



How Career Choices are Influenced by Experience of Internship, Peer Group, and Interpersonal Skills?

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ABSTRACT

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This study was conducted to know the effect of Experience of Internship (X1), Peer group (X2), and Interpersonal Skills (X3) on Career Choices (Y). This research was conducted using a descriptive quantitative approach. Data collection was carried out by distributing questionnaires to students using Google Forms by a Likert scale, and this study used multiple regression analysis methods. The population in this study were undergraduate students of the Office Administration Education class of 2020 at Surabaya State University with a total of 63 people. This study used saturated sampling techniques in sampling. Based on the results of data analysis, it is found that Experience of Internship, Peer Group, and Interpersonal Skills have a positive and significant effect on Career Choices. This states that the Experience of Internship that a person has experienced and obtained, the group of friends that a person has, and a person's ability to communicate and interact with others provide influence and assistance in viewpoints on how career decisions will be in a person's life, especially in this case in line with research, namely in students.

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INTRODUCTION

The world is progressing rapidly, bringing great challenges in various aspects of life. Humans are required to prepare themselves optimally to face these challenges, especially in



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choosing a job and planning a career. The career decision-making process requires individuals to understand themselves, assess available job options, realize personal needs, and prepare relevant career alternatives (Sari et al., 2022). The education period is an important foundation in equipping individuals before entering the world of work. However, in reality, many final-year students and fresh graduates experience confusion in designing and making decisions regarding their future careers. Every individual hopes to get a job that suits their capacity and desire. This phenomenon emphasizes the importance of a deeper study of the factors that influence career decision-making, especially among university students and fresh graduates.

Especially for students who will enter the workforce after completing their education. This career choice becomes a complex process, because it involves various factors that influence individual decisions, both from internal, external, and interpersonal factors (Koech et al., 2016; Thapa, 2024). A career includes not only the job one takes but also the sequence of experiences and activities that shape one's role in life. Therefore, careful career planning is necessary to ensure that decisions made can create continuity and hope for advancement in professional life (Reni, 2007).

One of the early stages in career planning is career selection, which is a process of self-awareness about strengths and weaknesses, as well as the consequences of the choices made (Masturina, 2018). This process is very important for students, especially for students in educational study programs, such as Office Administration Education. Although students are expected to choose a profession that suits their field of study, such as becoming an educator, the reality is that many external and internal factors can influence their decision to choose a different career path (Widiatami & Cahyonowati, 2013).

This phenomenon is reflected in undergraduate students of Office Administration Education at Surabaya State University class of 2020 who expressed confusion and indecision in determining a career after completing their education. The various career choices available, especially in this era of globalization, are increasingly diverse and are influenced by social dynamics and trends that are developing among the younger generation. Therefore, a deeper understanding of the factors that influence students' career decisions is needed, so that they can make more mature choices that are in line with their potential and expectations in the future.

Internship experience is one of the significant external factors in career decision-making. Internships provide a visualization and direct evaluation of career choices to be pursued (Sarfraz et al., 2017). Through this experience, students can gain new knowledge that is very important in determining their career path (Ellisabet & Sinarti, 2020). Internships also serve as

pre-employment training that helps students master the skills needed in the world of work (Sari & Nurhidayati, 2022). Therefore, the experience during an internship can have a major impact on the career choices that are made afterward, whether in terms of the decision to continue a career in the field that has been undertaken or switch to another career path.

Undergraduate students of Office Administration Education at Surabaya State University class of 2020, internship experiences in companies and schools provide two different perspectives. Internships in companies provide insight into the duties and responsibilities in the professional world, while internships in schools provide an overview of the workload of an educator. Both experiences influenced students' career decisions, with some choosing to continue their careers in education and others moving into office administration or other sectors.

The perception of the teaching profession also plays an important role in shaping students' career choices. Research by Annur & Trisnawati, (2023) highlights the influence of self-efficacy and students' perceptions of the teaching profession on their interest in becoming teachers. Their study found a positive correlation between self-efficacy, perceptions of the teaching profession, and interest in pursuing a teaching career. However, despite being enrolled in an Office Administration Education program, many students still prefer to work in private companies rather than become educators. This disparity indicates a need for a better understanding of how perceptions and personal confidence affect career choices, particularly among students in education-related fields.

