



## **The Effect of Career Planning on Employee Performance Through Work Motivation as a Mediator for Generation Z Employees in Yogyakarta**

**Rahmatika Chaerani Marsaoli<sup>1</sup> Widi Fajar Widyatmoko<sup>2</sup>**

Yogyakarta University of Technology, Yogyakarta, Indonesia<sup>1,2</sup>

Email: [rahmatikachaeranimarsaoli@gmail.com](mailto:rahmatikachaeranimarsaoli@gmail.com)<sup>1</sup> [widifajar@uty.ac.id](mailto:widifajar@uty.ac.id)<sup>2</sup>

### **Abstract**

Employee performance is a key factor for organizational success in the post-pandemic era, which is characterized by global economic challenges and high rates of resignation, especially among Generation Z. Like lack of planning career, motivation work low often time hinder Employee productivity. This study aims to analyze the effect of career planning on employee performance through work motivation as an intervening variable, on Generation Z employees in Yogyakarta. Using a quantitative approach with Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) based on Partial Least Squares (PLS) through SmartPLS. 4, study This involving 134 respondents Which chosen through purposive sampling. Data were collected using a Likert-scale questionnaire. Results study show: (1) planning career has a positive and significant effect on employee performance (T=6.178, P=0.000); (2) planning career increase motivation Work (T=14,572, P=0.000); (3) work motivation mediates the relationship between career planning and employee performance (T=5.176, P=0.000); (4) work motivation has a positive effect on employee performance (T=5.512, P=0.000); (5). The model explains 52.1% of the variation in work motivation and 83.4% of the variation in employee performance. These findings emphasize the importance of structured career planning to improve the performance of Generation employees.

**Keywords:** Career Planning, Employee Performance, and Work Motivation



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### **INTRODUCTION**

The current industrial era paradigm, and especially the conditions created in the Post COVID-19 Pandemic era which have implications and serve as a useful reminder of spontaneous self-organization, as well as the challenges of the hypertech era (digitalization) which will be based on the principles of innovation and proactive adaptation because industry (industrial revolution 4.0), products and markets experience continuous patterns of transition and transformation, which causes organizations to move from a stable equilibrium paradigm to a paradigm that is far from equilibrium and different in order to survive, then organizations must innovate where directing organizations based on the idea of growth, namely growth in profits, markets and the number of employees (Bassett-Jones, 2023: 266). The experience of a period requiring adjustment to work while facing the COVID-19 pandemic, has caused companies to face different employee responses, that some staff will welcome the opportunity to return to the workplace and the social environment and support that a good working environment can offer by enabling them to access career opportunities that will be offered through an enhanced profile. For the survival of the organization, it will depend on good human resource planning and the involvement and commitment of existing key workers as well as new groups of staff with new skills need to be recruited (Bassett-Jones, 2023: 271-276).

The State of the Global Workplace 2024 report from Gallup stated that "as many as 52% of Indonesian respondents were recorded as actively looking for new jobs, indicating a high desire to resign immediately, and becoming an important phenomenon to observe and address, because in fact in the field it was found that quite a lot of intentions or plans to resign from work were carried out by workers in the generation Z (GEN Z) where 3 out of 10 workers from this

generation actually chose to resign from the jobs they had obtained for a number of reasons stated, such as: problems: (1) unsatisfactory salary; (2) getting a better job offer elsewhere; (3) wanting to explore other jobs; (4) feeling unappreciated at work; (5) too much/excessive workload; (6) no career path; (7) contracts that have ended; (8) unhealthy work environment; (9) boredom at work, and (10) poor relationships with bosses. The youngest working/productive age population comes from generation Z in DI Yogyakarta, Indonesia based on BPS data on the number of people aged 15 years and above who are included in the workforce (2021-2023), it is known that 2,139,710 people/residents have worked spread across the DI Yogyakarta province. However, they are facing the Quiet Quitting phenomenon that has occurred and has begun to be widely discussed and reported since the Covid-19 Pandemic, even though there are still many unemployed or people who have difficulty finding/obtaining work (Kurniawan, et al., 2024). The results of the study indicate that continuous work pressure has been proven to play a major role in increasing emotional exhaustion, resulting in stress, anxiety, and mental fatigue, which ultimately risks disrupting the balance between work and personal life, and ultimately tends to lose motivation and reduce involvement in work (disengagement)

Paying attention to the information provided, it can be seen that the problem of the reasons for resignation can be linked to or caused by problems in the aspect of determining (maturity of choosing) the career obtained which is in accordance with what is expected (desired or planned), as well as aspects of the working environment in the organization, both organizational arrangements and interactions with colleagues or superiors/leaders. Related to the issue of career suitability that is owned/obtained, empirically and through various reports it has been revealed that career planning has a significant correlation with employee motivation factors in working better in their careers (Zhang & Perey, 2024; Pogodina & Kislina; 2024; Jackson & Tomlinson, 2020; Fitzpatrick, et al., 2025; Fahmi & Ali, 2022; Novitayanti, et al., 2020; Januari Wau & Purwanto, 2021; Ratnasari, et al., 2019; Obeidat, et al., 2022, Regen, et al., 2020. Organizations are required to be flexible, add redundancy, and develop systems and processes that can handle unplanned changes resulting from the uncertainty caused by unforeseen events. HR factors, now more than ever, have a crucial role to play and need to reengineer the way organizations view human resources—not just as employees, but as partners. New HR strategies must include an integrated approach to building organizations that collaborate with employees so they can build lives rather than just work and thrive in a World 2.0 environment (Abbey et al. in Pandey, et al. , 2023: 48). Thus, this study aims to examine the correlation between the influence of: (1) career planning on employee performance; (2) career planning on work motivation; (3) work motivation on employee performance; and (4) the mediating effect of work motivation between career planning on employee performance.

