

## College Student Career Decision Making: A Literature Study

Clarissa Maldini Henderina Bisinglasi<sup>1</sup>, Elviana Rizky Maharani<sup>2</sup>, Laetitia Nazareth Wetangterah<sup>3</sup>, Maruel Djawa Rambadeta<sup>4</sup>, Sarah Marchella Letelay<sup>5</sup>, Mernon Yerlinda Carlista Mage<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1-6</sup>Psychology Department, University of Nusa Cendana

e-mail: <sup>1</sup>[clarissabisinglasi@gmail.com](mailto:clarissabisinglasi@gmail.com), <sup>2</sup>[elvianarizky122@gmail.com](mailto:elvianarizky122@gmail.com),

<sup>3</sup>[laetitianw@gmail.com](mailto:laetitianw@gmail.com), <sup>4</sup>[arelrambadeta@gmail.com](mailto:arelrambadeta@gmail.com),

<sup>5</sup>[sarahmerchellaletelay@gmail.com](mailto:sarahmerchellaletelay@gmail.com), [mernon.mage@staf.undana.ac.id](mailto:mernon.mage@staf.undana.ac.id)

**Abstract.** Throughout life, individuals face many important choices, including career decisions. This is a crucial stage for students in the transition to the world of work. This systematic literature review examines the factors that influence students' career decision-making using the PRISMA framework in empirical articles between 2015 and 2025; from 320 initial articles, 8 relevant studies were selected. The main findings show that self-efficacy, self-understanding, emotional intelligence, parenting, career counseling, and social support (family and friends) play an important role in improving students' ability to make career decisions. Practical implications highlight the need for self-development programs and career guidance services in higher education to improve students' career readiness.

**Keywords:** *decision making, career decision, college student*

**Abstrak.** Sepanjang hidup, individu dihadapkan pada banyak pilihan penting, termasuk keputusan karier. Ini merupakan tahap yang sangat penting bagi siswa dalam transisi menuju dunia kerja. Tinjauan literatur sistematis ini mengkaji faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi pengambilan keputusan karir mahasiswa dengan menggunakan kerangka PRISMA pada artikel empiris antara 2015–2025; dari 320 artikel awal dipilih 8 studi yang relevan. Temuan utama menunjukkan self-efficacy, pemahaman diri, kecerdasan emosional, pola asuh, konseling karir, dan dukungan sosial (keluarga dan teman) berperan penting dalam meningkatkan kemampuan mahasiswa membuat keputusan karir. Implikasi praktis menyoroti perlunya program pengembangan diri dan layanan bimbingan karir di perguruan tinggi untuk meningkatkan kesiapan karir mahasiswa.

**Kata kunci:** *pengambilan keputusan, keputusan karir, mahasiswa*

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## **Introduction**

Throughout life, individuals face many important choices, including career decisions. For college students, this is a crucial stage in the transition to the world of work. (Muna, Kurniadi, Muslin and Sawitri, 2023) stated that career decisions often become a turning point in a person's life because they concern their future employment, education, and life satisfaction. However, college students often struggle to make the right career decisions. Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Nadiem Makarim said in a teleconference with the University of North Sumatra that 80% of graduates pursue careers that are not directly related to what they studied in college. This high percentage indicates a problem with students' decision-making.

Muslimah (2019) explains that career decisions are influenced by internal and external factors. Internally, research conducted by (Nadhiroh & Kurniawan, 2025) suggests that self-efficacy plays a crucial role in students' career decision-making. Furthermore, (Setiawan & Nusantara, 2020) found that independence and conformity have a positive, significant relationship with students' career decision-making.

Additionally, external factors also influence students' career decision-making. (Savira et al., 2022) found that family and peer environments have a significant influence on students' career planning. This shows that family and peer environments play a significant role in students' career planning, but family support has a stronger influence than peers (Aisah et al., 2018)

Career decision-making is a complex process influenced by psychological, family, and educational environment factors. However, previous studies have focused on specific variables in isolation and have not provided a comprehensive picture of the interrelationships among all these factors. Therefore, a systematic literature review is needed to comprehensively map the factors influencing students' career decision-making through an integrated series of analyses.

