

# THE EFFECT OF INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN WORK READINESS OF GENERATION Z IN JABODETABEK

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## ABSTRACT

Generation Z in Indonesia dominates the workforce and proficiency in digital skills. However, Generation Z faces challenges related to the perception of companies that view them as less prepared for work, which drives efforts from the government and educational institutions to enhance their work readiness. This study aims to analyze the effect of internship experience and emotional intelligence on the work readiness of Generation Z in Jakarta, Depok, Bogor, Tangerang, and Bekasi. This research uses a quantitative method with a survey of 150 respondents selected through non-probability sampling using a convenience sampling approach. The study utilized a questionnaire for data collection, which was then analyzed using Partial Least Squares (PLS)-based Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The results show that both internship experience and emotional intelligence have a positive and significant impact on work readiness. The findings indicate that internship experience has a greater effect on work readiness compared to emotional intelligence, highlighting the importance of strengthening internship programs to prepare Generation Z to meet labor market demands. This research provides benefits for Generation Z in the Jabodetabek area to determine strategies for enhancing work readiness through leveraging internship opportunities and developing emotional intelligence, both of which have proven to significantly help them face intense job competition and improve their chances of being hired by companies.

**Keywords:** Internship experience, emotional intelligence, work readiness

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The study on the work readiness of Generation Z is deemed relevant as this demographic group dominates the workforce in Indonesia. According to data released by the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), the Indonesian workforce is predominantly composed of Generation Z, totaling 74.93 million individuals or 27.94% of the total population (Rainer, 2023). The dominance of Generation Z in Indonesia's workforce indicates an opportunity to accelerate economic growth, given that Generation Z falls within the productive age group. The increasing number of individuals within the productive age group signifies that Indonesia is currently experiencing a demographic bonus era (Kominfo, 2021). Furthermore, Generation Z, often referred to as "digital natives" or the "digital generation," is distinguished by its advanced proficiency in utilizing digital technology. This proficiency enables Generation Z to efficiently perform various activities, thereby achieving higher productivity levels (Nurramadhania & Idulfilastri, 2023).

On the other hand, as of August 2023, the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) reported that 9.9 million young Indonesians aged 15 to 24 years, classified as Generation Z, were neither employed nor undergoing any training. This is concerning, particularly given Indonesia's target of achieving "Golden Indonesia 2045" (Setuningsih, 2024). This situation may be attributed to the perception among companies that this demographic group is not yet work-ready. This is substantiated by a survey conducted by Intelligent involving 1,243 business owners regarding

their assessments of graduates from 2020 to 2023, predominantly from Generation Z. The survey revealed that 40% of companies believed these recent graduates were not prepared to enter the workforce. Of the companies that deemed Generation Z unfit for employment, 94% stated they would prefer to avoid recruiting them (Prima, 2023).

Work readiness is defined as the overall state in which an individual is physically and mentally prepared to engage in activities related to employment (Muspawi & Lestari, 2020). In such a response to the work readiness of Generation Z, the Ministry of Labour (Kemenaker) has continuously developed various programs and policies, including collaborative efforts with educational institutions, aimed at encouraging and equipping students and young individuals to better prepare for the workforce, thereby enabling them to contribute to national development (Public Relations of the Ministry of Manpower, 2023).

The significance of internship experience and emotional intelligence is recognized as a critical factor influencing an individual's readiness for employment. Internship experience, being a form of experiential learning, can affect students' preparedness for the workforce by enabling them to experience real workplace environments and apply both hard skills and soft skills acquired during formal education (Sofa, et al, 2020). This assertion is further substantiated by the opinion of a Human Capital practitioner in Indonesia, who states that one solution to enhance Generation Z's readiness for employment lies in the ability of education to bridge the academic and professional worlds. This can be achieved through internship programs oriented toward practical, real-world application, ensuring that Generation Z is adequately equipped to face challenges in the professional sphere (Lazuardi, 2024).

