THE EFFECT OF SOFT SKILLS, HARD SKILLS, AND SELF-EFFICACY ON WORK READINESS WITH PART-TIME WORK EXPERIENCE AS A MEDIATION VARIABLE

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Abstract

This study examines the effects of soft skills, hard skills, and self-efficacy on work readiness, with part-time work experience as a mediating variable among Generation Z in the Solo Raya region. The conceptual framework is based on Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), which highlights the interaction between personal factors, learning experiences, and career-related outcomes. A quantitative approach was employed using primary data collected through an online questionnaire from Generation Z individuals aged 17–28 who had part-time work experience, selected using purposive sampling. Five constructs were measured on a 5-point Likert scale: soft skills, hard skills, self-efficacy, part-time work experience, and work readiness. Data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with the Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach via SmartPLS 4. The results show that soft skills have a positive and significant direct effect on work readiness, while hard skills and self-efficacy do not have a direct influence. However, all three variables significantly affect part-time work experience, which in turn positively influences work readiness. Furthermore, part-time work experience mediates the relationship between hard skills and work readiness, indicating that technical competencies contribute to readiness primarily through experiential learning. These findings reinforce the relevance of SCCT and emphasize the importance of practical work experience in enhancing Generation Z's work readiness.

Keywords: Hard Skills, Part-Time Work Experience, Self-Efficacy, Soft Skills, Work Readiness

INTRODUCTION

Rapid technological development and labor market transformation have intensified competition for employment, particularly for new entrants to the workforce. For Generation Z graduates, employability is no longer determined solely by academic qualifications but increasingly depends on their readiness to meet workplace demands through relevant skills, adaptability, and confidence. In Indonesia, including the Solo Raya region, many young graduates continue to face difficulties transitioning from education to employment due to limited practical experience and a mismatch between academic training and industry expectations.

Work readiness refers to an individual's capacity to perform effectively in professional settings, encompassing knowledge, skills, attitudes, and psychological preparedness (Alfiana et al., 2024). Previous studies indicate that both internal and external factors influence this readiness, with soft skills, hard skills, and self-efficacy emerging as key determinants. Soft skills include interpersonal and intrapersonal competencies such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and initiative (Lesmana, 2025), while hard skills represent technical and task-specific knowledge required in particular occupations (Budi Februari et al., 2024). Meanwhile, self-efficacy reflects an individual's belief in their ability to regulate behavior, overcome challenges, and achieve work-related goals (Susilowati & Fauzan, 2022; Mukti & Waskito, 2023).

Despite formal education attainment, a considerable proportion of Generation Z graduates in Solo Raya perceive themselves as inadequately prepared for the labor market. This condition is closely associated with limited exposure to real work environments, resulting in underdeveloped practical skills and low confidence when entering employment. Part-time work experience is therefore considered a crucial external factor that can bridge this gap by providing early exposure to workplace norms, skill application, and professional responsibility. Empirical evidence suggests that individuals with longer or more diverse work experiences tend to demonstrate higher levels of work readiness and employability (Zamrodah, 2016).

Previous research has consistently shown that soft skills, hard skills, and self-efficacy significantly influence work readiness. Mamentu et al. (2023) found that self-efficacy and soft skills play a central role in enhancing readiness for work, while Raihan and Nengsih (2024) confirmed the importance of both soft and hard skills. Studies by Putri (2023) and Fernandes et al. (2022) emphasized the dominant contribution of soft skills, whereas Pangaribuan et al. (2024) reported a partial effect of self-efficacy. Furthermore, Setiarini et al. (2022) and Dhea Novita et al. (2023) demonstrated that the combined influence of soft skills, hard skills, and self-efficacy significantly strengthens individuals' preparedness to enter the workforce.

However, existing studies largely examine these variables independently and provide limited insight into how external experiential factors may strengthen or mediate their effects. In particular, the mediating role of part-time work experience in the relationship between skills, self-efficacy, and work readiness remains insufficiently explored, especially within a regional Generation Z context.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the impact of soft skills, hard skills, and self-efficacy on employability, with part-time work experience examined as a mediating variable.