## **Method**

This study employs a systematic literature review (SLR) approach to identify, evaluate, and summarize empirical findings related to the topic under review (Norlita et al., 2023). The data collection technique in this study follows the Preferred Reporting Items

for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework, a set of evidence-based items that establish minimum standards for reporting in systematic reviews and meta-analyses (Page et al., 2021)

In the initial stage, the researchers defined the focus of the study: the factors influencing self-efficacy in career decision-making among college students. Next, the researchers compiled research questions and determined relevant keywords, such as "career decision making" and "college students." These keywords were then used to compile a search string, which was applied to the scientific database. The database used in this study was Google Scholar.

The next stage is screening. At this stage, articles are screened based on predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Inclusion criteria include empirical articles written in English or Indonesian, published between 2015 and 2025, that involve student subjects and examine the relationship between self-efficacy and career decision-making. Articles are excluded if they are not available in full text, are not empirical studies, or are not relevant to the research focus. The screening process is starting with the selection of titles and abstracts and continuing with the assessment of the full text. Articles that do not meet the criteria are systematically excluded from the analysis.

Next, the articles that passed the screening stage entered the data extraction and synthesis stage. The collected data were then analyzed using a narrative synthesis approach to identify patterns of findings, consistency of results across studies, and research gaps in this area (Popay et al., 2006)

## **Result**

This article's data search process was conducted systematically using the Google Scholar database from November 24 to December 5, 2025. The initial search yielded 320 articles. Then, articles were selected based on their titles, abstracts, and content. A total of 291 articles did not meet the inclusion criteria. This was due to the articles being irrelevant to the topic, duplicate articles, or not being research articles. Consequently, 29 articles proceeded to the article quality assessment stage.

Twentyone articles were eliminated through this assessment process due to participant incompatibility, study design, and lack of focus on the career decision- making

process. Consequently, 8 articles passed the assessment and will undergo further review for participant compatibility, study design, and focus on the career decision-making process.

