

Optimizing Career Development and Academic Achievement of Generation Z Students through Strengths-Based Counseling

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Abstract: Generation Z students, who were born and developed in the digital era, face unique challenges in career development and academic achievement. The characteristics of those who tend to rely on technology to communicate and learn often conflict with traditional academic and career expectations. This research aims to analyze the application of strengths-based school counseling in optimizing the potential of Generation Z students. Through a literature review approach, this study evaluates the impact of this approach on their academic motivation and career readiness. The findings show that strengths-based guidance can improve students' self-confidence, coping strategies, and emotional regulation. In addition, this approach, which utilizes digital technology as an interactive medium, provides positive results in supporting the development of student potential. Adapting coaching methods to the unique characteristics of Generation Z, such as their preference for technology and online communication, has been shown to strengthen the effectiveness of this approach. The research conclusions underscore the importance of adaptation in the implementation of strengths-based guidance to address the specific needs of Generation Z students, thereby helping them overcome academic challenges and achieve future career success. This research provides strategic insights for educators and school counselors to support holistic student development in an era that continues to change.

Keywords: Generation Z, Strengths Based Tutoring, Career Development, Academic Achievement, Digital Technology

INTRODUCTION

Generation Z students, born between 1997 and 2012, grew up in an environment that was greatly influenced by rapid technological advances (Waruwu & Lawalata, 2023). Generation Z are those who discovered the internet in childhood (Gazali, 2018). With unlimited access to information and global connectivity through digital devices, this generation has a different way of interacting, learning and developing themselves compared to previous generations. In this ever-changing world, Generation Z students are more likely to rely on technology to obtain information and communicate. This influences the way they solve problems, learn, and plan their careers. According to Palley (Turner, 2015) that 50% of Generation Z are more comfortable communicating online than in person, even when talking to friends, 70% of Generation Z prefer to communicate online rather than communicate in person. However, despite their exceptional digital skills, the challenges they face in career development and academic achievement are complex. Generation Z students often feel pressured by high expectations, both in terms of academic achievement and in determining the right career direction (Sudirman et al., 2024). Generation Z students, born between 1997 and 2012, grew up in an environment that was greatly influenced by rapid technological advances (Waruwu & Lawalata, 2023). Generation Z are those who discovered the internet in childhood (Gazali, 2018). With unlimited access to information and global connectivity through digital devices, this generation has a different way of interacting, learning and developing themselves compared to previous generations. In this ever-changing world, Generation Z students are more likely to rely on technology to obtain information and communicate. This influences the way they solve problems, learn, and plan their careers. According to Palley (Turner, 2015) that 50% of Generation Z are more comfortable communicating online than in

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person, even when talking to friends, 70% of Generation Z prefer to communicate online rather than communicate in person. However, despite their exceptional digital skills, the challenges they face in career development and academic achievement are complex. Generation Z students often feel pressured by high expectations, both in terms of academic achievement and in determining the right career direction (Sudirman et al., 2024).

Strengths-based counseling is an approach that emphasizes identifying and developing the positive potential that exists within an individual, not just focusing on improving weaknesses as is done in the traditional approach (Destiyanti, 2025). In this context, students are not only helped to overcome their limitations, but are more directed to optimize their strengths and talents. This is especially relevant for Generation Z students, who are often faced with various challenges in a fast-paced environment full of high expectations, both in academic achievement and career preparation. Fotaleno & Batubara (2024) explain that generation Z faces significant challenges in the job market due to generational gaps in in-demand skills, career expectations, and adaptation to technological change, which complicates their academic achievement and career preparation in a fast-paced and high-expectation environment. By recognizing and utilizing personal strengths, students can have greater self-confidence, as well as more motivation and effective strategies in achieving their academic and career goals. In this case, strengths-based coaching can be a powerful tool to help them adapt to change and reach their full potential in a world full of uncertainty. However, although this approach has been applied in various contexts and has been proven effective in helping individuals to develop, its application in the context of Generation Z students is still relatively limited. Generation Z has very different characteristics and challenges compared to previous generations, thus requiring adjustments in the way the guidance approach is applied (Irawaty & Wicaksono, 2024). Various studies have demonstrated the potential of strengths-based tutoring in improving students' self-development and academic outcomes, but the specific application in the context of this generation, which relies more on technology and interacts in a digital world, has not been fully explored. Additionally, many studies show a positive relationship between strengths-based tutoring and students' academic achievement and career development. However, appropriate and contextual application to generations exposed to this technology is still an area that needs to be explored more deeply. Therefore, it is important to understand how strengths-based guidance can be tailored to the specific needs of Generation Z students in developing careers and achieving academic achievement.