Focusing on Generation Z in the Solo Raya area, this research seeks to provide empirical evidence that clarifies how experiential learning complements individual competencies in enhancing work readiness.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Factors Influencing Work Readiness: Soft Skills, Hard Skillss, Self-Efficacy, and Part-Time Experience

According to Saragi Sitio and Rswiyanti (2022), readiness for work consists of the skills and knowledge needed to thrive professionally. This readiness is influenced by both internal factors such as cognitive abilities, competencies, motivation, health, and psychological needs and external ones like family, educational institutions, community context, and access to employment information (Violinda et al., 2023). Key components include soft skills, hard skills, one's belief in their capability (self-efficacy), and part-time job experience. Soft skills encompass social and personal abilities that boost workplace performance (e.g., communication, teamwork, emotional intelligence, critical thinking, ethics, leadership). Hard skills are technical proficiencies and technological literacy obtained through study and training that enhance efficiency and problem-solving. Self-efficacy captures confidence in handling tasks and reaching goals (Pangaribuan et al., 2024). Part-time work defined as under seven hours per day or 35 hours per week supplies practical exposure, develops competencies, and aids career development; common indicators are how long someone worked and the competency level they achieved (Laucu, 2023; Rambe et al., 2024; R. I. Putri & Harahap, 2023). Collectively, these elements form the foundation of employability.

Hypothesis Development

The Influence of Soft Skills on Job Readiness

Employers increasingly expect graduates to possess interpersonal abilities like communication, teamwork, and leadership that help them navigate workplace demands; empirical studies confirm that these soft skills positively influence work readiness (Dhea Novita et al., 2023; Setiarini et al., 2022).

H1: Soft skills have a positive influence on the work readiness of generation Z in the Solo Raya area.

Effect of Hard Skillss on Work Readiness

Acquired in formal educational settings, hard skills (technical and scientific competencies) permit tasks to be completed more efficiently. Evidence from Raihan & Nengsih (2024) and Dhea Novita et al. (2023) reveals a significant relationship between these competencies and students' work readiness.

H2: Hard Skillss positively affect the work readiness of Generation Z in the Solo Raya area.

Effect of Self-Efficacy on Work Readiness

Belief in one's ability to manage tasks and situations commonly called self-efficacy bolsters motivation and encourages proactive behavior; empirical studies by Pangaribuan (2024) and Mamentu et al. (2023) indicate it significantly enhances readiness for employment.

H3: Self-efficacy positively affects the work readiness of Generation Z in the Solo Raya area.

Effect of Soft Skills on Part-Time Work Experience

Those who demonstrate strong interpersonal abilities (communication and teamwork) and a reliable work ethic generally have better prospects for acquiring and holding onto part-time employment; soft skills are the personal and social resources that enable this adaptation. (Setiarini et al., 2022).

H4: Soft skills positively affect the part-time work experience of Generation Z in the Solo Raya area.

Effect of Hard Skillss on Part-Time Work Experience

Hard skills, meaning concrete technical abilities and field-specific knowledge, make candidates more technically prepared for work. Consequently, people with well-developed hard skills tend to obtain part-time positions more easily. According to Rambe et al. (2024), technical expertise contributes to greater work experience and higher individual productivity.

H5: Hard Skillss positively affect the part-time work experience of Generation Z in the Solo Raya area.

Effect of Self-Efficacy on Part-Time Work Experience

Self-efficacy denotes an individual's confidence in their capacity to overcome obstacles and carry out tasks effectively. People with high self-efficacy are more inclined to pursue new opportunities, such as part-time employment. Pangaribuan et al. (2024) note that this confidence encourages the acquisition of professional experience, which contributes to greater workplace readiness.

H6: Self-efficacy positively affects the part-time work experience of Generation Z in the Solo Raya area.

The Influence of Part-Time Work Experience on Work Readiness

Workplace exposure, skill development, and greater self-discipline can result from engaging in part-time employment. Empirical evidence suggests that an increase in such experience corresponds with improved work readiness (Zamrodah, 2016), and R. I. Putri & Harahap (2023) highlight how practical experience shapes job-related competencies.

H7: Part-time work experience has a positive effect on the work readiness of Generation Z in the Solo Raya area.

