

THE EFFECT OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP, INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE AND INTRINSIC MOTIVATION ON WORK READINESS WITH SELF-EFFICACY AS A MEDIATION VARIABLE



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Abstract

Increasing competition in the labor market requires university graduates to demonstrate strong work readiness supported by adaptive skills and self-confidence. This study examines the effects of lecturers' transformational leadership, internship experience, and intrinsic motivation on students' work readiness, with self-efficacy as a mediating variable. A quantitative survey was conducted involving 55 Management students who had completed an internship program. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed with Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling. The findings show that lecturers' transformational leadership, internship experience, and intrinsic motivation do not directly affect work readiness. However, internship experience and intrinsic motivation have a positive and significant effect on self-efficacy, while transformational leadership does not. Self-efficacy significantly influences work readiness and mediates the effects of internship experience and intrinsic motivation. These results highlight the central role of self-efficacy in translating learning experiences and motivation into work readiness. This study is limited by its small sample size and single-institution context, suggesting the need for broader future research.

Keywords: Work Readiness, Self-Efficacy, Transformational Leadership, Internship Experience, Intrinsic Motivation

INTRODUCTION

The increasingly dynamic changes in the business environment require universities to produce graduates who not only have academic competence, but also work readiness. Work readiness is a crucial aspect for management students, especially in the face of increasingly fierce labor competition, the development of digital technology, and the demands of the industrial world that lead to adaptability, communication, problem-solving, and self-confidence in entering the job market. In the context of universities that provide internships, which are usually conducted by fifth-semester students as part of an experience-based curriculum. Internships provide opportunities for students to gain exposure to the real world of work, strengthen practical competencies, and build mental readiness before entering the professional world.

However, empirical evidence suggests that not all students achieve optimal job readiness despite participating in internship programs. Some students still lack confidence, are unsure about their career path, or struggle to apply academic competencies to practical situations. This raises questions about factors that can enhance student job readiness.

Previous research has shown that lecturers' transformational leadership, internship experiences, and intrinsic motivation play a significant role in shaping students' work readiness (Cheng & Nguyen, 2024; Musa et al., 2025; Saif et al., 2024). Lecturers' transformational leadership is believed to inspire, provide clear direction, and motivate students to develop optimally (Assefa & Mujtaba, 2025; Roesminingsih & Windasari, 2025). Meanwhile, a quality internship experience can strengthen students' understanding of the demands of the workplace (Hassouna & Zaazou, 2024; Tjitjik Rahaju et al., 2024). Intrinsic motivation encourages students to learn and develop based on internal drives, not just academic demands (Assefa & Mujtaba, 2025; Cheng & Nguyen, 2024).

Furthermore, self-efficacy has the potential to be a psychological mechanism that bridges the influence of these variables on work readiness (Cipta & Wahyuni, 2024; Fitriyani et al., 2025; Tan et al., 2025). Self-efficacy describes an individual's belief in their ability to complete certain tasks. Students with high self-efficacy tend to be better prepared to face the challenges of the working world, more confident, and more adaptable to new environments. Therefore, a study on how lecturers' transformational leadership, internship experience, and intrinsic motivation influence students' work readiness through the mediation of self-efficacy is important to conduct. How do lecturers' transformational leadership, internship experience, and intrinsic motivation influence students' work readiness, and to what extent does self-efficacy mediate this relationship?

This research is crucial because student work readiness is a key indicator of higher education's success in producing competitive graduates. Although the study program has implemented an internship program as part of its curriculum, there remains a gap between academic competencies and the needs of the workplace. Many students lack strong self-confidence, struggle to adapt to professional environments, and are unable to maximize their internship experiences. Furthermore, the role of lecturers' transformational leadership, students' intrinsic motivation, and self-efficacy as a psychological factor have not been extensively researched in an integrated manner. Therefore, this research is urgently needed to identify factors that significantly influence student work readiness and provide an empirical basis for developing educational policies, learning strategies, and interventions to improve student competency more effectively and sustainably.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership in higher education is understood as a leadership style that emphasizes shared vision, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individualized attention to foster students' academic and psychological development. The literature over the past five years has shown that transformational leadership plays a crucial role in creating a positive learning climate and increasing student engagement (Lin & Wang, 2025). However, the influence of transformational leadership on student outcomes such as self-efficacy, engagement, and academic performance is often indirect and dependent on intermediary mechanisms.