Strengths-Based School Counseling is a developing approach in the field of guidance and counseling that focuses on an individual's strengths and potential to support their development. Katajisto et al (2023) explain that a strengths-based approach significantly increases students' psychological capital, optimism, and attitudes toward schoolwork and the future, indicating its growing importance in guidance and counseling practice, especially by centering students' experiences in intervention development. This approach differs from the problem-based approach, where more focus is given to the weaknesses or challenges students face. Demir et al (2022) explain that the Strengths-Based School Counseling approach emphasizes finding and utilizing students' character strengths, promoting positive psychology, while the problem-based approach focuses on overcoming weaknesses and challenges. This program aims to improve well-being and the functional use of strengths in students' lives. In an educational context, strengths-based guidance aims to help students recognize their own potential, explore personal strengths, and apply them in various aspects of life, including academics and careers.

Various previous studies show that strengths-based guidance has a significant positive impact on various aspects of student development, especially in increasing their level of self-confidence, motivating them to excel, and facilitating more mature career development. One relevant study is research by Wilding & Griffey (2015) that a strengths-based approach can improve educational practices by focusing on individual strengths, potentially increasing students' intrinsic motivation. However, it emphasizes the need for a personalized approach that considers the contextual application of these forces. This approach shows that a strengths-based approach can increase students' intrinsic motivation. This intrinsic motivation is a key factor in better academic achievement, because students who feel valued and empowered to develop their personal strengths tend to be more involved in the learning process and have clearer goals. This approach not only promotes academic achievement, but also has a positive impact on students' emotional well-being, as they feel more valued and confident in their abilities.

Additionally, research conducted by Vuorinen et al (2021) explains that over the last two decades, there has been a shift from deficit-centered pedagogy to a more positive perspective, with an emphasis on students' individual strengths and well-being. Then students who are given the opportunity to focus on their strengths are more likely to feel satisfied with their career choices and are more successful in achieving their career goals. When students recognize and develop their strengths, they can choose a career path that better suits their interests and natural talents. This not only increases satisfaction in future employment, but also reduces the levels of stress and

anxiety often experienced by students who feel forced to choose a career path they are not interested in. Therefore, a strengths-based approach not only provides benefits in academic aspects, but also in long-term career preparation, making students more prepared and confident to face the challenges of the world of work. Dunn (2017) explains that a strengths-based approach emphasizes identifying and leveraging individual interests and talents, encouraging engagement and motivation. This perspective increases career satisfaction and success by aligning personal strengths with professional opportunities, ultimately supporting a fulfilling, long-term career path. Krutkowski (2017) explained that a strengths-based approach enhances career preparation by helping individuals identify and utilize their unique talents, encouraging problem solving and creativity, and promoting engagement. This method equips students with skills for meaningful participation in society and supports long-term career success. These findings indicate that strengths-based guidance can be an effective solution in optimizing students' potential and preparing them for success, both in education and in future careers. However, although there has been a lot of research examining strengths-based guidance in education, its application specifically for Generation Z students is still limited. Generation Z has unique characteristics, such as a tendency towards technology and expectations for a more personalized and interactive learning experience (Padakari & Korwa, 2025). Therefore, understanding how strengths-based guidance can be tailored to the characteristics of Generation Z students is an important area to explore further.

