Research Article

Differences in Subjective Career Success Among Teachers Viewed from Career Development Stages

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Abstract.
Teachers play a crucial role in shaping the quality of education. As they navigate through challenging responsibilities, the desire for career success is inherent among teachers. Assessing career success subjectively, including individual satisfaction and feelings toward one's career, holds significance for teachers. Career development involves various stages, and individuals, including teachers, undergo an evolution of psychological needs and desires at each stage. The differing needs across career stages may lead to different views of career success by teachers. This study aims to explore differences in subjective career success among teachers in the establishment and maintenance stages. Employing a comparative quantitative approach, the research involved 677 teachers recruited through non-probability quota sampling. The Subjective Career Success Inventory served as the research instrument, and data analysis employed difference tests. Results indicate significant differences in subjective career success between teachers in the establishment and maintenance stages. Differences were observed in dimensions such as recognition, quality work, meaningful work, influence, growth and development, and satisfaction among teachers in these career development stages.

Keywords: career development stages, subjective career success, teacher

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1. Background

Teachers play a central role in realizing quality education (Fauzi, 2017). Serving as educators, teachers hold a noble profession with significant responsibilities towards students. To enhance educational quality, their duties must be accompanied by teacher well-being, which, in turn, can impact their professionalism. However, the field reality indicates that many teachers do not enjoy the well-being they rightfully deserve, as the noble tasks they undertake often do not match their income (Lonika & Riasnugrahani, 2022). The implementation of Law No. 14 of 2005, aimed at addressing the disparities experienced by teachers, proves difficult to enforce (Nugraha et al., 2022). Moreover, societal perceptions, particularly regarding teacher income, contribute to the avoidance of the teaching profession due to perceived insufficient earnings. Facing numerous

challenges such as excessive workload and limited income allowances, teachers are required to maintain their professionalism. Overcoming these challenges becomes particularly daunting when individuals lack self-motivation and positive self-esteem in pursuing their career goals (Ingarianti et al., 2022).

Fundamentally, every teacher aspires to achieve career goals and success. While most individuals objectively assess their career success through external measures such as salary, promotions, and positions (Arthur et al., 2005), it appears difficult for some teachers to evaluate their career success objectively given the realities of income and promotions (Mahendra, 2017). Objective career success in the teaching profession is perceived as limited due to factors beyond individual control, such as power structures, tax systems, economic and social stratification, and wage norms (Heslin, 2005). Therefore, subjective assessments of careers, which are not limited by external measures, play a crucial role in enabling individuals to achieve career success. Subjective career success involves individuals evaluating their career success based on self-defined assessment standards (Fridayanti, 2011). Subjective career success is the individual's perception of their career experience, including achievements, recognition, future outlook, and satisfaction (Nabi, 1999). Shockley et al. proposed eight dimensions of subjective career success. First, authenticity, where individuals align personal needs and preferences in shaping their career direction. Next, growth and development, involving career advancement based on new knowledge and skills. Subsequently, influence, where individuals exert impact on others within the organization or the overall structure. Meaningful work, where individuals engage in work with personal or social significance. Quality of work, where individuals strive to deliver high-quality results. Then, recognition, where individuals receive acknowledgment for their performance formally or informally from highly esteemed and respected peers. Personal life, where individuals have a career positively influencing life outside work. Lastly, satisfaction,which is a positive feeling individuals hold towards their career in general.

The subjective assessment of careers, including job satisfaction and individual perceptions, plays a crucial role in the current career transition era. Teachers assessing their career success subjectively tend to experience less burden in facing challenges and obstacles in their work (Akmal, Arlinkasari, & Andryani, 2017; Ingarianti et al., 2022). Subjective career success can assist teachers in fulfilling their duties and responsibilities, developing skills and competencies, and achieving career goals optimally (Ingarianti et al., 2022). Therefore, it is important for teachers to have a subjective perception of their career success, considering that a career is a lifelong journey for individuals. Subjective career success has been found to have a strong effect on individuals' internal processes,

such as increased work motivation, positive self-identity changes, the development of a sense of calling, subjective well-being, and lower turnover rates (Hall & Chandler, 2005; Feldman & Ng, 2007; Abele et al., 2016).