Part-Time Work Experience as a Mediator between Soft Skills and Work Readiness

The application of soft skills in real job settings increases their effectiveness. Readiness for employment is improved through part-time positions, which let individuals put their skills into practice. According to Setiarini et al. (2022), work experience acts as a mediator that amplifies the influence of soft skills.

H8: Part-time work experience mediates the effect of soft skills on the work readiness of Generation Z in the Solo Raya area.

Part-Time Work Experience as a Mediator between Hard Skillss and Work Readiness

Work readiness is significantly reinforced when hard skills are applied in real-world settings, such as through part-time employment. By engaging directly in work, individuals gain the opportunity to refine and develop their competencies. This aligns with Rambe et al. (2024), who found that practical work experience contributes to skill enhancement and improved performance.

H9: Part-time work experience mediates the effect of Hard Skillss on the work readiness of Generation Z in the Solo Raya area.

Part-Time Work Experience as a Mediator between Self-Efficacy and Work Readiness

Self-efficacy increases when individuals face and successfully overcome real challenges in the workplace. Part-time work experience can boost confidence in one's abilities, thereby enhancing work readiness. Pangaribuan (2024) highlights that experience can shape self-efficacy in a work context.

H10: Part-time work experience mediates the effect of self-efficacy on the work readiness of Generation Z in the Solo Raya area.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a quantitative, cross-sectional approach using primary data to examine the relationships among soft skills, hard skills, self-efficacy, part-time job experience, and work readiness among Generation Z. The analysis focuses on identifying associative and predictive relationships rather than establishing causal effects. Respondents were Generation Z residents of Solo Raya aged 17–28 who had part-time work experience, selected through purposive sampling.

Data were collected via an online questionnaire using five-point Likert scales to measure five constructs: soft skills (communication, emotional intelligence, critical thinking, work ethic, and leadership), hard skills (technical competencies and mastery of science and technology), self-efficacy (task performance, goal attainment, and resilience), part-time job experience (duration and level of skills acquired), and work readiness (individual abilities, motivation, cognition, as well as external support and labor/education information).

The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4. The measurement model was evaluated through validity and reliability testing, while the structural model was assessed using bootstrapping procedures to examine the strength and significance of direct and indirect relationships. Given the cross-sectional nature of the data, the findings should be interpreted as indicative of associations and mediating patterns at a single point in time, rather than definitive evidence of causal relationships. Future research is recommended to employ longitudinal or experimental designs to better capture the dynamic development of skills, work experience, and work readiness over time.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Data Description

A quantitative approach was used, with primary data collected through questionnaires distributed online. Generation Z individuals living in the Solo Raya region who had undertaken part-time work comprised the study population; purposive sampling guided selection according to specific eligibility criteria. Items measuring soft skills, hard skills, self-efficacy, part-time work experience, and work readiness were included in the Google Forms instrument. The final dataset consisted of 212 valid questionnaires (53.3% male; 46.7% female). The age distribution was 17–20 (17.5%), 21–24 (60.4%), and 25–28 (22.2%), and all participants confirmed part-time work experience.

Data Analysis

The analysis of data using SmartPLS is carried out in three primary stages to thoroughly examine the research hypotheses: evaluation of the outer model, assessment of the inner model, and testing of hypotheses. The outer model assessment verifies that the indicators reliably and accurately represent their respective constructs. Given that this research utilizes reflective constructs, the emphasis lies on both construct reliability and convergent validity. Convergent validity examines how well indicators within a single construct are correlated and suitable, with a preferred loading factor exceeding 0.70. Nevertheless, during the initial stages of model development, indicators with loadings ranging from 0.50 to 0.60 may still be considered acceptable if they hold theoretical relevance.

