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Internal Marketability, External Marketability, and Career Resilience: The Mediating Role of Learning Agility

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Abstract: This study investigated the relationships between perceived internal and external marketability, learning agility, and career resilience. We constructed a model proposing that learning agility mediates the perceived marketability and career resilience relationship. Structural equation modeling was conducted on survey data from 259 Korean employees from three organizations. The results indicated that perceived internal marketability was positively related to career resilience. Conversely, perceived external marketability was negatively and not significantly associated with career resilience. Also confirmed by our results was that learning agility was mediating between perceived internal marketability and career resilience but not between perceived external marketability and career resilience.

Keywords: internal marketability; external marketability; career resilience; learning agility; mediation

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1. Introduction

The fourth industrial revolution [1] and the unexpected COVID-19 pandemic have rapidly changed everything from the global labor market to individual workspaces. In these turbulent business environments, employees are no longer given lifetime employment in most organizations. As employees encounter more unstable job market situations, being marketable to internal and external organizations becomes imperative to avoid career disruptions [2]. In this respect, resilience has become one of the most critical determiners of individuals' sustainable development [3]. Career resilience is "a developmental process of persisting, adapting, and/or flourishing in one's career despite challenges, changing events and disruptions over time" ([4], p. 216).

In addition, today's employees are severely influenced by new industry trends such as digital transformation and Human Resources 4.0 in the workplace [5]. Without equipping themselves with the necessary skills and knowledge to cope with the changing nature of work, their career development efforts may not bear desirable results. Furthermore, during the ongoing transition toward emerging Industry 5.0 emphasizing the sustainability of competitive organizations [6], it will be meaningful to investigate the role of learning agility which is a sensitive and adaptable capability for employees' career resilience will be a worthwhile research endeavor. Individuals exhibiting career resilience are, thus, successful at adapting to significant adversity, conflict, or disruptive failures [7,8] while tending to be satisfied with their careers [4].

Because of the importance of career resilience, many researchers have tried to uncover the underlying influences of individual career resilience and how it is developed. Although many contextual and personal factors were proposed as antecedents in previous research [4], researchers seem to have neglected one potential individual characteristic—marketability. Marketability is a belief in one's value to current and future employers [9] and can be internal and external. Recently, a paradigm shift from traditional to boundaryless and

protean careers [9,10] has increased interest in marketability due to its critical nature for employees' sustainability in career development.

This study aims to examine the relationship between marketability and career resilience. According to the conservation of resources (COR) theory [11], marketability is a personal resource that leads to positive outcomes and the development of further resources. In this respect, we propose that marketability is an antecedent of career resilience. Individuals' perceptions of being valuable to employers are essential for developing career resilience. This is because personal beliefs in highly pressured situations can positively or negatively affect employees' behaviors, reactions, and thoughts [9]. Mishra and McDonald [4] also suggested a study into career resilience as an antecedent of traits; in their literature review, individual characteristics were positioned as the antecedents of career resilience in a visual network.

Additionally, we propose that learning agility is a vital link that explains the relationship between marketability and career resilience. Learning agility is an ability or willingness to learn new competencies from experience and successfully apply the learning, even in complex or novel situations [12–14]. Learning agility is expected to be influenced by marketability and increase career resilience as a personal quality or skill. Therefore, learning agility was proposed as a mediator in our study.

We expect this study to contribute to existing career development research by examining the relationship between career resilience and internal and external marketability. Many previous studies have only focused on internal marketability [15–17], neglecting external marketability. This study could enhance our understanding of the relationship between marketability and career resilience by including internal and external marketability. Moreover, this study could build on previous research by identifying the mediating role of learning agility in the relationship between perceived internal and external marketability and career resilience. Additionally, the results of the study could offer practical implications for leaders in organization and human resource development (HRD) practitioners.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Employee Marketability

To stay viable and become competitive in the ever-changing and unstable business environment, employees should be able to possess and demonstrate value-added capabilities for the organizations they are serving. Research has indicated that highly marketable employees maintain the unique characteristics needed by today's business organizations [18]. As previously defined, marketability is an individual employee's perception of being valuable to employers [9]. Its main difference from employability is its focus on unique core characteristics invaluable to internal and external recruiters [19]. Employability is broadly conceptualized as an individual's ability to seek and secure a job [20]. While internal marketability is oriented within the organization, external marketability is geared toward external employment opportunities.

