

Work readiness and life goals among final-year students in Madiun

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Abstract: *This study aims to determine work readiness in terms of life goals owned by final year students in Madiun. This research is a quantitative study with a correlational approach. The population of this study were final year students studying at universities in Madiun City. Sampling using purposive sampling technique with a total of 172 final year students. The scales used were the work readiness scale and the life purpose scale, distributed online via google form. Correlation analysis using spearman's rho. The results of the spearman's rho correlation coefficient in this study showed insignificant results with sig (2-tailed) $0.647 > 0.05$ with a correlation score of 0.035. It means that the relationship between work readiness and life goals is very weak or insignificant. Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that there is no relationship between work readiness and the life goals of final year students in Madiun. The recommendation of this study is to explore other variables that affect work readiness, such as self-efficacy and optimism with similar subject characteristics.*

Keywords: *work readiness; life goals; students.*

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui kesiapan kerja ditinjau dari tujuan hidup yang dimiliki oleh mahasiswa tingkat akhir di Madiun. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kuantitatif dengan pendekatan korelasional. Populasi penelitian ini adalah mahasiswa tingkat akhir yang berkuliah pada Universitas di Kota Madiun. Pengambilan sampel menggunakan teknik *purposive sampling* dengan total 172 mahasiswa tingkat akhir. Skala yang digunakan adalah skala kesiapan kerja dan skala tujuan hidup, disebarikan secara online melalui *google form*. Analisis korelasi menggunakan spearman's rho. Hasil korelasi koefisien spearman's rho dalam penelitian ini menunjukkan hasil yang tidak signifikan dengan sig (2-tailed) $0,647 > 0,05$ dengan skor korelasi 0,035. Diartikan bahwa hubungan antara kesiapan kerja dengan tujuan hidup sangat lemah atau tidak signifikan. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian dapat disimpulkan bahwa tidak terdapat hubungan antara kesiapan kerja dengan tujuan hidup siswa tingkat akhir di Madiun. Rekomendasi penelitian ini yaitu mengeksplorasi variabel lain yang mempengaruhi kesiapan kerja, seperti efikasi diri dan optimisme dengan karakteristik subjek yang serupa.

Kata kunci: kesiapan kerja; tujuan hidup; mahasiswa.

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INTRODUCTION

According to the 2022 report from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), 5.38% of Indonesians were unemployed out of a total number of 208.54 million of working-age individuals; 14% of them held a bachelor's or a master's degree (Abidin, 2022). Unemployment is most likely caused by the incongruity between job skills and job demands. The other factors contributing to unemployment are unrealistic expectations for high salary and status, as well as a lack of job opportunities.

Poor work readiness is also common among students in England. Around 45% of 7,000 university students and graduates reported that they were unprepared to enter workforce. Unpreparedness for work is likely a result of challenging job requirements, uncertainty about the future, or limited opportunities for learning or internships due to the Covid-19 pandemic (Hesti, 2021).

A study by Prisilia & Widawati (2021) found that 55.9% of 145 fresh graduates had poor work readiness. In a study conducted by Wijayanti (2019), it was found that final-year students had lower work readiness than second-year students. Moreover, six students in Madiun mentioned the reasons they were not ready for work. They had no clear vision on which job to pursue, felt uncertain about their future, lacked confidence in their skills, and felt unmotivated to improve them.

These characteristics did not indicate work readiness. As identified by Astuti and Purwanta (2019), work readiness is exhibited by having goals and purposes. An individual is ready for work if they have life goals and a desire for career success.

Work readiness can be developed by helping individuals envision their future; this is phase young adults typically experience (Muhammad, 2022). Putri (2019) stated that young adulthood is characterized by the process of exploring, discovering, becoming stable and productive, as well as having unique roles and responsibilities in the journey towards becoming an adult. The presence of life goals is discussed in development theories, such as the achievement of productivity, creativity, and emotional maturity in life (Gusumawati, 2022).

According to Pfund and Hill (2018), A young adult should be able to identify their life goals after careful discovery and formulation. Individuals entering early adulthood often face many challenges, including navigating the

professional world, building relationships with colleagues, and discovering their personal identity and life goals (Gustiawan, 2019). During early adulthood, individuals who have not fulfilled their age-related obligations may encounter both personal and social problems due to a perceived difference from those who have fulfilled their obligations (Gustiawan, 2019).

