



# A Qualitative Investigation of the Perceptions Student on Career Women

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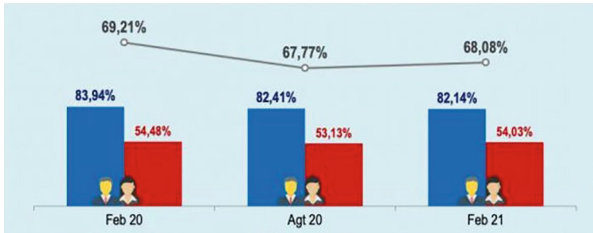
**Abstract.** Indonesian women have started to be active in their careers and get the same position in the world of work. Students' perceptions of career women will be a description and provision for them in their careers and households. This study aims to look at students' perceptions of career women. The research method used is a qualitative descriptive method. The sample of this study amounted to 50 students in various types of majors. Data collection techniques through questionnaires, observation and indirect interviews. In the results of research related to family, it produces that almost t half of student families have working fathers and mothers. Based on a short questionnaire, students stated that they strongly agreed with career women. In fact, majority respondents stated that they strongly agree with working women.

**Keywords:** Career Women · Perception Student

## 1 Introduction

Issues related to gender differences in education and work have become a topic that has received a lot of attention recently. At the 9th PICEEBA international conference with the theme “Leap to the imminent future: Seizing Opportunities in Education, Economics, and Business.” held in 2022 delivered a wealth of research results related to various opportunities in education, economics and business. This study is a part of organizing the conference because it is in line with the theme related to career opportunities which specifically presents career opportunities for women. Gender equality and the elimination of gender discrimination have been carried out in various countries. Based on data on the labor force participation rate by gender in 2021, women in Indonesia are able to participate in the world of work by 54.03% while for men it is 82.14% (Fig. 1).

Based on these data, it can be seen that Indonesian women have started to be active in their careers and get the same position in the world of work. Career support for Indonesian women cannot be separated from the support of parents and the government. In every level of education, the proportion of women's involvement with men is balanced. In addition, many Indonesian women are also pursuing higher education. Based on data in Indonesia 15.09% of Indonesian women study in university. The great desire of Indonesian women to be able to pursue higher education can be seen from their



**Fig. 1.** Labor Force Participation Rate in Indonesia 2021

participation in various majors in university. In certain majors they are very few in number compared to men, for example engineering majors. But for the education department, women dominate, perhaps because it is in accordance with their nature as mothers who like to educate their children. The purpose of women taking higher education is not just to increase knowledge. Women go to college because they want a career. Although there are still many pros and cons to career women in Indonesia, in fact every year the number of women's participation in careers continues to increase.

Career is all jobs (positions) that are handled or held during a person's working life [1]. Meanwhile "career women" means "women who are engaged in professional activities such as business fields, offices and so on based on expertise education such as skills, honesty, and so on that promise to achieve progress" [2].

According to Munandar (2001), the things that are obstacles for women to develop their careers can be internal (depending on themselves) and external (depending on the conditions of the family, micro environment, community macro environment, and culture) [3]. For some career women, obstacles in career development are faced as a challenge. However, some other career women are still trapped in external situations and conditions that are fixated on the traditional concept of the roles of men and women. Munandar (2001) stated that the internal factors that influence women's careers include guilt, multiple roles, and fear of success. Meanwhile, external factors include family support and work environment [3].

Today the number of women who pursue careers tends to increase. Various factors that are conducive to such a development include, as described by Syuqqah, as follows: 1) The progress and diversity of the world of education includes levels and equality for girls and boys. These symptoms foster the ability for women to engage in various professional fields 2) Improve services in various sectors and the diversity and equity for men and women play a role in creating new needs for society, including the issue of the need for women to enter various fields and specializations such as education, treatment, and care and as such. 3) Progress in the field of transportation facilities - the world of aviation in particular requires the presence of female workers such as flight attendants and the like 4) The progress and diversity of women's equipment and clothing requires female workers who handle buying and selling affairs 5) The length of time between the arrival of someone to the stage of sexual maturity and between a person's ability to live independently financially to enter the level of marriage, has caused serious psychological problems among husbands, so he needs the help of his wife to help the family economy [4]. The occurrence of discrimination in the family involving some men, leaving his

responsibilities as the head of the family. In conditions like this, women either because of divorce or other factors, are finally forced to work to make ends meet with or without their children.

