



## Preparing Future Talent: Career Adaptability And Employability Among Management Undergraduates

<sup>1</sup>Muhaidir Ikram, <sup>2</sup>Josafat Gracia Ginting, <sup>3</sup>Ahmad Rais Habib

<sup>1,2,3</sup>Universitas Negeri Makassar, Indonesia.

<sup>1</sup>[muhaidir.ikram@unm.ac.id](mailto:muhaidir.ikram@unm.ac.id), <sup>2</sup>[josafat.gracia.ginting@unm.ac.id](mailto:josafat.gracia.ginting@unm.ac.id),

<sup>3</sup>[josafat.gracia.ginting@unm.ac.id](mailto:josafat.gracia.ginting@unm.ac.id)

\*Correspondence Email: [muhaidir.ikram@unm.ac.id](mailto:muhaidir.ikram@unm.ac.id)

**Abstract:** This study aims to examine the effect of career adaptability on employability and to analyze differences in both variables based on cohort year and academic concentration among Management undergraduates at Universitas Negeri Makassar. This research employed a quantitative explanatory-comparative survey design. The population consisted of 851 active Management students from the 2021–2023 cohorts, while the sample comprised 130 students selected through proportionate stratified sampling. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire with a 4-point Likert scale. Career adaptability was measured using an adapted Career Adapt-Abilities Scale covering concern, control, curiosity, and confidence, while employability was measured using an adapted Employability Appraisal Scale covering work-readiness supportive behaviors, work-capital readiness, job-seeking behavior, self-control, and self-learning. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, validity and reliability tests, simple linear regression, and one-way ANOVA. The results show that all dimensions of career adaptability and employability were in the high category. Career adaptability had a positive and significant effect on employability, with an R Square value of 0.460, indicating that career adaptability explained 46.0% of the variance in employability. However, career adaptability and employability did not differ significantly based on cohort year or academic concentration. The study concludes that career adaptability is a key predictor of employability and should be strengthened through career coaching, experiential learning, internships, and industry-linked programs.

**Keywords:** Career Adaptability, Employability, Human Resource Management, Management Students, Work Readiness

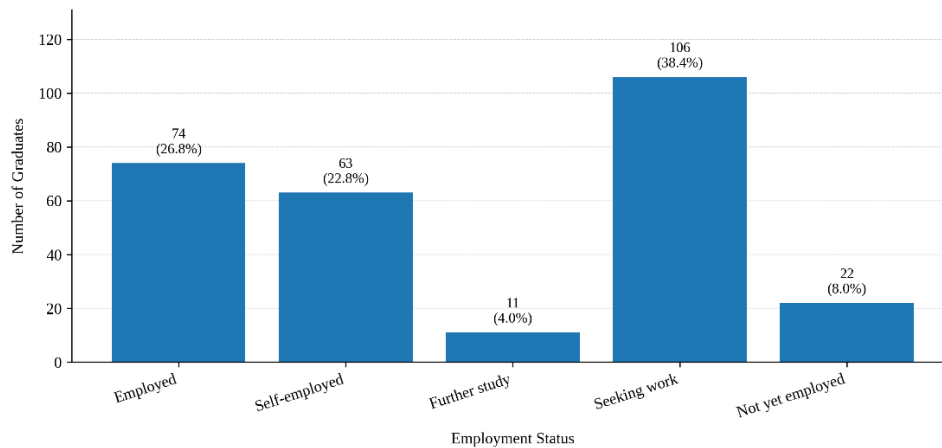
### INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutions play a critical role in preparing students to meet the increasingly competitive and dynamic demands of the labor market (Cheng et al., 2022). Universities are expected to produce graduates whose work readiness aligns with industry needs (Y. C. Zhang et al., 2022). However, research trends indicate that university graduates still face challenges in aligning their competencies with labor market requirements (Nadarajah, 2021). This condition suggests that universities must place greater emphasis on developing students' skills and



competencies throughout the learning process (Bisschoff & Massyn, 2024). Accordingly, students' work readiness has become a prominent issue in higher education research (Tong & Gao, 2022).

In the institutional context of Universitas Negeri Makassar, the relevance of graduate employability can be observed from the Tracer Study Report of the Faculty of Economics and Business in 2025. The report recorded 278 tracked graduates from the Management Study Program in the 2024 cohort. However, the employment status data show that among Management graduates, 74 were employed, 63 were self-employed, 11 continued their education, 106 were unemployed but actively seeking work, and 22 had not yet been employed. These findings indicate that the transition from higher education to employment remains a strategic issue for Management graduates, particularly in relation to career readiness, job-seeking behavior, and adaptive capacity in responding to labor market demands.



Source: Tracer Study Report FEB UNM 2025

**Figure 1.** Employment Status of S1 Management Graduates FEB UNM

Employability has emerged as a key indicator for assessing graduates' readiness to enter the workforce (Akhtar et al., 2024a). Employability refers to graduates' ability to obtain employment and adapt to evolving job demands (Y. C. Zhang et al., 2022). It also denotes an individual's capability to leverage their knowledge, skills, and personal attributes to secure work opportunities (Tong & Gao, 2022). Moreover, employability reflects graduates' preparedness to respond to shifting workforce needs within modern work environments (Bisschoff & Massyn, 2024). From a Human Resource Management (HRM) perspective, employability can be understood as an early form of human capital readiness because it reflects the extent to which students possess



competencies, adaptive behaviors, self-development capacity, and work-oriented attitudes required by organizations. Therefore, enhancing students' employability has become a strategic focus in efforts to improve the quality of higher education outcomes (Mohammed & Saadah, 2021).