According to Klasik and Strayhorn (2018), work readiness refers to an individual's ability to enhance their job competencies, including knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Work readiness can also be defined as the process of developing an individual's job potential, which is closely associated with an individual's attitudes, values, knowledge, and skills that enable them fulfill their roles and responsibilities. Work readiness is influenced by the preparedness and possession of necessary skills to meet the minimum requirements of a specific job. It can be verified through the job profiles or job analyses (Klasik & Strayhorn, 2018).

Taken together, work readiness can be defined as an individual's physical, mental, social, and emotional well-being, as well as career abilities, skills, understanding, productivity, and attitudes.

According to Cabrera (2020) work readiness consists of four aspects as follows:

a. Personal characteristics

This aspect refers to an individual's unique characteristics that may arise from their skill set. Personal characteristics can be used as the indicators to measure an individual's work readiness.

b. Awareness in organizations

Individuals are responsible for fulfilling their duties when joining an organization. They must adhere to the organization's rules, actively participate in organizational activities, and build good relationships with other members.

c. Job Competencies

Job competencies are the skills acquired by an individual throughout their life. Individuals can complete tasks assigned to them effectively when they possess the necessary skills.

d. Social Intelligence

Social intelligence refers to an individual's ability to assess their social environment and act accordingly. It plays an important role in helping individuals adapt to new situations.

Life goals are defined as internal strengths and serve as moral and spiritual principles. Additionally, life goals are personal responsibilities and reasons for living (Pfund &

Hill, 2018). Life goals can also be defined as the important reasons for an individual’s existence, from the perspective of the individual experiencing it (Sinamo, 2021). In addition to extrinsic values, such as money, an image, and fame, intrinsic values, such as self-acceptance and ownership can influence an individual's life goals. Moreover, the meaning of life is a series of actions taken by an individual in order to achieve positive outcomes and values not only for themselves, but also for others, which is often called as happiness (Gustiawan, 2019).

Overall, life goals can be interpreted as motivation for an individual to focus on their life, persevere in the face of challenges, and seek out more fulfilling options in order to find the meaning of life. In pursuit of happiness for oneself and others.

According to Bronk dan Mitchell (2020), life goals are comprised of four aspects. A life goal must encompass the following four aspects:

- a. **Commitment** Individuals form life goals when they begin to be committed to their beliefs, principles, and values. A committed individual appears to be actively engaged in actions that can bring them closer to their life goals. A goal-oriented person is better equipped to confront challenges because they view challenges as the natural part of the process of achieving goals in life. On the other hand, if a person lacks commitment, accomplishing life goals may be significantly tougher.
- b. **Goal-directedness** Individuals with goals always have direction as goals are considered as a compass for life. Establishing life goals can help individuals cultivate awareness of direction. They will be clear about where they need to go in life to achieve their goals. They tend to have a strong desire and be highly motivated to take the necessary actions in pursuit of their life goals.
- c. **Personal meaningfulness** This aspect refers to the importance of life goals for an individual and the influence it can have on the individual’s thoughts and actions in different situations. However, life goals often hold personal meaningfulness, which is equally important in shaping a person’s future. If a

person thinks that a life goal has a positive meaning in their life, they are more likely to feel accountable for accomplishing it.

- d. **Desire to contribute to the society.** This aspect is manifested into productive, not consumptive activities that provide values for both the individual who performs them and also the society. Individuals who engage in community interactions are more likely to receive social support from those around them.

METHODS

The type of the study was quantitative with a correlational design. This study was conducted at four universities in Madiun. The population of this study consisted of undergraduate students who were in their eighth semester or beyond, still working on their thesis, and attending universities in Madiun. Taken using a purposive sampling technique, the sample of this study was students who were actively enrolled in their eighth semester and had a desire to work. Calculated using the Lemeshow formula (Hidayat, 2021), the sample consisted of 166 students.

