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The Impact of Education and Motivation on the Capacity and Development of Generation Z

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Abstract

Education and motivation are pivotal in shaping the development of individuals and communities, particularly for Generation Z, who face unique socio-economic challenges in rural settings. This study aims to analyze the influence of education and motivation on the skills, mindset, and future prospects of Generation Z in Kuala Air Hitam Village, Langkat Regency, North Sumatra. A quantitative approach was employed, with data collected through questionnaires distributed to 44 respondents aged 13 to 28 years. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, validity tests, reliability tests, normality tests, heteroscedasticity tests, multicollinearity tests, multiple linear regression, F tests, and T-tests. The findings confirm that education and motivation together significantly affect potential of Generation Z, explaining 60.8% of the variation in their outcomes, with motivation having a stronger influence (t = 4.313, significance = 0.000) than education (t = 3.496, significance = 0.001). Both variables independently contribute to enhancing skills and prospects. The study concludes that integrating educational improvements with motivational programs is essential to unlock the potential of Generation Z, enabling them to overcome rural challenges and contribute to sustainable community development. Collaborative efforts among stakeholders are recommended to support these initiatives.

Keywords

Education, Motivation, Generation Z, Rural Development, Youth Potential.

1. Introduction

Generation Z, born between 1997 and 2012, represents a cohort shaped by the digital era, characterized by a profound reliance on technology and distinct values compared to previous generations (Januar, 2024). This generation, often described as tech-savvy and adaptable, has grown up with constant access to digital devices and the internet, influencing their communication, learning, and worldview (Noordiono, 2016). Twenge (2017) emphasizes that Generation Z's immersion in smartphones and social media fosters unique behavioral patterns, such as a preference for instant experiences and openness to diversity. Similarly, Dorsey (2009) highlights their digital-native status, noting their inclination toward rapid, flexible interactions. In rural contexts like Kuala Air Hitam Village in Langkat Regency, North Sumatra, these characteristics intersect with socio-economic challenges, including limited access to education and employment opportunities, which shape their development differently from urban peers. Understanding how education and motivation influence Generation Z in such settings is critical for unlocking their potential and fostering sustainable community growth.

Education serves as a cornerstone for individual and societal development, equipping individuals with skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for personal growth and national progress (Mustadi, 2020). Wright (2023) defines education as a deliberate effort to develop skills and behaviors Oligarch behaviors through formal and informal means. Formal education, spanning elementary to higher education, enhances cognitive and psychomotor skills, while informal education within families and communities' shapes attitudes and behaviors (Aleru, 2023). Kadir et al. (2022) views education as a lifelong process that fosters intellectual and cultural values, preparing individuals for future challenges. In rural areas, however, access to quality education is often limited, hindering Generation Z's ability to compete in a globalized world (Radja et al., 2023). Motivation, defined as an internal drive to achieve goals, complements education by encouraging persistent effort and enthusiasm (El Miedany & El Miedany, 2019; Nasution & Rizky, 2024). In Kuala Air Hitam Village, economic pressures and limited educational facilities often dampen motivation, leading many youths to prioritize immediate employment over further education.

The research gap lies in the limited exploration of how education and motivation interact to shape Generation Z's potential in rural Indonesian settings. According to Dellermann et al. (2019), digital transformation in education often overlooks rural contexts, where access to technology and educational resources remains scarce. Similarly, Seemiller and Grace (2019) note that Generation Z's motivational drivers are heavily influenced by urban-centric factors, leaving rural perspectives underexplored. Billett (2016) argues that workplace learning in rural areas often lacks structured educational support, limiting skill development. In Kuala Air Hitam Village, the interplay of education and motivation is further complicated by socio-economic constraints and cultural attitudes toward higher education (Hukama, 2017). This study addresses this gap by examining how education and motivation collectively influence Generation Z's skills, mindset, and future prospects in a rural setting, providing insights into tailored interventions for rural youth development.