Moreover, studies have noted two primary predictors for employee perceived marketability: individual and situational attributes [21]. First, the predictors in the personal characteristic domain include human capital variables, such as education, prior job training, and work experience [22,23]. Employees with these characteristics tend to be more competitive and rewarded by their companies [24]. Also, positive traits, such as optimism [25], a positive self-concept [26], and learning goal orientation [27], are other types of variables of internal characteristics of marketability. Situational factors are made up of proactive career behaviors, such as internal and external networking [9], voluntary participation in development [28], and job mobility preparedness [29], constituting the marketability domain.

Research studies have revealed that internal and external marketability are closely related to various organizational factors. First, Su et al. [30] indicated that employees' internal and external marketability correlates significantly with leaders' implicit followership prototypes. Another study has identified perceived internal and external marketability as

the variables linking career adaptability with job or career insecurities [31]. For the career aspect, external marketability is an influencing factor for career success [32].

2.2. Learning Agility

Rapid adaptation is a crucial competency for employees to stay afloat in the fast-paced, changing business environment. Learning agility is considered a core characteristic for the adaptive nature of employee competencies required for organizational performance and business success. It aids employees in overcoming continuous and prevailing work challenges. The definition of learning agility varies among researchers. The present study adopts the description: "a willingness and ability to learn from experience, and subsequently apply that learning to perform successfully under new or first-time conditions" [33], as it closely relates to our study. Also, learning agility is described as being "more extroverted, original, less accommodating, resilient, and focused—which together results in tendencies toward innovating, reflecting, risking, and performing" [34]. De Meuse et al. [13] delineated four learning agility dimensions: mental, people, change, and results. Within an organizational setting, learning agility is considered a mandatory attribute for high potential workers and leaders [35]. This is especially true for organizational members adapting to a volatile business environment where new skills and knowledge must be mastered frequently [36].

In various studies, employees' learning agility has been considered a key promoter of effective organizational performance. For example, learning agility directly influenced adaptive performance [37]. More specifically, learning agility facilitates the critical dimensions of adaptive performance, such as dealing with uncertain and unpredictable work situations and learning work tasks, technologies, and procedures [38,39]. From an international context, You et al. [34] found that learning agility plays a mediating role in the relationship between goal orientation and adaptive performance.

2.3. Career Resilience

In career development research, career resilience has appeared as a novel concept to describe an individual's capability to thrive in a challenging work environment. Compared to traditional notions of career-related variables (e.g., career management, planning, growth, and advancement), career resilience gained fresh attention from many researchers against the backdrop of unpredictable changes in the business world.

We view that the conceptualization of career resilience may share similar characteristics with other types of resilience. For example, in the psychology discipline, individual resilience is "the ability to cope with traumatic events and bounce back from adversity, and successfully address the challenges and achieve positive outcomes despite hardships" [40]. In organizational studies, resilience is described as the capability to bounce back quickly from external changes and overcome turbulent conditions [4]. Meanwhile, from a broader perspective, workforce resilience is an organization's capability to react quickly and adapt to internal and external threats to its workforce [41].

One key characteristic of traditional career development concepts is that the career effort is mainly driven by organizational development measures, not employees. For example, while many organizations provide professional career counselors or aid employees' career development through training programs, the new career resilience perspective has shifted the focus toward individual ownership and responsibility in career matters more sustainably [42]. Increasingly, career development is leaning toward a life capacity for individual employees that can handle various career hurdles and are unbound by a given job or a programmed career path. Researchers have gradually accepted this career paradigm shift as a more stable approach. Therefore, career resilience is becoming less employer-dependent, allowing more alternative career progression routes for employees [43].

A line of research has recently gathered much evidence of the effect of career resilience within organizational settings. Using a 13-item measure of career resilience, Noe et al. [44] found a positive correlation between career resilience and career stage; work role salience;

employee fit and organizational career plans; and managerial support and a global measure of job characteristics (i.e., variety, task identity, task significance, feedback, and autonomy). In another study, the effect of career resilience was reported as accumulating over time for an individual's career growth [45].