Although there is a lot of research discussing strengths-based guidance, most of this research still focuses on previous generations and places less emphasis on the unique characteristics of Generation Z students. Generation Z, who were born and grew up in the digital era, have very different ways of learning and interacting compared to previous generation (Ghafara et al., 2023). They are more accustomed to technology, fast information, and interaction via digital platforms, which influences the way they think, learn, and communicate. Therefore, the approach used in guidance for Generation Z needs to be better understood and adapted to their needs. Strengths-based tutoring can be an effective approach, but its implementation must pay attention to how Generation Z students access information and interact with the world around them. Goldbach & Hamza-Lup (2020) explain that generation Z, as digital natives, demands customized, on-demand learning experiences. Effective strengths-based tutoring must capitalize on their preferences for mobile, multimedia, and online technology, ensuring engagement through an interactive, flexible, and personalized approach that aligns with their digital habits and preferences. This approach, which emphasizes developing students' personal potential and strengths, must be integrated with technology and learning methods that suit their tendencies. Therefore, it is important to understand the specific characteristics of Generation Z so that strengths-based guidance can be implemented optimally, help them overcome existing academic challenges, and prepare them for better career development in the future. Additionally, although there is evidence to suggest that strengths-based mentoring can improve academic achievement and career maturity, research linking the two in the context of Generation Z is still very limited. This research aims to fill this gap by exploring how strengths-based guidance can be applied specifically to Generation Z students to improve these two aspects.

This research is important to conduct because not many have studied the application of strengths-based guidance in the context of Generation Z students, even though they face unique challenges in career development and academic achievement (Bakti & Safitri, 2017). By examining the application of this approach in more depth, it is hoped that this research can provide new insights that are useful for developing curriculum and guidance strategies in schools that are more relevant to the needs of Generation Z. In addition, by integrating technology in strengths-based guidance, this research also can provide guidance on how to leverage technology to bring students closer to their strengths and provide a more personalized and effective learning experience.

The general aim of this article is to analyze how strengths-based school counseling can optimize the career development and academic achievement of Generation Z students. This article aims to explore the application of this approach in the context of the unique characteristics of Generation Z students, as well as evaluate its impact on increasing their academic motivation and career readiness. In addition, this article aims to provide practical insights for educators and school counselors regarding more effective strategies to support student career development and academic achievement with a strengths-based approach, which is relevant to the needs of this digital generation.

This research contributes to the development of strengths-based guidance theory, especially in the context of Generation Z students. By examining the application of strengths-based guidance more specifically for this generation, this research can enrich the literature on effective guidance strategies in supporting career development and academic achievement. In addition, this research also provides practical contributions for educators and school

counselors in designing guidance programs that are more relevant to the needs of today's students, by integrating strengths-based approaches and technology in their learning and career development processes.

METHOD

The method used in this research is a literature review. Literature review is a systematic process carried out to study, analyze and summarize research relevant to a particular topic (Andriani, 2021). A literature review is a scientific study that focuses on a particular topic. A literature review will provide an overview of the development of a particular topic. A literature review will enable a researcher to identify a theory or method, develop a theory or method, identify gaps that occur between a theory and its relevance in the field/research results (Cahyono et al., 2019). The main aim of a literature review is to provide a comprehensive overview of what is known about the topic, as well as identify gaps in existing knowledge. This process involves searching and evaluating sources of information originating from various studies, articles, books and other scientific publications. A literature review is not just a summary, but also a critical analysis of the methodology, findings and conclusions drawn by previous research. Thus, a literature review can help researchers understand the latest developments in a particular field of study, as well as provide a strong theoretical basis for further research. In addition, literature reviews also function to show the relevance and contribution of new research being conducted to existing knowledge.

