

# Occupational self-efficacy and career adaptability in undergraduates who have participated in MBKM program

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**ARTICLE INFO****Article history:**

Received Dec 20, 2023

Revised Dec 30, 2023

Accepted Jan 9, 2024

**Keywords:**

Career Adaptability;

MBKM;

Occupational Self-Efficacy.

**ABSTRACT**

An internship experience can lead to an individual's confidence to perform work-related tasks, known as occupational self-efficacy. This belief will affect the individual's career adaptability, namely the individual's ability to adapt to career development, work transitions, and work problems, which in turn will help individuals deal with change and uncertainty in the world of work. One of the internship programs supported by the government is the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka program, more commonly referred to as MBKM. It aimed at increasing student competence through real work-related experiences, especially in internship and research schemes. This study aimed to determine the relationship between occupational self-efficacy and career adaptability in undergraduate MBKM program participants. Subjects in this study were collected using convenience sampling and obtained from 117 undergraduates who had participated in the MBKM program. A positive and significant relationship was found between occupational self-efficacy and career adaptability in undergraduate MBKM program participants with a total effect of 43.2%. Thus, the research hypothesis is accepted, namely that occupational self-efficacy affects career adaptability in undergraduate MBKM program participants.

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**1. Introduction**

The Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture (Kemdikbud) introduced the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) policy in the early 2020. This program essentially provides 3 semesters of study outside of campus for undergraduate students (Dikti Kemdikbud, 2020). The MBKM program is intended to open up broad opportunities for students to enrich and improve their insights and competencies in the real world according to their interests and aspirations. MBKM program also confirms that learning can occur anywhere, the universe of learning is limitless, not only in classrooms, libraries, and laboratories, but also in villages, industries, workplaces, service places, research centers, and in the community. The interaction between universities and the world of work and the real world will make the presence of universities appear as a determinant of the progress and development of the nation.

The MBKM program is strongly supported by the Kemendikbudristek and also by the campuses that have participated since the beginning. Cooperation with partners from the industry is also essential for implementing MBKM. The study program cannot only depend on the Ministry of Education and Culture but must also try to establish cooperation with the industry through lecturers who are serving the community, alumni working in companies, students who are doing internships (Wulandari et al., n.d. 2022). In addition, there are ongoing efforts to encourage students to take up various types of flagship activities, namely the Teaching Campus Program, Merdeka Student Exchange, Internship and Certified Independent Study (MSIB)

commonly called the Internship Program, Teaching Practitioners, Merdeka Entrepreneurship Program, as well as the Indonesian International Student Mobility Awards (IISMA) in regular and vocational versions. The basic aim is to increase student competence (Nizam, 2023) to match the demands of the business world and the industrial world. That aim is in line with Savickas (as cited in Becker et al., 2022) which states that individuals will begin to shape their careers through various decision-making and adaptation to their environment, as a form of a continuous cycle.

The MBKM program has also been responded to by the industry, and the most tangible impact is the reduction in the waiting time for graduates to get a job. Research from the Kampus Merdeka program found that around 41% of the 7,099 alumni of the program found employment within 0.3 to 2.8 months of graduation. This is much faster than the national average of 4 months (Nizam, 2023). The process of building an individual's career includes a synthesis process between the individual and the industry (Savickas as cited in Becker et al., 2022). This means that the MBKM program has succeeded in making this process happen faster so that the individual built is also more quickly accepted by the industry. This also means that many of the MBKM alumni have good career adaptability. Career Adaptability is an individual's ability to adapt to career development, work transitions, and work problems, which helps individuals deal with change and uncertainty in the world of work (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Koen, Klehe & Vianen (as cited in Tandiyuk et al., 2022) state that new graduates who have good career adaptability tend to have a greater chance of getting a job offer and ultimately getting a suitable career. This opinion is also supported by McArdle et al (2007). People with a high level of career adaptability have a lower risk of being unemployed for a long period because they have a strong understanding of their abilities.

