Determinants of Employment Intention among Undergraduate Students: A Multiple Linear Regression

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Abstract: Graduates are a vital human resource for economic development, but many struggle to secure employment due to rising competition, evolving job market demands, and economic uncertainties. This study investigates the determinants of employment intention among undergraduate students, solely focusing on the effects of self-efficacy and self-readiness. Data were collected from 160 students at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Kelantan Branch using a semi-structured questionnaire that measured self-efficacy, self-readiness, and employment intention on a 10-point Likert scale. Multiple linear regression analysis revealed that both self-efficacy and self-readiness significantly impact students' intention to seek employment after graduation, with self-readiness being the stronger predictor. The model explained 47.6% of the variation in employment intentions, indicating that while these two factors play a crucial role, other influences may also affect students' decisions. The findings suggest that universities should focus on enhancing students' readiness for the workforce and building their self-efficacy to better prepare them for future employment. Further research should consider additional factors influencing employment intentions and apply this model to other educational contexts for broader generalisation.

Keywords: Employment intention, Multiple linear regression, Self-efficacy and Self-readiness

1   Introduction

Graduates play a crucial role as a vital human resource in driving economic development by bringing fresh skills, innovation, and knowledge to the workforce [1]. However, despite their potential, many graduates today face significant challenges in securing employment due to increasing competition, changing job market demands, and economic uncertainties. Many studies have identified the lack of career planning, which starts with picking a field of study, as a major factor limiting graduates' ability to secure employment [2-4]. As many struggle to secure employment in today's highly competitive and rapidly changing job market, it is essential to understand what drives their employment intentions.

Employment intention among undergraduate students refers to their plans or motivations to seek jobs after completing their studies, which is a critical aspect of their transition into the workforce. It is an essential part of their transition from academic life to the professional world. This intention often reflects a student's readiness to move into the workforce, influenced by their career goals, perceived job opportunities, and personal aspirations. It can be shaped by various factors, such as confidence in

their skills, academic preparation, internship experiences, and external encouragement from family or peers.

Understanding what drives students to actively seek employment is crucial for universities and educational institutions. It helps them identify gaps in students' preparedness and adjust their programs to meet the evolving demands of the labour market. By knowing the key factors that affect students' employment intentions, universities can enhance career guidance, provide more practical skills training, and create environments that build students' confidence and readiness for post-graduation life. Ultimately, this insight helps institutions better equip students not only with academic knowledge but also with the necessary skills and mindset to successfully enter and navigate the workforce.

Employment intention is often influenced by factors such as self-efficacy, self-readiness, skills, confidence, and perceived job opportunities. Among these, self-efficacy plays a crucial role, as it reflects an individual's confidence in their ability to meet job demands, solve problems, and perform well in their roles. Research has shown that self-efficacy significantly influences students' decisions when choosing a major or field of study and defining their career path [5-7]. Furthermore, the findings from previous studies confirm that self-efficacy predicts career readiness and job search intention, as individuals' confidence in their ability to perform tasks significantly influences their career interests, job search behaviours, and positive coping strategies, leading to more optimistic outcomes in the job search process [8-11].

In addition to self-efficacy, self-readiness is another crucial factor influencing employment intentions. Self-readiness refers to an individual's overall sense of preparedness and confidence in their ability to join the workforce [12]. A study by Kalaimagal and Norizan [13] examining employment challenges faced by ICT graduates revealed that 50.40% of them lacked confidence in their skills before completing their studies, 21.30% struggled with communication skills, while 60.48% strongly emphasised the importance of skills for securing a job. Additionally, 25.81% felt they were not adequately prepared for employment. Career readiness is an important predictor for employment intention, as it is associated with concrete skills that individuals need to be career ready. Without the necessary skills and knowledge, students are unable to fulfil the needs of the job market.

A factor that can influence job readiness is prior experience students acquire, such as internships in industry settings [14]. The existence of an internship plays a pivotal role in enhancing students' readiness to seek employment by providing them with firsthand experience of the real world of work [15]. Through internships, students gain practical exposure, develop relevant skills, and better understand professional environments, all of which significantly contribute to their preparedness for entering the workforce. Prior experience, particularly through internships, is a key factor in shaping students' job readiness. Internships offer a bridge between academic learning and practical application in real-world industry settings. By participating in internships, students are exposed to actual work environments, allowing them to apply theoretical knowledge in practice, tackle real-world challenges, and develop industry-relevant skills.

