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The Influence of Soft Skills, Hard Skills, and Digital Literacy on the Job Readiness of Generation Z Students at Syekh-Yusuf Islamic University

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Abstract:

Technological advancements and changing demands in the workforce have made Generation Z's job readiness a key concern for higher education institutions. The purpose of this investigation is to examine the influence of soft skills, hard skills, and digital literacy on the job readiness of Generation Z among students at the Business and Economics Faculty at Syekh-Yusuf Islamic University in Tangerang for the 2022/2023 academic year. This analysis employed a quantitative method with an explanatory research approach. The sample consisted of 135 respondents, and data were collected using a questionnaire. Multiple linear regression analysis, validity and reliability tests, classical assumption tests, and hypothesis testing were used in the data analysis process using SPSS version 26. The results show that soft skills have a positive and significant effect on work readiness, with a significance value of 0.000 and a t-value of 3.592 > t-table value of 1.978. Hard skills also have a favorable and noteworthy impact, with a significance value of 0.007 and a t-value of 2.754 > 1.978. Digital literacy also has a positive and significant effect, with a significance value of 0.002 and a t-value of 3.098 > 1.978. Job preparedness is significantly impacted by all three factors at the same time, with an F-value of 21.776 and a significance level of 0.000. The contribution of these three variables was 31.7%, while 68.3% was impacted by additional variables not covered in this study. The findings of this investigation imply the importance of developing non-technical, technical, and digital skills in enhancing students' job readiness.

Keywords: *Hard Skills, Job Readiness, Digital Literacy, Soft Skills*

INTRODUCTION

Advances in digital technology, industrial transformation, and shifting labor market needs have led to changes in the competencies required by the workforce. Companies need not only graduates with academic abilities but also workers who can adapt to change, possess technical skills, and effectively utilize digital technology. These conditions make employability a key aspect in preparing a high-quality and competitive workforce. The International Labor Organization (ILO) emphasizes that development of competencies is a key factor in enhancing the competitiveness of the workforce, particularly for the younger generation entering the job market. This is especially relevant for Generation Z, which is

projected to become one of the dominant groups in the workforce; therefore, their readiness to meet job demands requires special attention.

Issues regarding work readiness remain evident in Indonesia's labor market. The Central Statistics Agency (BPS) reports that the open unemployment rate among university graduates in 2024 reached 5.26%. At the regional level, Banten Province had an open unemployment rate of 6.69% in 2025, while the city of Tangerang recorded a rate of 5.94%. These high figures indicate that the availability of college graduates has not been fully matched by the readiness and competencies required by the job market. This situation may signal a mismatch between the competencies of prospective workers and the demands of the business and industrial sectors.

This issue was also identified among students inside the Economics and Business Faculty (FEB) at Syekh-Yusuf Islamic University in Tangerang for the 2022/2023 academic year. Based on a pre-survey conducted by the researchers, there are still limitations in competencies related to job readiness. The findings indicated that soft talents scored 75.8%, work readiness 72.2%, hard skills 63.3%, and digital literacy 60.6%. These findings indicate that there are still students who have not yet reached an optimal level in communication skills, technical skills, The capacity to comprehend and assess digital data and readiness to enter the workforce. Thus, this situation points to an empirical issue that needs to be examined to identify the factors related to students' preparedness for the workforce.

In the literature, soft skills, hard skills, and digital literacy are viewed as competencies related to an individual's readiness for the workforce. Soft skills relate to non-technical abilities, such as communication, collaboration, responsibility, and adaptability. Hard skills relate to technical abilities and knowledge acquired through education, training, and experience. Meanwhile, digital literacy relates to the ability to use technology, manage information, communicate through digital media, and solve problems by utilizing technology. These three competencies have distinct characteristics but can conceptually complement one another in shaping an individual's readiness to meet job demands. However, previous research findings on the impact of these competencies on work readiness still show inconsistencies. Dewi (2024), study shows that soft skills and hard skills influence job readiness, while Budiarti et al., (2024) study indicates that digital literacy has a significant impact on job readiness. Conversely, Ratuela et al., (2022) study found that soft skills do not have a significant effect on work readiness. Ananda and Kurniawan (2023) also found that hard skills do not influence job readiness. Regarding the variable of digital literacy, Haniah and Wirawan (2025) showed that digital literacy has little effect on job readiness. These differing results indicate an evidence gap that has yet to yield consistent conclusions regarding the connection between job readiness and these three qualities.

