

ANALYSIS OF CHARACTER FACTORS GENERATION Z CAREER CHOICE IN LUMAJANG DISTRICT

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the characteristic factors influencing career choices among Generation Z, specifically in Lumajang Regency, East Java Province, with a case study at PT LABP. Generation Z, known as digital natives, has unique characteristics in determining their career choices. This research employs a quantitative approach using survey methods and multiple linear regression analysis to identify the influence of factors such as familiarity with technology, work values and attitudes, job flexibility, and the impact of social media on their career decisions. The findings indicate that familiarity with technology has a negative impact on the tendency to choose conventional careers, whereas job flexibility is a key determinant of Generation Z's career choices. Additionally, social media plays a crucial role in shaping their job preferences. This study provides insights for companies and policymakers to enhance understanding and adaptation of recruitment strategies and career development plans to attract and retain Generation Z talent.

Keywords: Career Choice; Generation Z; Job Flexibility; Social Media; Technology Familiarity

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis faktor karakteristik yang mempengaruhi pemilihan karir generasi Z, khususnya di Kabupaten Lumajang, Provinsi Jawa Timur, dengan studi kasus pada PT LABP. Generasi Z, yang dikenal sebagai digital natives, memiliki karakteristik unik dalam menentukan pilihan karir mereka. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan metode survei dan analisis regresi linier berganda untuk mengidentifikasi pengaruh faktor-faktor seperti keakraban dengan teknologi, nilai dan sikap terhadap pekerjaan, fleksibilitas kerja, serta pengaruh media sosial terhadap keputusan karir mereka. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa keakraban dengan teknologi memiliki pengaruh negatif terhadap kecenderungan memilih karir konvensional, sementara fleksibilitas kerja menjadi faktor utama dalam keputusan karir generasi Z. Selain itu, media sosial memainkan peran penting dalam membentuk preferensi kerja generasi ini. Studi ini memberikan wawasan bagi perusahaan dan pembuat kebijakan untuk memahami dan menyesuaikan strategi rekrutmen serta pengembangan karir guna menarik dan mempertahankan talenta dari generasi Z.

Kata kunci: Fleksibilitas Kerja; Generasi Z; Keakraban Teknologi; Media Sosial; Pemilihan Karir

INTRODUCTION

Data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) on the number of Indonesian workforce based on the National Labor Force Survey (Sakernas) conducted in August 2023 was 147.71 million people with the Open Unemployment Rate (TPT) in August 2023 amounting to 5.32 percent or 7.86 million people (bps.go.id/id/pressrelease/2023/11/06/2002) which, in this case, affects Generation Z. On the other hand, there are several negative societal stigmas towards Generation Z, such as being lazy, not having a work ethic, and having difficulty communicating. Of course, this cannot be generalized and simplified based only on experience and work behavior which is casuistic rather than complex for many people. However, what is actually happening to Generation Z in the world of work? Is it true that they are less capable or weaker than previous generations? Could there be other elements that influence this

view? Another reality that occurs is that there is a wave of resignations occurring among Generation Z which seems to be continuing, interestingly, Generation Z is more susceptible to experiencing *burnout* than other generations. Why can this happen?

Several studies show that Generation Z grew up in a digital era characterized by rapid and instantaneous developments, where information flows non-stop. In the 2000s, people first became familiar with the term 'smartphone.' Unlike previous generations, who only learned to use smartphones in adulthood or even old age, Generation Z has been exposed to these devices since childhood, allowing them to develop faster adaptation skills. We often find fathers or mothers who often ask their children how to use the application on *smartphone* His father and mother.

While technology is designed to facilitate work, it often increases pressure on Generation Z, particularly due to their expectation of constant connectivity via social media. The existence of technology that speeds up and facilitates human activities in all fields is certainly an advantage for society. However, on the other hand, the ease and speed of technological advances can also reduce the business process of human involvement in it, so that this is the root of the public stigma regarding Generation Z as a generation that is lazy and wants everything instantaneously because of technological advances. In addition, Generation Z is often faced with economic uncertainty, increasingly fierce job competition, and demands for success at a young age, which leads to stress and mental fatigue.

Generation Z is a generation consisting of individuals born between 1997 and 2012, a generation that is different from previous generations in terms of views on career and work. Generation Z, often referred to as *digital natives* (Daffa et. All, 2024), they follow Generation Y (*Millennials*) and previously known as *post-millennials* or *again* because they grow along with the rapid development of technology *digital*. Generation Z is known as a group that is very familiar with technology *digital* from an early age which shapes how to interact, work and access information.

