



## Self-Determination on Career Decision-Making Among High School Students: A Systematic Review

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### ABSTRACT

Career decision-making is a crucial phase in high school students' lives that shapes their future educational and occupational paths. This systematic review explores the role of self-determination in the career decision-making process of high school students, focusing on its influencing factors and effective interventions to enhance it. Self-determination refers to an individual's ability to make autonomous decisions driven by internal motivation. Based on the analysis of 10 selected journals from a total of 352 articles, the findings reveal that self-determination significantly contributes to the quality of career decisions. Social support from parents and teachers strengthens students' self-determination, while external pressure and conformity tend to hinder it. Interventions such as Career Academies and self-assessment activities have been shown to help students better recognize their interests and potentials. These findings provide valuable insights for educators and counselors in designing effective career guidance strategies based on the enhancement of students' self-determination.

## INTRODUCTION

Career decision-making is one of the most important aspects of high school students' lives, as it determines their future educational and occupational pathways. In this process, psychological factors such as self-determination play a crucial role in helping students make decisions aligned with their interests and potential (Kukulite & Lazareva, 2024). Self-determination refers to an individual's ability to self-regulate and make decisions based on internal motivation without significant external pressure. According to self-determination theory, individuals with a high level of self-determination are more likely to have confidence in making career decisions, actively explore career options, and set clear goals (Westover, 2024). This confidence in career decision-making is often associated with career decision self-efficacy, which is an individual's belief in their ability to make appropriate career choices (Shafira et al., 2024).

Furthermore, research shows that social support—especially from parents and teachers—plays a role in enhancing students' self-determination in career decision-making (Muna et al., 2023). Such support provides students with greater confidence to explore their career options and set realistic, long-term goals that align with their interests and competencies. On the other hand, a lack of self-determination can lead to uncertainty and difficulty in making career decisions. Some students struggle to choose a career path due to a lack of self-understanding, limited career information, and external pressures from their environment (Rafiola et al., 2024). Therefore, strengthening self-determination through psychological interventions and career education is a solution that needs to be developed within school environments.

In recent years, various approaches have been implemented to enhance students' self-determination in making career decisions. One of these is through Career Academies, which provide hands-on experience and career guidance to help students identify their interests and available career opportunities (Kudysheva et al., 2024). Another approach involves self-reflection and self-assessment, allowing students to better understand their preferences and values before making career decisions. This study aims to conduct a systematic review of the role of self-determination in career decision-making among high school students.

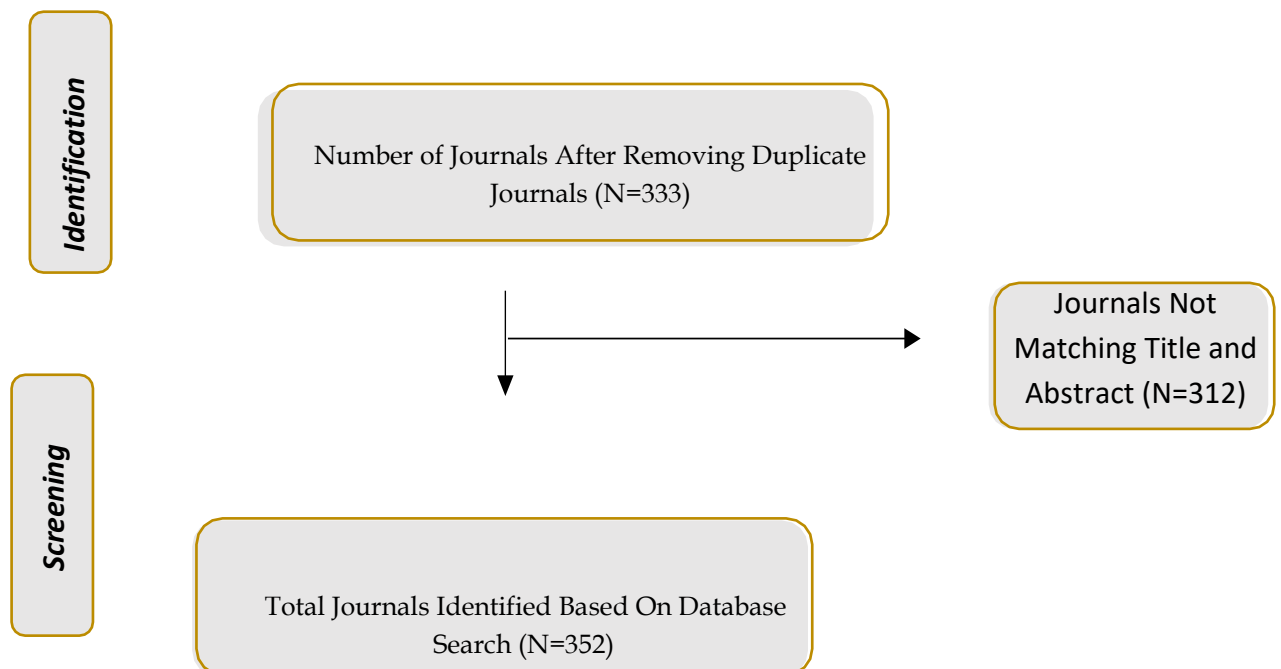
This review will explore the factors influencing self-determination, its impact on career decision-making, and the interventions that can be applied to enhance students' self-determination. By understanding this relationship, the findings of this study are expected to provide recommendations for educators