The objective of this research is to analyze the combined impact of education and motivation on Generation Z in Kuala Air Hitam Village, focusing on their skill development, mindset formation, and future opportunities. By employing a quantitative approach with statistical analyses, the study aims to identify the dominant factors influencing their potential and propose actionable strategies for community and governmental collaboration. This research seeks to contribute to the literature by offering evidence-based recommendations to enhance educational quality and motivational programs, fostering a competitive and creative generation capable of sustainable development.

2. Literature Review

Education fosters individual and societal development by providing knowledge, skills, and attitudes essential for growth. Mustadi (2020) defines education as a deliberate effort to shape cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. Aleru (2023) notes that it occurs in both formal institutions and informal settings like families. However, Radja et al. (2023) emphasize that rural areas often lack access to quality education, limiting skill development. Billett (2016) adds that insufficient support structures hinder competitiveness. UNESCO (2020) highlights that such disparities deepen inequalities, especially for rural Generation Z, who struggle to achieve upward mobility through education.

Motivation, an internal drive to achieve goals, plays a vital role in education. It directs and sustains behavior, promoting persistent effort (Nasution & Rizky, 2024). According to McClelland's theory, individuals with strong achievement motivation seek personal success over external rewards (Raito & Baety, 2022). Ryan and Deci (2020) emphasize that intrinsic motivation, fueled by personal interest, enhances educational engagement. However, in rural areas, economic challenges and limited support systems can weaken Generation Z's motivation (Hukama, 2017). Social and familial influences, which shape motivation, are often lacking in these areas (Seemiller & Grace, 2019).

The interplay between education and motivation is vital in shaping Generation Z's potential. As digital natives, they possess a unique mindset (Twenge, 2017), yet rural youth often face limited access to technology-based education, hindering skill growth (Dellermann et al., 2019). Motivation fosters persistence, while education builds essential skills (Bandura, 1997; Choudhury & Pattnaik, 2020). Wang and Eccles (2013) found that motivated students in supportive environments perform better academically. In Kuala Air Hitam Village, economic hardship and low awareness limit educational engagement (Ozkan & Solmaz, 2015; Hukama, 2017). Therefore, combining quality education with motivational support is key to empowering Generation Z.

H1: Education has a positive effect on generation Z potential.
H2: Motivation has a positive effect on generation Z potential.
H3: Education and motivation have a positive effect on generation Z potential.

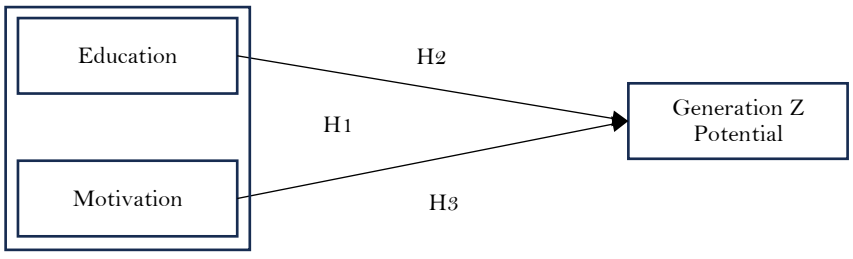

Figure 1. Research Framework

The framework is visualized in Figure 1, which illustrates the causal relationships between education (X1), motivation (X2), and Generation Z Potential (Y). Education directly influences skills and mindset, while motivation mediates and enhances these effects by fostering proactive behavior. A study by Wenzel (2009) supports this, showing that motivated individuals leverage educational opportunities more effectively. The framework accounts for contextual factors, such as economic pressures and limited access to higher education, which shape the variables' impact (Radja et al., 2023). Parker and Igielnik (2020) note that Generation Z's aspirations are often constrained by structural barriers in rural areas, underscoring the need for

integrated interventions. The framework hypothesizes that enhancing education quality and motivation through targeted programs, such as scholarships and inspirational seminars, will optimize Generation Z's potential. This study tests these relationships using statistical analyses, including regression and hypothesis testing, to provide evidence-based insights for rural youth development.

