



Navigating The Future: Exploring The Link Between Proactive Personality and Career Adaptability Among College Students in Indonesia

Brilliana Soroi Namalase, William Gunawan*

Center for Career Development and Assasement, Faculty of Psychology,
Universitas Kristen Krida Wacana, Indonesia.

*Corresponding Author. Email: william.gunawan@ukrida.ac.id

Abstract: This research explores the link between career adaptability and proactive personality among university students in Indonesia. Employing a quantitative correlational design, the study utilized a career adaptability scale and a proactive personality scale as instruments. A total of 1,590 students aged 18–25 years from six provinces across Java Island participated, selected through a cluster quota sampling technique. The hypothesis proposed that career adaptability would show a positive correlation with proactive personality, including its sub-dimensions. Data were examined using Spearman's correlation analysis, resulting in a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.651$ ($p < 0.001$). This outcome demonstrates a significant positive association between career adaptability and proactive personality, thereby confirming the hypothesis. The results highlight that students with stronger proactive personality traits are more likely to exhibit higher levels of career adaptability. These findings serve as a foundation for developing targeted interventions and programs that foster proactive personality to strengthen students' career preparedness and adaptability in response to the evolving labor market.

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Introduction

In facing career challenges, it is important for individuals to have strong career adaptability skills. Career adaptability helps individuals effectively adjust to changes in the work environment and navigate transitions smoothly (Feraco, 2022; Sisca & Gunawan, 2016). Workers continue to face complex and dynamic challenges, such as globalization, increased migration, technological developments, and international competition.

According to data from Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS, 2024), the open unemployment rate has risen to 4.82%, with fresh graduates making up the majority of the figure. This reflects the growing intensity of job competition. Meanwhile, the World Economic Forum (2020) projects that in the digital era, around 85 million jobs will disappear while 97 million new opportunities will be created. Hence, students are expected to develop strong career adaptability skills.

Proactive personality is one of the characteristics believed to influence career adaptability. Proactive personality is the tendency to take the initiative in changing the environment and anticipating challenges (Bateman & Crant, 1993). Students with proactive personalities tend to actively seek opportunities and solutions to career obstacles.

Several previous studies have stated that there is a significant relationship between proactive personality and career adaptability. According to the results of a study by Bandara & Senanayaka (2023) on final year students in Sri Lanka, there is a strong and positive



correlation between Proactive Personality and Career Adaptability ($r = 0.707$, $p < 0.001$). Another study conducted by Nurjamil & Indianti (2021) on vocational high school students in Indonesia stated that there is a positive relationship with a low correlation strength between Career Adaptability and Proactive Personality ($r=0.384$, $p<0.001$).

Another study by Ulfah & Akmal (2020) showed that proactive personality contributes significantly to career adaptability among final-year students in the Greater Jakarta area, with a regression coefficient ($\beta = 0.622$). Another study conducted by Ningrum et al. (2021) found that proactive personality contributes significantly and directly to career adaptability among alumni of SMK Muhammadiyah 3 Gresik, with a regression coefficient ($\beta = 0.435$). These two findings confirm that the higher the level of proactivity in a person's personality, the higher their level of career adaptability. Thus, proactive individuals will be more likely to take responsibility for their work and have a more focused vision for their future.

With these diverse findings, there are variations in the strength of the correlation as well as different geographical and population contexts that become gaps in this study. In particular, this study could focus on exploring the correlation between the two variables further with a larger and more representative sample from several provinces on the island of Java. In addition, previous studies have not explored the correlation between each dimension of career adaptability and proactive personality in depth. The novelty of this study lies in its broad sample coverage and in-depth analysis of the dimensions of career adaptability using empirical quantitative correlational methods. Thus, this study aims to confirm the positive and significant relationship between career adaptability and proactive personality among Indonesian students while providing practical contributions to the development of adaptive and proactive human resources to face career challenges in an ever-changing era. It is hoped that the results of this study can serve as the basis for the sustainability of career development programs and educational policies that support students' career readiness in the future.

Research Method

This study uses a quantitative approach with a correlational method. This approach will focus on measuring variables using numbers to test theories, analyzing data through statistical procedures with an empirical approach, and aims to test hypotheses (Daniar et al., 2021). This study uses Career Adaptability as the dependent variable and Proactive Personality as the independent variable.