As previously discussed, subjective career aspects related to the meaning of work offer a potential way to motivate employees beyond financial incentives and traditional career hierarchies (Rosso et al., 2010; Chen et al., 2016). Individuals not only assess their careers based on what they gain from their jobs but also on their role in their career life (Shockley et al., 2015). Each individual has different assessments of career achievements and satisfaction that cannot be equated. Research conducted by Hupkens et al. (2021) revealed that subjective career success can change as individuals progress in their careers, influenced by personal changes over time. Every individual undergoes an evolution of psychological needs and desires through different life phases (Levinson, 1978). Super (1980) explains that employees' aspirations in organizations change at various career stages. Super (1957, 1984) formulates a career development stage model proposing that individuals progress through five career development stages throughout their lives (Super et al., 1996). The stages and tasks in the life span begin with growth (from birth to age of 15), followed by exploration (ages of 15-24), establishment (ages of 25-44), maintenance (ages of 45-64), and disengagement (age of 65+). The growth stage represents an individual's initial introduction to the working world (Super, 1990). Subsequently, in the exploration stage, adolescents and young adults gather information about themselves and work through part-time jobs, curricular and extracurricular experiences, and other activities, guiding them in selecting a career and applying themselves in work roles. In the establishment stage, individuals engage in stabilizing, consolidating, and advancing their self-concept and career patterns to develop a secure position in the working world. Moving to the maintenance stage, individuals focus on maintaining their self-concept and current job status. In the disengagement stage, individuals shift their focus to developing a self-image and self-concept that is independent and separate from their work. Super's formulation of career development stages indicates that each stage in this life span illustrates the significance of the work undertaken for an individual's self-concept and identity. As noted by Super (1963), individuals strive to implement their self-concept through job choices. This self-concept evolves over time and develops as a result of individual experiences, making the self-concept a function and outcome of someone's career development (Hunt & Rhodes, 2021). At each career development stage, individuals seek to define, clarify, or fulfill their identity, needs, and psychological values.

This demonstrates that each individual exhibits different needs in expectations, aspirations, and abilities at various career stages. Consequently, individual assessments of career success at each career development stage may differ. According to Shockley et al. (2015), the formation and potential changes in the perception of success over time become significant information, given that these differences can be observed based on career stages. Different needs at each career development stage regarding expectations and aspirations towards their jobs reasonably can be expected to influence perceptions of job meaningfulness. This, in turn, allows individuals to assess subjective career success differently, considering that the evaluation of subjective career success refers to one's own definition of standards, needs, values, career stages, and aspirations (Rigotti et al., 2020). Previous research has investigated the differences in job-related factors across employee career stages. Researchers have explored differences in career stage in career decisions (Kooij et al., 2008; Lam et al., 2012), work motivation (Miao et al., 2009), commitment (McElroy et al., 1999), job satisfaction (Menguc & Bhuian, 2004), and work-life balance issues (Darcy et al., 2012; Demerouti et al., 2012).

Based on the elaboration above, the researcher suspects differences in subjective career success among teachers based on career development stages. In this study, the researcher focuses on the differences in subjective career success at the establishment and maintenance stages. In both stages, individuals have undergone their career processes and have needs to achieve career success. This research is expected to contribute to the scientific knowledge in the field of psychology, particularly the understanding of subjective career success and career development stages among teachers. It is also expected to benefit teachers in achieving subjective career success at each stage of their career development. Therefore, this study can serve as a reference for teachers in developing their careers to achieve career success.

1.1. Hypothesis

H1: There are differences in the dimensions of subjective career success among teachers based on career development stages.

H0: There are no differences in the dimensions of subjective career success among teachers based on career development stages.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

2.1. Variables or concepts studied

There were two variables in this study: Career Development Stage and Subjective Career Success. The independent variable in this study was Career Development Stage (X), and the dependent variable was Subjective Career Success (Y).

The independent variable, Career Development Stage, refers to the specific age of individuals in fulfilling the developmental role corresponding to their career development stage. The relationship between age and career development stage, according to Super, is termed the life-career rainbow. This career development stage illustrates the connection between age and the developmental tasks individuals face in their lives. Meanwhile, the dependent variable (Y), subjective career success, is the individual's personal assessment of their career achievements and satisfaction.

2.2. Sampling Method

This study applied a non-probability quota sampling technique, where participants were recruited based on criteria specified by the researcher with a predetermined quota (Sugiyono, 2018). The predetermined sample size consisted of 677 participants who worked as teachers in schools.

2.3. Research Participants

Participants in this study were individuals who worked as teachers, including both civil servants (PNS) and non-civil servants. The criteria for teachers eligible to participate in this study were having the status of civil servant/non-permanent teacher/foundation teacher, not holding the position of school principal, having a minimum of 5 years of work experience, and holding a bachelor's degree (S1/D4).

