Work Expectations and Self-Efficacy on Intention to Apply: Does Personal Motivation Play a Role?

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the influence of job expectations and self-efficacy on the intention to apply for jobs among Generation Z, with personal motivation as a mediating variable. The research is motivated by the high unemployment rate, which presents a significant challenge for young graduates, especially those without work experience. Furthermore, the gap between job expectations and actual conditions often hinders young graduates from entering the workforce. Data were collected through the distribution of questionnaires to Generation Z individuals in Malang City. The population in this study includes Generation Z from five districts in Malang City: Blimbing, Kedungkandang, Klojen, Lowokwaru, and Sukun. Purposive sampling was used, and data were analyzed using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) method with the SmartPLS 4.0 software. The results indicate that job expectations have a positive and significant effect on the intention to apply, both directly and indirectly through personal motivation. Meanwhile, self-efficacy does not directly influence the intention to apply but has a significant indirect effect through personal motivation. These findings highlight the crucial mediating role of personal motivation in the relationship between self-efficacy and job expectations on the intention to apply. Therefore, companies and career development practitioners are advised not only to focus on boosting self-confidence but also to strengthen internal motivation and address the job expectations of Generation Z to enhance their intention to apply for jobs.

Keywords: Gen Z; Job Expectations; Intention to Apply; Self-Efficacy; Personal Motivation

INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization, unemployment is a common problem. According to the National Labor Force Survey (Sakernas), the workforce in August 2024 reached 152.11 million people, an increase of 4.40 million compared to August 2023. The Labor Force Participation Rate (TPAK) also increased by 1.15 percentage points compared to the previous year. The employed population in August 2024 was recorded at 144.64 million people, an increase of 4.79 million compared to August 2023. The sector with the most

significant increase was Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries, with an increase of 1.31 million people.

On the other hand, the percentage of workers employed in formal activities reached 60.81 million people (42.05 percent), up 1.16 points compared to August 2023. The Open Unemployment Rate (TPT) in August 2024 was 4.91 percent, down 0.41 points compared to August 2023. However, the percentage of underemployed workers increased by 1.32, while part-time workers decreased by 0.46. The number of commuter workers in August 2024 also increased by 0.21 million to 7.59 million people (Statistical Yearbook of Indonesia, 2024). The high unemployment rate is not only caused by the limited number of available jobs, but also by companies becoming increasingly selective in recruiting potential employees. Companies tend to prefer qualified, ready, and willing employees. Qualified employees are defined as those with knowledge and skills that align with technological developments and global market needs, given the constant change and development of the workplace.

Malang is known as a hub for education, with numerous universities producing thousands of new graduates each year. This has led to increasingly fierce competition in the job market, especially for Generation Z, who are just entering the workforce. Based on 2024 statistical data, the Open Jobs Rate (TPT) in Malang City remains consistently higher than the provincial and national averages, although it shows a downward trend year after year. This high unemployment rate presents a significant challenge for young graduates, especially those without work experience. Furthermore, the gap between job expectations and actual employment often presents a barrier for young graduates. On the one hand, companies have high standards and expectations for candidates, such as specific work experience and skills. However, many recent graduates have specific expectations for their first job regarding salary, work environment, and career development opportunities. This mismatch can impact personal motivation and application intentions, ultimately influencing their decision to search for and apply for jobs.

One way to address changes and developments in the world of work is through education. Education is a key factor in developing each individual's potential. According to Ambarwati & Rusdart (2020), education is crucial in improving the quality of human resources (HR) in Indonesia. Education is expected to serve as a means of community empowerment, creating more creative, innovative, and productive human resources in facing complex challenges.

Hariyati, Wolor, and Rachmadania (2022) define education as a process that supports individual physical and intellectual development, thus enabling perfection. This educational foundation is becoming increasingly important in facing the era of global competition, where an individual's ability to enter the workforce is a determining factor for personal and organizational success. Final-year Gen Z, who live in the Greater Malang area, are at a crucial stage in preparing themselves to compete in an increasingly

competitive labor market. Understanding the factors influencing their intention to apply for jobs *becomes* an urgent need in this context.

Job expectations are a key determinant of Gen Z's career choices. Job expectations refer to an individual's expectations or beliefs about the outcomes they will achieve through effort and performance within a work context. According to Desler (2017), a person's motivation to work is influenced by the relationship between effort expended, performance, and rewards received. This theory emphasizes that individuals will be motivated if they believe that increased effort will result in better performance, which will bring desired rewards.