Positive experiences such as skills enhancement, networking, and exposure to work culture are decisive factors in students' career choices. However, it is not uncommon for negative experiences, such as excessive workload or discomfort in the work environment, to influence students' views of a profession (Muhamad et al., 2016). Therefore, internship experience plays an important role in shaping students' career decisions after graduation. In addition to the internship experience, social factors such as peer groups also influence students' career decisions. Peers are often a great source of reference and social support for individuals in making important decisions, including careers (Amani, 2013). A positive friendship environment may encourage individuals to choose a particular career path, while a less supportive peer influence may lead to a different decision. In this context, the role of the friendship environment in motivating and providing information becomes very relevant (Putra et al., 2023).

Undergraduate students of Office Administration Education, with various internship



experiences and support from friend groups, are faced with a dilemma in determining their careers. Some choose to follow in the footsteps of peers working in the same field, while others choose to explore a wider range of career options based on the experience they have gained. Thus, the factors of internship experience and social support from peers play an important role in shaping students' career choices.

In the Office Administration students class of 2020, the results of the research survey show that there are students who agree that peers provide support in various forms, such as emotional support or help in certain matters. However, some students disagree with this. Their peers are considered a second family, which plays an important role in their lives. The positive influence they receive from their peers includes supporting their decisions, sharing their perspectives, motivating them to move forward, modeling caring and helping each other, and motivating them to do everything to the fullest. Meanwhile, negative influences can happen, although this depends on the individual and how they react to it. Therefore, students need to be selective in choosing a friendship environment to avoid bad impacts that can damage the good habits they already have.

In addition to the experience of internship and peer group influence, interpersonal skills are also an important factor influencing one's career choice. Interpersonal skills include the ability to communicate well, cooperate in teams, and build productive working relationships. These skills also include the ability to cope effectively with problems and stress (Astuti et al., 2023). Students need to assess and improve their interpersonal skills before entering the workforce. This is important because the world of work is very complex, and interpersonal skills will affect success in interacting with coworkers, superiors, and clients or customers.

Undergraduate students of the Office Administration Education class of 2020 realize the importance of interpersonal skills before entering the world of work. They also argue that someone with poor communication skills will tend to avoid jobs that involve a lot of interaction with others, such as jobs in public relations, psychology, or customer service. However, for students who feel confident in their interpersonal skills, internship experiences, and teaching practices provide confidence in communicating and working with others.

Regarding relevant previous research, Zhao et al., (2023) found that internship experience affects the career intentions of medical doctors in Kenya and Uganda, while (Wahyuni et al., 2023) showed that internship experience has a positive and significant influence on work readiness. Elisabet & Sinarti, (2020) also found that internship experience affects students' career intentions. In addition, research by Husain & Mahfoodh, (2021) shows

that internship programs provide great benefits in providing real-world work experience. Research by Sitanggang, (2023) concluded that social support from peers is positively related to self-efficacy in career decision-making, while Arif et al., (2019) emphasized that social factors, especially peers, have a stronger influence than family in determining career choices. However, research conducted by Iyer & Siddhartha, (2020) showed that students' career choices in media were not influenced by role models or mentoring from peers, while Thapa, (2024) research showed that interpersonal influences, including peers, did not have a significant impact on career choices. This is a gap in previous research, which is an interesting topic to explore further.

METHOD

This research is explanatory research with a quantitative approach, which aims to test theories or hypotheses by explaining the relationship between two or more variables and understanding the cause and effect of the relationship (Sari et al., 2022). The quantitative approach is used because it allows objective measurement of variables and describes their characteristics through numbers or statistics (Sari et al., 2022) This study uses two types of data sources, namely primary data and secondary data. Primary data was obtained by distributing questionnaires to students majoring in Office Administration Education class of 2020 at Surabaya State University, which were designed based on indicators of each research variable. Secondary data is obtained from journals, books, and relevant literature used as a theoretical basis and to support the interpretation of the results.

The research population was all students of the Office Administration Education study program class of 2020 at Surabaya State University, consisting of three classes (A, B, and I) with a total of 63 students. Because the population was less than 100, the study used a saturated sampling technique so that the entire population was sampled (Arikunto, 2019). This study involves three independent variables, namely experience of internship, peer group, and interpersonal skills, and one dependent variable, namely career choices. Experience of internship is measured through indicators such as internship duration, relevance of internship tasks to the field of study, and evaluation of experience of internship. The peer group is measured through indicators of the frequency of career discussions, emotional support from friends, and the influence of friends in career decision-making. Interpersonal skills are measured through indicators of communication skills, teamwork, and conflict management. Career choices are measured through indicators of clarity of career goals, suitability of career

choices with the field of study, and confidence in career decision-making.

