eta^2 = 0.580$) had a greater effect on CDSE compared to EI's ability ($\eta^2 = 0.12$).

Although the trait of EI is known to contribute more on CDSE than the ability, it was found in a study conducted by Deminzi (2019) that the effect the trait of EI had on the CDSE was relatively low ($\eta^2 = 0.160$). Meanwhile, as mentioned and found in various studies, EI is an important factor in affecting the CDSE. Based on these differences, the mechanism of the relationship between the trait of EI and CDSE needs to be further studied. Furthermore, the EI that will be mentioned in this study is the trait of EI.

A person with a high EI will be open to new experiences and perspectives when he is being faced with a new situation (Goldberg, 1990; Jafri et al., 2016). Openness to new experiences tends to make someone active and be real action-oriented, which is closely related to proactive personality (PP) (Jafri et al., 2016). This explanation is supported by the result of a research showing that EI has a significantly positive relationship with PP (Jafri et al., 2016; Santos et al., 2018; Darmayanti & Salim, 2019), where individuals with a high emotional intelligence will be more proactive to make changes in their lives including career decisions making.

PP is defined as an individual's tendency to use his initiative to influence the individual's environment (Bateman & Crant, 1993). Hsieh and Huang (2014) found that PP had a significant effect in increasing CDSE. Individuals with a high PP will show more initiative to face and solve problems and have a feeling of success in terms of career decisions making. A person's proactive actions are assumed to explain the effect of EI on the CDSE. Individual with a high EI will act proactively in finding new information and solving problems, so they become more confident when they carry out career decisions making. Thus, PP is expected to mediate the effect of EI on CDSE on vocational school students.

Based on the explanation above, this study aims to examine the effect of PP as a mediator explaining the effect of EI on CDSE on vocational school students as the sample. The hypothesis in this study is that PP mediates the effect of EI on CDSE.

Methodology

This study used a quantitative method with a self-report questionnaire as a measurement of each variable. This study is part of a large study of the Forming Factors of Self-Efficacy in Career Decisions of Vocational School (SMK) Students, which involves 8 variables in it. This study used a quantitative method with a self-report questionnaire as a measurement of each variable, where data collection on the eight variables is carried out simultaneously.

Sample Population

The target population in this study is all the 12th grade vocational school students in Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang and Bekasi. The sampling method in this study is non- probability sampling with accidental sampling type based on the availability and willingness of students to respond. A total of 833 respondents with an age range between 16-20 years old was used as the research sample.

Measures

Career Decision Self-Efficacy (CDSE)

The CDSE measurement used the Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form (CDSES- SF) which was first developed by Betz, Klein and Taylor (1996). This questionnaire has been adapted into

Indonesian by Sawitri (2009) and has been passed through expert judgment. The CDSES-SF used in this study consisted of 19 items that measured a person's level of confidence, with a Likert scale from between 1-6 (1 = not sure at all, 6 = very sure). CDSE- SF is divided into 5 dimensions, namely self-appraisal, gathering occupational information, goal selection, making plans for the future, and problem solving. The reliability value of Cronbach's alpha on this scale is 0.797.

Emotional Intelligence (EI)

The EI measurement used the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire-Short Form (TEIQue-SF) from Petrides (2009) which has been adapted into Indonesian and used in Deminzi's research (2019). The TEIQue-SF used in this study consisted of 25 statement items with a Likert scale from between 1-6 (1 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree). TEIQue-SF is unidimensional, by measuring the global trait of EI. This measuring instrument also measured 15 facets which are divided into 4 factors, namely trait positivity or well-being, self- control, emotionality, and sociability. The reliability value of Cronbach's alpha on this scale is 0.819.

Proactive Personality (PP)

The PP measurement used Proactive Personality Scale (PPS) from Seibert, Crant, and Kraimer (1999) which has been adapted into Indonesian and passed through expert judgment and used in Preston's research (2018). PPS consisted of 10 statement items and is unidimensional, with a Likert scale from between 1-6 (1 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree). Cronbach's alpha reliability value on this scale is 0.824.

Data Analysis

This research data processing used the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) 24.0. The data analysis techniques used are: (1) Descriptive statistical analysis, (2) Pearson Correlation to see the correlation between the three variables, and (3) regression test using PROCESS by Hayes to test the effect of PP mediation on the relationship of EI with CDSE.

Result and Discussion

The correlation result showed that CDSE, EI, and PP are related to each other. As seen in Table 1, the result showed that (a) CDSE is positively correlated with EI; (b) CDSE is positively correlated with PP; (c) EI is positively correlated with PP. The result of the regression analysis test can be seen in Table 2. The result showed the influence between variables and showed the effect of PP as a mediator in the effect of EI on CDSE.

