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THE INFLUENCE OF EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS AND CAREER ADAPTABILITY ON WORK READINESS AMONG FINAL-YEAR STUDENTS

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Abstract

The transition from higher education to employment requires university students to possess not only academic knowledge but also transferable skills and psychological resources to respond to workplace demands. However, some students still face difficulties in preparing themselves for employment, particularly in applying their competencies and managing uncertainty during career transitions. This study aims to examine the influence of Employability Skills and Career Adaptability on Work Readiness among students of the 2022 cohort of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Singaperbangsa Karawang. A quantitative approach was employed using a structured questionnaire administered to 210 students selected through proportionate stratified random sampling from a population of 442 students. Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4. The findings demonstrate that Employability Skills and Career Adaptability both have a positive and significant influence on Work Readiness. The results indicate that students' readiness to enter the workforce is strengthened by their ability to apply transferable competencies, manage responsibilities, and respond confidently to career-related changes and uncertainties. These findings highlight the importance of integrating employability development and career adaptability into higher education practices. Universities are encouraged to strengthen experiential learning, internships, career counseling, mentoring, and career-oriented programs that develop students' practical competencies and psychological preparedness. Such efforts can support higher education institutions in preparing graduates who are academically qualified, professionally capable, and better equipped to adapt effectively to the workplace

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INTRODUCTION

Rapid advancement in information and communication technology has transformed the nature of work and continuously changed the competencies required in the labor market. Changes in technology and the work environment require individuals to develop competencies that are relevant, transferable, and responsive to evolving workplace demands (Ferliana et al., 2025). In this context, higher education institutions have an important role in preparing students not only through academic learning but also through the development of competencies that support their transition from higher

education into employment. The transition from academic life to professional employment represents an important stage in students' career development because it requires them to adapt to new roles, responsibilities, work environments, and expectations (Donald et al., 2018; Koen et al., 2012).

Upon completing their studies, graduates enter a substantially different environment that requires adaptation to new social roles, task demands, and daily routines. This transitional period is commonly experienced by individuals referred to as fresh graduates, namely those who have obtained a bachelor's degree within the preceding year and are beginning to confront the demands of employment (Oktarinanda & Fakhri, 2025). For many, however, this transition does not unfold as expected. High unemployment rates, a rapidly changing labor market, limited work experience, and a persistent mismatch between the competencies graduates possess and those employers require constitute genuine obstacles that fresh graduates must overcome (Kalleberg, 2020; Restrepo, 2015; Young et al., 2025).

Work readiness refers to an individual's preparedness to enter and perform effectively in the workplace. Such readiness extends beyond academic or technical knowledge and includes personal characteristics, organizational understanding, work competence, and social intelligence (Caballero et al., 2011; Potgieter et al., 2023). Consequently, students who are approaching graduation need to possess both work-related competencies and personal resources that enable them to respond effectively to workplace demands (Herbert et al., 2020). Work readiness is therefore not merely a condition of having sufficient knowledge, but also reflects the extent to which students are psychologically, behaviorally, and socially prepared to enter a professional environment.

One of the factors that may contribute to students' work readiness is employability skills. Employability skills are competencies that individuals can utilize to increase their ability to obtain and perform employment effectively (Hayati et al., 2024). These competencies include thinking ability, personal qualities, and work-related competence, which are transferable across different work situations. Students who possess stronger problem-solving, decision-making, self-management, responsibility, discipline, and interpersonal skills are expected to be better prepared to deal with workplace demands. Empirical evidence supports this relationship. Khotimah & Wiyono (2022) found that employability skills have a positive and significant effect on work readiness, while Yolanda et al. (2023) similarly demonstrated that employability skills significantly influence students' work readiness. Faisal et al. (2025) also reported that employability skills contribute to students' preparedness to face workplace challenges. These findings indicate that employability skills provide an important competency-based foundation for developing work readiness.

In addition to employability skills, career adaptability is another factor that is relevant to students' work readiness. Career adaptability refers to an individual's capacity to prepare for and respond to career-related tasks, transitions, and changes (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Career adaptability consists of four dimensions: career concern, career control, career curiosity, and career confidence. These dimensions enable individuals to anticipate their future career, take responsibility for career decisions, explore possible career opportunities, and maintain confidence in dealing with career-related challenges. For students approaching graduation, these capacities are important because the transition from university to employment involves uncertainty, new responsibilities, and changing labor-market expectations.

Previous empirical studies have demonstrated the relevance of career adaptability to work readiness. Lakshmi and Elmartha (2022) found that career adaptability has a positive relationship with students' readiness to enter the workforce, as individuals with greater adaptability are better able to anticipate and respond to future career demands. Similarly, Putri et al. (2024) reported a positive relationship between career adaptability and work readiness among final-year university students. International evidence from a PLS-SEM study of logistics students likewise shows that career adaptability improves work readiness (Nguyen & Le, 2026) (Wahyuni & Amin, 2026). These findings suggest that career adaptability functions as a personal resource that helps students manage career transitions, make appropriate career decisions, explore employment opportunities, and maintain confidence when facing changes in the labor market. Thus, career adaptability complements employability skills by addressing not only what competencies students possess, but also how they prepare for and respond to career transitions.

