



Gen Z And The World Of Work: A Study Literature Of New Graduates' Challenges In Building Job Readiness

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Abstract. Work readiness is an essential attribute for new graduates to adjust to the world of work, for job performance indicator and future career development. However, many fresh graduates are still immature in building work readiness. This study aims to explore the skills required for work readiness and the challenges faced in building work readiness among fresh graduates. A descriptive literature review approach conducted in July 2022 was used as the research method. The results showed that personal characteristics, organizational acumen, work competence, and social intelligence are competencies required by new graduates. Work readiness challenges are divided into personal and institutional factors, where personal factors include lack of work experience, individual characteristics that do not fit the organizational culture, and competencies that are not optimal. Meanwhile, institutional factors include the lack of connection between the workforce and educational institutions regarding the competencies needed by new graduates, the practical skills taught and the expected needs mismatch, the companies' doubts about fresh graduates, and the reluctance to provide the necessary training. These findings imply that cooperation and synergy between education and business are needed to build the work readiness of new graduates.

Keywords: Fresh graduates, Gen Z, Work Readiness, Work World

1 Introduction

The number of job seekers continues to increase every year. In August 2021, there were 206.71 million people in Indonesia who were of working age, and most of them (67.80%) were in the labor force[5]. The working population is the population aged 15 years or more. Meanwhile, the labor force is the working-age population that works, or has a job but is temporarily not working. Based on BPS data, the composition of the Indonesian labor force is 140.15 million people, 9.10 million of whom are unemployed or job seekers, and some of these job seekers are new graduates, both college graduates and high school graduates. Data from the Directorate General of Higher Education [19] recorded that the number of new college graduates in 2020 was 1,535,074 people who had to compete with experienced job seekers to find the desired permanent job.

This condition results in competition in finding the desired job becoming increasingly fierce and each brings its own dynamics. Experienced job seekers have the

problem of age, which is often a requirement when applying for a job. Meanwhile, new graduates with the right age have not had enough experience or work readiness, which is an important initial capital.

Work-readiness is the possession of skills, knowledge, attitudes, and commercial understanding that will make new graduates able to make productive contributions to the company immediately after starting work [21]. Work readiness is also defined as a combination of abilities that are in accordance with what the world of work requires, not only for current needs but also future needs given the dynamic world of work [17]. Another explanation from Caballero and Walker (2010) explains that work readiness is an indication of potential that will show how a person's job performance, success, potential for promotion, and career development. The term work readiness is equivalent to the terms workforce readiness, work preparedness, job readiness, job preparedness, and employ-ability[6] (Caballero & Walker, 2010; [26]. Each term describes the competencies that must be possessed by new graduates which are the main provisions in finding a job. The problem is that not every new graduate has the required work readiness.

Work readiness is an essential attribute for new graduates as capital to adjust to the world of work, as well as an indicator of job performance and career development of an employee in future jobs[4] [6]. The attributes in question are practical abilities (soft skills) that are not received in college or school such as the ability to work, build social relationships, organize, and work together in teams. These abilities are assets that need to be demonstrated when entering the world of work to be able to compete with fellow job seekers or with senior workers.

In reality, companies consider that new graduates have not mastered enough soft skills (Priksat et al., 2018) needed when working. Even if these soft skills competencies are possessed, they still do not meet company expectations [31], resulting in a gap between the abilities possessed by new graduates and company expectations (Caballero & Walker, 2010;[9];[21]; [22];[32]. This gap is problematic because companies or employers do not want to waste time and resources educating and training new workers, preferring instead to look for candidates who are already equipped and ready to work. The consequence faced by new graduate job seekers is to build work readiness as early as possible and equip themselves with the skills needed by the company.

Problems related to industry needs for qualified candidates that are not sustainable with the conditions of new graduates are a problem in many countries such as Australia, Japan, America, Mexico, Poland, India, Malaysia, Mauritius, Singapore, Thailand, Taiwan, and Indonesia [9]. [22]found that the abilities of new graduates in Indonesia are still very far from the needs of industries and organizations, both in the realm of government, companies, and in the field of education. Especially for new graduates who during college have no work or organizational experience and still carry a college mindset which is of course different from the world of work. Research from (Sagita et al., 2020) reinforces previous results that there is still a gap between the competencies possessed and those needed in terms of self-confidence, character, personal integrity, analytical skills, problem solving, communication, cooperation, time management, and creativity. Meanwhile, research from Qomariyah & Febriyanti found that new graduates need to prepare themselves in terms of social support, internal

encouragement, expanding opportunities, building competencies, and selection readiness [23].

