What is Gen Z Looking For? Work and Career Journey
(Study of the Phenomenon of Gen Z Alumni of Yogyakarta Universities who Work in Sleman, Yogyakarta)

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Abstract. This research discusses the meaning of work and career for Generation Z. The research was conducted using qualitative methods and a phenomenon study approach. The research was conducted in Yogyakarta by involving 5 resource persons with fulfilling criteria, namely Generation Z who are workers and work in the Sleman area, Yogyakarta and are alumni of universities in Yogyakarta. The data analysis method uses Data Triangulation, namely, data reduction, data display and conclusions. Generation Z, known as digital natives, are proficient in using technology, have high creativity, future orientation, and the ability to collaborate. Access to technology allows them to explore a variety of work options that match personal interests and values. The mismatch between work meanings often makes Gen Z less likely to stay in their jobs. The issues addressed in this study are the meaning of work, the meaning of career, and the factors that influence careers for Generation Z. The research findings show that: 1) The meaning of work for Gen Z in the findings, on job orientation, is to earn money to fulfill life needs. In career orientation, it emphasizes the importance of seeking experience, self-development, increasing social status and expanding relationships to prepare for their future careers. While in calling orientation, describing work as a form of worship and giving benefits to others. 2) The meaning of career for gen Z in the findings is a means to achieve professional advancement, apply knowledge, develop skills, and contribute to positive change. 3) Factors that influence careers include internal factors including interests, talents, and knowledge, and external factors including family, friends, social media, work environment, and boyfriend or girlfriend

Keywords Generation Z, Meaning of Work, Meaning of Career, Factors Affecting Career

1. INTRODUCTION

In the current industrial era, Generation Z is increasingly dominating the labor market. According to the Indonesia Gen Z Report 2024 published by *IDN Research Institute*, Generation Z includes individuals born between 1997 and 2012. By 2024, the population of Generation Z in Indonesia will reach around 74.93 million, which is 27.94% of the total population. Thus, Generation Z is the largest demographic group in Indonesia, (IDN Research Institute, 2024). This generation consists of individuals who are still in the phase of young age to early adulthood, namely those born between 1997 and 2012 (Permana, 2021).

Generation Z, known as *digital natives*, are adept at using technology and have high creativity, future orientation, and the ability to collaborate (Gentina, 2020). Technology, which is very close to Gen Z's life, provides easy access to explore various employment options, allowing them to find opportunities that better match their personal interests and values. This fact is also supported by the findings in the GoodStats.id article which shows that Generation

Z has a tendency to stay in the workplace for 1-2 years. In detail, 31% of the total Gen Z respondents (295 people) admitted to staying for 1-2 years in their workplace. (Goodstats.id, 2024).

The city of Yogyakarta, known as the "City of Students," offers a wide range of job opportunities in various sectors, such as technology, creative, education, and so on, which makes it a strategic location for Yogyakarta university alumni to start their career journey. As a city of education with many universities, Yogyakarta is a relevant context to understand the challenges and expectations of Generation Z, who enter the workforce with a different perspective than previous generations. In an article published by Jogjapolitan.harianjogja revealed that, on average, generation Z in Yogyakarta only works for about 1-3 months, when gen-Z feels unsuitable for the job, gen-Z will leave the job. This was conveyed by the Employment and Transmigration Opportunities, Bantul Disnakertrans, Yogyakarta, Rumiyati (Jogjapolitan, 2024)

This phenomenon shows that Generation Z tends to change jobs in a relatively short period of time, reflecting a mismatch in the world of work. This is the basis for exploring the meaning of work and career among Yogyakarta university alumni, especially those who work in Sleman. The meaning of work is the way workers perceive and respond to their work (Wrzesniewski et al., 1997). As expressed by a Generation Z interviewee who works in Yogyakarta, Alwan (23 years old), he wants a job that is not just to fulfill his financial needs, but also to seek new experiences and be able to contribute or help many people. Now Generation Z sees work as a broader and more interesting thing to research.

Based on a preliminary study conducted on generation Z regarding the meaning of work of generation Z in Jakarta, it is known that generation Z has a meaning of work that is in line with the dimensions of *job, career*, and *calling*. The most expected job by generation Z is a job that matches *passion*, has future guarantees, and has an impact on *self-improvement* (Ramadhani & Nindyati, 2022) . *The research gap* lies in the difference in geographical and demographic context between the research in Yogyakarta and the previous research in Jakarta, with new findings in the form of social and spiritual dimensions in the meaning of Gen Z work in Yogyakarta. As expressed by Gen Z workers in Yogyakarta, Alwan (23 years old) revealed that he works to benefit others and Zen (23 years old) works first as a form of worship.

Now generation Z views work as a broader and more interesting thing to research. Work is inseparable from career because every job a person does contributes to the development of his or her career (Kasan, 2022). A career includes a series of jobs that a person does during his or her lifetime with the aim of achieving growth, skill improvement, and

professional recognition in a particular field (Kasan, 2022). A career can also be defined as a job that provides opportunities for growth, both in terms of position, skills, and personal well-being (Rivai, 2003: 266). Semar theory career is a reflection of the *concept of self*, this means that a person chooses a job that allows them to express themselves (Rachmayani, 2015). In pursuing a career, generation Z is also influenced by various factors that can be both supporters and obstacles. According to (Mubarik et al., 2014) factors that influence career decisions are an effort to combine self-awareness by identifying factors inherent in each decision so that it is expected to be able to make the right decisions and choices based on self-knowledge and appropriate external information based on aspects of career attitudes, knowledge, and career skills.

