



CAREER ADAPTABILITY IN VARIOUS THEORIES: REVIEW THROUGH MULTICULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract: This paper intends to discuss the review of career adaptability in several different theoretical settings using a multicultural perspective. The scope of the discussion includes the definition, essence, aspect, and indicator of career adaptability in several theories. The methodology used is in the form of a literature review. This paper aims to provide benefits in providing descriptions of how career adaptability in several theories to gain a deeper understanding of the concept. The results obtained in the form of a review of the concept of “career adaptability” using a multicultural perspective from three different theories derived from the career construction counselling approach and the social-cognitive counselling approach. Each theory has been reviewed from four dimensions, namely: definition, essence, aspects, and indicators.

Keywords: career adaptability, theory, multicultural.

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INTRODUCTION

Along with various social shift that exists, changes in the career world also continue to occur, even from time to time occur more quickly. Evidenced by entering a new era in the industrial world, which is named Industry 4.0. In such circumstances, the ability to adapt (adaptability), flexibility (resilience), and making good plans, a reasonable approach to be able to cope with changes that

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occur (Brown & Lent, 2013, p. 23). Career counselor, as a profession engaged in that field, certainly needs to be able to keep comply of developments that occur. An understanding of the latest phenomena in the career world that is captured by the theorists gives birth to new concepts that need to be mastered. Career adaptability is one of the new concepts following current conditions. Many experts from different backgrounds have conducted research and produced diverse theories about the concept. The discussion of the diversity of views in a multicultural perspective to explain the concept of career adaptability is expected to make the concept's meaning understood fully and profoundly. Furthermore, the counsellor is expected to be able to make a better contribution for all who need to have the ability to adapt to the changing situation in the present.

The term “career adaptability” was coined by Donald E. Super and Edward G. Knasel in their 1981 writings when they assumed that the previous concept of “vocational maturity” was inappropriate in an adult context (Creed, Fallon, & Hood, 2009; K. Maree, 2017). If the concept of maturity is biological so it does not change much in adulthood, then the concept of adaptation is more psychosocial (Hartung, 2013, p. 86) and remains relevant when discussing adults. The concept of career adaptability allows for greater emphasis on new problems currently faced by many people and not related to maturity. Therefore, in assessing adaptability, counsellors must pay considerable attention to the ability of individuals to cope with these tasks, which may have little or nothing to do with age.

The concept of career adaptability more precisely emphasizes the interaction between adults and their environment. Besides, the concept also indicates a foresight that shows that individuals act proactively (Green, Noor, & Hashemi, 2019, p. 2). The phrase also focuses on the interaction between the individual and the environment. The term “adaptability” does not only mean that in interactions with the environment, but modifications will also only be made by individuals. But every individual will be involved in the process of finding a balance between receiving pressures that come from the world of work and making its impact on the environment.

The career adaptability process is also related to the adaptation model of Jean Piaget which consists of assimilation and accommodation (Rossier,

Maggiore, & Zimmermann, 2015, p. 48). In this model, an individual can assimilate some aspects of his environment into his existing scheme (and hence impact on the environment) but must also modify his scheme to accommodate certain other aspects of his environment (the environment makes an impact on him).

The idea of career adaptability as a concept was later developed to be more complete by Mark L. Savickas through his research since 1997. Savickas defines career adaptability as “readiness to cope with predictable tasks in preparing and participating in work roles and with appropriate adjustments. unpredictability due to changes in work and working conditions (Lent, 2013, p. 2).” The ability to adapt a career shows the readiness and resources of individuals to cope with repeated choices for vocational, work transitions and work trauma that characterize the current global economy. Some factors that make jobs unstable and unpredictable include innovative technology, mobile workforce, and corporate restructuring. The speed at which these changes occur has made workers unprepared, uncertain and nervous. Instead of planning a stable career path with one employer, insecure workers must now prepare work in a series of projects with different companies (Glavin in Savickas, 2013b, p. 6).

Savickas sees career adaptability as consisting of four dimensions, namely care, control, curiosity, and self-confidence (K. Maree, 2017; Savickas, 2013b, 2013a). Concern reflects the extent to which individuals think about their future and are involved in planning and preparing their careers. Individuals who care about their careers show a wise and future-oriented attitude towards work. Control reflects the degree to which individuals feel responsible for building and managing their careers. Individuals who control their careers believe that they must be responsible and aware of building their careers. Curiosity reflects the extent to which individuals explore the world of work and try to obtain information about requirements, routines, and employee benefits. Individuals who are curious about their careers show curiosity in exploring their interests and gathering information about where they are most suitable in the world of work. Confidence reflects the degree to which individuals believe in their ability to make and implement career decisions based on wisdom and realism. Individuals who believe in or trust in their ability to solve problems can overcome challenges.

