



## Building a career through growth mindset and grit: a study of organization students

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### ABSTRACT

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Career adaptability has emerged as an important competency in today's dynamic and unpredictable work environment. Many university students still face considerable challenges in developing the flexibility and perseverance required to respond effectively to complex and evolving career demands in a competitive global marketplace. This research examines how a growth mindset impacts individuals' ability to adapt to their careers, with grit positioned as a mediating variable, with a focus on students who actively participate in student organizations at the Faculty of Economics and Business, Padang State University. A quantitative method was employed, utilizing data gathered from a structured questionnaire distributed to 110 respondents selected using probability sampling techniques. The data were processed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM-PLS) with the assistance of SmartPLS version 4.0 software. The findings showed that growth mindset significantly influenced career adaptability, with grit as a mediating factor. The results of this study highlight the value of promoting a growth-oriented mindset and persistence in an organizational context to improve students' overall career readiness, adaptability, personal development, and resilience in the future workplace.

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

In the dynamic and uncertain era of globalization, an individual's capacity to adapt to change is highly essential. The acceleration of dynamics in the world of work is caused by technological disruption, digitalization, and the global economic crisis, which encourage the need for a flexible and resilient workforce. In the context, the concept of career adaptability is one of the main focuses in human resource development, especially for the younger generation who will enter the workforce. Career adaptability is an important indicator in HR management to assess individual readiness for career change and transition. Individuals with high adaptability tend to be more responsive, flexible, and able to adjust to career demands. According to Rudolph et al. (2017), they also have better job satisfaction, more stable psychological well-being, and greater chances of long-

term career success. In the era of an increasingly dynamic and uncertain world of work, career adaptability is an important need for students as a provision for facing the transition from the world of education to the professional world (Autin et al., 2017). Students are required not only to have academic knowledge, but also the ability to adapt to changes in industry, technology, and labor market expectations. (Topic urgency)

Referring to information from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in February 2024, 5.79% of the labor force in West Sumatra was recorded as ready to work but had not yet obtained a job. Although this figure shows a slight decrease compared to February 2023 (5.90%), this condition still reflects the gap between the readiness of graduates and the demands of the world of work. This phenomenon can be an indication that some individuals, especially new graduates, do not yet have the competencies needed to compete and adapt in a changing work environment. The imbalance between the number of graduates and available job opportunities has resulted in intensifying competition within the job market. This requires each individual to have superior competencies, including career adaptability, so as to effectively adjust to the dynamics of industry needs and show more value amid the high number of job seekers (Putri & Yuniasanti, 2023). Facing the challenges of the world of work, students need to pay attention to future career readiness, not only from the academic aspect but also psychologically. One way to improve career adaptability is through the cultivation of a growth-oriented mindset. (empirical condition)

Career adaptability is the ability of individuals to prepare, face, and respond to the challenges of complex career transitions in the future (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Dweck (2006) states that growth mindset denotes the conviction that intellectual abilities can be improved through commitment, continuous effort, and strategy. Siebring (2022) also asserts that growth mindset has a positive impact on career adaptability, helping individuals be more resilient in the face of career change. Not only that, Eggers (2023) states that the spirit to continue learning and openness to criticism and input are characteristics of a growth mindset, which contributes to improving an individual's ability to adapt to career development. In addition to growth mindset, there are other factors that contribute significantly to increasing career adaptability, including grit and parent-child communication (Wibowo et al., 2020). In this study, grit was chosen to be studied. Although parent-child communication also contributes to the formation of career adaptability, these variables are external and influenced by family dynamics that cannot always be controlled by individuals. On the other hand, grit is an internal factor that is inherent in a person and can be developed personally through experience, learning, and the process of self-reflection. In addition, grit, which reflects perseverance and consistency towards long-term goals (Duckworth et al., 2007), has an important role in helping individuals survive the complex pressures and changes in the career world. In a study conducted by Çarkıt (2024), showed that there is a positive influence of grit on career adaptability. Because it is more personal and can be grown in various contexts, grit is considered more relevant to be studied in relation for career adaptability, particularly within the context of students who are shaping their identity and future career direction.