3. Theoretical Framework and Research Model

To explain the relationship between perceived internal and external marketability and career resilience, the COR theory was reviewed as a theoretical framework. COR theory provides a valuable framework for this study, arguing that people endeavor to improve innate strengths and resources [46]. Therefore, adding value to this enhances one's internal and external marketability within and outside an organization and can be considered a personal resource helping improve career resilience.

COR theory assumes that these reserve resources reap others [47]; therefore, the acquisitions of perceived employability resources in the current organization and other outside organizations enable employees to achieve an additional strength—greater learning agility. Additionally, because learning agility provides additional resources and a better ability to cope with disasters in their careers, it gives them the flexibility to achieve career goals. Using the COR theory as a guiding framework of the study and applying the perspectives of the resource gain spiral in the study, we developed the study's conceptual model illustrated in Figure 1.

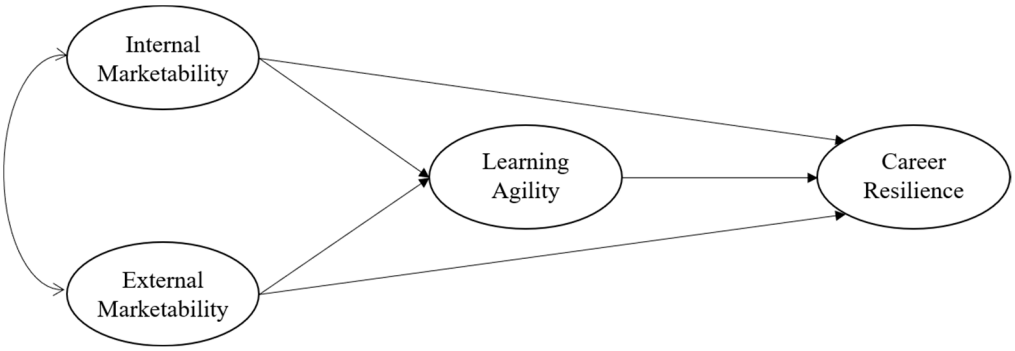

Figure 1. Theoretical indirect effects model from internal and external marketability on career resilience via learning agility.

3.1. Marketability and Learning Agility

Several studies indicate the significant relationship between internal and external marketability and learning agility. Swisher [36] claimed a bi-directional relationship between external marketability and learning agility to execute future executive job roles successfully. Based on this finding, he strongly suggested that US universities start including learning agility as a core competence domain in their graduate curriculum to promote external marketability for their graduates. From a developmental perspective, an individual's internal marketability is significantly correlated with learning agility when predicting an employee's potential for a leadership role [48]. Dragoni et al. [49] also reported that managers were more likely to be in developmental assignments when they possess solid learning agility and achieve higher levels of managerial competencies from developmental experiences than those with weaker learning agility. Dries et al. [50] studied the relationship between internal marketability and learning agility, finding that an employee's likelihood of being identified as high potential (internally marketable) was increased 18-fold if they had a highly rated learning agility. From these study findings, internal and external marketability can be assumed to be significantly correlated with an individual's learning agility. Therefore, we propose the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1. *Employee's perceived internal marketability predicts learning agility.*

Hypothesis 2. *Employee's perceived external marketability predicts learning agility.*

3.2. Marketability and Career Resilience

Regarding the relationship between marketability and career resilience, Day [51] identified significant associations between internal and external marketability and career resilience (i.e., networking, participation in development, and job mobility preparedness). However, the study also found that internal and external marketability are two independent constructs. From these findings, self-reported internal marketability was not related to either co-worker-reported external or internal marketability. In another study, organizational mobility preference, an attribute of internal marketability, was positively associated with career resilience [52]. From the responses of 171 US Army personnel transitioning to civilian jobs, Gowan et al. [53] found that an individual's external marketability (i.e., their plan to manage their transition to yield employment success) was significantly correlated with career success resilience. By defining resilience as the process of searching for a job and pursuing reemployment, Fleig-Palmer et al. [54] proposed a research model for investigating the relationship between an individual's external marketability (the mode of reemployment) and resilience. Lastly, Salisu et al. [55] found that entrepreneur career resilience has significantly intervened in the relationships between entrepreneurial career commitment and success. Based on the review of these study findings, we propose the following:

Hypothesis 3. *Employee's perceived internal marketability affects career resilience.*

Hypothesis 4. *Employee's perceived external marketability affects career resilience.*

