

The Mediating Effect of Self-Efficacy on Perceived Supervisor Support on Self-Perceived Employability in Generation Z Participating in the Certified Internship and Independent Study Program

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Abstract

According to demographic trends, Generation Z was 25% of the labor force by 2030. Generation Z needs extra preparation because of a lack of work experience and a propensity to have negative attitudes at work. Participating in an internship program like the Certified Internship and Independent Study is one of those preparations. Participants in this internship gain both practical work and supervised experience by their supervisor. This research investigated if self-efficacy can influence self-perceived employability as a mediator and perceived supervisor support as a predictor. The research method used a quantitative approach to 160 Generation Z members participating in the batch 3 internship program (25.5% of the population) at an IT company. Hypothesis testing was carried out with the mediation analysis model in the medmod module in Jamovi 2.3.26. The main result was that self-efficacy could partially mediate the effect of perceived supervisor support on self-perceived employability. This means that self-efficacy can indirectly increase the influence of perceived supervisor support on self-perceived employability. The direct influence of perceived supervisor support on self-perceived employability is smaller than when involving self-efficacy as a mediator. Based on this result, interventions can be made to strengthen the self-efficacy of internship participants, for example, by providing a solid experience so that the supervision program during an internship can strengthen the self-perceived employability of internship participants. In the end, the intern participants can feel the added value of their internship program.

Abstrak

Perkembangan demografi memprediksi Generasi Z akan mendominasi pasar tenaga kerja sebesar 25% pada tahun 2030. Kurangnya pengalaman kerja dan kecenderungan memiliki sikap negatif di tempat kerja membuat Generasi Z memerlukan persiapan khusus, salah satunya adalah dengan mengikuti program magang seperti Magang dan Studi Independen Bersertifikat (MSIB). Selama magang ini, peserta mendapatkan pengalaman kerja langsung juga pengalaman menerima supervisi dari tempat magangnya. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui apakah persepsi diri tentang kemampuan dipekerjakan dapat dibentuk dengan persepsi tentang dukungan atasan sebagai prediktor dan efikasi diri sebagai mediator. Metode penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif terhadap 160 anggota Generasi Z yang mengikuti program MSIB batch 3 (25,5% dari populasi) di sebuah perusahaan IT. Analisis data dilakukan dengan menguji model analisis mediasi dengan modul medmod di Jamovi 2.3.26. Hasil utama penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa efikasi diri secara parsial dapat memediasi persepsi dukungan atasan terhadap persepsi diri tentang kemampuan dipekerjakan. Artinya, efikasi diri secara tidak langsung dapat meningkatkan pengaruh persepsi dukungan atasan terhadap persepsi diri tentang kemampuan dipekerjakan. Pengaruh langsung persepsi dukungan atasan terhadap persepsi diri tentang kemampuan dipekerjakan lebih kecil dibandingkan ketika melibatkan efikasi diri sebagai mediator. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian ini, maka dapat dilakukan intervensi untuk memperkuat efikasi diri peserta magang, misalnya dengan memberikan pengalaman yang kuat sehingga program supervisi selama magang dapat memperkuat persepsi diri tentang kemampuan dipekerjakan peserta magang.

Pada akhirnya, para peserta magang dapat merasakan nilai tambah dari program magang yang diikutinya.

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INTRODUCTION

A report from GetSmarter (“The Future of Work Is Here: How Professionals and Businesses Are Adapting to a Changing Landscape,” 2020) predicts that Millennials will dominate 40% of the workforce, and Generation Z (shortened to Gen Z) is expected to dominate 25% globally by 2030. The workforce from Gen Z is predicted to grow from the estimated percentage because it is still the productive generation with the largest population in the world. Predictions regarding the dominance of Gen Z in the labor market require special attention because Gen Z is a generation that still has minimal work experience (Schroth, 2019). This shows that Gen Z’s capabilities at work must be improved in preparation for working professionally in the future. One of the efforts made by educational institutions to bring their alumni closer to the world of work is through internship activities. According to Nghia and Duyen (2019), an internship is a program that offers students the opportunity to apply and practice knowledge and abilities in professional situations.

