Key factors influencing work readiness in generation Z: A comparative study between future gen-Z workers and employer perspectives

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Abstract: This study is a mixed-methods study, with both quantitative and qualitative research. The quantitative research studies the important factors influencing the work readiness of Generation Z in Thailand. While the qualitative research studies employers in both the business and public sectors. The important variables in the study, according to the conceptual framework, are attitude, proactiveness, knowledge, intelligence skill, technology skill, learning skill, work motivation, integrity, emotional quotient, and social quotient. The data collection in the quantitative research uses questionnaires from 400 Generation Z throughout Thailand and analyzes the statistics using the partial least squares - structural equation modeling analysis. The qualitative research uses semi-structured interviews from 40 employers and analyzes the content to find conclusions. The results found that key factors influencing work readiness of Generation Z include attitude, technology skill, learning skill, work motivation, integrity, emotional quotient, and social quotient. The findings from employers revealed that five factors affecting work readiness are technology skill, learning skill, attitude, work motivation, and knowledge. When comparing research results from both students and employers, the key findings were that four factors were considered to influence work readiness included technology skill, learning skill, attitude, and work motivation.

Keywords: Attitude, Learning skill, Technology skill, Work motivation, Work readiness.

1. Introduction

This study aims to study the comparative perspectives of employers and future graduates, which will be useful for planning education and training, as well as understanding the management of human resources in the present and the future. In addition, studying the issue of readiness for work is very useful for organizations and graduates who will be employed in the future because studies have found that if we are not ready for work, it will result in a higher resignation rate and affect the stress of those who will be employed in the organization in the future [1]. The changes in the world in many ways are affecting the need for new skills for employees in public and private organizations. Scholars have proposed the concept of preparing for the future of the workforce with a focus on 21st century skills such as critical thinking skills, communication skills, problem-solving skill, creativity and innovation skills, understanding different perspectives, teamwork and leadership skills, technology skill, and learning skill [2-5]. While educational organizations and employers are interested in learning systems or processes that aim to increase learner engagement and enthusiasm in order to achieve outcomes that meet organizational expectations and create readiness for future employment [6]. Therefore, education plays an important role in the development of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values in individuals that will create individuals who can contribute to society in the future [3].

Human resource management, whether in the business or government sectors, always finds mention of the problems of new graduates entering the labor market. Currently, the problems of new Generation Z graduates around the world are being mentioned. Generation Z's desire to work in new and different ways has made it difficult for executives and human resources to manage and retain this generation, for

example [7]. Also, working in a multi-generational environment requires an understanding of the differences and needs of these generations in order to plan and manage human resources in the organization to achieve the organization's goals. Young people entering the labor market for the first time often encounter anxiety and expectations from themselves and their organizations [8]. Therefore, being well prepared in many areas such as necessary knowledge and skills is a good opportunity for Generation Z to get the job they want [7].

Generation Z will be the next generation that will be another important force driving the organization. It is a challenge for executives to understand the needs of this generation [9]. The needs and expectations of this generation are therefore important for creating an understanding of the organization, which the management and human resources must understand in order to use the results in planning the management of Generation Z in the future [6, 7]. In general, Generation Z exhibits distinct work patterns characterized by multitasking and enhanced efficiency. As the inaugural generation with unprecedented global connectivity, they possess the potential to revolutionize organizational structures through their adept use of technology and seamless access to information. This innovative approach to work is likely to facilitate knowledge acquisition and significantly improve workplace efficiency [9]. Work readiness is therefore an important issue in understanding Generation Z in terms of various factors that affect readiness for work after graduation or after becoming a graduate.

Past studies that studied factors affecting readiness for work concluded research results on various important factors that affect readiness for work, such as knowledge, abilities, attitudes, skills, experiences, work motivation, personality, learning, emotional intelligence. Educational institutions that are responsible for producing graduates according to the needs of employers must pay attention to the characteristics and needs of the generation that is studying in the institution. Therefore, educational institutions at the higher education level, both business and government sectors, must create a teaching and learning management system that focuses on important factors that will affect readiness for work in the future.

Therefore, researchers are interested in studying important factors affecting readiness for work of Generation Z in Thailand by comparing the perspectives of employers and those who are about to enter the labor market in the future. To use the research results to create policies, strategies and activities of various educational institutions in order to produce graduates who are ready to work in a changing environment and can meet the needs of future workers or employers.

2. Research Objectives
1. To study the level of work readiness and important factors affecting the work readiness of Generation Z in Thailand
2. To study the effects of important factors on the work readiness of Generation Z in Thailand
3. To compare the perspectives of Generation Z students or graduates and employers on factors affecting their readiness to work in Thailand.

3. Literature Review
3.1. Work Readiness Concept
Work readiness is the preparation for future employment, which is the readiness according to the expectations of the employer in various job positions [1, 2]. Another meaning is work readiness reflects the provision of students with the necessary skills to be successful in their future employment, which is the initial phase of entry into a career or working life for students in higher education [10]. Also, this readiness is a matter of showing the characteristics that will lead to success in work both in terms of work effectiveness and future career advancement [1, 11, 12]. Numerous related factors are considered within this framework, including skills, competencies, accountability, adaptability, flexibility, self-awareness, and personal development [12, 13]. In addition, the ability to work is an indicator in evaluating educational institutions in all countries around the world. Examples of factors affecting job readiness include social intelligence, work ability, personal characteristics, etc. [14]. Previous studies

have identified several key factors associated with job readiness, including individual traits, organizational understanding, job competence, social intelligence, work responsibility, and ability to work with others [15, 16]. Therefore, recruiting from fresh graduates is a human resource strategy of the organization to consider skills and characteristics to make it believable that the graduates who are hired will be able to work successfully [16].

3.2. Generation Z

The new generation entering the labor market is Generation Z, which is born between 1995 and 2012 [9]. Some reports revealed that Generation Z were born between 1995 and 2010 [7, 8]. This generation Z is considered the new generation that will enter the labor market and influence the workplace in th future [9]. This generation has different characteristics from other generations, including (1) technology orientation: This generation thinks that technology is a part of life that must be used every day because this generation was born in an era of modern technology. They use various information in life from using social media; (2) speed focus (more than accuracy) due to being born in an era of fast and modern technology, high-speed internet systems, and instantaneous communication of various data; (3) emphasize society focus: This generation wants to work in a job that provides both work success and social benefits. They want to work with organizations that also emphasize social responsibility; and (4) goals orientation and self-development: This generation needs clarity of work goals from their supervisors and needs training to create opportunities for growth in the workplace [9]. Generation Z is poised to emerge as a significant driving force within organizations. Consequently, it presents a challenge for executives to comprehend the unique needs of this generation.

