Self Esteem and Career Adaptability Among College Graduates: The Role of Career Decision Self Efficacy as Mediating Variable

Veronica Sitorus[1], Nia Ariyani Erlin[1]

[1]Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Negeri Padang, Indonesia
Email: niaariyanierlin@fe.unp.ac.id

Abstract. *The increasing challenges in the career world ultimately require human resources who are able to adapt quickly to changes and developments. The purpose of this study is to explain how self-esteem affects adaptability in careers by using self-efficacy in career decision-making as a mediator. This quantitative study involved 200 respondents selected using a purposive sampling approach, with data analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) 4.0. The results of the study indicate that career adaptability and self-efficacy in career decision-making are positively and significantly influenced by self-esteem. The relationship between self-esteem and career adaptability is mediated by self-efficacy in career decision-making, which also has a positive and significant impact on career adaptability. Career Construction Theory (CCT) in this study states that fulfilling basic psychological needs such as self-esteem can increase career decision self efficacy, which ultimately enhances career adaptability. The findings of this study highlight the importance for university graduates to develop self-esteem as a means to enhance confidence in career decision-making and career adaptability, especially in facing the challenges of an increasingly competitive career world.*

Keywords: Self Esteem, Career Adaptability, Career Decision Self Efficacy

INTRODUCTION

Progress and changes in various fields at the present time have made certain companies and institutions begin to focus on finding quality human resources and being able to adapt quickly to changes that occur. The increasingly competitive career challenges make adaptability very important to have in building their careers in the future. According to Greco & Kraimer (2020) a career itself involves increasing a person's responsibilities, skills and position in achieving their professional targets over time. In reality, there are still many college graduates who feel unprepared to adapt when entering the world of careers due to a lack of soft skills and hard skills, experience that is not too broad, low social support and a lack of self-confidence (Nurjanah, 2018).

Negative concerns experienced by college graduates about how to deal with the career journey process related to academic experience and the transition to the world of work affect their ability to adapt in their careers (Oliveira & Marques, 2024). Hou (2019) stated that the current changing career developments make career adaptability an important ability for individuals in facing an uncertain future of work. According to Greco & Kraimer (2020), career adaptability is a psychosocial resource that shows an individual's ability to manage current and future work challenges that can affect their social integration. Adaptation is the initial stage that

will determine how a person faces changes in the world of work and prepares themselves to carry out work roles that will affect career success in the future (Hamzah et al., 2021). Hlaďo et al. (2022) stated that high career adaptability helps individuals develop career preparation strategies for their future.

The unpreparedness to adapt to the changes that occur proves that it is important for every college graduate to have mature career planning and preparation in achieving their career so as to help them develop high career adaptability. In the early stages of career development, self-esteem is considered an important resource in various aspects of life, especially when facing career transitions (Marcionetti & Rossier, 2021). Self-esteem refers to the assessment or evaluation that a person makes of themselves about how well they think compared to the expectations of themselves and those around them (Adiputra, 2018). Low self-esteem in a person is indicated by the fact that they sometimes judge themselves as worthless and think they are not good enough at all (Hlaďo et al., 2022).

The results of Marcionetti & Rossier's (2021) study stated that most college graduates tend to have low self-esteem because they often underestimate their abilities rather than improve them and they also focus too much on the failures they will experience. A person with self-esteem who has a positive assessment of his or her worth and knows his or her capacity to achieve the career he or she wants by believing in his or her abilities (Hui et al., 2018). Thus, high self-esteem helps a person to dare to make the right decisions about their life and acknowledge that they are valuable and can face challenges with confidence.

Career decision self-efficacy (CDSE) is said to play an important role in career adaptability in college graduates in preparing themselves to enter the workforce (Hamzah et al, 2021). Taylor & Betz (1983) explained that CDSE is a person's level of self-confidence in their ability to complete the tasks required in the process of choosing the right career. With strong CDSE, college graduates can avoid choosing careers that do not match their interests or abilities, thereby reducing the risk of career dissatisfaction in the future (Joanne Chan & Chan, 2021).

CDSE is a foundation for graduates to act strategically, adaptively, and optimistically in facing the transition from campus to the world of work (Salim et al., 2023). CDSE affects graduates' resilience in the face of rejection, competition or changing industry trends. CDSE supported by social encouragement from the surrounding environment will also affect the level of confidence of college graduates who will encourage proactivity in self-development.

In the field of education, West Sumatra Province has more than 10 universities, both Kemendikti Sains and non-Kemendikti Sains and Technology universities spread across various districts and cities that have a mission to produce superior and competitive graduates in achieving successful and optimal career levels (Directorate General, 2025). However, data obtained from BPS Sumbar (2024), found the open unemployment rate according to the highest education completed in 2024 for diploma level of 7.6% and university of 6.73% increased from 2023 with a figure of 6.18% at diploma level and 5.52% at university level.

This will make it difficult for prospective workers if they do not prepare a good career plan so it is important for college graduates to have good career adaptability in preparing a successful career. This research data is also supported by the results of interviews conducted with several graduates from different universities in West Sumatra, it was found that some of the respondents still have a low level of career adaptation and have negative self-assessments of themselves in achieving their life goals. in achieving their life goals. Furthermore, some respondents also feel confident in making career decisions by considering the steps that need to be achieved according to their beliefs in order to be better prepared to adapt to their careers well.

