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Determinants of Work Readiness Among SMK MPLB Students in Semarang: The Role of Industrial Practice, Career Guidance, and Motivation

Aditya Putra Ramadhan[1], Ismiyati[2]

[1,2] Office Administration Education Study Program, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Negeri Semarang Jl. Raya Sekaran, Gunung Pati, Semarang City, Central Java

*Correspondence E-mail: adityaramadhan183@students.unnes.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the influence of Industrial Work Practice (Prakerin), career guidance, and student motivation on the work readiness of grade XII Office Management and Business Services (MPLB) students in vocational high schools across Semarang City for the 2025/2026 academic year. The primary challenge currently faced by vocational graduates is the high unemployment rate due to a mismatch between school competencies and the technical qualifications demanded by the industry. This quantitative research utilizes a non-experimental causal survey design involving 226 respondents selected using the Slovin formula and a proportionate stratified random sampling technique. Data were collected through Likert scale questionnaires and analyzed using multiple linear regression via IBM SPSS Statistics 25. The results show that simultaneously, Industrial Work Practice, career guidance, and student motivation significantly influence work readiness with an F-count of 108.162 and a contribution of 59.4%. Partially, career guidance was found to be the most dominant factor (t-count 6.100), followed by Industrial Work Practice (t-count 4.587), both of which have a positive and significant influence. Conversely, student motivation shows a significant negative influence (t-count -2.049), indicating the phenomenon of overconfidence among students. These findings emphasize the importance of evaluating motivation programs to align them with professional character maturity and industrial reality.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the midst of today's intense global competition, improving the quality of human resources (HR) is a fundamental pillar to drive a country's progressiveness. Vocational education institutions, especially Vocational High Schools (SMK), hold a strategic mandate to produce professional workers who possess technical and mental readiness in their respective fields. Through a skill-oriented curriculum, SMK graduates are projected to be directly absorbed into the business and industrial world after completing their period of study (Mutoharoh & Rahmaningtyas, 2019).

However, the effectiveness of the vocational education system in shaping work readiness still faces highly complex challenges. An analysis of field practices reveals several weak points that serve as primary obstacles to achieving the ideal work readiness of graduates:

(i) Contradiction Between SMK Graduate Unemployment Rates and Labor Market Dynamics. There is a significant anomaly between the vision of SMK as a solution to unemployment and the reality of low labor absorption. Based on data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (2024), the Open Unemployment Rate (TPT) for SMK graduates decreased from 13.55% (2020) to 9.01% (2024), yet they remain the highest contributor to unemployment due to a mismatch between school competencies and the technical qualifications demanded by modern industry.

(ii) Quality and Effectiveness Gap in Industrial Work Practice (Prakerin) Experiences. Prakerin, which is supposed to be an instrument for internalizing the work ethos, often becomes merely an administrative routine due to weak synchronization between the school curriculum and operational needs. In fact, high-quality practical experience is a primary determinant in strengthening students' self-confidence and professional readiness after graduation (Purnama & Suryani, 2019).

(iii) Inoptimal Role of Career Guidance in Mapping Student Potential. Career guidance services in SMK are not yet fully capable of serving as a "compass" to help students recognize their potential and interests. This navigation weakness results in many grade XII students experiencing career disorientation and failing to formulate realistic future planning, leaving them without clear mental readiness when entering the workforce (Cahyaningrum & Martono, 2019).

(iv) Low Intrinsic Motivation and Determination in Preparing for Careers. Work readiness is the result of synergy between school intervention and students' internal psychological drive. Without strong intrinsic motivation as a driving energy to equip themselves with both hard skills and soft skills, students will struggle to achieve the mental maturity and proactive work attitude required to survive in a high-pressure professional environment (Triani, 2019).

This phenomenon of work unreadiness is highly relevant when examined within the Office Management and Business Services (MPLB) competency expertise in Semarang City. As a metropolitan city with rapid economic growth, Semarang has a massive demand for administrative staff, logistics management, and business services. However, the output of SMK graduates in the field is perceived to have not fully reached the ideal standard of work readiness, which potentially creates dissatisfaction for both the graduates and the industrial sectors that absorb them (Putranto, 2017).

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The urgency regarding the mapping of work readiness in Semarang City has actually triggered the attention of several previous researchers through various points of view. For instance, Khamidah & Nurcholis (2026) conducted a macro-scale study on the influence of fieldwork practices and the motivation to enter the workforce on university and school students in Semarang City, concluding that motivation acts as a linear-positive dominant internal factor in increasing work readiness. Meanwhile, a more specific study within the office cluster was conducted by Adristy & Rozi (2026), who examined grade XII students of the MPLB Competency Expertise at SMK Negeri 9 Semarang. Through the integration of variables including PKL experience, self-efficacy, and career planning, they found that real experience in industry became the most powerful driver for work readiness, whereas career planning that was conceptual in nature precisely exerted no significant influence.

Although both local studies from 2026 provide valuable empirical foundations, a fundamental research gap remains unresolved. The study by Khamidah & Nurcholis (2026) still examines motivation in a general sense without isolating the specific characteristics and competency demands faced by students in the modern office administration cluster. On the other hand, although Adristy & Rozi (2026) focused on the realm of MPLB in Semarang, they overlooked the variable of motivation to enter the workforce and chose to heavily center their analysis on cognitive psychological aspects such as self-efficacy and career planning. What distinguishes and serves as the novelty of this study is the simultaneous integration between school environment interventions (the quality of Industrial Work Practice and Career Guidance services) and internal personal characteristics (Student Motivation) comprehensively on a wider population scale, covering nine SMKs organizing the MPLB competency expertise across Semarang City. This approach becomes highly crucial because the digitalization of office administration in Semarang City currently demands a balance between technical-operational readiness and the psychological maturity of students. Through this model, the study not only tests the influence of external drivers but is also capable of critically detecting whether there are emotional anomalies in student motivation that could potentially become counterproductive to the objectivity of their actual work readiness in industry.

