DOES INDUSTRIAL WORK PRACTICE EXPERIENCE AND VOCATIONAL COMPETENCE STRENGTHEN WORK READINESS THROUGH EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS?

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to determine the effect of industrial work practice experience and vocational competence on job readiness through employability skills at State Vocational High School 3 Depok. The research method used is quantitative research method with a descriptive approach. The population used in this study were students of State Vocational High School 3 Depok in all expertise programs, namely Construction and Property Business, Computer and Network Engineering, Online Business and Marketing, Accounting and Institutional Finance, Islamic Banking and Office Management Automation consisting of 450 students with a sample of 212 students. This research model uses a path analysis model and the data analysis technique used is SEM (Structural Equation Modeling) using the SmartPLS version 3 application. This shows that industrial work practice experience and vocational competence have a positive and significant direct effect on work readiness, and also have indirect effect through employability skills.

Keyword: Industrial work practices experience, Vocational competency, Employability skill, Work readiness

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk mengetahui pengaruh pengalaman praktik kerja industri dan kompetensi kejuruan terhadap kesiapan kerja melalui *employability skill* pada SMK Negeri 3 Depok. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah metodee penelitian kuantitatif dengan pendekatan deskriptif. Populasi yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah siswa SMK Negeri 3 Depok semua program keahlian yaitu Bisnis Konstruksi dan Properti, Teknik Komputer dan Jaringan, Bisnis Daring dan Pemasaran, Akuntansi dan Keuangan Lembaga, Perbankan Syariah dan Otomatisasi Tata Kelola Perkantoran yang terdiri dari 450 siswa dengan sampel sebanyak 212 siswa. Model penelitian ini menggunakan model analisis jalur (*path analysis*) dan teknik analisis data yang digunakan adalah SEM (*Structural Equation Modeling*) dengan menggunakan aplikasi SmartPLS versi 3. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pengalaman praktik kerja industri dan kompetensi kejuruan berpengaruh langsung secara positif dan signifikan terhadap kesiapan kerja, serta juga memiliki pengaruh tidak langsung melalui *employability skill*.

Kata Kunci: Pengalaman praktik kerja industri, Kompetensi kejuruan, *Employability skill*, Kesiapan kerja

INTRODUCTION

Vocational High School aims to prepare students to become productive human beings, able to work independently, fill job vacancies in the business world and the industrial world as middle-level workers in accordance with the competencies in the selected expertise program as stated in the National Education System Law Article 15. However, the existence of Vocational High School in preparing skilled middle-level workers still needs to be improved. Low levels of education and competence contribute to low labor productivity and will eventually create new unemployment. In February 2022, the open unemployment rate of Vocational High School graduates was still the highest compared to graduates of other education levels at 10.38%. Based on data obtained from (BPS RI, 2022) it shows that the purpose of organizing vocational education has not been achieved.

The high open unemployment rate of vocational high school compared to other levels of education shows that vocational high school graduates are not ready to work and meet the demands of the workforce according to their expertise. This can be caused by the lack of work readiness of vocational high school graduates and the gap between the skills possessed by vocational high school graduates and the skills needed in the industrial world and the inability of vocational high school to prepare vocational high school students to meet the needs of the world of work in accordance with the objectives of organizing vocational high school education.

To find out the plans of vocational students after graduation, the researcher made initial observations to students of State Vocational High School 3 Depok to find out their plans after graduating from vocational school. Then the results of vocational high school the students' plans are as follows:

Description	Number of Students	Percentage
Continuing to university	13	43%
Work	12	40%
Undecided	5	17%
Total	30	100%

Table 1. Students' plans after graduation

Source: Data processed by researchers (2023)

From the initial observation, it can be stated that 43% after graduating from vocational high school will continue to college and 40% choose to work immediately. The remaining 17% are still undecided whether to choose to work or continue to college. Based on this data, more choose to continue to college than to work directly. This shows that there is still a lack of work readiness for vocational students so they prefer to study again at college.

Several factors are identified as the problem of not being absorbed by vocational education graduates, including the information obtained is not sufficient to support obtaining employment, industry generally looks for experienced workers, many complaints from the industry that vocational high school graduates do not have the appropriate skills, especially employability to be able to survive in various situations and conditions and changes in the world of work (Hanafi, 2012; Wijaya et al., 2022).

