

The Relationship Between Locus of Control and Career Maturity Among 11th-Grade High School Students

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Abstract

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Career maturity is an important developmental capacity that enables high school students to plan their future, explore educational and occupational alternatives, obtain relevant career information, and make appropriate career decisions. One psychological factor that may be associated with career maturity is locus of control, which reflects students' beliefs regarding the extent to which their actions and efforts influence outcomes. This study aimed to examine the relationship between locus of control and career maturity among Grade XI students at SMA Negeri 1 Sedayu. A quantitative approach with a correlational design was employed. The participants were 168 Grade XI students selected using simple random sampling from a population of 290 students. Data were collected using locus of control and career maturity scales. The instruments demonstrated high internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.868 and 0.968, respectively. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, prerequisite tests, Pearson Product-Moment correlation, and simple linear regression. The results showed that most students had moderate levels of both locus of control (74%) and career maturity (72%). Pearson correlation analysis revealed a very strong positive relationship between locus of control and career maturity ($r = 0.842$, $p < 0.001$). Simple linear regression further indicated a significant relationship between locus of control and career maturity. ($R = 0.842$, $R^2 = 0.710$, $F = 405.78$, $p < 0.001$). Thus, locus of control accounted for 71.0% of the variance in career maturity within the research model, while the remaining 29.0% was associated with other factors. These findings highlight the importance of strengthening students' sense of personal agency through career guidance and counseling services, particularly in self-awareness, career planning, exploration, and decision-making activities.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The increasingly dynamic nature of the educational and professional landscapes requires high school students to be prepared to plan and determine their career paths from an early stage. Technological advancements and digitalization have transformed the nature of work and heightened the demands placed on individual competencies. Consequently, choosing further education and a career is no longer a simple matter; it requires the ability to recognize one's own potential, explore various career alternatives, gather relevant information, and make sound decisions. Therefore, the high school years serve as a crucial period for preparing students for their future careers, as this is the phase when they begin to face the need to make choices regarding education and employment after completing their secondary schooling. [1]. In this context, career maturity is a crucial skill that students need to develop.

Ideally, high school students are expected to possess career maturity that enables them to understand their own potential, engage in career planning, actively explore various educational and employment alternatives, acquire information about the world of work, and make realistic and responsible career decisions. [2]. The concept aligns with the view Super [3] position career maturity as part of an individual's career development. Career maturity relates not only to the decision to choose a job but also encompasses an individual's readiness to address career development tasks appropriate to their developmental stage. From Super's perspective, career maturity is reflected in, among other things, career planning, career exploration, knowledge of the world of work, and the ability to make career decisions. [4]. Thus, students with a good level of career maturity should be able to connect their self-understanding with various educational and career alternatives, and make choices based on rational considerations.

However, this ideal state has not yet been fully observed among students. Various studies indicate that high school students still face difficulties in making career choices, are not sufficiently active in seeking information regarding

education and employment, lack an understanding of university study program options, and are not yet capable of making decisions independently. One of the studies examined in this research. [5] indicates that 82.66% of students fall into the low-to-moderate career maturity category. Low career maturity can lead to various consequences, such as confusion regarding educational choices, a mismatch between personal potential and career choices, and hesitation in making future decisions.

This issue was also empirically observed among Grade XI students at SMA Negeri 1 Sedayu. Interviews with guidance and counseling teachers revealed varying levels of career maturity among the students. Some students sought consultations regarding their post-graduation career plans, while others exhibited low confidence in their academic abilities, leading to hesitation in selecting specific fields of study or occupations. Furthermore, limited information regarding higher education pathways, procedures, and job opportunities left students uncertain about whether their chosen career paths aligned with their personal potential. Another issue arose from discrepancies between the career choices of students and their parents, creating a need for assistance as the students weighed their career decisions.

These findings are corroborated by the results of an assessment conducted on 141 eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Sedayu on August 5–6, 2025. The assessment results indicate that career maturity ranks lowest among the developmental aspects, with a developmental level of 5.42. Analysis also reveals that some students lack in-depth knowledge regarding various professions and university study programs, rendering them unable to formulate structured career plans. Furthermore, findings from guidance and counseling services highlight the presence of students who possess career plans yet doubt their own abilities, as well as students who have not yet identified their own potential and interests, students who remain uncertain about their career choices, as well as those facing limited support from parents and family. These conditions indicate that the issue of career maturity is not merely a matter of the availability of career information but also involves psychological factors that influence how students perceive their own abilities and their sense of control over their future.