Based on these research gaps, this study aims to examine in depth the determinants of work readiness among SMK MPLB students across Semarang City through an analysis of the effects of industrial practice, career guidance, and work motivation.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Connectionism Perspective in the Construction of Work Readiness

The fundamental foundation in understanding the process of forming vocational high school (SMK) students' work readiness rests on the Connectionism Theory pioneered by Edward Lee Thorndike (1913). In this behavioral change psychology perspective, the learning process is defined as the formation of an association between sensory impressions (stimulus) and the tendency to act (response). Thorndike emphasized that mental and behavioral development is a form of functional adaptation of individuals to the demands of their environment, where every behavioral change that emerges is the result of a reactive interaction to a specific stimulus. In the context of vocational education, this theory provides a highly relevant framework to explain how the variables of Industrial Work Practice and Motivation interact in shaping Work Readiness through three primary laws of learning:

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(i) The Law of Readiness serves as the conceptual basis for work readiness, stating that an individual's satisfaction in acting highly depends on the maturity of physical and psychological preparation. In the context of vocational education, work readiness is the level of mental, physical, social, and emotional maturity achieved by students during the self-development process (Mahmud, 2018). Mature readiness will foster self-confidence, while forced action without adequate preparation will only trigger professional disorientation.

(ii) The Law of Exercise provides theoretical legitimacy for the urgency of the Industrial Work Practice program, where the relationship between stimulus and response becomes stronger through continuous repetition. Practical experience is a tangible manifestation to strengthen the connection between classroom theory and technical skills in the workplace. Intensive training and repetition of relevant activities during Prakerin are highly crucial to increase the efficiency of students' responses and prevent the weakening of technical competencies that have been mastered (Fatkhurrokhman, 2016).

(iii) The Law of Effect is closely related to the dynamics of student motivation, postulating that the strength of the stimulus-response relationship will increase if followed by a satisfying event. Utari et al. (2018) state that motivation to enter the workforce acts as an internal energy driver that arises in response to the career goals to be achieved. When students perceive the benefits or positive impacts of the learning and practice process, it triggers a psychological drive to continuously improve self-quality and build high determination.

2.2 Student Involvement Theory

This theory provides a systemic framework for understanding how the change and development of learners occur during the educational period through three core elements: Input, Environment, and Output (I-E-O Model). This concept emphasizes that educational success is not only determined by what students bring from the beginning, but rather by how far students are actively involved in the learning environment provided by the institution

(i) Input Element (Personal Characteristics) The variable of Student Motivation to Enter the World of Work (X3) is positioned as a crucial input element that refers to the initial drive and personal characteristics of students. This motivation acts as an internal force that provides direction and energy for learners to optimize the available learning opportunities. These internal characteristics, including self-confidence and personal values, become the primary determinants of the extent of student determination in achieving the desired final results in accordance with the basic concept of involvement pioneered by Astin (1993).

(ii) Environment Element (Environmental Intervention) The environment encompasses the entire learning experience and school programs manifested in the variables of Industrial Work Practice (X1) and Career Guidance (X2). Prakerin functions as a "real laboratory" to transform theory into practical competence, while career guidance acts as a professional navigation system for students. Through intensive involvement in both aspects of this environment, students internalize the work culture and professional attitude demanded by the industrial sector (Adristy & Rozi, 2026).

(iii) Output Element (Final Outcome) Work Readiness (Y) is the final outcome that represents the accumulation of knowledge, skills, and attitudes of students after passing through the interaction between internal motivation and school

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intervention. According to Indramayanti et al. (2024), the quality of this educational output highly depends on the level of intensity of student involvement in the guidance services and practical programs followed. A strong synergy between internal drive and the effectiveness of school programs will produce a graduate profile that is capable, competitive, and ready to face the challenges of the world of work.

2.3 Construction of Work Readiness Determinants

Vocational High School (SMK) students' work readiness is a multidimensional construction generated from the synergy of practical experience, career insights, and internal psychological drive. As a dependent variable, this readiness represents the graduate competency profile, which encompasses the mastery of knowledge, technical skills, as well as the maturity of attitudes and values (Suciani & Panggayuh, 2025). These three elements interconnect to form transition readiness from educational institutions to a competitive professional environment.

Industrial Work Practice plays a role as a crucial bridge toward industrial reality (DUDI) by applying the mechanism of the Law of Exercise to validate classroom theory through skill repetition (Hutagalung et al., 2025). In addition to technical experience, the strategic role of career guidance is vital as a navigator to prevent post-graduation professional disorientation (Subhan et al., 2025). This service equips students with an objective understanding of self and future planning, thereby strengthening determination when entering the job market (Cahyaningrum & Martono, 2019).

As the primary driver, students' internal motivation determines the speed and quality of achieving work readiness through energy changes that trigger affective responses and proactive behavior (Utari et al., 2018). Students with high achievement motivation tend to be more actively involved in both school activities and field practices to transform personal inputs into capable competency outputs. The synergy between this intrinsic drive and school program interventions will collectively increase the probability of a successful student transition into the world of work significantly (Musthofa et al., 2026).

Based on the theoretical review and alignment of the conceptual framework above, the hypotheses in this study are formulated as follows:

H_1: Industrial Work Practice, career guidance, and student motivation simultaneously have a significant influence on the work readiness of SMK MPLB students across Semarang City.

H_2: Industrial Work Practice has a positive and significant influence on the work readiness of SMK MPLB students across Semarang City.

H_3: Career guidance has a positive and significant influence on the work readiness of SMK MPLB students across Semarang City.

H4: Student motivation has a significant influence on the work readiness of SMK MPLB students across Semarang City.