3. Methods

This study adopts a quantitative research approach to examine the influence of education and motivation on Generation Z in Kuala Air Hitam Village, Langkat Regency, North Sumatra. Quantitative research, rooted in the positivist paradigm, facilitates hypothesis testing through numerical data analysis, as described by Sugiyono (2019). The approach is designed to collect structured data from a specific population, enabling statistical validation of relationships between variables. In this study, the focus is on understanding how education and motivation shape the skills, mindset, and future prospects of Generation Z, with data gathered from a carefully selected sample in a rural context.

The research was conducted in Kuala Air Hitam Village, with a sample of 44 respondents aged 13 to 28 years, representing Generation Z. Respondents were purposively selected to ensure a balanced representation of students, university students, and young adults in the workforce, reflecting the diverse experiences within this demographic. Data collection utilized a closed-ended questionnaire based on a Likert scale, ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree, to measure attitudes, opinions, and perceptions about education, motivation, and self-development opportunities. According to Sugiyono (2019), such questionnaires ensure standardized responses, enabling generalizable findings. The questionnaire included items on formal education levels, sources of motivation, and perceived barriers to personal growth, tailored to the socio-economic context of the village.

Data analysis followed a rigorous statistical process to ensure validity and reliability. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize data, providing insights into means, standard deviations, and ranges for education, motivation, and Generation Z's potential. Validity tests confirmed that the questionnaire measured the intended constructs, with correlation coefficients exceeding the critical threshold of 0.2973. Reliability tests, using Cronbach's Alpha, yielded values above 0.6, indicating consistent measurement across variables. Normality, heteroscedasticity, and multicollinearity tests were conducted to verify the data's suitability for regression analysis, with results confirming normal distribution (significance $>$ 0.05), no heteroscedasticity (significance $>$ 0.05), and no multicollinearity (VIF $<$ 10). Multiple linear regression, simultaneous F-tests, and partial t-tests were employed to test the hypotheses, assessing the individual and combined effects of education and motivation on Generation Z's potential.

4. Results

This study investigated the influence of education and motivation on Generation Z potential, using a quantitative approach with a sample of 44 respondents aged 13 to 28 years. The analysis aimed to test three hypotheses: H1, that education and motivation simultaneously have a positive effect on Generation Z potential; H2, that education has a positive effect on Generation Z potential; and H3, that motivation has a positive effect on Generation Z potential. Data were collected through a closed-ended Likert-scale questionnaire, assessing formal education levels, sources of motivation, and perceptions of self-development opportunities. Descriptive statistics provided an overview of the variables, revealing that the education variable had a mean score of 8.59 with a standard deviation of 1.317 and a range of 4 to 10, indicating moderate educational attainment among respondents. Motivation showed

a mean of 11.95, a standard deviation of 2.011, and a range of 5 to 14, suggesting relatively high motivational levels. The dependent variable, Generation Z potential, encompassing skills, mindset, and future prospects, had a mean of 28.95, a standard deviation of 5.062, and a range of 10 to 35, reflecting diverse outcomes influenced by the rural context.

Table 1. Respondent Demographics

Aspect	Criteria	Amount	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	14	31.8
	Female	30	68.2
Age	15 years	3	6.8
	16 years	5	11.4
	17 years	2	4.5
	18 years	2	4.5
	19 years	5	11.4
	20 years	17	38.6
	21 years	3	6.8
	22 years	6	13.6
	23 years	1	2.3
Education Level	Junior High/Equivalent	9	20.5
	High School/Equivalent	14	31.8
	College	21	47.7
Period of Stay	1–5 years	5	11.4
	5–20 years	27	61.4
	>20 years	12	27.3