The data in this study were collected using an instrument in the form of a questionnaire consisting of several statements measured using a Likert scale of 1-5. Each statement on the questionnaire is designed to measure the variables under study, namely experience of internship, peer group, interpersonal skills, and career choices. This questionnaire was distributed to undergraduate students of the Office Administration Education class of 2020. Table 1 shows the questions in the questionnaire used in this study, along with the measurement scale used.

Table 1. Questionnaire Design

No	Variable	Indicator	Number of Item	Total Item
1.	Internship Experience	Relationships with leaders or heads of departments at the internship site	1-4	4
		Relationships with staff at the internship site	5-10	6
		Conditions and resources of the internship site	11-10	4
2.	Peer Group	Social and emotional support	15-18	4
		As a socialization agent	19-21	3
		As a role model	22-24	3
3.	Interpersonal Skill	Respect the views of others	25-27	3
		Collaborate with others	28-31	4
		Communicate effectively with others		
			32-34	3
4.	Career Choices	Self-efficacy beliefs	35-38	4
		Outcome expectations	39-41	3
		Personal goals	42-45	4

Based on the results of Table 1, the data results will be analyzed using SPSS software with the following stages: classical assumption test to ensure the validity of the model, including normality test, multicollinearity test, and heteroscedasticity test; multiple linear regression analysis to measure the partial and simultaneous effects of independent variables on the dependent variable; hypothesis testing using a t-test to measure partial effects and F test to measure simultaneous effects; and the coefficient of determination (R^2) to determine the extent to which the independent variable explains the dependent variable. Primary data is used to answer the main objective of the research, which is to measure the influence of experience of internship, peer group, and interpersonal skills on students' career choices, while secondary data provides the theoretical basis and supports the interpretation of the research results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Validity and Reliability Test

Data processing in this study used a validity test with Pearson correlation. The research instrument is declared valid if the *r* count is greater than the *r* table at a significant level of 5%. Based on Table 2, the 45 statement items were declared valid.

Table 2. Validity Test

No	r (hitung)	r (tabel)	Ket.	No	r (hitung)	r (tabel)	Ket.
1	0.614	0.361	Valid	24	0.509	0.361	Valid
2	0.498	0.361	Valid	25	0.509	0.361	Valid
3	0.545	0.361	Valid	26	0.437	0.361	Valid
4	0.474	0.361	Valid	27	0.675	0.361	Valid
5	0.494	0.361	Valid	28	0.699	0.361	Valid
6	0.414	0.361	Valid	29	0.566	0.361	Valid
7	0.484	0.361	Valid	30	0.619	0.361	Valid
8	0.674	0.361	Valid	31	0.624	0.361	Valid
9	0.571	0.361	Valid	32	0.707	0.361	Valid
10	0.571	0.361	Valid	33	0.695	0.361	Valid
11	0.490	0.361	Valid	34	0.417	0.361	Valid
12	0.601	0.361	Valid	35	0.449	0.361	Valid
13	0.722	0.361	Valid	36	0.509	0.361	Valid
14	0.602	0.361	Valid	37	0.669	0.361	Valid
15	0.492	0.361	Valid	38	0.566	0.361	Valid
16	0.522	0.361	Valid	39	0.502	0.361	Valid
17	0.560	0.361	Valid	40	0.666	0.361	Valid
18	0.589	0.361	Valid	41	0.569	0.361	Valid
19	0.617	0.361	Valid	42	0.692	0.361	Valid
20	0.435	0.361	Valid	43	0.649	0.361	Valid
21	0.756	0.361	Valid	44	0.769	0.361	Valid
22	0.455	0.361	Valid	45	0.618	0.361	Valid
23	0.392	0.361	Valid				

Meanwhile, in this study, the reliability test was carried out using the Cronbach's Alpha technique with the help of SPSS software and a significant level of 0.05. The instrument is said to be reliable if the Cronbach's Alpha value is greater than the significant level, while if the Cronbach's Alpha value is smaller than the significant level, the instrument is considered unreliable.

Table 3. Reliability Test

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.948	45

The instrument is said to be reliable when the Cronbach's Alpha value > significant level, the instrument is said to be reliable. The significant level is 0.05. Based on Table 3, the Cronbach's Alpha value is $0.948 > 0.05$, so the instrument in this study is reliable.

