Psychology Students' Career Adaptability as Predictor Employability in Public Health Systems

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ABSTRACT:
Psychology students have great potential to contribute to future public health programs through their role in mental health. This study aims to look at the influence of career adaptability on employability in psychology students. This study is quantitative method research using linear regression analysis. This study involved 518 psychology students from one of the state university in Indonesia. The results of regression analysis show significant results and career adaptability has an influence contribution of 40% in influencing student employability. Based on these results, it is known that the hypothesis of this study is accepted, career adaptability can be a positive predictor that can increase student employability.

1. Introduction

Public health involves various professionals including doctors, nurses, nutritionists, and psychologists(DiMaria-Ghalili et al., 2014). The role of psychologists in public health systems is critical, especially in supporting mental health, designing behavioral interventions, and improving quality of life (Nelson & Mann, 2011; Silalahi et al., 2024). The global public health sector around the world faces major challenges in ensuring the availability of a qualified workforce and the ability to adapt to rapid changes (Rizqiansyah et al., 2017; World Health Organization, 2013). Research related to the role of psychologists in public health has been conducted extensively (Ferreira-Neto & Henriques, 2016; Halkitis, 2020; Lawrence & Barker, 2016). The foundation for becoming a competent psychologist in supporting public health begins from the education period, namely, when students are students. Unfortunately, research using psychology students as subjects to explore their readiness and role in public health remains minimal(Chawla & Saha, 2024). Psychology students have a great responsibility to prepare themselves to contribute to public health in the future (Shaw et al., 2015).

Psychology students have great potential to support a variety of programs in public health, such as mental health promotion, prevention of risky behaviors, and post-traumatic recovery (Abu-Ras et al., 2024). However, to contribute optimally, students must be equipped with skills suitable for employment needs in the public health sector (Abdillah et al., 2024; Woodall et al., 2024). Hence, the need for research on the employability abilities of psychology students in the area of public health has intensified due to the increasing scope of work in the public health sector.

From the above, there is insufficient research on the job readiness of psychology students, which in turn affects the relevance of these students with job opportunities, more so in the public health field. Graduate employability or graduate job relevance/demand, which is the capacity for learners to secure and sustain employment that is in line with their learning outcomes, is an important issue (Dacre Pool & Qualter, 2013). People who are highly employable tend to possess high emotional and self-governing intelligence, above-average academic and studying techniques, better insight about the careers they intend to pursue, good reason solving skills, and work and life experiences that are applicable (Coetzee & Harry, 2014; Dacre Pool et al., 2014; Udayar et al., 2018). In contrast, people with lower employability have trouble controlling both their emotions and themselves, low academic performance, poor studying strategies, a shallow understanding of

career goals, poor problem-solving skills, and a lack of professional and relevant extracurricular activities (Gowsalya & Kumar, 2015).

According to Hajat and colleagues, these theories suggest that one explanation of the low employability of psychology students is quite simple – they are unable to graduate (Hajat et al., 2024). Furthermore, it is evident that students who lack self-control in handling their emotions and themselves do not exhibit the mental stability or work ethic needed to cope in the public health sector, which can be quite strenuous and adaptive (Adelina et al., 2023). In addition, the challenge of academic achievement and even acquiring learning skills can constrain their understanding and practical application of any theoretical framework (Hidayah, 2015).

Moreover, career development strategies are frequently poorly understood by students, which leaves them ill prepared to meet the demands of the ever-changing working environment, especially with regard to work inputs (Aminah et al., 2024). If many people in any organization have poor decision-making skills, it becomes difficult for the organization to design programs that can improve the health status of the population (Yanzhi and Bhotisarn, 2024). Finally, a shortage of relevant work experience makes students unable to acquire the practical skills required in the profession (Wibowo, 2022). For this reason, it can be helpful to research the employability of students of psychology along with those of public health so that they can optimally contribute to the national health system.