These descriptive results highlight the variability in educational access and motivational drivers, shaped by socio-economic challenges such as limited educational facilities and economic pressures in the village. The demographic characteristics of the respondents, as presented in Table 1, provide context for interpreting the findings. The sample was predominantly female, with 30 respondents accounting for 68.2% of the total, while 14 males comprised 31.8%. Age distribution showed a concentration at 20 years, with 17 respondents or 38.6%, followed by 22 years (13.6%, n=6), 16 and 19 years (11.4% each, n=5), and smaller proportions at other ages. Education levels varied, with 47.7% (n=21) having college-level education, 31.8% (n=14) at high school, and 20.5% (n=9) at junior high or equivalent, indicating a relatively educated sample despite the rural setting. Most respondents had lived in the village for 5 to 20 years (61.4%, n=27), with 27.3% (n=12) residing for over 20 years and 11.4% (n=5) for 1 to 5 years, suggesting a stable community with long-term exposure to local conditions. Table 1 underscores the diversity of the sample, which is critical for understanding the generalizability of the findings within the rural context of Kuala Air Hitam Village.

Table 2. Validity Test

Variable	R Count
Education (X1)	0.733
	0.885
Motivation (X2)	0.780
	0.844
	0.649
Generation Z (Y)	0.757
	0.748
	0.731
	0.638
	0.675
	0.817

The validity of the questionnaire was rigorously tested to ensure it measured the intended constructs, as shown in Table 2. For education (X1), correlation coefficients of 0.733 and 0.885 exceeded the critical r-table value of 0.2973, confirming the validity of the items. Motivation (X2) items yielded coefficients of 0.780, 0.844, and 0.649, all above the threshold, indicating valid measurement of motivational factors. For Generation Z potential (Y), six items had coefficients ranging from 0.638 to 0.817, all surpassing the r-table value, ensuring the dependent variable was accurately assessed. According to Sugiyono (2012), a valid instrument measures what it is intended to measure, and these results affirm the questionnaire's suitability for capturing the constructs of education, motivation, and Generation Z potential. The high correlation coefficients suggest that the questionnaire items were well-aligned with the theoretical constructs, providing a robust foundation for subsequent analyses.

Table 3. Reliability Test

Variable	Cronbach Alpha
Education (X1)	0.643
Motivation (X2)	0.632
Generation Z potential (Y)	0.909

Reliability tests further validated the consistency of the measurement instruments, as presented in Table 3. The Cronbach's Alpha for education was 0.643, for motivation 0.632, and for Generation Z potential 0.909, all exceeding the minimum threshold of 0.6, indicating reliable instruments. A reliable instrument produces consistent results across repeated measurements, and these values confirm low measurement error. The high reliability of the Generation Z variable, in particular, suggests that the questionnaire effectively captured the multifaceted nature of skills, mindset, and future prospects. Table 3 demonstrates that the data collection tools were dependable, supporting the credibility of the statistical analyses that followed.

Diagnostic tests were conducted to ensure the data met the assumptions for regression analysis. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for normality yielded a significance value of 0.870, well above the 0.05 threshold, indicating that the residuals were normally distributed, a prerequisite for valid regression results. The Glejser test assessed heteroscedasticity, with significance values of 0.097 for education and 0.293 for motivation, both exceeding 0.05, confirming the absence of heteroscedasticity and ensuring consistent variance across the data. Multicollinearity was evaluated using tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) metrics, with both education and motivation showing tolerance values of 0.730 (above 0.100) and VIF values of 1.370 (below 10), indicating no correlation between

the independent variables. The coefficient of determination, measured by R^2, was 0.608, meaning that education and motivation together explain 60.8% of the variation in Generation Z potential, with the remaining 39.2% attributed to other factors not included in the model. These diagnostic results confirm that the data were suitable for regression analysis, providing confidence in the subsequent findings.