Data Analysis Results

Normality Test

Table 4. Normality Test Results

		Unstandardized Residual
N		63
Normal	Mean	.0000000
Parameters ^{a,b}	Std. Deviation	3.03096958
	Absolute	.072
	Positive	.063
	Negative	-.072
Test Statistic		.072
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) ^c		.200 ^d

Based on Table 4, the data is normally distributed if the significance level is > 0.05 , so the data in this study is normally distributed because $0.200 > 0.05$.

Multicollinearity Test

Table 5. Multicollinearity Test

Model	Collinearity Statistics Tolerance	VIF
1. (Constant)		
Experience of Internship	.397	2.521
Peer Group	.701	1.426
Interpersonal Skills	.405	2.468

Based on the multicollinearity test criteria in the Table 5, it is stated that there is no multicollinearity if the VIF value is less than 10 and the tolerance value is more than 0.1. The analysis results show that in variable X1 (Experience of Internship), the VIF value is 2.521 with a tolerance value of 0.397. In variable X2 (peer group), the VIF value is recorded at 1.426 with a tolerance value of 0.701. Meanwhile, for variable X3 (interpersonal skills), the VIF value is 2.468 with a tolerance value of 0.405. Thus, all variables meet these criteria and there is no multicollinearity in the model.

Heteroscedasticity Test

Table 6. Heteroscedasticity Test

Model	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1 (Constant)	.723	-2.289	.026
X1	.481	.325	.747
X2	4.381	.279	.781
X3	4.938	1.635	.108
X1_Kuadrat	-1.083	1.314	.195

X2_Kuadrat	.012	-.658	.514
X3_Kuadrat	-.111	.004	.997
X1x2	-9.664	-.040	.968
X1x3	.831	-1.785	.080
X2x3		.321	.749

The heteroscedasticity test using White's method show that there is no heteroscedasticity in this study because all variables have a significance value ≥ 0.05 . The details are X1 (0.747), X2 (0.781), and X3 (0.108).

Multiple Linear Regression Test

Table 7. Multiple Linear Regression Test Results

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	
	B	Std. Error
1. (Constant)	14.813	3.582
Experience of Internship	.039	.093
Peer Group	.014	.073
Interpersonal Skills	.730	.124

$$Y = a + bX_1 + bX_2 + bX_3$$

$$= 14,813 + 0,039X_1 + 0,014X_2 + 0,730X_3$$

The constant value (a) of 15.604 indicates that the Career Choices variable does not change when the Experience of Internship (X1), peer group (X2), and interpersonal skills (X3) do not affect it. The regression coefficient of X1 of 0.039 indicates that each one unit increase in X1 will increase Career Choices by 0.039, and a unit decrease will decrease it by 0.039. The X2 regression coefficient of 0.014 indicates that each one-unit increase in X2 will increase Career Choices by 0.014, and a one-unit decrease will decrease it by 0.014. Meanwhile, the regression coefficient of X3 of 0.730 shows a significant positive effect, where a one-unit increase in X3 increases Career Choices by 0.730, and a one-unit decrease decreases it by 0.730.

Hypothesis Testing

T test

Table 8. T Test Results

Coefficients ^a		
Model	t	Sig.
(Constant)	5.197	<,001
Experience of Internship	6.246	<,001

Model	t	Sig.
(Constant)	9.690	<,001
Peer Group	3.600	<,001

Model	t	Sig.
(Constant)	4.815	<,001
Interpersonal Skills	10.001	<,001

$$\begin{aligned}
 t \text{ tabel} &= [a(df=n-k)] \\
 &= [5\%(df=63-3)] \\
 &= (0,05 ; 60) \\
 &= 1,671
 \end{aligned}$$

Based on the results of the t-test, the significant value of variable X1 is 0.001 <0.05 and based on the calculated t value of 6.246 > t table of 1.671 which means that there is a partial influence between variable X1, namely Experience of Internship on Career Choices and thus H1 is accepted, then the significant value of variable X2 is 0.001 <0.05 and based on the calculated t value of 3.600 > t table of 1, 671 which means that there is a partial influence between variable X2, namely peer group on Career Choices and thus H2 is accepted, and the significant value of variable X3 is 0.001 <0.05 and based on the t value of 10.001 > t table of 1.671 which means that there is a partial influence between variable X3, namely interpersonal skills on Career Choices and thus H3 is accepted.