2.4. Research Instruments

Career development stages were measured using demographic data in the form of individual age. Goštautaitė et al. (2020) asserted that chronological age is a valid indicator for career stages. This study focused on two career development stages: establishment and maintenance stages. Establishment occurs within the age range of 25-44 years, while maintenance occurs within the age range of 45-65 years.

The Subjective Career Success (SCS) was measured using the Subjective Career Success Inventory (SCSI) developed by Shockley et al. (2016) and adapted into Indonesian by Ingarianti et al. (2022). The instrument comprised a total of 24 items and 8 dimensions of subjective career success, with 3 items per dimension, including recognition, quality work, meaningful work, influence, growth & development, authenticity, personal life, and satisfaction. An example item in this scale is "I feel that my job is meaningful." The used a 5-point Likert scale : (1) = Strongly Disagree, (2) = Disagree, (3) = Neutral, (4) = Agree, (5) = Strongly Agree.

2.5. Research Design

This study employed a quantitative approach with a comparative research design to investigate differences between two or more variables by comparing the studied variables. The quantitative approach involves measurement, calculation, and numerical data analysis throughout the research (Sugiyono, 2014). The comparative research design is comparative in nature, comparing one or more variables in two or more different groups or at different times (Sugiyono, 2017).

2.6. Data Collection Procedures

The research process involved several procedures. Firstly, the researchers examined the phenomenon to be studied by determining research variables, exploring and compiling theoretical studies on research variables, and determining the measurement instrument for the study. Subsequently, the researchers prepared the measurement instrument for the dependent variable, namely the Subjective Career Success Inventory (SCSI) developed by Shockley et al. (2016). The researchers then collected data with teachers who met the predetermined criteria. Data were collected by distributing the research instruments offline to teachers in the city of Batu. The researchers tabulated the data using Microsoft Excel, conducted data analysis, and drew conclusions regarding the research data.

2.7. Data Analysis Technique

In data analysis, the researcher used Jamovi version 2.3.21 with the independent sample t-test data analysis technique to determine differences in subjective career success among teachers based on their career development stages.

3. RESULT

The analysis results indicate a significant difference in subjective career success between teachers in the establishment and maintenance stages (t = -3.759; p = 0.001 < 0.05). This study found that teachers in the maintenance stage (M = 97.0, SD = 9.08) had higher subjective career success compared to teachers in the establishment stage (M = 94.3, SD = 8.78).

TABLE 1: Difference test on Subjective Career Success based on Career Development Stages.

Establishment (25-44 years of age)			Maintenance (45-65 years of age)		t	p	Cohen's	Desc.
	M	SD	M	SD			d	
Subjective Career Success	94.3	8.78	97.0	9.08	-3,759			Different
						< .001	-0.3009	

As shown in the table below, the analysis results reveal significant differences in the recognition dimension between teachers in the establishment and maintenance stages (t = -5.602; p = 0.001 < 0.05). Teachers in the maintenance stage (M = 12.4, SD = 1.40) exhibit a higher level of recognition than those in the establishment stage (M = 11.7, SD = 1.57). In the dimension of quality of work, significant differences were also found between teachers in the establishment and maintenance stages (t = -3.343; p = 0.001 < 0.05). Teachers in the maintenance stage (M = 11.5, SD = 1.80) possess a higher quality of work compared to those in the establishment stage (M = 11.0, SD = 1.80). Similarly, in the dimension of meaningful work, there are significant differences between teachers in the establishment and maintenance stages (t = -3.720; p = 0.001 < 0.05). Teachers in the maintenance stage (M = 12.5, SD = 1.49) have a higher level of meaningful work than those in the establishment stage (M = 12.1, SD = 1.55). In the dimension of influence, significant differences were found between teachers in the establishment and maintenance stages (t = -4.078; p = 0.001 < 0.05). Teachers in the maintenance stage (M = 11.4, SD = 1.45) exhibit a higher level of influence compared to those in the establishment stage (M = 10.9, SD = 1.63).

