
Career Adaptability Skills in Javanese Sandur Tradition for Generation Z Career Development

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Abstract: The Javanese Sandur tradition offers a unique cultural context for developing career adaptability skills in Generation Z, yet its potential remains underexplored in existing career development research. This study employs a qualitative participatory ethnographic design over five months in Karang Village, Tuban Regency, East Java, involving participant observation, in-depth interviews with Sandur practitioners, and document analysis. Data were thematically analyzed using Maxqda with an inductive approach. The findings reveal that active engagement in Sandur cultivates four core adaptability dimensions—concern, control, curiosity, and confidence—through collective performance practices, role exploration, cultural responsibility, and problem-solving within the community. These results demonstrate that Sandur is not only a form of cultural preservation but also a strategic medium for strengthening career adaptability among Generation Z facing rapid technological and social transitions. This research contributes new insights into how traditional cultural practices can serve as contextualized pathways for enhancing career readiness in modern work environments.

Keywords: Sandur tradition, Career Adaptability, Generation Z

INTRODUCTION

The Javanese Sandur tradition is a traditional performing art that reflects the social, cultural, and spiritual values of the Javanese community. Beyond its role as cultural entertainment, Sandur contributes to strengthening social cohesion and preserving local wisdom that continues to adapt across generations (Hidajad et al., 2022). In the context of the 21st century, cultural practices such as Sandur may also support the development of essential life and career skills, including communication, collaboration, creativity, and flexibility. These skills align with the concept of career adaptability, which is considered crucial for Generation Z navigating rapid technological and labor market changes (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012).

However, research connecting traditional cultural practices with the enhancement of career adaptability remains limited, especially within local Indonesian contexts. Most career development studies still emphasize formal educational or industrial settings and overlook the contribution of community-based cultural learning environments. This gap highlights the need to explore how indigenous cultural traditions can shape career readiness in modern society.

Therefore, this study aims to examine the role of the Sandur tradition in fostering career adaptability skills among Generation Z, and to identify specific aspects of adaptability that emerge through active participation in Sandur activities. The findings are expected to provide new insights into culturally grounded approaches for supporting youth career development.

As time progresses, particularly with the spread of globalization and rapid technological advances, cultural traditions, including Sandur, face significant challenges in remaining relevant and surviving. The influence of modernization often demands changes in existing cultural perspectives and practices. However, traditions such as Sandur have demonstrated an extraordinary ability to adapt to changing times. Sandur can serve as an important model in understanding how cultural traditions can remain relevant and function as a means of developing career adaptability skills, especially for the younger generation, particularly Generation Z (Magnano et al., 2021).

Generation Z is a group born and raised in the midst of the digital age and rapidly developing technology. They are known for their high level of dependence on technology, as well as their ability

to adapt more quickly in accessing information and communicating. However, despite their technological advantages, Generation Z faces challenges in terms of the social and professional skills needed to adapt to a dynamic and competitive world of work. Skills such as the ability to collaborate, communicate effectively, and solve problems in changing contexts are crucial for building a successful career in the future (Leung et al., 2021). Therefore, it is important to explore how local cultural traditions, such as Sandur Jawa, can serve as a means to develop the adaptability skills that Generation Z desperately needs in order to face a working world full of change and challenges.

Sandur adapts to modern elements, but the core values contained in this tradition remain relevant and useful for career skill development, especially among Generation Z. One of the core values of Sandur is the sense of togetherness created in every performance. Every individual involved in a Sandur performance must work together, communicate, and support each other so that the performance can run smoothly (Mansur & Felix, 2021). This reflects a skill that is very important in the world of work, namely the ability to work in a team and collaborate with various parties. In an increasingly global and connected world of work, the ability to work in multicultural and interdisciplinary teams is highly sought after. In this case, Sandur provides practical lessons on how effective collaboration can improve collective performance, as well as how individuals can adapt to the needs of the team and the situation at hand.

