



Career Commitment Based on Career Identity Diffusion among Students in Vocational Higher Education

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Abstract: Established student career identity is proven to influence individual career commitment. However, several research results show that some career identities still need to be established and have high commitment. This study aims to examine the effect of individual career commitment on career identity diffusion in vocational students. This study is a quantitative correlational research design that examines the effect of X1: social standards, X2: financial benefit, X3: functional benefit to variable Y; Career Identity Diffusion which is analyzed using multiple regression analysis. The population in this study were vocational students at Universitas Negeri Makassar. A sample of 210 students participates in the study. The instruments in this study consisted of 2, namely the Career Identity Development Inventory (CIDI) and the Career Development Questionnaire, which have been tested for validity and reliability through the Confirmatory Factor Analysis test. This study's findings indicate that financial and functional benefits are the main considerations for students who have a career diffusion identity to remain in their majors. This finding contributes to the fact that students tend to choose majors because of the high salary they will get in the future and the desire to fulfill their parents' expectations as successful people. The findings of this research are expected to be a consideration in implementing career guidance in schools, especially for teachers at vocational high schools and Counseling Guidance Teachers, so that effective career guidance since middle school will help students develop a more positive career identity.

Keywords: career commitment, career identity, career identity diffusion, students, vocational high education

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INTRODUCTION

Individuals choosing a career in tertiary institutions cannot be separated from how individual career identities are formed (Lee et al., 2021; Tarsianer et al., 2021). The results of previous research state that career identity is related to the competencies possessed by students, their learning experience, quality of choice, and career planning that has been passed (Min et al., 2021; Sugiyama et al., 2022). Identity in Erikson's theory of psychosocial development explains that an individual's personality develops through stages of facing challenges to obtain his identity when making career decisions and seeking recovery (Akinci & Eryilmaz, 2022; Crowe & McGarr, 2022). However, Marcia expanded on Erikson's theory that individual career identity is characterized by individuals being able to explore careers and make commitments. Commitment is contained in one of the four identity statuses: confiscation, moratorium, diffusion, and achievement, which are aspects of adolescent personal identity (Kolbert et al., 2021). Therefore, the importance of individual career identity, which is the perception of students' vocational perceptions and goals, is formed through self-exploration and the environment, social interaction, development of traditional skills, and work experience (Sheppard et al., 2020).

Career identity consists of 4 aspects of individual status (Karim & Sa'adah, 2021). The first is the identity moratorium which describes individuals who have not committed to various aspects of identity (Batool & Ghayas, 2020). Second, identity foreclosure is a commitment to identity without proper exploration (Batool & Ghayas, 2020). Third, identity diffusion is the status of individuals lacking in exploring and paying less attention to the development of their identity, marked by their low exploration and commitment (Downing & Nauta, 2010; Laughland-Booÿ et al., 2017). Fourth, identity achievement is a status of identity achievement if it has gone through a period of exploration and a clear commitment to its career identity status has emerged (Chong et al., 2021). However, many students do not sufficiently accept the career guidance process at school (Lapan et al., 2012). They choose a career or major at university simply because they follow other people's choices in their surroundings, not based on their career identity (Kniveton, 2004), and in the end, they feel that they choose the wrong major (Ahmed et al., 2017).

This self-identity is referred to as career identity diffusion, this is based on the results of Prabowo's research (2019) that students in choosing a major do not explore nor are they committed to the career they have chosen at university. So, these students usually have behavior that is not diligent in studying and does not

develop themselves, and efforts to achieve learning achievement are also low (Wolters & Hussain, 2015; Zhou et al., 2021). This behavior is usually marked by students who finish late until they get a dropout system at tertiary institutions (Makatulung & Samal, 2021; Widajati & Mahmudah, 2022). However, students with diffusion career identities persist in studying until graduation despite various academic problems (McAdam et al., 2022). This problem is also in line with the results of research by Putri et al. (2022) that students stay in the major even though they are still determining whether the chosen career suits them and where they want to go after graduating from college.