Career adaptability has a positive relationship with employability because it is influenced by self-efficacy factors. In the context of work, this concept is developed specifically, namely occupational self-efficacy. Occupational Self-efficacy is a belief in one's ability to perform work-related tasks, influenced by various factors such as experience, feedback, social support, and motivation (Rigotti et al., 2008). It is believed that occupational self-efficacy could predict job satisfaction and life satisfaction (Paggi & Jopp, 2015). These factors are obtained by students or graduates through the MBKM program they participate in. Thus, MBKM is an effective strategy to increase students' occupational self-efficacy, improve their career adaptability, and ultimately increase their chances of getting a good career.

Many studies have been conducted related to MBKM program graduates. Sandfreni's (2021) research on Esa Unggul University Informatics Engineering students showed that the MBKM program helped students face the post-campus period and develop their competencies individually. Alia's research (2023) shows that the MBKM program has a positive and significant influence on non-technical competencies in 516 alumni of Jendral Soedirman University. More specifically, Elfira (2022) concluded that there was a significant difference in the level of career adaptability between students who had participated in MBKM and those who had not. However, there is still very limited research linking Occupational Self-Efficacy, and Career Adaptability in university graduates. This information is very relevant for universities in developing policies related to MBKM in the long term, related to relationships with the industrial world. On the other hand, the industrial world can also use this information to become one of the filters for finding the human resources needed. Therefore, this study aimed to look at the influence that occupational self-efficacy has on the level of career adaptability of university graduates who have participated in the MBKM program.

## 2. Research Method

The subject population of this study is MBKM program alumni, therefore the technique applied is non-probability sampling to find the characteristics of respondents that need to be met. Convenience sampling as a non-probability sampling technique is used in this study, which is a data collection technique based on the availability and location of subjects that are easy to reach (Gravetter & Forzano, 2023). The sample criteria in this study are: (1) Undergraduates with a maximum of 12 months from graduation, and (2) an MBKM program alumni from internship or research schemes.

The instrument used in this study was two questionnaires. The questionnaire consisted of two parts, the Occupational Self Efficacy (Rigotti et al., 2008) and Career Adaptability (Yu et al., 2020). Occupational Self Efficacy is a unidimensional instrument, while Career Adaptability has 3 dimensions, namely career concerns, career control, career curiosity and career confidence. For example, I can remain calm when facing difficulties in my job because I can rely on my abilities for occupational self-efficacy, *thinking about what*

*my future will be like* for concern, *taking responsibility for my actions* for control, *becoming curious about new opportunities* for curiosity, and *learning new skills* for confidence.

Both instruments use responses in the form of a Likert scale consisting of four options, namely "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (4). The score in this instrument is calculated from the total score per each subscale, and then the scores from each subscale are summed to get a total score (total mean). The blueprints of both instruments can be seen in table 1.

**Table 1.** Blue print of the instruments

Variable	Dimension	Items
Occupational Self-Efficacy	Occupational Self Efficacy	6
Career Adaptability	Career Concerns	3
	Career Control	3
	Career Curiosity	3
	Career Confidence	3

Data collection was carried out by distributing questionnaires with 18 items to respondents online via email and social media. There were 117 participants who met the research criteria and fill out both questionnaires. The data obtained will be analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical analysis techniques. Descriptive analysis techniques are used to explain the characteristics of respondents, while inferential analysis techniques are used to test hypotheses.

### 3. Results And Discussions

Table 2 presents descriptive statistics for the variables measured in this study. Both mean of the instruments are above the theoretical mean. Thus it can be concluded that the level of occupational self-efficacy and career adaptability possessed by the participants tends to be high.

These finding can be explained based on the results of Arsyad & Widuhung's (2022) research which states that the MBKM program, especially internships and research activities, provide undergraduate students with more than enough experience regarding experiential learning. In addition, this activity also increases competence and trains students' independence in implementing a work program. Thus, it can be said that the MBKM program reduces uncertainty about the world of work, bringing about real experiences about adapting in the context of careers and problems at work.

