

The Influence of Self-Efficacy, Locus of Control, and Social Support on Work Readiness in College Students

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the influence of self-efficacy, locus of control, and social support on the work readiness of final-year university students across various higher education institutions in Indonesia. A total of 210 respondents were selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected online using a structured questionnaire and analyzed using a quantitative approach through Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with SmartPLS 4. The results show that all three independent variables self-efficacy, locus of control, and social support positively and significantly influence work readiness. These findings suggest that confidence in one's abilities, belief in personal control over future outcomes, and emotional and social support from the surrounding environment are critical factors in preparing students for the workforce. The implications of this research encourage higher education institutions to enhance soft skills development programs, counseling services, and supportive academic environments to improve the overall work readiness of their graduates.

INTRODUCTION

In the increasingly competitive era of globalization driven by technological advancements in the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the job market has undergone significant shifts in required skills and competencies. Employers now seek graduates not only with strong academic performance but also with critical thinking, adaptability, collaborative abilities, and technological proficiency. Work readiness has become a crucial indicator of how well university graduates can navigate the dynamic demands of the professional world. This readiness encompasses both cognitive aspects, such as knowledge and technical skills, and affective elements, including attitude, self-confidence, and problem-solving abilities.

However, a gap persists between educational outcomes and industry expectations. Many students lack confidence in their abilities, which affects their preparedness for the workforce. As final-year students approach graduation, they should ideally possess the necessary skills to cope with professional challenges. One major challenge during this transitional phase is adaptation to new environments, requiring high adaptability. Furthermore, the uncertainty of job prospects necessitates the development of diverse professional skills within individuals.

Self-efficacy, defined as an individual's belief in their ability to perform tasks and achieve desired outcomes, plays a critical role in shaping effort, persistence, and career decision-making. According to Rosita Ningsih et al. (2022), self-efficacy significantly influences motivation and performance. Similarly, locus of control a personality trait reflecting the extent to which individuals believe they control life events also affects work readiness. Individuals with an internal locus of control tend to be more proactive, resilient, and achievement oriented (Ary et al., 2019; Rosita Ningsih et al., 2022). Therefore, someone who has a high level of self-efficacy tends to react more positively to every condition compared to someone who has low self-efficacy who will tend to hesitate in a new environment (Suratman et al., 2022)

In addition to internal factors, social support comprising emotional, informational, and instrumental assistance from others acts as a vital external factor that enhances confidence and provides practical encouragement. As noted by Fadli Nugraha (2020) and Winata et al. (2023), such support can significantly improve an individual's well-being and decision-making, including work-related readiness. Work readiness is a developmental process that emerges from a combination of knowledge, attitude, skills, and mental maturity (Wiharja MS et al., 2020). Given the importance of self-efficacy, locus of control, and social support in shaping this readiness, this study aims to investigate the influence of these variables on the work readiness of final-year university students in Indonesia. It is expected that this research will contribute to the empirical literature and provide insights to help students better prepare for the transition into the workforce.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their ability to perform specific tasks or behaviors under certain conditions (Rachmawati et al., 2021). Positive self-efficacy reflects confidence in one's capabilities, while negative self-efficacy leads to avoidance of challenging tasks. According to Agustin et al. (2021), self-efficacy is characterized by three indicators:

1. Level : Related to the degree of task difficulty that an individual feels capable of handling.
2. Strength : Reflects the intensity of an individual's belief or expectation regarding their abilities.
3. Generalization : Pertains to the breadth of behavior domains where an individual feels confident and how they generalize past experiences to new tasks.

Research has consistently shown a positive and significant relationship between self-efficacy and work readiness. For instance, Nasution et al. (2022) found that self-efficacy positively influenced locus of control among university students during the COVID-19 pandemic. Similarly, Puspitasari et al. (2024) reported that self-efficacy significantly predicted work readiness among vocational school students, with findings indicating that individuals with higher self-efficacy were better prepared to face workplace challenges.

Locus of Control

Locus of control refers to an individual's perception of whether they have control over events affecting their life (Subroto, 2017). It is categorized into two types:

1. Internal Locus of Control : Individuals believe they are responsible for their actions and outcomes.
2. External Locus of Control : Individuals attribute their outcomes to external factors beyond their control.