The Indonesian government, through the Directorate General of Higher Education, Research, and Technology (Indonesian: *Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Tinggi, Riset, dan Teknologi*; 2022), launched the Certified Internship and Independent Study (Indonesian: *Magang dan Studi Independen Bersertifikat*, shortened to MSIB) program to provide students with the opportunity to become interns to be directly involved in internal activities at internship partners whose credibility has been verified. Nadiem Makarim, as Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Indonesian: *Menteri Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi*, shortened to Mendikbudristek), stated that the *Kampus Merdeka* (English: Independent Campus) program can help students to identify interests and characteristics in the process of determining a career that suits individual desires (Astuti & Sherly, 2022).

The increase in Gen Z’s capability to work can be assessed from the self-perceived employability (SPE) construct, which is defined as the perception of an individual’s ability to obtain long-term work in accordance with qualifications at a certain level (Rothwell et al., 2008). Individuals with high SPE have control over which job is better and tend to show unyielding effort in facing problems (Zhou et al., 2022). This can encourage the formation of a more mature career identity so that individuals feel more confident in attracting the attention of companies with their capabilities for work (Ahmed et al., 2019; Nazar & van der Heijden, 2012), that is why research about SPE still needs to be conducted.

Internally, the self-confidence that arises from SPE can be formed from self-efficacy (SE) as an individual’s subjective perception regarding his or her ability to demonstrate expected performance achievements (American Psychological Association, 2023). Luszczynska et al. (2005) define SE in more general terms as confidence in one’s competence in handling new work tasks and overcoming stressful difficulties and challenges in various situations.

Research conducted by Atitsogbe et al. (2019) found a positive and significant influence from SE and SPE. The research results suggest that students and fresh graduates who have self-confidence can get jobs and go through the transition period from study to work. Violany (2020) states that the higher

an individual's SE, the higher their SPE. This shows that individuals with good SE will help someone get a job and face the challenges in their environment.

Research by Qenani et al. (2014) found that individuals who participated in an internship program showed an increase in SPE of 250% or 2.5 times, specifically describing an increase in self-confidence to be employed. Meanwhile, research from Erlangga (2022) states that students who participate in an internship program show a high level of SE, positively impacting work readiness in the future. The implication given is that internship programs have a big influence on increasing individual SE (Lestari & Ubaidillah, 2022).

On the other hand, the MSIB program also provides opportunities for participants to receive guidance (mentoring) from experienced experts in specific companies and industries ("Mendikbudristek," 2022). Activities carried out during the internship program enable participants to form perceptions of mentors. This can then be reviewed further through the construct of perceived supervisor support (PSS), defined as an individual's assessment of whether a supervisor cares and appreciation for the individual's performance (Gordon et al., 2019). The individual can perceive the presence of a supervisor who appreciates someone's contribution as a form of concern for personal welfare (Eisenberger et al., 2002). Burns (2016) also explained that perceptions of supervisor support are shown through positive, supportive interactions between supervisors and their subordinates. In this case, interactions regarding positive support can take the form of feedback, training or coaching, and inclusion in decision-making (Shanock & Eisenberger, 2006). The study conducted by Afzal et al. (2019) stated that PSS can encourage the formation of individual self-efficacy (SE). It also states that supervisors have a role in shaping the SE of team members. Furthermore, individuals need specific support from supervisors in setting and encouraging members to achieve goals (Afzal et al., 2019).

Based on a review of previous PSS, SE, and SPE studies, researchers see an opportunity to review SE as a mediator. This is proven by prior research that discovered the SE variable in each PSS and SPE interaction. This potential is also reviewed by defining a mediator variable as one that can influence other variables because it is located in the middle of the causal relationship between the independent and dependent variables (Nindyati & Iskandar, 2009). So, the mediator model was chosen because it overcame the limitations of previous research findings by examining the effect of PSS on SPE through SE as a mediator in the Z generation that participated in the MSIB program. In other words, this research aimed to confirm that SE will perform as a mediator in the influence of PSS to SPE for the Z generation that participated in the MSIB program. In Figure 1, we will see the proposed hypothesis model. This research hypothesis is that self-efficacy is a mediator in the influence of perceived supervisor support on self-perceived employability.