New graduates in this era fall into the category of generation Z, which is the generation born between 1995-2010 and belongs to the working age group. Many studies related to work readiness take gen Z as the subject of research [1][3]; [27]; [30]. because indeed this generation is a generation that is in transition to the world of work. This generation is a generation that grew up and developed in the era of technology, which makes them different from previous generations, especially their expertise in utilizing technology [8] [30]. Furthermore, Singh and Dangmei (2016) revealed that Gen Z shows an individual character, likes instant things, is impatient, demanding, and lacks in problem solving skills because they are too attached to the internet. The characteristics possessed by Gen Z are contrary to company expectations [30].

The various explanations above show that work readiness is absolutely necessary for Generation Z as new graduates who will enter the workforce. However, the problem is that there are still many generation Z who are considered immature in building work readiness. The research question that arises is what hinders generation Z in building work readiness. What challenges are faced in preparing themselves to enter the world of work as new graduates. This literature study seeks to explore the abilities needed in work readiness, followed by exploring the challenges faced in building the work readiness of new graduates, as well as the readiness of the industrial business world in welcoming the new generation of workers.

2 Methods

The research method uses a descriptive literature study approach. This method is used to answer research questions or problems by tracing existing written sources. Researchers collect articles and sources that are in accordance with the topic of discussion, record existing findings, process the findings, and compile a framework of thinking so that it becomes a scientific article that can be accounted for. The data collection process was carried out in July 2020. Article sources were obtained from PubMed and google scholar search engine with the keywords "work readiness", "work readiness", "job readiness", "work preparedness", "employability", "workforce", "Generation Z" and "Gen Z". The inclusion criteria for the articles used were: 1) articles in Indonesian and English; 2) the minimum article year is 2010; 3) is a research article, literature study, or meta-analysis; 4) the article contains the full text of the article. Researchers also used reports from institutions that provide data related to the labor force and new graduates such as reports from BPS and the Directorate General of Higher Education. Meanwhile, articles that were in languages other than Indonesian and English, had a year older than 2010, and only contained abstracts were excluded from the analysis.

Descriptive analysis was conducted to explore each topic of discussion, namely: 1) skills needed in work readiness, 2) challenges in building work readiness, and 3) readiness of business and industry towards gen Z. Researchers read each article in full and described the results of the analysis according to the topic raised.

3 Findings and Discussion

3.1 Skills Needed in Work Readiness

Work readiness includes various attributes or abilities needed by prospective workers to be able to enter the world of work. The abilities in question include various combinations of abilities, especially soft skills, which can support future work performance and career development. These attributes and abilities will become benchmarks and indicators in determining the work readiness, work performance, and career advancement of Generation Z when entering the workforce (Borg et al., 2017).

Various experts expressed their views regarding the abilities that need to be possessed before entering the world of work. The following will describe some expert opinions related to the abilities or competencies that need to be mastered when entering the world of work. The first opinion comes from Prikshat et al. (2019) through the concept of work readiness integrated competence model (WRICM) which consists of 4 main abilities which are then broken down into more specific abilities or competencies[20]. The four main components in WRICM are intellectual resources, personality resources, meta-skill resources, and specific work-related resources. A clearer division of competencies in WRICM can be seen in table 3.1.

Table 1. Work-Readiness Integrated Competence Model

WRICM (<i>Work-readiness Integrated Competence Model</i>)	Intellectual Resources	Cognitive Ability	Problem solving and analytical thinking, strategic thinking and planning, learning ability
		Basic skills	Numeracy and literacy
	Personal Resources	Self-Management Skills	Meta-cognition, desire for continuous learning, and self-regulation
		Creative and Innovative Thinking Ability	Entrepreneurial ability, management of change, ability to make peace with uncertainty
		Leadership Ability	Leadership ability, logical thinking, foresight, ability to influence, ability to develop others, ability to maintain relationships, and courage to take responsibility
	Sumber Daya <i>Meta-skills</i>	Meta-skills Cooperation and Political Skills	Ability to work with others, influence others, conflict resolution skills, diversity management, political skills, interpersonal orientation, ability to relate to people
		Communication Skills	Oral and written skills, language skills, able to give and receive feedback
		Information	Mastery of information and