The Possibility of a student's career depends on Employability and Career Adaptability (Andika & Sari, 2021; Diva, 2023; Nurmasari, 2024). Prior studies have confirmed that career adaptability is a critical element in enhancing one's employment prospects, as it fosters employment for an individual (Coetzee et al., 2015; de Guzman & Choi, 2013; Khalid & Ahmad, 2021; Maree, 2017; Rossier et al., 2012; Tien & Wang, 2017). Career adaptability is a characteristic possessed by individuals concerning which they can deal, cope with, and accommodate themselves with various obstacles, alterations, and requirements encountered in the course of a career (Savickas, 1997, 2005). Career adaptability can help students navigate the transition from school to workforce or further specialize in their career field, with the hope that they will be stable in their future jobs (Kristiyorini et al., 2024). Individuals with a higher level of career adaptability tend to be more successful in finding, retaining, and developing their careers in a world of uncertainty (Savickas et al., 2009) (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Career adaptability development can help students be better prepared for the uncertainties and changes that may occur in their careers (Hirschi et al., 2015).

Based on career construction theory developed by Rudolph, Lavigne, and Zacher (2017), career adaptability is an adaptive resource that can increase employability as an adaptation result (Rudolph, Lavigne, Katz, et al., 2017). Therefore, the main purpose of this study was to examine whether career adaptability as an adaptive resource can act as a predictor and improve the employability (adaptive result) of psychology students in the public health sector.

This research is important because it provides new insights into how to develop the ability of psychology graduates to be better prepared to enter the workforce, especially in sectors that urgently need cross-disciplinary skills, such as public health. This study can also help identify which dimensions of career adaptability contribute the most to employability in the sector and provide recommendations for educational institutions to develop curricula that are more relevant to the demands of the dynamic world of work.

This investigation paves the way for examining the linkage between career adaptability of psychology students and their functional disposition, with a special emphasis on being adaptable to the ever-evolving and competitive job market, especially the public health sphere, by promoting career adaptability as the central variable. It is anticipated that this research will not only extend the theoretical frameworks, but also provide sound empirical evidence that would assist in formulating enhanced education policies and reinforce the conception of relevant teaching and training schemes more appropriate to the actual world of work.

2. Objectives

The main objective of this study was to analyze the influence of career adaptability on the employability of psychology students, with a focus on the public health sector. The purpose of this research is to seek out the aspects of career adaptability that are essential for the employability of

psychology graduates in that particular industry and their implications on their probability of securing related employment.

3. Methods

The current study employed a quantitative research methodology aimed at analyzing the correlation between career adaptability and employment opportunities for psychology students at a state university located in Indonesia. This study focuses on quantitative research design, which employs the collection and analysis of numerical data for statistical interpretation of findings relating to the characteristics of the two variables addressed in the study.

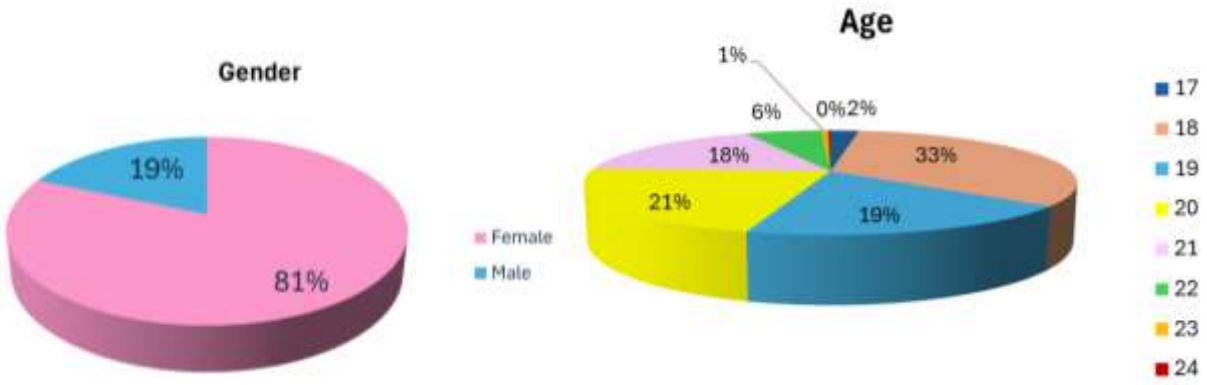

Figure 1. Sample Characteristic

The sample of this study consisted of 518 students from one of the public universities in Indonesia, who were selected using accidental sampling. The subjects of this study included 518 participants. The majority of subjects were women (422, 81.5%), while the rest, 96 people (18.5%) were men. The age range of the subjects was 17 to 24 years, with an average age of 19.39 years (SD = 1.37). In detail, there were 12 subjects aged 17, 172 subjects aged 18, 98 subjects aged 19, 110 subjects aged 20, 90 subjects aged 21, 32 subjects aged 22, 3 subjects aged 23, and 1 subject aged 24 years.