One of the internal factors theoretically related to career maturity is locus of control. [6]. Rotter defined "locus of control" as an individual's belief regarding the relationship between their actions and the resulting consequences or outcomes. Individuals with an internal locus of control tend to view success and failure as being linked to their own efforts, abilities, and decisions [7]. Conversely, individuals with an external locus of control are more likely to view life outcomes as being influenced by factors outside themselves, such as luck, fate, or the influence of others. [8]. These differences in beliefs can influence how individuals approach developmental tasks, including career development tasks.

In the context of career development, locus of control is significant because the processes of career planning and decision-making require an individual's active engagement. Students who believe they can control outcomes through their own effort and ability tend to be more proactive in seeking information, exploring career alternatives, planning for the future, overcoming obstacles, and making decisions. Conversely, the belief that success is largely determined by external factors can lead students to become more passive, prone to relying on others, and less motivated to engage in career exploration [9]. Thus, locus of control can conceptually serve as one of the psychological factors explaining differences in students' career maturity levels.

This relationship has received support from previous research, Research [10] demonstrates a link between locus of control and the career maturity of high school students, with internal locus of control contributing 50.6% to career maturity. Munawir et al., (2018) found a strong and significant relationship between internal locus of control and the career maturity of final-year students. Meanwhile, [11] A systematic literature review indicates a positive relationship between locus of control and career maturity. These findings suggest that an individual's belief regarding control over their life has the potential to be a significant factor in career development.

However, there remains a research gap that warrants further investigation. Previous studies on locus of control and career maturity have largely focused on final-year university students or concentrated on specific aspects such as internal locus of control, family support, work readiness, or other career-related variables. Consequently, empirical evidence regarding the relationship between locus of control and career maturity among high school students, particularly those in the eleventh grade, remains relatively limited. Beyond differences in subject characteristics, the developmental context of high school students differs from that of final-year university students. Eleventh-grade students are at a stage where career exploration and preparation are actively unfolding, and they are beginning to face the pressure of making decisions regarding their education or employment post-graduation. Therefore, findings derived from university students cannot be directly generalized to high school students.

Another gap lies in the local context of the study. Although the relationship between locus of control and career maturity has been examined previously, research specifically analyzing the relationship between locus of control and career maturity among Grade XI students at SMA Negeri 1 Sedayu was not found in the literature reviewed for this thesis. Yet, assessment results and interviews at the school indicate tangible issues regarding career maturity and students' beliefs in their own capabilities. Consequently, this study not only re-examines theoretical relationships established in prior research but also provides empirical evidence regarding the specific characteristics of the students and the school context.

The novelty of this research lies in examining the relationship between locus of control and career maturity among Grade XI students at SMA Negeri 1 Sedayu by integrating empirical school-related issues, career development perspectives, and students' internal psychological factors. Unlike previous studies that largely focused on final-year university students or specifically on internal locus of control, this study positions locus of control as a psychological factor linked to high school students' ability to navigate career development tasks. Consequently, this research aims to clarify the extent to which students' beliefs regarding personal control contribute to their readiness to plan, explore, gather information, and make career decisions.

This research is significant because career maturity is a developmental aspect that determines students' readiness to enter higher education or the workforce. A student's inability to prepare for and determine a career path can lead to choices that do not align with their personal potential and may hinder career development at subsequent stages. Understanding the relationship between psychological factors and career maturity can provide a foundation for guidance and counseling teachers to design career services that better meet students' needs. The findings may also assist schools in recognizing the importance of fostering students' beliefs and personal responsibility within the career planning process. Based on this background, the study aims to determine the relationship of locus of control to the career maturity of Grade XI students at SMA Negeri 1 Sedayu.

The selection of Grade XI students at SMA Negeri 1 Sedayu as the research context provides an empirical contribution beyond merely replicating previous studies in a different location. Grade XI represents an important stage in high school students' career development, as students are increasingly expected to engage in career exploration, clarify educational and occupational interests, consider future alternatives, and begin making more realistic career plans. At this stage, students' perceptions of personal control may be particularly relevant to how they approach career-related decisions and develop career maturity. However, previous studies have generally examined the relationship between locus of control and career maturity without sufficiently addressing how this relationship is manifested specifically among Grade XI students within the Indonesian high school context.

