

SELF-DIRECTED CAREERS IN THE NEW WORLD OF WORK: PROTEAN CAREER ORIENTATION AND CAREER SELF-EFFICACY AS FOUNDATIONS FOR CAREER SUSTAINABILITY: A NARRATIVE REVIEW

I Kadek Andika Budi Utama ^{1*}, Nuh Luh Sri Kasih ¹

¹ Universitas Mahasaraswati Denpasar

Article Info

Article history:

Received January 21 , 2026

Revised January 26 , 2026

Accepted January 26 , 2026

Keywords:

protean career orientation; career self-efficacy; career adaptability; adaptive behaviors; career sustainability; sustainable employability

ABSTRACT

Changes in the world of work driven by digitalization, hybrid work, the gig economy, and organizational restructuring have made careers increasingly non-linear and require individuals to take a more active role in managing their career trajectories. This narrative review synthesizes international literature from reputable journals to explain how *Protean Career Orientation* (PCO)-a *self-directed* and *values-driven* career orientation-contributes to *career sustainability* through enhanced career self-efficacy. Drawing on sustainable career models that emphasize *health, happiness, and productivity*, as well as the *social cognitive career theory* framework, the article proposes that *Protean Career Orientation* strengthens individuals' confidence in making career decisions, acquiring new skills, and navigating change. Career self-efficacy, in turn, promotes adaptive behaviors such as *career self-management, lifelong learning or upskilling, networking* and personal branding, and *job crafting*, which ultimately enhance *employability, subjective career success, and well-being* as indicators of *career sustainability*. This review also highlights the importance of context (*career shocks, work flexibility*) and organizational support (*learning culture, coaching, access to training*) as triggers and amplifiers of these processes. Finally, the article presents a conceptual model and narrative propositions that can serve as a basis for empirical research and as practical guidance for human resource development in the new world of work.

This is an open access article under the [CC BY-SA](#) license.



Corresponding Author:

I Kadek Andika Budi Utama | Universitas Mahasaraswati Denpasar

Email: andikabudi@unmas.ac.id