

# Self-efficacy mediates work ethics and work readiness

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**ABSTRACT:** This study examines the direct empirical relationship between independent variables work ethics and work readiness among 307 TVET graduates that enrol in boot camp programs within the MARA institutions. Moreover, the research identifies the significance of self-efficacy as a possible mediator in the relationship between independent variable work ethics and work readiness. For data analysis and hypothesis testing, Structural Equation Modelling and several statistical methods, such as the maximum likelihood estimate and regression technique, were utilised to understand the dimensionality of the variables. The results show that Self-efficacy was a mediating factor in the relationship between work ethics and work readiness of graduates play an important role in TVET graduates among MARA institutions.

**KEYWORDS:** Work-readiness, self-efficacy, work ethics

## I. INTRODUCTION

Many elements influence an organisation's employee performance (Akpa et al., 2021), including motivation, work ethics, work experience, work culture, discipline, and work environment (Ersa Rahmadania & Herminingsih, 2021). Employees can carry out their activities optimally because it is determined by motivation or encouragement to work hard and a comfortable work environment that encourages employee work performance (Girdwichai & Sriviboon, 2020). Organisational goals can be met through direction and motivation work that creates an environment conducive to staff performance growth (Riyanto et al., 2021). The increasing performance will increase perceived advantages if it can become work behaviour so that performance-based work behaviour can reach high job performance (Widarko & Anwarodin, 2022). Because not every employee can attain ideal work performance, there is still a requirement for a motivating factor to obtain maximum work. These driving variables are work motivation, work ethics, work experience,

work culture, discipline, and work environment. They can provide optimal employee performance (Muhd Akhir et al., 2021).

## Work Ethics

Motivation and workplace atmosphere are two factors that might affect employee performance in an institution or organisation (Ližbetinová & Hitka, 2020). For example, suppose a government agency wants work performance from its employees. In that case, it must address the issue of effort-enhancing performance and adopting employee work motivation management (Aflah et al., 2021; Japhet, 2021). However, it must also address the issue of developing a work environment system that allows employees to develop and achieve. Strong work ethics, it should go without saying, lead to better productivity and cooperation with colleagues (Ichsan et al., 2022). Furthermore, it allows the personnel's values to coincide with the company's. As a result, staff will be more inspired, encouraged, and productive due to their presence.

Work ethics, work experience, and work culture, the work spirit generated, can impact employee performance in an organisation if used ideally with due consideration for factors of employee behaviour to gain employee performance (Hair Awang et al., 2011; Japhet, 2021). As a result of a work ethic, work culture, and work experience, employee performance will improve (Akpa et al., 2021).

A work ethic is a focused and devoted approach to work that places high importance on one's professional standing (Japhet, 2021). In addition, individuals are good employees in any industry since they adhere to ethical standards.

As Hassan et al. (2022) mentioned, students' ethical and moral principles should be cultivated and developed to make significant growth commensurate with their level of civilization. Every learner must have a solid comprehension of ethical and moral notions, and

this must be taken into consideration. Teaching youngsters ethical and moral concepts may significantly influence their capacity to self-regulate daily (Walia, 2022). It should also be noted that ethical and moral principles must be used to foster a civil society that emphasises moral and social system integrity (Mat Yusoff et al., 2021).

Ethics is the concept that there are proper and wrong behaviours or good and bad acts that affect others (Aflah et al., 2021). Conformity with societal norms is achieved by the execution of good and suitable behaviours (Packer et al., 2021). Ethical behaviour will affect the quality of employees influenced by outside factors, including organizational culture's impact, political conditions, and the global economy (Metwally et al., 2019). Organizational culture is a structure that distinguishes one company from another (Ye et al., 2022). The value of unity will reflect in the attitude and employee conduct in the company as a result of organisational culture. Political conditions are the principles, circumstances, methods, or means by which aims are achieved (Brauckmann et al., 2023). The individual or group actions impact the fulfilment of rights and duties, and the aim will be fulfilled (Nielsen et al., 2021). The global economy refers to individuals using their resources to increase their well-being to meet their living requirements (Muksin Batubara et al., 2021).