This study therefore differs from previous research not merely in terms of location or sample characteristics, but in its focus on examining the relationship between locus of control and career maturity at a specific developmental stage of high school. Empirically, the study provides evidence from Grade XI students at SMA Negeri 1 Sedayu, a context that has not been adequately represented in the previous literature reviewed. Methodologically, the study employs a quantitative correlational approach to examine the strength and direction of the relationship between the two variables. Theoretically, the findings contribute to the understanding of how an internal psychological factor, namely locus of control, is associated with students' readiness to engage in career planning, exploration, information seeking, and career decision-making. Thus, the novelty of this study lies in providing context-specific empirical evidence concerning the relationship between locus of control and career maturity during the Grade XI developmental stage, rather than simply reproducing previous findings in a different setting.

The development of career guidance services for high school students is one of the practical implications of understanding factors associated with career maturity. However, previous studies have not fully addressed the relationship between locus of control and career maturity specifically among Grade XI students in the Indonesian high school context. Theoretically, previous research has established the relevance of locus of control to career development, but the relationship between students' perceived personal control and their career maturity during the developmental stage of Grade XI requires further examination. Methodologically, previous studies have used different samples, instruments, and analytical approaches, making it necessary to examine this relationship using a quantitative correlational design with standardized measures appropriate to the characteristics of Grade XI students. Empirically, limited evidence is available regarding this relationship among Grade XI students at SMA Negeri 1 Sedayu. Therefore, this study is not merely a replication conducted in a different location, but seeks to provide context-specific empirical evidence on the relationship between locus of control and career maturity among Grade XI students. This evidence may provide a basis for developing career guidance services that address students' self-understanding, career exploration, planning, and decision-making needs.

2. METHODS

This study employs a quantitative approach using a correlational research design. A quantitative approach was selected because the research data consist of numerical scores obtained via research instruments, which are subsequently analyzed using statistical techniques. The correlational design was chosen to determine the relationship and the magnitude of the relationship of the locus of control variable acting as the independent variable (X) to career maturity acting as the dependent variable (Y) among Grade XI students at SMA Negeri 1 Sedayu. This study does not involve any treatment or manipulation of the variables under investigation; instead, it measures the state of both variables as they exist within the research subjects. The study was conducted at SMA Negeri 1 Sedayu, Bantul Regency, Special Region of Yogyakarta.

Data collection took place on May 22, 2026. The research site was selected based on issues regarding locus of control and career maturity observed among Grade XI students.

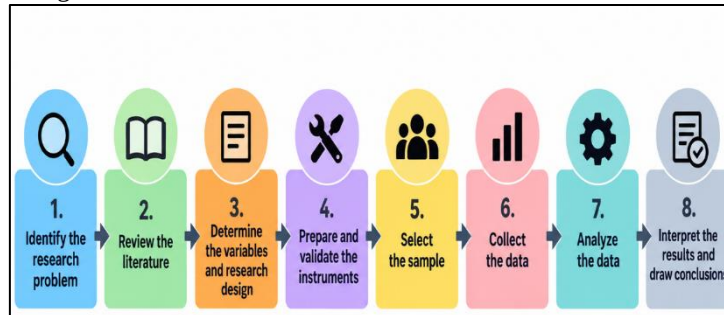


Figure 1. The Research Process

The research process was conducted systematically, proceeding from problem identification to the drawing of conclusions. The research stages included: (1) identifying issues related to students' locus of control and career maturity; (2) reviewing theories and prior research to establish a conceptual foundation; (3) defining research variables specifically, locus of control as variable X and career maturity as variable Y; (4) developing and testing research instruments; (5) determining the research population and sample; (6) collecting data by administering research scales to respondents; (7) processing and analyzing data using descriptive analysis, prerequisite testing, Pearson Product-Moment correlation analysis, and simple linear regression; and (8) interpreting results and drawing conclusions regarding the relationship between locus of control and students' career maturity. Data collection was carried out using psychological scales administered directly to the Grade XI students serving as research respondents. Two instruments were used to obtain research data: a locus of control scale and a career maturity scale. Both scales were constructed based on the theoretical dimensions and indicators of each respective variable. The research scales utilized a Likert model with four response options: Strongly Agree (SS), Agree (S), Disagree (TS), and Strongly Disagree (STS). The instruments comprised both favorable and unfavorable statements. Scoring involved assigning values of 1–4 based on the direction of the statement, after which the scores for all items were summed to obtain a total score for each respondent. The research population consisted of all Grade XI students at SMA Negeri 1 Sedayu, totaling 290 students. The sample was selected using a simple random sampling technique, ensuring that every member of the population had an equal chance of being chosen as a respondent. This technique was selected because the research population possessed relatively homogeneous characteristics and the study required a sample representative of that population. The sample size was determined using Slovin's formula with a 5% margin of error; the calculation to 168 students. Consequently, 168 Grade XI students served as research respondents, representing approximately 58% of the total population. The research instruments consisted of two scales: the locus of control scale and the career maturity scale. The locus of control scale was developed based on Rotter's (1966) concept, which distinguishes between internal and external dimensions of locus of control. The initial locus of control instrument comprised 43 items; following validity testing, 31 items were retained for the final instrument.