The Sandur tradition involves a high degree of creativity. Each Sandur performance relies not only on technical skills, but also on the imagination and creativity of the performers. They must be able to create new interpretations of existing cultural values and innovate in conveying the messages contained in each performance (Delle & Searle, 2022). This creativity is highly relevant to the world of work, which increasingly requires individuals who are able to think outside the box and innovate in solving existing problems. In facing a dynamic world of work, the ability to think creatively and find innovative solutions is very important. Thus, Sandur also plays a role in developing the creativity skills needed to adapt to the demands of an ever-changing world of work.

Although Generation Z is known for being adaptable to technology and information, many of them experience profound challenges in social and emotional aspects. Dependence on digital interactions, pressure for instant achievement, and a lack of intergenerational connections lead to weak interpersonal skills, existential anxiety, and cultural identity crises. They are also often trapped in transactional and short-term career orientations. In this context, the values of togetherness, perseverance, and collective meaning embedded in the Sandur tradition have the potential to be the antithesis of the fragmentation experienced by Gen Z, while also providing space for strengthening character and long-term life skills.

On the other hand, the Sandur tradition also faces sustainability challenges amid the tide of modernization and changing values in society. The lack of regeneration of artists, low interest among the younger generation due to the stigma of being "traditional and outdated," and the lack of formal policy support in cultural education have caused Sandur to be marginalized from the mainstream of popular culture. Excessive commercialization without substantial meaning has also obscured the noble values that should be taught. Therefore, a strategic transformation is needed that can bridge classical values with the lifestyles and aspirations of the modern generation.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach with a participatory ethnographic design to explore career adaptability skills within the Javanese Sandur tradition in Karang Village, Semanding District, Tuban Regency, East Java. Fieldwork was carried out over five months (September 2024–January 2025). Karang Village was selected due to its sustained practice of Sandur despite pressures from urbanization and modernization. Participants were purposively sampled for direct involvement in Sandur activities and demographic diversity (age, gender, socioeconomic background). The core sample included members from seven families actively practicing Sandur, representatives of local

youth organizations, and one community leader (the neighborhood association/RT head). In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 key informants drawn from these groups to capture personal meanings, social functions, and perceived skills gained through Sandur participation.

Data collection combined participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. Researchers engaged in participatory observation across a range of contexts—from public Sandur performances at Tuban cultural festivals to smaller village events—recording field notes and reflective memos. Documentary sources (community records, program notes, and local histories) were examined to triangulate oral data. All qualitative data were coded and analyzed thematically using MaxQDA (inductive approach). The analytic process involved open coding, axial coding to identify relationships among codes, and selective coding to derive higher-order themes related to career adaptability (e.g., concern/foresight, control/agency, curiosity/exploration, confidence/self-efficacy). Analytic rigor was enhanced through investigator triangulation, member checking with several participants to validate interpretations, thick description, and maintaining an audit trail of coding decisions and memos.

Ethical procedures included obtaining informed consent, ensuring voluntary participation, anonymizing participant identifiers, and securing data storage. Data analysis was conducted using an inductive thematic analysis approach assisted by Nvivo software, which enabled the identification of patterns of career adaptability skills in the Sandur tradition without being constrained by a rigid theoretical framework. This process began with the initial coding of data from observations, interviews, and documents, followed by the grouping of emerging themes based on skill dimensions relevant to the world of work, such as collaboration, communication, flexibility, creativity, and leadership. This data is analyzed from the perspectives of functionalism and positive psychology. To strengthen data interpretation, this study also applies alternative template analysis, which allows the structure to be repeatedly adjusted during the analysis process (Allsop et al., 2022). This thematic approach is very useful in exploring the interaction between traditional elements in Sandur and modern innovations, as demonstrated in the dynamics of tradition and career skills.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, this study used methodological triangulation by comparing data from observations, interviews, and documents, as well as conducting member checking with participants to ensure the accuracy of interpretations. This study also adheres to ethical principles, including obtaining consent from community leaders and participants, maintaining confidentiality, and ensuring voluntary participation. This methodology facilitates a deep understanding of the Sandur tradition as a cultural mechanism that contributes to the well-being of individuals and communities, socially, culturally, and spiritually, while remaining relevant in the midst of modernization (Fazia et al., 2023).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results

