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The Influence of Career Adaptability and Willingness to Compromise on Work Readiness: A Study of Student's School to Work Transition in Supporting SDG 4

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The transition from higher education to the workplace represents a critical stage that requires students to possess adequate psychological resources and career competencies. This study aims to examine the influence of career adaptability and willingness to compromise on students' work readiness during the school-to-work transition while highlighting its contribution to SDG 4 (Quality Education) through the development of employability competencies. **Method:** This study employed a quantitative descriptive approach using a correlational research design. The population consisted of 119,260 university students from seven universities in West Sumatra, Indonesia. A total of 210 students were selected using incidental sampling techniques. Data were collected using career adaptability, willingness to compromise, and work readiness instruments. **Data analysis** was conducted using descriptive statistics, simple linear regression, and multiple linear regression analysis. **Results:** The findings indicate that students demonstrated high levels of career adaptability and willingness to compromise, while their work readiness was categorized as moderate. Career adaptability significantly contributed to work readiness by 24.1%, while willingness to compromise contributed 11.3%. Simultaneously, both variables explained 27.5% of the variance in students' work readiness. **Novelty:** This study highlights the importance of strengthening career adaptability as an educational strategy to improve graduate employability and support SDG 4 by promoting quality education that prepares students for sustainable career development.

INTRODUCTION

The rising unemployment rate among recent graduates can be influenced by several factors, including a mismatch between academic curricula and labor market demands, unrealistic job expectations, and the lack of specific skills that are not adequately taught in formal education (Bukartaite & Hooper, 2023). The lack of competencies and in-demand skills is the reason for many companies rejecting graduates, even though those who demonstrate work readiness with high intellectual aptitude will still be considered by companies (Sellars et al., 2018). Final-semester students should improve their hard and soft skills to increase their competitiveness and meet the requirements of potential employers (Chiu et al., 2016). Those who are in the school-to-work transition should acquire additional skills that may not be fully addressed in university (Hettich, 2020). During this transition, they determine which career path they will take (Gleason, 2018). Given the increasing competitiveness of the workplace, students should proactively seek out job opportunities and training programs to acquire in-demand skills (Dwivedi et al., 2023). Individual resources that enable individuals to overcome challenges and grab opportunities during the school-to-work transition are referred to as career adaptability. The school-to-work transition involves on-the-job training, apprenticeships, cooperative education agreements, or other programs designed to prepare students to enter the workforce (Bank, 2018). Work readiness is characterized by an individual's resources necessary for successful entry into the job market (Suarda et