



EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGES: FACTORS CAUSING IDENTITY CRISIS AMONG GENERATION Z

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Abstract:

This research aims to analyze the factors that cause identity crisis among Generation Z. This research uses a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach. The informants in this study consisted of 6 junior or senior high school students who experienced an identity crisis, 2 junior or senior high school teachers, and 2 parents of students located in Bekasi City and DKI Jakarta. Data analysis in this study used Milles and Huberman's theory through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results showed that Generation Z students experience identity crisis due to two factors, namely internal factors which include inadequate emotion control and insecurity, and external factors which include non-supportive family background, social pressure, and the influence of social media.

Keywords: *Education, Identity Crisis, Generation Z*

INTRODUCTION

Generation Z, born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s, grew up in an era of unlimited digital communication and the internet. Generation Z experiences this developmental transition between childhood and adulthood in adolescence, which occurs between the ages of 12 and 21. Santrock says adolescence is a developmental transition that includes biological, cognitive, and socioemotional changes. At this time adolescents experience a crisis of searching for their identity, a teenager will try many things to find out who they really are. Their confusion about their sense of self and search for identity makes them worry too much about how they are seen by others and over-identify with those around (Artini, 2018).

The identity crisis experienced by Generation Z is a phenomenon that has received increasing attention along with the development of digital technology and social media. With rapid technological change and high global demands, they often feel pressured to meet changing expectations and adapt to complex social dynamics (Mahmud, 2024). Erikson said that identity crisis is the first step in the process of making decisions about various important issues related to self-identity. Furthermore, Erikson states that the crisis that must be resolved by adolescents is the search for self-identity. Acceptance of oneself as an individual and one's social environment, emotional and intellectual growth, skill development, and the selection of appropriate social values to be used to build one's own social behavior are all components that must be developed and sought to achieve self-identity. In this identity-seeking process, young people are often attracted to new things that spark their curiosity. However, this tendency can also lead to deviant behavior, often called juvenile delinquency (Artini, 2018). In this stage of searching for self-identity, there are adolescents who successfully find their identity and some who fail to find their identity which can lead to social deviation (Jannah & Satwika, 2021). In social pathology identity crisis is categorized as a type of behavior or condition that deviates from social norms that can have a negative impact on both individuals and society. Social pathology includes various types of behaviors or conditions that deviate

from social norms and can cause mental health and social problems. If not properly addressed, Generation Z's identity crisis can lead to mental disorders such as depression, anxiety, and a significant decrease in psychological well-being (Mahmud, 2024).

Juvenile delinquency incidents are now rampant, such as brawls, fights, theft, and drug abuse. In Kompas news, 3,000 teenagers in Bekasi are involved in gangster activities, and are divided into 29 groups that are known to often carry out brawls. In addition to brawls, they also often carry out illegal racing actions that disturb public order (Joy Andre, 2022). Then Jakarta Police Chief Inspector General Fadil Imran revealed that during 2022 there were 323 cases of juvenile delinquency in South Jakarta (Ricky Prayoga, 2023). And the Indonesia National Adolescent Mental Health Survey (I-NAMHS) revealed that 1 in 3 Indonesian adolescents aged 10-17 years experienced mental health problems, while 1 in 20 adolescents experienced mental disorders in the past 12 months. This equates to 15.5 million adolescents with mental problems and 2.45 million with mental disorders (Gloria, 2022).

Therefore, it is important to identify the factors that cause identity crisis. So as to learn mitigation strategies for identity crisis among Generation Z so that in the transition period adolescents can develop biological, cognitive, and socio-emotional changes properly. The results of this research are expected to provide a deeper understanding of how Generation Z experiences identity crisis.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach. According to Bogdan and Biklen in (Sugiyono, 2020) Qualitative research methods collect data in the form of words and pictures. Once analyzed, the data collected will be described in a way that is easy for others to understand. In this study, it is intended to provide a description, describe and interpret the factors that cause identity crisis in adolescents, especially junior and senior high school students located in Bekasi City and DKI Jakarta. Meanwhile, the phenomenological approach seeks to understand reality as it is by letting research subjects tell their experiences related to certain phenomena through open questions (Muntaha, 2022).