In addition to the inconsistency of research findings, there are still limitations regarding the combination of variables and the context of previous studies. Some studies examine soft skills and hard skills separately or incorporate other variables into their research models, whereas the joint examination of soft skills, hard skills, and digital literacy in relation to Generation Z's job readiness specifically among students in the Faculty of Economics and Business at Syekh-Yusuf Islamic University in Tangerang for the 2022/2023 academic year has not been extensively studied. This situation represents a research gap that warrants further investigation, particularly as the demands of the workforce increasingly require a combination of non-technical skills, technical skills, and digital competencies. Based on these empirical findings and the gaps in the existing research, there is a need for a study that can provide empirical evidence regarding the factors influencing Generation Z students' job readiness. This research is important to determine whether soft skills, hard skills, and digital literacy have an impact on job readiness, both partially and simultaneously. The research findings are expected to make an academic contribution by enriching human resource management studies on Generation Z's job readiness and to provide practical information for universities in developing students' competencies to better align with the needs of the workforce.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Job readiness is the capacity of an individual to incorporate knowledge, skills, and attitudes to meet the demands of the workplace. From a human resource management perspective, job readiness relates to the process of improving human resource quality so that they can effectively meet the organization's needs. Hasibuan (2020) views management as both Organizing The efficient and productive utilization of human resources and other resources to accomplish particular goals is both a science and an art. Thus, the development of individual competencies is a crucial component in producing high-quality Human resources with the ability to alter. As technology advances and job demands evolve, work readiness is no longer determined solely by academic ability but also requires mastery of soft skills, hard skills, and digital literacy.

Soft skills are non-technical aptitudes associated with a person's capacity to interact, collaborate, communicate, adapt, and manage oneself in a work environment. These skills are important because the workplace requires individuals who are not only capable of completing tasks but also of building professional relationships and adapting to change. Dewi (2024) study indicates that soft skills influence job readiness. The findings suggest that the better one's soft skill mastery increases a student's ability to meet the demands of the workplace. However, Ratuela et al., (2022) found different results, showing that soft skills do not have a significant effect on job readiness. These differing results suggest that the connection between job readiness and soft skills remains inconsistent and therefore needs to be tested in different research contexts.

Hard skills are technical abilities and knowledge related to performing job tasks within a specific field of expertise. These abilities can be acquired through education, training, or learning experiences and serve as the foundation for individuals to perform technical tasks. Dewi (2024), study indicates that hard skills influence job readiness, whereas Ananda and Kurniawan (2023) study suggests that hard skills do not influence job readiness. This discrepancy in findings suggests that mastery of technical competencies does not always result in the same level of job readiness for every individual. Thus, the connection between job readiness and hard skills still needs to be further examined, taking into account other competencies that can complement students' technical abilities.

In the era of digital transformation, digital literacy is becoming more and more important competency in preparing individuals for the workforce. Digital literacy is the capacity to efficiently access, manage, assess, and use digital information in addition to the ability to operate technological gadgets. These skills help students obtain information, communicate, use technology, and solve problems related to both academic and professional activities. Research by Budiarti et al., (2024) indicates that digital literacy influences students in the management program's preparedness for the workforce. However, research by Haniah and Wirawan (2025) yielded different results, showing that digital literacy does not have a notable impact on preparedness for job. This disparity implies that the implications of digital literacy on job readiness still requires empirical validation across different respondent characteristics and educational contexts. Consequently, this study develops a conceptual model that integrates the employment students' preparedness at the Faculty of Economics and Business at Syekh-Yusuf Islamic University in Tangerang can be explained by soft skills, hard skills, and digital literacy.