The grand theory in this study refers to Career Construction Theory (CCT) by Savickas (2005), which states that careers are part of the construction of self-identity formed through experience, decision-making, and response to change. In the context of university students, this theory emphasizes that career adaptability develops as part of the life narrative, which can be strengthened by internal factors such as growth mindset and grit. Improving career adaptability is not only important for individuals who have entered the workforce, but it is also very relevant for students who are undergoing the shift from academic life to the professional world. (supporting theories)

In recent years, student interest in joining campus organizations has continued to decline, including at UNP. In fact, organizational experience is important for building soft skills, leadership, and teamwork abilities - competencies that are essential in the professional environment. Although previous research has highlighted the function of a growth mindset within the learning environment and academic achievement, there are limited studies that specifically examine this variable in the context of Indonesian university students. Seeing the various challenges faced by university graduates in entering the world of work, it is important for educational institutions and career development to not only focus on academic achievement, but also pay attention to internal psychological aspects that support career readiness. (research gap)

One strategic way for students to develop career adaptability is by actively participating in student organization activities. Organizational activities provide real training space for students to build leadership, conflict management, decision making, and resilience to pressure, all of which are important experiences in the formation of career adaptability (Guan et al., 2013). Involvement in organizations allows students to practice conveying thoughts and opinions, thereby strengthening their confidence and improving their abilities that are currently considered more important for companies (Succi & Canovi, 2020). In addition, joining organizations also encourages the spirit of learning and self-confidence, which are important foundations in the development of career adaptability (Harefa & Waruwu, 2025). According to the findings of Kim & Lee (2025), it was found that a growth mindset positively and significantly influences an individual's ability to adapt to their career in college students, and this effect is significantly mediated by grit. This finding strengthens the understanding that learners who possess a growth mindset are likely to have perseverance and long-term enthusiasm (grit), which ultimately shapes their readiness to face complex and changing career dynamics. Within the changing landscape of the professional world that increasingly demands psychological flexibility and resilience, grit serves as an important link that transforms individuals' belief in their potential into adaptive actions in career planning. Jackson & Wilton (2017) showed that involvement in organizations improves graduate employability skills. In fact, the World Economic Forum (2020) highlights that today's companies prioritize soft skills like teamwork, flexibility, and self-regulation—skills that can be developed through involvement in campus organizations.

Therefore, this research is important to fill the gap by exploring how growth mindset can increase career adaptability through grit, especially in students who are actively involved in campus organizations as part of self-development and readiness to enter the professional world. On the basis of this description, the hypothesis that can be formulated in this study is as follows: In the CCT perspective, growth mindset encourages adaptive readiness and flexible career management. Research by Siebring (2022) and Puspitasari et al. (2024) shows that individuals who possess a growth mindset are generally more likely to adaptive and proactive in facing career challenges. H1: Growth mindset has a positive effect on career adaptability.

In the CCT perspective, grit is part of adaptive readiness that strengthens mental readiness to face career challenges. Research by Ramadina & Azis (2024) and Zhao et al. (2018) demonstrated that possessing a growth mindset positively impacts grit by means of increased perseverance and intrinsic learning motivation. H2: Growth mindset has a positive effect on grit

According to findings from Carkit (2024), grit has a positive influence on career adaptability because it reflects individual perseverance in facing challenges. In the CCT framework, grit includes adaptive readiness that supports the activation of career adaptability aspects such as concern, control, curiosity, and confidence. H3 : Grit has a positive effect on career adaptability.