In this study, the researchers involved 1,590 active student participants. The participants involved were students attending public and private universities in six provinces on the island of Java, representing the student population in Indonesia and aged 18–25 years. Participants were obtained using the Cluster Quota Sampling method with a sample size of 1,590 samples.

This study used an online questionnaire through the Questionpro platform and consisted of two measurement scales used to measure the variables in the study, as follows:

The Proactive Personality Scale is a measurement tool developed by Bateman & Crant (1993) and has been translated into Indonesian by Aryaningtyas (2018). This measurement scale consists of 10 items with a Likert scale consisting of six levels, ranging from strongly disagree (SD) to strongly agree (SA).

The Career Adapt-Abilities Scale Short Form is a measurement tool developed by Savickas (1997). This measurement tool has been adapted into Indonesian by Panjaitan & Sahrah (2023). This scale consists of 12 items that measure four dimensions, namely concern,



control, curiosity, and confidence, with a Likert scale consisting of six levels ranging from Strongly Disagree (SD) to Strongly Agree (SA).

In data analysis, the researchers used the techniques of normality, linearity, and correlation tests. Normality was tested using the Shapiro-Wilk method to evaluate whether the data distribution was normal or not, especially in large samples (Azwar, 2000). The linearity test was conducted to check whether the interaction between two variables had a significant linear pattern or not (Field, 2009). Data was considered normally distributed and met the linearity standard if $p > 0.05$. If the data proved to be normal and linear, the correlation was calculated using Pearson's correlation. However, if the data did not meet the assumptions of normality or linearity, Spearman's correlation was used. The data analysis process was carried out using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 and Jamovi software.

Results and Discussion

In this study, the number of participants obtained was 1590 respondents, from a minimum of 385 respondents required based on Raosoft's minimum sample size calculation (Raosoft Inc., 2004). The participants were students attending higher education institutions in 6 provinces on the island of Java, representing the student population in Indonesia. In the research, the respondent data found several general descriptions that will be presented through the following tables and data visualizations.

Table 1. Research Respondent Demographic Data

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	581	36,5%
Female	1006	63,3%
Domicile		
Banten	114	7,2%
DKI Jakarta	289	18,2%
East Java	523	32,9%
West Java	126	7,9%
Central Java	501	31,5%
DI Yogyakarta	37	2,3%

Next, the researcher conducted descriptive tests, assumption tests, and hypothesis tests. Table 2 shows the descriptive results of proactive personality, and Table 3 shows the descriptive results of career adaptability variables.

Table 2. Descriptive Analysis Results of Proactive Personality Variables

Category	Mean	SD	Range	
			Min	Max
Hypothetical	35	8	10	60
Empirical	47,7	6,37	25	60

Table 3. Descriptive Analysis Results of Career Adaptability Variables

Category	Mean	SD	Range	
			Min	Max
Hypothetical	42	10	12	72
Empirical	59,5	6,82	30	72

The researcher categorized the data using hypothetical norms. The categorization consists of 5 categories, namely Very Low, Low, Moderate, High, and Very High. (Azwar,



2017) states that there are five categories, ranging from very low to very high. Based on hypothetical categorization, the results of the proactive personality variable are shown in Table 4. Table 5 shows the results for the career adaptability variable, and Table 6 shows the results for each dimension of career adaptability.

Table 4. Results of Proactive Personality Variable Description

Category	Criteria	Frequency	Percentage
Very Low	$X \leq 23$	0	0%
Low	$23 < X \leq 31$	10	0,6%
Medium	$31 < X \leq 39$	152	9,7%
High	$39 < X \leq 47$	503	32,2%
Very High	$47 < X$	895	57,5%

Table 5. Results of Career Adaptability Variable Description

Category	Criteria	Frequency	Percentage
Very Low	$X \leq 27$	0	0%
Low	$27 < X \leq 37$	10	0,6%
Medium	$37 < X \leq 47$	152	9,7%
High	$47 < X \leq 57$	503	32,2%
Very High	$57 < X$	895	57,5%

Table 6. Results of Career Adaptability Dimension Overview

Dimension	Category					Mean	Description
	VL	L	M	H	VH		
Concern	2	21	43	374	1120	15,03	Very High
Control	0	18	49	517	976	14,70	Very High
Curiosity	3	20	56	459	1022	14,72	Very High
Confidence	1	14	40	348	1157	15,05	Very High

After conducting a hypothetical test, the proactive personality variable showed results that were dominated by the very high category. This indicates that respondents who are students in Indonesia have a very high level of proactive personality, amounting to 895 students (57.5%). The empirical test results found that the mean of proactive personality among students in Indonesia was 47.7. The career adaptability variable showed results dominated by the very high category. This indicates that respondents who are students in Indonesia have a very high level of career adaptability, amounting to 1080 students (69.3%). Empirical test results found that the mean proactive personality among students in Indonesia was 59.5. Based on the results of the description of career adaptability among students in Indonesia in each dimension, it was found that all five dimensions were in the very high category.