3. METHODOLOGY

This causal quantitative research was conducted at nine vocational high schools offering the Office Management and Business Services program in Semarang City. The research population

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consisted of 519 grade XII students for the 2025/2026 academic year, with a sample of 226 respondents determined using the Slovin formula and a proportionate stratified random sampling technique. Primary data were collected using closed-ended 5-point Likert scale questionnaires. Before being deployed for data collection on the official sample, the instrument was first pilot-tested on 30 grade XII MPLB students outside the research sample to verify its validity and reliability. The r-count value obtained from the Pearson Correlation coefficient was compared with the r-table value at a 5% significance level (N = 30), which is 0.361, while the reliability threshold utilized a minimum Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.70. A summary of the instrument pilot test results is presented in **Table 1** below:

Table 1. Recapitulation of Instrument Validity and Reliability Test Results

Variable	Number o Items	r-count Range	r-tabe	*Cronbach's Alpha*	Remarks
Industrial Work Practice (X1)	15	0.568 – 0.881	0.361	0.941	Valid & Reliable
Career Guidance (X2)	20	0.379 – 0.862	0.361	0.943	Valid & Reliable
Student Motivation (X3)	12	0.695 – 0.929	0.361	0.962	Valid & Reliable
Work Readiness (Y)	9	0.411 – 0.848	0.361	0.848	Valid & Reliable

Source: Primary data processed (2026)

Based on **Table 1** above, all statement items for the four variables are declared valid because they have an r-count value > 0.361. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient values for all variables are also well above the minimum threshold of 0.70, so the entire instrument is declared highly reliable for use in the research.

This research was conducted by strictly adhering to research ethical principles. Each student selected as a respondent was given an explanation regarding the research objectives and voluntarily signed an informed consent form without coercion. The researcher also applied the principle of anonymity by not publishing the personal identities of the respondents and guaranteed the confidentiality of all collected data, which are purely used on a limited basis only for academic scientific analysis purposes.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In organizing the data analysis regarding the determinants of work readiness among SMK MPLB students in Semarang City, the following tasks were established based on the research objectives:

(i) Determining the profile of students' work readiness along with its supporting variables, which include Industrial Work Practice, Career Guidance, and Motivation through descriptive statistical analysis to map the initial conditions of the respondents;
(ii) Developing a data management model through a series of analysis prerequisite testing to ensure that the multiple linear regression model used meets the standards of validity and is free from statistical bias;
(iii) Analyzing the effectiveness and the magnitude of the contribution of the independent variables' influence on students' work readiness partially and simultaneously to produce credible conclusions for the development of vocational education.

The execution of the data analysis was realized through three systematic quantitative data

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processing stages designed as follows:

(i) Descriptive Analysis Stage: Focuses on mapping the initial conditions of the respondents by identifying the criteria and achievements of the indicators for each variable based on empirical data in the field.

(ii) Prerequisite Testing Stage (Foundation Stage): Focuses on the verification of the testing methodology, where the regression model is examined using a series of classical assumption tests (normality, multicollinearity, heteroskedasticity, and linearity) to ensure the model is free from statistical bias.

(iii) Inferential Analysis Stage (Emphasis Stage): The phase for determining the efficiency of the developed multiple linear regression model to test the research hypotheses partially (t-test) and simultaneously (F-test), as well as calculating the magnitude of the coefficient of determination (R^2)

Through these stages, the observations indicate that educational management elements such as Industrial Work Practice and Career Guidance are important drivers in modernizing students' work readiness, which is supported by internal energy drives from the motivation to enter the world of work.

4.1 Descriptive Profile of Variables

The initial stage of this analysis is focused on identifying the criteria and mapping the profile of each research variable through descriptive statistical evaluation. This process aims to obtain a deep overview regarding the data distribution from the 226 respondents collected through digital questionnaire instruments.

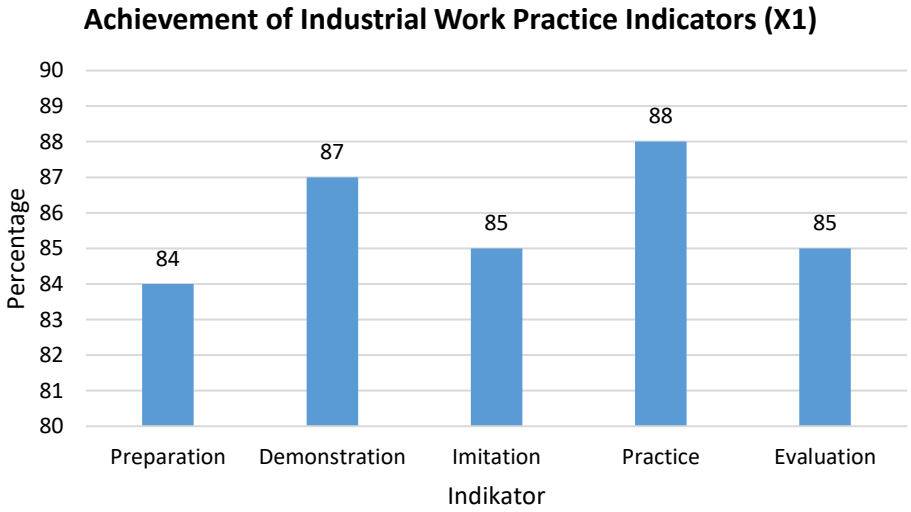


Figure 1. Achievement of Industrial Work Practice Indicators (X1)

The Industrial Work Practice (Prakerin) variable was evaluated through five strategic indicators that reflect the stages of mastery of students' psychomotor competence while interacting with the real work environment. **Figure 1** shows that overall, the Industrial Work Practice variable is in the Very High category.

(i) The Practice indicator emerged as the main driver within this variable with the highest percentage of 88% (Very High) and an empirical score reaching 2,969. This high achievement is proven by the fact that the majority of respondents (60%) gave the maximum rating on independent practice experience in industry, which directly strengthens their operational independence.

(ii) The Demonstration indicator occupies the second position with an achievement of 87% (Very High). This indicates the effectiveness of the knowledge transfer process from

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industrial supervisors, where 136 respondents (60%) stated that the demonstration of office tasks could be absorbed very well.

(iii) The Imitation and Evaluation indicators each recorded a percentage of 85%. In the imitation aspect, 48% of students felt highly capable of duplicating industrial work standards without significant obstacles. Meanwhile, the evaluation indicator, which is in the Very High category, reflects the existence of an effective feedback mechanism, where 50% of students were able to assess the quality of their work results objectively.

(iv) The Preparation indicator recorded a percentage of 84% (High). Although it is relatively the lowest achievement, this number still shows that the initial preparation and administrative readiness of 107 respondents (47%) before going into the field were already on a strong foundation.

