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The Impact of Positive Career Shock on Career Optimism: Examining the Mediating Role of Career Decision Making Self Efficacy and the Moderating Role of Consideration Future Consequences - Immediate

(Study: Generation Z in the Digital Creative Industry, Evidence from Indonesia)

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to determine the effect of Positive Career Shock on Career Optimism mediated by Career Decision Making Self-Efficacy and the moderating role of Consideration Future Consequences - Immediate (Study of Generation Z Employees in the Digital Creative Industry in Indonesia). The method of this research is Purposive Sampling, and uses an online survey method by distributing questionnaires and analyzing the data using SmartPLS application with SEM-PLS method. The results of the data obtained in this study were 291 respondents from Gen Z employees who work in the digital creative industry from various provinces in Indonesia. The results showed that Positive Career Shock has a significant positive effect on CDMSE. CDMSE has a significant positive effect on Career Optimism, and has a mediating role in the relationship between Positive Career Shock and Career Optimism. Meanwhile, CFC-I does not moderate the relationship between CDMSE and Career Optimism.

Keywords: positive career shock, career decision making self-efficacy, consideration future consequences – immediate, career optimism

1. Introduction

Technological advances and the increasing demand for labor in more globally competitive industries, have led to a shift in labor demand from less skilled workers to higher skilled workers (Gogoi, 2023). The various impacts of globalization can be overcome, if employees are able to adapt to the current work environment. One important resource that has been shown to be influential in successful career adaptation is career optimism (Rottinghaus et al., 2005).

Deloitte, a UK public accounting firm, has conducted a survey on the various factors that cause stress for generation Z and Millennial employees in the workplace from 44 countries, showing

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that 41% of Gen Z who feel stress in the workplace with the main cause is concern about their future career prospects (*The Deloitte Global 2022 Gen Z and Millennial Survey*, 2022). Therefore, knowing what elements can increase employee confidence about future career prospects or called career optimism is an important thing to research so that the main problem causing employees to feel depressed in the world of work can be resolved.

Career optimism is defined as an individual's positive expectations and attitudes towards their best future career development including a positive view of the future, the belief that career obstacles are temporary, and confidence in overcoming them to achieve success (Rottinghaus et al., 2005).

To examine career optimism, a number of studies have used social cognitive career theory (SCCT) (Ahmad & Nasir, 2023; Garcia et al., 2015; Lent & Brown, 1996). Social cognitive theory considers self-efficacy as the most pervasive and focused socio-cognitive mechanism of personal agency in influencing future conditions because belief in one's ability to perform certain actions (self-efficacy) will produce positive expectations (i.e. optimism) (Garcia et al., 2015). The social cognitive perspective argues that self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and career-related goals are important mechanisms that drive career development (Eva et al., 2020). Previous research shows that career optimism can be influenced by positive career shock which is mediated by Career Decision Making Self Efficacy (CDMSE) (Ahmad & Nasir, 2023).

According to Ahmad & Nasir, (2023) Positive career shock can affect Career Decision Making Self Efficacy (CDMSE). Career shock can be defined as a disruptive and overwhelming event that, at least to some degree, is caused by factors beyond an individual's control and triggers a deliberate thought process regarding one's career (Akkermans et al., 2021). CDMSE is defined as an individual's level of belief that the individual will successfully complete the tasks required in making career decisions (Betz et al., 1996).

In turn, CDMSE may also influence one's level of career optimism. Based on the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) perspective, an individual's confidence to perform certain actions (e.g. confidence to make career decisions - otherwise called CDMSE) will lead to positive career-related outcomes (such as career optimism). Research conducted by Ahmad & Nasir (2023), which is based on SCCT, shows that CDMSE is categorized as a mediator variable in the relationship between positive career shock and career optimism.

Based on Ahmad & Nasir, (2023), shows that the effect of CDMSE on career optimism is moderated by Consideration Future Consequences - Immediate (CFC-I). CFC-I is another widely used construct to assess the extent to which individuals consider the future implications of current behavior, and the extent to which those considerations influence current behavior (McKay et al., 2018).

