



THE EFFECT OF SOFT SKILLS AND SELF-EFFICACY ON GENERATION Z'S WORK READINESS IN TASIKMALAYA CITY

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Abstract: This study aims to examine the influence of soft skills and self-efficacy on the work readiness of Generation Z in Tasikmalaya City. Using a quantitative approach, this study explores how non-technical skills such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and leadership, as well as individuals' confidence in their abilities, contribute to the readiness of young people to enter the workforce. The theoretical foundation is based on Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory (1997) and Becker's Human Capital Theory (1993), which emphasize the integration of psychological and behavioral competencies as essential components for employability. The study findings indicate that soft skills and self-efficacy play a significant and positive role in shaping work readiness, indicating that graduates with strong interpersonal and self-regulation skills are more adaptable and confident in facing professional challenges. This study highlights the importance of educational institutions and policymakers in encouraging personal development and skills-based training to enhance graduates' competitiveness in an increasingly dynamic labor market.

Keywords: Soft Skills; Self-Efficacy; Job Readiness.

1. Introduction

Human Resources (HR) are a key asset in creating healthy competition in organizations. In the Industry 4.0 era, technical skills alone are not enough; individuals also need soft skills and self-efficacy to navigate the complexities of the workplace (Syifa, FD, Wolor, CW, & Adha, 2023). Generation Z, growing up in the digital age, faces challenges in developing the interpersonal skills and self-confidence necessary for the transition to the workforce (Fitriyani et al., 2025).

Generation Z, born between 1997 and 2012, grew up in a time of rapid digitalization, social media, and ever-evolving economic and technological change. They generally possess strong technological skills and are able to absorb new information quickly. However, several studies have shown that they tend to lack non-technical skills such as interpersonal communication, stress resilience, adaptability to formal work environments (soft skills), and confidence in facing work challenges. In Indonesian research, soft skills and self-confidence are considered important factors influencing the job readiness of new graduates (Fitriyani et al., 2025). However, other studies have found that although soft skills have a positive effect, the impact is not always statistically significant, depending on variables such as work motivation or digital literacy levels (Karimah, Muhammad Nuskan Abdi, and Mufid 2025).

Generation Z is a young age group dominating the labor market. They grew up amidst the digital transformation, thus having an advantage in using technology. However, they also face challenges in developing interpersonal skills, adaptability, and confidence in the workplace. According to a study (Khodapanah 2025), although Generation Z is quick to learn technology, gaps in soft skills and self-efficacy often affect their job readiness.

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Therefore, understanding the characteristics and behaviors of Generation Z is crucial in creating strategies to improve job readiness based on psychological and social competencies.

At the national level, BPS data shows a worrying phenomenon regarding the younger generation: in the 2020 Population Census, 9.9 million Generation Z (aged 15–24) in Indonesia were recorded as unemployed. NEET (Not in Work, Education, or Training) among Generation Z is also high: the August 2023 National Labor Force Survey (Sakernas) reported that approximately 22.25% of the 44.7 million Generation Z were NEET. This situation indicates that many of this generation are not yet ready to enter the workforce, either due to competency barriers, self-confidence, or other supporting factors.

Based on global, national and regional conditions, this research was conducted in Tasikmalaya City to determine the extent to which soft skills and self-efficacy affect the work readiness of Generation Z. The results of this study are expected to provide clear and concrete information about the situation of Generation Z in Tasikmalaya City, so that it can help educational institutions, local governments and the private sector in designing soft skills training and increasing self-efficacy so that the younger generation of the nation's successors are better prepared to enter the world of work.

Based on Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1993), individuals who continuously invest in education, training, and work experience will increase their productivity in the labor market. In the context of Generation Z's work readiness, this theory is relevant to explain the importance of developing soft skills as part of intangible human capital, but has a significant impact on performance and competitiveness in the world of work. Work Readiness is not only determined by mastery of technical skills (hard skills), but also by non-technical abilities and an individual's self-confidence in their abilities. Soft skills include communication skills, teamwork, leadership, critical thinking, and problem-solving that shape professional behavior in the workplace (Mohammed and Ozdamli 2024; Winterton & Turner 2019) .

Self-Efficacy Theory (Bandura, 1997) within the framework of Social Cognitive Theory emphasizes the importance of a person's belief in their ability to organize and execute the actions necessary to achieve specific goals. In the context of job preparation, self-efficacy plays a crucial role in building confidence to face challenges in the workplace and adapt to a constantly changing professional environment. Self-efficacy reflects a person's belief in their ability to face tasks and challenges, which impacts motivation, persistence, and creativity at work (Kleppang, Steigen, and Finbråten 2023; Rahmawati, D., & Putra 2024) .

Previous research has extensively explored the relationship between soft skills, self-efficacy, and job readiness, but most of these studies were conducted in large cities and involved mediating variables such as motivation or internship experience. These findings have also been inconsistent, with self-efficacy sometimes showing a significant effect, and sometimes not. Furthermore, studies of Generation Z in non-metropolitan areas such as Tasikmalaya City are still limited. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by analyzing the direct and simultaneous influence of soft skills and self-efficacy on Generation Z's job readiness, in order to contribute to the development of education and employment in the region.

