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Student Work Readiness in Higher Education: The Role of Organizational Engagement, Academic Performance, and Learning Environment

Muhammad Khoirur Farihin

Management Study Program, Faculty of Economics and Business
Boyolali University
Boyolali, Indonesia

khoirulfa25@gmail.com

Mirza Syahviyar

Accounting Study Program, Faculty of Economics and Business
Boyolali University
Boyolali, Indonesia

F22010019@student.uby.ac.id

Alean Kistiani Hegy Suryana

Management Study Program, Faculty of Economics and Business
Boyolali University
Boyolali, Indonesia

aleankistiani@gmail.com

Tien Suhartini

Management Study Program, Faculty of Economics and Business
Boyolali University
Boyolali, Indonesia

tiensuhartini@mail.uby.ac.id

Abstract

Work readiness has become a critical issue in higher education human resource management, particularly in bridging the gap between academic competence and industry demands. However, empirical evidence from private universities in developing regions remains limited. Objective: This study aims to examine the partial and simultaneous effects of organizational engagement, academic performance, and learning environment on student work readiness at Boyolali University, Indonesia. Methods: A quantitative research design was employed. Data were collected through structured questionnaires distributed to 55 students from the 2021 cohort. Multiple linear regression analysis was performed to test the hypotheses. Results: The F-test results indicated that organizational engagement, academic performance, and learning environment simultaneously have a significant effect on student work readiness ($p < 0.001$). The coefficient of determination (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.312$) revealed that the three independent variables collectively explain 31.2% of the variance in work readiness. Conclusion: Organizational engagement, academic performance, and learning environment are essential determinants of student work readiness. Higher education institutions should promote organizational engagement and optimize learning environments to enhance graduate employability. Further research is recommended to explore other contextual variables.

Keywords: Work Readiness; Organizational Engagement; Academic Performance; Learning Environment; Higher Education.

I. INTRODUCTION

Human resources (HR) play a crucial role as the primary foundation for an organization's progress and sustainability as well as a vital indicator for measuring the achievement of economic targets. In line with the mandate of the laws of the Republic of Indonesia, higher education is recognized as a strategic pillar in the national education system. Its role is essential in advancing science and technology, enlightening the nation, and equipping the Indonesian people with cultural values to ensure sustainable development (Shabrina, 2022). Therefore, higher education institutions are expected to produce competent graduates who can support sustainable organizational performance through strong commitment and positive organizational values (Suhartini et al., 2023).

Amid the dynamics of the globalization era, the demand for human resource development has become increasingly urgent. Globalization drives individuals to continuously master and deepen their knowledge of science and technology, as a key prerequisite for competing on the international stage. Therefore, the education system is required to produce competitive graduates. Nevertheless, the challenge of educated unemployment in Indonesia remains an issue that warrants serious attention (Setiarini et al., 2022).

Rapidly growing sectors are highly dependent on the availability of reliable, knowledgeable, and high-quality human resources. Workers are expected to possess strong analytical, creative, and innovative skills; possess in-depth knowledge; be environmentally conscious; and be able to identify jobs that match their expertise and skills. In this context, today's labor market is becoming increasingly competitive and demands workers with relevant capabilities and skills. Accordingly, employees are also expected to develop a strong spiritual psychological contract, which promotes responsibility, commitment, integrity, and alignment between personal values and organizational goals (Suhartini, 2022).

Based on data from August 2024, Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS) an open unemployment rate in Indonesia of 4.91%, meaning there are approximately 7.47 million unemployed people. This figure represents a decrease from the previous period, which stood at 7.86 million people. However, BPS data updated on February 6, 2025, indicates that the open unemployment rate for higher education graduates remains quite high 5.25% in 2024, a slight increase from 5.18% in 2023. This reality underscores that the number of college graduates who have not yet secured employment in Indonesia remains significant. As seen in the data, this figure increased from 2023 to 2024. If left unaddressed, the open unemployment rate among higher education graduates will continue to rise.

Higher education institutions are expected to produce graduates with strong academic competence and practical skills that meet labor market demands. Nugroho et al. (2024) emphasized that work readiness is shaped by the knowledge, skills, and competencies acquired throughout higher education. Therefore, students need to prepare themselves to adapt to the evolving needs of the workforce. Boyolali University is committed to producing high-quality graduates through four faculties: Economics and Business, Law,

Agriculture and Animal Husbandry, and Communication and Information Technology which offer seven study programs: Management, Accounting, Law, Agrotechnology, Animal Science, Communication, and Computer Science.

