



## Factors that Influence Career Decisions in Adolescents: A Systematic Review

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### ABSTRACT

Career decision making is not an easy thing for adolescents. There are many influencing factors in the career decision-making process, so adolescents tend to get stuck in their career choices and find it difficult to plan their careers well. This systematic review identifies what factors influence adolescents in their career decision making. The literature search used two databases, ScienceDirect and Taylor&Francis, with the criteria of English-language articles and limited to the last five years of research. The review only focused on research articles that identified influencing factors in adolescents' career decisions. The findings explained that there are internal and external factors that influence career decisions in adolescents. Internal factors include self-acceptance, self-efficacy, and emotional intelligence. While external factors are family communication styles, parental employment, parenting patterns, educational curriculum, and lack of information caused by the covid-19 pandemic situation.

Keywords: career decision, adolescent, family, self-efficacy, emotional intelligence

### 1. Main text

Career decision making is a variable that has two different perspectives: as a process and as individual differences (Walsh & Osipow, 1988; Fajriani et al., 2023). As a process, career decision making can be divided into two models, namely the descriptive model, which answers the question "How are decisions made?" and the prescriptive model, which answers the question "How are the best decisions made?". Based on models of career decision making as a process, namely descriptive and prescriptive models, each model describes the process of individual progress in decision making. In addition, (Sharf, 2013; Fajriani et al., 2023) suggest that descriptive models are usually based on studies of adolescent or adult decision making and describe or explain the decisions individuals make when choosing a career. Whereas prescriptive models are based on psychological decision-making theory and cognitive decision-making, and focus on idealized approaches to decision-making. In other words, descriptive models only describe the career decision-making process, whereas prescriptive models provide guidance on how ideal decisions should be made.

Career decision making according to Zamroni (2016), which is a process of determining career choices based on self-understanding, as well as understanding careers from several alternative choices to making commitments for each process that will occur in the future. In the concept of career super-maturity, students or adolescents must know how to make career decisions by using knowledge and thinking to build career plans (Sharf, 2013; Fajriani et al., 2023). The concept explicitly states that the ability to make career decisions is something that should be owned by adolescents.

Adolescence according to (Santrock, 2011; Ghassani et al., 2020) is a time when adolescents' cognitive abilities develop and allow them to think critically, such as evaluating, making decisions, making commitments, and determining them in real life. At the secondary school education level, adolescents or students are in a period of career preparation, which is a period where they are faced with many career choices to choose which one is better based on self-understanding and career understanding (Hartono, 2016). On the other hand, Erikson also suggested that developing awareness of future occupations or careers is something that adolescents should strive for at their current stage of identity development (Russ, 2016; Ghassani et al., 2020). The same thing was also stated by Havighurst that choosing and making career decisions is one of the adolescent developmental tasks that must be completed before entering adulthood (Dhayanandhan, Bohr, & Connolly, 2015).

However, in the process, career decision making is not an easy thing for adolescents. Adolescents often experience difficulties in making career decisions that occur because of the many factors that influence adolescents in planning their careers. Based on theoretical studies (Patton & McMahon, 2001), there are four factors that influence a person's career decision-making process, namely individual genetic abilities and special abilities (gender, ethnicity, appearance, ability or disability), environmental conditions, learning experiences, and skills in performing tasks. In making career decisions, of course, it must involve many factors and aspects that need to be considered such as expectations from parents, closest people, life goals, understanding of the skills and interests that individuals have (Istifarani, 2016).

A common problem that adolescents often face in the career field is that they experience confusion and difficulty in planning their careers, and lack support from their families about good career planning. Social support is an important factor because it will affect the stability of career decision making in adolescents. When adolescents get high family social support, they will get a lot of emotional, appreciative, instrumental, and informative support from the family. Fouad et al, (2016) also emphasized that families influence individual career-related decisions, through providing information and emotional and financial support. In career decision making there is also the influence of *significant others*. According to Johnson & Johnson (1991) social support comes from important people who are close (significant others) for adolescents who need help, for example in the school environment such as teachers and friends are also very influential on adolescent decisions in their careers.

The focus of this research (systematic review) is to uncover the factors that influence career decisions in adolescents. Several related literatures that have addressed the main topic in the last five years were carefully reviewed, especially to see if there are other influencing factors besides those that have been studied repeatedly in the years before the covid-19 pandemic. The purpose of this review of research articles is to provide a detailed overview of the influencing factors in career decisions, in addition to being a source of guidance in identifying the reasons behind each individual's career decision.