Considering the various conditions that occur in Indonesia, the topic of career optimism is very important to study. For example, the Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS RI) noted that

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the majority of Indonesia's population is Generation Z. In addition, Indonesia is facing both challenges and opportunities because Generation Z has a large role in economic growth in Indonesia (*Hasil Sensus Penduduk 2020*, 2021). On the other side, the results of a survey conducted by DataIndonesia.id published in an electronic magazine entitled "Knowing Gen Z Better in 2023", showed that the industry field that is the dream job of Generation Z in Indonesia is the digital creative industry (Sadya & Pratiwi, 2023). Datacity mentioned 11 examples of digital creative industries, including advertising companies, architecture, culture and heritage, design, film/TV, NFT, games, music, photography, streaming, and visual and performing arts (*UK Digital Creative Industry*, 2024).

The research conducted by Ahmad & Nasir, (2023)has various limitations, one of which is that it has a small sample size and the research subject only consists of employees of electronic media (television channels) in Pakistan. Therefore, based on Ahmad & Nasir, (2023) recommendation, this research provides novelty by expanding the subject of research respondents.

Based on the background and phenomena described above, this study will be conducted on Generation Z employees in the Digital Creative Industry in Indonesia with the following objectives:

1) Testing the effect of Positive Career Shock on CDMSE
2) Testing the Effect of CDMSE on Career Optimism
3) Testing the mediating role of CDMSE on the effect of Positive Career Shock on Career Optimism
4) Testing the role of CFC-I moderating the effect of CDMSE on Career Optimism

2. Literature Review

2.1 SCCT

Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) is basically derived from the general social cognitive theory proposed by Albert Bandura (Brown, 2002). Social cognitive theory argues that the goals one sets are influenced by self-efficacy and outcome expectations, e.g. individuals who have strong and positive beliefs about their abilities and about the expected outcomes of their efforts, are likely to cultivate personal goals that are consistent with these beliefs (Lent & Brown, 1996). SCCT incorporates three central variables from general social cognitive theory: self-efficacy, outcome expectations, personal goals (Brown, 2002). The definitions of each variable are: Self-efficacy refers to a person's beliefs about their ability to organize and execute a set of actions necessary to achieve a particular type of performance, outcome expectations are personal beliefs about the consequences or outcomes of performing a particular behavior, and personal goals can be defined as a determination to engage in a particular activity or to achieve a particular outcome in the future. A number of studies using the SCCT framework have shown that self-efficacy in decision making has a relationship with career optimism (Ahmad & Nasir, 2023; Doo & Park, 2019; Eva et al., 2020; McLennan et al., 2017). In addition, optimism is considered as part of one of the SCCT constructs, namely outcome expectations, where outcome expectations are directly influenced by self-efficacy and beliefs about efficacy and these outcomes can motivate individuals towards their interests, goals, and actions (McLennan et al., 2017).

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2.2 Generation Z

Generation Z is the latest generation often referred to as the *iGeneration* to reflect the internet generation (Gabrielova & Buchko, 2021). There are various opinions regarding the year of birth of Generation Z, based on Statistics Canada, Generation Z was born starting in 1993, and various researchers' recognition considers that Gen Z was generally born in 1995 (Khan & Ilyas, 2021). Meanwhile, the Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS RI), which is assigned to conduct a population census in Indonesia, considers that Generation Z was born in 1997 – 2012 (Hasil Sensus Penduduk 2020, 2021).

2.3 Career Shock

Career shock can be defined as a disruptive and overwhelming event, at least to some degree, that is caused by factors beyond an individual's focal control and triggers deliberate thought processes about one's career (Akkermans et al., 2018). Basically, career shock occurs due to a combination of an external event and an individual's internal thought process about his or her career, and its definition includes the interaction between the event and one's initial understanding of the event (Akkermans et al., 2021).

Career shock with both negative and positive valences was illustrated by several previous researchers. Mansur & Felix, (2021), mentioned that although career shock is an unexpected event, which seems to only have a negative impact on one's career, career shock can also have a positive impact on one's career. (Akkermans et al., 2018) illustrate negative career shocks such as major reorganizations and the loss of a loved one, which are likely to have a negative impact on one's career. Positive career shocks involve unexpected promotions, receiving early salary increases, receiving awards, being praised for performance on important projects, and being nominated for outstanding achievements (Blokker et al., 2019).

2.4 Career Decision Making Self – Efficacy

According to Bandura's theory, self-efficacy refers to a person's belief in their ability to successfully perform certain behaviors and is developed from their experience with the impact of their behavior in the past (Gianakos, 2001). Then, Betz et al., (1996) defines career decision-making self-efficacy (CDMSE) as a condition that measures the level of an individual's belief that he can complete the tasks required to make career decisions successfully. In measuring the CDMSE instrument scale, Betz et al. (1996) used Crites' Five Career Choice Competencies or the so-called Career Maturity Inventory model, which includes behaviors related to: (a) accurate self-assessment, (b) gathering occupational information, (c) goal selection, (d) making plans for the future, and (e) problem solving.

