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The Role of Perceived Employability In The Relationship Self-Efficacy and Subjective Career Success

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Abstract:

Purpose: This study aims to examine the effect of self-efficacy on subjective career success among employees of Islamic tourisme companies. In addition, the study investigates the mediating role of perceived employability, specifically internal and external employability, in explaining the relationship between self-efficacy and subjective career success.

Design/methodology/approach: This research employed a quantitative approach using a causal research design. Data were collected through questionnaires distributed to employees working in Islamic Tourisme companies in West Sumatra, Indonesia. A total of 200 valid responses were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with SmartPLS 4.0.

Findings: The findings reveal that self-efficacy does not directly influence subjective career success. However, self-efficacy significantly affects both perceived internal employability and perceived external employability. Furthermore, internal and external employability significantly influence subjective career success and fully mediate the relationship between self-efficacy and subjective career success. These results indicate that employability perceptions play an essential role in transforming employees' confidence into positive career outcomes.

Research limitations/implications: This study is limited to employees in the Islamic tourism sector and uses a cross-sectional design. Future research is recommended to apply longitudinal approaches and examine broader industrial contexts.

Practical implications: Organizations should strengthen employees' self-efficacy and employability through career development programs, training, and competency enhancement initiatives to improve career success outcomes.

Originality/value: This study contributes to the career development literature by simultaneously examining perceived internal and external employability as mediating variables in the relationship between self-efficacy and subjective career success within the Islamic tourism industry context.

Keywords: Self-Efficacy; Perceived Employability; Subjective Career Success; Social Cognitive Career Theory

INTRODUCTION

The contemporary employment landscape is increasingly shaped by digital disruption, dynamic organizational changes, and uncertain career trajectories. Employees are expected to respond quickly to technological developments, flexible working systems, and continuous competency enhancement demands (Coetzee et

al., 2023). As a result, career advancement is no longer entirely dependent on organizational career structures, but also on individuals' ability to proactively manage and direct their own career development.

Employees in the tourism sector frequently face various employment challenges, including irregular working hours, limited job security, temporary employment arrangements, and unpredictable career progression (Lei et al., 2021). These conditions are particularly evident in the Hajj and Umrah travel industry, which forms part of the Islamic tourism sector. The industry is highly sensitive to external disruptions such as economic instability, changes in government regulations, global health crises, and political uncertainty (Gautam, 2023; Gebbels et al., 2020; Goh & Lee, 2019). Therefore, employees working in Hajj and Umrah travel agencies are required to continuously strengthen their adaptability, resilience, and professional capabilities in order to sustain their careers.

Over the years, the meaning of career success has shifted from objective achievements toward more subjective evaluations (Gaile et al., 2022).. Earlier perspectives mainly emphasized measurable indicators such as salary, hierarchical position, and promotion opportunities. In contrast, recent studies highlight subjective career success, referring to employees' personal perceptions of satisfaction, accomplishment, and fulfillment in their professional lives (Seibert et al., 2024).. This concept reflects how individuals evaluate their career achievements according to their personal expectations, values, and career aspirations (Lei et al., 2021; Rigotti et al., 2018).

Several individual-related variables have been identified as important predictors of subjective career success. Among the most widely discussed factors are self-efficacy (Bhawna et al., 2023) and perceived employability (Heijden et al., 2022). Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their capability to successfully perform tasks and achieve targeted outcomes (Maddux, 2017) (Blaique et al., 2022). Individuals with strong self-efficacy generally demonstrate greater persistence, confidence, and motivation when dealing with work-related challenges and career development activities (Baluku et al., 2020; Bhawna et al., 2023; Seibert et al., 2024)

Another factor that has received growing attention is perceived employability, which describes employees' beliefs regarding their ability to secure and maintain employment opportunities both within and outside their current organizations (Rothwell & Arnold, 2005; Tee et al., 2022a)(Diaa et al., 2024). Perceived internal employability reflects employees' confidence in obtaining opportunities inside the organization, whereas perceived external employability relates to opportunities available in the broader labor market (Akkermans et al., 2019; Niu et al., 2019). Employees with higher employability perceptions are more likely to feel secure about their future careers and better prepared to cope with employment uncertainty (Baluku et al., 2020; Tee et al., 2022).