## 2. Method

In this study, the researcher first formulated fundamental questions as an initial step in the article review process using the SPIDER approach (Sample, Phenomenon of Interest, Design, Evaluation, Research Type). The main question in this review process is "What factors influence career decisions in adolescents?". After formulating the question, the researcher proceeded to design search keywords that would be used to find specific articles on the subject in various databases. The formulation of keywords in the literature search refers to the formulation of the question, namely Career Decision-Making and Student or Adolescent, which then the keywords are used in searching for articles on two databases, namely science direct and taylor&francis. The literature search in this study focuses on research conducted in the last five years (2019-2024), with the criteria that articles are in English and can be accessed (open access). After searching, researchers found 171 articles identified from ScienceDirect (n = 83) and Taylor & Francis (n = 88). The collected article citations were reviewed using *mendeley*, which after the review process found no duplicate articles. In the second stage, 117 articles were excluded because they did not match the title and abstract. After that, 54 articles were left for full text review. Then at the last screening stage, researchers found as many as 45 articles did not meet the inclusion criteria so they were excluded or discarded. After all the screening processes were carried out, finally 9 articles were left that met the criteria according to the formulation of the question and were selected by the researcher for further review.

This study focuses on adolescents or high school students. When referring to career development theory, adolescence is included in the exploration phase, where adolescents try to determine what career choices to make and how to move towards these choices academically (Tressler, 2015). Adolescent career decisions are usually faced with two things, namely between entering the world of work or continuing higher education. Previous research shows that many adolescents or students experience confusion and indecision regarding their career development (Albion and Fogarty 2002). Likewise, another study conducted by Sawitri (2009) explained that in Indonesia, indecision in career decisions is often found among adolescents or high school students.

The literature search and selection process that has been carried out by researchers is then described in detail through the Meta-Analysis Checklist (PRISMA) below:

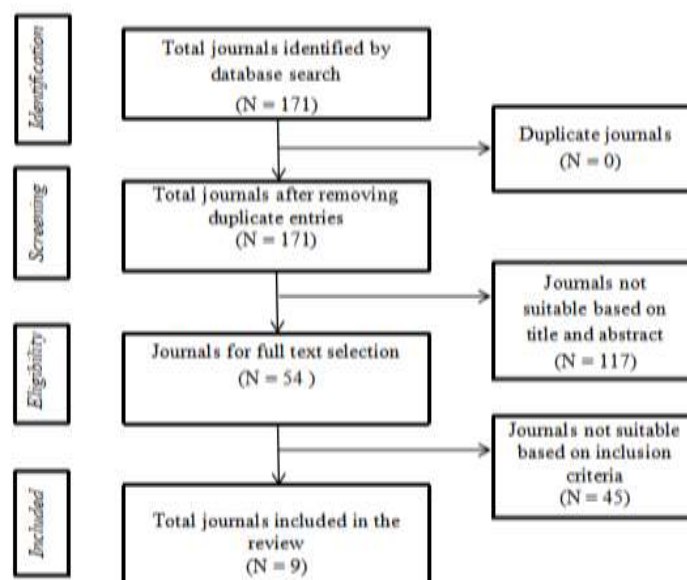


Figure 1. PRISMA Graph for Journal Selection Flow

## 3. Result and Discussion

### Research Characteristics :

In this literature review, 9 journals were reviewed and analyzed to explain the factors influencing career decisions in adolescents. The studies were published based on different geographical areas in several countries, namely Taiwan, Vietnam, Indonesia, Japan, India, China, and the United Kingdom. The subjects in this systematic review were adolescents with an age range of 14 - 21 years. In addition, there is one study whose subjects also included parents (F.C. Cheng et al., 2024), which aims to explore the influence of dental parents on their children's career decision making in dentistry. For a more detailed explanation, please see the table below:

**Table 1.** Socio-demographic characteristics of subjects

No.	Author	Country/Region	Subject
1	F.-C. Cheng, L.-H. Wang, Y.-C. Wang, et al (2024)	Taiwan	2 parents of dentist fathers (each of whom has a child attending medical school or a dental student)
2	L.Nguyen, HT Nguyen, NH Nguyen, et al (2023)	Vietnam	330 students
3	DDB Situmorang & RMA Salim (2021)	Jakarta, Indonesia	617 students (211 boys and 406 girls with an age range of 15 to 17 years.
4	Masamitsu Kobayashi, et al (2023).	Japan	14 nursing students
5	Yixin Wang (2023)	Northeast China	743 junior students (391 boys and 352 girls)
6	ZOU Ran, Sadaf Zeb, Faiza Nisar, Fakhra Yasmin, Petra Poulova & Syed Arslan Haider (2022)	China	310 students
7	Xinwen Bi & Shuqiong Wang (2023)	China	442 teenagers
8	Zaidan Mohammed, Sampath Kumar & Prakash Padakannaya (2021)	India	207 Indian and foreign students (from Afghanistan, Congo, Sudan, Ghana, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Kenya, Togo, Uganda, Tanzania, Mali, Somalia, Eretria, Maldives and Ivory Coast).
9	Kathleen M.Q & James C. (2023)	English	663 students