Then, this research focused on college graduates of the 2024 and 2025 intakes in West Sumatra Province starting from universities, academies, polytechnics, institutes and colleges who are in the process of looking for work. Furthermore, the purpose of this study is to analyze the role of CDSE in mediating the influence of self-esteem on career adaptability in college graduates

in West Sumatra. Greco & Kraimer (2020) emphasized that career adaptability and self-efficacy are considered important factors individually in relation to each other for the career development process and career decision making. The results of Hamzah et al (2021) study explain that there is a significant direct influence on self-esteem on career adaptability mediated by CDSE. Fatin & Salim (2020), in their research also stated that the role of CDSE for student graduates will overcome their doubts in analyzing career opportunities from the career plans they have prepared.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Career Construction Theory (CCT)

In this study, the researcher used a grand theory in the form of career construction theory. Career construction theory was developed by Savickas & Porfeli (2012), which explains a person's ability to build and manage their career in the future based on life experiences and self-identity (Greco & Kraimer, 2020). Career construction theory is a modern approach to career development that emphasizes the active process of individuals constructing their own career meaning and identity (Greco & Kraimer, 2020). This career construction theory emphasizes the importance of adaptive behavior in managing the career development process and being ready to face unexpected changes in the career world related to improving self-skills and new responsibilities from before (Greco & Kraimer, 2020).

Career adaptability is an important component in this theory (Greco & Kraimer, 2020). In career construction theory, there is a term psychosocial construction where the existence of adaptation resources is expected to develop adaptive behavior in a constructive activity such as introduction or orientation, exploration, formation, management and release of self (Greco & Kraimer, 2020). This construction theory asserts that individuals have different levels of willingness and ability to act to cope with changing conditions in their environment (Greco & Kraimer, 2020). Thus, good adaptation is indicated by success, satisfaction and development. Career construction theory also does not only focus on the field of career or work but encourages resources to continue to evaluate and recognize themselves in building and managing a career (Greco & Kraimer, 2020).

That way, if someone is able to recognize and understand themselves as a whole well, it will increase self-esteem towards their career journey and when someone is able to form a career identity, it makes that person feel valuable and worthy of getting the career they are pursuing. Having a comprehensive self-understanding can help someone make career decisions that are in line with their identity (Greco & Kraimer, 2020). In the process of choosing a career in the future, career adaptability becomes an important component related to how someone evaluates themselves regarding their career development while continuing to improve their abilities so that they are able to make career decisions that they believe in (Greco & Kraimer, 2020).

Based on this theory, it can be concluded that self-esteem increases CDSE because individuals with strong self-esteem are more confident in their ability to explore career options (curiosity), evaluate information (control), and solve career problems (confidence). CDSE then strengthens career adaptability, this self-confidence encourages adaptive behaviors such as career planning and risk-taking (Taylor & Betz, 1983). Therefore, it is important to create a strong level of self-confidence in choosing the career decisions that will be taken so as to encourage someone's ability to build an optimal career and successfully achieve career goals in the future.

Career Adaptability

In the career development process, high career adaptability is required for someone who is about to start a career in order to be able to develop a career preparation strategy and determine the career goals they want to achieve in the future (Hamzah et al 2021). According to Greco & Kraimer (2020) career adaptability is a psychosocial resource that shows an individual's ability to manage current and future work challenges that can affect their social integration. Career adaptability allows someone to show their involvement in the job role and be able to

manage the challenges that arise in the world of work. Thus, career adaptability is concluded as the extent to which a person adapts when participating in their work role or changes or challenges in their career field. Greco & Kraimer (2020) states that there are four elements to measure career adaptability namely concern, control, curiosity and confident.

Self Esteem

Rosenberg (2017) explains that self esteem refers to the assessment or evaluation that a person makes of himself regarding how well he thinks compared to the expectations of himself and those around him. By creating positive self -esteem in a person, it will help him to change negative actions and behavior into positive ones. a more objective perspective (Kvasková et al., 2023). Therefore, self-esteem can be concluded as how a person views and accepts the quality and characteristics of himself in living his life. Self-esteem influenced by the following two important factors namely self competence and self respect.

Career Decision Self Efficacy

Career decision self efficacy (CDSE) reflects a strong understanding of one's own abilities that helps in setting career goals and being able to take responsibility for the career decisions chosen (Salim et al., 2023). Furthermore, Taylor & Betz (1983) explained that CDSE is a person's level of self-confidence in their ability to complete the tasks required in the process of choosing the right career. High CDSE in a person will help him in determining career decisions that are truly in accordance with his own desires (Kvasková et al., 2023). CDSE can be concluded as a form of a person's self-confidence in making career decisions about how they trust their ability to plan and choose a career that is in line with their values and career goals. Taylor & Betz (1983) emphasized that CDSE refers to a number of specific abilities of a person as follows such as self appraisal, occupational information, goal selection, planning and problem solving. From the background and literature review that have been explained previously, there are a number of hypotheses formulated in this study as follows:

