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WORK READINESS OF UKI TORAJA FACULTY OF ECONOMICS STUDENTS: INTEGRATION OF ACADEMIC ABILITY AND TALENT MANAGEMENT IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF HUMAN CAPITAL THEORY

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the integration of academic ability and talent management on the work readiness of students of the Faculty of Economics UKI Toraja from the perspective of human capital theory. Data collection techniques by filling out questionnaires by students of the Faculty of Economics UKI Toraja who have participated in the Work World Practice, Internship and Certified Independent Study (MSIB), Entrepreneurship Internship activities using SEM-Smart PLS. The results of the study showed that Academic Ability influenced Work Readiness with a coefficient of 0.494, a t value of 6.286, and a p-value of 0.000, while Talent Management influenced Work Readiness with a coefficient of 0.473, a t value of 5.739, and a p-value of 0.000. Academic Ability and Talent Management simultaneously influenced Work Readiness significantly with an F value of 328.973 and a p-value of 0.000. The academic ability variable has the greatest influence compared to talent management with a coefficient value of 0.494.
Keywords: Academic Ability, Talent Management, Work Readiness

INTRODUCTION

Preparing to enter the competitive world of work is a challenge for every student. Student readiness to face the challenges of the world of work includes various interrelated components, including mastery of academic knowledge, technical skills relevant to the field of study, and development of essential soft skills. Students who are ready to work not only have a strong theoretical understanding, but are also able to apply that knowledge in practical situations.

In addition, students also need to master practical skills that are relevant to the world of work. Internship experience contributes to job readiness by strengthening understanding of the theories learned in lectures and improving adaptability and interpersonal skills needed in the world of work (Safitri Y et all, 2023) This internship program provides an opportunity for students to apply the knowledge they gain in class in real situations, as well as build professional networks that can be useful in the future.

Students who are proactive in seeking and participating in these activities will have a competitive advantage. A study by (Sari R et all, 2021)

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shows that Soft skills, such as communication skills, leadership, and time management, have proven to be important in preparing graduates to face the world of work and students who are able to balance organizational activities and studies tend to be more work-ready and more competitive in the labor market.

Talent management also plays an important role in student readiness. research conducted (Apriyanto R, 2023) that communication and leadership in an organizational context, including how these skills can affect students' chances of getting jobs in the public and private sectors. This shows that students who have these skills perform better, which has implications for their job opportunities. Soft skills such as communication, adaptation, and leadership are very important for students in facing the world of work (Rifai, 2021) Although academic background is important, companies place more emphasis on interpersonal skills and soft skills in the recruitment process (Achmadi, 2020)

Human Capital Theory explains that investment in education and training, both in the form of technical skills (hard skills) and non-technical skills (soft skills), can increase individual productivity and prepare them for success in the world of work (Setyawasih R, 2023). Academic ability in the context of Human Capital is referred to as part of knowledge, which is one of the main pillars of human capital and the importance of identifying individuals who have great potential and superior abilities, both in terms of academics and other skills to support the strategic goals of the organization (Gaol, 2025)

This study places academic ability and talent management as the main focus in the work readiness of students of the Faculty of Economics UKI Toraja. The readiness of graduates in facing the world of work is considered very important, which requires attention from various parties to improve the quality and relevance of education (Pramesti et all, 2024). The work readiness of students of the Faculty of Economics UKI Toraja through academic ability and talent management is an important first step in opening up broad job opportunities.

METHOD

This research method is by using a quantitative approach. The quantitative approach is a statistical method used to collect quantitative data from research studies (Rustamana et all, 2024). The type of data used is primary data obtained from the results of filling out questionnaires by 313 UKI Toraja students who participated in internship activities as respondents. The variables used in this study are academic ability and talent management as independent variables and work readiness as the dependent variable.

Indicators related to students' academic abilities (Feriawati, 2021) are: (1) Speed of problem solving in a certain time, (2) Capacity to understand each task, (3) Selection of the right strategy, and (4) Achievements obtained in the academic field .The dimensions and indicators of talent management (Pella & Afifah, 2018) are (1) Personal quality and character, (2) Potential, (3) Learning spirit, while the indicators of work readiness (Rosara et al., 2018) are (1)Have logical and objective considerations (2) Have the ability to coordinate or work

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together with others (3) Be able to control oneself (4) Have a critical attitude (5) Have the courage to accept responsibility (6) Have the ability to adapt to the environment (7). Have the ambition to progress by trying to follow progress or developments in the field of expertise.

The following is descriptive data on respondent identity based on gender, year of enrollment, concentration, and type of internship attended.

Table 1. Respondents by Gender

No	Gender	Amount	Percentage (%)
1.	Man	44	14.06
2.	Woman	269	85.94
Total		313	100

Based on table 1, it can be seen that the number of respondents based on gender is 44 respondents (14.06%) male and 269 respondents (85.94%) female. So it can be concluded that the respondents in this study were mostly dominated by female students with a total of 269 people with a percentage of 85.94%.