Table 1.
Outer Loading Stage 1

Indicator	Variables	HS	KK	PT	SE	SS	Note
Hard Skills (X2)	HS1	0.814					Valid
	HS2	0.733					Valid
	HS3	0.853					Valid
Job Readiness (Y)	KK1		0.808				Valid
	KK2		0.737				Valid
	KK3		0.823				Valid
Part-Time (Z)	PT1			0.799			Valid
	PT2			0.767			Valid
	PT3			0.846			Valid
Self-Efficacy (X3)	SE1				0.766		Valid
	SE2				0.716		Valid
	SE3				0.794		Valid
Soft Skill (X1)	SS1					0.801	Valid
	SS2					0.635	Unvalid
	SS3					0.729	Valid
	SS4					0.744	Valid
	SS5					0.706	Valid

Source: Results of data processed using SmartPLS4, 2025

The convergent validity assessment revealed that one indicator, SS2, within the soft skills construct, did not reach the minimum loading factor threshold of 0.70, scoring only 0.635. Since this value falls below the required outer loading criterion (> 0.70), the indicator

is deemed inadequate for representing the construct accurately. Consequently, SS2 was excluded from the model, and a second round of convergent validity testing was conducted. The updated outer loading results from this subsequent stage are presented in Table 2.

Table 2.
Outer Loading Stage 2

Indicator	Variables	HS	KK	PT	SE	SS	Note
Hard Skills (X2)	HS1	0.814					Valid
	HS2	0.733					Valid
	HS3	0.853					Valid
Job Readiness (Y)	KK1		0.812				Valid
	KK2		0.731				Valid
	KK3		0.824				Valid
Part-Time (Z)	PT1			0.799			Valid
	PT2			0.767			Valid
	PT3			0.845			Valid
Self-Efficacy (X3)	SE1				0.767		Valid
	SE2				0.716		Valid
	SE3				0.794		Valid
Soft Skill (X1)	SS1					0.818	Valid
	SS3					0.773	Valid
	SS4					0.737	Valid
	SS5					0.733	Valid

Source: Results of data processed using SmartPLS4, 2025

All indicators listed in Table 2 satisfied the convergent validity criterion, with outer loadings exceeding the 0.70 cutoff. For the Hard Skills construct, indicators HS1–HS3 produced loadings between 0.733 and 0.853. Job Readiness indicators (KK1–KK3) likewise achieved acceptable values, ranging from 0.731 to 0.824. Indicators for Part-Time (PT1–PT3), Self-Efficacy (SE1–SE3), and Soft Skills (SS1, SS3–SS5) also surpassed the 0.70 threshold. Consequently, every indicator in the model demonstrated adequate convergent validity and was retained for further analysis.

