

# An Illuminative Analysis of College Students' Career Adaptability in Relation to Their Internship Experiences

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## ABSTRACT

There are a number of factors that contribute to the rising rate of unemployment among college graduates, one of which is a discrepancy between technological and economic advancements and workforce readiness. Individual career readiness is thought to assist businesses in locating such high-quality potential employees. It is anticipated that an internship program for college students will provide students with some preparations to enable them to successfully adjust to their workplace. Savickas (1997) defined career adaptability as an individual's capacity to adjust to a workplace environment. This study aims to investigate college students with internship experience's career adaptability. A quantitative descriptive method and a non-experimental design were used in this study. This study used a quota sampling method to select 64 college students who had completed an internship. The Career Adapt-Abilities Scale, developed by Savickas & Profelli (2012), contained a questionnaire whose reliability was 0.948. The study found that 76.6 percent of college students who had completed an internship exhibited high career adaptability. In addition, the profile of each aspect of career adaptability demonstrated that the majority of college students who have completed an internship also have a high profile in all aspects. It is possible to draw the conclusion that respondents already possess the capability of future workplace adaptation.

**Keywords:** Flexibility in a career; Experiential Internship; Students at colleges.

## INRODUCTION

According to Law No. 12 of 2012 on Higher Education, internships are one of the co-curricular activities that college students can participate in to support the fundamental skills learned in intracurricular learning. According to Munfaati (2017), the internship program enables college students to participate in work experiences at organizations relevant to their chosen field of science. College students participate in an internship program as part of their job training to enhance their practical skills and gain work experience. It is anticipated that internship programs will serve as a venue for training and preparing students for employment. However, it turns out that the number of people without jobs who have a college degree remained high until 2018 (INDEF, 2019). According to the Central Statistics Agency (BPS)'s data from the National Labor Force Survey (Sakernas), one of the biggest factors in unemployment is the number of people without jobs who have graduated from a university or other higher educational institution.

According to INDEF (2019), there are a number of factors that contribute to the rising rate of unemployment among people with higher education. One of these is the discrepancy that exists between the advancement of technology and the economy and the level of preparation provided by employers. Klehe et al. claim that (2012), an individual's career adaptability may assist the business in determining the quality of an employer candidate. In addition, Koen et al. claim that (2012), career adaptability is the mental preparation that can influence an individual's job search (Klehe et al., 2012). This is contrary to the expectation that internship programs should help college students. The internship program is one example of an effort to give college students experience. Students are given opportunities to gain experience in order to better prepare them for the demands of industry in the future. The qualifications of skills that a company seeks change as a result of economic and technological development.

Before entering the workforce, bachelor's degree holders must have a solid work history. College students are motivated to begin acquiring work-ready experience by participating in the internship program. Work readiness, according to World Bank Group (2019), is when an employer is able to solve problems, collaborate with others, and adapt to the workplace. Savickas (1997) defines career adaptability as the capacity for adaptability to the workplace. Career adaptability, according to Savickas (2013), is "the attitude and individual competency used to adapt to the work environment."

Career concern, responsibility or control over one's career, curiosity about the work environment, and the confidence to act appropriately with one's interest and ability are the four dimensions of career adaptability that are identified by Savickas (1997). These dimensions are a person's adaptability strategy for dealing with tasks, transitions, and traumatic workplace experiences now or in the future. According to research on career adaptability, career adaptability is a crucial factor in an individual's career path (Klehe et al., 2011).

An individual with good career adaptability is influenced by adaptivity's antecedent factors. According to Tolentino et al., adaptability includes a proactive personality and a positive outlook on one's future. (2014). Perceived social support, cognitive ability, self-esteem, individual self-evaluation of self-worth and abilities (core self evaluation), and future orientation are additional factors that influence career adaptability (Rudolph et al., 2017). Rudolph et al. say that (2017), these factors further assist an individual in adapting to challenges related to their career. The ability to adapt one's career makes it easier to move from school to work (Negru-Subtirica et al., 2015). Career adaptability has the potential to significantly aid individuals in achieving optimal adaptation during career transitions. College students will experience career transition from their studies to the workplace. According to Skorikov (2007), college students will be able to develop themselves and their careers well if they have high career adaptability (Hirschi, 2009). On the other hand, if a person has a low career adaptability, he or she will have trouble making the transition to a new career and will experience emotions like pressure, pessimism, and doubt that can make the process of self-actualization and success in life more difficult (Savickas, 2002).

The majority of respondents who have completed internships are more prepared and able to adapt to the workplace in their future careers than respondents who have never completed an internship, according to preliminary data collected on Bandung college students. According to the responses provided by the groups of respondents who have completed internships, internships are also an effort to obtain experience to prepare for future careers. According to the objectives of facilitating the internship program, the existence of an internship program or activity for college students can help their career readiness.

Researchers are encouraged to examine the description of career adaptability in college students who have joined internships based on the phenomenon of the gap between expectations of being held and facilitating an internship program for college students and the large number of unemployed people with a higher education background. Then, the specialist needed to make it explicit by looking at the portrayal of vocation flexibility on undergrads in Bandung.