**Career Decision Influence Factors :**

After reviewing related journals, there are several findings about factors that influence students or adolescents in making decisions about careers. These factors come from within the individual (internal) such as self-efficacy, self-acceptance, and emotional intelligence. Likewise, there is also a role from the outside world (external) such as family support, parenting style, parents' careers, family communication quality, educational curriculum, and lack of information caused by the covid-19 pandemic situation.

**Table 2.** List of factors that influence career decisions in adolescents

No.	Author (Year)	Method (Measurement Tool)	Influence Factor	Results
1	F.-C. Cheng, L.-H. Wang, Y.-C. Wang, et al (2024)	Interview (F.C Cheng et al., 2024)	Parents' career (dentist profession)	Adolescents whose parents work in dentistry are more likely to study dentistry and become dentists.
2	L.Nguyen, HT Nguyen, NH Nguyen, et al (2023)	Survey-questionnaire (L. Nguyen et al., 2023)	Influencers (family, friends, teachers)	The findings show that Influencers, such as family, friends, and teachers, are factors that influence career choice decision-making.
3	DDB Situmorang & RMA Salim (2021)	- Short Form Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale (Betz et al., 1996)  - Questionnaire	Parenting styles and parental thinking styles	Career decision-making was positively correlated with father's authoritarian style, father's permissive style, mother's authoritarian style, mother's permissive style, and the following thinking styles: legislative, executive, judicial, monarchical, hierarchical, anarchical, global, local, internal, external, and liberal.

		Parental Authority (Buri, 1991)		
		-Thinking Style Inventory-Revised II (Sternberg et al., 2007)		
4	Masamitsu Kobayashi, et al (2023)	Semi-structured interview (Kobayashi et al., 2023)	Lack of Information due to Covid-19 Pandemic situation	Adolescents have difficulty in making decisions about career paths due to lack of information with restrictions. There is also confusion due to the job search system being modified from offline to online.
5	Yixin Wang (2023)	- The Over Parenting Scale Bradley Geist J C, 2014)	Overparenting	Overparenting is significantly and positively associated with career expectancy pressure and career indecision.
		- CCA subscale of the Career Indecision Profile (CIP-65) (Hacker J, Carr A, Abrams M, & Brown SD, 2013)		
6	ZOU Ran, Sadaf Zeb, Faiza Nisar, Fakhra Yasmin, Petra Poulova & Syed Arslan Haider (2022)	- General self-efficacy scale (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 2010)  - Emotional Intelligence Scale (Wong & Law, 2002)  - Career decision-making difficulty scale (Gati & Saka, 2021)	Self-efficacy (SE) and emotional intelligence (EI)	Self-efficacy has a significant negative relationship with career decision-making difficulties. In addition, emotional intelligence also has a significant negative relationship with career decision-making difficulties.
7	Xinwen Bi & Shuqiong Wang (2023)	- Chinese version of the Parent-Adolescent Communication Scale (Barnes H, Olson DH, 2003)  - Career Maturity Questionnaire (Wang Y, Zhang W, 2008)	Quality of family communication	High-quality communication between parents and adolescents can improve career maturity of adolescents,
8	Zaidan Mohammed, Sampath Kumar & Prakash Padakannaya (2021)	- Subscales of psychological well-being (Ryff & Keyes, 1995)	Self-acceptance	Respondents' self-acceptance is proven to have an effective influence on career decision-making difficulties.

- Career Decision  
Difficulty Questionnaire  
(Gati et al., 1996)

9	Kathleen M. Quinlan & James Corbin (2023)	Interview survey (Kathleen M. Quinlan & James Corbin, 2023)	Education curriculum	Indicates that 'pure' and vocational-oriented curricula play an important role in the development of students' career interests and decisions.
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### **Internal Factors**

Research findings by Zou Ran, et al (2022) show that there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence (EI), self-efficacy (SE), and career decision-making difficulties. SE has a significant negative relationship with career decision-making difficulties. That people who have low career decision-making self-efficacy have a tendency to limit their career choices and targets because they realize the poor chances of achieving certain career ambitions (Bandura A et al., 2001). In addition, EI also has a significant negative relationship with career decision-making difficulties. Sulejmanov and Seitl (2020) have shown that individuals who have high emotional intelligence show fewer difficulties in their career decision-making.