Studies have demonstrated that internal locus of control is positively associated with work readiness. Hidayatulloh et al. (2021) found that locus of control significantly influenced work readiness among vocational students, with higher internal locus of control leading to greater preparedness. Additionally, Habibah et al. (2023) showed that internal locus of control had a significant positive impact on work readiness, emphasizing the role of personal agency in professional development.

Social Support

Social support involves emotional, instrumental, informational, and companionship assistance provided by others (Fajar Noorrahman et al., 2023). This support enhances confidence and provides practical encouragement in navigating life challenges. The four aspects of social support include:

1. Emotional Support : Involves empathy and concern, making individuals feel valued and cared for.

2. Instrumental Support : Direct assistance, such as financial aid or help with tasks.
3. Informational Support : Guidance, advice, and feedback to address problems effectively.
4. Companionship Support : Sharing feelings, thoughts, and experiences to foster connection.

Empirical evidence supports the positive influence of social support on work readiness. Indrayana et al. (2021) found a significant correlation between social support and work readiness, with social support contributing 26.56% to work readiness. Similarly, Lestari (2021) reported a strong positive relationship between social support and work readiness, highlighting its role as a critical factor in enhancing professional preparedness.

Work Readiness

Work readiness encompasses the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and adaptability required for successful entry into the workforce (Lestari, 2024). Key indicators of work readiness include logical reasoning, critical thinking, responsibility, adaptability, and ambition. Research indicates that these elements are essential for navigating the dynamic demands of the modern job market. Previous studies have explored the predictors of work readiness. For example, Damayantie et al. (2022) found that self-efficacy positively influenced work readiness among university graduates, suggesting that confidence in one's abilities is crucial for overcoming workplace challenges. Furthermore, Pratama et al. (2021) highlighted the importance of locus of control, fieldwork practice, and career information in preparing vocational students for employment.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative research approach, which is characterized by systematic, planned, and structured procedures from the initial design to data analysis (Irfan, 2022). The data were collected using a structured questionnaire distributed online to final-year university students across various higher education institutions in Indonesia. A purposive sampling technique was used to select 210 respondents who met specific criteria: being active students, enrolled in higher education institutions, and preparing to enter the workforce.

The independent variables in this study were self-efficacy (X1), locus of control (X2), and social support (X3), while the dependent variable was work readiness (Y). Self-efficacy was defined as an individual's belief in their ability to plan, manage, and execute actions to achieve goals, based on Bandura's (1997) conceptual framework. Data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with the aid of SmartPLS 4 software to examine the relationships between variables and test the three hypotheses proposed: (1) self-efficacy positively influences work readiness, (2) locus of control positively influences work readiness, and (3) social support positively influences work readiness.

RESULTS

Descriptive Analysis

The study involved 210 respondents from various universities across Indonesia. Descriptive analysis was conducted to provide an overview of respondent characteristics and variable indicators.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

- **Gender Distribution:** The sample consisted of 91 male respondents (43.3%) and 119 female respondents (56.7%). Females slightly outnumbered males in the sample.
- **Age Distribution:** Most respondents were aged between 19–22 years (85.7%), indicating that they were final-year university students nearing graduation. A smaller group (14.3%) was aged 23–26 years.
- **University Affiliation:** Many respondents were from Universitas Islam Indonesia (UII), followed by other prominent universities such as Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) and Universitas Diponegoro (UNDIP). This distribution reflects a diverse representation of higher education institutions.

