

Research Article

Generation Z Career Planning: Is LinkedIn an Important Platform for Career Planning among Generation Z in Indonesia?

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Diponegoro University, Prof. Sudarto 13th Street, Tembalang, Semarang, Central Java, Indonesia**ORCID**Lela Lestari: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3991-9594>**Abstract.**

This study aims to explore the opinions of Indonesian students regarding the role of one of the Professional Social Media Platforms (PSMP), namely LinkedIn, in their career planning process. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with 10 students from various universities in Indonesia. Informants were selected using non-random sampling with a purposive sampling technique. The inclusion criteria were Generation Z students in Indonesia with a maximum age of 24 years and those who were using LinkedIn. The study found that Generation Z students in Indonesia use LinkedIn to obtain various information for career planning. Broadly speaking, the informants considered LinkedIn as an important tool for career planning, concerning self-assessment, career exploration, and job search. The use of LinkedIn helps them establish connections with alumni who are already working and gain insight into the career paths of certain professions, making it easier for them to search for jobs according to their areas of interest.

Keywords: career planning, professional social media platform (PSMP), generation Z, LinkedIn

1. INTRODUCTION

Professional Social Media Platform (PSMP) has become an increasingly important tool for career advancement and development. According to a study by Hanna et al. [1], PSMP provides several advantages over traditional methods such as letters of recommendation, walk-in recruitment, campus recruitment, and social network promotion by leveraging professional networks. Researchers have also highlighted the importance of networking for career success, which is made possible through platforms such as LinkedIn and other PSMPs [2]. Moreover, the exponential growth of online information has created a talent pool, which recruiters can use to generate job opportunities through PSMP [3]. Research results have shown that Professional Social Media Presence (PSMP) has a positive correlation with career outcomes such as job search, promotion, and

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career development [4]. Recruitment through platforms like LinkedIn, Naukri, Monster, Indeed, and Xing is beneficial for both job seekers and companies. These platforms act as modern media channels by listing and curating job opportunities [5].

On LinkedIn, job vacancies can be viewed approximately 500 times and receive over 50 applicants. The platform offers a search menu with 20 filters and Boolean functions to help identify job vacancies based on qualifications, skills, and experience [6]. Recruiters can manage potential candidates and their responses to questions by using LinkedIn Pipeline [7]. LinkedIn offers additional features such as influential networks, professional communities, courses, connections, and the ability to post content [8]. Compared to other job platforms, these characteristics make LinkedIn a unique social media platform. Studies show that LinkedIn is the most effective and convenient tool for employers and job applicants. It was found to be the most effective platform (94%) in generating sales leads [9].

According to Black & Perold [10], teenagers initially use social media as a way to stay connected with their peers. However, they were unconsciously influenced by it in terms of their careers and future studies. Social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook have become important sources of information for job searches, recruitment practices, and career decisions [11]. Additionally, social media is also considered a useful tool for career advancement and job searches [12], and a source of information for career planning to achieve success [11].

Generation Z, born between 1997-2012 [13], has started to create accounts and observe professional social media platforms (PSMP). Currently, they are aged between 11-24 years and dominate the population in Indonesia, accounting for 27.94% of the total population or 74.93 million people [14]. LinkedIn is one of the PSMPs with the highest number of users. It is currently the largest professional network in the world, with a total of 950 million users as of mid-2023. In Indonesia, LinkedIn users have reached 24.9 million, with users aged 18-24 years accounting for around 6.6 million, or 26.5% of the national total [15].

Generation Z is mostly composed of university students who are in the process of planning their careers before graduating. According to Bridgstock [16], PSMP plays an active role in facilitating students' professional careers. Previous studies have mainly focused on the influence of platforms like LinkedIn, Naukri.com, Monster.com, and Xing on students' and employees' professional careers [17]. The current research aims to explore the opinions of Indonesian university students belonging to Generation Z regarding the role of LinkedIn in their career planning process through in-depth interviews. The goal is to provide an overview of how Generation Z uses LinkedIn

for career planning. Additionally, the results of this research can offer valuable insights to Generation Z that the use of PSMP like LinkedIn is not restricted to job searching or application, but can also be used for self-assessment and career exploration. Previous research shows that job seekers in Indonesia with higher education are at a disadvantage in the labor market, in other words, have a longer duration of unemployment than job seekers with low education [18]. It is hoped that the use of LinkedIn by students will make it easier to prepare for a career and can easily fulfill employment information needs because the higher the use of social media, the more employment information needs will be met [19]. Several academic studies have also shown that using LinkedIn allows its users to benefit in their careers [20].