Several studies examining job expectations on job application intentions have been conducted by Pramudita, Kriswianti, and Bhimasta (2024) showing that job expectations have a significant positive effect on job application intentions among Gen Z. Similarly, (Retno Ningtyas and Widayati 2020)found that career expectations have a positive influence on a person's interest in continuing education or taking further career steps, thus confirming the importance of job expectations as a key driver. However, different results were found in a study by Rina & Ratnasari (2021) showing that some final-year Gen Z students postponed their intention to apply for jobs due to expectations regarding administrative readiness, such as completeness of documents, which ultimately affected their interest in immediately applying for jobs.

Besides job expectations, *self-efficacy* also plays a crucial role. *Self-efficacy* influences how a person faces challenges and obstacles in the job search process (Syifa & Ekowati, 2022). Gen Z with high levels of *self-efficacy* tend to be more confident in meeting job requirements and more motivated to apply for jobs than those with low levels of *self-efficacy*. Research has been conducted Andina, Kusuma, and Firdaus (2023), who found that *self-efficacy* positively influences Gen Z's job readiness, with those with high *self-efficacy* tending to be more prepared to enter the workforce. However, a different finding was found in a study by Wahyuningsih & Lukiastuti (2021) whose analysis showed that *self-efficacy* did not affect employment decisions.

Personal motivation is an attitude towards a profession or job that includes identification, sequence, persistence, and involvement, reflecting a person's commitment to their personal goals to achieve their career (Dananjaya & Rasmini, 2019). Personal motivation can encourage Gen Z to direct their potential and abilities in finding jobs that match their interests and competencies. In job search, individual motivation links job expectations and *self-efficacy* with the intention to apply for a job (Locke & Latham, 2002).

Suwardi & Utomo (2011) showed that motivation positively and significantly affects employee performance. Similarly, Nuraini et al. (2021) found that personality motivation and adaptability significantly influence career outcomes. However, Hartawan, Arjaya,

and Citrawati (2024) found different results, showing that work motivation hurts employee performance.

In the context of Gen Z in Malang City, it is important to identify the relationship between job expectations, *self-efficacy*, work motivation, and intention to apply for a job. This understanding provides theoretical insights for the development of human resource management studies and practical implications for higher education institutions in designing more effective career development programs. Based on this background, this study aims to analyze the influence of job expectations and *self-efficacy* on *intention to apply*, mediated by personal motivation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Job Expectations

Job expectations refer to the extent to which individuals have specific expectations regarding their desired job, including salary, career path, work environment, and work-life balance. According to Vroom (1994) individual expectations regarding expected outcomes can influence their level of effort and decision-making. In the context of late-stage Gen Z, high expectations for their first job can drive their intention to apply.

Job expectations encompass an individual's expectations regarding various aspects of their job, such as fair pay, career advancement opportunities, a conducive work environment, and work-life balance. Realistic and positive expectations can increase work motivation because individuals feel more confident that their efforts will yield results that align with their expectations.

Self Efficacy

Self-efficacy is an individual's belief in their ability to complete a task (Bandura, 1986). In the context of job searching, Gen Z with high self-efficacy tends to be more confident that they can meet job requirements, thus increasing their intention to apply. Sheu & Phrasavath 2019) in Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) showed that self-efficacy significantly influences career decision-making. Gen Z, who feel confident in their competence, will be more likely to search for and apply for jobs because they believe they can compete with other candidates. In addition, self-efficacy can also reduce anxiety or fear of rejection, which ultimately increases the intention to apply for jobs.

Self-efficacy, according to Bandura (1986) is an individual's belief in their ability to succeed in a given situation. This belief can influence how individuals organize their efforts, adapt to challenges, and persist in adversity. High self-efficacy can increase motivation to achieve their goals because they believe their efforts will yield positive results. Self-efficacy plays a crucial role because individuals who feel confident in their abilities tend to demonstrate greater commitment and effort at work. They will view complex tasks as challenges they can overcome, rather than obstacles that hinder them.

Conversely, individuals with low self-efficacy may feel anxious or inadequate, which can lower their motivation levels at work.

