

Career adaptability among FTTE students at Jambi University

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Abstract: Career adaptability is essential for students to navigate future career challenges effectively. It equips individuals to adjust to changes in the workplace and proactively manage their professional paths. This study examines the career adaptability of students at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education (FTTE), Jambi University, involving 17 male and 157 female participants through a cross-sectional survey and quantitative descriptive approach. Data were collected using a career adaptability instrument and analyzed with descriptive statistics, t-tests, and independent t-tests. Simple random sampling was employed to select participants. The findings indicate that FTTE students generally exhibit moderate levels of career adaptability. Furthermore, t-test results ($p = 0.00 < 0.05$) reveal significant differences in career adaptability between male and female students. Interventions are recommended to include career counseling, guidance, training, and workshops to improve students' career adaptability.

Keywords: Career adaptability; gender differences; student development

Introduction

The transition from school to college is a pivotal phase in shaping future career success, where effective career planning is often determined by the quality of current decisions (Koen et al., 2012; Nilforooshan & Salimi, 2016). Achieving career success necessitates a high level of adaptability. Research highlights that students with greater career adaptability are better equipped to handle career-related challenges and make informed decisions about their future. This adaptability encompasses several dimensions, including emotional regulation (Lee & Jung, 2022), social support (Dewani & Nuzulia, 2024), and proactive career planning (Wetstone & Rice, 2023).

Career adaptability refers to an individual's psychological readiness and resources to address vocational development tasks, navigate career changes, and manage work-related challenges. This skill has become crucial for undergraduate students facing career uncertainty in today's dynamic labor market. The need for more confidence among graduates in adapting to career demands underscores the importance of enhancing career adaptability, as noted in studies focusing on Chinese graduates (Hou et al., 2014; Jin et al., 2012).

The results of interviews with FTTE students at Jambi University in October 2024 revealed that low career decision-making is often influenced by intrinsic and extrinsic factors such as limited understanding of the world of work, misaligned interests and talents, and doubts in planning life after graduation. This result aligns with the findings of Ramdhani et al (2019), who observed that many students lack the self-confidence needed for career maturity. Additionally, new graduates often need more self-assurance, creativity, and communication skills, primarily due to inadequate career adaptability from a psychological perspective.

Career adaptability enables individuals to perform job-related tasks effectively, manage career development, navigate transitions, and plan for future professional endeavors (Savickas et al., 2018). Hirschi (2009) demonstrated that career adaptability developed during school

years significantly contributes to educational success, supported by positive emotional states, social support, and the family's educational background. Higher levels of understanding and readiness to learn at school increase students' ability to adapt to future careers.

However, findings by Negru-Subtirica & Pop (2016) present a contrasting perspective, showing no significant relationship between academic achievement and curiosity in early adolescents. Although students may possess high career knowledge, they often need more apparent career planning, highlighting a gap in research and practical outcomes. Addressing these discrepancies, Hidayat et al (2021) found that the career adaptability of 6th, seventh, and 8th-semester students at Jakarta State University fell within a moderate range. In contrast, (Hamdan, 2024) observed high career adaptability among Psychology students from the 2016 to 2021 cohort at Bandung Islamic University.

These varying results emphasize the importance of understanding differences in career adaptability across student populations. University counselors need to consider these variations to provide targeted support. This study aims to explore and provide a detailed overview of the career adaptability of students at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education (FTTE), Jambi University.

Method

This study employs a descriptive quantitative method with a cross-sectional survey design, which involves collecting data at a single point in time. The primary objective of this design is to describe and analyze the level of career adaptability among FTTE students at Jambi University. Using descriptive quantitative analysis, the researchers aim to provide a detailed depiction of the data without drawing conclusions or making predictions.

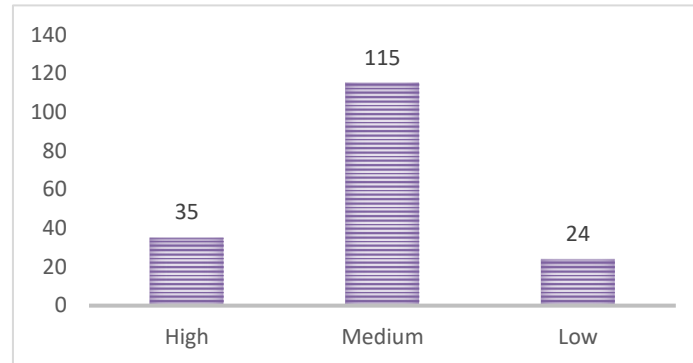
The study's participants included 17 male and 157 female students from FTTE, Jambi University, selected through a simple random sampling technique. Data were collected using a career adaptability instrument comprising 20 items based on four indicators: career concern, career control, career curiosity, and career confidence. Sample statements include: "I realize that my current choices shape my future," "I feel that attending career development seminars and training is a waste of time," and "I can manage my emotions even under work pressure." Responses were measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from STS (strongly disagree) to SS (strongly agree). The instrument demonstrated strong reliability with an alpha coefficient of 0.86. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics to calculate the mean and standard deviation, categorized as high, moderate, or low. An independent t-test assessed differences in career adaptability levels between genders, with a significance threshold of $p < 0.05$.