The relevance of these factors can also be observed in the preliminary condition of students in the research setting. An initial pre-survey was conducted among 30 students of the 2022 cohort of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Singaperbangsa Karawang. The 30 pre-survey respondents were drawn by simple random sampling from the 2022 cohort roster of the Faculty of Economics and Business and were not included in the main sample. The pre-survey was intended as an initial diagnostic assessment to identify indications of students' work readiness, employability skills, and career adaptability before the main research was conducted. Therefore, the pre-survey findings were used only to illustrate the initial empirical phenomenon and were not used for hypothesis testing or statistical generalization. The main study subsequently involved 210 students selected from a population of 442 students.

Table 1. Pre-Survey Results for Students of the 2022 Batch
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Variable	Indicator	Statement	SD	D	MA	A	SA	Total Score	%
Work Readiness	Mental Readiness	Students are prepared to accept job rejection without losing motivation.	0	4	17	9	0	95	63%
Employability Skills	Self-awareness	Students realize their own strengths and weaknesses.	0	6	19	5	0	89	59%
Career Adaptability	Confidence in one's own readiness	Students are confident they have enough preparation before entering the workforce	0	2	14	14	0	102	68%

Source: Processed by author, 2026

The preliminary findings indicate that several aspects of students' preparedness for entering employment still require attention. In terms of work readiness, mental readiness obtained the lowest score among the measured indicators, at 63%. This finding indicates that although students may possess academic competencies, some may still experience challenges in maintaining motivation and psychological preparedness when facing rejection and competitive pressure in the labor market. In terms of employability skills, self-awareness obtained the lowest score at 59%, indicating that students' ability to recognize their own strengths and weaknesses had not yet developed optimally. Meanwhile, several aspects of career preparation related to career adaptability also showed relatively lower scores, particularly students' confidence in

their readiness to enter employment which stood at 68%. These findings suggest that students' career adaptability had not developed evenly across the measured aspects.

The preliminary findings are important because they show that the transition from higher education to employment cannot be explained solely by students' possession of academic knowledge. Students may still face difficulties in recognizing their own capabilities, maintaining psychological readiness, preparing for recruitment processes, and responding confidently to career-related demands (Caballero & Walker, 2010). These conditions reinforce the relevance of examining employability skills and career adaptability as two complementary factors in explaining work readiness.

To provide a theoretical foundation for these relationships, the present study draws on human capital theory and career construction theory. Human capital theory holds that knowledge, skills, and personal attributes are resources that raise an individual's productivity and labor-market value (Becker, 1964) Career construction theory explains how individuals manage vocational transitions by drawing on adaptability resources, namely concern, control, curiosity, and confidence, which are expressed in adapting responses and lead to adaptation results (Savickas, 1997; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). In this framework, work readiness is treated as an adaptation result of the school-to-work transition. Fugate et al. (2004) connect the two perspectives by describing employability as a psychosocial construct that combines career identity, personal adaptability, and social and human capital. Accordingly, employability skills are expected to support work readiness by equipping students to perform work tasks, and career adaptability is expected to support it by enabling students to anticipate and handle career transitions.

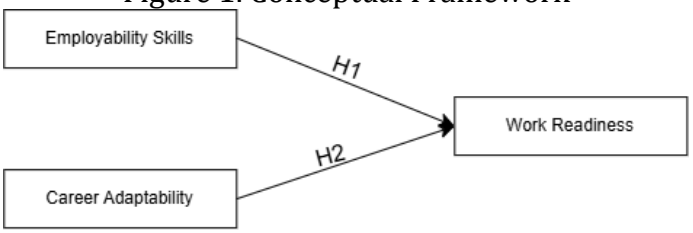
Previous research has established that employability skills are positively associated with work readiness (Faisal et al., 2025; Khotimah & Wiyono, 2022; Yolanda et al., 2023) and that career adaptability is positively associated with work readiness (Lakshmi & Elmartha, 2022; Putri et al., 2024). However, international studies have largely treated employability (Jackson & Bridgstock, 2021; Tomlinson, 2017) and career adaptability (Johnston, 2018; Kwon, 2019; Rudolph et al., 2017) as separate streams of research, and studies that place both resources in a single model to explain work readiness are scarce. This matters because the two constructs capture different resources: employability skills reflect competencies that students can apply to work tasks, whereas career adaptability reflects the psychosocial capacity to anticipate and manage career transitions (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Testing them together shows which resource contributes more to work readiness when the other is controlled, which is not visible when each is tested alone. Evidence of this kind is also limited for final-year business students in Indonesia, where the transition to work occurs under high graduate unemployment (Young et al., 2025). Therefore, this study examines the relationships between employability skills, career adaptability, and work readiness among final-year students, focusing on the individual structural paths from employability skills and career adaptability to work readiness. Previous research has established that employability skills are positively associated with work readiness (Faisal et al., 2025; Khotimah & Wiyono, 2022; Yolanda et al., 2023) and that career adaptability is positively associated with work readiness (Lakshmi & Elmartha, 2022; Putri et al., 2024). However, international studies have largely treated these resources in separate streams. Employability research centers on graduate capital and skills (Jackson & Bridgstock, 2021; Tomlinson, 2017), whereas career adaptability research, grounded in career construction theory, examines adaptation outcomes such as

employability (Johnston, 2018; Kwon, 2019; Rudolph et al., 2017). Studies that include career adaptability together with other predictors of work readiness, such as career support, career decision clarity and internship experience (Junita & Erlin, 2026; Nguyen & Le, 2026; Wahyuni & Amin, 2026) did not test employabiltiy skils in the same model. Evidence that places employability skills and career adaptability side by side as predictors of work readiness is therefore limited, particularly for final-year business student in Indonesia, where the transition to work occurs under high graduate unemployment (Young et al., 2025). Testing both resources together shows which contributes more to work readiness when the other is controlled, which cannot be seen when each is tested alone.