Table 1. Locus of Control Instrument

Variable	Aspect	Indicator	Item
Locus of Control	Internal Locus of Control	Belief that success is influenced by one's own hard work	1, 2, 3, 4
		Belief that failure is caused by one's own actions	5, 7
		Ability to lead oneself	9, 10, 11, 12
		Understanding of one's own potential	13, 14, 15, 16
		Belief that one has control over one's life	18, 19, 20
		Responsibility for decisions made	21, 22, 23, 24
	External Locus of Control	Belief that success is determined by luck	25, 27, 28
		Belief that failure is caused by factors outside oneself	29, 31
		Dependence on others in determining success	34
		Perception that the environment or situation has greater influence than personal effort	38
		Ability to resolve conflicts	41, 42, 43
		Total final items	31

The career maturity scale was developed based on the career maturity indicators utilized in the study. The initial instrument consisted of 49 items, and after testing, 46 items were selected for data collection. Career maturity was measured using a scale developed based on the framework of Super comprising four dimensions: career planning, career exploration, world-of-work information, and career decision making. The initial career maturity scale consisted of 49 items, with 46 items retained after validity testing.

Table 2. Career Maturity Instrumen

Variable	Aspect	Indicator	Item Numbers (Final)
Career Maturity	Career Planning (Planning)	Making educational or occupational career plans	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
		Establishing clear career goals	7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12
	Career Exploration	Collecting various career-related information	14, 15, 16, 17, 18
		Exploring personal potential	19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24
		Participating in various career-related activities	25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30
	World-of-Work Information	Understanding types of occupations and educational major options	31, 32, 33, 34
		Understanding employment opportunities and career prospects	36, 37, 38
	Career Decision Making	Ability to make career decisions according to one's potential	39, 40, 41, 43, 44
		Taking responsibility for decisions made	45, 46, 47, 48, 49
		Total final items	46

Instrument validity was established through construct validity (using expert judgment) followed by item validity testing via Pearson Product-Moment correlation. Testing was conducted on 30 Grade XI students at SMA Negeri 1 Semin. Validity criteria were based on a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$, with items deemed valid if the calculated r-value exceeded the r-table value. Instrument reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha via SPSS software. The results yielded reliability coefficients of 0.868 for the locus of control scale and 0.968 for the career maturity scale, indicating high internal consistency for both instruments and justifying their use in data collection. Data analysis was conducted in stages. The first stage involved descriptive statistical analysis to characterize the locus of control and career maturity data; this analysis covered minimum and maximum scores, mean, median, mode, range, and standard deviation. The second stage involved prerequisite analysis tests, specifically normality and linearity tests. The normality test determined whether the data distribution met the assumption of normality, while the linearity test confirmed the linearity of the relationship between locus of control and career maturity. The linearity test results showed a "deviation from linearity" value of 0.101 exceeding the 0.05 threshold—thereby confirming a linear relationship between the two variables. The third stage involved the Pearson Product-Moment correlation test to determine the direction and strength of the relationship between locus of control and career maturity. Decision-making is based on a significance level of 0.05. If the significance value is less than 0.05, the relationship between the two variables is considered significant. Subsequently, a simple linear regression analysis is conducted to determine the extent of the relationship of locus of control and career maturity. A regression model is used because the study involves only.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results

The study involved 168 Grade XI students from SMA Negeri 1 Sedayu as respondents. Research data were obtained using a locus of control scale consisting of 31 items and a career maturity scale consisting of 46 items. Descriptive analysis results indicate that locus of control scores had a minimum value of 77, a maximum of 125, a mean of 95.10, a median of 93.00, a mode of 91, and a standard deviation of 7.868. The distribution of respondents' locus of control levels is presented in the Table:

Table 3. The distribution of respondents' locus of control

Category	Score Interval	Frequency	Percentage
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Low	$X \leq 87.23$	18	11%
Moderate	$87.23 < X < 102.97$	125	74%
High	$X \geq 102.97$	25	15%
Total	—	168	100%

Based on this distribution, 18 students (11%) fell into the low category, 125 students (74%) into the medium category, and 25 students (15%) into the high category. Furthermore, the descriptive analysis results indicate that career maturity scores had a minimum value of 85, a maximum of 172, a mean of 134.09, a median of 130.00, a mode of 130, and a standard deviation of 16.251. The distribution of respondents' career maturity levels is presented in the Table.