Meanwhile, Zaidan Mohammed, et al (2021) in their research revealed that individual self-acceptance is proven to have an effective influence on career decision-making difficulties. This corroborates the findings of research (Di Fabio et al., 2015) on the relevance of self-acceptance in facilitating career advancement. The positive relationship of autonomy with the components of career decision-making difficulties also shows its directional relevance to career decision-making difficulties as also explained in other studies (Guay et al., 2006).

### **External Factors**

L.Nguyen (2023) found that Influencers, such as family, friends, and teachers, are factors that influence adolescents' decision making in choosing a career. This is in line with research conducted by Malik and Husain (2020) which states that parental education significantly impacts adolescents' career choices. Parents who are regularly present in their children's daily lives will increase their children's confidence in choosing the best profession in various interesting career fields. As shown by Koech et al (2016), that parents can influence their children's career development by actively reinforcing or punishing certain behaviors, which can encourage or inhibit certain interests or behaviors related to certain abilities.

On the other hand, Xinwen Bi & Shuqiong Wang (2024) identified that high-quality communication between parents and adolescents can increase adolescents' career maturity, which is in line with previous research (Chae Y & Lee H, 2016). When they communicate openly with their parents, adolescents have more opportunities to express their opinions and feelings (Schrodt, 2009). These family factors provide the psychological background support where adolescents can achieve career maturity. Furthermore, through open communication, adolescents can exchange information and opinions with parents, obtain advice and guidance from parents, and acquire skills regarding self-regulation and planning that are beneficial for adolescent career development (Kim HK & Chang JK, 2017). Conversely, problems in communication, such as lack of communication, hesitation to express experiences, and negative interactions, adversely affect the development of adolescents' career maturity (Oh Ej, 2017). These results expand our understanding of the relationship between family communication quality and career maturity in non-Western cultural contexts.

Based on Situmorang and Salim's (2021) research, authoritative and permissive parenting styles from the father and mother significantly predict career decision making. These results are in line with previous research where authoritative parenting styles have a greater influence on career decision making, due to the balance between warmth and control (Baumrind, 1991). In other words, authoritative parents generally set clear rules and boundaries, yet allow democratic discussions within the family. Meanwhile, permissive parents tend to be more free in approaching their children (Situmorang & Salim, 2020).

While Yixin Wang (2024) explained in his findings that overparenting has a negative influence on career decision making in students or adolescents. Specifically, overparenting behavior increases the pressure of students' career expectations which leads to higher levels of indecision when making career decisions. A study conducted in China (Yixin Wang, 2023) explains that parents in China tend to exhibit overparenting behavior, have high expectations of children, and place too much importance on success. So that in parenting patterns like this can have an impact on the emotional burden of adolescents and reduce the ability of adolescents to make decisions about careers.

In a research article by F.C. Cheng et al. (2024) explained that children whose parents work in dentistry are more likely to study dentistry and become dentists (Wolf TG et al., 2021). In fact, for high school graduates, being accepted into a medical or dental school in Taiwan is a competitive process that has many aspects. Students from families with high socioeconomic status, including medical or dental families, usually have a greater chance of being accepted into medical or dental school (Cheng FC et al., 2022).

Other findings by Kathleen M. Quinlan & James Corbin (2023) identified that the most frequently mentioned factors of influence on career interest were curriculum (46%), placement (14%), work experience (7%) and co-curricular activities (6%). These findings corroborate other research on effective career interventions, which shows the effectiveness of vocational-oriented curriculum and work experience in promoting career learning (Bimrose, Barnes, & Brown, 2005).

Masamitsu Kobayashi et al (2023) emphasized in their research that one of the external factors that influence career decisions is when the world is hit by the Covid-19 pandemic. The Covid-19 pandemic situation has caused the loss of opportunities for adolescents to obtain career information and confusion

in making career decisions (Masamitsu Kobayashi et al., 2023). This limits the sources of information related to career prospects for individuals, causing difficulties in making career decisions.

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#### 4. Conclusions

After reviewing related journals on factors that influence career decisions in adolescents, researchers found several important points that became the source of foundation in identifying the reasons behind each individual's career decision. In addition to internal factors as primary factors owned by individuals, on the other hand there are also many external factors that are taken into consideration in a career decision. Internal factors include self-efficacy, emotional intelligence, and self-acceptance. Internal factors that become the findings of researchers are of course also inseparable from individual talents and interests, which are not clearly formulated in each journal that researchers review. As for external factors, among them are family communication styles, parenting patterns, parental employment, educational curriculum and the covid-19 pandemic situation. External factors, which are the findings of this researcher, also play an important role in the process of making career decisions in adolescents in addition to internal factors.

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