The career guidance service in schools is positioned as a strategic navigator to direct professional orientation and map student potential.

Figure 2 shows that overall, the Career Guidance variable is in the High to Very High criteria. The dynamics of achievement for each indicator can be elaborated as follows:

(i) The Environmental Familiarization indicator becomes the most dominant aspect within this variable with a percentage of 86% (Very High) and an empirical score reaching 3,876. This high achievement is supported by the fact that 123 respondents (54%) gave the maximum rating toward the insights into the world of work and job requirements provided through guidance services at school.

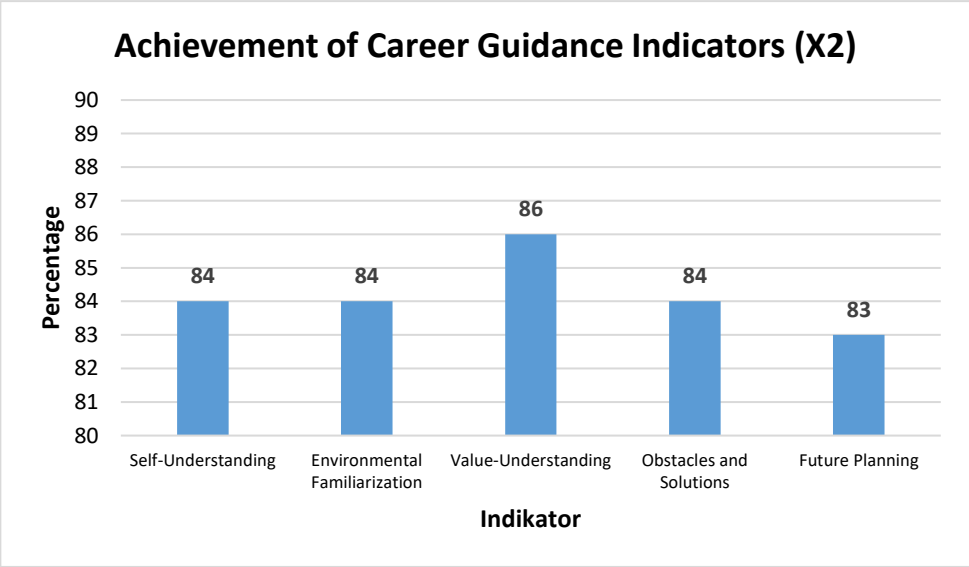


Figure 2. Achievement of Career Guidance Indicators (X2)

(ii) The Self-Understanding, Value-Understanding, and Obstacles and Solutions indicators show a very stable achievement at 84% (High). This indicates that the guidance program has successfully assisted the majority of students in recognizing their potential interests and talents, internalizing professional ethics, and equipping problem-solving abilities related to career constraints.

(iii) The Future Planning indicator recorded a percentage of 83% (High). Although it is in a positive category, this indicator is relatively the lowest achievement compared to other aspects. This reflects that even though 107 respondents (47%) already have a good direction, the concrete decision-making stage and the formulation of career steps post-study remain an area that requires more intensive assistance.

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Students' motivation to enter the world of work is viewed as internal energy that provides direction and a driving force for learners in optimizing their career preparation.

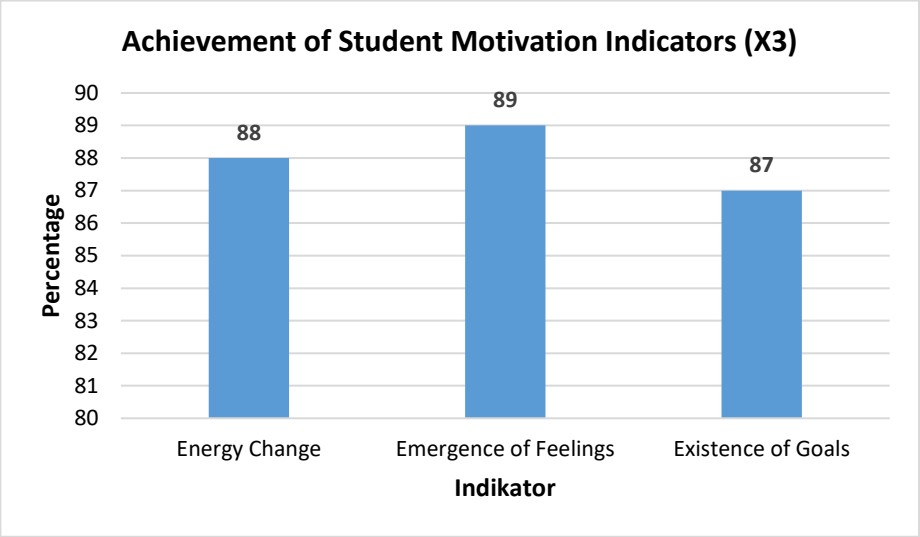


Figure 3. Achievement of Student Motivation Indicators (X3)

Figure 3 shows that overall, the Student Motivation variable is within the Very High criteria. The dynamics of achievement for each indicator are elaborated as follows:

(i) The Emergence of Feelings indicator is the strongest driver in the motivation variable, reaching a percentage of 89% (Very High) and an empirical score of 4,028. This high achievement reflects an extraordinary emotional enthusiasm, where as many as 145 respondents (64%) stated they have a very strong affective drive to immediately contribute professionally in the industry.

(ii) The Energy Change indicator recorded a percentage of 88% (Very High) with an empirical score of 3,966. This data confirms that students have great internal strength to be actively involved in various work preparations, where as many as 133 students (59%) are in the very high category in terms of mental stamina and the drive to act.

(iii) The Existence of Goals indicator obtained a percentage of 87% (Very High) with an empirical score of 3,922. This confirms that the majority of students have established clear professional targets, where as many as 141 respondents (62.2%) have a target orientation that functions as a guide for their behavior in welcoming the future.

Students' work readiness is the primary output representing the maturity of the cognitive, psychomotor, and affective dimensions of learners before entering the job market.