Career Adaptability Skills in the Javanese Sandur Tradition

The main skill that can be learned from the Sandur tradition is the ability to collaborate and work in a team. Every Sandur performance involves many individuals with various roles who must work together to create a harmonious result. In this process, each team member makes an important contribution, whether in music, dance, or drama. They must learn to respect and understand each other's roles, as well as explore the various individual contributions to a complete work.

This effective collaboration reflects skills that are highly sought after in the modern workplace, where cross-disciplinary and multicultural teamwork is increasingly a key requirement. Today's professional world relies heavily on the ability to work with various parties, whether from different cultural backgrounds, disciplines, or fields of expertise. Through involvement in the Sandur tradition, individuals can hone their ability to collaborate with others and appreciate each other's roles in the team.

In addition to collaboration, effective communication is also a key skill that can be honed through the Sandur tradition. In every Sandur performance, communication between team members is essential to maintain harmony and ensure the event runs smoothly. The message conveyed in Sandur, whether through movements, facial expressions, or song lyrics, must be clearly received and understood by the audience. Therefore, every individual in a Sandur performance must be able to convey messages effectively, both verbally and non-verbally.

Good communication skills are essential in the modern workplace, where individuals must be able to express ideas, listen to colleagues, and interact with various parties to achieve common goals. In the professional world, clear and effective communication is a determining factor in building good relationships with colleagues, superiors, and clients. Another skill taught by Sandur is flexibility and adaptability, which are highly relevant to a work environment full of uncertainty and rapid change. During a Sandur performance, participants are often faced with sudden changes, such as changes in weather, performance location, or adjustments to schedules and roles. To be able to deal with these changes well, Sandur performers must have the ability to adapt quickly while maintaining the quality of the performance.

The ability to adapt to new and unexpected conditions is very relevant in the world of work, which often faces uncertainty. Generation Z, who grew up in an era of digital and ever-evolving technology, will face new challenges that require a high level of adaptability. Sandur, as part of cultural tradition, provides a concrete example of how individuals can remain flexible in the face of change and adapt to new environments. Creativity in Sandur performances is evident in the way performers modify traditional costumes to suit contemporary themes. For example, in a performance at a cultural event in Tuban, dancers wore contemporary batik fabrics and incorporated small LED lights into their crowns. One participant (P6) said, "We have to keep innovating so that the younger generation is interested in watching Sandur, so we modify the appearance a little, as long as we don't change the meaning of the story." Improvisation in the storyline also occurs, especially when they insert environmental issues into scenarios that were previously mythological.

In the performance, the leader of the Sandur group (usually called the elder) makes decisions ranging from the selection of the play to the order of the performances. One informant (P3), who is the youngest member, said, "Pak Sarman decides when to start, who performs first, and who replaces someone if they are sick." Field observations also show that this leader not only manages technical matters but also acts as a liaison with the event committee and local community leaders.

The Application of Javanese Sandur Traditions to the Career Development of Generation Z

The Javanese Sandur tradition has a significant impact on career development, especially for Generation Z, who are currently facing various challenges in a modern and rapidly changing world of work. Generation Z, known for their high dependence on technology, often face challenges in social and professional aspects. Therefore, it is important for them to develop adaptability skills that can help them navigate an increasingly dynamic and competitive world of work.

Generation Z needs skills that can facilitate effective teamwork, especially since today's workplace demands cross-disciplinary collaboration. The Sandur tradition teaches the importance of togetherness and collaboration in achieving common goals. Through participation in this tradition, Generation Z can learn to work with people from different backgrounds and learn to appreciate the contributions of each team member. These skills are highly sought after in an increasingly global and connected workplace, where collaboration between multicultural teams is becoming more common.