Conceptually, employability skills emphasize the competencies that students can apply when performing work-related tasks, while career adaptability emphasizes their capacity to anticipate, manage, and respond to career transitions and changing circumstances. Examining both factors simultaneously therefore provides a more comprehensive perspective on work readiness than examining either factor independently. The present study addresses this gap by investigating the influence of Employability Skills and Career Adaptability on Work Readiness among students of the 2022 cohort of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Singaperbangsa Karawang. Specifically, this study examines the partial influence of Employability Skills and Career Adaptability on Work Readiness and assesses the extent to which both variables jointly explain variations in students' Work Readiness. The findings are expected to provide empirical evidence for higher education institutions in developing strategies to strengthen students' competencies and career preparedness before entering the labor market.

H1: Employability skills have a positive and significant effect on work readiness.
H2: Career adaptability has a positive and significant effect on work readiness.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework



RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a quantitative research method with descriptive and verificative approaches to examine the influence of Employability Skills and Career Adaptability on Work Readiness among students of the 2022 cohort at the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Singaperbangsa Karawang. The research was conducted at the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Singaperbangsa Karawang, with the research object consisting of active undergraduate students from the 2022 cohort in the Management and Accounting study programs.

The sample size was determined using Slovin's formula (Tejada et al., 2012), which is commonly applied when the population size is known and the population variance is unknown. Denoting by n the sample size, Slovin's formula is given by

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

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$$n = \frac{442}{1 + 442 \times 0.05^2}$$

$$n = \frac{442}{2.105} = 210$$

The stratified random sampling is used when the population is heterogeneous. The population was divided into two strata, and respondents were drawn randomly from each stratum in proportion to its size. In this study, the samples are active students from the Faculty of Economics and Business at Singaperbangsa University Karawang.

Table 2. Sampling Technique

No	Study Program	Population	Sample
1	Management	237	237/442 x 210 = 113
2	Accounting	205	205/442 x 210 = 97
	Total	442	210

Source: Processed by author, 2026

The population comprised 442 students, consisting of 237 Management students and 205 Accounting students, from which 210 respondents were selected using proportionate stratified random sampling, with 113 respondents from Management and 97 from Accounting. Primary data were collected directly from respondents through a structured questionnaire, while secondary data were obtained through literature studies, including books, previous research articles, reports, and relevant official documents.

Table 3. Variable Operational

No	Variable	Dimension	Indicator	Statement Item	Validity	Relibiality
1.	Employability Skills (Idham & Aliyyah, 2020)	Thinking Ability	Managing information systematically	ES1	0,733	0,924
			Selecting alternative solutions	ES2	0,706	
			Decision-making	ES3	0,646	
			Implementing solutions	ES4	0,748	
		Personal Quality	Self-awareness	ES5	0,646	
			Openness	ES6	0,769	
			Integrity	ES7	0,691	
			Initiative	ES8	0,663	
		Competence	Time management	ES9	0,596	
			Interaction skills	ES10	0,706	
				ES11	0,663	
			Understanding responsibilities	ES12	0,658	
			Discipline	ES13	0,773	
2.	Career Adaptability (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012)	Career Concern	Career Awareness	CA1	0,858	0,946
			Career Understanding	CA2	0,783	
			Career Planning	CA3	0,840	
		Career Control	Competence development	CA4	0,868	
				CA5	0,755	
				CA6	0,775	
			Preparing to enter the	CA7	0,850	

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No	Variable	Dimension	Indicator	Statement Item	Validity	Relibiality
			workforce	CA8	0,776	
				CA9	0,810	
				CA10	0,778	
			Mental and work-attitude preparation	CA11	0,884	
				CA12	0,760	
		Career Curiosity	Exploring career information	CA13	0,851	
			Seizing opportunities	CA14	0,801	
			Evaluating options	CA15	0,773	
		Career Confidence	Confidence in personal readiness	CA16	0,835	
			Persistence	CA17	0,879	
			Self-confidence	CA18	0,723	
3.	Work Readiness (Caballero & Walker, 2010)	Personal Characteristics	Mental readiness	WR1	0,797	0,944
			Self-development	WR2	0,689	
			Resilience	WR3	0,706	
		Organizational Sharpness	Awareness of organizational roles	WR4	0,663	
			Professionalism	WR5	0,740	
			Work ethics	WR6	0,733	
			Organizational responsibility	WR7	0,692	
		Work Competence	Achievement motivation	WR8	0,596	
			Problem-solving	WR9	0,754	
			Critical thinking	WR10	0,692	
			Innovative thinking	WR11	0,740	
		Social Intelligence	Socializing skills	WR12	0,614	
			Motivation to collaborate	WR13	0,675	
			Adaptability	WR14	0,704	
			Interpersonal communication skills	WR15	0,747	

Source: Processed by author, 2026

Based on Table 3, all variables show validity values above the minimum threshold of 0.30 and reliability values above the threshold of 0.60, indicating that all variables are considered valid and reliable. All variables were operationalized using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Data analysis involved descriptive and verificative analysis.