Personal Motivation

Personal motivation is an internal drive that influences individuals to choose, initiate, and maintain specific work behaviors. It is often a key driving factor in career decisions, including job application intentions. Furthermore, Sheu & Phrasavath (2019) in Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) shows that a person's motivation significantly contributes to their intention to pursue a particular career. High motivation increases a person's belief in their potential for success, strengthening their intention to apply for a desired job.

According to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, individuals will be driven to achieve higher goals once their basic needs are met. In the context of job searching, late-stage Gen Zers who are highly motivated will be more likely to apply for jobs that suit their needs. This is reinforced by research by Srinadi & Supartha (2015), which shows that motivation significantly influences the intention to quit, which is the opposite of the intention to apply. High motivation tends to decrease the intention to quit, so high work motivation will also increase the intention to apply for a job.

Intention to apply

Intention to apply refers to interest in a job position, which begins with seeking information about job openings (Barber, 2015). In the job search process, prospective employees typically have certain standards or criteria they consider ideal for the company. Several factors influencing this process include the company's brand image, psychological social needs, and social factors such as recommendations from close relatives (Barber, 2015).

Individual behavior varies, including in the drive to achieve goals. Desire is considered a primary factor influencing individual actions. The level of desire and effort expended to achieve a goal reflect the strength of that drive. The stronger a person's desire to achieve something, the greater the effort they will exert (Ajzen & Schmidt, 2020). This theory states that individual behavior is the result of rational cognitive processes. Factors such as desires, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors mutually influence a person's actions. Among these factors, desire is the most influential in determining behavior. Therefore, to understand a person's actions, it is important to first understand the individual's desires.

Hypothesis Development

Job Expectations and Intention to Apply

Job expectations refer to the extent to which individuals hold specific expectations regarding their desired job, including aspects such as salary, career path, work

environment, and work-life balance. According to Vroom (1994), individual expectations regarding expected outcomes can influence their level of effort and decision-making. In the context of late-stage Gen Z, high job expectations for their first job can drive their intention to apply.

Research conducted by Choi, Park, and Sohn (2021) shows that expectations about jobs that align with individual preferences increase their intention to apply for specific jobs. Therefore, the more positive Gen Z's expectations about job opportunities, the higher their intention to apply for those jobs. This can be attributed to the belief that the job can fulfill personal needs and desires.

Self-Efficacy and Intention to Apply

Self-efficacy is an individual's belief in their ability to successfully complete a specific task (Bandura, 1986). In the context of job searching, Gen Z with high self-efficacy tend to be more confident in their ability to meet job requirements, thus increasing their intention to apply.

Research by Sheu & Phrasavath (2019) on Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) shows that self-efficacy has a significant influence on career decision-making. Gen Z who feel confident in their competencies are more likely to search for and apply for jobs because they believe they can compete with other candidates. Furthermore, self-efficacy can also reduce anxiety or fear of rejection, ultimately increasing intention to apply.

Job Expectations and Personal Motivation and Intention to Apply

Job expectations encompass an individual's expectations regarding various aspects of their job, such as fair pay, career development opportunities, a conducive work environment, and work-life balance. Realistic and positive expectations can increase work motivation because individuals feel more confident that their efforts will yield results in line with their expectations. Kamarullah & Hidayanti (2024) demonstrated that self-efficacy has a positive and significant effect on employee performance through motivation, emphasizing the importance of work motivation in improving employee performance. Thus, positive job expectations are a crucial factor in increasing personal motivation, especially among late-stage Gen Z who are preparing to enter the workforce.

Personal motivation is an internal drive that influences individuals to choose, initiate, and maintain specific work behaviors. It is often a key driving factor in career decision-making, including intention to apply. Sheu & Phrasavath (2019) in Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) shows that a person's motivation significantly contributes to the intention to pursue a particular career. High motivation increases a person's belief in their potential for success, thereby strengthening their intention to apply for a desired job.

Self-Efficacy and Personal Motivation and Intention to Apply

Bandura (1986), stated that self-efficacy is an individual's belief in their ability to succeed in a given situation. These beliefs can influence how individuals organize their efforts, adapt to challenges, and persist in the face of adversity. High self-efficacy can increase a person's motivation to achieve their goals because they believe their efforts will yield positive results. Self-efficacy plays a crucial role because individuals who feel confident in their abilities tend to demonstrate greater commitment and effort at work. They will view difficult tasks as challenges they can overcome, rather than obstacles that hinder them. Conversely, individuals with low self-efficacy may feel anxious or inadequate, which can decrease their motivation levels at work.