The notion of work ethic has been introduced in the organisation since employees began working for the multinational corporation. However, depending on the organisational level, the principles of work ethics may be defined in various ways. The Islamic work ethic, for example, is founded on the ideas of choice, clarity, opposition, and morally acceptable behaviour (Kusworo, 2020). Furthermore, the Islamic norm of workplace behaviour is founded on the prophet Muhammad's assertion that "work is the ultimate form of devotion" (Akhmadi et al., 2023). For a corporation to function efficiently, moral and ethical norms must be followed. The labour attitude should combine self-discipline and determination, and the work should foster self-reliance and self-confidence (M. Tran et al., 2021). On the other hand, the protestant work ethic holds that arduous labour is necessary for financial success and that failure to put in such labour may have bad consequences in people's lives (Vaquero-Solís et al., 2020). Compared to the time a person should spend on leisure, Western work ethics conveys the negative connotations of a curse, sad, dishonourable, corrupt, and waste (Sharma & Rai, 2015).

According to Aini (2020), An Islamic work ethic encompasses the whole personality of a Muslim, including how they express themselves, how they seem, what Muslims believe, and how they assign meaning to things. This work ethic pushes Muslims to act and achieve the greatest amount of charity possible so that the pattern of human relationships and their own might be properly intertwined (Aflah et al., 2021). Because it is a self-selected and self-aware attitude based on cultural norms linked to labour, the Islamic work ethic may impact a person's performance (Boudlaie et al., 2022). This impact on the individual is because the Islamic work ethic is built on cultural values. The Islamic work ethic is founded on cultural values; these cultural values, in turn, shape each individual's Islamic work ethic, enabling the Islamic work ethic to impact that individual's performance (Nasution & Rafiki, 2020).

Workers' effectiveness inside organisations strongly relies on ethical standards and practices (Aini, 2020). In contrast to a lack of work ethic, which may result in poor job performance, a strong work ethic may help people maintain their productivity over time (Hautamäki, 2020; Othman & Alias, 2016).

Employees who work under leaders who promote ethics are convinced to adopt a broad range of attitudes and behaviours critical to the organization's success. This attitude is in addition to the fact that such leaders influence the ethical behaviour of their employees (Rodzalan et al., 2019). The education system can see how today's college students behave and interact with their professors and peers may indicate their future professional performance (Adnan & Hasan, 2019).

Work dominance, confidence, hard labour, freedom, ethics, postponed fulfilment, and wasted time a classified as work ethics (Adnan & Hasan, 2019; Rautenbach & Keet, 2020). Therefore, these factors may be considered when determining if someone demonstrates ethical behaviour in the business or at the educational level.

The corruption perception index influences the investor for business confidence in this country (Transparency International, 2020). Good business ethics is emphasised in Islamic lessons, including sale and buying transactions (Othman & Alias, 2016; Wibowo & Mansah, 2020). Indirectly, this corruption index is closely related to ethics in doing business. While different opinions have expressed this confusion, ethics has been recognised as critical in addressing corporate scandals (Khan et al., 2022). The suspicion of corporate business practices led to the scope of corporate scandals. Economic activity is an

important part of many individuals. As business practises, like any other human activity, is human activity, this is examined from a moral point of view.

### Self-Efficacy

Employment trends that are becoming more dynamic and unpredictable, along with the fast expansion of the globalisation age, have followed a quicker, more diversified, and surprising rate of change is occurring in the world of employment. (Sholikah et al., 2021). People are urged to be adaptable to work with their present professional progress and adjust as needed (Tokbaeva & Achtenhagen, 2023). Individual behaviour is important and relates to self-efficacy in various activities (Asbari et al., 2021).

Self-efficacy affects the learning process, which influences behaviour and shapes students' job readiness; it may help students perform more successfully and adapt more easily to a new work environment (Usman & Sulistyowati, 2020). However, a lack of self-efficacy leads to pessimism, learners' future orientation toward the importance of job preparation becomes poor, and they lose confidence in their abilities. A study conducted among vocational students found that self-efficacy effect work readiness (Aji & Irdianto, 2020)

Similarly, self-motivational theories emphasise the importance of people's psychological requirements and objectives in self-expression and behaviour (Alamer et al., 2023). Their self-efficacy influences individuals motivation (Usán et al., 2022). Self-efficacy is a term that relates to people's views about their ability to accomplish desired aims and intentions as a ground theory (Bandura, 1986, 1997). The multipart and varied effects of such motivational practices on self-esteem may also be observed in competing ideas or images about the final aims that underlie our self-related perceptions and behaviours (Baba & Balint, 2022). Self-efficacy is confidence in their ability to succeed in a certain condition (Stenmark et al., 2021).