Kim & Lee (2025) found that grit mediates the relationship between growth mindset and career adaptability. Individuals with a growth mindset tend to be more

persistent, thus forming grit that strengthens adaptability to career change. From a CCT perspective, this supports flexible and sustainable careers. H4: Grit mediating the influence of growth mindset on career adaptability

(research objectives), The decline in participation in student organizations may affect the long-term relevance of the model, as the target population becomes increasingly limited. However, these findings remain statistically valid in the context of students who are currently active in organizations. In fact, this downward trend underscores the importance of this research, as it shows that strengthening growth mindset and grit through organizations is becoming increasingly urgent before more students lose the opportunity to develop career adaptability through organizational experience. (Statistical Impact of Declining Student Participation in Campus Organizations on the Relevance of the Research Model)

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses quantitative methods. Considering the nature of the problem addressed in this research, the design used is causal research. (design)

The population of this study was 325 active students in organizations at FEB UNP. Data collection was carried out using probability sampling method, which is a proportionate stratified random sampling technique is an opportunity-based sampling method (each individual within the population has the same likelihood of being selected), but with the division of strata (layers) and the selection of random samples proportionally from each stratum (Sugiyono (2013), so that the data and information in this study were obtained from 110 respondents, by multiplying the number of indicators by 5 to 10 (Hair et al., 2019), who were students who participated in organizational activities at FEB UNP through distributing questionnaires. (sample & population)

Table 1. Distribution of Research Samples

Organization Name	Number of Members	Number of Samples
Badan Perwakilan Mahasiswa	29	$\frac{29}{325} \times 110 = 9,81 = 10$
Badan Eksekutif Mahasiswa	65	$\frac{65}{325} \times 110 = 22$
HMD Manajemen	74	$\frac{74}{325} \times 110 = 25,04 = 25$
HMD Akuntansi	60	$\frac{60}{325} \times 110 = 20,30 = 20$
HMD Ilmu Ekonomi	40	$\frac{40}{325} \times 110 = 13,53 = 14$
HMD Pendidikan Ekonomi	57	$\frac{57}{325} \times 110 = 19,29 = 19$
TOTAL	325	110

Source: Data processed, 2025

Each item in the questionnaire is arranged based on the existing theoretical indicators of each variable. Career adaptability variables are measured through 4 dimensions, namely concern, control, curiosity, confident with 11 question items from Savikas & Porfeli (2012). Growth Mindset is measured using 8 questions items from Sigmundsson & Haga (2024). Grit was measured with 6 question items from Duckworth & Quinn (2009). Each question item is arranged in the form of a Likert scale and is used to measure the variables under study. (instruments)

Data collection was conducted online through Google Forms to allow respondents to complete the survey flexibly without interrupting their daily activities. (data collection procedures). The questionnaire in this study was first tested to ensure its validity and reliability using SmartPLS 4.0 software. The testing process includes convergent validity,

discriminant validity, and composite reliability tests, and the results show that the instrument is suitable for use. (analysis techniques)

The following table shows the operationalization of the variables in this study :

Variable	Indicator	Measurement
Career Adaptability	Concern	Preparing for the future
		Becoming aware of the educational and career choices that I must make Planning how to achieve my goals
	Control	Taking responsibility for my actions Sticking up for my beliefs Counting on myself
		Curiosity
	Confidence	Performing tasks efficiently
Growth Mindset	“Your intelligence is something about you that you can’t change very much”	I know that with effort I can improve my skills and knowledge I can influence and change my development in general
	“No matter how much intelligence you have, you can learn new things, but you can’t really change your basic intelligence”	I can change my skills and knowledge through practice I like to take challenges and try new things I see learning as my goal Effort makes me stronger
	“You can always change it quite a bit”	I want to spend more time and work more on an area/theme/skill to develop my skills and knowledge I have faith in my own skills and my possibilities
	Perseverance of Effort	I finish whatever I begin Setbacks don’t discourage me I am diligent I am a hard worker I have achieved a goal that took years of work I have overcome setbacks to conquer an important challenge

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### 3.1 Result

##### a. Description of Respondent Characteristics

This study involved 110 respondents who were active students of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Padang State University who were members of student

organizations. Respondents were classified based on gender, department, and type of organization followed. Based on gender, 69 people (62.73%) were female and 41 people (37.27%) were male. In terms of department, the respondents consisted of 37 Management students (33.64%), 24 Economics students (21.81%), 27 Accounting students (24.55%), and 22 Economics Education students (20%). Meanwhile, based on the type of student organization, students who are members of BPM are 10 people (9.09%), BEM 22 people (20%), HMD Manajemen 25 people (22.73%), HMD Ilmu Ekonomi 14 people (12.73%), HMD Akuntansi 20 people (18.18%), and HMD Pendidikan Ekonomi as many as 19 people (17.27%). This classification provides a comprehensive picture of the distribution of respondents in the context of the study.