2. METHOD

For this qualitative research, semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten Generation Z students which was carried out online via Zoom Meeting. The informants were selected using purposive sampling. The qualifications for selecting the informants were that they had to be Generation Z students in Indonesia, below 24 years of age, and LinkedIn users. The reason for selecting a small number of informants was to save time and conduct in-depth interviews effectively. The focus of in-depth interviews with a small sample is to understand the complexity of the informant's reactions and feelings in their social context, rather than establishing objective facts [21]. The indicators used as a guide in giving interview questions are three basic stages of career planning, namely: (1) self-assessment; (2) career exploration; and (3) job search [22]. The probing technique was used during the interview process to explore the researcher's curiosity. This technique increased the opportunity for informants to provide detailed accounts of their experiences [23]. To protect the data, the informants' real names were not used, and instead, L1 to L10 were assigned to each informant. Narrative analysis was used in this research to understand the informants' experiences and the process of forming certain meanings in their social context [24–26].

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Ten Generation Z students from various universities in Indonesia, aged between 18-21 years, were interviewed for this research. Despite coming from different universities, regions, and study programs, all of them were LinkedIn users. The primary reason for using LinkedIn was career planning. Still, the platform was also utilized for various

purposes, such as finding information about scholarships, creating a personal brand portfolio, seeking the attention of specific companies, building relationships, observing other people's career journeys, and obtaining valid information about certain companies. Table 1 shows the informant code, age, and city of origin.

TABLE 1: Informants' Data

Code	Age (years old)	City of Origin
Z1	20	Depok, West Java
Z2	20	Demak, Central Java
Z3	21	Rembang, Central Java
Z4	20	Solok, West Sumatera
Z5	20	South Jakarta, DKI Jakarta
Z6	29	South Jakarta, DKI Jakarta
Z7	18	Medan, North Sumatera
Z8	20	South Sulawesi
Z9	20	South Jakarta, DKI Jakarta
Z10	20	Purwodadi, Central Java

Career planning has been confirmed as one of the goals of all informants using LinkedIn. There are three basic stages of career planning, namely: (1) self-assessment; (2) career exploration; and (3) job search [22]. These three stages of career planning became the main reference in conducting in-depth interviews with informants. Through the interview process, an in-depth explanation was obtained regarding the informants' opinions based on their experience using LinkedIn which specifically focused on the career planning process. The informants thought that LinkedIn could be a useful platform for career planning. Informants L1, L2, L5, and L9 stated that LinkedIn could be a medium for personal branding through features that can display portfolios in the form of achievements, certifications, and organizational experience. Then, L1, L3, L4, L7, L8, and L10 expressed the opinion that through LinkedIn they can search for information about certain companies, expand relationships through connections, and information about certain types of work which is very useful in the career planning process. Apart from that, L6 shared his experience when using LinkedIn Premium, he was able to take part in training to improve his skills.

All informants agreed that LinkedIn is useful for the first stage of career planning, namely the self-assessment stage. Most of them (L1, L2, L3, L4, L5, L6, L7, L9) believed that LinkedIn could be used to assess oneself by observing the profiles of people with similar professions to their interests. Through these observations, they could compare their qualifications or skills with those of others and use that as motivation

to improve themselves and develop skills according to their qualifications. However, L8 and L10 had a different opinion. They believed that self-assessment using LinkedIn should be more focused on finding information about the qualifications required for the profession of interest and looking for internships to gain experience, rather than comparing achievements or experiences with those of others listed on LinkedIn profiles.