In the theory of self-career development, three aspects shape an individual's career identity based on the theory of Batool and Ghayas (2020). Thus, this aspect is exploration. Career exploration is searching for an identity that can direct a person to choose a meaningful identity or career with full consideration of several possible choices (Batool & Ghayas, 2020; Lysova et al., 2015). The second one states that career commitment has two components: making decisions about careers (Batool & Ghayas, 2020) and identifying them (Lin & Chen, 2020). The third is reconsideration, where individuals can reconsider their identity choices and actively consider choices that align with their goals and aspirations. (Laughland-Booÿ et al., 2017). However, as seen from the exploration aspect of vocational students, there are still students in the career identity diffusion stage (Salami, 2008). The results of research by Baartman et al. (2013) show that in the reconsideration aspect, vocational students do not reach this aspect because they do not have specific career goals.

Furthermore, the career commitment aspect of vocational students is an aspect that is still being questioned, Specifically, why vocational students persist in their chosen major without knowledge related to the major according to their self-image and potential and do not have specific career goals (Lichtenstein et al., 2009). Therefore, the question in this research is why vocational students remain committed to completing their studies even though they are still determining whether their major matches their potential or do they have future career goals. There are three career commitment indicators: social standards, economic benefits, and functional benefits (Batool & Ghayas, 2020; Meyer et al., 2006; Shearer & Luzzo, 2009). Therefore the purpose of this study was to examine the effect of the career commitment aspect on the self-identity of vocational students, especially in career diffusion.

Career identity consists of 4 identity statuses, namely identity achievement exploration accompanied by commitment; the moratorium is an exploration without commitment; identity foreclosure commitment without exploration; and identity diffusion means no exploration or commitment (Laughland-Booÿ et al., 2017). The career identity model is often a hierarchically arranged development process. The model in which development begins with the lowest form of identity is when individuals feel they do not have a commitment, which is meant not being able to relate to certain values and norms and not exploring between the two by not trying. Actively find their references. This condition is called career identity diffusion (Meijers, 1998). Furthermore, according to Xu and Lee (2019), individuals with a career diffusion identity rarely express interest in a particular career or proactively engage in exploratory activities. These individuals mention several career goals but need help to actualize them. Furthermore, according to Wendling and Sagas (2022), individuals in diffusion status have little or no interest in exploring options and arrive at the stage of not being able to commit to determining their career.

According to Diemer and Blustein (2007), career development theory emphasizes that individuals must clarify their vocational identity and develop a future orientation. Career development emphasizes the structural context of career development, looking at external barriers to the clarification of vocational education and vocational identity (Lewis & Gilhousen, 1981; Savickas, 2020). Thus, aspects of the development of individual career identity seen from Marcia's theory of development are divided into three aspects: exploration, commitment, and reconsideration (Batool & Ghayas, 2020). Exploration is the collection of information that is relevant to individual career progress. This exploration is said to facilitate the formation of career plans that are relevant to personally meaningful work life and are part of the stages of the career development process (Jiang et al., 2019; Zikic & Hall, 2009). Furthermore, career commitment is a form of work commitment that individuals have towards their careers and can be linked to desired career outcomes (Ballout, 2009; Carson & Bedeian, 1994). Also, reconsideration refers to the components of forming a career identity (Batool & Ghayas, 2020; Fusco et al., 2022).

Career commitment is an individual's behavior towards his work and involvement in his career, often referred to as individual beliefs, feelings, and acceptance of the goals and values of his career choices (Ahmed, 2019). In addition, career commitment is someone who has certainty about his career choice (Laughland-Booÿ et al., 2017). The results of Zhu et al. (2021) research show that career commitment positively affects career success because individuals can be diligent in developing skills and pursuing goals in their chosen majors. According to Kim et al. (2020), career commitment also refers to the psychological attachment to one's career field and a strong psychological state to continue to carry out a series of tasks related to the chosen and defined major. Career commitment is based on three aspects: social standards, economic benefits, and functional benefits (Goulet & Singh, 2002). This finding aligns with previous research results that socioeconomic factors,

