




Psychocentrum Review

ISSN 2656-8454 (Electronic) | ISSN 2656-1069 (Print)
Editor:  Sisca Folastri

Publication details, including author guidelines

URL: <http://journal.unindra.ac.id/index.php/pcr/about/submissions#authorGuidelines>

What Career Success Means to Student's Perspective: A Qualitative Study

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Article History

Received : 15 June 2022

Revised : 04 July 2022

Accepted : 07 July 2022

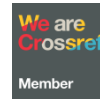
How to cite this article (APA 6th)

Hamdan, A. H, Supriatna, M, & Yuda, E. S. (2022). What Career Success Means to Student's Perspective: A Qualitative Study. *Psychocentrum Review*, 4(2), 178-189. DOI: 10.26539/pcr.421071The readers can link to article via <https://doi.org/10.26539/pcr.421071>

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Original Article

What Career Success Means to Student's Perspective: A Qualitative Study

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Abstract. Career success has different meanings for each level and condition of the person. Careers have a range at every level of life, from children, and adolescents, to adults. However, none of the studies reveals the meaning of career success at the adolescent level, such as students. Therefore, this study aims to understand the concept of career success from a student's perspective. What is the meaning of career success, and what are the characteristics of students who are successful in their careers. This research uses a qualitative case study design approach with the phenomenological method. Data were collected by face-to-face structural interview technique. Participants in this study were 20 high school students (10 males and 10 females). The Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis analyzed data. The study's results revealed that students gave meaning to career success, including objective and subjective, such as the ability to achieve self-efficacy, self-happiness, and make others happy. Students' career success characteristics are grouped with abilities in knowledge, attitudes, and skills. The research findings can be used to develop career success in adolescents, develop career success instruments, and purpose career guidance and counselling services.

Keywords: Career success, Student's perspective, Career development.

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Introduction

The study of career success continues to grow every year. This study covers various facets of the topic of career success. The essential thing and the beginning of the study of career success is the definition and concept of career success. This theoretical concept refers to the definition put forward by (Judge et al., 1994); career success is defined as positive psychological or work-related outcomes that accumulate as a result of one's work experience. Various research articles were found to refer to this definition as the primary basis for their research (Ahmad et al., 2019; Converse et al., 2014; Danner et al., 2020; Nikitkov & Sainty, 2014; Zacher, 2014)

Career success is generally divided into two parts, namely objective career success and subjective career success or extrinsic career success and intrinsic career success (Haines et al., 2014). Career success by definition and the meaning of success that is visible and measurable, the measure used is real. Others can also judge career success objectively (Schwartz et al., 2016). A career is extrinsically measured by a person's salary, position and answers (Converse et al., 2014). Several studies agree and use objective measures as a definition of career success, such as a study conducted by (Abele et al., 2016).

As opposed to objective success, the second part of career success is subjective career success. This success gives the meaning of success as a form of individual subjectivity. The

choice of measurement is based on individual personal feelings and is not measured based on other people. Subjective career success is not judged by other people's measures but by the individual's own feelings. Subjective career success is seen in satisfaction, comfort, happiness and other subjective measures (Ishak, 2015).

The accumulation and combination of objective and subjective career success are what most researchers agree on (Schwartz et al., 2016). These definitions and concepts not only mean one-sided career success, such as objective or subjective, but career success must combine the two. The results also show that there is even a relationship between objective career success and subjective career success (Nikitkov & Sainty, 2014).

In addition to the contradiction between objective and subjective, the definition of career success also differs from individual, work, community, and socio-cultural aspects (Schwartz et al., 2016). Differences in the meaning of career success are also found from one country to another (United et al., 2014). In addition, other factors that distinguish the meaning of career success are age, life dynamics, and individual experiences from time to time (Afiouni, 2014).

Responding to these findings, researchers have also examined the definition and meaning of career success from happy settings and backgrounds. According to executives and supervisors, career success is appreciation, high position achievement and personal achievement. Consider important for success (Pellegrin & Coates, 1957). According to working women, career success is that women's definition of success is: first, working in a location that supports ideology, family and gender, and is process-oriented that reflects dynamic interactions (Afiouni & M. Karam, 2014). Career success among part-time workers reveals that not all older workers perceive the need to be kept up-to-date as a positive thing, pushing them toward retirement (Hennekam, 2015).