Empirical studies show that the lecturer-student relationship and learning engagement are key mediators explaining how transformational leadership influences students' psychological development (Lin & Wang, 2025). Without active engagement and meaningful learning interactions, transformational leadership tends to only increase positive perceptions of lecturers, but does not necessarily strengthen students' self-efficacy. Research in higher education contexts also finds that transformational leadership is more effective in increasing self-efficacy when integrated with project-based learning and authentic assignments that provide students with opportunities to experience real-life success (S. Wang et al., 2024).

Furthermore, Liu & Huang, (2023) emphasized that clear and continuous performance feedback is a crucial element in bridging the influence of transformational leadership on student self-efficacy. Thus, while transformational leadership provides social resources in the form of inspiration, role models, and persuasion, building self-efficacy still requires instructional design that emphasizes authentic learning experiences and academic coaching. Recent literature recommends integrating transformational leadership with authentic learning approaches to optimize its impact on student capabilities.

Internship Experience

Over the past five years, bibliometric and systematic reviews have confirmed that internships or work-integrated learning (WIL) are strategic components in developing employability, including job readiness, vocational identity, and graduate self-confidence (Jackson, 2015; Shen et al., 2024). However, recent literature emphasizes that the positive impact of internships on job readiness depends heavily on the quality of the internship experience, not simply the participation or duration of the internship.

Research shows that internships involving authentic assignments, active mentoring, clear performance feedback, and opportunities to take on meaningful responsibilities tend to contribute significantly to competency development and career transition readiness (Jackson et al., 2024). Conversely, internships that are administrative, routine, and lack reflection provide only limited benefits to students' career readiness (Patrick et al., 2008). Recent systematic studies also emphasize the importance of reflective structures and competency-based assessments to enable students to internalize work experiences as meaningful learning (Shen et al., 2024).

Within the social cognitive career theory (SCCT) framework, internships are positioned as learning experiences that influence job readiness through the formation of self-efficacy and outcome expectations. Empirically, effective internships have been shown to strengthen vocational identity and employability confidence, which in turn enhance job readiness. Therefore, contemporary literature recommends shifting internship design from

mere work placement to structured, reflective, and competency-oriented learning experiences to maximize learning transfer to job readiness.

Intrinsic motivation

Intrinsic motivation—the desire to engage in an activity out of interest, curiosity, or internal satisfaction—remains a central concept in the study of learning and employability. Self-determination theory (SDT) posits the needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness as key sources of intrinsic motivation; when these needs are met, the quality of engagement and learning improves, fostering adaptive outcomes such as persistence, creativity, and deep learning (Ryan & Deci, 2020). A recent meta-analysis showed that SDT motivation types (from a motivation to intrinsic) differ in their predictive power for organizational and educational outcomes, and that promoting more self-determined motivation generally leads to more positive outcomes (Broeck et al., 2021). A recent systematic review adds an important nuance: intrinsic effects are highly context-dependent (e.g., task design, feedback, and social conditions); for example, reward contingencies or interpersonal interactions can enhance or diminish intrinsic motivation depending on how they are implemented (S. Wang et al., 2024). In the context of vocational education and work readiness, recent literature suggests that intrinsic motivation will be effective in driving employability when combined with authentic experiences, mentor support, and learning structures that provide opportunities for mastery experiences—so that internal motivation can be converted into self-efficacy and practical work capabilities.

Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is viewed as a psychological engine that influences an individual's level of effort, persistence, and adaptability in the face of challenges, making it a key factor in shaping work readiness. The literature over the past five years has shown that self-efficacy has a strong relationship with learning engagement, academic performance, creativity, and reduced learning burnout, both in educational contexts and career transitions (Bao et al., 2021; Schunk & Dibenedetto, 2020).

Meta-analytic evidence and longitudinal studies confirm that individuals with high self-efficacy tend to be more confident in tackling new tasks, more resilient to failure, and more proactive in career development (Howard et al., 2021). In the context of work readiness, self-efficacy serves as a crucial mediator that translates learning experiences—such as internships and active learning—into tangible employability outcomes (Akkermans et al., 2024). Recent research also suggests that self-efficacy can be strengthened through the use of educational technology, including AI-supported learning tools, especially when the technology is used in challenging and contextualized tasks (Zhai & Li, 2025).

