Self-Concept and Career Maturity in Generation Z in Palembang City

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ABSTRACT

This research is motivated by the importance of Generation Z having career maturity because it will be related to career decision-making. Generation Z needs to explore themselves to support future career development. The purpose of this study was to empirically analyze the effect of self-concept on the career maturity of Generation Z in Palembang City and to find out the differences in self-concept and career maturity of Generation Z in Palembang City based on gender. The population was Generation Z in Palembang City, which amounted to 138.444 people. The number of samples taken was 100 respondents sing accidental sampling. The data were taken by distributing questionnaires to respondents. The data was processed and analyzed using simple linear regression analysis techniques and the Independent Sample t-test. This study's results demonstrated that self-concept significantly affected career maturity, and based on gender, there is no significant difference between the self-concept and career maturity of Generation Z in Palembang. Based on the results of this study, Generation Z, both men and women, can improve their ability to assess themselves so that they are able to recognize and evaluate the potentials that exist in themselves. This research can also help organizations in formulating career development policies for Generation Z

Keywords: *Self-concept, career maturity, career decision, career development generation*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Career maturity is a person's level of preparedness for making career decisions. Career-related decisions are tailored to the individual's age and tasks in appropriate career development. Career excellence is crucial in individual career choices (Efendy & Haryanti, 2020). Career maturity is also defined as the level of readiness of an individual to choose, plan, and prepare for his or her future career. Career performance indicates the level of progress achieved in each continuum of the individual's career development stage (Alam, 2016). Individual career development goes through several stages in which careers evolve in line with one's age. There are five stages of career development according to Donald E. Super: namely, the growth stage, the exploration stage, the formation stage, the maintenance stage, and the decline stage. The growth phase spans from birth to 14 years of age. The exploration phase occurs from ages 15 to 24 years. The formation phase runs from ages 25 to 44 years. The maintenance phase commences at ages 45 to 64 years, and the decline phase begins at ages 65 years and older. The exploration stage is when individuals begin to recognize that work is important in life. At this time, the work done by individuals is still in the form of adjustments and has not yet reached the point of seriousness. At this stage, individuals begin to specify the various ideas regarding the choice of work that best suits them (Aulia & Yulianti, 2022).

Currently, individuals aged 15 to 24 belong to Generation Z. Generation Z was born between 1997 and 2012, making them 10 to 24 years old. There are two groups within Generation Z: those who are still in school and those who are starting their careers in the workforce. Generation Z is a creative generation that has grown up alongside the development of digital technology. This is what makes Generation Z inseparable from digital technology. Based on the 2020 population census conducted by Statistics Indonesia, Generation Z is the demographic with the largest proportion of the population, accounting for 27.94% of Indonesia's total population. Meanwhile, the 2020 population census results recorded that there are 2.2 million members of Generation Z in South Sumatra Province out of a total population of 8.2 million. Table 1 shows the number of Generation Z members in Palembang City.

TABLE 1 / Total Population by Age Group and Sex in Palembang City in 2021

Age Group	Male	Female	Total
10-14	65.997	62.379	128.376
15-19	64.137	61.178	125.315
20-24	70.362	68.082	138.444
Total	200.496	191.639	392.135

Source: Data processed (2024)

Overall, the number of Generation Z individuals in Palembang City is quite large. When viewed by gender and age group, the number of Generation Z in Palembang City has almost the same proportion. This significant population can be an asset for Palembang City, as some members of Generation Z have entered the working age. It necessitates the ability to choose and plan the careers that will be undertaken by Generation Z. Individuals aged 10 to 19 years old are, on average, still attending elementary to high school, while those aged 20 to 24 years old are typically students, with some already working. At this stage, individuals fall into the category of adolescence until the threshold of adulthood, which is characterized by the ability to think critically and make decisions. One of the important decisions adolescents make is the selection of a job. Often, this is perceived merely as the first step toward work readiness. However, this decision is crucial in shaping a person's career path (Yibeltal, 2020).

Previous studies that predominantly used students and college students as respondents indicated that college students exhibited moderate career maturity. If career maturity is not enhanced, there will be a potential loss of skills that hinders students' career development in the future (Fei et al., 2022). Other research also reveals that, on average, students have a low level of career maturity and face challenges in making career decisions (Almaida & Febriyanti, 2019). Additionally, the results of the study

found that students who have completed higher education cannot determine their career direction and are still uncertain about career choices (Munawir et al., 2018). Research (Purwandika & Ayriza, 2020) indicates that various problems arise for students when determining their career direction, particularly when deciding on further education and when entering the workforce. Gender analysis shows that female students have higher career maturity than males; however, some studies report the contrary, suggesting that male students have higher career maturity than female students (Creed & Patton, 2003).