Data collection was carried out using two standardized scale instruments: the Career Adaptability Scale and Employability Scale. The first scale, the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS) developed by Savickas & Porfeli (2012) was used to measure career adaptability. This scale measures four main dimensions: concern, control, curiosity, and confidence, which, as a whole, describe the extent to which individuals are prepared to face changes and challenges in their careers. The second scale, the Employability Scale developed by Dacre Pool et al. (2014) is used to measure student employability, which includes emotional intelligence and self-management, academic performance and study skills, career development learning, problem-solving skills, and work and life experience. Both scales are considered relevant because they measure important aspects related to students' readiness and ability to enter the workforce.

Before the instrument was disseminated to the respondents, the validity and reliability of both scales were tested. The results of the reliability test of the employability scale are the coefficient of discrimination power of the moving item 0.402-0.663 with an alpha coefficient of 0.924. Meanwhile, the career adaptability scale discrimination index test produced a score coefficient of 0.462-0.776 with an alpha coefficient of 0.956.

The hypothesis test and hypothesis test of this research was carried out with the help of JASP software. Before conducting a hypothesis test, this study tested the research assumptions by conducting linearity, normality, and heteroscedasticity tests. After these assumptions were tested, data analysis was carried out using The hypothesis test was carried out by regression analysis using JASP software.

4. Results

a. Descriptive Statistics

The following are the results of the descriptive statistics from the research data of both variables.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Employability	518	94.423	13.643	47	130
Career Adaptability	518	102.888	12.654	50	120

Based on the information from the table above, it can be seen that this study involved 518 students. Based on the table, it is known that the average employability score obtained by the subjects is 94.42 (SD = 13.64) with a minimum score of 47 and a maximum score of 130. The average score for employability is 94.423. This indicates that, in general, the research subjects have a relatively high level of employability. The standard deviation for employability was 13.643. This indicates that there is considerable variation in employability scores among the research subjects. The average career adaptability score is 102.89 (SD=12.65) with a minimum score of 50 and a maximum score of 120. The standard deviation for career adaptability was 12.654. This value is slightly lower than the standard deviation for employability, indicating that career adaptability scores tend to be centered around the mean. Overall, inter-individual variation is large for employability but smaller for career adaptability.

b. Assumption Test

1. Normality test

Based on the normality test using JASP and Q-Q Plot analysis, it was found that the virgins were normally distributed because they were close to 0.

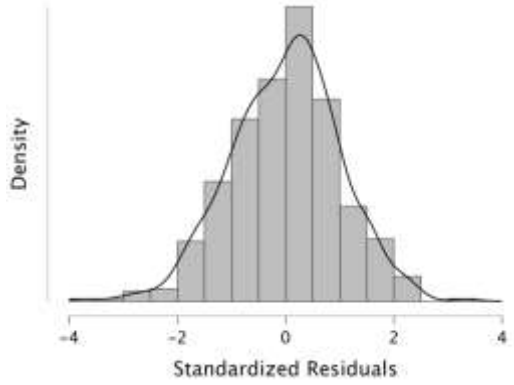

Figure 2. Results of normality test

2. Linearity test

A linearity test was performed by conducting a test. Based on a linearity test using JASP, it was found that the virgin was linearly distributed.