Table 4. Distribution of respondents' career maturity

Category	Score Interval	Frequency	Percentage
Low	$X \leq 117.84$	18	11%
Moderate	$117.84 < X < 150.34$	122	72%
High	$X \geq 150.34$	28	17%
Total	—	168	100%

A total of 18 students (11%) fell into the low category, 122 students (72%) into the medium category, and 28 students (17%) into the high category.

3.2 Results of Prerequisite Analysis Tests

A normality test was conducted on the regression residuals using the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test. Based on a dataset of 168 observations, the test yielded an Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.200 and a Monte Carlo Sig. value of 0.977. Since the significance value of 0.200 exceeds 0.05, the residual data satisfy the normality assumption. The linearity test resulted in a Deviation from Linearity value of 0.101; as this value is greater than 0.05, the relationship between locus of control and career maturity meets the linearity assumption. Correlation analysis was performed using the Pearson Product Moment method. The analysis revealed a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.842$ with a significance level of $p < 0.001$, based on data from 168 respondents. The relevant table is presented below:

Table 5. normality test

Variable	Pearson's r	Sig.	N
Locus of Control – Career Maturity	0.842	< 0.001	168

The Pearson correlation analysis involving 168 respondents showed a very strong positive relationship between locus of control and career maturity ($r = 0.842$, $p < 0.001$). This indicates that higher locus of control scores were associated with higher career maturity scores among Grade XI students. The relationship was statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

3.3 Simple linear regression analysis

A simple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between locus of control and career maturity. The Model Summary results show values of $R = 0.842$, $R^2 = 0.710$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.708$, and Standard Error of the Estimate = 8.350. The table is presented below: was conducted to determine the relationship between locus of control and career maturity. The Model Summary results show values of $R = 0.842$, $R^2 = 0.710$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.708$, and Standard Error of the Estimate = 8.350. The table is presented below:

Table 6. linear regression analysis

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error
1	0,842	0,710	0,708	8,350

An R-square value of 0.710 indicates a strong relationship between locus of control and career maturity, with 71.0% of the variance in career maturity statistically explained by the regression model.

3.4 The ANOVA test results

The ANOVA test results show an F-value of 405.78 with a significance of $p < 0.001$. The ANOVA test table is as follows:

Table 7. ANOVA test results

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	26,244.816	1	26,244.816	405.78	< 0.001
Residual	10,737.511	166	64.684		
Total	36,982.327	167			

The ANOVA results indicate that the regression model is statistically significant ($F = 405.78$, $p < 0.001$). This finding indicates a significant relationship between locus of control and career maturity among the 168 students analyzed.

3.5 The regression coefficient analysis

The regression coefficient analysis results show a constant value of -20.974 , while the regression coefficient for locus of control is 1.720 , with a t-value of 19.401 and a significance of $p < 0.001$.

Table 8. regression coefficient analysis results

Variabel	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	-20,974	8,436	—	-2,486	0,014
Locus of Control	1,720	0,089	0,842	19,401	< 0,001

The test results yielded a calculated t-value of 19.401 with a significance level of $p < 0.001$. This value meets the significance criterion at the 0.05 level. Consequently, H_a is accepted and H_0 is rejected. Overall, the analysis results show $R = 0.842$, $R^2 = 0.710$, $F = 405.78$, and $t = 19.401$ ($p < 0.001$). The R^2 value indicates that locus of control has a strong relationship with career maturity, with 71.0% of the variance in career maturity statistically explained by the relationship between the two variables, while the remaining 29.0% is associated with other factors outside the locus of control variable within the research model.

3.6 Discussion

The research results indicate that the locus of control level among Grade XI students at SMA Negeri 1 Sedayu generally falls into the moderate category. These findings suggest that the majority of students possess a level of locus of control that has not yet reached the high category. These findings can be understood through the concept of locus of control developed by Rotter. Locus of control relates to an individual's belief regarding the extent to which an outcome or reinforcement is perceived as a consequence of their own behavior versus something largely determined by external factors such as luck, chance, or forces beyond their control. Thus, locus of control describes how individuals interpret the relationship between their actions and the resulting consequences.