The informants in this study consisted of 6 junior or senior high school students who experienced an identity crisis, 2 junior or senior high school teachers, and 2 parents of students located in Bekasi City and DKI Jakarta. The data collection techniques used in this research are interview and observation techniques. In this study, purposive sampling technique was used to identify informants, namely targeted informants selected based on certain criteria. The data analysis technique in this study uses Milles and Huberman's theory where the stages are: Data reduction, Data presentation, and Conclusion drawing.

Table 1. Research Informants

No	Initials	Age	Status
P1	AM	16	Students
P2	HA	16	Students
P3	MF	14	Students
P4	MD	14	Students
P5	TS	16	Students
P6	MA	14	Students
P7	DT	56	Teacher
P8	SN	44	Teacher

P9	DP	46	Parents
P10	DE	43	Parents

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results showed that Generation Z students experience identity crisis due to two factors, namely internal factors which include inadequate emotion control and insecurity, and external factors which include non-supportive family background, social pressure, and the influence of social media.

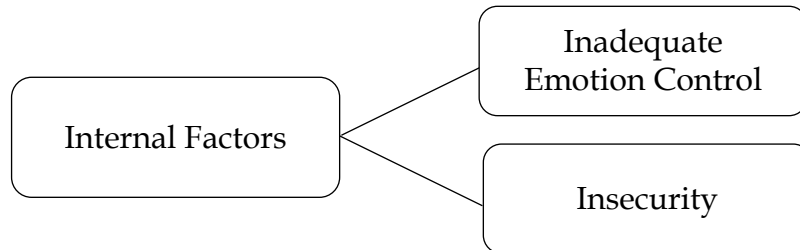


Figure 1. Internal Factors

Internal Factors Causing Identity Crisis

1. Inadequate Emotion Control

In the transitional period of adolescence, emotional tensions rise as a result of physical and glandular changes. Not all adolescents experience instability from time to time as a consequence of trying to adjust to new patterns of behavior and new social expectations (Putri, 2024). However, this change encourages adolescents' attitudes when things do not match their idealistic conditions, making their emotional conditions easily deteriorate.

Inadequate emotion control in adolescents can contribute to identity crisis, a tendency to feel high shame or guilt, due to ineffective emotion regulation, has also been found to correlate with identity crisis intensity. Adolescents who do not have good emotion control tend to have more difficulty adapting to social demands, thus facing more obstacles in developing a strong and stable identity.

Adolescents often experience a range of intense and complex emotions, including excessive anxiety about the future. Failing to cope with these emotions can lead to confusion and uncertainty about themselves. When adolescents cannot control their emotions, they can feel trapped in making poor decisions. Adolescents who have Inadequate emotion control, tend to be easily reactive to the behavior of people around them, which makes them less wise in making decisions, thus shaping their identity.

“I want to get attention by joining my friends in brawls,
I didn't refuse my friend's invitation, because it was fun to brawl” (P4)

In the field findings, researchers found junior high school student informants who vented their emotions by committing brawls, this even became a form of validation of their identity, informants felt cool when they won the brawl. This often happens without considering the negative consequences of their actions.

This is also supported by previous research (Putri, 2024) which states that adolescents' difficulties in developing personality can cause obstacles in the socialization process. The manifestation of this weak personality causes the emergence of unstable emotional levels in adolescents that adolescents also show signs of self-distrust or low self-esteem, disappointment, emotional disturbances and the wrong will and way of

thinking so that adolescents give up easily, and are inconsistent in solving problems.

2. Insecurity

Insecurity is a sense of anxiety or fear of the surrounding environment as a result of dissatisfaction with one's own condition. Insecurity or can be said as a feeling of insecurity. When feeling insecure a person feels ashamed, guilty, inadequate, or even feels unable to do anything. This symptom can cause adolescents to be afraid of interacting with other people (Majazeta Yusrina, Aliffah, & Holilah, 2024). Adolescents become anxious when they do not get what they want. In another aspect, social problems that often arise are teenagers' concerns about whether or not they will be accepted by certain groups. Insecurity plays an important role in adolescent identity crisis.