Individuals and strong self-efficacy can develop deeper curiosity in activities with strong commitment (Almutairi, 2020). Another characteristic of great self-efficiency is pulling through faster from disappointments and looking at the challenging problem as a duty to be learned (Bandura, 1978) in the initial theory. The idea that an individual can attain a certain goal or carry out a given activity is an essential component of self-efficacy, a strong predictor of good

performance (Widarko & Anwarodin, 2022). Self-efficacy of individual increase by increasing belief in task well. This direct relationship shows that the lower self-efficacy would be less on the individual performing a task. This link is crucial for an individual's motivation since individuals are less likely to give a task their whole effort if they have a low self-efficacy, while those with a high self-efficacy are more likely to offer a task their complete effort (Hatlevik & Bjarnø, 2021). Bandura (1978) contends that a person's level of self-efficacy is an element of their "self-system," which also comprises their attitudes, capabilities, and cognitive capacities. This system tremendously influences how we see the world around us and react to its many complexities. The principle of one's capacity to prosper is an essential part of this self-system.

### Work Readiness

Work readiness, also known as work competency, represents to person's knowledge, skills, and attitudes toward their occupations following predetermined standards (ACT, 2013). According to ACT (2013), work readiness abilities consist of critical thinking, problem-solving, finding information, thinking abilities, such as understanding information, noncognitive, practical calculation and soft skills. In addition, these skills are characterised as individual factors and behavioural abilities that increase an individual's relationships, quality of work, and employment prospects. Talents may be summed up as personal qualities and behavioural abilities that enrich an individual's life (A. August, 2020). Such talents include flexibility, honesty, the ability to work well with others, and workplace discipline.

Numerous factors may contribute to a worker's readiness for the workplace. Work readiness may be impacted by a person's career planning, culture, self-efficacy, resiliency, social skills, entrepreneurial orientation, proactive outlook, and emotional abilities (D. A. Parker et al., 2009; Miners et al., 2018). These eight elements are given in the following order: career planning, culture, self-efficacy, resilience, social skills, and entrepreneurial orientation (Audibert et al., 2020). Many variables govern work readiness and discover that many are connected when these characteristics are assessed. For example, self-efficacy contributes to an individual's work readiness. According to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy is a person's confidence in his capacity to organise and carry out a sequence of activities required to accomplish a desired objective. The idea that one can succeed and accomplish one's

goals is referred to as self-efficacy. Students are required to build self-efficacy to make decisions about their future vocations or occupations independently. Self-efficacy may be described as the extent to which a student is self-confident in skills and talents and is aware of the forms of work suited to those capabilities depending on the study area pursued (Nur Fitriyana et al., 2021).

Individuals must have work readiness to face challenges and compete with others in the workplace. Work readiness is a crucial feature that must be strengthened since it is one of the factors used to determine whether or not graduates can satisfy the needs of employers (Siddique et al., 2022). Some graduates thought that they already had the personal traits and attributes sought by employers, such as job preparedness, communication skills, and collaboration (Sugiyanto, 2019). The fact of the matter is, however, that many business owners have found that certain recent college graduates lack the basic job skills necessary for sustained professional success (Atan, 2018). Adaptable, knowledgeable, qualified, and employable personalities will be generated to gather the needs of new employment requirements in the twenty-first century (Borg & Scott-Young, 2020). When individuals have access to work readiness, they can operationalize affective abilities, deploy emotional and common qualities, and connect career-specific intellectual talents (McGunagle & Zizka, 2020). All of these factors enhance an individual's employability.

Work readiness is the level at which a person has the information and abilities necessary to function successfully in the workplace (Akbar et al., 2021). Individuals are deemed job-ready when they can adapt to the workplace's cultural and professional demands. In addition, work readiness is also defined as the extent to which a person has the mentality, abilities, and knowledge required for successful employment (USAID, 2020). During this time, work readiness bridges work-oriented learning with the abilities that are necessary for employment.

Currently, the Malaysian government is promoting participation in apprenticeships and a job-guarantee programme by giving financial subsidies to training providers and young people and financial incentives to businesses (Perkeso, 2020). Other opportunities, such as training programmes, job volunteering, and work experience, play significant roles in preparing young people for the profession; nevertheless, government policy focuses less on these opportunities. Programs that give young people a chance to get training and experience in their

industry are quite significant (Muhd Akhir et al., 2021). Each kind of job-readiness programme is customised to the particular needs of its members.

According to MOF (2022), through PERKESO, the Malaysian government offers a variety of initiatives to enhance employment opportunities. This SOCSO-implemented effort aims to provide one thousand employment possibilities for young people after the Covid-19 epidemic. For instance, the Malaysia Short-term Work Program (MySTEP) gives a job guarantee and eighty thousand employment opportunities in the public sector, government-link companies (GLCs), and trade alliances. In addition, to increase the skill level of young talent, the government provides a training and skill improvement programme (Upskill Malaysia) administered by HRD Corporation. This programme provides job seekers with skills training to improve their marketability and guarantees employment positioning for a target of two hundred twenty thousand trainees (MOF, 2022).