### **Literature Review**

Inkson's view (2007, inMcDonald and Hite 2023) It is important to clarify that career perspectives often have an individual focus based on the person's interests and goals, rather than on the needs of the family or larger group, as might be expected in more collectivist societies. Career paths unfold over time in steps that may or may not be linear, and can encompass several different professional and organizational domains. Thus, it forms a different perspective in terms of the individual's operational or action capabilities that a person has when approaching career decision-making and planning. Furthermore, it continues with the condition of career development (CD), which is the ongoing process of planning and acting toward work and personal life goals. Because development means growth, the continuous acquisition, and application of one's skills. Therefore, CD is the result of individual career planning and the provision of organizational support and opportunities, ideally a collaborative



process focused on both the individual and the organization. Career planning whether for job search or also for shaping the start of a career as well as planning for individual career development and its relationship to the organization, it is revealed McDonald dan Hite (2023) that employee career development will be a dynamic part of this new era, but needs to be reconfigured to suit the present and changes; employees determine their own routes, both inside and outside the organization working to achieve their goals, because many systems now offer multiple career paths.

Understanding of career that is necessary for individuals, especially in planning and/or developing their careers, needs to be considered (McDonald dan Hite 2023) when studying or preparing for a career (work), including: Career Success; Career Competencies; Career Transitions; and Career Identity. The concepts and theories of motivation put forward by renowned and influential experts in the dissemination and development of knowledge in this field, which have provided a picture of direction and understanding that can be accepted and applied to management and organizational practices; two of which are so influential as Herzberg (1968) in (Pazil et al., 2021), who divides two motivational factors by distinguishing between what he calls hygiene factors (extrinsic) and motivator factors (intrinsic) (Pazil et al., 2021). As for Maslow with his hierarchy of needs as a (Guillén, 2021). In addition, there is also Douglas McGregor (1960) in (Buchanan dan Huczynski, 2017) establishing two sets of motivational propositions, which he calls 'Theory X' and 'Theory Y' and various other standardized and developed theories.

Kanfer et al., (2008) Work motivation is defined as a psychological process that influences how personal effort and resources are allocated to work-related actions, including the direction, intensity, and persistence of those actions. Work motivation is not a property of the individual or the environment, but rather a psychological mechanism and process that connects them. Work motivation is also more accurately defined as a set of processes that determine a person's intention to allocate personal resources across various possible actions. This definition emphasizes the distributional aspect of motivation and describes the critical process by which an individual exerts control over his or her behavior. A key feature of the motivational process is the coupling between intention and resource allocation toward specific actions. Intentions and actions can change rapidly as a function of changes in the individual or the environment, and vary in scope, timescale, and complexity. Motivation as the allocation of resources to different actions encompasses the concept of self-regulation or implementation processes. The allocation of specific resources to actions represents a primary means of personal control over behavior. Therefore, to change behavior, one must change motivation.

Performance is the extent to which organizational members contribute to achieving organizational goals. Campbell (Johns dan Saks, 2023) et al.'s theory defines performance as behavior or actions relevant to the achievement of organizational goals that can be scalable, that is, measured. Furthermore, job performance is defined as what one is paid to do, or what one should be paid to do. This theory states that measurement options, whether ratings from supervisors, peers, or oneself, simulated work samples, or hard criteria (e.g., calculations of revenue generated, costs saved, customer complaints, or some variant of computerized performance appraisal), in addition to being valid, reliable, and unimpaired, must be free from contamination from sources of variation not under the individual's control (e.g., differences in technology that affect an individual's performance). Situational enhancers or constraints, if not accounted for in the assessment, can contaminate the average, variance, or both with respect to individual performance. Performance appraisal is a time period to summarize the overall progress an individual or team has made as a result of training, and to agree on new goals to be

set. Campbell et al.'s theory further (Johns dan Saks, 2023) states that performance is multidimensional, and that each dimension is represented by a category of similar behaviors or actions. This theory proposes a taxonomy of high-level performance components, namely, (1) job-specific task proficiency, (2) non-job-specific task proficiency (organizational citizenship behavior), (3) written and oral communication proficiency, (4) demonstration of effort, (5) maintenance of personal discipline, (6) facilitation of coworker and team performance, (7) supervision/leadership, and (8) management/administration. This theory provides a framework for any scholar who wishes to study performance and any practitioner who wishes to improve it. Among the determinants of performance are three types of choices that individuals make, namely, the choice to perform, the choice of level of effort, and the choice of duration of effort, one's persistence.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

The research design determined or applied is to use a Cross-Sectional Quantitative Correlative Approach through Multivariate Data Path Analysis, with the Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) Analysis Technique. The target population in this study is aimed at the productive age group or entering working age (>15 years) which was conducted in the Yogyakarta Province, Indonesia with a minimum sample requirement of 119 respondents with a 95% confidence level, using the help of the application formulation "G \* Power version 3.1.9.7" and "NCSS-PASS 2023 version 23.0.2" as a comparison material and to strengthen the accuracy of the results of determining the research sample. With a tab design or criteria for 3 (3) predictors, strength (confidence level) of 0.95 (or 95%) and a significance level of 0.05. The distributed questionnaire was compiled using a measurement scale: a "Likert" scale with a score weight ranging from the answer category "Strongly Agree" (5) to "Strongly Disagree (1)," and distributed using an online survey method via the Google platform: Google Form (<https://www.google.com/forms/about/>) with an appropriate time span according to the needs and suitability of the characteristics of the analysis method/technique in this study. The total items asked to the respondents were 30 questions/statements (questioners) where each question came from the dimensions of each research variable, to obtain responses on considerations of their understanding formed based on experience or knowledge from learning about the nature of what should be now and in the future compared to the conditions of reality (empirical) that exist/currently experienced. Furthermore, the collected data was processed using the testing feature in the "SMARTPLS version 4.1.0.3" application. The variables studied in this study consist of independent variables, namely: career planning (X), dependent variables, namely: employee performance (Y), and intervening/mediator variables, namely: work motivation (Z). The research hypotheses formulated in accordance with the framework of this research objective include:

- H1: Career Planning Has a Significant Influence on Employee Performance;
- H2: Career Planning Has a Significant Influence on Work Motivation;
- H3: Work Motivation Has a Significant Influence on Employee Performance;
- H4: Work Motivation mediates the relationship between Career Planning and Employee Performance.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Descriptive Statistical Test**

The research results are based on data obtained and processed using descriptive and inferential statistics to provide information on the characteristics of the respondent profile, score answers and hypothesis test results, which can be seen as follows:

## Respondent Characteristics

**Table 1. Respondent Characteristics: Age and Gender**

Age	Frequency	Gender	Frequency
< 20 Years	13 (9.7%)	Man	57 (42.5%)
20-28 Years	99 (73.9%)	Woman	77 (57.5%)
>28 Years	99 (16.4%)		
<b>Total</b>	<b>134 (100%)</b>		

Source: Processed by the author, 2025

Based on the data listed in Table 1, it is known that the number of respondents in the age category is more dominated by the age range of 20-28 years and the portion is filled by female respondents. And in this study, it was concluded that interest or response in responding to the important topics or issues discussed in this study regarding the importance of career planning tends to be or is greater given by Gen Z with the female gender. However, responses did not only come from Gen Z but also from the previous generation which is mostly dominated by the Millennial Generation, where it can be said that their position can be as a colleague or superior/leader in an organization/company for Gen Z employees.

**Table 2. Respondent Characteristics: Position/Title, Length of Service, and Salary**

Position or Title	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Entry-Level (New employees, Fresh graduates, etc.)	59	44.0%
Lower Management Level	30	22.4%
Intermediate Level (Senior Staff, Analyst, etc.)	25	18.7%
Middle Management Level	11	8.2%
Top Management/Executive Level	9	6.7%
Length of work	Frequency	Percentage (%)
< 2 Years	72	53.7%
25 years	52	38.8%
6 - 10 Years	10	67.5%
> 10 Years	-	-
Salary (per-Month)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
< 4 Million	76	56.7%
4 - 7 Million	54	40.3%
8 - 15 Million	4	3.0%
> 15 Million	-	-

In other respondent data categories as shown in Table 2., above, most of them are filled by respondents with positions or titles, and length of work in work organizations/companies at the lower management level to employees who are classified as newly accepted ( new recruit/employee ): < 5 years, especially employees with the status of newly graduated from universities or other educational institutions. In addition, according to the information on monthly salary earnings, it shows that most of them earn income that is classified as sufficient to meet the needs for that level of worker.

## Respondents' Answer Analysis

Of the four (4) elements in this research topic, as intended to obtain causality or correlation information on the influencing factors of career planning and the mediating effects of work motivation and employee performance; the processed data that has been collected also shows the diversity of respondents' opinions/views according to their understanding in determining the score value or answer category for the questions presented. In the career

planning element, the responses based on the scores given are considered to have a positive or good nuance, with the majority of answers and cumulative results approaching the total or full value, namely values ranging from 511-515 (or > 76%) of 670 (100%). The variety of answers also determines the ranking of the determined indicators, that the factor with the highest score or the most received good responses, and became the most important and most considered aspect, namely:

1. Individual capacity (education and work experience), social networking aspects, and suitability of formation; and the suitability of potential and personal preferences to the needs or fields of work required by the organization;
2. The salary and promotion opportunities that can be offered; the attitude of readiness regarding compliance and the ability to explore the job; the role/function/duty of the desired position or title; and the image of the organization;
3. Fair and open processes (e.g. promotion) that are clearly carried out or implemented by the organization; ability (potential) and self-will (motivated) are able to work well as an initial career or work assessment, as well as opportunities for career development from before;
4. Due to incompatibility with current conditions/positions or the existence of new connections, in order to add work commitments or related to motivation and performance in the future.

The arguments for assessing employee work motivation elements were found to yield more varied scores. However, responses to the assessments obtained a better average score ranging from 512-520, or >77%, with scores generally positive or good. Furthermore, the responses obtained were ranked according to the main aspects most frequently considered to indicate employee work motivation, including:

1. Resilience or tenacity (perseverance) or strong attitude/determination; clarity and accuracy of direction and goals when working or as well as in accordance with the direction of the leader/organization when carrying out work;
2. Willingness and ability to make every effort or various efforts to complete work properly and quickly;
3. Creativity in work;
4. Good attendance record at the office or being on duty on time, not intentionally playing truant, to avoid work time or tasks.