social relations, economic structure, and cultural values positively influence career identity (Meijers & Lengelle, 2012; Stringer & Kerpelman, 2010). The results of previous studies stated that career commitment involves developing personal career goals and identifying involvement in their career goals. Individuals who are willing to exert their potential and are optimistic about pursuing their personal career goals are considered to have a high level of career commitment (Goulet & Singh, 2002). Also, Shim and Rohrbaugh (2011) found that career commitment is also referred to as a combination of individual attitudes towards career roles in career decisions and behavior for example, career identification, work involvement, and career planning based on personal values they have (Na-Nan et al., 2021). Based on this explanation, the objectives of this study are: 1) to describe the career commitment of vocational students; 2) to identify the type of career commitment that has the most influence on the formation of career identity for vocational students' diffusion.

METHODS

The research used a quantitative correlational design to determine the relationship between independent variables (Asenahabi, 2019), namely career commitment: social standards, financial benefits, and functional benefits, which are predicted to affect the dependent variable, namely the career identity of vocational student diffusion. In this study, researchers were able to determine which factors significantly influenced the variable of student diffusion career identity as seen from 3 aspects of career commitment. This research design can be described as follows.

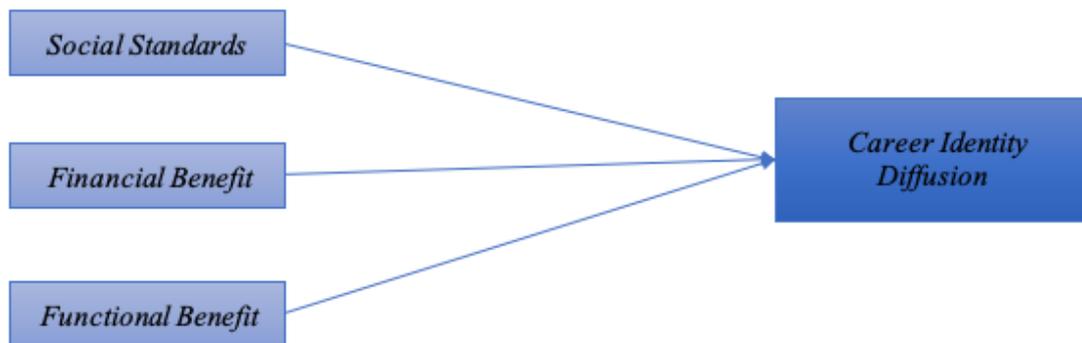


Figure 1. Research Design on the Relationship between Career Commitment and Career Identity Diffusion

This study uses an independent variable, namely career commitment which consists of X1: social standards, X2: financial benefits, and X3: functional benefits. In this study, 290 students of the Faculty of Vocational Studies at Universitas Negeri Makassar with various vocational study programs involved filling out a research questionnaire and selecting using random cluster sampling. Respondents consisted of N: 173 male students and N 117: female students with an age range above 20 years. Respondents in this study were dominantly selected in the 7-14 semester range because students at this semester level are more involved in career exploration and tend to think about future job potential.

The career identity instrument was adapted from a questionnaire (Bennion & Adams, 1986) from Erikson's theory of career identity development. This instrument consists of four aspects, namely identity moratorium, identity foreclosure, identity diffusion, and identity achievement, using modified Likert scale answer choices consisting of 4 answer choices of strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. The results of the confirmatory factor analysis test can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. The Result of the CFA Test of Career Identity Development Inventory (CIDI)

	Respondents	Reliability		Validity			
		Cronbach's	RMSEA	GFI	Chi-Square	CFI	TLI
Career Identity Development Inventory	290	0.896	0.003	0.917	351.328/129	0.907	0.889
Moratorium		0.740					
Diffusion		0.841					
Foreclosure		0.758					
Achievement		0.717					

The Career development instrument was developed based on research results (Batool & Ghayas, 2020) which consists of career development identity factors. It consists of exploration, commitment, and

reconsideration, which have undergone an exploratory factor analysis EFA test and have reached the confirmatory factor analysis test stage to ensure the reliability and validity of the used instrument. This instrument uses a modified Likert scale model with four answer choices strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. The results of the confirmatory factor analysis test can be seen in [Table 2](#).