The Influence of Self Esteem on Career Adaptability

Greco & Kraimer (2020), in career construction theory states that in the process of career development, individual adaptation is needed starting from the way they prepare themselves to take on job roles and the ability to adjust to changes and challenges in the career world. Cheung (2015) explains that self-esteem refers to a person's emotional assessment that concerns all aspects of themselves in achieving their life goals. This is in line with the career construction theory which explains the importance of someone recognizing their interests, values, skills and personality in planning and building a career (Greco & Kraimer, 2020). The process helps a person to understand themselves better so as to increase self esteem. Research conducted by Atac et al (2018) that self-esteem forming career adaptability that affects self-confidence, motivation and resilience of a person in facing career challenges that are used as opportunities as a place to develop in facing career transitions. In the early stages of career development, self-esteem is considered an important resource in various aspects of life, especially when facing career transitions (Marcionetti & Rossier, 2021). Changes in the world of work make it important for a person to increase their self esteem in order to be able to show the quality of good self worth and be more actively involved in showing adaptive actions. Based on the description above, the research hypothesis is formulated, namely: Hypothesis 1: Self-esteem has a positive and significant influence on career adaptability

The Influence of Self Esteem on Career Decisions Self Efficacy

Baumeister & Vohs (2018) stated that self esteem and career decision self efficacy are two different concepts but influence each other. Self esteem is general and includes overall self-assessment, while career decision self-efficacy is more specific and focuses on a person's specific competence in making career decisions. Both are important to develop so that individuals can plan their careers well while feeling confident in achieving their life goals. With a thorough understanding of oneself, it can help a person make career decisions that are in line with their

identity (Greco & Kraimer, 2020). (Abdullah & Roslan, 2021) proves that graduates with good self-esteem tend to have high CDSE, so they are more prepared to face the world of work proactively and strategically. Self-esteem is related to a person's assessment of themselves. will affects how self-confidence in their ability to make career decisions in the future. Having a comprehensive understanding of oneself can help someone make career decisions that are in line with their identity (Greco & Kraimer, 2020). The results of research conducted by (Triwidiyanti et al., 2022) suggest that high self-esteem can affect CDSE because someone who has a comprehensive understanding of themselves tends to be more confident in making career decisions by increasing their abilities to be able to achieve the career field of interest. Based on the description above, the research hypothesis is formulated, namely: Hypothesis 2: Self esteem has a positive and significant influence on CDSE.

The Influence of Career Decisions Self Efficacy on Career Adaptability

In the process of choosing the desired career, CDSE is present to help someone to be brave in determining the career decisions that will be taken and be able to overcome every career challenge that exists Taylor & Betz (1983). The results of research conducted by Hamzah et al (2021) stated that CDSE with career adaptability has a positive and significant correlation. Chui & Ngo (2022), explained that there is a positive relationship between CDSE and career adaptability because CDSE is able to create career exploration actions and being able to adapt to career transitions. Kim & Lee (2018), states that when someone is trained to have self-efficacy in career decision making, they will prepare the steps that need to be considered and improve their skills in order to have strong career adaptability according to their abilities, values and personality. Someone who has a strong CDSE will have the initiative to think about the steps needed to successfully adapt to a career transition. Self-efficacy will direct their attitude and behavior in adjusting to the changes they experience in building their career. CDSE reflects an understanding of one's own abilities in setting career goals and being able to take responsibility for the career decisions chosen (Salim et al., 2023). Based on the description above, the research hypothesis is formulated, namely: Hypothesis 3: Career decisions self efficacy has a positive and significant influence on career adaptability.

The Influence of Self Esteem on Career Adaptability Mediated By Career Decision Self Efficacy

Career construction theory emphasizes that adaptability skills are one of the skills that are currently needed in the career world in facing increasing challenges and changes (Greco & Kraimer, 2020). In addition to adaptability skills, career construction theory explains that in order to achieve career stability in the future, understanding and recognizing oneself is one of the important factors that should not be ignored because it will affect social interactions in the career world. That way, if someone is able to recognize and understand themselves as a whole well, it will increase self-esteem towards their career journey and when someone is able to form a career identity, it makes that person feel valuable and worthy of getting the career they are pursuing. Strong self-esteem is necessary to have because it will affect how one's attitude and behavior towards the sustainability of one's career (Hui et al., 2018). This is also supported by research conducted by Atac et al. (2018) which shows that self-esteem is a significant predictor of a person's career adaptability.

(Greco & Kraimer, 2020) in his career construction theory also states that having a comprehensive understanding of oneself can help someone make career decisions that are in line with their identity. High self-efficacy in the context of a career is indicated by a person's willingness to recognize their potential and experience and adjust it to the career they want to achieve. The results of a study conducted by Hamzah et al (2021) showed that self-esteem has a positive and significant effect on career adaptability in final year students at the State University of Malaysia mediated by CDSE. High self-esteem encourages a person to make career decisions that can affect their ability to explore various career options so that they can demonstrate adaptive behavior towards their career. Based on the description above, the research hypothesis

is formulated, namely: Hypothesis 4: Self esteem has a positive and significant impact on career adaptability which is mediated by career decision self efficacy.