In employee performance assessments, the responses through the scores given were not as varied as those for work motivation assessments, but were found to have a lower average cumulative score, ranging from 451-481 or > 67%; although still considered positive. This was due to the large number of responses that were contradictory or less in accordance with the respondents' (individual/employee) understanding of the nature of their performance assessment or what they experienced. When sorted and summarized, the aspects of employee performance assessment (individual) from highest to lowest scores are as follows:

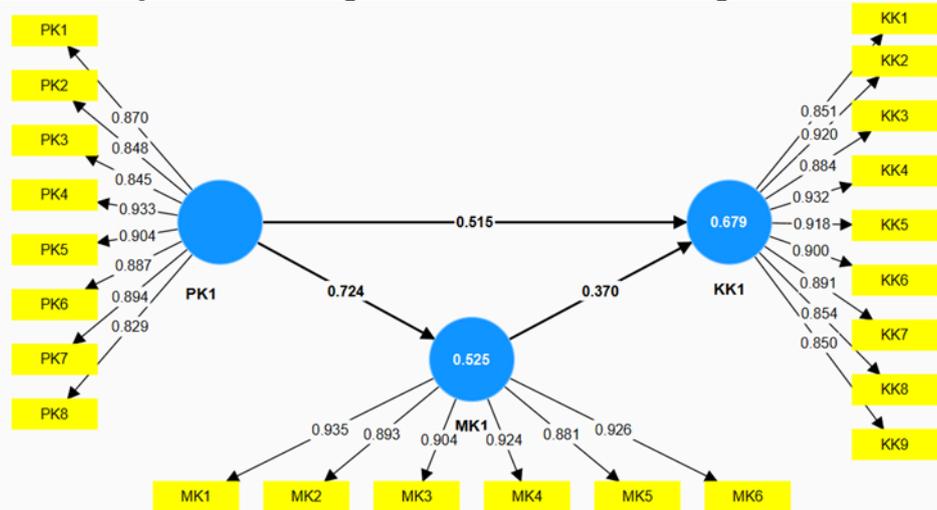
1. Able to convey information or report the process and progress of achieving work task targets directly and immediately; and clearly, openly, and easily understood to superiors or other employees who need it; and
2. Able to carry out and complete work tasks by utilizing various skills and technical knowledge (creative, innovative) to suit needs.

Thus, the planning factor is something that is still of interest or considered necessary and tends to be carried out by the current productive young generation, where it can be assumed

that Gen Z in particular, pays more attention and/or realizes the importance of preparing or choosing a career (job/profession) that will be undertaken more maturely so that it becomes a focus and priority in making efforts to improve or improve the conditions/situations of the work environment both internally and externally, especially in the DI Yogyakarta region.

### Testing of Research Models and Hypotheses

The data analysis process to obtain the PLS-SEM correlation value for the research model built for each variable processed using SMARTPLS is shown in Figure 2 below:



**Figure 2 Bootstrapp test results - SMARTPLS**

### Validity and Reliability Test

**Table 3. Results of Convergent Validity & Composite Reliability Tests**

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha (CA)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Composite Reliability	
			(CR rho_c)	(CR rho_a)
CP	0.957	44.0%		
WM	30	22.4%		
EP	25	18.7%		

Furthermore, the value of each item that is greater than the others and meets the criterion standards has been found in the results of the discriminant validity test through the Fornell-Larcker Criterion test and the required HTMT ( Heterotrait-monotrait ) ratio (shown in Table 4. Results of the Discriminant Validity Test ).

**Table 4. Results of Discriminant Validity Test**

Fornell-Larcker Criterion Test Results			
	CP	WM	EP
CP	0.889		
WM	0.744	0.911	
EP	0.784	0.724	0.889
HTMT Ratio Test Results (Heterotrait-monotrait ratio)			
	CP	WM	EP
CP			
WM	0.750		
EP	0.809	0.770	

The values displayed above indicate that the measurement instrument for each variable has excellent internal consistency and high reliability, and is able to explain more than the standard/required variance values contained in its indicators. Thus, all indicators, including the Career Planning, Work Motivation, and Employee Performance variables, have met the threshold requirements for Convergent Validity and Composite Reliability tests and can be declared "Valid and Reliable".

## Hypothesis Testing

### Hypothesis Test Analysis

The description of the analysis results to test the hypothesis formulated in this study can be seen in Table 5 Hypothesis Test Results below:

**Table 5. Hypothesis Test Results**

Track	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values	Description
CP→ WM	0.724	0.729	0.050	14,572	0	Significant
CP→ EP	0.281	0.278	0.046	6,178	0	Significant
CP→ WM→ EP	0.228	0.231	0.044	5,176	0	Significant
WM→ EP	0.315	0.319	0.057	5,512	0	Significant

Source: Processed using SmartPLS by the Author 2025

From the description of the results of the hypothesis test in Table 5 above, it can be concluded that:

1. Hypothesis 1: Career planning has a positive and significant effect on employee performance with a t- value of  $6.178 > 1.96$  and a p-value of  $0.000 < 0.05$ .
2. Hypothesis 2: Career planning has a positive and significant effect on work motivation with a t- value of  $14.572 > 1.96$  and a p-value of  $0.000 < 0.05$ .
3. Hypothesis 3: Work motivation has a positive and significant effect on employee performance with a t-value of  $5.512 > 1.96$  and a p-value of  $0.000 < 0.05$ .
4. Hypothesis 4: Career planning has a positive and significant effect on employee performance through work motivation with a t- value of  $5.176 > 1.96$  and a p-value of  $0.000 < 0.05$ .

Thus, all the results of the hypothesis test are declared accepted, and can significantly provide an influence or effect according to what was formulated in this study.

## SYNTHESIS OF THE MAIN DISCUSSION

### Career Planning Has a Significant and Positive Influence on Employee Performance

It can be interpreted that, the better and more prepared in carrying out career planning, the better and more likely to get the opportunity to have and be able to contribute to providing good performance because of the creation of a match between the needs (classification) of workers as intended to be able to provide employee performance that meets the expectations and targets of work/tasks assigned or given by the organization to the capacity of individuals/employees who are recruited or whose competencies are developed. By carrying out career planning, individuals should strive to have a career level or path, namely what profession (work) they want or a job that they want to make as a source of livelihood in order to fulfill their needs and welfare in their lives. Proper career development will improve



employee performance, because employees are responsible for continuously improving their skills to maintain their competencies based on what is needed or if it relates to positive and effective effects in improving employee performance and overall organizational performance.

