

# Career Decision Self-efficacy Mediates the Emotional Intelligence on Career Preparation Behaviour

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**Keywords:** Career decision self-efficacy, emotional intelligence, career preparation behaviour

**Abstract:** This study aims to identify salient factors on students' career preparation behaviour in the context of the psychology education. The present study examined relationship between emotional intelligence and career decision self-efficacy, considering the mediating role of career preparation behaviour. The online data on demographic characteristics, emotional intelligence, career decision self-efficacy, and career preparation behaviour were collected from 277 university students majoring in psychology. Data was analysed on SPSS. The mediation models were conducted by running the PROCESS macro models 4 in SPSS. The results revealed that direct effect emotional intelligence to career preparation behaviour is not significant, while indirect effect through career decision self-efficacy as a significant mediator. The theoretical, possible implications for students' career preparation behaviour, and study limitations are discussed in the report.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The process of aligning career decision making with educational requirements is becoming increasingly complex with the evolution of advanced technologies in the world today than ever before (Onoyase & Onoyase, 2009). Various pressures to adapt to the rapidly expanding global labor market, increased international competition, widespread restructuring and outsourcing, and increased incidence of contractual arrangements (Restubog, Bordia, & Bordia, 2011). Today many young people of Indonesia are likely to continue their education at university, until 2017 the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) recorded that there are 60.4% of Indonesian people who are studying high school (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2018). When they have higher education they hope to find a suitable job in this competitive and unstable world of work. Therefore, students need to be proactively involved in managing their career planning.

JobStreet.com (JobStreet.com, 2014) conducted a survey of 17.623 correspondents in early October 2014 on satisfaction employees to their work. From the survey results showed that 73% of employees are not satisfied with the work due to several factors. Employment insufficiency that is available with educational background owned makes 54% of

employees forced to work not in accordance with their educational background, it causes productivity tends to decline and career path. The data also shows 60% of correspondents say they do not have a career path where they work.

Even so, the Central Bureau of Statistics data is still (Widiyani, 2016) indicating the existence of an unemployed college graduate. The survey, conducted until 2016, found that college graduates who worked were 12.24%, equivalent to 14.57 million from 118.41 million workers across Indonesia. While unemployment of college graduates reached 11.19% or equivalent to 787 thousand from a total of 7.03 million people who do not have a job. On the other hand, the results of a survey by Tradingeconomics.com (Trading Economics, 2018) indicate that the Consumer Confidence Index (CCI) in Indonesia declined to 120.7 in October 2017 from 123, 8 in September. This is the lowest level since February 2017 due to expectations that fewer jobs will be available in the next six months (133.8 from 137.2 in September). The Consumer Confidence Index (CCI) is an index that measures consumer expectations of current employment income and availability over the past 6 months, general economic conditions and employment availability expectations in the next 6 months. This trend can be said to show that labour in

Indonesia is entering a phase of incapacity in adjusting competence demands with global economic growth and career incompatibility, and will ultimately change the approach to labour challenges.

Based on the results of the tracer study conducted at one of the psychology faculties of universities in Yogyakarta, it was found that alumni who delivered the material obtained during the education process had been able to support them when they were working. But they also said that before they also needed debriefing which was not only technical to face the world of work, so that at the time they were going to graduate they would feel to be better prepared in determining their careers.

Some studies show that in some areas of the world students experience a dilemma in career decision making (Ogutu, Odera & Maragia, 2017). The process of career decision making is not easy. Each individual who undergoes a career decision-making process will be influenced by several factors including the context in which they live, their personal abilities, and the attainment of their education (Watson, McMahon, Foxcrif & Els, 2010), these factors can facilitate or impede its development.

Career decision making is a complex process because of difficulties in adjustment to career choices and is also influenced much by personal considerations (Perez & Gati, 2017). Many young adults find it difficult to make career decisions, this is due to uncertainty, pressure or concern regarding future regrets (Saka & Gati, 2007). This condition may cause the individual to use a less than optimal way of dealing with these important decisions, choosing to delay making decisions, or involving others in sharing responsibility for the outcomes (Perez & Gati, 2017).