Descriptive analysis was used to describe respondents' perceptions of the research variables, while verificative analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with SmartPLS 4. The measurement model in the PLS-SEM analysis was evaluated through the measurement model (indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity). Indicator reliability was assessed based on the outer loading of each indicator, with a recommended value above 0.70, indicating that the construct explains more than 50% of the indicator variance, indicators with outer loadings between 0.40 and 0.70 were considered for elimination when their removal improved the reliability or validity of the construct, while indicators with outer loadings below 0.40 were excluded from the measurement model. Internal consistency reliability was assessed using Composite Reliability (rho_c), with values between 0.60 and 0.70

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considered acceptable and values between 0.70 and 0.90 indicating good to satisfactory reliability. Convergent validity was evaluated using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), with a minimum recommended value of 0.50, indicating that the construct explains at least 50% of the variance of its indicators. Discriminant validity was assessed using the Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) (Henseler et al., 2015), with values below 0.90 considered acceptable for constructs with high conceptual similarity and values below 0.85 recommended for constructs with clearer conceptual distinctions (Hair et al., 2022).

The structural model was evaluated in five steps (Hair et al., 2022). First, collinearity among predictor constructs was assessed using the inner variance inflation factor (VIF), with values below 3 indicating no critical collinearity issues. Second, the significance of the path coefficients was examined through bootstrapping with 5,000 verify the number of subsamples, using a two-tailed test at the 5% significance level ($t > 1.96$ or $p < 0.05$). Third, the model's explanatory power was assessed using the coefficient of determination (R^2), with values of 0.25, 0.50, and 0.75 indicating weak, moderate, and substantial explanatory power, respectively. Fourth, the effect size (f^2) of each predictor construct was evaluated, with values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 representing small, medium, and large effects, respectively (Cohen, 1988). Finally, the hypotheses were considered supported when the hypothesized path coefficients were positive and statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Analysis

1. Employability Skills

Table 4. Respondents Answers to the Emplotability Skills

Dimension	Indicator	Choice					Average Score	Category		Variable
		1	2	3	4	5		Indicator	Dimension	
Thinking Ability	ES1	1	1	28	113	67	4.16	Agree	4.11	4.10
	ES2	0	3	37	98	72	4.14	Agree		
	ES3	0	3	44	103	60	4.05	Agree		
	ES4	0	6	32	112	60	4.08	Agree		
Personal Quality	ES5	0	11	48	94	57	3.94	Agree	4.11	
	ES6	0	2	25	102	81	4.25	Strongly Agree		
	ES7	0	2	25	118	65	4.17	Agree		
	ES8	0	3	41	103	63	4.08	Agree		
Competence	ES9	0	10	43	112	45	3.91	Agree	4.09	
	ES10	1	4	35	111	59	4.06	Agree		
	ES11	1	7	36	103	63	4.05	Agree		
	ES12	0	4	27	114	65	4.14	Agree		
	ES13	0	3	19	103	85	4.29	Strongly Agree		

Source: Processed by author, 2026

Where:

1. ES1 : Students are able to process and understand information logically.
2. ES2 : Students are able to choose various alternative solutions rationally.
3. ES3 : Students are able to make decisions through careful consideration.
4. ES4 : Students are able to implement established decisions.
5. ES5 : Students are aware of their own strengths and weaknesses.

6. ES6 : Students are open and able to accept directions and feedback for evaluation
7. ES7 : Students have integrity as a core principle in every action.
8. ES8 : Students have the initiative to complete tasks without waiting for
9. ES9 : Students are able to manage their time between academic activities and preparation before entering the workforce.
10. ES10 : Students are able to interact effectively within the campus environment
11. ES11 : Students are able to interact effectively outside the campus environment
12. ES12 : Students are able to understand and fulfill responsibilities given in academic and organizational activities.
13. ES13 : Students are able to comply with rules both inside and outside the campus.

Employability Skills variable obtained an overall average score of 4.10, which falls into the Agree category. This indicates that, in general, final-year students perceive themselves as already possessing adequate employability skills. The three dimensions show relatively even scores, namely Thinking Ability (4.11), Personal Quality (4.11), and Competence (4.09), all of which are in the Agree category. The marginal gap of only 0.02 between the highest and the lowest dimension suggests that students' employability skills are developed in a balanced manner across cognitive, personal, and competence aspects.

At the indicator level, all 13 indicators fall into the Agree or Strongly Agree category. The highest scores were found in ES13 (4.29), which concerns compliance with rules inside and outside the campus, indicating that discipline and receptiveness to evaluation are the strongest aspects of students' employability skills. In contrast, the lowest scores were found in ES9 (3.91), concerning time management between academic activities and career preparation. The findings suggest that respondents may face challenges in balancing academic responsibilities with career preparation, indicating a need to improve time management and prioritize activities to support their transition into the workforce.