Fajri, Wijaya, and Pratama (2024) found that self-efficacy has a significant influence on employee job satisfaction and performance. This study shows that strong self-beliefs (self-efficacy) play a significant role in increasing employee job satisfaction and effectiveness in completing tasks, resulting in improved performance. Furthermore, research by Satria (2022) shows that self-efficacy has a positive and significant effect on employee performance through motivation. This study also found that self-efficacy can increase employee motivation, which then contributes to improved performance. Thus, high self-efficacy can strengthen personal motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic, because employees feel more capable of overcoming challenges and achieving their goals.

According to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, individuals will be driven to achieve higher goals once their basic needs are met. In the context of job searching, late-stage Gen Zers who are highly motivated are more likely to apply for jobs that match their needs. This is supported by research by Srinadi & Supartha (2015), which shows that motivation significantly influences intention to quit, which is the opposite of intention to apply. High motivation tends to decrease intention to quit, so it can be assumed that high work motivation will also increase intention to apply for a job.

Hypothesis

H1. Job Expectations positively influence the intention to apply in Gen Z.
H2. Self-efficacy has a positive influence on the intention to apply in Gen Z.
H3. Personal motivation mediates the relationship between job expectations and intention to apply in Gen Z.
H4. Personal motivation mediates the relationship between self-efficacy and intention to apply in Gen Z.

Hypothesis Model
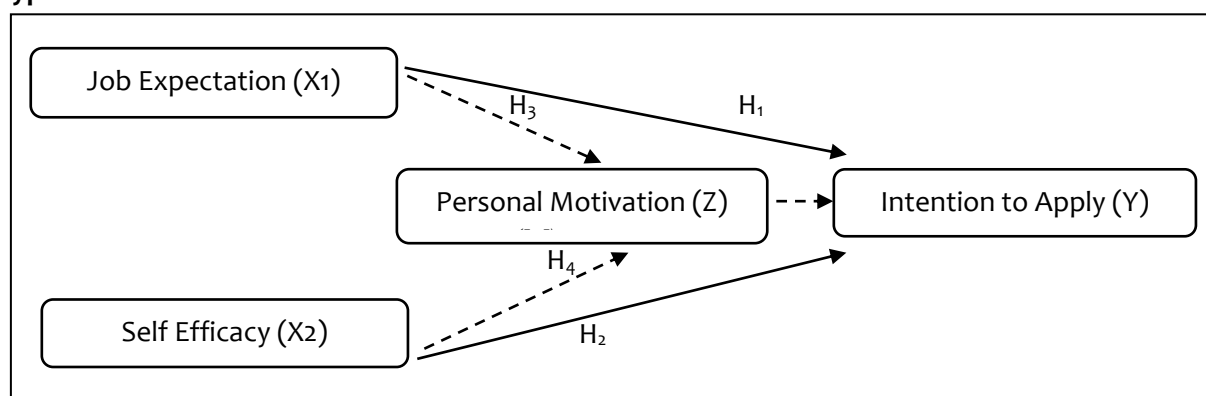
Figure 1. Research Model
Source : authors (2025)

METHODOLOGY

This study conducts an explanatory study using questionary to collect data and test hypotheses.The survey instrument is designed to gather data on five research variables. Measurement items are taken from previous studies and slightly modified to fit this research. The measurement scale used by researchers to measure variables is a Likert scale. The weight used is 1 to 5, with alternative answers ranging from strongly agree to disagree strongly. This research was conducted at Generation Z from five districts in Malang City: Blimbing, Kedungkandang, Klojen, Lowokwaru, and Sukun. Purposive sampling was used, where respondents were selected, so the sample used in this research was 175 respondents. Based on the questionnaire distribution, the sample returned to the researcher was 165 respondents.

Primary data was collected through a questionnaire and analyzed using structural equation modelling (SEM) techniques with SmartPLS 4.0 software. The partial least squares (PLS) data analysis technique assumes that PLS is a compelling method because it can be used on all data scales, does not require many assumptions, and the sample size can be small, medium, or large. PLS aims to explain the relationship between latent variables (Supriyanto & Ekowati, 2019). In addition, the PLS was used since the offered indicators did not fit the reflective measurement model (Baharuddin et al. 2023). PLS is an analytical method that is not based on many assumptions; besides that, PLS can also be used as a tool to confirm Theory. Using PLS can explain the relationship between latent variables to be studied. PLS can also analyze constructs formed with reflective and formative indicators (Innayah et al., 2022).