Students' employability is shaped by their learning experiences and skill development during their time in higher education (Y. C. Zhang et al., 2022). Universities play a vital role in providing learning environments that enable students to build competencies relevant to labor market demands (Cheng et al., 2022). Nevertheless, a persistent gap is frequently observed between graduates' skill sets and the skills required by industry (Nadarajah, 2021). This gap underscores the need for employability development to remain a central priority in higher education (Mohammed & Saadah, 2021). A deeper understanding of student employability is therefore essential for strengthening graduates' readiness to compete in increasingly dynamic and competency-based labor markets (Tong & Gao, 2022).

In addition, dynamic work environments require individuals to adapt to diverse career-related challenges (Jones et al., 2024). An individual's ability to prepare for and respond to changes in the workplace is a decisive factor for future career success (Tahiry & Ekmekcioglu, 2023). Individuals with stronger career readiness are generally better positioned to develop competencies that match labor market needs (Lee et al., 2021). The capacity to anticipate career changes and explore new work opportunities is also fundamental to enhancing readiness for workforce entry (Ojala et al., 2023). Consequently, an increasing number of studies highlight career adaptability as an important factor that may influence individuals' employability (Arubayi & Igbomor, 2024). Career adaptability is particularly relevant for undergraduate students because it reflects their concern for future careers, control over career decisions, curiosity in exploring work opportunities, and confidence in facing career barriers.

Conceptually, career adaptability and employability are closely related. Career adaptability is conceptualized as a psychosocial resource consisting of concern, control, curiosity, and confidence that enables individuals to manage career transitions, developmental tasks, and work-related challenges (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Employability refers to a set of skills, knowledge, attributes, and perceived capabilities that enable individuals to obtain employment, sustain employment, and adapt to changing labor market demands (Eimer & Bohndick, 2023; Tushar &



Sooraksa, 2023; Y.-C. Zhang et al., 2022). In this study, employability is reflected in work-readiness supportive behaviors, work-capital readiness, job-seeking behavior, self-control, and self-learning as indicators of students' readiness to enter the labor market. Therefore, career adaptability is expected to strengthen employability because students who are more adaptive are more likely to translate academic learning into career planning, work readiness, and labor market competitiveness (Akhtar et al., 2024b; Grosemans et al., 2023; Santos-Jaén et al., 2022).

Although research on career adaptability and employability continues to expand, several gaps remain. First, many prior studies have examined the relationship between these variables primarily at the association level using correlation analysis (Ayuni & Nio, 2025; Rahma et al., 2023), which provides limited clarity regarding the direction of influence or the predictive role of career adaptability for employability. Second, some studies draw participants across multiple programs or broad higher education contexts, leaving limited empirical evidence that specifically reflects Management students within a particular institutional setting (Zain et al., 2025). Third, from an HRM perspective, career adaptability can be conceptualized as a psychosocial resource that potentially functions as “talent capital” for strengthening employability; however, empirical testing that situates this relationship explicitly within an HRM framework among Management students at Universitas Negeri Makassar remains insufficient (Dhinepuji & Stephani Raihana Hamdan, 2024; Nugroho & Fajrianthi, 2021). Fourth, previous studies have paid limited attention to whether career adaptability and employability differ based on student academic characteristics, particularly cohort year and academic concentration. This comparative perspective is important because students from different cohorts and concentrations may have different learning exposure, career orientation, and academic experiences that can shape their employability readiness.

This study contributes to the literature in three ways. First, it provides empirical evidence on the predictive role of career adaptability in shaping student employability. Second, it offers comparative evidence by examining whether career adaptability and employability differ based on cohort year and academic concentration. Third, it focuses specifically on Management undergraduates at Universitas Negeri Makassar and positions career adaptability and employability within an HRM perspective, particularly in relation to human capital development, talent readiness, and workforce preparation.



Moreover, existing research trends suggest that student employability remains a timely topic in higher education, given that graduates face intensifying labor market competition. Universities are increasingly expected to produce graduates with career readiness and the capacity to adapt to ongoing changes in the world of work (Nyagope, 2025). Based on the identified gaps, the research problem concerns the limited empirical clarity regarding the extent to which career adaptability operates as a factor influencing employability among Management students at Universitas Negeri Makassar. In addition, it remains necessary to examine whether students' career adaptability and employability vary across cohort year and academic concentration. Specifically, empirical testing is required to assess whether students' capacity to anticipate their career future, direct decision-making, explore opportunities, and build confidence in overcoming barriers contributes to their work readiness. The study also seeks to determine whether differences in academic stage and concentration are associated with different levels of adaptive career resources and employability attributes. Accordingly, this study aims to analyze the effect of career adaptability on employability among Management undergraduates at Universitas Negeri Makassar and to examine differences in career adaptability and employability based on cohort year and academic concentration.