Table 2. The result of the *CFA Test of Career Development Questionnaire*

	Respondents	Reliability		Validity		
		Cronbach's	GFI	Chi-Square	CFI	TLI
Career Commitment	290	0.768	0.978	43.610/21	0.975	0.958
Financial Benefit		0.772				
Functional Benefit		0.671				
Social Standard		0.693				

The first data analysis in this study used descriptive analysis with JASP to determine the independent variable of career commitment and the career identity diffusion of vocational students. The second was determining the independent variable's significant influence on the dependent variable. The researcher conducted multiple linear regression analyses on JASP. The result produced the output of the simultaneous effect of career commitment variables on career identity diffusion, as well as ANOVA and Coefficients of Career Commitment on Diffusion of Career Identity to determine factors that most influence the dependent variable.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The description of career commitment in vocational students with career identity diffusion shows that the career commitment aspect of vocational students is in the high category (Mean = 31). Specifically, students who stay in the major have chosen because social standards are in the high category (Mean = 11,493), in terms of financial standards as a reason for staying in the major they have chosen are in the high category with a mean = 11,417, and on functional reasons benefit is in the high category with a mean of 9,003.

Table 3. Descriptive Test of Career Commitment Variables

Variable	Maximum	Minimum	Mean	SD	Category
Career Commitment	44	22	31	3.859	High
Financial Benefit	16	7	11.493	1.834	High
Functional Benefit	16	7	11.417	1.821	High
Social Standard	12	6	9.003	1.287	High

N = 290 Student in Vocational Higher Education

The results of multiple linear regression tests show that individual career commitment has a significant effect on students who have a diffusion career identity to stay in the major they have chosen. This finding can be seen in [Table 4](#) with a p-value <0.05.

Table 4. Career Commitment in Anova Test for Diffusion Career Identity

Model		Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	P
H ₁	Regression	1129.959	3	376.653	30.506	<.001
	Residual	3531.227	286	12.347		
	Total	4661.186	289			

Based on [Table 5](#), the regression coefficients show that aspects of commitment affect vocational students who have identity diffusion to stay in their chosen majors even though they do not know whether the major is following their potential or not. In [Table 5](#), the R² value is 0.242, meaning that aspects of career commitment have an effect of 24.2% on the ability of vocational students who have career diffusion to stay in the majors they have chosen. In addition, other factors have an effect of 75.8%.

Table 5. Linear Regression Test of Career Commitment to Diffusion Career Identity

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	RMSE
H ₀	0.000	0.000	0.000	4.016
H ₁	0.492	0.242	0.234	3.514

In addition, [Table 6](#) shows that the aspect of career commitment that influences vocational students to

stay in the major they have chosen is the standard financial factor ($p=0.001$) and the functional benefit factor ($p=0.004$). It can be concluded that vocational students have a diffusion of career identity even though they have chosen majors in higher education without sufficient self-exploration and do not have career goals. These students were able to survive and complete their studies with consideration of financial benefits and functional benefits. Vocational students do not consider social benefits as a reason to stay in their major in higher education.

Table 6. *Coefficients Career Commitment on Diffusion Career Identity*

Model		Standard Error	Standardized	t	p	Collinearity Statistics	
						Tolerance	VIF
H ₀	(Intercept)	0.236		91.620	<.001		
H ₁	(Intercept)	1.738		3.256	0.001		
	Sosial Standards	0.128	0.115	1.961	0.051	0.770	1.298
	Financial <i>Benefit</i>	0.129	0.322	5.505	<.001	0.774	1.293
	Functional <i>Benefit</i>	0.191	0.176	2.878	0.004	0.709	1.411

The results above show that career commitment to vocational students consisting of social standards, financial benefits, and functional benefits is classified in the high category because, in general, students show a good level of 21st-century skills, especially in aspects of problem-solving and adaptability (Latif & Umar, 2022). So, even though they cannot make career decisions, they undergo certain majors and can complete their studies because of their good problem-solving and adaptation skills (Cevik & Senturk, 2019). Adaptability helps students to be able to solve problems and survive in the learning environment in higher education (Nicholls, 2020). Adaptability also encourages students' coping skills, especially when facing learning problems and surviving difficult conditions (Britt et al., 2016). In addition, the results of this study are supported by research findings (Kim et al., 2020) that individual coping abilities encourage the formation of self-regulation in achieving certain goals.