Emotional intelligence constitutes a critical factor influencing an individual's readiness for employment. This is because individuals possessing a high level of emotional intelligence tend to exhibit greater preparedness for the workforce (Noviyanto & Wijanarka, 2023). Furthermore, Febriani (2023) asserts that in the digital era, characterized by pervasive technological connectivity and the rapid development of information accompanied by mounting pressures, significant challenges arise. Consequently, Generation Z must cultivate advanced emotional intelligence to effectively navigate the dynamic nature of the professional environment. This emotional intelligence serves as a pivotal determinant of Generation Z's readiness for employment amidst the increasingly complex demands of contemporary times.

This study addressed the gap which was identified in previous research, as it has been found that studies examining factors influencing work readiness, particularly among Generation Z, remain limited. Prior research has predominantly focused on more specific subjects, such as vocational high school students or college students, without explicitly investigating Generation Z. Moreover, earlier studies also exhibit sample limitations. For instance, research conducted by Supriyanto et al. (2022) and Fauzan et al. (2023) exclusively examined work readiness among vocational high school students. Additionally, those studies only employed internship experience and motivation as independent variables. Consequently, this highlights a gap in prior research, particularly in terms of sample scope and the utilized variables

The theoretical foundation of this research is grounded in Super's Career Development Theory (1955), which emphasizes the significance of maturity in addressing developmental tasks at each stage of a career. In this context, maturity refers to an individual's preparedness to make suitable career choices based on their age, from career exploration in adolescence to career transition in later years (Super et al., 1996). Super's maturity model encompasses two aspects: attitudes and skills essential for career development. Attitudes reflect an individual's

perspectives and feelings toward career choices and their willingness to pursue a career upon entering the professional sphere (Super, 1955).

The readiness of fresh graduate students to enter the workforce can be associated with the concept of maturity, as they are required to demonstrate appropriate attitudes and skills to face the challenges of the professional world. According to Super (1955), the attitudes referred to encompass students' perspectives and feelings toward their career choices, which reflect their preparedness to transition into the workforce. Positive attitudes, such as optimism and self-confidence, are crucial in supporting this readiness. Conversely, negative attitudes, such as uncertainty or doubt in selecting a career path, can hinder the transition from the academic environment to the professional realm. Therefore, students who exhibit positive attitudes toward their careers and have outlined steps to achieve their goals will be better equipped to face the challenges of the workforce.

A person is deemed to possess skills when they have a relevant and adequate level of expertise and experience corresponding to their respective field of specialization. Accordingly, through internship experiences, it is anticipated that students will gain both experience and skills from the activities they have undertaken, thereby equipping them with strong job readiness (Fauzan et al., 2023). Similarly, regarding emotional intelligence, Fitriani et al. (2021) assert that individuals who continuously strive to enhance their emotional intelligence will find it easier to advance their careers in the professional world. This is because students with high levels of emotional intelligence are better equipped to face challenges in the workplace and demonstrate superior job readiness (Nurjaman et al., 2023).

This study endeavors to integrate insights to examine the influence of internship experience and emotional intelligence on job readiness, particularly among Generation Z residing in the Greater Jakarta area (Jabodetabek). The interaction between these variables is expected to provide valuable information for companies, especially those planning to recruit employees from Generation Z. The findings of this research are also anticipated to offer guidance to company leaders in considering the characteristics of Generation Z employees suitable for employment, thereby enabling a more precise and effective recruitment process.

### **Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis**

The Super Career Development Theory (1955) emphasizes that career maturity is a key factor in career preparation for recent graduates or "fresh graduates." Career maturity refers to an individual's readiness to make appropriate career decisions based on their developmental stage. According to this theory, career maturity encompasses attitudes reflecting how an individual thinks about their career, their motivation to pursue career choices, and their skills in planning and exploring career options. During the exploration stage—which is typically experienced by fresh graduates—the willingness to face growth challenges, such as making suitable career choices, serves as a critical indicator of maturity. Furthermore, internship experience is identified as a significant element in supporting an individual's job readiness.

