
The Role of Grit in Career Adaptability among Students Participating in the Kampus Mengajar Program

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Abstract

The university students were in the career exploration stage. Additionally, career adaptability is an important factor that helps students cope with transitions and uncertainties in the workplace. Interestingly, one factor that may enhance students' career adaptability is grit. This study examined the effect of grit on career adaptability among students participating in a Kampus Mengajar Program. The study employed a quantitative approach with a correlational design, analyzed using simple regression analysis. The research sample consisted of students participating in the Kampus Mengajar Program who were selected using a convenience sampling technique. The findings showed that grit had a positive and significant effect on career adaptability. Students with higher grit levels tended to demonstrate better career adaptability. Descriptively, consistency of interest emerged as the most prominent aspect of grit, whereas curiosity was the strongest aspect of career adaptability. These findings indicate that grit, as a personal resource, can support the development of career adaptability, particularly among students involved in experiential learning programs such as internships.

Keywords: *career adaptability, grit, kampus mengajar*

Introduction

The development of today's labor market is characterized by increasing competency demands, job competition, and uncertainty. The growing number of university graduates is not always accompanied by adequate employment opportunities, causing graduates to face challenges in transitioning from education to the workforce. Data from the Badan Pusat Statistik (2026) indicate that the open unemployment rate among university graduates still requires serious attention, reaching 5.39% in 2025. According to the World Economic Forum (2025), approximately 39% of workers' core skills are expected to change by 2030. These conditions indicate that graduates' success is determined not only by academic achievement but also by their ability to adapt to job demands and changes in the work environment.

In facing the complexities of the labor market, university students need to prepare themselves not only with academic knowledge but also with practical skills and adaptability (Omar et al., 2023). One way to prepare for the workforce is through participation in relevant programs such as Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM). This program, particularly the Kampus Mengajar Program, serves as a bridge between academia and the labor market and is designed to develop students' hard and soft skills.

The Kampus Mengajar Program prepares students to engage directly in professional settings, particularly education, by serving as partners to teachers in

improving literacy and numeracy and developing creative learning strategies (Kemendikbudristek, 2022). Although participants receive intensive preparation, Kampus Mengajar participants encounter numerous challenges in the field, as reflected in various complaints on social media, such as limited school facilities, differences in student characteristics, and adjustment to workplace culture in schools. Nevertheless, these challenges ultimately train students to face the realities of the labor market in the future.

According to Super (Santröck, 1995), individuals aged 18–25 undergo the exploration stage in search of careers that align with their own competencies. The Kampus Mengajar Program provides opportunities for students to experience these stages of career exploration more intensively. Career adaptability refers to individuals' readiness to cope with predictable tasks when preparing for and participating in work roles, as well as their ability to adapt to unexpected tasks resulting from changes in work and working conditions (Savickas, 1997). In career construction theory, adaptation reflects personality flexibility or willingness to change, as well as readiness to cope with career imbalances or transitions through appropriate responses that demonstrate adaptability (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012).

Savickas and Porfeli (2012) explained that career adaptability comprises four dimensions: concern, control, curiosity, and confidence. Concern refers to the extent to which individuals are oriented toward and involved in future preparation. Control enables individuals to take responsibility for shaping themselves and their environment to face the future through self-discipline, effort, and perseverance. Curiosity refers to the extent to which individuals explore situations and seek information about their career opportunities. Confidence refers to the extent to which individuals believe in their ability to solve problems and face challenges in their careers.

Various studies have shown that career adaptability is influenced by several factors, including social support, work experience, life satisfaction, educational institutional support, hope, optimism, hardiness, resilience, and grit (Giffari & Suhariadi, 2012; Gregor et al., 2021; Li et al., 2021; Monika, 2021). One factor influencing career adaptability is grit, which plays a crucial role in career adaptability (Lestari et al., 2022). Grit is a flexible non-cognitive personality trait that can be developed, unlike intelligence and socioeconomic status, which function as predictors of academic achievement and readiness to face various workplace challenges (Alan et al., 2019). Grit contributes to the achievement of larger and more long-term goals (Astrella et al., 2023). Soland et al. (2013) explained that grit is part of the interpersonal competencies essential for students to develop in order to face labor market competition in the twenty-first century.