Self-efficacy in decision making is also thought to be influenced by his emotional intelligence. Individuals who have a higher awareness of their emotional states are thought to be able to integrate emotional experiences with their thoughts and actions (Di Fabio & Saklofske, 2014). Di Fabio (2012) state that emotions are linked to the purposes, projects and needs of every individual. As a consequence, emotional intelligence can be an important variable in the process of career exploration and career decision making (Emmerling & Cherniss, 2003). Thus, we predict:

*Hypothesis 1:* Optimal in emotional intelligence will be positively associated with increase in career decision self-efficacy.

Career preparation behavior is a series of processes, starting with investigations to determine areas suitable for careers and activities to prepare selected careers and exercises to improve the behavior that supports them. Various career preparation behaviors not only include cognitions and attitudes related to career selection but also actions to decide on careers and to implement those decisions (Mi & Kyungja, 2016).

Previous studies have found that psychological factors such as psychological empowerment (Pines, et al., 2011) and psychological capital consisting of self-efficacy, optimism, hope and resilience (Noviati, 2018) have important roles in improving the adjustment of life on campus and optimal student performance so that it can be used to promote better college outcomes.

Self-efficacy is a belief that functions as a variable that influences career preparation behavior at college students (Kim & Jyung, 2012). Those who feel anxious and helpless, or lower levels of self-efficacy are less likely to seek careers (Mi & Kyungja, 2016). So that it can be said that self-efficacy plays an important role when students prepare a career for themselves.

Career decision self-efficacy is developed based on Bandura's self-efficacy theory (1997). Self-efficacy is defined as the conviction that possible efficiently execute the conduct required to produce the outcomes (Bandura, 1997). Zimmerman (2000) state that self-efficacy concept has been used to offer an explanation for that self-efficacy ends in individuals' precise behaviours as a direct or mediated role, and a function. Furthermore, Luzzo, Hitchings, Retish, and Shoemaker (1999) tried to define a career decision of self-efficacy based on Bandura's theory as an individual's confidence in her or his ability to effectively engage in career decision-making activities and task. So that when an individual is involved in career decision-making activities he will also be encouraged to make preparations in the career. Thus, we predict:

*Hypothesis 2:* Increase in career decision self-efficacy will be positively associated with an increase in career preparation behaviour.

There are three reasons that can support the importance of emotion in career construction, that is, emotions motivate action, they organize it, and they allow access to the chosen career path, as well as its development (Young, Valach & Collin, 1996). So it can be said that career development is closely

related to emotions. Cooper (1997) argues that individuals who trust their feelings and allow themselves to be guided by them will have a more successful career path. Therefore, to be able to have a successful career path they should be able to prepare it early.

Blau (1993) divides the preparatory behavior of careers into two forms: the preparatory steps, and the active steps. Preparatory steps include finding and gathering information about a career through newspapers, magazines, and the Internet, and talking about careers with relatives and professors. On the other hand, active steps include formal career preparation behaviors such as creating and sending curriculum vitae, or direct interviews and counseling with directors or employees in the prospective career field. While in this study focused on the preparatory steps in the students. To be able to know what preparations need to be done then the students should also be confident in making decisions related to their career.

Career preparation behavior and career decision making can actually be considered and carried out together. Kim and Kim (1996) stated in their research that in Korea there are four types of students in terms of career development: (1) Students who have decided what to do related to their careers and are preparing significantly; (2) students who have decided what to do regarding their career but do not make serious preparations; (3) students who have not decided what they will do related to their career, but are making preparations such as taking a TOEIC course; and (4) students who have not decided what to do about their career and do not do something serious for their future.