2. Career Adaptability

Table 5. Respondents Answers to the Career Adaptability

Dimension	Indicator	Choice					Average Score	Category		Variable
		1	2	3	4	5		Indicator	Dimension	
Career Concern	CA1	0	2	31	116	61	4.12	Agree	4.10	4.05
	CA2	2	6	33	108	61	4.05	Agree		
	CA3	0	1	37	107	65	4.12	Agree		
Career Control	CA4	0	3	28	119	60	4.12	Agree	3.99	
	CA5	1	2	27	125	55	4.10	Agree		
	CA6	1	7	43	116	43	3.92	Agree		
	CA7	0	2	30	143	35	4	Agree		
	CA8	0	3	31	133	43	4.03	Agree		
	CA9	0	13	63	99	35	3.74	Agree		
	CA10	0	14	67	89	40	3.74	Agree		
	CA11	0	5	27	132	46	4.04	Agree		
	CA12	1	4	20	113	72	4.20	Agree		
	CA13	1	1	25	111	72	4.20	Agree	4.15	

Career Curiosity	CA14	0	1	36	114	59	4.10	Agree	
	CA15	0	2	29	113	66	4.16	Agree	
Career Confidence	CA16	0	7	35	119	49	4	Agree	4.10
	CA17	0	6	20	115	69	4.18	Agree	
	CA18	0	4	24	126	56	4.11	Agree	

Source: Processed by author, 2026

1. CA1 : Students are able to understand their interest in preferred fields of work
2. CA2 : Students can understand short-term and long-term career goals they wish to achieve
3. CA3 : Students are able to plan several career alternatives, such as employment, entrepreneurship, or continuing studies
4. CA4 : Students are able to develop their technical skills according to their preferred career field.
5. CA5 : Students are able to enhance their interpersonal skills to support career development.
6. CA6 : Students actively seek relevant internship or part-time work experience in their career field
7. CA7 : Students are able to prepare a good CV and portfolio according to their preferred field.
8. CA8 : Students are able to compose job application letters tailored to the position and company applied for
9. CA9 : Students are able to answer job interview questions clearly and confidently
10. CA10 : Students have a good social media personal branding to support the job search process
11. CA11 : Students are able to perform tasks well even under work pressure
12. CA12 : Students have the willingness to continuously learn and improve skills to support career growth
13. CA13 : Students actively seek and thoroughly explore information regarding their preferred career
14. CA14 : Students are able to utilize every opportunity to achieve their career goals
15. CA15 : Students are able to consider various career options carefully before making a decision
16. CA16 : Students are confident in having adequate preparation before entering the workforce
17. CA17 : Students continuously strive to achieve career goals despite facing difficulties
18. CA18 : Students are confident in their abilities to develop their future career

The Career Adaptability variable obtained an overall average score of 4.05, which falls into the Agree category. This shows that final-year students generally perceive themselves as adaptable in facing their career transition. Among the four dimensions, Career Curiosity obtained the highest score (4.15), followed by Career Concern (4.10) and Career Confidence (4.10), while Career Control obtained the lowest score (3.99) all four remain in the Agree category. This pattern suggests that students are quite curious about career information and concerned about their future, and are fairly confident about it, but their ability to take control through concrete preparation is relatively less developed.

At the indicator level, the highest scores were found in CA12 (4.20), the willingness to continuously learn and improve skills the findings mean that respondents

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demonstrate a strong willingness to continuously learn and improve their skills, reflecting their commitment to personal and career development. Meanwhile, the lowest scores were found in CA9 (3.74), the ability to answer job interview questions clearly and confidently, and CA10 (3.74), having good personal branding on social media to support the job search. CA6 (3.92), actively seeking internship or part-time work experience, was also relatively low. All three indicators belong to the Career Control dimension and relate to practical job-search readiness, which explains why this dimension has the lowest average. Students thus show strong learning motivation and career curiosity, but still need support in practical preparation such as interview practice, personal branding, and access to work experience.

3. Work Readiness

Table 6. Respondents Answers to the Work Readiness

Dimension	Indicator	Choice					Average Score	Category		Variable
		1	2	3	4	5		Indicator	Dimension	
Personal Characteristics	WR1	0	11	38	124	37	3.89	Agree	4.07	4.15
	WR2	1	4	20	107	78	4.22	Strongly Agree		
	WR3	0	5	24	126	55	4.20	Agree		
Organizational Sharpness	WR4	0	2	22	123	63	4.28	Strongly Agree	4.19	
	WR5	0	2	20	119	69	4.21	Strongly Agree		
	WR6	1	2	15	129	63	4.20	Agree		
	WR7	1	1	21	123	64	4.18	Agree		
Work Competence	WR8	1	0	20	115	74	4.24	Strongly Agree	4.09	
	WR9	1	0	33	122	54	4.09	Agree		
	WR10	0	3	43	105	59	4.05	Agree		
	WR11	0	4	45	108	53	4	Agree		
Social Intelligence	WR12	1	1	19	104	85	4.29	Strongly Agree	4.21	
	WR13	0	1	20	114	75	4.25	Strongly Agree		
	WR14	0	3	24	118	65	4.17	Agree		
	WR15	0	4	29	109	68	4.15	Agree		

Source: Processed by author, 2026

Where:

1. WR1 : Students are ready to accept job rejections without losing motivation
2. WR2 : Students actively develop self-capabilities to support career readiness
3. WR3 : Students are able to persevere and remain focused when facing obstacles in preparing for their future career
4. WR4 : Students are able to understand their roles and responsibilities within an organization
5. WR5 : Students are able to demonstrate professionalism in carrying out their roles within an organization
6. WR6 : Students are able to exhibit behavior aligned with applicable organizational values, rules, and norms
7. WR7 : Students demonstrate responsibility in carrying out organizational obligations without disregarding common interests
8. WR8 : Students have a strong drive to complete tasks on time according to specified targets

9. WR9 : Students are able to find solutions to resolve academic tasks and organizational activities
10. WR10 : Students are able to analyze problems critically before making decisions in both academic and organizational activities.
11. WR11 : Students are able to think innovatively to enhance the effectiveness of completing academic tasks and organizational activities.
12. WR12 : Students are able to establish positive relationships with others.
13. WR13 : Students have the motivation to collaborate with others to achieve organizational goals
14. WR14 : Students are able to adapt to new environments.
15. WR15 : Students are able to convey ideas and information clearly in communication with others.