3.3. Learning Agility and Career Resilience

Several studies supported the relationship between learning agility and career resilience. For instance, Dai et al. [38] found a significant relationship between the trajectories of learning agility and career growth. The study identified that employees with high learning agility were promoted more often and received a higher salary increase than those with low learning agility over ten years. This finding supports the relationship between learning agility and resilience when considering upward mobility as a type of career resilience. Bedford [56] revealed the connections between learning agility, workplace performance, and career advancement. The study's multiple regression analyses indicated that learning agility significantly predicted potential for career advancement. Another study conducted in South Korea revealed that learning agility and career preparation behavior are correlated considerably based on the 420 responses from university students [57]. Meanwhile, De Meuse's [12] meta-analysis findings indicated a robust relationship between learning agility and leadership potential as a priori of career resilience. From these study findings, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 5. *Learning agility affects career resilience.*

3.4. Mediating Role of Learning Agility

As described earlier, learning agility plays a central role in the research model in establishing an independent relationship with internal and external marketability and career resilience. However, in reviewing previous research, we could not find any particular studies investigating the mediating role of learning agility between the variables. Many researchers claim that learning agility is a pivotal factor influencing an employee's career matters, such as career resilience [38,56,57]. We also want to identify the direction in which learning agility mediates the relationships between career resilience and either internal or external marketability. Therefore, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 6. *Learning agility mediates the relationship between internal marketability and career resilience.*

Hypothesis 7. *Learning agility mediates the relationship between external marketability and career resilience.*

4. Methods

4.1. Population and Sample

The target population of this study was employees working for for-profit organizations in South Korea. A snowball sampling method was used, and an online survey link was distributed via email. Overall, 278 responses were collected. However, among the 278 cases, 19 cases (6.8%) were deleted because the cases were deemed unreliable. For example, some cases were marked with the same number. Finally, 259 complete cases were used in this study. Demographic information on gender, age, tenure, and industry was collected (Table 1). The sample captured diversified groups of employees in three different sectors. Of the 259 employees, the percentages of male and female employees were 74.5% and 25.5%, respectively. The average age of the employees was 45 years, and the majority were in their 30s (27.8%), 40s (28.6%), and 50s (25.1%). More than 63% had less than ten years of work experience, and more than half of the employees were in the manufacturing industry.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants (n = 259).

Characteristics	*n*	%	Characteristics	*n*	%
Gender			Tenure (years)		
Male	193	74.5	Less than 10	165	63.7
Female	66	25.5	11–20 s	60	23.2
Age (years)			21–30	28	10.8
20s	18	6.9	Over 30	6	2.3
30s	72	27.8	Industry		
40s	74	28.6	Manufacturing	130	50.2
50s	65	25.1	Construction	23	8.9
Over 60	30	11.6	Service	106	40.9

4.2. Measures

Internal marketability was measured using Eby et al.'s [9] three items. The first and second authors translated the scale using a rigorous forward and backward translation process. Each item was assessed on a 5-point scale from 1 (rarely) to 5 (very often). An example is, "Given my skills and experience, the company that I work for views me as a value-added resource." The Cronbach's alpha for the three items of internal marketability was 0.917. External marketability was also measured using Eby et al.'s [9] three items. The items were assessed using a 5-point scale from 1 (rarely) to 5 (very often). For example, "I could easily obtain a comparable job with another employer." The scale showed a high internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha = 0.930).

Learning agility was measured using Bedford's [56] nine items. The measurement was reliable (Chronbach's alpha = 0.93) in a Korean context [34], and the reliability of the items was confirmed to be satisfactory in the current study (Chronbach's alpha = 0.93). One example was "I display a desire to gain new knowledge and skills." Learning agility was measured using a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (rarely) to 5 (very often). To measure career resilience, Kang's translated scale was adopted. Kang [58] summarized the scale that was used by Day and Allen [51], who combined four items from London [59] and three items from Noe et al. [44] to create a career resilience scale. Kang [58] adopted six items that fit the Korean culture, and we also used the six items to measure career resilience. The items were measured with a 5-point scale from 1 (rarely) to 5 (very often). An example was "I welcome job and organizational changes." The reliability (Cronbach's alpha = 0.897) also met the recommended level.