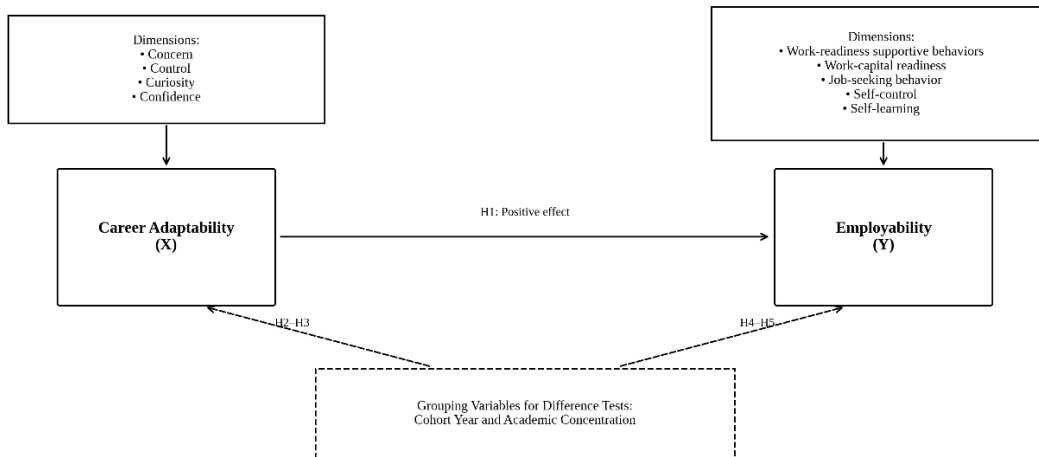
## **METHOD**

This study employed a quantitative approach with an explanatory-comparative survey design to examine the effect of career adaptability on employability and to analyze differences in both variables based on cohort year and academic concentration among Management undergraduates at Universitas Negeri Makassar. The explanatory design was used because this study aims to statistically test the directional relationship between career adaptability as the independent variable and employability as the dependent variable. Meanwhile, the comparative design was used to examine whether students' career adaptability and employability differ across cohort year and academic concentration groups (Creswell & Creswell, 2022).

The conceptual model positions career adaptability as a predictor of employability. Career adaptability consists of concern, control, curiosity, and confidence, referring to the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale developed (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Employability was measured through work-readiness supportive behaviors, work-capital readiness, job-seeking behavior, self-control, and



self-learning, adapted from the Employability Appraisal Scale (Llinares-Insa et al., 2018). The conceptual model of the study is presented in Figure 1.



**Figure 2.** Conceptual Model of the Study

The regression model used in this study is expressed as  $Y = \alpha + \beta X + \epsilon$ , where Y represents employability, X represents career adaptability,  $\alpha$  represents the constant,  $\beta$  represents the regression coefficient, and  $\epsilon$  represents the error term. In addition to testing this predictive relationship, this study also compares career adaptability and employability based on cohort year and academic concentration to provide a more comprehensive understanding of students’ work-readiness patterns.

The population comprised all active undergraduate students of the Management Study Program at Universitas Negeri Makassar from the 2021–2023 cohorts, totaling 851 students.

Cluster	Population (Nh)	Suggest (Nh/N)	Sample Calculation (Nh/N × n)	Sample (nh)
2023	332	0,390	50,7	51
2022	435	0,511	66,5	66
2021	84	0,099	12,8	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>851</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>130,0</b>	<b>130</b>

**Table 1.** The Percentage Analysis of Feasibility Criteria

Source: Author (2026)

A total of 130 stuent were selected using proportionate stratified sampling based on cohort year to ensure proportional representation (Sekaran, 2003). Sample allocation followed the formula  $nh = (Nh/N) \times n$ , resulting in 51 students from the 2023 cohort, 66 students from the 2022 cohort, and 13 students from the 2021 cohort. Academic concentration was included as a grouping



variable for comparative analysis. Academic concentration was not used as the basis for sampling quota but was included as a grouping variable in the comparative analysis.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire with a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree. The questionnaire consisted of 12 items for career adaptability and 14 items for employability. It also included demographic information on cohort year and academic concentration.

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, classical assumption tests, simple linear regression, and difference tests. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize respondents' characteristics and students' responses across indicators and variables. Classical assumption tests, including normality of residuals and heteroscedasticity checks, were conducted to ensure the adequacy of the regression model. Simple linear regression was used to test the effect of career adaptability on employability. In addition, difference tests were conducted to examine whether career adaptability and employability differed based on cohort year and academic concentration. Since cohort year and academic concentration consisted of more than two groups, one-way ANOVA was used when the assumptions of normality and homogeneity of variance were met. If the homogeneity assumption was not fulfilled, Welch ANOVA was applied. If the data did not meet the assumptions of parametric testing, the Kruskal-Wallis test was used as a nonparametric alternative. Statistical significance was evaluated at the 5% level, and the data were processed using SPSS (Ferdinand, 2014).

Based on the research model, the hypotheses are formulated as follows:

H1: Career adaptability has a positive and significant effect on employability among Management undergraduates at Universitas Negeri Makassar.

H2: There are significant differences in career adaptability among Management undergraduates based on cohort year.

H3: There are significant differences in employability among Management undergraduates based on cohort year.

H4: There are significant differences in career adaptability among Management undergraduates based on academic concentration.

H5: There are significant differences in employability among Management undergraduates based on academic concentration.



**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

This section presents the research findings and discusses the effect of career adaptability on employability among Management undergraduates at Universitas Negeri Makassar. The analysis includes respondent characteristics, descriptive statistics, instrument quality, regression analysis, and comparative analysis based on cohort year and academic concentration.

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	107	82.3%
	Male	23	17.7%
	Total	130	100.0%
Cohort Year	2021	13	10.0%
	2022	66	50.8%
	2023	51	39.2%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Academic Concentration	Finance	36	27.7%
	Marketing	54	41.5%
	Human Resource Management	40	30.8%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*Table 2. Respondent Characteristics*  
*Source: Primary data processed by the author (2026)*

Table 2 shows that the majority of respondents were female students, totaling 107 respondents or 82.3%, while male students accounted for 23 respondents or 17.7%. Based on cohort year, most respondents came from the 2022 cohort, with 66 students or 50.8%, followed by the 2023 cohort with 51 students or 39.2%, and the 2021 cohort with 13 students or 10.0%. In terms of academic concentration, most respondents were from the Marketing concentration, totaling 54 students or 41.5%, followed by Human Resource Management with 40 students or 30.8%, and Finance with 36 students or 27.7%. This distribution indicates that the sample represents various student groups within the Management Study Program and is relevant for further comparative analysis.