Based on the background of thoughts about generation Z above, the author is interested in conducting research on the meaning of work, the meaning of career for generation Z, and influencing factors in a career. This research was conducted on generation Z who work in Sleman, Yogyakarta. The sources of this research are 5 generation Z people who are alumni of Yogyakarta universities who work in Yogyakarta with different types of jobs. This research is contained in the title ***"What Does Gen Z Want? Work and Career Journey (Phenomenon Study of Gen Z Alumni of Yogyakarta Universities Working in Sleman, Yogyakarta)"***. The results of the study are expected to provide better insight into how generation Z who are alumni of universities in Yogyakarta and work in Sleman, Yogyakarta perceive work and career, as well as provide guidance for organizations and companies in supporting the professional development of this generation.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW
Generation Z

Generation Z is a demographic group born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s. This definition is supported by various sources, such as Barhate and Dirani (2022) who state that Generation Z are those born between 1997 and 2012, as well as the opinions of Gabrielova and Buchko (2021) who agree on the same year range. Generation Z is known as *digital natives*, meaning that they are a generation that was not only born in the era of technology, but also utilizes technology in every aspect of their lives. As *digital natives*, they are used to using technology from an early age and do not need time to adjust to new devices (Gentina, 2020). Stillman & Stillman (2017) identified seven unique characteristics of Generation Z: (1) *Figital*, which merges the physical and digital worlds seamlessly; (2) *Hyper-Customization*, with a desire to create a unique personal identity; (3) *Realistic*, which is focused on practical,

business-oriented goals; (4) *FOMO*, the tendency to stay connected and on top of the latest trends; (5) *Economist*, which prioritizes collaboration and social contribution in the workforce; (6) *DIY*, the tendency to be self-reliant in completing tasks; and (7) *Driven*, a competitive nature that favors quick decision-making but requires caution. These characteristics shape the way they think and interact in their personal and professional lives.

Work Meaning

Work meaning is a set of values, beliefs, attitudes and expectations held by individuals related to work (Gaggioti, 2006). According to Super & Sverko (in Aini, 2022) the meaning of work is one of the orientations or desires of individuals from the work they do and look for a goal during the work process which can ultimately lead to enthusiasm. Meanwhile, according to Rosso, Dekas & Wrzesniewski (in Aini, 2022), the meaning of work refers to the way a person views the work they do. Referring to Wrzesniewski's 1997 theory (in Grillo et al., 2021) regarding the concept of work meaning as *job*, *career*, and *calling*. This theory states that individuals have different ways of understanding and feeling their work, which can generally be categorized into three orientations: *job*, *career*, and *calling*. In the *job* orientation, work is seen as a means of earning an income and making ends meet. *Career* orientation refers to those who see work as a means for self-development and social status enhancement. In the *calling* orientation, individuals see work as an integral part of themselves that gives meaning and purpose to life.

Career meaning

Career meaning is a concept that not only describes the position or job a person holds, but also includes a self-development journey that involves a series of professional experiences throughout an individual's life (Sunardi, 2008). Rachmayani, (2015) the concept of career is actually more of a theory about human relationships with the world of work. Super (in Bela J., 2021) identifies career as a reflection of the *concept of self*, where individuals choose jobs that allow them to express themselves. Career choice is a dynamic matching process, influenced by individual development and the environment. According to the *Social Cognitive Career Theory* (SCCT) (in Zola et al., 2002), *career meaning formation* is a dynamic process, influenced by individual development and the environment. (2022), the formation of career meaning is influenced by (1) self-efficacy-individual *beliefs* in their ability to succeed, (2) *outcome expectations-beliefs* about the results obtained from effort, and (3) *goals-goals* that influence career behavior and decisions.

Previous research on the meaning of work, Ramadhani & Nindyati, (2022) in their research on the Description of the Meaning of Work for Generation Z in Jakarta found that the meaning of work of generation Z in Jakarta is in line with the dimensions of *job, career*, and *calling*. Gen Z in Jakarta shows that if the income earned is greater, then generation Z tends to interpret their work. The most expected job by generation Z is a job that fits their *passion*, has future guarantees, and has an impact on *self-improvement*. These findings indicate that financial motivation and career development opportunities are important factors for generation Z in the world of work. Rahma, E (2019) in her research on millennials conducted in Yogyakarta, with six interviewees. The results of this study indicate that the meaning of work for millennials consists of four meanings, namely: work according to passion, implementation of knowledge and financial independence. Aini (2022) in his research on employees in Jember regency found that the meaning of work for employees includes Jember found that employees' meaning of work includes several aspects that are closely related to the *meaning of work*. Workers define work as a form of obligation and responsibility, earning a living or sustenance, applying the knowledge that has been obtained, the opportunity to develop their competencies, activities that are carried out regularly to gain experience, and work as a form of worship. Ramadhan, F (2018) This research was conducted on baristas in Yogyakarta, with nine resource persons who work as coffee baristas. The results of this study indicate that the meaning of work for baristas consists of four meanings, namely: opportunities to learn and support self-development, make friends from coffee customers, learn and develop knowledge at any time, barista as a profession that requires special skills. Suhartini, T (2018) This research was conducted on early childhood education educators at paud 'aisyiyah bustanul athfal in sleman district, Yogyakarta special area with ten resource persons. The results of this study that the meaning of work for PAUD ABA educators/teachers is as worship, entertainment, to improve the condition of society by sharing knowledge (calling) showing benefits to other people, and making a living (job) Hanifah & Wardono (2020) in their research on Generation Z Job Seekers in Indonesia found that Generation Z work is influenced by five main values, namely intrinsic, extrinsic, altruistic, status, and social work values. They show a desire to help each other and contribute to society through their work and want a better social status than before by working. Fikri et al., (2024) in their research on Analyzing Work Preferences for Generation Z who are undergraduate management students found that employees' work expectations at work are salary, career development, *work life balance, work* location, and flexibility. Generation Z really expects companies that provide active support for individual career development through clear career opportunities. In addition, they prefer jobs with

competitive salaries and flexibility. Bella & Andani (2024) in their research on job characteristics that affect PT Prudential employees, namely *Task identity* reflects the extent to which workers can see the entire task process from start to finish, which provides a sense of achievement and pride. *Task significance* relates to the impact of work on others, which increases a sense of social responsibility. *Skill variety* describes the variety of skills required in the job, *Autonomy* gives employees freedom in determining how to complete tasks and *feedback* in providing information to employees about the effectiveness of their work.

