

Psychological Capital's Influence on Subjective Career Success Among Millennials in Yogyakarta's Retail Industry

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the relationship between psychological capital and subjective career success among millennial employees in retail companies in Yogyakarta. The hypothesis posits a positive correlation between psychological capital and subjective career success among these employees. The subjects of this study were 170 individuals aged between 22 and 30 years. Data collection was conducted using the Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ-24) and the Subjective Career Success Scale (SCS). The data analysis technique employed was Karl Pearson's product moment correlation. The findings indicate a significant positive relationship between psychological capital and subjective career success, with a correlation coefficient (r_{xy}) of 0.727 and a p-value of 0.000. The acceptance of this hypothesis reveals a determination coefficient (R^2) of 0.525, meaning that psychological capital accounts for 52.5% of the variance in subjective career success among millennial employees in Yogyakarta's retail sector.

Keywords: *Psychological Capital, Subjective Career Success, Millennial Employees*

Introduction

Currently, the retail business is rapidly evolving, marked by traditional retail businesses transforming into modern retail operations and the emergence of new modern retail ventures (Aninditha & Lakshmi, 2018). Retail companies are predominantly staffed by young people who form a significant part of the workforce across various retail businesses in Indonesia. In addition to the growth in retail sales value, the retail industry in Indonesia is also bolstered by an increasing number of millennial employees.

In 2022, the number of millennial employees working in the retail sector in Indonesia reached 1.6 million, a 2.2% increase from the previous year's total of 1.56 million. This rise in millennial employees in the retail sector is driven by several factors, including the growth of the retail industry itself. The retail industry in Indonesia continues to expand, thus requiring more labor. Millennials, known for their active and challenge-seeking nature, are drawn to work in the retail industry (LinkedIn, 2021). The retail sector offers numerous employment opportunities, thereby providing millennials with greater chances to secure jobs in this field (Statistics Indonesia (BPS), 2023).

The major drivers of this development include significant economic growth, which enhances consumer purchasing power. Additionally, lifestyle changes, particularly in urban areas, contribute by increasing preferences for convenience and comfort in shopping. Positive influences also stem from advancements in information and communication technology, which facilitate easier access to retail product and service information. Local governments also play a vital role in promoting the growth of modern retail by easing the process for investors to open modern stores (Ariyanti & Hidayat, 2023).

Millennial employees are encouraged to explore careers, desired identities, and preferred lifestyles. Individuals can spend a third of their lives at work. It is not surprising, then, that the Millennial generation is obsessed with career success (Aninditha & Lakshmi, 2018). One retail industry in Yogyakarta has faced significant challenges in enhancing the level of subjective career success among its employees, particularly among millennials. According to a statement from the HR division team, a survey conducted by a consulting firm in collaboration with the company revealed a lack of training programs and communication between supervisors and subordinates. Millennial employees often feel a lack of ownership over the company.

According to Shockley (2017), Subjective Career Success is defined as an individual's perception of the success they have achieved in their career. Dimensions of subjective career success, according to Shockley (2017), include authenticity, growth and development, influence, meaningful work, personal life, quality of work, recognition, and satisfaction.

Based on interviews to gather data or facts about subjective career success among employees, researchers conducted interviews with 10 millennial employees at a retail company in Yogyakarta on March 27-28, 2024, aged between 22 to 30 years. From the interviews, issues were found in the authenticity dimension affecting 8 millennial employees. Subjects spent more time at work, marked by additional working hours, impacting individual career success. Additionally, the growth and development dimension also showed issues among 6 millennial employees. Subjects remained in the same position despite working for more than three years and noted a lack of support from supervisors and the company.

The influence dimension also revealed issues among 5 employees. Employees lacked social interaction with others, prioritizing themselves. Additionally, the meaningful work dimension showed issues for 5 millennial employees. Subjects stated that their work felt insignificant and was only completed to meet company targets. They expressed a desire to work for companies whose missions and values they agreed with. The personal life dimension showed issues among 5 millennial employees, with work limiting their time to enjoy personal activities.

Further, problems were identified in the quality of work dimension among 4 millennial employees. Subjects preferred to work in teams and collaborate with others, but a competitive and individualistic work culture demotivated them from achieving their career goals. Additionally, the recognition dimension revealed issues among 6 millennial employees. Subjects stated that they received insufficient recognition for their efforts and achievements at

work. Employees wanted to know if what they were doing was adequate to identify areas for future improvement. Lastly, the satisfaction dimension also reflected issues among 4 employees. Employees found it difficult to focus on their work, often feeling bored, tired, and distracted by thoughts unrelated to their jobs.

