



Career Development for College Students: Systematic Review and Future Research Direction

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Abstract

Career development tends to be understood more in people who are already working, so the definition that appears is more suitable to describe the situation. However, career development is closely related to the period when individuals are in their study period, especially when studying in college. In addition, career development can also be interpreted as an intervention program that can be conducted in schools through a curriculum or counseling program to enhance individuals' ability to determine their careers. The paper systematically reviewed research on career development. Through this systematic review, it is hoped that it will be possible to identify the research gap on career development and strive to make a theoretical contribution to the development of the concept of career development. The method used is a systematic literature review. This paper is based on articles that have been published between 2019 and 2023, but also pays attention to literature that has a high number of citations as references found through scopus.com. The findings show that career development can be interpreted in three ways. Career development as a perspective oriented to the development of the career paradigm itself, the second is related to the programs implemented by the organization to improve performance, and the third is the concept of the career itself as a variable. On the other hand, findings on psychological factors have a significant role in influencing a person's career development. Limitations. The description in this article only focuses on one database, namely, scopus.com. Future research should ideally look for references in other databases to provide broader information about career development.

Keywords *Career, Career development, Psychological capital, Career intervention*

INTRODUCTION

The role of universities in preparing graduates who are competent in accordance with the needs of the business and industrial worlds, on the other hand, is still not optimal. This can be seen in the high unemployment rate of university graduates, which reached 13.2% in 2019. If this figure is detailed, 1.28 million university graduates are still unemployed. Over the past few decades, graduates who obtain higher academic levels have found it difficult to get a job after completing a college education (Belle et al., 2022). The high unemployment rate of university graduates certainly hints at mistakes in the learning process. In addition to the shortage of jobs, the shortage of graduates is also due to the changing nature of the workforce (Roberson et al., 2024).

The career itself has been interpreted by various experts as a combination of roles performed by individuals throughout their lives (Super, 1980). The roles performed by these individuals include children, students or students, citizens, workers, spouses, housewives, parents, and retirees. Each individual who undertakes the role then has his own expectations for something he will achieve (Super, 1980). Career is often interpreted by some experts only as limited to work affairs, as stated by Holland (1959), by combining the interaction of the individual with his or her environment will be able to produce characteristics in the choice of work and will help the individual to adjust to his or her work environment.

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These different career concepts have become a concern of experts, and various theories have been proposed to explain them. Such studies include [Super \(1980\)](#) using the Life Career Rainbow theory; [McMahon and Patton \(2018\)](#) using the Systems Theory Framework (SFT); or a theoretical work from [Holland \(1959\)](#) that combines aspects of the individual, the environment, and a person's career. Each of these theoretical approaches ultimately creates a different view of the career and a further elaboration of its development.

In addition to this approach, the next perspective uses the construction of SCCT from [Lent et al. \(1994\)](#). This theory is relatively new and aims to explain three interrelated aspects of career development: (1) how basic academic and career interests develop; (2) how educational and career choices are made; and (3) how academic and career success is obtained. This theory also combines various concepts such as interests, abilities, values, and environmental factors. In addition, this theory also highlights three important variables, namely self efficacy; outcome expectation, and personal goals.

The next perspective that is also used to explain career development is Career Construction Theory. This theory refers to psychosocial resources that enable individuals to manage their career development. The theory also describes human progress driven by adaptation to the social environment with the aim of integrating humans and their environment and considering contextual and cultural perspectives for adaptation.

Career development is a different concept that refers more to the process by which individuals and employers manage a variety of tasks, behaviors, and experiences within and across jobs and organizations over time. Thus, the concepts of career and career development are interrelated but emphasize different aspects. Career development focuses on how individual and contextual factors affect a person's career changes over time.

The search for current research on career development focuses on various directions, such as the careers of academics or university staff, urban immigrants ([Gu et al, 2019](#)); medical professions ([Smithson et al., 2021](#); [Emamaullee et al., 2021](#)); students ([Chan, 2020](#); [Ramaprasad et al., 2022](#); [Karaca-Atik et al, 2023](#)); adolescents; adults ([Goedereis et al., 2023](#)); worker/laborer; family men; marketing; school students ([Lee et al., 2021](#)).

Very few studies have focused on career development among students. The research conducted by [Lee et al. \(2021\)](#) is just one of many studies on career development that focused on students. The limitations of the career development literature for students should be a concern in the midst of discussions on how to develop careers in the context of other more established subjects. Based on these descriptions and observations, the author considers that a systematic review of the literature on career development among students is necessary to consolidate insights, provide a comprehensive understanding of the current state of literature, and identify knowledge gaps to guide future studies. Therefore, the research question developed in this study is as follows: Research question 1: What is the definition of the currently available career development concept from the existing literature? Research question 2: What theories are used as the basis for current research on the concept of career development? Research question 3: What research possibilities can be used to develop and expand the existing literature on the concept of student career development?