In the context of high school student development, beliefs regarding control over outcomes become relevant when students begin to face tasks requiring personal choices and responsibility, including decisions about further education and career paths. Students who hold a stronger belief that their decisions and efforts are linked to the outcomes they achieve tend to possess a more robust psychological foundation for taking action, evaluating options, and engaging in planning [12]. Conversely, when future outcomes are perceived largely as the result of luck, circumstances, or the decisions of others, student engagement in the career planning process may become less active.

The results of this study also indicate that the moderate category constitutes the dominant group. This suggests that while most students possess a belief in their ability to control their lives, this belief is not yet consistently strong. In other words, although students likely have the capacity to view themselves as capable of influencing outcomes, they still take external factors into account when determining the results in certain situations.

These findings are consistent with research Şeker, (2025) conducted a study involving 367 high school students. The research found a significant relationship between locus of control and career maturity ($p < 0.001$), although the reported strength of the relationship was relatively weak ($r = 0.137$). The study also demonstrated that self-efficacy and locus of control were jointly and significantly associated with career maturity. Thus, within this study, locus of control can be viewed not merely as a personality characteristic, but also as a psychological aspect linked to students' readiness to address career development tasks.

The research results indicate that the career maturity of Grade XI students at SMA Negeri 1 Sedayu falls predominantly into the moderate category. The mean career maturity score was 134.09 with a standard deviation of 16.251 , while the minimum and maximum scores were 85 and 172 , respectively. The prevalence of the moderate category suggests that most students possess some degree of readiness to handle career development tasks, yet this readiness is not yet fully optimal. This situation is significant because Grade XI students are at a stage where choices regarding further education, employment, and career alternatives are becoming increasingly concrete [14]. Therefore, career maturity relates not only

to whether or not a career choice has been made, but also to the student's readiness to understand themselves, acquire information, explore alternatives, plan, and make decisions.

This concept aligns with Super's career development perspective, which views career maturity as an individual's readiness to handle career development tasks appropriate to their current stage of development. [15]. Studies regarding the Career Development Inventory also define career maturity as readiness to make educational and vocational choices. In research involving secondary school students, career maturity can be operationalized through several aspects, such as career planning, career exploration, decision-making, information about the world of work, knowledge of occupational groups of interest, and the realization of career choices.

The results of this study are also consistent with empirical findings from the thesis, which indicate that there are still students who lack structured career planning, do not fully understand the nature of various jobs or fields of further study, and harbor doubts regarding their career choices. Thus, the "moderate" category observed in the study does not imply a lack of career readiness; rather, it indicates that the process of career maturity development is ongoing and there is still room for improvement, particularly in areas related to planning, exploration, information gathering, and decision-making.

The results of the Pearson correlation analysis indicate a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.842$, with a significance level of $p < 0.001$. This correlation value falls into the category of a very strong relationship, based on the interpretation guidelines used in the study. These results demonstrate a positive relationship between locus of control and career maturity; specifically, higher locus of control scores in this study tend to be associated with higher career maturity scores, whereas lower locus of control scores tend to be linked to lower career maturity scores.

Theoretically, this relationship can be explained through Rotter's theory. When individuals perceive a link between their personal behavior and efforts and the outcomes they achieve, they have a basis for directing their behavior more actively. In a career context, this belief can foster student engagement in activities related to planning, information seeking, exploring alternatives, and decision-making [16].

The relationship between the two variables is also supported by research Yıldız & Öztemel, (2025) found that students with an internal locus of control orientation achieved higher scores on various aspects of vocational maturity compared to students with an external orientation. These findings provide empirical support for the results of the present study, as they demonstrate a similar pattern in the context of secondary school students namely, that beliefs regarding personal control are linked to the development of vocational maturity. Previous research in Indonesia has also shown a similar pattern. Puspitasari found a significant relationship between internal locus of control and career maturity among 11th-grade students at SMA Negeri 4 Yogyakarta, with an effective contribution of 34.50% [6]. Research result Prayoga et al. (2024) also found a significant relationship between locus of control and career maturity of high school students. Meanwhile, research by Praptiwi et al. shows that internal locus of control is one of the variables examined in relation to high school students' career maturity, along with future time perspective. Thus, the correlation result of 0.842 in this study strengthens the evidence that locus of control is closely related to the career maturity of secondary school students.