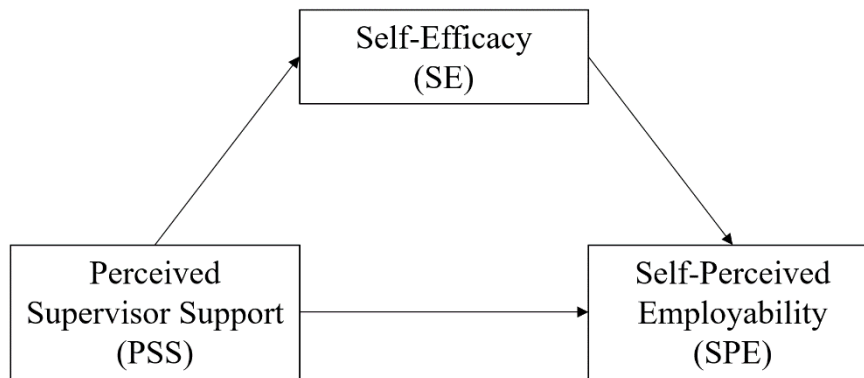


Figure 1.
Research Hypothetical Model

METHODS

Research Design

This research uses a quantitative approach design without involving experiments (non-experimental) by collecting data at one time through a cross-sectional study design on research participants. Furthermore, this research also consists of a mediation model to test the mediator variable in the middle of the interaction on the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable (Hayes, 2013). This research uses self-efficacy as an intervening variable (mediator) between perceived supervisor support and self-perceived employability. So, this design predicts that perceived supervisor support does not directly influence changes or strengthening of self-perceived employability, and self-efficacy will act as a pulley to find the expected influence.

Research Respondent

Specifically, this research was conducted on batch 3 MSIB program participants at PT X, a technology industrial company. This is based on a Deloitte report that found that 51% of Gen Z are interested in working in the technology industry. Gen Z is more tech-savvy than previous generations (Gomez et al., n.d.). Respondents in this research totaled 160 people with the following characteristics: (1) born in 1995–2010, so they are included in Generation Z; and (2) batch 3 MSIB program participants at PT X. The sampling technique used was simple random sampling.

Instruments

The instrument used to measure self-perceived employability (SPE) is the Employability Scale by Rothwell et al. (2008; 2009). The original employability scale had 16 items, using a scaling method with a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 for strongly disagree (STS) and 5 for strongly agree (SS). The measuring instruments were analyzed using the Rasch Model, carried out with Winsteps-Ministep. The analysis results explain that two items in the SEP cannot be used because they do not meet psychometric requirements. Cronbach's alpha coefficient (α) is .77. Thus, this measuring tool is reliable for use in research. The data collection procedures were conducted online using Google Forms for all research variables (self-perceived employability, self-efficacy, and perceived supervisor support).

The measurement of self-efficacy in this research used the general self-efficacy (GSE) measuring instrument developed by Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1993). The 10 items in the GSE measuring tool are assessed using a 4-point Likert scale, with 1 for not suitable and 4 for very suitable. The analysis of the measuring instrument for this research shows that Cronbach's alpha coefficient (α) is .88. Thus, this GSE measuring instrument is also classified as having good reliability for use in this research.

The measurement of perceived supervisor support (PSS) is understood as the intern's perception regarding the belief that the mentor at the internship place appreciates the performance contribution given, offers assistance, and shows concern for the intern's welfare in the form of scores from the PSS measuring tool by Burns (2016). The PSS instrument has 13 items with a scaling method with a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. The analysis of measuring instruments shows that Cronbach's alpha coefficient (α) is .93. Similar to the two previous measuring instruments, this PSS mala measuring instrument is also classified as a measuring instrument with good reliability and meets the requirements for use in this research.

Data Analysis

The data in this research was processed in several parts. Testing the validity and reliability of the data in this research was carried out using the Rasch Model via Winsteps 3.73 software. Researchers also carried out classical assumption tests, namely normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity tests. Hypothesis testing was carried out using the mediation path analysis method with the help of Jamovi 2.3.26 software with the medmod module. Descriptive analysis was also conducted to enrich the research results as additional analysis.

RESULTS

Respondent Demographic Data

The data distribution of 160 research respondents relating to demographic data can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1.
Demographic Data

	n	%
Gender		
Male	82	51.2%
Female	78	48.8%
Year Born		
1999	6	3.8%
2000	56	35%
2001	81	50.6%
2002	16	10%
2003	1	0.6%
Working Status		
Working	36	22.5%
Looking for a Job	124	77.5%
Higher Education		
Public	75	46.9%
Private	85	53.1%
Semester		
6	12	7.5%
7	4	2.5%
8	119	74.4%
Graduated	25	15.6%

Note. N = 160.