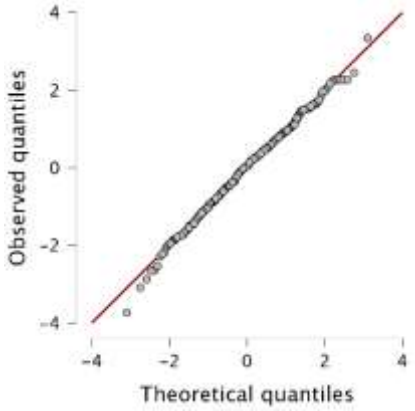

Figure 3. Linearity test results

3. Heteroscedasticity test
   Based on the heteroscedasticity test, the data had an even distribution.

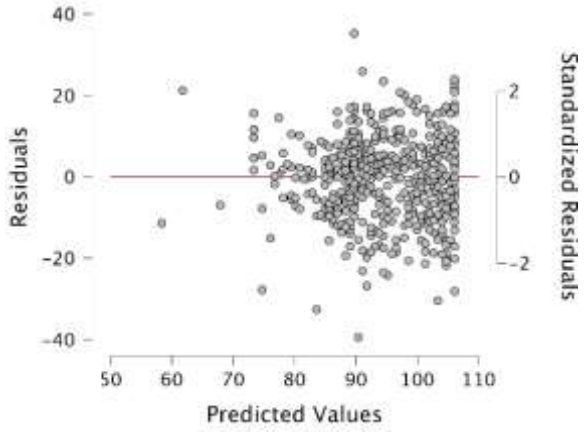

   Figure 4. Heteroscedasticity test results

4. Autocorelation test
   Table 2. Coefficient of Determination

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	RMSE	Durbin-Watson		
					Autocorrelation	Statistic	p
M_0	0.000	0.000	0.000	13.643	0.018	1.962	0.664
M_1	0.633	0.400	0.399	10.576	0.032	1.933	0.446

Note. M_1 includes Career Adaptability

Based on the table, it is known that the Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.933 indicates that there is no significant autocorrelation in the residuals; therefore, the assumption of residual independence is met. The root mean square error (RMSE) value of 10.576 indicates that the average prediction error rate in the model is quite low, which confirms that the model has good prediction accuracy. The RMSE decreased from 13.643 (M_0) to 10.576 (M_1), indicating an improvement in prediction accuracy. Based on this it can be seen that career adaptability has a substantial contribution to employability, indicated by the to employability, indicated by an increase in R^2 and a decrease in RMSE. The model showed a good fit with the data, although statistical significance needs to be considered in the interpretation of the results.

c. Hypothesis Test
   Table 3. Anova Summary

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
M_1	Regression	38508.486	1	38508.486	344.279	< .001
	Residual	57715.925	516	111.853		
	Total	96224.411	517			

Note. M_1 includes Career Adaptability
Note. The intercept model is omitted, as no meaningful information can be shown.

Based on Table 3, it can be seen that the resulting regression equation is significant, $F(1, 516) = 344.279$, $p < 0.001$. The ANOVA results further strengthened the validity of the regression model used. An F value of 344.279 with regression degrees of freedom (df) of 1 and residuals of 516 resulted in a p value of $p < 0.001$. This shows that the regression model as a whole is significant in explaining the variance in employability. From the sum of squares, the contribution of career adaptability to the variability of employability is quite large, amounting to 38,508.486, compared to the variability that cannot be explained by the model (residual) of 57,715.925. With a total sum of squares of 96,224,411, the model explained most of the variability in the data, indicating that career adaptability is an important factor influencing employability.

Table 4. Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized	Standard Error	Standardized	t	p
M_0	(Intercept)	94.423	0.599		157.523	< .001
M_1	(Intercept)	24.249	3.810		6.364	< .001
	Career Adaptability	0.682	0.037	0.633	18.555	< .001

The Mo value shows that if there are no independent variables in the model, the average value of employability is 94.423. The M_1 value shows that when career adaptability is zero, average employability is 24,249. The values of t = 18.555 and p < 0.001 indicate that career adaptability is statistically significant in predicting employability. All t-values have a p < 0.001, indicating that both the intercept and the career adaptability variable are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level (α=0.05 α=0.05). Based on this, the M_1 model is better than M_0 because it includes an independent variable of career adaptability, which is statistically significant in predicting employability. Therefore, a positive career adaptability coefficient indicates a positive relationship between career adaptability and employability.

The following is the resulting regression equation: Employability = 24.249 + 0.682 (Career Adaptability). A career adaptability coefficient of 0.682 (SE = 0.037) indicates that each one-unit increase in career adaptability is associated with a 0.682-unit increase in employability, and this result is statistically significant (t = 18.555, p < 0.001). In addition, the standardized coefficient of 0.633 indicates that career adaptability has a moderately strong influence on employability. Thus, the results of this study confirm the importance of career adaptability as a significant determinant of employability, supporting the hypothesis that individuals with higher career adaptability tend to have better employability.