The Work Readiness variable obtained an overall average score of 4.15. This indicates that final-year students generally consider themselves ready to enter the workforce. Social Intelligence obtained the highest dimension score (4.21), which falls within the Very Agree range, followed by Organizational Sharpness (4.19), Work Competence (4.09), and Personal Characteristics (4.07), which is the lowest, although still in the Agree category. Students therefore feel most ready in terms of social relations and understanding of organizational life, and relatively less ready in terms of personal characteristics, such as mental resilience. At the indicator level, the highest scores were found in WR12 (4.29), the ability to establish positive relationships with others. These results show that students' strengths lie in collaboration, professionalism, and achievement orientation. In contrast, the lowest scores were found in WR1 (3.89), readiness to accept job rejection without losing motivation, This suggests that mental resilience in facing rejection, as well as critical and innovative thinking, are aspects of work readiness that still need to be strengthened (Shrestha & Poudel, 2026).

This study involved 210 students from the Class of 2022 at the UNSIKA Faculty of Economics and Business as respondents. Respondent characteristics based on gender, study program, and age are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Respondent Characteristics

Characteristics	Category	Total	Percentage
Gender	Male	69	33%
	Female	141	67%
Study Program	Management	113	53,8%
	Accounting	97	46,2%
Age	20	6	3%
	21	100	48%
	22	85	40%
	23	17	8%
	≥ 24	2	1%

Source: Processed by author, 2026

The study respondents were dominantly female (67%) compared to male (33%). Regarding fields of study, the majority of respondents were from the Management program (53.8%), reflecting the larger student population in that program. In terms of age, the majority were 21 (48%) and 22 years old (40%), which corresponds to the typical age of final-year undergraduate students.

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Table 8. Indicator Reliability

Variable	Indicator	Outer Loading
Employability Skills	ES12	0.754
	ES4	0.745
	ES2	0.738
	ES6	0.738
	ES1	0.735
	ES13	0.735
	ES7	0.728
	ES3	0.722
	ES11	0.714
	ES10	0.712
	ES8	0.710
	ES9	0.706
	ES5	0.702
Career Adaptability	CA11	0.775
	CA7	0.763
	CA14	0.748
	CA4	0.747
	CA16	0.736
	CA8	0.732
	CA18	0.729
	CA15	0.721
	CA13	0.719
	CA5	0.719
	CA1	0.717
	CA12	0.713
	CA2	0.711
	CA3	0.710
	CA10	0.706
	CA17	0.706
	CA9	0.705
	CA6	0.704
Work Readiness	WR1	0.708
	WR10	0.789
	WR11	0.749
	WR12	0.708
	WR13	0.761
	WR14	0.733
	WR15	0.728
	WR2	0.811
	WR3	0.719
	WR4	0.770
	WR5	0.749
	WR6	0.716
	WR7	0.759
	WR8	0.737
	WR9	0.800

Source: Processed by author, 2026

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The results of the outer loading analysis presented in Table 8 indicate that all indicators have loading values above the recommended threshold of 0.70, demonstrating satisfactory indicator reliability. For Employability Skills, the outer loading values range from 0.702 to 0.754. For Career Adaptability, the values range from 0.704 to 0.775. Meanwhile, Work Readiness has outer loading values ranging from 0.708 to 0.811. Since all indicators exceed the minimum threshold, they demonstrate adequate reliability in measuring their respective constructs and are therefore retained for further analysis. These results support the suitability of the measurement model in terms of indicator reliability.

Table 9. Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha

Variable	Composite Reliability (rho_c)	Cronbach's Alpha
Employability Skills	0.935	0.925
Career Adaptability	0.952	0.947
Work Readiness	0.951	0.944

Source: Processed by author, 2026

All variables exhibited Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.70, indicating a good level of reliability. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values were 0.527 for both Employability Skills and Career Adaptability, and 0.562 for Work Readiness, all exceeded the 0.50 threshold, thereby meeting the criteria for convergent validity.

Table 10. Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Variable	Average Variance Extracted
Employability Skills	0.527
Career Adaptability	0.527
Work Readiness	0.562

Source: Processed by author, 2026

Based on Table 10 above, it can be seen that the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for the three variables Employability Skills, Career Adaptability, and Work Readiness exceed the threshold of 0.50. therefore, all these variables are considered to meet the validity criteria.

Table 11. Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

	Career Adaptability	Employability Skills	Work Readiness
Career Adaptability			
Employability Skills	0.677		
Work Readiness	0.711	0.770	

Source: Processed by author, 2026

Based on Table 11 the results indicate that all Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio values between constructs fall below the 0.90 threshold. This demonstrates that each construct in this study possesses good discriminant validity, meaning that each latent variable in the research model is distinct from the other constructs.

