

Future Orientation and Work Readiness in the Context of Curricular Internship: An Industrial-Organizational Psychology Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the relationship between future orientation and work readiness among psychology students who have participated in a curricular internship program using an industrial and organizational psychology perspective. This study employs a quantitative approach with a cross-sectional correlational design, involving 222 respondents selected using purposive sampling. Data collection was conducted using the Work Readiness Scale (WRS) and a future orientation scale with good reliability. Data analysis employed Spearman's correlation. The results indicate a significant positive relationship between future orientation and work readiness ($r = 0.680$; $p < 0.001$), indicating a strong relationship. These findings underscore the importance of psychological factors in supporting students' transition from the academic world to the workplace. This study contributes to the development of interdisciplinary psychology by integrating educational experiences and competencies in industrial and organizational psychology, and emphasizes the role of future orientation in enhancing.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The transition from college to the workforce remains a critical challenge in Indonesia, as evidenced by the high unemployment rate among college graduates. Although the national open unemployment rate saw a slight decline to 2.94% in 2024, the unemployment rate for college graduates remains very high, at 5.25% [1]. This disparity indicates that a bachelor's degree does not

automatically equate to employability, defined as graduates' possession of the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for professional success [2].

Work readiness is not formed instantly but through a continuous process of learning, training, and practical experience [3]. One strategy implemented by universities to enhance students' work readiness is through internship programs, which provide students with opportunities to gain real-world work experience. Through internships, students are expected to develop professional skills, understand workplace dynamics, and improve their readiness to enter the workforce [4]. However, previous research indicates that internship experience alone is insufficient to guarantee optimal work readiness, as students still exhibit varying levels of readiness despite having similar experiences [5].

This study is grounded in the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) developed by [6], which serves as a specialized extension of Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory [7]. Utilizing SCCT as a theoretical framework, this research argues that work readiness is not merely the mechanical result of vocational training or technical exposure, but is profoundly shaped by internal cognitive-motivational processes, specifically future orientation. Within the SCCT framework, learning experiences such as curricular internships do not automatically translate into work readiness; rather, they are mediated by personal cognitive factors. Future orientation, defined as the capacity to plan, anticipate, and evaluate future goals [8], functions as a psychological filter through which students interpret and internalize their internship experiences. According to [9], individuals with a robust future orientation exhibit superior self-regulatory capabilities, allowing them to better align their current behaviors (such as proactive engagement during internships) with long-term career objectives. Consequently, future orientation acts as a critical psychological bridge that transforms practical exposure into optimal professional readiness. From an integrative psychological perspective, this process can also be understood as reflecting an individual's awareness of purpose and responsibility in life, as highlighted in Islamic psychological frameworks [10]. From an Islamic psychological perspective, future orientation may be conceptually situated within the interplay of *ikhtiar* (active striving) and *tawakkul* (trust in God), which together reflect a dynamic balance between goal-directed effort and reliance

on divine will. Empirical studies have demonstrated that *tawakkul* functions as a significant psychological resource associated with coping, stress regulation, and self-regulation processes, while classical and contemporary Islamic perspectives emphasize the integration of human agency (*ikhtiar*) and spiritual reliance in guiding purposeful behavior [11].

Although previous studies [12], [13] have identified a positive correlation between future orientation and work readiness, several gaps remain. First, the existing literature is largely descriptive and lacks a focus on psychology students, who face a unique professional landscape where mastery of soft skills is crucial yet often abstract. Second, previous research has often overlooked students who have completed structured curricular internships, where the interaction between formal institutional support and individual psychological planning could be examined in greater depth.

Therefore, it is hypothesized that future orientation is significantly associated with work readiness among psychology students with internship experience. Based on these considerations, this study aims to examine this association among psychology students who have participated in a curricular internship program at Universitas Negeri Padang.