Previous research on career meaning, Putri, M. (2024), in her research on Generation Z employees found that the higher the value of career position growth perceived by Generation Z employees, the stronger their commitment to the organization. The results of this study reflect the meaning of career for Generation Z as something closely related to professional advancement. Generation Z interprets career not only as routine work, but also as an ongoing process to achieve professional goals. Barhate and Dirani (2021) in their research on *Career Aspirations of Generation Z* found that the meaning of career for Generation Z prioritizes jobs that offer *career growth* and opportunities for continuous learning. This study also emphasizes that *career development* and *supportive work environment* are the main factors that influence Generation Z's career preferences. If jobs do not offer career development and only focus on routine without learning opportunities, Generation Z is likely to feel dissatisfied and more prone to *job switching*. Megawati et al. (2024) in their research on Analyzing Gen Z Career Preferences and Values: Implications for the World of Work found that the meaning of career for Generation Z as seen from career preferences includes career development, salary, implications of knowledge possessed, *work life balance*, flexibility, and *work* location. Farla et al., (2022) in their research on *Career Success: Analysis of The Dimensions* found that career success consists of two main dimensions, namely *extrinsic career success* and *intrinsic career success*. The *extrinsic career success* dimension refers to achievements that can be measured objectively, such as salary, promotion, and job status, while *intrinsic career success* is related to individual satisfaction with their work, including satisfaction with self-development and achievement of career goals. This research was conducted on lecturers at one of the state universities in South Sumatra. Ingarianti et al., (2019) in their research on Career Commitment with adaptations to the CCM instrument so that it can be used in Indonesia, found that: (1) *Career identity* is very important because usually a person tends to define themselves through the job they choose; (2) *Career planning* plays a big role in helping a person set long-term goals that match personal aspirations; (3) *Career resilience* allows a person to better deal with changes and challenges, especially in the dynamic world of work. Alfiany, S (2021). in his

research on career planning for people with disabilities at Cupable coffee shop in Yogyakarta, found that career planning for people with disabilities includes *passion*, developing *skills* and business management, participating in competitions and developing Cupable as *personal branding*, showing equality with other baristas, and starting coffee entrepreneurship. Kasan, (2022) in his research on factors that influence career planning in class X of Tilamuta public high school. revealed that these factors consist of within the individual and from outside the individual. Internal factors include *life values*, special talents, interests, personality traits, knowledge, and physical condition, all of which contribute to self-understanding and potential that can be developed for a career. External factors involve *societal* influences, *socioeconomic status*, family expectations, school education, and association with peers, which provide support or barriers to career planning.

3. METHODS

This research uses qualitative methods. According to Creswell (2015) qualitative research begins with assumptions and the use of interpretive or theoretical frameworks that shape or influence the study of related research problems. According to Rusandi & Rusli, (2021) qualitative research allows researchers to explore a phenomenon naturally, relying on observation and interviews.

Research Location

The research was conducted in Sleman District, Yogyakarta.

Population and Sample

Population according to Creswell (2016) is a group of individuals who have the same characteristics. In qualitative research, sample selection is carried out carefully. to ensure that the sample represents the characteristics of the population being studied (Asrulla et al., 2023). The sample used in the study was *purposive sampling* method, which means that the researcher deliberately chose individuals who met certain criteria. The criteria for the selected informants are Generation Z who work and are employees at a business entity in Sleman, Yogyakarta, are alumni of universities in Yogyakarta.T consists of those who have changed jobs and those who have not, to explore various perspectives on how Generation Z interprets work and career.

Research Informants

1) **Muhamad Naufal Alwan**, 23 years old, works at the Health and Sport Center UNY as a *Masseur / Sports Therapist*, work address Karang Malang, Caturtunggal, Kec. Depok, Sleman Regency, DI Yogyakarta 55281, alumni of Yogyakarta universities namely UNY (2019-2023) , length of work 2 years.

2) **Puspa Riningtyas S**, 22 years old, works at JavaConnections as an Admin, work address Jl. Raya Solo - Yogyakarta No.KM 9, Karangploso, Maguwoharjo, Kec. Depok, Sleman Regency, DI Yogyakarta 55282, alumni of Yogyakarta universities namely UII (2020-2024), length of work 4 months, has changed jobs, length of work was 2 months. **(3) M. Fajar Khaerul Anam**, 22 years old, works at PT Teperformance as a *Customer Service,* work address Jl. Magelang KM. 6 No. 18, Kutu Patran, Sinduadi, Kec. Mlati, Sleman Regency, DI Yogyakarta 5528, Yogyakarta university namely UAD (2019-2023), length of service 4 months.

3) **Muhammad Rafif Zaen**, 25 years old, works at the Directorate of Human Resources / UII Leadership School as HR Development Staff (Functional Position), work address Jl. Kaliurang No.Km. 14.5, Krawitan, Umbulmartani, Ngemplak sub-district, Sleman regency, Yogyakarta 55584, university in Yogyakarta namely UII (2018-2022), length of service 2 years.

