



## Contribution of Vocational Interest and Self-Efficacy to the Work Readiness of Vocational School Students

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**Abstract.** This research aims to determine the contribution of interest and self-efficacy to the work readiness of vocational high school (SMK) students in Makassar City. Using a quantitative research method with data analysis techniques in the form of descriptive statistics and multiple linear regression tests, the results show a significant influence between job interest and self-efficacy on the work readiness of SMK students. This is evidenced by the Sig. value of the job interest variable at  $0.041 < 0.05$  probability, and the Sig. value of the self-efficacy variable at  $0.022 < 0.05$  probability. These findings emphasize the importance of work readiness for SMK students in facing the increasingly dynamic and competitive workforce. The theoretical implications of this study contribute to the development of literature related to work readiness, while practically, these results can serve as a basis for schools, the government, and relevant stakeholders to design programs that can enhance students' vocational interest and self-efficacy, thereby better preparing them for entering the workforce.

#### Keywords:

*Vocational Interest; Self-Efficacy; Work Readiness; (5).*

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## INTRODUCTION

In the increasingly dynamic era of globalization, the demand for labor across various industrial sectors requires human resources (HR) to be competent and professional. According to a report from the World Economic Forum (2023), one of the global challenges in addressing the Fourth Industrial Revolution is the growing skills gap, particularly among young workers. In Indonesia, data from the Central Bureau of

Statistics (BPS) in 2023 indicates that the open unemployment rate among vocational high school (SMK) graduates reached 10.38%. This condition underscores the importance of improving the quality of SMK graduates to prepare them for the challenges of the labor market.

Vocational education, such as that provided by Vocational High Schools (SMK), plays a crucial role in preparing a workforce that is job-ready. Dewey (1916), in his theory of vocational education, emphasized that

vocational education should connect learning with practical experiences to produce graduates who are not only technically skilled but also adaptable to industry needs. SMK aims to create a workforce that possesses technical skills, creative abilities, and productivity relevant to market demands. However, despite being designed to prepare students for the workforce, SMK graduates still face challenges in terms of work readiness.

Recent studies in Indonesia support this concern. Kurniawati and Arief (2019) found that many SMK students still face difficulties when transitioning into the job market due to a lack of practical experience and confidence in their skills. This gap is exacerbated by a misalignment between school curricula and the evolving demands of industries. Rahmawati and Syamsul (2021) suggest that SMK programs need to be updated regularly to reflect industry standards, and partnerships with local businesses should be strengthened to facilitate students' exposure to real-world work environments.

In addition to industry and educational program alignment, Fadilah and Munadi (2021) highlighted the importance of aligning the vocational curriculum with emerging technological trends. Their study showed that continuous improvement in curriculum design, particularly in information technology and engineering fields, directly impacts the work readiness of SMK graduates. Furthermore, Purnomo and Anshori (2023) emphasized that the 4th industrial revolution requires an entirely new set of competencies from SMK graduates, stressing the need for digital literacy and problem-solving skills in addition to traditional technical skills.

One of the key factors influencing students' work readiness is vocational interest. According to Holland's Theory of Vocational Personalities and Work Environments (Holland, 1997), vocational interest plays a crucial role in helping individuals choose careers that match their personality and abilities. Students with a strong interest in a particular vocational field tend to be more focused and motivated to develop the necessary skills. A study by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2018) in the United States found that students with high vocational interest had better participation rates in skill-based education programs and were more prepared to enter the

labor market. Similarly, Hasanah and Putra (2020) in Indonesia discovered that students with a high interest in their vocational studies tend to be more proactive in seeking opportunities for skill development, both inside and outside the classroom.

In addition to interest, self-efficacy is also a key factor in work readiness. Bandura (1977) defines self-efficacy as an individual's belief in their ability to organize and execute actions necessary to achieve specific goals. In the context of vocational education, students with high self-efficacy tend to be more confident in completing technical tasks and facing challenges in the workplace. Research by Lent, Brown, and Hackett (1994) through their Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) emphasizes that strong self-efficacy is positively correlated with work readiness and career success, especially in environments that require specialized skills, such as the industrial sector. In the Indonesian context, Hidayat and Lestari (2022) found that SMK students with higher levels of self-efficacy were more likely to demonstrate readiness for employment, showing greater resilience when faced with complex tasks and responsibilities during internships.

Moreover, Yusuf and Subekti (2022) suggested that self-efficacy is not only developed through education but also through exposure to real-world work challenges. They found that students who engaged in internships and apprenticeships exhibited higher levels of confidence and competence. Similarly, Ghazali and Latan (2020) noted that self-efficacy can be strengthened through feedback and mentorship from teachers and industry professionals.