This study focuses on two key factors that may influence employment intention: self-efficacy, which refers to a student's belief in their own abilities to secure any job position after graduation, and self-readiness, which reflects how prepared they feel to enter the workforce. By analysing the relationship between these factors and employment intention, this research aims to uncover the most significant predictors of students' employment-seeking behaviour. Using a sample of students from Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Kelantan Branch, the study employs multiple linear regression analysis to assess the influence of self-efficacy and self-readiness on students' employment intentions. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of strategies that can enhance students' preparedness and confidence in seeking employment post-graduation.

2   Methodology

This section describes the conceptual model, target population and study design, sampling design, research instrument, data collection method, and method of data analysis employed for this research.

A   Conceptual Model

The main aim of this study is to investigate whether self-efficacy and self-readiness influence students' intentions to seek employment after graduation. The conceptual framework, as shown in Figure 1, illustrates the connections between these independent variables (self-efficacy and self-readiness) and the dependent variable (students' employment-seeking intentions). Based on the conceptual model, the following hypotheses were formulated for testing:

H_{11}: Self-efficacy significantly affects students' intention to seek employment.

H_{12}: Self-readiness significantly affects students' intention to seek employment.

These hypotheses aim to assess how each independent variable individually affects the students' intentions to seek employment after completing their studies, providing insights into the validity of the proposed model.
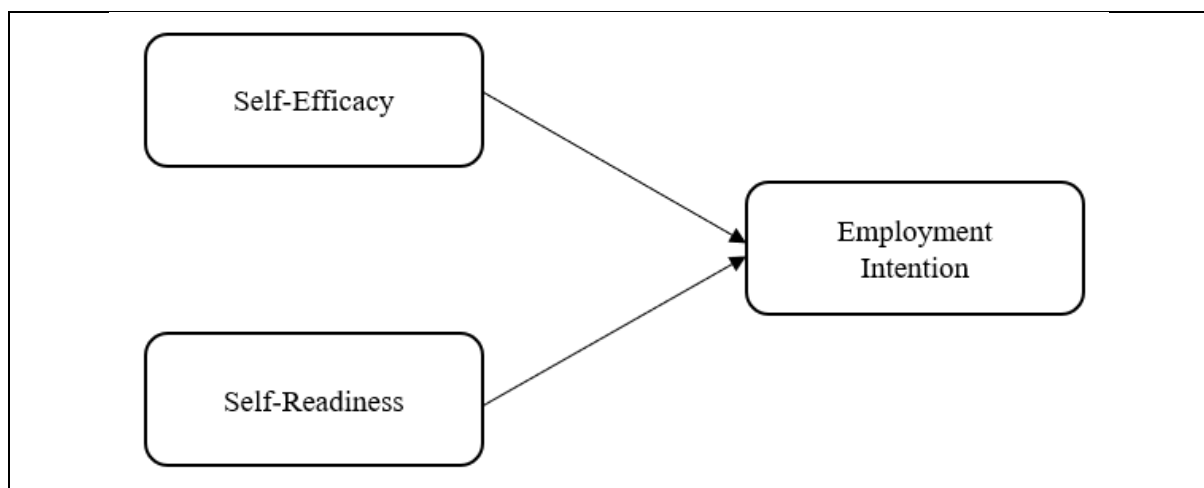

Figure 1: Conceptual Model

B   Target Population and Study Design

The target population for this study comprised students from Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Kelantan Branch, Kota Bharu campus, ranging from semester 3 to semester 7. Only two academic programs were included in this study: Bachelor of Science (Hons.) Statistics (CS241) and Bachelor of Entrepreneurship (Logistics and Distributive Trade) with Honours (CS291). A cross-sectional study design was employed, enabling researchers to examine whether self-efficacy and self-readiness significantly influence students' intention to seek employment after graduation at a single point in time.

C   Sampling Design

The sampling frame for this study was obtained from the Academic Affairs Department of UiTM Kelantan Branch's Kota Bharu Campus, covering students from semester 3 to semester 7. A total of 160 students participated in the study. The sample size was determined using Raosoft software, with a 5% margin of error and a 95% confidence interval. To ensure that each student had an equal opportunity to be selected, participants were chosen through a simple random sampling technique.