Table 2. Respondents Based on Class Year

No	Year of the Generation	Amount	Percentage (%)
1.	2021	11	3.51
2.	2022	302	96.49
Total		313	100

Based on table 2, it can be seen that the number of respondents based on the year of the class, there were 11 respondents (3.51%) from the class of 2021 and 302 respondents (96.49%) from the class of 2022. So it can be concluded that the respondents in this study were mostly dominated by students from the class of 2022 with a total of 302 people with a percentage of 96.49%.

Table 3. Respondents Based on Concentration

No	Concentration	Amount	Percentage (%)
1.	Financial Management (K1)	111	35.47
2.	Marketing Management (K2)	72	23
3.	Human Resource Management (K3)	130	41.53
Total		313	100

Based on table 3, it can be seen that the number of respondents based on concentration is 111 respondents (35.47%) of financial management concentration students (K1), 72 respondents (23%) of marketing management concentration students (K2) and 130 respondents (41.53%) of HR management concentration students (K3). So it can be concluded that the respondents in this study were mostly students with HR management concentration (K3) with a total of 130 people with a percentage of 41.53%.

Table 4. Respondents based on Internships attended

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No	Internships followed	Amount	Percentage (%)
1.	Workplace Practice (PDK)	294	9.93
2.	Independent Student Exchange (PMM)	7	2.23
3.	Student Entrepreneurship Development Program (P2MW)	2	0.64
4.	Certified Internship and Independent Study(MSIB)	6	1.92
5.	Institutional Support System (ISS)	4	1.28
Total		313	100

Based on table 4, it can be seen that the number of respondents based on the internships they participated in was 294 respondents (93.93%) participating in the Work World Practice (PDK), 7 respondents (2.23%) participating in the Independent Student Exchange (PMM), 2 respondents (0.64%) participating in the Student Entrepreneurship Development Program (P2MW), 6 respondents (1.92%) participating in the Certified Independent Internship and Study (MSIB) and 4 respondents (1.28%) participating in the Institutional Support System (ISS). So it can be concluded that the respondents in this study were mostly students who participated in the Work World Practice (PDK) internship activities, with a total of 294 students with a percentage of 93.93%.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Instrument Test

Data collection using a questionnaire using a Likert scale (1-5). Research data is processed using SEM-SMART PLS. The results of the Validity and Reliability Test are as follows:

1) Reliability Indicator

Validity Test

Table 5 Outer Loading Test Results

	Academic Ability	Work Readiness	Talent Management
X1.1	0.809		
X1.10	0.823		
X1.11	0.814		
X1.12	0.731		
X1.13	0.702		
X1.14	0.842		
X1.15	0.801		
X1.2	0.764		
X1.3	0.794		
X1.4	0.817		
X1.5	0.865		
X1.6	0.839		
X1.7	0.837		
X1.8	0.848		
X1.9	0.852		

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X2.1			0.844
X2.10			0.871
X2.11			0.834
X2.12			0.797
X2.13			0.827
X2.14			0.85
X2.15			0.867
X2.16			0.848
X2.17			0.876
X2.18			0.847
X2.19			0.748
X2.2			0.866
X2.20			0.853
X2.21			0.86
X2.22			0.847
X2.3			0.831
X2.4			0.819
X2.5			0.71
X2.6			0.851
X2.7			0.835
X2.8			0.846
X2.9			0.783
Y1.1		0.749	
Y1.10		0.783	
Y1.11		0.765	
Y1.12		0.815	
Y1.2		0.736	
Y1.3		0.759	
Y1.4		0.759	
Y1.5		0.718	
Y1.6		0.78	
Y1.7		0.734	
Y1.8		0.793	
Y1.9		0.756	

Based on the results of the validity test in the Table, it can be seen that all indicators have an outer loading value ≥ 0.70. Therefore, all indicators in this study can be stated to have met the criteria.

2) Reliability Test

Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (Internal Consistency Reliability)

The next test that needs to be done on the outer model is the internal consistency reliability test. This test is

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carried out through the Cronbach alpha and composite reliability values. The Cronbach alpha and composite reliability values accepted must be more than 0.7 (Hair et al., 2021).

Table 6. Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Academic Ability	0.962	0.964	0.966	0.657
Work Readiness	0.935	0.936	0.943	0.582
Talent Management	0.979	0.98	0.98	0.694

The test results in the Table show that all latent variables meet the reliability test criteria. This is based on the cronbach alpha and composite reliability values of all latent variables having values >0.7. Therefore, all latent variables are declared reliable after meeting all measurement criteria.