The internship experience provides students with the opportunity to apply the theoretical knowledge they have acquired and develop their practical skills. This process facilitates a deeper understanding of the professional environment and prepares them for their future careers. Emotional intelligence plays a critical role in job readiness. Students who can manage their own emotions and comprehend those of others are better equipped to handle workplace pressures. These skills are essential for fresh graduates to adapt to the dynamic nature of the professional world and establish effective relationships with colleagues. Consequently, the

combination of internship experience and emotional intelligence enables fresh graduates to achieve a higher degree of job readiness, as it indirectly assists them in overcoming the challenges they may face.

Among the various predictors that may influence work readiness, internship experience stands out as a key factor, particularly in influencing the work readiness of Generation Z students. This is because internships serve as a source of experience and knowledge that students must undergo (Sofa, et al, 2020). An internship program that is well-organized and executed can enhance students' skills and knowledge, preparing them for work after graduation in their respective fields of expertise (Supriyanto et al., 2022). Utami & Raharjo (2020) also states that internship experience provides students with a direct understanding of the professional world, helping them prepare to enter the workforce. Internship experience serves as motivation for final-year students to prepare for entering the workforce, aligning with their desired job positions, armed with competencies gained through formal education and internship experience. This enables students to compete in the job market and build their careers in the future. Therefore, internship experience has a positive and significant impact on work readiness. Vilysia and Turangan (2024) also has Significance and consistent result over the internship experience influenced the positive of work readiness. Based on this theory and evidence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**H1:** Internship experience has a positive impact on the work readiness of Generation Z in the Greater Jakarta area (Jabodetabek)."

Emotional intelligence is another important factor that can influence the work readiness of Generation Z. This is because if a student has a high level of emotional intelligence, they will be better equipped to face challenges in the workplace and exhibit a higher level of work readiness (Nurjaman, et al., 2023). This is supported by a study conducted by Noviyanto and Wijanarka (2023), which found that emotional intelligence has a significant influence on work readiness. Febriyana, et al. (2023) in their research have also proven that emotional intelligence has a positive and significant impact on work readiness, such that the higher the emotional intelligence of students, the higher their work readiness. This is because students are expected to possess the ability to recognize their own emotions, manage their emotions, self-motivate, recognize the emotions of others (empathy), build cooperative relationships with others, overcome difficulties, and resolve conflicts. The following hypothesis is proposed:

**H2:** Emotional intelligence has a positive influence on the work readiness of Generation Z in the Greater Jakarta area (Jabodetabek).

The variables are interrelated in a complex manner, as supported by prior research. Studies indicate that internship experiences can enhance students' job readiness. Through internship activities, students are expected to acquire experience and skills that contribute to their preparedness for entering the workforce (Fauzan et al., 2023). Similarly, emotional intelligence has been demonstrated to have a positive and significant impact on job readiness. This is because individuals who continuously develop their emotional intelligence are better positioned to advance their careers in the professional world (Fitriani et al., 2021).

For the sake of empirical analysis, these variables are operationalized through specific indicators. Internship experience is generally measured by evaluating the duration of the internship, education and human resource development, reinforcement and refinement of learning outcomes, work-related skills, and the development of workplace attitudes (Pambajeng & Sumartik, 2019). Emotional intelligence is assessed through the ability to recognize one's own emotions, manage one's own emotions, self-motivation, recognizing

others' emotions, and maintaining positive relationships with others (Riwayati & Santoso, 2022). Meanwhile, job readiness is evaluated using indicators such as having logical and objective reasoning, critical attitudes, environmental adaptability, alignment with areas of expertise, and the ability to collaborate effectively (Fauzan et al., 2023).

This study has aimed to contribute to the field by examining the relationship between internship experiences and emotional intelligence in relation to job readiness among Generation Z individuals residing in the Jabodetabek region. By exploring these relationships, the study seeks not only to validate the proposed hypotheses but also to provide insights for Generation Z to enhance their job readiness through leveraging their internship experiences and emotional intelligence.

## **2. RESEARCH METHOD**

This study adopted a quantitative approach with a descriptive design aimed at examining the influence of internship experience and emotional intelligence on the job readiness of Generation Z in the Jabodetabek area. The target population of this research consists of Generation Z individuals residing in Jabodetabek, aged 17 to 27 years. Data collection is conducted using non-probability sampling, specifically convenience sampling, where the selected Generation Z samples are those who have either graduated from college or are in their final semester of study, have completed an internship program, and reside in the Jabodetabek area. The total sample comprises 150 respondents, determined and adjusted to align with the scope of the study.