The researchers then conducted assumption tests. The assumption tests consisted of normality and linearity tests. The normality test was conducted using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov technique, because the sample used was more than 50. The conclusion of the normality test can be said to be normally distributed if the significance value $p > 0.05$ (Pratama and Permatasari, 2021). The results of the normality test can be seen in Table 7.

Table 7. Kolmogorov-Smirnov Normality Test Results

Variable	Coefficient Value	Description
Proactive Personality and Career Adaptability	0.080 $p < 0.001$	Not Normally Distributed



The next test conducted by the researcher was a hypothesis test, using Spearman's Correlation test, because the normality test results showed that the data were not normally distributed. A correlation test is a test conducted to determine the relationship between two or more variables (Sugiyono, 2019). Table 8 shows the interpretation categories of the correlation test, the results of the correlation test are shown in Table 9, and the results of the correlation test between proactive personality and each dimension of career adaptability are shown in Table 10.

Table 8. Correlation Test Categorization Results

Coefficient Interval	Description
0,00 – 0,199	Very Weak
0,20 – 0,399	Weak
0,40 – 0,599	Moderate
0,60 – 0,799	Strong
0,80 – 1,000	Very Strong

Table 9. Results of Career Adaptability and Proactive Personality Correlation Test

Variable	p-value	Spearman's Correlation	Description
Proactive Personality and Career Adaptability	$p < 0.001$	0.651	Positive relationship and strong

Table 10. Correlation Test Results for Proactive Personality and Career Adaptability Dimensions

Variable	p-value	Spearman's Correlation	Description
Concern Dimension and Proactive Personality	$p < 0.001$	0,503	Positive relationship and moderate
Control Dimension and Proactive Personality	$p < 0.001$	0,522	Positive relationship and moderate
Curiosity Dimension and Proactive Personality	$p < 0.001$	0,609	Positive relationship and strong
Confidence Dimension and Proactive Personality	$p < 0.001$	0,569	Positive relationship and moderate

These results indicate that the hypothesis “there is a significant positive relationship between career adaptability and proactive personality among students in Indonesia” can be accepted. In this study, the researchers also conducted a correlation test between proactive personality and each dimension of career adaptability. The results of this study found that each dimension correlated positively and significantly with the variable of proactive personality, with varying correlation strengths, thus confirming the hypothesis that “there is a significant positive relationship between the dimensions of career adaptability and proactive personality among students in Indonesia.”

Based on the results obtained, the researcher found a strong positive relationship between Proactive Personality and Career Adaptability among Students in Indonesia ($r = 0.651$, $p < 0.001$). These results indicate that the higher the level of Proactive Personality, the higher the level of Career Adaptability in the individual. Based on the correlation test results, it can be concluded that the hypothesis (H_0) is accepted. This study found a positive relationship between Proactive Personality and each dimension of Career Adaptability, with a moderate to strong correlation strength.

The Proactive Personality variable in this study showed that students have a very high level of proactivity. Proactive personality is defined as an individual's tendency to show



initiative, creativity, responsibility, and persistence in remaining active or productive. These results indicate that students in Indonesia have a tendency to be proactive, creative, and persistent in being productive. This is supported by the PPS questions, namely, "I always look for new ways to improve my life" and "I always look for better ways of doing things." Having an initiative and creative attitude is one of the supporting factors in maintaining a proactive attitude.

In the career adaptability variable, the results show that career adaptability among students in Indonesia is at a very high level, with an average of 59.5. This result indicates that students in Indonesia tend to be able to prepare themselves and adapt to changes and developments in the work environment. The researchers also analyzed the level of career adaptability in each dimension. In the dimensions of concern, control, curiosity, and confidence, it was found that all four dimensions were in the very high category.

