



Self-Efficacy and Career Decision-Making Among Eleventh-Grade High School Students

Clarisa Aprilia^{1*}, Rion Nofrianda², Marlita Andhika Rahman³
Jambi University

Corresponding Author: Clarisa Aprilia clarisaaprilias28@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: Self-Efficacy, Career Decision-Making

Received: 20, November
Revised: 22, December
Accepted: 31, January

©2026 Aprilia, Nofrianda, Rahman:
This is an open-access article distributed
under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).



ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the relationship between self-efficacy and career decision-making among eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Muaro Jambi. A quantitative correlational design was employed, involving 70 students selected through purposive sampling. Self-efficacy was measured using a 32-item scale adapted from Sanyoto (2024), while career decision-making was assessed using a 20-item scale adapted from Sarwandini (2019). Data were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment correlation. The results revealed a positive and significant relationship between self-efficacy and career decision-making ($r = 0.417$, $p = 0.001$). These findings indicate that students with higher self-efficacy are more capable of making career decisions that align with their interests, abilities, and personal potential. This study underscores the importance of strengthening self-efficacy to support students' readiness in the career decision-making process.

INTRODUCTION

Career development plays a crucial role in shaping individuals' well-being, life satisfaction, and long-term achievement. Career is not merely defined as employment, but as a lifelong process involving personal growth, learning experiences, and role transitions. Therefore, making appropriate career decisions becomes a fundamental developmental task, particularly during adolescence when individuals begin to explore educational and occupational pathways.

In the context of rapid technological change and increasing labor market competition, adolescents are required to engage in careful and realistic career planning. Inadequate career decision-making may lead to career mismatch, academic dissatisfaction, and difficulties in adapting to future work demands. Career decision-making refers to the process of selecting educational or occupational alternatives that align with an individual's interests, abilities, values, and aspirations. This process involves self-understanding, access to career information, and the ability to evaluate and commit to career choices.

Senior high school students represent a critical population in career development, as they are expected to make important decisions regarding higher education or entry into the workforce. Decisions made during this stage may have long-term consequences for academic success, career satisfaction, and psychological well-being. However, many students experience uncertainty and confusion in determining suitable career paths, particularly when choosing college majors or vocational directions.

Empirical evidence indicates that career indecision among adolescents remains a significant issue. National data show that a considerable proportion of Indonesian youth are categorized as Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET), reflecting unresolved educational and career pathways. This phenomenon highlights the importance of identifying psychological factors that influence students' career decision-making during the high school years.

Previous studies suggest that career decision-making is influenced by both internal and external factors. Internal factors include motivation, emotional regulation, values, and self-efficacy, while external factors involve family support, school counseling services, and access to career information. Among these factors, self-efficacy has been consistently identified as a key psychological determinant of career-related behavior. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their ability to organize and execute actions required to achieve specific goals. Students with higher self-efficacy tend to be more confident in exploring career options, overcoming obstacles, and making informed career decisions.

Social Cognitive Career Theory emphasizes self-efficacy as a central component influencing career interests, choices, and persistence. Individuals who possess strong self-efficacy beliefs are more likely to engage in active career exploration and commit to career decisions, whereas low self-efficacy may lead to hesitation, indecision, and reliance on external influences.

Although numerous studies have reported a positive relationship between self-efficacy and career decision-making, empirical evidence from regional senior high schools remains limited. Therefore, further investigation is

needed to strengthen understanding of this relationship in different educational contexts.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to examine the relationship between self-efficacy and career decision-making among eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Muaro Jambi. The findings are expected to contribute to the literature on career development and provide practical implications for schools and guidance counselors in supporting students' career readiness.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their capability to organize and execute actions required to achieve specific goals (Bandura, 1997). In the context of senior high school students, self-efficacy plays a crucial role in shaping confidence, persistence, and motivation when dealing with academic and career-related tasks. Students with higher self-efficacy tend to demonstrate greater initiative in exploring career information, evaluating their abilities, and overcoming obstacles during the career decision-making process.

According to Bandura, self-efficacy develops through four main sources: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological or emotional states. These sources influence how individuals perceive their competence and regulate their behavior when facing important life decisions, including those related to career planning and choice.