Data collection was conducted through structured questionnaires utilizing a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), enabling respondents to indicate their level of agreement with statements regarding internship experiences and emotional intelligence in relation to work readiness. The questionnaires were distributed online to reach a diverse Generation Z population within the Greater Jakarta area (Jabodetabek).

Each variable in this study has been operationalized with specific indicators. Internship experience includes indicators such as the duration of the internship, education and human resource development, consolidation and enhancement of learning outcomes, workplace skills, and the development of workplace attitudes (Pambajeng & Sumartik, 2019). Emotional intelligence encompasses indicators such as recognizing one's own emotions, managing one's own emotions, self-motivation, recognizing others' emotions, and fostering good relationships with others (Riwayati & Santoso, 2022). Meanwhile, job readiness includes indicators such as possessing logical and objective reasoning, critical thinking skills, environmental adaptability, alignment with areas of expertise, and the ability to collaborate (Fauzan et al., 2023).

The data analysis in this study was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with the assistance of SmartPLS software version 4.0.9.4, enabling simultaneous evaluation of multiple relationships between variables. The analysis included testing validity and reliability through convergent and discriminant validity, as well as reliability testing using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values. Following the validation process, internal model analysis was carried out to evaluate the hypotheses using path coefficients and significance testing.

The research hypotheses propose a significant influence of internship experience and emotional intelligence on job readiness, tested at a 5% significance level. The SEM approach allows for a comprehensive examination of the direct relationships among variables.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Based on the data collected from the distributed questionnaires, the majority of respondents in this study are Generation Z females aged 17 to 21 years, residing in Jakarta, and participating in internship programs organized by universities.

The analysis of the measurement model demonstrates strong validity and reliability across all established constructs. The *Loading Factor* values exceed the required threshold of 0.7 (**Table 1**), and the *Average Variance Extracted* (AVE) surpasses the mandatory threshold of 0.5 (**Table 2**), thereby confirming convergent validity. The cross-loading criteria indicate that the loading value of each construct indicator is higher than the cross-loadings of the other construct indicators (**Table**). Additionally, the *Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio* (HTMT) values fall below the prescribed threshold of 0.9, affirming discriminant validity (**Table 4**). The *Cronbach's Alpha* values range between 0.6 and 0.95, and the *Composite Reliability* values meet the minimum requirement of 0.7 (**Table 5**). Collectively, these results validate the measurement model, ensuring that each construct is accurately and reliably measured by its respective indicators.

Table 1. Loading Factor Analysis

Item	Internship Experience	Emotional Intelligence	Work Readiness
V1-1	0.711		
V-2	0.722		
V1-4	0.777		
V1-5	0.753		
V2-1		0.753	
V2-2		0.791	
V2-3		0.830	
Y-1			0.722
Y-3			0.721
Y-4			0.763
Y-5			0.760

Table 2. Average Variance Extracted Analysis

Variable	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Internship Experience	0.550
Emotional Intelligence	0.627
Work Readiness	0.550

Table 3. Cross Loadings Analysis

Item	Internship Experience	Emotional Intelligence	Work Readiness
V1-1	0.711	0.292	0.292
V-2	0.722	0.254	0.255
V1-4	0.777	0.269	0.335
V1-5	0.753	0.291	0.397
V2-1	0.246	0.753	0.269
V2-2	0.318	0.791	0.315
V2-3	0.317	0.830	0.430
Y-1	0.310	0.299	0.722
Y-3	0.291	0.316	0.721

Item	Internship Experience	Emotional Intelligence	Work Readiness
Y-4	0.354	0.326	0.763
Y-5	0.351	0.362	0.760

Table 4. Heteroit Monotrait Ratio Analysis

Variable	Internship Experience	Emotional Intelligence	Work Readiness
Internship Experience			
Emotional Intelligence	0.508		
Work Readiness	0.587	0.587	

Table 5. Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability Analysis

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Internship Experience	0.731	0.830
Emotional Intelligence	0.712	0.834
Work Readiness	0.728	0.830

The subsequent analysis of the inner model measurement is conducted through multicollinearity testing, R-square ( $R^2$ ) analysis, predictive relevance testing ( $Q^2$ ), effect size testing ( $f^2$ ), path coefficient analysis, and hypothesis testing.