**Table 2.** Descriptive statistics of the instruments

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Occupational Self-Efficacy	16.00	24.00	21.3248	1.51333
Career Adaptability	30.00	48.00	43.1880	2.78212

Table 3 presents the logistic regression results of Occupational Self-Efficacy to the Career Adaptability of the participants. For every 1% increase in the level of Occupational Self-Efficacy (X), Career Adaptability (Y) will increase by 1.208. the regression coefficient value is positive (+), it can be said that Occupational Self-Efficacy (X) has a positive effect on Career Adaptability (Y). So the regression equation is  $Y = 17.433 + 1.208 X$ . This means that there is an influence of the independent variable Occupational Self-Efficacy (X) on the dependent variable Career Adaptability (Y).

**Table 3.** Logistic regression results

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1. Constant	17.433	2.763		6.309	.000
Occupational Self-Efficacy	1.208	.12.4	.657	9.345	.000

The R Square value is 0.432, which means that the effect of Occupational Self-Efficacy (X) on Career Adaptability (Y) is 43.2%. While the remaining 56.8% is influenced by other variables. This positive influence means that the increase in Occupational Self-Efficacy of a graduate of the MBKM undergraduate program will affect the increase in the student's Career Adaptability.

This finding can be explained by referring back to the types of activities followed by the respondents, namely internships or research activities in the MBKM program. By participating in one of these activities, individuals have the experience and belief that they are able to perform tasks related to a job or career (Rigotti et al., 2008). With the development of this belief, namely occupational self-efficacy, the ability to adapt to the demands of career development can also increase.

#### 4. Conclusion

There have been many evaluations of the MBKM program regarding the implementation system, both shortcomings and advantages, such as in (Arsyad & Widuhung, 2022). However, the impact of MBKM on graduates is rarely discussed, except for the waiting period for work which is one of the accreditation assessments. This study provides data of career adaptability level and occupational self-efficacy level owned by graduates who have participated in the MBKM program. These results lead to an evaluation of the quality of graduates produced if the MBKM program is included in the education process.

Based on the results of the study, it is concluded that the career adaptability level and occupational self-efficacy level owned by graduates who have participated in the MBKM program are mostly high. Moreover, there is a positive and significant relationship between Occupational Self-Efficacy and Career Adaptability in MBKM Program Participants' College Graduates with a total effect of 43.2%. So, the more Occupational Self-Efficacy possessed by undergraduate students of the MBKM program, the more Career Adaptability will increase. Although this study only have 117 participants, the results still can be used as additional knowledge on the variables of Occupational Self-Efficacy and Career Adaptability, especially for undergraduate students of the MBKM program.

There are several implications that researchers can suggest, namely as a positive evaluation for research subjects regarding the relationship between Occupational Self-Efficacy and Career Adaptability. Researchers advise undergraduate students of the MBKM program to continue improving their Occupational Self-Efficacy, which is the ability to perform work-related tasks, increasing their experience of receiving feedback, social support, and developing motivation which will ultimately increase students' Career Adaptability by being oriented towards career progress, actively involved in exploring careers related to suitable job prospects, taking responsibility for work tasks and roles, showing a persistent attitude in striving to achieve self-success. The researchers also suggested that multiple agencies could provide training and interventions related to improving Occupational Self-Efficacy and Career Adaptability for both undergraduate graduates and MBKM program alumni.

Research on career adaptability has been conducted at various ages and various stages of education. Lakshmi & Elmartha's (2022) study on 182 final year undergraduate students showed that 69.2% were in the very high level and 24.7% were in the high level. This shows that the majority of final year students already have the readiness to enter the industry, even though the research respondents have not been exposed to the MBKM program. So, it will be interesting to focus on the development of career adaptability owned by undergraduate students, since they enter lectures, undergo education until they become graduates. This research can also be extended to compare the results between students who have participated in the MBKM program, on specific schemes of the MBKM program, and those who have not.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to express my deepest gratitude for the expression and dedication of the entire team. The Journal of Managed Science (JMAS) has reviewed the article and published the author's paper. In addition, the author would also like to thank all peer reviewers who have collaborated with and supported the preparation of this article so that it can be successful and published in the Journal of Management Science (JMAS).

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