		Technology Skills	communication technology, understanding ethical issues related to technology and its use
		Systematic Thinking Ability	Ability to see the big picture, able to solve ongoing problems, able to solve difficult problems
Specific Job-related Resources	Basic Business-related Skills	Performance management, organizational management, professionalism, and strong work ethic	

The next expert opinion related to the components needed in work readiness comes from Caballero et al. (2011) through the work readiness scale[7]. Caballero et al. (2011) developed the Work Readiness Scale to measure how much work readiness a new graduate has. The implications of this scale mean that the aspects in question are competencies that must be possessed when entering the workforce. The competencies that must be mastered by new graduates are[7]:

- a. Personal characteristics, which are individual perceptions of personal characteristics related to work situations, such as knowledge of oneself, ability to survive, adaptability, flexibility, and desire to develop oneself.
- b. Organisational acumen, refers to the knowledge and awareness of the organization with regard to the protocols and practices that apply in the company environment. Competencies that must be possessed include work motivation, maturity, professionalism, social responsibility, desire for continuous learning, and work attitude.
- c. Work competence, relates to an individual's competencies and strengths related to work. Examples of work competence include organizational skills, critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, and innovation.
- d. Social Intelligence, is the social ability and the way individuals can interact and adapt to work situations. The abilities included in social intelligence are teamwork, collaboration skills, interpersonal skills, adaptability, and communication skills.

Research in Indonesia conducted by Qomariyah & Febriyanti (2021) with a qualitative approach found 5 components that play a role in a person's work readiness [23]. Although this research was conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic, researchers feel that the components found are quite relevant to be applied in various situations. The five components found to affect work readiness are:

- a. Social support
Individuals who receive support from the social environment will be better prepared to enter the world of work. This support comes from family, friends, and the educational environment. The support provided can vary, such as financial support for self-development, information on job opportunities from friends, and skill development opportunities provided by educational institutions.
- b. Internal encouragement

Internal encouragement, of course, comes from within the individual who can strengthen and influence the individual in preparing to find the expected job. This internal encouragement can also be in the form of an individual's willingness to develop the abilities needed to build work readiness. The existence of internal encouragement will motivate individuals to continue learning new things in accordance with the company's demands for individuals who are proactive and full of initiative.

c. **Opportunity**

Opportunities in this case are work experiences that are sought by individuals to complement the formal education that has been achieved. Opportunities do not come by themselves, but must be actively sought by new graduates.

d. **Competence**

Competencies include various knowledge and abilities that individuals have in solving problems, especially those related to work. Various competencies such as digital skills, work attitudes, and communication skills are basic competencies that must be possessed.

e. **Job selection readiness**

Work readiness will be assessed during the job selection process, so having knowledge related to the position applied for can show one's work readiness. The attitude shown during the selection process will be used as evaluation material regarding whether or not an individual is ready to occupy a certain position. Understanding the duties and roles of a position will give the impression that the individual applying for the position knows the direction and goals to be achieved when later starting work.

The various explanations above have illustrated that work readiness is not enough from just one factor, but involves many interrelated factors. These factors come from within the individual or internal factors and from outside the individual or external factors.

3.2 **Challenges in Building Work Readiness**

Building work readiness is not as easy as turning the palm of the hand, as evidenced by the many reports from the industrial world that new graduates entering the workforce are still lacking in terms of work readiness. The hope is that when an individual has graduated from formal education, they can immediately get a job that suits their interests and talents. But in reality, after graduating from school and college it takes about 3 to 6 months for new graduates to find a job [15]. One of the implications of this condition is that companies assume that new graduates who apply for jobs do not meet the required qualifications, or it can be said that new graduates have poor work readiness. O'Boyle et al. (2017) said that there are still many company managers who are not confident in the communication and social skills of generation Z who grew up in the technological era.

The lack of work readiness must have a causal factor, researchers call it a challenge. In this discussion, researchers will describe the challenges that exist in the process of building the work readiness of prospective new graduates. The challenges are classified

into two categories, namely personal factors and institutional factors. Further explanation is as follows.