4) **Marsha Aurellia Syahda**, 23 years old, works at Shopee Indonesia as an *Analyst*, work address Jl. Babarsari No.2, Sleman, Depok District, DI Yogyakarta 55281, alumni of Yogyakarta universities namely UII (2019-2023), length of work 7 months, has moved jobs, length of work was 3 months.

Data Collection Techniques

In this study using the techniques described by Creswell (2015) in his book, data was collected using three main techniques: observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was conducted by visiting the sample location of Generation Z who work in Sleman, Yogyakarta. Interviews were conducted with five interviewees selected by *purposive sampling*, namely Generation Z alumni of Yogyakarta universities. Interviews were recorded to ensure accuracy, and documentation was conducted in the form of photographs and audio recordings as supporting evidence.
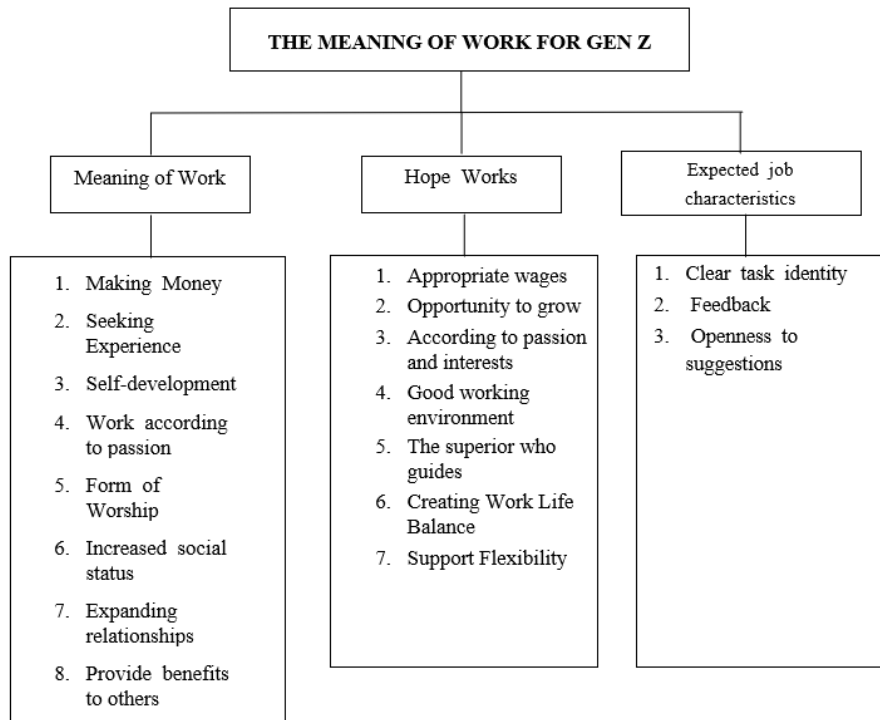
Data Analysis Method

This research uses data analysis based on the method described by Sekaran and Bougie (2017), which is divided into two stages. The first stage is analysis before field research, which includes preliminary studies, initial observations, selection of suitable sources, and initial interviews. After that, the researcher formulates the problem to be studied. The second stage is analysis after data collection, which consists of three steps: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

4. RESULTS

The meaning of work for Gen Z

Based on the data reduction that has been made by the author, the results of the first problem formulation can be presented in the following data *display* :

THE MEANING OF WORK FOR GEN Z

Meaning of Work	Hope Works	Expected job characteristics
1. Making Money 2. Seeking Experience 3. Self-development 4. Work according to passion 5. Form of Worship 6. Increased social status 7. Expanding relationships 8. Provide benefits to others	1. Appropriate wages 2. Opportunity to grow 3. According to passion and interests 4. Good working environment 5. The superior who guides 6. Creating Work Life Balance 7. Support Flexibility	1. Clear task identity 2. Feedback 3. Openness to suggestions

Source: research data (2025)

Based on the research findings, Generation Z not only sees work as a means to earn money, but also as an opportunity to develop themselves and contribute to society. In line with research (Grillo et al., 2021) using the theory by Wrzesniewski regarding the meaning of work *job, career, calling*. The results of the research findings, on *job* orientation, Gen Z works to make money, on *career* orientation, Gen Z emphasizes the importance of seeking experience, self-development, increasing social status and expanding relationships to prepare for their

future careers. While on *calling orientation,* Gen Z describes work as a form of worship and benefits others. In Ramadhani & Nindyati's research, (2022) on the Overview of Work Meaning for Generation Z in Jakarta shows that if the income earned is greater, then generation Z tends to interpret their work. In line with the findings of this study.

> *"Working for myself, the most important thing is to earn money..." (Alwan, 22/10/24, 10.00 WIB)*

> *"For me, working, actually honestly working to make money, deck." (Puspa, 22/10/24, 14.00 WIB)*

The meaning of work for Generation Z also includes seeking experience. This is in line with Aini's research (2022), which found that in Jember Regency employees defined work as a form of activity that is carried out regularly to gain experience. Similar to this study, Generation Z also interprets work as an experience.

> *".... For me, working now is also to seek new experiences or learn new things..." (Alwan, 22/10/24, 10.00 WIB)*

> *"...Besides earning money, I'm also looking for experience too, valuable experience to grow later...." (Puspa, 22/10/24, 14.00 WIB)*

The meaning of work for Generation Z also includes self-development, which is in line with Ramadhani & Nindyati's (2022) findings that career development is an important factor for Generation Z in Jakarta. In the findings of this study, Gen Z who have just graduated and are still in the process of self-development, see work as a place to develop themselves. This is also similar to the findings of Ramadhan, F (2018) regarding baristas who interpret work as a means of self-development.