The career adaptability coefficient is 0.682, which means that every 1 unit increase in career adaptability increases employability by 0.682 units. In addition, t = 18,555 for career adaptability indicated that this variable was statistically significant. A p-value of 0.001 indicates that the effect of career adaptability is statistically significant. Based on these results, H0 was rejected because p < 0.05, so career adaptability had a significant influence on employability. The following is a plot model generated from the interaction between career adaptability and employability:

Based on Table 3, the results of the regression analysis show that career adaptability has a significant influence on employability. This is evidenced by the R2 value of 0.400, which shows that 40% of the variance in employability can be explained by the variable predictor of career adaptability. In line with this statement, the following graph explains the interaction between career adaptability and employability variables.

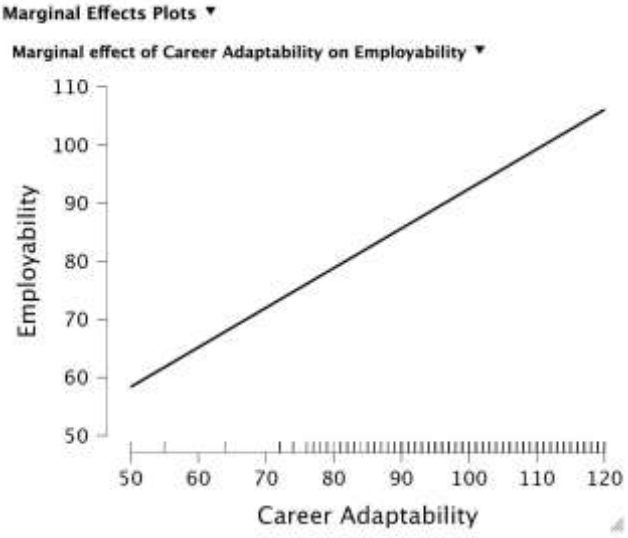

Figure 5. Marginal effect plots of career adaptability on employability

The figure displays a graph of the relationship between career adaptation and employability. The horizontal axis of the graph represents career adaptation, with scores increasing from left

to right indicating higher levels of adaptation. The vertical axis represents employability, with scores increasing from bottom to top, indicating higher employability. A consistently rising sloping line indicates a positive relationship between the two variables. In other words, the higher the level of career adaptation, the higher is the employability. This graph shows that individuals who can adapt well to the changes and demands of the work world tend to have good employability.

5. Discussion

This study aimed to determine how career adaptability would improve students' employability in the context of public health. To understand the results of this study, the authors applied a linear regression analysis technique. In view of the p-value of <0.001, we can understand the practical significance of this finding slightly better. The study also indicates that career adaptability is significant, with a determined regression coefficient of 0.682. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that the research hypothesis of this study is true – career adaptability indeed affects the employability chances of students in this particular case.

Psychology students who seek employment in the public health field possess career adaptability, which generously improves their chances of being employable. Such career adaptability helps develop a range of competencies that are necessary to meet the demands of employment; these include the ability to adjust to workplace changes and accept and solve challenges in one's career in this instance. Problem-solving, critical thinking, and stress management are examples of these competencies, which are critical in active workplaces, such as public health (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Career adaptability is essential for enabling psychology students working in public health to cope with changes in health policies, technological applications, and community problems. This improves one's chances of finding a job due to having relevant work experience, possessing a positive outlook, and being willing to assume responsibility (Fiori, Bollmann, & Rossier, 2015). It should also be mentioned that an individual is struggling with employability by being able to seize chances and opportunities, have professional relationships, and pursue learning for better professional performance.

The results strengthen the narrative claiming that career adjustment is a crucial psychological asset allowing people to cope with the pressures of the fast-moving professional environment. In fact, according to career construction theory, career adaptability is the ability to deal with change in careers, uncertainty, and expansions of career opportunities. Empirically, these findings reinforce the literature that emphasizes the importance of adaptability skills in the face of an increasingly competitive global labor market. Such findings correspond with earlier studies that have shown that career adaptability is essential in finding, keeping, and developing one's career, particularly during these challenging times when the workplace is filled with uncertainties (Diva, 2023; Rossier et al., 2012).