Career planning (or planning) is also often referred to as career decisions, career development or career path (Gutteridge, in Rothwell, et al., 2015; Smith & Peterssen (2024: 3); Inkson, 2007, Simonsen, 1997, Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005 in McDonald & Hite, 2023: 2-3, 22); Rudman (2004: 169-171)), that career planning is a process of planning and action to determine, sequence, combination of roles, patterns of continuous experience (Super, 1990; Greenhaus & Callanan, 1994; Collin & Young 2000, in Barnes, et al., 2010: 11) towards work and personal life goals as a form of self-discovery that leads to lifelong career choices (Smith & Peterssen, 2024), related to the journey of determining routes/paths or career development (Rudaman, 2004) which places career competency development as a result of a collaborative process or job search in order to form a career start that focuses on individuals and organizations (McDonald & Hite, 2023: 2-3, 13, 18), which can also be done with the help of others (e.g., counselors or career professionals) (Niels & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2022: 13-16; Smith & Peterssen (2024: 4) and means growth, continuous acquisition, and application of one's skills for work that is decent and financially satisfying (Smith & Peterssen, 2024) and includes one's involvement with the community through/in work organizations/places of work during their lifetime or life course (Barnes, et al., 2010). Because the elements in career development planning are: (a) Inclusion, that everyone has a career; (b) Participation regarding being involved and contributing to society and to the well-being of others through the work done; (c) Lifelong development or progress by making progress in learning and working throughout life; building (d) Identity by oneself; in order to pursue (e) Well-being or career happiness through achieving meaningful work (Barnes, et al., 2010: 11). Also, identifying the sequence of jobs—along with possible learning and training experiences—that individuals need in order to progress to fulfill their potential and gain job satisfaction. (Barnes, et al., 2010), by integrating various life roles related to work, family, leisure, and community (Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2014: 44-45). Understanding the career determination that individuals need to have, especially in planning and/or developing their careers, needs to be considered (McDonald & Hite, 2023: 27-35, 74-96) when studying or preparing for a career (work), including:

1. Career Success: (a) Human resource capital; (b) Social capital; (c) Sponsorship or organizational support; (d) Socio-demographic variables; (e) Stable individual characteristics or traits); (f) Structural or contextual factors.
2. Career Competencies: (a) Reflective career competencies; (b) Communicative career competencies; and (c) Behavioral career competencies.
3. Career Transitions: A decision to make a change through transition considerations caused by: (a) A period of imbalance in a previous career; (b) A period of reflection on oneself and one's situation before making any changes; (c) A period of developing new professional connections and changes; and (d) Committing to a new career.
4. Career Identity, such as (a) role identity, (b) job identity (tasks performed), and (c) organizational identity.

A close match of jobs to people leads to satisfied and productive employees. Consequently, many organizations see the importance of providing key staff, or those with development potential, with career planning counseling and assistance (Rudman, 2004). According to Greenhaus, et al. (2019), career planning programs can be beneficial in helping employees improve or maintain their job competitiveness and increase their interest in their work regardless of the nature of their employment relationship with the organization or company. In



their view, Rothwell, et al. (2015), as business cycles have become compressed, so too have the skills cycles that are linked to performance. And by linking and/or integrating career planning (development) with succession planning that focuses on meeting the future talent needs of the organization at all levels, it is necessary to align it by uniting individual interests (goals) and organizational needs; because, from the perspective of employers, developing people is crucial to maintaining future competitiveness, while from the perspective of individuals (employees), relying primarily on the current employer (work organization/company) to provide opportunities or a clear career path is a thing of the past. Today's employees must refocus on lifetime employability rather than relying on lifetime employment.

The career establishment preoccupations share the task of developing adaptability associated with the career "exploration" stage and the career "establishment" stage associated with the "career maintenance" stage. Furthermore, the work/life adjustment problem shares the task of developing adaptability associated with the career "maintenance" stage and the career "disengagement" stage. These psychosocial career preoccupations or concerns influence individuals to behave adaptively aimed at proactively engaging in behaviors that will bring about changes in themselves and their environment, as according to self-determination theory, which seeks to satisfy innate psychological needs (e.g., autonomy, competence and relatedness) that enable individuals to function optimally and develop maximally further, similar to cognitive acceptance which implies openness and motivation to adapt and support change, either in oneself (new mindset) or in one's personal and/or social/work environment (Coetzee, in Martin, 2016: 68). When it comes to improving employee performance and development, an organization must understand the critical tasks people face at different times in their careers. Programs designed to help employees early in their careers, such as challenging initial job assignments, will likely differ to some extent from the development activities most relevant to someone mid-career (e.g., learning to be a mentor) or late in their career (pre-retirement counseling). Furthermore, according to Greenhaus, et al. (2019) career planning programs can be beneficial in helping employees improve or maintain their job competitiveness and increase their interest in their work regardless of the nature of their employment relationship with the organization or company.

Furthermore, Rothwell, et al., (2015) also linked the importance of career planning with succession planning because of their interconnectedness in job development (career) by explaining six characteristics that explain the role of career planning and succession: mobility, fluidity, agility, integrity, values, and opportunities, which are central to individual and organizational growth related to how individuals and organizations view work and jobs constantly changing, to enable employees to perform their daily tasks better, remain ready to work in a dynamic labor market, and position themselves for internal promotions. The benefits of integrating the two include: (a) Allowing organizations to assess their talent (employee) needs by establishing competency models or job descriptions; (b) Allowing leaders to identify, and determine in a short time, key people available to fill critical job functions; (c) Providing a path for current and future succession planning, and discussions on how to develop talent; (d) Defining career paths through the organization; (e) Providing a higher return on investment from employees; and (e) Leading to the promotion and pre-selection of the right people to meet the organization's goals. Career planning is not only done by individuals, but can also be obtained, for example, with the help of counselors. Evidence shows that not only do many workers experience negative work situations and job dissatisfaction, but they also do not know how to improve their work situations. Whether it is the young, the elderly, the unemployed, the underemployed, affected housewives, affected workers; and members of various racial, ethnic,



and socioeconomic groups each face work-related problems that have a significant impact on their lives (Niels & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2022: 13-16).

