

Effect of Self-Efficacy and Peer Social Support on Students' Career Maturity

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Article Info

History Articles
Received:
10 June 2024
Accepted:
16 Juny 2024
Published:
31 August 2024

Keywords:
Self-efficacy, Peer
Social Support,
Career Maturity

Abstract

The part of the phenomena of vocational high school students' (SMK) perplexity about their future profession options are attributed to their immaturity and lack of preparedness for the workforce. With an ex post facto study using a sample of 280 students from SMKN 6 Kota Semarang, the purpose of this research is to investigate the impact of peer social support and self-efficacy on their career maturity. Multiple linear regression analysis was used to test the research findings, and the results show that career maturity is highly affected by self-efficacy. In a similar vein, career maturity is greatly affected by peer social support. Thus, career maturity is affected by both peer social support and self-efficacy combined. These results help to clarify the requirements and difficulties faced by students when selecting their future careers, allowing for more targeted and efficient counseling.

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p-ISSN 2252-6889
e-ISSN 2502-4450

INTRODUCTION

Career maturity is a critical component in career development, as well as in successful career exploration and decision-making (Sinuraya et al., 2022). Career maturity has a profound effect on individuals and is a prerequisite for reaching life objectives. It helps students with the ability to make informed career choices, aiding in their maturation process. Students with low career maturity often struggle with career planning and tend to lack clear plans for their future careers (Apriliana & Suranata, 2022).

Individuals seen as mature in their occupations are able to comprehend the vocations they have chosen and develop their skills to fit them. In addition, career-mature students focus on careers that interest them and strive to overcome setbacks in order to advance in their careers (Djunaedi et al., 2022).

A previous study by Lindawati et al. (2022) found that career maturity among two vocational high schools in the 12th grade has moderate career maturity at 59.52%, low career maturity at 29.79%, and high career maturity at 10.71%. Additionally, compared to their male peers, female students had higher degrees of career maturity.

This career maturity is affected by self-efficacy. Self-efficacy and career maturity have been linked in previous studies (Seligman in Sinuraya et al., 2022).

Because it encompasses students' understanding and belief in their skills to achieve their goals, self-efficacy plays a significant role in career planning particularly in terms of achieving a

successful career. One prominent figure who discussed self-efficacy is Bandura. Self-efficacy is defined as an individual's belief in their capacity to achieve desired goals. According to Bandura (1986), self-efficacy is the conviction that each person has in their capacity to perform particular tasks.

Low self-efficacy can impact a student's ability to reach their goals, including their career objectives. Students who possess a high level of self-efficacy are more likely to reach career maturity (Aminah et al., 2021). Essentially, high school students are already capable of making decisions and taking responsibility for their choices, including their career decisions. In addition, Aminah et al. (2021) discovered that students' career maturity increased with their level of self-efficacy, the higher the self-efficacy, the higher their career maturity. This significant positive relationship underscores the importance of self-efficacy in developing career maturity among vocational high school students.

According to previous research by Wahyuningsih et al. (2023), vocational high school students had low levels of self-efficacy (66.32%), which negatively impacted their career decision-making. This study is supported by research identified a significant effect of self-efficacy on career maturity, highlighting self-efficacy as a crucial component in achieving career maturity (Jianchao et al., 2022).

Beside self-efficacy, the students' career maturity is affected by social support from their peers (Dewi et al.,

2020). Theoretically, peers are individuals of similar maturity levels and age categories (Santrock, 2009). Students' career maturity is greatly affected by their peers, who frequently act as their primary source of support when making career decisions—sometimes even more than parental advice (Kristiono, 2018). Students frequently spend time with peers who they believe understand their circumstances and provide support in decision-making, including career choices, which are a part of career maturity.

As explained by Nickerson & Nagle (in Sandri, Yuliana, & Muslikah, 2021), most adolescents have more communication and trust with their peers than with their parents, as peers are perceived as sources of information outside the parental domain (Santrock in Zulfa et al., 2018). Students are less likely to choose a specific major or career if their peers do not also select it, indicating that peer influence plays a role in the career decision process, though there is no significant difference between male and female students in this regard (Oduh, Agboola & Eibhalemen, 2020). In addition, previous research by Hendayani & Abdullah (2018) indicated that the higher the peer support, the better the professional maturity of the students. This supports the idea that peer support can have a major impact on career maturity.

Based on preliminary research conducted by the researchers at SMKN 6 Kota Semarang through interviews with BK teachers, it shows that SMKN students were still unsure about their

career path one to two months after graduation. There have also been cases of graduates working in fields unrelated to their academic background. Previous research also indicates that many students lack career maturity, as evidenced by insufficient career planning, career selection, and decision-making skills post-graduation. This clearly demonstrates an issue with career maturity among vocational high school students.

Therefore, self-efficacy and peer social support are hypothesized to affect career maturity. This study aims to explore the impact of self-efficacy and peer social support on career maturity among vocational high school students. The findings of this research are crucial for elucidating how peer social support and self-efficacy contribute to students' increased career maturity.

RESEARCH METHOD

The respondents in this study comprised 280 students from SMKN 6 Kota Semarang. They were selected using a cluster random sampling technique, with the sample size determined based on the Slovin formula.

The instruments used included psychological scales, such as the General Self-Efficacy Scale, the Peer Social Support Scale, and the Career Maturity Scale. The General Self-Efficacy Scale was adapted and developed from Schwarzer et al. (1997), originally consisting of 10 items but expanded to 20 items encompassing 3 indicators: magnitude (8 items), strength (4 items), and generality (8 items). After testing, 19 items were found valid, and 1 item was

discarded, resulting in a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.83 for the self-efficacy variable.