According to Duckworth et al. (2007), grit consists of two dimensions: consistency of interest and perseverance. Consistency of interest refers to individuals' ability to maintain their interests over long periods despite facing challenges and obstacles. Individuals with high consistency of interest are not easily distracted, remain committed to their goals, and do not change their objectives despite experiencing failures or setbacks. Meanwhile, perseverance of effort refers to an individual's ability to continue exerting effort when facing challenges and to maintain persistence in achieving long-term goals.

Previous studies have examined the relationship between grit and career adaptability based on career construction theory, primarily using samples of university students from Western countries (Datu et al., 2019; Gregor et al., 2021). Grit has also been identified as a factor that supports the achievement of important career development milestones and positively predicts career adaptability (Gregor et al., 2021; Taman & Yang, 2020, cited in Li et al., 2021). Furthermore, grit is considered a trait that enables individuals to cope effectively with career challenges, vocational developmental tasks, career transitions, and occupational trauma; therefore, grit may be positioned as an indicator of adaptability within the Career Construction Model of Adaptation (CCMA) (Çarkıt, 2024).

Although previous studies have demonstrated that grit influences career adaptability, research on these two variables remains limited, particularly in Indonesia. To address this gap, the present study focuses on students participating in the Kampus Mengajar Program, who possess different experiential characteristics from those of general university students. Kampus Mengajar participants not only engage in academic processes on campus but are also directly involved in teaching and learning activities in partner schools, such as supporting literacy, numeracy, technological adaptation, and school administration. The Kampus Mengajar Program requires students to adapt to diverse field conditions, including limited facilities, differences in school culture, student characteristics, collaborative dynamics with teachers, and the possibility of placement in underdeveloped, frontier, and outermost regions (3T areas). These conditions expose Kampus Mengajar participants to more complex transitional experiences than those who receive only classroom-based learning. Therefore, grit is a relevant variable because it reflects persistence, consistency of interest, and individuals' ability to persevere while performing their roles and responsibilities.

Grit is believed to help students sustain their efforts, adjust to school environments, and develop readiness to face career challenges. This study aimed to examine the role of grit in the career adaptability of students participating in a Kampus Mengajar Program. Based on this rationale, this study hypothesized that grit has a positive effect on career adaptability, such that students with higher levels of grit tend to demonstrate higher career adaptability.

Method

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative approach with a correlational design. This design was used to examine the effect of grit on career adaptability among students participating in the Kampus Mengajar Program. In this study, grit served as the independent variable, and career adaptability served as the dependent variable.

Participants

The participants in this study were students from Kampus Mengajar Program batches 7 and 8. Batch 7 consisted of more than 32,000 students, whereas batch 8 consisted of 11,795 students. Therefore, the population in this study included students participating in Kampus Mengajar Program batches 7 and 8.

The research sample was determined using a convenience sampling technique, which refers to a sampling method based on the accessibility of respondents who met

the research criteria. The respondent criteria in this study included students who had participated or were currently participating in Kampus Mengajar Program batches 7 and 8 and were willing to complete the research instruments. The minimum sample size was calculated using Cochran's formula, resulting in a minimum requirement of 381 respondents. The total number of respondents involved in this study was 457 students who participated in the Kampus Mengajar Program.

Measures

The instruments used in this study consisted of two scales that had been adapted into the Indonesian language and tested for validity and reliability. The Career Adaptabilities Scale Short Form (CAAS-SF), adapted by Prihastuty et al. (2024), was used to measure career adaptability and consisted of 12 items. The GRIT-S scale, adapted by Priyohadi et al. (2019), was used to measure grit and consisted of eight items. Respondents answered using a five-point Likert scale with the response options Strongly Appropriate (SS), Appropriate (S), Neutral (N), Inappropriate (TS), and Strongly Inappropriate (STS) for the career adaptability scale and Strongly Agree (SS), Agree (S), Neutral (R), Disagree (TS), and Strongly Disagree (STS) for the GRIT-S scale.

Research Procedure

Data collection was conducted online using digital questionnaires. The questionnaire link was distributed to students participating in Kampus Mengajar Program batches 7 and 8 through online communication platforms, such as coordination groups, Kampus Mengajar participant networks, and social media relevant to the research target. Before completing the questionnaire, the respondents received information regarding the research objectives, participation criteria, data confidentiality, and their right to participate voluntarily.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 26. The analysis began with descriptive statistics to describe the respondents' characteristics, as well as the levels of grit and career adaptability among students participating in the Kampus Mengajar Program. Furthermore, classical assumption tests, including tests for normality, linearity, and heteroscedasticity were conducted, to ensure that the data met the requirements for regression analysis.