Technology and the internet have become an inseparable part of Generation Z's daily life. Generation Z is very dependent on devices *digital* for various activities, from communicating, studying, to working. Turner & Williams (2018) in their research found that this generation's habit of always being connected to technology has a big impact on how they choose their careers. They prefer jobs that are technology-based, innovative, and allow them to work flexibly.

The differences between Generation Z are not only seen in terms of the technology they use, but also the values and priorities they hold in choosing a career. Changes in the world of work, such as flexibility, autonomy, technological developments and social awareness are increasingly influencing this generation. Barhate and Dirani (2021) found that 90% of Generation Z will even work in jobs that are not common or do not exist in today's society. Generation Z prefers careers that can provide financial stability, considering the economic uncertainty that occurred when they were growing up. They also prioritize jobs that offer opportunities for growth and recognition for achievements. In social terms, they are more likely to want work that is not only personally rewarding, but also has a positive impact on society.

Generation Z's career selection and determination process faces various unique challenges and problems. Although they have easier access to information and technology, as well as a higher ability to adapt to digital developments, they are also faced with several difficulties that can influence their career decisions. Some of the main challenges faced by Generation Z in choosing and establishing a career include economic uncertainty, pressure from social media, changes in the labor market, and challenges in managing work-life balance or *work-life balance*.

1. Economic Uncertainty and a Rapidly Changing Job Market

Economic uncertainty characterized by recession, global pandemics such as COVID-19, and changes in labor market patterns are one of the main factors influencing this generation in choosing a career. Generation Z often feels anxious about the future of their work, as they grew up in a period of high uncertainty, including the global economic crisis, automation, and major shifts in the way work is done (such as remote work or work flexibility).

Smith (2020) stated that, although Generation Z is more educated and has strong technology skills, many of them are worried about job stability in a world full of rapid change and uncertainty. Study *Pew Research Center* (2021) shows that 66% of Generation Z stated that they feel anxious about economic conditions and the labor market, which causes them to often feel uncertain about choosing the career path they want.

PT LABP is one of the companies that is actually experiencing related problems *recruitment* workforce, especially Generation Z. PT LABP is a company that operates in the field of sales and repair services *Laptop*, Computer, *Smartphone* & Electronics which is located in Lumajang Regency, East Java Province. This company was founded in 2008. Currently PT LABP has 90.32% of employees, the majority of whom consist of Generation Z.

PT LABP experiences problems, especially regarding the fulfillment of the company's human resources, namely being faced with difficulties or low success of the process *recruitment* especially in Generation Z. This is as stated by the Founder at the same time *CEO* PT LABP in the initial interview with researchers as follows:

"I wonder why in the current conditions it is difficult to get a job but there are so many applicants (Generation Z) that when job vacancies are opened the number of applicants is large, but when the call is made only a few come, and of those who are called and pass test not everyone wants to do a work contract. After that, there were several who wanted a work contract resign when it's over onboarding, even during training, even when it has been carried out or has just started work placement."

The reality of the low success of the process *recruitment* is reflected in the data *recruitment* PT LABP throughout 2024 as shown in Table 1.1. PT LABP Applicant Data for 2024 obtained by researchers from the HRD Department of PT LABP from January to December 2024, two conclusions about this phenomenon can be found as follows:

1. An average of 43.85% of Generation Z applicants did not come to fulfill the company's call for further selection in the process *recruitment* at PT LABP.
2. On average, 78.15% of Generation Z applicants who passed the test did not continue to join the company and did not continue with the employment contract process with the PT LABP company.

Based on this data, it is necessary to research what characteristic factors actually influence Generation Z in determining or choosing their career and how much influence these factors have in determining their career. So, this research aims to find out what characteristic factors influence Generation Z in determining and choosing their career path and how much influence these factors have on Generation Z's career choices.