1. Personal factors

Personal factors are factors that come from within the individual related to personal characteristics and the lack of effort made so that the competencies needed in work readiness are not maximized. In this discussion, researchers will describe the essential competencies that Generation Z in Indonesia lacks, as well as other challenging factors related to personal factors.

a. Lack of work experience

Experience is an important asset for someone before entering the workforce. Work experience will support Generation Z's work readiness [14] as it provides an overview of the world of work and its dynamics. Furthermore, Garcia-Aracil et al. (2021) found that students who have work/organizational experience and academic achievement during college have a positive impact on work readiness. Fenech et al. (2020) emphasized that students need to take part in training during college for self-development and engage in learning processes that will increase the experience, abilities, and capacities needed when working. In addition, with experience, a person will have a place for self-development to hone soft skills [13]. Qomariyah and Febriyanti found that experience is an important component in building work readiness [23]. Training and internship experiences can increase self-efficacy which is an important aspect of work readiness [12]. However, the problem is that there are still many new graduates who lack work experience [21] which indirectly impacts the lack of other competencies in work readiness. Bandaranaike and Willison (2015) revealed that new graduates are still unable to fully apply the academic knowledge gained in the world of work. This can be attributed to their lack of work experience [2].

b. Personal characteristics that do not fit the organizational culture

Several studies have found that personal characteristics that do not meet company expectations are a problem in terms of work readiness. Sagita et al. (2020) found that character and personal integrity are components that need to be improved by new graduates because many still do not meet company expectations [26]. Bandaranaike and Willison (2015) also stated that the affective capacity (social and personality skills) of new graduates is considered more important than the status of graduates [2].

Generation Z is also a difficult individual to work according to the standard operating procedures set by the company [24], thus indicating that generation Z is a group that is difficult to organize or motivate. Generation Z's unwillingness to follow standard procedures will trigger negative judgment from the company. Said et al. (2020) found that generation Z is a generation that quickly gets bored with work and lacks trust in superiors [27]. These two characteristics show that generation Z lacks commitment to work. In general, the personal character related to work that is lacking in new graduates and is widely mentioned is personal integrity.

c. Competencies that are not maximized

Many studies related to work readiness have found that there is still a gap between company expectations and the quality of prospective workers. The implication is that new graduate job seekers are still lacking in terms of competencies sought by companies or do not meet the standards set. In fact, mastery of soft skills is the main assessment for companies in measuring the work readiness of new in addition to formal

degrees and academic success [9]. This lack of competence stems from the lack of work experience possessed by generation Z as new graduates [28]. Unlike previous generations who started working in their teens, Generation Z does not have this experience. Generation Z will continue their education on average up to university level, and during the education process is not accompanied by work experience so that their experience is lacking. This lack of experience will impact their expectations, resulting in low commitment and high turn-over [28].

Various kinds of competencies that are still lacking and need to be improved include critical thinking, analytical, teamwork, problem solving, communication skills, lack of decision-making skills, low work commitment, lack of interpersonal relationship skills, adaptability, and time and self-management [6] [13] [15]; Plant et al., 2019; [21]; Priyono & Nankervis, 2019; [26]. These abilities are essential abilities needed in the world of work in any field. A new graduate before going to work needs to build these competencies through work experience or organizational experience.

2. Institutional factors

Various literatures mention that the problem faced by Indonesia in relation to the fulfillment of workers is that there is still a gap between the quality of prospective workers and the demands that companies have [21] [22]. This challenge arises not only because of new graduates who lack competence, but also there is an institutional role ranging from formal education institutions, companies, to the government. Prikshat et al. (2018) answered through the following explanation:

a. There is still a lack of connection between the world of work and educational institutions regarding the competencies of new graduates needed.

b. In Indonesia itself, this challenge arises because of the mismatch between the practical skills taught and the expected needs, lack of internship experience, inappropriate job placement. In addition, the educational curriculum taught is too theoretical so that it is not in accordance with the field, teachers who lack work experience, outdated materials, and poor quality graduates.

c. Doubts held by companies over new graduates and reluctance to provide the required training.

This opinion is reinforced by Priyono and Nankervis (2019) who said that the mismatch of qualifications concerns the lack of alignment between the curriculum and graduates with industry needs, both in knowledge, skills, and 'soft' and 'hard' abilities. and Papakonstantinou (2015) revealed that there needs to be cooperation between institutions and the world of work in building the work readiness of generation Z [25]. Educational institutions are obliged to prepare a curriculum that supports industry needs, while industry businesses need to provide training that can improve the abilities and competencies of generation Z who are just entering the workforce. Unfortunately, the involvement of industrial businesses in curriculum development to build students' work readiness is still lacking [4]. Skills mismatches also include the failure of educational institutions to adequately prepare new graduates for future workplaces, and the negligence of employers in providing appropriate development opportunities. While the 'field of study' mismatch concerns the government's failure to adequately analyze the changing skills demands of the labor market, and to ensure a match between industry demand and education system supply.