One of the factors that influences individual career maturity is self-concept. Self-concept is defined as an individual's perception of oneself (Fei et al., 2022). Each individual can develop his or her own concept of career and realize and express this self-concept in a field of work (Almaida & Febriyanti, 2019). Career maturity is the ability and capacity of individuals to make realistic career choices. Meanwhile, self-concept is an image that a person has of themselves, which is shaped by experience and interaction with the environment. Therefore, career maturity in individuals can be maximized if their self-concept is fulfilled (Dewi, 2021).

The results of the study indicate that self-concept is a predictor of individual career maturity (Efendy & Haryanti, 2020). Likewise, the results of research (Zahra et al., 2018), (Fei et al., 2022), and (Alam, 2016) found that self-concept has a significant relationship with career maturity. In addition to research that states the influence or relationship between self-concept and career maturity, there are also studies that report no influence between the two variables. Research by (Sarah et al., 2021) found that there is no significant relationship between self-concept and career maturity. Thus, there are still research gaps from previous findings, and it is necessary to conduct another study that will examine the effect of self-concept on career maturity. Therefore, this study aims to empirically analyze the effect of self-concept on the career maturity of Generation Z in Palembang City and to identify the differences in self-concept and career maturity of Generation Z in Palembang City based on gender.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Career Development Theory

Career Development Theory was proposed by Donald E. Super in 1957. This theory focuses on career development aspects that involve self-concept throughout the life stages (Hom et al., 2010; Patton & McMahon, 2014). It suggests vocational development and vocational maturity (Yibeltal, 2020). In vocational development, this theory reveals the progression of individual careers through several stages, where careers develop in accordance with a person's age. The five stages of individual career development are: the Growth Stage (birth to age 14), the Exploration Stage (ages 15 to 24), the Formation Stage (ages 25 to 44), the Maintenance Stage (ages 45 to 64), and the Decline Stage (age 65 and above) (Alam, 2016; Munawir et al., 2018).

In terms of vocational maturity, this theory states that individuals will encounter the demands of career development over time. Based on the career stages, individuals must manage the changes that occur in their environment, which reflects their career maturity. Career maturity is psychological, physical, and social readiness to face environmental demands encountered at every stage of life (Strauser, 2013). The readiness to cope with changes in the work environment can be affective and cognitive. The affective aspect is reflected in a person's attitude that demonstrates career maturity, such as in career planning, career exploration, and curiosity, while the cognitive aspect of career maturity is indicated by the level of knowledge and decision-making related to careers (Patton & McMahon, 2014).

Self-Concept

Self-concept is the perception and assessment of oneself and one's relationships with objects or other people in the environment. Self-concept is one of the main factors in achieving success in life. If an individual knows their abilities, they will succeed in life. Self-concept is related to the choice of job and position. Research results show that a person's physical growth and cognitive development correlate with the development of their self-concept and career maturity (Munawir et al., 2018). Self-concept is an understanding of oneself that develops continuously through experience (Noviyanti et al., 2019). Self-concept is an individual's self-image that develops from childhood to adolescence and is influenced by family, school, and the social

environment. The complexity of career concepts is reinforced by the knowledge and experience of the individual (Alam, 2016).

Having a good self-concept means that a person can recognize and evaluate their potential physically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually, making this the main capital in choosing a career that aligns with their potential (Efendy & Haryanti, 2020). Furthermore, someone with a good self-concept will be able to organize their career maturity and prepare ideals related to their chosen career (Purwandika & Ayriza, 2020). The results of some previous research suggest that self-concept is a predictor of individual career maturity and has a significant relationship (Efendy & Haryanti, 2020; Zahra et al., 2018; Fei et al., 2022; Alam, 2016).

Career Maturity

Career maturity is an individual's ability to manage job tasks at each stage of the career development path, starting from the exploration stage to the decline stage (Yibeltal, 2020). A person's ability to complete career development tasks according to age and stage of career development is a condition for achieving career maturity (Munawir et al., 2018). Career maturity refers to an individual's readiness to choose, plan, and prepare for a future career (Alam, 2016). The ability to make decisions is a sign of career maturity. Individuals who have reached career maturity can plan, prepare, and make the right decisions about their careers and are ready to face the challenges they will encounter during their career journey. Those who have achieved maturity in their careers can also make more career choices that align with their readiness (Purwandika & Ayriza, 2020).