4.3. Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were performed using SPSS 25, and the hypothesized latent SR model was analyzed using Amos 18. We chose to study the hypothesized model with structural equation modeling (SEM) because it can simultaneously test theoretical relationships among multiple variables accounting for measurement error. A significant assumption of SEM is a multivariate normal distribution for outcome variables [60]; thus, normality was tested using AMOS 18. Table 2 shows the skewness value ranging from −0.102 to 0.110 and kurtosis values from −0.327 to 0.417. Given the guideline (−3 < skewness < 3, kurtosis < 8, [60], the variables met the normality assumptions. Still, the data failed to meet the multivariate normality. When data show nonnormality, bootstrapping is recommended [60–62]. The bootstrap method creates multiple subsamples from the original dataset; thus, the bootstrap sample distributions depend on the original dataset. Therefore, more than 200 original dataset sample size is recommended [60]. A bootstrapping was performed to analyze the data because our sample met the guideline. To check the overall fit of the model, this study used four fitness indices: comparative fit index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), and standard root mean square residual (SRMR). Individual parameter estimates and indirect effects were tested using 5000 bootstrap samples, and the bias-corrected bootstrap confidence intervals were adopted to test the mediating effects.

Table 2. Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations of Variables.

Variables	M	SD	IM	EM	LA	CR
Internal marketability	3.534	0.791	(0.917)			
External marketability	3.259	0.897	0.702 **	(0.930)		
Learning agility	3.842	0.592	0.558 **	0.437 **	(0.930)	
Career resilience	4.025	0.597	0.461 **	0.299 **	0.671 **	(0.897)
Skewness	-	-	0.017	−0.044	0.110	−0.102
Kurtosis	-	-	−0.194	0.119	−0.327	0.417

Note. ** $p < 0.01$ (two-tailed test); $n = 259$; M = mean; SD = standard deviation; IM = Internal marketability, EM = External marketability, LA = Learning agility, CR = Career resilience. The values on the diagonal are Cronbach's alpha.

5. Results

5.1. Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Analysis

Table 2 presents the mean, standard deviation, correlations between research variables, kurtosis, skewness, and Cronbach's alpha. All variables were positively related (ranging from 0.299 to 0.702) and statistically significant at $p < 0.01$. Moreover, all measures demonstrated adequate levels of reliability (ranging from 0.897 to 0.930, [63]).

5.2. Measurement Model Assessment

Following Anderson and Gerbing's [64] two-step modeling, we tested the measurement model to evaluate the convergent and discriminant validity of the four research variables. Subsequently, the structural models were compared. Before performing a series of CFA, the measurement items of learning agility (PLA1: item 1, 4, 7; PLA2: item 2, 5, 8; PLA3: item 3, 6, 9) and career resilience (PCR1: item 1, 4; PCR2: item 2, 5; PCR3: item 3, 6) were parceled into three groups, respectively, based on Little et al.'s [64] random assignment strategy. Then, a four-factor model was compared with one-factor and three-factor models. Table 3 presents that the four-factor model indicated a good fit to the data, χ^2 (48, $n = 259$) = 117.73, $p < 0.001$, CFI = 0.98, TLI = 0.97, RMSEA = 0.08, SRMR = 0.040, based on Hu and Bentler's recommendation (TLI $\geq$ 0.95, CFI $\geq$ 0.95, SRMR < 0.08, RMSEA < 0.06; [65,66]). Moreover, all the factor loadings of the four-factor model ranged from 0.798 to 0.951 and were statistically significant because none of the 95% confidence intervals included zero.

Table 3. Fit Statistics for CFA Models.

Model	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR
Model 1 (one factor)	1430.28 ***	54	26.487	0.543	0.441	0.31 [0.30, 0.33]	0.165
Model 2 (three factors)	421.246 ***	51	8.260	0.877	0.841	0.17 [0.15, 0.18]	0.063
Model 3 (four factors)	117.73 ***	48	2.45	0.98	0.97	0.08 [0.06, 0.09]	0.040

Note. Model 1: All four variables were combined into a single factor; Model 2, Internal and external marketability were combined into one factor; CFI, comparative fit index; TLI, Tucker-Lewis index; RMSEA, root mean square error of approximation; SRMR, standardized root mean square residual; *** p (Bootstrap adjusted p) = 0.001.