A literature review is used which aims to identify, analyze, and synthesize previous research related to strengths-based guidance, career development, and academic achievement of Generation Z students. The selected literature comes from scientific journals, books, and research reports that are relevant to the topic. The search process was carried out through academic databases such as Google Scholar, JSTOR, and ProQuest. The analytical procedure used in this research is to map various existing theories and research results, then extract the main findings that can be used as a basis for this research. The primary focus is to explore how strengths-based guidance can be implemented in the context of Generation Z students, as well as its impact on their career and academic development. Apart from that, the author also analyzes studies related to the application of technology in strength-based guidance, because the characteristics of Generation Z are greatly influenced by technological advances. This analysis aims to identify whether a strengths-based approach involving technology can be more effective in improving desired outcomes in Generation Z students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Strengths-based school counseling can optimize the career development and academic achievement of Generation Z students in a way that is highly relevant to their characteristics and needs. Generation Z, who grew up in the digital era with rapid technological advances, has a more interactive way of learning and tends to rely on technology in the process (Prasetyo et al., 2024). A strengths-based approach focuses on identifying and developing students' positive potential, rather than just improving weaknesses, which is very in line with the characteristics of Generation Z who value a more personal and in-depth approach. By recognizing individual strengths, students can feel more confident and motivated to achieve their academic goals, because they know what their strengths are (Lombu & Lase, 2023). In addition, through this guidance, students are invited to explore their career potential by utilizing the strengths they have, which can increase their career readiness and reduce uncertainty in planning for the future. Integrating technology in the guidance process also really supports this generation, because they are used to digital platforms that make the learning and interaction process easier. This allows for a more interactive and relevant coaching experience. Bright et al (2022) explain that strengths-based school counseling focuses on positive attributes of adolescents, promoting resilience and coping strategies. By emphasizing strengths, it can effectively reduce anxiety, help students to navigate challenges and build confidence in their abilities, ultimately fostering a supportive environment for mental well-being. Thus, strengths-based tutoring not only increases academic motivation, but also provides a strong foundation for students to develop their careers in an increasingly digital world. This approach can also reduce the anxiety that students often feel about their future, because they better understand the strengths they can use to achieve success in the academic and professional fields.

A strengths-based guidance approach is very relevant to apply to Generation Z students because of their unique characteristics which tend to prioritize practicality, speed of access to information, and integration of technology in everyday life. Fransiati et al (2024) explain that group guidance is a strengths-based approach for Generation Z, fostering self-confidence, self-esteem and mindfulness. This supportive environment encourages

sharing experiences and developing strategies for managing FoMO, ultimately helping students live balanced and meaningful lives. Bakti & Safitri (2017) explained that generation Z is known as a generation that grew up with technology and social media, which makes them very accustomed to a fast-paced and interactive environment. Therefore, a strengths-based approach, which focuses on identifying and developing the positive potential of each individual, provides a more personalized and effective way to approach students. By recognizing and optimizing each student's strengths, this guidance helps them to better understand themselves, increase self-confidence, and strengthen motivation to achieve academic and career goals. Additionally, this approach allows students to learn in ways they deem relevant, such as using digital platforms they are familiar with, which makes the tutoring process more engaging and effective.

The impact of implementing this strengths-based approach on increasing the academic motivation and career readiness of Generation Z students is very significant. By focusing on students' potential and strengths, they are not only encouraged to overcome weaknesses, but are also empowered to hone existing abilities. This increases their self-confidence, both in the academic context and in planning future careers (Alam & Mohanty, 2024). Students become more motivated to explore career opportunities that match their strengths, thereby increasing their readiness to face challenges in an increasingly competitive world of work. Additionally, this approach helps students focus more on their long-term goals in a way that is more structured and based on individual strengths, which can reduce anxiety about the future and increase their satisfaction and academic achievement.