Despite extensive discussions regarding self-efficacy, employability, and career success, previous empirical findings remain inconclusive. Several studies indicate that self-efficacy directly contributes to career success (Baluku et al., 2020; Tee et al., 2022a), whereas others suggest that the relationship may occur indirectly

through mediating mechanisms (Presti & Elia, 2020; Tee et al., 2022). Furthermore, limited studies have simultaneously examined perceived internal and external employability as mediators in explaining subjective career success (Forrier & Cuyper, 2018; Nelissen et al., 2017). As a result, the underlying mechanism explaining how self-efficacy influences subjective career success remains insufficiently understood.

This limitation is particularly important in the context of the Hajj and Umrah travel industry, where employees are simultaneously required to sustain career opportunities within their organizations while preparing for uncertainties in the broader labor market. In such conditions, perceived internal employability may strengthen employees' confidence regarding promotion opportunities, organizational recognition, and long-term career continuity, whereas perceived external employability becomes increasingly important in helping employees remain competitive amid market volatility, regulatory changes, and employment instability. However, previous studies have generally examined employability as a unidimensional construct and have rarely investigated the simultaneous mediating roles of perceived internal and external employability within a single framework, particularly in Islamic tourism and developing-country contexts (Forrier & Cuyper, 2018; Nelissen et al., 2017). Most prior research has focused on general tourism, hospitality, or Western organizational settings, leaving limited evidence regarding employees in Islamic tourism companies whose career experiences are strongly shaped by religious service orientation and external environmental uncertainty. Consequently, the literature still lacks a comprehensive understanding of how employees' self-efficacy can be translated into subjective career success through employability perceptions across both organizational and external labor-market contexts.

Addressing these gaps, the present study investigates the mediating role of perceived employability in the relationship between self-efficacy and subjective career success among employees of Islamic tourisme company. This research is expected to enrich the career development literature by offering a deeper understanding of how self-beliefs and employability perceptions influence subjective career outcomes within the Islamic tourism industry.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPHOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Self-Efficacy and Subjective Career Success

Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their ability to perform tasks and achieve desired outcomes effectively (Hartman & Barber, 2020). Employees with high self-efficacy tend to be more confident, motivated, and persistent in facing work challenges and pursuing career goals. Previous studies have shown that self-efficacy contributes positively to career achievement and career satisfaction (Abele & Spurk, 2009; Chughtai, 2018). Employees who believe in their abilities are more likely to evaluate their careers positively and demonstrate stronger resilience in uncertain situations.

H1: Self Efficacy positively related to subjective career success

Self-Efficacy and Perceived Employability

Employees with strong self-efficacy generally perceive themselves as capable of meeting workplace demands and adapting to changing career conditions (Rino et al., 2023). According to Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), self-efficacy influences career-related behavior and encourages individuals to engage in competency development activities. As a result, employees with higher self-efficacy are more likely to perceive greater employability both within and outside the organization (Sultana, 2020).

H2a: Self-Efficacy positively related to Perceived External Employability
H2b: Self-Efficacy positively related to Perceived Internal Employability

Perceived Employability and Subjective Career Success

Perceived employability reflects an individual's assessment regarding the ability to secure and maintain employment (Vanhercke et al., 2014). Employees who believe they have strong employability tend to experience higher confidence, reduced career anxiety, and stronger feelings of career security(Diaa et al., 2024).

Perceived internal employability refers to the perception that an employee can maintain or improve their position within the organization (Baluku et al., 2020; Tee et al., 2022b). Perceived external employability refers to the belief that an employee can obtain employment opportunities in the broader labor market.

Employees with strong employability perceptions are generally more satisfied with their careers because they feel capable of handling career transitions and workplace uncertainty. Previous studies also indicate that employability contributes positively to career satisfaction and career success (Tee et al., 2022a).