Result and Discussion

Based on the data collected from 174 FTTE students at Jambi University, the researchers classified career adaptability into three categories in table 1: a low category (≤ 57), a medium category (scores between 57 and 68), and a high category (≥ 68).

Table 1. Distribution of Career Adaptability Across Categories

	Formula	K
Low	$X < M - 1 \text{ SD}$	$X < 57$
Medium	$M - 1 \text{ SD} \leq X < M + 1 \text{ SD}$	$57 \leq X < 68$
High	$M + 1 \text{ SD} \leq X$	$X \geq 68$



Graph 1. Overview of Career Adaptability Based on Career Adaptability Categorization

The analysis revealed in Graph 1 that 35 students (20% of the total sample) demonstrated high career adaptability. Meanwhile, 115 students (66%) fell within the medium category, and 24 (14%) were classified in the low category.

Table 2. SPSS Analysis Results

N	Valid	174
	Missing	0
Mean		62.74
Median		62.00
Std. Deviation		5.600

The analysis results in Table 2 indicate that the average career adaptability score is 62.74, with a median of 62.00 and a standard deviation of 5.600. These findings highlight the career adaptability levels of FTTE students at Jambi University, categorized into three groups: high, medium, and low.

Component-Wise Analysis of Career Adaptability Among FTTE Students at Jambi University

Indicator	N	M	SD	Category Indicator
Career Concern	174	13,19	2,34	Moderate
Career Control	174	12,94	1,87	Moderate
Career Curiosity	174	18,66	2,55	Moderate
Career Confidence	174	13,60	1,88	Moderate

The analysis presented in Table 3 reveals that each component of career adaptability among FTTE students at Jambi University falls within the moderate category. Specifically, the scores for Career Concern ($M = 13.19$, $SD = 2.34$), Career Control ($M = 12.94$, $SD = 1.87$), Career Curiosity ($M = 18.66$, $SD = 2.55$), and Career Confidence ($M = 13.60$, $SD = 1.88$) indicate moderate levels across all dimensions.

These findings suggest that students face various psychological and situational challenges. Factors such as limited self-awareness, high perfectionist standards (Chen et al.,

2022), and insufficient understanding of career options and necessary skills (Tang & Goh, 2023) contribute to these moderate levels. (Hui et al., 2021) emphasizes the importance of active learning to enhance career adaptability, while Omar et al (2023) highlight that individuals with high career adaptability possess strong work skills, adaptability to change, and confidence, as opposed to those with low adaptability who struggle with change, lack confidence, and resist new learning opportunities.

Overall, the research findings indicate that the career adaptability of FTTE students at Jambi University and the four dimensions analyzed are categorized as moderate. While this is not a negative outcome, it underscores the need for interventions to elevate their career adaptability to a higher category. In addition to categorizing and analyzing the levels of career adaptability, the researchers conducted a t-test to compare the career adaptability of male and female students at FTTE. Preliminary average scores for male and female students' career adaptability were calculated prior to the t-test analysis. Table 4 presents the findings, summarizing both groups' average career adaptability scores.

Table 4. Career Adaptability Levels by Gender

	Gender	N	M	SD
Career Adaptability	Male	17	62	7,15
	Female	157	63	5,43

The findings in Table 4 indicate that male and female students at FTTE, Universitas Jambi, exhibit similar average scores in career adaptability. Specifically, the average score for 157 female students was 63, while 17 male students recorded an average score of 62, reflecting a slight difference of 1 point. To further investigate, an independent sample t-test was conducted to determine whether the difference in career adaptability between male and female students was statistically significant. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. T-Test Results for Career Adaptability Among FTTE Students at Universitas Jambi

Career Adaptability	N	p<0.05
	174	0.000

The analysis in Table 5 demonstrates a p-value of 0.000 (< 0.05), confirming a statistically significant difference in career adaptability between male and female students. The varying levels of career adaptability among students result in diverse outcomes. Some students exhibit high adaptability, others fall into the low category, while the majority are in the moderate range. These differences are attributed to several factors, including personal characteristics, family dynamics, educational environments, and social support systems (Rahmi et al., 2024). These elements interact complexly, influencing how individuals shape their career trajectories.

Career adaptability is crucial for students as it affects their ability to navigate career transitions and challenges. Students with lower or moderate levels of adaptability may require targeted interventions to enhance their readiness for future career demands. Counseling services, such as those addressing employment barriers (Ramadhoni et al., 2024) or career counseling (Omar et al., 2022), offer practical solutions to improve adaptability, resilience, and workplace readiness (Drosos & Korfiatis, 2023).

In addition to counseling, tailored strategies for Generation Z can further enhance career adaptability. This generation faces unique challenges shaped by their digital upbringing, necessitating a career guidance model integrating training, workshops, and social media engagement. These services address concerns such as job security, career planning, and proactive management, as highlighted by Nadya & Farozin (2021). Such efforts can foster sustainable career development and long-term adaptability.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the career adaptability of FTTE students at Universitas Jambi is predominantly moderate, with significant differences observed between male and female students. To improve adaptability levels, universities can implement services such as career counseling, guidance programs, training sessions, workshops, and digital engagement tailored for Generation Z. These initiatives can serve as viable alternatives for university counseling providers to enhance students' resilience and adaptability in career development. Future research should explore interventions designed to improve career adaptability and examine related variables, such as social support and self-efficacy, to deepen the understanding of factors influencing career adaptability among students.

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