Each company has its own criteria for recruiting employees, and it is certain that each company has its own way of selecting prospective employees. Not only vocational high school graduates participate in the selection, but also college graduates and entrepreneurs, so the competition for work for vocational high school graduates is very high. This shows how important the work readiness of vocational high school students is to enter the industrial or business world.

Graduates' work readiness provides confidence and certainty for vocational students in choosing their careers. Student work readiness is not only obtained from the knowledge gained from a vocational subject. In fact, vocational knowledge is not enough to be used as a provision for entering the world of work so that real work experience is needed from the industrial or business world through industrial work practices.

Students as subjects have many individual characteristics that differ from one another. Many factors or variables can affect student work readiness, both from internal and external factors. According to research conducted by Yusadinata et al. (2021) the influence of industrial work practice experience and work motivation affects work readiness. According to (Setyaningrum et al., 2018) organizational activeness and learning achievement have a positive effect on work readiness.

Research conducted by Huda et al. (2019) shows that parents' socioeconomic conditions are factors that influence work readiness. Other relevant research was also conducted by Chotimah and Suryani (2020) that field work practice, motivation to enter the world of work and self-efficacy are factors that influence work readiness. Researchers made initial observations of 30 students of Class XII of State Vocational High School 3 Depok to find out the factors that influence students' work readiness. The results of these initial observations are presented in Table 2.

No	Factors		Total n = 30 (100%)				
INO.		Yes	%	No	%		
1	Industrial Work Practice Experience	27	90%	3	10%		
2	Work Motivation	23	77%	7	23%		
3	Vocational Competence	30	100%	0	0%		
4	Family Economic Condition	17	57%	13	43%		
5	Organizational Activism	20	67%	10	33%		
6	Employability Skill	25	83%	5	17%		

Table 2. Factors Influencing Job Readiness

Source: Data processed by researchers (2023)

Based on the results of the initial observation, it shows that the vocational competency factor is the highest factor with a percentage of 100%. Then the factor with the highest percentage after vocational competence is industrial work practice experience at 90%. The next factor that influences work readiness is employability skills at 83%. Work motivation and organizational activity have a percentage of 77% and 67%. Family economic conditions are the last factor at 57%.

Based on several factors above, it can be concluded that there are 3 (three) factors that influence students' work readiness, namely vocational competence occupies the highest factor, the second highest factor is industrial work practice experience and the third highest factor is employability skills. Therefore, researchers use the variables of industrial work practice experience and vocational competence to see the influence of these factors on work readiness mediated by employability skills. Based on the background and supported by data, the aims of the research is to determine the magnitude of the influence of industrial work practice experience and vocational competence on student work readiness mediated by employability skills.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Work readiness according to Makki et al. (2015) are the skills, knowledge and attitudes that will enable new graduates to contribute productively to the achievement of organizational goals in the place where the individual works. According to Pool and Sewell (2007) to have high work readiness, several things are needed, namely expertise in accordance with their

fields, personality, intelligence and broad insight, understanding in thinking that makes a person able to choose and feel comfortable with their work so that they can achieve success, especially in the world of work.

Based on the opinions of experts, it can be concluded that work readiness is the willingness of individuals in a mature condition physically and mentally to be able to do a certain job supported by knowledge, skills and work attitudes and potentials in certain fields of work. Data collection in this study was measured based on responsibility, flexibility, psychomotor, communication, self view and work safety.

Individual abilities can be developed through training, practice, group work and selfstudy. Various efforts are made by vocational high school education institutions to be able to prepare vocational high school graduates who are ready to work, one of which is by providing work experience through industrial work practice programs. Vocational High School Curriculum (Dikmenjur, 2013), states that industrial work practice is a pattern of organizing training that is jointly managed between vocational high school and industry or professional associations as partner institutions, starting from the planning stage, implementation stage, to the evaluation stage, and certification which is a unified program using various alternative forms of implementation.