Results

The results showed that this study involved 457 students participating in the Kampus Mengajar Program: 54% from Batch 7 and 46% from Batch 8. Most respondents were female (80%) and came from public universities (60%). A total of 76% of the respondents were education majors, whereas 24% were non-education majors. Placement locations were almost equally distributed between rural (48%) and urban (52%) areas. Most participants were assigned to elementary schools (60%), followed by junior high schools (33%), and vocational high schools (7%). More detailed information regarding respondent characteristics is presented in the following table:

Table 1.
Characteristics of Respondents

	Kategorisasi	Jumlah	Persentase	Total
Angkatan	Angkatan 7	245	54%	457
	Angkatan 8	212	46%	
Jenis Kelamin	Laki laki	91	20%	457
	Perempuan	366	80%	
Asal Universitas	Negeri	272	60%	457
	Swasta	185	40%	
Jurusan	Pendidikan	347	76%	457
	Non pendidikan	110	24%	
Sekolah penempatan	Pedesaan	219	48%	457
	perkotaan	238	52%	
Jenjang sekolah penempatan	SD	273	60%	457
	SMP	153	33%	
	SMK	31	7%	

Descriptive analysis showed that students participating in the Kampus Mengajar Program demonstrated relatively high levels of career adaptability and grit. Career adaptability had a mean score of 50,78 (SD = 6,234), which was higher than the theoretical mean score. Among the four dimensions, curiosity had the highest score (13,05; SD = 1,850). Although all dimensions generally showed relatively high scores, the control group had the lowest score (12,34; SD = 1,906). In addition, grit had a mean score of 29,01 (SD = 4,370), indicating strong perseverance in achieving long-term objectives. The perseverance of effort dimension had a mean score of 14,23, reflecting students' persistence in facing challenges, whereas the consistency of interest dimension had a mean score of 14,78.

Table 2.
Descriptive Statistics Table

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Career Adaptability	457	16	60	50,78	6,234
concern	457	3	15	12,79	1,998
control	457	5	15	12,34	1,906
curiosity	457	3	15	13,05	1,850
confidence	457	3	15	12,60	1,842
GRIT	457	15	40	29,01	4,370
Perseverance of effort	457	7	20	14,23	2,370
Consistency of interest	457	7	20	14,78	2,546
Valid N (listwise)	457				

Assumption Tests

The results of the analysis showed that the Monte Carlo significance value was 0,183, which was greater than 0,05. Therefore, it can be concluded that the data were normally distributed.

Table 3.*Results of the Normality Test*

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		
		Unstandardized Residual
N		457
Normal	Mean	,0000000
Parameters ^{a,b}	Std. Deviation	5,57360625
Most Extreme	Absolute	,051
Differences	Positive	,031
	Negative	-,051
Test Statistic		,051
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		,007 ^c
Monte Carlo Sig. (2-tailed)	Sig.	,183 ^d
	99% Confidence Interval	Lower Bound Upper Bound
		,173 ,193

a. Test distribution is Normal.

b. Calculated from data.

c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.

d. Based on 10000 sampled tables with a starting seed of 2000000.

Table 4.*Results of the Linearity Test*

ANOVA Table							
			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Career	Between	(Combined)	4821,488	24	200,895	6,728	,000
Adaptability	Groups	Linearity	3554,999	1	3554,999	119,059	,000
* Grit		Deviation from Linearity	1266,489	23	55,065	1,844	,011
	Within Groups		12899,190	432	29,859		
	Total		17720,678	456			

The significance value for linearity was 0,000, which was smaller than 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that the relationship between the two variables meets the assumption of a linear relationship.

Hypothesis Testing

Table 5.*Results of the Hypothesis Test*

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3554,999	1	3554,999	114,186	,000 ^b
	Residual	14165,679	455	31,133		
	Total	17720,678	456			

a. Dependent Variable: Career Adaptability

b. Predictors: (Constant), Grit

Based on the above table, the hypothesis test examining the effect of grit on career adaptability showed an F-value of 114,186 with a significance probability value of 0,000 ($p < 0,05$). Therefore, H_0 was rejected, and H_a was accepted. This finding that the hypothesis that grit has a positive and significant effect on career adaptability can be accepted.

Furthermore, based on the analysis, the results of the regression equations were obtained.

Table 6.

