

The Influence of Self-Efficacy, Work Interest, Competence, and Career Guidance on the Work Readiness of the Gen Z Workforce

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Abstract. This study explores the influence of self-efficacy, work interest, competence, and career guidance on the work readiness of the Gen Z workforce participating in the Tanah Laut Regency Manpower and Industry Office Internship Program. Data were collected from 40 participants through surveys, interviews, and observations. The analysis involved multiple regression tests to assess the impact of the variables on work readiness. The results indicate that self-efficacy, work interest, and competence positively influence work readiness, while career guidance also significantly prepares interns for the workforce. However, conflicting findings from previous studies regarding the impact of career guidance highlight the need for further research to clarify its effects. This study contributes to the understanding of factors that shape the work readiness of Gen Z, offering insights for educational institutions and career guidance programs to better equip future workers with the skills and confidence needed in a competitive job market.

Keywords: Career guidance, Competence, Gen Z, Self-efficacy, Work interest, Work readiness

1 Introduction

Education plays a vital role in enhancing the quality of human resources. In today's era of globalization, marked by challenges and intense competition, there is a growing need for highly skilled individuals. Gen Z must possess the necessary abilities, knowledge, and skills aligned with the development demands. This understanding of the workforce does not align with the current reality. The educational system's output cannot meet the needs of various development sectors that require professional workers. The shortage is evident not only in the number and types of workers but also in their quality.

The low quality of higher education produces graduates who lack the readiness to compete in the workforce. This mismatch contributes to the high unemployment rate in Indonesia, highlighting that education is failing to prepare individuals for employment adequately. Several factors influence work readiness, both internal and external. Internal factors include intelligence, talent, interest,

motivation, attitude, experience, and skills. External factors include influences from society, family, school, and the surrounding environment.

Readiness refers to a person's overall state that enables them to respond or react in a particular way to a given situation [1]. This readiness is influenced by the individual's ability to adapt to the circumstances, shaping their response. Readiness consists of three key aspects: (a) physical, mental, and emotional states; (b) the individual's needs, motives, and goals; and (c) the skills, knowledge, and prior learning they have acquired.

Work readiness is a person's reaction to be willing to do something. Readiness is very important to obtain maximum results. If an individual or student is highly ready to learn, work, or do other things, they will feel comfortable and able to do various things in all aspects or fields. Work readiness is a person's overall state, influencing their ability to respond to job demands [2]. An individual's current circumstances directly affect how they react in the workplace. Organizational performance is shaped by a range of factors, with both employees [3] and leaders [4] playing pivotal roles in driving productivity and overall effectiveness.

Self-efficacy is the level of interns' ability to work and adapt to the work environment more quickly because self-efficacy shows its implementation through behavioral changes that can form the readiness for the learning process that interns have undergone [5]. Interns who already feel they have the ability will assume and feel confident they can get the job. Someone who can give a positive impression of their abilities will have a greater chance of getting a job. This self-efficacy directs individuals to understand their condition realistically and adjust between expectations of the job they want and their abilities [6].

Knowledge of the workforce is enhanced through internship programs, which provide valuable experience for the younger generation. This experience is essential when starting a job after graduation, as internships help ease the transition into the working world. In addition to learning how to secure employment, individuals also gain insight into finding jobs that align with their talents and interests. Talents and interests drive individuals to focus and engage more actively in activities that match their strengths and preferences.

Experience is knowledge or skills mastered by someone obtained from learning either intentionally or unintentionally [7]. Experience is divided into 2, namely 1) direct experience obtained through direct participation and action and 2) substitute experience obtained through direct observation, pictures, graphics, words, and symbols. Through the internship experience, it is hoped that the young generation can have certain competencies, namely the level of knowledge, skills, and work ethic that are following the demands of the world of work and give recognition and appreciation to work experience as part of the educational process.

Another internal factor influencing work readiness is work interest. A strong interest in a particular field is valuable in achieving related goals. An individual's level of interest directly affects their involvement in an activity. Work interest can be a powerful catalyst for worker engagement and involvement [8][9]. When individuals are genuinely interested in their work, they are more likely to invest themselves fully, demonstrating higher levels of commitment, motivation, and productivity. This deep sense of engagement enhances individual performance and contributes to a more dynamic and collaborative workplace culture. The greater the interest and attention someone has, the more invested they become in their work.