Counselors provide career assistance to their clients in a variety of ways. For example, counselors in high schools, colleges, and community settings teach clients the skills (e.g., self-assessment, job search, and career information acquisition) necessary for effective career planning and career decision-making. Counselors in all settings can also help students/clients recognize that their decisions about employment affect their entire lives. More specifically, in helping people manage their career development effectively in the 21st century, career counselors help clients or students with issues related to motivation and performance by learning how to (Niels & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2022: 14-15):

1. Using both rational and intuitive approaches in career decision making.
2. Clarity about the importance attached to each life role and the values to be expressed through participation in various life roles.
3. Dealing with uncertainty, change, and transition effectively.
4. Developing and maintaining self - awareness , especially in the areas of interests, values, motivations, and talents.
5. Develop and maintain awareness about work and career.
6. Develop and maintain skills and knowledge relevant to current work.
7. Access and participate in lifelong learning opportunities.
8. Searching for work effectively, even when one is not looking for work.
9. Providing and receiving career guidance.
10. Develop and maintain skills in multi-cultural awareness and communication.

In practice in Indonesia, career planning, both the process of selecting/preparing, developing, or determining a career path, is in fact more dominantly carried out when someone is still undergoing the process of school or university education, rather than among the productive age population or job seekers. Seen from the perspective of scientific research or research that discusses or reviews the issue of career planning in Indonesia, it is more often carried out in educational environments at the high school level (Suwidagdho, et al., 2023) to university students who will later have to be ready to find work after completing that level of education. In Indonesia, the adoption of the concept of career decision making or career planning guidance for senior high school (SMA) students is implemented through the implementation of the independent curriculum. As stated as the background to the implementation of learning methods that provide flexibility in choosing students in recognizing and optimizing their potential and can complete each learning achievement according to the chosen elective subjects, starting to think about the future and learning to be responsible for the choice of subjects according to their motivation (interests, talents, and abilities), in order to be more confident in planning a career by learning to know themselves through in-depth career exploration, namely choosing subjects that are in accordance with their study plans at college and/or professions of interest. Students can choose subjects related to their study plans and combine them with subjects from other groups according to their interests. Or, for students who will continue working, they can choose subjects that will support their abilities equipped with competencies that are in accordance with their career goals/in the workplace later (Aryanto, et al., 2024; Wahyudin , et al., 2024: 18-26).

This informative statement is in line with the research results that prove that the career planning aspect is so much in demand or implemented by students in Indonesia since it was implemented in the learning process and the determination of the independent curriculum to polish the potential competencies and characters of individuals to be ready to compete,



collaborate, coordinate and communicate (social aspects) in order to adapt and based on their own preferences or based on recommendations (suggestions and guidance) for generation Z according to the demands of developments in the industrial era and the demands of the current 21st century global labor market which is increasingly disrupted by the latest digitalization advances and innovations in the field of technology, communication and informatics (ICT) in the future ( Nur: 2023; Junyanti, 2024; Toyib, et al. (2024); Thahery, 2023; Lianti, et al., 2024.

Students are highly engaged in post-graduation education and career preparation activities, reflecting the use of adaptive strategies to navigate the transition to higher education and employment and to achieve their academic and career goals. These include attending career-promoting events or job fairs , participating in internships or training related to career goals, attending classes or tours, preparatory exams, introductory classes, and meeting with career counselors for college selection from high school graduation as the most frequently engaged career preparation activities, as direct information about colleges and careers has been shown to be more helpful in exploring post-secondary options, stimulating students' interest in their own personal and professional growth, and facilitating their decision-making process, as career development is a process of understanding oneself and the external environment. For students who want to be more career-focused, for example, a college-level experience might mean community college or specialized technical education training after high school. For Career Technical Education ( CTE), the implication is to encourage career-focused high school students to explore CTE options and guide them to post-secondary education that will help them advance in their careers (Xing, et al., 2019).

The career planning landscape for university and college students reveals both significant transformative potential and persistent challenges. Career planning initiatives offer significant benefits, fostering skills, clarity in aspirations, job satisfaction, and adaptability for growth. However, barriers such as limited resource accessibility, generic guidance, cultural influences, scarce practical exposure, and misalignment with academic schedules hinder their comprehensive effectiveness. Thus, they require tailored support , inclusive resources, broader practical exposure, and seamless integration into the academic curriculum. By addressing these challenges, institutions can empower students to make informed decisions, navigate diverse career paths, and develop professionally, creating a more adaptable workforce prepared for the dynamic demands of the future (Zhang & Perey, 2023). Students who have good career planning will have higher job readiness, because students who have career planning can understand careers that suit their potential to achieve a career in the future with the knowledge they have gained during their education so that students are better prepared to enter the world of work or have good job readiness (Violinda, et al., 2023). The results of research on the influence of career planning that ultimately forms conformity with expectations and career goal direction that will have implications for employee motivation when/in work as well as subsequent impacts that mediate the results of career planning to the quality of implementation or achievement of work performance, are considered in line with the theory of expectancy (hope) related to motivation and performance through Expectancy Theory by Victor Vroom (1964, in Latham, 2007: 45-47) that motivation refers to the process that regulates the choices made by people or lower organisms among voluntary alternative forms developed to explain almost all work-related behaviors ranging from job choice to performance in the workplace, focusing on choice, effort, and persistence. In short, expectancy theory operationalizes motivation in terms of four components. The first is effort. The second is the intrinsic valence in high performance outcomes derived from effort, the extent to which effective performance is desired for its own sake. Third, there is instrumentality—the causal relationship that one perceives between one's



performance and the rewards expected to be received as a result of this performance. Finally, there is the valence for employees of the reward. This theory is also known as VIE theory (i.e., valence, instrumentality, expectancy). Expectancy theory, first and foremost, provides a “within-individual” framework for predicting and explaining the choices a person makes (Van Eerde & Thierry, 1996, in Latham, 2006).

