

The Contribution of Work Values, Career Adaptability, and Willingness to Compromise on Students' Work Readiness during the School-to-Work Transition

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Abstract

Work readiness is a reflection of an individual's quality of life evaluation, viewed from their own perspective. However, in reality, the work readiness of students is still low. This study aims to determine the contribution of work value, career adaptability, and willingness to compromise on students' work readiness during the school-to-work transition. The study uses a descriptive quantitative approach with a correlational method. A total of 210 students were selected through incidental sampling techniques to participate in this research. The instruments used include scales for work value, career adaptability, willingness to compromise, and work readiness. The results of the study indicate that students' work value is in the high category, their career adaptability is in the high category, their willingness to compromise is in the high category, and their work readiness is in the medium category. The findings show that work value, career adaptability, and willingness to compromise significantly contribute positively to students' work readiness. This research implies that future studies should focus on helping students develop work readiness during their school-to-work transition.

Keywords: Work value, career adaptability, willingness to compromise, work Readiness.

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Introduction

The increasing number of unemployed graduates can be attributed to several factors, including the mismatch between the skills learned in college and the needs of the job market (Cemalcilar et al., 2018). The competencies or skills possessed by graduates often do not meet the standards required in the workplace, leading many companies to be reluctant to offer job opportunities (Pastore et al., 2021). However, bachelor's degree holders who have job readiness with skills supported by high intellectuality tend to be more considered by companies (Holtmann et al., 2021). Additionally, excessive idealism in job searching and the need for specific skills that are not taught in formal education also contribute to this issue (Argaheni, 2020). This mismatch between competencies and job market needs results in lower employment opportunities for college

graduates (Usman, 2020). Conversely, graduates who are job-ready and have high intellectual competencies are more likely to be considered by companies (Pool & Sewell, 2007).

Discussions on career development have become an intriguing topic because an individual's career develops throughout their lifespan, integrating into every role and environment (Arta et al., 2023). This career development is also influenced by various factors (Afdal & Suya, 2014). Higher education plays a crucial role in preparing quality human resources with a brighter future orientation compared to before (Afdal, 2019).

One of the main responsibilities in student development is preparing them for their future careers (Sandowil et al., 2021). Students are expected to be able to determine the career path they will pursue and start preparing themselves through education or skills relevant to their chosen profession (Afdal, 2019). The selection of a career field is closely related to the process of choosing an educational program, as each field of work requires the completion of certain education and training aligned with the demands of the job (Fikri et al., 2023).

The phenomenon faced by millennial students, especially those in their final years and about to transition from education to the workforce (school-to-work transition), indicates the need for additional skills that are not taught in formal education or lectures (Siembab & Stawarz, 2019). At this stage, they must determine the career they will pursue in the future (Cahuc et al., 2021). Students need to be more proactive in seeking and participating in other skill training required in the workplace, considering the increasing competition in the job market (Dudyrev et al., 2020). The readiness to face challenges in this transition phase, as well as the ability to seize opportunities, is known as career adjustment or career adaptability (Jiang, 2017). The transition from education to the workforce includes on-the-job training, internships, cooperative education agreements, or other programs designed to prepare students for entering the workforce (Chen et al., 2020).

Mary Rogers' research titled "School-to-Work Transition" (2000) briefly discusses school-to-work transition programs designed to equip adolescents with the skills and knowledge necessary to enter the workforce (Rogers, 2000). This transition includes on-the-job training, internships, cooperative

education agreements, or other programs that prepare students for entering the workforce, as well as introducing the philosophy of work-based activities that can help unlock the future career potential of students from an early age, even from kindergarten (Chen et al., [2020](#)).

Work values play an essential role in students' job readiness. Research indicates that preferences for work values such as intrinsic and extrinsic rewards contribute to better career planning, ultimately enhancing students' job readiness. By understanding and integrating these work values, students can make more accurate career decisions that align with their long-term goals, which is crucial for success in the workforce (Sulistiobudi & Hutabarat, [2022](#)).

Career adaptability, or the ability to adapt to career changes, also significantly contributes to job readiness. Research shows that students with high career adaptability are more prepared to face job-seeking challenges and tend to have higher employability. This adaptability enables students to be more flexible and proactive in planning and navigating their career paths, which is vital in dealing with the ever-changing dynamics of the job market (Al-Waqfi et al., [2023](#)).