According to Wibowo (2016), argues that industrial work practice is a form of cooperation between vocational high school and industry that has been carried out by schools by giving trust to the industry to guide students to achieve competencies in accordance with the curriculum. With this collaboration, it is hoped that students can become the workforce needed according to the needs of the world of work.

Industrial work practice experience is defined as a training program provided by education providers to vocational high school students carried out in an industry, where students play a role and are treated like real employees in accordance with the expertise program studied at school (Anindya, Marsofiyati, & Adha, 2023). Data collection in this study was measured based on student seriousness, work knowledge, practical experience, work problem solving and guidance.

The implementation of industrial work practices is carried out based on the competencies in each expertise program (Praja et al., 2023). Spencer and Spencer (1993), argues that a competency is an underlying characteristic of an individual that is causally related to criterion-referenced effective and/or superior performance on a job or situation. A person is called competent in their field if their knowledge, skills and attitudes and work results are in accordance with the standards set and / or recognized by the institution or government (Musfah, 2011).

Further Barnawi and Arifin (2012), vocational competence or what can be called hard skills can be interpreted as a person's skills in terms of knowledge, technology, and technical skills related to their field of knowledge. Vocational competence for students is a set of knowledge and psychomotor and attitudes that must be possessed by students to be able to work in their field of expertise. Data collection in this study was measured based on understanding vocational competencies, applying competencies, ability to use work tools, speed of completing work and responsiveness.

In addition to soft skills and hard skills, another thing needed to improve work readiness is work skills. Employability skill is transferable core skill groups that represent essensial functional and enabling knowledge, skills, and attitudes required by 21st century workplace necessary for career success at all levels of employment and for all levels of education (Overtoom, 2000).

According to Ogbeide (2006) employability skills are basic and generic skills but are very useful in helping each individual to enter the world of work. Employability skills can be

seen as an ability possessed by individuals to be able to move in the labor market so that they are independently able to find, get and be able to maintain a job (de Grip et al., 2004).

From some of the opinions of the experts above, employability skills are an ability that includes the skills, knowledge and attitudes needed to enter the world of work, stay in a job and develop a career at work or for career development in a new workplace. Data collection in this study was measured based on occupational identity, confidence in success, learning tendencies, organizing social networks and training experience.Based on the literature review, the researcher formulates the following hypothesis:



Figure 1. Image Constellation Relations Between Variables Source: Data processed by researchers (2023)

METHOD

This type of research is quantitative research using survey methods and the data that researchers take is primary data or data that researchers obtain directly. While this type of research is a type of explanatory research, namely research that explains the causal relationship between variables that affect the hypothesis. The analysis technique used in this research is path analysis. The population of this study were students of State Vocational High School 3 Depok. The affordable population in this study were XII grade students of State Vocational High School 3 Depok in the 2022/2023 school year, totaling 450 students consisting of 5 expertise programs, namely Construction and Property Business, Computer and Network Engineering, Online Business and Marketing, Accounting and Institutional Finance, Islamic Banking and Office Management Automation. The sampling method in this study used proportional random sampling and based on the Isaac and Michael formula, the number of samples to be taken in this study was 212 students. This research instrument uses a Likert scale with answer categories that have been provided with 5 alternative answers. The 5 alternative answers are strongly agree (SS), agree (S), doubt (RR), disagree (TS) and strongly disagree (STS).

This research hypothesis testing was carried out using Structural Equation Model (SEM) research based on Partial Least Square (PLS) 3. Conducted in two stages, the first stage is to test the measurement model, namely testing the construct validity and reliability of each indicator. The second stage is to test the structural model which aims to determine whether there is an influence between variables / correlation between constructs measured using the t test from PLS.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Outer Model

Outer Model Testing, specifies the relationship between latent variables and their indicators, or it can be said that the outer model defines how each indicator relates to its latent variable. The following are the outer model results.