Career success in professors, achieving the highest status and contributions in their field of study and having made a significant contribution to that field, value their work and feel positive about what they do (Beigi, 2017). For factory workers, career success is when certain needs are met in their career (Koekemoer et al., 2018). The millennial generation is currently researching the meaning of career success. Millennials are the latest generation to enter the workforce and consist of people born between 1982 and 2005 (Horsington, 2007). Emma's research results (Parry et al., 2012) reveal the definition of career success that is considered important by all Millennials regardless of the country is success or income, satisfaction, Learning and Development and the suitability of individuals with job characteristics.

Along with the development of research on the definition of career success, however, no research has revealed the meaning of career success from student's perspective. A career in principle is a lifelong journey that is part of aspects of life such as life roles, life settings, and events (Supriatna & Budiman, 2009). Therefore, it is important to understand the meaning of career success in the setting and its role. The study of career success in adolescents is also a topic of guidance and counselling. Career success is one of the development goals of students, according to the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), which is used as the basis for developing the goals of comprehensive guidance and counselling programs. Career success includes the 5th goal in the vocational/career realm, namely learning to earn (Rusmana, 2009).

Therefore, this study aims to understand the concept of career success from a student's perspective. What is the meaning of career success, and what are the characteristics of students who are successful in their careers? Students and schools are essential sectors to understand the definition of career success. In view, the school or Education sector is a pre-occupation, as the beginning of determining one's career (Yusuf, 2002). Education is also a significant element in finalizing the preparation of career choices, making career plans, and developing one's self to achieve career success and life success (Febriani et al., 2016). The research findings can be used to develop the concept of career success in adolescents, the development of career success instruments and the purpose of career guidance and counselling services.

Method

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. Career success is the case focused in this study. A case study is an intensive and holistic analysis of a phenomenon or social unit. According to Creswell (Creswell & Poth, 2016), it is a qualitative research approach in which the researcher examines one or more cases in depth and defines the situations and themes. This approach were chosen based on the research objective to reveal the meaning of career success for students.

The quantitative method used in this research is phenomenological. In particular, the phenomenological method is used to understand individual perceptions, feelings, or thoughts about a study (Houser, 2019). In this study, a phenomenological method was used following the research objective to understand the meaning of career success in students' perceptions. Data was collected through structured interviews during one meeting.

Participants

The participants of this study were 20 students of class XI in one of the public high schools in Binjai City. The descriptions of the age, gender, and ethnicity are described in the table below.

Tabel 1. Profile of Participants

| Variables | Category | F | % |
|-----------|---------------|----|----|
| Gender | Male | 10 | 50 |
| | female | 10 | 50 |
| Age | 16 years old | 13 | 65 |
| | 17 years old | 7 | 35 |
| Ethnicity | Minang | 1 | 5 |
| | Java | 10 | 50 |
| | Karo | 1 | 5 |
| | Mandailing | 3 | 15 |
| | Batak | 1 | 5 |
| | Malay | 1 | 5 |
| | Not mentioned | 3 | 15 |

Sampling Procedures

Determining the sample in this study using purposive sampling technique, type a convenience sampling. The criteria for sampling are as follows: 1) The sample is class XI students; class XI is selected as the middle class in high school. 2) The sample consists of the same number of men and women. 3) The sample is willing to be a research participant and participate in interview activities. The sample in this study consisted of students of classes XI MIPA 1 and XI MIPA 2, and each class consisted of 10 students with 5 males and 5 females. All participants are willing to be the research sample. The research was carried out in one of the classrooms at the school.

Materials and Apparatus

The material used in this research is an interview guide developed by researcher. This guide was developed based on a theoretical study of career success and aims to understand the definition of career success and the characteristics of successful students

from their point of view. The interview guide is an open-ended question consisting of two questions. The following is the question, what is the meaning or meaning of career success in your opinion? What are the characteristics of students who are successful in their careers? The interview guide is used for structured interviews, which means that each student is asked the same questions. Students are asked to express their opinion without word limit.