Results of the Simple Linear Regression Equation

		Coefficients ^a			t	Sig.
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	32,244	1,754		18,382	,000
	GRIT	,639	,060	,448	10,686	,000

a. Dependent Variable: Career Adaptability

Based on the table, the estimated simple regression equation is as follows:

$$Y = a + bX + e$$

$$Y = 32,244 (\alpha) + 0,639 (X) + e$$

The regression equation indicated that if grit (X) equals zero, career adaptability (Y) is predicted to be 32,244. Furthermore, every unit increase in grit increased career adaptability by 0,639. Based on the results of the t-test, the significance value was 0,000 (less than 0,05), and the t-value was 10.686 (greater than the t-table value of 1,686). Therefore, the hypothesis that "Grit has a positive and significant effect on career adaptability" was accepted.

In addition, data analysis produced a coefficient of determination (R^2). The results of the coefficient of determination (R^2) in this study are as follows:

Table 7.

Results of the Coefficient of Determination Test

Model Summary ^b				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,448 ^a	,201	,199	5,580

a. Predictors: (Constant), Grit

b. Dependent Variable: Career Adaptability

Based on the table, the coefficient of determination (R^2) was 0,201, indicating that grit contributed 20,1% to career adaptability, while the remaining 79,9% was influenced by other factors that was not included in the variables examined in this study.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that the level of grit among students participating in the Kampus Mengajar Program was categorised as high, with a percentage of 53%. In addition, both dimensions of grit demonstrated high percentages: perseverance of effort at 61% and consistency of interest at 68%. These findings reinforce the results of studies

conducted by Salima et al. (2024), Vivekananda (2018), Winarto et al. (2019), as well as Mawati and Primanita (2019), which showed that grit among university students generally falls within the high category, both in the dimensions of perseverance of effort and consistency of interest.

A high level of grit indicates that students possess persistence, resilience, and consistency in maintaining their goals despite facing various challenges during the program. Duckworth et al. (2007) explained that gritty individuals tend to have better self-control, specific goals, and consistent interests. This is consistent with Duckworth (2016), who emphasized that grit can predict individual achievement through the ability to persist, work hard, and consistently strive for long-term goals. Thus, grit among students participating in the Kampus Mengajar Program can be understood as a psychological resource that helps them persist in facing academic obstacles and field experiences.

The high level of grit among students participating in the Kampus Mengajar Program may also be understood through the characteristics of the program, which require students to engage directly with real situations in schools. Students are not only expected to complete program tasks but also to adapt to limited facilities, diverse student characteristics, and the dynamics of working with teachers and school staff members. Under such conditions, the perseverance of effort dimension reflects students' ability to continue striving and learning from mistakes despite unsatisfactory outcomes (Muhibbin & Wulandari, 2021). Meanwhile, the more prominent consistency of the interest dimension indicates that students tend to maintain their interests and commitments despite difficulties. This finding is consistent with Salima et al. (2024), who explained that individuals with high consistency of interest remain committed to their goals despite failures and obstacles. These findings may also be related to the characteristics of the respondents, the majority of whom came from educational majors, and were therefore likely to possess a strong interest in education and the teaching profession (Franco et al., 2024). Therefore, the Kampus Mengajar Program may serve as a space for interest actualization and a means of strengthening students' persistence in fields relevant to their career orientations.

In addition to grit, the results also showed that the career adaptability of students participating in the Kampus Mengajar Program was high. These findings are consistent with those of studies conducted by Pujiastuti and Hamdan (2024) and Afifah and Salim (2020), who demonstrated that university students may develop strong career adaptability when prepared to face career developmental tasks and changes in the work environment. High career adaptability indicates that students are prepared to address their work roles, adjust to changes, and respond to unexpected situations. Yasmin and Ash-Shiddiqi (2023) explained that the higher individuals' career adaptability, the lower the barriers they perceive when facing career challenges. In the context of the Kampus Mengajar Program, this means that students with high career adaptability are more capable of managing obstacles during the program, whether adapting to the school environment, communicating with school staff, or managing assigned tasks.

When examined from the dimensions of career adaptability, all dimensions demonstrated high tendencies, namely, concern, control, curiosity, and confidence. These findings are consistent with those of Afifah and Salim (2020) and Miskiyah et al.