Based on the conducted outer model analysis, all tests met the required criteria. With all outer model requirements satisfied, the analysis process can proceed to inner model testing to evaluate the structural relationships between variables and test the hypotheses formulated in this study. In collinearity testing, it can be done by looking at the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) value. If the VIF value is > 5, it indicates a potential collinearity, while it is considered to have no collinearity if the VIF value is < 5.

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Table 12. Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)

	VIF		VIF
CA1	2.323	CA15	2.534
CA10	2.710	CA16	2.467
CA11	2.637	CA17	2.324
CA12	2.122	CA18	2.442
CA13	2.256	CA2	2.251
CA14	2.233	CA3	2.061
CA4	2.308	ES8	1.831
CA5	2.052	ES9	2.178
CA6	2.122	WR1	1.983
CA7	2.473	WR10	2.725
CA8	2.279	WR11	2.420
CA9	2.027	WR12	2.221
ES1	2.096	WR13	2.290
ES10	2.002	WR14	2.052
ES11	2.063	WR15	2.131
ES12	2.109	WR2	2.736
ES13	1.982	WR3	2.227
ES2	2.021	WR4	2.713
ES3	1.937	WR5	2.155
ES4	2.018	WR6	2.225
ES5	2.264	WR7	2.501
ES6	1.991	WR8	2.175
ES7	1.968	WR9	2.731

Source: Processed by author, 2026

Based on Table 12 it can be seen that all indicators in the variables Employability Skills (ES), Career Adaptability (CA), and Work Readiness (KK) have VIF values below 3. According to Hair et al. (2022), a VIF value < 3 indicates that there are no serious collinearity problems in the research model. Furthermore, the explanatory power of the model is evaluated using the coefficient of determination (R^2) and effect size (f^2), with each metric employing distinct criteria. R^2 values are categorized as 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25, representing strong, moderate, and weak levels, respectively.

Table 13. Coefficient Determination

	R-square
Work Readiness	0.603

Source: Processed by author, 2026

Based on Table 13 the coefficient of determination (R^2) for the Work Readiness variable is 0.603. This indicates that the independent variables Career Adaptability and Employability Skills contribute 60.3% to the Work Readiness variable, while the remaining 39.7% is influenced by factors outside the model. With this value, the research model is categorized as having moderate predictive power; since the R^2 value falls between 0.50 and 0.75, the model demonstrates a satisfactory ability to explain the endogenous variable under study.

Effect size (f^2) assessment is conducted to determine the magnitude of the influence exerted by each exogenous variable on the endogenous variable within the research model. The criteria for f^2 involve threshold values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35, representing small, moderate, and large effect sizes, respectively.

Table 14. F Square

	Career Adaptability	Employability Skills	Work Readiness
Employability Skills			0.366
Career Adaptability			0.198
Work Readiness			

Source: Processed by author, 2026

Table 14 indicates that the influence of Employability Skills on Work Readiness falls into the strong category, as the f^2 value of 0.366 exceeds 0.35. Furthermore, the influence of Career Adaptability on Work Readiness falls into the moderate category, as the f^2 value of 0.198 is greater than 0.15 but remains below 0.35. This demonstrates that Employability Skills have a greater influence on Work Readiness compared to Career Adaptability.

Table 15. Path Coefficient

	Coefficient (O)	t-statistic	p-value
Employability Skills → Work Readiness	0.493	6.261	0.000
Career Adaptability → Work Readiness	0.363	4.209	0.000

Source: Processed by author, 2026

The results of the hypothesis testing indicate that Employability Skills have a positive and significant effect on Work Readiness among students of the 2022 cohort of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Singaperbangsa Karawang. The analysis produced a path coefficient of 0.493, with a t-statistic of 6.261 and a p-value of 0.000. Since the t-statistic exceeds the critical value of 1.96 and the p-value is below 0.05, the first hypothesis is supported. The positive path coefficient indicates that higher Employability Skills are associated with higher levels of Work Readiness. These findings demonstrate that the skills possessed by students, including problem-solving, decision-making, self-management, responsibility, discipline, and interpersonal abilities, contribute substantially to their ability to prepare for and face the demands of the workplace. Thus, Work Readiness is not solely determined by academic knowledge, but also by the extent to which students develop transferable skills that can be applied in professional environments.

The significant effect of Employability Skills on Work Readiness is consistent with previous research. Yolanda et al. (2023) found that Employability Skills have a positive and significant effect on students' Work Readiness, particularly because communication and other transferable skills support individuals in entering and adapting to the workplace. Similarly, Faisal et al. (2025) reported that students with higher Employability Skills tend to be better prepared to face workplace challenges. The finding is also supported by Novitaningrum & Wulandari (2025), who demonstrated that one of the factors influencing work readiness is employability skills. Therefore, the present study strengthens the existing empirical evidence that the development of employability-related competencies is an important component in preparing university students for the transition from higher education to employment.

This finding provides a critical contribution to the understanding of Employability Skills by demonstrating that these skills are not merely qualifications that increase an individual's potential employability, but also function as practical resources that prepare students to perform and respond to actual work demands. Thinking ability enables students to analyze situations, solve problems, and make appropriate decisions; personal quality supports responsibility, discipline, and self-management; while competence enables students to apply their knowledge and skills to work-related tasks.