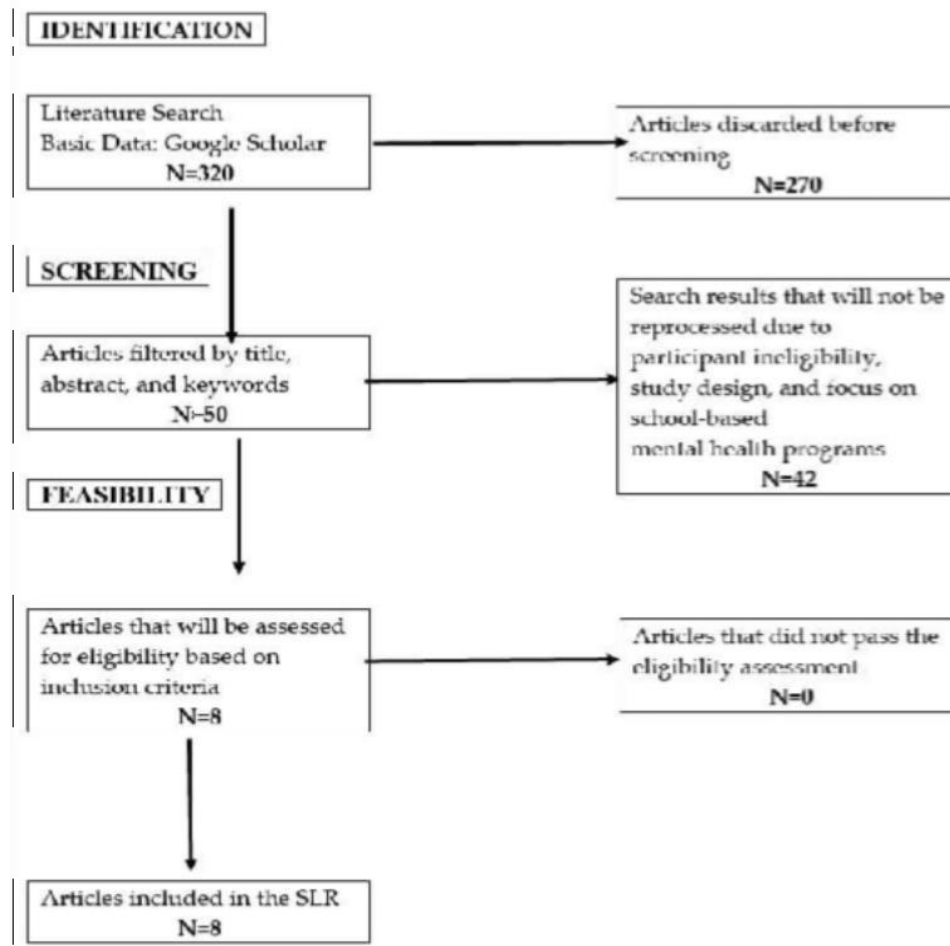


Figure 1. PRISMA

Table 1.

Data Extraction

No	Title	Name of the Journal, Researcher, year	Method & Measuring Instrument	Research Innovation	Research Objectives	Results
1	The Relationship between Self-Efficacy and Career Decision Making among Students	<i>Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai</i> Putri, M. G., & Primanita, R. Y. (2023)	Quantitative and Correlation, General Self-Efficacy (GSE)	The level of career decision-making among students is in the moderate category, unlike previous studies, which placed it in the low category. This shows an improvement in students' ability to determine their career path, although it is not yet optimal.	Understanding the relationship between self-efficacy and career decision-making among non-vocational undergraduate students.	There is a significant positive relationship between self-efficacy and career decision-making among students. Thus, the higher an individual's self-efficacy, the higher their career decision-making.
2	The Role of Self-Understanding in Students' Career Decision-Making	Prosiding Konseling Kearifan Nusantara, Amin, W. S., Haryanti, S., Fitriani, Y., &	Qualitative	Students demonstrate a substantial understanding of themselves in personal terms and aspects and have prepared themselves through further education, rigorous skill	Understanding the role of self-understanding in students' career decision-making is crucial.	Most students already have a fairly good understanding of themselves, including their abilities, interests, strengths, weaknesses, and the preparation needed to enter the workforce. This self-understanding helps them plan their careers, identify challenges, and prepare relevant skills. The findings confirm that the better students' self-understanding

		Maulia, D. (2024)		development, and readiness to enter the workforce.		is, the easier it is for them to make realistic career decisions in line with their potential.
3	The relationship between authoritative parenting and career decision-making among fourth-year university students	<i>Jurnal Empati</i> , Pakpahan, J. F., & Kustanti, E. R. (2020).	Quantitative , Authoritative parenting scale and Career decision-making scale	Authoritative parenting significantly contributes to fourth-year students' career decision-making abilities, confirming that family influence remains strong into early adulthood.	Understanding the relationship between authoritative parenting and career decision-making among fourth - year students at Diponegoro University.	There is a significant positive relationship between authoritative parenting and career decision-making. This means that students who experience authoritative parenting from their parents, characterized by warmth and balanced control, tend to have better career decision-making skills. Authoritative parenting contributes 4.8% to career decision- making, while other factors come from variables not examined in this study.
4	The Effect of Career Counseling on Career Decision Making Among Final Year Students in the Faculty of Psychology.	Prosiding Seminar Nasional Millennial 5.0 Fakultas Psikologi UMBY. Dewi, R. P., & Rochmani, K. W. (2020,	Quantitative , Career Decision-Making Scale	Career counseling using the “Achieving Together” model has proven effective in strengthening the career decision-making skills of final-year students, thereby contributing to the development of career counseling services in higher education.	Understanding the influence of career counseling on career decision-making among final-year students at the Faculty of Psychology, UMBY.	This shows that career counseling significantly improves students' career decision-making abilities. The experimental group that received counseling showed higher career decision-making scores than the control group ( $Z = 2.575$ ; $p = 0.010$ ), indicating that the intervention was effective in helping students make clearer and more focused career choices.