Successful students may be seen from three perspectives: academic performance, success in social relationships, and career readiness (Han et al., 2022). It implies that graduates who are deemed successful can achieve these criteria. Future employment success will be simpler for students with a good CGPA, extensive networks, and cautious career preparation (Misni et al., 2020). Higher education is an educational institution that aspires to generate graduates with comprehensive knowledge, superior skills, excellent character, and the ability to join the workforce. In line with the scientific area, students are armed with various ideas and abilities during lectures, which they may acquire inside and outside the classroom. University offers graduates the information and skills needed to live successfully in the future (Lee et al., 2021).

As persons enter the early adult phase, college students are expected to enhance their knowledge, skills and personal traits to live freely (Atan, 2018). For educational achievement, students must have comprehensive knowledge and abilities at this level to be prepared to join the workforce (Siddique et al., 2022). Colleges set a graduate outcome with personal ability and success in academic and professional excellence. This personal ability also includes the capacity to adapt, develop, and apply spiritual knowledge, technology, art, and other relevant information (Calvo & García, 2020). However, achieving these skills will be difficult because people's lives are becoming more complicated in the age of



globalisation influencing the individual (Atan, 2018).

Ethics is a morality-related discipline called moral philosophy, which is morally good and evil to do, right and wrong. The philosophy of ethics allows people to choose any situation in their lives. The ethos of the character, tradition and practises of a group of people or cultures is the word of ethics adopted from the Greek language. Unethical behaviour in opposition is inconsistent with personal values and social standards defined as incorrect and ruthless. Implementing and evaluating a person's ethics or moral judgments is not simple. However, it is known that ethical or moral evaluations are multidimensional individual differences. In Islam, the doing business principle is based on Al-Quran and hadith. For example, Islam's business ethics are honest, responsible, no cheating, and promising and generous (Wibowo & Mansah, 2020). People in business were taught to follow the right ethics and were not involved in prohibiting trading activities.

Personal ethics differ from professional ethics. Personal ethics is a personal concept and spiritual trait integrated between family, peers and culture since childhood. Technical ethics is a workplace regulation imposed on employees that can be learned through preparation and training. Professional ethics is intended to minimise harm to the reputation of the employee (Razak et al., 2022).

According to the findings of research carried out by Aflah(2021), the presumptions about the good and considerable influence that Islamic work ethics have on Islamic motivation, job satisfaction, and affective commitment on employee performance are acknowledged. Work ethics related to Islamic values, as a kind of Islamic workplace ethics, may indicate a person's attitude toward many parts of their work, such as priority activities and participation, as well as a desire for employee progress and fulfilment of higher organisational objectives (Aini, 2020). Furthermore, Islamic work ethics are an Islamic requirement of professional behaviour that involves business, dedication, teamwork, accountability, social contact, and innovation. These are all aspects of Islamic labour ethics. When a person has a strong relationship with God, it is more probable that the teachings and precepts of the religious tradition he follows will be reflected in his beliefs and actions. In a genuine approach to Islamic work ethics, several procedures must be followed in line with the Quran and other sharia-based explanations (Mat Yusoff et al., 2021). One of them is concerned about the situation's financial elements.

This element is important since it has several ramifications for people and their budgets. The practice of Islamic work ethics does not imply depriving oneself of worldly pleasures; rather, it emphasises finding ways to fulfil one's desires in this life, such as using Islamic work ethics as guidance in business (Saepudin et al., 2019).

The Islamic code of conduct for the workplace and its influence on a person's intrinsic motivation (Sulastri, 2020). According to the findings, there seems to have been a favourable impact. The role of intrinsic motivation in Islamic work ethics. According to the research conducted by Nasution and Rafiki's (2020) study, there is a favourable connection between adhering to Islamic work ethics and dedication to the organisation and feeling satisfied in employment. The Islamic code of behaviour for work may serve as a guide for employees. The benefits have been shown and confirmed in terms of boosting performance (Ersa Rahmadania & Herminingsih, 2021). A belief in labour as a moral good, a set of norms that emphasise the value of effort, and the willingness to work long hours are all essential parts of a work ethic (Cambridge Dictionary, 2022). A work ethic may also be characterised as a society's collective idea that its individuals are prepared to be in command of their governing destiny in the quest for regeneration, creativity, and tenacity in the already existing opportunities, as well as the capacity to envisage new ones. Being adaptive to changes in the economic context and making constant efforts to advance the welfare of individuals and the community are also vital components of a good work ethic. As a result, participating in ethical conduct at work enhances an organization's performance, especially when the firm employs several tactics to build an ethical work culture (Nasution & Rafiki, 2020).

