

# Career Maturity of Guidance and Counseling Students at University X: A Descriptive Study

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## ABSTRACT

Career maturity is one of the important indicators of an individual's readiness to face the workforce. Students, as young individuals in the transitional phase between the educational world and the professional world, are expected to possess the ability to plan, explore, and make career decisions thoughtfully. This study aims to describe the level of career maturity among students based on the results of questionnaire analysis, as well as to identify aspects that need to be improved in the career development process. This study employs a descriptive quantitative approach involving 32 third-semester students from the Guidance and Counseling program at University X. The research instrument used is a Career Maturity Scale consisting of 25 statements, covering four main aspects: Career Planning, Career Exploration, Career Decision, and Knowledge of the Working World. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics based on score norms from Indriyani (2020). The research results indicate that the majority of students have a high level of career maturity (87.50%), while 12.50% fall into the moderate category, and no respondents are in the low category. The Career Planning (90.63%) and Career Decision-Making (87.50%) aspects scored the highest, indicating that students have clear career directions and goals and are confident in making decisions. However, the Work Information aspect (31.25% high; 68.75% moderate) showed the lowest results, suggesting the need to enhance students' understanding of labor market dynamics and technological developments. Overall, this study confirms that students have good internal career readiness but still require reinforcement in external aspects through the provision of career guidance services, exposure to the industrial world, and improvement of digital career literacy.

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## Introduction

Career maturity is a crucial aspect of individual development, particularly for university students who are in a transitional phase toward the world of work. Individuals with a high level of career maturity tend to have a clearer understanding of their personal potential, are able to set career goals, and can make realistic decisions regarding their future careers (Syam et al., 2021). According to Savickas (as cited in Rumengan & Soetjningsih, 2024), career maturity reflects an individual's readiness to cope with career development tasks that are appropriate to their age and life experience. In the context of higher education, career maturity is closely associated with students' efforts to plan career paths, explore career options, make informed decisions, and understand the world of work. These efforts are commonly conceptualized through four core dimensions: career planning, career exploration, career decision-making, and knowledge of the world of work (Indriyani, 2020). Optimal career maturity is therefore a prerequisite for students to make independent and realistic career decisions.

Despite its importance, empirical observations indicate that many university students continue to experience confusion and uncertainty regarding their career direction, even when they demonstrate strong academic potential. At University X, previous findings reveal that while students show dominant strengths in career planning (90.63%) and career decision-making (87.50%), a substantial weakness persists in the domain of knowledge about the world of work. Specifically, the majority of students (68.75%) fall within the moderate category for this aspect (Widiawati et al.,

2025). This pattern suggests an imbalance between students' internal readiness—such as attitudes, aspirations, and planning—and their external preparedness, particularly in terms of competencies and accurate understanding of labor market realities (Yhudin et al., 2025). Such a gap raises critical concerns regarding the extent to which students' career readiness is truly adaptive and robust in responding to rapidly changing labor market demands, given that sound career decision-making requires access to adequate and relevant information (Widiawati et al., 2025).

In this study, career maturity was assessed using the Career Maturity Scale, which was adapted from Crites' conceptual framework. The instrument employed a five-point Likert response format, ranging from 1 to 5. Theoretically, the lowest ideal score obtainable is 1, while the highest ideal score is 5. The mean score per item served as the basis for categorization, with a score of 3.00 representing the ideal midpoint separating lower and higher tendencies of career maturity. Categorization followed the normative criteria proposed by Indriyani (2020), classifying scores into three levels: high ( $>3.67$ ), moderate (2.33–3.67), and low ( $<2.33$ ).

Accordingly, this study aims to empirically describe the level of career maturity among students at University X. The findings are expected to provide accurate quantitative data regarding the distribution of students across different levels of career maturity and to explicitly identify which dimensions are dominant and which require further intervention. These descriptive quantitative data are anticipated to serve as a valid foundation for University X in designing more targeted career guidance and counseling programs, particularly those aimed at strengthening students' knowledge of the world of work, so that their overall career readiness becomes more comprehensive and adaptive.

## Method

This study employed a descriptive quantitative approach to examine the level of career maturity among students at University X (Supriyanti, 2020). The research population consisted of third-semester students enrolled in the Guidance and Counseling Study Program at University X, with a sample of 32 students. Data collection was conducted between October 23 and October 25, 2025.

Data were collected using the Career Maturity Scale, which consisted of 25 valid items encompassing four main dimensions: career planning, career exploration, career decision-making, and knowledge of the world of work. Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5), following the instrument framework proposed by Indriyani (2020).

The collected data were analyzed descriptively using SPSS software (Supriyanti, 2020). Individual respondents' scores were calculated by computing the mean score across items and subsequently classified according to the normative criteria established by Indriyani (2020). These criteria categorize career maturity into three levels: high ( $> 3.67$ ), moderate (2.33–3.67), and low ( $< 2.33$ ).