METHODS

Study Area, Population, Design and Sampling Method

This is a quantitativeresearch that was conducted in West Sumatra from May 2025. The population in this study is a number of college graduates in West Sumatra. In sampling, the researcher used the purposive sampling technique with the following criteria: (1) Aged 21-25 years because individuals aged 19-25 years are included in the emerging adulthood age which requires them to be able to make decisions in determining the career they will pursue after completing their education at college (Din & Yudiana et al., 2021); (2) Not yet have a permanent job or are looking for work; (3) Diploma (D3/D4) and bachelor's (S1) graduates in 2024 and 2025 because based on data obtained from the West Sumatra BPS in 2024, there was an increase in unemployment at these levels compared to the previous year; (4) Are graduates from universities under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Science and Technology and non-Ministry of Education and Science and Technology in West Sumatra. The determination of the number of samples in this study used the hair formula, namely using the assumption of 10 times the number of indicators in the study (Sarstedt et al., 2021). The number of indicators in this study was 11 indicators from each variable so that the number of samples in this study was set at 110 which represented the population. Research data collection comes from primary data in the form of questionnaires, while secondary data is obtained from websites, journals, books and other scientific articles.

Research Instruments

The data collection techniques used in this study are primary and secondary data collection techniques. The instrument used in collecting primary data for this study was a survey method using a questionnaire conducted by giving a number of written questions or statements to respondents and then arranged on a Likert scale. The likert scale is a scale used to measure a person's opinion, attitude or statement on a question using numbers 1 to 5 (Sugiyono, 2013). Data collection through this questionnaire is distributing through google forms to respondents according to the criteria. Meanwhile, secondary data collection techniques in this study were obtained from a number of websites, journals, books and other scientific articles. Self-esteem in this research questionnaire was measured using the Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale (RSES) by Rosenberg which has 2 indicators which includes self-competence and self-respect with 10 questionnaire items. Career decision self-efficacy was measured using The Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form by Taylor & Betz (1983). For this variable, there are 25 questionnaire items that cover five indicators, namely self-appraisal, occupational information, goal selection, making a plan and problem-solving arranged on a likert scale. Furthermore, career adaptability is measured using the Career Adaptability Scale (CAAS) by Greco & Kraimer (2020) which includes 4 indicators, namely concern, control, curiosity, and confident with 24 questionnaire items.

Study Analysis

The data analysis of this study used descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. After the data was collected, a data verification stage was carried out to ensure the integrity of the completed questionnaires and check whether all questions had been answered completely. To see how the respondents responded to the number of question items asked, the total respondent achievement formula (TRA) was used for descriptive statistical data analysis. Meanwhile, for inferential statistical data analysis, the researcher used software in the form of Smart PLS4.0 with the PLS-SEM (Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling) technique which can test measurement models and structural models and can test hypotheses between variables simultaneously (Sarstedt et al., 2021). Hypothesis testing is carried out by operating

bootstrapping to see if there is a relationship between variables and whether the formulated hypothesis can be accepted.

RESULTS AND DICUSSION

Descriptive Statistic

Descriptive statistical analysis is a data processing technique used to analyze data by describing the data that has been collected without the aim of making general explanations and conclusions (Sugiyono, 2013). The data comes from the results of respondents' answers to the items in the questionnaire, which are then processed by grouping and tabulating the data. The total number of final respondents in this study was 200 people, dominated by female college graduates in West Sumatra as many as 125 people, and male as many as 75 people. This study involved respondents from 15 different universities, both state universities and private universities, where the most respondents came from Padang State University graduates as many as 114 people.

Description of Research Variables

The total achievemenst of respondents (TRA) are used to determine each category of answers from descriptive variables. The career adaptability variable produces a TRA of 90.95 % which is in the high category. For the self-esteem variable, it produces a TRA of 77% which is in the medium category and need to be improved. Career decision self-efficacy has a TRA of 88% and is in the high category.

Outer Model

Validity Test

Validity test is measured using convergent validity and discriminant validity. Convergent validity in the Smart PLS program is assessed based on the rule of thumb which is usually used according to (Ghozali, 2015), namely the loading factor value > 0.70 is considered valid and can also be seen from the average variance extracted (AVE) value > 0.50. While the discriminant validity test is assessed based on cross loading, if the correlation of the construct dimension has a higher value compared to the correlation of other cons truct dimensions, then the construct is said to have discriminant validity.
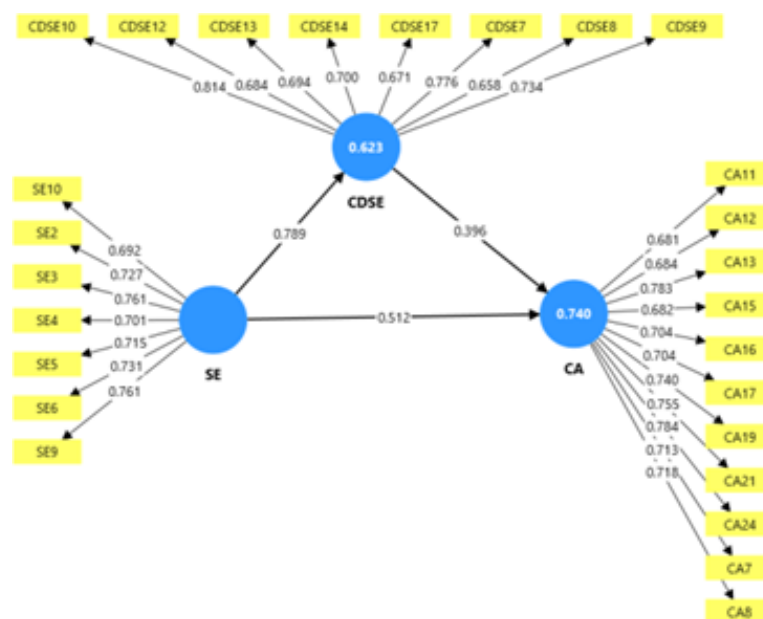