Willingness to compromise is also a factor that supports students' job readiness. Studies indicate that the willingness to accept alternative career options that may not have been initially desired can enhance self-efficacy in career decision-making and career adaptability. This is crucial because the willingness to compromise allows students to remain resilient and adaptive in the face of changes or obstacles in their career journey, thereby enhancing their overall job readiness (Parola, [2023](#)).

Work values and work readiness

The impact of work values on work readiness among students has been the subject of research in recent years (Ginevra et al., [2018](#)). Work values reflect an individual's beliefs and priorities regarding specific aspects of work, such as job security, career development, and work-life balance. Studies indicate that these values can significantly influence students' work readiness. For example, a study conducted by Chan et al. ([2020](#)) found that extrinsic work values, such as job stability and financial rewards, heavily influence students' expectations of job quality and workplace communication environment, which ultimately affects their readiness to work (Chan et al., [2020](#)).

On the other hand, work readiness refers to the extent to which students possess the attitudes and skills necessary for success in the workplace. Factors such as maturity, technical skills, and prior work experience have been identified as key determinants of students' work readiness. A study by Sultoni et al. (2023) highlights that levels of maturity, mental and emotional states, and self-development efforts significantly affect students' work readiness. These findings suggest that work readiness is not only about having technical skills but also involves mental and emotional preparedness (Sultoni et al., 2023).

Nevertheless, it is important to understand that the relationship between work values and work readiness among students is highly complex and influenced by various factors, including the intrinsic and extrinsic values held by students, as well as their level of mental and emotional readiness. A deep understanding of students' work values can assist educational institutions and employers in preparing students for a smoother transition from the academic world to the workforce.

Career adaptability and work readiness

Career adaptability, which includes dimensions such as concern, control, curiosity, and confidence, has been proven to have a significant impact on work readiness among students. Students with high levels of career adaptability tend to be better prepared to meet the demands of the working world. For instance, research conducted by Al-Waqfi et al. (2023) shows that career adaptability positively affects career readiness, particularly in terms of career decidedness and perceived employability. This study also emphasizes that career adaptability can enhance work readiness through mechanisms such as the willingness to work in the private sector (Zhang et al., 2021).

Moreover, the dimensions of career adaptability, such as confidence and curiosity, significantly contribute to improving work readiness. For example, research by Hlad'ó et al. (2021) found that social support from parents, friends, and teachers is positively related to career adaptability, which in turn strengthens students' readiness to enter the workforce (Tandiayuk et al., 2022). Confidence and curiosity, which are part of career adaptability, have been shown to be important in helping students develop the skills needed to succeed in their careers (Tentama & Riskiyana, 2020).

Finally, the control that students have in their career planning, as discussed in research by Fu et al. (2022), indicates that students with high self-regulation and core self-evaluation are better prepared for the transition from education to the workforce. The development of dynamic career adaptability during the school-to-work transition provides a strong foundation for work readiness, where students who are more adaptable to change are better prepared to face challenges in the workplace.

Career adaptability plays a crucial role in enhancing students' work readiness. It encompasses the ability to cope with and adapt to career-related changes, such as labor market dynamics and job demands. Studies show that students with high career adaptability are better prepared to transition from education to the workforce (Lee et al., 2022). They tend to have greater confidence in making career decisions and planning their career steps, which in turn increases their readiness to enter the working world (Al-Waqfi et al., 2023).

Career adaptability not only affects work readiness but also directly contributes to employability. Research shows that students with high career adaptability are more likely to have better employment status after graduation (Super & Sverko, 1995). This is because they are more capable of aligning their skills and knowledge with changing labor market demands and are more proactive in seeking job opportunities. Students who are career adaptable are more likely to obtain and retain jobs and demonstrate good performance in their roles (Wee, 2013).

In addition to affecting work readiness and employability, career adaptability also plays an important role in enhancing students' well-being and career satisfaction (Filatrovi, 2020). Students with high levels of career adaptability are better equipped to face the challenges of transitioning from education to the workforce, ultimately leading to greater career satisfaction. The ability to adapt to career changes makes them more resilient to stress and change, which ultimately contributes positively to their psychological well-being (Magnano et al., 2021).