2.5 Consideration Future Consequences

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According to Strathman et al., (1994), Consideration Future Consequences (CFC) refers to the extent to which individuals consider the potential long-term outcomes of their current behavior and the extent to which they are influenced by those potential outcomes. Strathman et al., (1994), measured a CFC scale that reflects an individual's tendency to consider the current and future consequences of his behavior. Despite that, Joireman et al., (2008) categorized the 12 items of the scale into 2 subscales, namely CFC - Immediate, and CFC - Future. CFC - F is a condition of strong concern about future consequences. CFC - Immediate itself is defined as a condition of strong concern about immediate (current) consequences. The study conducted by (Joireman et al., 2008), showed that the two CFC subscales differently predict the nature of a person's self-control. Ahmad & Nasir, (2023) used CFC-I as a moderator variable on CDMSE and career optimism.

2.6 Career Optimism

The definition of career optimism is a person's perspective to expect the best outcome or to emphasize the most positive aspects of an individual regarding future career development and comfort in performing planning tasks (Rottinghaus et al., 2005). Individuals who are optimistic about career potential, they tend to be interested in their future careers, engage in learning directed towards an imagined future, and feel that they are on the path to career success (Eva et al., 2020).

3. Hypothesis Development

3.1 Positive Career Shock and CDMSE

Disruptive and overwhelming events that are, at least to some degree, caused by factors beyond the control of the focal individual and that trigger deliberate thought processes regarding one's career are referred to as career shock (Akkermans et al., 2018). In terms of response, there are events that are positively received by individuals while others are not (Akkermans et al., 2018). CDMSE is defined as a behavioral domain relevant to the decision-making process. CDMSE is categorized as an important personal resource at the center of individual career development. Based on CoR theory, self-efficacy is seen as an important "key resource" (Chen et al., 2009) because self-efficacy can drive positive career-related outcomes such as employee career commitment. Positive career shocks are associated with positive outcomes, whereas negative career shocks are associated with negative outcomes (Seibert et al., 2013). Positive career shocks make people more confident to pursue future job prospects (Blokker et al., 2019). The results of research (Ahmad & Nasir, 2023) show that positive career shock affects CDMSE.

H1+: Positive career shock has a positive effect on CDMSE

3.2 CDMSE dan Career Optimism

Social cognitive career theory explains people's future career expectations, which are largely based on their perceptions of their ability to work in a particular environment (Lent et al., 1994). According to this theory, a person's confidence to perform certain actions, such as their

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confidence to make career-related decisions, or CDMSE, will result in good outcomes for their career. Various literature evidence supports the relationship between CDMSE and career optimism (e.g., ((Eva et al., 2020; Garcia et al., 2015; McLennan et al., 2017). The results of research by (Ahmad & Nasir, 2023) also show that CDMSE has an effect on career optimism

H2+: CDMSE has a positive effect on Career Optimism

3.3 Mediating role of CDMSE

After individuals have experienced certain career shocks, they will then enter into a phase of critical appraisal of their future career development process (Baruch et al., 2016). The existence of positive career shocks will not harm the current career image and positively impact decision making (Seibert et al., 2013). Therefore individuals who experience positive career shocks are more likely to have an optimistic view of their future career (Ho & Sum, 2018). In social cognitive career theory, CDMSE is also theorized as a mediating variable between personal factors (e.g. career shocks) and career-related outcomes (e.g. career optimism) ((Lent et al., 1994; Penn & Lent, 2019). Personal factors explicitly shape a person's CDMSE, which in turn triggers them to think optimistically about their future career outcomes, thus promoting career optimism. The research results from (Ahmad & Nasir, 2023) indicate the mediating role of CDMSE between the relationship of positive career shock and career optimism.

H3+; CDMSE mediates the effect of Positive Career Shock on Career Optimism.