Several factors influence students' work readiness, including organizational engagement, academic performance, and the learning environment. As cited in Thoyyib Fuady et al. (2022), student organizations play a crucial role in supporting students' development beyond classroom learning. In line with this, higher education aims to develop creative, innovative, independent, and productive graduates, with student organizations serving as an important platform for enhancing students' non-academic potential. Through organizational participation, students develop essential soft skills, such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and leadership, which strengthen work readiness (Sari et al., 2026). Supporting this view, Susanto et al. (2024) found that organizational experience, together with academic achievement and IT proficiency, positively contributes to students' work readiness by developing competencies needed to adapt to workplace demands.

Another factor influencing work readiness is academic performance. Academic success is always linked to students' learning objectives. Grades are used to indicate learning outcomes, serving as a standard for assessing students' progress in the learning process over time. According to Mahmudah et al. (2022), a person's overall learning performance can be assessed through observation of students' abilities and skills during learning activities.

A 2022 report from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbud-Riset) shows that the average Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) for undergraduate students in Indonesia is 3.33, below the ideal standard of 3.50 or higher. This condition may reduce graduates' competitiveness in the labor market. Academic performance, reflected by students' GPA, is an important indicator of learning achievement and work readiness. Angiasari et al. (2025) emphasize that academic performance improves graduates' work readiness, both directly and indirectly through the development of soft skills. In addition, the Diploma Supplement (SKPI), which accompanies the diploma, provides comprehensive information on graduates' learning outcomes, skills, and competencies beyond GPA alone. Therefore, the SKPI and GPA complement each other as key indicators in assessing the employability of college graduates.

In addition, the comfort of the learning environment is a crucial factor. The learning environment encompasses both abstract and concrete conditions that significantly influence the learning process. This environment is divided into the campus, family, and community settings. If all three of these environments are supportive, students will feel comfortable while studying. Consequently, this contributes to improved academic performance and their future work readiness. This finding is supported by Utaminintyas (2021), who emphasizes the influence of the learning environment from the family, campus, and community perspectives.

Previous studies have identified organizational engagement and academic performance as important determinants of students' work readiness. Mulyana, B. S. and Linando, J. A. (2024) found that participation in student organizations significantly enhances graduates' readiness to enter the labor market; however, their study focused solely on organizational engagement without considering other factors that may also influence work readiness. Likewise, Ridwan, M. and Pradikto, S. (2025) examined the effects of organizational engagement and academic performance on students' work readiness but did not incorporate the learning environment as a potential determinant. Moreover, both studies were conducted in different institutional contexts, limiting the generalizability of their findings to other higher education settings. Therefore, this study addresses these gaps by examining the combined effects of organizational engagement, academic performance, and the learning environment on students' work readiness at Boyolali University.

Accordingly, this study aims to examine both the partial and simultaneous effects of organizational engagement, academic performance, and the learning environment on the work readiness of the 2021 cohort of students at Boyolali University. This study is expected to contribute to the literature by extending previous research through the integration of these three determinants within a single research model and to provide practical implications for higher education institutions in improving graduate employability.

Conceptual framework and hypotheses

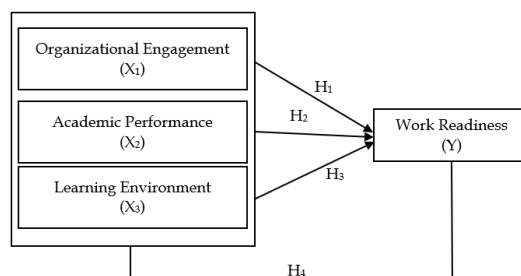


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

- H₁ : Organizational engagement has a positive and significant effect on the work readiness of Boyolali University students.
 H₂ : Academic performance has a positive and significant effect on the work readiness of Boyolali University students.
 H₃ : The learning environment has a positive and significant effect on the work readiness of Boyolali University students.
 H₄ : Organizational engagement, academic performance, and the learning environment simultaneously have a positive and significant effect on the work readiness of Boyolali University students.