2. METHOD

This study employs a quantitative approach with a cross-sectional correlational design aimed at testing the relationship between future orientation and work readiness at a single point in time. The quantitative approach was chosen because this study focuses on objectively testing relationships between variables through statistical analysis, thereby enabling the acquisition of empirical evidence regarding the interrelationships among the constructs under investigation. According to [14], quantitative research is a research method used to study a specific population or sample, and its data analysis is statistical in nature with the aim of testing established hypotheses. The population in this study consists of students in the Psychology Program at Padang State University from the 2021/2022 cohort who have completed an internship program. The sampling technique employed was purposive sampling, with the criteria being active students who have participated in and completed an internship program. This

technique was chosen because not all members of the population have experience relevant to the work readiness variable. Nevertheless, the use of purposive sampling has the potential to introduce selection bias; therefore, the research results are interpreted cautiously and are limited to the characteristics of the research sample. The sample size in this study consisted of 222 respondents who met the research criteria and were considered sufficient for correlational analysis in the context of this study.

The instrument used to measure work readiness is the Work Readiness Scale (WRS), developed by Caballero [2] and modified by [15], which consists of 27 items covering aspects of personal characteristics, organizational intelligence, work competencies, and social intelligence. Meanwhile, future orientation is measured using a future orientation scale based on J. E. Nurmi's theory [16], which covers aspects of motivation, planning, and evaluation, and was developed by [17]. The future orientation scale consists of 24 items. Both instruments use a four-point Likert scale without a neutral option, which aims to reduce central tendency bias and encourage respondents to provide more definitive answers.

The validity of the instrument in this study is based on the validation results reported in previous research, given that the instrument used is a standardized measurement tool that has undergone a process of development and psychometric testing. In this study, construct validity testing was conducted again using item-total correlations via SPSS, where an item was considered valid if it had a correlation coefficient greater than 0.30 and a significance level of less than 0.05. The reliability of the instrument was tested using Cronbach's Alpha. Based on previous research, the Work Readiness Scale (WRS) has a reliability coefficient of 0.938, and the future orientation scale has a coefficient of 0.760. In this study, the reliability test results showed that the Work Readiness Scale had a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.874 and the Future Orientation Scale had a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.880, which falls into the high category; thus, the instruments were considered reliable and suitable for use in this study.

The research procedures were conducted in accordance with the principles of research ethics. This study has obtained approval from the relevant academic program. Prior to data collection, all participants were provided with an informed consent form containing an explanation of the study's objectives, the

questionnaire completion procedure, assurances of data confidentiality, and the participants' right to refuse or withdraw from the study at any time without consequences. Participation in this study was voluntary, and all data collected were kept confidential and used solely for research purposes. Data collection was conducted by distributing questionnaires to respondents who met the study criteria.

Data analysis was performed using the Spearman Correlation test with the assistance of SPSS version 31.0, as the data did not meet the assumption of normality. This test was used to determine the relationship between future orientation and work readiness. A significance level of less than 0.05 indicates a significant relationship between the two variables.

During the implementation stage, the researcher prepares research instruments, namely the Work Readiness Scale (WRS) and the future orientation scale. Next, the researcher screens potential respondents based on established criteria. Respondents who meet the criteria are then provided with an explanation of the study's objectives and assurances regarding data confidentiality before being asked to consent to participate. After obtaining consent, the researcher distributed the questionnaire to the respondents to be completed. The final stage is data processing. The collected data was first checked to ensure its completeness and compliance with the research criteria. Subsequently, the data were processed and analyzed using SPSS version 31.0 to address the research questions and test the formulated hypotheses.

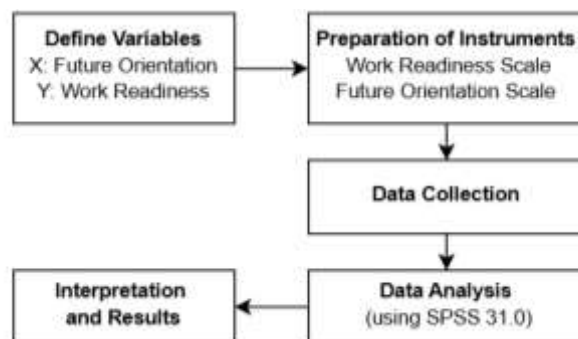


Figure 1. Research Procedure

3. RESULTS

The population for this study consisted of all Psychology students at Universitas Negeri Padang who had participated in the

Department of Psychology's internship program during the 2021/2022 academic year, totaling 497 students. The sample for this study comprised 222 students.