Furthermore, the analysis results indicate no differences in the authenticity between teachers in the establishment and maintenance stages (t= -0.839; p = 0.402 > 0.05). Similarly, no differences were found in the personal life between teachers in the establishment and maintenance stages (t = 1.653; p = 0.099 > 0.05). However, in the growth

and development dimension, differences were identified between teachers in the establishment and maintenance stages (t= -2.608; p = 0.009 < 0.05). Teachers in the maintenance stage (M = 12.8, SD = 1.45) have a higher level of growth and development than those in the establishment stage (M =12.5, SD = 1.55). Moreover, the analysis results also indicate differences in the satisfaction dimension between teachers in the establishment and maintenance stages (t = -2.332; p = 0.020 < 0.05). Teachers in the maintenance stage (M = 12.3, SD = 1.64) experience higher satisfaction than those in the establishment stage (M = 12.0, SD = 1.77).

TABLE 2: Difference test on Subjective Career Success Dimensions based on Career Development Stages.

	Establishment (25-44 years of age)		Maintenance (45-65 years of age)		t	p	Cohen's d	Desc.
	M	SD	M	SD				
Recognition	11.7	1.57	12.4	1.40	-5,602	< .001	-0.4484	Different
Quality of Work	11.0	1.80	11.5	1.80	-3,343	< .001	-0.2676	Different
Meaningful Work	12.1	1.55	12.5	1.49	-3,720	< .001	-0.2978	Different
Influence	10.9	1.63	11.4	1.45	-4,078	< .001	-0.3265	Different
Authenticity	12.5	1.39	12.6	1.49	-0,839	0,402	-0.0677	Not different
Personal Life	11.8	1.74	11.6	1.95	1,653	0,099	0.1344	Not different
Growth and Development	12.5	1.55	12.8	1.45	-2,608	0,009	-0.2088	Different
Satisfaction	12.0	1.77	12.3	1.64	-2,332	0,020	-0.1866	Different

4. DISCUSSION

The research result indicates significant differences in several dimensions of subjective career success, namely recognition, quality of work, meaningful work, influence, growth and development, and satisfaction, among teachers in the establishment and maintenance stages of career development. However, no differences were found in the dimensions of authenticity and personal life between teachers in the establishment and maintenance stages. The differences observed in these two career development stages may arise from individual preferences in defining their personal success (Shockley et al., 2016), considering that a career is a lifelong process that individuals must navigate. The attitudes and behaviors perceived individually, related to an individual's work experiences and activities throughout their lifespan, give rise to numerous subjective aspects required by individuals from their work. These aspects include developing a

professional identity, continuing personal growth, fulfilling personal needs, establishing and meeting professional goals, and addressing demands in other areas of life such as family, friends, and health (Hall, 1976; Gattiker & Larwood, 1986). This aligns with Levinson (1986), who asserts that linear success across various stages, such as early, middle, and late adulthood, is each associated with specific goals, values, related activities, and particular tasks that need to be accomplished, both in the family and work domains. Similarly, Super's career stage model (1957) also indicates that individuals have different preferences depending on their age or career stage. These preferences emerge due to the development of self-concept, aspirations, and job needs throughout their lifespan (Duarte & Lopez, 2018). Other research has shown that employees' beliefs about their choices, needs, and attitudes toward their work can differ based on their career stage (Lam et al., 2011; Lee et al., 2011; Post et al., 2013), thereby influencing the formation of an individual's personal definition of career success, observable through career stages (Shockley et al., 2016).

This study explores differences in dimensions of subjective career success among teachers in the establishment and maintenance stages of their career development. Significant differences were found in the dimension of recognition, representing formal and informal acknowledgment of performance by others. In the establishment stage, individuals focus on building a stable work environment and progressing in their careers. During this period, they may work towards promotions and career advancement, requiring formal or informal recognition from superiors or respected individuals. In contrast, individuals in the maintenance stage have lower aspirations for promotion, focusing on maintaining their self-concept and current job status (Demeroutti, Peeters, & Van, 2012). However, this study reveals higher recognition dimensions in teachers in the maintenance stage than those in the establishment stage, suggesting a greater association of success assessment with acknowledgment among maintenance-stage teachers. The role of their profession and professional status as teachers makes this need for acknowledgment extend beyond their jobs to encompass their families and communities (Ng & Feldman, 2007).

Furthermore, there are significant differences in the quality of work dimension between teachers in the establishment and maintenance stages. Maintenance-stage teachers exhibit higher quality of work compared to those in the establishment stage. Individuals in the maintenance stage strive to maintain their position and the level of success achieved in their work, demonstrating effective and efficient coping with negative aspects of their jobs (Slocum & Cron, 1985). This relates to the quality of work dimension in subjective career success, where individuals aim to deliver high-quality

work. Similarly, the meaningful work dimension also shows significant differences between teachers in the establishment and maintenance stages. Maintenance-stage teachers have higher perceptions of career success related to work that holds personal or social significance compared to those in the establishment stage. Consistent with career development stages, individuals in the maintenance stage typically seek greater opportunities for involvement in meaningful work and assignments (Coonway, 2004; Kooij & Boon, 2017).