Career Decision-Making

Career decision-making in this study is grounded in Parsons' Trait and Factor theory, which emphasizes a rational and systematic process of aligning individual characteristics with occupational requirements (Parsons, as cited in Winkel & Hastuti, 2006). Effective career decision-making involves three core components: (1) self-understanding, including awareness of interests, abilities, values, and limitations; (2) knowledge of the world of work, such as educational pathways, job characteristics, and career opportunities; and (3) realistic reasoning to relate personal traits to occupational information.

For senior high school students, career decision-making represents a critical developmental task, as they are required to make educational and career-related choices while their self-concept is still developing. Limited self-awareness or insufficient access to accurate career information may result in confusion, indecision, or unrealistic career choices. Therefore, career decision-making is not merely about selecting a job or academic major, but about making informed and realistic decisions that align personal potential with environmental opportunities.

Self-Efficacy and Career Decision-Making

The relationship between self-efficacy and career decision-making can be explained through the framework of Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) proposed by Lent, Brown, and Hackett (1994). SCCT positions self-efficacy as a central determinant of career-related behaviors, including exploration, goal setting, and decision-making.

From the perspective of Parsons' Trait and Factor theory, self-efficacy supports students' engagement in each component of the career decision-making

process. Students with strong self-efficacy are more confident in understanding their personal traits, actively seeking career information, and applying realistic reasoning when matching themselves with available career options. In contrast, students with low self-efficacy may experience doubt, hesitation, and difficulty committing to career decisions. Thus, self-efficacy can be regarded as a key internal factor that enhances students' readiness and effectiveness in making career decisions.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative correlational design with a cross-sectional approach to examine the relationship between self-efficacy and career decision-making among senior high school students. Data were collected at a single point in time without manipulating the research variables.

Participants

The participants were 70 eleventh-grade students from SMA Negeri 1 Muaro Jambi, selected using purposive sampling. The selection was based on recommendations from school counselors, considering students' engagement in career-related consultations and their willingness to participate. All participants provided informed consent prior to data collection.

Instruments

Data were collected using two Likert-type scales. Self-efficacy was measured using a 32-item scale adapted from Sanyoto (2024), which demonstrated good reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.892$). Career decision-making was assessed using a 20-item scale adapted from Sarwandini (2019), with a reliability coefficient of Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.895$. Both instruments had been previously validated and were used to assess students' confidence and career decision-making processes.

Procedure

Data collection was conducted offline using paper-based questionnaires to ensure clarity of instructions and minimize technical difficulties. Participants completed the instruments under the supervision of the researcher and school staff.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to describe the distribution, central tendency, and variability of the research variables. Prior to hypothesis testing, normality and linearity assumptions were examined. Data normality was tested using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, while linearity was assessed using the F-test. Pearson Product Moment correlation analysis was employed to examine the relationship between self-efficacy and career decision-making.

Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to ethical research principles, including informed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, their voluntary participation, and their right to withdraw at any time without consequences. All data were used solely for research purposes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were conducted to examine the levels of self-efficacy and career decision-making among eleventh-grade students. The results showed that students' self-efficacy was generally at a moderate level ($M = 87.41$, $SD = 5.25$). Similarly, career decision-making also demonstrated a moderate level ($M = 53.64$, $SD = 4.44$). These findings indicate that most students have begun to develop confidence and engagement in career planning, although their readiness for making optimal career decisions has not yet fully matured.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Self-Efficacy and Career Decision-Making

	N	Range	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation	Varsians
Self-Efficacy	70	28	75	103	87,41	5,25	27,522
Career Decision-Making	70	27	42	69	53,64	4,44	19,711

Assumption Testing

Prior to hypothesis testing, assumption tests were conducted. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test indicated that the data were normally distributed ($p = 0.200$). Linearity testing also confirmed a linear relationship between self-efficacy and career decision-making ($p = 0.087$). These results fulfilled the assumptions required for Pearson correlation analysis.

Correlation Analysis

Pearson Product Moment correlation analysis revealed a positive and significant relationship between self-efficacy and career decision-making ($r = 0.417$, $p = 0.001$). This finding indicates that higher levels of self-efficacy are associated with better career decision-making abilities among students.