Career maturity is one of the important elements that students must possess because it is related to their future. Each student can have a clear understanding of the duties and responsibilities they will undertake (Purwandika & Ayriza, 2020). Previous research shows that junior students have lower career maturity rates than senior students. Based on gender, female students exhibit higher career maturity than their male counterparts; however, some studies yield opposite results, indicating that male students have higher career maturity than females (Creed & Patton, 2003).

3. RESEARCH METHOD

This type of research is a survey with a quantitative approach. The population in this study is Generation Z in Palembang City, aged 20 to 24 years, comprising 138,444 people. The number of samples used was 100 respondents. The sampling method employs non-probability with the accidental sampling technique, where respondents suitable as samples will be taken by chance.

The data used in this research is primary data collected directly from the source. The research data was gathered using a questionnaire. The questionnaire contains a list of questions related to the research problems to be filled out by respondents. Before being distributed to respondents, the questionnaire was first tested for feasibility through validity and reliability tests. The statement items in the questionnaire use a Likert scale with values from 1 to 5.

Variable operationalization for measurement is adapted from various previous studies. Self-concept variables are measured by several indicators, namely identity self, behavioral self, judging self, physical self, moral self, personal self, family self, and social self, adapted from the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale developed by Fitts in 1965 (Asy'ari et al., 2014), consisting of 16 items. Career maturity variables are measured by indicators of attitudes (career planning and career exploration) and cognitive indicators (knowledge of career decisions, knowledge of career information, and knowledge of occupational choices), adapted from Super Theory, consisting of 10 items (Sungadi, 2017).

Data were analyzed using simple linear regression analysis and independent sample t-tests. Simple linear regression analysis is used to determine the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable, while the independent sample t-test is a comparison test or differing test between two samples that are not related or free. The model and regression equation in this study are stated as follows:

$Y = a + bX + e$

Description:

Y = Career maturity

a = Constant

b = Regression coefficient

X = Self-concept

e = Error

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4. 1 RESULTS

TABLE 2 / Characteristics of Respondent

Description		%
Gender	Male	67
	Female	33
Education	Bachelor	44
	Diploma	14
	High School/Equivalent	42
Job-status	Currently at school/college and not yet working	53
	Have finished school/college and have not yet worked	24
	Currently at school/college and already working	15
	Have finished school/college and already working	8

Source: Data processed (2024)

Based on Table 2, respondents in terms of gender are primarily male, comprising 67%, while female respondents account for 33%. Regarding the status of most respondents, 53% are currently in school/college and not yet working.

TABLE 3 / Regression Coefficient

Coefficients[a]					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	19.262	5.038		3.823	0.000
Self-Concept	0.408	0.092	0.408	4.430	0.000
a. Dependent Variable: Career Maturity					

Source: Data processed (2024)

Based on Table 3, the output values of regression coefficients so that a simple linear regression equation is obtained as follows:

$$Y = 19{,}262 + 0{,}408X + e$$

The equation above can be translated as follows:

a. The constant value of 19.262 means that if the self-concept is equal to zero or there is no increase in self-concept, then career maturity has a value of 19.262.

b. The regression coefficient value of X is 0.408 and has a positive sign. The positive sign indicates that the direction of the relationship is unidirectional. This means that if there is an increase in the self-concept variable, the career maturity variable will also increase.

TABLE 4 / Correlation Coefficient

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.408[a]	.167	.158	3.978
a. Predictors: (Constant), Self-Concept				

Source: Data processed (2024)

Based on Table 4, the correlation coefficient (r) is 0.408. This coefficient value indicates a moderate relationship between the self-concept variable and the career maturity variable. To determine the effect of self-concept on career maturity, we look at the significance value. Based on Table 3, it can be observed in the Sig. column that the significance value of the self-concept variable is 0.00 (< 0.05). This means that there is an influence of self-concept on career maturity.

TABLE 5 / Independent Sample t-Test Results of Self-Concept and Gender

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Self-Concept	Equal variances assumed	1.015	.316	-1.005	98	.317	-.927	.923
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.058	73.022	.294	-.927	.877

Source: Data processed (2024)

Based on Table 5, the difference in mean values between males and females is -0.927. The negative value indicates that the average value of the second group (females) is greater than the average value of the first group (males). The significant value in the t-test shows 0.317 (>0.05). There is no significant difference in the average self-concept between men and women.

TABLE 6 / Independent Sample t-Test Results of Career Maturity and Gender

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Career Maturity	Equal variances assumed	.669	.415	1.590	98	.115	1.455	.915
	Equal variances not assumed			1.687	74.654	.096	1.455	.862

Source: Data processed (2024)

Based on Table 6, the difference in mean values between men and women is 1.455. The positive value means that the average value of the first group (male) is greater than the average value of the second group (female). The significant value in the t-Test is 0.115 (>0.05). This indicates that there is no discernible difference in typical career maturity between men and women.