> *"And as a form of self-development, when I first started working until now maybe it has pretty much been able to change ourselves into something that becomes a better self." (Zen, 11/11/24, 10.30 WIB)*

> *"...working for self-development too. Because yesterday I was a student, what I felt was really different..." (Marsha, 12/11/24, 19.00 WIB)*

The meaning of work for Generation Z also includes working according to *passion*, which is in line with the findings of Rahma, E (2019)'s research on the *millennial* generation at UII Yogyakarta. The study found that one of the meanings of work for millennials is working according to *passion*. This was also found in this study, where gen Z interpreted work in accordance with their *passion* and the fields studied during college.

> *"...As a graduate of the informatics study program, I want a job that matches my passion and the field I studied during college..." (Fajar, 3/11/24, 14.00 WIB)*

The meaning of work for Generation Z also includes a form of worship, which is in line with the findings of Aini (2022) on Jember Regency employees found that, workers define work in addition to experience, also as a form of worship. This is also found in this study, that working to balance the life of the world and the hereafter, a form of worship that is the obligation of a Muslim.

> *"...to work is first of all certainly as an obligation in the sense that it is a form of worship for a Muslim. " (Zen, 11/11/24, 10.30 WIB)*

Increasing social status is one of the aspects that Generation Z also interprets in work. This finding is in line with Hanifah & Wardono's (2020) research, which shows that Generation Z in Indonesia wants better social status through their work, as well as contributing positively to society.

> *"So working is also a positive view from the community, as long as you as a man can work and provide for the community." (Zen, 11/11/24, 10.30 WIB)*

The meaning of work for Generation Z also includes the opportunity to expand relationships, which is in line with the findings of Ramadhan, F (2018) on baristas in Yogyakarta. The study found that baristas interpreted their work, among others, to expand their social network through interactions with customers.

> *"I work in this company to expand my network, such as from friendships, and so on" (Fajar, 3/11/24, 14.00 WIB).*

The meaning of work for Generation Z also includes providing benefits to others, which is in line with the findings of Suhartini, T (2018) on PAUD educators in Yogyakarta. The study showed that for PAUD teachers, work is also a means to share knowledge and provide benefits.

> *"Of course, besides that, it is also to benefit other people. I am in the service sector, so if it turns out that my services can satisfy other people, I feel very useful, very satisfied too" (Alwan, 22/10/24, 10.00 WIB).*

After researchers know the meaning of working gen Z, researchers need to find out related to expectations. Work expectations are something that workers want. The findings regarding work expectations for Generation Z in this study include appropriate wages, opportunities for development, according to *passions* and interests, a good work environment, a supervisor who guides, the creation of a *work-life balance*, and supports flexibility. In line with the findings of Fikri et al. (2024), that employees' work expectations at work are salary, career development, *work life balance, work* location, and flexibility. The difference lies in the work location.

"The first expectation of workers for me is obviously about salary. I hope my salary is in accordance with the skills or knowledge that I have learned so far...". (Alwan, 22/10/24, 10.00 WIB)

"I also hope for the development of the skills that I have given to this job...". (Puspa, 22/10/24, 14.00 WIB)

"That's right. Well yes, I feel like there is no balance for my work and life, it's really messy...I wish I could work with more humane hours, so I have time to rest and take care of my life too." (Puspa, 22/10/24, 14.00 WIB)

"This is related to flexibility. Currently, in my job as a customer service representative, there is a shift system. However, some of the shifts are in the middle of the night or early morning, which often disrupts my golden hours of sleep." (Fajar, 3/11/24, 14.00 WIB)

Gen Z's expectations regarding working according to their interests and *passions* is a new finding. Where Gen Z wants to work according to their interests, sometimes Gen Z's work is not in line with their interests and *passions*.

"Work will be more fun if it is in accordance with our passion. Because it will make me more motivated and feel satisfied at work, ..." (Fajar, 3/11/24, 14.00 WIB)

Work expectations in the findings also include a good work environment and a supervisor who guides. This is similar to the findings of Firmansyah (2022) employees expect comfort in the workplace that supports productivity, as well as from superiors as an ongoing process to inform employees about their situation and the organization's performance towards a goal. Likewise by Amanullah et al., (2014) who discussed employee work expectations at the Bulu Lor Semarang health center related to the work environment and superiors who communicate openly to employees.

"Work expectations from this environment, want a *supportive* environment for me to develop...". (Alwan, 22/10/24, 11.00 WIB)

"But, I feel that I don't get enough direction from my superiors. So the hope is that there are superiors who guide, which is really important in my opinion." (Puspa, 22/10/24, 14.00 WIB)

The job characteristics that Gen Z expects in the findings vary, these include clear task identity, feedback, and openness to suggestions. Gen Z expects clear tasks according to their work position and only focused on one skill. Previous research by Bella & Andani, (2024) provides a view of the five core dimensions of work characteristics that influence employee job satisfaction at PT Prudential Life Assurance Indonesia . These five dimensions of work characteristics are task *identity, task significance, skill variety, autonomy, and feedback*. The

similarities with the findings of this study, according to the *job desk* they applied for (task identity) and *feedback*.

> *"In my opinion, the most important thing is that the task is in accordance with the jobdesk that I applied for." (Puspa, 22/10/24, 14.00 WIB)*

> *"...so the characteristic that I want is feedback. Why, because it lets me know where my strengths and weaknesses are in my work..." (Alwan, 22/10/24, 10.00 WIB)*

Generation Z in the findings also expects the characteristics of openness to proposals, in line with research by Narottama & Surya (2015) conducted on employees at KPN Kamadhuk Sanglah Hospital that employees who have the opportunity to participate in making decisions in the field of duty are expected job characteristics.