Procedures

The research was carried out in schools with the following procedures. Participants attend the interview room, which is different from the student study room. The interviewer provides an introduction to the topic that will be discussed, namely career success in the view of students. The interviewer delivered open-ended questions that had been prepared for the students. Participants respond and answer questions according to their conditions. The interview was conducted in a structured manner, where each participant received the same questions sequentially. The interview was carried out in one meeting.

Design or Data Analysis

Data analysis was carried out in four stages: generating, organizing, coding, and interpreting data. The data analysis process is carried out with Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Eatough & Smith, 2017). The research data were analyzed qualitatively based on the type of individual answers. All interview data were read one by one and then coded at the location of the writing stating specific definitions and characteristics. Furthermore, categorization and withdrawal of the essence of each category are carried out.

Result

Definition of Career Success

Career success in students has its definition. Based on the results of interview data analysis, the definition of career success according to students' perspectives can be grouped into five categories of answers. The categories of career success are: (1) Students define career success as the ability to channel their interests and talents. (2) Career success results from achieving one's goals or targets. (3) Career success is getting achievements and wealth. (4) Career success is self-happiness, and (5) Career success is making others proud.

Students interpret career success as channeling their interests and talents. This definition is the least number of students expressed. The distribution of interests and skills begins with first introducing interests and talents. The freedom and ability of students to channel their interests and talents can be interpreted as career success for students. It can be seen in the following interview excerpt.

PI: Kesuksesan karier menurut saya hanyalah kebebasan dalam penyaluran minat dan bakat yang kita miliki. Tidak hanya bebas, tetapi juga konsisten dan berkembang menjadi lebih baik. Jika seseorang bebas menyalurkan minat dan bakatnya dengan konsisten dan terus berkembang maka ia tergolong sukses. (In my opinion, career success is only freedom in channelling our interests and talents. Not only free but also consistent and growing for the better. If a person is free to channel his interests and talents consistently and continues to grow, then he is classified as successful.)

Other students interpret career success as a result of self-achievement. The achievements in this example are dreams, goals, planned targets, and getting something you want. Students do not mention what they want. But the process of achieving personal targets has become a measure of success for students.

P16: Kesuksesan karier menurut saya adalah ketika berhasil mencapai suatu hal yang sudah ditargetkan. (In my opinion, career success is when you achieve something that has been targeted.)

P2: Kesuksesan karier menurut saya adalah ketika segala planing/ kegiatan berhasil diraih dengan kerja keras sendiri. (In my opinion, career success is when all planning/activities are achieved through hard work alone)

P9: Sukses karier adalah mendapat sesuatu yang diinginkan. (Career success is getting what you want)

P12: Kesuksesan karier adalah dapat mencapai semua cita-cita yang dia miliki seperti pekerjaan dll. (Career success is being able to achieve all the goals he has such as work etc.)

P18: Makna kesuksesan karier bagi saya disaat saya sudah dapat mewujudkan cita-cita saya. (The meaning of career success for me is when I can realize my dream.)

P19: Kesuksesan karier adalah berhasil mencapai keinginan yang diinginkan baik di bidang pembelajaran di sekolah ataupun pekerjaan yang diinginkan. (Career success is succeeding in achieving the desired desires both in the field of learning at school or the desired job)

P20: Menurut saya kesuksesan karier adalah dimana yang saya impikan (cita-cita) dapat tercapai di diri sendiri. (I think career success is where I can achieve my dreams (dreams) in myself).

Another definition of career success students is getting achievements and wealth. This definition shows that career success needs to be validated by the existence of tangible forms or objects such as possessions or achievements. In contrast to other students who define career success as a process, they interpret it as a result. It is taken from the following statement.