4.2 DISCUSSION

Self-Concept and Career Maturity

The results showed that self-concept has a significant influence on career maturity. Donald E. Super, in his Career Development Theory, states that self-concept is involved in one's career development at every stage of life (Hom et al., 2010; Patton & McMahon, 2014). Generation Z is made up of individuals between the ages of 15 and 24. According to Career Development Theory, people in this age range are in the exploration stage. At this stage, a person will see themselves and their role and explore their options, starting from school to entering the workforce. At this age, individuals have tentative career choices and explore their careers through school vocations, hobbies, and work experiences (Hom et al., 2010).

This study emphasizes the self-concept and career maturity of individuals aged 20 to 24 years. Individuals in this age group are considered to possess developed self-concept and career maturity. Many previous studies have examined the influence of self-concept and career maturity on students (Munawir et al., 2018; Purwandika & Ayriza, 2020; Yibeltal, 2020). In this study, the research focuses not only on students but also on Generation Z aged 20 to 24, where some are still students and others are already working. Individuals who are undergoing education or who have completed their studies will prepare themselves to choose, plan, and prepare for a future career. Generation Z, in the age range of 15 to 24 years old, is transitioning from adolescence into adulthood. The adolescent phase is critical as individuals make career choices, explore career paths, and assess their abilities. Career planning and development for adolescents can involve forming career preferences or narrowing career options. At this age, career maturity develops alongside individuals' awareness of their future careers. Individuals become increasingly conscious of their occupational choices and attitudes toward various situations.

Adolescents are still in the process of forming their professional interests and awareness; consequently, the careers they choose to pursue often shift and vary. Therefore, if adolescents receive guidance in career selection, they will be more focused and dedicated to their career plans and choices. Individuals with strong career maturity will show concern for themselves and their careers. Thus, there is a positive correlation between self-concept and vocational maturity (Lau et al., 2021).

Self-Concept, Career Maturity, Gender

Self-concept is the way a person views and describes themselves, which impacts both their self-perception and their views of the external environment, including interactions with the social environment (Emery et al., 2023). Self-concept is also defined as an individual's perception of themselves, shaped through experience and their environment (Paumier & Chanal, 2023). Self-concept is related to career maturity (Hidayat et al., 2020). Career maturity refers to a person's readiness to navigate each stage of their career development, such as progressing from the educational phase to the job search phase or moving from the early career phase to the mid-career phase (Hom et al., 2010).

Previous research primarily emphasizes the levels of career maturity among male and female students. Some studies have found that female students exhibit higher career maturity than their male counterparts, while others report the opposite results, indicating that male students possess higher career maturity than females (Creed & Patton, 2003). This study focuses on the career maturity of Generation Z individuals aged 20 to 24 years. At this age, Generation Z is entering adulthood, characterized by enhanced decision-making and critical thinking abilities. Thus, this study not only emphasizes the level of career maturity but also analyzes the differences in career maturity and self-concept based on gender, extending beyond students to encompass the entire Generation Z population.

When the findings were analyzed by gender, no significant differences were observed between Generation Z males and females; however, the average self-concept score for females was higher than that for males. This result aligns with findings from another study (Yibeltal, 2020), which reported similar results. Furthermore, the study found no significant differences in career maturity between male and female Generation Z participants. These results support the research conducted by Birola & Kiralp (2010) and Kim & Shin (2020).

An individual's self-concept and career maturity will develop in tandem with the individual's physical growth and cognitive development. Thus, both men and women will have the same self-concept and career maturity through their development both physically and mentally. Individuals with a positive self-concept can make career planning that has been well considered where career planning is a form of career maturity (Lestari et al., 2022).

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis results, it is concluded that self-concept significantly affects career maturity in Generation Z in Palembang City, and there is no significant difference between self-concept and career maturity based on gender in Generation Z in Palembang City. The research analysis suggests that Generation Z should improve their assessment and understanding of their careers, preparing them to navigate each stage of career development. Further research can explore the impact of additional variables not discussed in this study.

6. LIMITATION AND IMPLICATION

This study only examines the influence of self-concept on Generation Z's career maturity. Future research can include other variables not covered in this study and assess the impact of these variables, such as internal locus of control, parental support, and self-efficacy. This research can aid organizations in formulating career development policies for Generation Z. Additionally, this research is expected to enhance knowledge in the study of individual careers and serve as a reference for further research in the field of Human Resource Management, particularly on the topic of individual career research.

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