**Table 6.** Shows that the VIF values for the multicollinearity test are less than 5 ( $<5$ ), indicating that no multicollinearity symptoms are present.

Table 6. Multikoleniaritas Test

	VIF
Internship Experience → Work Readiness	1.163
Emotional Intelligence → Work Readiness	1.163

The R-square ( $R^2$ ) analysis (**Table 7**) for work readiness is 0.284, indicating that the variables of internship experience and emotional intelligence have a moderate influence in explaining work readiness, accounting for 28.4%. The remaining 71.6% of the influence is explained by other variables not examined in this study.

Table 7. R-square Analysis

Variable	R Square	Description
Work Readiness	0,284	Moderate (medium)

The predictive relevance test aimed to measure the accuracy of the estimation and prediction of variable parameters. **Table 8** shows that the results of the relationships between the variables used in this study are considered relevant for measuring the research model developed in this study. The variables are deemed relevant because they have a predictive relevance or Q-Square value greater than 0 ( $>0$ ).

Table 8. Predictive Relevance Analysis

Variable	Q Square
Work Readiness	0,233

It is also followed by the effect size ( $f^2$ ) presented in **Table 9** provides insight into the contribution of each predictor variable, namely internship experience and emotional intelligence, to work readiness. Internship experience has an effect size of 0.124, indicating a small effect size, which means that internship experience makes a moderate contribution to explaining work readiness. Meanwhile, emotional intelligence has an effect size of 0.123,

indicating a small effect size, meaning that emotional intelligence makes a small contribution to explaining work readiness.

Table 9. Effect Size Analysis

	f-square	Result
Internship Experience → Work Readiness	0,124	Small Effect
Emotional Intelligence → Work Readiness	0,123	Small Effect

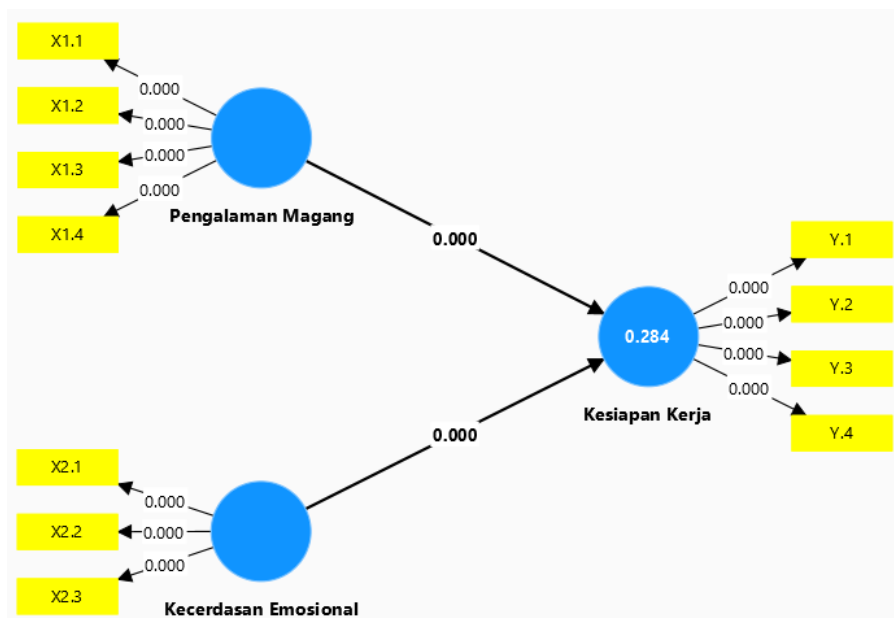


Figure 1. Path Coefficient

Table 10. Hypothesis Testing

	Original Sample	t-statistics	p-values
Internship Experience → Work Readiness	0,322	3,998	0,000
Emotional Intelligence → Work Readiness	0,321	4,312	0,000