Indicator	Mean	Category*
<b>Career Adaptability (X)</b>		
Concern	3.649	High
Control	3.469	High
Curiosity	3.415	High
Confidence	3.428	High
<b>Employability (Y)</b>		
Work-Readiness Supportive Behaviors	3.266	High
Work-Capital Readiness	3.156	High
Job-Seeking Behavior	3.154	High
Self-Control	3.296	High



Indicator	Mean	Category*
Self-Learning	3.504	High

**Table 3.** Mean Scores of Research Variables  
Source: Primary data processed by the author (2026)

Category based on a 4-point scale: 1.00–2.00 = Low; 2.01–3.00 = Moderate; 3.01–4.00 = High.

Based on Table 3, all dimensions of career adaptability were categorized as high. The highest mean score was found in the concern dimension, with a mean value of 3.649. This indicates that students have strong future orientation, career awareness, and concern for their career development. Meanwhile, curiosity had the lowest mean score among the career adaptability dimensions, with a value of 3.415. Although still categorized as high, this result suggests that students’ willingness to explore career alternatives, occupational information, and new work opportunities can still be strengthened.

For employability, all dimensions were also categorized as high. The highest mean score was found in self-learning, with a value of 3.504, indicating that students have strong learning agility and willingness to develop their competencies independently. However, job-seeking behavior and work-capital readiness showed relatively lower mean scores, namely 3.154 and 3.156. This implies that although students demonstrate strong internal learning capacity, they still require further support in practical career preparation, job-search strategies, recruitment readiness, and work-experience exposure.

Before hypothesis testing, validity and reliability tests were conducted to ensure that the measurement items properly represented the intended constructs and demonstrated acceptable internal consistency (Sekaran, 2003).

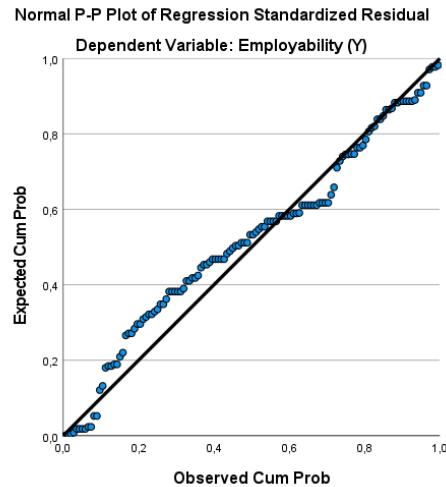
Variable	Number of Items	Validity (r item–total)	Reliability (Cronbach’s Alpha)
Career Adaptability (X)	12	0.604–0.748	0.894
Employability (Y)	14	0.491–0.733	0.889

**Table 4.** Validity and Reliability Test Results  
Source: Primary data processed by the author (2026)

Table 4 shows that all items met the validity criteria, as indicated by item-total correlation values above the required threshold. The reliability results also showed strong internal consistency for both variables. Career adaptability had a Cronbach’s Alpha value of 0.894, while employability



had a Cronbach’s Alpha value of 0.889. These values indicate that the instruments used in this study were reliable and appropriate for further statistical analysis.



**Figure 4.** Normality Test

The normality assumption was examined using the histogram and Normal P-P Plot of regression standardized residuals. The histogram showed that the residual distribution was centered around zero and generally followed the normal curve. In addition, the Normal P-P Plot indicated that most residual points were located close to the diagonal line. These results suggest that the residuals were approximately normally distributed and that the regression model reasonably satisfied the normality assumption.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.678 <sub>a</sub>	0.460	0.455	4.60863

a. Predictors: (Constant), Career Adaptability

**Table 5.** Coefficient of Determination  
 Source: Primary data processed by the author (2026)

Table 5 shows that the R value was 0.678, indicating a strong positive relationship between career adaptability and employability. The R Square value of 0.460 indicates that career adaptability explains 46.0% of the variance in employability. Meanwhile, the remaining 54.0% is explained by other factors not included in the model. This result indicates that career adaptability is an important predictor of employability among Management undergraduates.

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>				
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.



		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	10,932	4,337		2,520	,013
	Career Adaptability	1,426	,137	,678	10,434	,000

a. Dependent Variable: Employability

**Table 6.** *Regression Coefficient and Hypothesis Test Result*  
*Source: Primary data processed by the author (2026)*

Based on Table 6, the regression equation is:

$$Y = 10.932 + 1.426X$$

The regression coefficient for career adaptability was positive, with a value of 1.426. This means that every one-unit increase in career adaptability is associated with an increase of 1.426 units in employability. The significance value of 0.000 is lower than 0.05, indicating that career adaptability has a positive and significant effect on employability. Therefore, H1 is accepted.

This finding confirms that students with stronger career adaptability tend to demonstrate higher employability. Students who are more concerned about their future careers, capable of controlling career-related decisions, willing to explore career opportunities, and confident in overcoming career barriers are more likely to have stronger work readiness and employability attributes. From an HRM perspective, career adaptability can be understood as a psychosocial resource that supports the development of human capital, talent readiness, and students' preparedness to enter the labor market.

The comparative analysis was conducted to examine whether career adaptability and employability differed based on cohort year and academic concentration. Before conducting one-way ANOVA, the homogeneity of variance assumption was assessed using Levene's test. For cohort year, the variance of career adaptability was homogeneous, as indicated by Levene's statistic of 0.163 with a significance value of 0.850. The variance of employability was also homogeneous, with Levene's statistic of 0.963 and a significance value of 0.384. Similarly, for academic concentration, the variance of career adaptability was homogeneous, with Levene's statistic of 2.003 and a significance value of 0.139, while employability showed Levene's statistic of 1.121 with a significance value of 0.329. Since all significance values were greater than 0.05, the homogeneity assumption was fulfilled, and one-way ANOVA was used.