Willingness to Compromise and work readiness

Willingness to compromise has a significant impact on work readiness among college students,

especially in the context of transitioning from academia to the workforce. Willingness to compromise refers to an individual's willingness to accept alternative career options that do not fully align with their initial preferences. Studies show that when students exhibit a high willingness to compromise, they tend to have better career decision self-efficacy, which in turn enhances their work readiness. Additionally, career adaptability plays an important mediating role, as more adaptable students are better able to adjust to new career demands, thus improving their readiness to enter the workforce (Parola, [2023](#)).

On the other hand, work readiness is also significantly influenced by students' engagement in academic activities and the development of soft skills during their studies. Research shows that students who actively engage in coursework and personal development exhibit higher levels of work readiness. Willingness to compromise in this context allows students to be more flexible in facing career challenges, utilizing soft skills such as adaptability, problem-solving, and motivation that they acquire during their studies. This contributes to their increased readiness to work after graduation (Magallanes, [2022](#)).

However, it is also important to note that willingness to compromise does not always have a positive impact. In some cases, an overly high willingness to compromise can reduce career satisfaction and increase work stress, which ultimately can hinder work readiness. Research indicates that when career compromise is too significant, it can negatively affect job satisfaction and diminish students' confidence in their future employment prospects (Tsaousides & Jome, [2008](#)). Therefore, a balance between willingness to compromise and personal aspirations is crucial to ensure optimal work readiness.

However, research linking work readiness with work values, career adaptability, and willingness to compromise remains limited. Therefore, this study aims to fill that gap by examining the contribution of work values, career adaptability, and willingness to compromise to students' work readiness. The results of this study are expected to provide new insights into the dynamics of work readiness and the factors that influence it.

Method

Design

This study is a correlational research utilizing a cross-sectional approach.

Respondents

The study involved 210 university students selected through purposive sampling from seven universities in West Sumatra, namely Universitas Negeri Padang, Universitas Andalas, Universitas Islam Negeri Imam Bonjol, Universitas PGRI Sumatera Barat, Universitas Bung Hatta, Universitas Putra Indonesia YPTK Padang, and Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Barat. Data collection was conducted on March 23, 2024. The students who participated understood the informed consent provided and voluntarily took part in this research.

Measurement Tools

The scales used in this study include the work value scale, career adaptability scale, willingness to compromise scale, and work readiness scale. The work value scale consists of 30 items, the career adaptability scale consists of 24 items, the willingness to compromise scale consists of 24 items, and the work readiness scale consists of 24 items. All scales in this study use a Likert scale model. Each scale was tested through content validity estimation by professional judgment. Items deemed insufficiently representative of their constructs were revised or replaced with more representative items. Reliability was estimated using the internal consistency approach.

Work Value Scale

The work value scale consists of 30 items, developed based on the dimensions outlined by Ye (2015). Data collection in this study used a scale with five response alternatives: Strongly Agree (SS), Agree (S), Somewhat Agree (KS), Disagree (TS), and Strongly Disagree (STS). Example items include "I can complete my work on time," "I have various skills at work," and "I always arrive on time at work." The reliability estimation yielded a Cronbach's alpha = 0.871.

Career Adaptability Scale

The career adaptability scale consists of 24 items, developed based on the aspects by Savickas & Porfeli (2012). Data collection in this study used a scale with five response alternatives: Strongly Agree (SS), Agree (S), Somewhat Agree (KS), Disagree (TS), and Strongly Disagree (STS). Example items include "I hope to create positive changes that can be felt by many people" and "I understand the importance of preparing for the future, not only for myself but also for future generations." The reliability estimation yielded a Cronbach's alpha = 0.805.

Willingness to Compromise Scale

The willingness to compromise scale consists of 24 items, developed based on the aspects by Parola (2023). Data collection in this study used a scale with five response alternatives: Strongly Agree (SS), Agree (S), Somewhat Agree (KS), Disagree (TS), and Strongly Disagree (STS). Example items include "I am confident that the major I chose aligns with my desires" and "I am confident that through the process of compromise, I can learn and grow professionally." The reliability estimation yielded a Cronbach's alpha = 0.918.

Work Readiness Scale

The work readiness scale consists of 24 items, developed based on the aspects by Caballero & Walker (2010). Data collection in this study used a scale with five response alternatives: Strongly Agree (SS), Agree (S), Somewhat Agree (KS), Disagree (TS), and Strongly Disagree (STS). Example items include "I have the ability to do internships because during my studies I successfully completed several scientific works" and "I hope that the major I chose matches my talents and skills to easily find a job." The reliability estimation yielded a Cronbach's alpha = 0.924.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using multiple regression, preceded by prerequisite tests including normality test, regression linearity test, and multicollinearity test. Data analysis was processed using IBM SPSS version 26.