In carrying out her role as a career woman, there are challenges that women must face, known as dual role conflict. According to Netemeyer et.al defines dual role conflict as a conflict that arises due to work-related responsibilities interfering with demands, time, and tension in the family [5, 6].

Due to the existence of multiple role conflicts and career demands, this study was conducted to see how students perceive career women in their environment. In general, perception is the process of receiving a stimulus by the senses which is then interpreted to give rise to an understanding or meaning that makes the stimulus easier to understand. Every individual in living his life always experiences what is called perception as a result of his appreciation of stimuli that come from the environment [7].

Perception is a process by which individuals organize and interpret their sensory impressions to give meaning to their environment [8]. Baron & Byrne (2004) perception is the process used to know and understand something [9]. Perception is the process of using knowledge that has been possessed (stored in memory) to detect or obtain an interpretation of the stimulus (stimulus) received by the senses. With the perception of a person will be aware of the circumstances around him and also his situation [10].

The perception process is an individual process, therefore in perception it can be stated that because feelings, thinking abilities, individual experiences are not the same, then in perceiving a stimulus, the perception results may differ from one individual to another (Davidoff, Rogers) [10].

In the process of perception always involves attention. Attention is an important factor in perception. Through attention in the perception process, a person will determine which messages he will receive and which he will reject, or which will be considered positive and which will be considered negative [11]. McDowell,2006 also states that perception consists of positive perceptions and negative perceptions [12].

Based on the understandings above, it can be concluded that perception is the result of a complex process within the individual to recognize or provide assessments of the stimulus or object so that it is easier to understand and this process is individual. Students' perceptions of career women will be a description and provision for them in their careers and households. If they have a good perception of working women, it will affect their choice and career motivation as women, for male students the view of career women will be their provision in the future. Once the students' perceptions of career women are so important, this research was conducted on students to help develop their careers.

## 2 Methods

The research method used is a qualitative descriptive method that aims to solve a problem by describing the state of the research subject. According to Nawawi (2012) states that the descriptive method is a problem-solving procedure that is studied by describing an object/subject of research at this time based on the facts that appear as they are [13]. The sample of this study amounted to 50 students in various types of majors. Data collection techniques through questionnaires, observation and indirect interviews.

### 3 Results and Discussion

Population data in Indonesia in 2021 has a population of 272,229,372 the number of male residents is 137,521,557 and women 134,707,815. The female population is quite balanced with the male population. The times have also supported women in Indonesia to study and work in both the formal and informal sectors. In various universities the number of female students is also equal to that of male students. Indonesian women prefer majors related to education. Wanting to be an educator is one of the desires of women in Indonesia in addition to being a doctor and other formal jobs. The development of women entrepreneurs in Indonesia also continues to increase every year. This shows that career women in Indonesia have become a natural thing.

We conducted observations, interviews and gave a short questionnaire to see and observe how the perceptions of male and female students towards career women. Observations are divided into several important points such as career women in the family environment, to their desire in choosing career women in the future.

In the results of research related to family, it produces data that 40% of student families have working fathers and mothers and 44.4% only work fathers. From this data, it can be understood that there is almost a balance between both working parents with only the father working. Based on the interviews, it was also understood that most of the students were familiar with working mothers. The majority of respondents stated that their mother had worked since they were small so they were used to the division of tasks within the family to support the work of their father and mother.

The second point examined in the subject of this study is related to whether or not students agree with the presence of working women. Based on a short questionnaire, students stated that they strongly agreed with career women. In fact, up to 80% of the total respondents stated that they strongly agree with working women. This statement is supported by the reason that career women are needed in today's developments. Students stated "career women are indispensable in today's era, job opportunities for women are wide open, technological developments also support women or housewives to be able to participate in the business world even if only from home and while taking care of their children".