> *"...When I first entered UII until now, what I really feel is that there is more openness to new proposals or new thoughts..." (Zen, 11/11/24, 10.30 WIB)*

The Meaning of Career for Gen Z

Based on the data reduction that has been made by the author, the results of the first problem formulation can be presented in the following data *display*
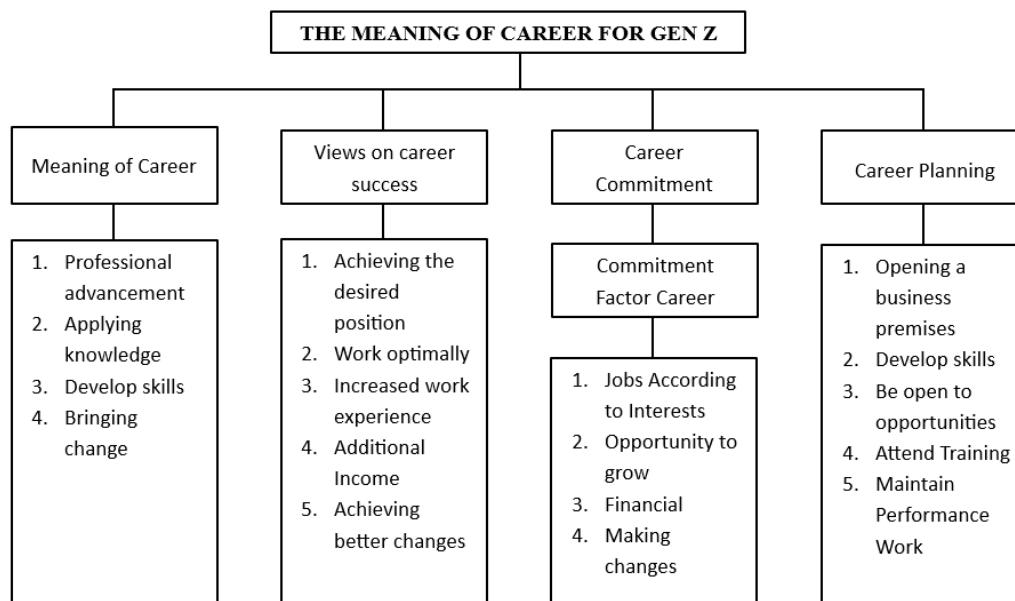
Source: research data (2025)

Career meaning is a concept that not only describes the position or job a person holds, but also includes a journey of self-development that involves a series of professional experiences throughout life (Sunardi, 2008). Gen Z career meaning in the findings of this study includes professional advancement, applying knowledge, developing skills, bringing change.

In previous research by Putri, M. (2024) on gen Z employees found that the higher the value of career position growth felt by Generation Z employees. This is in line with the research findings, that professional advancement affects career meaning.

> *"Regarding my career, reaching the position of lecturer from the work that I do" (Alwan, 22/10/24, 10.00 WIB)*

> *"...the meaning that I understand, where I can get to the desired position. I really want to be an Apparatus HR Analyst" (Puspa, 22/10/24, 14.00 WIB)*

The meaning of career for Generation Z includes the application of knowledge that has been learned and the development of skills in line with the findings of Megawati et al. (2024) on generation Z who mentioned career development as one of the main career preferences. This is also supported by Barhate and Dirani's (2021) research, on generation Z which emphasizes that *career growth* and continuous learning opportunities are priorities.

> *"..... On the other hand, while being a lecturer, I want to open my own therapist clinic. That way, I am not only giving theoretical knowledge, but can directly apply the knowledge I have learned..." (Alwan, 22/10/24, 10.00 WIB)*

> *"...my career where I can continue to develop the skills that are in me, yes..." (Fajar, 3/11/24, 14.00 WIB)*

Career meaning for Generation Z also includes bringing change, this is new, but the findings of Farla et al.'s research on lecturers in Sumatra on intrinsic career success, showed that career meaning also includes individual satisfaction in achieving career goals. (2022) on lecturers in Sumatra on *intrinsic career success*, showed that career meaning also includes individual satisfaction in achieving career goals. Gen Z interprets its career to be able to bring change as the main goal.

> *"So for me personally at this time the meaning of my career is to be able to bring good changes to the organization" (Zen, 11/11/24. 10.30 WIB).*

After exploring the meaning of career, one needs to have a view of success in their career. The views of career success in the findings of this study include achieving the desired position, additional income, working optimally, increasing work experience, and achieving better changes . In previous research Farla et al. (2022) on lecturers in South Sumatra found that career success consists of two main dimensions, namely *extrinsic career success* and *intrinsic career success*. The *extrinsic career success* dimension refers to achievements that can be measured objectively, such as salary, promotion, and job status, while *intrinsic career success* relates to individual satisfaction with their career, including satisfaction with self-development and achievement of career goals. Similar to the findings of this study, success

from achieving a desired position and additional income describes *intrinsic* factors and working to the maximum, increasing work experience, and achieving a change for the better describes *extrinsic* factors

> *"In my opinion, success in our career is when we can achieve several things that are our main goals. First, definitely achieving the position we want..." (Puspa, 22/10/24, 14.00 WIB)*
>
> *"...So yes, success can be from how I work optimally so that I can be seen as qualified to be able to achieve, to take the position." (Zen, 11/11/24, 10.30 WIB)*
>
> *"Career success is also an increase in work experience, it can be by my future participation in large projects..." (Fajar, 3/11/24, 14.00 WIB)*
>
> *"The view of success for me is one of increasing income too...so at least my salary is not just the basic salary, there are other incentives". (Marsha, 12/11/24, 19.00 WIB)*
>
> *"Of course, success in my view is related to change. When we can provide a good change, it can change everything that might not have been good before into something better..." (Zen, 11/11/24, 10.30 WIB)*