3.3. Key factors Influencing Work Readiness
3.3.1. Attitude

By definition, attitude is a psychological response and evaluation of a person, event, or thing, which can be positive or negative. It consists of important components such as thoughts, emotions, cognitions, and behaviors [17]. From a work perspective, attitude is one of the important factors that reflect a person's readiness to work, such as a positive view of oneself, understanding one's strengths and weaknesses, accepting criticism, being punctual, having self-confidence, and being able to adapt to new things well [13]. Graduates from higher education must be individuals who have positive thoughts, are optimistic, respectful of others, are humble, honest, sincere, curious, and are committed individuals [15, 16]. Previous studies have found that self-esteem attitudes influence the development of career readiness among higher education students Oblinad, et al. [10]. Prifti [18] study stated that attitudes in terms of self-efficacy will affect academic success, which will ultimately lead to future job readiness. This is consistent with Alhadabi and Karpinski [19] study, which indicated that self-efficacy perception influences University students' academic success, which in turn affects their future work readiness. In addition, the study of Fitriyana, et al. [20] found that attitude, particularly self-confidence and self-efficacy, had a significant influence on work readiness. The researchers believe that the attitude of graduates in higher education is important and is one factor affecting the work readiness of graduates. Therefore, this study hypothesizes that:

H_1: Attitude has a positive effect on the work readiness of Generation Z people.

3.3.2. Proactiveness

In today's dynamic and increasingly decentralized work context, proactive behavior has become a very important factor for successful organizational performance [21-23]. A proactiveness describes individuals who continuously seek improved methods for accomplishing tasks [23]. Proactiveness behavior is the initiative to improve or change the current situation or to create a new situation that involves challenging the status quo [22, 23]. Proactive personality is important for work ability, such as self-confidence, good time management, and proper task prioritization [24]. Having a proactive

personality is an important part that reflects the work readiness with the organization that employs graduates Caballero and Walker [11]. Jiang, et al. [23] study indicated that individuals with proactive behaviors are more likely to seek personal growth in terms of personal development and career readiness, which means that graduates with proactive behaviors are more likely to be ready for employment. This is consistent with Pratama, et al. [25] study, which concluded that proactiveness behaviour had a significant influence on work performance and career success. It means that graduates from higher education must have proactiveness behaviors that will affect their work readiness in organizations that must adapt to the rapidly changing and ever-changing context. Therefore, this research is based on the following hypothesis:

H_2: *Proactiveness has a positive effect on the work readiness of Generation Z people.*

3.3.3. Knowledge

Education is important for having correct and sufficient knowledge for life, especially applying knowledge to one's career. Knowledge from education is therefore important for preparing graduates in higher education to be ready for future employment [26]. Graduation is the first priority of consideration, which may include educational success measured by other factors [11]. Graduates' knowledge from teaching in educational institutions must include both basic work knowledge and knowledge that promotes the development of various skills in order to work effectively [15]. The study of Nooplong, et al. [27] stated that knowledge, especially the ability to apply knowledge to work creatively, is an essential skill to prepare graduates. Meanwhile Wong, et al. [28] studied graduates from Malaysia and found that knowledge had an influence on the work readiness of the graduates. This is consistent with Yang, et al. [1] who found that knowledge was an important factor in the work readiness of nursing graduates. The researcher believes that in order to have skills and experiences that are beneficial to the workplace, students in higher education must first have the correct and sufficient knowledge, and then these things will happen and lead to readiness to graduate and work successfully. Therefore, the researcher has set the following hypothesis:

H_3: *Knowledge has a positive effect on the work readiness of Generation Z people.*

3.3.4. Intelligence Skill

Intellectual skills refer to the ability to analyze situations and use knowledge and understanding of concepts, principles, theories, and processes to think analytically and solve problems when faced with new and unexpected situations. These skills will occur in graduates through expressions of systematic thinking, rational thinking, and critical thinking [27]. This intellectual ability is the ability of learners to think at a higher level that teachers must develop in the learning process. High-level thinking includes analytical thinking, critical thinking, creativity, rational thinking, and scientific thinking. Graduates must demonstrate intellectual skills that are ready to work successfully, such as logical thinking, creativity, problem-solving skills, analytical or research skills, etc. [11, 15, 26]. That means intellectual skills are important and affect the work readiness of graduates in higher education [24]. The study of Nooplong, et al. [27] clearly stated that intellectual skills are necessary skills to prepare graduates in accordance with the framework for developing the quality of graduate production. This is consistent with Nurlaela, et al. [26] study indicated that one of the internal factors affecting work readiness is the individual's intellectual skills. The researcher believes that students in higher education must have intellectual skills that will lead to effective job readiness and success in future work. Therefore, the hypothesis that the researcher set on this issue is:

H_4: *Intelligence skill has a positive effect on the work readiness of Generation Z people.*

3.3.5. Technology Skill

As today's world is driven by modern technology, workers need to have the knowledge and skills to utilize such technology to achieve higher productivity [5]. Information and technology competence is an important part that reflects graduates' work readiness [11, 29]. A study by Kerdpanya and

Chimmani [30] found that some students' technology skills still need further development to be in line with the current labor market. The researchers recommend continuous development of students' technology skills so that students are ready for work both now and in the future. While research by Silpanilman, et al. [29] studied using qualitative research by conducting in-depth interviews with experts from Rajabhat Universities in Thailand. It was found that technology skills are important for students to enter the labor market and they must have skills that are consistent with their future lives and work, as the world changes towards the world of technology and digital. Therefore, the researchers believe that students must have technological skills for work readiness, including understanding various technologies, being able to manage information well, being able to manage knowledge, being able to analyze and synthesize information correctly in order to use the results to solve problems at work, and being able to present information using appropriate information technology formats. Therefore, this study also hypothesizes that:

H_5: *Technology skill has a positive effect on the work readiness of Generation Z people.*

3.3.6. Learning Skill

Learning skills is a broad term used to describe a range of skills required to acquire new knowledge and skills, particularly within the framework of formal learning [31]. Learning skills require the four Cs: critical thinking, creative thinking, collaboration, and communication. Therefore, creating an atmosphere and process that promotes learning is very important for the development of learning skills [4]. Students need to be open to new learning processes, especially self-development, which is important for future employment [6, 16]. A study by Alhadabi and Karpinski [19] found that creating a good learning atmosphere for university students that affects self-confidence will influence the academic success of this group of students, which learning in such an atmosphere influences the future work readiness of university students. Also, Prifti [18] study concluded that learning through technology that supports the learning process will have a significant impact on the learner's learning success, including learner satisfaction. In addition, Chowdhury [32] study found that learning skill through work-integrated learning processes resulted in the creation of graduates who are ready to work. Previous studies pointed out that organizing activities to create learning for students must be carried out with an emphasis on student participation [33]. The researcher believes that students' learning skills play an important role in the work readiness of graduates from colleges or universities to work. Therefore, this research hypothesizes that:

H_6: *Learning skill has a positive effect on the work readiness of Generation Z people.*

