



Teachers' Subjective Career Success: A View from Gender and Demographic Background

Gita Fitria Romas Ananda, Tri Muji Ingarianti*, Devina Andriany

Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang

*Corresponding Author. Email: ingarianti@umm.ac.id

Abstract: The present study explores teachers' subjective careers in gender, length of service, and employment status. In order to do this, 320 teachers from the islands of Java and Kalimantan participated in a quantitative descriptive study. The data were collected using the Subjective Career Success Inventory (SCSI) and analyzed using SPSS. The result showed that 232 teachers (72.5%) possessed a moderate level of subjective career success. Gender played a significant role in the recognition and influence dimensions. Recognition, influence, quality work, and meaningful work dimensions were all influenced by the length of employment, while employment status plays a role in recognition, quality work, and influence dimensions. Income level and teaching certificate differ in teachers' subjective career success, particularly the influence dimension. Overall gender, length of service, and employment status all played a role in teachers' subjective career success.

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Introduction

Recent years have witnessed numerous changes in technology and the career field. Technological and economic development has encouraged individuals to develop their careers continuously. They face a range of career options to develop, retain, and improve their well-being. A career is a lifetime process individuals go through, consisting of various job roles, including paid and non-paid ones. Being a parent could be considered an unpaid career in daily life contexts, while one's job regarded as a paid career. Career refers to positive development at the workplace and individual level, a notion of lifelong learning and skill development (Nadarajah et al., 2012). Career planning is pivotal to determining the career individuals intend to build and develop. If one reaches their set goal, one's career could be considered a success. To achieve career success, individuals must understand and evaluate their progress (Gubler et al., 2020).

Career success may result from proper career planning. Some individuals believe that career success is associated with their success in achieving the wanted position, promotion, income level, and other objectively measurable achievements (Shockley et al., 2015). This condition shows that some people understand the objective career success. However, the objective career success has some weaknesses, given that some factors are beyond individuals' control. One example of these factors is the government's employment regulation on the career stage, affecting individuals' income, facility, and position. Subjective career success allows individuals to develop their own subjective career success criteria at the individual level. For instance, teachers may be satisfied when their students understand the materials they deliver or when teachers perceive to meet their spiritual needs. The subjective



career success emphasizes work-life balance and contributes to goal achievement (Heslin, 2005).

Subjective career success is pivotal because when individuals are motivated to achieve their subjectively defined success, they are likely to put effort into attaining their goal. Teachers must define their subjective career success because their profession is often considered less likely to achieve objective career success (Mahendra, 2017). Teaching activities at school often flood teachers. In this regard, Helmi (2015) classifies teachers' work-related tasks into three categories: profession, humanity, and community. Concerning the first field of teachers' task (i.e., profession), teachers have to educate and transfer their knowledge to improve students' knowledge and skills. Concerning humanity, teachers play a role as the second parents for their students in the school environment and attract students' sympathy. In the field of community, teaching is considered a noble profession, and people expect new knowledge from teachers.

Considering these three tasks, a teacher is undoubtedly a pivotal component of the education process. Despite their central role in education, rewards for teachers are often unworthy of their tasks. Most teachers live a modest life, and teachers' salary in remote areas is often insufficient to meet their families' needs. Most teachers do not receive any incentives other than their monthly salary, despite the many huge responsibilities they bear. Due to this condition, teachers are likely to find it challenging to attain objective career success. Thus, they need to develop subjective career success. Many studies on subjective career success have been conducted using quantitative and qualitative approaches (Arthur et al., 2005). However, as Spurk et al. (2019) suggest, further inquiries on subjective career success are necessary. The present study explores teachers' subjective career success in gender, length of service, and employment status.

Research Method

The present study applied a quantitative descriptive method, an approach used to seek relevant numerical data to be described and interpreted following the purpose of the study. A descriptive study is also used to understand a variable independently without comparing it to other variables. The study participants were 320 teachers in Java and Kalimantan islands recruited using the accidental sampling technique. The accidental sampling technique was applied, and any individuals deemed suitable the criteria and accessible were recruited as the study participants (Sugiyono, 2009). Following article 8 of Law no. 14 of 2005, a teacher is required to have the academic qualification, competence, teaching certificate, be physically and psychologically sound, and be able to promote the national educational goal. Participants in this study were teachers with at least five years of teaching experience and a bachelor's degree. Teaching certificate ownership was not set as the inclusion criteria because the certification program barely reaches remote areas.