Career Adaptability was also found to have a positive and significant effect on Work Readiness. The path coefficient was 0.363, with a t-statistic of 4.209 and a p-value of 0.000. Because the t-statistic is greater than 1.96 and the p-value is below 0.05, the second hypothesis is supported. The positive coefficient indicates that students with stronger Career Adaptability tend to demonstrate higher Work Readiness. Career Adaptability enables students to respond more effectively to career-related tasks, changes, and uncertainties by developing career awareness, controlling career decisions, exploring career opportunities, and maintaining confidence in their ability to achieve career goals. Consequently, students who are more adaptable in managing their career development are more likely to be psychologically and behaviorally prepared to enter a dynamic and competitive labor market.

This finding is in accordance with Amos et al. (2026), who found that Career Adaptability has a positive and significant effect on the Work Readiness of final-year students. The finding is also consistent with Lakshmi & Elmartha (2022), who reported that students with higher Career Adaptability tend to be more prepared to enter the workforce because they are better able to anticipate career changes and prepare for future career demands. Further indicated that students with high Career Adaptability demonstrate better readiness in responding to workplace demands. These findings suggest that Career Adaptability functions as an important personal resource that helps students manage the transition from university to employment (Doğanülkü & Yılmaz, 2026).

The finding indicates that students who possess stronger career concern, career control, career curiosity, and career confidence tend to demonstrate greater readiness to enter the workforce. However, the contribution of this finding to Career Adaptability theory extends beyond confirming the existence of a positive relationship. The result suggests that the four dimensions of career adaptability function as psychological resources that help students transform uncertainty surrounding the transition from university to employment into greater preparedness for work. Career concern encourages students to think about and prepare for their future careers, career control strengthens their sense of responsibility for career-related decisions, career curiosity encourages exploration of career opportunities and work environments, while career confidence supports students' belief in their ability to overcome career-related challenges. In this context, career adaptability can be interpreted as a mechanism that bridges the psychological transition between being a university student and becoming a worker.

Finally, the coefficient of determination shows that Employability Skills and Career Adaptability jointly explain 60.3% of the variance in Work Readiness, as indicated by an R^2 value of 0.603, while the adjusted R^2 is 0.599 which represents moderate explanatory power the remaining 39.7% is explained by factors outside the model. The findings suggest that both competencies and career-related adaptability contribute to students' preparedness to enter the workforce, although 39.7% of the variance in Work Readiness is explained by other factors outside the model. Overall, the results confirm that strengthening Employability Skills and Career Adaptability can play an important role in improving students' Work Readiness and supporting a more effective transition from higher education to the professional world. Therefore, the stronger influence of Employability Skills suggests that students' perceived readiness to enter the workforce is more closely associated with their ability to demonstrate relevant work-related competencies, while Career Adaptability provides

complementary resources to navigate career transitions and future professional challenges.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Employability Skills and Career Adaptability are important factors in strengthening students' Work Readiness as they transition from higher education to employment. Employability Skills provide students with the practical capabilities required to apply knowledge, solve problems, manage responsibilities, and interact effectively in professional environments, while Career Adaptability provides psychological resources that enable students to anticipate career demands, take responsibility for career decisions, explore employment opportunities, and maintain confidence when facing career transitions.

These findings imply that higher education policy should place greater emphasis on the systematic development of employability and career adaptability within the learning process rather than treating them as supplementary outcomes of university education. Universities may integrate career-oriented learning, experiential learning, internships, mentoring, career counseling, and workplace-based projects into academic programs to provide students with both practical competencies and psychological preparedness before entering the labor market. Particular attention should also be given to students' mental readiness, as psychological barriers and uncertainty regarding the transition to employment may remain even when students possess adequate academic and technical competencies.

This study has several limitations. First, it used a cross-sectional design, so the results show associations at one point in time and cannot establish causal direction or show how work readiness changes as students approach graduation. Second, the sample came from one faculty and one cohort at a single university, which limits generalization. Third, all constructs were self-reported through one questionnaire, so the results may reflect self-perception rather than actual workplace competence and may be affected by common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Fourth, the model contains only two predictors and leaves 39.7% of the variance in work readiness unexplained.

Future research could (a) use a longitudinal or cross-lagged panel design that measures employability skills and career adaptability before the final year and work readiness at graduation; (b) sample several universities and compare groups, for example by study program or university type, using PLS multigroup analysis; (c) test mediators such as career self-efficacy or internship experience, and moderators such as work experience; (d) add other-reported or behavioral measures, such as employer or supervisor ratings, to reduce common method bias, and test it formally with full collinearity VIF (Kock, 2015) and (e) report predictive relevance using PLSpredict (Shmueli et al., 2019).

Statement on the Use of Artificial Intelligence

The authors acknowledge the use of Grammarly AI as a language refinement tool during manuscript preparation, primarily for grammar correction and improving sentence clarity. The authors retain full responsibility for all ideas, analyses, interpretations, and conclusions presented in this study.

Conflicts of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest

Author contributions

Conceptualization, Author1 and Author2; methodology, Author1; data collection and screening, Author1; formal analysis, Author1; writing, original draft preparation, Author1; writing, review and editing, Author2; supervision, Author 3; visualization. All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript

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