Career planning, which is known as the activity of “planning” the career goals themselves, is also in line with the goal -setting theory proposed by John Locke (1964) because goals have an effect in directing attention and action (choice ), mobilizing energy expenditure or effort, extending efforts over time (persistence), and motivating individuals to develop relevant strategies (cognition ) to achieve goals (Locke, Shaw, Saari, & Latham, 1981). With commitment to goals, job performance increases because goals provide a regulatory mechanism that allows employees to observe, monitor, subjectively evaluate, and adjust work behavior to achieve goals (Locke, 1964, in Latham, 2006: 53) . The results are also in line with Snyder's (2002) Hope-Action Theory , which states that optimistic individuals are more likely to have practical goals in life, and are then able to find various ways to pursue goals and, most importantly, are to take continuous action towards achieving goals. In terms of career decision-making, it can provide an opportunity to learn more about oneself and one's place (meaning) in the world (Niles, et al., 2021: 6-10).

### **Career planning has a significant and positive influence on work motivation**

The results of the hypothesis test mean that through good and appropriate career planning, it can grow/create or improve better work motivation for employees. Because, the better the suitability or compatibility in preparing the intended career, whether at the start of a career phase (searching for a new one and/or establishing an initial path to having a job) or for development to a higher level or establishing a different career path from the one previously owned. From an organizational perspective, work motivation is a key lever in maximizing the use of human resources for organizational success. Conversely, in the context of employee performance management, organizations often look at the operation of the motivation process by using personality trait measures to identify applicants (new employees) who are more likely to be reliable, passionate about their work, and work well with others to achieve high levels of unit performance when conducting effective personnel selection (Kanfer, et al. , in Kanfer, et al., 2008: 603-606). Employee motivation to engage in job-related training and career development activities is a subcategory of the “work motivation” construct. On the other hand, in the case of long -term career planning , career development activities may actually shift some of the psychic energy of employees (especially incumbents, currently employed workers) from focusing on their current jobs to contemplating and considering future job moves—sometimes outside the company (organization) altogether (Feldman & Ng, in Kanfer, et al., 2008: 402-404). Individuals acquire new knowledge and skills, develop new interests and passions, seek new opportunities and rewards, experience new constraints, and build and protect self-perceptions of professional competence and identity (Kanfer, et al. , in Kanfer, et al., 2008: 603-606). In linking passion to work, Miller-Tiedeman and Tiedeman (1985) refer to this movement as career or direction-setting in human life. Movement toward self-actualization, whatever we call the direction, increases adaptive capacity. Motivational constructs explicitly indicate the direction (or "positive perception") implicitly set by character. Motivation does not move people; rather, it directs them. By providing motivational direction, character designs life paths and directs daily behavior. Personal needs, work values, and occupational interests have become objective indicators that individuals use to assess their life projects (Savickas, in Bloch & Richmond, 1997: 4-7).



### **Work Motivation has a significant and positive influence either directly on Employee Performance or through its role as mediation for Career Planning**

The view formed through the results of this study is that with the existence of motivational factors formed through job acquisition after preparation and achievement of a career (job) as expected or desired to be developed, the result is that it increasingly encourages someone to provide better work results in accordance with individual performance targets and its impact when linked to the scope of team work (group cooperation) as required by the work organization/company. Work motivation is a psychological process that influences how personal effort and resources are allocated to work-related actions, including the direction, intensity, and persistence of those actions. It is also more accurately defined as a set of processes that determine a person's intention to allocate personal resources across various possible actions, and is not a property of the individual or the environment, but rather the psychological mechanisms and processes that link them. Therefore, to change behavior, one must change motivation (Kanfer, et al. (in Kanfer, et al. , 2008: 1-6). Performance is the extent to which organizational members contribute to achieving organizational goals. Performance is a function of motivation as well as other factors, such as personality, general cognitive ability, emotional intelligence, task understanding, and opportunity. Motivation will translate into good performance if individuals have job-relevant general cognitive ability and emotional intelligence, and if they understand the task (John & Saks, 2023: 205-206).

Elements that can be used to see or measure the level of employee work motivation according to Campbell et al. 's (1970) view, which looks at which persistent efforts are directed towards a goal by assessing aspects such as: (a) effort ; (b) persistence; (c) direction; (d) goals or objectives, including criteria for high productivity, good attendance, and creative decisions (in John & Saks (2023: 177). Meanwhile, for measuring employee (individual) performance, one can use arguments or conceptualizations from Hackman & Oldham (1974, in Buchanan & Huczynsk, 2019: 297), where the work that is designed and carried out can then be analyzed using a job characteristics model in terms of five core dimensions in which employees can demonstrate: (a) Skill variety ; (b) Task identity ; (c) Task significance ; (d) Autonomy ; and (e) Feedback. Occupational wellness, including career satisfaction, is one of the eight core dimensions of health, along with emotional, social, financial, spiritual, physical, intellectual, and environmental health, which are interconnected, and constitute a holistic whole that requires a delicate balance in each area (Smith & Peterssen, 2024: 4). As illustrated when someone has a drive or motivation that aims to impress others, so that someone tends to strive for the next promotion and greater prestige (pleasant extrinsic motivation), so that someone tries to seek personal satisfaction, feelings in terms of competition, success and excitement (intrinsic pleasurable motivation), which then has a desire to enjoy and improve work, to become better at what we do, to advance in the career. This visual representation also allows the concept of work as a career to be compatible with work as a job and in most cases will enter or have it (Guillén, 2021: 184-188).