The simple linear regression analysis yielded values of $R = 0.842$, $R\text{-squared} = 0.710$, and $\text{Adjusted } R\text{-squared} = 0.708$. The $R\text{-squared}$ value of 0.710 indicates that locus of control explains 71.0% of the variation in career maturity scores within the research model, while the remaining 29.0% is attributable to factors other than the locus of control variable analyzed in this study. This $R\text{-squared}$ value demonstrates a very strong association between locus of control and career maturity within the research sample. However, the 71.0% figure requires careful interpretation; it represents the proportion of variation in career maturity explained by the regression model, not that 71% of students' overall career maturity development is caused solely by locus of control. Given the study's correlational design, these results cannot be used to establish a definitive cause-and-effect relationship. ANOVA results show an $F\text{-value}$ of 405.78 ($p < 0.001$), indicating that the regression model is statistically significant. Furthermore, the regression coefficient for locus of control is $B = 1.720$, with a $t\text{-value}$ of 19.401 ($p < 0.001$). Thus, an increase in the locus of control score within the model is associated with an increase in the career maturity score. The strength of the relationship observed in this study differs from that reported in several previous studies. For example, a study among Grade XI students at SMA Negeri 4 Yogyakarta reported a significant relationship between internal locus of control and career maturity, with an effective contribution of 34.50%. Differences in the strength of the relationship may be associated with variations in sample characteristics, instruments, analytical designs, variable compositions, and school contexts; therefore, the findings across studies should be interpreted in relation to their respective research contexts rather than as indicators of one study's superiority over another [10].

The research findings can be further explained through Super's career development theory. Career maturity is a developmental construct concerning an individual's readiness to address career tasks appropriate to their current stage of development. High school students are at a developmental stage where they face increasing pressure to clarify their educational and career choices. At this stage, students require not only information about occupations but also the ability to understand themselves, evaluate alternatives, set goals, and make decisions. First, the characteristics of the sample may have played a role. The participants were Grade XI students from SMA Negeri 1 Sedayu who were at a developmental stage in which they were beginning to consider educational and occupational alternatives. At this stage, beliefs about personal control may be closely connected with students' readiness to plan, explore, and make career decisions. The

relatively homogeneous educational and institutional background of the participants may also have produced a specific pattern of responses within the sample. Therefore, the magnitude of the correlation should be interpreted primarily within the context of Grade XI students at the participating school rather than assumed to represent all Indonesian high school.

Taken together, the finding of $r = 0.842$ provides strong evidence of a positive association between locus of control and career maturity in this sample, but it should not be interpreted as evidence that locus of control alone determines career maturity. The observed relationship may reflect a combination of substantive psychological association, measurement characteristics, shared self-report methodology, and contextual factors. Future studies could strengthen the evidence by using multiple data sources, separating the measurement of predictor and outcome variables temporally, incorporating behavioral or performance-based indicators, and replicating the study across several schools with more heterogeneous samples. Such approaches would help determine whether the magnitude of the relationship remains similarly strong beyond the specific sample and measurement context of the present study.

Second, the characteristics of the instruments may have contributed to the observed relationship. The locus of control scale was developed based on Rotter's distinction between internal and external locus of control, whereas the career maturity scale was based on dimensions proposed by Super and Jordaan, including career planning, career exploration, world-of-work information, and career decision making. Although the two constructs are theoretically distinguishable, some of their indicators may be conceptually related. For example, internal locus of control emphasizes personal responsibility, perceived control, and belief in one's own efforts, whereas career maturity includes planning, decision making, and responsibility for career decisions. Such conceptual proximity may result in respondents who perceive themselves as responsible for their life outcomes also reporting greater readiness in managing their careers.

In this process, locus of control can serve as a psychological resource that helps students position themselves as agents in decision-making. Students with a stronger belief in personal control are better equipped to view career choices as matters that can be influenced through effort, decisions, preparation, and action. This aligns with the characteristics of career maturity, which require an individual's active involvement in the career development process [18] indicates that among secondary school students, factors such as self-confidence, ability, and work experience are associated with career planning and exploration. The study also positions planning and exploration as integral components of career maturity development. These findings demonstrate that career maturity is a multidimensional construct that does not exist in isolation. Consequently, the strong relationship between locus of control and career maturity observed in this study can be understood as part of a broader psychological process in the development of students' career readiness.