In the modern workplace, uncertainty and rapid change are major challenges that Generation Z must face. The Sandur tradition provides an opportunity to hone the skill of adapting to unexpected changes. These skills will be very useful in overcoming the challenges of an ever-changing world of work. With experience in this tradition, Generation Z can learn to remain calm and focused when faced with unexpected situations and find the best solutions for every change that occurs.

Sandur teaches the importance of creativity in solving problems and facing challenges. In the world of work, the ability to think creatively is essential, especially when dealing with complex problems or seeking innovative solutions. By participating in the Sandur tradition, Generation Z can develop the ability to improvise, think outside the box, and find effective solutions to every challenge that arises. These skills are very useful in various fields of work that require new and creative approaches to solving problems that arise.

Generation Z also needs strong leadership skills to succeed in the workplace. Through their experience in the Sandur tradition, they can learn to lead and organize teams effectively. This leadership is essential in achieving common goals and ensuring that each team member works well to achieve the desired results. In a competitive workplace, the ability to lead teams and projects will greatly help Generation Z advance in their careers.

Figure 1. Leading the Dance in the Sandur Tradition (Photo taken by researcher)



This image depicts a scene from the Sandur Tradition performance, in which two dancers engage in an expressive dance. One dancer appears to lead with dramatic movements, wearing traditional clothing with distinctive features, while the other dancer follows with intense expressions. In the background, there are simple props that depict a village atmosphere, such as bamboo cages, which add an authentic and profound impression to the story being told. The dim lighting and focus on the two dancers create an intense emotional atmosphere, signifying the importance of dance in conveying messages and emotions in the Sandur Tradition, which combines dance with elements of local culture.

Figure 2. *Image of the Sandur tradition practiced by Generation Z (Photo taken by researcher)*



This image shows a group of Generation Z youth participating in a Sandur Tradition performance, where they perform with enthusiasm and passion. The performers, consisting of various young individuals, wear traditional clothing that reflects the local culture, while some of them wear casual clothes. They pose together on a stage illuminated by dramatic lighting, signifying their success in reviving this tradition. This scene shows that the younger generation, despite being modern and influenced by technology, still preserves and celebrates their cultural traditions through performing arts such as the Sandur Tradition, which combines elements of dance, drama, and music in a meaningful performance.

The Sandur Tradition offers numerous benefits in developing the adaptability skills that Generation Z urgently needs to succeed in the workplace. Through the collaboration, communication, flexibility, creativity, and leadership skills taught in this tradition, the younger generation can better prepare to tackle existing challenges and thrive in an increasingly complex professional world.

Discussion

Career Adaptability Skills in the Javanese Sandur Tradition

Research findings indicate that participation in the Sandur tradition contributes to the development of five aspects of career adaptability skills: collaboration, communication, creativity, flexibility, and leadership. These five aspects can be analyzed within the framework of career adaptability literature (Savickas, 2013; Magnano et al., 2021), which emphasizes the importance of an individual's ability to adapt to changes and uncertainties in the world of work (Ting et al., 2024).

In Sandur performances, dancers and musicians signal each other through eye and hand movements to indicate tempo changes. One informant (P5) explained, "When I play the drum, I have to look at the dancer's eyes. If he gives me a signal, it means we have to change the beat." This kind of nonverbal interaction is key to cohesiveness. This collaborative process teaches the importance of mutual respect, understanding each other's roles, and adapting to the roles assigned (Parola & Marcionetti, 2023). The collaboration in Sandur performances is evident in the synchronized

movements, musical coordination, and teamwork in production. This is in line with Savickas' findings (2013) emphasizing that collaboration is part of career concern, which is an individual's awareness of their future career and readiness to contribute to teamwork. In addition, Magnano et al (2021) emphasizes that participatory experiences in cultural activities can strengthen interpersonal skills that are highly sought after in the modern workplace.