Grouping Variable	Dependent Variable	F	Sig.	Interpretation
Cohort Year	Career Adaptability	1.711	0.185	Not significant
	Employability	2.530	0.084	Not significant
Academic Concentration	Career Adaptability	0.816	0.445	Not significant



---

Employability	1.014	0.366	Not significant
---------------	-------	-------	-----------------

---

**Table 7.** *Difference Test Results Based on Cohort Year and Academic Concentration*

*Source: Primary data processed by the author (2026)*

Table 7 shows that career adaptability did not differ significantly based on cohort year,  $F = 1.711$ ,  $p = 0.185$ . Employability also did not differ significantly across cohort groups,  $F = 2.530$ ,  $p = 0.084$ . Although the significance value for employability based on cohort year was relatively close to the 0.05 threshold, it remained statistically non-significant. Therefore, H2 and H3 are not supported. These findings indicate that students from the 2021, 2022, and 2023 cohorts had relatively similar levels of career adaptability and employability.

The results also show that career adaptability did not differ significantly based on academic concentration,  $F = 0.816$ ,  $p = 0.445$ . Similarly, employability did not differ significantly across academic concentrations,  $F = 1.014$ ,  $p = 0.366$ . The Tukey HSD post hoc results further confirmed that all pairwise comparisons among Finance, Human Resource Management, and Marketing students were not statistically significant. Therefore, H4 and H5 are not supported.

These findings suggest that cohort year and academic concentration do not significantly differentiate students' career adaptability and employability. This may occur because Management students across cohorts and concentrations share relatively similar academic environments, curriculum structures, learning experiences, and access to institutional career development opportunities. Although students in higher cohorts may have greater academic exposure, this difference was not strong enough to produce statistically significant variation in career adaptability or employability. Likewise, differences in academic concentration do not appear to create meaningful differences in students' adaptive career resources or employability attributes.

Overall, the findings show that career adaptability is a significant predictor of employability, while cohort year and academic concentration do not significantly differentiate students' career adaptability and employability. Therefore, employability development should focus more on strengthening students' adaptive career resources rather than relying only on demographic or academic grouping factors. Practically, study programs and universities should design structured interventions such as career coaching, internship programs, project-based learning, industry collaboration, job-search training, and self-development programs. These initiatives are important to translate students' career adaptability into stronger employability and work readiness.



## **Discussion**

The regression results confirm that career adaptability has a positive and significant effect on students' employability. This finding implies that when Management students are better able to anticipate career demands, regulate their career-related choices, explore available opportunities, and remain confident in the face of barriers, they tend to demonstrate stronger employability attributes needed to enter and sustain participation in the labor market. The direction of this relationship is consistent with Career Construction Theory, which positions career adaptability as a psychosocial resource that enables individuals to manage career-development tasks, navigate transitions, and respond effectively to uncertainty in contemporary work environments (Rudolph & Zacher, 2023). In this sense, employability is not only a function of technical competence, but also reflects the extent to which students possess adaptive resources that guide purposeful career behavior and continuous capability development.

In the present context, Management students on Universitas Negeri Makassar display generally favorable patterns in both variables, they appear capable of thinking ahead about their career future, organizing themselves, exploring options, and dealing with obstacles, while also reporting employability strengths related to sustained learning and self-management. At the same time, the variation across indicators highlights that some components are more pronounced than others, indicating areas where development efforts can be prioritized. The strongest career adaptability indicator is future orientation, reflecting the "concern" dimension namely, students' awareness that present choices shape future career trajectories and their motivation to anticipate upcoming needs. Within Savickas' framework, concern functions as a psychological prerequisite for adaptive career behavior, because students who attend to the future are more likely to plan, mobilize resources, and seek information that strengthens their career readiness (Bagus & Meita, 2025). From an HRM perspective, strong future orientation also facilitates institutional efforts to direct students toward development activities such as training, certification, and internships, because these activities are more likely to be interpreted as career investments rather than short-term academic requirements (Tentama & Nabilah, 2020).

Conversely, the relatively weakest career adaptability indicator concerns decision independence, which maps onto the "control" dimension. Although this weakness is relative rather



than absolute, it remains substantively important because decision independence shapes students' capacity to set priorities, select realistic career pathways, and assume responsibility for the consequences of their choices during the school-to-work transition (Peng et al., 2021). When this aspect is not sufficiently developed, students may experience ambivalence, delay career actions, or make choices that are less aligned with their interests and competencies (Mahdi & Rani Armalita, 2025). Such conditions can weaken employability by producing less coherent competence-development strategies, less consistent job-search behavior, and less compelling professional narratives when students must articulate their field and position preferences (Zhou et al., 2023).

On the employability side, the strongest indicator relates to self-directed learning, signaling robust learning agility. In HRM literature, learning agility is a core capability in dynamic labor markets because it supports continuous upskilling and reskilling and enables individuals to keep pace with changing job requirements (Wolor et al., 2025). Students who are comfortable learning independently tend to be more adaptive to technological change and evolving role expectations and are better positioned to pursue competence updates demanded by employers (Matondang et al., 2024).

However, the relatively weakest employability indicator concerns work-experience readiness, specifically the perceived adequacy of work experience as preparation for entry into employment. This matters because work experience often serves as direct evidence of competence for employers and therefore plays a decisive role in recruitment and selection (Boto-García & Escalonilla, 2024; Jackson, 2024). Limited work experience can constrain CV and portfolio quality, reduce the availability of concrete behavioral examples during interviews, and lower confidence throughout selection processes (Anderson & Tomlinson, 2021).

More importantly, limited practical exposure may restrict the conversion of career adaptability into observable employability outcomes: adaptability supplies psychological and behavioral readiness, whereas experience provides a context in which competence can be displayed and verified (Li et al., 2025). Therefore, even though the effect of career adaptability on employability is supported, the magnitude and practical expression of that effect are likely to strengthen when students are afforded more relevant experiential opportunities.