3.3 Business and Industry Readiness for Gen-Z

Currently, the world recognizes various generational categories based on the year of birth, and each generation has different characteristics according to the dynamics of the ongoing development of the times. There are at least 6 (six) generations that currently color the life of the world. The following is a description:

Table 2. Generation division

↓	Generasi Veteran (1925 - 1946)
	Generasi <i>Baby Boomer</i> (1946 - 1960)
	Generasi X (1960 - 1980)
	Generasi Y (1980 - 1995)
	Generasi Z (1995 - 2010)
	Generasi Alfa (2010 +)

Source: Andrea et al., 2016

Referring to the generational division in Table 2, it can be said that generation Z is a generation that is in the transition period entering the world of work. The age range of generation Z ranges from 13 years to 28 years or is in adolescence to early adulthood. Individuals who are in their 20s have the task of starting to think about work because most of them have graduated from college.

Preparing for the new era of the world of work is not only a demand for generation Z, but also for the world of work itself. Especially in the midst of the invasion of technology and artificial intelligence (AI) requires not only workers but also companies and businesses to develop to keep up with the demands of a changing world [18]. Businesses and industries need to prepare themselves because the characteristics of Generation Z, which grew up in the digital era, are different from previous generations. If this difference is not addressed properly, it will become a gap that can cause problems such as bias, stereotypes, and misperceptions [33], considering that the company's managerial position holders are generations above them with different characteristics.

Andrea et al. (2016) mentioned that generation Z is called the digital native generation because they were born when technology and the internet were developing rapidly. They depend on various aspects of life on technology including problem solving and searching for answers solely from the internet. As a result, generation Z is stigmatized as a tech savvy generation but lacking in problem solving [1](Singh & Dangmei, 2016).

Another characteristic mentioned by Andrea et al. (2016)[1], namely generation Z is ambitious, likes challenges, is confident, is not afraid of change, and is nimble but tends to be impatient. These characters are similar to those conveyed by [10] (Dolot, 2018). Singh and Dangmei (2016) also found that generation Z is individualistic, impatient, instant-minded, demanding, and less ambitious than previous generations [30]. While [24] found that generation Z has dynamic, transparent, innovative, involved, tolerant, socially responsible, emotional, knowledgeable, and individualistic characteristics.

When it comes to work, Generation Z has its own views and expectations of a job. Racolța-Paina and Irini (2021) call it unrealistic expectations, especially with regard to salary [24]. Siddiky & Akter (2021) said that Gen Z will tend to choose a job that provides the possibility of promotion, benefits or severance pay, and provides a sense

of security, as well as Gen-Z Indonesia [29] [11]. Gen-Z will choose a job based on personal interests rather than fulfilling demands and directions from others. In addition, Gen-Z considers workplace stability to be important, as well as work-life balance [1][8] [10]. Gen-Z also expects a job that provides opportunities for learning and growth [8], as well as direct feedback from superiors [10].

Indeed, Gen-Z is an exceptional worker, but companies need to prepare themselves to work with Gen-Z and their characteristics. Organizational culture can no longer be rigid and conservative because it will get opposition from Gen-Z, and companies need to prepare themselves in terms of digital readiness to be more in line with the capacity of Gen-Z who are digital natives. In addition, companies also need to provide supporting factors that will encourage generation Z to be better prepared and more motivated to work, namely leadership figures who can be role models, recognition, providing generation Z opportunities to engage in challenging projects, career planning, salary, more flexible working hours, and rewards [8] [23].

4 Conclusion

Job readiness is an important aspect that needs to be prepared before the younger generation enters the real world of work. In reality, there are still many gen Z who are not ready in hard skills and soft skills to be able to enter the world of work. This gap occurs because the needs expected by companies or the industrial world are not in line with the abilities provided in the campus world. The younger generation needs to build work readiness as early as possible. In addition, this readiness is not only the responsibility of the younger generation but also the government, educational institutions, and job providers.

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