Furthermore, the literature emphasizes that learning interventions focused on mastery experiences, modeling, constructive performance feedback, and affective regulation are effective strategies for improving students' self-efficacy (Schunk & Dibenedetto, 2020). Thus, self-efficacy not only plays a role as a predictor of work readiness but also as a key psychological mechanism connecting learning experiences and the demands of the workplace.

Work Readiness

Work readiness is understood as a multidimensional construct encompassing technical competencies (job-specific skills), generic skills (communication, teamwork, problem-solving), and psychological readiness such as adaptability, resilience, and career

clarity. Recent literature confirms that work readiness reflects not only the ability to perform tasks but also an individual's readiness to transition and adapt in a dynamic work environment (Hirschi et al., 2015; Jackson et al., 2024).

A recent systematic review highlighted the importance of integrating curriculum with authentic learning experiences, particularly through Work-Integrated Learning (WIL), strengthening digital employability skills, and explicit competency assessments to reduce the employability gap for graduates (Jackson, 2015). In the context of vocational education, research shows that the quality of work experience, support from industry mentors, and opportunities to develop 21st-century skills are key determinants of student and university student employability (Thi et al., 2024).

Furthermore, the literature from the last five years emphasizes that measuring work readiness needs to differentiate between performative readiness—the ability to perform work tasks—and transition readiness, which is the psychological readiness and career planning for the school-work transition (Akkermans et al., 2024). At the policy level, close collaboration between educational institutions and industry and curriculum orientation toward the demands of Industry 4.0 and Society 5.0 are recommended to ensure the relevance and sustainability of graduates' work readiness.

RESEARCH METHOD

An explanatory quantitative design with mediation modeling: lecturer TL, internship experience quality, and intrinsic motivation as predictors; self-efficacy as mediator; work readiness as outcome. This design tests direct and indirect effects (total effect) to assess the psychological mechanisms that bridge the relationship between antecedent and readiness according to current employability and WIL recommendations.

Population: all 5th-semester UMG Management Study Program students who have completed internships per year, because this group has experienced exposure to the world of work that is relevant to the constructs of work readiness and career self-efficacy. Sample: 55 respondents, sufficient for PLS-SEM with a mediation model and 5 latent constructs, considering the 10-times rule and the need for bootstrapping mediation paths. Sampling technique: purposive sampling with inclusion criteria (active 5th-semester students, have completed/reported internships, willing to fill out the questionnaire) and exclusion (duplicate/incomplete responses). This approach is in line with work-integrated learning practices that require relevant work experience as a basis for assessing employability.

The data collection method used a likert-type questionnaire instrument with 1–5 scales for five constructs: lecturer transformational leadership (TL), quality of internship experience (Quality Internship), intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, and work readiness. Adapted indicators from HEI literature (TL dimensions: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration), internship quality (authentic assignments, feedback, mentoring, task relevance), intrinsic motivation (interest, enjoyment of learning, mastery orientation), self-efficacy (confidence in completing entry-level academic/professional tasks), and work readiness (soft skills, career orientation, professionalism). Data analysis began with data quality checks: outlier detection, missing items, common method bias (Harman's single factor, full collinearity VIF). Item selection was based on loading >0.7 , AVE ≥ 0.5 , CR ≥ 0.7 , HTMT $<0.85/0.90$. PLS-SEM: path estimation for direct effects (TL to readiness; internship to readiness; motivation to readiness;

antecedent to self efficacy; self efficacy to readiness) and indirect effects (antecedent→efficacy→readiness) with 5,000 bootstrapping; reporting path coefficients, t-stat, p-value, CI, R^2 , f^2 , Q^2 .

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After passing the screening stage, the researchers conducted a main test by distributing questionnaires. They then analyzed the questionnaires to narrow down the data for analysis. Ultimately, they used 55 respondents for their data analysis, which was processed using SmartPLS 4.09 software.

1. Testing the measurement model (outer model)

The measurement model (outer model) was tested to assess the validity and reliability of the constructs used in this study, including Transformational Leadership, Internship Experience, Intrinsic Motivation, Self-Efficacy, and Work Readiness. The convergent validity test results showed that all indicators had outer loading values above the minimum limit of 0.50, with most indicators above 0.70. This indicates that each indicator is able to adequately represent its latent construct. In addition, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value for all constructs was above 0.50, confirming that the indicator variance is explained more by the constructs than by measurement error.