One theory that intensively uses the concept of career adaptability is the “Career Construction Theory” from Mark L. Savickas (2013a, p. 147). The theory views careers from the perspective of contextualism which conceptualizes development as being controlled by adaptation to the environment and not by the maturity of the structure within. Career construction theory explains the interpretive and interpersonal processes that individuals use as actors, agents, and writers to create themselves, form identities, and build careers (Savickas, 2013a, p. 179). This theory highlights the role of two meta-competencies, namely adaptation and identity, in overcoming tasks of vocational development, job transitions, and work trauma. Adaptability instils the will and skills to direct one's work-life; identity includes meaning in work behaviour and work activities. This theory devised a scheme for selecting career interventions and informing models for career development counseling. In career construction counseling, counselors can help counselees to find out their reputation as actors, struggles as agents, and recurring themes as writers. What is more important is that career construction counseling encourages actors to use their adaptability and identity to choose and engage in actions that create a more fulfilling life.

Based on the concept developed by Savickas, career adaptability is further examined by Peter A. Creed, Tracy Fallon, and Michelle Hood and the results are outlined in the article titled “The relationship between career adaptability, person and situation variables, and career concerns in young adults.” (Creed et al., 2009). In this study, career adaptability is defined as follows: “Career adaptability refers to the process of self-control in individual relationships and the environment and emphasizes the management of new problems faced by individuals” (Creed et al., 2009, p. 220). This study departs from the view that career adaptation is an important construct, but there needs to be some effort to operationalize it or to investigate the adaptive resources needed to manage a successful career transition. The study examines the relationship between career adaptability and career constructs that stand out from career problems among young adults. It also examines whether career adaptability mediates the relationship between people and career situation and care variables. First, it examines whether the high-level constructs of career adaptation can be represented by self-regulation strategies that focus on careers from self-exploration and the environment, career planning and career decision making, and general self-regulation. Second, it investigates

whether the relationship between people and situation variables and career-related problems is mediated by career adaptation strategies. Then conceptualize people's variables as individual differences in goal orientation, and situation variables are operationalized as perceived social support from family, friends, and significant others.

In their research, Creed and friends describe career adaptability in a different dimension from the dimensions proposed by Savickas. They examined it in four dimensions, namely career planning, career exploration, self-exploration, decision making, and self-regulation (Creed et al., 2009, p. 219). In this way, one's personal development and adaptability include seeing available opportunities (exploring), looking forward to the future (planning), making appropriate and feasible choices (deciding), and managing all intrapersonal, interpersonal, and environmental factors that affect the achievement of one's goals, which can briefly be referred to as self-regulating. Self-regulation mechanisms are relevant to career adaptability because they are activated in times of stress, change, or when faced with new challenges. In this study, it was tested whether the four career adaptation strategies (self and environmental exploration, career planning, and decision making) and general self-regulation measures could be represented by second-order factors of career adaptability.

The study of Creed and colleagues contributed to the career literature by showing that (a) the operationalization of career adaptability from Savickas can be represented by a higher single order factor, (b) the Savickas career adaptation variable is related to general measures of self-regulation, and (c) career adaptability mediates relationships between different people and environmental variables and important variables related to careers. The findings of this study inform the design of interventions to promote the development of learning goal orientation and the use of self-regulation strategies with young adults when they think about careers. Other experts have suggested that the orientation of learning objectives can be developed and that self-regulation can be improved, thereby, increasing the capacity of individuals to adapt. This study relies on cross-sectional self-report data, which limits the capacity to make causal statements (Creed et al., 2009, p. 227).

Based on different grand theories, Robert W. Lent and Steven D. Brown also researched career adaptation and wrote it in an article titled Social Cognitive Model of Career Self-Management: Toward a Unifying View of Adaptive Career Behavior Across the Life Span (Lent & Brown, 2013). In this study, career adaptability is examined from the perspective of Social Cognitive Career Theory (SSCT), and is defined as follows: “Adaptive career behaviour is in the form of career self-management applied to help direct career development (and education) both in everyday circumstances and under stressful conditions” (Lent & Brown, 2013, p. 559). The SCCT approach includes the disposition of resources to help explain the process of career adaptation which is largely framed in five major personality factors (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism) and adaptive mechanisms in the form of self-efficacy (Lent & Brown, 2013, p. 566).