The concern dimension was at a very high level, with a mean of 15.03. This indicates that individuals pay attention to thoughts and considerations related to their future careers, including building optimism and hope for the future. Individuals with a high level of concern tend to be optimistic, hopeful, and have a planning mindset. This is supported by the items "I care about the educational and vocational choices I have to make" and "I am preparing for my future."

The control dimension is at a very high level with a mean of 14.70. This dimension indicates that individuals are able to take responsibility for their future and regulate themselves in making career decisions. Individuals with a high level of control tend to be able to control their environment to achieve their career choices, face life's challenges, and regulate themselves in dealing with problems. This is supported by the CAAS questions, namely, "I rely on myself" and "I am able to complete my work well."

The curiosity dimension is at a very high level with a mean of 14.72. This dimension indicates that the individual is able to have an interest in exploring themselves, seeking information, and developing themselves according to their career desires. Individuals with a high level of curiosity tend to always reflect productive and active attitudes in career exploration, thus having a more realistic picture of the future. This is supported by the CAAS questions, namely, "I am able to analyze choices carefully before making a decision" and "I am able to observe several different ways of doing something."

The confidence dimension is at a very high level with a mean of 15.05. This dimension indicates that the individual is able to have the confidence to solve problems, act persistently, and have self-esteem in achieving their career goals. Individuals with high confidence levels tend to be able to solve problems and have self-efficacy, enabling them to continue striving to achieve their future plans. This is supported by the CAAS questions, namely, "I am able to complete my work well" and "I am willing to learn new skills."

In this study, researchers also conducted a correlation test between proactive personality and each dimension of career adaptability. The results of this study found that each dimension correlated positively and significantly with the proactive personality variable. The control dimension found a correlation of ($r=0.522$, $p<0.001$), which means that the higher the proactive personality, the higher the level of control of students, reflecting a tendency to exercise self-control in facing career challenges. The concern dimension ($r=0.503$, $p<0.001$) indicates that a high level of proactive personality supports increased optimism and hope for the future. Furthermore, the curiosity dimension ($r=0.609$, $p<0.001$) shows that employees with high levels of proactive personality tend to always reflect productive attitudes and have a more realistic picture of the future. Finally, the confidence



dimension ($r=0.569$, $p<0.001$) shows that students with high levels of proactive personality will be more confident and strive to achieve their future plans.

The results of this study are in line with previous studies, which state that there is a positive relationship between proactive personality and career adaptability, with a strong correlation. The advantage of this study is that it provides a more in-depth discussion of the correlation between proactive personality and each dimension in the career adaptability variable. Another advantage is that there is a difference in context between this study and previous studies. This study takes a different context, namely covering students in Indonesia represented by the student population in 6 provinces on the island of Java, while previous studies covered vocational high school students in Jakarta and students in Sri Lanka.

Conclusion

The conclusions drawn from the results of this study are:

1. Proactive personality and career adaptability have a significant positive relationship. If proactive personality among students in Indonesia is high, then career adaptability is also high.
2. Proactive personality and career adaptability have a strong correlation ($r=0.651$, $p<.001$).
3. There is a significant positive correlation between proactive personality and each dimension of the career adaptability variable, with varying degrees of correlation strength.

Recommendation

Based on the results of the study, there are several recommendations that can be made. For students, it is hoped that they will be able to develop a proactive attitude in planning and navigating their future careers. This can be achieved through active participation in organizational activities, soft skills training, and searching for information related to job opportunities and self-development. The more proactive students are in developing themselves, the greater their ability to adapt to the dynamic changes in the world of work. As for recommendations for universities, they are expected to provide space and a forum for soft skills training, and to involve students in real projects to enhance their proactive personality in supporting their career adaptation skills. Universities are also expected to provide counseling facilities to help students if they have confusion or questions about their careers.

This study has several limitations. The first limitation is that the total number of respondents in this study met the minimum sample size of 385 students. However, the demographic distribution of participants was not evenly spread and was dominated by students in East Java (32.9%) and Central Java (31.5%). In the Jakarta, Banten, and West Java regions, the number of participants ranged from 18.2% to 7.9%. Therefore, the domicile of the participants cannot represent the whole and cannot be generalized. Second, this study only focuses on the relationship between proactive personality and overall career adaptability at a specific point in time. Further research could be conducted using other variables related to career readiness and employability, such as Perceived Future Employability (Gunawan et al., 2019), conducting longitudinal studies, and using more appropriate sampling techniques.

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