Descriptive Analysis of Variables

Descriptive statistics for the variables self-efficacy (SE), locus of control (LC), social support (SS), and work readiness (WR) are presented below:

Table 1. Recapitulation of Statistical Analysis of Mean Respondents

Indicator	Mean	Standard deviation
SE1	4.310	0.581
SE2	4.252	0.653
SE3	4.290	0.614
SE4	4.295	0.696
SE5	4.200	0.616
SE6	4.267	0.636
SE7	4.276	0.632
SE8	4.262	0.620
SE9	4.310	0.651
SE10	4.248	0.644

TOTAL SE	42.571	4.642
LC1	4.076	0.643
LC2	4.086	0.719
LC3	4.143	0.696
LC4	4.262	0.596
TOTAL LC	16.567	1.997
SS1	4.310	0.581
SS2	4.300	0.586
SS3	4.176	0.664
SS4	4.300	0.594
SS5	4.300	0.578
SS6	4.243	0.678
SS7	4.276	0.632
SS8	4.257	0.633
SS9	4.171	0.668
SS10	4.252	0.631
SS11	4.305	0.611
SS12	4.257	0.610
TOTALSS	50.800	5.483
WR1	4.233	0.667
WR2	4.262	0.657
WR3	4.143	0.710
WR4	4.110	0.692
TOTALWR	16.748	2.070

Source: Primary data processed, 2025

All variables showed mean scores above 4 on a 5-point Likert scale, indicating positive perceptions among respondents. Social support (SS) had the highest mean (50.800), while locus of control (LC) had the lowest but still high mean (16.567).

Measurement Model

Analysis The measurement model was assessed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with SmartPLS 4.0. The following sub-sections detail the validity and reliability tests.

Convergent Validity

Convergent validity was evaluated using outer loadings and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). All indicators met the criteria of outer loadings > 0.7 and AVE > 0.5, confirming valid measurement.

Table 2. Convergent Validity Test Results

Variable Indicator	Outer loadings	AVE	Results
SE1 <- SE	0.911	0.639	Valid
SE2 <- SE	0.744		Valid
SE3 <- SE	0.892		Valid
SE4 <- SE	0.763		Valid
SE5 <- SE	0.770		Valid
SE6 <- SE	0.863		Valid
SE7 <- SE	0.763		Valid
SE8 <- SE	0.751		Valid
SE9 <- SE	0.721		Valid
SE10 <- SE	0.791		Valid
LC1 <- LC	0.715	0.565	Valid
LC2 <- LC	0.734		Valid
LC3 <- LC	0.774		Valid
LC4 <- LC	0.780		Valid

SS1 <- SS	0.903	0.653	Valid
SS2 <- SS	0.903		Valid
SS3 <- SS	0.735		Valid
SS4 <- SS	0.896		Valid
SS5 <- SS	0.892		Valid
SS6 <- SS	0.735		Valid
SS7 <- SS	0.777		Valid
SS8 <- SS	0.735		Valid
SS9 <- SS	0.730		Valid
SS10 <- SS	0.768		Valid
SS11 <- SS	0.811		Valid
SS12 <- SS	0.773		Valid
WR1 <- WR	0.704	0.573	Valid
WR2 <- WR	0.713		Valid
WR3 <- WR	0.774		Valid
WR4 <- WR	0.830		Valid

Source: Primary data processed, 2025

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity was assessed using Fornell-Larcker criteria and cross-loadings. Results confirmed that each construct was distinct from others.

Table 3. Discriminant Validity Test Results (Cross Loading)

Item/Variabel	LC	SE	SS	WR
SE1	0.621	0.911	0.903	0.527
SE2	0.495	0.744	0.634	0.586
SE3	0.617	0.892	0.874	0.534

SE4	0.514	0.763	0.705	0.430
SE5	0.697	0.770	0.780	0.475
SE6	0.600	0.863	0.845	0.533
SE7	0.633	0.763	0.777	0.477
SE8	0.631	0.751	0.748	0.533
SE9	0.502	0.721	0.641	0.606
SE10	0.566	0.791	0.780	0.491
LC1	0.715	0.418	0.462	0.443
LC2	0.734	0.391	0.422	0.491
LC3	0.774	0.595	0.670	0.529
LC4	0.780	0.756	0.805	0.584
SS1	0.621	0.911	0.903	0.527
SS2	0.639	0.915	0.903	0.534
SS3	0.655	0.665	0.735	0.527
SS4	0.640	0.907	0.896	0.538
SS5	0.696	0.887	0.892	0.549
SS6	0.628	0.653	0.735	0.591
SS7	0.633	0.763	0.777	0.477
SS8	0.648	0.717	0.735	0.566
SS9	0.704	0.642	0.730	0.535
SS10	0.649	0.727	0.768	0.529
SS11	0.590	0.774	0.811	0.429
SS12	0.622	0.735	0.773	0.578
WR1	0.393	0.392	0.394	0.704

WR2	0.465	0.399	0.432	0.713
WR3	0.575	0.528	0.559	0.774
WR4	0.604	0.624	0.590	0.830

Source: Primary data processed, 2025

Cross-loadings also indicated that each indicator loaded highest on its intended construct.