The comparative findings provide an additional perspective on the pattern of career adaptability and employability among Management students. The results show that career adaptability and employability do not differ significantly based on cohort year. This indicates that students from the 2021, 2022, and 2023 cohorts have relatively similar levels of adaptive career resources and employability attributes. Although senior students may have had more academic exposure, the difference was not strong enough to generate statistically significant variation. This finding can be interpreted in line with the view that career development learning should be embedded progressively across the curriculum rather than treated only as a final-year intervention. Career development learning enables students to reflect on career goals, understand work requirements, and prepare for labor market transitions throughout their study period ((Dean et al., 2022; Ho et al., 2023).

The study also found no significant differences in career adaptability and employability based on academic concentration. Students from Finance, Human Resource Management, and Marketing concentrations appear to share relatively similar levels of career readiness and employability. This result may be explained by the fact that students across concentrations are located within the same Management Study Program, experience similar foundational management courses, and are exposed to comparable academic and institutional environments. Therefore, employability may be shaped more by shared learning experiences, career development learning, and human capital development than by concentration labels alone (Dean et al., 2022).

Taken together, the predictive and comparative findings indicate that career adaptability is a stronger explanatory factor for employability than cohort year or academic concentration. These results integrate with and extend prior research that identifies career adaptability as a key determinant of employability and broader career outcomes. Students with stronger adaptability resources tend to report greater confidence in job search, better understanding of job-search challenges, and higher readiness to capitalize on available opportunities (Al-Waqfi et al., 2023; Aminjafari et al., 2023). The present findings also support the view that career adaptability contributes to career-related outputs such as work readiness and employability, reinforcing its theoretical role as a central resource in transition processes (Aminjafari et al., 2023; Omar et al., 2023).



Conceptually, the pattern observed here aligns with an HRM-oriented interpretation of employability as the outcome of interacting resources: career adaptability strengthens orientation, self-regulation, exploration, and confidence, and employability improves when these resources are operationalized through learning behaviors and relevant experiences. At the same time, the non-significant differences based on cohort year and academic concentration suggest that employability development should be designed as a structured and program-wide intervention for all Management students, rather than being limited to certain cohorts or concentrations. Embedded career management programs, career development learning, and practical competence-oriented activities have been shown to strengthen students' perceived employability and career readiness (Chieng et al., 2024).

In terms of practical implications, the study suggests that employability development should be approached as a structured talent-development process. At the individual level, strengthening the "control" component can be supported through goal-based career decision-making training, alternative mapping, consequence evaluation, and periodic reflection. At the instructional level, project-based learning that requires students to design work plans, select strategies, and defend outputs can strengthen decision autonomy while simultaneously producing portfolio evidence. At the institutional level, expanding internship partnerships, industry-linked projects, and career services (CV clinics, interview simulations, and alumni mentoring) can increase experiential exposure and enhance evidence-based readiness, thereby facilitating the translation of adaptability into employability.

Accordingly, study programs and universities should not limit employability enhancement to specific cohorts or concentrations. Instead, career coaching, internship preparation, project-based learning, CV clinics, interview simulations, alumni mentoring, and industry-linked projects should be provided systematically across the student lifecycle. Such initiatives are important because career adaptability supplies psychological and behavioral readiness, while structured career development activities and experiential learning provide practical contexts through which students can demonstrate, verify, and strengthen their employability attributes (Chieng et al., 2024).

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting these findings. First, the study relies on self-reported data, which may be affected by social desirability and perceptual bias.



Second, the cross-sectional design limits the ability to capture developmental dynamics across cohorts or semesters, and it does not fully establish temporal causality. Third, because the sample is drawn from a single program within one institution, generalizability to other disciplines or universities should be made cautiously. Fourth, employability is likely shaped by additional contextual factors not modeled here, such as access to career services, social networks, local labor market conditions, and socioeconomic background. Fifth, although this study compared respondents based on cohort year and academic concentration, the comparative analysis was limited to group differences and did not examine interaction effects among student characteristics.

Future research should therefore employ longitudinal designs to examine how career adaptability and employability evolve during university study and how they predict post-graduation outcomes. Studies may also test mediating mechanisms such as career planning, job-search behavior, internship participation, or learning engagement to clarify the pathways through which adaptability affects employability. Additionally, moderators such as gender, cohort year, prior work experience, and participation in university career programs may be examined to identify conditions under which the effect is stronger or weaker. Building on the present results, future work can formulate testable propositions that the effect of career adaptability on employability is partially mediated by structured experiential exposure (e.g., internships or industry projects) because such exposure provides competence-verification contexts, and that decision independence strengthens the conversion of adaptability resources into employability through more consistent goal-directed actions (Li et al., 2025; Peng et al., 2021).

## **CONCLUSION**

This study concludes that career adaptability has a positive and significant effect on employability among Management undergraduates at Universitas Negeri Makassar. Students who demonstrate stronger concern for their future careers, greater control over career-related decisions, stronger curiosity in exploring career opportunities, and higher confidence in facing career challenges tend to have better employability. The regression result indicates that career adaptability explains 46.0% of the variance in employability, confirming that adaptive career resources are important predictors of students' work readiness.



The descriptive findings show that all dimensions of career adaptability and employability were in the high category. Concern emerged as the strongest dimension of career adaptability, indicating that students generally have strong future orientation and career awareness. In employability, self-learning obtained the highest mean score, reflecting students' strong ability to develop competencies independently. However, relatively lower scores in job-seeking behavior and work-capital readiness indicate that students still need stronger practical exposure, recruitment preparation, and work-experience readiness.

The comparative results show that career adaptability and employability did not differ significantly based on cohort year or academic concentration. This means that students from different cohorts and concentrations have relatively similar levels of career adaptability and employability. Therefore, employability development should not be limited to specific student groups, but should be implemented comprehensively across all cohorts and concentrations. Study programs and universities are encouraged to strengthen career coaching, internships, project-based learning, CV clinics, interview simulations, alumni mentoring, and industry collaboration to translate students' career adaptability into stronger employability and work readiness.