The category thresholds were determined by dividing the scale range (1–5) into three equal intervals based on an ideal midpoint score of 3.00 and an ideal standard deviation of approximately 0.67 (Indriyani, 2020). Accordingly, mean scores between 2.33 and 3.67 were classified as moderate, scores above 3.67 as high, and scores below 2.33 as low. Through this analytical procedure, the study is expected to provide a clear descriptive profile of students' career maturity levels and to identify specific dimensions that require greater attention in the development of career guidance and counseling programs.

## Result and Discussion

### Results

The results of this study are based on processed and interpreted data obtained from the Career Maturity Scale questionnaire completed by 32 students of University X. The data are presented in the form of statistical tables that describe the overall level of students' career maturity as well as the percentage distribution across each of the four assessed dimensions: career planning, career exploration, career decision-making, and knowledge of the world of work (Antara et al., 2016).

**Table 1.** Overall Profile of Students' Career Maturity Levels

No.	Category	Score Criteria	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
1	High	> 3.67	28	87.50
2	Moderate	2.33–3.67	4	12.50
3	Low	< 2.33	0	0.00

As presented in Table 1, the majority of students demonstrated a high level of career maturity. Specifically, 28 out of 32 students (87.50%) were classified in the high category, indicating strong overall readiness in managing career-related tasks and decision-making. A smaller proportion of students (12.50%) fell into the moderate category, while none of the respondents were categorized as having low career maturity. These findings suggest that, overall, students at University X possess a well-developed level of career maturity, although a minority still require additional support to further strengthen their career development readiness.

**Table 2.** Percentage Distribution of Students' Career Maturity by Dimension

Career Maturity Dimension	High (%)	Moderate (%)	Low (%)
Career Planning	90.63	9.37	0.00
Career Exploration	71.88	28.12	0.00
Career Decision-Making	87.50	12.50	0.00
Knowledge of the World of Work	31.25	68.75	0.00

Table 2 illustrates the percentage distribution of students' career maturity across the four assessed dimensions. The results show that career planning exhibits the highest proportion of students in the high category (90.63%), followed by career decision-making (87.50%), indicating strong readiness in setting career goals and making career-related decisions. Career exploration demonstrates a relatively lower proportion of students in the high category (71.88%), with nearly one-third of students (28.12%) classified at the moderate level, suggesting variability in students' efforts to seek and evaluate career-related information.

In contrast, knowledge of the world of work represents the weakest dimension, with only 31.25% of students categorized as high and the majority (68.75%) falling into the moderate category. This finding highlights a notable gap between students' internal career readiness—such as planning and decision-making—and their external preparedness, particularly in understanding labor market conditions and occupational requirements. Overall, the results indicate that while students demonstrate strong career maturity in planning and decision-making, further support is needed to strengthen their knowledge of the world of work.

## Discussion

Based on the research findings, the majority of students at University X demonstrated a high level of career maturity (87.50%), while the remaining students were classified in the moderate category (12.50%). None of the students fell into the low category. These results indicate that most students at University X possess adequate readiness to face and plan their future careers (Limjong et al., 2024).

According to Donald Super's career development theory (1990), career maturity refers to an individual's readiness to make appropriate career decisions based on self-understanding, knowledge of the world of work, and the ability to align career choices with real-life conditions. University students, who typically fall within the exploration stage (ages 15–24), are expected to begin identifying their interests, values, and abilities while developing realistic career plans (Whakinunddin, 2020). The findings of this study suggest that students at University X have generally reached a level of career development consistent with this theoretical framework (Jatmika, 2015). Their ability to plan and make relatively mature career decisions may be influenced by several factors, including campus environmental support, academic guidance, participation in student organizations, and access to career-related information (Maulidina et al., 2025).

### Career Planning

Career planning emerged as the strongest dimension, with 90.63% of students classified in the high category. This finding indicates that students are aware of the importance of career planning and have begun to formulate clear career directions. They are able to visualize occupations that align with their interests and competencies and to identify the steps required to achieve their career goals (Pratiwi et al., 2025).

These results reflect students' prospective thinking, whereby they not only focus on their

current academic activities but also consider long-term career prospects in the labor market (Latif et al., 2017). This condition is consistent with Indriyani's (2020) assertion that individuals with high career maturity tend to possess a clear professional vision, set specific career goals, and develop structured yet flexible career plans. The high level of career planning also suggests students' awareness of global competition and rapid changes in the world of work. Many students actively prepare themselves through skills training, digital competency development, and engagement in relevant non-academic experiences (Ruzain et al., 2025). Supporting evidence from studies conducted at Universitas Islam Riau shows a significant relationship between strong career planning and work readiness, particularly in highly competitive global labor markets (Ruzain et al., 2025). Thus, the strong career planning dimension reflects a positive indication of students' future orientation and preparedness for dynamic labor market demands.