Discriminant validity tests were conducted using the Fornell–Larcker criteria, cross-loading, and heterotrait–monotrait ratio (HTMT). The Fornell–Larcker results showed that the square root of the AVE for each construct was greater than the correlation between the other constructs, so each construct could be empirically distinguished. This finding was supported by the cross-loading values, which showed that each indicator had the highest loading on the measured construct compared to other constructs. Furthermore, all HTMT values were below the threshold of 0.90, indicating a good level of discriminant validity and the absence of overlapping issues between constructs.

Furthermore, construct reliability testing showed that all variables had composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha values above 0.70. This indicates that the research instrument has high internal consistency and can be relied upon to measure the constructs studied. Thus, the overall results of the outer model testing indicate that the measurement model has met the validity and reliability criteria, making it suitable for use in structural model testing and further research hypothesis testing.

2. Structural Model Testing (Inner Model)

The structural model was evaluated using R-square for the dependent variable and path coefficient values for the independent variables, the significance of which was then assessed based on the t-statistic value of each path.

The R-square value is the coefficient of determination on endogenous constructs. According to Chin (1998), the R-square value is 0.67 (strong), 0.33 (moderate), and 0.19 (weak). The coefficient of determination (Adjusted R-square) is used to show how much influence the influencing variable has on the influenced variable. Changes in the R-square value can be used to assess the influence of certain independent latent variables on the dependent latent variable whether it has a substantive influence. Based on the results, the Adjusted R-square value for each equation is above 50 percent (0.5). The adjusted R-square value of 0.506 means that the independent variables (Intrinsic Motivation, Quality of Internship Experience, and Transformational Leadership) are able to explain the

mediating variable (Self-Efficacy) by 50.6 percent, the remainder by other variables outside the model. The adjusted r square value of 0.644 means that the independent variables (Intrinsic Motivation, Quality of Internship Experience, and Transformational Leadership) and the mediating variable (Self Efficacy) are able to explain the dependent variable (Work Readiness) by 66.4 percent, the remainder by other variables outside the model.

Testing with the Stone-Geisser Q-square test for predictive relevance and the t-test and significance of the structural path parameter coefficients. The Q-square measures how well the observed values are generated by the model and its parameters. A Q-square value greater than 0 (zero) indicates that the model has predictive relevance, while a Q-square value less than 0 (zero) indicates that the model has low predictive relevance.

To calculate Q2, the formula can be used:

$$Q^2 = 1 - (1 - R_1^2) (1 - R_2^2) \dots (1 - R_p^2) \dots$$

$$\text{Nilai } Q^2 = 1 - (1 - 0.534)(1 - 0.670) = 1 - 0.330 = 0.846$$

$$Q^2 = 0.846$$

A Q-square value greater than 0 (zero) indicates that the model has predictive relevance value.

The Goodness of Fit (Gof) test shows that the Goodness of Fit evaluation of the model is measured using the R2 of the dependent latent variable with the same interpretation as regression. A model is said to be good if the Gof value is above 0.38.

$$GoF = \sqrt{AVE \times R^2} = \text{sqrt}(0.522 \times 0.602) = \text{sqrt}(0.314) = 0.560$$

Gof = 0.560, the gof_ is already large because it is above 0.38.

The results of the multicollinearity test showed that all VIF values were <10, so they were free from multicollinearity.

3. Hypothesis Testing

To test the hypothesis, the t-statistic value generated from the PLS output is compared with the t-table value, the PLS output is an estimate of the latent variable which is a linear aggregate of the indicators. The testing criteria with a significance level (α) of 5% for a 1-way test (positive/negative influence) are determined as follows:

From the results of the t table and t count, the comparison can be seen as follows:

- If t count > t table (1.64), then H0 is rejected and H1 is accepted.
- If t count < t table (1.64), then H0 is accepted and H1 is rejected.