## REFERENCE

- Akhtar, P., Moazzam, M., Ashraf, A., & Khan, M. N. (2024a). The interdisciplinary curriculum alignment to enhance graduates' employability and universities' sustainability. *International Journal of Management Education*, 22(3), 101037. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijme.2024.101037>
- Akhtar, P., Moazzam, M., Ashraf, A., & Khan, M. N. (2024b). The interdisciplinary curriculum alignment to enhance graduates' employability and universities' sustainability. *The International Journal of Management Education*, 22(3), 101037. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijme.2024.101037>
- Al-Waqfi, M. A., Tlaiss, H., & Ghoudi, K. (2023). Career Adaptability as a Predictor of Job Search Intentions and Career Readiness of Young Adults in the United Arab Emirates. *Journal of Career Development*, 50(5), 1076–1096. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08948453231157759>



Aminjafari, A., Nilforooshan, P., & Abedi, M. R. (2023). Explaining Employability Through Career Adaptability, Job Search Selfefficacy, Complexity Perception, and Luck Readiness: A Mediator Model. *Journal of Counseling Research*.  
<https://doi.org/10.18502/qjcr.v22i85.12547>

Anderson, V., & Tomlinson, M. (2021). Signaling standout graduate employability: The employer perspective. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 31(3), 675–693.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/1748-8583.12334>

Arubayi, D. O., & Igbomor, E. (2024). The Relationship between Career Adaptability and Employee Retention. In ... *and Engineering Journals*, 7 (11), 634. academia.edu.

Ayuni, S., & Nio, S. R. (2025). Hubungan Career Adaptability dengan Work Readiness Mahasiswa Tingkat Akhir D3 di Universitas Negeri Padang. *TSAQOFAH*, 5(3), 2953–2969.  
<https://doi.org/10.58578/tsaqofah.v5i3.6050>

Bagus, R. R., & Meita, S. B. (2025). Hubungan Antara Orientasi Masa Depan Terhadap Kesiapan Kerja Pada Siswa Smk. *PAEDAGOGY: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan Dan Psikologi*, 5(2), 674–683. <https://doi.org/10.51878/paedagogy.v5i2.6065>

Bisschoff, Z. S., & Massyn, L. (2024). A conceptual soft skills competency framework for enhancing graduate intern employability. *Higher Education, Skills and Work-Based Learning*, 15(7), 66–81. <https://doi.org/10.1108/HESWBL-08-2023-0239>

Boto-García, D., & Escalonilla, M. (2024). Grade point averages versus experience. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 109, 103828. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2024.103828>

Cheng, M., Adekola, O., Albia, J., & Cai, S. (2022). Employability in higher education: a review of key stakeholders' perspectives. *Higher Education Evaluation and Development*, 16(1), 16–31. <https://doi.org/10.1108/heed-03-2021-0025>



- Chiang, F., Goi, C. L., Ho, J. M., & Yip, K. Y. (2024). Beyond the academic curriculum: embedding a career management program to improve the employability of business students. *Education + Training*, 66(4), 379–394. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ET-01-2024-0009>
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2022). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (6th ed.). SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Dean, B. A., Ryan, S., Glover-Chambers, T., West, C., Eady, M. J., Yanamandram, V., Moroney, T., & O'Donnell, N. (2022). Career development learning in the curriculum: What is an academic's role? *Journal of Teaching and Learning for Graduate Employability*, 13(1), 142–154. <https://doi.org/10.21153/jtlge2022vol13no1art1539>
- Dhinepuji, D. P., & Stephani Raihana Hamdan. (2024). Studi mengenai Adaptabilitas Karir Mahasiswa. *Bandung Conference Series: Psychology Science*, 4(1), 147–152. <https://doi.org/10.29313/bcsps.v4i1.9934>
- Eimer, A., & Bohndick, C. (2023). Employability models for higher education: A systematic literature review and analysis. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, 8(1), 100588. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2023.100588>
- Ferdinand, A. (2014). Metode Penelitian Manajemen: Pedoman Penelitian Untuk Penulisan Skripsi, Tesis Dan Disertasi Ilmu Manajemen. Edisi kelima. In *Badan Penerbit Universitas Diponegoro*.
- Grosemans, I., De Cuyper, N., Forrier, A., & Vansteenkiste, S. (2023). Graduation is not the end, it is just the beginning: Change in perceived employability in the transition associated with graduation. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 145, 103915. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2023.103915>
- Ho, T. T. H., Le, V. H., Nguyen, D. T., Nguyen, C. T. P., & Nguyen, H. T. T. (2023). Effects of career development learning on students' perceived employability: a longitudinal study. *Higher Education*, 86(2), 297–315. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-022-00933-6>



- Jackson, D. (2024). The relationship between student employment, employability-building activities and graduate outcomes. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 48(1), 14–30. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2023.2253426>
- Jones, J., Manoharan, A., Jiang, Z., & Singal, M. (2024). A Framework of Facilitators and Barriers to Career Adaptability: Migrant Hotel Workers During COVID-19. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research*, 48(3), 483–500. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10963480221118820>
- Lee, P. C., Xu, S. (Tracy), & Yang, W. (2021). Is career adaptability a double-edged sword? The impact of work social support and career adaptability on turnover intentions during the COVID-19 pandemic. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 94(January), 102875. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2021.102875>
- Li, X., Xiang, T., & Ma, S. (2025). Exploring the influences of four components of university experience on students' employability: a meta-analysis. *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10775-025-09773-z>
- Llinares-Insa, L. I., González-Navarro, P., Zacarés-González, J. J., & Córdoba-Iñesta, A. I. (2018). Employability Appraisal Scale (EAS): Development and Validation in a Spanish Sample. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 9. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01437>
- Mahdi, S. S., & Rani Armalita. (2025). The Relationship Between Career Decision Self Efficacy And Self Perceived Employability On Vocational Student. *In Trend : International Journal of Trends in Global Psychological Science and Education*, 2(3), 138–145. <https://doi.org/10.62260/intrend.v2i3.419>
- Matondang, I. D., Silalahi, R. A., & Fatira Ak, M. (2024). The Impact of Student Activeness in the Independent Campus Learning Program (MBKM) on Students' Readiness to Enter the World of Work. *Proceedings of International Conference on Multidiciplinary Research*, 6(1), 109–116. <https://doi.org/10.32672/picmr.v6i1.762>