3.4 Moderating role of CFC – I

Construal Level Theory (CLT) - a social psychology theory in Liberman & Trope, (1986) can be used as a basis to explain the moderating effect of CFC-I on the relationship between CDMSE and career optimism. CLT asserts that the extent to which a particular event, task, or object is psychologically distant, impacts the level of an individual's interpretation of that event, task, or object. individuals' understanding and interpretation of events, i.e. the way individuals interpret those events, impacts their decision-making and evaluation (Kim et al., 2016). In addition, Alfalah & Alganem, (2020) argue that low and high levels of construal, if used skillfully, can have an impact on positive psychological factors such as optimism. And the results of the study Ahmad & Nasir, (2023) showed a moderating effect of CFC-I on CDMSE and career optimism.
H4+; CFC-I moderates the effect of CDMSE on Career Optimism

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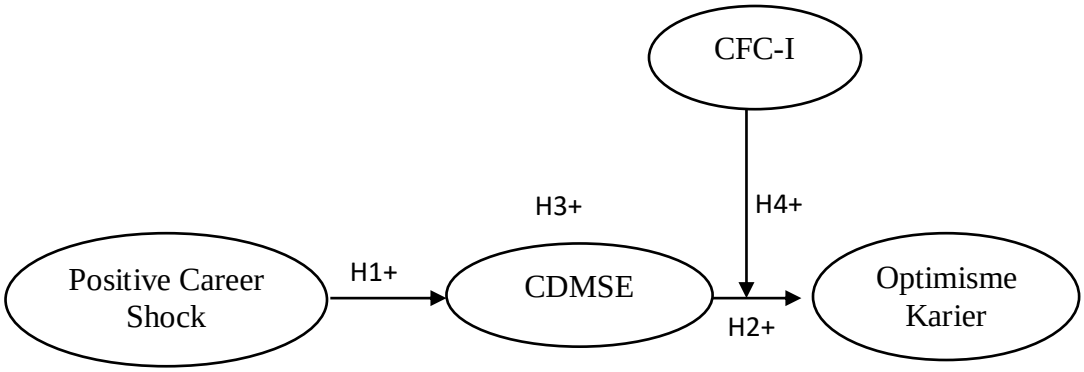

Figure 2.1 Research Framework

4. Method

This research is a quantitative study with a survey method distributed via Google Form. This study uses a type of sampling called purposive sampling, which is a sampling technique that collects from members of the population who meet certain criteria (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). Respondents in this study are generation Z with criteria aged 15 - 27 years who are currently working in digital creative industry companies in Indonesia for at least 6 months. The lower limit of respondent age criteria (15 years) is based on the minimum age of someone who is included as a productive workforce, and the upper limit of respondent age (27 years) is based on the definition of generation Z born in 1997 - 2012. Meanwhile, the criteria for the types of companies where generation Z works in the digital creative industry are advertising, architecture, culture and heritage, design, film/TV, NFT, games, music, photography, streaming, and visual and performing arts companies. The data in this study were analyzed using the PLS - SEM method. The minimum criteria for working for 6 months are based on research conducted by (Ahmad & Nasir, 2023).

The measurement indicators in this study use a Likert scale of 1 - 5. To measure Positive Career Shock is based on 3 indicators compiled by Blokker et al., (2019) and Seibert et al., (2013) (1 - 5: have not experienced - hard large impact), CDMSE is based on 5 indicators compiled by Taylor & Betz, (1983) (1 - 5: no confidence at all - complete confidence), CFC - I with 7 indicators compiled by Joireman et al., (2012) (1 - 5: Strongly Disagree - Strongly Agree), and Career Optimism with 11 indicators compiled by Rottinghaus et al., (2005) (1 - 5: Strongly Disagree - Strongly Agree).

5. Results

In the data processing stage, several statistical tests were carried out using the SmartPLS 3 application. These tests are validity, reliability, and hypothesis testing. The final number of respondents in this study were 291 Gen Z employees (aged 15 - 27 years) who work in various Digital Creative Industry companies in Indonesia, with various characteristics of the respondents as follows:

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Table 5. 1 Characteristics of respondents based on Period Of Work

Description	Total	Percentage
6 month - 1 year	196	67,35%
1 - 2 year	53	18,21%
2 - 3 year	12	4,12%
> 3 year	30	10,31%
Total Respondents	**291**	**100%**

Table 5. 2 Characteristics of respondents base on Industry

Description	Total	Percentage
Game	23	7,90%
Film / TV	1	0,34%
Photography	32	11,00%
Culture and Heritage	21	7,22%
Design	106	36,43%
Visual and Performing Arts	7	2,06%
Advertising	31	10,65%
Music	14	4,81%
NFT (Non-Fungible Token)	3	1,03%
Architecture	18	6,19%
Streaming	19	6,53%
Total Respondents	**291**	**100%**

Table 5. 3 Characteristics of respondents based on Gender

Description	Total	Percentage
Male	108	37,11%
Female	183	62,89%
Total Respondents	**291**	**100%**

Validity and Reliability Testing

The validity test is related to measurement accuracy, where evidence of construct validity provides confidence that the size of the items taken from the sample can represent the actual score in the population (Hair, Hult, et al., 2014). The reliability test aims to determine the accuracy and accuracy of the measurement procedure with an instrument.