(2024), who showed that the dimensions of career adaptability among university students can develop positively. This concern dimension indicates that students are aware of their future careers and have begun to consider the choices and consequences of their career decisions. This aligns with Savickas and Porfeli's (2012) explanation that concern helps individuals look ahead and prepare for future possibilities. The control dimension reflects students' ability to take responsibility for their career choices through self-discipline, effort, and persistence. The curiosity dimension reflects students' tendency to explore opportunities and seek information about available career alternatives. The confidence dimension demonstrates students' beliefs in their ability to solve problems, make decisions, and develop new skills to prepare for their future careers.

The curiosity dimension emerged as the most prominent aspect of career adaptability among students participating in the Kampus Mengajar Program. This finding suggests that participation in the Kampus Mengajar Program may encourage students to explore career opportunities, understand workplace environments, and seek information relevant to their future career choices. Coetzee et al. (2015) explained that high curiosity helps individuals navigate unpredictable changes in working conditions. In the context of this study, a high level of curiosity may be influenced by the new experiences students gain during the program, including opportunities to directly understand educational environments, interact with students, and face real problems in schools. For students from non-educational majors, these experiences may broaden career exploration beyond their primary field of study, whereas for students from educational majors, the program may strengthen their understanding of professions related to education.

Although all dimensions of career adaptability were categorized as high, the control dimension showed the lowest score. Career control is related to disciplined behavior and individuals' ability to take responsibility for their career choices (Nirwani, 2022). The relatively low scores for this dimension may indicate that some students were still in the process of considering their career choices more carefully. Participants in the Kampus Mengajar Program, especially students from non-educational majors, may experience career dilemmas because their teaching experiences do not always align with their primary educational background.

However, students from educational majors do not always intend to pursue careers after graduation (Muhson et al., 2012). The mismatch between educational background and occupational field may become a challenge in the adaptation process and in achieving expected performance outcomes (Afero et al., 2023). Therefore, the position of control as the lowest dimension may be understood as an indication that students are still at the stage of career exploration and decision stabilization.

The results of this study also demonstrated that grit had a positive and significant effect on career adaptability among students participating in the Kampus Mengajar Program. These findings reinforce those of Sabila and Dewi (2018), Ginting (2023), and Lestari et al. (2022), who found a significant positive relationships between grit and career adaptability. This means that the higher the level of grit students possess, the higher their ability to adapt to career demands and changes.

Çarkıt (2024) explained that students with high levels of grit possess greater adaptive resources for managing career challenges and coping with change. In the context of the Kampus Mengajar Program, grit helps students remain persistent in carrying out their tasks, collaborating with schools, and adjusting teaching methods according to students' needs. Thus, grit functions not only as a personal characteristic but also as a factor that strengthens students' readiness to face the dynamics of their careers.

The relationship between grit and career adaptability may be explained through the connection between consistency of interest and career curiosity dimensions, both of which emerged prominently in this study's results. Interest consistency reflects individuals' ability to maintain their interests and goals over long periods (Duckworth et al., 2007), whereas career curiosity reflects their tendency to explore various career possibilities and seek relevant information (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Among students participating in the Kampus Mengajar Program, consistency of interest in education or professional skill development may encourage curiosity about various career opportunities. In other words, students who possess stable interests and persistence in completing a program tend to be more motivated to explore career options, understand workplace challenges, and prepare themselves adaptively. Therefore, the findings of this study emphasize that grit is an important factor supporting the development of students' career adaptability, particularly within practice-based learning experiences such as the Kampus Mengajar Program.

Conclusion

This study demonstrated that grit plays an important role in supporting the career adaptability of students participating in the Kampus Mengajar Program. Students who possess persistence, consistency of interest, and commitment to long-term goals tend to be more capable of adjusting to the various demands, changes, and challenges that emerge during career exploration. Participation in the Kampus Mengajar Program provides opportunities for students to develop career readiness through direct involvement in school environments, collaboration with various stakeholders, and adaptation to diverse conditions in the field.

The findings of this study confirm that grit can serve as an important personal factor that helps students develop career adaptability. The stronger the grit possessed by students, the greater their tendency to plan for their future careers, make responsible decisions, explore opportunities, and build confidence in facing future career challenges. Therefore, strengthening grit should become an important focus in student self-development, particularly for participants in the Kampus Mengajar Program.

Future studies should examine other factors that may strengthen career adaptability, such as social support, self-regulation, field experience, and educational environmental factors. In addition, longitudinal research should be conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the development of grit and career adaptability among students over time. For organizers of the Kampus Mengajar Program, mentoring, preparatory training, and reflection on field experiences should continue to be strengthened so that students can obtain optimal benefits for their career readiness.

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