### 3.2 Model Measurement (Outer Model)

#### a. Validity and Reliability Test

Validity in this study was tested through two types of testing, namely convergent validity and discriminant validity. Convergent validity is considered fulfilled if the outer loading value exceeds 0.7, while discriminant validity is achieved when an indicator has a higher correlation with its own variable than with other variables. However, in carrying out the analysis, several instruments were found that did not meet the validity criteria, so they had to be eliminated. Therefore, in the context of this study, instruments with a minimum outer loading value of 0.65 are still acceptable as valid, as long as they do not reduce the overall quality of the model. Gio et al. (2024) also suggest that measurement items falling within the 0.40 to 0.70 loading range can be evaluated for removal if doing so enhances the value of AVE.

#### b. Outer Loading (Final)

Table 2. Outer Loading Final

	M	X	Y
M10	0.796		
M11	0.739		
M12	0.776		
M7	0.705		
M8	0.700		
M9	0.763		
X1		0.667	
X2		0.706	
X3		0.797	
X4		0.763	
X5		0.778	
X6		0.711	
X7		0.775	
X8		0.755	
Y10			0.714
Y11			0.678
Y14			0.689
Y15			0.776
Y16			0.729
Y17			0.729
Y19			0.703
Y3			0.728
Y4			0.759
Y5			0.731
Y9			0.683

Source: Data processed, 2025

Discriminant validity is analyzed by comparing the AVE value and the correlation between constructs. Constructs are considered valid if the AVE value is  $> 0.5$ . After deleting several instruments, the final AVE results were obtained.

#### Average Variance Extracted (AVE) (Final)

Table 3. Average Variance Extracted (AVE) (Final)

Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	
X	0.555
Y	0.519
M	0.559

*Source: Data processed, 2025*

Based on Table 3, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for all constructs growth mindset (0.555), career adaptability (0.519), and grit (0.559) are above the minimum threshold of 0.5. This indicates that each construct has sufficient convergent validity, which means that most of the indicator variance can be explained by its respective construct. Thus, all variables in the model have met the required validity criteria. The reliability test is carried out by assessing the Composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha values of the indicators used to measure each construct. A construct is declared reliable if both values exceed the 0.70 threshold.

Table 4. Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha

	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (rho_a)
X	0.885	0.888
Y	0.907	0.908
M	0.842	0.843

*Source: Data processed, 2025*

Based on Table 4, all constructs (X, Y, and M) display Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values exceeding 0.70, indicating that all three constructs demonstrate strong reliability and consistently measure their respective variables. Thus, the instruments used in this study are declared reliable.

#### 3.3 Structural Model Measurement (Inner Model)

After the outer model evaluation stage is completed, the subsequent stage involves assessing the inner model, where the R-square value indicates the extent to which the independent variables account for the variance in the dependent variable.

Table 5. R-Square Analysis Result

R-Square	
	0.506
Y	0.594

*Source: Data processed, 2025*

Based on the table, the R-Square of the career adaptability variable is 0.594, meaning that it can be explained by grit and growth mindset by 59.4%, the remaining 40.6% is influenced by external factors. Meanwhile, grit is explained by growth mindset by 50.6%, and the remaining 49.4% by variables outside the model.

#### 3.4 Hypothesis Test

##### a. Direct Effect Hypothesis

Hypothesis testing for direct influence is done by observing the statistical value generated from the inner model. A hypothesis is accepted if the t statistical value  $> 1.96$ . In this case, the bootstrapping method was carried out on the research sample.

