

## **ABSTRACT**

*Despite rapid growth in internship participation among Indonesian university students, graduate unemployment remains high at 904,440 persons in 2025, suggesting that internship experience alone does not automatically lead to informed career decisions. This study aims to examine the effect of internship experience on career decision-making among university students, with self-efficacy as a mediating variable. The study is grounded in Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) developed by Lent et al. (1994), which posits that learning experiences shape self-efficacy beliefs and subsequently influence career decisions. Data were collected through a questionnaire administered to 163 students of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Diponegoro, who had completed or were currently undergoing an internship, and were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) via SmartPLS 4.*

*The results indicate that internship experience has a positive and significant effect on career decision-making (path coefficient = 0.364) and on self-efficacy (path coefficient = 0.494). Self-efficacy positively and significantly influences career decision-making (path coefficient = 0.471) and partially mediates the relationship between internship experience and career decision-making (indirect effect = 0.233). These findings provide empirical support for SCCT in the Indonesian higher education context. Future researchers are encouraged to examine additional mediating or moderating variables, such as career adaptability or social support, to further understand the psychological mechanisms underlying career decision-making among university students.*

**Keywords:** *internship experience, self-efficacy, career decision-making, Social Cognitive Career Theory, PLS-SEM*