The novelty of This research is based on the simultaneous testing of the influence of soft skills and self -efficacy. on the work readiness of Generation Z in the region non metropolitan. In addition, this study also expands the application of Self-Efficacy Theory

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(Bandura, 1997) and Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1993). This study offers a conceptual model that emphasizes the importance of combining psychological and socioeconomic factors as determinants of work readiness among young people in the digital era. The purpose of this study is to analyze the influence of soft skills and self-efficacy on the work readiness of Generation Z in Tasikmalaya City, with the hope of contributing to the development of educational curricula and strategies for improving work readiness.

2. Research methods

This study uses a quantitative explanatory approach with *a cross-sectional survey design*. Data analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS 25 to examine the relationship between variables through multiple regression analysis. The population of this study was Generation Z. The sample obtained was 80 respondents and was taken using a purposive sampling technique. Data were collected using a Likert scale questionnaire and analyzed using SPSS 25. The variables studied included Soft Skills (X1), Self-Efficacy (X2), and Work Readiness (Y). Regression analysis and classical assumption tests were conducted to evaluate the hypothesis (Sujarweni, VW, & Utami 2019) .

Before conducting the regression analysis, validity and reliability tests were conducted to ensure the instrument was suitable for use. Validity testing was conducted using the Pearson Product Moment technique, where the validity criterion is determined based on the correlation value between items with a total value > 0.30 (Hair et al., 2020). All indicators showed correlation values above the established limit; thus, the instrument was considered valid.

The population in this study is Generation Z in Tasikmalaya City. The researcher used a purposive sampling method to select individuals who meet the requirements according to the criteria set in the study. The criteria used in this study's sampling were: 1) Generation Z females and males; 2) Aged 21-23 years; 3) Domiciled in Tasikmalaya City; 4) Final year students preparing to enter the workforce.

Since the exact population size is unknown, the sample size was determined based on the requirements of multiple regression analysis. According to Tacbacknick and Fidell (2012), the minimum recommended sample size for multiple regression can be calculated using the formula $N > 50 + 8 (2) = 66$. Therefore, the 80 respondents used in this study meet the minimum requirements of multiple regression analysis and are considered adequate for this study.

According to (Sugiyono, 2017:2) the research method is essentially a scientific method for obtaining data to achieve certain goals and uses, and the research is based on the characteristics of rational, empirical, and systematic scientific research. In this study, the method used is a quantitative method. This method was chosen because this study focuses on testing hypotheses, testing relationships between variables, and producing data in the form of numbers which are then analyzed using statistical tools. The quantitative approach is very suitable for research that aims to measure the Influence of Soft Skills and Self-Efficacy on Generation Z's Work Readiness in Tasikmalaya City, so that the data obtained can describe the phenomenon being studied objectively.

(Sugiyono, 2017:147) explains that descriptive analysis is used to provide a general description or explanation of collected data, without objectively testing hypotheses. The

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collected data is then presented in tables, graphs, or diagrams for easier understanding. The instruments used to collect the data are questionnaires and Likert scales for measurement.

The Likert scale is a measuring tool used to determine the attitudes, opinions, and perceptions of individuals or groups of people toward a social phenomenon. On this scale, respondents are asked to provide answers based on their level of agreement or disagreement with a number of statements presented (Umar, 2008: 78) .

3. Results and Discussion

This study shows that soft skills and self-efficacy have a positive influence on Generation Z's work readiness. The results of this study support Bandura's (1997) theory which states that self-efficacy is a primary psychological mechanism, as well as Becker's (1993) theory which considers soft skills as a form of non-cognitive capital that increases one's competitiveness. In the context of Indonesia's collectivist culture, the impact of self-efficacy is greater because it is influenced by social support (Kleppang et al., 2023). Theoretically, this study combines both theories, confirming that soft skills can strengthen self-efficacy in shaping the work readiness of the younger generation.

3.1 Reliability Statistics

Table 1. Reliability Statistic

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Results
Soft Skills (X ₁)	0.960	Reliable
Self-Efficacy (X ₂)	0.960	Reliable
Work Readiness (Y)	0.960	Reliable

Source: SPSS output (processed 2025)

All variables showed high reliability ($\alpha = 0.960$) which confirmed internal consistency (Syam, Salim, and Yusuf 2025). Based on the results of the reliability test, the Cronbach's Alpha value was 0.960 for all variables, namely Soft Skills (X₁), Self-Efficacy (X₂), and Job Readiness (Y). This value is far above the minimum reliability limit (0.60), so that all research instruments are declared very reliable.

3.2 Model Summary

Table 2. Model Summary

R	R²	Adjusted R²	Standard Error
0.899	0.809	0.804	2,369

Source: SPSS output (processed 2025)

Based on the results of the Model Summary, the values obtained were R = 0.899, R Square = 0.809, and Adjusted R Square = 0.804. This means that 80.9% of the variation in changes in work readiness can be explained by the soft skills and efficacy variables together, while the remaining 19.1% is influenced by other factors outside the model such as work experience, social environment, and personal motivation.