The subjective career success was measured using Shockley et al.'s (2015) Subjective Career Success Inventory (SCSI), adapted by Ingarianti (2022). The instrument consists of eight aspects of subjective career success: Recognition, Quality Work, Meaningful Work, Influence, Authenticity, Personal Life, Growth and Development, and Satisfaction. The instrument contains 24 items, with three items measuring each aspect. The data were analyzed in three stages. First, each participant's response was scored. In the second stage, the scored data were tabulated using Microsoft Excel to see each participant's final score. The participants' score was categorized based on the eight aspects of SCSI (i.e., Recognition, Quality Work, Meaningful Work, Influence, Authenticity, Personal Life, Growth and

Development, Satisfaction . Finally, descriptive and independent sample analysis was carried out on the data using SPSS software.

Results and Discussion

This study explores the teachers' subjective success. The demographic data, including gender, domicile, certificate ownership, last education, and income, do not differ in participants' subjective career success. However, length of service and employment status significantly affected teachers' subjective success. The following Table 1 displays the analysis result.

Table 1. T-Test Result in Teachers' Subjective Career

Subjective Career Success	t	df	F	Sig/p	Description
Gender	1.119	318		0.264	Different
Domicile	0.785	318		0.433	No difference
Income	1017	318		0310	No difference
Certificate Ownership	1.567	318		0.118	No difference
Educational Background			1.479	0.229	No difference
Length of service			3.734	0.025	Different
Employment Status			3.095	0.047	Different

The result indicates a difference in teachers' subjective career success in terms of length of service and employment status (Sig = .025 – 0.047). There is no difference in teachers' subjective career success in gender, domicile, income, certification, and educational background (Sig = 0.229 – 0.433).

Table 2. Discrimination Test Result on Teachers' Subjective Career Success Dimension

Variable	t	df	f	p	Description
Recognition					
Gender	2.303	318		0.022	Different
Domicile	1864	318		0.063	No difference
Income	1.546	318		0.123	No difference
Education	1.310	318		0.191	No difference
Length of service			1043	0.354	No difference
Employment Status			7.318	0.001	Different
Quality Work					
Gender	1.005	318		0.316	No difference
Domicile	1.103	318		0.271	No difference
Income	0.876	318		0.382	No difference
Education	1,604	318		0.110	No difference
Length of service			0.554	0.575	No difference
Employment Status			8.469	0.000	Different
Meaningful Work					
Gender	1,185	318		0.237	No difference
Domicile	-0.629	318		0.530	No difference
Income	1.198	318		0.232	No difference
Education	2.371	318		0.018	Difference
Length of service			0.554	0.575	No difference
Employment Status			8.469	0.000	Different
Influence					



Gender	2,008	318	0,045	Different
Domicile	1,563	318	0,119	No difference
Income	2,280	318	0,023	Different
Education	2,751	318	0,006	Different
Length of service		2,326	0,099	No difference
Employment		2,950	0,054	No difference
Status				
Authenticity				
Gender	0,507	318	0,613	No difference
Domicile	-0,236	318	0,813	No difference
Income	0,598	318	0,550	No difference
Education	0,287	318	0,775	No difference
Length of service		0,257	0,613	No difference
Employment		2,040	0,132	No difference
Status				
Personal Life				
Gender	0,155	318	0,877	No difference
Domicile	0,291	318	0,771	No difference
Income	-0,131	318	0,896	No difference
Education	-0,633	318	0,527	No difference
Length of service		0,737	0,479	No difference
Employment		0,126	0,882	No difference
Status				
Growth and Development				
Gender	0,471	318	0,638	No difference
Domicile	0,539	318	0,590	No difference
Income	-0,274	318	0,784	No difference
Teaching Certificate	0,554	318	0,580	No difference
Education		1,049	0,351	No difference
Length of service		1,552	0,214	No difference
Status		1,218	0,297	No difference
Satisfaction				
Gender	0,464	318	0,643	No difference
Domicile	0,542	318	0,588	No difference
Income	0,022	318	0,982	No difference
Teaching Certificate	0,492	318	0,623	No difference
Education		1,111	0,330	No difference
Length of service		0,674	0,511	No difference
Status		0,754	0,471	No difference

The independent test performs for each dimension of SCS on teachers' demographics. Regarding the recognition dimension, teachers' gender, length of service, and employment status differed in teachers' SCS, while domicile, income, educational background, and teaching certificate ownership did not. There is a difference in quality work regarding teachers' length of service, gender, domicile, income, certificate ownership, educational background, and employment status. Regarding the meaningful work dimension, a difference was noticed in teachers' teaching certification and employment status, while gender, domicile, income, and length of service exhibited no difference. The influence dimension also exhibited a difference in SCS in gender, income, certificate ownership, and employment



status, while the length of service, educational background, and domicile did not. Regarding the authenticity dimension, no difference in SCS was found in terms of all demographic data in this study.