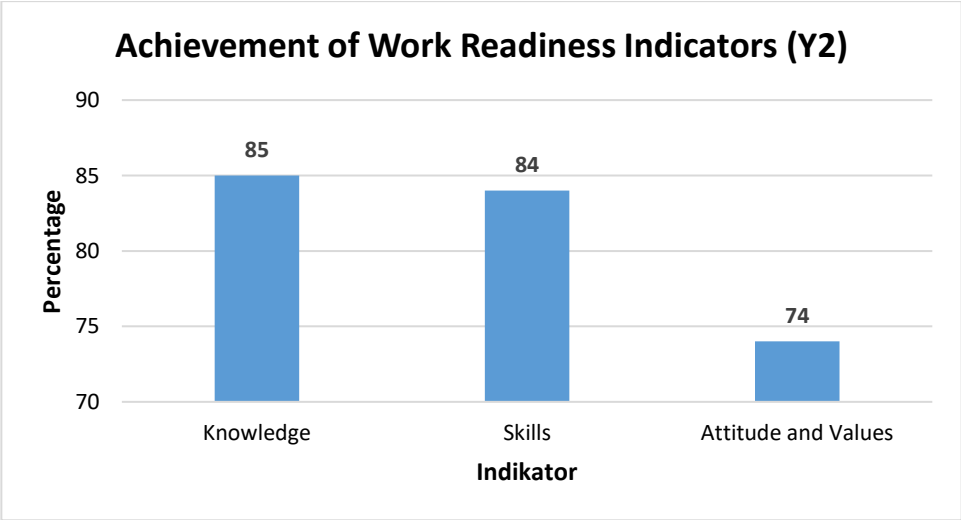


Figure 4. Achievement of Work Readiness Indicators (Y)

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Figure 4 shows that overall, the Work Readiness variable is within the High criteria. The dynamics of achievement for each indicator are elaborated as follows:

(i) The Knowledge indicator recorded the highest percentage of 85% (High) with an empirical score reaching 2,867. A total of 132 respondents (59%) were in the very high category, which proves that cognitively, students already possess a very good stock of academic material and office insights.

(ii) The Skills indicator obtained a percentage of 84% (High) with an empirical score of 2,840. The data shows a balanced distribution between the Very High (45%) and High (45%) categories, confirming that students have solid technical skills in applying work procedures practically.

(iii) The Attitude and Values indicator recorded the lowest percentage of 74% (High) with an empirical score of 2,517. Unlike the other indicators, the majority of respondents, as many as 112 students (50%), were in the High category and 76 students (33.6%) were in the Fairly High category, while only 16% reached the Very High category. This shows the existence of a gap between the maturity of professional character and students' technical and theoretical mastery.

4.2 Model Feasibility Analysis

This stage is crucial to ensure that the developed multiple linear regression model is objective, unbiased, and has a high accuracy of estimation. The purpose of the normality test is to detect whether the residual variable in the regression model has a normal distribution. The testing step is operated using the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov method.

Table 2. *One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Normality Test Results*

Description	Unstandardized Residual
N	226
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z (Test Statistic)	0,053
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	**0,200**

Source: Primary data processed (2026)

Referring to the findings in **Table 2**, the Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value obtained is 0.200. Since this significance value is well above 0.05, it can be ensured that the residual data in this research has been normally distributed and is feasible to be used for subsequent analysis procedures.
The Multicollinearity Test is executed to ensure the absence of a strong correlation relationship among the independent variables (X1, X2, X3) in the regression model. The prerequisite for this test to be fulfilled is obtaining a Tolerance value > 0.10 and a VIF value < 10.00.

Table 3. Multicollinearity Test Results

Variable	Tolerance	VIF
Industrial Work Practice (X1	0,279	3,585
Career Guidance (X2)	0,228	4,377
Student Motivation (X3)	0,362	2,763

Source: Primary data processed (2026)

Table 3 outlines that each variable has a Tolerance value exceeding 0.10 and a VIF of less than 10.00. Therefore, this regression construction is confirmed to be clear from multicollinearity disturbances.

The function of the heteroskedasticity test is to monitor the presence of variance inequality in the residuals from one observation to another. Based on the Glejser Test, a model is considered ideal if the significance value of the independent variables toward the absolute

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residual is > 0.05.

Table 4. Heteroskedasticity Test Results (Glejser Test)

Variable	Signifikansi (p-value)
Industrial Work Practice (X1)	0,473
Career Guidance (X2)	0,843
Student Motivation (X3)	0,580

Source: Primary data processed (2026)

Table 4 displays the significance scores for Industrial Practice which is 0.473, Career Guidance at 0.843, and Motivation at 0.580. Since all of these numbers are > 0.05, this construction is free from heteroskedasticity issues.

The function of the linearity test is to validate whether the correlation between the independent variables and the dependent variable has a linear nature. The testing procedure is run by comparing the Deviation from Linearity value listed in the ANOVA table.

Tabel 5. Hasil Uji Linearitas

Hubungan Variable	*Deviation from Linearity* (Sig.)
Work Readiness (Y) * Industrial Work Practice (X1)	0,054
Work Readiness (Y) * Career Guidance (X2)	0,071
Work Readiness (Y) * Student Motivation (X3)	0,098

Source: Primary data processed (2026)

Table 5 establishes that the significance scores of Deviation from Linearity for the three variable relationships are at a number > 0.05. These results indicate the existence of a significant linear correlation between the dependent variable and the independent variables.

4.3 Inferential Statistical Analysis

This stage is the phase for determining the efficiency of the developed regression model to prove the hypotheses regarding the determinants of students' work readiness.

Multiple linear regression analysis was applied to determine the direction and magnitude of the influence of the variables Industrial Work Practice (X1), Career Guidance (X2), and Student Motivation (X3) toward Work Readiness (Y).