P14: Kesuksesan karier menurut saya jika saya mampu menghasilkan uang untuk memenuhi kebutuhan hidup saya. (Career success in my opinion if I am able to make money to meet my needs)

P5: Sukses karier adalah ketika kita mencapai suatu hal dari pekerjaan kita atau contohnya mendapat juara dan penghargaan-penghargaan dalam hal positif. (Career success is when we achieve something from our work or for example getting champions and awards in a positive way).

Other students interpret career success as the happiness they feel in themselves. This definition is very different from the view that career success requires achievement results, such as championships or trophies. For them, career success can be interpreted as a measure of their own happiness. They consider success more as a subjective element that each individual can feel. Satisfaction and happiness in what you do are the main keys to career success.

P17: Menurut saya kesuksesan karier bukan hanya tentang pekerjaan, tetapi kesuksesan karier itu tentang kebahagiaan dan membahagiakan orang lain. (I think career success is not just about work, but career success is about happiness and making other people happy.

P4: Kesuksesan karier adalah saat kita berhasil mendapatkan suatu hasil yang memuaskan untuk diri sendiri. (Career success is when we manage to get a satisfying result for ourselves).

Other students interpret career success by involving other people. The involvement of other people who are often called students is parents. Career success, in this case will be achieved when parents are happy and proud of what they do. Students also interpret helping

others, such as friends, as career success. The happiness and pride of others are the main keys to career success. It is revealed in the following narrative.

P11: Sukses menurut saya itu adalah ketika bisa membanggakan kedua orang tua. (In my opinion, success is when you can make your parents proud)

P7: Bagi saya kesuksesan karier adalah ketika dapat membantu orang lain khususnya teman dan ketika dapat mencapai tujuan yang diinginkan seperti misalnya menginginkan nilai yang tinggi di mata pelajaran tertentu. (For me career success is when you can help other people especially friends and when you can achieve the desired goals such as wanting high marks in certain subjects)

P6: Sukses karier juga berarti kita sudah bisa membahagiakan kedua orang tua kita dan meringankan beban mereka. (Career success also means we can make our parents happy and lighten their burdens)

P8: Menurut saya sukses karier adalah ketika segala keinginan kita berhasil diraih dengan baik, membanggakan dan membahagiakan orang tua akan prestasi yang didapat serta mewujudkan segala harapan yang dititipkan kepada kita. (In my opinion, career success is when all our wishes are achieved well, making our parents proud and happy for our achievements and realizing all the hopes entrusted to us).

Therefore, career success in the views of students is different. In addition to the definition of career success, students are also asked to reveal the students characteristics who are successful in their careers.

Characteristics of Career Success

Therefore, career success in the views of students is different. In addition to the definition of career success, students are also asked to reveal the characteristics of students who are successful in their careers. The characteristics of career success in students are described in table below.

Tabel 2. Characteristics of career success according to students

| No | Characteristics | Code Used | Person | Frequency (F) |
|----|-------------------------------|--|--|---------------|
| 1 | Have a stance | Have a strong stance, not unstable, not easily swayed in all conditions | (P1), (P6), (P10) | 3 |
| 2 | Develop interests and talents | Develop something that interests him, be able to develop his talents, channel his interests and talents, know what talents he has, continue to develop his hobbies, and have skills | (P1), (P17), (P18), (P7), (P8), (P5), | 6 |
| 3 | Achievers | Achieve in class, get school achievements, get various achievements outside the school environment. Winning competitions in both academic and non-academic, got first place in school, | (P2) (P4), (P12), (P15), (P16), (P18) (P8), (P11), (P13) | 9 |
| 4 | Social | Have a high social spirit, have many friends, easy to get along with, get along with many friends, get along with other people | (P2), (P4), (P12), (P15), (P13), (P16), (P19) | 7 |
| 5 | Self-confident | Self-confident | (P2), (P3), | 3 |