II. METHOD

This study employed a quantitative research approach. As cited from Sugiyono (2024:1), a research method is a scientific approach used to collect data for specific purposes and benefits. A quantitative method is a research approach based on the positivist paradigm, which is applied to observe a specific population or sample, using data collection techniques via specialized instruments, and analyzed quantitatively and statistically to describe conditions and test formulated hypotheses. The study population consisted of 118 Boyolali University students from the 2021 cohort, the researcher applied a probability sampling technique using simple random sampling. A sample of 55 respondents was selected at random based on calculations using the Slovin formula with a margin of error of 10%.

In this study, data were collected by distributing questionnaires via an online platform and using Google Forms, which respondents filled out directly. This quantitative approach relied on primary data. The data were then analyzed using SPSS 26 with multiple linear regression analysis. The research was conducted at Boyolali University. Boyolali University is a private university located in Boyolali Regency. UBY is the only university in Boyolali that aims to become a center of excellence in higher education by emphasizing a spirit of entrepreneurship rooted in local wisdom and competitiveness.

Operationalization of Variables

Table 1
Operationalization of Variables

Variables	Indicators
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Organizational Engagement (X_1) (Tannady, 2005 in Duryat, 2021: 18) Organizational engagement refers to an individual's activity within an organizational system that involves interactions among more than one person and largely concerns human relationships.	a. Attendance Rate b. Level of Activity c. Members' Willingness to Make Sacrifices d. Organizational members motivation
Academic Performance (X_2) (Alex Sobur 2006 in Rawi, 2022: 21) Academic performance is tangible evidence of a student's success or learning ability, measured by the weight of their accomplishments in learning activities.	a. Semester GPA b. Cumulative GPA c. Graduation rate d. Duration of Education
Learning Environment (X_3) (Heimstra 1991 in Harjali, 2019: 24) The learning environment encompasses everything surrounding a person that can influence the growth and development of adults in an educational context.	a. Campus facilities b. Home facilities c. Student-Faculty Relationships d. Friendships
Work Readiness (Y) (Robbins 2001, as cited in Siska et al., 2024: 174) states that work readiness is a condition in which an individual possesses the skills, abilities, and motivation to complete their tasks and fulfill their responsibilities.	a. Physical, mental, and emotional condition b. Skills c. Knowledge d. Ability to adapt to the environment

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Validity Test

The validity test demonstrated that all questionnaire items had significance values below the accepted threshold of 0.05. Therefore, all measurement items were considered valid and appropriate for further statistical analysis.

Table 2
Validity Test

Correlations				
Variable	Item	Sig Value	Base Sig Value	Description
Organizational Engagement (X_1)	X1.01	.000	0.05	Valid
	X1.02	.000	0.05	Valid
	X1.03	.000	0.05	Valid
	X1.04	.000	0.05	Valid
	X1.05	.000	0.05	Valid
	X1.06	.000	0.05	Valid
	X1.07	.000	0.05	Valid
	X1.08	.000	0.05	Valid
	X1.09	.000	0.05	Valid
	X1.10	.000	0.05	Valid
	X1.11	.000	0.05	Valid
	X1.12	.000	0.05	Valid
	X1.13	.000	0.05	Valid
Academic Performance (X_2)	X2.01	.000	0.05	Valid
	X2.02	.000	0.05	Valid
	X2.03	.000	0.05	Valid
	X2.04	.000	0.05	Valid
	X2.05	.000	0.05	Valid
	X2.06	.000	0.05	Valid
Learning Environment (X_3)	X3.01	.000	0.05	Valid
	X3.02	.000	0.05	Valid
	X3.03	.000	0.05	Valid
	X3.04	.000	0.05	Valid
	X3.05	.000	0.05	Valid
	X3.06	.000	0.05	Valid
Work Readiness (Y)	Y.01	.000	0.05	Valid
	Y.02	.000	0.05	Valid
	Y.03	.000	0.05	Valid
	Y.04	.000	0.05	Valid
	Y.05	.000	0.05	Valid
	Y.06	.000	0.05	Valid
	Y.07	.000	0.05	Valid
	Y.08	.000	0.05	Valid
	Y.09	.000	0.05	Valid

Source: Data processed using SPSS 26, 2025.

Partial Test (t-Test)

Table 3
t-Test

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	14.657	4.878		3.005	.004
	X1	.278	.083	.447	3.357	.001
	X2	-.053	.171	-.039	-.309	.758
	X3	.395	.168	.285	2.353	.023

Source: Data processed using SPSS 26, 2025.