In addition, the Peer Social Support Scale was developed based on Sarafino (2007) with 32 items, covering 4 indicators, such as emotional support (8 items), esteem support (8 items), instrumental support (8 items), and informational support (8 items). After testing, 31 items were found valid, and 1 item was discarded, resulting in a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.91 for the peer social support variable.

Other than that, the Career Maturity Scale was developed based on Sharf (2013) with 40 items, consisting of 7 indicators, such as career planning (7 items), career exploration (7 items), decision making (5 items), world of work information (6 items), knowledge of job groups (5 items), career decisions (6 items), and career orientation (4 items). After testing, 35 items were found valid, and 5 items were discarded, resulting in a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.88, indicating very high reliability. From the validity and reliability test conducted, all three scales are deemed suitable for use in this research.

The data collected were analyzed through prerequisite tests and hypothesis testing using multiple linear regression analysis with the assistance of SPSS 26.00.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The detailed data description specifically presents the intercorrelation of the mean and standard deviation for self-efficacy, peer social support, and career maturity. The findings of the

descriptive analysis show that the degree of professional maturity ($M = 110.01$, $SD = 24.50$) and peer social support ($M = 89.11$, $SD = 11.09$) both lean toward the moderate group, while the level of self-efficacy ($M = 58.78$, $SD = 7.89$) tends toward the high category. Table 1 provides an overview of the characteristics of each variable.

Table 1. The Results of Descriptive Statistical Analysis

	Mean	SD
Self-Efficacy	58.78	7.891
Peer Social Support	89.11	11.09
Career Maturity	110.01	14.50

Multiple regression analysis results showed that self-efficacy positively correlated with career maturity ($\beta = 0.98$, $p < 0.01$). Furthermore, the results of the multiple regression analysis showed that peer social support had a beneficial impact on professional maturity ($\beta = 0.43$, $p < 0.01$). Thus, this study shows that career maturity is correlated with both peer social support and self-efficacy ($R = 0.80$, $p < 0.01$). When combined, peer social support and self-efficacy explain 64% of the variation in career maturity ($R^2 = 0.64$).

Table 2. Multiple Regression Test Results

Predictor	β	T	P
SE	.978	10.24	< 0.01
PSS	.423	6.23	< 0.01
R		.80	
R^2		0.64	
F		240.65	
P		<0.01	

Notes: SE: Self-Efficacy; PSS: Peer Social Support; CM: Career Maturity

The findings of this research are

supported by previous research. Self-efficacy plays a crucial role in career planning, as it enables students to be aware of and believe in their abilities to achieve their goals, specifically in attaining a successful career. Students who have a high sense of their own abilities are more capable of working toward career maturity (Aminah et al., 2021).

Furthermore, prior research by Wahyuningsih et al. (2023) found that the level of self-efficacy among vocational high school students was low at 66.32%, which negatively impacted their career decision-making. Jianchao et al. (2022) supports the findings of this study. They indicated the impact of self-efficacy on professional maturity and recognizing self-efficacy as a critical component in reaching career maturity. Additional studies also support the assertion that self-efficacy affects career maturity in students (Naila & Manikandan, 2024; Ahsanu & Rozamuri, 2023). Anderson and Brown (1997) state that self-efficacy has a significant role in defining a student's career maturity, especially for those who live in both urban and rural areas.

In addition to self-efficacy, social support from family also affects students' career maturity (Dewi et al., 2020). Theoretically, peers are individuals of similar maturity levels and age categories (Santrock, 2009). Peers impact students' career maturity, serving as a source of support when they need assistance in making career decisions, often more so than advice from parents (Kristiono, 2018). As a crucial component of career maturity, students often spend time with

peers who they consider to be aware of their situation and who offer support when making decisions, especially those related to their careers.

Students tend to choose a particular field of study or career if it is also selected by their peers. Prior research has found a significant effect of peers have a significant influence on students' career processes, with no discernible differences between male and female students (Oduh, Agboola & Eibhalemen, 2020). Social support from peers can affect career maturity, as supported by Hendayani & Abdullah (2018) who found that the higher the support from peers, the greater the career maturity among students. Additional research indicates that social support from peers plays a crucial role in assisting students in achieving good career maturity (Puspitasari et al., 2022).

Furthermore, previous studies have examined at the impact of peer social support and self-efficacy on career maturity. Faturrahmansyah and Susilawati (2022) discovered that these factors jointly improve career maturity in high school students. Self-efficacy significantly improves the career maturity of vocational high school students, and social support also plays a significant role in enhancing their career maturity. Moreover, Putra et al. (2023) discovered a highly substantial positive correlation between final-year students' career maturity and their sense of self-efficacy and peer social support. This suggests that students' career maturity can be affected by both peer social support and self-efficacy.

For students to reach career

maturity, social support from their surroundings and self-belief in their own potential and abilities are essential. The results of this study show that professional maturity is significantly influenced by peer social support and self-efficacy. As a result, efforts should focus on building peers' social support networks and self-efficacy in order to inspire students—especially those enrolled in vocational high schools—to reach career maturity.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion, the conclusion is identified that among vocational high school students, self-efficacy, and peer social support positively affect their career maturity. In other words, the better the self-efficacy and peer social support, the higher the career maturity experienced by students. From this, counselors or guidance and counseling teachers should be more aware of the development of problems faced by their students, particularly in terms of self-efficacy and peer social support.

Future researchers could conduct studies on with distinct demographics—such as Islamic school (MA) or high school (SMA) students—or in other places with larger populations. To get more accurate study results, future researchers can increase the range of factors, create targeted treatments or offer interventions meant to improve these variables, and employ mixed-method or qualitative approaches. Other than that, based on the limitations of this study, future research could also consider gender and age factors in similar studies.

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