In the dimension of influence, significant differences were found between teachers in the establishment and maintenance stages. Considering career development stages, compared to individuals in the establishment stage, who focus on advancing their careers, developing a stable work life, and achieving independence in their jobs, those in the maintenance stage prioritize greater concern for relationships with colleagues and professionals. This involves helping and guiding others while striving to strengthen their organizations, as individuals in the maintenance stage are well-established in their career patterns (Kooij & Boon, 2017). During the maintenance stage, employees usually perceive that they have contributed significantly to the organization (Saleem & Amin, 2013). In line with this, this study found a higher influence dimension in teachers in the maintenance stage compared to those in the establishment stage. In the influence dimension, individuals have an impact on others in the organization and the organization itself.

Significant differences were also found in the growth and development dimension between teachers in the establishment and maintenance stages. Maintenance-stage teachers exhibited higher growth and development dimensions compared to those in the establishment stage. In terms of career development stages, individuals in the maintenance stage tend to consider renewing their skills to maintain their current status and position (Saleem & Amin, 2013). This aligns with the study conducted by Taneva et al. (2016), showing that growth and development continue to occur in the later stages of a career, such as maintenance and disengagement. Furthermore, significant differences were found in the satisfaction dimension between teachers in the establishment and maintenance stages. Satisfaction, representing an individual's contentment with their career in general, was found to be higher in maintenance-stage teachers than those in the establishment stage. Findings by Walker et al. (2004) indicated that teachers who stay longer in their profession are more satisfied with their careers, considering maintenance-stage teachers have longer work experience compared to those in the establishment stage. Consistent with this, other studies have shown that individuals in

the maintenance phase do not report lower levels of job satisfaction compared to other age groups (Ornstein et al., 1989).

In contrast, no differences were observed in the dimensions of authenticity and personal life between teachers in the establishment and maintenance stages. This may be because teachers in both stages have gone through the exploration stage, where they matched their interests and abilities with their jobs and applied their self-concept to their work and life roles (Super, 1957). Therefore, both groups have adjusted their personal needs and preferences in shaping their career direction as teachers and have actively developed their careers. This aligns with the authenticity dimension in subjective career success, stating that individuals feel successful if they can adjust personal needs and preferences in shaping their career direction. Similarly, in the personal life dimension, no differences were found because each career development stage involves an increased role and responsibility in both work and family (Super, 1980). This makes teachers in the establishment and maintenance stages establish careers that positively influence life outside of their work and strive to balance their roles in both work and family aspects. In addition, to establish and maintain their job status while simultaneously pursuing other life priorities, it is not surprising that teachers in both establishment and maintenance stages appreciate autonomy in performing their work in their own way. Their interest in non-work priorities in life also leads them to desire greater control over their time between work and non-work goals. This is related to the personal life dimension in subjective career success, where individuals have careers that positively influence life outside of their work. Thus, the absence of differences in authenticity and personal life dimensions among teachers in the establishment and maintenance stages can be explained.

This study brings novelty by providing in-depth explanations of each dimension of subjective career success based on teachers' career development stages. However, the limitation of this research lies in the limited data collection to several cities in East Java only. Future studies could broaden the sample's domicile evenly across Indonesia to better represent the population of teachers in the country. The implications of this research are directed towards teachers in the establishment and maintenance stages of career development to gain a deeper understanding of their subjective career success, considering that a career is an aspect individuals navigate throughout their lives. Thus, this can encourage teachers to achieve success in their careers at each stage of their career development.

5. CONCLUSION

This study revealed significant differences in dimensions of subjective career success, namely recognition, quality work, meaningful work, influence, growth and development, and satisfaction, among teachers in the establishment and maintenance stages of career development. However, no differences were found in the dimensions of authenticity and personal life between teachers in these two stages. This study also reveals that teachers in the maintenance stage had higher scores in the dimensions of recognition, quality work, meaningful work, influence, growth and development, and satisfaction compared to teachers in the establishment stage.

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Ethics Policy

Ethical policies include the conflict-of-interest statements, informed consent procedures, and ethical committee approval. Requirements can vary by discipline. If you are unclear about the requirements for your study, check with your colleagues and advisors, and also the Conference Organizer(s).

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