The results of this research provide practical insight for educators and school counselors regarding the importance of implementing a strengths-based approach in supporting student career development and academic achievement, especially for Generation Z who grew up in the digital era. This approach emphasizes identifying and developing the positive potential of each student, allowing them to recognize their own strengths, increase their self-confidence, and achieve more focused academic and career goals. In the context of Generation Z, which tends to focus on technology and the speed of information, this approach is also relevant because it can be adapted to the digital tools and platforms they use (Yusuf, 2024). With this strategy, educators and counselors can be more effective in designing more personalized and interactive guidance programs, thereby supporting students in optimizing their abilities and preparing them to face challenges in the world of education and future careers. This approach prioritizes identifying and developing students' personal strengths, allowing them to better recognize their own potential. This process not only increases students' understanding of their abilities and interests, but also strengthens their self-confidence. In the context of Generation Z students, who often face high pressure to excel, a strengths-based approach helps them see and utilize their strengths as capital to face academic and career challenges. Students who have a clear understanding of their strengths tend to be more motivated and feel more capable of achieving their goals. DrobniĀ (2023) explains that a strengths-based approach in school counseling focuses on identifying and mobilizing individual strengths, promoting independent education and social integration for students with special needs. This represents a shift from deficit-based methods, enhancing overall personal development and potential recognition.

Various studies support these findings, showing that students who know and understand their strengths are more focused and more motivated to achieve academic goals and develop their career potential. Robinson & Walker (2024) explained that awareness in students allows participants to view their strengths positively and plan their future use, potentially increasing focus and motivation in academic and career pursuits. By identifying and leveraging these strengths, students can make more informed decisions about their educational and career paths, and be better prepared to face future challenges. A strengths-based approach also reduces feelings of inadequacy or anxiety that students often experience when faced with weaknesses or failures. Previous studies have shown that when students are encouraged to focus on their strengths, they not only feel more confident, but are also more motivated to achieve academic and professional success. Therefore, strengths-based guidance has proven effective in increasing students' motivation and academic achievement, especially in the context of a generation growing up amidst rapid technological advances and social change.

Strengths-based guidance has a very positive impact in increasing students' career readiness, especially in the context of Generation Z who grew up amidst rapid technological developments. Generation Z is known for its dependence on technology and fast access to information, so a guidance approach that utilizes technology is very relevant for them (Bagaskara, 2024). In strengths-based guidance, students are encouraged to recognize their potential through various applications and digital platforms that can help them explore their strengths, interests and personal values. By utilizing technology that has become part of students' daily lives, this guidance process becomes more interactive and interesting. Students can access a variety of resources directly, take personality tests,

or participate in online discussions and consultations that lead to their career development. This makes them more actively involved in the guidance process and more quickly recognize their abilities.

In addition, the use of technology in strengths-based guidance also allows students' career development processes to be more structured and focused (Anuar et al., 2024). Students can easily explore various career fields that suit their strengths, either through career simulations, online skills training, or by taking part in internship or personal development programs supported by digital platforms. Thus, strengths-based guidance not only helps students to recognize their potential, but also prepares them with the skills and understanding necessary to face greater challenges in the future. Generation Z, who often faces uncertainty in a very dynamic world of work, can feel more confident and ready to face the professional world (Alamin et al., 2023). This approach helps them plan their career steps more clearly and purposefully, so they can navigate existing changes and face challenges with more maturity and confidence. Strengths-based guidance that integrates technology provides opportunities for students to build career readiness that is more holistic and relevant to the demands of the times.

The main difference between the results of this study and previous research lies in the emphasis on the unique characteristics of Generation Z students, who are highly influenced by technology. Most previous research has focused on older generations, whose attachment to technology is not as strong as that of emerging generations. Generation Z is known for its tendency to interact via digital platforms, access information online, and use technology as part of their daily lives (Putri et al., 2024). This research integrates technology in a strengths-based coaching approach, allowing students to identify and develop their strengths through interactive digital tools. This strengths-based approach becomes more relevant and effective for Generation Z students, because technology supports the process of self-knowledge and career development more flexibly and adaptively to the needs of the times (Aprilita, 2024). In contrast to previous research which prioritizes face-to-face approaches and traditional methodologies, this research shows that technology can enrich the guidance process and increase student motivation in achieving their academic and career goals.