Figure 1. Outer Model

Source: Smart PLS (2025)

According to Sarstedt et al (2021) an ideal loading factor is 0.70, however 0.60 is still acceptable in the outer model as long as the composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) meet the requirements. In the image above, from a total of 54 items for each variable, the researcher deleted 28 items that had factor loadings values below 0.60, namely CA1, CA2, CA3, CA4, CA5, CA6, CA9, CA10, CA14, CA18, CA20, CA22, CA23, CDSE11, CDSE1, CDSE2, CDSE3, CDSE4, CDSE5, CDSE6, CDSE 15, CDSE 16, CDSE18, CDSE19, CDSE20, SE1, SE7 and SE8 so that the outer loading for the convergent validity test has been met. Another method in measuring convergent validity is also seen from the AVE (Average Variance Extracted) value where the AVE value at > 0.50 indicates good convergent validity (Ghozali, 2015).

Table 1. Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
CA	0.909	0.910	0.923	0.523
CDSE	0.865	0.870	0.895	0.516
SE	0.852	0.855	0.887	0.529

Source: Smart PLS (2025)

Based on Table 1, it can be seen that each variable has an AVE value > 0.50 which has met the required rule of thumb. Thus, it can be stated that each variable in this study has met the convergent validity test criteria.

Table 2. Output Cross Loading

	CA	CDSE	SE
CA11	0.681	0.591	0.501
CA12	0.684	0.595	0.541
CA13	0.783	0.636	0.599
CA15	0.682	0.492	0.619
CA16	0.704	0.589	0.561
CA17	0.704	0.522	0.639
CA19	0.740	0.604	0.579
CA21	0.755	0.561	0.613
CA24	0.784	0.592	0.684
CA7	0.713	0.571	0.576
CA8	0.718	0.615	0.637
CDSE10	0.659	0.814	0.608
CDSE12	0.540	0.684	0.625
CDSE13	0.573	0.694	0.574
CDSE14	0.543	0.700	0.531
CDSE17	0.616	0.671	0.455
CDSE7	0.581	0.776	0.656
CDSE8	0.446	0.658	0.436
CDSE9	0.615	0.734	0.609
SE10	0.640	0.589	0.692
SE2	0.575	0.573	0.727
SE3	0.719	0.699	0.761
SE4	0.600	0.572	0.701
SE5	0.529	0.468	0.715
SE6	0.558	0.550	0.731
SE9	0.531	0.516	0.761

Source: Smart PLS Data Processing, 2025

Based on Table 2, it is known that the cross loading output value indicates good discriminant validity because the correlation of the indicator to its construct is higher compared to the correlation value of the indicator to other constructs. This indicates that the discriminant validity test in this study is declared valid.

Reliability test

The reliability of the questionnaire is measured by looking at the composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha values to measure the actual value of reliability in a construct (Ghozali, 2015). The composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha values can be stated as reliable with a value of > 0.70.

Table 3. Cronbach Alpha and Composite Reliability

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
CA	0.909	0.910	0.923	0.523
CDSE	0.865	0.870	0.895	0.516
SE	0.852	0.855	0.887	0.529

Source: Smart PLS (2025)

Based on Table 14, it shows that the Cronbach Alpha and Composite Reliability values are > 0.70 so that they have fulfilled the rule of thumb in the applicable reliability test and all variables in this study are declared reliable.

Inner Model

The inner model is evaluated using the R-square value and significance value to measure the percentage of direct influence of exogenous variables on endogenous variables. In assessing the model with PLS, it begins by looking at the R-square value for each endogenous latent variable. Table 4 shows the results of the R-Square estimation using SmartPLS.

Table 4. R-Square Estimation Results

	R-square	R-square adjusted
CA	0.740	0.737
CDSE	0.623	0.621

Source: Smart PLS (2025)

Based on the table above, it shows that the R-Square value of the career adaptability variable is 0.740, meaning that the value states that 74% of the self-esteem variable contributes to the career adaptability variable while the rest is influenced by variables outside the study. The R-Square value for the CDSE variable is 0.623, meaning that the value states that 62% of the self-esteem and career adaptability variables contribute to the CDSE variable while the rest is influenced by variables outside the study.

Hypothesis Development

Hypothesis testing is conducted to test how the relationship between each hypothesis that has been formulated previously is related. By using SmartPLS 4.0, researchers conducted hypothesis testing in this study tested by operating bootstrapping to see the effect of independent variables on dependent variables:

Direct Effect Hypothesis

The direct effect hypothesis test is carried out by looking at the T-Statistic value produced by the structural model (inner model). The research hypothesis can be accepted if the T-statistic value is > 1.96 (T-table), conversely if the T-statistic is smaller than the T-table then the hypothesis is rejected (Ghozali, 2015). A p-value of <0.05 means the hypothesis is declared

acceptable. Conversely, if the p-value is > 0.05, then the hypothesis is declared rejected Sarstedt et al (2021).