Research conducted by Coetzee et al. (2015) state that there is a positive relationship between career adaptability and employability. In addition, Khalid & Ahmad (2021) research using similar subjects, namely undergraduate students, also obtained similar results, namely that there is a positive relationship between career adaptability and employability in college students. The results of this study can be used to strengthen the research, with similar results showing that career adaptability can affect employability in college students. Furthermore, this study will thoroughly discuss how each dimension of career adaptability can affect employability in college students.

Based on the results of the correlation test on each dimension of career adaptability, which includes concern, control, curiosity, and confidence, it was found that these dimensions play an important role in increasing one's employability. The Pearson correlation coefficient has a value of r=0.527, which indicates a moderate positive relationship between the concern dimension and employability. On the other hand, the control and employability variables are relatively moderately correlated, as the Pearson correlation coefficient r = 0.548 between them indicates. Furthermore, the Pearson correlation coefficient r = 0.570 found for the employability variable falls within the boundaries of a positive, fairly strong correlation as well. To be more specific, confidence, having a coefficient of r = 0.627, possesses the highest correlation with employability, more than all other

variables. This further suggests that confidence is central in determining the ease with which an individual can secure a job.

Pearson's correlation coefficient of r=0.627 indicates that the confidence dimension in career adaptability plays a crucial role in increasing student employability. According to Bandura, self-efficacy is the belief that one can succeed in the goals they set on themselves. Therefore, they are more likely to take necessary actions, bear risks, and persist in events that have the potential to be fruitful. This further highlights the importance of the confidence dimension in achieving global employability, as confidence boosts the chances of achieving positive outcomes in interfaces such as job interviews and interactions with peers and colleagues. Such students tend to have a more positive perspective on challenges, which also leads to better perseverance (Maggiori et al., 2013). Baiti et al. (2017) and Junker et al. (2021) also share a similar view and say that self-confidence leads students to take a more creative approach to different issues. With a proper amount of self-confidence, students are willing to take risks and challenges, which in turn helps boost their experience capital. This, in turn, leads to improved academic performance. This encourages students to take on challenges with high hope for success, leading to greater interest in learning.

The curiosity dimension of career adaptability plays an important role in improving student employability, with a Pearson correlation of r=0.570. Curiosity can be defined as the ability by which an individual seeks different job options, employment locations, or career growth opportunities, especially in the case of a rapidly changing and ever-shifting area such as public health (Savickas, 2013). As Kashdan et al. (2004) demonstrated, curiosity is an integral part of modern education and honing one's skill sets. Whether it is the climate of acute competition or constant technology upgrades, those individuals that are highly curious and have confidence not only excel in taking up new challenges, but also possess the ability to cope with high expectations and demands. With the right mix of curiosity and confidence, psychology majors, for instance, could delve deeper into the complex nature of contemporary healthcare issues and their respective public policies, making them extremely capable contestants in the job market. Tutorials revolving around health policies and public health regulations would greatly benefit curious students and encourage them to pursue further economic opportunities in the health sector (Safitri et al., 2022). Apart from that, curiosity does aid one's insight into the real life conditions of society and enables them to comprehend community-based innovative solutions to health problems and health issues in general (Rudolph et al., 2017). Aiming high and scoring big career wise in the public health sector could be achieved through honing one's self-esteem and confidence, while one's curiosity motivates them to explore the boundaries of the ever-changing health field (Anwar et al., 2024).

The control dimension of career adaptability played an important role in improving student employability, with a Pearson correlation of r=0.548. Control reflects an individual's ability to organize and direct oneself in the face of career challenges, including making responsible decisions and demonstrating commitment to professional goals (Savickas, 2013). Rotter's (1966) research on locus of control shows that individuals with internal control (those who believe that their success depends on their own efforts) tend to have higher levels of employability. This is because they are more proactive in seeking opportunities, improving their skills, and taking responsibility for their careers. Students with high levels of control tend to have strong self-management, enabling them to set priorities and maintain productivity in their careers (Barczak & Cannella-Malone, 2022). Control ensures that there is initiative in skill acquisition appropriate for that career (Creed et al., 2009; Maulidah, 2022). In addition, self-control contributes to improved academic performance and study skills, such as effective time management and dedication to learning. (Wang et al., 2023). Students with effective control tend to be successful in regulating their feelings and actions towards difficult job situations (Rudolph, Lavigne, Katz, et al., 2017). High-control students are likely to be proactive in spotting and resolving workplace problems (Guan et al., 2015).

