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Research Paper

The Role of Self-efficacy and Locus of Control on Work Readiness Among Gen Z

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Abstract

As a generation who start entering the work force. Gen Z faces unique challenges and opportunities as they transition from education to employment. One issues that come up from this transition was readiness to work. The study explored how self-efficacy and locus of control influence work readiness in Generation Z. The research method use was quantitative research with multiple regression statistic to analyse the data. Respondents of the research were 70 students higher education in the last year ((M= 17; F= 53) and mean of age = 20.9 (20 years 10 months). The data were collect with questionnaire of general self-efficacy, locus of control and work readiness. The result show that self-efficacy significantly influence to work readiness, and locus of control did not influence to work readiness among generation Z. Based on this finding it can see that to improve the students' readiness to work, the intervention of self-efficacy was more useful than locus of control. This model suggests that training programs or interventions aimed at enhancing self-efficacy may be more effective in increasing work readiness than those that concentrate solely on the internal locus of control, especially among generation Z with all the uniqueness.

Keywords *self-efficacy, locus of control, work readiness, gen Z.*

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, Generation Z has been in the spotlight in the world of work because of their unique characteristics and values compared to previous generations, including in Indonesia. This generation, born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s, has a fast communication style, a tendency to work with advanced technology, and a preference for flexibility and life balance (Dangmei et al., 2016; Yunos & Din, 2019). However, Generation Z's main challenge is readiness to work, especially when entering the professional world, which often differs from their expectations.

Readiness to work refers to individuals' psychological readiness, skills, and attitudes to enter and adapt to the work environment (Caballero et al., 2011). Generation Z, who have become accustomed to technology and rapid information, may have different expectations at work, but their readiness to adapt to a dynamic and challenging work environment can be influenced by psychological factors such as self-efficacy and locus of control (Chavan & Carter, 2018; Handoko & Wijono, 2023). Self-efficacy, or an individual's confidence in his or her ability to achieve goals, is important to build confidence and initiative at work, which is needed by this generation in a competitive world of work. For example, individuals with high levels of self-efficacy tend to be more confident in taking on new challenges, brave to take initiative, and more open to learning new skills that are relevant in the workplace (Bandura, 1977).

In addition, the locus of control, an individual's perception of the extent to which they can control the results they achieve (Levenson, 2006; Rotter, 1966), also plays an important role in job readiness. Generation Z, who have an internal locus of control or the belief that they have control over their work results, tend to be more proactive and committed to their work. On the other hand, the external locus of control, where individuals feel that their work results are more influenced by

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external factors, can hinder their readiness to face job challenges, as they tend to lack confidence in taking responsibility for their work results (Rotter, 1966).

This study aims to examine the role of self-efficacy and locus of control in building work readiness among Generation Z. Many studies have focused on the relationship between self-efficacy and locus of control separately from work readiness (Handoko & Wijono, 2023; Judge et al., 2002). However, research that examines the interaction between self-efficacy and locus of control in shaping work readiness among Generation Z is still rare. For example, how high self-efficacy and internal locus of control collaborate or complement each other in increasing their readiness to work. Understanding how these two factors affect readiness to work is expected to help organizations and educational institutions in developing training programs that can increase the readiness of this generation to enter the world of work. Thus, Generation Z will be better prepared to navigate the challenges that exist while making a positive contribution to the organization. This was the urgency of why self-efficacy and locus of control need to be researched together in shaping work readiness among Generation Z.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Work readiness is a modern concept that has become popular in literature as a metric for assessing individuals' potential in the workforce or labour market (Caballero et al., 2011). Work readiness is defined as a personal attribute that describes knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are important aspects of completing tasks or work and adapting to the work environment. Personal attributes are: 1) general skills encompass cognitive abilities (such as problem-solving and critical thinking), job-related technical skills, and interpersonal skills (like communication and teamwork) (Caballero et al., 2011). 2) Psychological readiness includes self-efficacy, motivation, and emotional intelligence (Pool & Sewell, 2007). 3) Employability skills include various skills, knowledge, and personal attributes that improve graduates' prospects of obtaining employment and succeeding in their chosen fields (Yorke, 2010). Perceived work readiness is also reflected through self-view, which measures the individual's perceived readiness to work (Swann et al., 2007).

Self-efficacy has been the subject of numerous studies and is a dependable indicator of success in a variety of behaviours, including job performance and academic success (Meera & Jumana, 2015). A person who believes they can do a certain job or reach a particular goal is said to have self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is confidence in one's ability to succeed, and it relates to an individual's view of their capacity to impact their environment through motivation, cognitive abilities, and potential actions (Bandura, 1977). Bandura identified four key sources of self-efficacy: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological and emotional states. People with high self-efficacy have superior physical and mental health, establish realistic objectives and expectations, and are aware of their strengths and flaws. Generally, individuals with high self-efficacy possess more confidence in their ability to achieve long-term success than those with lower self-efficacy levels (Bandura, 2010).