H3a: Perceived External Employability positively related to subjective career success
H3b: Perceived Internal Employability positively related to subjective career success

The mediating Role of Perceived Employability

Self-efficacy may not directly produce career success; instead, its effects can occur through other psychological mechanisms. One possible mechanism is perceived employability (Pandia et al., 2023). Employees who believe in their abilities are more likely to feel employable, and these employability perceptions may subsequently enhance their subjective evaluations of career success.

Individuals with high self-efficacy generally possess stronger confidence in their professional competencies, making them more optimistic about career opportunities (Rino et al., 2023). As a result, they may experience higher levels of career satisfaction and success because they perceive themselves as capable of surviving and thriving in competitive labor markets.

H4a: Perceived External Employability mediates the relationships between Self-Efficacy and Subjective career success

H4b: Perceived Internal Employability mediates the relationships between Self-Efficacy and Subjective Career Success

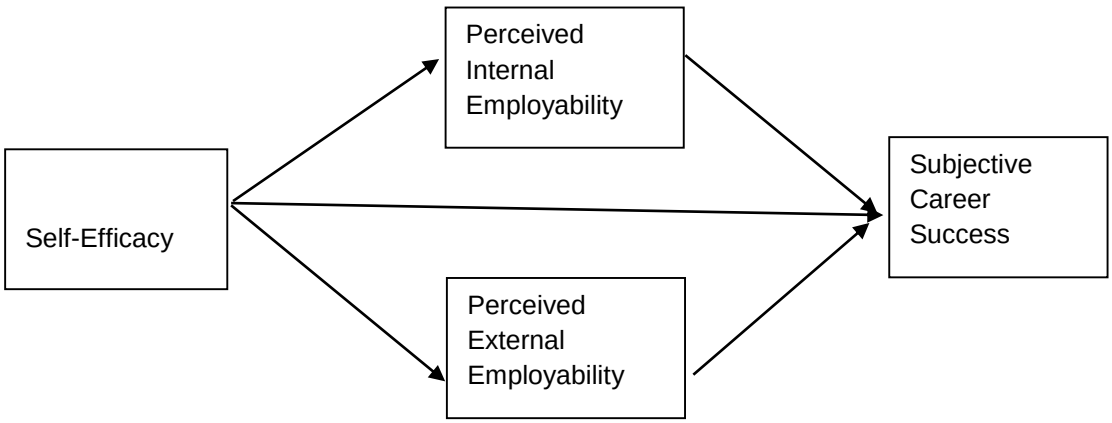


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

RESEARCH METHODS

This study applied a quantitative method with a causal research approach to analyze the relationships between self-efficacy, perceived employability, and subjective career success. Data were collected through online and offline questionnaires distributed to employees of Hajj and Umrah travel agencies in West Sumatra, Indonesia.

A total of 200 respondents participated in this study. The sample size was determined based on SEM-PLS requirements and was considered sufficient to represent the research model. The questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The collected data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with SmartPLS 4.0, including validity, reliability, and hypothesis testing procedures.

Measurement

Subjective career success was assessed using a five-item scale adapted from (Zopiatis et al., 2017). Self-efficacy was measured using a nine-item instrument adopted from (Jiang, 2021). Meanwhile, perceived internal and external employability were measured using the scale developed by (Rothwell & Arnold, 2007), consisting of eleven items in total.

RESULTS

Validity Test

The validity test demonstrated that all indicators met the required loading factor threshold, indicating that the measurement items appropriately represented their respective constructs. In addition, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values exceeded the minimum requirement of 0.50, confirming convergent validity (Hair et al., 2019).

Reliability Test

Reliability analysis also showed satisfactory results. Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values for all variables were above the recommended threshold, indicating strong internal consistency.