| | | | | |
|----|---|--|---|---|
| 6 | Dare to try new things | Dare to try new things | (P15), (P2) | 1 |
| 7 | Active | Active in school and outside of school, Active in lessons, participate in various competitions held | (P2), (P3) | 2 |
| 8 | Able to speak in public | <i>Public speaking</i> who are good, dare to come forward, appear in front of people, can express the results of their thoughts to others. | (P2), (P3), (P4), (P12), (P8), (P15), (P16), (P19), | 8 |
| 9 | Adaptive | Able to adapt to new atmosphere able to adapt in various conditions | (P3), (P10) | 2 |
| 10 | Discipline | Implement the rules that have been made well, discipline | (P3), (P13) | 2 |
| 11 | Never give up | Not easily give up, never give up, have strong ambitions. work hard, try yourself, study hard, persevere, be consistent | (P3), (P14), (P16), (P10) (P18), (P12), (P13), (P19), (P14) | 8 |
| 12 | Have a plan | Have plans for the future. prepare everything from scratch, can plan for the future carefully. | (P3), (P4), (P6), (P7) | 4 |
| 13 | Able to solve problems | Able to solve problems, | (P5) | 1 |
| 14 | Initiative | Work on his will (initiative) | (P6) | 1 |
| 15 | Have a goal | Determine what the goal will be, have a goal | (P7), (P10), (P15) | 3 |
| 16 | Polite | Have a good attitude, be polite to teachers/older people | (P6), (P12), (P13) | 3 |
| 17 | Religious | Able to balance the life of this world and the hereafter. | (P6) | 1 |
| 18 | Managing time | Set time to play, set hours of study and play. Can manage time when learning and playing, dividing learning and playing time, | (P7), (P12), (P13), (P15), (P16), (P17), (P18), (P19) | 8 |
| 19 | Understand own strengths and weaknesses | Able to understand the advantages and disadvantages | (P10) | 1 |
| 20 | Honest | Students who don't cheat on exams | (P17) | 1 |

Based on table above, the characteristic of the most career success in the view of students is an achievement with many 9. Never give up, able to manage time and speak in public with many 8. Followed by having a high social spirit numbering 7. Able to develop interests, talents, and achievements with a total of 6. Having plans totaling 4. The characteristics of career success that students least reveal are daring to try new things, being able to solve problems, being initiative, religious, understanding one's strengths and weaknesses and being honest with a frequency of 1.

Discussion

Based on the research results described above, the definition of career success has various meanings by students. These definitions can be analyzed and compared with existing career success theories. Referring to Timothy A. Judge (Ishak, 2015; Judge, 1995), career success is the accumulation of positive psychological results or achievements from one's work experience. Career success is divided into two parts, namely objective career success and subjective career success, or in other terms, extrinsic career success and intrinsic career success.

The findings of the definition of career success by students can also be classified into objective career success and subjective career success. Career success objectively or extrinsically provides a definition and meaning of success that is visible and measurable, the measure used is real and can also be assessed objectively by others. (Schwartz et al., 2016). In objective career success, adults are generally interpreted as getting a salary, getting a promotion and financially (Converse et al., 2014). But for students, the objective of career success is to get achievements, winning champions, and win competitions.

Meanwhile, subjective career success tends to be the same as the meaning of career success in adults: happiness. Students also interpret career success as happiness in themselves that they feel. So, the measure of success is not only objective but also subjective. This success gives the meaning of success as a form of individual subjectivity, the choice of measurement is based on individual personal feelings and is not measured based on other people. Subjective career success is not judged by other people's measures but by the individual's own feelings. Subjective career success is seen in satisfaction, comfort, happiness and other subjective measures (Ishak, 2015).

Adolescents' definitions of career success can also be analyzed through career development tasks at a young age. The stage of career development aged 15-24 is in the exploration phase. Students who are at the exploration stage in their careers have the following career development tasks: (a) Recognize skills and obtain relevant information to make career decisions, (b) Be aware of their interests and abilities and relate them to job opportunities, (c) Identify fields and the level of work that matches their interests and abilities (d) Obtain training to develop skills and accelerate entering work to meet their interests and abilities (Supriatna et al., 2021). Career success for students is when they can complete career development tasks in adolescence. Achievement is part of the results of the achievement of these developmental tasks.