Meanwhile, to see the significant influence between variables for a one-way test, this can be seen in the following criteria:

- If prob.value sig/2 < 0.05 then there is a significant influence
- If the prob.value sig/2 > 0.05 then the effect is not significant

A summary of the results of the hypothesis testing can be seen in the following image:

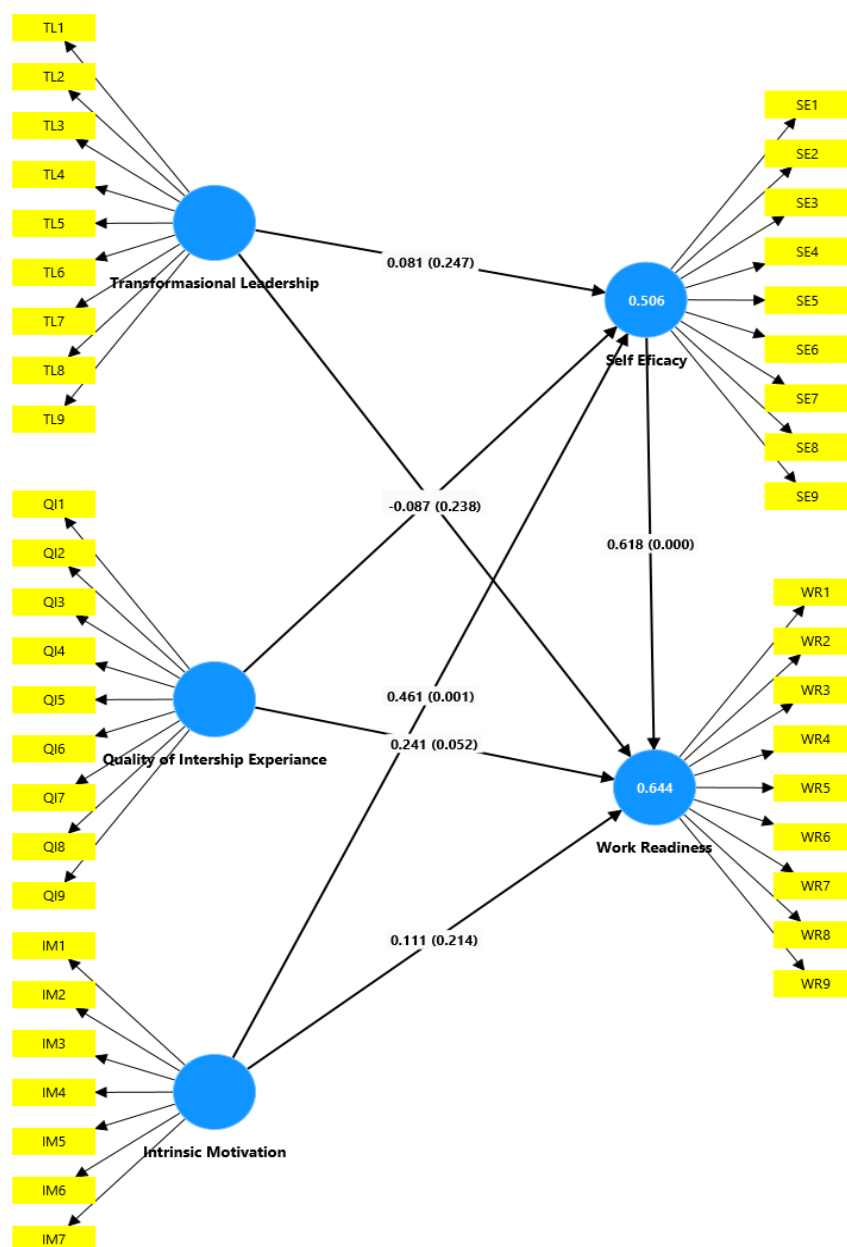


Figure 1.
Path Analysis

Regression equation:

Self efficacy = $0.461 \text{ Intrinsic Motivation} + 0.343 \text{ Quality of Internship Experience} + 0.081 \text{ Transformational Leadership}$

Work Readiness = $0.111 \text{ Intrinsic Motivation} + 0.241 \text{ Quality of Internship Experience} - 0.087 \text{ Transformasional Leadership} + 0.618 \text{ Self Efficacy}$