RESULTS

Table 1. R-Square Value

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Intention to Apply (Y)	0.830	0.821
Personal Motivation (Z)	0.804	0.797

Source: Primary Data Processed (2025)

Table 1 presents the R Square and adjusted R Square values for two dependent variables: Intention to Apply (Y) and Personal Motivation (Z). The R Square value indicates the magnitude of the independent variable's contribution in explaining the dependent variable. For the Intention to Apply (Y) variable, the R Square value of 0.830 means that the independent variables in the model can explain 83% of the variation in job application intention. Meanwhile, the Adjusted R Square value of 0.821 indicates a correction value for the number of predictors used, and still indicates a high contribution level. For the Personal Motivation (Z) variable, the R Square value of 0.804 means that 80.4% of the variation in personal motivation can be explained by the independent variables that influence it, with an Adjusted R Square value of 0.797. These values indicate that the model used has strong explanatory power for both dependent variables.

Table 2. Hypothesis Testing

	t Statistics	P Value	Information
Job Expectations to Intention to Apply	2.114	0.035	Significant
Job Expectations to Personal Motivation	4.985	0.000	Significant
Personal Motivation to Intention to Apply	5.047	0.000	Significant
Self-Efficacy to Intention to Apply	0.311	0.756	Not Significant
Self-Efficacy to Personal Motivation	3.566	0.000	Significant

Source: Primary Data Processed (2025)

Table 2 shows the results of the significance test of the influence of variables based on the t-statistic and p-value. The effect of Job Expectation on Intention to Apply has a t-statistic value of 2.114 with a p-value of 0.035, below the significance threshold of 0.05, so it is declared significant. Similarly, the effect of Job Expectation on Personal Motivation shows a t-statistic value of 4.985 and a p-value of 0.000, indicating a highly significant relationship. Furthermore, Personal Motivation also significantly affects Intention to Apply, with a t-statistic of 5.047 and a p-value of 0.000. Conversely, Self-Efficacy does not significantly affect Intention to Apply because its t-statistic value is only 0.311 and a p-value of 0.756, which is far above the significance limit. However, Self-Efficacy significantly affects Personal Motivation with a t-statistic value of 3.566 and a p-value of 0.000. Overall, these results indicate that most of the relationships between variables in the model are significant, except for the direct effect of Self-Efficacy on Intention to Apply.

Table 3. Sobel Test

	t Statistics	P Values	Information
Self-Efficacy (X2) - Personal Motivation (Z) - Intention to Apply (Y)	2.591	0.000	Significant
Job Expectations (X1) - Personal Motivation (Z) - Intention to Apply (Y)	3.658	0.010	Significant

Source: Primary Data Processed (2025)

Table 2 shows the results of the significance test of the influence of variables based on the t-statistic and p-value. The first path is from Self-Efficacy (X2) through Personal Motivation (Z) to Intention to Apply (Y), which has a t-statistic of 2.591 and a p-value of 0.000. Because the p-value is less than 0.05, this path is declared significant, meaning Self-Efficacy indirectly influences Intention to Apply through the intermediary of Personal Motivation. The second path is from Job Expectation (X1) through Personal Motivation (Z) to Intention to Apply (Y), with a t-statistic of 3.658 and a p-value of 0.010. This value also indicates a significant effect. Thus, both indirect paths in the model have a significant effect, confirming that Personal Motivation is an important mediator in the relationship between the independent variables (Self-Efficacy and Job Expectation) and Intention to Apply.

DISCUSSION

Job Expectations and Intention to Apply

The test results in this study support these findings, where job expectations are proven to have a positive and significant effect on intention to apply. These results indicate that the higher the job expectations that Gen Z has, both in terms of competitive compensation, clear career paths, supportive work culture, and balance between personal and professional life, the greater their tendency to actively search for and apply for suitable jobs.