In the second stage of career exploration, LinkedIn was also considered useful by the informants. L1 suggested that the Connection feature on LinkedIn could be used to connect with alumni from his university, providing insight into relevant career paths. L2 and L3 believed that career exploration via LinkedIn could be done through job opportunities shared by HR and other users appearing on the homepage. L5 pointed out that Communities and Channels on LinkedIn could be used for exploring information about certain fields of work or professions. L6 had a positive experience using the Learning feature on LinkedIn to learn and hone skills. Additionally, L1, L4, L7, L8, L9, and L10 agreed that LinkedIn can provide information regarding the choice of professions relevant to the field of science they are studying in college.

The third stage of career planning is job search, although currently, the informants are still carrying out student activities, most have tried to find information about job vacancies available on LinkedIn. This is a proactive effort to acquire knowledge about professions related to their field of study and the required qualifications. L1, L4, L5, L6, L9, and L10 believe that LinkedIn can be a valuable tool in the job search process as it recommends positions suited to their skills and also helps them connect with alumni who can offer insights into relevant companies. L2's experience when using LinkedIn in the job search process through the Job Search feature, so that it can help find jobs according to his interests. In addition, LinkedIn's AI can help customize a portfolio that suits his skills. L6 and L10 have also found that LinkedIn offers a feature to apply for jobs using a LinkedIn account when recruitment opens. However, L3, L7, and L8 believe that LinkedIn might not be as useful for job search to them currently since they are still focused on finding information about internship programs offered by companies on LinkedIn.

Based on the opinions of the informants, it can be concluded that LinkedIn is an effective Professional Social Media Platform (PSMP) for career planning. This aligns with previous research which highlights LinkedIn as a valuable source of career-related information such as job searches, recruitment practices, and career decisions [11]. While LinkedIn is a form of social media, it is specifically designed for professional use. Multiple studies have also indicated that social media can be a helpful tool for career advancement and job searching [12], and can provide valuable insights for career

planning [11]. This study confirms that LinkedIn is indeed a useful medium for career planning, as all informants expressed their positive views on the platform's ability to provide career-related information.

The participants in this study are students from different universities and regions in Indonesia who believe that LinkedIn plays a significant role in career planning. LinkedIn helps students through various stages of career planning, including assessment, exploration, and job search. This finding is by previous research which states that Professional Social Media Platforms (PSMPs) can actively assist students in their professional careers [16, 17]. The study also found that students find LinkedIn easy to use and useful for career planning because of its many supportive features. This demonstrates that LinkedIn is a complete PSMP that makes it easier for its users to plan their careers and build professional networks. Research conducted by scholars has indicated that building professional networks is an essential career management strategy that can significantly contribute to one's success in the workplace [2, 27–32]. Moreover, LinkedIn is considered superior to other job platforms due to its characteristics such as an influential network, professional community, courses, connections, and the opportunity to post content, which are additional features that LinkedIn offers compared to other social media platforms [8].

4. CONCLUSION

Many Indonesian students from Generation Z are now using LinkedIn as a type of Professional Social Media Platform (PSMP). One of the main reasons for using LinkedIn among students is for career planning. LinkedIn can assist students with their career planning by starting with self-assessment, which can be done by observing the accounts of other professionals with similar interests. This helps them to compare and motivate themselves to develop their skills and qualifications. Additionally, LinkedIn can help students explore various careers by utilizing its features to learn about the different professions and career levels relevant to their field of study. Nowadays, students are even using LinkedIn to search for job opportunities and find information about the qualifications needed for their desired profession. Apart from job search, students also utilize the platform to look for information about internship programs offered by companies.

The research presented here has limitations because it solely relies on Generation Z participants from Indonesian universities. In the future, it would be beneficial to expand the scope of the research to incorporate other groups of Generation Z in Indonesia, such

as high school students or high school graduates who did not pursue higher education. Additionally, future research could employ other methods, such as quantitative or mixed methods. The theoretical and practical contributions of this research are significant as they provide new insights into the use of PSMP in career planning. The research results can be used as an alternative for Generation Z individuals who wish to plan their careers independently.

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