Table 1.
Direct Effect

No	Direct Effect	Coef	t stat	P values	Conclusion
1	Quality of Internship Experience -> Self Efficacy	0.343	2.405	0.008	positive effect
2	Intrinsic Motivation -> Self Efficacy	0.461	3.203	0.001	positive effect
3	Transformational Leadership -> Self Efficacy	0.081	0.684	0.247	no effect
4	Intrinsic Motivation -> Work Readiness	0.111	0.793	0.214	no effect
5	Quality of Internship Experience -> Work Readiness	0.241	1.625	0.052	no effect
6	Transformational Leadership -> Work Readiness	-0.087	0.714	0.238	no effect
7	Self-efficacy -> Work Readiness	0.618	3.649	0.000	positive effect

Table 2.
Indirect Effect

Indirect Effect	Coef	tstat	P values	Conclusion
Intrinsic Motivation -> Self Efficacy -> Work Readiness	0.285	2.313	0.010	mediate/indirect effect
Quality of Internship Experience -> Self Efficacy -> Work Readiness	0.212	1.929	0.027	mediate/indirect effect
Transformational Leadership -> Self Efficacy -> Work Readiness	0.050	0.694	0.244	not mediating

Discussion

The results of the study indicate that the quality of the internship experience has a positive and significant impact on students' self-efficacy. This finding confirms that authentically designed internships through realistic assignments, clear work targets, regular feedback, and supervisory guidance can strengthen students' confidence in their professional abilities. Theoretically, these results are consistent with social cognitive career theory (SCCT), which positions learning experiences as a primary source of self-efficacy development through mastery experiences, social modeling, and verbal persuasion (Damodar et al., 2024). The work-integrated learning (WIL) perspective also emphasizes that supervisor support and the quality of mentoring are key to strengthening self-efficacy during an internship (Drewery et al., 2025). Therefore, it is not the duration of the internship that is decisive, but rather how much students actually learn and experience success during the internship (Al-Awlaqi et al., 2025; Dautovic et al., 2025).

Intrinsic motivation has been shown to have a positive and significant effect on student self-efficacy. Students who learn out of interest, curiosity, and personal satisfaction tend to have stronger beliefs in their abilities. This finding aligns with self-determination

theory (SDT), which asserts that intrinsic motivation develops when the needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are met (Howard et al., 2021). A recent meta-analysis showed that autonomous motivation is positively correlated with learning engagement, well-being, and indicators of self-efficacy (Y. Wang et al., 2024). From a social cognitive theory perspective, intrinsic motivation increases the likelihood of mastery experiences because students are more persistent and ready to face challenges (J. Wang et al., 2024). Therefore, intrinsic motivation functions as a psychological energy that strengthens self-efficacy through meaningful learning experiences (Ito et al., 2024).

The results of the study showed that lecturers' transformational leadership had no significant effect on student self-efficacy. This finding indicates that inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and learning vision are not sufficient to shape students' personal self-confidence. Theoretically, social cognitive theory emphasizes that self-efficacy is primarily formed through mastery experience or tangible success (Zaini et al., 2022). The literature over the past five years indicates that the influence of transformational leadership on self-efficacy is often indirect and mediated by learning engagement or practical experience (Lin & Wang, 2025). Without project-based learning, authentic assignments, and clear performance feedback, transformational leadership tends to only increase positive perceptions of lecturers (Choi & Kang, 2021; Sánchez-García et al., 2024). This explains why internship experiences are more dominant in shaping self-efficacy (Windasaria et al., 2025).

This study found that lecturers' transformational leadership had no significant effect on work readiness. Although lecturers were considered inspirational, this influence was not sufficient to improve applied work readiness, such as readiness for job selection and professional adaptation. Recent literature indicates that the influence of educational leadership on work readiness tends to be indirect and requires intermediary mechanisms, such as career self-regulation and strengthening specific competencies (Ardiansyah et al., 2021). This finding aligns with studies on authentic leadership, which also reported an insignificant direct effect on work readiness (Tawfik & Mahgoub, 2024). Thus, work readiness is more closely linked to actual capabilities and self-efficacy than simply leadership style.

The results of the study indicate that the quality of the internship experience does not have a significant direct effect on job readiness. This indicates that work experience does not automatically translate into job readiness without a process of reflection and internalization. Experiential learning theory emphasizes that new experiences become meaningful through reflection and conceptualization (Ferns et al., 2014; Jackson, 2015). Recent studies indicate that internships influence career readiness primarily through psychological mediators such as self-efficacy and career adaptability (Hirschi et al., 2015; Lent & Brown, 2019). When internships do not result in mastery experiences, the direct effect on job readiness is weakened (Jackson et al., 2024). Therefore, internships need to be designed as a learning process, not simply a work placement.