Julian Rotter introduced the concept of locus of control in 1954, describing how rewards and punishments influence our behaviour. Locus of control refers to the level of confidence a person has in managing their experiences. Levenson further elaborated that the locus of control consists of two dimensions: internal and external. The internal locus of control is when an individual believes that their circumstances result from internal factors, while the external locus of control occurs when a person feels that their experiences are determined by external factors or luck (Levenson, 2006; Rotter, 1966; Stanley et al., 1983).

Self-efficacy refers to an individual’s belief in their ability to succeed at a new or specific task (Bandura, 2010). In the work context, employees with high self-efficacy tend to believe they can solve problems, handle tasks, and meet job demands effectively. This explains why individuals with

high self-efficacy could potentially demonstrate work readiness by showing their confidence in their ability to handle workplace challenges.

Hypothesis 1: Self-efficacy has positive effect on work readiness. The higher gen Z's self-efficacy, the higher work readiness.

Rotter (1966) explained the locus of control as individual believe they can control the outcomes they experience. Individual with an internal locus of control believe they can influence outcomes through their own actions and efforts. On other side, an external locus of control feel outcomes are more influenced by external factors such as luck or others action (help from others). In term of work readiness, individual with internal locus of control, are more likely to take responsibility, understand their strength and weakness, learn from their mistakes and seek chances to improve their capacities. This is because they believe they could control their performance, which encourage them to be more proactive, initiative and prepared.

Hypothesis 2: Locus of control has positive effect on work readiness. The higher gen Z's internal locus of control, the higher their work readiness.

The combination of high self-efficacy and an internal locus of control often fosters a strong sense of agency, which contributes to enhanced work readiness. Individual with high self-efficacy and high internal locus of control tend to shape confident and resilient in handling work difficulties because they believe in their abilities to control their performances or outcomes. The combination high self-efficacy and internal locus of control creates stronger sense of self-assurance. It makes individuals more prepare to deal with the job demands.

Hypothesis 3: There is an effect of self-efficacy and locus of control on work readiness among gen Z.

RESEARCH METHOD

As state on previous part of this article, there were three hypotheses:

1. Self-efficacy has positive effect on work readiness. The higher gen Z's self-efficacy, the higher work readiness.
2. Locus of control has positive effect on work readiness. The higher gen Z's internal locus of control, the higher their work readiness.
3. There is an effect of self-efficacy and locus of control on work readiness among gen Z.

The respondents were students of higher education in the last year (minimal in third year) from various universities. The sum of respondents were 70 students (M= 17; F= 53) and mean of age = 20.9 (20 years 10 months), collecting by convenience technique sampling. The sum of respondents was the G-Power calculator result with F-test family for multiple regression with 2 predictors; effect size = 0.15; error probability = 0.05 and the power = 0.80.

Data collection with questionnaires translates into Bahasa without back translation. After the translation, items were transferred into Google Forms and shared with respondents. Three instruments were used to collect data: 1) the General Self-efficacy scale, 2) the Locus of control scale, and 3) the Perceived Work Readiness scale (self-view). The validity of the questionnaires is conducted by content validity with evaluation by expert judgment whether the items are relevant to the construct or not. The reliability of the questionnaires use alpha Cronbach analysis with Jamovi.

Work readiness was measured by perceived work readiness in this research, which was measured by one question that reflected on what respondent felt about their readiness to work or their self-view of the readiness to work. The question was, on a scale of 1 to 10, how you could describe your readiness to work? The measurement of General self-efficacy uses the scale developed by Pond and Hay (1989) with 11 items on the Likert scale (1 strongly disagree – 5 strongly agree) and reliability coefficient (alpha Cronbach) = 0.743. Measuring Locus of control was

using the Levenson locus of control scale (Stanley et al., 1983b). It contains 24 items with a Likert scale ((-3) strongly disagree – (+3) strongly agree) and has three types of locus of control (Internal (alpha Cronbach = 0.80), Powerful Others (alpha Cronbach = 0.8620 and Chance (alpha Cronbach = 0.769)). The scoring of the Locus of control is explained in Table 1.

Table 1. Scoring of Levenson Locus of Control Scale

Locus of Internal	Total your responses for items 1, 4, 5, 9, 18, 19, 21, and 23 ; then add +24.
Locus of Powerful others	Total your responses for items 3, 8, 11, 13, 15, 17, 20, and 22; then add +24.
Locus of Chance	Total your responses for items 2, 6, 7, 10, 12, 14, 16, and 24; then add +24.