However, although this study shows positive results, there are several limitations that must be noted. One of the main limitations is the limited resources and readiness of schools to implement a strengths-based approach with technology. Although technology can enrich the tutoring experience, not all schools have adequate infrastructure to support optimal use of technology. Some schools may face limitations in terms of access to technological devices, training for teachers and counselors, and difficulties in systematically integrating technology into the guidance process. This shows that although technology can improve interaction and guidance effectiveness, its application requires careful preparation and stronger support from schools and policy makers. In other words, although technology is a very potential tool in strengths-based guidance (Jones et al., 2023), successful implementation is highly dependent on the readiness of existing infrastructure and resources in the educational environment.

This research has enormous significance in providing new insights into the influence of strengths-based guidance on the career development and academic achievement of Generation Z students. The findings of this research not only enrich understanding of how guidance can be implemented more effectively in the digital era, but also provide a foundation on which strong to introduce a strengths-based approach in schools serving this generation of students. Generation Z students, who are known for their attachment to technology and fast information, require a different approach from previous generations (Christiani & Iksari, 2020). A strengths-based approach, which prioritizes developing students' personal potential, has proven effective in increasing their self-confidence, motivation and readiness to achieve academic goals. These findings also open up opportunities for implementing guidance that is more relevant and responsive to the needs of a generation that has grown up with technological advances. Therefore, this approach can be the right solution to help students maximize their potential, both in academics and careers.

With a strengths-based approach, students not only develop academically, but are also better prepared to face an increasingly competitive world of work (Reis et al., 2024). This approach allows students to recognize their strengths and strengths, which they can then utilize to choose a career path that suits their interests and talents. This can reduce the level of anxiety and uncertainty that students often experience when planning their future. Amidst the uncertainty of a rapidly changing world of work, having a clear understanding of personal strengths can provide students with greater self-confidence. They become better prepared to face challenges in the professional world and can make wiser decisions regarding their further education or career path. Thus, strengths-based guidance not only helps students achieve academic success, but also prepares them to become more prepared and mature individuals in facing post-school life.

Future research can be conducted using a quantitative approach to measure more accurately the impact of strengths-based guidance on the academic achievement and career maturity of Generation Z students. This approach will allow researchers to collect more objective and measurable data, and can provide a clearer picture of how This approach has a big influence on students' academic and career development. Additionally, research could also include comparisons between schools that have implemented technology in strengths-based tutoring and those that have not, to find out more in-depth differences in results. By conducting this comparison, research can provide insight into how effective technology is in strengthening strengths-based guidance, as well as identify factors that influence the successful implementation of technology in educational contexts. It is hoped that the findings from this research can provide practical recommendations for the development of more effective guidance in schools.

CONCLUSIONS

The strengths-based school counseling approach has proven effective in optimizing the career development and academic achievements of Generation Z students. By utilizing technology familiar to Generation Z, this approach allows students to recognize and develop their personal strengths through a more interactive and interactive process. relevant. Focusing on students' positive attributes helps them overcome anxiety, increase self-confidence, and build motivation to achieve academic and career goals. It also prepares students to face the challenges of an increasingly competitive world of work by providing a strong foundation through mastery of technology-based skills.

Educators and school counselors are advised to integrate technology in strengths-based guidance programs, such as the use of digital applications or online platforms that support the recognition and development of student potential. Additionally, this approach needs to be designed personally and flexibly to meet students' individual needs, so that they feel supported holistically. Further research is also recommended to explore the long-term impact of this approach on students' career success and mental wellbeing in the digital age.

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