Inner Model Evaluation (Structural Model Assessment)

Assess the structural model for collinearity issues (VIF)

Collinearity is a condition in which two or more predictor (independent) variables in a model have a high linear relationship, meaning they are highly correlated with each other. Collinearity testing can be done by looking at the VIF value. If the VIF value <5 then the model is fit and can be continued in further analysis. The results of the VIF value test can be seen in the following table:

Table 7. VIF Test Table

	VIF
Academic Ability -> Job Readiness	1,287
Talent Management -> Job Readiness	1,287

It can be seen in the table above that the VIF values between research variables have met the test limit, namely <5. From the inner model test, it was found that the model in general is quite good.

Assess the Significance and Relevance of the Structural Model of Relationships

Path CoefficientAnd T Value

At this stage, the test conducted is by looking at the path coefficient value and the t value. The path coefficient value approaching 1 indicates a positive relationship and vice versa, a value approaching 0 indicates a weak relationship in the model structure. Furthermore, the t value indicates the significance of a relationship between variables at a certain error level. In this study, the researcher used a significance level error of 5% which means the t value must be greater than 1.96(Hair et al., 2021). The following are the path coefficient and t value values displayed in the following table.

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Table 8. Path Coefficient and t Value

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
Academic Ability -> Job Readiness	0.494	0.495	0.079	6,286	0
Talent Management -> Job Readiness	0.473	0.472	0.082	5,739	0

The test results show that Academic Ability has a positive and significant effect on Work Readiness with a coefficient of 0.494 (T = 6.286, p = 0.000). This shows that the higher a person's academic ability, the more prepared they are to face the world of work. In addition, Talent Management also has a significant effect on Work Readiness with a coefficient of 0.473 (T = 5.739, p = 0.000), which means that good talent management can improve an individual's readiness to enter the world of work.

R-Square Value

The R-square value or coefficient of determination is used to evaluate the strength of the structural model. The higher the r-square value means the better the prediction model of the proposed research model. Table 9 shows the results of the test analysis on the R-Square value.

Table 9. R-Square Value

	R-square	R-square adjusted
Work Readiness	0.689	0.687

The R-square value for Job Readiness of 0.689 indicates that Academic Ability and Talent Management together influence 68.9% of the variability in Job Readiness. While the remaining 31.1% is influenced by other variables not included in the study.The following is the outer data from the data testing results:

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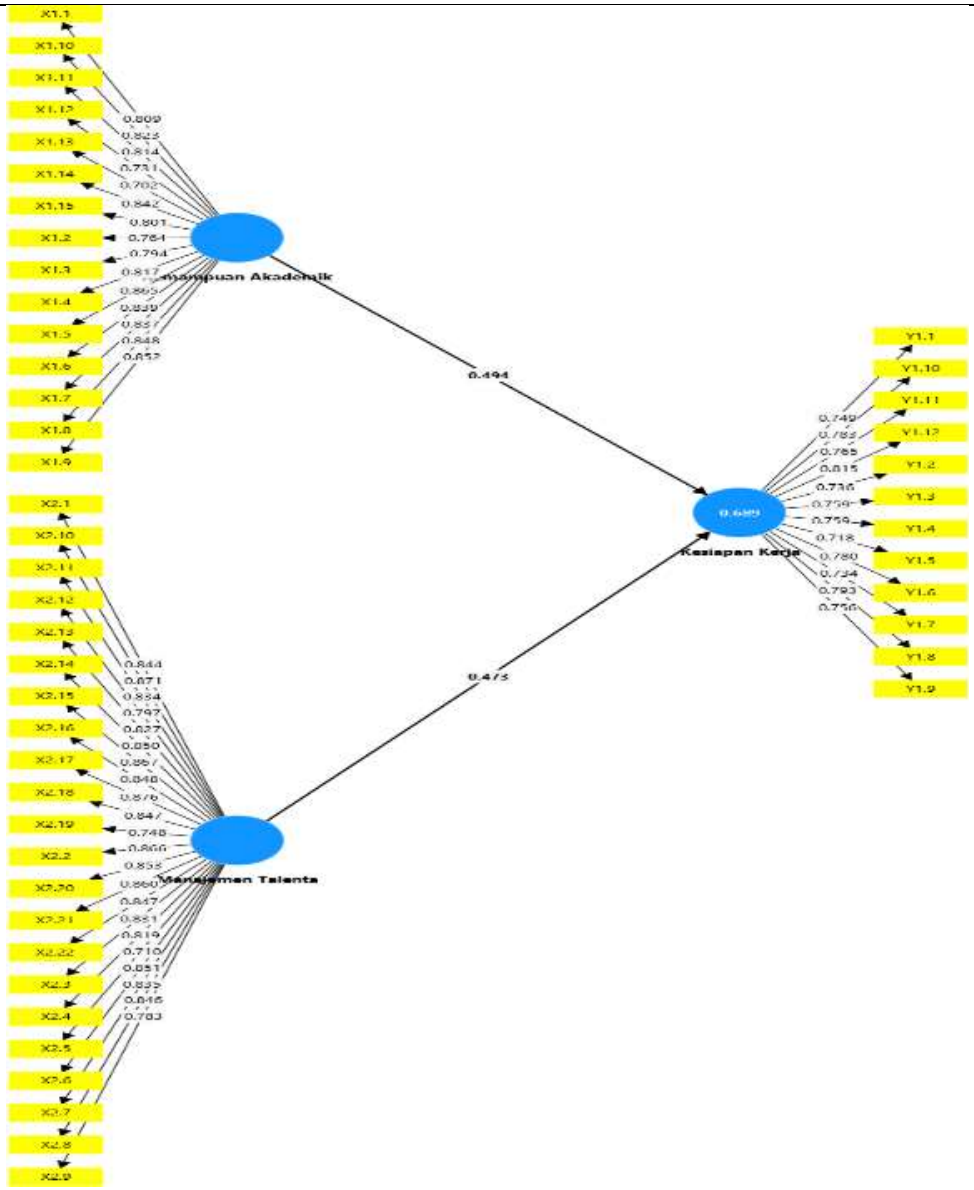