Table 6. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Results

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)
(Constant)	9,857
Industrial Work Practice (X1)	0,197
Career Guidance (X2)	0,221
Student Motivation (X3)	-0,088

Source: Primary data processed (2026)

Based on the results in **Table 6**, the multiple linear regression equation model in this study is as follows:

$$Y = 9{,}857 + 0{,}197X1 + 0{,}221X2 - 0{,}088X3$$

Berdasarkan model persamaan tersebut dijabarkan secara detail sebagai berikut:

(i) Constant (∝) of 9.857: This number indicates that if the variables Industrial Work Practice, Career Guidance, and Student Motivation are considered constant or zero, then the average Work Readiness score of SMK MPLB students across Semarang City is worth 9.857 points. This phenomenon illustrates the existence of a fundamental readiness level that has been mastered by students through routine learning activities in educational

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institutions.

(ii) Regression Coefficient of Industrial Work Practice (b1) of 0.197: The magnitude of this positive coefficient shows a unidirectional correlation between Industrial Work Practice and Work Readiness. Each one-point increase in the quality of Industrial Work Practice implementation is estimated to be able to boost students' Work Readiness by 0.197 points, provided that other variables do not change.

(iii) Regression Coefficient of Career Guidance (b2) of 0.221: This coefficient shows the largest positive influence among other variables. This means that every one-unit increase in the effectiveness of Career Guidance services will increase students' Work Readiness by 0.221 units. This finding confirms the crucial role of career navigators in schools in shaping a work-ready graduate profile.

(iv) Regression Coefficient of Student Motivation (b3) of -0.088: Unlike the other variables, the motivation coefficient shows a negative value. This indicates that every one-unit increase in subjective motivation actually risks reducing the objectivity score of students' Work Readiness by 0.088 units. This finding directs the analysis to the point that excessively high emotional drive without being accompanied by the maturity of actual competence can trigger unreadiness in facing industrial realities.

The F-test is operated to prove the existence of a meaningful collective impact from the variables Industrial Work Practice (X1), Career Guidance (X2), and Student Motivation (X3) toward Work Readiness (Y).

Table 7. Results of Simultaneous Hypothesis Testing (F-Test)

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	2137,405	3	712,468	108,162	0,000
Residual	1462,330	222	6,587		
Total	3599,735	225			

Source: Primary data processed (2026)

Table 7 outlines the acquisition of Fcount at the number 108.162, exceeding Ftable 2.65 with a significance score of 0.000 < 0.05. Referring to this reference, the First Hypothesis (H1) is declared accepted. This finding validates that Industrial Work Practice, Career Guidance, and Student Motivation have a significant impact simultaneously for the Work Readiness of SMK MPLB students in the Semarang City area.

The function of the t-test is to observe the significance level of the impact of each independent variable independently over the dependent variable. The magnitude of ttable is established at the number 1.652 within a significance level of 0.05.

Table 8. Results of Partial Hypothesis Testing (t-Test)

Variable	t-count	t-table	Sig.
Industrial Work Practice (X1)	4,587	1,652	0,000
Career Guidance (X2)	6,100	1,652	0,000
Student Motivation (X3)	-2,049	1,652	0,042

Source: Primary data processed (2026)

Based on **Table 8**, the interpretation of the partial test results for each variable is as follows:

(i) Influence of Industrial Work Practice on Work Readiness (H2): The test results show a tcountvalue of 4.587, which is larger than ttable1.652, with a significance level of 0.000 < 0.05. Thus, the Second Hypothesis (H2) is accepted, which means Industrial Work Practice has a positive and significant influence on the Work Readiness of SMK MPLB students

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across Semarang City.

(ii) Influence of Career Guidance on Work Readiness (H3): This variable recorded the highest tcountvalue of 6.100, exceeding ttable1.652, with a significance of 0.000 < 0.05. This result proves that the Third Hypothesis (H3) is accepted. This positive and significant influence confirms the dominant role of career guidance services in improving students' professional readiness independently.

(iii) Influence of Student Motivation on Work Readiness (H4): The test results show a significance value of 0.042 < 0.05 with a tcountof -2.049. Statistically, the absolute value of tcount(2.049) is larger than ttable(1.652), so the Fourth Hypothesis (H4) is accepted as a significant influence. However, this finding shows a negative direction of influence, indicating that an increase in motivational drive that is not balanced with character maturity potentially reduces the objectivity of students' work readiness.

The purpose of the analysis of the coefficient of determination is to validate the effectiveness of the model when explaining the diversity in the dependent variable (Y). This procedure was executed through two tiers, namely the simultaneous coefficient of determination (R^2) and the simple coefficient of determination (Zero-Order r^2). The application of the simultaneous coefficient of determination is intended to map the proportion of the combined impact between the independent variables toward Work Readiness (Y).

Table 9. Results of Simultaneous Coefficient of Determination Analysis (R^2)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0,771	0,594	0,588	2,567

Source: Primary data processed (2026)

Based on **Table 9**, the R Square value obtained is 0.594. This shows that 59.4% of the variation in the Work Readiness of SMK MPLB students across Semarang City can be explained simultaneously by the variables Industrial Work Practice, Career Guidance, and Student Motivation. Meanwhile, the remaining 40.6% is influenced by other factors outside the scope of this research model.

The function of the simple coefficient of determination is to calculate the magnitude of each independent variable's contribution to the dependent variable individually.

Table 10. Recapitulation of Simple Coefficient of Determination (Zero-Order R2)

Variable Independen	R	R Square	Kontribusi (%)
Industrial Work Practice (X1)	0,724	0,524	52,4%
Career Guidance (X2)	0,744	0,553	55,3%
Student Motivation (X3)	0,557	0,310	31,0%

Source: Primary data processed (2026)

Based on the data in Table 10, the interpretation of each variable's contribution is as follows:

(i) Career Guidance (X2) provides the largest independent contribution, which is equal to 55.3%. This finding emphasizes that career guidance services have the most dominant role in shaping students' work readiness.

(ii) Industrial Work Practice (X1) provides an independent contribution of 52.4%. This shows that practical experience in the field is an important pillar in students' technical readiness in the world of work.

(iii) Student Motivation (X3) provides the smallest independent contribution of 31.0%.

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Although it still provides an influence, the magnitude of motivation's contribution is below the other two variables, in line with the findings in the previous partial test.