Suyono(2021) mentioned that Iman, Islam, Ihsan, and Taqwa are stated in the Qur'an and Hadith and are all related to Islamic ethics. Since elementary school determines both the organisation and content of education, establishing a sound educational foundation is a major challenge, especially in developing their work ethics. Meanwhile, its relationship to Islamic teaching is the cornerstone or basis of Islamic education, which gives a firm foundation or principle (Nurdiyanti et al., 2022). As a result, the foundation of Islamic culture must be handled appropriately in unveiling what will be taught next. Furthermore, because they encompass all elements of human existence, including this life and the next, the Al-Qur'an and Hadith are recognised as genuine sources of Islamic law and knowledge. Therefore,

both become obvious indicators of the rate at which people live by practising Islam, including work ethics. Character is a distinctive mental and moral strength trait that distinguishes oneself from others. A person who can urge or mobilise people to undertake something has a natural and inherent characteristic. Character education is critical for the country because it addresses the problem of the ongoing generational shift and must be maintained indefinitely. A person's character is built on their strong or weak values. Angels symbolise positive characteristics, whilst devils represent negative ones. The gravitational pull of positive and negative energy on each other shapes a person's personality. Negative energy is drawn to positive values. Religion is the world's embodiment of good energy. Faith in God is the wellspring of moral values, while thaghut (Satan) is the source of immoral values. The bad energy manifests itself as immoral ideals. These moral and ethical principles serve to purify humanity's value. This principle also continues for the individual to develop their work ethics. In addition, ethics was greatly dependent on an individual's capacity

The Qur'an emphasises morally upright behaviour almost constantly, such as respecting parents, being kind to one's family, friends, and neighbours, assisting the poor and orphaned, maintaining one's integrity, ensuring that one's intentions are pure, and keeping one's word when one makes a promise (Mat Yusoff et al., 2021). Consequently, ethics in Islam are built to not only manage the religion's connection with humankind but also lead believers toward a greater relationship with God. Muslims who follow moral principles based on God's mandate will undoubtedly have acceptable manners and ethical standards. Because Allah, who knows all and knows what is best for His creatures, is the legislator for all systems, including the ethical system, Islam practises inclusive perception concerning ethical dilemmas. Work ethics was a clear explanation guide in Al-Qur'an.

There are several theories related to ethics from previous studies. The theories linked to ethics include divine, virtue ethics theory, deontology theory, egoism theory, utilitarian theory, command theory and relativism theory. Al-Aidoros et al. (2013) state that most of these theories are rejected from the Islamic viewpoint. The philosophy of relativism, the core concept in ethics, applies to a particular environment (Al-Aidaros et al., 2013; Bahari, 2020; Hautamäki, 2020; Oghani et al., 2020). Different businesses can have various ethical rules. Therefore, the whole culture can proclaim no fundamental reality in ethical values.

This hypothesis can reject since a particular society's past can contradict Islamic values (Al-Aidaros et al., 2013; Gharibpoor et al., 2020).

Following the directives sent down by God is the central tenet of the divine command doctrine, which proposes that this is the best way to live (Rautenbach & Keet, 2020). In religion, everything prohibited by God is primarily classified as immoral. The command theory aligns with the Islamic interpretation, but this idea is opposed by most Western literature (Aydin, 2020).

Utilitarianism determines the correct ethics where behaviour results in more benefits than any other practice (Rautenbach & Keet, 2020). However, the concept of utilitarian philosophy has not been in line with the Islamic paradigm because the only reason for this doctrine is the most significant consequences for the highest number of people (Al-Aidaros et al., 2013).

People's egoism ideology must always be for their benefit (Rautenbach & Keet, 2020). The behaviour person calls ethically permissible only if it serves an individual (Oghani et al., 2020). This principle is contradictory to the Islamic principles of justice and humanity.

The deontology theory highlights the obligation as the moral concept's foundation as a correct or incorrect decision (Edwards & Amoah, 2020). This theory emphasises, in particular, the connection between responsibility and the nature of human behaviour (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019). It does not take the consequences of the procedure into account. However, there are fundamental ethical acts that all must accept. The philosophy of deontology is not explicit about the origins of this "standard ethics" since Muslim values are the only basis for the ethical system of Islam (Aydin, 2020).