5.3. Structural Model Assessment

In the second step, an alternative model was developed and compared to the original model. The original model is the hypothesized partial mediation model. In contrast, the alternative model is a full mediation model that trimmed two paths (internal marketability → career resilience, and external marketability → career resilience). Table 4 confirms both models' goodness-of-fit [66]. The alternative model was nested within the original model; therefore, we conducted a chi-square difference test to compare the two models. The results showed that the models are different, $\Delta\ \chi^2(2, n = 259) = 6.87$, $p < 0.05$, indicating that the additional constraints decreased the model fit. Therefore, the original model (partial mediation model) was selected.

Table 4. Fit Statistics for CFA Models.

Model	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR
M0 (Partial mediation)	117.73 ***	48	2.45	0.98	0.97	0.08 [0.06, 0.09]	0.040
MA (Full mediation)	124.60 ***	50	2.49	0.98	0.97	0.08 [0.06, 0.07]	0.046

Note. M0: Original model; MA: Alternative model; CFI, comparative fit index; TLI, Tucker-Lewis index; RMSEA, root mean square error of approximation; SRMR, standardized root mean square residual. *** $p < 0.001$.

5.4. Hypotheses Testing

Figure 2 illustrates the relationships between the latent variables. The detailed information is presented in Table 5. The standardized path coefficients were considered, and the 95% confidence intervals were used to determine statistical significance. Concerning Hypotheses 1 and 2, the statistical model suggested a direct and positive effect of internal marketability on learning agility, $\gamma = 0.475$ (SE = 0.106), $p < 0.05$, but the path between external marketability and learning agility was statistically nonsignificant, $\gamma = 0.114$ (SE = 0.120), $p > 0.05$. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 was supported, whereas Hypothesis 2 was not. Regarding Hypothesis 3, the analysis results suggested that internal marketability's impact on career resilience was statistically significant, $\gamma = 0.212$ (SE = 0.083), $p < 0.05$. Thus, Hypothesis 3 was supported. However, the impact of external marketability on career resilience (Hypothesis 4) was not statistically significant, $\gamma = -0.135$ (SE = 0.072), $p > 0.05$. Regarding Hypothesis 5, the statistical model showed that learning agility influences career resilience, $\gamma = 0.671$ (SE = 0.071), $p < 0.05$.

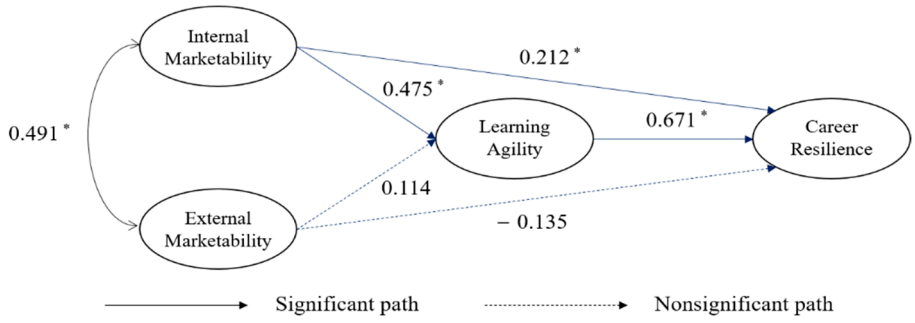

Figure 2. Effects of internal and external marketability on career resilience via learning agility. Standardized coefficients, * $p < 0.05$.

Table 5. Standardized Estimates of Direct and Indirect Effects.

Parameter	Standardized Estimate	SE	*p*	95% CI	
				LL	UL
Internal marketability → Learning agility	0.475	0.106	0.000	0.260	0.683
External marketability → Learning agility	0.114	0.120	0.349	−0.130	0.344
Learning agility → Career resilience	0.671	0.071	0.000	0.519	0.799
Internal marketability → Career resilience	0.212	0.083	0.011	0.048	0.376
External marketability → Career resilience	−0.135	0.072	0.059	−0.280	0.005
IM → LA → CR	0.318	0.076	0.000	0.13	0.39
EM → LA → CR	0.077	0.082	0.334	−0.05	0.17

Note. IM = Internal marketability, EM = External marketability, LA = Learning agility, CR = Career resilience; SE = standard error; CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit.