D   Research Instrument and Data Collection Method

A semi-structured questionnaire served as the research instrument for this study. It was organised into four sections: demographic profile, self-efficacy, self-readiness, and employment intention. Participants rated each item in every section on a 10-point Likert scale. A summary of the number of items and the scales used for each section can be found in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of the Number of Items for each Section

Section	Number of Items	Scale
A: Demographic	2	Not Applicable
B: Self-Efficacy	5	A 10-point Likert response
C: Self-Readiness	6	range from strongly
D: Employment Intention	11	disagree to strongly agree

Data for this study were collected using a self-administered questionnaire created on the Google Forms platform. The online questionnaire was shared with selected participants via WhatsApp, which was chosen as it is a widely used communication tool among students. Completing the questionnaire took approximately 10 to 15 minutes. Participation was entirely voluntary, allowing respondents to fill out the questionnaire at their convenience and in a location of their choice.

E   Method of Data Analysis

i.   Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to provide quantitative descriptions of the demographic profile of respondents who took part in this study, including gender and future planning.

ii.   Reliability Analysis

Reliability analysis was conducted to assess the internal consistency of the scales used in this study. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient is a commonly employed statistical tool for evaluating the reliability of these scales. A Cronbach's alpha value below 0.6 indicates insufficient internal consistency, while values between 0.6 and 0.7 are deemed acceptable, and values above 0.8 are considered good.

iii. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression analysis was employed to determine which factors (self-efficacy and self-readiness) significantly influence employment intention. The multiple linear regression model used in this study is represented by Equation 1.

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \varepsilon \tag{1}$$

Where,

Y: Employment Intention
X_1: Self-Efficacy
X_2: Self-Readiness

The R-squared, also known as the coefficient of determination, was utilised to evaluate the goodness of fit of the regression model. R-squared values range from 0 to 1, with values closer to 1 indicating a more precise fit of the regression line to the data points. Generally, a higher R-squared signifies a better fit of the model to the dataset.

After assessing the model's fitness, the next step in the regression analysis was to evaluate the model's adequacy. This included checking the assumptions of normality, homoscedasticity, and

multicollinearity, all of which must be satisfied before the model can be used to predict the dependent variable. The normality assumption was assessed using a normal probability plot and histogram, while the scatterplot of residuals versus predicted values was utilised to examine homoscedasticity. If the scatterplot does not reveal any discernible patterns among the data points, it indicates that the homoscedasticity assumption is met, suggesting consistent error variance.

The multiple linear regression analysis included several independent variables. The inclusion of multiple independent variables can lead to strong correlations among them, potentially resulting in multicollinearity issues within the dataset. This condition can be assessed using the variance inflation factor (VIF). A dataset is deemed to have multicollinearity problems when the VIF exceeds 10.

Once all the requirements were met, the next step was to conduct the overall F-test. This test evaluates the significance of the model by analysing the p-value provided in the ANOVA table. The model is considered significant if the p-value is less than 0.05. After confirming the model's significance, the results of the individual t-tests were examined to identify specific predictor variables (self-efficacy and self-readiness) that significantly influence the response variable (employment intention).