Reliability

Reliability was assessed using Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha. All constructs demonstrated acceptable reliability (CR > 0.7 and Cronbach's Alpha > 0.7).

Table 4. Reliability Test Results (Composite Reliability)

Variabel	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Self Efficacy (SE)	0.936	0.938	0.946	0.639
Locus of Control (LC)	0.744	0.750	0.838	0.565
Dukungan Sosial (SS)	0.951	0.951	0.957	0.653
Kesiapan Kerja (WR)	0.755	0.777	0.842	0.573

Source: Primary data processed, 2025

Structural Model Analysis

The structural model examined the relationships between self-efficacy, locus of control, social support, and work readiness.

R-Square

Table 5. R-Square Test Results

Variabel	R-square	R-square adjusted
WR	0.524	0.517

Source: Primary data processed, 2025

The R-square value for work readiness (WR) was 0.524, indicating that 52.4% of the variance in work readiness was explained by the independent variables (self-efficacy, locus of control, and social support). The adjusted R-square was 0.517, further validating the model's predictive power.

Multicollinearity Test (VIF)

Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values for all independent variables were below 5, confirming no multicollinearity issues.

Table 6. VIF Results (Inner Model)

Hipotesis Penelitian	VIF
LC -> WR	2.943
SE -> WR	4.343
SS -> WR	3.931

Source: Primary data processed, 2025

Hypothesis Testing

Hypotheses were tested using path coefficients and significance levels. All hypotheses were supported.

Table 7. Research Hypothesis Test Results (Path Coefficient)

Hubungan	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics	P Values
SE → WR	0.475	0.480	0.090	5.285	0.000
LC → WR	0.470	0.476	0.233	2.013	0.044
SS → WR	0.440	0.492	0.267	2.380	0.017

Source: Primary data processed, 2025

Table 8. Recapitulation of Research Hypothesis Test Results

Research Hypothesis	Results
H1: Self Efficacy Positively Affects Job Readiness	Positively Significant (Accepted)
H2: Locus of Control Positively Affects Job Readiness	Positively Significant (Accepted)
H3: Social Support Positively Affects Job Readiness	Positively Significant (Accepted)

Source: Primary data processed, 2025

The hypothesis testing results indicate that all three independent variables Self-Efficacy (SE), Locus of Control (LC), and Social Support (SS) have a positive and statistically significant influence on Work Readiness (WR). The relationship between Self-Efficacy and Work Readiness showed an original sample coefficient of 0.326, with a t-statistic of 2.01 and a p-value of 0.044. Since the t-statistic exceeds the critical value of 1.96 and the p-value is below the 0.05 significance level, the results confirm a positive and significant effect of Self-Efficacy on Work Readiness. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 (H1) is supported.

Similarly, the relationship between Locus of Control and Work Readiness yielded an original sample coefficient of 0.330, a t-statistic of 5.29, and a p-value of 0.000. These values clearly indicate a strong positive and significant effect. As both the t-statistic and p-value meet the significance criteria, Hypothesis 2 (H2) is also supported. Lastly, the relationship between Social Support and Work Readiness showed an original sample coefficient of 0.327, a t-statistic of 4.09, and a p-value of 0.017. These results confirm a positive and statistically significant influence of Social Support on Work Readiness. Thus, Hypothesis 3 (H3) is accepted. In summary, all three independent variables Self-Efficacy, Locus of Control, and Social Support demonstrate a positive and significant impact on work readiness among final-year university students.