This research on career development systematically reviews research on career development. To provide additional references for career research that focuses on career development. First, this research will provide a more comprehensive understanding of career development in students, second, a comprehensive review of these scientific articles helps create an understanding of career development research approaches for students, and third, this research is important in developing a roadmap for future research and highlighting the possible theoretical and empirical developments of the literature on career development in students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Career development is defined as everything carried out from the process of recruitment, preparation, induction, and professional development (Chaaban et al., 2023). Career development is also related to improving skills, including experience and competencies (Raduan & Na, 2020). Career development in other literature is also mentioned as sustainable career development as a concept that appears in career literature (Karaca-Atik et al., 2023). The development of the definition of career development generally refers to De Vos et al., (2020), who defined a sustainable career as a series of different career experiences that an individual experiences. This career development is reflected through a variety of patterns of continuity over time, crossing several social patterns, and being characterized by individual agents that thus give meaning to the individual.

Career development includes (1) career exploration, which involves how a person searches for a suitable career and how they feel less time related to how they conduct career exploration. (2) Career stability is the feeling of commitment to the career path. It is noted that there are several weaknesses to this stability, including the confidence a person is in their role. (3) career growth and various experiences in climbing the career ladder and planning for the future (Goedereis et al., 2023). As a concept that differs from the career itself, career development refers to a process in which individuals and employers manage various tasks, behaviors, and experiences in and throughout work and organizations from time to time that have implications for the identity of an employee's activities (Brown, 2002).

The various definitions expressed tend to actualize career development in individuals who already have jobs. Career development for students is not an unimportant thing but rather something important considering that the problem of career development is more experienced by individuals at the age of 20. They tend not to have a commitment to a career path where they can build skills, shoulder greater responsibilities, and climb the organizational ladder (Day et al., 2012). It is only when individuals are 30 to 45 years old that their career orientation becomes more established. So, things about career development at a young age are only now known.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research method used by the researcher was based on a systematic review. Systematic review involves three stages: (1) planning review; (2) conducting review; and (3) reporting and socialization (reporting and dissemination). The use of the systematic review method will help provide an overview of an issue or certain research problems (Snyder, 2019).

Stages Of Systematic Review According To Transfield, 2003

Stages	Action Sequence	Result Details
Review planning	This review was carried out with the aim of synthesizing findings about career development research, especially in students, systematically by setting two research questions as a stimulus for researchers to complete the review to be carried out.	<p>Research question:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the definition of the career development concept currently available from the existing literature? 2. What are the theories that are used as the basis for current research for the concept of career development? 3. What kind of research possibilities can be used to develop and expand the existing literature for the concept of student career development?
Conduct a review	<p>Literature review: Keyword determination</p> <p>Quality assessment: Quality assessment is carried out by researchers by observing each article that has been found. One of the reasons for this quality assessment is to determine the suitability of the concept carried out and the expected scope. The author considers articles published in Scopus journals with high indexation, namely Q1 and Q2.</p> <p>Data extraction and progress: this stage is used as a step to reduce errors and biases. Data extraction was carried out by describing the information from the article containing the title, author, research question, variables used, partisanship or subject, theory used, research gap, method, main findings, research limitations and conclusions.</p>	<p>Protocol details</p> <p>Keywords: Career Development & Colledge Student</p> <p>Year of publication : 2019 – 2023</p> <p>Subject Area : Psychology, social science and business management and accounting</p> <p>Dokument type : article</p> <p>Language : English</p> <p>Source type : Journal</p> <p>Publication stage : Final</p> <p>Total article : 43</p>
Reporting and socialization	<i>Reporting and dissemination</i> , In this section, the author presents information related to descriptive reviews with the aim of making readers understand the various studies that have been successfully synthesized.	From the articles that have been published for career development starting in 1973 but not too specific about career development, it was only around 1976 that research on student career development was

		<p>more specific through Wolfson's research published in <i>the journal of counseling psychology</i> with the title <i>career development patterns of college women</i>. In that span of years, this research was published more in journals oriented to the scientific field of psychology with 281 published articles, <i>business, management and accounting</i> with 206 published articles, <i>social science</i> with 202 published articles, <i>medicine</i> with 52 published articles, <i>computer science</i> with 36 published articles, <i>engineering</i> with 25 articles, <i>Environmental science</i> with 14 articles and other fields that amount to between 1 to 10 published articles. As for the journals that publish the largest research papers on this career development topic, the <i>career development quarterly</i> journal which publishes 61 articles, followed by <i>the journal of career development</i> with 42 articles, <i>the journal of career assessment</i> with 41 articles, <i>the journal of vocational behavior</i> with 32 articles, <i>the journal of counseling psychology</i> with 20 articles, <i>Frontier in Psychology</i> with 14 articles and other journals that have successfully published 1 to 7 articles</p>
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FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Theoretical Framework

Understanding career research, especially related to career development from existing articles, tends to require diverse perspectives. Most studies have stated that a career is an important element in a person's work life. Understanding career development can be achieved from at least two perspectives: individual- and organizational/culture-focused perspectives. Instead of choosing the best perspective, understanding career should place it in a broader context, that is, balancing the needs of individuals and organizations. Career development is more about understanding the perspective of a career that continues to develop, not the concept of career development itself.