Source: Data processed by researchers (2023)

The figure above shows the results of testing the outer model in this study, with the results declared valid because the value on the construct is> 0.7. The following are the results of the calculation on outer loading:

	Employability Skill (X3)	Job Readiness (Y)	Vocational Competence (X2)	Industrial Work Practice Experience (X1)
ES1	0.725		· · ·	• · · ·
ES8	0.793			
ES11	0.759			
ES12	0.730			
ES4	0.748			
ES7	0.729			
KK12		0.822		
KK13		0.811		
KK14		0.844		
KK18		0.806		
KK4		0.828		
KK9		0.851		
KKJ1			0.784	
KKJ10			0.767	
KKJ12			0.769	
KKJ13			0.740	
KKJ2			0.800	
KKJ3			0.776	
KKJ5			0.730	
KKJ6			0.800	
KKJ7			0.766	
KKJ8			0.776	
KKJ9			0.757	
PPKI10				0.740

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	Employability	Job Readiness (Y)	Vocational Competence	Industrial Work Practice
	Skill (X3)		(X2)	Experience (X1)
PPKI11				0.741
PPKI15				0.706
PPKI2				0.750
PPKI4				0.748
PPKI5				0.781
PPKI7				0.760
PPKI9				0.724
KK1		0.815		

Source: Data processed by researchers (2023)

Based on the results of the outer loading factor in the table above, it can be concluded that all indicators of the variable constructs of Work Readiness, Industrial Work Practice Experience, Vocational Competence and Employability Skill have a value> 0.7 which means that the indicators of all variables meet the validity requirements.

Test discriminant validity by looking at the cross loading on the measuring items of each variable. The cross loading value of each variable must be greater than 0.7. The following is a cross loading table from this study.

	Employability Skill (X3)	Job Readiness (Y)	Vocational Competence (X2)	Industrial Work Practice Experience (X1)
ES1	0.725	0.615	0.566	0.561
ES8	0.793	0.518	0.748	0.557
ES11	0.759	0.579	0.623	0.605
ES12	0.730	0.519	0.650	0.571
ES4	0.748	0.460	0.643	0.540
ES7	0.729	0.608	0.490	0.595
KK1	0.543	0.815	0.491	0.517
KK12	0.669	0.822	0.687	0.669
KK13	0.582	0.811	0.484	0.579
KK14	0.629	0.844	0.624	0.609
KK18	0.640	0.806	0.617	0.637
KK4	0.565	0.828	0.567	0.551
KK9	0.602	0.851	0.575	0.577
KKJ1	0.648	0.559	0.784	0.623
KKJ10	0.744	0.640	0.767	0.671
KKJ12	0.597	0.510	0.769	0.513
KKJ13	0.550	0.508	0.740	0.486
KKJ2	0.736	0.529	0.800	0.632
KKJ3	0.638	0.683	0.776	0.591
KKJ5	0.575	0.425	0.730	0.422
KKJ6	0.630	0.510	0.800	0.472
KKJ7	0.600	0.547	0.766	0.535
KKJ8	0.619	0.507	0.776	0.532
KKJ9	0.655	0.512	0.757	0.537
PPKI10	0.671	0.568	0.627	0.740
PPKI11	0.664	0.670	0.554	0.741
PPKI15	0.528	0.489	0.509	0.706
PPKI2	0.470	0.524	0.511	0.750
PPKI4	0.460	0.492	0.485	0.748
PPKI5	0.573	0.588	0.570	0.781
PPKI7	0.501	0.452	0.491	0.760
PPKI9	0.617	0.447	0.484	0.724

Table 4. Cross Loading

Source: Data processed by researchers (2023)

Based on the cross loading table above, the constructs of the Work Readiness (KK), Industrial Work Practice Experience (PPKI), Vocational Competence (KKJ) and Employability Skill (ES) variables have a greater construct value than the loading value of other constructs. A greater value indicates the suitability of an indicator to explain its construct than to explain other constructs.

Furthermore, discriminant validity can be strengthened by looking at square root of average extracted (AVE), composite reliability and cronbach's alpha. The average variance extracted (AVE) index results, composite reliability, and cronbach's alpha can be seen in the Table 5.