Based on Table 2, the variance contribution of EI and PP on CDSE was 21%. It signifies that there are 79% other variables that can affect the CDSE. EI significantly affected CDSE through PP ($a.b = 0.10, p < 0.01$). Furthermore, the confidence interval (CI) of the bootstrap result ranges from between 0.07 to 0.13, which means that there is a significant

Table 1. The correlation between Career Decision Self-Efficacy, Emotional Intelligence, and Proactive Personality

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3
CDSE	5.01	.435	-	.275**	.444**
EI	3.91	.542	.275**	-	.316**
PP	4.71	.609	.444**	.316**	-

** Correlation is significant at $p < .01$ (two-tailed)

CDSE = Career Decision Self Efficacy; EI = Emotional Intelligence; PP = Proactive Personality

Table 2. The Mediation Role of Proactive Personality in the influence of Emotional Intelligence on Career Decision Self-Efficacy

		PP			Consequent		
Antecedent		Coefficient	SE	p	Coefficient	SE	p
EI	<i>a</i>	0.35	.37	< .01	<i>c'</i> 0.12	.02	< .01
PP		-	-	-	<i>b</i> 0.28	.02	< .01
constant	<i>i1</i>	3.32 <i>R</i> ² = .09	.14	< .01	<i>i2</i> 3.21 <i>R</i> ² = .21	.12	< .01

indirect effect of EI on CDSE via PP. This means students with a high EI tend to have proactive personalities and will show more initiative, so students will be more confident in making career decisions. The result of this study indicated that the hypothesis is accepted. Nevertheless, the regression test result can also be seen that the score of the direct effect is greater than the indirect effect. This means the effect of PP as a mediator is only partial, or in other words EI basically can directly affect the CDSE.

Discussion

This research was conducted aiming to see the effect of EI on CDSE, with PP as a mediator in vocational school students. The result of the research indicated that PP is significantly able to mediate EI and CDSE. This means that vocational school students who have a high EI will also have high PP, which in turn will have an impact on the increase of CDSE. They are being more initiative to provide changes in their lives, so individuals are more confident in making decisions related to careers. Vocational school students with a high EI will show proactive behavior in preventing and solving problems, looking for new information, and actively taking opportunities that exist, which makes them become more confident about themselves in career decision making.

EI is known to affect PP, where vocational school students with a high EI can overcome the stress they face and make it possible for them to show high initiative (Zampetakis et al., 2009). This is in accordance with researches conducted by Jafri, Dem, and Choden (2016); Santos, Wang, and Lewis (2018); and Darmayanti and Salim (2019) in which they stated that EI had a significantly positive relationship with PP.

Furthermore, proactive personalities direct vocational school students to their beliefs in making career decisions. The result of this study are consistent with studies conducted by Hsieh and Huang (2014) and Kim and Park (2017) which stated that PP affects CDSE. Proactive people are likely to anticipate and prevent problems that arise during the career decision making process, and are active in finding opportunities (Parker, Bindl, & Strauss, 2010), making them more confident in the career decision-making process.

The result of this study also showed that EI was able to directly affect the CDSE of vocational school students without having to go through PP mediation. In other words, students with a high EI do not always go through PP to make them more confident in the career decision-making process. An individual with a high level of EI is known to be better able to evaluate their own emotions and the emotions of those around them and be able to use their emotions effectively (Santos, Wang, & Lewis, 2018). They will also be better able to understand and integrate emotional experiences through thoughts and actions (Di Fabio & Saklofske, 2014). To conclude, they also show more confidence in their ability to make a proper career decision (Brown, et al. 2003; Santos et al., 2018). They will be more resilient because they are able to understand the causes of their stress and develop strategies, as well as be more persistent to overcome the negative consequences of the stress they experience (Cooper & Sawaf, 1997; Sy, Tram, & O'Hara, 2006).

The result of this study contributes to the development of research on CDSE, where CDSE is predicted by EI and can be mediated by PP. This result can also be used in intervention programs in an effort to improve the student's CDSE. Practitioners such as school counselors, psychologists, and other educators can provide interventions to improve students' EI and PP, thereby increasing students' CDSE.

Limitation

This study has several limitations, as well as advices given to be of concern for subsequent further research. The data collection process was carried out together with 5 other variables in the substantial research conducted. Chances are the sample where they filled out questionnaires had experienced fatigue due to the large number of items that need to be answered. This can cause the obtained data to be less compatible in comparing with who they really are. The next research should consider the process of data retrieval and pay attention to the current condition of respondents while filling out the questionnaire.

The next researchers in the future study should also consider other factors that can mediate the effect of EI on the CDSE. High school students can be taken into consideration as research sample, then pay attention to any differences in the characteristics between high school students and vocational school students, whether there are differences of CDSE in themselves. Social support is known to affect one's self-efficacy (Choi et al., 2012), so that the next researchers in the future can use social support variables in similar studies. Furthermore, the next researchers are advised to conduct research in other areas besides Jakarta which is an urban city. This should be done in order to obtain a broader picture with different social supports in each culture, such as Sumatra, Java, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and so forth.

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