Result

This study aims to examine the contribution of work value, career adaptability, and willingness to compromise to students' work readiness. Before testing the hypothesis, the researcher conducted assumption tests related to data normality, linearity, and multicollinearity. The normality test results show that the work value career adaptability willingness to compromise and work readiness indicate normally distributed. The linearity test results that the work value, career adaptability, and willingness to compromise with work readiness is linear. The multicollinearity test show that work value, career adaptability, and willingness to compromise have no multicollinearity.

The results of work value (X_1), career adaptability (X_2), and willingness to compromise (X_3) have a moderate positive relationship with the work readiness of students during the school-to-work transition (Y), as indicated by a multiple correlation coefficient $R = .525$. Additionally, the R Square value = 0.275 suggests that approximately 27.5% of the variance in work readiness (Y) can be explained by the combined influence of these three variables (X_1, X_2, X_3). This indicates that while these factors contribute significantly to predicting work readiness, a substantial portion of the variance is still explained by other factors not included in the model. The F-test shows a calculated F-value = 26.106, which is much higher than the critical F value = 3.89, with $p = .000$. This indicates that the combined effect of work value, career adaptability, and willingness to compromise on work readiness is statistically significant, reinforcing the conclusion that these variables together have a meaningful impact on students' readiness to transition into the workforce.

Table 1

Results of multiple regression analysis of work value, career adaptability, and willingness to compromise on job readiness.

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		
	B	t	Sig
Constant	21,149	2,878	0,000
Work Value (X_1)	0,289	3,089	0,000
Career Adaptability (X_2)	0,229	3,473	0,000
Willingness to Compromise (X_3)	-097	-1,076	0,283

The results of the multiple regression analysis, as shown in [Table 1](#), reveal the individual contributions of work value, career adaptability, and willingness to compromise to students' work readiness. The constant in the model is 21.149, which represents the baseline level of work readiness when all independent variables are set to zero, and this value is statistically significant with a t-value of 2.878 and $p = .000$.

For work value (X1), the unstandardized coefficient (B)= 0.289, with a t-value= 3.089, $p = .000$, indicating a positive and significant contribution to work readiness. This suggests that an increase in work value is associated with an increase in students' work readiness. Similarly, career adaptability has an unstandardized coefficient (B)= 0.229, a t-value= 3.473, $p = .000$, showing that it also has a positive and significant impact on work readiness. This implies that higher levels of career adaptability are linked to greater readiness for work.

In contrast, the willingness to compromise variable has an unstandardized coefficient (B)= -0.097, with t-value= -1.076, $p = .283$. This indicates that willingness to compromise does not have a statistically significant effect on work readiness in this model. The negative coefficient suggests a potential inverse relationship, but this result is not significant enough to draw firm conclusions. Overall, the analysis highlights that both work value and career adaptability significantly contribute to students' readiness for work, while willingness to compromise does not appear to have a significant impact in this context.

Discussion

The purpose of this study is to examine the contribution of work value, career adaptability, and willingness to compromise to work readiness. The results of the multiple regression analysis show that work value, career adaptability, and willingness to compromise contribute positively to students' work readiness. Previous research has shown that work value contributes to work readiness (Chan et al., [2020](#)). Additionally, research by Al-Waqfi et al. ([2023](#)) shows that career adaptability positively affects career readiness. Furthermore, a study by Parola ([2023](#)) found that willingness to compromise contributes to work readiness. In conclusion, the positive contributions

of work value, career adaptability, and willingness to compromise to work readiness underscore the importance of these factors in preparing students for successful transitions into their careers. These findings align with previous research that highlights the interconnectedness of these variables in fostering career preparedness among students.

The findings that work value, career adaptability, and willingness to compromise positively contribute to students' work readiness are consistent with previous research in this area. Work value has been shown to be a significant predictor of career adaptability, which in turn enhances work readiness. A study conducted on Chinese university students found that both extrinsic and intrinsic work values positively influenced career adaptability, leading to a higher likelihood of students developing adaptive capabilities necessary for their career development (Ye, 2015). This indicates that students who place importance on certain work values are more likely to be prepared for the workforce, as they have already begun to adapt their career-related skills and attitudes.