In addition to collaboration, effective communication is a skill taught through the Sandur tradition. In every performance, communication between members is very important to maintain harmony and ensure that the message to be conveyed is clearly received by the audience. Every individual in Sandur must have the ability to communicate well both verbally and non-verbally. In the professional world, this skill is highly sought after, as effective communication not only affects the quality of work, but also fosters productive relationships with colleagues and clients (Aryati & Suradi, 2022).

Another strength of the Sandur tradition is its flexibility and adaptability. The ability to adapt to changes in the story, stage conditions, and audience demonstrates a high degree of flexibility. According to Fugate et al. (2004), flexibility is an important element in career adaptability, especially when dealing with an uncertain and dynamic work environment. The Sandur tradition allows participants to naturally practice resilience and adjustment to change (Hamzah et al., 2021).

Creativity and problem solving are also key skills taught in the Sandur tradition. During performances, participants often face challenges that require creative solutions, such as changing choreography, substituting musical instruments, or finding new ways to convey messages that are relevant to the modern context. Today's workplace requires individuals who are able to think creatively, find new solutions, and innovate in order to solve complex problems (Lee et al., 2021). Therefore, the Sandur tradition greatly contributes to developing the creative thinking skills needed in a professional world that is increasingly innovation-oriented.

Leadership is also a skill that is honed in the Sandur tradition. Several individuals in a Sandur performance act as leaders who direct the course of the performance, give instructions to team members, and ensure that everything runs smoothly. The ability to lead a team and manage projects is highly sought after in the workplace (Cardoso et al., 2021). Through this experience, Sandur artists can develop their ability to manage people, give direction, and work with team members to achieve common goals.

Research linking cultural traditions to career adaptability skills is still relatively scarce. Many studies have explored the influence of culture on social development, but very few have directly investigated how specific cultural traditions can contribute to the development of skills needed in the workplace, especially in the Indonesian context. Most previous studies have focused more on internal factors such as motivation, technical knowledge, and academic qualifications in career development (Delle & Searle, 2022). This indicates a gap in the literature examining the influence of traditional culture on the adaptability skills needed in the professional world.

The Implications of the Javanese Sandur Tradition on the Career Development of the Younger Generation Z

In the Javanese Sandur tradition, despite originating from a highly traditional cultural context, it has great potential to contribute to the development of Generation Z's career adaptability skills. Generation Z is an age group born and raised amid rapid technological developments and increasing globalization. Although they are known for their ability to quickly adapt to technology and information, the major challenge faced by Generation Z is the social and professional skills needed to adapt to the ever-evolving dynamics of the world of work. It is in this context that the Javanese Sandur tradition can play an important role in equipping them with the skills needed to succeed in the professional world (Öztemel & Yıldız-Akyol, 2021).

The Sandur tradition is not only an art performance, but also a means of social education that teaches important values such as collaboration, communication, creativity, flexibility, and leadership.

These skills are highly relevant to the challenging and rapidly changing world of work, which often tests a person's ability to adapt (Rahim et al., 2021). For Generation Z, who are often faced with uncertainty and the need to innovate in their work, these skills are key to adapting to social, economic, and technological changes.

One of the most important aspects of the Sandur tradition is collaboration. In every Sandur performance, many individuals with different roles work together to create a harmonious result. This collaborative process involves not only technical skills, but also interpersonal skills, such as listening, supporting each other, and appreciating the contributions of others. These teamwork skills are highly relevant in the modern workplace, where jobs often involve cross-disciplinary and multicultural teams (Rahadi et al., 2022).

Today's generation often has very diverse backgrounds in terms of education and experience, so the ability to collaborate with different individuals and leverage each other's expertise is essential. In a workplace that increasingly relies on teamwork to complete large projects, this skill will help them navigate complex team dynamics and improve the effectiveness of collaboration (Ran et al., 2023). In the Sandur tradition, clear and effective communication is essential for the smooth running of a performance. The message conveyed through music, dance, and drama must be clearly understood by the audience. Similarly, in a professional context, verbal and nonverbal communication skills are essential for interacting with various parties in the workplace.