As displayed in **Figure 1** and **Table 10**, the path coefficients and hypothesis test results demonstrate various levels of influence between the variables on work readiness. The path coefficient for internship experience on work readiness is 0.322, with a t-statistic of 3.998 and a p-value of 0.000, confirming a statistically significant positive effect of internship experience on work readiness. This supports the hypothesis that a positive internship experience will enhance work readiness. Furthermore, the path coefficient for emotional intelligence on work readiness is 0.321, with a t-statistic of 4.312 and a p-value of 0.000, confirming a statistically significant positive effect of emotional intelligence on work readiness. This supports the hypothesis that higher emotional intelligence leads to increased work readiness.

This study analyzes the relationship between internship experience and emotional intelligence on the work readiness of Generation Z in the Greater Jakarta area (Jabodetabek). The research findings indicate that both internship experience and emotional intelligence have a significant positive effect on work readiness. These findings provide insights into factors that can enhance the work readiness of this demographic group.

The positive and significant impact of internship experience on work readiness aligns with previous research indicating that the higher the internship experience, the higher the work readiness (Supriyanto, et al., 2020). This result is also consistent with the research conducted



by Sofa, et al (2020) and Utami & Raharjo (2020), which found that internship experience has a significant impact on students' job readiness, as internships provide students with a direct insight into the working world. This helps students prepare to enter the workforce, as internship experience serves as a motivation or drive for final-year students to prepare themselves for entering the workforce in line with their desired positions, armed with the competencies gained through formal education and internship experience, thereby enabling students to compete in the job market to achieve a career in the future. Vilysia and Turangan (2024) also has Significance and consistent result over the internship experience influenced the positive of work readiness.

The positive and significant relationship between emotional intelligence and work readiness is consistent with prior research. Nurjaman et al. (2023) found that emotional intelligence positively influences students' work readiness. Research by Noviyanto & Wijanarka (2023) and Febriyana et al. (2023) also demonstrated that emotional intelligence impacts work readiness, indicating that the higher the emotional intelligence of students, the higher their work readiness. This is because students are expected to possess the ability to recognize their own emotions, manage their own emotions, self-motivate, recognize the emotions of others (empathy), build collaborative relationships with others, overcome difficulties, and resolve conflicts.

Based on the findings, an emphasis on internship experience and emotional intelligence can enhance the work readiness of Generation Z, particularly those who reside in the Jabodetabek area. The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the factors that influence work readiness among Generation Z. These findings indicated that the work experience possessed by this demographic group and their level of emotional intelligence may impact their overall work readiness.

#### **4. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

This research reveals that internship experience and emotional intelligence significantly affect the work readiness of Generation Z in the Greater Jakarta area (Jabodetabek). Generation Z individuals who have undergone internships are more prepared to face challenges in the workplace as they gain firsthand understanding of the work environment, enhance their technical skills, and strengthen their communication abilities. This indicates that internships play a crucial role in preparing new graduates with relevant knowledge and skills, thereby improving their competitiveness in a highly competitive job market. Additionally, emotional intelligence has a substantial impact on work readiness, demonstrating that an individual's ability to understand, manage, and express their emotions effectively is essential in supporting job performance. Generation Z with high emotional intelligence are more effective in handling stressful situations, optimizing productivity, and collaborating well within teams. This underscores the importance of enhancing interpersonal and emotional skills through self-development programs or training.

However, this study has several limitations. The variables used in this study are limited to three, namely internship experience, emotional intelligence, and work readiness. Therefore, future research is recommended to include additional variables such as soft skills, work motivation, or role clarity. The scope of the study is confined to active students or graduates in the Jabodetabek area, making the results non-generalizable to other regions or groups. Furthermore, data collection was conducted solely through online questionnaires using the convenience sampling method, which limits the diversity of respondents. For future studies, it

is suggested to expand the research scope to other metropolitan cities, incorporate interviews as an additional data collection technique, and employ more representative sampling methods to generate more comprehensive data that better reflects the work readiness of Generation Z.

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