To verify the mediation effects (Hypotheses 5 and 6), we used an additional test to perform bootstrapping. Many researchers have argued that bootstrapping method is the most appropriate method [67,68] to detect a mediation effect. As presented in Table 5, the standardized indirect effect of internal marketability on career resilience via learning agility was statistically significant, ab = 0.318, SE = 0.076, 95% CI [0.13, 0.39]. Therefore, Hypothesis 5 is supported. However, the standardized indirect effect of external marketability on career resilience via learning agility was statistically nonsignificant, ab = 0.077, SE = 0.082, 95% CI [−0.05, 0.17]. Thus, Hypothesis 6 is not supported.

6. Discussion

This study investigated the associations between perceived internal and external marketability, learning agility, and career resilience. The study evidenced two opposite relationships among perceived marketability, learning agility, and career resilience. Namely, (1) perceived internal marketability was significantly and positively related to career resilience, whereas perceived external marketability was not significantly and negatively related to career resilience; and (2) learning agility mediated between perceived internal marketability and career resilience, but not between perceived external marketability and career resilience. Based on the research findings, we analyzed the results from several aspects.

First, we found that employees with a high level of perceived internal marketability were likely to have more career resilience, and this relationship was partially mediated by learning agility. The research finding of a positive relationship between perceived internal marketability and learning agility is consistent with a prior study by Houben et al. [69]. Their research showed that an individual's perceived internal employability was positively associated with work-related learning activities rather than one's perceived external employability. When organizations provide employees with learning opportunities to enhance their skills [20,69,70], their increased perceptions of employability in the current organization may be closely related to their learning attitudes and behaviors.

Additionally, when employees place their values in the internal labor market, they want to connect with their current organization [16] and remain in the existing organization [71]. These employees would therefore be unlikely to look for a job elsewhere and leave the organization because of increased commitment and lower turnover intention [17,21].

Although the perception of internal employability was positively related to personal accomplishment and organizational commitment, it was negatively associated with turnover intention [17]. Additionally, De Cuyper and De Witte [15] found that the employee's perception of all available job opportunities in the internal and external labor markets and the employee's perception of better job opportunities in the internal labor market are positively associated with employee's affective organizational commitment. Further, internal employability was positively related to an employee's embeddedness, which is considered the decision to remain with an organization [72]. However, the employee's perception of external qualitative self-rated employability was negatively associated with affective

organizational commitment. Moreover, perceived internal employability was negatively related to job search intensity, while perceived external employability was positively related to job search intensity [16].

Therefore, the employees who perceive themselves as valuable to their current employers tend to be interested in the jobs within the organization; in doing so, they are likely to develop learning agility and, subsequently, career resilience. These workers actively seek out challenges and new experiences, are open to changes from new ideas, and aspire to acquire new knowledge and skills. This personal ability to learn and challenge new things promotes career resilience because they can adapt to unexpected disruptions in the career-related environment, effectively cope with problems, and optimistically accept any changes. The results follow Abu-Tineh's [45] research finding that individual learning positively predicts career resilience. Additionally, the research finding that learning agility stimulates career resilience supports the previous studies' results. That is, participants reported that learning skills that included the self-reflection on their experience, a valuable component of their studies, had helped them improve their resilience [73] because learning agility resulted from reflections on past mistakes and learning from them [74,75].

Second, contrary to our expectations, we did not find a significant relationship between perceived external marketability and career resilience and no mediating role for learning agility. A possible explanation for this finding is that employees with a high degree of external marketability could be making the following assumptions: (1) they will quickly get a comparable job with another company, and (2) they are in high demand given their existing skills and experiences [9]. Employees who believe themselves to be strong candidates in the external labor market might be uninterested in developing learning agility and, thereby, less likely to increase career resilience.

6.1. Theoretical Contributions

This study can theoretically contribute to career-related research. First, this study adds further evidence to the existing knowledge of 'the management paradox' [15], which is a belief that increased employability from employee learning provided by an organization increases employee turnover. This study demonstrates that the management paradox may be confined to employees with high perceived external marketability rather than those with high perceived internal marketability.