Table 2. Correlation Between Self-Efficacy and Career Decision-Making

	r	p	
Self-Efficacy - Career Decision-Making	0,417	0,001	Positive

The present study found a positive and significant relationship between self-efficacy and career decision-making among eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Muaro Jambi. This finding indicates that students who possess stronger beliefs in their abilities tend to demonstrate greater confidence and effectiveness in making career-related decisions. The strength of the correlation, which falls within the moderate range, suggests that self-efficacy plays an important role in career decision-making, although it is not the sole determining factor.

The descriptive findings revealed that most students exhibited moderate levels of self-efficacy. This condition suggests that students have begun to develop confidence in their capabilities, yet such confidence has not fully matured to optimally support complex career-related decisions. During adolescence, self-efficacy is still in a developmental stage and may fluctuate depending on experiences, feedback from significant others, and exposure to challenging

situations. As a result, students may feel confident in certain contexts but remain hesitant when faced with uncertainty or high-stakes career choices.

Similarly, students' career decision-making abilities were predominantly at a moderate level, particularly in aspects of self-understanding, knowledge of the world of work, and realistic reasoning. This finding reflects the developmental characteristics of senior high school students, who are actively exploring their interests and abilities but may struggle to integrate self-knowledge with occupational information. Limited exposure to real-world career experiences and insufficient career information may further contribute to uncertainty and indecision at this stage.

The significant relationship between self-efficacy and career decision-making supports the assumptions of Social Cognitive Career Theory, which emphasizes self-efficacy as a central mechanism influencing career-related behaviors. Students with higher self-efficacy are more likely to engage in career exploration, evaluate alternatives confidently, and commit to decisions based on realistic self-appraisal. In contrast, students with lower self-efficacy may experience doubt, fear of failure, and reliance on external opinions, which can hinder effective career decision-making.

From the perspective of Parsons' Trait and Factor theory, self-efficacy facilitates students' ability to engage in the three essential components of career decision-making: understanding oneself, understanding the world of work, and applying realistic reasoning to connect personal characteristics with occupational requirements. Students who believe in their abilities are more confident in assessing their strengths and limitations, seeking relevant career information, and making rational decisions that align with their personal potential.

Despite the significant relationship found, the moderate correlation coefficient indicates that career decision-making is influenced by multiple factors beyond self-efficacy. External factors such as parental expectations, peer influence, access to career guidance services, and socio-economic conditions may also contribute to students' career decisions. Therefore, efforts to enhance career decision-making should adopt a comprehensive approach that addresses both internal psychological factors and external environmental supports.

Practically, these findings highlight the importance of school-based guidance and counseling programs in fostering students' self-efficacy. Structured career exploration activities, counseling interventions, and decision-making skill training can help strengthen students' confidence and readiness to make informed career choices. By enhancing self-efficacy alongside supportive career guidance, schools can better prepare students to navigate career decisions in a realistic and adaptive manner.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study concludes that self-efficacy is positively and significantly associated with career decision-making among eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Muaro Jambi ($r = 0.417$, $p = 0.001$). Students with higher levels of self-efficacy tend to demonstrate greater confidence and effectiveness in making realistic and well-directed career decisions. In addition, the findings reveal that

both self-efficacy and career decision-making among students are predominantly at a moderate level, indicating that students have begun to develop career awareness and self-confidence, although these capacities have not yet reached an optimal level.

These results suggest that strengthening students' self-efficacy is an important strategy for enhancing their readiness in career decision-making. Schools are encouraged to optimize guidance and counseling services by implementing continuous career development programs that focus not only on providing career information but also on fostering self-awareness, confidence, and decision-making skills. Career exploration activities, counseling interventions, and collaboration with higher education institutions or professional organizations may help students develop clearer and more realistic career plans.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations, including the relatively small sample size and the focus on a single psychological variable. Future research is recommended to involve larger and more diverse samples, examine additional factors such as parental support and socio-economic conditions, and employ longitudinal designs to better understand the development of self-efficacy and career decision-making over time.

FURTHER STUDY

Despite demonstrating a significant relationship between self-efficacy and career decision-making among eleventh-grade students, this study has several limitations that should be considered. First, the cross-sectional design employed in this research limits the ability to draw causal conclusions between self-efficacy and career decision-making. Future studies are therefore encouraged to adopt longitudinal or experimental designs to better examine causal relationships and developmental changes over time.