Table 4. Multiple Linear Regression

Model	Std. Coef. Error	Std. Coef. Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	3.583		0.253	0.801
Education (X1)	0.440	0.400	3.496	0.001
Motivation (X2)	0.288	0.493	4.313	0.000

The multiple linear regression analysis, presented in Table 4, modeled the relationship between education, motivation, and Generation Z potential, resulting in the equation Y = 0.908 + 1.537X_1 + 1.242X_2. The constant of 0.908 indicates that when education and motivation are zero, Generation Z potential remain at 0.908 units. The coefficient for education (1.537) suggests that a one-unit increase in education leads to a 1.537-unit increase in Generation Z potential, holding motivation constant. Similarly, the coefficient for motivation (1.242) indicates that a one-unit increase in motivation results in a 1.242-unit increase in outcomes, holding education constant. These positive coefficients align with the theoretical expectation that both variables enhance skills, mindset, and prospects. The regression model's significance, supported by subsequent tests, underscores the predictive power of education and motivation in this rural context.

The T-Test, presented in Table 4, tested H2 and H3, examining the individual effects of education and motivation. For education (H2), the t-value was 3.496, exceeding the critical t-table value of 2.018, with a significance of 0.001 (below 0.05), indicating a positive and significant effect on Generation Z. For motivation (H3), the t-value was 4.313, also surpassing the critical value, with a significance of 0.000, confirming a positive and significant effect. These results lead to the acceptance of H2 and H3, demonstrating that both education and motivation independently contribute to Generation Z potential, with motivation showing a stronger effect due to its higher t-value. Table 4 highlights the distinct contributions of each variable, with motivation's dominance suggesting that internal drive plays a critical role in this rural setting.

The findings indicate that education and motivation are pivotal in shaping Generation Z's skills, mindset, and future prospects in Kuala Air Hitam Village. The significant simultaneous effect (H1) underscores the need for integrated educational and motivational programs. The individual effects (H2 and H3) highlight that while both variables are important, motivation's stronger influence suggests that fostering enthusiasm and drive could yield substantial benefits. These results are consistent with the challenges observed in the village, where limited access to education and economic pressures often dampen motivation, leading many youths to prioritize immediate employment over further studies. The regression model and statistical tests provide robust evidence for designing interventions that enhance educational quality and motivational support to unlock the potential of Generation Z.

Table 5. F Test

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	670.298	2	335.149	31.837	0.000[b]
Residual	431.611	41	10.527		
Total	1101.909	43			

The F Test, shown in Table 5, evaluated H1, which posits that education and motivation simultaneously have a positive effect on Generation Z potential. The calculated F-value of 31.837 exceeded the critical F-table value of 4.079, with a significance of 0.000 (below 0.05), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis and acceptance of H1. This result confirms that education and motivation together significantly influence Generation Z potential, supporting the model's overall validity (Sugiyono, 2018). The strong F-value reflects the combined explanatory power of the independent variables, highlighting their importance in shaping the potential of rural youth. The simultaneous effect is particularly relevant in Kuala Air Hitam Village, where integrated interventions could leverage both factors to address socio-economic challenges.

5. Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that education and motivation significantly shape the skills, mindset, and future prospects of Generation Z in Kuala Air Hitam Village, supporting all three hypotheses. The multiple linear regression analysis revealed that education and motivation together explain 60.8% of the variation in Generation Z potential, with the F Test (F = 31.837, sig = 0.000) supporting H1, indicating a significant simultaneous effect. According to Mustadi (2020), education is a deliberate process that fosters cognitive and psychomotor development, critical for preparing youth for global competition. In this rural context, however, limited access to quality education, coupled with economic pressures, hinders Generation Z's ability to leverage educational opportunities. The significant individual effects of education (t = 3.496, sig = 0.001) and motivation (t = 4.313, sig = 0.000), as confirmed by the T-Test supporting H2 and H3, underscore their distinct contributions, with motivation emerging as the more dominant factor. Nasution and Rizky (2024) emphasize that motivation drives persistent effort, which is particularly vital in rural settings where external support is scarce.