Therefore, it was found that most millennial employees face issues that create challenges in achieving Subjective Career Success in the company. They are expected to have high levels of subjective career success (Apriliani & Ingarianti, 2023). High subjective career success has a positive impact on employees, proven by a survey (PwC, 2021) that found companies with high levels of subjective career success experience significant benefits such as higher levels of creativity and innovation. Therefore, based on the aforementioned discussion, the researcher is interested in examining the relationship between psychological capital and subjective career success among millennial employees in Yogyakarta's retail industry.

Methodology

The variables used in this study are Psychological Capital, incorporating aspects from Luthans (2007) as cited by Ramadhan (2022), and Subjective Career Success, based on aspects from Shockley (2017) as cited by Ingarianti (2022), among millennial employees in Yogyakarta retail companies.

Data Collection Method The data collection method employed in this study involves the use of scales. A scale is an agreement used as a reference to determine the length of intervals within a measuring tool, enabling the tool to produce quantitative data (Sugiyono, 2014). The model of scale used in this research is the Likert scale. Likert scales are utilized to measure attitudes within a study (Azwar, 2012).

In this study, the Likert scale is presented with four answer choices: Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Agree (A), and Strongly Agree (SA). For favorable items, the scoring is as follows: SA scores 4, A scores 3, D scores 2, and SD scores 1. For unfavorable items, the scoring is reversed: SA scores 1, A scores 2, D scores 3, and SD scores 4.

Data Analysis Method The data analysis method used is the Pearson product-moment correlation analysis (Firdaus, 2009). Data analysis is performed using the SPSS (Statistical Product and Service Solutions) software, version 25.0 for Windows. This product-moment correlation analysis is functional in testing the hypothesis concerning the relationship between psychological capital and subjective career success among millennial employees in Yogyakarta's retail companies.

Results and Discussion

Data Overview

This study utilized scales measuring Psychological Capital and Subjective Career Success to explore the hypothesized relationships among millennial employees in Yogyakarta's retail companies. The data, categorized into low, medium, and high groups for both variables,

aimed to position individuals within a continuum based on measured attributes (Azwar, 2019).

Table 1. Research Data Description

Variable	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Subjective Career Success	170	24	96	60	12
Psychological Capital	170	22	88	55	11

Note: SD = Standard Deviation

The demographic breakdown included 71 males (41.8%) and 99 females (58.2%), all between 22-30 years. Educational levels varied, with 59.4% holding high school diplomas, 12.4% associate degrees, and 28.2% bachelor's degrees. Job roles ranged across sales, marketing, cashier, administration, and store crew.

Categorization and Normality Testing

Categorization based on psychological capital and subjective career success was crucial for further analysis. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test assessed data normality, showing non-normal distribution for both variables which, according to Hadi (2015), does not significantly impact results for large samples ($n > 30$).

Table 2. Categorization of Subjective Career Success

Category	Guidelines	Score	N	Percentage
High	$X > (\mu + 1\sigma)$	>72	150	88.2%
Medium	$(\mu - 1\sigma) \leq X < (\mu + 1\sigma)$	$48 \leq X < 72$	20	11.8%
Low	$X < (\mu - 1\sigma)$	<48	0	0%

Note: μ = Mean, σ = Standard Deviation

Table 3. Categorization of Psychological Capital

Category	Guidelines	Score	N	Percentage
High	$X > (\mu + 1\sigma)$	>66	32	18.8%
Medium	$(\mu - 1\sigma) \leq X < (\mu + 1\sigma)$	$44 \leq X < 66$	138	81.2%
Low	$X < (\mu - 1\sigma)$	<44	0	0%

Correlation Analysis

The Pearson product-moment analysis revealed a strong positive correlation ($r_{xy} = 0.727$, $p = 0.000$) between psychological capital and subjective career success, suggesting that higher psychological capital correlates with higher career success.

Table 4. Hypothesis Testing Results (N=170)

Variables	r_{xy}	p	R^2	Notes
Subjective Career Success * Psychological Capital	0.727	0.000	52.5%	Positive

The analysis of the relationship between psychological capital and subjective career success among millennial employees in retail companies in Yogyakarta reveals a significant positive correlation. This relationship, underscored by a high Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.727 and a p-value of 0.000, suggests that as psychological capital increases, so does the perception of career success among these employees. The determination coefficient ($R^2 = 52.5\%$) implies that psychological capital explains over half of the variance in subjective career success, indicating a strong effect.

Psychological Capital as a Driver of Career Success Psychological capital, encompassing self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience, equips employees to meet and navigate the challenges of the retail environment—a sector characterized by constant change and competition. Millennials, in particular, value environments that support their growth and development, aligning with the characteristics promoted by high psychological capital. The findings suggest that employees with higher psychological capital are more likely to perceive their career trajectory as successful because they feel more competent and capable of achieving their career goals.