Virtue ethics theory focuses on what makes a suitable entity or human rather than what makes good behaviour (Garlington et al., 2020). Each person should have unique qualities of virtue, such as civility, cooperation, courage, dignity, niceness, kindness, sincerity, compassion, faithfulness, self-confidence, personality control, modesty, fairness, and empathy. There is no alignment from the Islamic viewpoint since virtue ethics is the only reason for this ideology (Al-Aidaros et al., 2013).

Kusworo (2020) points out that ethical principles are compatible with business goals, significantly optimising income. Most companies face philosophical dilemmas but prefer to solve them and still gain a sufficient income spiritually, or it turns out to be a lucrative business for an organisation perceived to have a sophisticated

corporate culture. However, this can not guarantee an ethical business income relationship, as other factors can affect the company's competitiveness. Ethics must guide all human actions because it is a community practice, so ethics should be a guideline for operations (Kusworo, 2020). In the working environment, the moral basis is a guideline for the individual. The corporation expects staff not to exploit the company's properties, the parties to the arrangement want others to comply with the contracts, the consumer still wants the items they buy to be as good as advertised, and so on. Of course, the company would not occur if people in business were unethical, such as vendors, clients, staff, executives, and suppliers.

Many factors influence human ethics in their lives, including friends, family, experience, personal values, and circumstances (Mahmud et al., 2022). During their training for the job market, personal ethics impact individual results. The ethics factor could influence graduates to do a real job. In general, this concept is specifically related to the business principles that the company serves.

Marina and Wahjowo (2017) information regarding business ethics is essential and should implement at the organisation. The qualitative study of business ethics for commerce sustainability in the hospital mention that "We want to be seen at the vanguard of humanity's rightful, moral, and ethical norms, and people both within and outside our hospital want us to participate in community events that reflect our corporate ideals." Therefore, Islamic business ethics is implemented to redesign the hospital's vision and mission for sustainable business (Marina & Wahjono, 2017).

The Kusworo (2020) research tested the hypothesis that vocational students significantly perceived business and professional ethics. The parametric statistic with an unbiased t-test was used to evaluate the significance of the difference in the gender sample.  $P = 0.05$  is used as the significance threshold for all statistical tests, and the result value is ( $p < 0.05$ ). This finding demonstrates a considerable variation in business and professional ethics opinions between female and male technical-vocational students.

Work ethics at workplace practices are crucial when building a successful business with pleased and committed employees. Proper work ethic contributes to productive and ethical work environments. These work ethics are key elements essential for any business organisation's success. There are many examples of unethical behaviour in the workplace, such as cheating or stealing from company resources. Without proper work ethics at

the workplace, it would not be easy to maintain a successful business. Several factors affect work ethics, such as individual skills, beliefs, and values. In order to build a strong business foundation, the employees should be committed to ethical business practices and have good work ethics. A successful workplace is where employees are treated fairly and motivated to do their best. The company must also set a good example by treating its employees with respect and dignity. Cultivating a culture of integrity and trust in the workplace will help ensure the company's success. Establishing and maintaining a positive reputation is one of the most important things that can be done to ensure a successful company (Islam et al., 2021). Maintaining a positive reputation in the business industry will enhance customer loyalty and encourage repeat business. A good reputation for a business will also attract new customers. Every business needs to follow ethical standards to build a positive brand image in the industry. For a business to succeed, it must promote ethical practices and maintain a good relationship with customers.

Studies have shown that businesses that follow ethical standards are more successful than those that do not (Cohen, 2020). Businesses should follow strict guidelines to ensure fair treatment of their employees. Employers should treat their employees with dignity and respect at all times. They should also create a safe environment for their workers where everyone can feel secure and comfortable. Today's business environment is highly competitive, and companies must find ways to stand out. One way of doing so is by following the best practices and standards of ethics and integrity. Companies aligned with these principles are more likely to succeed long-term. Integrity is an essential ingredient for business success. Businesses must demonstrate their commitment to high standards of ethics and integrity to compete in today's challenging marketplace.

Indicating to the firm's stakeholders, such as its employees, investors, customers, and anyone else participating in the day-to-day workplace operations, that the company is looking out for its best interests may be aided by maintaining high ethical standards (Lin et al., 2022). Organizations may consider the best interests of their workers while also having a beneficial influence on the lives of those whose lives they touch as a result of their operations by implementing ethical principles into their organisational structure (Hagendorff, 2020). As a result, workers and other stakeholders will often behave ethically in their everyday activities to protect the company's best interests.