3 Finding

A Descriptive Analysis

Figure 2 illustrates the distribution of respondents based on gender and future planning (further study or seeking employment). According to the presented pie chart, most participants of this study were female, constituting 83% of the total. The pie chart also indicates that most participants prefer to seek employment after graduation, accounting for 75%.
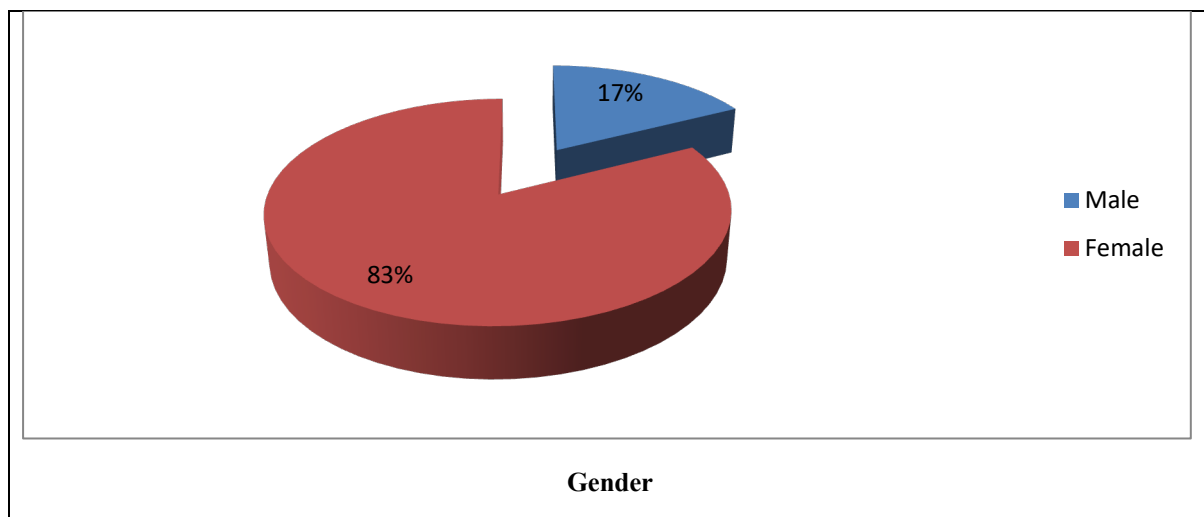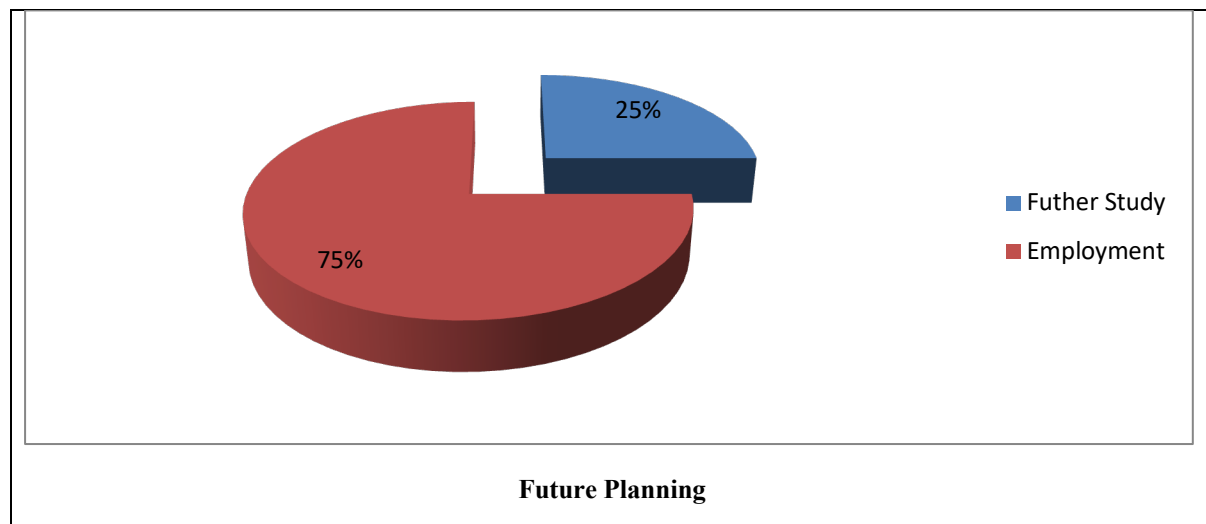

Gender

Figure 2: Distribution of Respondents According to Gender and Future Planning

B   Reliability Analysis

Table 3 presents the Cronbach's alpha values associated with each construct involved in this study. As all the Cronbach's alpha coefficient values exceeded the established minimum value of 0.6, therefore, it can be inferred that the set of items within the construct exhibits high internal consistency. This suggests that these items effectively measure the same underlying concept.

Table 3: Summary of Reliability Analysis for each Construct

Construct	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient
Self-Efficacy	5	0.829
Self-Readiness	6	0.872
Employment Intention	11	0.910

C   Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

The R-square value of 0.476 indicates that self-efficacy and readiness account for 47.6% of the variation in students' intentions to seek employment after graduation, while the remaining 52.4% is attributed to other factors.

Table 4: Goodness of Fit

R-Square
0.476

Figures 3(a) and 3(b) visually assess the assumptions of normality and homoscedasticity, respectively. The normal probability plot of the standardised residuals shows that the data points closely align with the fitted line, indicating that the error terms follow a normal distribution. Therefore, the normality assumption was satisfied. The scatterplot of residuals versus predicted values displays a random, evenly dispersed pattern without any distinct trends, confirming that the error terms have constant variance and that the homoscedasticity assumption was met.