Organizational Engagement (X₁)

Based on the results of the data analysis above, the significance value for the organizational engagement variable is 0.001, which means that this variable significantly affects the dependent variable (work readiness) because this value is < 0.05.

Academic Performance (X₂)

The academic performance variable has a significance value of 0.758, which is greater than 0.05, indicating that it does not significantly affect work readiness. Therefore, H₂ is rejected.

Learning Environment (X₃)

Based on the results of the data analysis above, the learning environment variable has a significance value of 0.023, which means that this variable has an effect on the dependent variable (work readiness) since this value is < 0.05.

Simultaneous Test (F-Test)

Table 4
F-Test

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	221.007	3	73.669	9.176	.000 ^b
	Residual	409.429	51	8.028		
	Total	630.436	54			

Source: Data processed using SPSS 26, 2025.

Based on the ANOVA results, the F-test yielded an F value of 9.176 with a significance value of 0.000 (< 0.05). This indicates that organizational engagement, academic performance, and the learning environment simultaneously have a significant effect on students' work readiness among the 55 respondents.

Coefficient of Determination Test (R²)

Table 5
Test of the Coefficient of Determination

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.592 ^a	.351	.312	2.833

Source: Data processed using SPSS 26, 2025.

The data show that the *adjusted* R² value is 0.312; when calculated using the coefficient of determination formula, the result is $0.312 \times 100\%$, which equals 31.2%. From these calculations, it can be concluded that the *adjusted* R² value is 31.2%, indicating that the variables of organizational engagement, academic performance, and learning environment explain 31.2% of the variance in work readiness.

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Table 6
Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	14.657	4.878		3.005	.004
	X1	.278	.083	.447	3.357	.001
	X2	-.053	.171	-.039	-.309	.758
	X3	.395	.168	.285	2.353	.023

Source: Data processed using SPSS 26, 2025.

The findings from the multiple linear regression analysis can be expressed in the following equation:

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + e$$

$$Y = 14.657 + 0.278X_1 - 0.053X_2 + 0.395X_3 + e$$

Referring to the multiple linear regression equation described above, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- The constant term is 14.657, indicating that when all independent variables are equal to zero, the predicted work readiness score is 14.657.
- The regression coefficient for the organizational engagement variable is 0.278, meaning every one-unit increase in organizational engagement increases work readiness by 0.278 units.
- The regression coefficient for academic performance is -0.053, indicating that every one-unit increase in academic performance is associated with a 0.053-unit decrease in work readiness. However, this relationship is not statistically significant ($p = 0.758$).
- The regression coefficient for the learning environment variable is 0.395, meaning that every one-unit increase in the learning environment score will increase the work readiness score by 0.395.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that organizational engagement has a significant positive effect on students' work readiness, as indicated by a p-value of 0.001, which is below the significance threshold of 0.05. In contrast, academic performance does not have a significant effect on students' work readiness, as evidenced by a p-value of 0.758, which exceeds 0.05. Meanwhile, the learning environment has a significant positive effect on students' work readiness, with a p-value of 0.023, indicating a statistically significant partial effect. Furthermore, the F-test results demonstrate that organizational engagement, academic performance, and the learning environment collectively have a significant effect on students' work readiness. The adjusted coefficient of determination (Adjusted R²) of 0.312 indicates that these three variables explain 31.2% of the variance in students' work readiness, while the remaining 68.8% is explained by other factors not included in this research model.

The findings suggest that higher education institutions should enhance students' work readiness by encouraging participation in student organizations and fostering a supportive learning environment. Although academic performance did not significantly influence work readiness, maintaining good academic achievement remains important as it reflects knowledge, critical thinking, and analytical skills valued in the workplace. This study was limited by time, resources, data access, and the inclusion of only organizational engagement, academic performance, and the learning environment as predictors of work readiness. In addition, the findings may have been affected by respondents' subjective perceptions and are limited in generalizability because the study focused solely on the 2021 cohort of Boyolali University students.

Based on these findings, universities are encouraged to strengthen work readiness through training that integrates organizational engagement with career preparation, soft skills development, and stronger collaboration between student organizations and

industry. Universities should also maintain a supportive learning environment by providing adequate facilities, interactive learning methods, and opportunities for students to actively engage in academic and non-academic activities. Future research is recommended to include broader and more diverse samples and examine additional factors influencing work readiness to provide a more comprehensive understanding of graduate employability.

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