3.3.7. Work Motivation

Motivation is a complex process that describes the intensity, direction, and perseverance of an individual's efforts to achieve a certain goal [17]. In another meaning, motivation may mean the combination of internal and external driving forces that result in work effort and create direction, intensity, and individual effort to accomplish something [34]. In terms of work, motivation is a very important factor in achieving the expected goals. Motivation can come from many sources, and it can be financial or non-financial [17]. Therefore, organizational executives need to focus on the motivation of their personnel in the organization. Graduates who have something to like are those who understand the organization and clearly understand the forms and practices of the work environment [24]. In addition, graduates who are motivated to work will demonstrate a desire to enter the world of work, have hope, and a positive attitude Akbar, et al. [15]. Fauzan, et al. [35] study found that students' work motivation has a clear influence on their work readiness, which is very important for students' future entry into the labor market. This is consistent with the study of Setyadi, et al. [36] who found that work motivation resulting from work practices or training during university studies significantly affected students' work readiness. Therefore, this study also raises the hypothesis that:

H_7: *Work motivation has a positive effect on the work readiness of Generation Z people.*

3.3.8. Integrity

Integrity is an important virtue in preparing graduates in higher education to enter the labor market effectively and be able to work in various types of organizations [27]. A study by Pawanna [37] that studied morality and ethics in undergraduate students in Thailand found that there are 6 important virtues: discipline, responsibility, honesty, sacrifice, patience, and sufficiency. The results of this study clearly indicated that having a high level of integrity is related to better academic achievement, which is consistent with the study by Muenrak and Chairuang [38] who identified the integrity of Thai students as consisting of 6 aspects: discipline, responsibility, honesty, sacrifice, patience and respect. While the study of Katanyutanon and Rattanasuwannachai [39] that studied the development of integrity in Thai students found that the integrity that can be developed the most is diligence, patience, moderation and gratitude. The study of Muenrak and Chairuang [38] that studied the morality and ethics of Thai vocational students found that integrity is an important factor in preparing students for the labor market, such as discipline, responsibility in work, etc. The researchers believe that the integrity of graduates that affects their success in higher education certainly affects their work readiness in the early career of graduates. Therefore, this study suggests that:

H_8: Integrity has a positive effect on the work readiness of Generation Z people.

3.3.9. Emotional Quotient

Emotional quotient or emotional intelligence is related to the ability of an individual to understand others in the social context in which they live in a way that allows them to recognize differences in emotional reactions and use this awareness to influence others by controlling their emotions well [40, 41]. A global survey found that emotional quotient is two of the three most important skills for effective work in various positions in various companies Coronado-Maldonado and Benítez-Márquez [40]. Pholrak [42] stated that emotional quotient can be developed in many ways, such as developing from the teaching process, developing from being a good role model, including the use of art to enhance emotional intelligence in the form of stress therapy, releasing stressful emotions, and relaxing emotions well. This shows that new graduates who are ready to work must be those who have the ability to manage stress, have stress tolerance, have self-awareness and self-confidence, and have the ability to get along well with others [11, 16, 43]. The study by Masole and van Dyk [44] found that emotional quotient had a significant effect on the work readiness of students in South Africa. This is consistent with Wong, et al. [28] study of graduates from Malaysia revealed that emotional quotient, especially in terms of stress management and teamwork, has an influence on work readiness of them. Also, Yang, et al. [1] study clearly indicated that empathy, a component of emotional quotient, had a significant influence on the work readiness of nursing graduates in China. The researcher believes that the emotional quotient of graduates has an influence on the readiness to work at the beginning of the graduates' careers. Therefore, this research hypothesizes that:

H_9: Emotional quotient has a positive effect on the work readiness of Generation Z people.

3.3.10. Social Quotient

Social quotient, or social intelligence, is a process of understanding the behavior of others and dealing with those behaviors well, reflecting a deep understanding of the social world [45]. By definition, social quotient refers to the behavior that individuals adapt and interact with in society, which is very important in the work context, such as communication skills, teamwork, and cooperation with others [16, 24]. This social skill is considered an important part of showing the work readiness after graduating from higher education [11]. The study of Nooplong, et al. [27] concluded that or social skills especially interpersonal relationship are essential skills that are crucial in creating work readiness of graduates in the work life. This is consistent with Wong, et al. [28] study found that social quotient of graduates in Malaysia has an influence on the work readiness of graduates who are about to graduate and work. In summary, social quotient is considered an important social skill that will affect the readiness of new graduates to work, such as adapting to unfamiliar cultures, listening and

responding to others with respect, and being patient in dealing with others [13]. The researcher believes that having social quotient in graduates has a significant impact on the work readiness of graduates. Therefore, this study also hypothesizes that:

H_{10} *Social quotient has a positive effect on the work readiness of Generation Z people.*

3.4. Research Framework

After a comprehensive review of the previous literature and research on work preparedness, as presented at the beginning of this article, the researcher developed the conceptual framework for this study, illustrated in Figure 1.
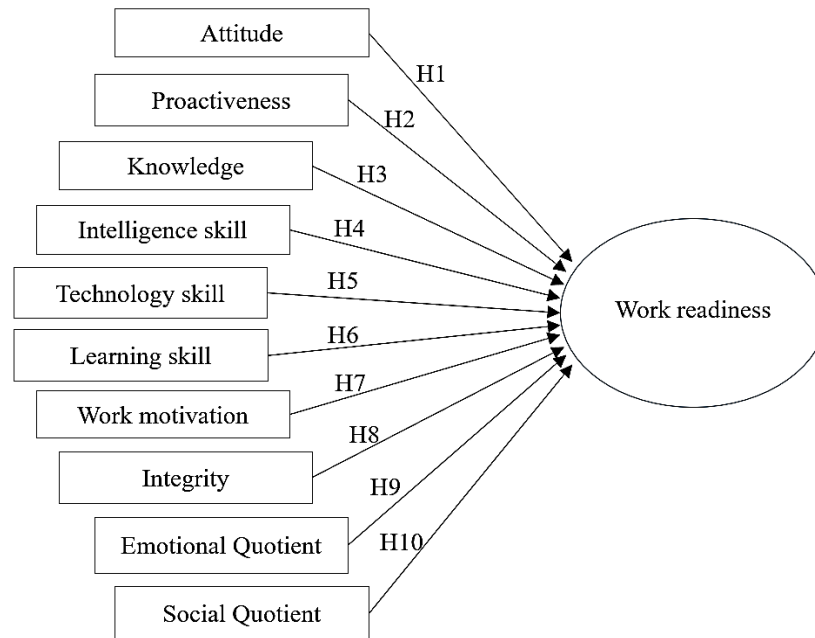
Figure 1.
Research Framework.

4. Research Methodology

This research is a mixed-method research. The first step is a quantitative research on Generation Z who will enter the future labor market, followed by a qualitative research that focuses on employers who employ graduates.

4.1. Quantitative Research
4.1.1. Population and Sample

The population is Generation Z in Thailand who are studying at the college and/or university level. Statistics from the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation of Thailand in 2023 found that there were 1,657,410 students registered in the Ministry's system from both public and private higher education institutions [46]. Therefore, the sample size calculation will use the unknown population formula. The sample will be calculated using Taro Yamane's sample size calculation formula with an error level of 5%, resulting in a sample size of 400 people. Therefore, the researcher will collect data from 400 questionnaires by dividing the data collection into quotas in four regions of Thailand. Therefore, 100 questionnaires per region must be collected.