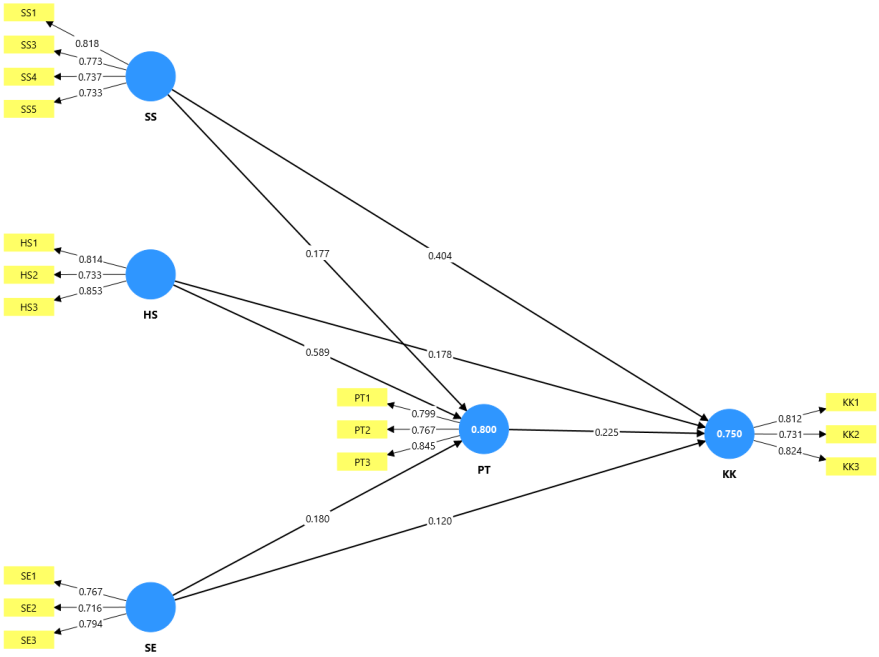

Figure 1.
Research Results
Source: SmartPLS4 data processing, 2025

Figure 1 indicates that all research indicators satisfy the convergent validity requirements, with each loading factor exceeding 0.70. Specifically, the highest loadings were observed for SS1 (0.818) in soft skills, HS3 (0.853) in hard skills, SE3 (0.794) in self-efficacy, PT3 (0.845) in part-time work, and KK3 (0.824) in job readiness. The R^2 value of 0.800 for the part-time work variable suggests that soft skills, hard skills, and self-efficacy collectively account for 80% of its variance. In contrast, job readiness exhibits an R^2 of 0.750, indicating strong predictive capability of the model for Generation Z's job readiness in the Solo Raya region. Furthermore, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was examined to assess the proportion of variance each construct explains in its indicators. Constructs with AVE values above 0.50 are deemed valid, as they explain more than half of the variance in their indicators. Overall, these findings demonstrate that the model achieves full convergent validity.

Table 3.
Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Indicator	Average variance extracted (AVE)
HS	0.643
KK	0.624
PT	0.647
SE	0.577
SS	0.587

Source: Results of data processed using SmartPLS4, 2025

The SEM-PLS analysis (Table 3) revealed that all variables in this research achieved Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values exceeding the 0.50 benchmark. In detail, Hard Skills recorded an AVE of 0.643, Job Readiness 0.624, Part-Time Experience 0.647, Self-Efficacy 0.577, and Soft Skills 0.587. These findings suggest that each construct satisfies the convergent validity requirement, indicating that more than half of the variance in their respective indicators is accounted for. Consequently, the model demonstrates satisfactory fit and can be reliably employed for subsequent analyses.

Discriminant Validity

Table 4.
Cross Loading

Indicator	HS	KK	PT	SE	SS
HS1	0.814	0.625	0.717	0.652	0.67
HS2	0.733	0.611	0.652	0.57	0.58
HS3	0.853	0.683	0.731	0.655	0.71
KK1	0.678	0.812	0.655	0.618	0.691
KK2	0.586	0.731	0.583	0.563	0.616
KK3	0.626	0.824	0.658	0.641	0.658
PT1	0.701	0.676	0.799	0.634	0.676
PT2	0.693	0.643	0.767	0.645	0.646
PT3	0.714	0.611	0.845	0.617	0.622
SE1	0.606	0.598	0.582	0.767	0.683
SE2	0.567	0.588	0.576	0.716	0.622
SE3	0.608	0.568	0.634	0.794	0.577
SS1	0.681	0.681	0.688	0.677	0.818
SS3	0.623	0.663	0.59	0.64	0.773
SS4	0.562	0.641	0.599	0.609	0.737
SS5	0.638	0.55	0.592	0.6	0.733

Source: Results of data processed using SmartPLS4, 2025

Table 4's cross-loading results reveal that every indicator correlates most strongly with its designated construct rather than with others. All values surpass the 0.70 benchmark, indicating that the indicators reliably capture their intended constructs. This pattern holds across all study variables: soft skills, hard skills, self-efficacy, part-time work experience, and job readiness. Each latent variable sufficiently accounts for its indicators without significant overlap with other constructs, thereby confirming discriminant validity and supporting the appropriateness for subsequent structural model analysis.

Construct Reliability (Cronbach's Alpha)

Table 5.
Cronbach's Alpha

Indicator	Cronbach's alpha
HS	0.719
KK	0.698
PT	0.726
SE	0.632
SS	0.765

Source: Results of data processed using SmartPLS4, 2025

Table 5 presents the results of data analysis, showing that Cronbach's Alpha scores for all constructs exceed the 0.70 threshold, with 0.6 still considered acceptable. Among the variables, soft skills exhibit the highest reliability at 0.765, followed by part-time work at 0.726, hard skills at 0.719, job readiness at 0.698, and self-efficacy at 0.632. These findings demonstrate that the indicators maintain strong internal consistency. Consequently, the research instrument can be regarded as reliable, as each construct's indicators effectively measure their respective latent variables in a stable and consistent manner.

Composite Reliability (Composite Reliability/CR)

Composite Reliability (CR) serves to evaluate the consistency of indicators within a given construct. Unlike Cronbach's Alpha, CR provides a more precise reliability estimate because it incorporates the loading of each indicator. A CR value exceeding 0.70 is generally considered ideal, reflecting that the indicators reliably capture the latent variable. In exploratory studies, CR values ranging from 0.60 to 0.70 are deemed acceptable. Elevated CR scores indicate that the construct's indicators demonstrate coherence and yield stable measurement results.