The description of career adaptability is an extension of the SCCT for development tasks and overcoming career self-management challenges. While the previous SCCT model was aimed primarily at content-oriented problems (such as field choices), the independent management model focused on the processes that underlie adaptive career behaviour (such as career exploration, job search, career advancement) that occur in the work path. The new model is a broad framework that can be adapted to the study of various adaptive career behaviours. For example, research on career decision-making processes can focus on operating self-efficacy, expected outcomes, goals, support and obstacles, and relevant traits (such as conscientiousness); about the behaviour (such as self-exploration and the environment) they lead; and, perhaps, the more important final decision results (such as decision making, commitment to choose, anxiety in decision making). Although designed to be consistent with existing findings that have examined some of its elements (especially in the field of career decision making and the job search process), the utility of explaining the model – and operating along with its component variables – needs to be assessed in further research.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section will describe the results of the synthesis of the authors using the literature review method of the concept of career adaptability expressed by (a)

Mark L. Savickas and Erik J. Porfeli; (b), Peter A. Creed, Tracy Fallon, and Michelle Hood; (c) Robert W. Lent and Steven D. Brown. The first two sources use the career construction counselling approach while the third approach the social-cognitive counselling approach. Synthesis is carried out in four dimensions, namely the definition, essence, aspects, and indicators of the concept of career adaptability reviewed from various sources. A summary of this discussion can be seen in the table at the end of this article.

1. Definition

The dimension of definition or comprehension is to answer the question, “What is career adaptability?” The three sources cited in the literature review disclosed by the three (groups) of different experts above provide a different explanation of the problem. Some essence that can be synthesized from these notions is explained below.

- a. All of them see that career adaptability is a condition that is within an individual (internal). Phrases that describe this such as individual resources (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012), self-control (Creed et al., 2009), and self-management (Lent & Brown, 2013). These conditions have varying magnitudes in one person with other people. The situation is related to something the owner wants to achieve or do so that it can be called an ability.
- b. Adaptation, adaptive, and adaptability are concepts related to adjustment (Lent & Brown, 2013; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). In this case, what is adjusted is ourselves not the environmental conditions. So that it can be referred to as self-adjustment.
- c. The scene or context in which the adaptation takes place above is in the career scene, following the concept explained namely career adaptability.
- d. The first manifestation of the ability above is in the form of capacity (Coetzee & Harry, 2013; Johnston, 2018; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012), describing the amount or more and least, between the very capable to the incapable.
- e. The second form of willingness (Johnston, 2018; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012, p. 662), illustrates the strength of the willingness to do what is capable of being done.

- f. The third form is commitment (Hirschi & Valero, 2015; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012; Soresi, Nota, & Ferrari, 2012), illustrating the promise and great responsibility to actualize these abilities in behaviour.
- g. Career adaptability can be achieved by good self-control (Creed et al., 2009; Lent & Brown, 2013) to achieve the desired goals by setting aside the things that can hinder it.
- h. The direction of self-control is to overcome (coping) (J. G. Maree, 2013; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012) the difficulties faced and anticipate the various possibilities that will occur in the future.
- i. Difficulties encountered can originate from the tasks (Duffy, 2010; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012) given to us, the transition (Bobek, Hanson, & Robbins, 2012; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012) from old to new conditions that require adjustments, or in the form of trauma (Hirschi & Valero, 2015; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012) due to past experiences that need to be solved with a new learning process.

From the synthesis with various considerations towards sources obtained from the literature stated above, the definition proposed by the author for career adaptability is “the ability to make self-adjustment in the career scene in the form of capacity, will, and commitment for self-control to cope tasks, transitions, or trauma as well as to anticipate all possibilities in the vocational future.”

2. *Essence*

The essence taken from each definition discussed here is as follows:

- (a) Ability to coping difficulties due to changes in work (the essence of Savickas & Porfeli));
- (b) The process of self-regulatory in the form of managing new problems (the essence of the definition of Creed, *et.al.*);
- (c) Career self-direction in various circumstances (the essence of the Lent & Brown definition).

While the essence of the definition as the synthesis results from the author is: “The ability to control yourself to overcome all possibilities in a career.”

3. Aspects

Based on the analysis of the three definitions expressed by the experts discussed, as well as the definition of the results of the synthesis of the author, all of them contain both cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. Next, the characteristics of each aspect contained in the concept of career adaptability are revealed from each expert.

a. Cognitive

Career adaptability is related to knowledge, thinking skills, insight, and several other cognitive aspects as illustrated below.

- (a) Career adaptability contains resources for coping that need to be equipped with adequate knowledge and thinking skills for problem-solving, while also requiring anticipation processes that require thinking skills (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012).
- (b) Management of problems as part of career adaptability requires thinking ability and adequate insight as well as self-control functions (Creed et al., 2009).
- (c) The function of self-management that exists in career adaptability is an activity that requires a high level of cognitive (Lent & Brown, 2013).

b. Affective

The first two theory that comes from the construction counselling approach shares the same affective aspect, while the third theory from the social cognitive approach mentions it differently as described below.

