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Career Adaptability and Work Volition among Aviation Vocational Cadets: The Mediating Role of Career Engagement toward SDG 4, SDG 8, SDG 9, and SDG 10

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ABSTRACT

Objective: To analyzes the direct effect of career adaptability on work volition among cadets in aviation vocational higher education and its indirect effect through career engagement, while positioning the model within the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 4, SDG 8, SDG 9, and SDG 10. **Method:** The study used a quantitative explanatory design involving 310 active non-Polbit Diploma III cadets from Politeknik Penerbangan Surabaya and Akademi Penerbang Indonesia Banyuwangi. Data were collected using a closed-ended questionnaire with a six-point Likert scale and analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). **Results:** Career adaptability had a positive and significant effect on career engagement, career engagement had a positive and significant effect on work volition, and career adaptability had a positive and significant direct effect on work volition. Career engagement also significantly mediated the relationship between career adaptability and work volition, indicating partial mediation. **Novelty:** The study contributes to SDG-oriented aviation vocational higher education by explaining how adaptive career resources become a perceived capacity for occupational choice when translated into proactive career development behavior among non-Polbit cadets.

INTRODUCTION

The contemporary labor market is characterized by increasing uncertainty, technological disruption, changing skill requirements, and increasingly competitive transitions from education to employment. Higher education graduates cannot rely solely on formal qualifications and technical skills; they also need the psychological readiness to interpret change, explore opportunities, make informed decisions, and sustain an independent career direction (Brown & Lent, 2016; Lent & Brown, 2013; World Economic Forum, 2025). In vocational education, this issue is particularly important because students are prepared to enter occupational sectors that demand professional competence, discipline, adaptability, and readiness to comply with evolving standards (UNESCO, World Bank, & International Labour Organization, 2023).

This study is also relevant to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The 2030 Agenda emphasizes inclusive and equitable quality education, lifelong learning, productive employment, decent work, innovation, resilient infrastructure, and reduced inequalities (United Nations, 2015, n.d.). Within this framework, aviation vocational higher education contributes to SDG 4 by strengthening employability-oriented learning, to SDG 8 by preparing young people for decent work, to SDG 9 by developing human resources for a safe and innovative aviation sector, and to SDG 10 by reducing unequal access to career opportunities through structured career support.

The SDG perspective is important because the education-to-work transition is not merely an individual career issue; it is also a sustainable development issue. Graduate