Career adaptability itself is a crucial component in the transition from school to work, as it encompasses the readiness to cope with changes and transitions within one's career. Research has consistently shown that career adaptability is positively associated with career readiness, including factors like career decidedness and perceived employability. For example, a study conducted in the United Arab Emirates found that career adaptability significantly impacts young adults' career readiness, suggesting that adaptability is crucial for successful vocational transitions (Al-Waqfi et al., 2023).

Willingness to compromise also plays a pivotal role in career development, particularly in enhancing career decision-making self-efficacy and adaptability. A study that validated the Willingness to Compromise Scale highlighted that this trait not only predicts career adaptability but also mediates the relationship between career decision self-efficacy and adaptability. This suggests that students who are willing to compromise are more adaptable and confident in their career decisions, ultimately contributing to their readiness for the workforce (Parola, 2023). The psychological dynamics of the research findings, which indicate that work values, career adaptability, and

willingness to compromise contribute positively to students' work readiness, can be explained through several interrelated psychological concepts.

First, work values reflect an individual's beliefs and priorities regarding work, such as the importance of high income, job stability, or personal satisfaction. Psychologically, these values function as internal motivators that drive individuals to engage in and commit to career development. When students have strong work values aligned with their aspirations, they are more likely to develop proactive and adaptive strategies to face career challenges, thereby enhancing their work readiness. These values also help students make decisions that align with their long-term goals, providing a sense of direction and purpose.

Second, career adaptability is the psychological capacity to cope with changes and challenges in career development. The psychological dynamics here relate to how individuals use psychological resources such as a sense of control, optimism, and confidence to navigate career transitions. Students with good career adaptability skills are better able to manage the stress and uncertainty that often arise during the transition from education to the workforce. This adaptability allows them to remain flexible and open to new opportunities, ultimately increasing their readiness to enter the workforce.

Finally, willingness to compromise reflects a flexible and realistic attitude toward career decisions. From a psychological perspective, willingness to compromise demonstrates the ability to balance ideal expectations with the realities of the situation. This is crucial in career decision-making because individuals often need to adjust their expectations to the realities of the job market. Students who are willing to compromise tend to be more adaptive and resilient, enabling them to continue progressing even when faced with obstacles or opportunities that do not align with their initial plans. Overall, the psychological dynamics of these research findings suggest that students' work readiness is not solely determined by technical skills but also by personal values, adaptability, and a flexible attitude that supports effective and adaptive decision-making in their careers.

The results of this study can help identify important factors for students to succeed in the transition from school to the workforce (Nurfarhanah, 2017). This can assist stakeholders, such as lecturers, career counselors, and program planners, in developing more effective programs and services to support students during this transition (Mustika, 2023). The transition from school to the workforce is a critical period for students (Nurfarhanah, 2012). During this time, students must adapt to a new environment, develop new skills, and build professional networks (Afdal et al., 2023). This research can assist students in this transition by providing them with an understanding of what is expected of them and how they can prepare themselves (Iswari, 2017).

However, the study's use of a cross-sectional design does not allow for the examination of causal relationships between the variables. Longitudinal studies would be beneficial to determine how these factors evolve over time and their long-term impact on work readiness. Furthermore, the study sample may not be representative of the broader student population, limiting the generalizability of the results. Future research could benefit from a more diverse sample and the inclusion of objective measures of work readiness to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing students' transition from school to the workforce.

Conclusion

The conclusion of this study highlights that work value, career adaptability, and willingness to compromise play significant roles in enhancing students' work readiness. The findings suggest that students who prioritize certain work values, demonstrate the ability to adapt to career-related changes, and are willing to make compromises in their career decisions are better prepared to transition from school to the workforce. This indicates that these psychological and behavioral factors are crucial for students as they prepare to enter the job market. The study underscores the importance of addressing these factors in career guidance programs to better equip students for successful career transitions. However, the study also acknowledges its limitations, such as the use of a cross-sectional design and the potential lack of generalizability due to the sample used, suggesting the need for further research to explore these factors over time and in more diverse populations.

Acknowledgment

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Conflict of Interest

The researchers declare that this paper has no conflicts of interest.

Author Contribution

All authors have contributed equally to the study's conceptualization, interpreting data, reviewing, and editing the manuscript.

Data Availability

Data can be provided upon request to the author.

Declarations Ethical Statement

The study followed the guidelines of the Declaration of Helsinki.

Informed Consent Statement

Informed consent was obtained from all persons involved in the study.

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