Being a career woman has its own challenges for a woman because she has to carry out a dual role, namely as a mother and also as a worker [14, 15]. However, based on data analysis, 72.5% of students still dream of a career woman as an option in their future life. And they argue that 73.8% of career women are not an obstacle to domestic life. On the contrary, being a career woman can ultimately help the family's economy and can be directed at investing in education for their children so that the next generation can be more educated.

The following are the results of interviews related to female students' perceptions of career women associated with the current pandemic situation.

"My opinion about career women is that women are independent women who do not depend on others because career women can do whatever they want without bothering those around them."

"I think career women are very useful for the future, especially when the current outbreak of the corona virus and others has reduced livelihoods, therefore working women or career women are needed to make ends meet."

In terms of expectations, parents of students stated that being a career woman was also the hopes and dreams of their parents.

“I think it is necessary for a career woman, because a woman is educated at high school with her parents so that she can work, not only that, being a career woman is being an independent woman. In marriage, we also need to give some of our income to their parents.”

Meanwhile, male students also think that career women are good as long as they don't forget their role as a mother.

“Career women will be very much needed at this time, because human needs are increasing and of course it costs money to fulfill this, with the existence of career women the needs can be lighter. But women must know their nature as well as housewives.”

“In my opinion, in this modern era, women are indeed required to become career women because they need independence, we don't have to rely on men or husbands.”

Fulfill personal desires to be able to have a career even in the outside world can be fulfilled through academic channels and get funding for career development [16, 17]. According to the demands of the times and the convenience of technology, being a career woman is very possible at this time [18]. Here are some opinions of female students regarding their dreams of becoming a career woman.

“Career women in my opinion are independent women, who can fulfill their needs without expecting other people's gifts, especially nowadays many women choose to work and earn their own income, and can help their family's economy.”

“In this high-tech era, it is also recommended for women to work because they can increase income in the family. At the same time, women who can work alone are women who are independent both to buy personal needs and the needs of their family.”

This applies to women at the early stages of their careers who are confronted with social and family responsibilities, they face more obstacles both academically and entrepreneurially than their male counterparts. [16, 19]. So they also provide advice for other prospective career women regarding career women to continue to support their dreams regarding career women.

“Being a career woman will automatically build their passion. There is a desire to continue to learn and have a high focus in him. They can learn a lot in their work and can find out what they need to achieve to be better in their lives.”

In building a career, women are free to make choices and provide mutual support so that they find an amazing journey [20]. The large number of job opportunities for women and the increasing needs of life, so being a career woman is one of the choices that must be taken by women [21]. By balancing the roles of wife and mother, women can also be successful in the world of work [22, 23].

With the help of the family, the double conflict for career women can be resolved properly [24, 25]. Good communication also reduces work stress for women [26, 27]. Making the priority scale between work and family the key to the success of career women [28–30].

## 4 Conclusion

Every woman's decision in career choice is followed by a challenge as a dual role. All conflicts can be resolved if there is an agreement between all parties involved and full support from parents and families. From the research results, students give positive perceptions of career women. Becoming a working woman is also the dream of female students in applying their knowledge and fulfilling their passion. The attitude taken in carrying out her role as a career woman in both the formal and informal sectors is to determine priorities. When carrying out both roles simultaneously, a wise attitude is needed to be able to share family interests with work without sacrificing one of them. Establishing effective communication with family needs to be done, increasing quality time with family such as taking advantage of holidays together. In addition, it is also necessary to have someone who helps in managing household matters such as housekeepers. By coordinating with the family, the problem of having a dual role as a career woman can be carried out properly. This research is only limited to students' perceptions of career women. In the future, research needs to be developed that looks at the perceptions of society or family and the world of work towards career women. So that complete results will be obtained and can be used as the basis for policies in the world of education and the world of work towards the existence of career women.

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