To achieve this success, generation Z shows career commitment which includes emotional attachment and recognition of self-identity formed through work (Hidayati, 2024). Research findings regarding career commitment for gen Z in this study include work according to interests, opportunities for growth, *financial*, and can provide change. This has similarities with previous research findings by Ingarianti et al., (2019) by applying the CCM instrument in Indonesia found that career commitment can be seen through, (1) *Career identity*, this is in line with research findings, namely gen-Z career commitment to jobs that match interests. (2) *Career planning*, this is also in line with the findings, namely the opportunity to develop. (3) *Career resilience*. The difference lies in the financial aspect and bringing change.

> *"For me, commitment in my career is very much influenced by how much the work I do matches my interests." (Puspa, 22/10/24, 14.00 WIB)*
>
> *"...the more opportunities relevant to my interests that the company offers, the greater my commitment to stay and give my best." (Fajar, 3/11/24, 14.00 WIB)*

In Nuraini et al.'s research, (2021) found that *personality motivation* contributes to increasing commitment which encourages individuals to be more passionate about careers in accounting education students. Likewise, with the findings of this study, career commitment includes financial motivation and bringing about change.

"The same is most related to finances. So with the increase in level in my job, of course the salary will increase. Either the basic salary or the extra money. So the more financially secure I am, the more committed I am." (Alwan, 22/10/24, 10.00 WIB)

"Because there is a desire for me to make a change from something that is not good to good. That is what I am committed to in order to continue to be in this position..." (Zen, 11/11/24, 10.30 WIB)

After someone already has a commitment to their career, future career planning is needed. Alfiany, S (2021). in his research on career planning for people with disabilities at Cupable coffee shop in Yogyakarta, found that career planning for people with disabilities includes *passion*, developing *skills* and business management, participating in competitions and developing Cupable as *personal branding*, showing equality with other baristas, and starting coffee entrepreneurship. The similarity with this research is developing *skills*, attending training, and opening a business place.

"...I want to open a therapy center..." (Alwan 22/10/24, 10.00 WIB)

"I plan my career by focusing on developing skills that are relevant to myself..." (Puspa 22/10/24, 14.00 WIB)

"I also still do some kind of training activities as a data analyst from the Ministry of Communication and Information..." (Fajar, 3/11/24, 14.00 WIB)

In addition, the findings of this study show that Gen Z career planning also includes being open to opportunities. This is something new, showing that even though gen Z is already working in a place or position, they are still looking forward to opportunities that can be taken in their career.

"...always be open to new opportunities that can help in the long run..." (Puspa, 22/10/24, 10.00 WIB)
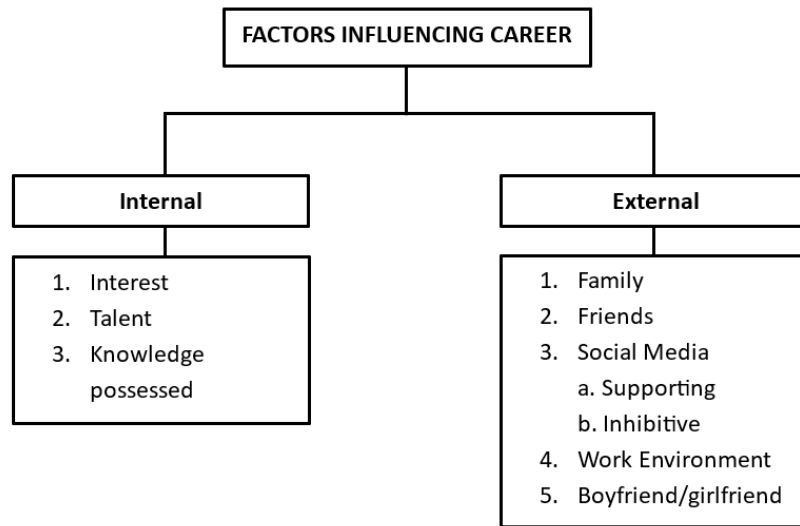
"...Apart from that, I also try to be open to discuss with my superiors, like what I mentioned at the beginning, I also told my superiors that if there is an opportunity to move up to HR, please let me know. Besides that, I diligently open Shopee career, because all the information is there, so I try to diligently open Shoppee career..." (Marsha 12/11/24, 19.00 WIB)

Finally, in the findings of this study, gen Z career planning is also with the effort to work optimally. In line with previous research, literature analysis by Fahmi & Hapzi Ali, (2022) the enthusiasm in maintaining work performance shows the motivation of gen-Z in career planning.