4.1.2. Measurement Scale

The questionnaire was developed from a review of literature and research on variables related to work readiness. It consisted of two main parts: Part 1 was a question about the general information of the respondents, and Part 2 was a question about important variables in the research, including attitude, proactiveness, knowledge, intelligence skill, technology skill, learning skill, work motivation, integrity, emotional quotient, social quotient, and work readiness. The number of questions about the variables in the conceptual framework is 52 items. The questions use a 5-point Likert scale format, where one score means the least agreement and five score means the most agreement. The details of the questionnaire are shown in Table 1. After the questionnaire was developed, the researcher checked the validity of the questionnaire using the Item-objective congruence (IOC) method using 3 experts. The result of the validity examination was equal to 1, which is considered appropriate [47]. After that, the researcher checked the reliability using the Cronbach's alpha statistic with a standard value of 0.7. It was found that every variable had a value greater than 0.7. This result indicates that the questionnaire has a good level of confidence which can be used to collect data [48].

Table 1.
Source and reliability of the key variables in the questionnaire.

Variables	Items	Sources	Reliability
Attitude	5	Akbar, et al. [15] and Cabrera [13]	0.744
Proactiveness	5	Sagita, et al. [24]	0.909
Knowledge	4	Cabrera [13]	0.844
Intelligence skill	4	Akbar, et al. [15]	0.923
Technology skill	4	Silpanilman, et al. [29]	0.950
Learning skill	4	Caballero, et al. [16]	0.803
Work motivation	4	Riwayati and Santoso [43]	0.876
Integrity	5	Pawanna [37]	0.863
Emotional quotient	4	Riwayati and Santoso [43]	0.835
Social quotient	4	Sagita, et al. [24]	0.821
Work readiness	9	Riwayati and Santoso [43]	0.897

4.1.3. Data Collection

The quantitative research data collection was conducted by using a multi-stage sampling method. In the first step, Thailand was divided into 4 regions: the North, the Central, the South, and the Northeast. After that, data was collected using a quota sampling method using 100 questionnaires per region, totaling 400 questionnaires. The purposive sampling method was used to collect data by sending questionnaires online. Sending questionnaires online to collect data is an opportunity for respondents to decide for themselves whether or not to participate in this study. Data collection was conducted by sending questionnaires through various social media, such as Facebook and LINE chat.

4.1.2 Statistical analysis

The statistical analysis of this study was conducted by the researcher in two parts. The first part was the descriptive statistical analysis, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. For the mean, the researcher interpreted the results using the following five criteria: An average of 4.21-5.00 was considered to be at the highest level; an average of 3.41-4.20 was considered to be at a high level; an average of 2.61-3.40 was considered to be at a moderate level; an average of 1.81-2.60 is considered to be at a low level; and an average of 1.00-1.80 is considered to be at the least level. The second part of the statistical analysis was the inferential statistical analysis, in which the researcher used structural equation modeling to test the research hypothesis. The researcher chose to use Partial-least square (PLS-SEM) structural equation analysis to test the influence of the path between the variables in the conceptual framework of the research.

4.2. Qualitative Research

4.2.1. Targeted Informants

The population of the qualitative research is the employers who will hire graduates from colleges or universities in the future. Qualitative research scholars recommend a sample size of informants between 20 and 30 people [49]. The researcher selected 20 informants from the government sector and 20 informants from the business sector, totaling 40 people. The criteria for selecting informants will be based on positions related to human resource management, including senior executives, business owners, managers, supervisors, and human resource departments. In addition, the researcher will use the criterion of at least 5 years of experience in personnel management.

4.2.2. Data Collection

Data collection in qualitative research was conducted by the researcher using semi-structured interviews. The interview forms were prepared in advance for the important issues of this study. The interview process involved both face-to-face and telephone interviews, depending on the convenience of the informants, as some of the informants were in remote provinces. The researcher attempted to collect data covering many areas of Thailand.

4.2.3. Content Analysis

The researcher conducted a triangulation process prior to data analysis using the researcher, research assistants, and key data documents. Qualitative data analysis was conducted using content analysis to summarize key points from the informants. The conclusions of the qualitative analysis were then combined with the quantitative research results to compare the perspectives of Generation Z workers who will work in the future and employers who employ graduates.

4.3. Ethical Approval for Human Research

The research project, questionnaires, and interview form have been considered and approved by human research ethics from the Human Research Ethics Committee of Phetchabun Rajabhat University of Thailand, which received certification number PCRU-REC NO. 006/66.

5. Research Results

5.1. Quantitative Research Results

5.1.1. Descriptive Analysis of Participants

From the data received from 400 research participants, the results in Table 2 show that the majority of respondents were female at 69.3 percent, followed by male at 28.7 percent and LGBTQ+ at 2 percent, respectively.

Table 2.
Data analysis of the participants.

Variables		Frequencies	Percent
Gender	Male	115	28.7
	Female	277	69.3
	LGBTQ+	8	2.0
Age	18 years-old	4	1.0
	19 years-old	49	12.3
	20 years-old	74	18.5
	21 years-old	93	23.2
	22 years-old	119	29.7
	23 years-old	47	11.8
	24 years-old or above	14	3.5
Accommodation	Living in a dormitory or living alone	180	45.0
	Living with parents	176	44.0
	Living with relatives	44	11.0
Part-time jobs	Yes	219	54.8
	No	181	45.2
Income per month	Below 151 USD	280	70.0
	151 − 300 USD	88	22.0
	301 − 450 USD	23	5.7
	451 USD or above	9	2.3

The age of the majority of respondents was 22 years old at 29.7 percent, followed by 21 years old at 23.2 percent and 20 years old at 18.5 percent, respectively. This age range of Generation Z in Thailand is mostly students in their final year of university studies. The research also found that 45 percent of students live alone or in dormitories and 44 percent live with their parents. In terms of part-time work, 54.8 percent of students have part-time jobs to earn extra income for their studies and life. In addition, the research found that the majority of the respondents, 70 percent, had a monthly income of less than 151 US dollars, followed by 22 percent who had a monthly income of 151-300 US dollars.

5.1.2. Statistical Analysis of Key Variables

The results of the analysis of the opinion levels related to the key variables of the research are shown in Table 3.

Table 3.
Statistical analysis of the key variables.

Variables	Means	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Attitude	4.66	0.42	Highest level
Proactiveness	4.28	0.62	Highest level
Knowledge	4.05	0.68	High level
Intelligence skill	4.11	0.68	High level
Technology skill	4.22	0.64	Highest level
Learning skill	4.25	0.62	Highest level
Work motivation	4.43	0.59	Highest level
Integrity	4.43	0.60	Highest level
Emotional quotient	4.31	0.64	Highest level
Social quotient	4.33	0.71	Highest level
Work readiness	4.39	0.58	Highest level

The research results found that most of the variables with the highest opinion levels were attitude, proactiveness, technological skill, learning skill, work motivation, integrity, emotional quotient, social quotient, and work readiness. The knowledge and intellectual skill variables had high levels of opinions. When considering the standard deviation of all variables, they were considered to be at a good level with no problems with data distribution.