Table 4. Direct Effect Hypothesis Test

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
CDSE -> CA	0.396	0.398	0.079	5.001	0.000
SE -> CA	0.825	0.828	0.024	35,039	0.000
SE -> CDSE	0.789	0.794	0.024	32,504	0.000

Source: Smart PLS (2025)

The results for the direct hypothesis in hypothesis 1, hypothesis 2 and hypothesis 3 are as follows: The results of testing Hypothesis 1 in table 4 show that the self-esteem variable produces a P-value <0.05 and a T-statistic value of 35,039 (>1.96). These results indicate that hypothesis 1 is accepted because there is a positive and significant influence between self-esteem and career adaptability. Furthermore, the coefficient value is 0.825, which means that if the level of self-esteem possessed by a number of college graduates in West Sumatra is high, it will have an impact on high career adaptability. Rosenberg (2017) explains that self esteem refers to a person's emotional assessment regarding all aspects of himself in achieving his life goals. This is in line with career construction theory which explains that it is important for a person to recognize their interests, values, skills and personality in planning and building a career (Greco & Kraimer, 2020). Research conducted by Atac et al (2018) states that self esteem plays a role in shaping career adaptability which affects a person's self-confidence, motivation and resilience in facing career challenges which are used as opportunities as a place to develop in facing career transitions. Similar research conducted by Kvasková et al (2023), also states that self-esteem as a foundation of self-confidence in adapting more openly in the face of changes in the world of work and increasing self-ability. If a person has high self-esteem, then they will consider themselves capable of adapting to career challenges that arise and see career uncertainty as part of the process towards success that leads to increased employability.

The results of testing Hypothesis 2 show that the self-esteem variable produces a P-value <0.05 and a T-statistic value of 32,504 (>1.96). These results indicate that hypothesis 2 is accepted because there is a positive and significant influence significant between self-esteem and career decision self-efficacy. Furthermore, the coefficient value is 0.789, which means that if the level of self-esteem possessed by a number of college graduates in West Sumatra is high, it will have an impact on high career decision self-efficacy. Atac et al (2018) shows that self esteem is a significant predictor of a person's career adaptability. It is important for college graduates to create high self esteem within themselves in order to be able to show the quality of their abilities when entering the world of work. In the early stages of career development, self esteem is considered an important resource in various aspects of life, especially when facing career transitions (Marcionetti & Rossier, 2021). People with strong self-esteem tend to actively seek information about career opportunities, professional networks and personal development programs. Conversely, low self-esteem can lead to procrastination or dependence on others in making decisions. High self-esteem can help a person to overcome difficulties and put negative things into a more objective perspective (Kvasková et al., 2023). Hui et al (2018) in their research suggest that if a person has a strong self esteem, it means that he considers himself valuable, accepts his strengths and weaknesses in making the right decisions for his life.

The results of testing Hypothesis 3 show that the career decision self-efficacy variable produces P-values <0.05 and a T-statistic value of 5.001 (>1.96). These results indicate that hypothesis 3 is accepted because there is a positive and significant influence between career decision self-efficacy and career adaptability. Furthermore, the coefficient value is 0.396, which means that if the level of career decision self-efficacy possessed by a number of college graduates in West Sumatra is high, it will have an impact on high career adaptability. CDSE is an important aspect for college graduates because CDSE will encourage college graduates to assess their

abilities that need to be improved in facing increasingly high career challenges and require resources that quickly adapt to developments (Salim et al., 2023). Liu (2024), stated that low CDSE can hinder the career success of university graduates, ranging from difficulty securing employment to long-term stagnation. However, with the right interventions (such as training, social support and self-exploration), graduates can build confidence and make better career decisions. Someone who has a strong CDSE will have the initiative to think about the steps needed to successfully adapt to a career transition. Self-efficacy will direct their attitude and behavior in adjusting to the changes they experience in building their career. Joanne & Chan (2021), also stated that with strong career decision self-efficacy, college graduates can avoid choosing a career that does not match their interests or abilities so as to reduce the risk of career dissatisfaction in the future and achieve good career adaptability.

Indirect Effect Hypothesis

The indirect effect hypothesis is used to see the effect between self esteem on career adaptability through career decision self efficacy as a mediating variable. The mediation hypothesis can be accepted if it produces a T-statistic > 1.96. The results of the calculation in this T-statistic can be seen in the following table:

Table 5. Indirect Effect Hypothesis Test

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
SE -> CDSE -> CA	0.313	0.316	0.066	4,769	0.000

Source: Smart PLS (2025)

Based on the table 5, it's known that the P-values <0.05 and the T-statistic value of the indirect effect of self-esteem on career adaptability through career decisions elf efficacy is 4.769 (> 1.96) so it can be said that indirectly, career decision self efficacy (CDSE) has a significant role as a mediator in the influence of self-esteem on career adaptability. This study shows that career adaptability is positively and significantly influenced by self-esteem. Thus, the results of testing Hypothesis 4 is accepted because if the self-esteem of college graduates in West Sumatra is high, it will significantly increase CDSE and have an impact on career adaptability to be higher.