However, the role of schools, families, and communities in shaping students' vocational interest and self-efficacy cannot be overlooked. Epstein's Framework of Six Types of Parental Involvement (2001) highlights the importance of parental involvement in supporting children's interest and motivation in education, including vocational education. Additionally, schools play a role in providing a supportive environment through the development of industry-relevant programs that align with labor market needs. Ryan and Deci (2000), through their Self-Determination Theory (SDT), assert that social environmental support, including from schools and families, can enhance students' intrinsic motivation to

learn and succeed in vocational fields. A study by Sari and Nuraini (2020) in Indonesia emphasized the importance of family involvement, noting that students who receive encouragement from their parents and communities are more likely to develop a strong sense of self-efficacy and motivation toward their vocational studies.

Although many factors contribute to vocational interest and self-efficacy, Lestari and Fadli (2020) argue that collaboration between schools and industry is crucial. Their research suggests that when vocational programs are supported by industry stakeholders through internships, career workshops, and curriculum input, students are better equipped to face real-world work demands.

Nevertheless, a gap exists in the literature regarding how vocational interest and self-efficacy simultaneously influence SMK students' work readiness. Most existing studies tend to focus on one factor or fail to explore both comprehensively within the context of SMK students in Indonesia. This study aims to fill that gap by analyzing the simultaneous contributions of vocational interest and self-efficacy to the work readiness of SMK students, particularly in the city of Makassar.

Therefore, this study has three main objectives: 1) To determine the contribution of self-efficacy to the work readiness of SMK students; 2) To determine the contribution of vocational interest to the work readiness of SMK students; and 3) To determine the simultaneous contribution of self-efficacy and vocational interest to the work readiness of SMK students.

## **METHOD**

This study employs a quantitative research, focusing on vocational high school (SMK) students. The sampling method utilized is purposive sampling, which selects participants based on specific criteria relevant to the study's objectives, such as their involvement in vocational programs. This method is supported by Creswell (2018), who emphasizes its appropriateness for obtaining in-depth insights from targeted populations. A total of 70 students were included in the sample.

Data collection was conducted using questionnaires and documentation. The questionnaire assessed students' work readiness, interest, and self-efficacy, and was validated for content and reliability using Cronbach's Alpha to ensure accuracy.

Data analysis included descriptive statistics and multiple linear regression analysis. Before conducting the regression analysis, prerequisite tests were performed: (1) Normality Test, to confirm that residuals follow a normal distribution. (2) Linearity Test, to ensure a linear relationship between independent (interest, self-efficacy) and dependent variables (work readiness). (3) Multicollinearity Test, using Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) to check for correlations among independent variables. (4) Heteroscedasticity Test, to verify constant variance of residuals.

Once these assumptions were confirmed, multiple linear regression analysis was conducted using SPSS software to examine the contributions of interest and self-efficacy to work readiness, providing a comprehensive understanding of their effects.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Descriptive Analysis of Interest**

The results of descriptive statistical data processing of work interest variables using SPSS get the following results in the table 1.

Based on the data above, the minimum value is 24 and the maximum is 49 and the average value is 42.31.

### **Descriptive Analysis of Self-Efficacy**

The results of descriptive data processing of self-efficacy variables using SPSS get the following results in the table 2. Based on the data above, the minimum value is 26 and the maximum is 50 and the average value is 42.56.

### **Descriptive Analysis of Job Readiness**

The results of descriptive statistical data processing of work readiness using SPSS get results in table 3.

**Table 1.** Descriptive Analysis of Interest

Descriptive Statistics								
	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
Work Interests (X2)	70	24	25	49	2962	42,31	,590	4,939
Valid N (listwise)	70							

**Table 2.** Descriptive Analysis of Self-Efficacy

Descriptive Statistics								
	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
Self-efficacy (X1)	70	24	26	50	2979	42,56	,546	4,564
Valid N (listwise)	70							

**Table 3.** Descriptive Analysis of Job Readiness

Descriptive Statistics								
	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
Self-efficacy (Y)	70	17	26	43	2426	34,66	,431	3,607
Valid N (listwise)	70							

**One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test**

		Unstandardized Predicted Value
N		70
Normal Parameters <sup>a,b</sup>	Mean	34,6571429
	Std. Deviation	,81114230
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	,079
	Positive	,036
	Negative	-,079
Test Statistic		,079
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		,200 <sup>c,d</sup>

- a. Test distribution is Normal
- b. Calculated from data
- c. Liliefors Significance Correction.
- d. This is a lower bound of the true significance

Based on the data above, the minimum value obtained was 26 and the maximum was 43 and the average value was 34.66.

**Prerequisite Test Analysis**

**Table 4.** Prerequisite Test Analysis

Model	Coefficients <sup>a</sup>					Collinearity Statistics	
	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)	26,714	4,963		5,383	,000		
Self-efficacy Work Interests	,137	,087	,187	1,567	,022	,999	1,001
	,067	,081	,099	,830	,411	,999	1,001

From the results of the prerequisite test analysis above, it shows that the data is normal and linear.