Furthermore, as previously described, career decision-making self-efficacy is seen as having a very important role in one's career planning and development (Lent & Brown, 2013). In addition to having a direct effect on various variables related to careers, the decision-making self-efficacy also has indirect effects. Bandura (1982) states that self-efficacy is a mediator variable of individual behavior and goals. Xu and Tracey (2014) found that decision-making self-efficacy has a mediating effect on the relationship between ambiguity tolerance and career indecision. Research conducted by Santos, Wang, and Lewis (2018) shows the indirect role of career decision self-efficacy in the relationship of emotional intelligence and difficulties in making career decisions. The career decision self-efficacy is described as an individual's confidence in his ability to fulfil the tasks needed in making career decisions. Brown, George-Curran, and Smith (2003) state that

individuals with emotional intelligence are more likely to believe in their capacity to deal with tasks related to making career decisions. Furthermore, Emmerling and Cherniss (2003) emphasize that people who have an understanding and ability to regulate their emotions tend to be better at predicting the emotional consequences of various career choices. On that basis, this study predicts that career decision-making self-efficacy has an indirect effect on the relationship between emotional intelligence and karmic preparation behavior. Thus, we predict:

*Hypothesis 3:* The relationship between emotional intelligence and career preparation behaviour will be mediated by career decision self-efficacy.

## 2 MATERIALS AND METHODS

### 2.1 Participants

All participant in this study were student who studied in psychology majors at one of the private university in Yogyakarta. Participants involved in this study were active students (students who had entered the second year of lectures in five-year study period, and who are enrolled in the semester that runs), members of the classroom lectures using e-learning facilities (one of the facilities is a communication medium that can be accessed freely by students). As much as 300 online questionnaires were distributed through email to all potential participants. A total of 23 potential participants were eliminated among the sample due to incomplete responses, and as such 277 responses were used for further analysis.

### 2.2 Procedures

Data were collected through on online survey. Based on a list of students we already have, we sent a message in their classroom email inviting them to participate in this study. The online survey contained two main parts: an introduction and a number of research scales. In the introduction section, we described the research objectives, research procedures, identity of the researchers, and confidentiality undertakings of the participants. Informed consent statements have been explained into separate display screen appear earlier than the participants can get right of entry to the survey through click on an "I agree" button, as recommended by Schmidt (1997). All aspects and

items inside the on-line survey had been written within the Indonesian language. The coefficient of Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the reliability of the measures of all scales in this research.

### 2.3 Instruments

The data were collected using psychological scale, namely emotional intelligence scale, career decision self-efficacy scale and career preparation behaviour scale. That scales are developed based on the process of adaptation to the results of previous studies. On the scale of each variable statement has 5 alternative answers. The career decision scale of self-efficacy alternative answers is Likert-type scale ranging from "not at all" to "extremely". While the scale of alternative emotional intelligence answer is Likert-type scale where "Strongly disagree" and "Strongly agree". The career preparation behaviour scale presented with questions such as "How much time have you spent preparing for your career for past six months?" The items were measured on a five-point Likert-type scale where "no time at all" and "very much time". The questionnaire assessment moves from 5 to 1 in favourable statements and moves 1 to 4 for unfavourable statements.

The emotional intelligence scale was adapted from the scale developed by Schutte, Malouff, Hall, Haggerty, Cooper, Golden, and Dornheim (1998) based on emotional intelligence model from Salovey and Mayer (Schutte et al, 1998). This scale consists of 33 items with cronbach's alpha reliability of 0.89. The following are examples of items presented to respondents "I know when to speak about my personal problems to other" and "I expect that I will do well on most things I try".

The scale used to measure career decision self-efficacy is a scale adapted from the Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale (CDSSES) compiled by Betz, Klein and Taylor (1996). CDSSES can evaluate individual confidence in career decision making, seen from 5 subscales of self-appraisal (e.g. I can define the type of lifestyle I would like to live), occupational information (e.g. I can find information about graduate or professional schools), goal selection (e.g. I can choose a career that will fit my interests), planning (e.g. I can prepare a good resume) and problem solving (e.g. I can change careers if I did not like my first choice). This scale consists of 25 items with the reliability of cronbach's alpha of 0.92.

While the career preparation behaviour scale was adapted from the scale developed by Choi and Kim (2013). This scale consists of 7 items with

cronbach's alpha reliability of 0.81. The following are examples of items presented to respondents "I have watched job-related TV programs or participated in career fairs" and "I have taken advice about my potential jobs from current employees in the field".

The survey instrument also included questions on demographic characteristics such as gender, involvement in the student activity unit, internship experience, interest specialization in psychology, and career aspirations.