		September)				
5	The Relationship Between Independence and Conformity in Career Decision-Making Among Fifth Semester Students in the Faculty of Education at Semarang	<i>JURNAL EDUKASI : Jurnal Bimbingan dan Konseling</i> , 6(2). Setiawan, I., & Nusantara, E. (2020).	Correlational descriptive, Psychological Scales: Independence scale, conformity scale, career decision-making scale	Independence and conformity both significantly influence career decision-making, with all three variables at a moderate level, reflecting the realistic circumstances of fifth-semester students determining their careers.	Understanding the relationship between independence and conformity in career decision-making among fifth-semester students at the Faculty of Education, UNNES, in 2019.	Independence and conformity have a positive, significant relationship with career decision-making among fifth-semester students. Statistical test results show a significant. Value of $0.000 < 0.05$ with an F count of 61.216, which means that both variables influence career choice ability. Independence has a stronger influence ( $r = 0.548$ ) than conformity ( $r = 0.348$ ).

	State University in 2019					
6	Parental Involvement and Social Support: Determining Factors for Smart Career Decisions for Education Students.	<i>Didaktika : Jurnal Kependidikan</i> , Sabila, A. H., & Rahayu, D. (2025).	Quantitative , Career decision-making scale, parental involvement, and social support.	Parental involvement and social support simultaneously explain 44.9% of the variation in Faculty of Teacher Training and Education students' career decision - making, confirming the strong role of external factors in the context of higher education compared to studies at the school level.	Understanding the influence of parental involvement and social support on career decision-making among students at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education.	Parental involvement and social support have a positive and significant influence on students' career decisions. Based on regression testing, the F value is 31.924; $p = 0.000$ with an influence contribution of 44.9%. Partially, parental involvement has a strong influence on career decisions ( $\beta = 0.389$ ), as does social support ( $\beta = 0.348$ ). This shows that the social environment, especially family and friends, plays a significant role in helping students make career choices.



7	The Relationship Between Family Support and Career Decision Making Among Students at the Faculty of Education, Unnes	Jurnal Bimbingan Dan Konseling, Sa'diyah, H., & Hariyadi, S. (2022)	Quantitative , Career decision-making scale and family support scale.	Family support, especially emotional support, proved to be very high and had a significant influence on students' career decisions, making it a dominant factor that distinguishes this study from previous studies.	Understanding the relationship between family support and career decision-making among students at the Faculty of Education, UNNES.	This shows that UNNES Faculty of Education students have very high family support in terms of empathy, feeling listened to, and the presence of family members when students are experiencing problems. In addition, the career decision-making level of UNNES Faculty of Education students is in the high category. Thus, there is a positive relationship between the family support of UNNES Faculty of Education students and their career decision-making.
8	The relationship between proactive personality and self-efficacy in career decision-making among third-year students of the Faculty	Universita s Diponegor o. <i>Jurnal Empati</i> , 6(4), 340-345 Fitwaturnu suliyah, N. V. (2018)	Quantitative ,Self-Efficacy Scale in Career Decision Making and Proactive Personality Scale	The novelty of this study lies in the empirical evidence that proactive personality is a strong predictor of self-efficacy in career decision-making, with an effective contribution of 55.1%.	Understanding the relationship between proactive personality and self-efficacy in career decision-making among third - year students at the Faculty of Psychology,	There is a significant positive relationship between proactive personality and self- efficacy in career decision-making among third-year students in the Faculty of Psychology at Diponegoro University. Thus, the more proactive the personality, the higher the self-efficacy in making career decisions. Conversely, the lower the proactive personality, the lower the self-efficacy in making career decisions among third-year students of the Faculty of Psychology at Diponegoro University.

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### **Discussion**

The first source of literature is a study conducted by (Putri & Primanita, 2023), which found a significant positive relationship between self-efficacy and career decision-making among students. This aligns with research by (Nadhiroh & Kurniawan, 2025), which confirms that self-efficacy plays an important role in helping students cope with stress, make career choices, and improve career readiness. A second study was conducted by (Amin et al., 2007). This study's findings show that self-understanding significantly impacts students' ability to make career decisions. This aligns with research by (Mardlia et al., 2021), which shows that strong self-understanding makes it easier for students to recognize their interests and abilities, enabling them to make clearer, more focused career decisions.