Generation Z, raised in a digital environment and focused on technology-based communication, often faces challenges in communicating directly or in situations that require effective interpersonal communication. Through involvement in the Sandur tradition, they can learn to better appreciate the importance of face-to-face communication, which can help them build stronger and more sustainable professional relationships in the workplace.

One of the characteristics of today's workplace is rapid and unexpected change. In the Sandur tradition, performers often have to adapt to sudden changes, such as bad weather, location changes, or other technical issues that can affect the course of a performance. For this reason, flexibility and adaptability are very important skills in this tradition. For Generation Z, who often face uncertainty in the workplace, the ability to remain calm and flexible in the face of unexpected changes is very important. In a highly dynamic and challenging work environment, adaptability skills will enable them to remain relevant and able to deal with rapidly changing situations. Through participation in the Sandur tradition, they can learn how to adapt to change without compromising the quality of their work (Jia et al., 2022).

In every Sandur performance, participants are often faced with challenges that require creative solutions, whether in terms of choreography, musical improvisation, or how to convey messages in a more modern context. In the workplace, creativity is essential, especially in sectors that require innovation and complex problem-solving. Through involvement in the Sandur tradition, Generation Z can hone their ability to think creatively and find new solutions to the challenges they face (Schenarts, 2020).

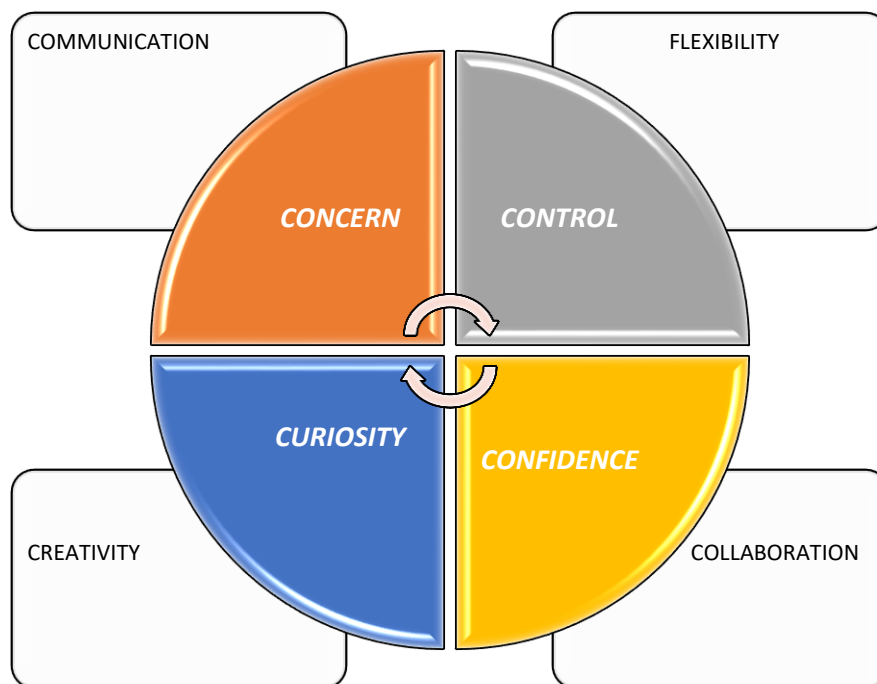
Today's professional world increasingly prioritizes individuals who are able to think outside the box and create new ideas to improve performance or solve complex problems. With experience in the Sandur tradition, they can develop these skills better, which in turn will enrich their career development.