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Job Readiness (Y)	0.922	0.937	0.682
Industrial Work Practice Experience (X1)	0.885	0.908	0.553
Vocational Competence (X2)	0.931	0.941	0.593
Employability Skill (X3)	0.842	0.884	0.559

Fable 5. Convergent	Validity
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Source: Data processed by researchers (2023)

Based on this table, it can be seen that the industrial work practice experience variable (X1) has a composite reliability value of 0.908 with an AVE value of 0.553. The vocational competency variable has a composite reliability value of 0.941 with an AVE value of 0.593. The employability skill variable (X3) as a mediating variable has a composite reliability value of 0.884 with an AVE value of 0.559. The work readiness variable (Y) has a composite reliability value of 0.937 with an AVE of 0.682. These results indicate that all variables meet convergent validity because they have a composite reliability value above 0.7 and an AVE value above 0.5. So that all variables meet the reliability criteria.

Inner Model

R-Square (R²)

The R-Square (R^2) value is used to determine the proportion of variance in the value of certain dependent latent constructs that can be explained by independent latent constructs. The results of the R-Square calculation in this study can be seen in the following table.

Table 5. R-Square (R)				
Variable	R Square			
Employability Skill (X3)	0.749			
Job Readiness (Y)	0.616			

Table 5. R-Square (R²)

Source: Data processed by researchers (2023)

Based on the R-Square (R^2) table above, the R-Square of path model I = 0.749 means that the ability of the variable constructs of industrial work practice experience and vocational competence in explaining employability skills is 0.749 or 74.9 percent (medium).

R-Square path model II = 0.616 means that the construct ability of industrial work practice experience variables and vocational competence in explaining work readiness is 0.616 or 61.6 percent (medium). It can be concluded that industrial work practice experience and vocational competence have a relationship with work readiness and in the first path model it can be seen that industrial work practice experience and vocational competence have a greater relationship through employability skills as a mediator.

F-Square (f²)

The f-Square value is used to assess how much relative influence the independent latent construct has on the dependent latent construct. The results of the f-Square calculation in this study can be seen in the following table.

Table 6. f-Square (f^2)					
	Employability Skill (X3)	Job Readiness (Y)			
Industrial Work Practice Experience (X1)	0.235	0.117			
Vocational Competence (X2)	0.653	0.156			
Employability Skill (X3)		0.158			

Source: Data processed by researchers (2023)

The relationship between the variable constructs of industrial work practice experience and the employability skill construct is 0.235, which means that both have a moderate relationship. The relationship between the variable constructs of industrial work practice experience and the work readiness construct is 0.117, which means that both have a weak relationship. The relationship between the vocational competency variable construct and the employability skill construct is 0.653 which means that both have a strong relationship. The relationship between the vocational competency variable construct and the work readiness construct is 0.156, which means that both have a moderate relationship. The relationship between the employability skill variable construct and the work readiness which means that both have a moderate relationship. The relationship which means that both have a moderate relationship.

Hypothesis Test

Researchers conducted hypothesis testing through direct effect measurement by looking at the path coefficient results, while the measurement of intervening variables in this study was seen from the indirect effect results. The results of the f-Square calculation in this study can be seen in the following figures and tables.



Figure 3. Image of Graphical Output Bootstrapping

Source: Data processed by researchers (2023)

The purpose of the path coefficient is to test the hypothesis of the direct effect of an independent construct on the dependent construct. In hypothesis testing, it can be seen through the t-statistic value obtained from testing the path coefficients, where the t test can be seen from the T-statistic value and P Value.

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Table 7. Path Coefficient					
	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Employability Skill (X3) -> Job Readiness (Y)	0.298	0.301	0.084	3.526	0,000
Vocational Competency (X2) -> Employability Skill (X3)	0.581	0.583	0.047	12.251	0,000
Vocational Competency (X2) -> Job Readiness (Y)	0.339	0.338	0.084	4.051	0,000
Industrial Work Practice Experience (X1) -> Employability Skill (X3)	0.348	0.348	0.046	7.546	0,000
Industrial Work Practice Experience (X1) -> Job Readiness (Y)	0.338	0.345	0.088	3.818	0,000

Source: Data processed by researchers (2023)

Indirect effect analysis aims to test the hypothesis of the indirect effect of an independent construct on the dependent construct mediated by an intervening construct.