This phenomenon reflects the distinctive characteristics of Gen Z, who seek work as a source of income and a platform to express their personal values, lifestyle, and long-term aspirations (Sheu and Phrasavath, 2019). This finding is also consistent with the *expectancy theory* proposed by Vroom (1994), which states that individuals are more likely to take action if they believe it will produce a desired outcome. In this case, when Gen Z believes that applying to a company will provide results in line with their expectations materially and psychologically, their intention to apply will be strengthened (Vroom, 1994; Robbins & Judge, 2017). Therefore, organizations need to understand and respond to the evolving work expectations among Gen Z in order to attract and retain potential young talent.

Job expectations refer to an individual's expectations regarding the conditions, environment, and outcomes of a job, such as salary, career path, work culture, and work-life balance (Robbins & Judge, 2017). For Gen Z, a generation with high aspirations, critical thinking, and a tendency to be selective in choosing a workplace, job expectations are a crucial factor influencing their desire to apply for a job (Wahyuningsih, & Lukiastuti, 2021).

Previous research has shown that the greater the level of alignment between an individual's job expectations and the conditions offered by a company, the greater their intention to apply (Pramudita et al. 2024). As part of the digital generation growing up in

the information and technology era, Gen Z in Malang City is exposed to various narratives about ideal work cultures that encompass flexibility, work-life balance, self-development, and sustainability values. This makes them set high standards for their dream jobs (Pramudita et al. 2024). In this context, when companies can reflect these expectations through authentic employer branding strategies, transparent organizational communications, and engaging and relevant job postings, Gen Z's intention to apply for jobs will increase significantly (Pramudita et al. 2024).

Self-Efficacy and Intention to Apply

The analysis results in this study indicate that self-efficacy not significant effect on intention to apply. This condition can be explained by the strong influence of various external factors, such as job market uncertainty, increasingly fierce competition, social expectations of ideal jobs, and a mismatch between personal abilities and the demands of available positions. Even individuals with high levels of self-efficacy can experience confusion or uncertainty in making career decisions if they are not supported by strong internal motivation, access to accurate job information, or a supportive social environment (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2000).

Self-efficacy is an individual's belief in their ability to complete a task or achieve a specific goal, including applying for a job (Bandura, 1997). In this case, self-efficacy plays a crucial role in determining how much effort an individual will expend, how long they can persist in the face of obstacles, and how they respond to failure and stress in the job search process. Gen Z with high levels of self-efficacy tend to have strong self-confidence in facing various stages of the job selection process, such as preparing a curriculum vitae (CV), attending interviews, and adapting to a new work environment (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2000).

In the context of Gen Z in Malang City, most of whom are transitioning from education to the workforce, self-efficacy plays a crucial role in shaping their mental and psychological readiness. Those who believe they possess adequate competencies and can compete with other candidates generally demonstrate a greater intention to apply for jobs than those who still have doubts about their abilities (Nuraini et al., 2021). Therefore, self-efficacy is expected to influence intention to apply positively.

Thus, these results emphasize that self-efficacy requires the role of other factors as reinforcements in shaping the intention to apply. Confidence in one's competence does not necessarily lead directly to concrete actions such as applying for a job, without motivational encouragement or supportive external conditions. Therefore, to increase job application intentions among Gen Z, approaches focusing solely on increasing self-efficacy must be complemented with strategies that foster personal motivation, provide environmental support, and strengthen the perception of realistic job opportunities.

Job Expectations and Personal Motivation and Intention to Apply

The analysis results in this study confirm this role, by showing that job expectations significantly influence personal motivation, and personal motivation significantly influences intention to apply. Path analysis also shows that the influence of job expectations on intention to apply remains significant even after being mediated by personal motivation, which means the mediation that occurs is partial.

These findings confirm that job expectations that align with an individual's personal preferences and values can strengthen Gen Z's internal drive to act. The greater the congruence between an individual's expectations and the reality of the job offered, the greater their motivation to pursue the opportunity. In other words, personal motivation is not merely a passive intermediary but a key driving force in transforming expectations into concrete intentions to apply for jobs (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

Personal motivation is an internal drive that drives a person to achieve specific goals, including deciding to apply for jobs (Ryan & Deci, 2020). In this context, personal motivation is not merely a momentary desire but a reflection of an individual's values, aspirations, and long-term goals closely related to fulfilling basic psychological needs, such as autonomy, competence, and social connectedness. For Generation Z, who are known to have a strong orientation towards life balance, self-development, and meaning in work, personal motivation is crucial in determining their career behavior.