Students' definition of career success was also compared with the finding of Emma Parry (Parry et al., 2012), which focuses on the millennial generation. By age, the students who participated in this study did not include the millennial generation. So, the definition of career success in the millennial generation is also different from the definition of career success for students. For millennials, career success is an individual's suitability with job characteristics (Job-task characteristics), describing a person's perceived career success based on certain aspects of work such as responsibility, challenge, autonomy and participation. As for students, career success is the ability to channel their interests and talents. This difference in meaning is also based on differences in the setting where they are active. The millennial generation tends to carry out daily activities by working, while students carry out daily activities at school.

The last definition of career success in the view of students is that a career is someone else's. Other people referred to by students are parents and friends. This finding is in line with research (Hirschi et al., 2016) which reveals that on-work orientation such as; family, personal life, and community showed a positive relationship with career satisfaction. All three nonwork orientations, particularly family orientation, are positively related to life satisfaction and career success (Hirschi et al., 2016)

The findings about the characteristics of career success according to students can be grouped based on the aspect of ability. It is because, in general, career success in the view of students is interpreted as the ability to be successful in self and daily activities. Career success

as an ability that includes aspects of knowledge, attitudes and skills. Description of career success based on aspects and indicators can be seen in table 3 below.

Tabel 3. Aspects and indicators of career success according to students

| No | Aspect | Indicator |
|----|-----------|--|
| 1 | Knowledge | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understanding your strengths and weaknesses 2. Have a plan 3. Have a goal |
| 2 | Attitude | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have a stance 2. Self-confident 3. Adaptive 4. Discipline 5. Never give up 6. Polite 7. Initiative 8. Honest |
| 3 | Skills | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop interests and talents 2. Dare to try new things 3. Able to speak in public 4. Able to solve problems 5. Able to manage time 6. Able to socialize with other people |

The knowledge aspect is the ability of students to relate to the mind to achieve career success. The indicators of these aspects are; understanding your strengths and weaknesses, having a plan, and having a goal. The attitude aspect is students' ability related to feelings to achieve career success. These indicators are; have a stand, confident, adaptive, disciplined, never give up, polite, initiative, and honest. The skill aspect is students' ability related to actions to achieve career success. These indicators are; developing interests and talents, daring to try new things, speaking in public, solving problems, managing time, and socializing with others.

Some of the characteristics of career success revealed by students are also in line with the findings of other research results. In the aspect of knowledge, indicators have plans in accordance with the findings(Guerrero et al., 2016), with the development that career planning is positively related to career success. The indicator has a goal relevant to research findings that having a person's goal orientation is an important determinant of subjective and objective career success(van Dierendonck & van der Gaast, 2013).

Regarding attitude, indicators have a stand, which is in line with research findings that career commitment has a significant and positive effect on subjective career success(Cheramie, 2013). Adaptive indicators are relevant to research results showing that increasing career adaptability positively impacts clients' job satisfaction (Zacher, 2014). On indicators of unyielding, research findings(Danner et al., 2020)stated that grit is a factor supporting career success. However, this finding was also challenged by(Clark & Plano Clark, 2019), which state that grit is unrelated to career success. Never giving up can also be interpreted as resilience; research results show that resilience is a predictor of career success (Ahmad et al., 2019).

In the skill aspect, the indicator of daring to try new things can be interpreted as lifelong learning. The lifelong learning mentality is a method of approaching work with curiosity, strategic thinking, and persistence. The findings show that a lifelong learning mindset increases objective and subjective career success (Drewery et al., 2020).

Conclusion

This study aims to reveal the definition and characteristics of career success according to students. Students interpret career success as (1) the ability to channel interests and talents, (2) the results of achieving their own goals or targets, (3) getting achievements, (4) self-happiness and (5) success in making others proud. The characteristics of career success according to students can be grouped into three aspects: abilities, attitudes and skills. The ability aspect is characterized by indicators of understanding one's strengths and weaknesses, having plans and having goals. The attitude aspect is characterized by indicators of having a stand, confidence, adaptive, disciplined, unyielding, polite, initiative and honesty. Indicators of developing interests and talents represent the skill aspect.

Acknowledgements

The researcher would like to thank all participants who have been this study's main data sources. Supervisors who have guided and supported the implementation of this research.

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