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## **Self-Efficacy Training as a Strategy to Improve Career Maturity of Vocational High School Students**

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### **Abstract**

Self-efficacy training is needed to improve the career maturity of vocational high school students to be better prepared to face the demands of the working world. This study aims to test the self-efficacy training module in improving the career maturity of vocational high school students. This study used a quantitative experimental method involving 15 students as research subjects. Sampling used a purposive sampling technique with cluster sampling criteria. This study used a career maturity scale of 34 statement items as the main instrument. The data obtained were analysed using an independent t-test on the IBM SPSS version 21 application. The results of the analysis showed a significant difference in career maturity in the experimental group and the control group after the experimental group was given self-efficacy training ( $t = -2.742$  and  $sig. = 0.011$ ), meaning that providing self-efficacy training can improve the career maturity of vocational high school students. Suggestions for guidance counsellors and schools can integrate self-efficacy training programs on an ongoing basis to help students develop career maturity. This study provides an overview that increasing self-efficacy through training can be an effective strategy in preparing vocational school students to face the demands of the world of work, so it is worthy of being applied more widely in other vocational schools.

**Keywords:** career maturity, Holland's RIASEC, self-efficacy

### **INTRODUCTION**

Vocational High Schools (SMK) are formal schools aimed at producing the best graduates, aligned with students' skills, job-related skills, self-development, and the creation of easy-to-run businesses in their respective fields (Apriyani dkk., 2020). Islamiati (2023) stated that companies can still not fully absorb the 3.5 million job seekers. The mismatch between what educational institutions prepare and what the job market needs is one of the ongoing challenges in workforce absorption (Sitorus & Wicaksono, 2020). As a result, workforce absorption is severely

limited due to the mismatch between prospective employees' skills and work-life demands.

Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in 2024 regarding the Open Unemployment Rate for vocational high school graduates, it was 11.13 in 2021, then decreased to 9.42 in 2022 and decreased again to 9.31 in 2023 (Survei Angkatan Kerja Nasional, 2024). In their research, Alimudin et al. (2019) argued that nationally, ideally, around 80-85% of vocational high school graduates can enter the workforce, such as graduates of SMK Negeri 8 Bandung City majoring in Automotive Body Repair Engineering, who showed a work readiness level of 81.91%. Aspects underlying this readiness include student understanding, knowledge that shows that students have in-depth insight into the chosen career field, skills relevant to the career field, and personality aspects related to the principle of each student to be ready to take responsibility if mistakes occur (Muspawi & Lestari, 2020).

Jobs, professions, and education are all part of a career. Careers play a crucial role in the lives of individuals, especially those entering adulthood (Kleine dkk., 2023). Careers continue to evolve as individuals develop. Many individuals choose jobs and professions based on their interests or talents, but relying solely on talent and interest does not guarantee long-term retention in a given field (Basri dkk., 2021). Jachimowicz et al. (2018) explained that individuals pursuing career interests are likelier to quit, as interest contributes little to career development. When an individual's interests have a clear purpose, the situation is different, as goals have greater energy than simply pursuing interests (Nye dkk., 2021).

This statement aligns with Holland's definition of career maturity (Nauta, 2020), which is the fit between an individual's personality type and the work environment. Individuals with career maturity will choose a career based on their personality type, skills, or interest in a particular

field. If this is not a match, the individual does not yet have career maturity (Hartono & Wibowo, 2023). According to Super (Lim & You, 2019), career maturity is part of an individual's readiness to face developmental tasks to achieve life goals. Individuals who can complete tasks appropriate to their age can have a mature career, while individuals who cannot do so have not yet achieved career maturity (Qonitatin & Kustanti, 2021).

Based on interviews conducted with Guidance and Counselling (BK) teachers at the research site, it was found that friends' suggestions generally influenced students' major choices, and some even chose haphazardly because they did not seek information about the majors available at school. As a result, at the beginning of their studies, many students complained of experiencing difficulties or felt that their chosen majors were inappropriate. This condition reflects a lack of individual preparedness to face developmental tasks. According to Gómez-Jorge and Díaz-Garrido (2023), individuals must have confidence in their chosen major, called self-efficacy. According to Dwitama and Puspitadewi (2023), self-efficacy is the belief in achieving goals, facing challenges, and completing developmental tasks. Self-efficacy can help students develop their abilities to achieve their career goals (Maslikhah dkk., 2022). Given the importance of self-efficacy, this study aims to develop a self-efficacy training module to improve students' career maturity.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

### **Approaches and Types of Research**

This study used a quantitative approach with a Nonequivalent Control Group Design (NCGD) experimental design, which falls into the quasi-experimental design category. Sugiyono (2018) defines a quasi-experimental design as a research design similar to a pure experiment,

but does not involve randomly assigning subjects to groups. This design was chosen because it fits the field conditions that limit the randomisation process, but still allows researchers to test the effect of a treatment on the dependent variable. This design has two groups: an experimental group and a control group. Then the experimental group received treatment through self-efficacy training, while the control group was not given any treatment. Next, both groups were given a posttest to see the difference in results.

### **Research Subject**

The subjects in this study were eleventh-grade vocational high school students in Samarinda City. The researchers used a nonprobability sampling technique with purposive sampling to obtain the subjects. The criteria for this study were students with low career maturity. The screening results revealed 15 students with the lowest pretest scores.

### **Research Instruments**

The career maturity scale consists of 34 statements with a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.833. This scale is a modification of Holland (Nauta, 2020), who views career maturity as a fit between an individual and the work environment, per personal values such as interests, talents, and skills matching job demands. Holland identified six personality types called Holland's RIASEC: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional.