It is necessary to explain that the contribution values presented in Table 10 above utilize the simple coefficient of determination value (Zero-Order r^2). This value reflects the magnitude of the relationship and the gross contribution from each independent variable individually toward Work Readiness without controlling for or considering the presence of other independent variables. Therefore, the accumulation of these Zero-Order contribution values mathematically can overlap and exceed the simultaneous coefficient of determination value (R^2) in Table 9 which is at the figure of 59.4%. The simultaneous R^2 value precisely has already eliminated the relationship between independent variables (multicollinearity) through multiple linear regression procedures.

4.4 Discussion

This section is a synthesis of the statistical test results presented previously with theoretical foundations and empirical phenomena in the field.

(i) The Influence of Industrial Work Practice, Career Guidance, and Motivation on Work Readiness (H1). The overall testing output found that Industrial Work Practice, Career Guidance, and Student Motivation contribute significantly to the formation of Work Readiness of SMK MPLB students in the Semarang region. This fact is strengthened through the achievement of an Fcount figure of 108.162 at a significance level of 0.000, which results in the first hypothesis (H1) in this research being legitimately accepted. The regression construction has a solid predictive power through the acquisition of a coefficient of determination (R^2) at the figure of 0.594, which means the combination of these three variables is able to explain the diversity of students' Work Readiness up to 59.4%. This finding confirms that the developed research model has met the criteria of high estimation accuracy and is objective in capturing the phenomenon of work readiness in the field. The success of this model emphasizes that work readiness is a complex outcome that cannot stand alone, but is rather the result of synergy between practical experience, information navigation, and internal driving force. According to Rosmawati & Meilani (2019), work readiness includes the maturity of cognitive, psychomotor, and affective dimensions that must be developed in an integrated manner. The synergy between Industrial Work Practice as a technical training arena, Career Guidance as a professional orientation compass, and Motivation as a driving energy, is statistically proven to be able to increase the probability of students successfully transitioning to the professional world of work.

(ii) The Contribution of Industrial Work Practice in Shaping Technical Independence (H2). The partial analysis results show that Industrial Work Practice (X1) has a positive and significant influence on the Work Readiness of SMK MPLB students across Semarang City. Based on the simple coefficient of determination calculation method (Zero-Order r^2), independently without being controlled by other variables, Prakerin provides a gross contribution of 52.4% (Table 10). However, when calculated using the multiple linear regression method to see the clean, net contribution value (Sumbangan Efektif / net), the unique influence generated by variable X1 is 8.6% within the model. This coefficient number proves that the empirical experience obtained by students during the practical period in industry remains an important driver in converting classroom theory into technical skills in the workplace. This finding provides theoretical legitimacy to the Connectionism Theory by Thorndike, particularly the Law of Exercise, where the relationship between stimulus and response becomes stronger through continuous

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repetition. In this case, practical experience is a real manifestation to strengthen the connection between theory in class and technical skills in the field of work. Furthermore, when viewed from the Student Involvement Theory (I-E-O Model), Prakerin functions as an Environment element (environmental intervention) or a "real laboratory" that transforms theory into practical competence. According to Hutagalung et al. (2025), the empirical experience obtained by students during the practical period in industry functions as a bridge connecting the mastery of theory in class with the operational standards applicable in the business and industrial world. This is reinforced by the opinion of Purnama & Suryani (2019), stating that quality practical experience is a primary determinant in strengthening students' self-confidence and professional readiness after graduation. The high influence of Industrial Work Practice is in line with the results of the descriptive analysis, where the Practice indicator recorded the highest achievement percentage of 88% in the very high category. This achievement shows that the direct involvement of students in carrying out administrative tasks repeatedly has formed mature technical independence. Improving the quality of industrial practice systematically will be directly proportional to increasing students' work readiness, because through the repetition of activities in the field, students not only hone motor skills but also the ability to adapt to a professional working climate. This finding is also supported by research by Khomsah et al. (2025), stating that the synergy between field practice and school programs collectively increases the probability of a successful transition of students toward the world of work significantly. This is in line with the concept of link and match in vocational education which emphasizes the importance of synchronization between the school curriculum and industrial needs so that graduates have competitiveness (Natavia et al., 2025).

(iii) The Dominance of Career Guidance as a Work Readiness Navigator (H3). Based on the partial test results, Career Guidance (X2) emerged as the most dominant variable influencing students' Work Readiness. This is proven by the tcount value which reached the highest figure of 6.100, > ttable of 1.652, as well as a highly powerful significance value at the figure of 0.000. Thus, the third hypothesis (H3), which states the presence of a positive and significant influence of career guidance on work readiness, is declared accepted. Statistically, this variable provides a partial contribution of 14.4%, which emphasizes that providing direction and career information in schools has a larger impact on shaping students' perceptions of readiness compared to mere practical experience in the field. In the perspective of Student Involvement Theory (I-E-O Model), career guidance is positioned as a crucial Environment element (environmental intervention) that functions as a professional navigation system for students. Through intensive involvement in this service, students are able to internalize the work culture and professional attitude demanded by the industrial sector. This finding is in line with the argument of Cahyaningrum & Martono (2019) that career guidance services in SMK are capable of becoming a "compass" to help students recognize their potential and interests, thereby preventing the occurrence of career disorientation when entering the world of work. According to Faizin & Asmaillah (2025), effective career guidance functions as a "compass" that helps students align personal aspirations with the realities of job market demands. The dominance of this variable is also reflected in the descriptive analysis of the Environmental Familiarization indicator which achieved a high score of 86%. This shows that the work readiness of SMK MPLB students highly depends on how well they understand the dynamics of the world of work, job requirements, and the industrial climate they will face. Students who have a good understanding of self and environment

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tend to have a more stable self-confidence in making career decisions. In line with the opinion of Sahin & Sugiharto (2025), career guidance is not merely an administrative service, but rather an educational intervention instrument capable of reducing transition anxiety from school benches to the world of work. Meanwhile, the indicator that has the lowest empirical score from the career guidance variable is future planning, which if viewed from its empirical score, obtains a score of 3,743. This statement item with the lowest score is on number 43, "I am ready to pursue a job in the field of office administration." This statement item, when viewed from the total of all scores, only obtained 929, which indicates that most respondents are not yet ready to pursue a job in the field of office administration in the future. Following up on this, the researcher distributed an open questionnaire via WhatsApp to 5 respondents who answered strongly disagree and disagree. Based on the results of the distributed open questionnaire, several logical reasons were obtained from students, including (1) a lack of self-confidence due to limitations of supporting facilities such as laptops and computers, and (2) a lack of interest and family support regarding future prospects in the office field/world. Based on this, it can be concluded that MPLB students have not fully experienced the application of future planning indicators, particularly regarding being ready to pursue a job in the field of office administration. If dug deeper, future planning has a positive influence if the school provides support by increasing students' lesson hours and guidance to students' parents about office administration.