5.1.3. Measurement Model Assessment

Before assessing the influence of the paths in the structural equation model, the researcher first evaluates the measurement model to test the validity and reliability of the latent variables and the relationships between the variables in the model, which will ensure the validity and appropriateness of the model and the results of the analysis in the next section. The results of the study's measurement model analysis are shown in Tables 4 and 5.

Table 4.
Construct loadings and reliability of measurement model.

Constructs	Items	Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite reliability	Average Variance Extracted
Attitude	Att1	0.715			
	Att2	0.681			
	Att3	0.734	0.760	0.764	0.511
	Att4	0.665			
	Att5	0.772			
Proactiveness	Pro1	0.751			
	Pro2	0.772			
	Pro3	0.822	0.857	0.864	0.636
	Pro4	0.830			
	Pro5	0.810			
Knowledge	Km1	0.846			
	Km2	0.770	0.844	0.853	0.681
	Km3	0.864			
	Km4	0.819			
Intelligence skill	Intel1	0.859			
	Intel2	0.778	0.846	0.849	0.684
	Intel3	0.829			
	Intel4	0.841			
Technology skill	Tech1	0.763			
	Tech2	0.881	0.853	0.860	0.696
	Tech3	0.895			
	Tech4	0.791			
Learning skill	Lea1	0.796			
	Lea2	0.778	0.799	0.799	0.625
	Lea3	0.750			
	Lea4	0.834			
Work motivation	Mot1	0.787			
	Mot2	0.781	0.766	0.775	0.589
	Mot3	0.813			
	Mot4	0.681			
Integrity	Ing1	0.765			
	Ing2	0.800			
	Ing3	0.817	0.874	0.875	0.666
	Ing4	0.862			
	Ing5	0.834			
Emotional quotient	Eq1	0.858			
	Eq2	0.782	0.783	0.789	0.610
	Eq3	0.679			
	Eq4	0.794			
Social quotient	Sq1	0.863			
	Sq2	0.886	0.889	0.890	0.751
	Sq3	0.865			
	Sq4	0.852			
Work readiness	Rd1	0.805			
	Rd2	0.824	0.928	0.929	0.635
	Rd3	0.812			

Rd4	0.814	
Rd5	0.787	
Rd6	0.814	
Rd7	0.760	
Rd8	0.760	
Rd9	0.793	

From the results of the measurement model analysis in Table 4, the researcher tested three important statistical values in all variables: Cronbach's alpha, Composite reliability, and Average variance extracted (AVE). The researcher used standard values to assess the reliability of the measurement model at 0.7 for alpha and Composite reliability and at 0.5 for AVE [50]. The results of the analysis show that all statistical values of all variables in the measurement model pass the reliability criteria. Therefore, it can be concluded that the research model is valid and suitable for analyzing the influence of different paths in the structural equation model in the next step.

Table 5.
Discriminant validity (Fornell–Larcker Criterion).

Contracts	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)
Emotional Quotient (1)	0.781										
Integrity (2)	0.710	0.816									
Intelligence skill (3)	0.641	0.599	0.827								
Work motivation (4)	0.723	0.673	0.658	0.767							
Proactiveness (5)	0.667	0.601	0.729	0.654	0.797						
Social Quotient (6)	0.753	0.665	0.651	0.661	0.689	0.867					
Technology skill (7)	0.547	0.568	0.650	0.611	0.622	0.541	0.835				
Attitude (8)	0.551	0.558	0.496	0.557	0.662	0.541	0.412	0.715			
Knowledge (9)	0.608	0.534	0.811	0.615	0.693	0.596	0.582	0.451	0.825		
Learning skill (10)	0.709	0.683	0.729	0.752	0.696	0.730	0.623	0.513	0.681	0.797	
Work readiness (11)	0.778	0.731	0.728	0.756	0.736	0.778	0.661	0.605	0.671	0.791	0.790

The results of the discriminant validity analysis of the measurement model are shown in Table 5. The validity is considered from the fact that each statistical value in each column must be less than the top value of the column (shown in bold at the top of the column) [51]. The results of the analysis show that the measurement model of this research has appropriate discriminant validity and it can be concluded that the analysis of the influence of the path in the research model can be conducted appropriately in the next step.

5.1.4. Structural Model Assessment

The results of the structural equation model analysis are shown in Figure 2 and Tables 6, and 7. This analysis is used to test and conclude the results of the study's hypothesis.
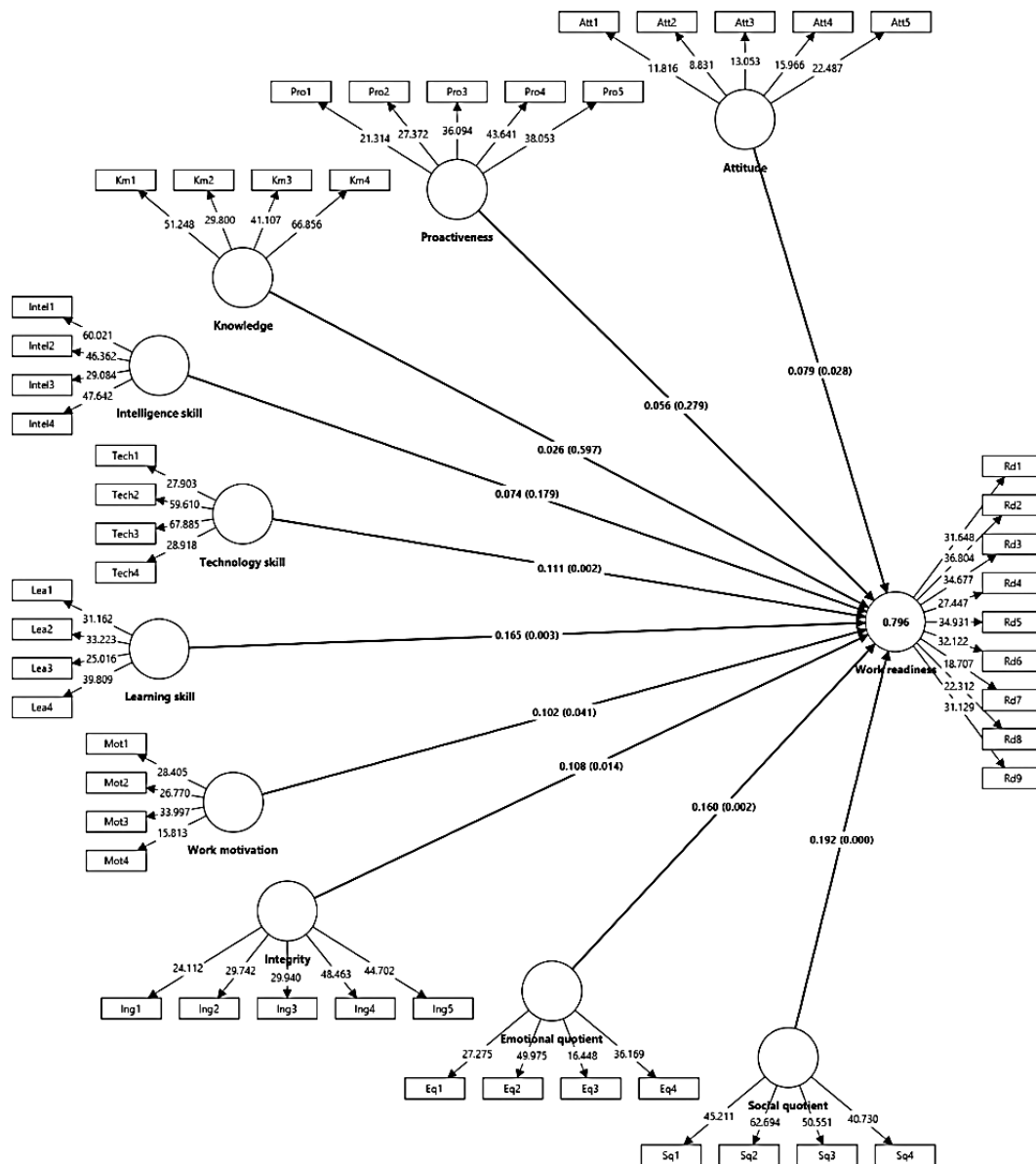