Employees must possess the necessary skills and expertise relevant to their field to perform tasks effectively and deliver accurate results. Employee performance improvement is influenced by

various factors, with competence playing a pivotal role. Competence enhances and broadens work capabilities, leading to increased efficiency. Repeated practice of the same task enables individuals to perform it more quickly and skillfully. This is because employees are better equipped to execute their responsibilities as they become competent. Competence is an individual's ability to hold market value, shaped by creativity and innovation [10], [11]. It reflects the capacity to perform tasks accurately, leveraging knowledge, skills, and attitudes to achieve a competitive edge.

Career guidance is a process of assisting an approach with the aim that interns can understand their potential, get to know the world of work, then try to plan their future according to their ideals, and make decisions that follow the potential of the interns and their decisions are expected to be relevant to the requirements and demands of the chosen career. Career guidance is a particular form of guidance, initially called vocational guidance [12].

Self-efficacy, work interest, and career guidance simultaneously and partially affect work readiness [5][13][14]. The studies suggest that interns should enhance their work readiness and self-efficacy, better understand their interests and that educators should improve career guidance services. However, some studies present a unique finding regarding career guidance, indicating a negative relationship [5], [14]. This suggests that more frequent career guidance sessions may lower students' confidence in their readiness for the workforce as they begin to feel less prepared. Given the conflicting results regarding the impact of career guidance on work readiness, further research is needed to clarify its effects. This discrepancy points to a research gap that warrants deeper investigation into how career guidance influences work readiness.

2 Hypotheses Development

The hypotheses proposed in this study are as follows:

- a. H1: Self-efficacy affects the work readiness of the Gen Z workforce in the Internship Program.

Self-efficacy is a person's belief in their ability to achieve goals and overcome obstacles to achieve a result in a particular situation. High efficacy possessed by individuals can also provide cognitive motivation to act better toward the goals that the individual wants to achieve. Self-efficacy is important for adolescents to continue facing all the changes [15]. Self-efficacy is related to the belief that one can carry out the expected actions. Efficacy is a self-assessment of whether one can carry out good or bad actions, right or wrong, and can or cannot do them according to the requirements. Efficacy is not the same as aspiration (ideals) because aspirations describe something ideal that should be achieved. In contrast, efficacy describes assessing one's abilities [16]. Self-efficacy significantly affects work readiness with a determination coefficient of 35.5%, while the remaining 64.5% is influenced by other variables not examined in this study [17].

- b. H2: Work interest affects the work readiness of the Gen Z workforce in the Internship Program.

Interest is a feeling or internal drive that motivates someone to engage in an activity. It significantly impacts how a person approaches tasks, as strong interest enables them to perform more effectively. In contrast, a lack of interest leads to less optimal results. A strong

interest fosters determination and persistence, helping individuals overcome challenges without easily giving up. Interest from within can boost motivation, influencing learning outcomes and achievements. Entrepreneurship education, self-efficacy, and work interest contribute to work readiness [18].

- c. H3: Competence influences the work readiness of the Gen Z workforce in the Internship Program.

Competence explains what people do in the workplace at various levels. It details the standards of each level, identifying the characteristics, knowledge, and skills required by individuals who carry out tasks and responsibilities effectively to achieve professional quality standards in work. Human resource competence is competence related to knowledge, skills, abilities, and personality characteristics that directly affect their performance [19]. Thus, it can be concluded that competence can also be interpreted as the ability and willingness to carry out work effectively and efficiently to achieve organizational goals. Work competence, career guidance, and self-efficacy positively affect students' work readiness [20]. However, each variable has a different effect. The work competence variable and the self-efficacy variable have a positive impact on work readiness.

- d. H4: Career guidance affects the work readiness of the Gen Z workforce in the Internship Program.

Several studies have reported mixed findings, showing a positive and negative relationship between career guidance and work readiness [5][13][14]. Due to these conflicting results on the role of career guidance in fostering work readiness, further research is necessary to clarify its true impact. This gap presents an opportunity to understand better how career guidance influences students' transition into the workforce.