Second, this research found that personal factors like perceived internal marketability and learning agility positively affect career resilience. The finding is consistent with the notion of the COR theory by indicating that employees with greater resources like internal marketability are better able to generate additional resources, such as learning agility and, subsequently, career resilience [11,76]. These results are consistent with the resource caravan concept ([11] and gain spiral [46] because the associated resources of perceived internal marketability and learning agility affect other resources like career resilience by generating a resource caravan pathway. Therefore, our findings demonstrate that the research model can be adequately explained through the lens of gain spirals from the COR theory.

Third, our study contributes to the career resilience literature by responding to the research call for the reverse relationship regarding the variables with career resilience research [4]. We empirically tested the reverse relationship between perceived marketability as career resilience outcomes (i.e., career satisfaction, personal career success) and career resilience because perceived marketability is a relevant indicator of subjective career success [9]. Additionally, this study extends our understanding by revealing the apparent relationship between learning agility and career resilience because these two variables are viewed as similar concepts [77]. We found that learning agility and career resilience are differentiated from the constructs; moreover, learning agility positively and significantly leads to career resilience.

Finally, this study contributes to the marketability research by integrating two types of marketability in one model. The current study's results indicate that internal and external

marketability are interrelated and align with previous research [30]. By empirically testing both marketability aspects, our findings show that only perceived internal marketability is a significant predictor of learning agility and career resilience.

6.2. Practical Implications

The study results provide practical implications for organizational leaders and human resource development (HRD) practitioners. First, the study results show that perceived internal marketability developed from the learning experience can promote learning agility and career resilience. Thus, organizational leaders and HRD practitioners should understand that employees' learning agility and career resilience, essential employee assets in the current turbulent business environment, can be enhanced by their belief of being valued in the internal labor market. Our findings encourage organizations to invest in employee job-related learning to increase employability and foster sustainable personal growth.

Second, managers and HRD practitioners should increase employees' perceptions of being employable in the internal labor market by establishing employee retention and development policies. Thus, organizations should focus on providing firm-specific training and learning activities to employees to develop their potential competence and improve internal marketability. Simultaneously, internal opportunities within the organization through job posting and job rotation need to be expanded to allow employees to use them to set their career goals and as a resource for career information and support their internal mobility [78].

Finally, given that the study results indicate that employees' learning agility plays an essential role as a mediator between perceived internal marketability and career resilience, the facilitation of high learning agility is crucial to help employees become career-resilient while creating a sustainable workforce in today's challenging environment. Organizations can benefit from having agile and resilient employees. They should, therefore, form a favorable learning culture for employees to remain agile [79,80] and for organizations to be sustainable.

6.3. Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Like other studies, this study also has some limitations. First, this study relied on self-report from a single source of employees' perceptions. This may lead to concerns about the common method variance likely to occur when participants report their perceptions of independent and dependent variables [79]. Especially, self-assessment of perceived internal and external marketability may be the most critical concern because respondents are likely to over-evaluate their level of marketability. Thus, future research could use objective ratings such as company evaluation data or manager ratings about marketability.

Second, perceptions of external marketability were not significantly and positively associated with career resilience and were not significantly associated with learning agility. This finding might be affected by the characteristics of the sample in this study; senior employees aged 50 or older accounted for 36.7% of all employees. Therefore, future study is needed to replicate this model with other samples in other contexts to deepen our understanding of the relationship between externally perceived marketability and career resilience.

Third, this study was conducted across three different industries in South Korea. The sample of this study reflects Korean organizations well but the majority of the employees are male. Therefore, readers should be careful when they interpret and apply the findings of this study to western culture because perceived internal and external marketability may vary depending on culture and industry. In this respect, further studies in various cultural and industrial contexts (e.g., countries where the ratio of female and male employees is similar, industries undergoing digital transformation, etc.) should be considered.

Finally, another limitation is the cross-sectional nature of the research. The relationships of the variables in this study cannot show causal associations because the data were collected simultaneously. However, the underlying hypotheses of our study come from

a causal relationship between internal and external marketability and career resilience through learning agility. Therefore, an avenue for future research is to test these relationships with a longitudinal design over a more extended period.

7. Conclusions

This study expands the current body of knowledge, showing that perceived internal marketability can lead to better learning agility, consequently affecting greater career resilience. Our findings serve as an empirical evidence for future research on relationships among internal marketability, learning agility, and career resilience. Moreover, current study contributes to the theoretical knowledge base of internal and external marketability, learning agility, and career resilience.

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