Figure 2.
Final structural model.
Note: The numbers on the paths between the circles indicate the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable. The numbers in parentheses are statistical significance values.

Table 6.
Path effects of Structural model.

Paths	Effects	t-value	P value
Attitude -> Work readiness (H1)	0.079	2.193	0.028*
Proactiveness -> Work readiness (H2)	0.056	1.083	0.279
Knowledge -> Work readiness (H3)	0.026	0.529	0.597
Intelligence skill -> Work readiness (H4)	0.074	1.344	0.179
Technology skill -> Work readiness (H5)	0.111	3.032	0.002**
Learning skill -> Work readiness (H6)	0.165	2.977	0.003**
Work motivation -> Work readiness (H7)	0.102	2.042	0.041*
Integrity -> Work readiness (H8)	0.108	2.461	0.014*
Emotional quotient -> Work readiness (H9)	0.160	3.139	0.002**
Social quotient -> Work readiness (H10)	0.192	3.634	0.000***

Note: *, **, *** means the statistical significance at .05, .01, and .001 level.

From Figure 2 and Table 6, it shows the influence of the paths between important variables in the conceptual framework of the research. The research results found that important variables that influence the readiness to work of Generation Z of Thailand are attitude, technology skill, learning skill, work motivation, integrity, emotional quotient, and social quotient. The top 5 most influential variables are social quotient, learning skill, emotional quotient, technology skill, and integrity. The results of the research indicate that Hypotheses 1, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 (H1, H6, H7, H8, H9, and H10) are supported, while Hypotheses 2,3 and 4 (H2, H3, and H4) are rejected.

Table 7.
Coefficient of Determination.

Dependent variable	Coefficient of determination (R^2)	Adjusted R^2
Work readiness	0.796	0.790

Table 7 shows the results of the analysis of the coefficient of determination to explain the influence of the independent variables that can explain the variance of the dependent variables. The analysis results found that all the independent variables that are important factors can explain the variance of work readiness by 79.6 percent.

5.2. Qualitative Research Results
In qualitative analysis, the researcher will analyze the content obtained from interviews with employers from both the public and business sectors.

Table 8.
Results from the targeted informants in the business sector.

Id	Sex	Age	Type	Position	Perspective on factors affecting the work readiness*									
					Att.	Pro.	Kno.	Intl.	Tec.	Lea.	Mot.	Intg.	EQ	SQ
1	M	60	B	Exec.	✓			✓			✓	✓		
2	M	59	B	Exec.	✓				✓		✓	✓		✓
3	F	57	B	Exec.	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	
4	M	57	B	Owner	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5	F	56	B	Owner	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
6	M	56	B	Manag.		✓			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
7	F	55	B	Owner	✓						✓		✓	
8	F	52	B	Owner	✓				✓	✓	✓			✓
9	M	52	B	Exec.					✓	✓				
10	M	51	B	Exec.			✓	✓	✓					
11	M	50	B	Exec.	✓				✓	✓			✓	
12	M	50	B	Exec.	✓				✓	✓				
13	M	50	B	Exec.	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
14	F	49	B	Owner	✓	✓			✓	✓				
15	F	48	B	HR	✓	✓			✓					
16	M	47	B	Exec.	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
17	M	47	B	HR	✓				✓	✓			✓	
18	M	45	B	HR	✓		✓			✓			✓	
19	L+	44	B	HR			✓	✓	✓					
20	F	41	B	Head			✓		✓	✓	✓			
Total count number					15	6	8	5	17	14	9	6	9	5
Total count %					75	30	40	25	85	70	45	30	45	25
Rank					2	6	5	7	1	3	4	6	4	7

Note: Id = the number of the interviewee; M = Male; F = Female; L+ = LGBTQ+; Age in years; B = Business sector; Exec. = Executive level; Manag. = Manag. = Manager; HR = Human Resources; Att.= Attitude; Pro. = Proactiveness; Kno. = Knowledge; Intl. = Intelligence skill; Tec. = Technology skill; Lea. = Learning skill; Mot. = Work motivation; Intg. = Integrity; EQ = Emotional quotient; and SQ = Social quotient.

Table 8 is the analysis result from interviews with employers in the business sector. It was found that overall the most important factor affecting work readiness was technology skills, followed by attitude, learning skills, work motivation, and emotional intelligence, respectively. When considering from the perspective of senior executives and business owners, the most important factor affecting work readiness was technology skills and the attitude of graduates. When comparing male and female employers, it was found that male employers prioritized technology skills most, followed by attitude and learning skills. Female employers prioritized technology skills and attitude as the most important factors. An interesting point is that senior corporate employers (those in their fifties and above) tend to place more importance on emotional quotient, social quotient, and integrity than younger employers.

Table 9.
Results from the targeted informants in the government sector.