3.3 Coefficient (t-Test Results)

Table 3. Coefficient (t-Test Result)

Variables	B	T	Sig.	Results
Constant	0.838	0.481	0.632	-
Soft Skills (X ₁)	0.413	4,220	0.000	Important
Self-Efficacy (X ₂)	0.510	4,796	0.000	Important

Source: SPSS output (processed 2025)

The following regression equation is obtained:

$$Y = 0.838 + 0.413X_1 + 0.510X_2$$

The constant value shows that if soft skills (X₁) and self-efficacy (X₂) have a value of zero, the level of work readiness still has a basic score of 0.838. The positive regression coefficient indicates that each one-unit increase in soft skills will increase job readiness by 0.413 units, assuming other variables remain constant. The calculated t-value is 4.220 and the significance value is 0.000 (<0.05), indicating that soft skills have a positive and significant influence on job readiness. The positive regression coefficient indicates that every one unit increase in self-efficacy will increase work readiness by 0.510 units. The calculated t value = 4.796 and Sig. = 0.000 (<0.05), which indicates that self-efficacy also has a positive and significant effect on work readiness.

The results of the t-test show that:

The variable (X₁) has a t value of 4.220 with Sig. of 0.000 (<0.05).

The self-efficacy variable (X₂) has a t value of 4.796 with Sig. of 0.000 (<0.05).

Thus, both partially and simultaneously, these two independent variables have a positive and significant influence on work readiness (Y). The higher a person's soft skills and self-efficacy, the higher their readiness to face the world of work.

3.4 ANOVA (F Test Results)

Table 4. ANOVA

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1826.172	2	913,086	162,668	0.000
Remainder	432,215	77	5,613		

Source: SPSS output (processed 2025)

Based on the results of the ANOVA table, the calculated F value was 162.668 with a significance value of 0.000. Since Sig. <0.05, it can be concluded that the regression model built is suitable for use and both independent variables (soft skills and self-efficacy) simultaneously have a significant effect on Generation Z's work readiness in Tasikmalaya City.

The regression results indicate that soft skills and self-efficacy significantly influence work readiness. The adjusted R² value (0.804) indicates that 80.9% of the variation in work

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readiness is explained by these two variables. This finding is consistent with Bandura (1997) and Becker (1993) who highlight self-confidence and skill investment as key components of employability.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on data analysis and discussion regarding the influence of soft skills and self-efficacy on work readiness in Generation Z in Tasikmalaya City, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Soft skills have a positive and significant influence on job readiness. The partial test yielded a t-value of 4.220 with a significance level of 0.000, which is less than 0.05. This indicates that the better Generation Z's soft skills, such as communication, collaboration, problem-solving, and leadership, the higher their job readiness. These non-technical skills are crucial for adapting to the workplace.
2. Self-efficacy also has a positive and significant influence on job readiness. A partial t-test yielded a t-value of 4.796 with a significance level of 0.000, which is less than 0.05. This means that the higher Generation Z's confidence in facing tasks and challenges, the higher their readiness for the world of work. Strong self-efficacy increases enthusiasm, persistence, and courage in taking risks in the workplace.
3. Soft skills and self-efficacy simultaneously have a significant influence on job readiness. The F-test results show a calculated F-value of 162.668 with a significance level of 0.000, which is smaller than 0.05. The coefficient of determination (R^2) reaches 0.809, which means that 80.9% of changes in job readiness can be explained by these two variables. The remaining 19.1% is influenced by other factors such as work experience, motivation, or support from the surrounding environment. Therefore, the development of soft skills and self-efficacy is very important in shaping job readiness for Generation Z.

Theoretically, this study extends the application of Self-Efficacy Theory and Human Capital Theory by demonstrating that the two concepts reinforce each other in explaining the level of work readiness of the younger generation. Self-efficacy functions as a psychological mechanism that encourages the use of soft skills in the workplace, while soft skills act as a means to increase one's confidence in a professional context. The results of this study also confirm the findings of previous studies (Syam et al., 2025; Fitriyani et al., 2025), which found that soft skills and self-efficacy significantly influence the work readiness of the younger generation.

This study used only quantitative methods with a relatively small sample size ($n = 80$) and focused on one region, Tasikmalaya City. For future research, it is recommended to apply a mixed-methods approach or Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with a larger sample size to more accurately capture the relationships between unobserved (latent) variables. Additionally, additional variables such as work motivation, digital literacy, and social support should be added to further develop a more comprehensive theoretical model of youth work readiness.

Based on the research results and conclusions obtained, the researcher provides several suggestions as follows:

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1. For Students (Generation Z): Students should continue to develop social skills such as communication, collaboration, leadership, and problem-solving. They should also increase their self-efficacy by trying new things, being active in organizations, and participating in challenging projects or competitions.
2. For Industry and Employers: Companies and institutions are expected to not only evaluate technical skills but also provide opportunities for young graduates to hone communication and collaboration skills through internships, on-the-job training, or organized mentoring programs.
3. For Future Researchers: This study can be expanded by adding variables such as work motivation, internship experience, digital skills, or social support that may influence the work readiness of the younger generation.

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