"...My step is to maximize what I can do to achieve the desired position. Be a good staff, then carry out all responsibilities..." Zen (11/11/24, 10.30 WIB)

Factors that influence Gen Z careers

Based on the data reduction that has been made by the author, the results of the first problem formulation can be presented in the following data *display*

```
                    ┌──────────────────────────────┐
                    │  FACTORS INFLUENCING CAREER  │
                    └──────────────────────────────┘
                                  │
              ┌───────────────────┴───────────────────┐
     ┌──────────────────┐                    ┌──────────────────┐
     │     Internal     │                    │     External     │
     └──────────────────┘                    └──────────────────┘
     ┌──────────────────┐                    ┌──────────────────┐
     │ 1. Interest      │                    │ 1. Family        │
     │ 2. Talent        │                    │ 2. Friends       │
     │ 3. Knowledge     │                    │ 3. Social Media  │
     │    possessed     │                    │    a. Supporting │
     │                  │                    │    b. Inhibitive │
     │                  │                    │ 4. Work Environment │
     │                  │                    │ 5. Boyfriend/girlfriend │
     └──────────────────┘                    └──────────────────┘
```

Source: Research data (2025)

Factors that influence career decisions according to Mubarik et al., (2014) is an effort to combine self-awareness by identifying factors inherent in each decision so that it is expected to be able to make the right decisions and choices based on self-knowledge and appropriate external information based on aspects of career attitudes, knowledge, and career skills. In the research findings by generation Z working at Yogyakarta, it was found that internal factors that influence careers include interests, talents, and knowledge possessed. While external factors include family, friends, social media, work environment, and boyfriend or girlfriend.

Related to internal factors, in previous research by Kasan (2022), internal factors that influence career planning of class X students of SMA Negeri 1 Tilamuta include *life values*, special talents, interests, personality traits, knowledge, and physical condition. The similarity in the findings of this study lies in the special talents, interests, and knowledge that also affect the careers of gen Z who work in Sleman, Yogyakarta.

"Okay, my career is according to my interests..." (Marsha 12/11/24, 19.00 WIB)

".... in addition to the encouragement from oneself to be able to continue to utilize the talents possessed in this terappis. ...." (Alwan, 22/10/24, 10.00 WIB)

"...the talent I have" (Puspa, 22/10/24, 14.00 WIB)

"...and also I have knowledge that has been developed for a long time in this field." (Fajar 3/11/24, 14.00 WIB)

Regarding external factors, research by Kasan (2022) revealed that external factors that influence the career of Class X Sma Negeri 1 Tilamuta, namely the influence of society, *socioeconomic status* (socioeconomic status), family expectations, school education, and association with peers, which provide support or obstacles in preparing career planning. Similarities with the findings of this study are family and friends.

"...because of family encouragement, like when I was offered to continue as an employee at my current workplace, I had to consult my parents first for future progress or support from them..." (Alwan 22/10/24, 10.00 WIB)

"...Then my friends listen to me when I vent, share information, and also provide solutions..." (Puspa, 22/10/24, 14.00 WIB)

The findings of this study also show that social media affects careers for gen Z. This is in line with the findings in previous research by Kartini & Andalia (2022). This is in line with the findings in previous research by Kartini & Andalia (2022) regarding the influence of social media at work for *millennials*, that social media, when used appropriately, can increase productivity. However, social media can also be an inhibiting factor if its use is not well regulated. This is similar to the findings of this study, social media can both help and hinder.

"Social media is one of my factors in my career..." (Alwan, 22/10/24, 10.00 WIB

"In my opinion, it really helps, because nowadays there is a lot of information about lockers on IG or not on Linkedin, there are a lot of people who are open to networking..." (Marsha, 12/11/24, 19.00 WIB)

"Being a blocker is when you spend too much time scrolling without a clear purpose. As a generation Z, sometimes I also get caught up in seeing updates from my friends or other people showing off their success... This sometimes makes me feel dissatisfied with my current job and brings up feelings of overthinking. (Fajar 3/11/24, 14.00 WIB)

Another thing that can affect Generation Z's career is the work environment. A *supportive* environment will help and increase the enthusiasm of working gen Z. The same thing was also revealed in Sari et al.'s research (2023) on PT BRI employees, finding that a supportive work environment has an influence on employee careers.

"Yes, maybe it's the same work environment, Ma'am...Besides that, I got a lot of help and felt that I was already united, so it was a bit burdensome to move." (Fajar, 3/11/24, 14.00 WIB)

Finally, the factor that can influence the career of gen Z in the study from the external side is a girlfriend or boyfriend. Girlfriends are considered as people who can provide support and input. In line with the findings of Kornblum et al.'s (2021) research on *How Romantic Relationships Affect Individual Career Goal Attainment: A Transactive Goal Dynamics Perspective* found that romantic relationships can affect individual career goal achievement.

> *"Including my boyfriend too...so if I complain, there will definitely be input like that..."* (Puspa, 22/10/24, 14.00 WIB)

5. CONCLUSION

Conclusion

The meaning of work for gen Z in this study includes: (1) Meaning of Work: earning money, seeking experience, self-development, work according to passion, increasing social status, expanding relationships, a form of worship and benefiting others. (2) Work Expectations: Appropriate wages, opportunities for growth, according to passion and interests, good work environment, supervisors who guide, creation of *work-life balance*, and support for flexibility.(3) Expected Job Characteristics: Clear task identity, feedback, and openness to suggestions.

Career meanings for gen Z in this study include: (1) Career Meaning: Professional advancement, applying knowledge, developing skills, and bringing change. (2) View of Success in Career: Achieving the desired position, working optimally, increasing work experience, additional income, and achieving better changes.(3) Career Commitment: Viewed from the factors that make gen Z committed to their careers include work that suits their interests, opportunities for growth, financial, and providing change. (4) Career Planning: Opening a business, developing skills, being open to opportunities, attending training, and maintaining work performance

Factors that influence Generation Z's career in the research findings include, (1) Internal Factors: Interests, talents, and knowledge possessed. (2) External Factors: Family, friends, social media, work environment, and boyfriend or girlfriend.

Advice

For Generation Z is to set realistic long-term career goals and be flexible to changing job trends, as well as build professional networks and utilize technology wisely. In addition, it is important to learn from mentors or coworkers and maintain a balance between personal

ambitions and the needs of the working world to create a meaningful and sustainable career.

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