

Perceived Organizational Support and Its Moderating Effect on the Relationship between Career Development and Lecturer Performance in Vocational Education

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the moderating effect of perceived organizational support on the relationship between career development and lecturer performance in vocational education. The research was conducted using a quantitative approach and survey method involving lecturers from various vocational education institutions. Data were analyzed using moderation regression analysis. The results showed a positive and significant relationship between career development and lecturer performance. In addition, perceived organizational support was found to have a moderating effect on the relationship. Specifically, the positive impact of career development on lecturer performance is greater when perceived organizational support is high. These findings emphasize the importance of career development initiatives and organizational support in improving lecturer performance in vocational education institutions. This study contributes to the literature by providing empirical evidence on the role of perceived organizational support in strengthening the relationship between career development and job performance. Practical implications for vocational education institutions include the implementation of effective career development programs and a supportive organizational climate to maximize lecturer performance.

Keywords

Perceived organizational support, career development, lecturer performance, vocational education, moderation analysis

1. Introduction

Vocational education plays a crucial role in preparing skilled workforce to meet growing demands and drive global economic growth (Cheng et al., 2018); (Mulder, 2019). In this context, the performance of the lecturer becomes a key factor that determines the quality of the graduate and the effectiveness of the vocational education institution as a whole. Studies conducted by Suarta et al. (2018) and Abelha et al. (2020) show that the performance of lecturers has a direct impact on the competence of graduates and their readiness to work in the era of Industry 4.0. However, although the important role of lecturers has been recognised, there is still a gap in the understanding of the factors affecting lecturer performance, especially in the context of unique vocational education (Tran et al., 2020); (Schreiber-Barsch and Mauch, 2019). Career development and organizational support have been identified as key elements that potentially affect employee performance in various sectors, including higher education (Caesens et al., 2016); (Zhao et al. 2022); (Zacher et al., 2019). However, the interaction between these factors and their impact on the performance of lecturers in vocational education institutions is still not comprehensively explored.

Career development, which includes a range of activities and programmes designed to enhance individual competencies and prospects, has been shown to have a positive impact on employee performance in various organizational contexts (Blokker et al., 2019); (Akkermans et al., 2020). In the academic environment, career

development opportunities can include pedagogical training, research support, and mentoring programmes, all of which have the potential to improve the teaching effectiveness and research productivity of lecturers (Guan et al., 2017); (Van der Klink et al. 2017). Meanwhile, the perception of organizational support (POS) that reflects employee confidence in the extent to which organizations value lecturer contributions and care about lecturer well-being has proven to have a significant impact on a variety of work outcomes, including organizational performance and commitment (Kurtessis et al, 2015); (Ahmed et al., 2020). A study conducted by Jensen and Lannone (2018) revealed that POS has a positive effect on the work attachment and innovative behaviour of lecturers in higher education institutions. However, although previous research has examined the direct impact of career development and POS on performance, few have yet to investigate the effect of POS moderation on the relationship between career growth and performance, especially in the context of vocational education that has unique characteristics and challenges.

Given the importance of improving the quality of vocational education in the face of rapid technological change and the demands of a dynamic labour market (Mulder, 2019); (Ludwig-Mayerhofer and Pollak, 2019), a deeper understanding of the factors affecting the performance of lecturers becomes crucial. This research aims to fill these gaps by studying the relationship between career development and lecturer performance, as well as investigating the role of POS moderation in the relationship. By understanding this dynamic, vocational education institutions can design more effective strategies to improve their lecturer's performance, which in turn will have a positive impact on the quality of education and graduates produced (Billett et al., 2018); (Bakar, 2018). Furthermore, this research will also make significant theoretical contributions by expanding our understanding of the interaction between career development, POS, and performance in the context of vocational education, which so far is still less explored in human resource development.

1.1 Objectives

This research has three main purposes that are interrelated. First, the study aims to empirically test the relationship between career development and the performance of lecturers in vocational education institutions. By understanding these connections, research can provide valuable insights into how career development initiatives can affect the effectiveness of teaching, research productivity, and the overall contribution of lecturers. Second, this study aims to analyze the effect of moderation of perceived organizational support (POS) on the relationship between career development and lecturer performance. Through this analysis, the study seeks to uncover how POS can strengthen or weaken the impact of career development on lecturer's performance, providing a more nuanced understanding of the organizational dynamics in the context of vocational education. Finally, based on these findings, the study aims to formulate and provide practical recommendations for vocational education institutions in an effort to improve the performance of lecturers through effective career development strategies and the creation of a supportive organizational environment. By achieving these goals, research is expected to contribute to the development of the theory and practice in human resource management in the vocational education sector, as well as assisting institutions in optimizing the potential of academic staff.