METHOD

This research uses a quantitative approach with a survey design to collect data related to characteristic factors that influence career choice decisions in Generation Z. The research population is individuals who fall into the Generation Z category, namely those born between 1997 and 2012, who are of productive age and are choosing or are about to start their careers by applying for jobs at PT LABP. The sample consists of individuals from PT LABP's applicant database who did not proceed with their employment contracts in 2024, within Lumajang Regency, East Java Province, from January to December. The sample size uses the Slovin formula with a margin of error (e) of 5% (0.05), so the ideal sample size is rounded to 91 respondents. The instrument in this research will use a questionnaire which will contain closed questions to obtain more in-depth data regarding preferences that are characteristics and considerations for Generation Z career choices. The data collected will be analyzed using descriptive statistical analysis and multiple linear regression to see the relationship between the variables that have been determined in the research.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This research was conducted on respondents who are generation Z who have or are in the process of choosing a career at PT LABP, Lumajang Regency, East Java Province. Data was collected through a survey using a questionnaire that assessed various characteristic factors of generation Z and how these factors influenced their career choice decisions. A total of 90 respondents participated in this research. The majority of respondents are individuals who have secondary and tertiary educational backgrounds and are already active in the world of work or are in the early stages of choosing their career path.

Descriptive analysis results indicate that the majority of respondents have a high level of familiarity with technology, with more than 70% reporting active use of the internet, social media, and

digital devices. In addition, value factors and attitudes towards work, such as work-life balance and flexibility, are the main considerations in choosing a career. More detailed results of the descriptive analysis are shown in **Table 4.1** following:

Characteristic Factors of Generation Z	Average Score
Familiarity with Technology	3.75
Values and Attitudes towards Work	3.50
Social and Environmental Awareness	3.25
Influence of social media	3.40
Openness to Diversity and Inclusion	3.55

From the table above, it is evident that familiarity with technology has the highest score, indicating that technology plays a crucial role in the lives and career decisions of Generation Z. To determine the extent to which the characteristic factors of generation Z influence career choice, a multiple linear regression test was carried out. The results of the regression analysis show that the overall regression model **significant** ($p < 0.05$), which means that generation Z characteristic factors have a significant influence on their career choice.

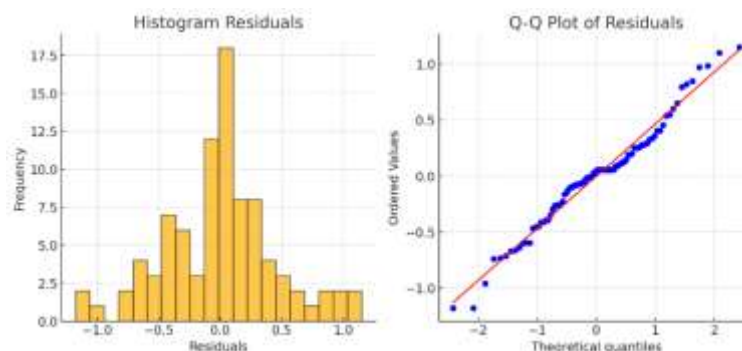
The F test shows that the regression model has **p value of 5.57e-05**, which indicates that there is at least one independent variable that influences generation Z's career choice. With values **the F-statistic is 4.457**, the model can be said to be fit for further analysis. Several independent variables that have a significant influence on generation Z's career choices are:

- X1.1 (Intimacy with Technology)** has a significant negative effect ($p = 0.005$), indicating that the higher the level of familiarity with technology, the lower the tendency to choose a conventional career.
- X1.3 (Smartphone Use)** has a significant positive influence ($p = 0.003$), indicating that increased smartphone usage correlates with a stronger influence on career decision-making.
- X2.5 (Flexibility in Work)** is also significant ($p = 0.001$), indicating that work flexibility is the main factor in generation Z's career choice.

Table 4.2 Multiple Linear Regression Test Results

Variabel	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Stat	P-Value
Constant	1.580	0.634	2.49	0.015
X1.1 Familiarity with Technology	-0.703	0.246	-2.85	0.005
X1.3 Smartphone Use	0.700	0.229	3.04	0.003
X2.5 Flexibility in Work	0.395	0.112	3.52	0.001

In addition, the results of classical assumption tests are shown in **Figure 4.1 Histogram of Residuals and Q-Q Plot of Residuals**:



The results of this research are in line with many previous studies which show that generation Z is more likely to choose technology-based and flexible jobs (Turner & Williams, 2018; Smith, 2020). This is not surprising considering that this generation grew up in the digital era, where access to technology and information is very easy. They are used to dynamic work systems and are not stuck in traditional office spaces. However, the results of this study also show differences from several previous findings which revealed that economic stability is the main factor in choosing a career (Duffy et al., 2017). This difference can be caused by economic and social changes in recent years, where generation Z is starting to see that flexibility and freedom in work are as important as financial stability.