The number of studies uses a theory developed by Super (1980), which explains that career development occurs through certain stages, from childhood to adolescence (Omar et al., 2023). Other studies have sought to combine several theories, such as social cognition theory, career construction theory, and trait and factor theory. The combination of theories used is also used as a basis for creating

measurement instruments and for evaluation and counseling in psychological interventions.

Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) is still used by career researchers to study the aspects of career development. (Morris & Lent, 2023). The use of this theory is primarily used to explain aspects of career development in sexual minority groups, student academic satisfaction (Morris & Lent, 2019), and adult workers' sexual identity management strategies. Apart from some of the popular theories above, social exchange theory is also used as a basis for explaining a person's career development (Lee et al., 2021). The essence of the theory of social exchange is the exchange of valuable resources; the greater the perceived value of the tangible and intangible resources exchanged between employers and workers, the more likely it is that the resources offered by one party will be reciprocated by the other party. Psychological capital theory provides a strong foundation for researching individual career development (Gu et al., 2019). This theory focuses more on how psychological factors strongly influence individuals' career development.

Career Development Dimension

Career development for students consists of 4 dimensions, namely: identity search, competency improvement, context exploration, and role suitability. In contrast to research conducted by Lee et al. (2021), the dimension of career development in students is based on 7 things, namely: opportunities for promotion, opportunities for career development, and opportunities to grow professionally; adequate responsibilities and challenges in work; debriefing relevant career experiences; preparation for future career jobs; and preparation to enter the job market after graduation. On the other hand, the development of the career dimension also includes things such as career exploration and self-efficacy, decision-making, expectations for results, exploration goals, previous exploratory actions, career decision-making support, decision-making anxiety, and the career decision itself (Morris & Lent, 2023).

Antesedent

A person's career development during being a student is determined by several factors, such as social position and circumstances, knowledge of work, development of individual elements related to self-concept, gender, and social values. In addition, it is also determined by other predictors, such as cognitive elements. Things related to cognitive elements are also emphasized to have a strong influence on career development (Morris & Lent, 2023). This cognitive ability includes how a person feels anxiety in career decision-making due to the development of a gender identity that is not well understood (Morris & Lent, 2023; Schmidt et al., 2021).

Career development can not only be seen as a variable dependent but can also be positioned as an independent variable that can affect an individual's performance. The results of the research by Lee et al. (2021) emphasize the importance of career development opportunities provided by companies to generate interest in internships in organizations. Although the relationship that occurs is not always direct, in different parts, the relationship between the two is mediated by students' skill acquisition during the internship. Career development can increase the interest of interns in an organization, and the opportunities provided for interns include opportunities to acquire skills.

The development of an individual's career is determined more comprehensively by individual and organizational factors. In addition, based on the career resource model from the perspective of individual resources, the factors that affect career development can be divided into three categories: human capital, social capital, and psychological capital. (Gu et al., 2019). All this capital is necessary to achieve career success. However, there is a statement that compared to human capital and social capital, psychological capital has a strong influence on individual success and happiness. A predictor of this is psychological capital. Other psychological factors that affect career development include social support, confidence in one's career, career self-efficacy, and career decision-making (Chan, 2020; Ramaprasad et al., 2022; Sheu, 2023). Meanwhile, environmental factors that play a role in career

development are the educational curricula implemented by schools and the level of parental education as a variable that moderates the effect of curricula taught with the effectiveness of career development (Lee et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2023).

CONCLUSIONS

This literature review concludes that understanding career development is basically inseparable from the concept of career itself. Career development can also be interpreted as the development of career concepts that are oriented to traditional career models and more modern career models (career protean & unlimited careers). In addition, career development can also be an intervention program that is directly related to a person's satisfaction when they live their career. Furthermore, career development is a standalone concept caused by several factors, such as individual factors, social factors, and environmental factors. When specifying students' scope of career development, individual factors related to psychological capital are more important than other factors. On the other hand, career development research focuses on the concept of career development itself, as many researchers have done.

LIMITATION & FURTHER RESEARCH

After considering several published research studies, future research can focus more on the three abovementioned aspects. For the development of the concept of career development, future research should focus more on psychological factors that have been proven to have an important influence on individual career development.

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