METHOD

This study used an explanatory research design and a quantitative methodology approach to analyze the impact of soft skills, hard skills, and digital literacy on Generation Z's job readiness. The investigation population consisted of pupils in the Business and Economics Faculty at Syekh-Yusuf Islamic University in Tangerang for the 2022/2023 academic year, utilizing Yamane's technique to get a sample size of 135 respondents with a margin of error of 5%. Information was obtained via a survey as primary data and from literature and related documents as secondary data. Data collection utilized a 1 -

4 Likert scale. Multiple linear regression, tests for validity and reliability, classical assumptions, t-tests, F-tests, and the coefficient of determination were all used in the data analysis process apply SPSS version 26.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Validity Test

The test of validity compares r_{hitung} and r_{tabel} using person correlation moment and is deemed valid if the Sig value $< 0,05$.

Table 1. Validity Test

Questionnaire	R-Count	R-Table	Description
Soft Skills (X₁)			
S1	0,810	0,443	Valid
S2	0,854	0,443	Valid
S3	0,831	0,443	Valid
S4	0,837	0,443	Valid
S5	0,868	0,443	Valid
S6	0,777	0,443	Valid
S7	0,810	0,443	Valid
S8	0,791	0,443	Valid
S9	0,847	0,443	Valid
S10	0,886	0,443	Valid
Hard Skills (X₂)			
H1	0,726	0,443	Valid
H2	0,886	0,443	Valid
H3	0,849	0,443	Valid
H4	0,704	0,443	Valid
H5	0,856	0,443	Valid
H6	0,821	0,443	Valid
H7	0,870	0,443	Valid
H8	0,746	0,443	Valid
Digital Literacy (X₃)			
D1	0,831	0,443	Valid
D2	0,922	0,443	Valid
D3	0,815	0,443	Valid
D4	0,556	0,443	Valid
D5	0,897	0,443	Valid
D6	0,756	0,443	Valid
D7	0,737	0,443	Valid
D8	0,846	0,443	Valid
D9	0,817	0,443	Valid
Job Readiness (Y)			
J1	0,853	0,443	Valid
J2	0,786	0,443	Valid
J3	0,864	0,443	Valid
J4	0,714	0,443	Valid
J5	0,821	0,443	Valid
J6	0,791	0,443	Valid
J7	0,807	0,443	Valid
J8	0,865	0,443	Valid
J9	0,867	0,443	Valid
J10	0,642	0,443	Valid

Table 1 shows that all questionnaire items were found to be valid, as indicated by the fact that the computed r values exceed the r values in the table.

Reliability Test

The reliability test is used to assess the level of uniformity of an instrument for study by comparing Cronbach's Alpha $> 0,60$.

Table 2. Reliability Test

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Description
Soft Skills	,926	Reliable
Hard Skills	,922	Reliable
Digital Literacy	,926	Reliable
Job Readiness	,933	Reliable

Table 2 shows that all four variables were found to be dependable and appropriate for data collecting tools for the research sample, as they had Cronbach's alpha (α) values above 0,60.

Normality Test

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test with a significance level is used to perform a normality test to ascertain whether the regression model has a normal distribution with a significance $> 0,05$.

Table 3. Normality Test

	Significance Asymp Sig. (2-tailed)	Description
Kolmogorov-Smirnov	,200	Data is normally distributed

According to table 3, the study's findings indicate assuming the residuals follow a normal distribution, with a p -value of $0,200 > 0,05$.

Multicollinearity Test

A multicollinearity test was used to assess if the regression model exhibited a strong relationship or connection among the independent variables; provided that the tolerance $> 0,10$ and the VIF < 10 , we can conclude that multicollinearity does not exist.

Table 4. Multicollinearity Test

Coefficients ^a		
Model	Tolerance	VIF
Soft Skill	,709	1,411
Hard Skill	,807	1,240
Digital Literacy	,849	1,178

Based on Table 4, the tolerance values for each independent variable were obtained: Soft Skills at 0.709, Hard Skills at 0.807, and Digital Literacy at 0.849, with all three variables having tolerance values > 0.10 . As for the VIF values of the three independent variables, Soft Skills is 1.411, Hard Skills is 1.240, and Digital Literacy is 1.178, with all three < 10 . Thus, the model passes the multicollinearity test and shows no signs of multicollinearity.