F test

Table 9. F Test Results

	Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	940.737	3	313.579	32.482	<,001b
	Residual	569.580	59	9.654		
	Total	1510.317	62			

$$\begin{aligned}
 F \text{ tabel} &= df (N2) = n-k = 63-2= 61 \\
 &= df (N1) = k-1 = 2-1 = 1 \\
 &= 61:1 = 3,15
 \end{aligned}$$

The significance value for the effect of the experience of internship (X1), peer group (X2), and interpersonal skills (X3) on career choices (Y) is $0.001 < 0.05$, and f-count of $32.482 > f$ table 3.15, this indicates that there is a simultaneous influence between X1, X2, and X3 on Y, so H4 is accepted.

Coefficient of Determination (R Square)

Table 10. Coefficient of Determination Test Results

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.789a	.623	.604	3.107

Based on the table 10, the R square value is 0.623 or 62.3%, which means that the variables X1, X2 and X3 have an influence of 62.3% on Y. If the influence of the independent variable is large on the dependent variable, $R^2 > 0$ or close to 1, referring to the results of R2 or R Square above shows the value of $R^2 0.623 > 0$ or close to 1, this means that there is a large influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable.

Discussion

The Effect of Practical Experience of Internship on Career Choices

The results of this study confirm that experience of internship, peer group influence, and interpersonal skills collectively play a crucial role in shaping career choices. Zhao et al., (2023) and Husain & Mahfoodh, (2021) emphasize that internship programs provide real-world exposure, increasing career awareness and readiness. (Wahyuni et al., 2023) further highlight that students with more experience of internship demonstrate higher preparedness for professional careers, supporting the findings of this research. Similarly, (Ellisabet & Sinarti, 2020) argue that variations in internship experience significantly impact students' career intentions.

The Effect of Peer Group on Career Choices

This study shows the peer group influence is another key determinant of career choices. Sitanggang, (2023) found a strong correlation between peer support and self-efficacy in career decision-making. Arif et al., (2019) concluded that social factors, particularly peer influence, outweigh family influence when selecting a career. Suwanto et al., (2021) and Gamlath, (2022) further reinforced that peer interactions shape an individual's perceptions and aspirations regarding career paths. However, Iyer & Siddhartha, (2020) challenge these findings,

suggesting that peer mentoring does not always have a significant impact, highlighting the need for further investigation into contextual factors that may moderate this effect.

The Effect of Interpersonal Skills on Career Choices

This study shows that Interpersonal skills also emerged as a critical factor in career decision-making. Cho et al., (2021) assert that strong interpersonal competence boosts confidence in career selection, aligning with the present study's findings. (Ekeruche & Echedom, 2023) found a significant relationship between interpersonal skills and career development in professional settings, particularly among academic librarians. (Jang & Han, 2020) emphasized the role of motivation in enhancing interpersonal skills, reinforcing their importance in career advancement. However, (Thapa, 2024) provides a contrasting viewpoint, arguing that interpersonal influences, including peer interactions, do not significantly impact career decisions, suggesting that other factors such as personal interests and economic considerations might play a stronger role.

The Influence of Experience of Internship, Peer Group and Interpersonal Skills on Career Choices

The combined influence of experience of internship, peer group, and interpersonal skills on career choices is evident in this study. The significant F-test results confirm that these variables collectively shape career decisions, supporting the integrated approach to career development suggested by prior research. The interplay between real-world experience, social interactions, and communication skills highlights the necessity of comprehensive career preparation programs that equip students with the necessary competencies to make informed career choices. These findings contribute to the growing body of literature emphasizing the multidimensional nature of career decision-making and the need for educational institutions and policymakers to foster experiential learning, peer collaboration, and interpersonal skill development.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that experience of internship, peer groups, and interpersonal skills have a positive influence, both partially and simultaneously, on the career choices of undergraduate students of Office Administration Education class of 2020. The research respondents consisted of class 2020 students who were divided into three classes (A, B, and I),



with the entire population used as samples. This study concluded that there is a positive influence of experience of internship on career choices, a positive influence of peer groups on career choices, a positive influence of interpersonal skills on career choices, and a simultaneous positive influence of the three variables on student career choices. The implications of this study include the potential to be the basis for further research, both to explore similar phenomena and to develop other factors that influence career choices. The study program is also expected to strengthen career guidance support through activities such as workshops or seminars to assist students in making career decisions. The author suggests that future researchers use additional or different variables and expand the scope of the population to enrich the results of the study.

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