Insecurity prevents adolescents from reaching their potential and recognizing their strengths and weaknesses. Without strong self-confidence, adolescents tend to doubt their abilities and self-worth, making it difficult to develop a solid positive identity. In addition, a lack of self-confidence can make adolescents more vulnerable to pressures from their external environment. If these feelings of insecurity are not addressed in a positive way, as a result, Generation Z adolescents may seek other ways to gain recognition and a sense of worth, one of which is through brawling behavior.

This is supported in research (Reinandini, Fatimah, & Salim, 2024) which states that when adolescents do not have a clear understanding of values and life goals, they tend to get caught up in patterns of behavior that follow trends or imitate others without considering the impact on themselves. And this identity crisis is often exacerbated by a lack of self-confidence, which can lead to deeper confusion in the process of self-discovery.

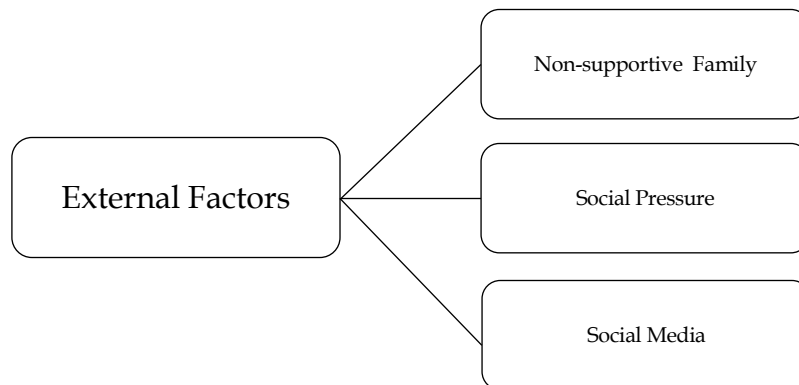


Figure 2. External Factors

Faktor Eksternal Penyebab Krisis Identitas

1. Non-supportive Family

The first factor is the lack of role models and support from the family. Generation Z teenagers who are in the phase of searching for themselves really need role models and direction from their families, because the family is the initial foundation or madrasa for a child. If the family cannot provide good upbringing and direction, they will lose their way and teenagers will look for role models outside. Adolescents who feel a lack of attention and support from their family or surroundings often experience feelings of loneliness and low self-esteem. They may feel unrecognized or unimportant within their family or community. When adolescents do not receive adequate attention, they tend to seek recognition from external sources, such as peers. And in an effort to feel accepted and valued, they may engage in juvenile delinquent behaviors such as brawls and bullying.

" I bully because I'm just following along,
and I also want to have someone to tell me what to do" (P3)

Family education also plays an important role in shaping adolescents' behavior and values. Families that provide good education and sufficient attention can help adolescents develop a healthy understanding of themselves and the world around them. However, when family education is lacking, teens may not get the guidance needed to cope with social pressures and make wise decisions. Lack of family education may cause teens to seek behavioral models from other sources, such as peers or the media. Without proper guidance, teens may be more easily influenced by negative behaviors. They may see bullying as a way to gain control or power over others, or perceive brawls as a way to show courage and gain recognition.

"This Identity Crisis occurs because of the lack of family education" (P8)

This shows how a lack of education from the family can encourage negative behavior. Generation Z teens may not understand the impact of their actions on others and themselves. Parents, then, have a very important role in helping teens form their identity. Without emotional support and role models from parents, teens tend to seek recognition and validation from external sources, such as peers and social media. This can lead to an identity crisis, where adolescents feel unsure of their values and purpose in life. In previous research (Mahmud, 2024) also mentioned that Generation Z, who grew up in unstable or unsupportive family environments, are more likely to have difficulty in developing a cohesive and stable identity.