Table 6.
Composite Reliability

Indicator	Composite reliability (rho_c)
HS	0.843
KK	0.833
PT	0.846
SE	0.803
SS	0.85

Source: Results of data processed using SmartPLS4, 2025

Table 6 shows that each of the four research constructs achieves a Composite Reliability (CR) exceeding 0.70, which confirms that the indicators collectively provide

strong and cohesive measurement for their respective constructs. These findings indicate that the instruments used are reliable and produce consistent results.

Collinearity Statistics (Collinearity Statistics/VIF)

Table 7.
Collinearity Statistics/VIF

Indicator	HS	KK	PT	SE	SS
HS		5.115	3.384		
KK					
PT		4.992			
SE		3.682	3.52		
SS		4.274	4.118		

Source: Results of data processed using SmartPLS4, 2025

Most constructs in Table 7 exhibit VIFs under 5, indicating multicollinearity is not a serious concern. The Job Readiness construct shows a slightly higher VIF (5.115), but because it remains below the common threshold of 10, the structural model is still acceptable for subsequent analyses.

Evaluasi Struktur Model (Inner Model)

Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

Table 8.
Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

Indicator	R-square	R-square adjusted
KK	0.75	0.745
PT	0.8	0.797

Source: Results of data processed using SmartPLS4, 2025

Table 8 shows that the part-time construct has an R^2 of 0.80, meaning the model's exogenous predictors explain 80% of its variance while the remaining 20% is attributable to variables outside the model. For Job Readiness, the R^2 equals 0.75, indicating that the independent variables account for three quarters of its variance and that the other quarter is influenced by unmeasured factors. Both coefficients are relatively large (≥ 0.75), implying the model has strong explanatory capacity and fits the observed relationships well.

Effect Size (f^2)

Table 9.
Effect Size (f^2)

Indicator	HS	KK	PT	SE	SS
HS		0.025	0.512		

KK		
PT	0.041	
SE	0.016	0.046
SS	0.152	0.038

Source: Results of data processed using SmartPLS4, 2025

Table 9 shows that Hard Skills exert only a minor direct impact on Job Readiness ($f^2 = 0.025$), yet they have a very large influence on part-time work experience ($f^2 = 0.512$), suggesting that mastery of technical abilities strongly shapes respondents' experiences in part-time roles. Part-time work experience contributes minimally to both self-efficacy ($f^2 = 0.016$) and Job Readiness ($f^2 = 0.041$), while self-efficacy itself explains a small portion of variance in Job Readiness ($f^2 = 0.046$). Soft Skills produce a moderate effect on self-efficacy ($f^2 = 0.152$). In sum, the dominant association identified is between Hard Skills and part-time work experience; the other links range from small to moderate in magnitude.

Hypothesis Testing

Direct Effect Testing

We performed a direct-effect assessment to evaluate links between the model's variables excluding mediating constructs see Table 10 for the findings.

Table 10.
Path Coefficients

Indicator	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
HS -> KK	0.178	0.177	0.106	1.681	0.093
HS -> PT	0.589	0.585	0.06	9.824	0
PT -> KK	0.225	0.218	0.087	2.59	0.01
SE -> KK	0.12	0.129	0.086	1.388	0.165
SE -> PT	0.18	0.184	0.063	2.86	0.004
SS -> KK	0.404	0.401	0.087	4.613	0
SS -> PT	0.177	0.175	0.07	2.539	0.011

Source: Results of data processed using SmartPLS4, 2025

The analysis found five significant paths and two non-significant ones. Soft skills positively influenced job readiness ($t = 4.613$, $p = .000$) and also predicted greater part-time work experience ($t = 2.539$, $p = .011$). Hard skills strongly predicted part-time work experience ($t = 9.824$, $p = .000$), and self-efficacy also had a significant effect on part-time work experience ($t = 2.860$, $p = .004$). Furthermore, part-time work experience was a significant predictor of job readiness ($t = 2.590$, $p = .010$). However, hard skills ($t = 1.681$, $p = .093$) and self-efficacy ($t = 1.389$, $p = .165$) did not have significant direct effects on job readiness.