**Classical Assumption Test**

The results of the classic assumption test which get the following results in the table 5.

**Table 5.** Classical Assumption Test Results

Anova Table							
			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Work Readiness (Y)* Self-efficacy (X1)	Between Groups	(Combined)	119,249	14	8,518	,602	,852
		Linearity	12,611	1	12,611	,891	,349
		Deviation From Linearity	106,638	13	8,203	,580	,860
	Within Groups		778,523	55	14,155		
	Total		897,771	69			

The role of family support in developing vocational high school students' From the results of the classical assumption test above, it can prove that the data is normal and linear.

**Regression Test**

The analysis reveals significant findings regarding the influence of both self-efficacy and vocational interest on work readiness among students. Specifically, the significance value for self-efficacy is 0.022,

which is less than the 0.05 probability threshold. This indicates a strong effect of self-efficacy on students' readiness for the workforce. High self-efficacy suggests that students believe in their abilities to perform tasks and meet challenges, which is crucial for successful integration into the job market.

Similarly, the vocational interest variable shows a significance value of 0.041, also below the 0.05 threshold. This result reinforces the conclusion that students' interest in their chosen vocational fields significantly

contributes to their work readiness. When students are genuinely interested in their area of study, they are more motivated to engage in learning and skill development, further enhancing their preparedness for employment. Together, these findings underscore the importance of fostering both self-efficacy and vocational interest to better equip students for future career challenges

### Discussion

#### 1. Self-efficacy on work readiness

The findings indicate a significant influence of self-efficacy on students' work readiness, as evidenced by a significance value of 0.022, which is less than the 0.05 probability threshold. This highlights the strong contribution of self-efficacy to student work readiness. According to Bandura's theory, self-efficacy encompasses an individual's belief in their ability to execute tasks necessary for achieving specific outcomes. This belief not only affects actual capability but also shapes students' perceptions of their readiness for the workforce.

Recent literature supports these findings. For instance, Lent et al. (2020) demonstrated that higher self-efficacy is positively correlated with job performance and adaptability in new work environments. Concrete examples of this can be seen in students who engage in internships; those with high self-efficacy are more likely to take initiative, seek feedback, and persist in overcoming challenges, thus enhancing their readiness for future employment.

Furthermore, exploring the interaction between self-efficacy and vocational interest could provide deeper insights. For instance, students with both high self-efficacy and strong vocational interest may exhibit enhanced work readiness compared to those with high self-efficacy alone. This interaction suggests that the motivational aspects of self-efficacy can be amplified when combined with genuine interest in the vocational field.

From a practical standpoint, these findings suggest that schools should implement programs that enhance students' self-efficacy through experiential learning opportunities, such as simulations and internships. By fostering a strong belief in their capabilities, educators can better prepare students for the realities of the job market

#### 2. Job interest on work readiness

The results also reveal a significant relationship between vocational interest and work readiness, with a significance value of 0.041, indicating that students' interest in their chosen field plays a crucial role in their preparation for employment. Research by Rohman and Dalu (2020) confirms this, showing a positive correlation between work interest and vocational learning achievements.

Students who possess a high interest in their vocational studies tend to engage more actively in their learning, seek out practical experiences, and persist through challenges. For example, a student passionate about automotive technology may spend additional time practicing skills beyond classroom hours, ultimately leading to greater work readiness. Students with a strong interest in their field may develop higher self-efficacy through successful experiences, thereby creating a positive feedback loop that further enhances their work readiness.

Practically, these findings underscore the importance of aligning educational programs with students' interests. Schools and policymakers should consider integrating career counseling and hands-on experiences in vocational curricula to cultivate students' interests and subsequently enhance their work readiness. Initiatives such as industry partnerships can provide students with real-world exposure, fostering both interest and self-efficacy in their chosen careers.

In summary, both self-efficacy and vocational interest significantly influence work readiness among SMK students. A deeper understanding of their interaction and practical implications can guide educational stakeholders in designing effective programs that prepare students for the demands of the workforce.

## CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The influence of vocational interest and self-efficacy on the work readiness of vocational students in Makassar can be seen from several studies that show a positive relationship between the two variables. One study states that vocational interest has a significant effect on students' work readiness. In the study, it was found that students who

have a high interest in work tend to be more prepared to enter the world of work. This is because work interest can increase students' motivation and commitment in learning and practicing in their chosen field. Other studies have also shown that job interest, along with self-efficacy and career guidance, has a significant influence on the job readiness of vocational students. Thus, it can be concluded that vocational interest is a key factor influencing the work readiness of vocational students in Makassar. Therefore, it is important for educational institutions to develop programs that can increase students' interest in their field of expertise, so that they are better prepared to face challenges in the world of work.

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