## METHODOLOGY

The methodology employed in this research is characterized as a non-experimental approach, specifically quantitative research, which is structured to avoid administering any specific treatments or interventions to the sample (Christensen, 2007). The study's population comprises college students in Bandung who have participated in an internship program. The sample characteristics include active college students who are registered as interns in an organization or company. The sampling technique applied in this research is quota sampling, wherein the researcher establishes the desired sample size or quota for the identified group, followed by convenience sampling from that group (Christensen, 2010). The total number of respondents in this study is 64.

The instrument utilized for measurement is the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS) questionnaire developed by Savickas & Profeli (2012), which has been previously employed and adapted in research conducted by Alya Yasmin in 2018, targeting respondents with similar characteristics to those in this study,

namely college students. This questionnaire comprises 24 items, each representing the dimensions of career adaptability: career concern, career control, career curiosity, and career confidence. Respondents are instructed to evaluate the extent of the strengths they have developed following their internship experience by selecting one of five response options for each statement presented. The reliability of the research data, assessed using the Cronbach's Alpha test, yielded a coefficient of 0.954, with reliability scores for each dimension of career adaptability as follows: concern (.884), control (.837), curiosity (.906), and confidence (.832). The validity of the instrument was tested using the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) procedure, meeting the goodness of fit criterion of greater than 0.90, with a CFI index result of 0.97.

This measurement tool consists of 24 items, each accompanied by five response options. Respondents are required to select one answer for each item based on their individual circumstances. The five answer choices are provided along with their corresponding scores.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of processed research data are divided into general or overall career adaptability profile data and career adaptability descriptions based on demographic data and cross tabulation between demographic data and supporting data. Existing data are categorized based on predetermined categorization. Based on the research data processing that has been done, the following results are obtained:

**Table 1. Respondent Demographic Data**

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	10	15.6
	Female	54	84.4
Class of	2016	55	85.9
	2017	9	14.1
Age	20 years old	17	27.0
	21 years old	40	63.5
	22 years old	5	7.9
Frequency of Joining Internship	1 time	52	81.3
	2 times	11	17.2
	3 times	1	1.5
Year of Joining Internship	2017	1	1.3
	2018	8	10.4
	2019	68	88.3
Duration of Internship	Less than 1 month	5	6.5
	1 month	37	48.1
	More than 1 month	35	45.5
Alignment of Internship with Psychology	Yes	58	75.3
	No	19	24.7

Based on the table above, it can be seen that the majority of respondents in this study were female, came from the 2016 class, and were 21 years old. Then, related to their internship activities, the majority of respondents had joined an internship once. It can be seen that the majority of respondents took part in their internship activities in 2019. In addition, the respondents in this study were grouped according to the duration or length of their internships, which were less than 1 month, 1 month, and more than 1 month. Finally, the majority of respondents have joined internships that are in line with their scientific fields, namely psychology such as assistant psychologists and human resources, while other respondents have joined internships that are not in line with their scientific fields such as content writers, public relations staff, and baristas.

Furthermore, the researcher describes the general career adaptability profile and an overview of each dimension of the respondent's career adaptability. The percentage results of the number of respondents were

obtained as follows:

**Table 2. Overview of Respondents' Career Adaptability Profile in General**

Profil Category	Career Adaptability	Dimensi Career Adaptability			
		Concern	Control	Curiosity	Confidence
Low	4.7	4.7	3.1	6.3	1.6
Medium	18.8	17.2	26.6	20.3	37.5
<b>High</b>	<b>76.6</b>	<b>78.1</b>	<b>70.3</b>	<b>73.4</b>	<b>60.9</b>

The data presented in the table indicates that the college students who participated in internships exhibit career adaptability profiles predominantly in the high category (76.6%), followed by the medium category (18.8%), and the low category (4.7%). This suggests that a significant majority of respondents are classified within the high adaptability category. Specifically, 76.6% of participants in this study demonstrate readiness to confront the tasks and challenges that may arise in their future careers. They are perceived as capable of adjusting to the work environment, possessing psychosocial resources such as attitudes and competencies essential for managing tasks within their professional settings.

Moreover, an examination of the profiles across the various dimensions of career adaptability—namely concern, control, curiosity, and confidence—reveals that most college students who have engaged in internships also display high adaptability in these areas. This suggests that the majority of respondents possess adequate resources to navigate future assignments, transitions, and challenges in their prospective job roles, largely attributed to their internship experiences.

Notably, the concern dimension is rated higher than the others, indicating that respondents are already invested in their future careers. This inclination likely enhances their propensity for thorough exploration, strong commitment, and information gathering (Negru-Subtirica, Pop, & Crocetti, 2015). These findings align with the responses to questions regarding future orientation, where most participants expressed clarity about their future plans. However, it is worth noting that 3.1% of respondents reported uncertainty, indicating confusion about whether to pursue postgraduate studies or enter the workforce.

In the control dimension, a significant number of college students who participated in internships also demonstrate a high adaptability profile.