- Mohammed, A. A. M., & Saadah, Z. A. N. (2021). Soft Skills and Graduates' Employability in the 21st Century from Employers' Perspectives: A Review of Literature. *International Journal of Infrastructure Research and Management*, 9(2), 44–59.
- Nadarajah, J. (2021). Measuring the Gap in Employability Skills Among Malaysian Graduates. *International Journal of Modern Trends in Social Sciences*, 4(15), 81–87. <https://doi.org/10.35631/ijmtss.415007>
- Nugroho, S. A., & Fajrianti, F. (2021). Pengaruh Career Adaptability dan Psychological Capital terhadap Self-Perceived Employability pada Mahasiswa Tingkat Akhir Fakultas Psikologi Universitas Airlangga. *Buletin Riset Psikologi Dan Kesehatan Mental (BRPKM)*, 1(1), 520–531. <https://doi.org/10.20473/brpkm.v1i1.26690>
- Nyagope, T. S. (2025). From University to the World of Work: A Higher Education Curriculum response. *EDUCATIO: Journal of Education*, 9(1), 40–50. <https://doi.org/10.29138/educatio.v9i1.1679>
- Ojala, J., Nikander, A., Aunola, K., De Palo, J., & Ryba, T. V. (2023). The role of career adaptability resources in dual career pathways: A person-oriented longitudinal study across elite sports upper secondary school. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 67(May 2022), 102438. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychsport.2023.102438>
- Omar, M. K., Romli, A. H., Azeem, N., & Zakaria, A. (2023). Relationship Between Career Adaptability And Employability Skills: Towards Engineering Graduates Career Development. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 13(12). <https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v13-i12/20351>
- Peng, P., Song, Y., & Yu, G. (2021). Cultivating Proactive Career Behavior: The Role of Career Adaptability and Job Embeddedness. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.603890>



- Rahma, A., Priyatama, A. N., & Kusumawati, R. N. (2023). Career Adaptability dan Self Perceived Employability pada Mahasiswa Magang. *Jurnal Psikologi Perseptual*, 8(1), 49–59. <https://doi.org/10.24176/perseptual.v8i1.7571>
- Rudolph, C. W., & Zacher, H. (2023). Adapting to involuntary, radical, and socially undesirable career changes. *Current Psychology*, 42(6), 5015–5026. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-021-01859-5>
- Santos-Jaén, J. M., Iglesias-Sánchez, P. P., & Jambrino-Maldonado, C. (2022). The role of gender and connections between entrepreneurship and employability in higher education. *The International Journal of Management Education*, 20(3), 100708. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijme.2022.100708>
- Savickas, M. L., & Porfeli, E. J. (2012). Career Adapt-Abilities Scale: Construction, reliability, and measurement equivalence across 13 countries. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 80(3), 661–673. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2012.01.011>
- Tahiry, M. A., & Ekmekcioglu, E. B. (2023). Supervisor support, career satisfaction, and career adaptability of healthcare sector employees. *Vilakshan - XIMB Journal of Management*, 20(2), 292–301. <https://doi.org/10.1108/xjm-09-2021-0247>
- Tentama, F., & Nabilah, B. R. (2020). The contribution of future orientation towards employability in students of vocational high school. *Journal of Education and Learning (EduLearn)*, 14(4), 623–628. <https://doi.org/10.11591/edulearn.v14i4.17053>
- Tong, M., & Gao, T. (2022). For Sustainable Career Development: Framework and Assessment of the Employability of Business English Graduates. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13(April). <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.847247>
- Tushar, H., & Sooraksa, N. (2023). Global employability skills in the 21st century workplace: A semi-systematic literature review. *Heliyon*, 9(11), e21023. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e21023>



Wolor, C. W., Suhud, U., Nurkhin, A., Hoo, W. C., & Rababah, M. A. (2025). Unleashing the Potential of Learning Agility: A Catalyst for Innovative Work Behavior and Employee Performance. *Public Health of Indonesia*, 11(2), 169–180. <https://doi.org/10.36685/phi.v11i2.992>

Zain, T. S., Asfitri, M. K., Angguna, W. M., Nugraha, Y. A., Sakti, I. P., & Junianto, M. (2025). Konsep dan Dinamika Adaptabilitas Karir pada Mahasiswa Vokasi: Sebuah Studi Literatur. *Journal of Psychology and Social Sciences*, 3(3), 119–133. <https://doi.org/10.61994/jpss.v3i3.1082>

Zhang, Y. C., Zhang, Y., Xiong, X. L., Liu, J. B., & Zhai, R. B. (2022). An Empirical Study on the Improvement of College Students' Employability Based on University Factors. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13(March), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.793492>

Zhang, Y.-C., Zhang, Y., Xiong, X., Liu, J.-B., & Zhai, R.-B. (2022). An Empirical Study on the Improvement of College Students' Employability Based on University Factors. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.793492>

Zhou, D., Peng, Z., & Zhou, H. (2023). The influence of career decision-making self-efficacy on employability of higher vocational students: mediated by emotional intelligence. *Frontiers in Education*, 8. <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2023.1274430>