Table 1. General Profile of Respondents

Data	Criteria	Total	Percentage
Academic	2021	27	12%
Year	2022	195	88%
Total		222	100%

Based on the table above, this study involved 222 psychology students from Universitas Negeri Padang; 27 (12%) were from the 2021 academic year, and 195 (88%) were from the 2022 academic year. Thus, there were more respondents from the 2022 academic year than from the 2021 academic year.

3.1. Research Data Analysis

3.1.1. Normality test

A normality test was conducted as an initial procedure to identify the data distribution. In this study, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used for the normality test. Based on the analysis results, the Asymp. Sig. values for the work readiness and future orientation variables were < 0.001 . These significance values are less than 0.05, so it can be concluded that the data for both variables are not normally distributed. However, given the relatively large sample size, the normality test is sensitive to small deviations; therefore, subsequent analysis employs non-parametric techniques.

3.1.2. Linearity test

Table 2. Linearity test

Variable	F	Linearity	Deviation from Linearity
Future Orientation and Work Readiness	163.270	<0.001	0.202

The results of the linearity test indicate that the relationship between future orientation and work readiness is linear ($F = 163.270$; $p < 0.001$), meaning the p-value is less than 0.05. Meanwhile, the significance value for Deviation from Linearity is 0.202, which is greater than 0.05. These results indicate that the

relationship between the future orientation variable and work readiness is linear. Overall, these results suggest that an increase in future orientation tends to be followed by an increase in work readiness in a consistent pattern that does not deviate from a linear form, thereby fulfilling the assumption of linearity in the analysis of the relationship between variables.

3.1.3. Spearman Correlations

Table 3. Spearman Correlation Test

Variable	N	Asymp. Sig.	r	r ²
Future Orientation and Work Readiness	222	<0.001	0.680	0.462

Based on the results of the normality test, the research data are not normally distributed and therefore do not meet the assumptions for parametric analysis. Consequently, the analysis of the relationship between variables was conducted using a non-parametric test, specifically Spearman’s correlation. The analysis results indicate a significant positive relationship between future orientation and work readiness among psychology students who have completed an internship program ($r = 0.680$; $p < 0.001$). This correlation coefficient value indicates a strong relationship between the two variables. Additionally, the coefficient of determination (r^2) of 0.462 indicates that future orientation accounts for 46.2% of the variation in work readiness. This finding suggests that the higher an individual’s future orientation, the higher their level of work readiness. Thus, the relationship identified in this study is correlational.

3.1.4. Summary of Research Findings

Table 4. Summary of Research Findings

Variable	Result	Category	Interpretation
Future Orientation	High	High	Students have clear future planning
Work Readiness	High	High	Students are ready for work
Correlation (r)	0.680	Strong	Significant positive relationship

Coefficient (r^2)	0.462	Moderate	46.2% contribution
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Based on Table 4, both variables are classified as high. Correlation analysis indicates a strong and significant positive relationship between future orientation and work readiness. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination indicates that future orientation makes a significant contribution to work readiness, although other factors also play a role.

3.2. Visualization of Findings



Figure 2. Relationship Model of Future Orientation and Work Readiness

Figure 2 illustrates a conceptual model of the relationship between future orientation and work readiness. Future orientation has a direct positive relationship with work readiness, as shown by the results of the correlation analysis. This indicates that the higher an individual’s future orientation, the higher their level of work readiness.

Additionally, this model includes “other factors (not examined)” to indicate that work readiness is a multidimensional construct and is not solely influenced by future orientation. This is supported by the coefficient of determination ($r^2 = 0.462$), which indicates that future orientation accounts for 46.2% of the variation in work readiness, while the remaining 53.8% is influenced by other factors not analyzed in this study. It should be emphasized that the relationship presented in this model is correlational and does not indicate a cause-and-effect relationship.

4. DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that there is a significant positive relationship between future orientation and work readiness among psychology students who have participated in an internship program ($r = 0.680$; $p < 0.001$). This correlation

coefficient indicates a strong relationship, suggesting that the higher an individual's future orientation, the higher their level of work readiness. Additionally, the coefficient of determination ($r^2 = 0.462$) indicates that future orientation accounts for 46.2% of the variation in work readiness, while the remainder is influenced by other factors not examined in this study.