## 3 RESULTS

### 3.1 Demographic Profile

Demographic information will be described based on gender, involvement in the student activity unit, internship experience, interest specialization in psychology, and career aspirations. Among the sampled participants, 21.13% were male and 78.87% were female. In this study also identified some activities undertaken by students in addition to following the lecture, the activity is involved in the student activity unit (50.18%) and internships (12.45%).

Furthermore, every student on the subject of this study has also understood what areas of psychology they are interested in. Based on the data collected, there are six areas of psychology that attract students, namely the field of industrial and organizational psychology (43%), clinical psychology (38%), social psychology (3%), educational psychology (4%), developmental psychology (9%) and Islamic psychology (3%).

Then based on open questions submitted to the respondents obtained information related to their career aspirations when it was graduated. The information is grouped into 7 categories, namely 1) working as HRD (41.13%); 2) profession as a psychologist in the field of clinical, educational, and industry and organization (30.9); 3) profession as consultant both in education and development, and industry and organization (3.4%); 4) profession as a lecturer and researcher (13.21%); 5) profession in the field of police or military (4.15%); 6) work as an entrepreneur (5.7%); 7) working as a civil servant/PNS (0,38%). Then there are 1.13% of participants who do not have career aspirations when graduated later.

### 3.2 Descriptive Statistic

Based on the results of data analysis, it obtained the norm description of the research data that contains the basic functions of statistics. Description of the research data are emotional intelligence (Mean=129.83; SD=12.142), career decision self efficacy (Mean=91.87; SD=12.105), and career preparation behaviour (Mean=22.48; SD=4.815).

### 3.3 Examining the Mediation Model

The results of the analysis show, the product of path (a) between emotional intelligence and career decision self-efficacy ( $b=0.5698$ ;  $SE=0.0454$ ;  $p=0.000$ ) and path (b) between career decision self-efficacy and career preparation behaviour ( $b=0.2234$ ;  $SE=0.0264$ ;  $p=0.000$ ), both are statically significant ( $p<0.001$ ). The results confirmed the mediation models, suggesting that career decision self-efficacy mediated the emotional intelligence on career preparation behaviour. Both product of path (a) and path (b) also confirmed Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2 as well the simple correlation analysis above. The results showed that 36.6% proportion of career decision self-efficacy variance was significant can be explained by emotional intelligence ( $F=157.66$ ,  $p=0.00$ ).

Hypothesis 3 states that career decision self-efficacy will mediate the relationship between emotional intelligence and career preparation behaviour. To test for this mediation effect, we followed the approach recommended by Preacher and Hayes (2008). The mediation models were conducted by running the PROCESS v2.16.3 in SPSS, model 4 (Hayes, 2013). The result indicated that an indirect effect of emotional intelligence and career preparation behaviour via career decision self efficacy was significant (Effect=0.3265;  $SE=0.458$ ; 95% CI=0.2398, 0.4203). The total effect was

significant (Effect=0.1254;  $SE=0.0223$ ;  $p=0.000$ ). Specifically, there wasn't a significant direct effect (Effect=-0.0019;  $SE=0.0249$ ;  $p=0.9392$ ) that indicated acceptable mediation model. Figure 1 present these findings. Thus, Hypothesis 3 is supported by our data. The results showed that 28.9% proportion of career preparation behaviour variance was significant can be explained by emotional intelligence and career decision self-efficacy collectively ( $F=55.78$ ,  $p=0.00$ ).

## 4 DISCUSSION

The present study focused primarily on identifying the relationships between predictors (i.e., emotional intelligence and career decision self-efficacy) of career preparation behaviour student. The results of the correlation analysis indicate a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and career decision self-efficacy. This suggests that emotional intelligence can increase career decision self-efficacy in students. These results are consistent with previous studies (Brown, et al, 2003; Di Fabio, 2013; Jiang 2014; Jiang 2016). This study further reinforces previous findings on the importance of emotional roles associated with career decisions (Brown, et al, 2003; Di Fabio & Kenny, 2015). Di Fabio (2012) mentions that emotional intelligence as an innovative variable in career decision making. The importance of emotional factors in career construction is explained by Emmerling and Cherniss (2003) which states that people who have the ability to understand and manage their emotions tend to be able to predict the consequences of their career choices. Brown, et al (2003) states that students who have the ability to feel and understand emotions and manage emotions tend to be more confident in making career decisions. Similarly, Jiang (2014) states that students who demonstrate the ability to evaluate the emotions of themselves and others and use and manage their emotions in