The Sandur tradition also teaches leadership values. In every performance, there are individuals who act as leaders who organize the event, give directions to team members, and ensure that everyone functions well in their respective roles. These leadership skills are very relevant to the world of work, where individuals with the ability to lead teams and manage projects are in high demand. Generation Z is often faced with a highly connected and competitive world. Therefore, effective leadership skills are essential for guiding teams and projects to success (Liu et al., 2023). Through involvement in Sandur, they can learn how to manage others, provide clear direction, and ensure that each individual in the team can contribute to the maximum extent possible.

In the Sandur tradition, several parties play a role in supporting the development of career adaptability skills for Generation Z. First of all, Sandur practitioners, such as artists, trainers, and group leaders, have an important role in transferring the values and skills necessary for success in the world of work. They are responsible for ensuring that every individual involved in Sandur performances gains experiences that enrich their social and professional skills. In addition, the community and local society also play an important role in providing a supportive environment for Generation Z to learn and develop through Sandur. Collaboration between various parties in the community will strengthen this learning experience, as Generation Z can learn directly from social interactions with various members of the community.

Overall, the Sandur tradition helps Generation Z develop skills that are highly relevant for facing a fast-paced and uncertain world of work. Through their involvement in Sandur, they can develop the ability to adapt to various changes, collaborate in diverse teams, communicate effectively, think creatively, and lead wisely. These skills will not only enhance the quality of their work but also enrich their career development, giving them an edge in an increasingly dynamic professional world. Collaboration, Communication, Creativity, and Flexibility.

Figure 3. Image of Sandur Traditional Skills and Career Adaptability Aspects



The image illustrates the relationship between the skills acquired from the Javanese Sandur tradition and aspects of career adaptability that are important for Generation Z in facing the modern world of work. The diagram consists of two main layers: the outer layer shows the four core skills developed through participation in the Sandur tradition, namely communication, flexibility, creativity, and collaboration. These four skills reflect core competencies that are highly sought after in today's professional environment, such as the ability to work in cross-disciplinary teams, communicate ideas effectively, adapt to changing dynamics, and create innovative solutions to challenges (Magnano et al., 2021; Chen et al., 2022).

Meanwhile, the inner part of the diagram shows four main aspects of career adaptability, namely concern, control, curiosity, and confidence, as developed by Savickas (2013) in the Career

Construction theory. These aspects describe an individual's readiness to plan for the future, ability to manage pressure and change, drive to continue learning, and confidence in making decisions under uncertainty. The reciprocal relationship between these two layers shows that traditional skills honed through cultural activities such as Sandur not only shape practical competencies but also strengthen the psychological foundation that enables individuals to be more resilient, adaptive, and ready to face changes in the world of work (Delle & Searle, 2022; Hamzah et al., 2021).

Thus, this image confirms that local traditions such as Sandur can serve as a strategic and relevant source of experiential learning in the context of modern human resource development, while also bridging cultural values and professional demands in the era of globalization

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that participation in the Javanese Sandur tradition plays a significant role in fostering career adaptability skills among Generation Z in Karang Village, particularly in the domains of concern, control, curiosity, and confidence. Through collective performance practices and cultural collaboration, Sandur provides a learning space where communication skills, creativity, flexibility, and leadership are naturally exercised and strengthened. These findings highlight that cultural practices can serve not only as heritage preservation activities but also as effective informal education for preparing youth to navigate an increasingly dynamic world of work.

Several limitations should be acknowledged, including the focus on one community setting and the limited duration of observation, which may not fully represent the broader dynamics of Sandur practices in other regions. Future research should employ comparative and longitudinal designs across different cultural contexts and integrate interdisciplinary perspectives to provide more comprehensive insights into the connection between traditional culture and career development.

This research suggests important practical implications. Schools can integrate local cultural traditions such as Sandur into extracurricular or project-based learning to strengthen students' adaptability skills. Cultural communities and local governments can collaborate to sustain Sandur as a learning ecosystem that supports youth skill development. Policymakers are encouraged to design programs that leverage local cultural practices as community-based career education, ensuring that cultural preservation simultaneously contributes to youth empowerment and workforce readiness.

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