This study explores the teachers' subjective success. The demographic data, including gender, domicile, certificate ownership, last education, and income, do not differ in participants' subjective career success. However, length of service and employment status significantly affected teachers' subjective career success.

This paper presents the discussion section in two parts: the overall subjective career success and each dimension. Over time, career success cannot only be gained through a single dimension but through one's evaluation of the aspects of subjective career success (Shockley et al., 2015). The subjective career success is pivotal in determining the magnitudes of efforts individuals are likely to achieve their goals. This study showed that teachers' subjective career success was at a moderate level (72.5%; n=232 teachers). Fifty-four teachers in this study reported a high level of subjective career success (16.9%), while 34 teachers (10.6%) reported a low level of subjective career success.

A career defines a process individuals go through in carrying out their job. Individuals may face various career challenges that can lead to their success. The notion of subjective career success sees individuals' evaluation of their career-related experiences. A range of factors may affect teachers' subjective career success (Dai & Song, 2016). Among these factors are individual differences, family, and organization. Every individual may define their career success differently. However, individuals' SCS tend to be similar when working in a similar environment or organization. (Arthur et al., 2005). This study explores subjective career success by considering participants' demographic data to describe the difference in teachers' SCS in terms of their demographic background.

Participants' SCS in this study was analyzed based on gender, domicile, income level, teaching certificate ownership, educational background, length of service, and employment status. The statistical analysis result showed that some demographic factors exhibited no difference in subjective career success. Gender, domicile, income level, teaching certification, and educational background exhibited no difference in teachers' SCS, while the length of service and employment status indicated a difference in teachers' SCS level.

There was no gender difference in SCS in this study, including 214 female and 106 male teachers as study subjects. It may be accounted for by equal rights to access higher education. Education is an essential means to develop individuals' skills for achieving career success. This study matches Enache et al.'s (2011) study that subjective career success is not different in terms of gender.

Subjective career success also shows indifference in terms of domicile, as the focus is not the teachers' place of work but the SCS. No difference in teachers' SCS was noticed in income level because it is categorized as the objective career success (Abele & Spurk, 2009). Teaching certificate ownership was also reported not to differ in teachers' SCS levels. A teaching certificate represents governments' recognition of the teaching profession, and teachers with no teaching certificate can still develop their skills through training, workshops, and seminars. There is no difference in teachers' SCS in terms of their educational background because participants in this study hold at least a bachelor's degree and can develop their skills, proven by their field of expertise (Rismawati, 2018).

The result indicates a difference in teachers' subjective career success in terms of length of service and employment status. This study grouped length of service into three categories: 5-10 years, 10-15 years, and >15 years. The analysis result showed that teachers with more than 15 years of teaching experience exhibited higher subjective career success



than those with 5-15 years of teaching experience. This result is understandable, as the length of service correlates with experience, and individuals tend to evaluate each of their career stages through the experience (Pangestuti, 2019). Regarding the length of service, Phytanza and Burhaein's (2020) report a significant effect of length of service on SCS, meaning that individuals with more extended employment periods tend to exhibit a higher willingness to develop their careers to achieve career success.

Teachers' subjective career success is also different in terms of employment status. In this study, teachers' employment status was divided into three categories: Civil Servant (n=150), Institutional Permanent Employee (n=89), and Temporary Employee (n=81). The analysis showed that civil servants exhibited the highest subjective career success level. It may be due to civil servants' promising financial status, allowing them to achieve career success quickly. This finding supports Cooper (2008), who suggests that civil servants are more motivated to achieve their career success, thanks to their status's privilege. Teachers can fulfill both their subjective and objective career success as civil servants. In the same vein, Stumpf et al. (2012) found that employees with a higher salary and wider promotion opportunities evaluate their careers more positively. The civil servant is still considered the highest preference in Indonesia for seeking a job and social status. Promotion, material success, and social status are objective career success. This finding is consistent with Gu and Su's (2016) study report on the positive relationship between subjective and objective career success. Their study further asserts that in a community with collectivist values like Asia, one's objective and subjective career success may also be affected by a group's interest.