The results of this study are generally consistent with previous research indicating a relationship between locus of control and career maturity among secondary school students. First, Lokan found that students with an internal locus of control demonstrated a higher level of vocational maturity compared to students with an external locus of control. Second, Puspitasari's study on 11th-grade students at SMA Negeri 4 Yogyakarta showed a significant relationship between internal locus of control and career maturity, with an effective contribution of 34.50%. Third, [19] found a significant relationship between locus of control and career maturity among high school students. The study involved 367 students and found $p < 0.001$ for the relationship between the two variables. Fourth, the study [20] specifically involved 16 Grade 11 students from three high schools in Surabaya and examined the relationship of locus of control and career decision-making self-efficacy with career maturity. The study employed a quantitative *ex post facto* design and serves as highly relevant empirical evidence, given that the subjects shared the same profile namely, Grade 11 high school students. Fifth, more recent research involving vocational high school (SMK) students also indicates that internal locus of control is linked to career maturity; notably, this research examined the role of self-efficacy as a mediating variable. The results revealed a positive and significant relationship between internal locus of control and career maturity. The consistency of findings across these various studies reinforces the empirical evidence that beliefs regarding personal control constitute a relevant psychological factor in the development of career maturity.

The study's primary finding is an R^2 value of 0.710, indicating that the model incorporating locus of control explains 71.0% of the variation in career maturity within the research data. This substantial value demonstrates the significant role of the locus of control variable within the research model. Nevertheless, career maturity is inherently a complex construct. Existing literature indicates that career development is also linked to other psychological and contextual factors. Research on high school students, for instance, has shown associations between career maturity and self-efficacy, career knowledge, work experience, and various other developmental factors. Consequently, the 29.0% of variance unexplained by the model does not represent a research "error"; rather, it reflects variations in career maturity stemming from factors not included in the model. These factors such as career decision-making self-efficacy, self-concept, family support, future time perspective, career knowledge, career exploration experience, and school environment factors offer avenues for future research.

This is also consistent with research [21] which indicates that self-efficacy and locus of control are jointly associated with career maturity. The study Purwaningrum & Setiowati, (2025) also included career decision-making self-efficacy, alongside locus of control, as a predictor of career maturity among 11th-grade students. Thus, the study's findings do not indicate that locus of control is the sole determinant of career maturity; rather, they demonstrate a significant statistical relationship between locus of control and career maturity within the model being tested. Overall, the research results reveal

a consistent pattern across the descriptive, correlational, and regression data. The majority of students fall into the moderate category for both locus of control and career maturity. Theoretically, these findings suggest a link between students' beliefs regarding personal control and their readiness to undertake career development tasks. When students perceive themselves as having a role in determining outcomes, a psychological foundation is established that supports their engagement in career planning, exploration, information seeking, and decision-making. These results are also supported by prior research on secondary school students, ranging from classic studies on the relationship between locus of control and vocational maturity to more recent studies conducted in Indonesia. Thus, the study's main finding can be summarized as follows: the higher the students' locus of control tendency, the higher the career maturity scores observed in the data. However, this conclusion should be interpreted within the limitations of a correlational/regression research design; the results indicate a statistically significant relationship between the variables rather than providing absolute evidence of causality.

AI STATEMENT/AI DISCLOSURE

During the preparation of this manuscript, the author used ChatGPT (OpenAI) to assist with language refinement, English editing, sentence restructuring, and enhancing the clarity and readability of the text. The AI tool was not used to generate, manipulate, or analyze research data, statistical results, or research findings. All AI-assisted content has been critically reviewed, verified, and revised by the author. The author bears full responsibility for the accuracy, originality, interpretation, and integrity of the manuscript's content.

CONCLUSION

This study found that the majority of Grade XI students at SMA Negeri 1 Sedayu demonstrated moderate levels of both locus of control and career maturity. The findings also revealed a very strong and positive relationship between locus of control and career maturity ($r = 0.842$, $p < 0.001$). This indicates that students with higher levels of locus of control tend to demonstrate higher levels of career maturity. The regression analysis showed that the model accounted for 71.0% of the variance in career maturity, while the remaining 29.0% was associated with other factors not included in the model. Scientifically, these findings indicate that locus of control is an important psychological factor associated with students' career maturity. Students who perceive their efforts, decisions, and actions as relevant to their future development may be more prepared to engage in career planning, exploration, and decision-making. However, because this study employed a correlational design, the findings should be interpreted as an association rather than evidence of a causal relationship. The findings have practical implications for school guidance and counseling services. Career guidance programs may incorporate activities that strengthen students' self-awareness, career goal setting, career information seeking, individual career planning, and responsible career decision-making. Particular attention may be given to students who remain at a moderate level of career maturity so that they have greater opportunities to develop confidence and responsibility in managing their career development.

This study is limited by its correlational design, the use of self-report scales, and its focus on Grade XI students at a single high school. Future research could involve students from different schools and contexts and examine other factors associated with career maturity, such as self-efficacy, self-concept, interests, family support, access to career information, and the social environment. Such studies may provide a broader understanding of the factors associated with students' career maturity.

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