Table 8. Indirect Effect					
	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Vocational Competency (X2) -> Employability Skill (X3) -> Job Readiness (Y)	0.234	0.237	0.052	4.503	0,000
Industrial Work Practice Experience (X1) -> Employability Skill (X3) -> Job Readiness (Y)	0.348	0.352	0.049	7.108	0,000

Source: Data processed by researchers (2023)

Discussion

Based on the results of measuring the direct effect by looking at the results of the path coefficient and indirect effect, it can be concluded (1) H1: the industrial work practice experience variable has a positive effect on work readiness directly seen from the t-statistics value> 1.96 which is 3.818 and p-values are 0.000 < 0.05. So the first hypothesis can be accepted. So the first hypothesis in this study can be accepted. (2) H2: vocational competency variables have a positive effect on work readiness directly seen from the value of t-statistics> 1.96, which amounted to 4.051 and p-values are 0.000 < 0.05. So the second hypothesis in this study can be accepted. (3) H3: employability skill variables have a positive effect on work readiness directly seen from the t-statistics value> 1.96 which is equal to 3.526 and p-values are 0.000 <0.05. So the third hypothesis in this study can be accepted. (4) H4: the industrial work practice experience variable has a positive effect on employability skills directly seen from the t-statistics value> 1.96, which is 7.546 and the p-values are 0.000 < 0.05. So the fourth hypothesis in this study can be accepted. (5) H5: vocational competency variables have a positive effect on employability skills directly seen from the t-statistics value> 1.96, which is 12.251 and the p-values are 0.000 < 0.05. So the hypothesis in this study can be accepted. (6) H6: the industrial work practice experience variable affects job readiness with employability skills as a mediator between the two. The t-statistics value of the influence of the three variables amounted to 7.108 > 1.96 and p-values 0.000 < 0.05. So it can be concluded that the employability skill variable mediates the effect of industrial work practice experience on work readiness and the sixth hypothesis in this study can be accepted. (7) H7: vocational competence variables affect job readiness with employability skills as a mediator between the two. The t-statistics value of the influence of the three variables amounted to 4.503 > 1.96 and p-values 0.000 < 0.05. So it can be concluded that the employability skill variable mediates the effect of vocational competence on work readiness and the seventh hypothesis in this study can be accepted. This research is in line with previous research, namely, (Putriatama et al., 2016), (Noviyanti & Setiyani, 2019), (Azizah et al., 2021), (Wardani et al., 2017) and (Fitriyanto, 2019).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The work readiness of vocational high school students must be improved considering that the main purpose of organizing vocational high school education is to produce graduates who are ready to work with their knowledge, skills and experience so that in the future the open unemployment rate of vocational high school will no longer be the highest. Based on the results of the research analysis that has been carried out, the researcher can conclude the following: (1) Industrial work practice experience has a significant and positive effect on work readiness. This means that if students have high industrial work practice experience, they will have high work readiness. (2) Vocational competence has a significant and positive effect on work readiness. This means that if students have high vocational competence, the more ready students are to work. (3) Employability skills have a significant and positive effect on work readiness. This means that if students have high employability skills, their work readiness will increase. (4) Industrial work practice experience has a significant and positive effect on employability skills. This means that if the industrial work practice experience of students is high, students will have high employability skills. (5) Vocational competence has a significant and positive effect on employability skills. This means that if the vocational competence of students increases, the employability skills of students will increase. (6) Industrial work practice experience affects job readiness with employability skills as a mediator with a significant indirect effect. This means that the experience of industrial work practice is able to influence work readiness through the employability skills of students. (7) Vocational competence affects job readiness with employability skills as a mediator has a significant indirect effect. This means that vocational competence is able to influence work readiness through employability skills of students.

This study has several limitations that need to be refined with other studies. The results of this study cannot be applied to all schools because of the different characteristics of schools in each region. It would be nice if further research is conducted with a wider scope so that the results of the study can cover a wider area and identify more problems and solutions found. The dependent variable, namely work readiness, is not only influenced by industrial work practice experience, vocational competence and employability skills. Other researchers who are interested in conducting similar research are advised to analyze the influence of other variables that can influence work readiness in accordance with the times to get the latest and appropriate results. This research only uses a quantitative approach using SEM - Partial Least Square (PLS). Researchers suggest that further research be carried out using a qualitative approach to obtain more comprehensive results in terms of identifying factors that influence work readiness.

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