The importance of similarity in values that differentiate needs in relation to person-environment fit regarding the conceptual division in which needs and values vary, namely the amount an employee desires for one or more psychological needs compared to the importance of one or more values for an employee between an employee and an organization, that the importance placed by a person and an organization on certain attributes will then give rise to supplementary fit; fulfilling the basic need for consensual validation from a person's perspective and has a smaller relationship to employee attitudes because this fit is based on fulfilling environmental needs rather than one's needs. While complementary need-supply fit



is clearly important because it leads to the fulfillment of one's needs so that people (employees) show positive attitudes as long as their needs are met (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005; Van Vianen, 2000, in Latham, 2007: 163). Apart from the organizational level, complementary and additional fit has been at the group, job, and individual levels showing person-group fit (PG), person-job fit (PJ), and person-supervisor fit (PS) as general terms for various conceptualizations at these levels respectively (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Verquer, Beehr, & Wagner, 2003, cited by Greguras, et al., in Gagné, 146-147). Successfully applying motivational theories in the workplace is challenging, and organizations (managers) cannot simply copy or refer to one theory and apply it in a 'pure' form. They also need to be sensitive to differences in individual needs and values among people (subordinates or employees) under their managerial function, avoiding simply viewing 'employees' as a homogeneous group. This is because each person has differences in what is needed and valued, as well as how to perceive and evaluate their work situation. Integrating or combining motivational theories in application, such as expectancy theory, emphasizes the importance of complex social processes in shaping individual and group behavior. Furthermore, it is assumed that employees are motivated when their organizational experiences include favorable perceptions of work, work groups, and management, positive emotions, stronger personal and social identities, and experiences of dignity at work (Amabile and Kramer's, 2007, in Bratton, 2021: 192-193). The explanation of expectancy theory is also considered to be in line with or strengthen and strengthen the argument of this study's results.

## **CONCLUSION**

Thus, based on various research results accompanied by explanations and discussions that have been discussed above, this study confirms the importance of career planning factors also creating, maintaining and increasing employee work motivation to perform better and optimally as required by the organization/company where they work which is based on the results of correlational studies which show that career planning has a positive and significant effect on work motivation which is also a mediating factor for employee performance in a work organization/company.

## **Suggestion**

A limitation of this study is that it was conducted in Yogyakarta, with a sample size of 134 respondents. Therefore, the findings require a broader population to be generalized to other regions with different organizational and situational contexts, particularly across diverse industrial sectors. Future research could also consider using qualitative data analysis techniques, such as those used to assess individual motivation. More broadly, highlighting the regulatory basis for business activities or work organization operations in Indonesia, especially in the Yogyakarta area which still requires more attention from stakeholders, especially from the role of the government from the central to regional/local levels in responding to business activities and community empowerment that are included in the workforce and/or work groups, especially in the next generation which will be increasingly filled or dominated by the current Gen Z group as well as its influence on the next generation in the future, in order to strengthen the position of HR empowerment through the regulation of business entities or employer organizations that are friendly to the demands of the needs and readiness of national and local employment elements as a priority, and included as a national and regional/local strategic agenda by refocusing on improving the quality of HR, such as improving the quality of educational facilities and infrastructure, easy access to facilities, preparation of methods and procedures for good and stable, standard and one learning-education process (national



standards) can be applied or become a reference in order to achieve an even balance of quality under the umbrella of education sector policies or other related fields.

In addition, it requires improvements in quality standards and educational methods in the national curriculum system (independent curriculum in Indonesia) that are more ready to use or implemented, which at the beginning of its formation should have been in line with the intention of helping generations of students who are preparing for their future careers to be more focused, reducing the burden of general learning materials to be directed, specific, as things that need to be prepared/provided or based on their own considerations regarding the materials or competencies that they want to add later, and finally being able to better guarantee and be responsible in achieving/creating the welfare and ideals they hope for. Anticipatory and protective steps that are more responsive, adaptive, and inclusive are urgently needed in improving the system of implementing learning activities and accepting/placing new students at school age from an early age for problems that often become recurring in the regions. Important factors, especially in the aspect of individual readiness and/or capacity as needed for the organization or the desired/desired work profession, especially for the young population of Gen Z who are still at the beginning of their career path, namely still/currently undergoing the learning process either in high school (SMA) or vocational school (SMK) or pursuing higher education at university, in order to better prepare themselves by equipping themselves with the needs for demands for understanding in terms of knowledge (basic, general, and specific scientific fields), as well as enriching experiences that can add to the supporting abilities and skills in the current era that prioritizes the capacity and skills in using digitalized online media/devices as the main characteristics of this generation (Gen Z) more wisely, directed in forming career potential and protected by barriers. It also opens up new and broad perspectives to further develop and rely on one's creativity in determining one's future career and not only rely on one main area of competence, but also fill and/or form other capacities and capabilities that can support a career in terms of one's main job/profession, whether in the field of office administration, certain technical work, or even various opportunities/possibilities that can be obtained so as to guarantee the continuity of well-being until retirement.

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