Table 1. Validity and Reliability Test

Variable	AVE	Cronbach Alpha	CR
Self-Efficacy	0.599	0.917	0.929
Perceived Internal Employability	0.643	0.812	0.827
Perceived External Employability	0.568	0.875	0.902
Subjective Career Success	0.651	0.865	0.867

Source: SmartPLS output (2026)

Table 2. Results of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Path	Effect Size	t-statistic	p-value	Decision
H1	Self-Efficacy -> Subjective Career Success	-0.092	1.543	0.123	Not Supported
H2a	Self-Efficacy -> Perceived External Employability	0.466	7.840	0.000	Supported
H2b	Self-Efficacy -> Perceived Internal Employability	0.425	7.383	0.000	Supported
H3a	Perceived External Employability -> Subjective Career Success	0.231	2.226	0.026	Supported
H3b	Perceived Internal Employability -> Subjective Career Success	0.529	5.257	0.000	Supported

H4a	Self-Efficacy -> Perceived External Employability -> Subjective Career Success	0.108	2.056	0.040	Supported
H4b	Self-Efficacy -> Perceived Internal Employability -> Subjective Career Success	0.225	4.027	0.000	Supported

Source: SmartPLS Outputs (2026)

Table 2 shows the structural model analysis revealed that self-efficacy significantly influenced both perceived internal employability and perceived external employability. Furthermore, both dimensions of employability significantly affected subjective career success.

DISCUSSION

The results indicate that self-efficacy does not directly influence subjective career success. This finding implies that employees' confidence in their abilities alone is not sufficient to create career satisfaction unless it is supported by strong employability perceptions (Hamzah et al., 2022). Employees may feel successful in their careers when they believe they have opportunities and competencies that are valuable in the labor market. In the context of Hajj and Umrah travel agencies in West Sumatra, employees work in an industry characterized by regulatory uncertainty, fluctuating market demand, and limited career stability. Consequently, employees tend to evaluate career success not only based on self-confidence, but also on their perceptions of career opportunities and job security within and outside the organization. This finding highlights the novelty of the study by demonstrating that, within the Islamic tourism sector, employability serves as a crucial mechanism linking self-efficacy to subjective career success.

Based on Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), self-efficacy encourages individuals to take initiative, adapt to challenges, and improve their professional competencies (Lent & Brown, 2019). In this study, self-efficacy was found to positively affect both internal and external employability. Employees with higher confidence levels tend to perceive themselves as more capable of maintaining and obtaining employment opportunities both inside and outside the organization (Rino et al., 2023).

The findings also show that perceived internal and external employability significantly influences subjective career success. Employees who perceive themselves as employable are likely to feel more secure, optimistic, and satisfied with their careers. Strong employability perceptions help employees manage career uncertainty and improve confidence regarding future career opportunities (Heijden et al., 2022). Additionally, research findings (Andresen et al., 2022) reveal that perceived internal employability is associated with subjective career success.

Furthermore, perceived employability was proven to mediate the relationship between self-efficacy and subjective career success. This suggests that employability acts as an important mechanism through which self-efficacy contributes to positive career outcomes. Employees with strong self-belief are more likely to experience

career success when they also perceive themselves as employable. The research by (Dacre et al., 2013) support this findings, It suggests that the connection between self-efficacy and career satisfaction can be affected by the perception of employability. The study by (H. Ahmed, 2019) shown that perceived employability mediates the relationship between self-efficacy and career success.

These findings emphasize the importance of organizational support in improving employees' competencies, confidence, and employability through training programs, career development initiatives, and supportive work environments (Heijden et al., 2022; Hamzah et al., 2022).

CONCLUSION, LIMITATION, AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study examined the role of self-efficacy and perceived employability in shaping subjective career success among employees of Hajj and Umrah travel agencies in West Sumatra. The findings reveal that self-efficacy does not directly influence career success, while perceived employability significantly mediates the relationship.

Employees with stronger employability perceptions tend to feel more confident, satisfied, and positive about their career achievements. These findings emphasize the importance of employability in supporting long-term career development.

This study enriches the career development literature by highlighting perceived employability as a key factor connecting self-efficacy and subjective career success. Practically, organizations should support employee development through training and career enhancement programs.

However, this study is limited by its cross-sectional design and self-reported data collection. Future studies are recommended to use longitudinal approaches and broader research settings to strengthen generalizability.

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Data curation and formal analysis: Tika Rahma Yani Siregar
Validation: Bulan Nettiary Kelara
Writing – review & editing: Tika Rahma Yani Siregar, Bulan Nettiary Kelara

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