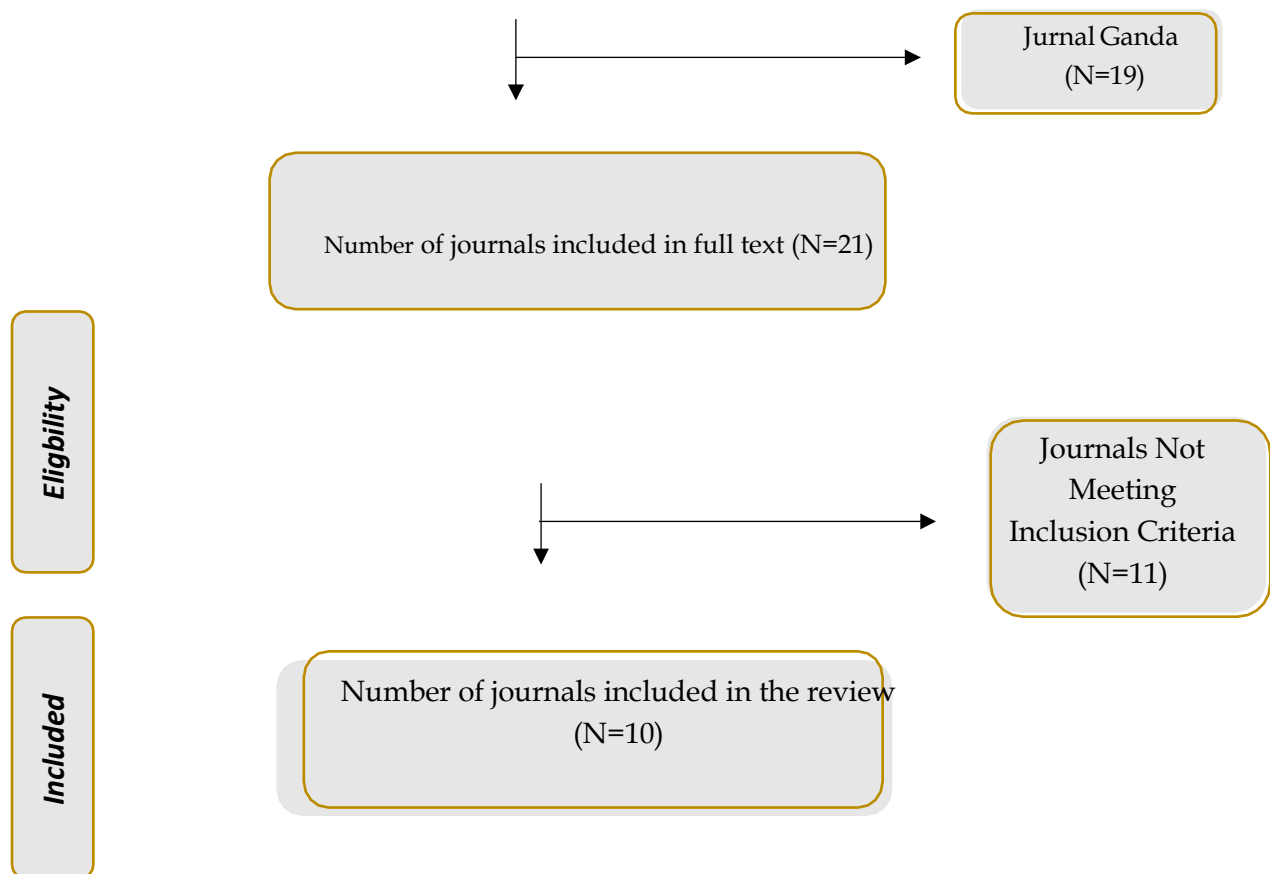
and counselors in helping high school students make more accurate and suitable career choices based on their potential. Thus, this research not only contributes to the theoretical understanding of self-determination in the context of education and career but also offers practical insights for supporting high school students in their future career journeys.