2. Literature Review

Career development has long been recognized as a crucial factor in improving employee performance in various sectors, including higher education. A study by Zhao et al. (2022) showed that structured career development programmes can significantly improve employee commitment, motivation, and productivity. In the context of higher education, Guan et al. (2017) found that career development opportunities are positively correlated with faculty performance and job satisfaction. Furthermore, research by Blokker et al. (2019) revealed that career competence development contributes to improved employability and individual career adaptability, which in turn can improve job performance. In the context of vocational education, Seema et al. (2022) emphasized the importance of sustainable career development for lecturers to face technological change and dynamic demands.

Perceived organizational support (POS) is an important concept in organizational behavior that refers to employees' convictions about how much the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being. (Eisenberger et al., 1986). A meta-analysis study by Kurtessis et al. (2015) showed that POS has a positive impact on a variety of work outcomes, including organizational performance and commitment. A study by Ahmed et al. (2020) confirmed these findings in the context of higher education, suggesting that POS had a positive effect on the work attachment and innovative behaviour of lecturers. Caesens et al. (2019) further revealed that POS contributes to improved employee well-being, which in turn can improve performance.

The Protean Career Theory, developed by Hall (1976) and updated by Hall et al. (2018), provides a strong theoretical framework for understanding career development in modern contexts. This theory emphasizes that individuals should take an active role in managing their own careers, with a focus on sustainable learning and adaptability. In the context of vocational education, this theory is very relevant given the need for lecturers to constantly update their skills and knowledge according to developments. (Le Blanc et al., 2019). A recent study by Rodrigues et al. (2018) shows that protean career orientation is positively linked to subjective job performance and career success, affirming the importance of self-development initiatives in improving performance.

Furthermore, the Goal Setting Theory presented by Locke and Latham (1990) and updated in their study (Locke & Latham, 2019) is also relevant in understanding the relationship between career development, POS, and performance. This theory states that setting specific and challenging goals can improve individual motivation and performance. In the context of career development and POS, organizations that provide clear support and development opportunities can help employees set and their career goals, which in turn improve performance. (Bickerton et al., 2014). Research carried out by Pak et al. (2019) confirms that the establishment of career goals supported by the organization is positively linked to employment attachment and employee performance.

Although the direct impact of career development and POS on performance has been extensively studied, there is still a gap in understanding the interaction between these two factors, especially in the context of vocational education. Several studies have begun to explore the effect of POS moderation in various organizational contexts. For example, Kleine et al. (2019) found that POS moderates the relationship between job crafting and employment attachment, demonstrating the important role of organizational support in strengthening the positive impact of employee self-development initiatives. In the context of higher education, Van der Klink et al. (2020) revealed that organizational backing strengthens the link between the development and innovation of faculty teaching.

The integration of protean career theory and goal setting theory in the context of this research provides a strong theoretical foundation for understanding how career development and POS can interact in affecting the performance of lecturers in vocational education institutions. This perspective emphasizes the importance of individual initiatives in career development, reinforced by organizational support in the form of clear objectives and the provision of the necessary resources. Thus, this research not only fills gaps in empirics, but also contributes to the development of theory by exploring the interactions between these factors in the specific context of vocational education.

3. Methods

The research uses a quantitative approach with cross-sectional design to analyze phenomena among vocational education lecturers in LLDIKTI Region II (South Sumatra, Lampung, Bengkulu, Bangka Belitung) Indonesia. Stratified random sampling is applied to obtain samples from various types of institutions. A total of 154 respondents participated in the study. The method is aimed at generating in-depth insights into vocational education in the region, taking into account the diversity of institutions. The data collected will be analyzed instrumentally to produce findings that can be generalized and useful for the development of vocational education policies and practices. Data analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics software version 26. Analysis includes: descriptive statistics to describe sample characteristics and variable distribution, reliability (Cronbach's alpha) and validity (confirmative factor analysis) tests for research instruments, correlation analysis to test relationships between variables, hierarchical regression analysis for testing main effects and interaction effects, and moderation regression analyses using PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2022) to test the effect of POS moderation on the relationship between career development and lecturer performance.