Career construction theory is a modern approach to career development that emphasizes the active process of individuals constructing their own career meaning and identity. It sees careers as an ongoing process shaped by individuals' stories, interactions and adaptations to an ever-changing world. Careers are not only influenced by interests or abilities, but also by an individual's experiences, social interactions and interpretations of the world of work. Career identity is constantly evolving as new experiences, life values change, or external challenges such as technology or recession. Individuals have active control in building careers, but are also influenced by cultural, economic and political contexts. Industrial change is not seen as a threat, but as material for career reconstruction so that the ability to adapt to failures or changes that continue to evolve is needed for someone.

Hamzah et al (2021) in their research stated that career construction theory provides an understanding of the importance of career adaptability which is also influenced by intrinsic factors, one of which is in the form of self esteem and career decision self-efficacy in building the direction of one's behavior to create a meaningful career. Having a comprehensive self-understanding can help someone make career decisions that are line with their identity (Greco & Kraimer, 2020). Individuals create a coherent career story from their experiences, which helps them understand their career path and make decisions. Graduates with high CDSE are more likely to actively pursue training, build a portfolio or expand their professional network. Self-esteem not only has a direct impact on career adaptability, but also indirectly through increasing individual confidence in making career decisions (Hui et al., 2018). CDSE encourages active

behaviors such as opportunity exploration, networking, or career risk-taking, which directly contribute to adaptability.

With strong CDSE, college graduates can avoid choosing careers that do not match their interests or abilities, thereby reducing the risk of future career dissatisfaction Joanne & Chan (2021). This study is supported by Hamzah et al (2021) who stated that self-esteem has a strong role in a person's career adaptability, especially CDSE as a mediator. For example, a college graduates may be confident in general but if they are not confident in choosing a career path, they will still struggle to adapt. Then if college graduates has low self esteem, it will make them experience excessive anxiety and result in suboptimal career decisions that will hinder the ability to adapt to the career world. CDSE is a foundation for graduates to act strategically, adaptively, and optimistically in facing the transition from campus to the world of work (Salim et al., 2023). CDSE affects graduates' resilience in the face of rejection, competition or changing industry trends. CDSE supported by social encouragement from the surrounding environment will also affect the level of confidence of college graduates who will encourage proactivity in self-development. Therefore, it's important for college graduates to have strong self-esteem, it will help them to make the right decisions about their lives, acknowledge that they are valuable and ready to adjust to new tasks and responsibilities that will be assumed during the start of their career process (Hui et al., 2018).

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis conducted and the discussion in the previous chapter, the conclusions obtained in this study include: 1) There is a direct and significant positive influence between self-esteem and career adaptability in college graduates in West Sumatra. This shows that college graduates who have a high level of self-esteem tend to have high career adaptability in facing the academic transition to the world of work. 2) There is a direct and significant positive influence between self-esteem and career decision self-efficacy in college graduates in West Sumatra. This shows that college graduates who have a high level of self-esteem tend to form high career decision self-efficacy for themselves. 3) There is a direct and significant positive influence between career decision self-efficacy and career adaptability in college graduates in West Sumatra. This shows that college graduates who have a high level of career decision self-efficacy towards career adaptability will form good career adaptability. 4) There is an indirect and significant positive influence on self-esteem towards career adaptability with career decision self-efficacy as a mediator. This means that the influence of high self-esteem will be able to increase career decision self-efficacy for college graduates in West Sumatra, so that in the end it will tend to increase the career adaptability of college graduates.

SUGGESTION

The researcher suggests that every college graduate should form higher self-esteem within themselves by better recognizing their strengths and weaknesses, being optimistic in facing challenges and seeing career uncertainty as part of the process towards success. Self-esteem in this study plays an important role in increasing career adaptability in college graduates in West Sumatra through increasing career decision self-efficacy. Therefore, college graduates are expected to be able to develop adaptation strategies in facing the transition from the academic world to the increasingly competitive world of work. This study can also be used as a reference by further researchers who will discuss similar topics, but the study can also use research objects other than students and college graduates, for example in someone who has worked or who is just starting his career and can also add other mediating variables such as proactive personality or resilience so that it can expand the scope of research that is more diverse and contextual.

REFERENCES

Abdullah, N. O. Y., & Roslan, S. (2021). The relationship between perceived social support, self-esteem and career decision self-efficacy among first year undergraduate students.

International Journal of Academic Research in Business & Social Sciences, *11*(8). https://doi.org/10.6007/ijarbss/v11-i8/10782

Adiputra, S. (2018). Influence of peer groups to the self-esteem of Lampung and Javanese students. *International Journal of Psychology and Educational Studies*, *5*(1), 15-22. https://doi.org/10.17220/ijpes.2018.01.003

Ataç, L. O., Dirik, D., & Tetik, H. T. (2018). Predicting career adaptability through self-esteem and social support: A research on young adults. *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance*, *18*(1), 45-61. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10775-017-9346-1

Cheung, C. K., Cheung, H. Y., & Hue, M. T. (2015). Emotional intelligence as a basis for self-esteem in young adults. *The Journal of psychology*, *149*(1), 63-84. https://doi.org/10.1080/00223980.2013.838540

Chui, H., Li, H., & Ngo, H. Y. (2022). Linking protean career orientation with career optimism: Career adaptability and career decision self-efficacy as mediators. *Journal of Career Development*, *49*(1), 161-173. https://doi.org/10.1177/0894845320912526

Din, A. F., & Yudiana, W. (2021). Keterkaitan Persepsi Terhadap Ekspektasi Orang Tua Dengan Kesulitan Dalam Mengambil Keputusan Karier Pada Mahasiswa Tingkat Akhir. *Journal of Psychological Science and Profession*, *5*(1), 50-56. https://doi.org/10.24198/jpsp.v5i1.26601

Fatin, A., & Salim, R. M. A. (2020). Emotional intelligence, career decision self-efficacy, proactive personality: Study on Indonesian vocational students. *Psychology and Education*, *57*(2), 91-94.