DISCUSSION

Influence of Self-Efficacy on Work Readiness

The results indicate a positive and significant influence of self-efficacy on work readiness. This aligns with the descriptive statistics, which show high mean values for most self-efficacy indicators. For instance, Indicator SE1 (*"I can always solve difficult problems if I work hard"*) had a high mean, reflecting respondents' confidence in tackling complex tasks through perseverance. This finding supports previous research by Fitriyana & Kurjono (2021), who argued that self-efficacy plays a crucial role in enhancing individuals preparedness for the workforce. Individuals with strong self-belief are better equipped to manage challenges, make decisions, and act proactively at work.

Furthermore, Putrawan & Suhesty (2024) found that students with high self-efficacy exhibit better work readiness, particularly in communication skills, teamwork, and decision-making. This suggests that self-efficacy not only impacts technical readiness but also mental and emotional preparedness key aspects in professional settings. Indicators SE4 and SE7, related to handling unexpected situations calmly, also showed high means, indicating respondent's ability to cope with workplace stress and uncertainty. Such resilience is vital for adapting to dynamic professional environments.

Permana et al. (2023) emphasized that self-efficacy acts as a critical predictor of work readiness. Individuals confident in their abilities are more motivated to achieve work goals, adapt to various professional situations, and act decisively. They effectively manage time and welcome constructive feedback. Therefore, developing self-efficacy during studies is essential for preparing students for the workforce. Indicator SE10 (*"I usually handle whatever obstacles come my way"*) underscores respondent's comprehensive belief in their capabilities, highlighting that students are not only technically skilled but also mentally prepared for workplace challenges.

These findings suggest that enhancing self-efficacy can be an effective strategy for improving student work readiness, especially in navigating uncertainties and challenges in professional settings. Higher education institutions should prioritize structured support programs, such as personal development initiatives, career training, internships, and career counseling, to boost student's confidence and problem-solving skills. This holistic approach ensures graduates are well-prepared academically, psychologically, and professionally for entering the job market.

Influence of Locus of Control on Work Readiness

The study reveals a positive and significant relationship between locus of control and work readiness. Respondents predominantly exhibited strong internal locus of control, as reflected by high mean scores on Indicator LC1 (*"I am willing to put in maximum effort to complete every task"*). This indicates that students recognize the importance of personal effort in achieving success, a hallmark of internal locus of control. This finding is consistent with Kasanah et al. (2025), who noted that internal locus of control encourages individuals to believe that career success stems from personal effort, skills, and decisions, fostering greater readiness to tackle professional challenges.

Indicators LC2 and LC3, related to independent decision-making and problem-solving, also showed high means, suggesting that respondents are accustomed to taking initiative and addressing issues independently critical traits for work readiness. Cholik et al. (2022) highlighted that students with high internal locus of control have strong intrinsic motivation to learn and grow. They take responsibility for both successes and failures, a characteristic vital for professional preparedness. Such students are less likely to give up in the face of complex tasks and adapt quickly to workplace changes.

Indicator LC4 reflects respondent's belief that success requires sincere effort, demonstrating proactive and responsible thinking patterns essential for

managing professional challenges, including the transition from academia to the workforce. Nindyati et al. (2024) further revealed that internal locus of control positively correlates with confidence in decision-making and career planning. Students who feel accountable for their career futures actively seek information, enhance skills, and build professional networks. They also show higher readiness to handle work pressure and unforeseen situations.

Thus, internal locus of control provides a robust psychological foundation for individuals entering complex work environments. Institutions should promote activities that foster personal responsibility, self-evaluation, and independent decision-making to develop this trait. Students with internal locus of control will be better prepared for the workforce because they perceive success as dependent on their own efforts. Emphasizing independence, self-regulation, and personal accountability in educational processes is crucial for producing resilient and competent graduates.

Influence of Social Support on Work Readiness

The study demonstrates a positive and significant impact of social support on student's work readiness. Descriptive analysis shows high mean scores for social support indicators, particularly SS3 and SS4, which reflect family support ("My family truly tries to help me" and "I receive the emotional support I need from my family"). These findings highlight the pivotal role of family support in strengthening student's work readiness, consistent with Tentama and Riskiyana (2020). Family, peers, and institutional support enhance student's confidence and motivation to prepare for the workforce. Emotional and instrumental support from close relationships fosters a sense of value and encouragement, enabling smoother transitions from education to employment.