#### Table 6. Output Path Coefficient

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values
M -> Y	0.353	0.344	0.126	2.816	0.005
X -> M	0.711	0.714	0.059	12.094	0.000
X -> Y	0.478	0.489	0.129	3.698	0.000

Source: Data processed, 2025

Based on table 6, the results of testing all hypotheses are accepted. can be explained as follows : H1: Growth mindset → Career adaptability, The initial hypothesis indicates that a growth mindset positively influences career adaptability ( $t = 3.698 > 1.96$ ; path coefficient = 0.478). H1 accepted. H2: Growth mindset → Grit, The second hypothesis reveals that a growth mindset exerts a positive influence on grit ( $t = 12.094 > 1.96$ ; path coefficient = 0.711). H2 accepted. H3: Grit → Career adaptability, The third hypothesis indicates that grit positively influences career adaptability ( $t = 2.816 > 1.96$ ; path coefficient = 0.353). H3 accepted.

#### b. Mediation Hypothesis

The mediation hypothesis is accepted if the t-statistic value  $> 1.96$ . This hypothesis testing aims to see the effect of growth mindset on career adaptability mediated by grit.

Table 7. Output Indirect Effect

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values
X -> M -> Y	0.251	0.245	0.092	2.732	0.006

Source: Data processed, 2025

Based on the calculation of the mediation path coefficient, the t-statistic value is 2.732, which is greater than 1.96, with an original sample value of 0.251. These findings indicate that growth mindset has a positive effect on career adaptability, with grit acting as a mediating variable in the relationship.

### 3.5 Discussions

#### a. Growth Mindset Has a Positive Effect on Career Adaptability in Students Who Participate in Organizations

Based on the results of the analysis with the PLS method, it was found that the growth mindset variable has a positive effect on career adaptability in students who are active in organizations. This is indicated by the t-statistic value of 3.698 which exceeds the t-table value of 1.96, so the relationship is declared significant. Thus, it can be concluded that the positive effect of growth mindset on career adaptability is statistically supported.

This research is supported by Siebring's research (2022) which states growth mindset can positively increase career adaptability. This finding is also in line with the Career Construction Theory perspective (Savickas, 2005), which states that a growth mindset encourages individuals to survive and thrive in facing career challenges. In this context, students who are active in student organizations at FEB UNP who have a high level of growth mindset tend to show better career adaptability. Thus, this study concludes that a positive level of growth mindset among student organizations contributes to their readiness and flexibility in designing and navigating future career directions.

b. Growth Mindset Has a Positive Effect on Grit in Students Who Participate in Organizations

Based on the results of the analysis using PLS, it was found that the growth mindset variable has a positive effect on grit in students who participate in organizations. This is indicated by the t-statistic value of 12.094, which exceeds the t-table value of 1.96, so the relationship is declared significant. Thus, it can be concluded that the positive influence between growth mindset on grit is statistically acceptable.

This research is supported by the research of Zhao et al. (2018) which states that growth mindset can positively increase grit. This finding is in line with the perspective of Career Construction Theory (Savickas, 2005), which explains that growth mindset plays a role in helping individuals to survive and thrive when facing various challenges in the career building process. In this context, students who are active in student organizations at the Faculty of Economics and Business, Padang State University and have a high level of growth mindset tend to show a stronger level of grit, characterized by consistency and perseverance in achieving long-term goals. Therefore, this research concludes that a positive growth mindset among organizational students contributes to the strengthening of grit, which is an important factor in the resilience and direction of their future career achievements.

c. Grit Has a Positive Effect on Career Adaptability in Students Who Participate in Organizations

The PLS analysis results indicate that grit positively influences career adaptability among organizationally active students, with a t-statistic of 2.816—surpassing the critical value of 1.96—demonstrating a statistically significant and valid relationship. The findings in this study are in line with the results of a study conducted by Carkit (2024), which showed that grit, as part of an individual's internal characteristics, plays an important role in shaping career adaptability. This means that there are intrinsic factors within a person that significantly influence the extent to where individuals are capable of responding to changes and meeting the challenges presented by the professional environment. So it can be concluded that grit in students active in organizations in FEB UNP contributes positively to their career adaptability. This is in line with Career Construction Theory (Savickas, 2005), which emphasizes that perseverance and an unyielding spirit help individuals respond adaptively to career challenges and shape their professional identity.