Id	Sex	Age	Type	Position	Perspective on factors affecting the work readiness									
					Att.	Pro.	Kno.	Intl.	Tec.	Lea.	Mot.	Intg.	EQ	SQ
21	M	65	G	Exec.					✓	✓				
22	M	58	G	Head	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
23	M	58	G	Exec.	✓		✓		✓					
24	M	56	G	Head	✓	✓			✓	✓				
25	F	53	G	Head	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
26	F	52	G	Head	✓		✓		✓			✓	✓	✓
27	M	52	G	Head	✓						✓			
28	F	52	G	Exec.		✓			✓	✓				
29	M	51	G	Exec.	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
30	M	50	G	Head			✓		✓	✓				
31	F	49	G	Head					✓	✓			✓	
32	F	47	G	Head			✓			✓	✓			
33	F	47	G	Head					✓	✓	✓			
34	F	47	G	Head	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
35	F	47	G	Exec.						✓	✓		✓	
36	F	45	G	HR					✓		✓			
37	L+	45	G	HR					✓	✓	✓			
38	F	45	G	Head					✓					
39	F	44	G	Head	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
40	F	41	G	Head	✓		✓			✓	✓			
Total count number					10	7	9	5	16	15	12	6	6	4
Total count %					50	35	45	25	80	75	60	30	30	20
Rank					4	6	5	8	1	2	3	7	7	9

Note: Id = the number of the interviewee; M = Male; F = Female; L+ = LGBTQ+; Age in years; G = Govenrment sector; Exec. = Executive level; Manag. = Manager; HR = Human Resources; Att.= Attitude; Pro. = Proactiveness; Kno. = Knowledge; Intl. = Intelligence skill; Tec. = Technology skill; Lea. = Learning skill; Mot. = Work motivation; Intg. = Integrity; EQ = Emotional quotient; and SQ = Social quotient.

Table 9 shows the qualitative analysis results for public sector employers, who are primarily executives and senior managers. The research found that the most important factor affecting work readiness among government employers was technology skills, which was the same opinion as employers in the business sector, followed by learning skills, work motivation, attitude, and knowledge, respectively. When considering only senior executives (aged 50 and above), it was found that technology skills ranked first, followed by learning skills, attitude, and proactive personality, respectively. Male employers in the public sector viewed technology skills as the most important factor influencing work readiness, followed by learning skills and attitude, respectively. Meanwhile, female employers in the public sector equally ranked technology skills and learning skills as the most important factors influencing Generation Z graduates' work readiness.

Table 10.
Results from the targeted informants in both sectors.

Factors	Frequencies	Percentage	Ranking
Attitude	25	62.5	3
Proactiveness	13	32.5	7
Knowledge	17	42.5	5
Intelligence skill	10	25.0	9
Technology skill	33	82.5	1
Learning skill	29	72.5	2
Work motivation	21	52.5	4
Integrity	12	30.0	8
Emotional quotient	15	37.5	6
Social quotient	9	22.5	10

The overall findings of both business and public sector employers in Thailand on the work readiness of Generation Z graduates are presented in Table 10. The results show that the top five most important factors influencing work readiness are technology skills, learning skills, attitude, work motivation, and knowledge, respectively.

An example of an interview confirming the importance of technology skills for work readiness is a senior business executive (No. 2, male, 59 ears old) who stated, "*The new generation of graduates entering the workforce, which is Generation Z today, must have technology skills to support future work environments that will require modern technologies such as artificial intelligence or specialized programs that various departments within the organization can use to enhance competitiveness.*" Another senior government executive (No. 21, male, 65 years old) stated, "*The new generation of graduates (Generation Z) who are about to enter the workforce must be technologically proficient in order to effectively use artificial intelligence and achieve organizational goals.*" Learning skills are also a crucial skill for work readiness. A business owner (No. 8, female, 52 years old) stated, "*Learning skills are a crucial skill for future careers. Generation Z graduates must possess these skills, which are highly sought after by businesses because business competition is constantly changing. Consistent learning is crucial to winning in the business game.*" A senior government executive (No. 24, male, 56 years old) stated, "*Higher education institutions must create processes that equip students with the learning skills to effectively graduate and employ them as organizations require.*" The third most important skill is Generation Z graduates' attitude, which affects their work readiness from the perspective of employers. Business owners (No. 7, female, 55 years old) and human resource managers (No. 17, male, 47 years old) shared the same view that "*The attitude of new graduates (Generation Z) is important in assessing work readiness in a business organization because that attitude will determine that individual's behavior in the workplace. Competitive businesses need to employ workers with positive attitudes, perseverance, and attitudes that promote teamwork to win.*" This is consistent with a government executive (No. 27, male, 52 years old) who stated that "*Workers' attitudes significantly affect their work success and growth in the organization. Generation Z graduates entering the workforce must develop their own attitudes, including personal attitudes, such as positive attitudes, and attitudes related to teamwork.*"

However, the remaining seven skills are also considered crucial to Generation Z graduates' work readiness: motivation, knowledge, emotional qoutient, proactive personality, integrity, intellectual skills, and social intelligence. Employers also suggest other important skills, including communication skills, particularly in foreign languages, and volunteerism, essential for promoting social and community development.

6. Discussion

The first part of the discussion deals with the results of the study on work readiness and key factors that have been reviewed in the literature to influence work readiness included attitude, proactiveness, knowledge, intellectual skill, technology skill, learning skill, work motivation, integrity, emotional quotient, and social quotient. The study found that nine factors ranked highest among Generation Z students: work readiness, attitude, proactiveness, technology skill, learning skill, work motivation, integrity, emotional quotient, and social quotient. The other two dimensions, knowledge and intellectual skill, ranked lower than the others. This indicates that Generation Z students still believe they need further development in these two dimensions. However, the factors with the highest scores reflect Thai Generation Z students' confidence in their readiness to work, believing that they possess the essential skills, positive attitudes, ethical values, and emotional and social intelligence to truly work in organizations in the future.

The second part is a discussion of the quantitative study results on factors affecting work readiness. A study of Generation Z students on factors affecting work readiness in Thailand found seven key factors that significantly impact Generation Z's work readiness included attitude, technology skill, learning skill, work motivation, integrity, emotional quotient, and social quotient. Although no influence was found on the other three factors, namely proactiveness, knowledge, and intellectual skill,

all seven key factors significantly and reliably influenced Generation Z's work readiness. The finding that attitudes significantly affect job readiness in Generation Z is consistent with previous studies, which indicated that attitudes such as self-efficacy and self-confidence influence educational success, which in turn affects future employment after graduation or work readiness [19, 20]. Meanwhile, the study on technological skills confirms that these skills significantly impact Generation Z's work readiness. This finding is consistent with past studies, which found that technological skills are important for entering the labor market and also important for students' future employment [29, 30]. Therefore, students must recognize their importance and develop themselves to have sufficient technological skills to create work readiness according to the needs of the labor market. Furthermore, the research clearly indicates that learning skills significantly influence Generation Z's work readiness. This finding is consistent with the previous studies, which concluded that learning skills, particularly those derived from work-integrated learning processes, contribute to the creation of job-ready graduates [18, 32]. This research also found that Generation Z's work motivation influenced their readiness to work upon graduation. This is consistent with past studies, which concluded that work motivation influenced their readiness to work [35, 36]. The final two factors that this study found to influence Generation Z's work readiness were emotional quotient and social quotient. This finding is consistent with the past studies, which indicated that emotional intelligence significantly impacted work readiness [1, 43]. In addition, it is consistent with the studies that revealed that social skill is an essential factor for the work readiness of graduates [27, 28].