Heteroscedasticity Test

Using the test for heteroscedasticity, one can ascertain if there are differences in the regression model's residuals' variance; specifically, according to the Glejser test, if the importance level (Sig.) $> 0,05$, therefore, there isn't heteroscedasticity.

Table 5. heteroscedasticity test

Coefficients ^a	
Model	Sig
(Constant)	,510
Soft Skill	,700
Hard Skill	,386
Digital Literacy	,336

Table 5 indicates that the study's findings indicate that the values of significance for all three dependent variables exceed 0,05. Thus, this model of regression does not display heteroscedasticity. and passes the heteroscedasticity test.

Multiple Linear Regression and t-Test (Partial)

The application of multiple linear regression ascertain how two or more independent factors affect the dependent variable. Meanwhile, the t-test is utilized to ascertain how each The dependent variable is significantly impacted by the independent variable level (Sig.) > 0,05 and a calculated t-value > the table.

Table 6. Multiple Linear Regression Test and t-Test (Partial)

Coefficients ^a				
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
(Constant)	7,311	3,307		,029
Soft Skill	,263	,073	,305	,000
Hard Skill	,304	,110	,219	,007
Digital Literacy	,267	,086	,240	,002

1. Soft skills have a importance value of $0.000 < 0,05$ and a t-value > t-table ($3.592 > 1.978$), with a coefficient of 0.263. Thus, soft skills significantly and favorably impact job readiness.
2. Hard Skills have a importance value of $0.007 < 0,05$ and a t-value > t-table ($2.754 > 1.978$), with a coefficient of 0.304. Thus, Hard Skills significantly and favorably impact job readiness.
3. Digital literacy has a importance value of $0.002 < 0,05$ and a t-value > t-table ($3.098 > 1.978$), with a coefficient of 0.267. Thus, digital literacy significantly and favorably impact job readiness.

F-Test (Simultaneous)

The degree of significance of the combined impact of the independent factors on the dependent variable is ascertained using the F-test.

Table 7. F-Test

ANOVA ^a		
Model	F	Sig.
Regression	21,776	,000 ^b

According to Table 7, the outcomes of the F-test show that the computed F-value of 21.776 > 2.670, with a degree of significance of $0.000 < 0,05$. This means that soft skills, hard skills, and digital literacy collectively (concurrently) have a substantial impact on job readiness.

Coefficient of Determination

The determination coefficient is a statistical measure used to ascertain the degree to which independent factors influence the dependent variable, expressed as a percentage.

Table 8. Coefficient of Determination

Model Summary	
Model	Adjusted R Square
1	,317

Soft skills, hard skills, and digital literacy is responsible for 31.7% of the variation in job readiness, according to Table 8's coefficient of determination of 0,317. Other factors not included in this study, such as motivation, internship experience, and so forth, have an impact on the remaining 68,3%.

DISCUSSION

The Impact of Soft Skills on Job Readiness

Employability is greatly and favorably impacted by soft skills. This implies that a student's employability increases with their level of soft skills. Based on the questionnaire results, students who possess communication skills, teamwork skills, adaptability, emotional intelligence, politeness, and empathy are better able to complete tasks, adjust to the work environment, and boost their self-confidence and mental readiness to face the working world after graduation.

The study's findings support the idea of Riantisari (2025), which states that soft skills are one of the key factors in enhancing an individual's work readiness to confront the difficulties of the 21st-century job market. Additionally, the results of this investigation align with the research Hariasni et al., (2026), this suggests that soft talents have a favorable and a major influence on job readiness. The study shows that students with strong communication, collaboration, and leadership skills tend to be better prepared and more confident in performing their jobs.

Considering the findings of earlier studies, theories, and findings, can conclude that soft skills are important role in influencing students' job readiness, as they are impacted by elements like talent, intelligence, interests, motivation, and a supportive environment. The better a student's soft skills, the higher their readiness to adapt to the job environment.