#### Career Decision-Making

The career decision-making dimension also demonstrated a high level, with 87.50% of students categorized as high. This result indicates that students are generally capable of making career decisions with a good level of confidence. They are able to base their decisions on personal interests, values, and abilities rather than relying solely on external influences such as family or peers (Rahmi, 2019).

Career maturity is not only reflected in the existence of career plans but also in the ability to make rational, realistic, and independent decisions. Career-mature students are able to evaluate various career alternatives, assess the advantages and disadvantages of each option, and select paths that best align with their personal characteristics (Adinda et al., 2025). This aligns with the definition of career maturity proposed by Super (1980), which emphasizes the successful completion of age-appropriate career development tasks. The supportive campus environment at University X—through academic activities, career counseling services, and student organizational involvement—appears to facilitate students' autonomy in career decision-making. Such an environment is crucial for fostering timely and informed career decisions, which are essential competencies in contemporary work contexts (Maulidina et al., 2025).

#### Career Exploration

The career exploration dimension yielded 71.88% of students in the high category, indicating that students have begun actively seeking information about their career interests, although the level of exploration remains suboptimal (Hastuti & Psikologi, 2020). Some students may remain at the planning or passive information-seeking stage—such as browsing online resources or consulting peers—without engaging in direct exploratory activities like career seminars, workshops, internships, or professional networking with industry practitioners (Awaliyah et al., 2019).

Career exploration is a critical component of career maturity, as it allows students to gain concrete insights into job demands, required skills, and potential opportunities and challenges (Awaliyah et al., 2019). Through exploration, individuals are better able to align their self-concept with future professional roles (Delsa Septira et al., 2025). The findings suggest that there is still considerable room for improvement in facilitating experiential career exploration. Universities can play a strategic role by providing integrated internship programs, individualized career guidance, and soft skills training to help students gain firsthand exposure to the realities of the labor market.

#### Knowledge of the World of Work

Among all dimensions, knowledge of the world of work emerged as the weakest, with only 31.25% of students in the high category and 68.75% in the moderate category. This indicates that many students still have limited understanding of actual labor market conditions, including employment opportunities, industry needs, technological developments, and future occupational trends (Sa'idah, 2024).

This finding underscores the importance of labor market knowledge in shaping overall career maturity. Insufficient information may hinder students' ability to align their competencies with industry demands, increasing the risk of mismatch between academic backgrounds and future employment (Jalal, 2024). Several factors may contribute to this limitation, such as limited career socialization activities on campus, restricted access to labor market data, and low student participation in professional activities such as job fairs, industry seminars, and career training

programs (Jalal, 2024). To address this issue, universities should strengthen the role of Career Development Centers as hubs for career information and consultation. Furthermore, collaboration with industry partners through guest lectures, professional training, and collaborative internship programs can provide students with deeper and more practical insights into the world of work.

#### Overall Analysis and Implications

Overall, the findings indicate that students at University X exhibit a generally high level of career maturity, particularly in career planning and decision-making (Awaliyah et al., 2023). However, career exploration and knowledge of the world of work require further enhancement to achieve optimal career maturity. High career maturity represents a valuable asset in facing global challenges, especially in the era of Industry 5.0, which demands flexibility, creativity, and adaptive competencies (Abdullah, 2020). Career-mature students are more likely to navigate labor market dynamics effectively, maintain clear life directions, and achieve future job satisfaction (Sisca & William Gunawan, 2015).

The implications of these findings suggest that universities should develop comprehensive programs aimed at strengthening students' career readiness, including self-development and soft skills training, individual and group career counseling, increased collaboration with industry through internships and job training, and the organization of job fairs, career seminars, and professional workshops. At the same time, students are encouraged to actively seek experiential learning opportunities and expand their exposure beyond academic activities. Continuous efforts to enhance career exploration and labor market knowledge are essential for fostering comprehensive and sustainable career maturity (Lestari Kadiyono et al., 2020).

## Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate that the majority of students at University X demonstrate a high level of career maturity, reflecting strong psychological readiness and well-developed career planning in preparing for the world of work. Career planning and career decision-making emerged as the strongest dimensions, highlighting students' ability to independently determine professional directions and goals. However, the dimension of knowledge of the world of work remains at a moderate level, suggesting the need to enhance students' understanding of labor market dynamics, industry demands, and technological developments.

The implications of these findings underscore the critical role of higher education institutions in strengthening career guidance that is grounded in up-to-date and relevant labor market information, enabling students to become more adaptive to changes in the world of work. Accordingly, this study recommends the implementation of career guidance programs that emphasize exposure to industry realities, the development of digital career literacy skills, and increased collaboration with industry partners. Such initiatives are expected to support students' comprehensive career readiness and facilitate a smoother transition from higher education to professional employment.

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