This practice may be accomplished through exhibiting ethical behaviour to others. As a result, staff members are treated fairly and are made aware of the organization's commitment to social responsibility and environmental sustainability (Dzhengiz & Niesten, 2020). As a result, they are less likely to participate in actions that are harmful to the environment and might potentially damage the organization's reputation in the public eye.. This practice is because a well-treated employee is more likely to understand an organization's commitment to responsibility and environmental sustainability. Work ethics contributes to developing a mutually beneficial connection between organisations and the persons impacted by the company's operations(Kurnia, 2020).

This kind of effort is likely to assist organisations and their workers reach extraordinary breakthroughs, such as increased employee satisfaction and production levels (Jamal Ali & Anwar, 2021). Employees who are made aware of and given the impression that their firm is dedicated to preserving high ethical standards are more likely to be committed to their duties and feel pride in belonging to such an organisation. A large rise in productivity may result from implementing this sort of adjustment at a corporation. Citizenship in an organisation is a kind of employee behaviour that occurs when team members voluntarily commit to conducting themselves positively (Chen et al., 2022) in a constructive and forward-thinking manner. This form of good work ethics behaviour often develops a great organization.

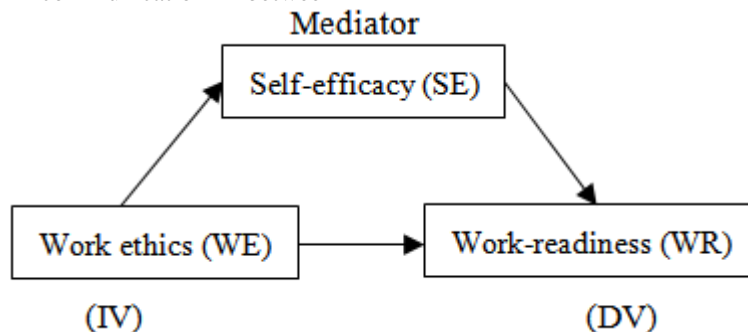
Some organisation highlights certain work ethics in their workplaces. **Error! Reference source not found.** shows the six-element work ethics suggested by PITCS (2021) for the employee guide. These elements include obeying the company's rules and regulations to develop a good culture. Effective communication between

employers is another element of work ethics. This communication practice gets the employer the same level of information and develops their professional relationship with each other. Responsibility and accountability are two elements that tie people with positive work ethics. The last element is to be a loyal worker in what they do in the organisation (Zhang, 2020). Work is an activity that every employee should take seriously. The practice of Islamic work ethics is actively promoted among employees since it has far-reaching repercussions for people, families, businesses, and even society (Wahab & Wahab, 2021).

## II. RESEARCH DESIGN

This study focuses primarily on testing an integrated model that identifies factors influencing the technical graduate's work readiness. The research problem and the objective are clear to derive from this model. The data collected among the TVET student went through a specific program conducted by the government to improve their employability. This study will use a method and survey approach to collect quantitative data on personal factors to determine the work relationship's readiness. A cross-sectional study using a data compilation method is applied as it can merely administer to a large sample (Kayama et al., 2016).

This study will test several hypotheses based on the critical factor for work readiness theory and the quantitative survey sample. Statistical analysis is a tool to prove the framework study, including structural equation modelling. Test conduct by the empirical link between work ethics as an independent variable with the work readiness as the dependent variable to support the hypothesis. For this research, self-efficacy as a mediator.



Research Framework



### III. RESULTS

**Table 1**  
**Examining Results of Hypothesised Effects of the Variables**

Path	Unstandardised Estimate		Standardised Estimate	C.R.	P-value	Result
	Estimate	S.E.	Beta			
WE ---> WR	0.618	0.065	0.579	9.457	***	Accept
WE ---> SE	0.773	0.094	0.624	8.192	***	Accept
SE ---> WR	0.205	0.039	0.238	5.307	***	Accept

Note: \*p< 0.05; \*\*p< 0.01; \*\*\*p< 0.001; SE (standard error); C.R (critical ratio); Beta -standardized regression weight.