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According to Hair, et al., (2014), indicators with outer loading 0.40 to 0.70 can be said to be valid and considered not to be removed from the model if the composite reliability value is > 0.7 or the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is above the recommended limit of 0.5. However, to avoid too many indicators being removed, in this study, the AVE value limit is based on the opinion of Fornell & Larcker, (1981), where a construct is interpreted as meeting the convergent validity criteria if the AVE value ranges between 31% and 40%, or is below the recommended level of 0.5 provided that the Composite Reliability value is more than 0.7. After removing several unqualified indicators, including the CFC-I7, CDMSE1, OK10, OK9R, CFC-I6, OK5R, and OK3R indicators in stages, the following validity and reliability test values are shown belows:

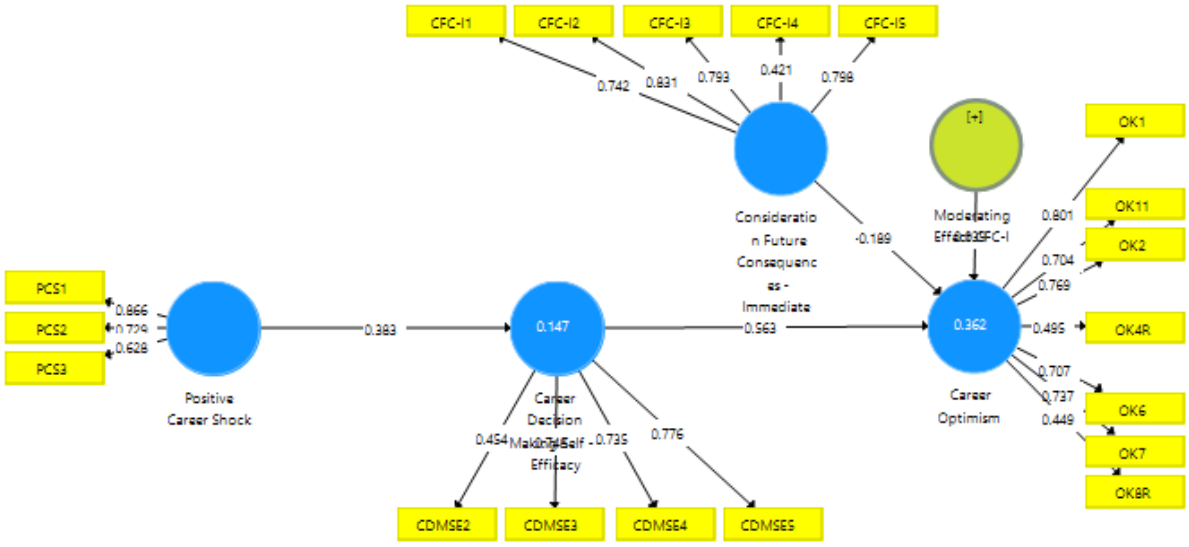

Figure 5. 1 Validity Testing (Outer Loading Value)

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Table 5. 4 Validity Testing (Outer Loading Value)

Variable	Indicator	Loading Factor
Positive Career Shock	PCS1	0.866
	PCS2	0.729
	PCS3	0.628
Career Decision Making Self Efficacy	CDMSE2	0.454
	CDMSE3	0.748
	CDMSE4	0.735
	CDMSE5	0.776
Consideration Future Consequences - Immediate	CFC-I1	0.742
	CFC-I2	0.831
	CFC-I3	0.793
	CFC-I4	0.421
	CFC-I5	0.798
Career Optimism	OK1	0.801
	OK2	0.769
	OK4R	0.495
	OK6	0.707
	OK7	0.737
	OK8R	0.449
	OK11	0.704