Second, the use of purposive sampling and the involvement of a limited number of classes restrict the generalizability of the findings. Further research should involve larger and more diverse samples from different schools or regions to enhance the external validity of the results.

Third, the reliance on self-report questionnaires may introduce response bias, as the data depend on students' perceptions and honesty. Future studies may benefit from combining quantitative measures with qualitative methods, such as interviews or focus group discussions, to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of students' career decision-making processes.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors would like to express their sincere appreciation to SMA Negeri 1 Muaro Jambi for granting permission and support during the data collection process. The authors also thank the teachers and students who participated in this study and provided valuable contributions. In addition, appreciation is extended to the academic supervisors for their guidance and constructive feedback throughout the research process.

REFERENCES

- Agnia, H., & Dasalinda, D. (2022). Hubungan efikasi diri dengan pengambilan keputusan karier siswa kelas XII SMA Negeri 1 Sukakarya.
- Firdaus, W., & Arjangga, R. (2024). Self-efficacy and career decision-making difficulties in senior high school students. *Indigenous: Jurnal Ilmiah Psikologi*, 5(2). <https://doi.org/10.23917/indigenous.v5i2.8941>
- Jianto, D. C. W., & Sarajar, D. K. (2025). Hubungan self-efficacy dengan pengambilan keputusan karier pada siswa SMA Yayasan Sekolah Kristen Indonesia (YSKI). *Paedagogy: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan dan Psikologi*, 5(3), 1322–1331. <https://doi.org/10.51878/paedagogy.v5i3.7597>
- Lent, R. W., Brown, S. D., & Hackett, G. (1994). Toward a unifying social cognitive theory of career and academic interest, choice, and performance. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 45(1), 79–122. <https://doi.org/10.1006/jvbe.1994.1027>
- Pratama, M. F., & Muttaqin, D. (2024). Career decision-making self-efficacy as mediator of parental career support and vocational identity. *Journal of Educational, Health and Community Psychology*, 13(4), 1748–1767. <https://doi.org/10.12928/jehcp.v13i4.29077>
- Putri, M. D. A., Yuliejantiningasih, Y., & Ismah, I. (2022). Hubungan antara self-efficacy dan perencanaan karier siswa kelas XII SMA Negeri 1 Moga Kabupaten Pemalang. *G-Couns: Jurnal Bimbingan dan Konseling*, 6(2), 239–249. <https://doi.org/10.31316/g.couns.v6i2.3463>
- Sampson, J. P., Reardon, R. C., Peterson, G. W., & Lenz, J. G. (2004). *Career counseling and services: A cognitive information processing approach*. Thomson/Brooks/Cole.
- Sanyoto, S. A. (2024). Hubungan antara efikasi diri dengan perilaku pengambilan keputusan karier pada siswa SMA Negeri 1 Sulang di Kota Rembang Jawa Tengah. *Jurnal Takaya*, 1(3), 25–35.
- Sarwandini, S., & Rusmawati, D. (2019). Hubungan antara quality of school life dengan pengambilan keputusan karier pada siswa kelas XII di SMA Negeri 2 Kebumen. *Jurnal Empati*, 8(1), 117–122. <https://doi.org/10.14710/empati.2019.23584>
- Setiyani, P., Ismanto, H. S., & Ajie, G. R. (2023). Hubungan antara efikasi diri dengan pengambilan keputusan karier siswa kelas XI SMA Negeri 1 Juwana. *Jurnal Bimbingan Konseling dan Psikologi*, 3(2), 83–95.
- Soejanto, L. T., & Rahmawati, A. I. N. (2023). Peran career decision making difficulties sebagai mediator hubungan antara career decision making self-efficacy dan career decision making. *Jurnal Bimbingan dan Konseling: Kajian dan Aplikasi*, 1(2), 124–132. <https://doi.org/10.59672/jbk.v1i2.2576>
- Yanuar, D. M., Wahono, P., & Suherdi. (2023). The effect of emotional intelligence and self-efficacy on career decision making of vocational high school students. *Jurnal Pendidikan Ekonomi, Perkantoran, dan Akuntansi*, 4(2), 121–134. <https://doi.org/10.21009/jpepa.0402.10>