The second research finding shows that the career commitment of vocational students affects career identity diffusion. It can be concluded that students who have a career commitment, even though they still have a diffusion career identity, will be able to survive. They need to learn whether the chosen major matches their potential even though they have no career goals. The findings of this study align with the results of research (Aryani & Umar, 2020; Aryania et al., 2020; Batool & Ghayas, 2020) that several factors influence individuals to stay in their chosen majors. This factor is because of considerations related to future job prospects and other people's views of the individual. Some students argue that studies at university have a better future than those who do not attend college.

The third research finding shows that career commitment has an effect of 24.2% on the career identity of diffusion students, and there is another factor of 75.8% that affects student career identity. In line with research results (Samson et al., 2021; Shim & Rohrbaugh, 2011), there are three reasons why students are committed to certain careers, namely, based on considerations of financial benefits, functional advantages, and social standards. A teenager committed to a certain direction is characterized by individual beliefs about the consequences of their actions (Batool & Ghayas, 2020; Sinring et al., 2022). Even so, other factors affect one's career commitment, namely the factor of career exploration experience during the early career development stage (Batool & Ghayas, 2020; Chasanah & Salim, 2019; Umar, 2021).

Financial benefit is seen as a factor that influences individual commitment to staying in a particular major even though they do not have career goals because Generation Z has a deep understanding that salary, benefits, and benefits are very important in life (Aryani & Umar, 2020; Batool & Ghayas, 2020; Sinring & Umar, 2020). In addition, they are fully aware that their career choices will determine their future socioeconomic status, so they tend to commit to careers that provide financial benefits (Basri & Umar, 2020; Umar et al., 2022). Furthermore, the results of this study indicate that functional aspects affect individuals with career diffusion identities due to functional benefits such as feelings of joy, pleasure, and satisfaction when interacting with other people or the surrounding environment (Bedelkhalif & Studies, 2017; Lent et al., 2000). For example, a student persists in a vocational major even though he does not have a career goal because of fulfilling their parents' dreams, so they will feel very proud and consider themselves successful (Batool & Ghayas, 2020). The results of the study (Ahmed, 2019; Fényes et al., 2021; Jin et al., 2009) concluded that when students identify themselves in certain majors or careers because of enjoyment, pride, or fulfillment of the dreams of the people around them, they will tend to stick to even in difficult conditions. Apart from the material, social and religious factors, it turns out that teenagers consider very important what they will feel in any career (Martí'ah et al., 2018; Umar & Wiguna, 2020). They value their subjective experience, which reflects that in adolescents' lives, subjective positive feelings are so important that they even try to find this element in their career-related goals (Pandang et al., 2022; Pandang & Umar, 2021). Practical value is very important because it is not only involved

in selecting any career but also influences persistence and commitment to any profession or job (Nauta & Kokaly, 2001; Özbilgin et al., 2005).

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that career commitment of students at the Faculty of Engineering is in the high category. This career commitment consists of aspects of financial benefits, functional benefits, and social standards. Two factors influence student commitment to career identity diffusion: financial benefits and social standards. A teenager committed to a certain direction is characterized by individual beliefs about the consequences of their actions. Other factors affect one's career commitment, namely the career exploration experience during early career development. Financial benefits are seen as a factor that influences individual commitment to staying in a particular major, even though they do not have career goals, because Generation Z deeply understands that salary and benefits are very important in their life. In addition, they are fully aware that their career choices will determine their future socioeconomic status, so they tend to commit to careers that provide financial benefits.

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