Indirect Effect Testing

Table 11.
Path Coefficients

Indicator	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
SE -> PT -> KK	0.041	0.04	0.022	1.846	0.065
SS -> PT -> KK	0.04	0.038	0.023	1.758	0.079
HS -> PT -> KK	0.133	0.127	0.052	2.54	0.011

Source: Results of data processed using SmartPLS4, 2025

The analysis shows that part-time work experience significantly mediates the relationship between hard skills and job readiness (β = 0.133, t = 2.54, p = 0.011). This indicates that proficiency in hard skills leads to more valuable part-time work experience, which subsequently enhances readiness for employment. By contrast, mediation through part-time work was not found for self-efficacy (β = 0.041, t = 1.846, p = 0.065) or soft skills (β = 0.040, t = 1.758, p = 0.079), as these indirect effects were not statistically significant.

The Impact of Soft Skills on Job Readiness

The SmartPLS results indicate that the soft skills variable significantly influences the job readiness of Generation Z in the Solo Raya region, with a t-statistic of 4.613 and a p-value of 0.000. This suggests that individuals exhibiting advanced soft skills including communication, teamwork, work ethics, and leadership tend to be better prepared for entering the workforce. These outcomes are consistent with the studies of Dhea Novita et al. (2023) and Setiarini et al. (2022), which emphasize the pivotal role of soft skills in enhancing students' employability. By bridging academic knowledge with the expectations of professional environments that demand social adaptability and effective interpersonal communication, soft skills not only ease workplace adjustment but also promote higher productivity and professional behavior.

The Influence of Hard Skills on Job Readiness

Hard Skills did not demonstrate a significant impact on Job Readiness in this study (t = 1.681, p = 0.093). The coefficient is positive (0.178), but it fails to reach conventional significance levels, suggesting that possessing technical abilities or subject-matter knowledge alone is insufficient for workplace preparedness among Generation Z. More decisive seem to be factors like hands-on work experience and an individual's self-efficacy. This outcome contrasts with the findings of Raihan & Nengsih (2024) and Dhea Novita et al. (2023), who reported a meaningful role for Hard Skills. One plausible explanation is respondent composition: many participants are early-career and have not yet translated their technical training into workplace practice. Consequently, the effect of Hard Skills may strengthen when they are paired with real-world experience.

The Influence of Self-Efficacy on Job Readiness

The results of the analysis reveal a t-value of 1.388 and a p-value of 0.165, demonstrating that self-efficacy does not significantly influence the job readiness of Generation Z in the Solo Raya region. This implies that confidence in handling work-related tasks alone is insufficient to directly shape readiness. Even though members of Generation Z may trust their own capabilities, such confidence has yet to be reinforced by hands-on experience or a thorough understanding of workplace dynamics. These results diverge from the findings of Pangaribuan (2024) and Mamentu et al. (2023), who found self-efficacy to significantly affect job readiness, likely because, in this study's context, actual professional experience contributes more substantially to readiness than theoretical self-assurance.

The Influence of Soft Skills on Part-Time Work Experience

The analysis produced a t-value of 2.539 with an associated p-value of 0.011, demonstrating that soft skills exert a positive and statistically significant influence on part-time work experience. In other words, individuals who possess stronger interpersonal competencies are more likely to secure and perform effectively in part-time positions. Soft skills encompass abilities such as effective communication, collaboration, time management, and adaptability in the workplace. Students who cultivate these interpersonal attributes tend to be favored for part-time employment because employers view them as capable collaborators who maintain professional behavior. These results corroborate Setiarini et al. (2022), who found that attributes like responsibility, teamwork, and work ethic substantially affect a person's success in obtaining work experience. Consequently, proficiency in soft skills not only enhances employability but also forms a fundamental basis for entering the part-time labor market.

The Influence of Hard Skills on Part-Time Work Experience

The analysis produced a t-value of 9.824 with $p < 0.001$, indicating that Hard Skills have a significant positive effect on part-time work experience. In practice, this means individuals with stronger technical competencies—such as computer literacy, graphic design, foreign language ability, and administrative know-how—are more likely to obtain part-time employment. These results support Rambe et al. (2024), who argue that technical skills improve employability for both full-time and part-time positions. Thus, Hard Skills not only strengthen long-term job readiness but also enable students to acquire early workplace experience through part-time work.