Theoretically, these findings align with the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) framework, which states that career development outcomes are determined not only by external experiences but also by internal cognitive and motivational processes [6]. In this context, future orientation serves as a cognitive mechanism that enables individuals to interpret and optimize the internship experiences they have gained. Students with a high future orientation tend to be more proactive, have clear career goals, and are able to align their current behavior with their long-term goals.

These findings are consistent with studies [12] on senior undergraduates and [13] on students in their second and fourth semesters, which demonstrates the important role of future orientation in work readiness. However, there are several important differences to note. Compared to previous studies involving college students in general, this study specifically focuses on psychology students who have completed an internship program. These participant characteristics may explain why the strength of the relationship in this study is relatively high, as internship experience provides a real-world context for students to develop and apply their future orientation.

Conversely, some previous studies have shown weaker relationships, likely due to participants lacking direct work experience. Without practical experience, students tend to struggle in connecting future planning with concrete work readiness. Additionally, methodological differences, such as the use of different instruments and sample characteristics, may also influence variations in results across studies.

These findings also indicate that internship experience alone is insufficient to guarantee optimal work readiness. The effectiveness of such experiences depends heavily on how individuals process and internalize the experiences gained. In this context, future orientation serves as a "psychological bridge" linking practical experience with professional readiness. Students with a

strong future orientation tend to be able to reflect on their internship experiences, draw lessons, students with a strong sense of future direction tend to be able to reflect on their internship experiences, draw relevant lessons from them, and use those lessons as a foundation for preparing for their careers.

From a psychological perspective, future orientation encompasses aspects of motivation, planning, and evaluation, all of which play a role in supporting self-regulation. Individuals with this ability tend to be better prepared to face career challenges, are committed to their goals, and are able to devise strategies to achieve them. Furthermore, these findings can also be understood through the perspective of Islamic psychology, where future orientation relates to the balance between ikhtiar (effort) and tawakkul (surrender to God)[11]. This balance can help individuals build psychological resilience, self-regulation skills, and a sense of life's meaning, which ultimately supports work readiness.

Nevertheless, this study has several limitations. First, the use of a cross-sectional design does not allow researchers to draw causal conclusions. Second, the use of self-report instruments has the potential to introduce social bias. Third, the use of purposive sampling and a sample drawn from a single institution limits the generalizability of the study's findings. Additionally, this study did not control for other variables such as GPA, socioeconomic status, or gender, which may also influence work readiness.

Future research is recommended to use longitudinal or experimental designs to gain a deeper understanding of causal relationships. Additionally, future studies could incorporate other variables such as self-efficacy, career adaptability, or social support to enrich the work readiness model. Cross-program or cross-cultural studies are also important to enhance the external validity of the findings.

Practically, the results of this study indicate that universities need not only to provide internship programs but also to foster students' future orientation. This can be achieved through career counseling programs, future planning workshops, and reflective activities that help students connect their learning experiences with long-term career goals.

5. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that future orientation has a significant relationship with career readiness among psychology students who have participated in an internship program. These findings confirm that career readiness is not only related to practical experience but is also influenced by internal cognitive and motivational processes that help individuals plan and prepare for their future careers. Academically, these results strengthen the theoretical framework that positions psychological factors as a crucial component in the development of work readiness. Practically, these findings imply that universities need not only to provide internship experiences but also to foster students' future orientation through career counseling programs, future planning training, and reflective activities that help students connect their experiences with long-term career goals.

Nevertheless, this study has several limitations, including the use of a cross-sectional design, which does not allow for causal conclusions; the use of self-report instruments, which may introduce bias; and the fact that the sample was drawn from a single institution, thereby limiting the generalizability of the findings. Therefore, the results of this study should be interpreted with caution and within the context of the sample studied.

Future research is recommended to employ longitudinal or experimental designs to gain a deeper understanding of the relationships among variables, as well as to consider other relevant variables, such as self-efficacy, social support, and demographic factors. Additionally, cross-institutional or cross-cultural studies are needed to enhance the external validity of the findings.

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