### **Research Procedures**

Career maturity training was provided to the experimental group as a form of treatment. The training material was delivered through a module modified directly by the researcher, with adjustments based on

career maturity characteristics according to Holland's theory. The career maturity module designed by the researcher is described as follows:

**Table 1**

Career Maturity Training Module Details

<b>Session</b>	<b>Learning Objectives</b>	<b>Materi Pokok</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Duration</b>
1	1. Understand the concept of career maturity 2. Recognize personality types based on Holland's theory 3. Identify personal interests, talents, and values	1. Definition of career maturity and its importance for students 2. Relationship between interests, talents, and career choices	Pretest, interactive lecture, group discussion, personality test, individual reflection	90 minutes
2	1. Develop short-term and long-term career plans 2. Enhance career-supporting skills 3. Evaluate and reflect on career maturity development	1. Career planning according to personality type and personal potential 2. Measuring changes in career maturity after train	Interest-talent test, brainstorming, experience sharing, posttest, reflective discussion, closing session	90 minutes

### **Data Analysis**

The data obtained were analysed using the independent t-test technique with the help of the IBM SPSS program version 21. The independent t-test was used to determine whether there was a difference in the average score between the experimental and control groups.

## RESEARCH RESULTS

Two assumptions must be met before conducting an independent t-test analysis: the normality test and the homogeneity test. The normality test determines whether the research data is normally distributed, while the homogeneity test determines whether the two groups being compared are equal.

**Table 2**

Normality Test

Variable	Shapiro-Wilk	Sig.
Career maturity in the experimental group	0.966	0.787
Career maturity in the control group	0.954	0.584

The significance value of the Shapiro-Wilk normality test in the experimental group was 0.787, and in the control group was 0.584. The rule used in the normality test is  $p > 0.05$ ; thus, these results indicate that the data are normally distributed.

**Table 3**

Homogeneity Test

Variable	Equal Variances Assumed	Sig.
Career maturity in the experimental and control groups	0.160	0.692

The homogeneity test results between the experimental and control groups showed a significant value of 0.692. The rule used in the normality test is  $p > 0.05$ ; this means that both groups are declared homogeneous and suitable for an independent t-test analysis.

**Table 4**

Independent Sample t-test Analysis

Variable	t-test	Sig.
Career maturity in the experimental and control groups	-2.742	0.011

The independent sample t-test analysis of career maturity between the experimental and control groups showed a significant value of 0.011. The rule used in the normality test is  $p < 0.05$ ; based on these results,

self-efficacy training has been proven to improve students' career maturity.

## **DISCUSSION**

The results of this study indicate that self-efficacy training significantly improves the career maturity of vocational high school students. This finding confirms the role of self-efficacy in the career maturity process. Three aspects of self-efficacy (cognitive, affective, and motivational) can explain the relationship between self-efficacy and career maturity (Jianchao dkk., 2022). First, in the cognitive aspect, students with high self-efficacy tend to perceive their abilities to face career challenges positively (Izzati dkk., 2023). This condition can be reflected in students' ability to develop realistic career plans and link interests and talents with existing job opportunities (Asri dkk., 2021).

Second, on the affective side, increased self-efficacy can reduce students' anxiety related to future career uncertainty (Abdillah dkk., 2023). Students who initially chose majors based on peer influence or without careful consideration (as seen in interviews with guidance counsellors) became more confident in their career choices after participating in the training. This confidence fostered positive emotions such as optimism, courage to try, and self-satisfaction, which are important indicators of career maturity (Lim & You, 2019; Yiming dkk., 2024).

Third, from a motivational perspective, self-efficacy is a driving force for setting short—and long-term career goals and increasing persistence in achieving them (Tentama & Nur, 2021). This finding aligns with Jachimowicz et al., (2018) finding that clear goals and confidence in one's abilities provide greater energy than simply pursuing interests. In other words, self-efficacy training provides career knowledge and

restructures students' mindsets and beliefs, empowering them to boldly set goals and consistently pursue them (Tentama dkk., 2019).

The psychological dynamics during training can be explained through four sources of self-efficacy proposed by Bandura and Cervone (2023): First, Mastery experiences; students are allowed to develop career plans based on their interests and personalities, thus experiencing small successes that increase their self-confidence. Second, vicarious experiences; playing videos of successful figures and sharing experiences provide positive social models, allowing students to learn through observation. Third, verbal persuasion; the facilitator provides verbal encouragement, which helps students interpret their abilities more positively. Fourth, physiological states; anxiety management is carried out through discussion and reflection, so students feel calmer in facing the future.

This psychologically dynamic-based intervention explains why the t-test analysis significantly improved the experimental group. Students not only received career information but also experienced a process of internalising beliefs that shaped career readiness more comprehensively. These findings reinforce previous research emphasising the effectiveness of self-efficacy development programs in improving career maturity, decision-making skills, and work readiness (Pujianti & Purwantini, 2019; Sharapova dkk., 2023). Therefore, it can be emphasised that integrating self-efficacy training into career counselling services in vocational high schools is relevant and strategic for reducing graduate unemployment and preparing graduates to face global challenges (Jannah dkk., 2023).

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the discussion above, the self-efficacy training in this study proved effective in improving the career maturity of vocational high school students. This improvement occurred because the efficacy



training provided could organise students' thought patterns, emotions, and motivations in facing career development tasks. Therefore, the results of this study confirm that the self-efficacy training program is worthy of being integrated sustainably into guidance and counselling services in vocational schools. Practical implications: Guidance and counselling teachers can use this training module to help students build career readiness early, thus improving their competitiveness in the workforce and reducing the risk of unemployment after graduation.

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