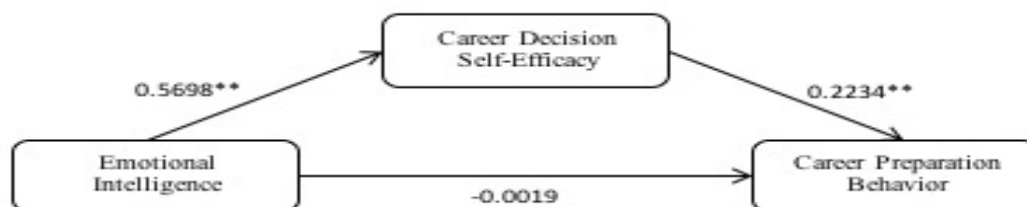


Figure 1: Path diagram for the mediation model.

various activities tend to have the confidence to make career choices.

The study also found that career decision self-efficacy has a predictive ability towards career preparation behavior (hypothesis 2). These results further reinforce the important role of career decision self-efficacy in determining the extent to which students will prepare themselves for an upcoming career. Choi and Kim (2013) found, both in American and Korean students career decision self-efficacy determines the student's career preparation behavior. These findings suggest that an important role of self efficacy in student career development occurs in a variety of cultural contexts. Skorikov (2007) states that career preparation behavior can not be separated from one's self-beliefs about a career to be chosen. Thus, the career decision self-efficacy is seen to shape the individual's self-confidence, self-confidence and future career determination skills. Furthermore, this belief will lead students to more actively seek information, plan and determine career goals. Confidence is seen as determining career planning behavior (Fort, Jacquet, & Leroy, 2011). Understanding the role of self efficacy is expected to improve the behavior of career preparation in psychology students optimally.

Furthermore, the results in career decision self-efficacy studies placed as mediator variables suggest that career decision self-efficacy mediates the relationship of emotional intelligence and career preparation behavior. That is, self-awareness to recognize emotions will only play a role in improving students' career readiness when through confidence in the ability to make career decisions. Students who have good emotional intelligence tend to have the confidence and confidence to determine his career. Furthermore, career decision self-efficacy encourages students to better prepare themselves in the face of a career that will come. This study supports the findings of Santos, et al (2018) which states that self-efficacy making career decisions has a negative mediation effect relationship between emotional intelligence and lack of career readiness and lack of career information. The results of the analysis show that self efficacy makes career decisions perfectly acting as mediators. The ability to recognize your own emotions and use emotions in action or activity can not directly improve career preparation behavior, unless the belief / confidence in the ability to determine a desired career is enhanced first.

## 5 CONCLUSION

Overall, the results of this study indicate an important role of emotional intelligence and career decision self-efficacy, especially the effectiveness of self efficacy variables as mediators that bridge the relationship between emotional intelligence and career preparation behavior. The results of this study can be used as a basis for designing courses related to student career development. During this time, career development programs through various programs to improve soft skills emphasize the ability of students to recognize their emotions and others and use emotions for various activities was not enough to encourage students to prepare for an upcoming career. Based on this research, self-efficacy career decision making is seen to have a significant role. Programs related to career development also need to include materials that can enhance students' confidence to be able to determine the desired career, for example through direct experience in the form of internship program or through indirect experience in the form of sharing session with the alumni who succeed in the field certain. Bandura (1982) mentions that experience of success in past activity and vicarious experience as a source of individual self efficacy.

Apart from the results of research that can provide direct implications, there are several limitations of the research that can be used as suggestions in subsequent studies. First of all, try to get more diverse university samples, to be able to overcome the limitations of generalization. Second, future research must expand models that support student learning and careers. Finally, other career related concepts are also considered as predictors of career decision making.

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