- (a&b)The function of coping and self-control in career construction to achieve adaptability, in addition to involving cognitive activities as well as effective activities in the form of emotional management, such as delaying satisfaction, avoiding impulsivity, impatience, acting recklessly, in a hurry, boredom that can hamper efforts problem solving (Creed et al., 2009; J. G. Maree, 2013; Nilforooshan & Salimi, 2016; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012).
- (c) Good self-management in career adaptability involves managing emotions as above. Likewise, several aspects of personality that are indicators of career adaptability in this theory stem from affective

aspects, such as openness, extraversion (establishing social interaction as a positive effect), approval, and neuroticism (negative affect) (Lent & Brown, 2013; Nilforooshan & Salimi, 2016).

c. Psychomotor

All theory discussed assumes that adaptability is not limited only as a predisposition in the self, but needs to be actualized in the form of conative and adaptation actions (psychomotor aspects) as the implementation of cognitive and affective behaviours that are also adaptive. Furthermore, career adaptability is a psychosocial construct in a cultural context (Einarsdóttir, Vilhjálmsdóttir, Smáradóttir, & Kjartansdóttir, 2015, p. 173) and cultural differences can indicate different levels of career adaptability (eg. in Ramdhani, Budiamin, & Budiman, 2019; Rindanah, 2018). These are reflected in the antecedent concept of career adaptability for each theory, as expressed in the following list.

- (a) According to Mark L. Savickas and Erik J. Porfeli (2012), there are three aspects of psychomotor as the antecedent of career adaptability: willingness, readiness, adapting;
- (b) According to Peter A. Creed, Tracy Fallon, and Michelle Hood (2009), there are two aspects: adaptive career decision making, self-control;
- (c) According to Robert W. Lent and Steven D. Brown (2013, p. 562), there are two aspects: goal-directed action, outcome/attainment.

4. Indicator

Indicators of each theory discussed, as revealed by the authors, can be stated in the following list.

- (a) According to Savickas and Porfeli, there are four indicators of career adaptability: concern, control, curiosity, confidence (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012)
- (b) According to Creed and friends, there are four indicators follows: planfulness, exploration, decision-making, self-regulation (Creed et al., 2009, p. 220)
- (c) According to Lent and Brown, there are six indicators: openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism, self-efficacy (Lent & Brown, 2013, p. 566).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In the above explanation, the concept of “career adaptability” has been reviewed using a multicultural perspective on three different sources. Two sources use the career construction counselling approach while the third uses the social-cognitive counselling approach. Each theory has been reviewed from four dimensions, namely: definition, essence, aspects, and indicators.

Career adaptability concepts can be synthesized as the ability to make self-adjustment in the career scene in the form of capacity, will, and commitment for self-control to cope tasks, transitions, or trauma as well as to anticipate all possibilities in the vocational future.

Analysis of the factors that build career adaptability enables us to better understand the concept and can examine it in detail based on each element associated with the concept. Furthermore, guidance and counselling can develop services to develop the career adaptability of a person or group of people by considering the factors involved in it

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Career Adaptability in Various Theories: Review Through Multicultural Perspectives

Table 1. Review of Career Adaptability in Three Different Sources Viewed from the Dimensions of Definition, Essence, Aspects, and Indicators, and Synthesis Results for Each of these Dimensions.

No.	Dimensions	Source 1	Source 2	Source 3	Synthesis
1.	Definition	Career adaptability is a psychosocial construct that denotes an individual's resources for coping with current and anticipated tasks, transitions, traumas in their occupational roles that, to some degree large or small, alter their social integration (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012, p. 662).	Career adaptability refer to self-regulatory processes, stress the importance of the interaction between the individual and their environment, and emphasize managing novel, non-maturational problems that confront the individual (Creed et al., 2009, p. 220).	Adaptive career is behaviors that people employ to help direct their own career (and educational) development, both under ordinary circumstances and when beset by stressful conditions (Lent & Brown, 2013, p. 559).	Career adaptability is the ability to make self-adjustment in the career scene in the form of capacity, will, and commitment for self-control to cope tasks, transitions, or trauma as well as to anticipate all possibilities in the vocational future
2.	Essence	Ability to coping difficulties due to work changes	The process of self-regulatory in the form of managing new problems	Career self-direction in various circumstances	Self-control ability to overcome all the possibilities in a career
3.	Aspects	(1) Cognitive (2) Affective (3) Psychomotor	(1) Cognitive (2) Affective (3) Psychomotor	(1) Cognitive (2) Affective (3) Psychomotor	(1) Cognitive (2) Affective (3) Psychomotor
4.	Indicators	(1) Concern (2) Control (3) Curiosity (4) Confidence (Savickas & Porfeli, 2011)	(1) Planfulness (2) Exploration (3) Decision-making (4) Self-regulation (Creed et al., 2009, p. 220)	(1) openness (2) conscientiousness (3) extraversion (4) agreeableness (5) neuroticism (6) self-efficacy (Lent & Brown, 2013, p. 566).	(1) Concern (2) Control (3) Curiosity (4) Confidence