The data was collected through questionnaires that incorporated the 5-point Likert scale. Positive and negative statements were provided in the questionnaire. The scoring for positive statements was as follows: Very Appropriate=5, Appropriate=4, Neutral=3, Not Appropriate=2, and Very Not Appropriate=1. For negative statements, the scoring was as follows: Very Appropriate=1, Appropriate=2, Neutral=3, Not Appropriate=4, and Very Not Appropriate=5. Before administered to the students, the instrument of the research was assessed through expert judgment, followed by validity and reliability tests.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the normality test using Kolgomorov-Smirnov statistical test, the significance value was 0.200, which is greater than 0.05, indicating that the two variables had a normal distribution. However, the linearity test results for both variables were 0.609, indicating non-linearity as the value exceeded 0.05.

Table 1. Normality Test

Variable	N	Sig.
Work Readiness and Life Goals	172	.200

Table 2. Linearity Test

Variable	F	Sig.
Work Readiness and Life Goals	0.263	0.609

Table 3. Hypothesis Testing

Variable	Spearman's rho	Sig.
Work Readiness and Life Goals	0.035	0.647

In hypothesis testing, the Spearman's rho test was used to determine the correlation between work readiness and life goals. The obtained results showed a significance of 0.647, indicating that there is no significant relationship between the two variables since the value is greater than 0.05. The correlation coefficient obtained a value of 0.035, indicating a very weak relationship between work readiness and life goals.

These results suggest that there is no relationship between life goals and work readiness. The absence of relationship maybe influenced by skills or abilities. A study by Ratuela (2022) revealed that hard and soft skills have a positive influence on work readiness. Similarly, a study by Ardias (2022) showed that social skills have a significant correlation with work readiness. Based on the results of the interviews with the respondents who had a moderate level of life goals and a moderate level of work readiness, the reasons for not fully ready for work were anxiety about whether their skills were sufficient for their job and fear of working with toxic co-workers. In line with the study by Angraini (2021), communication skills have a significant relationship with work readiness. According to Saputra (2022), organizational skills can also enhance students' work readiness. The study found that participating in organizational activities can train students to work in a team, expand their knowledge, boost their confidence, and improve skills, such as public speaking, leadership, and negotiation.

Another factor that affects work readiness is self-efficacy. Based on the results of the study by Br Tarigan (2021), there is a positive relationship between work readiness and self-efficacy. The study found that students with higher self-efficacy demonstrated better work readiness. On the other hand, students with lower self-efficacy had poorer work readiness. These results are consistent with those of the study by Indah (2019) and suggest that self-efficacy significantly affects work readiness. It found that higher self-efficacy leads to better work readiness among the final-year students. The most recent study by

Amalina (2022) also found that self-efficacy correlates positively with work readiness among final-year students.

Another factor is work motivation. In a study conducted by Yusman, & Ismiyati, (2019), a relationship was found between work motivation and work readiness in which work motivation can boost work readiness. This finding indicates that high levels of work motivation led to high levels of work readiness. Wibowo (2021) also observed the relationship between work motivation and work readiness. The study found that motivation contributes to students' efforts in preparing for the workforce. The interviews with the respondents who had high levels of work readiness revealed that they felt ready for employment immediately after graduation. Their motivation to be independent, earn their own salary, and alleviate the burden on their parents contributed to this readiness.

Another factor is optimism. A study by Indrayana (2021) found that there is a relationship between optimism and work readiness. Optimism was found to have an active and positive impact on work readiness. In line with these results, Buyukgoze-Kavas (2016) argued that optimism is crucial in cultivating an individual's readiness for entering the workforce.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that there is no correlation between work readiness and life goals of final year students in Madiun. It can be seen from hypothesis testing using Spearman's rho test which resulted in 0.907 point of sig. (2-Tailed) and it is greater than 0.05. It means that life goals are not the only determining factors of work readiness levels, but from the previous research it is known that there are some factors affecting it, which are self-efficacy, work motivation, optimism, and skills. Furthermore, the number is also supported by the interview on the respondents regarding things that make them ready to work, such as field work experience during college that increase their

beliefs to be ready for work and financial reason as a motivation to work.

Further studies regarding work readiness may explore the other variables affecting work readiness, such as self-efficacy and optimism with similar subject's characteristics.

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