The concern dimension in career adaptability plays an important role in influencing student employability, with a Pearson correlation of r=0.527. Concern refers to the ability to plan for a future career with the awareness and anticipation of challenges that may arise (Savickas, 2013). Previous research, such as that conducted by Creed and Watson (2003), has found that career concerns can increase individuals' motivation to seek new job opportunities or learn additional

skills. Concern enables students to prepare appropriately for their careers (Tokan, 2018). Students with good concerns demonstrate strong self-management skills, which help maintain their focus on career goals. (Yu, 2013). Concern encourages students to improve their academic performance and study skills dimensions of employability, such as completing assignments consistently and understanding theoretical concepts relevant to public health (Jackson, 2015). In addition, students with good concerns will actively explore opportunities and challenges in the world of work and increase the career development learning dimension of employability (Jackson & Tomlinson, 2020). Good concern also encourages students to seek relevant work and life experiences, making them better prepared for the demands of working in public health (Divaris et al., 2008).

Based on the description above regarding the role of each dimension of career adaptability in influencing employability, it can be seen that career adaptability has an important role in increasing student employability. This is in line with the results of the regression analysis, which states that career adaptability has a significant influence on employability. This is evidenced by the R2 value of 0.400, which indicates that 40% of the variance in employability can be explained by the predictor variable career adaptability.

With respect to public health, it can be stated that career adaptability is a major asset that helps people to adjust to the changing needs of their jobs within the changing aspect of public health problems, such as the introduction of new policies or new health technologies. Employability, which is the potential to get a job and retain it, can be improved with the enhancement of career adaptability that allows psychological students to be more flexible, creative, and resourceful (Rudolph et al., 2017). Career adaptability in psychology should also be regarded as important as the state of job readiness because it is where one prepares to take an active role in public health projects that address real issues by promoting best practices within the community or society.

Psychology students with high career adaptability are better able to work as a team across different areas or disciplines, perform ethical tasks, and apply tailored interventions to the community (Fiori, Bollmann, & Rossier, 2015). Thus, increasing career adaptability not only facilitates the employability of students in psychology, but is also a more strategic action in the delivery of public health services that are responsive to the pressing needs of the world. Drawing from this, since career adaptability has been shown to significantly influence student employability, universities should strive to facilitate the development of career adaptability to increase student employability skills. Several previous studies have shown that career adaptability can be developed through targeted interventions and support programs, such as career counseling, mentoring, and training (Carvalho et al., 2023; Gai et al., 2022; Hidayah & Ramli, 2017; Kepir Sávoly & Tuzgol Dost, 2020).

These results reaffirm the strong positive influence of career adaptability on employability. However, the authors emphasize that this study was only able to explain 40% of the variance, while the remaining 60% of the factors that may influence employability have not been examined. Based on this, future research could examine other factors, including education, work history, and professional contacts, that could help improve employability. In addition, this study focused on linear relationships. Potential nonlinear relationships or moderation from other variables, such as organizational support, could be an interesting area for further research.

6. Concluson

This study seeks to establish career adaptability as a predictor of employability for students in the field of public health, particularly for those pursuing a degree in psychology. The results confirmed that career adaptability accounted for 40% of students' employability. However, the claim made here, which asserts that 40% of employability is a result of career adaptability, is not fully accurate, as a more accurate assertion would be that there are some other factors that also influence employability and do not fall within the purview of this model. Alcohol consumption is an example of one such factor, as it negatively impacts employability and should be accounted for in further studies on this model. In addition, the subjects of this study only involved students from one university, so the results may not fully reflect the general condition of psychology students in

various higher education institutions. Future research should involve a more diverse sample from various universities with different geographical backgrounds, accreditations, and curricula.

These findings suggest that developing career adaptability among psychology students can be a development priority in the higher education curriculum, especially to improve students' readiness to enter the public health sector. Universities can design training programs, career guidance, or structured internship activities to help students develop abilities such as flexibility, self-control, curiosity, and self-confidence. With increased career adaptability, students will be better prepared to face the dynamics of the labor market in public health, thus increasing their employability opportunities. In addition, these findings also provide insights for practitioners and policymakers to design more effective human resource empowerment strategies in bridging the needs of the world of work with the potential of psychology graduates.

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