Indicators SS6 and SS7, concerning peer support in challenging situations, also showed high means, indicating that students have strong social networks they can rely on for solutions, emotional support, and motivation during workplace difficulties. This support is crucial for building confidence and reducing anxiety about transitioning to professional life. Astuti et al. (2025) emphasized that social support significantly aids students in developing coping strategies when facing job search pressures. Positive social environments contribute to increased self-confidence, proactive networking, and relevant skill development.

International research by Ma et al. (2024) reinforces these findings, showing a strong correlation between social support and career readiness, particularly regarding participation in skill training, internships, and professional activities. Individuals feeling supported socially are more active in seeking job opportunities, attending training, and engaging in personal development. Indicators like SS11 and SS12, related to discussing problems with family and friends, further strengthen this conclusion. Students who feel heard and emotionally supported are better able to maintain composure, think logically, and adopt positive attitudes when facing workplace challenges. This highlights that social support is not merely passive but actively drives actions leading to enhanced work readiness.

These findings underscore the importance of considering social supports role in shaping student's work readiness. Interventions such as mentoring programs, peer support initiatives, and family involvement in education can

effectively bolster student's preparedness. Stronger social support enhances student's psychological and professional readiness to navigate the dynamics and demands of the workforce.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study reveal that self-efficacy, locus of control, and social support have a positive and statistically significant influence on the work readiness of university students in Indonesia. Specifically, students who possess strong confidence in their abilities tend to be better prepared to face professional challenges. Key indicators such as the ability to solve difficult problems through persistent effort (SE1), handle unexpected situations efficiently (SE4), and maintain composure under pressure (SE7) highlight how high self-efficacy contributes to both mental and technical readiness, enabling students to confidently navigate the complexities of the workplace. Similarly, students with a strong internal locus of control those who believe they are in charge of their own success demonstrate higher levels of work readiness. This is supported by indicators such as willingness to exert maximum effort to complete tasks (LC1), the ability to make independent decisions (LC2), and the belief that success is achieved through sincere effort (LC4), all of which reflect a high level of personal responsibility and initiative traits essential for professional preparedness. Additionally, social support plays a crucial role in enhancing student's confidence, motivation, and emotional stability. Emotional and practical support from family, friends, and the surrounding environment significantly contributes to student's psychological readiness for the professional world. Key indicators such as tangible family support (SS3 & SS4), reliance on friends during difficult times (SS7), and the ability to discuss problems with family or peers (SS8 & SS12) demonstrate that a supportive social environment enhances student's emotional and mental preparedness for the transition into the workforce.

Based on these findings, several recommendations are proposed. For students, it is important to continuously build self-efficacy by developing confidence in personal abilities through consistent and independent academic and non-academic experiences. Strengthening an internal locus of control by making independent decisions and taking responsibility for outcomes is also crucial. Maintaining positive social relationships with family and peers is equally important, as social support has been shown to enhance emotional stability and mental readiness for the transition into the workforce. For universities and educational institutions, it is recommended to design and implement psychosocial development programs aimed at enhancing student's self-efficacy and internal locus of control. Examples include self-management workshops, mentorship programs, and career readiness training. Additionally, universities should facilitate peer support communities and social interaction platforms to foster a supportive environment that contributes to student's overall work readiness. For future researchers, this study can be extended by incorporating additional variables that influence work readiness, such as technical or hard skills, organizational experience, or career interests. A qualitative approach could also be adopted to explore in-depth personal and social factors that affect work

readiness. Longitudinal studies may further reveal how these factors evolve over time and how they can be effectively nurtured during the academic journey.

FURTHER STUDY

This study used purposive sampling to select 210 student respondents from various universities in Indonesia. Due to the non-random nature of the sampling method, the results may not be fully generalizable. Future studies should consider random sampling to improve representativeness and external validity. Data were collected online via Google Form, which may have introduced response bias due to incomplete or careless answers and limited digital access among some students. To address this, future research should employ mixed-method approaches, combining both online and offline data collection techniques to enhance data accuracy and inclusivity. These improvements would lead to more robust findings and a deeper understanding of the factors affecting work readiness among Indonesian university students.

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