Existing Literature on Psychological Capital and Career Success Research consistently highlights psychological capital as a pivotal element influencing employee outcomes across various industries. For instance, a study by Luthans, Youssef, and Avolio (2007) provides foundational insights into how psychological capital enhances job satisfaction, commitment, and performance, which are critical components of subjective career success. This is particularly relevant to retail environments where rapid changes and high demands can significantly impact employee perceptions of career progression.

Alignment with Similar Studies Similar findings were observed in a study by Avey, Reichard, Luthans, and Mhatre (2011), which indicated that psychological capital positively impacts employee attitudes, behaviors, and performance across different sectors, including retail. This study aligns with our findings, emphasizing that higher psychological capital can enhance the subjective career success among millennial employees by boosting their resilience, optimism, and self-efficacy.

Sector-Specific Research In the context of the retail industry, Newman, Ucbasaran, Zhu, and Hirst (2014) found that employees with high psychological capital were better able to handle customer relations and workplace stress, which are integral to career success in retail settings. This further corroborates our study's findings, suggesting that psychological capital is not only beneficial for personal development but also for navigating the unique challenges of retail environments.

International Perspectives Research by Sweetman and Luthans (2010) in the multinational context showed that psychological capital contributes significantly to career satisfaction and success among employees in diverse cultural settings. This extends the applicability of our findings beyond Yogyakarta, indicating a universal benefit of psychological capital across different cultural landscapes.

Implications for Retail Management For retail managers, the strong linkage between psychological capital and subjective career success underscores the importance of fostering an organizational culture that supports the development of psychological resources. Initiatives could include: (1) **Training and Development Programs:** Training programs that focus on building resilience, enhancing self-efficacy, boosting optimism, and fostering hope can empower employees. Such training helps employees develop a growth mindset, essential for navigating the complexities of retail environments. (2) **Mentorship and Support Systems:** Implementing mentorship programs where more experienced employees guide millennials can enhance psychological capital. Mentorship can provide the younger workforce with reassurance and the confidence needed to tackle the challenges they face at work. (3) **Recognition and Feedback:** Regular recognition of employees' efforts and constructive feedback can reinforce their intrinsic motivation and enhance their psychological capital. Recognizing small wins and providing constructive feedback can help employees see growth opportunities in their everyday tasks.

The Role of Organizational Policies Organizational policies that promote work-life balance, provide opportunities for career advancement, and recognize individual contributions can enhance psychological capital. Such policies contribute to a supportive work environment where employees feel valued and understood.

Longitudinal Considerations While this study presents a snapshot of the relationship between psychological capital and subjective career success, further research could explore this relationship over time. Longitudinal studies would help determine how psychological capital influences career trajectories and successes over longer periods, potentially offering deeper insights into how early interventions can set employees on paths to long-term success.

Limitations and Further Research The research is limited to millennial employees within Yogyakarta's retail sector, which may not generalize to other regions or industries. Future research could expand the demographic and geographic scope to include a broader range of participants and sectors. Additionally, exploring other factors that might mediate or moderate the relationship between psychological capital and subjective career success could offer more

nuanced insights. For instance, examining the role of organizational culture or the impact of economic fluctuations could provide deeper understanding.

Further research should consider longitudinal studies to track changes in psychological capital and subjective career success over time, potentially offering deeper insights into the causality and long-term effects of these constructs. Additionally, expanding the study to include diverse geographical locations and different retail sectors could provide a broader understanding of the generalizability of these findings.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

This research has demonstrated a positive relationship between psychological capital and subjective career success among millennial employees in retail companies in Yogyakarta. It indicates that higher levels of psychological capital correlate with higher levels of subjective career success, and vice versa. The findings suggest that the majority of millennial employees in these companies possess a moderate level of psychological capital and a high level of subjective career success. The hypothesis that psychological capital significantly influences subjective career success is therefore supported.

Recommendations for Subjects

For employees who already exhibit high subjective career success, it is recommended to maintain these levels through continuous personal development and engagement with professional growth opportunities. For those with moderate or low subjective career success, retail companies in Yogyakarta should consider additional factors such as career commitment, career motivation, interpersonal relationships, salary satisfaction, and recognition among others. Proper support and targeted interventions can help even those with low psychological capital to enhance their psychological aspects, potentially leading to greater and more sustainable career achievements.

Recommendations for Future Research

Further studies should explore additional variables not included in this research to understand the levels of subjective career success among millennial employees more comprehensively. It is advised to use a larger and more diverse sample for better generalization of the findings. Exploring different research methodologies and industries might also provide valuable insights. Employing varied data analyses, such as linear regression or causal structural analysis, could offer deeper understanding, particularly within specific industries like manufacturing, services, or technology sectors. This would help observe the long-term dynamics of the relationships studied. Future researchers are also encouraged to address any limitations identified in this study to refine the research outcomes.

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