Hypothesis Testing

1. Academic Ability Influences Work Readiness with a coefficient of 0.494, a T value of 6.286, and a p-value of 0.000. Since the p-value <0.05, the hypothesis is accepted, indicating that the higher a person's academic ability, the higher their work readiness. Academic ability reflects theoretical and technical competencies acquired during education, which play an important role in building the foundation of skills needed in the world of work. Individuals with good academic ability are better able to absorb new information, complete tasks efficiently, and face professional challenges with more confidence. This variable has the greatest influence compared to talent management with a coefficient value of 0.494.
2. Talent Management influences Job Readinesswith a coefficient of 0.473, a T value of 5.739, and a p-value of 0.000. The hypothesis is accepted, indicating that effective talent

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management can improve a person's work readiness. Talent management includes various individual development strategies, such as training, mentoring, and career management, which **help** individuals develop skills relevant to the world of work. With a good talent management program, individuals are better prepared to face challenges in a professional environment and have skills that are more in line with industry needs.

Table 8. F Test (Simultaneous)

	Sum square	df	Mean square	F	P value
Total	16837	311	0	0	0
Error	5380,478	309	17,413	0	0
Regression	11456.52	2	5728,259	328,973	0

Simultaneous Test (F Test) of Work Readiness

The results of the simultaneous test show that the influenceAcademic Ability and Talent Management simultaneously on Work Readiness are significant with F value of 328.973 and p-value of 0.000. Because p-value <0.05, then this regression model is significant, which means that both independent variables (Academic Ability and Talent Management) together have a strong influence on work readiness. This shows that students' work readiness is not only influenced by their academic abilities, but also by how talent management is developed by strengthening quality, personal character, honing self-potential and having a learner's soul.

CONCLUSION

Academic Ability Influences Work Readinesswith a coefficient of 0.494, a T value of 6.286, and a p-value of 0.000. The main foundation in forming critical thinking patterns, analytical skills, and understanding concepts relevant to the world of work. Through the learning experience in college, students not only gain theoretical knowledge, but are also trained to solve problems, think systematically, and work in teams—all of which are competencies needed in a professional environment. In addition, academic achievements such as grades and achievements are often used as early indicators in the job selection process, reflecting an individual's potential and responsibility. Thus, academic ability is very important in preparing students to adapt and contribute effectively in the workplace.

Talent management influences Job Readinesswith a coefficient of 0.473, a T value of 5.739, and a p-value of 0.000. Talent management plays an important role in improving students' work readiness because this process allows for the identification, development, and direction of individual potential in a structured manner according to the needs of the world of work. Through talent management programs—such as leadership training, interpersonal skills development, mentoring, and placement in strategic projects or activities—students gain experience and coaching that strengthens their competencies

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beyond academic aspects. This helps students understand their strengths, increase self-confidence, and develop a high work ethic and adaptability, all of which are essential to facing professional challenges. With effective talent management, students' work readiness can be improved and adjusted to the demands of the labor market.

Academic and Management Skills Talent simultaneously towards Job Readiness is significant with an F value of 328.973 and a p-value of 0.000. Work ability and talent management contribute synergistically to students' work readiness, because both support each other in forming competent individuals who are ready to enter the professional world. When strong work ability is combined with effective talent management, students are not only intellectually ready, but also mentally, emotionally, and professionally ready to face the dynamics of a complex and competitive work world. The most dominant variable influencing work readiness is academic ability with the largest coefficient value of 0.494.

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