The Impact of Hard Skills on Job Readiness

Hard skills have a favorable and important impact on employability. This implies that a student's hard talents are positively correlated with their employability. Based on the questionnaire results, students who possess strong quantitative and technical skills, critical thinking abilities, strong writing skills, and a solid foundation of knowledge and insight are better equipped to complete tasks and adapt more easily to technical demands, thereby increasing their chances of being hired in the workforce.

The study's findings support the idea of Kamila (2025), it declares that hard skills are specific abilities that can be trained, observed, measured, and developed to satisfy the demands of the workplace. Additionally, the findings of this research align with the research by Deswarta et al., (2023), which indicates that hard skills have a favorable and noteworthy impact on job readiness. The study shows that students who possess expertise, skills, and knowledge tend to be more successful in their fields of work.

In light of research findings, theory, and previous studies, can conclude that hard skills are fundamental competencies that support students' work readiness, as they are impacted by elements like

training, the quality of learning, and motivation to learn. The better a student's hard skills, the higher their readiness to meet the needs and competency standards of the workforce.

The Impact of Digital literacy on Job Readiness

Employability is greatly and favorably impacted by digital literacy. This means that the greater a student's level of digital literacy, the better their employability. Based on the questionnaire results, students who possess skills in using digital devices, managing digital information, digital communication, and problem-solving are better able to adapt to technological advancements, improve work efficiency, and prepare themselves to satisfy the needs of a workplace that is becoming more and more digital.

The study's findings support the theory put forth by Karimah et al., (2025), which states that digital literacy is the capacity to successfully access, comprehend, assess, and use digital technologies. Furthermore, the findings of this investigation also align with the study conducted by Widiawati et al., (2025), which states that digital literacy possesses a favorable and a substantial impact on employability. That study showed that pupils with strong digital literacy skills have a high level of employability.

In light of research findings, theories, and previous studies, can conclude that digital literacy is essential to improving students' employability in the digital age, as it is influenced by factors such as curiosity about technology, reading habits, and limited training opportunities, all of which encourage students to use digital devices.

The Impact of Soft Skills, Hard Skills, and Digital Literacy on Job Readiness

Soft skills, hard skills, and digital literacy simultaneously possess a favorable and noteworthy impact on students' employability. Considering the questionnaire results, the majority of students possess good soft skills, hard skills, and digital literacy. Communication, collaboration, and responsibility skills support the improvement of students' work readiness. Additionally, mastery of technical skills relevant to their fields of study, as well as the capacity to obtain, understand, and make use of digital technology, helps students complete tasks effectively and adapt to developments in the workforce. These findings indicate that a combination of soft skills, hard skills, and digital literacy can enhance students' job readiness as they face an increasingly competitive job market.

The findings of this investigation align with the theory presented by Luthfiani (2025), which states that digital literacy is a combination of abilities, information, and mindsets that allow students or recent graduates to make a contribution to the achievement of organizational goals. Additionally, the findings of this investigation are corroborated by (Deswarta et al., (2023), which states that soft skills and hard skills concurrently possess a favorable and substantial influence on employability, as well as through investigation Muliasari et al., (2024), those shows that digital literacy and soft skills concurrently have a favorable and substantial impact on employability.

CONCLUSION

This research demonstrates that soft skills, hard skills, and digital literacy have a favorable and noteworthy impact on the employability among pupils at the Business and Economics Faculty, Syekh-Yusuf Islamic University of Tangerang, both individually and collectively. These findings indicate that interpersonal skills, technical proficiency, and the ability to utilize digital technology are complementary competencies that contribute to students' employability. Thus, enhancing these three competencies is a critical factor in preparing graduates to adapt and compete in an increasingly dynamic and technology-driven job market.

One of the study's drawbacks is that only students from the Business and Economics Faculty were included in the research sample at Syekh-Yusuf Islamic University in Tangerang for the 2022/2023 academic year and utilized only three independent variables. It is advised that future studies broaden the

and characteristics of respondents across generations and to consider other factors, such as work motivation, self-efficacy, and internship experience, or organizational experience, in order to obtain a more thorough comprehension of work readiness.

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