Intrinsic motivation does not have a significant direct effect on job readiness. This finding suggests that learning interest and personal satisfaction do not automatically translate into job readiness for students. SDT explains that intrinsic motivation improves learning quality, but its impact on career outcomes is often indirect (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Studies show that intrinsic motivation influences career readiness through mediators such as self-efficacy and career adaptability (Hirschi et al., 2015). Without work experience and authentic learning,

intrinsic motivation remains limited to the academic realm (Jackson, 2015). Therefore, intrinsic motivation needs to be translated into real-world experiences to impact job readiness.

Self-efficacy has been shown to have a positive and significant effect on job readiness. This finding confirms that an individual's belief in their ability to complete tasks and adapt is a key determinant of job readiness. Social cognitive theory explains that individuals with high self-efficacy are more persistent and resilient in the face of challenges (Bandura). Within the SCCT framework, self-efficacy influences career goals and behaviors (Lent & Brown, 2019). Recent studies have shown that self-efficacy is strongly related to job transition readiness and career adaptability (Hirschi et al., 2015). Thus, self-efficacy functions as a psychological engine that translates experiences into concrete job readiness.

The results of the mediation test showed that the effect of transformational leadership on work readiness through self-efficacy was insignificant. The weak TL→self-efficacy pathway prevented the chain effect from forming. The literature indicates that transformational leadership influences outcomes through learning engagement and lecturer-student relationships, not directly through self-efficacy (Lin & Wang, 2025). When leadership is not translated into authentic learning experiences, self-efficacy does not develop. Therefore, work readiness is more influenced by factors closer to practice, such as internships and personal success experiences (Raba et al., 2021).

The results of this study indicate that self-efficacy mediates the effect of internship experiences on job readiness. Internships contribute to job readiness by enhancing students' self-confidence. This finding aligns with SCCT, which positions learning experiences as a source of self-efficacy formation (Musa et al., 2025), studies have shown that internship effectiveness strengthens employability confidence and vocational identity (Jackson et al., 2024; Shen et al., 2024). From a WIL perspective, the quality of internship design is key to the impact of work experience on job readiness (Philip et al., 2026; Pianda et al., 2024).

Intrinsic motivation does not directly influence job readiness, but it does significantly influence it through self-efficacy. This finding suggests that self-efficacy acts as a full mediator. SDT explains that intrinsic motivation increases engagement and competence, which then shape self-efficacy (Philip et al., 2026; Pianda et al., 2024; Ryan & Deci, 2020; Ryan & Ferber, 2025). Studies show that autonomous motivation influences career readiness through career self-efficacy (Guay, 2022; Hirschi et al., 2015). Akkermans et al., (2024) assert that self-efficacy is the main bridge between personal characteristics and employability outcomes. Thus, intrinsic motivation is the "fuel," while self-efficacy is the "engine" of job readiness.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that student work readiness is not only determined by learning environment and experience factors, but is also strongly influenced by internal psychological mechanisms, particularly self-efficacy. The results showed that lecturers' transformational leadership did not have a significant direct effect on work readiness. Although lecturers can provide academic inspiration and motivation, this influence is not sufficient to shape applied work readiness if it is not accompanied by real-life experiences that foster a sense of competence in students. Furthermore, the quality of internship experiences also did not show

a significant direct effect on work readiness. These findings indicate that work experience does not automatically increase work readiness if it is not internalized as a successful experience that strengthens students' self-confidence. Intrinsic motivation also did not have a direct effect on work readiness, indicating that learning interest and internal drive alone are not sufficient to prepare students to enter the workforce. Conversely, self-efficacy was shown to have a positive and significant effect on work readiness. Students who have high confidence in their ability to complete tasks, adapt to the work environment, and face professional challenges tend to be more prepared to enter the workforce. In the mediation test, self-efficacy did not mediate the effect of lecturers' transformational leadership on work readiness, but it successfully mediated the effect of internship experience quality and intrinsic motivation on work readiness. Overall, this research confirms that self-efficacy plays a key role in bridging learning experiences, internal motivation, and work readiness. Therefore, improving student work readiness requires designing learning and work experiences that provide successful experiences, constructive feedback, and gradual challenges to optimize the development of student self-efficacy.

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