4. Data Collection

Data collection is carried out through a structured questionnaire that is divided into four main sections. The first part measures career development using an adaptation scale from the career development inventory (Super et al., 1981) which has been modified for vocational education contexts. The scale consists of 15 items that assess aspects such as career planning, career exploration, and career decision-making. The second part assesses the perception of organizational support (POS) using a short version of the survey of perceived organizational Support (Eisenberger et al., 1986) which has been validated in the context of higher education, consisting of 8 items that measure lecturer perception about support from the institution. The third part measures the performance of lecturer using instruments developed based on lecturer performance indicators established by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture, covering teaching aspects (6 items), research (5 items), and community dedication. (4 item) (see Table 1).

The last section gathers demographic information, covering gender, age, education, working time, and type of institution. All items in the career development scale, POS (see Table 2), and lecturer performance were measured using the Likert scale of 5 points, where 1 represents highly disagree and 5 represents very agree.

Tabel 1. Measurement Item

Variable (construct)	Dimensions	Measurement Item	Reference
Career Development (CD)	Career Planning	I have a career plan for the next 5 years	Super et al, 1981
		I set short-term and long-term goals	
		I have strategies to career goals	
		I identify skills for career advancement	
	Career Exploration	I have career achievement timelines	
		I'm looking for information on career development opportunities	
		I discuss with colleagues about field developments	
		I attend seminars to expand the network	
		I read the latest publications in my field	
		I seek mentors for up-to-date my field	
	Career Decision-making	I'm confident in making career decisions	
		I consider various career decision factors	
		I evaluate career choices	
		I identify career opportunities according to interests	
		I am prepared to take risks of career development.	
Perceived Organizational (POS)	Institutional support for lecturers	Institutions value my contributions	Eisenberger et al., 1986
		Institutions care about my well-being	
		Institution provides resources for my professional development	
		Institution values my opinion in decision-making	
		Institution supports my research and publication activities	
		Institution takes into account my purposes and values	
		Institution provides fair opportunities for career advancement	
		Institution acknowledges my academic achievements	
Lecturer Performance (LP)	Quality of teaching	I use varied teaching methods	Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia
		I constantly update the teaching material	
		I integrate technology into teaching	
		I give constructive feedback to the students	
		I encourage the active participation of the students in the classroom	
		I applied fair and transparent judgment	
	Research productivity	I regularly publish in scientific journals	
		I engage in collaborative research	
		I submit proposals for research grants	
		I guide student research	
		I attended and presented at a scientific conference	
	Contribution to community service	I'm engaged in dedication activities according to my expertise	
		I apply research results to community issues	
		I collaborate with external partners in the dedication	
		I evaluate the impact of community service activities	

Tabel 2. Respondent Profiles

Variables		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	49	31.8
	Female	105	68.2
Age	< 25	2	1.2
	26 – 35	32	20.8
	36 – 45	87	56.4
	46 – 55	24	15.6
	> 55	12	7.8
Education	Doctoral degre (PhD))	4	2.6
	Master degree	147	95.5
	Bachelor degree	3	1.9
Year of service	< 2	29	18,8
	2 – 5	40	26.0
	6 – 10	48	31.2
	> 10	37	24,0
Type of institution	Polytechnic	5	83.3
	Community college	1	16.7

5. Results and Discussion

5.1 Descriptive Statistics

Research results show that Career Development (CD) has an average score of 3.42 (SD = 0.98), indicating perception that tends to be positive but still has room for improvement compared to the ideal score of 5.0. Perceived Organizational Support (POS) reaches an average of 3.21 (SD=1.12) indicating moderate but lower levels of organizational support than the findings of Caesens et al. (2020) in the academic context. Meanwhile, Teacher Performance (CD) showed quite good results with an average of 3.35 (SD = 1.05), albeit slightly below the "high performance" threshold according to Stupnisky et al. (2018). Overall, these three aspects indicate the potential for further improvement in career development, organizational support, and faculty performance in the institutions. In general, these results indicate that although perceptions of career growth, organisational support and lecturer performance tend to be positive, there is still significant potential for improvement. Especially in terms of organizational support and lecturer performance, where the average score is below the benchmark set in the latest literature (See Table 3).

Table 3. Summary Statistics Descriptive Variable Research

Variable	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
CD	154	1	5	3.42	0.98
POS	154	1	5	3.21	1.12
LP	154	1	5	3.35	1.05

Li et al. (2018) stressed the importance of alignment between career development, organizational support, and employee performance. They found that organizations with higher POS scores tend to have employees with better performance. Furthermore, a relatively high deviation standard (especially for POS, SD = 1.12) indicates a considerable variability in respondent perception. This may be an indication of significant differences in experience between lecturers in terms of the organization support they receive.