**Table 3. Overview of Respondents Career Adaptability Profile based on Demographic Data**

Demographic Data	Category Profile	Career Adaptability	Concern	Control	Curiosity	Confidence
Gender	Male	Low	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
		Medium	20.0	20.0	10.0	10.0
		High	80.0	80.0	90.0	90.0
	Female	Low	5.6	5.6	3.7	7.4
		Medium	18.5	16.7	29.6	22.2
		High	75.9	77.8	66.7	70.4
Frequency of Joining Internship	1 time	Low	3.8	5.8	1.9	5.8
		Medium	19.2	15.4	26.9	21.2
		High	76.9	78.8	71.2	73.1
	More than 1 time	Low	8.3	0.0	8.3	8.3
		Medium	16.7	25.0	35.0	16.7
		High	75.0	75.0	66.7	75.0
Duration of Internship	Less than 1 month	Low	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

		Medium	20.0	0.0	40.0	20.0
		High	80.0	100.0	60.0	80.0
	1 month	Low	5.4	5.4	2.7	8.1
		Medium	21.6	18.9	37.8	18.9
		High	73.0	75.7	59.5	73.0
	More than 1 month	Low	5.7	2.9	5.7	5.7
		Medium	14.3	20.0	14.3	20.0
		High	80.0	77.1	80.0	74.3
Alignment of Internship with Psychology	Yes	Low	3.4	1.7	3.4	5.2
		Medium	17.2	19.0	31.0	20.7
		High	79.3	79.3	65.5	74.1
	No	Low	10.5	10.5	5.3	10.5
		Medium	21.1	15.8	15.8	15.8
		High	68.4	73.7	78.9	73.7

**Note. Values are expressed as percentages (%). Career adaptability and its dimensions are categorized into Low, Medium, and High levels. The dimensions of career adaptability include Concern, Control, Curiosity, and Confidence.**

The data presented in the table indicates that the college student respondents who engaged in internships exhibit strong career adaptability profiles across all demographic categories. Analyzing the gender distribution, it is evident that 75.9% of female respondents and 80% of male respondents possess high career adaptability profiles. This finding aligns with research conducted in China, which suggests that men demonstrate greater career adaptability than women (Hou et al., 2012 in Rudolph et al., 2017). While the career adaptability dimensions for female respondents show a predominance of high profiles, they do not reach the levels observed in their male counterparts. This suggests that although female respondents possess the capability to adapt to changes in their work environments, their adaptability is not as pronounced as that of male respondents.

Additionally, when examining the career adaptability profiles of respondents based on their internship participation, the results reveal minimal differences between those who completed a single internship and those who undertook multiple internships. Supporting data indicates that both groups express confidence in their ability to tackle challenges within the professional realm. Therefore, it can be concluded that whether participating in one internship or several, respondents demonstrate readiness and competence to navigate challenges and changes in their work environments. This conclusion is consistent with findings from Creed and Patton (2002), which assert that individuals with work experience exhibit higher career maturity than those without (Creed et al., 2009). Furthermore, an analysis of each dimension reveals that respondents who participated in more than one internship tend to explore their future careers more actively and display greater confidence in overcoming obstacles.

The analysis of internship duration reveals that each category is predominantly represented by high-profile individuals, with respective percentages of 80%, 73%, and 80%. The findings indicate that there is minimal variation among respondents who completed internships lasting less than one month, one month, and more than one month. Furthermore, across all dimensions, it can be concluded that the majority of respondents, regardless of whether their internship lasted less than one month, one month, or more than one month, exhibit a high level of readiness and adaptability to the work environment in their prospective careers.

Additionally, when examining the alignment of internships with the field of psychology, the results indicate that both groups of respondents—those whose internships were aligned with their academic discipline and those whose internships were not—demonstrate a high level of career adaptability. However, a closer look reveals that 79.3% of the aligned group falls within the high adaptability category, compared to 68.4% of

the non-aligned group. Moreover, the percentage of respondents in the low adaptability category is higher among those whose internships were not aligned with their field. This suggests that the aligned group possesses greater resources to facilitate their adaptation to future work environments (Savickas & Profeli, 2012). Furthermore, an examination of the dimensions indicates that the majority of college students who undertook internships relevant to psychology are more engaged in planning for their futures, while those in unrelated internships exhibit greater confidence in their ability to meet future work demands.

## CONCLUSION

The analysis and discussion of the descriptive research data indicate that a significant number of college students in Bandung who participated in internships exhibit a readiness to adjust to their future work environments. Overall, these students demonstrate the ability to plan their careers effectively, take responsibility for their career decisions, explore their surroundings, gather information regarding career options, and navigate challenges that arise during their professional development. To enhance future research on career adaptability, the following recommendations are proposed:

- Expand the sample size to ensure a more representative distribution of results across various respondent categories;
- Examine the career adaptability profile considering additional factors not addressed in this study that may influence the dynamics of respondents' career adaptability;
- Conduct further investigations into the differences in career adaptability profiles between students who have completed internships and those who have not, to gain a clearer understanding of the distinctions between these two groups.

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