Note: PCS (Positive Career Shock, CDMSE (Career Decision Making Self Efficacy), CFC-I (Consideration Future Consequences – Immediate, OK (Career Optimism)

Table 5. 5 Reliability Testing

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Rho_A	Composite Reliability	AVE
Positive Career Shock	0.630	0.675	0.778	0.477
CDMSE	0.795	0.816	0.852	0.460
CFC - I	0.807	0.793	0.848	0.537
Career Optimism	0.625	0.719	0.789	0.559

Source: PLS Results, 2025

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Hypothesis Testing

The relationship between variables was analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM) using the SmartPLS 3.0 application. The criteria for accepting the hypothesis if the p-value <0.05. The following is a picture and table of data analysis results:

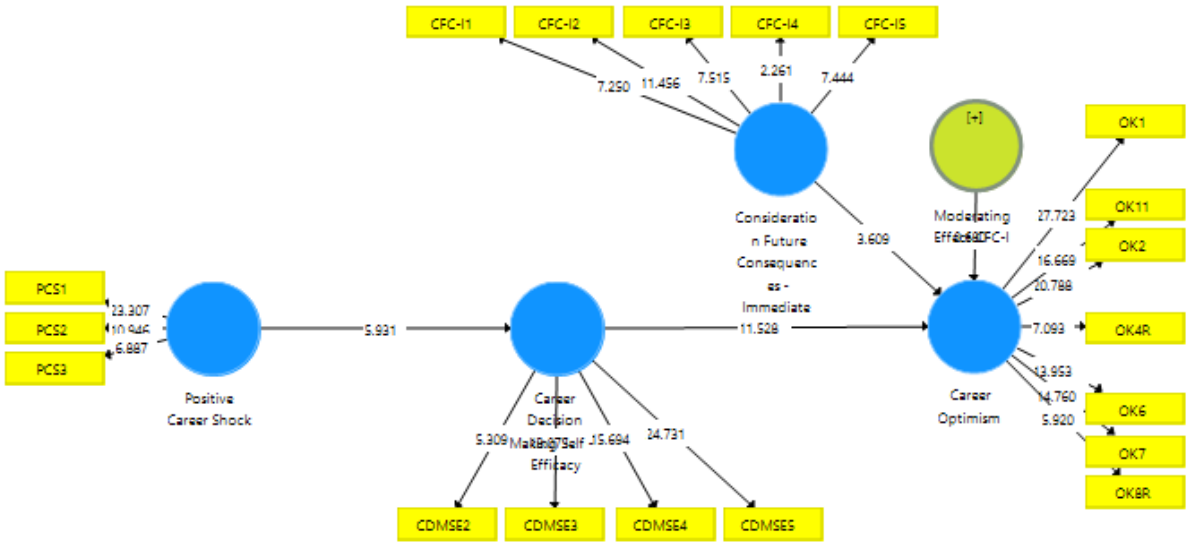

Figure 5. 2 Results of Hypothesis Testing

Results of Direct Impact

Table 5. 6 Results of Hypothesis Testing (Direct Impact)

	Original Sample	Sample Mean	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	P Values
Positive Career Shock -> CDMSE (H1+)	0.383	0.396	0.065	5.931	0.000
CDMSE -> Career Optimism (H2+)	0.563	0.565	0.049	11.528	0.000
Moderating Effect of CFC – I (CDMSE - Career Optimism) (H4+)	0.039	0.038	0.057	0.680	0.497

Source: PLS Results, 2025

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Results of Indirect Impact

Table 5. 7 Results of Hypothesis Testing (Indirect Impact)

	Original Sample	Sample Mean	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	P Values
Positive Career Shock -> CDMSE (H3+)	0.216	0.225	0.046	4.663	0.000

Source: PLS Results, 2025

6. Discussion

Positive career shock has a positive effect on CDMSE (H1+)

Positive Career Shock affects CDMSE with an original sample value of 0.383, a t-statistic value of 5.931 (> 1.96), and a p-value of 0.000 (< 0.05). This indicates a positive and significant effect of Positive Career Shock on CDMSE, so H1+ is supported. Thus, the results of this study strengthen previous research conducted by Ahmad & Nasir, (2023). These findings can illustrate that when individuals experience positive events unexpectedly, it can strengthen their confidence in the completion of tasks related to future career decisions.