Positive and realistic job expectations such as fair financial rewards, a supportive work culture, opportunities for growth, and flexible hours can trigger intrinsic motivation, which is the drive to work for reasons that come from within, not solely for external rewards (Ryan & Deci, 2020). When these expectations are met or even promised by the company through employer branding or job descriptions, Gen Z tends to respond positively with increased personal motivation to join.

This motivation is a driving force that bridges the relationship between job expectations and intention to apply (Ajzen, 2020). This means that while high job expectations can create a positive perception of a job, the intention to apply will not necessarily arise without strong personal motivation. In this context, personal motivation is a mediator, explaining how and why job expectations can lead to concrete actions such as the desire to apply.

Self-Efficacy and Personal Motivation and Intention to Apply

The results of this study found that self-efficacy significantly influenced personal motivation, but did not directly influence to the intention to apply. Conversely, personal motivation still significantly influenced to the intention to apply, which indicates that internal motivation plays a role as a full mediator (complete mediation) in the relationship between self-efficacy and intention to apply for work.

Besides mediating job expectations, personal motivation also plays an important role as a bridge in the relationship between self-efficacy and intention to apply. Individuals from Generation Z who have high self-efficacy beliefs, namely the belief that they can organize and carry out the actions necessary to achieve desired results, tend to have optimism and readiness in facing work challenges, as well as enthusiasm to pursue available career opportunities (Bandura, 1997; Lent, Brown, and Hackett, 2000). However, this belief does not automatically translate into concrete actions such as applying for jobs, unless supported by a strong internal drive or personal motivation that encourages the actualization of these beliefs (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

In career psychology, self-efficacy serves as an important source of self-perception. At the same time, personal motivation is the catalyst that moves someone from the belief stage to the action stage. In other words, without intrinsic motivation born from the need for achievement, personal growth, and self-actualization, self-efficacy can remain a potential that is not realized in actual behavior, such as the intention to apply for a job (Lent, Brown, and Hackett, 2000). This is particularly relevant for Gen Z, who, despite having high levels of self-confidence thanks to exposure to technology and information, still need alignment between beliefs and internal drive to be genuinely motivated to take concrete action in the world of work.

CONCLUSIONS

Job expectations positively and significantly influence the intention to apply for jobs in Generation Z. The job expectations in question include various important aspects such as competitive compensation, a clear career path, a supportive work culture, and a balance between personal and professional life. Generation Z strongly prefers jobs that provide decent financial rewards, support long-term career development, and provide a healthy and inclusive work environment.

Self-efficacy, an individual's belief in their own abilities, does not directly and significantly affect the intention to apply for jobs in Generation Z. This finding suggests that belief in one's own abilities alone is insufficient to trigger the intention to apply. Other factors are likely needed to bridge the relationship, such as internal motivation, personal goals, or perceptions of the world of work itself.

Job expectations significantly influence personal motivation, which also influences intention to apply. These findings suggest that individuals' expectations about the world of work, such as compensation, career path, work culture, and work-life balance, can increase their internal motivation, ultimately driving their intention to apply for jobs.

Self-efficacy significantly influences personal motivation, but does not directly influence intention to apply. Meanwhile, personal motivation has been shown to influence intention to apply significantly. This finding underscores the importance of internal

motivation in bridging self-confidence with concrete action in the job search, particularly among Generation Z.

Implication

The implications of these study showed that even if someone is confident in their capabilities, without strong personal motivation, the intention to apply for a job may not necessarily arise. Therefore, developing self-efficacy within an individual, for example through skills training, career guidance, or small success experiences, should be accompanied by efforts to foster intrinsic motivation, such as giving meaning to work, individual empowerment, and aligning work with personal values. This motivation acts as a driving force that mobilizes potential into concrete action (Ryan & Deci, 2000), making self-efficacy not just a belief, but a source of energy that can transform intentions into concrete behaviors in the job search process.

Limitations and recommendations

This study is limited to highlighting Gen Z in Malang City, whose results are less generalizable. For further research, a review using different independent variables is recommended. It is recommended that Gen Z in Malang City not only rely on self-confidence or belief in their abilities (self-efficacy) when facing the world of work, but also build personal motivation. By combining self-confidence and motivational drive from within, individuals will be better prepared and encouraged to take real steps in the job search process.

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