2. Social Pressure

"There are so many comments from other people that are very unpleasant for me that I myself take issue with my appearance that makes me feel inferior and want to change my appearance" (P5)

"At school, the smart ones usually don't want to be friends with the dumb ones, so they look for coping mechanisms, by finding a way to get their identity by joining in with the gangs, joining in with something where they are valued"(P1)

The findings show that socialization at school can also be influenced by intelligence levels and academic achievement. Adolescents who are perceived as less intelligent are often avoided by more accomplished peers. This kind of social discrimination further exacerbates feelings of isolation and low self-esteem among adolescents. When they cannot find an accepted and valued place within the school environment, they tend to seek out communities outside of school that offer a sense of brotherhood and recognition, albeit in negative forms such as brawling groups. The reason teens do this is because they would rather be someone who is known as having a negative identity than having no identity at all (Nadiyah, Nadhirah, & Fahriza, 2021). Teenagers often fear feeling lonely or isolated. They seek out groups or communities where they can feel accepted and have friends. This fear of loneliness makes them more vulnerable to negative influences from the social environment. They may engage in juvenile delinquency just to ensure that they have a place in the group and don't feel alone. This fear of loneliness can be very strong, especially for teens who do not get adequate emotional support from their families.

Peer pressure also plays an important role in adolescent behavior. Adolescents often feel the need to follow the behavior of their peers in order to be accepted in a particular social group. For some adolescents, involvement in brawls or bullying is a way to show bravery or loyalty to their friend group. In addition, they may feel that such actions give them the attention and status they seek. Adolescents who are in a negative social environment often feel the need to follow the behavior of their peers in order to be accepted in the social group. They fear being left out or alienated if they do not follow the norms of the group. Peer pressure to do things that are not in line with positive values

can exacerbate the identity crisis. Adolescents who are in a negative social environment tend to experience confusion and uncertainty about who they really are and what they want in life. This is supported by research (Putri, 2024) which suggests that most identity crises are caused by life pressure on adolescents, so that sometimes they experience stress and depression. Therefore, adolescents find it difficult to form their identity.

3. Social Media

“Many identity crises are caused by the spectacle of less educational social media, all of which can be watched by all ages” (P9)

Social media plays an important role in Generation Z's life. Generation Z teens often spend hours watching content on various social media platforms. However, not all the content available is educational. Many shows feature negative behaviors, unrealistic lifestyles, and destructive values. Adolescents exposed to this kind of content often experience confusion in determining their true values and life goals. Constant exposure to uneducational content can damage self-perception and make Generation Z feel unsure of who they are which can exacerbate identity crises, as Generation Z teens may feel that they do not measure up to expected standards or experience pressure to meet unrealistic expectations.

Research (Mahmud, 2024) suggests that social media, as one of the essential tools for communicating and interacting in the digital age, contributes significantly to accelerating and deepening this identity crisis. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok and Twitter provide opportunities for Generation Z to share and create their own images. This has caused Generation Z to experience a significant spike in levels of anxiety, depression and identity crisis compared to previous generations. In the cultural and social context, Generation Z is also faced with challenges related to globalization and shifting values. The decline of Indonesian nationalism is one of the consequences of such changes. To face these challenges, Generation Z must make Pancasila a solid fortress as well as a guideline for life. By upholding the values of Pancasila, Generation Z can form a strong self-identity that is in line with the nation's identity (Yohamintin, 2024).

CONCLUSION

Identity crisis in Generation Z is often caused by a combination of internal and external factors that affect their psychological development. Internal factors include inadequate emotion control and insecurity, and external factors include non-supportive family background, social pressure, and social media influence. Adolescents who are exposed to negative content on social media, are in a destructive social environment, and do not get enough attention and education from their parents tend to experience confusion and uncertainty about their identity. It is important for parents, educators, and friendships to provide Generation Z youth with the necessary support, including providing educational content on social media, creating a positive social environment, and providing attention and guidance. With the right approach, we can help adolescents overcome their identity crisis and develop into healthy, thriving individuals.

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