In this era of digitalization, jobs with flexible working hours have become the main choice for generation Z. A study from Gursoy et al. (2019) revealed that jobs that allow people to work from anywhere are more attractive to them than jobs that require them to be in the office all day. This is clear from the increasing interest in freelance and project-based work. In addition, the need for digital skills is also increasing. A report from McKinsey & Company (2021) shows that in the future, work will increasingly rely on data analysis, artificial intelligence and digital project management capabilities. This is in line with the preferences of generation Z who tend to choose careers with continuous learning opportunities.

This research also found that social media has a big role in shaping generation Z's career decisions. This is supported by research by Kaur & Patel (2021), which revealed that social media is not only a place for entertainment, but also a platform for the younger generation to build personal branding and look for job opportunities.

Platforms such as LinkedIn, Instagram, and even TikTok are now a means for generation Z to access information related to the world of work and share their professional experiences. Chatterjee and Suy (2020) note that many generation Z find inspiration and job opportunities simply by building their professional profiles on social media. Even though work flexibility is a top priority, this does not mean that generation Z ignores aspects of job security and benefits. A study from Twenge (2021) shows that although they like the freedom of work, they still want health security and the opportunity to develop in their careers.

Interestingly, personal values also play an important role in job selection. Research from Lyons and Schweitzer (2017) found that generation Z tends to look for companies that have sustainability and social responsibility values. They prefer to work in a place that aligns with their principles and supports social and environmental initiatives. In the Deloitte report (2022), it is stated that companies that have a sustainability vision are more attractive to the younger generation. They want to work in an environment that is not only profit-oriented, but also has a positive impact on society.

The desire to continue learning is also a major factor in choosing a job. Ng et al. (2018) found that generation Z is more interested in working in companies that offer ongoing training and skills development. They don't want to feel stagnant in their careers, but continue to grow and hone new skills. Apart from that, the family still has an influence in generation Z's career decisions. Lent et al. (2019) revealed that family is often a source of motivation and support in determining job choices, especially in terms of stability and future prospects. The development of the gig economy also provides an alternative for generation Z to have more control over their careers. Spreitzer et al. (2021) noted that project-based work is increasingly sought after by the younger generation because it provides flexibility and freedom to work according to their lifestyle.

New technologies such as blockchain and cryptocurrency are also starting to attract generation Z's interest in choosing a career. According to a PwC report (2023), the fintech and blockchain industry is growing and becoming a promising option for those who want to work in an innovative and fast-growing field. On the other hand, balance between work and personal life remains a major concern. Wang et al. (2022) found that generation Z is more likely to reject jobs with long working hours that are disproportionate to the benefits provided. They look for jobs that allow them to live a more balanced life.

Increasing awareness of the importance of mental health is also an important factor in job selection. A study from Robertson and Cooper (2020) shows that generation Z prefers to work in companies that have employee welfare policies, including support for mental health. As artificial intelligence (AI) and automation continue to develop, many Generation Z are starting to consider careers in technology. A report from the World Economic Forum (2023) states that jobs in the AI sector will be one of the most sought after in the future, because they provide interesting challenges and opportunities.

One of the biggest challenges for Generation Z in career selection is global economic uncertainty. According to the IMF (2023), economic fluctuations impact the confidence level of younger generations when choosing between stable jobs and high-risk, high-potential careers. Apart from that, government policies in employment also play a role in the work preferences of generation Z. OECD (2022) notes that flexible employment regulations can increase the attractiveness of work for the younger generation, especially in supporting a more adaptive work ecosystem. Overall, this research reveals that generation Z has a different perspective in choosing work compared to previous generations. They prioritize flexibility, technology, personal values, and life balance in determining their career paths. These results provide insight for companies and policy makers in understanding and adapting to the needs of the future workforce.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

a. Conclusion

The characteristics of Generation Z significantly influence their career choices. Work flexibility, smartphone usage, and familiarity with technology are the key factors influencing Generation Z's career choices. The regression model has an R-Square value of 0.361, which shows that generation Z's characteristic factors explain 36.1% of the variation in their career choice.

b. Recommendation

1. **For Companies:** It is recommended to provide a flexible and technology-based work environment.
2. **For the Government:** Employment policies should be more adaptive to the needs of Generation Z.
3. **For Generation Z:** It is recommended to understand the factors that influence career choice in order to make a better decision.
4. **For Further Research:** Future research should explore additional factors influencing Generation Z's career choices, such as cultural and social aspects.

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