- e. H5: Self-efficacy, work interest, competence, and career guidance simultaneously influence the work readiness of the Gen Z workforce in the internship program.

Based on the background, objectives, and literature review, this study's theoretical framework can be seen in Figure 1.

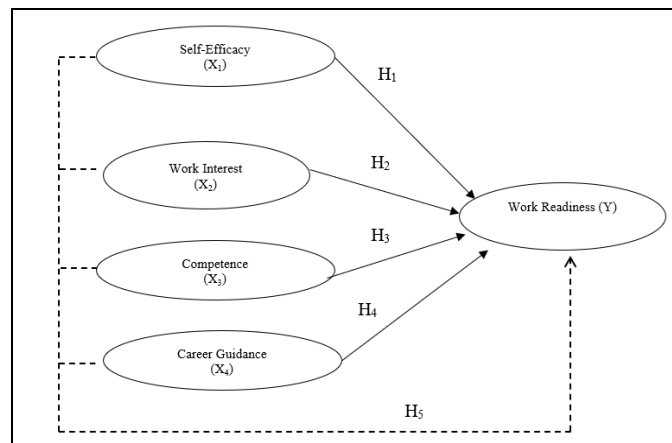


Fig. 1. Theoretical Framework

Note:

_____ : Partial

----- : Simultaneous

3 Methods

The population of this study consisted of 40 internship participants at the Manpower and Industry Office of Tanah Laut Regency in 2023. Respondents in research can be deliberately selected through purposive sampling to ensure they align with the study's specific objectives [21]. Since all 40 participants were included, a census was used. Data collection methods encompassed surveys, observations, interviews, documentation, and literature reviews, which researchers frequently use [22]. The data analysis involved testing the research instruments for validity and reliability. Before the regression analysis, classical assumption tests were performed, including normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity tests. Hypothesis testing was conducted using the F-test and t-test to assess the significance of the findings.

4 Results and Discussion

4.1 Characteristics of Research Respondents

The respondents in this study comprised 17 females (42.5%) and 23 males (57.5%). Most participants in the Tanah Laut Regency Manpower and Industry Office internship program had a vocational high school background, with 23 specializing in Mechanical Engineering and 17 in Office Administration. In terms of age, most participants were 18 years old (24 individuals), followed by 7 participants who were 19, 5 participants who were 20, and 4 participants who were 21 years old.

4.2 Validity and Reliability Tests

As shown in **Table 1**, the statement items are considered valid, as indicated by the Corrected Item-Total Correlation (r-value), which exceeds 0.312 (r-table). Additionally, in **Table 2**, Cronbach's Alpha value is above 0.60 (reliable). Thus, all variables are included in the regression estimation analysis.

Table 1. Validity Test Results

Variable	Item	R-value
Self-efficacy	P1	0.670
	P2	0.629
	P3	0.700
	P4	0.720
	P5	0.785
Work interest	P1	0.720
	P2	0.630
	P3	0.543

Work competence	P4	0.661
	P5	0.597
	P1	0.848
	P2	0.770
	P3	0.853
Career guidance	P1	0.576
	P2	0.668
	P3	0.695
	P4	0.666
	P5	0.663

Table 2. Reliability Test Results

Variable	Cronbach Alpha
Self-efficacy	0.735
Work interest	0.613
Work competence	0.762
Career guidance	0.664

4.3 Classical Assumption Test

The Normality Test aims to test whether or not the data used has a normal distribution in a regression model. The statistical normality test used is the non-parametric One Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistical test, showing a result of 0.200, which means the value is $p > 0.05$. It can be said that the data in this study is normally distributed.

Multicollinearity test is a form of testing for assumptions in multiple regression. The multicollinearity assumption states that the independent variables must be free from multicollinearity symptoms. The multicollinearity test can be known by the VIF value for each predictor with the requirement to be free from multicollinearity if the VIF value is not more than 10 and the tolerance number is not more than 1. The VIF value is not more than 10, and the tolerance number is not more than 1, so it is declared free from multicollinearity, as shown in **Table 3**.