The Influence of Self-Efficacy on Part-Time Work Experience

The results of the analysis reveal a t-statistic of 2.860 and a p-value of 0.004, demonstrating that self-efficacy significantly and positively influences part-time work experience. Individuals with greater confidence in their abilities tend to seek out and participate more actively in part-time employment. This confidence equips them to handle new challenges and responsibilities in workplace settings. Students exhibiting high self-efficacy are generally more proactive in acquiring professional experience, including part-time jobs. These results align with Pangaribuan et al. (2024), who emphasize that self-efficacy is a key factor in motivating career development and the accumulation of professional experience. Consequently, robust self-efficacy not only drives work motivation

but also promotes engagement in activities that enhance preparedness for entering the workforce.

The Influence of Part-Time Work Experience on Job Readiness

The analysis reveals that part-time work experience significantly influences job readiness, as indicated by a t-value of 2.590 and a p-value of 0.010. This outcome highlights the importance of engaging in part-time employment, which helps individuals develop discipline, manage their time effectively, understand workplace ethics, and interact professionally. These findings align with the theoretical framework proposed by Zamrodah (2016) and are consistent with the research of R. I. Putri & Harahap (2023), both of which emphasize that accumulating work experience strengthens one's readiness for employment. Consequently, for Generation Z, participating in part-time work represents a vital opportunity to refine skills and enhance preparedness prior to entering full-time careers.

Part-Time Work Experience as a Mediator between Soft Skills and Job Readiness

The mediation test ($t = 1.758$, $p = 0.079$) suggests that part-time work experience fails to significantly mediate the effect of soft skills on job readiness. While the estimated indirect effect points in a favorable direction, its lack of statistical strength indicates that having strong interpersonal and communication skills does not automatically convert into higher job readiness via part-time employment. In essence, improvements in readiness seem to require more than skill possession they demand active application and reflection during work. This finding somewhat diverges from Setiarini et al. (2022), who found part-time experience to be a beneficial mediator; in this sample, soft skills appear to influence readiness mainly through a direct pathway.

Part-Time Work Experience as a Mediator between Hard Skills and Job Readiness

With a t-statistic of 2.540 and $p = 0.011$, it was found that part-time employment significantly mediates the effect of hard skills on job readiness. The implication is that technical knowledge becomes more consequential for employability when it is exercised in part-time work settings. Practical engagement enables individuals to refine those skills and internalize workplace practices, thereby increasing readiness for work. Rambe et al. (2024) report similar conclusions, framing part-time experience as a vital conduit between theory and practical preparedness.

Part-Time Work Experience as a Mediator between Self-Efficacy and Job Readiness

The analysis reveals a t-statistic of 1.846 and a p-value of 0.065, suggesting that part-time work experience does not significantly serve as a mediator between self-efficacy and job readiness. While a positive relationship exists, its strength is insufficient to establish a meaningful mediation effect. This outcome might be explained by self-efficacy being predominantly shaped by internal psychological elements, such as motivation and personal confidence, rather than by part-time work experience alone. Nonetheless, the findings indicate a tendency for individuals with higher self-efficacy to acquire valuable work experience, potentially contributing to improved job readiness over time.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that soft skills are the most influential factor in shaping job readiness among Generation Z in the Solo Raya region, as they enable individuals to adapt, communicate, and collaborate effectively in the workplace, consistent with employability and human capital theories. In contrast, hard skills and self-efficacy do not directly enhance job readiness, indicating that technical competence and confidence alone are insufficient without practical application. This interpretation is reinforced by the mediating role of part-time work experience, which bridges hard skills and job readiness by providing experiential learning that transforms technical knowledge into employable capability. The absence of mediation for soft skills suggests that these competencies are transferable and immediately observable, while self-efficacy requires tangible performance to translate into readiness. Despite limitations related to geographic scope, self-reported data, and excluded variables, the findings highlight the importance of integrating soft-skill development and work-based learning opportunities within educational programs to better prepare Generation Z for labor market entry.

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