5.2 Reliability and validity Tests

The results of the reliability test and the validity of the research instruments show that all variables have a good level of internal consistency. Table 4 shows Cronbach's Alpha value for each variable, where Career Development (CD) has a value of 0.892, Perceived Organizational Support (POS) 0.875, and lecturer performance (LP) 0.901. According to Hair et al. (2019), the Cronbach's Alpha rating above 0.7 is considered sufficient, while a rating over 0.8 indicates good reliability. Thus, all variables in this study meet high reliability standards. This result is consistent with the findings of Yunus et al. (2020) which Cronbach's Alpha for a career development scale of 0.88 in the

context of higher education. Meanwhile, for POS, the score obtained in this study is slightly higher than that by Caesens et al., (2019), who found a reliability score of 0.85 for the POS scale in an academic setting.

Tabel 4. Reliability Test Summary

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Item
CD	0,892	15
POS	0,875	8
LP	0.901	15

Regarding the number of items, the CD and LP variables each consist of 15 items, whereas the POS consists of 8 items. This amount is in line with the Morgado et al. (2017) recommendation that a scale of 10-15 items generally provides a good balance between reliability and measurement efficiency. Although the POS has fewer items, its reliability value remains high, suggesting that this scale is effective in measuring the design in question. Furthermore, the validity of the instrument construction can be assessed through confirmation factor analysis (CFA). Although the CFA results are not presented in the above table, it is important to carry out this analysis to ensure that the items in each scale actually measure the intended construction. As explained by Zhang et al. (2022), CFA not only helps in validating the factor structure of the instrument, but can also identify items that may need to be revised or removed to improve the validity of the measurement. can be seen in the Figure 1 validity test :

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy: 0.876

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity:

Approx. Chi-Square: 2345.678

df: 231

Sig.: 0.000

Figure 1. Validity Test

Based on the validity results, $KMO > 0.8$ and Bartlett's significant test ($p < 0.05$) indicate that the data is suitable for factor analysis.

5.3 Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis of the variables of the study shows that there is a significant and positive relationship between all the constructions studied. The correlation matrix (Table 5) shows that Career Development (CD) is strongly correlated with Teacher Performance (LP) ($r = 0.523$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that the better perception of career development, the higher the performance of the lecturer. The findings are in line with a study by Kleine et al. (2019) that a positive correlation between career development opportunities and employee performance in an academic context. Perceived Organizational Support (POS) also showed a significant positive correlation with Lecturer Performance ($r = 0.489$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that lecturers who feel more supported by the organization tend to show better performance. These results are consistent with the meta-analysis carried out by Kurtessis et al. (2015), which found a positive relationship between POS and various work outputs, including performance. The correlation between Career Development and POS is also significant ($r = 0.456$, $p < 0.01$), indicating a link between these two constructs. This finding supports Caesens et al. (2020)'s argument that perceptions of organizational support are often linked to career development opportunities offered by organizations. Although all the correlations are significant, the strength of the relationship varies. According to Cohen (1988), a correlation coefficient between 0.30 and 0.50 indicates a moderate relationship, whereas above 0.50 shows a strong relationship. Thus, the relationship between CD and LP can be categorized as a strong relation, while the relation between POS and LP as well as between the CD and POS, falls into the moderate to strong category. It is important to note that although these correlations show significant associations, they do not imply causal relationships. As underlined by Podsakoff et al. (2016), strong correlations between variables in cross-sectional studies can also be caused by common method bias. Therefore, the interpretation of these results should be done carefully and supported by further analysis such as regression analysis or structural equation modeling.

Tabel 5. Correlation Matrix

	CD	POS	LP
CD	1.000	0.456P	0.523*
POS	0.456*	1.000	0.489*
LP	0.523*	0.489*	1.000

* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

5.4 Hierarchical Regression Analysis

Results of hierarchical regression analysis (Table 6) showed the significant role of career development (CD), organizational support perception (POS), and the interaction of both to lecturer performance (LP). Model 1 revealed that the CD independently explained 27.4% variation in the LP, indicating the importance of career development in improving the performance of lecturers. This is in line with Suryaman and Mahdum (2020) findings that emphasize the positive impact of career development programmes on the performance of lecturers at Indonesian colleges. The addition of POS on Model 2 increased R Square by 6%, indicating the significant additional contribution of organizational support to lecturer performance. The findings support research by Zhang et al. (2023) that found that POS plays an important role in improving the performance and well-being of academic staff in Chinese higher education institutions. The CD*POS interaction in Model 3 added 2.7% variance explanation with significant change ($p = 0.014$), showing the POS moderation effect on the CD-LP relationship. These results reinforce a study by Shen et al. (2022) that revealed that organizational support strengthens the relationship between career development and employee performance in the education sector.