As show in Table 1, the C.R and p-value of work ethics (WE) in predicting work readiness (WR) were 9.457 and 0.000, respectively. It means that the probability of getting a critical ratio as large as 9.457 in absolute value is 0.000. In other words, the regression weight for work ethics (WE) in the prediction of work readiness (WR) is significantly different from zero at the 0.001 level (two-tailed). Thus, path WE→WR was supported. Further, the standardised estimate of Beta was 0.579, indicating a positive relationship. It means when work ethics (WE) goes up by one standard deviation, work readiness (WR) goes up by 0.579standard

As shown in Table 1, the C.R and p-value of work ethics (WE) in predicting self-efficacy (SE) were 9.192 and 0.000, respectively. It means that the probability of getting a critical ratio as large as 9.192 in absolute value is 0.000. Moreover, the regression weight for work ethics (WE) in the prediction of self-efficacy (SE) is significantly different from null at the 0.001 level (two-tailed). Thus, path WE→SE was supported. Further, the standardised estimate of Beta was 0.624, indicating a positive relationship. It means self-efficacy (SE) goes up by one standard deviation when work ethics (WE) goes up by 0.624 standard deviations.

Refer to Table 1, the C.R and p-value of self-efficacy (SE) in predicting work readiness (WR) were 5.307 and 0.000, respectively. It means that the probability of getting a critical ratio as large as 5.307 in absolute value is 0.000. In other words, the regression weight for self-efficacy (SE) in the prediction of work readiness (WR) is significantly distinct from null at the 0.01 level (two-tailed). Thus, path SE→WR was supported. Further, the standardised estimate of Beta was 0.238, indicating a positive relationship. It means, that when self-efficacy (SE) goes up by one standard deviation, work readiness (WR) goes up by 0.238 standard deviations.

#### Self-efficacy as mediator

There was a substantial association between work ethics (WE) and work readiness (WR) in the absence of self-efficacy (SE), as evidenced by the results, which are shown in Table 2. The standardised total effect was 0.624, and the p-value was 0.000. Thus, the overall impact of work ethics (WE) as IV on work readiness (WR) as DV was statistically significant at the 0.001 level without the addition of self-efficacy (SE) as M.

**Table 2:**  
**Results of Examining Mediation Effects of Self-Efficacy, Using Bootstrapping**

DV = Work Readiness (WR) M = Self-efficacy (SE)	Independent variable (IV) WE
Total Effect of IV on DV without M	0.624***(sig.0.000)
Direct Effect of IV on DV with M	0.579***(sig.0.000)
Indirect Effect of IV on DV through M	0.159***(sig.0.000)
Effect of IV on M	0.624***(sig.0.000)
Effect of M on DV	0.238***(sig.0.000)

Mediation Path	WE → SE → WR
Mediation Effect	Yes
Degree of Mediation	Partial Mediation

\*p < 0.05, \*\*p < 0.01, \*\*\*p < 0.001

This relation was still significant even after inclusion self-efficacy (SE) into the model, with the standardised direct effect of 0.579 and the p-value of 0.000. Thus, the direct effect of work ethics (WE) as IV on work readiness (WR) as DV with the inclusion of self-efficacy (SE) as M was statistically significant at 0.001 level. According to Table 2, the effects of work ethics (WE) as IV on self-efficacy (SE) as M was statistically significant at 0.001 level, with the standardised effects of 0.624.

At the 0.001-level significance level, the effects of self-efficacy (SE) as a moderator on work readiness (WR) as a direct variable were statistically significant, and their standardised effects were 0.238.

These findings suggest that self-efficacy (SE) mediates the link between work ethics (WE) and work readiness (WR) (WR). Further, the result revealed that work ethics (WE) had a significant indirect positive effect on work readiness (WR) through self-efficacy (SE) with the standardised indirect effect of 0.159 and the p-value of 0.000.

In addition, the results indicated that work ethics (WE) had a substantial indirect positive influence on work readiness (WR) through self-efficacy (SE), with a standardised indirect effect of 0.159 and the p-value of 0.000.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Self-efficacy partially mediates between work ethics and work readiness for TVET graduates. Therefore, work ethics is an independent variable and work readiness is a dependent variable. Nevertheless, the analysis shows that self-efficacy is important as a mediator between work ethics and readiness. High Self-efficacy person could see jobs that are difficult to do as challenges to conquer the TVET sector. A work ethic characterised by an honest, dedicated workforce with high moral standards benefits the company's profitability and reputation and boosts employee morale.

Regarding behaviour and decision-making, the moral code regulates workers' behaviour regarding right and wrong judgments. This ethical behaviour applies to the TVET sector that decides on their hands-on activity. On the other hand, a culture that tolerates work ethics in an organisation is likely to result in increased attrition,

reduced productivity and, eventually, a weakened reputation and financial performance.

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