Descriptive Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

The research’s data analysis results were carried out in two ways: descriptive analysis and hypothesis testing. Table 2 explains the descriptive analysis results of each research variable.

Table 2.
Descriptive Analysis

Variables	Number of Items	Mean	Score		Std. Deviation
			Min.	Max.	
Self-Perceived Employability	14	55.3	39	70	6.87
Self-Efficacy	10	33.3	22	40	4.77
Perceived Supervisor Support	13	53.8	30	65	9.11

Based on Table 2, the mean obtained from each research variable corresponds to the number of items in each measuring instrument. The measurement scale for the SPE and PSS variables has five Likert items, while the SE variable has four. The scale value is obtained by dividing the mean by the number of items in each variable. The scale mean for SPE is 3.95, PSS is 4.14, and SS is 3.33. The scale mean obtained for SPE and PSS is above the hypothetical mean (> 3), and likewise, for SE, the scale mean is also above the hypothetical mean (> 2.5).

Before carrying out a mediator analysis, a classical assumption test is first carried out. The results of the classical assumption test show a normal distribution ($p = .081$), there are no symptoms of multicollinearity ($VIF = 1.16 < 10$; tolerance = .0862), and no symptoms of heteroscedasticity were found with points spreading above, below, and around the zero value, and did not form wide and narrow wave patterns. From all the classical assumption tests carried out, it can be seen that all assumptions are met, so it is continued with mediator analysis. The mediator test results can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3.
Mediation Path Test Results

Path	Estimate	SE	95% CI (a)		β	p	Mediation (%)
			Lower	Upper			
a × b PSS → SE → SPE (Indirect effect)	.115	.0302	.0555	.174	.152	< .001	38.2%
a PSS → SE	.194	.0385	.1189	.270	.371	< .001	-
b SE → SPE	.590	.1024	.3892	.791	.410	< .001	-
c' PSS → SPE (Direct effect)	.185	.0537	.0799	.290	.245	< .001	61.8%
c + a × b PSS → SPE (Total effect)	.300	.0549	.1920	.407	.397	< .001	100%

Based on Table 3, it is known that path a is the effect of PSP on SE with a path coefficient of .194 ($p < .001$), meaning that the effect of PSS on SE is significant. Furthermore, path b is the effect of SE on SPE, showing a path coefficient value of .590 ($p < .001$). These findings indicate that SE has a significant influence on SPE. It was also found in path c' that perceived supervisor support had a signifi-

cant direct influence on self-perceived employability with a path coefficient of .185 ($p < .001$). Table 3 also explains that self-efficacy ($\beta = .410$) has a greater influence on self-perceived employability than perceived supervisor support ($\beta = .245$). The description of the mediation pathway in this research is visualized in Figure 2.

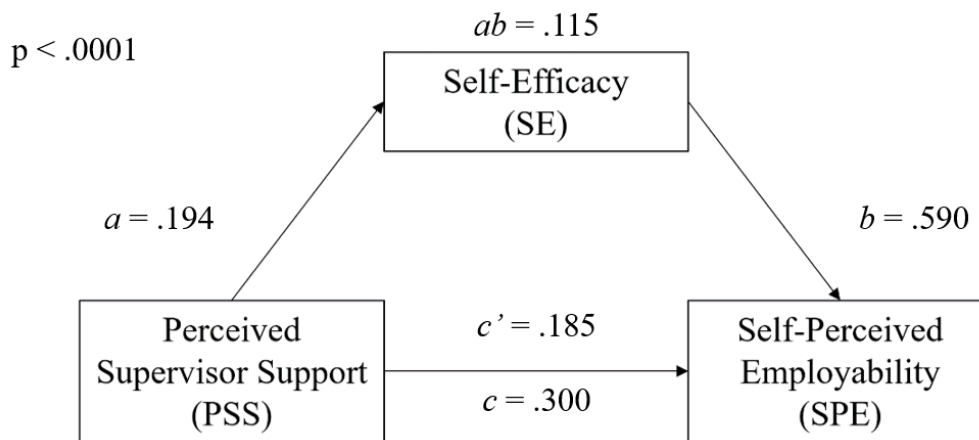


Figure 2.
Tested Model

This research continued by testing the mediation effect, finding the influence of each path between variables. The meaning of forming the mediation effect is concluded by referring to the confidence interval (CI) score. The test results found that for indirect effects, the lower-level score showed a figure of .0555, and the upper limit was .174. This condition means a mediation effect occurs because the range from .0555 to .174 does not exceed zero (Hayes, 2013). The resulting indirect effect was .115 or had a mediation effect percentage of 38.2%.