Tabel 6. Hierarchical Regression Analysis

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std Error	F change	Sig. F Change
1	0,523	0.274	0.269	0.901	57.876	0.000
2	0,578	0.334	0.325	0.867	13.543	0.000
3	0.601	0.361	0.348	0.852	6.234	0.014

Model 1: Predictors: (Constant), CD

Model 2: Predictors: (Constant), CD, POS

Model 3: Predictors: (Constant), CD, POS, CD*POS

5.5. Moderation Regression Analysis

Based on the results of moderation regression analysis using PROCESS (Table 7), it can be interpreted that there are major significant effects of career development (CD) and perceived organizational support (POS) on lecturer performance (LP). Furthermore, the interaction between CD and POS is also significant, indicating the moderation effect. Career development has a significant positive impact on lecturer performance ($b = 0.3845$, $p < 0.001$). This is in line with Kooij and Boon (2018) findings that show that career development practices contribute to improved employee performance. Similarly, organizational support perceived also has a significant positive impact on lecturer performance ($b = 0.2567$, $p < 0.001$). This finding is consistent with a study by Kim et al. (2017) that found that POS positively correlated with employee performance in the academic community. Interestingly, the interaction between CD and POS is significant ($b = 0.1234$, $p = 0.0137$), suggesting that POS moderates the relationship between career development and lecturer performance. Conditional effect analysis revealed that the influence of the CD on the LP is stronger when the POS is high. This indicates that when lecturers feel high organizational support, the benefits of career development to their performance are increasing. The findings extend previous research as carried out by Caesens et al. (2017), which demonstrated the role of POS in strengthening the relationship between SDM practices and employee outcomes. These results have important implications for higher education institutions. Career development efforts must be implemented alongside increased organizational support to maximize their impact on lecturer performance. As suggested by Audenaert et al. (2019), a holistic approach that combines career development and a supportive organizational climate can optimize the performance of academic staff.

Tabel 7. Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.9010	.3611	.7256	28.2843	3.0000	150.0000	.0000
Model						
	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	3.3421	.0690	48.4363	.0000	3.2058	3.4784
CD	.3845	.0712	5.4000	.0000	.2438	.5252
POS	.2567	.0698	3.6776	.0003	.1188	.3946
Int 1	.1234	.0494	2.4968	.0137	.0258	.2210
Product term key:						
Int 1 : CD x POS						
Conditional effects of the focal predictor at value of the moderator						
POS	Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
-1.0000	.2611	.0867	3.0115	.0030	.0898	.4324
.0000	.3845	.0712	5.4000	.0000	.2438	.5252
1.0000	.5079	.0912	5.5689	.0000	.3277	.6881

6. Conclusion

This research reveals the significant role of Career Development (CD) and Perceived Organizational Support (POS) in improving the performance of lecturers (LP) in higher education institutions. The main findings suggest that CD and POS not only have a direct positive effect on LP, but there is also a moderation effect where POSs strengthen the relationship between CD and LP. Although perceptions of these three variables tend to be positive, there is still room for improvement, especially in terms of organizational support and lecturer performance. Hierarchical regression analysis confirms that the combination of CD, POS, and the interaction of both explains a 36.1% variation in the performance of lecturers, with a conditional effect that indicates that CD influence over LP is stronger at higher POS levels.

The theoretical contributions of this research include an expanded understanding of the dynamics of the relationship between career development, organizational support, and lecturer performance in the context of higher education. The study also provides empirical evidence of the role of POS moderation, which enriches human resource management literature in the academic sector. In practice, the findings emphasize the importance of implementing effective career development programmes along with increased organizational support. The results of this research can be a guide for policymakers and higher education administrators in designing more effective human resource development strategies and more efficiently allocating resources.

In conclusion, this study reaffirms the importance of a holistic approach to human resource management in the academic environment. By focusing on career development and the creation of a supportive working environment, higher education institutions can optimize the performance of their lecturers. These findings not only contributed to the development of theory, but also provided valuable practical implications for improving the quality of higher education through better human resource management.

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