(a) **Normal Probability Plot**   (b) **Scatter Plot of Residual vs Predicted**
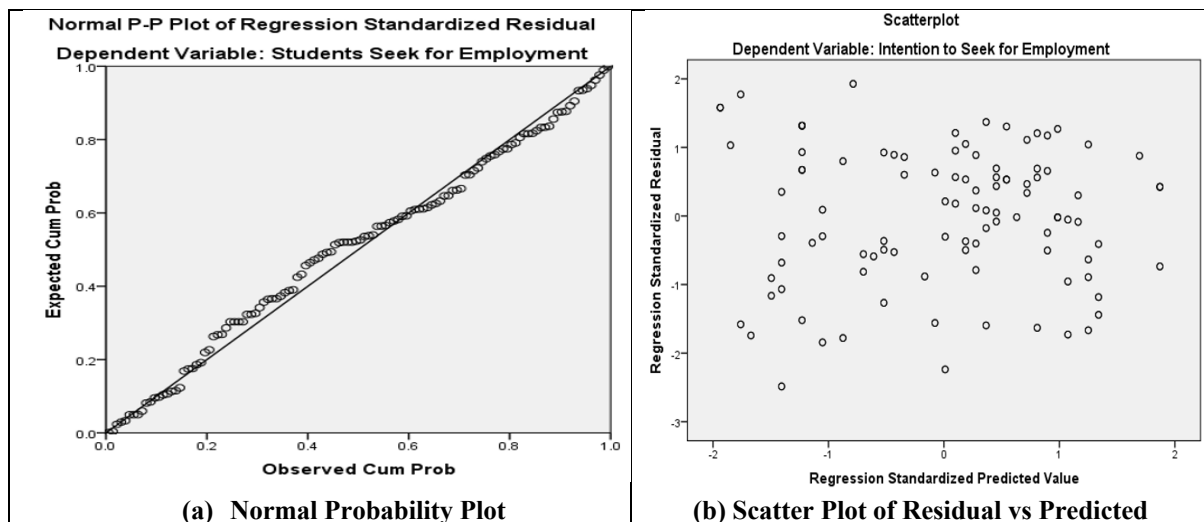
Figure 3: Normality and Homoscedasticity Assumptions

Table 5 shows the variance inflation factor (VIF) for each construct. As all VIF values were below 10, it indicates that the predictor variables were not highly correlated. This confirms the absence of multicollinearity between the predictor variables, self-efficacy and readiness.

Table 5: Multicollinearity Assumption

Construct	VIF
Self-Efficacy	1.162
Self-Readiness	1.113

As shown in Table 6, the calculated p-value was less than 0.000, which was below the 0.05 significance threshold. This indicates that the multiple linear regression model was statistically significant, meaning that at least one of the predictor variables, either self-efficacy or readiness, has a significant effect on the response variable, employment intention.

Table 6: Test for Significance of Regression Model

Model	Sum of Square	DF	Mean Square	F Statistics	Sig.
Regression	64.250	2	32.125	53.102	0.000
Residual	70.782	117	0.605		
Total	135.032	119			

Based on the regression results in Table 7, the p-value was below 0.05, confirming that both self-efficacy and self-readiness significantly influence students' employment intentions. The coefficient values highlight that self-readiness ($\beta 1=0.379$) is the stronger predictor, with the highest beta coefficient. This means that for every one-unit increase in self-readiness, students' intentions to seek employment after graduation rise by 0.379, making self-readiness the most influential factor in predicting employment intentions.

Table 7: Test for Significance of Individual Predictor Variable

Variable	Coefficient Value	T Statistics	Sig.
Constant	4.368	4.787	0.000
Self-Efficacy	0.180	-3.130	0.000
Self-Readiness	0.379	4.787	0.000

The fitted regression model is as follows:

$$\hat{Y}_{Employment-Intention} = 4.368 + 0.180_{Self-Efficacy} + 0.379_{Self-Readiness} \tag{3}$$

4   Conclusion

This study investigated the determinants of employment intention among undergraduate students, focusing on the role of self-efficacy and self-readiness. Using multiple linear regression analysis, the findings revealed that both self-efficacy and self-readiness significantly influence students' intention to seek employment post-graduation. Readiness emerged as the stronger predictor, indicating that students who feel more prepared are more likely to pursue employment after completing their studies.

The model explained 47.6% of the variation in employment intention, suggesting that while self-efficacy and readiness play a crucial role, other factors not included in this study may also contribute to students' employment intentions. The reliability analysis further confirmed the robustness of the research instrument, with Cronbach's alpha values for all constructs exceeding the threshold for internal consistency.

These findings highlight the importance of fostering students' readiness and confidence in their abilities to ensure a smooth transition into the workforce. Universities should focus on enhancing both practical skills and self-efficacy to better equip students for future employment. Future research could explore additional factors affecting employment intention and extend the model to different educational contexts.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors agree that this research was conducted in the absence of any self-benefits, commercial or financial conflicts and declare the absence of conflicting interests with the funders.

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