## METHOD

In the review process, the author formulated a research question using the PCC (Population, Concept, Context) approach as the foundation. Based on this approach, the research question was: *What is the role of the concept of self-determination in career decision-making?* The next step involved designing search keywords to be used across various databases. From the research question, key terms such as *self-determination*, *career decision-making*, *self-determination*, and *career decision-making* (in Indonesian) were derived. These terms were then used to search for articles in several databases, including Publish or Perish, Scopus, and ScienceDirect. After collecting the articles, the author checked for duplication using Rayyan. The selection process began with a review of titles and abstracts, followed by a full-text screening. From a total of 352 journals identified, 10 journals were selected for meeting the criteria—namely, discussing the role of self-determination in career decision-making.

Prisma





The journal selection process is illustrated using the PRISMA diagram in Figure 1.

In conducting the review, the researchers established several inclusion criteria: (1) journals must discuss the topics of self-determination and career decision-making, (2) journals must be published between 2015 and 2025, (3) journals must be written in English or Indonesian, and (4) the study must use either a qualitative or quantitative research approach. Meanwhile, the exclusion criteria included: (1) journals that do not address the topics of self-determination and career decision-making, (2) journals not written in English or Indonesian, and (3) articles in the form of books, meta-analysis studies, or research that does not clearly explain its methodology.

## DISCUSSION

Career decision-making is one of the most crucial stages in an individual's development, especially during adolescence at the high school level. At this stage, adolescents are faced with a range of complex and demanding choices, such as selecting an academic major, planning their future, and preparing to enter the workforce. Therefore, the ability to make sound career decisions becomes an essential foundation for future success. One of the most influential psychological factors that supports effective career decision-making is self-determination.

Self-determination refers to an individual's capacity to independently manage and direct themselves, set personal goals, make decisions without external pressure, and take full responsibility for the choices they make. Individuals with high self-determination typically have strong intrinsic motivation, high self-confidence, and a strong awareness of their personal values and interests—all of which are essential in the career decision-making process. Self-determination also reflects the extent to which adolescents can think and act autonomously, without overly relying on the opinions of others. In the context of careers, this is especially important because the choices made should align with an individual's own potential, interests, and values—not merely be driven by external pressures such as parental expectations, peer influence, or social trends.

A review of ten scientific journals consistently shows that self-determination has a significant influence on the quality of adolescents' career decision-making. One study by Khairunnisa and Satwika (2023) found that self-determination, alongside conformity, plays an important role in students' ability to make career decisions. The study revealed that the higher the students' level of self-determination, the better the quality of their career decisions. This suggests that students with greater self-control tend to be more prepared and confident in choosing career paths that align with their potential and life goals.