(iv) The Negative Influence of Motivation on Work Readiness (H4). The most unique finding in this study lies in the influence of the Student Motivation variable (X3) which shows a negative but statistically significant direction toward Work Readiness tcount = -2.049; Sig. 0.042). This anomalous finding indicates that an increase in motivational drive that is subjective-emotional in nature precisely correlates with a decrease in the objectivity score of students' work readiness. This empirical fact is in line with previous studies by Chotimah & Suryani (2020) which showed that partially, the motivation to enter the world of work does not have a positive and significant effect, and records a negative regression coefficient of -0.215. This emphasizes that psychological drive does not always interact linear-positively with the actual professional transition readiness of vocational high school students. This anomalous condition is similar to the description in the study by Puspitasari & Fadhli (2024) which outlines that the variable of motivation to enter the world of work does not exert a significant partial influence on the level of work readiness. In this study, the phenomenon is not speculative but rather based on the empirical data gap between actual indicators in the field. Based on the descriptive analysis results, the internal affective indicator of students on the aspect of the Emergence of Feelings (Enthusiasm) recorded a very high percentage of 89%. However, on the other hand, the objective output indicator on the Work Readiness variable (Y), namely the Professional Attitude and Values aspect, precisely occupied the lowest score of 74%. This data link reflects the symptoms of unrealistic career optimism or overconfidence (an illusion of excess confidence). Students have ambitions and emotional spirits that are eager to immediately work and complete their studies, but these high expectations are not balanced with the internalization of ethics, discipline, character maturity, and a comprehensive understanding regarding the complexity of actual workloads in modern industry. High affective motivation that is not balanced with mature mental readiness causes students to tend to underestimate the real challenges of the world of work. Consequently, in multiple linear regression statistical modeling, this conflicting temporary emotional drive precisely provides a negative contribution toward the total score of students' work

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readiness measured through objective competence indicators. The high level of motivation without being accompanied by professional attitude maturity makes students tend to underestimate the actual challenges of the world of work, thereby objectively lowering their readiness score (Pratiwi & Mudrikah, 2024). This is in line with the opinion of Ika Wahyuningsih & Agung Yulianto (2020), stating that without a strong foundation of character and work ethics, high motivation will only become a temporary emotional drive that is counterproductive to readiness in facing complex organizational dynamics.

This study has several limitations that need to be considered in interpreting its results. First, data collection fully relies on self-reported questionnaire instruments that carry a risk of social desirability bias, where respondents tend to provide answers considered ideal by the school. Second, the disclosure of the negative motivation influence phenomenon interpreted as an indication of overconfidence in this study is newly based on descriptive data gap analysis, because the initial instrument design did not include a standalone psychological overconfidence measurement scale. Finally, the geographical scope of this research is limited to the urban area of Semarang City with specific local economic characteristics, so that generalization of the research results for rural areas or cities with different economic scales must be done with caution.

5. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that simultaneously, Industrial Work Practice, Career Guidance, and Student Motivation have a significant influence on the Work Readiness of grade XII Office Management and Business Services (MPLB) students in vocational high schools (SMK) across Semarang City.

Partially, distinct dynamics of influence were found for each variable:

(i) Career Guidance is the most dominant determinant with the highest t-count value (6.100) and an independent contribution of 55.3%. This confirms that professional navigation services in schools are the primary key to student readiness.

(ii) Industrial Work Practice has a positive and significant influence with a t-count value of 4.587 and an independent contribution of 52.4%.

(iii) Student Motivation significantly influences work readiness with a t-count value of -2.049 (Sig. 0.042), but shows a negative direction of influence. This unique finding indicates the phenomenon of overconfidence, where excessively high emotional motivation without being accompanied by professional character maturity precisely reduces the objectivity of students' work readiness.

Based on the research findings above, several specific practical policy recommendations based on each variable are proposed as follows.

(i) Policy Suggestions Based on the Career Guidance Variable (X2): Schools are advised to revitalize career guidance services so that they do not merely serve as an administrative center for job vacancy information. Schools need to implement interactive guidance such as job interview simulations, professional curriculum vitae preparation training, and hold special briefings (parenting sessions) for students' parents to align family support regarding the future prospects of the modern office world.

(ii) Policy Suggestions Based on the Industrial Work Practice Variable (X1): Schools are expected to strengthen curriculum synchronization through link and match programs with relevant Business and Industrial World (DUDI) partners. Concrete steps that need to be taken include providing additional independent laboratory

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practice hours focused on mastering the latest office technology (advanced Microsoft Office and data processing applications), as well as facilitating computer extracurriculars to hone students' motor skills.

(iii) Policy Suggestions Based on the Student Motivation Variable (X3): An in-depth evaluation by teachers and school counselors regarding student motivation programs is required. The approach to providing motivation must be shifted from merely igniting temporary affective-emotional spirits to introducing objective work realities. Students must be equipped with comprehensive insights regarding professional ethics, organizational pressure, and workload responsibilities in industry to reduce the counterproductive phenomenon of overconfidence.

(iv) Suggestions for Future Researchers: For the development of the subsequent scientific treasury, it is suggested that future researchers explore psychological mediating variables such as self-efficacy and apply a mixed-method approach to dissect the root causes of the negative influence of motivation on students' professional transition readiness in more depth.

6. AUTHORS' NOTE

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. The author also confirms that this manuscript is free from elements of plagiarism and is an original work resulting from independent research.

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