Table 3. Multicollinearity Test Results

Variable	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
Self-efficacy	0.564	1.772
Work interest	0.626	1.598
Work competence	0.510	1.961
Career guidance	0.719	1.391

Table 4 shows that the tested variables do not contain heteroscedasticity because the significance of the correlation results is greater ($>$) than 0.05 (5%), so if the data are enlarged, it does not cause the error to become greater.

Table 4. Heteroskedasticity Test Results

Variable	Cronbach Alpha
Self-efficacy	0.875
Work interest	0.594
Work competence	0.154
Career guidance	0.465

4.4 Multiple Regression Analysis

The results of the regression analysis are shown in **Table 5**.

Table 5. Multiple Linear Regression Test Results

Independent Variable	Koefisien Regresi	t-test	Sig	Note
Self-efficacy	0.302	3.035	0.005	Significant
Work interest	0.224	2.373	0.023	Significant
Work competence	0.361	3.453	0.001	Significant
Career guidance	0.234	2.660	0.012	Significant
Constant: 4.957				
F-test: 36.091 (Sig 0.000)				
F-table: 2.839				
t-table: 1.684				
R: 0.897				
R-Square: 0.805				

5 Discussion

Based on **Table 5**, this study's results indicate that self-efficacy affects the work readiness of the Gen Z workforce in the Tanah Laut Regency Manpower and Industry Service Internship Program. Gen Z in the Tanah Laut Regency Manpower and Industry Service internship program can fulfil their self-efficacy, overcome their difficulties when given tasks, and diligently complete them. Self-efficacy is one of the most influential aspects of self-knowledge in everyday human life. This is because self-efficacy also influences individuals in determining the actions to achieve a goal, including estimates of various events faced [15]. The survey results prove that Self-efficacy significantly affects work readiness.

The findings of this study reveal that work interest significantly influences the work readiness of the Gen Z workforce participating in the internship program. Work interest is critical in driving individuals' efforts toward achieving their goals. These results align with previous research [17], highlighting the importance of solid work interest in fostering persistence and determination. For Gen Z, a high level of work interest enhances their commitment to reaching desired career outcomes.

This study's results indicate that competence affects the work readiness of the Gen Z workforce in the internship program. Competence describes each job's function, role, and responsibility by Gen Z. Competence also determines the weight of the work carried out by Gen Z; the more competence is given, the better the work results are produced. This finding supports that competence is the ability to carry out or do a job or task based on knowledge and skills and supported by the work attitude required by the job [23]. Competence shows skills or expertise characterized by professionalism in a particular field as being most important and superior.

The results of this study indicate that career guidance affects the work readiness of the Gen Z workforce in the internship program. Gen Z needs career guidance in the internship program because it helps raise awareness and increase its potential value so that Gen Z can realize its potential in the surrounding environment. This finding aligns with a previous study [14] stating that self-efficacy, work interest, and career guidance all impact work readiness.

The study's results show that self-efficacy, work interest, and career guidance affect work readiness simultaneously and partially. The suggestions given in this study are that to improve interns' work readiness, interns may increase their self-efficacy and work competence and understand their work passion/interest.

On the other hand, organizations should increase their understanding of interns' interests and improve career guidance services. Readiness is a reaction from someone to be willing to do something. Readiness is very important to obtain maximum results. If individuals or internship participants are highly ready, they will feel comfortable and able to do various things in all aspects or fields when carrying out learning, work, or other things.

6 Conclusions

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that self-efficacy significantly impacts the work readiness of Gen Z participants in the Tanah Laut Regency Manpower and Industry Office Internship Program. Higher self-efficacy equips them to overcome challenges, reflecting their confidence in their abilities. Furthermore, work interest is vital in motivating Gen Z to pursue their goals, enhancing their focus and perseverance. Competence also positively affects work readiness, as relevant knowledge, skills, abilities, and personal attributes align with workplace expectations, directly improving performance. Additionally, career guidance proves valuable in helping Gen Z prepare for the transition to the workforce, offering insights and practical support. Together, self-efficacy, work interest, competence, and career guidance collectively shape the work readiness of the Gen Z workforce, underscoring the importance of these factors in developing a capable and motivated future workforce.

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