The third piece of literature is a study by (Pakpahan & Kustanti, 2020). This study shows that authoritative parenting significantly positively correlates with students' career decision-making. Students who grow up in families with an authoritative parenting style tend to be better able to make mature, realistic, and independent career decisions. This finding aligns with (Chan, 2014) research, which revealed a significant relationship between authoritative parenting and career maturity.

Further research by (Dewi, 2017) shows that career counseling, especially group counseling, effectively improves students' ability to recognize themselves and develop career plans systematically. Group dynamics motivate students and provide realistic insights into career choices. Similar research by (Nurrega et al., 2018) shows that career counseling using the Cognitive Information Processing approach improves career decision-making skills.

Meanwhile, Setiawan and (Setiawan & Nusantara, 2020) emphasize that independence and conformity have a significant influence on career decision-making, where students continue to strive to balance personal judgment and peer influence, which often becomes an important external factor, especially in crowded situations, supported by research by (Fatresi, 2017), which shows that conformity influences students' career decision-making.

Research by (Sabila & Rahayu, 2025) emphasizes the importance of parental involvement and social support in helping students make career decisions, noting that the family environment significantly influences career assessment and choices. This is in line with the findings of (Cahyani & Ratnaningsih, 2020), which show that the greater the social support, the better an individual's career decision-making ability.

Further research by (Sa'diyah & Hariyadi, 2022) was conducted. Their findings show that students receive substantial family support, including empathy, active listening, and the presence of family members during times of need. Similar findings were reported by (Lutfiana, 2024), who demonstrated that family support significantly contributes to the self-efficacy of final-year students in career decision-making. Families play a role by providing guidance and emotional support, which makes students more confident in facing career choices.

A proactive personality has been shown to have a positive, significant relationship with self-efficacy in making career decisions among students. Those with proactive personalities tend to be more confident when exploring career options and determining their future direction (Fitwaturrusuliyah, 2018). Conversely, low proactivity is associated with lower self-confidence in making career decisions. From an external factors, family social support plays an important role in shaping students' self-efficacy. The attention, guidance, and motivation provided by family can strengthen students' confidence in choosing the right career. Family support helps students emotionally and provides the information and guidance they need when facing doubts or dilemmas in the career decision-making process (Salwani & Cahyawulan, 2022).

### **Conclusion**

Based on a review of various studies, it can be concluded that career decision-making among students is influenced by a combination of internal and external factors. Internal factors such as self-efficacy, self-understanding, and proactive personality play an important role in shaping students' confidence and readiness in determining career choices. Meanwhile, external factors include authoritative parenting, family and social support, peer conformity, and career counseling interventions, which have been proven to contribute significantly to strengthening career decision-making abilities. Therefore, we

must undertake comprehensive efforts to enhance students' career decision-making skills by bolstering personal aspects and creating a supportive environment.

### *Suggestions*

Students are expected to be more active in exploring their potential, interests, and available career opportunities. Efforts such as attending career seminars, seeking internship experiences, consulting with career counselors, and building personal competencies can help increase self-confidence in the career decision-making process. In addition, students need to develop a proactive attitude by taking the initiative to plan their future and being open to relevant sources of information.

Higher education institutions are advised to strengthen their career guidance and counseling services through programs that build self-efficacy, such as career planning training, self-development activities, and interest and talent assessments. Institutions can also foster a supportive academic environment by encouraging faculty advisors, career centers, and student activities that develop proactive personalities. In addition, collaboration with industry and digital career service providers can expand students' access to information.

Future researchers are advised to expand the scope of variables studied, for example, by considering factors such as career anxiety, career maturity, and exposure to digital career information, to provide a more comprehensive picture of the career decision-making process. The use of more diverse research methods, such as mixed-methods or longitudinal designs, can also provide a deeper understanding. In addition, expanding the research sample to include universities and other regions will increase the generalizability of the findings.

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