CDMSE has a positive effect on Career Optimism (H2+)

CDMSE affects Career Optimism with an original sample value of 0.563, a t-statistic value of 11.528 (> 1.96), and a p-value of 0.000 (< 0.05). This indicates a positive and significant effect of CDMSE on Career Optimism, so H2+ is supported. Thus, the results of this study strengthen previous research conducted by Ahmad & Nasir, (2023). These findings can illustrate that when an individual has a high level of confidence in the ability to complete tasks about career decisions, the individual will be more optimistic about their future career. Based on the perspective of social cognitive career theory, individual confidence to perform certain actions such as confidence to make career-related decisions (or called CDMSE), will lead to positive career-related outcomes such as career optimism.

CDMSE mediates the effect of Positive Career Shock on Career Optimism (H3+)

Based on the results of data processing above, it shows that the mediating effect of CDMSE on the effect of Positive Career Shock on Career Optimism shows the original sample of 0.216, and t-statistic of 2.225 (>1.96), and p-value 0.000 (<0.05). This indicates a significant mediating effect of CDMSE in the relationship between Positive Career Shock and Career Optimism, so hypothesis H3+ is supported. Thus, the results of this study strengthen previous research conducted by Ahmad & Nasir, (2023).

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that Positive Career Shock has a significant indirect effect on Career Optimism through CDMSE. This condition can be illustrated when someone

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experiences a positive career shock, it increases self-efficacy in career decision making (CDMSE), which then contributes to one's career optimism.

CFC-I moderates the effect of CDMSE on Career Optimism (H4+)

The moderating effect of CFC - I on the effect of CDMSE on Optimism with original sample value of 0.039, t statistic value of 0.038 (< 1.96), and p-value of 0.497 (> 0.05). This indicates a positive and insignificant effect of the moderating effect of CFC-I on the effect of CDMSE on Career Optimism, so H4+ is not supported. The results of this study do not support the results of previous research conducted by Ahmad & Nasir, (2023). This condition illustrates when individuals who have greater concern about considering future consequences that are urgent (CFC-I) do not strengthen the relationship between CDMSE and career optimism.

CFC-I, which prioritizes immediate outcomes, may not align with the processes involved in CDMSE and career optimism. Individuals who score high on the CFC-I subscale tend to prefer smaller, immediate rewards over larger but delayed rewards (Joireman et al., 2008). Meanwhile, career optimism and CDMSE are oriented towards something to be achieved in the future which tends to be long-term in nature.

7. Conclusion, Limitations and Recommendations

This research is based on the SCCT theory in examining what components can increase employee career optimism. In general, SCCT combines three central variables from general social cognitive theory, namely outcome expectations, self-efficacy, personal goals (Brown, 2002). The results of this study indicate that there is a significant effect of positive career shock on CDMSE. CDMSE has a positive and significant influence on Career Optimism. CDMSE also has a role as a mediating variable in the relationship between positive career shock and career optimism. However, CFC-I does not have a significant moderating role on the relationship between CDMSE and Career Optimism, in contrast to the findings of Ahmad & Nasir, (2023). Career optimism is an important thing to be observed by researchers and be noted for stakeholders, because worries about career prospects are problems that are being faced by various employees which cause job stress.

The findings of this study indicate that Positive Career Shock has a positive and significant effect on employee career optimism through increasing Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy (CDMSE). The managerial implication of this result is the importance for the company to strategically create positive and unexpected work experiences, such as providing incentive bonuses or accelerated promotions for employees who achieve targets. This step is expected to strengthen employees' career decision-making efficacy and increase their confidence in long-term career prospects.

This study has various limitations, including that this research uses a cross-sectional approach that only describes certain conditions. In addition, based on geographical considerations, Indonesia has a very large area coverage and Indonesian population is spread from various

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islands with religious conditions, so that it experiences limited access to isolated areas or limited technology and internet networks that can affect the representation of respondents from various regions.

The recommendations for future researchers are that it is possible to conduct research with longitudinal methods in order to determine the dynamics of change over time, and allow in-depth analysis and can consider conducting subgroup analysis based on certain geographic areas to identify differences between respondents from different regions in a country. Despite that, based on the results of the differences between this study and previous research by Ahmad & Nasir, (2023) showing the presence and absence of the moderating effect of CFC - I on the relationship between CDMSE and Career Optimism, future researchers are expected to add the moderating effect of CFC - F or use the entire CFC instrument as a moderator variable on the relationship between CDMSE and Career Optimism in order to get an in-depth analysis of the role of CFC.

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