The next section discusses the results of qualitative research from interviews with employers in both Thailand business and government sectors. The findings found that the top factors affecting work readiness were technology skill, learning skill, attitude, work motivation, and knowledge, respectively. These findings reflect the perspectives and ideas of executives in the Thai business and public sectors, reflecting their needs and criteria for considering new personnel entering their organizations. These factors therefore determine whether graduates from Thai educational institutions will find jobs and meet the expectations of employers in both the business and public sectors. These findings are consistent with several previous studies that clearly identify five key factors that influence work readiness [1, 5, 18, 20, 28, 30, 35]. However, if we look further at senior business executives, we also found that another important factor affecting work readiness is emotional quotient. This is consistent with the previous studies, which clearly indicated that emotional quotient impacts work readiness, particularly stress management, which directly impacts work performance [28, 40]. These findings, expressed by senior executives, suggest that long-standing executives with diverse work experiences may perceive emotional intelligence as crucial to work readiness, enabling them to achieve both successful work and a balanced work-life balance.

The final section is a discussion of the comparative results of student and employer perspectives. When comparing the findings of both Generation Z students and employers, four key factors were found to be common influencing work readiness included technology skill, learning skill, attitude, and work motivation. This comparison reveals both similar and contrasting perspectives. The four factors that influence work readiness are shared by employers and Generation Z workers entering the workforce. A crucial factor is technological skills [5, 30]. This is not surprising, given the rapid development of technology in the world, particularly in the area of artificial intelligence. If Generation Z students lack these skills, they will certainly not be able to work in businesses or the public sector. Another important factor, consistent with other skills, is learning skills. Those with learning skills tend to perform consistently well despite changing organizational factors. In reality, organizations must constantly adapt due to external factors (such as technology, society, and politics). Therefore, learning skills are crucial to work readiness [32]. Work attitude and motivation are also linked to other skills. Those with positive attitudes (such as positive thinking, self-reliance, and teamwork) and strong motivation to work will be more prepared and able to achieve their goals [20, 36]. However, employers continue to prioritize the knowledge graduates need to be ready for the future work. This research is consistent with the past studies, which found that knowledge is a key foundation for other essential

skills, such as technological skills and is a crucial factor in work readiness [1, 5, 27]. In terms of competency, knowledge is a crucial component of competency that will enable people to be ready to perform any job within an organization. This is concerning as Thai Generation Z students still view knowledge and intellectual skill as being lower than other factors and requiring further development. Therefore, to align with employers' expectations and perspectives, students should focus on acquiring knowledge specifically related to their future careers. This knowledge, both directly related to the job itself and indirectly related to the job, is essential for successful job preparation and fulfillment of employer expectations.

7. Conclusion and Recommendation

This study aims to examine key factors influencing the work readiness of Generation Z in Thailand, which will be used as policies and strategies for human resource management for both business and public sector organizations. A study from both Generation Z students and employers found that there are eight key factors that influence Generation Z's work readiness in Thailand: technology skills, learning skills, attitude, work motivation, knowledge, integrity, emotional quotient, and social quotient. Meanwhile, four key factors are common to both the future Gen Z workforce and employers including technology skills, learning skills, attitude, and work motivation. These results, which are considered new findings of this study, are shown in Figure 3.
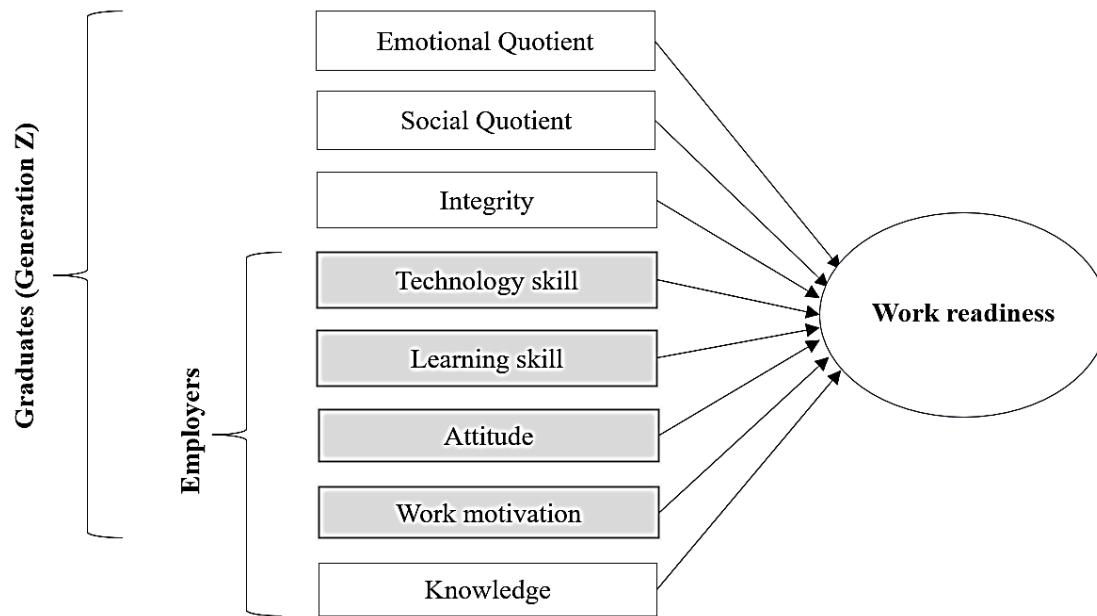

Figure 3.
Key factors affecting Generation Z Graduates' work readiness in both Gen Z and employer perspectives.

If we were to summarize the overall results of this research, we would find that all factors found to influence work readiness are related to the definition of competency, which consists of three components: knowledge, skills, and attributes such as attitude. The competencies summarized from the new findings of this research are considered important competencies for creating work readiness for Generation Z students, including knowledge, technology skill, learning skill, work motivation, emotional quotient, social quotient, the right attitude, and integrity.

The recommendations for implementation of this research's new findings are relevant to educational institutions, particularly higher education institutions in both the public and private sectors. Developing

key institutional outputs—graduates entering the workforce—requires an understanding of the factors influencing graduates' work readiness. Understanding these factors will lead to the development of appropriate policies, strategies, and activities for developing graduates ready for employment in a constantly changing world and a generational shift between learners and educators. This understanding will ultimately contribute to the success of creating a quality workforce for national development in both business and government organizations. Furthermore, Generation Z individuals themselves, who will benefit from this research, need to understand the perspectives and needs of their future employers in order to plan their own development and ensure successful employment readiness in the future.

For further research based on this study, the researchers suggest that scholars should prioritize the study's new model, which derives from the findings of this study. This will determine whether graduates who possess all the factors outlined in this model are truly successful in their organizations. Furthermore, they should investigate whether other factors influence graduates' work success, using this model as a basis for their studies.

Transparency:

The author confirms that the manuscript is an honest, accurate, and transparent account of the study; that no vital features of the study have been omitted; and that any discrepancies from the study as planned have been explained. This study followed all ethical practices during writing.

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