Ghozali, I., & Latan, H. (2015). Partial least squares konsep, teknik dan aplikasi menggunakan program smartpls 3.0 untuk penelitian empiris. *Semarang: Badan Penerbit UNDIP*, *4*(1), 35-46.

Greco, L. M., & Kraimer, M. L. (2020). Goal-setting in the career management process: An identity theory perspective. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *105*(1), 40. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/apl0000424

Hamzah, S. R. A., Kai Le, K., & Musa, S. N. S. (2021). The mediating role of career decision self-efficacy on the relationship of career emotional intelligence and self-esteem with career adaptability among university students. *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*, *26*(1), 83-93. https://doi.org/10.1080/02673843.2021.1886952

Hlaďo, P., Juhaňák, L., Hloušková, L., & Lazarová, B. (2022). Exploring the roles of career adaptability, self-esteem, and work values in life satisfaction among emerging adults during their career transition. *Emerging Adulthood*, *10*(1), 135-148. https://doi.org/10.1177/21676968211012586

Hou, C., Wu, Y., & Liu, Z. (2019). Career decision-making self-efficacy mediates the effect of social support on career adaptability: A longitudinal study. *Social Behavior and Personality: an international journal*, *47*(5), 1-13. https://doi.org/10.2224/sbp.8157

Hui, T., Yuen, M., & Chen, G. (2018). Career adaptability, self-esteem, and social support among Hong Kong University students. *The Career Development Quarterly*, *66*(2), 94-106. https://doi.org/10.1002/cdq.12118

Joanne Chan, S. H., & Chan, K. T. (2021). The indirect effects of self-esteem and future work self on career adaptability factors: A study of Chinese undergraduate students. *Journal of Employment Counseling*, *58*(2), 50-73. https://doi.org/10.1002/joec.12157

Kim, N. R., & Lee, K. H. (2018). The effect of internal locus of control on career adaptability: The mediating role of career decision-making self-efficacy and occupational engagement. *Journal of employment counseling*, *55*(1), 2-15. https://doi.org/10.1002/joec.12069

Kvasková, L., Hlado, P., Juhaňák, L., & Macek, P. (2023). Self-esteem and career adaptability: moderating roles of parental and peer support. *The Career Development Quarterly*, *71*(2), 84-96. https://doi.org/10.1002/cdq.12319

Liu, Y. (2024). Research on the Change and Countermeasures of College Students' Employment Trend Based on Big Data Analysis. In *SHS Web of Conferences* (Vol. 200, p. 02002). EDP Sciences. https://doi.org/10.1051/shsconf/202420002002

Marcionetti, J., & Rossier, J. (2021). A longitudinal study of relations among adolescents' self-esteem, general self-efficacy, career adaptability, and life satisfaction. *Journal of Career Development*, *48*(4), 475-490. https://doi.org/10.1177/0894845319861691

Nurjanah, A. S. (2018). Kecemasan mahasiswa fresh graduate dalam melamar pekerjaan. *Al-Ittizaan: Jurnal Bimbingan Konseling Islam*, *1*(2), 35-38.

Oliveira, Í. M., & Marques, C. (2024). The role of career adaptability and academic engagement in college student's life satisfaction. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *21*(5), 596. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph21050596

Rosenberg, M. (2017). The self-concept: Social product and social force. In *Social psychology* (pp. 593-624). Routledge.

Salim, R. M. A., Istiasih, M. R., Rumalutur, N. A., & Situmorang, D. D. B. (2023). The role of career decision self-efficacy as a mediator of peer support on students' career adaptability. *Heliyon*, *9*(4). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e14911

Sarstedt, M., Ringle, C. M., & Hair, J. F. (2021). Partial least squares structural equation modeling. In *Handbook of market research* (pp. 587-632). Cham: Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-57413-4_15

Savickas, M. L., & Porfeli, E. J. (2012). Career Adapt-Abilities Scale: Construction, reliability, and measurement equivalence across 13 countries. *Journal of vocational behavior*, *80*(3), 661-673. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2012.01.011

Sugiyono. (2013). *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif dan R&D*. Bandung: Alfabeta.

Taylor, K. M., & Betz, N. E. (1983). Applications of self-efficacy theory to the understanding and treatment of career indecision. *Journal of vocational behavior*, *22*(1), 63-81. https://doi.org/10.1016/0001-8791(83)90006-4

Triwidiyanti, W., Rahayu, Y. P., & Pramadi, A. (2022, June). Stressor Dan Dukungan Sosial Pada Istri Prajurit TNI AL. In *PROSIDING SEMINAR NASIONAL FAKULTAS PSIKOLOGI Universitas Diponegoro "Penguatan Ketahanan Keluarga: Menjawab Tantangan Pembangunan SDM Indonesia Unggul" Semarang, 29 Juni 2022* (pp. 429-443). Undip Press.