Based on Table 1 we can conclude that respondent with locus of control internal will have higher total score on this category. Respondent that lower total score in locus of internal; will categorize as external locus of control, without considering which is greater, the locus of power others or locus of chance. The data analysis of this research was quantitative approach with multiple regression analysis.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis was conduct with Jamovi. Result of the data analysis divided into three parts: 1) descriptive analysis; and 2) hypothetical testing

Table 2. Descriptive analysis result for each variable

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Perceived work readiness	7.41	1.68
Self-efficacy	40.2	1.25
Locus of internal	34.2	6.92
Locus of powerful others	22.6	10.7
Locus of chance	24.8	8.74

Table 2 shown the mean of each research variable, the respondents of this research show the internal locus of control, because we can see the highest of mean was internal locus for control. The perceived work readiness of respondents including higher than average, because the mean was above 5 (since the evaluation scale was 1 to 10). Likewise, self-efficacy shows a high tendency considering that empirical mean is greater than the hypothetical mean (3*11 = 33).

The normality test was conduct before multiple regression and the coefficient of normality was normal with Shapiro-Wilk 0.960, and p = 0.25 proven that the data was normal. The next step was conducting the multiple regression analysis, the result shown in the table 3.

Table 3. Multiple regression self-efficacy and internal locus of control on perceived work readiness

R	R^2	F	p
0.334	0.111	2.76	0.049*

*p significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 3 informed that the hypothesis was confirmed that the correlation of self-efficacy and internal locus of control on perceived work readiness are significant (p =0.049; p <0.05). Both of self-efficacy and internal locus of control influence perceived work readiness was 11.1% and 88.9% was other variables. The model coefficient regression of perceive work readiness shows on table 4.

Table 4. The model coefficient regression of perceive work readiness

Predictor	Estimate	t	p
Intercept	0.4081	0.115	0.909
Internal locus of control	-0.0512	-1.686	0.096
Self-efficacy	0.0707	2.025	0.047

Table 4 shows that locus of internal did not significantly influence the perceive work readiness (estimate = -0.0512 and p = 0.096, p >0.05) and the other side self-efficacy shows significant influence on the perceive work readiness (estimate = 0.0707 and p = 0.047, p < 0.05).

The purpose of the study was to investigate the effect of self-efficacy and locus of control on work readiness among Generation Z individuals who are entering the workforce. The multiple regression analysis showed that the third hypothesis was confirmed and significant. It means self-efficacy and locus of control together have a significant relationship with work readiness. In a modest way, we can say these psychological factors do indeed contribute to explaining work readiness in Generation Z.

Self-efficacy has been identified as a significant predictor of work readiness, aligning with existing literature that suggests individuals with high self-efficacy are more confident when facing new situations, such as entering the workforce (Bandura, 2010; Handoko & Wijono, 2023). Self-efficacy plays an important role in work readiness. Individuals confident in their ability to achieve goals feel more prepared to work. For Generation Z, self-efficacy is particularly relevant, as this generation has grown up in a highly digital, fast-paced environment that requires them to continually adapt and develop new skills. The significant influence of self-efficacy implies that initiatives to build confidence and empower young workers could enhance their readiness to enter and thrive in the workplace. Employers and educational institutions might consider programs that boost self-efficacy through skill-building workshops, mentorship, and real-world training experiences.

Meanwhile, the internal locus of control shows an insignificant negative relationship with work readiness. This finding contrasts with some prior research, which associates internal locus of control with a higher sense of responsibility and perseverance in facing challenges (Rotter, 1966). One possible explanation is that individuals with a high internal locus of control may feel a greater sense of responsibility for their preparation. If they perceive themselves as unprepared, they might experience psychological unpreparedness, even if their actual abilities are sufficient. This supports the literature that the internal locus of control is one of the personality aspects and to influence human behavior needs other strong variables such as experiences (Yalamanchilli et al., 2024). The internal locus of control may have a more complex relationship with perceived work readiness. Even though the statistics were not significant in this research, the belief that a person has complete control over their life can bring additional pressure to feel ready before they enter the workforce.

CONCLUSION

In summary, the multiple regression result show that both variables have significant effect, its mean that the third hypothesis was confirmed. However, the regression coefficient model shows that only self-efficacy shows a significant influence to work readiness. While relationship locus of control and work readiness was not significant and the relational was negative.

The findings emphasize the need for organizations and educators to focus on building self-efficacy as a pathway to improving work readiness. Generation Z individuals with high self-efficacy

are more likely to feel ready and capable in a professional setting. Programs that foster skill mastery, provide real-world challenges, and offer constructive feedback can help young professionals develop the confidence needed to transition smoothly into the workforce.

LIMITATION & FURTHER RESEARCH

Further studies could investigate other factors that may moderate the relationship between locus of control and work readiness, such as organizational culture or team dynamics, to gain a more nuanced understanding of these relationships in diverse workplace settings.

There are some limitations in the research. The first is related to the measurement of perceived work readiness. Measurements based on the perception of readiness to work do not provide a strong picture of readiness to work itself. Additional use of other research instruments is needed, both using questionnaires and measuring ability directly. The second limitation is the limited number of samples (70 people) which is suspected to cause the existing data not to have enough variety of data.

This model has implications that in improving job readiness, training programs or interventions that focus on improving self-efficacy can be more effective than focusing only on the internal locus of control aspects.

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