d. Grit Mediating the Influence of Growth Mindset on Career Adaptability in Students Who Participate in Organizations

Growth mindset has been proven to have a positive influence on career adaptability mediated by grit. This is reinforced by the test results which show that the t-statistic value of 2.732, which is greater than 1.96, indicates that the relationship is statistically significant. Based on the results of the indirect effect test, it was found that a growth mindset has a positive impact on career adaptability through grit. This finding suggests that grit functions as a mediator in the relationship between growth mindset and career adaptability among students involved in campus organizations at the Faculty of Economics and Business, Padang State University. In other words, a growth mindset contributes indirectly to enhancing career adaptability through the intermediary of grit.

This result aligns with the findings of Kim & Lee's study (2025), which revealed that growth mindset plays an important role in shaping grit, which ultimately has an impact on increasing career adaptability, especially for students who are active in student organizations. The growth mindset attitude helps students to remain diligent and not easily give up in facing challenges, thus strengthening their fighting power (grit). This perseverance then supports students in adjusting to various changes and demands in the world of work, so that their career adaptability also increases.

This research is also supported by Career Construction Theory (Savickas, 2005), where career adaptability develops through individual career narratives shaped by life experiences and internal psychological factors. In this case, growth mindset acts as a cognitive foundation that encourages individuals to see challenges as learning opportunities, while grit facilitates perseverance and consistency in achieving career goals. For students who are active in student organizations at FEB UNP, the combination of these two factors allows them to be more flexible and resilient in responding to change, and able to design a career future that matches their personal values and aspirations.

These findings provide empirical support for Career Construction Theory (Savickas, 2005), confirming that growth mindset and grit are internal factors that play a role in shaping career adaptability. This enriches our understanding that career adaptability is not only the result of external influences or social experiences, but can also be shaped through personal mindset and perseverance. This study also expands the application of CCT theory in the context of Indonesian students who are active in campus organizations, an area that has yet to be extensively explored empirically.

The results of this study emphasize the urgency for higher education institutions, especially in Indonesia, to formulate policies that support the development of soft skills through student organization activities. Campuses need to facilitate growth mindset and grit development programs through leadership training, mentoring, and evaluation of organizational activities. This can be an integral part of the strategy to improve graduate employability amid the challenges of an increasingly competitive job market.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis and discussion conducted, several conclusions can be drawn. First, Growth mindset has a positive effect on career adaptability in students who participate in organizations. These results indicate students who possess a strong growth mindset are generally more capable of enhancing their adaptability when dealing with the dynamics and challenges of their careers.

Second, growth mindset has a positive effect on grit in students who participate in organizations. This result indicates that students with high levels of growth mindset tend to show stronger perseverance and perseverance in achieving their long-term goals.

Third, grit has a positive effect on career adaptability in students who participate in organizations. These results indicate students who demonstrate high levels of grit are generally more likely to be resilient and persistent in pursuing their goals, able to adjust to changes and challenges in the career world more effectively.

Lastly, there is a positive indirect effect in the relationship between growth mindset and career adaptability with grit as a mediating variable, for students who participate in student organizations. This shows that a high growth mindset is able to encourage an increase in grit in students, which ultimately strengthens their capacity to adjust to obstacles and transitions within the professional environment.

This study has limitations in terms of population and sample size, which are still relatively small, as respondents only include students who are active in organizations at the Faculty of Economics and Business, Padang State University. Therefore, it is recommended that future research involve a broader population, both in terms of faculty and level of organizational involvement, to obtain more general and representative results. It is also recommended that future research explore the relationship between growth mindset and career adaptability using more up-to-date and contextual indicators. This aims to broaden the scope of analysis and obtain findings that are more relevant to the dynamics of students today.

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