The same thing was also found in the mediation test on the direct effect, namely that a mediation effect occurred with a lower limit score of .0799 and an upper limit of .290, meaning this range does not exceed zero. Meanwhile, the resulting direct effect is .185 or 61.8%. These results indicate that the mediation effect in this research was partial because the direct effect produced was greater than the indirect effect.

Based on the description, the direct influence from PSS to SPE (.185) is smaller than that of SPE to PSS via SE (.300). This can also explain that the condition that occurs is partial mediation because it only causes an increase in influence when involving SE as a mediator. The direct influence does not change to zero. In another sense, self-efficacy partially mediates the influence of perceived supervisor support on the self-perceived employability of MSIB program intern participants at PT X.

DISCUSSION

This research aims to answer whether self-efficacy is a mediator in the influence of perceived supervisor support on self-perceived employability in Gen Z participants of the MSIB program at PT X supervisor supports partial self-perceived employability. This condition occurs because the indirect effect found is smaller than the direct effect in the mediation route. These results refer to Nindyati and Iskandar (2009), who stated that, statistically, full mediation occurs when the role of the independent variable (IV) on the dependent variable (DV) becomes zero (no correlation) when passing through the mediator variable (M). Meanwhile, when the results from the IV to DV route via M are smaller than the direct IV to DV route, it can be said that the resulting mediation function is only partial. In line with the opinion of Hayes (2013), partial mediation indicates that the association between IV and DV does not fully occur due to the mechanism of the mediator variable. This explains that the

influence of perceived supervisor support on self-perceived employability does not only occur due to the existence of self-efficacy mechanisms but also from other variables that need to be investigated further to be able to explain how PSS can influence SPE. According to MacKinnon et al. (2007), partial mediation is a normal result from research because it tends to be unrealistic when expecting one mediator to explain the causal relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

The research results show a significant influence on PSS on SE. This is in line with previous research by Ekmekcioglu (2020), which found that PSS significantly influences SE in a positive direction. That study explains that individuals who feel supported and appreciated by their supervisors will show strengthened beliefs in achieving goals. The results of this research also support the findings by Afzal et al. (2019) that support from a supervisor can encourage individuals to set and achieve goals.

The findings of this research regarding the significant influence of PSS on SE can be meaningful, namely that Gen Z as MSIB program intern participants who perceive their mentor's support positively will show increased self-efficacy. Perceived supervisor support in this research is shown in the form, namely that interns feel that mentors in the company help the process of learning from mistakes to develop productively. Apart from that, it is known that companies' mentors provide independence to complete work successfully. The output of completing work is one form of self-efficacy, as explained by Arrianti (2017). The study explains that when an individual has the confidence to be successful in facing a challenge and believes in their abilities, that individual is in the self-efficacy category, which tends to be high. This is also in line with the findings regarding SE conditions in this research, namely that Gen Z interns assess themselves as able to solve difficult problems and find ways to solve them independently. So, well-perceived mentor support can encourage individual self-confidence to show better performance.

Another main finding from this research is that self-efficacy significantly influences self-perceived employability. This means that self-confidence in Gen Z apprentices can form confidence in getting a job in the future in a competitive and complex labor market situation. Specifically, Gen Z in this research who were interns in the MSIB program felt able to get a job because the skills and experience they had were currently needed by companies so that they became relevant capital.

The significant influence of SE on SPE supports previous research, which revealed that SE encourages students and fresh graduates to have confidence in getting a job and going through the transition period from tertiary education to a professional work situation Atitsogbe et al. (2019). Research by Chow et al. (2019) also agrees that individuals with high SE perceive their employability nicely. This encourages individuals to choose more challenging jobs and be willing to put in more effort, as well as showing persistence in getting a job (Wang et al., 2021). Based on this, researchers can conclude that self-efficacy can encourage apprentices to be more confident in their abilities and capabilities to produce the perception that they are worthy of employment, which is identified as self-perceived employability.