Eight dimensions of SCS were also analyzed, including recognition, quality work, meaningful work, influence, authenticity, personal life, growth and development, and satisfaction. The first dimension, i.e., recognition, shows that male teachers exhibited a higher willingness to obtain recognition to achieve their subjective career success than female teachers. It may be accounted for that male teachers bear more responsibility than females, e.g., providing for their families. In terms of gender, a difference in recognition was noticed based on length of service and employment status. Teachers with more than 15 years of service exhibited higher recognition than those with 5-15 years. Teachers with more than 15 years of service are likely to have more experience than teachers with 5-15 years. Thus, teachers with more than 15 years of service have more recognition for their performance. Likewise, teachers with civil servant status require higher recognition to achieve their subjective career success than institutional permanent and contract teachers. It is consistent with Montanari et al.'s (2020) study on recognition, reporting that recognition affects one's subjective career success and creativity.

Regarding the dimension of quality work, gender, domicile, income, teaching certificate, and educational background exhibit no difference, whereas the length of service and employment status exhibited a reasonably significant difference. Teachers with a length of service of more than 15 years tend to be satisfied with their work quality. Teachers with civil servant status also see their subjective career success based on their career quality. Fitria's (2018) study report that quality work serves as one of the indicators of one's career success. Individuals must put in the best quality work, mainly related to human resources. Armor and Taylor (1998) suggest that quality work positively affects one's subjective career success.

Regarding the dimension of meaningful work, i.e., individuals see their work as a meaningful effort to achieve subjective career success, civil servant-teachers report more meaningful work than institutional permanent and contract teachers. However, no significant difference in meaningful work was noticed in gender, domicile, income, educational



background, and length of service. This result indicates that the meaning of a job appears to emerge when teachers have more stable employment status. It is consistent with Brischoe et al. (2014), who states that subjective career success may be attained through the value, goal, and meaning obtained when individuals evaluate their career.

In the influence dimension, a difference was noticed in gender, income level, teaching certificate, and employment status. On the other hand, length of service, educational background, and domicile exhibited no difference. Regarding gender, male virtually wants to be more dominant than female individuals. It aligns with Woehler et al.'s (2020) study on gender differences in career success achievement, reporting that male workers tend to want to be more impactful.

Another dimension of SCS is authenticity, i.e., the career formed by one's personal preference. The statistical analysis result showed no difference in authenticity regarding demographic factors. This result contradicts participants' responses to the open questions. Seven of 320 participants stated that they become teachers for their parents, like participants R, Y, and SA stated that they become teachers to fulfill their parents' dreams. Unlike the other three participants, FDJ and R stated that being a teacher is their childhood goal. Vos and Soens (2008) suggest that authenticity is conceptually positively related to career success.

The statistical analysis result showed that the demographic factors examined in this study exhibited no difference in personal life and growth and development dimensions. The personal life dimension defines a condition where one's career positively affects one's daily life. The growth and development dimension refers to individuals' efforts in developing their careers by improving knowledge and skills. This result supports Kraimer's (2018) study suggesting that proper career development may trigger subjective career success, particularly among individuals who have attained the objective career success (Kraimer, 2018). No difference was noticed in personal life and growth and development dimensions, proving that all teachers in this study have attained their subjective career success, particularly those dimensions.

This study sees whether demographic factors may result in different levels of teachers' subjective career success. The novelty of this study lies in its participant, i.e., teachers. Meanwhile, its limitation lies in the data collection sites less representative of Indonesia since the data were collected only in East Java and Kalimantan. Future studies are expected to involve participants that are more representative of Indonesia. The result of this study could be used as a basis for future studies on Indonesian teachers' subjective career success.

Conclusion

Some conclusions are drawn based on the result of the study. First, some demographic factors affect one is subjective career success while others do not. The former includes gender, length of service, and employment status, while the latter includes domicile, income level, and teachers' educational background. Gender, length of service, and employment status play a role in one's recognition dimension. The difference in quality work is also noticed in terms of length of service and employment status. Meanwhile, the length of service alone differs in teachers' meaningful work dimension. Gender, income, teaching certificate, and employment status) exhibited differences in participants' SCS, particularly the influence dimension. Meanwhile, the demographic factors did not affect authenticity, personal life, growth and development, and satisfaction. In general, most teachers report a moderate level of SCS (72.5%; n=232 respondents), 54 teachers report high SCS (16.9%), and 34 teachers (10.6%) report low SCS levels.



Recommendation

Following the result of this study, schools and education agencies need to pay attention to the importance of teachers' SCS, not merely rely on objective career success. Subjective career success can be attained when individuals perceive satisfaction with their careers. Future studies are recommended to scrutinize each aspect of teachers' subjective career success, as this profession plays a central role in human resource development.

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