The dominance of motivation aligns with theoretical perspectives on intrinsic and extrinsic drivers. Raito and Baety (2022) highlight McClelland's theory, which suggests that individuals with high achievement motivation focus on personal success, a trait evident among respondents with a mean motivation score of 11.95. This high motivation likely compensates for educational barriers, such as limited facilities and high costs, as noted by Radja et al. (2023). The study's demographic data, showing 47.7% of respondents with college-level education, suggest that those who pursue higher education are driven by strong internal motivation, despite socio-economic challenges. Hukama (2017) argues that rural communities often undervalue higher education due to immediate economic needs, which explains why many youths in Kuala Air Hitam Village opt for factory work post-high school. The interplay of education and motivation, as modelled by the regression equation (Y = 0.908 + 1.537X_1 + 1.242X_2), indicates that enhancing both factors could significantly boost Generation Z's potential, aligning with Nurkholis (2013) view that education transmits cultural and intellectual values to prepare youth for future challenges.

The stronger effect of motivation (beta = 0.493) compared to education (beta = 0.400) suggests that fostering enthusiasm and goal-oriented behavior is critical in rural contexts. Jannah et al. (2024) note that motivation enhances performance by channelling skills toward meaningful outcomes, a dynamic evident in the village where economic constraints limit educational access. The lack of awareness about scholarships, as highlighted by Azizah (2022), further exacerbates these challenges, pushing youths toward immediate employment. Fernando et al. (2024) argue that motivation can be cultivated through targeted interventions, such as inspirational seminars, which could counteract the low educational aspirations observed. The study's findings also resonate with Ulya et al. (2024), who emphasize the role of

tailored educational strategies in addressing rural youth's needs, suggesting that combining motivational programs with improved educational access could yield synergistic effects.

The implications of these findings are significant for stakeholders in Kuala Air Hitam Village. Educational institutions and local governments should prioritize improving access to quality education through infrastructure development and scholarship programs, as suggested by Radja et al. (2023). Community-based initiatives, such as youth organizations focused on skill development, can foster motivation, aligning with Jannah et al.'s (2024) emphasis on organizational support. Collaboration between government, schools, and private sectors, as advocated by Amin and Bakri (2023), could create sustainable programs that integrate education and motivation, empowering Generation Z to contribute to village development. These efforts should address the socio-economic barriers identified by Hukama (2017), ensuring that rural youths are equipped with both the knowledge and drive to succeed. By investing in these areas, stakeholders can cultivate a competitive, creative generation capable of driving sustainable progress in Kuala Air Hitam Village.

6. Conclusion

This study confirms that education and motivation significantly shape the skills, mindset, and future prospects of Generation Z in Kuala Air Hitam Village, supporting all three hypotheses. The F Test validates H1, demonstrating that education and motivation together have a substantial positive effect on Generation Z potential, explaining 60.8% of the variation in their development. The T-Test results further support H2 and H3, with education and motivation showing significant individual effects, with motivation emerging as the more dominant factor. These findings highlight that while education provides a critical foundation for cognitive and skill development, motivation drives persistence and enthusiasm, particularly in a rural context where access to educational resources is limited. The interplay of these factors is crucial for empowering Generation Z to overcome socio-economic challenges and contribute to their community's progress.

The implications of these findings underscore the need for integrated interventions in Kuala Air Hitam Village, such as improving educational infrastructure and implementing motivational programs like inspirational seminars and youth skill development initiatives. However, the study's limitations include its small sample size, which may limit generalizability to other rural contexts, and its focus on quantitative data, which may overlook qualitative insights into cultural or familial influences. Future research should employ mixed-methods approaches to explore these dynamics in greater depth and include larger, more diverse samples across multiple villages to enhance generalizability. Collaboration among government, educational institutions, and community organizations could further strengthen interventions, ensuring that Generation Z is equipped with the education and motivation needed for sustainable development.

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The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.