The research results also found that self-efficacy's influence on self-perceived employability was more significant than the influence of perceived supervisor support on self-perceived employability. The influence of PSS is not as strong as SE because it was found that Gen Z interns felt that mentors in companies did not provide appreciation that made individuals feel valued. Mentors did not understand each individual's career goals. The conditions differ from the study by Bhate (2013), which revealed that the formation of PSS requires real support from supervisors in the form of concern for career goals, appreciation of good performance results, and development of abilities and competencies relevant to the job. Paustian-Underdahl et al. (2013) also revealed that a good PSS could be

formed when a supervisor is supportive, sociable, communicates effectively, and listens to subordinates.

Further identification found that PSS was also a less strong predictor of SPE, which was related to Gen Z's characteristics, who tended to become self-learners with an independent approach (Poague, 2018). Current research data supports this. Participants scored the highest average scores, one of which was in the answers to the PSS items, namely, "My mentor gave me independence so I could do my job successfully" and "My mentor supports professional growth and development." This indicates that Gen Z prefers independence in learning and work activities, so the role of mentor support is only expected to be sufficient autonomy to help grow and develop professionally.

This research looks at the reasons SE has a stronger influence on SPE by looking at the source of reinforcement and using the theory expressed by Maddux (1991). SE in this research can be strengthened through one source, namely vicarious experience. Vicarious experience is a source of self-efficacy that shapes individual beliefs through learning processes, such as observing, modeling, or imitating others. Based on this, it is clearly explained that the participation of Gen Z as interns in the MSIB program allows participants to gain relevant knowledge, one of which is getting an accurate picture of professional practice through the involvement of mentors as parties seen by individuals (Ditjen Diktiristek, 2022a). This experience helps interns to be more confident about their abilities and professional skills.

Furthermore, since SE is known to be an antecedent of SPE development, self-efficacy has a greater effect on self-perceived employability (Atitsogbe et al., 2019; Quiring et al., 2017). Atitsogbe et al. (2019) explained that SE is an antecedent of SPE because it involves individual beliefs to get the desired results. Then, a study by Quiring et al. (2017) also explained that individuals will be encouraged to prepare themselves for a professional career path and maintain their strengths during the job search process.

The current research also found one supporting fact: SE conditions were better in the group of participants who had found work than those looking for work. These findings add evidence that SE can encourage the formation of SPE, which impacts the employment status of Gen Z interns in the MSIB program. This condition means that the current research supports previous findings, which revealed that SPE can reduce the duration of job search time and encourage individual career success (Ahmed et al., 2019; Gupta & Ansari, 2023).

The novelty of the current research was obtained through a discovery, namely that there is a significant direct influence on perceived supervisor support on self-perceived employability. Researchers have not found research investigating these two variables' mechanisms of influence. This mechanism was found in this research because of the contextual nature of the research, namely on participants in the MSIB program at PT X. These results also support previous studies that found that individual involvement in an internship program increased SPE by 2.5 times (Qenani et al., 2014). However, further research is still needed to determine the more complex mechanisms of the direct influence of PSS on SPE.

Referring to a series of additional analyses by researchers, no significant differences were found in the SPE, SE, and PSS variables based on gender, university, semester, and work status. These results indicate that men and women who come from PTN or PTS with positions in semester six until completion of education and have or are looking for work do not have differences in the conditions of self-perceived employability, self-efficacy, and perceived supervisor support. Furthermore, no research has been found that has conducted an in-depth study of these three variables and reviewed

them based on demographic factors. This can become a reference for further research to explore variables by considering demographic factors.

The current research recognizes that there are still limitations that can be considered for future research exploration. This research did not conduct in-depth control of the demographic factors, such as gender, college, semester, and work status. In addition, the current research only uses the MSIB program as a research context, so the research only looks at the processes that occur from SPE, SE, and PSS in MSIB activities. This explains that this research did not explore the impact of the MSIB program on the influence of the three variables, both in conditions before and after the program took place.

CONCLUSION

Self-efficacy partially mediates the influence of perceived supervisor support on self-perceived employability and has a more significant impact than perceived supervisor support. This means that perceived supervisor support can encourage the formation of self-perceived employability in MSIB program participants at PT X, and its formation becomes stronger with the encouragement of self-efficacy. Companies need to facilitate the strengthening of SPE and SE for Gen Z apprentices by providing competent mentors in the MSIB program. The role of supervisors or mentors in carrying out their duties to monitor MSIB program participants play a significant role in strengthening employability. When selecting a mentor or supervisor, paying attention to the supervisor or mentor's abilities is important. If necessary, prior training will be provided to prospective supervisors or mentors.

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