Findings from several other studies also affirm the important role of self-determination in adolescent career decision-making. For example, Saputra (2022) found that self-determination, along with parental support, had a positive impact on the career decision-making process, while self-efficacy did not show a significant effect. This supports the argument that a combination of internal motivation (self-determination) and external support (from parents) is an important factor in preparing adolescents for their career decisions.

A study conducted by Sasabila et al. (2024) revealed that self-determination negatively correlates with the level of difficulty in making career decisions. In other words, the higher the students' self-determination, the fewer obstacles they experience when choosing a career path. This shows that self-determination not only provides a clear direction in career choices but also helps students navigate the complex process of decision-making. Another study by Salviah (2023) similarly found that self-determination positively influences career decision-making, while conformity has a negative effect. This implies that adolescents who are overly influenced by social pressure or a desire to conform tend to experience more difficulty in making career decisions that align with their true selves.

This aligns with the findings of Pratama and Primanita (2023), as well as Anggraina (2024), who emphasized that the higher the level of self-determination possessed by students, the better their ability to make accurate career decisions. Additionally, Vahartiningsih and Nastiti (2023) highlighted the importance of parental social support alongside self-determination in enhancing career decision-making skills. A supportive family environment can strengthen

students' internal motivation, allowing them to plan their career future with greater confidence.

Research conducted by Ayu (2024) also adds an interesting perspective: self-determination and the quality of school life can enhance students' self-efficacy in making career decisions. This suggests that a conducive school environment, when combined with self-confidence and personal control, can significantly improve students' overall career readiness. Similar findings were also reported by Reza Listyaningrum and Japar (2023), as well as Rahmasari et al. (2023), who stated that self-determination has a significant impact on students' ability to make career decisions. Meanwhile, conformity was again found to have no significant influence, reinforcing the importance of instilling values of autonomy and personal responsibility in adolescents to support mature and identity-aligned career decision-making.

### Self-Determination in Career Decision-Making

| No | Authors                      | Subjects                             | Self-Determination                                                                      | Career Decision-Making                                                               |
|----|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | Khairunnisa & Satwika (2023) | 253 Islamic boarding school students | Career decisions are influenced by conformity and self-determination.                   | Conformity and self-determination affect students' ability to make career decisions. |
| 2  | Saputra (2022)               | 177 students in Klaten               | Parental support and self-determination contribute to career decisions.                 | Self-efficacy has no significant effect on career decisions.                         |
| 3  | Sasabila et al. (2024)       | 155 students in Surabaya             | Self-determination has a negative impact on career decision-making difficulty.          | Higher self-determination reduces difficulty in making career decisions.             |
| 4  | Salviah (2023)               | 273 students in Pekanbaru            | The higher the self-determination, the lower the difficulty in making career decisions. | Conformity reduces decision-making quality, while self-determination improves it.    |
| 5  | Pratama & Primanita (2023)   | 235 students in Sawahlunto           | Self-determination positively influences career decisions.                              | Higher self-determination leads to better career decisions.                          |

| No | Authors                         | Subjects                   | Self-Determination                                                      | Career Decision-Making                                                                      |
|----|---------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 6  | Anggraina (2024)                | 177 students in Banda Aceh | Self-determination enhances the ability to make career decisions.       | Higher self-determination increases the quality of career decision-making.                  |
| 7  | Vahartiningsih & Nastiti (2023) | 177 students in Sidoarjo   | Parental support and self-determination support career decision-making. | Parental social support and self-determination enhance career decision quality.             |
| 8  | Ayu (2024)                      | 60 students in Jepara      | Self-determination and school quality improve self-efficacy.            | Self-determination and school quality enhance self-efficacy in career decisions.            |
| 9  | Listyaningrum & Japar (2023)    | 207 students in Surakarta  | High self-determination positively impacts career decisions.            | High self-determination improves students' career decisions.                                |
| 10 | Rahmasari et al. (2023)         | 200 students in Sidoarjo   | Self-determination supports the career decision-making process.         | Conformity is not significant, while self-determination facilitates career decision-making. |

The systematic review aimed to answer the research question: To what extent does self-determination contribute to improving the quality of career decision-making in students? Through the analysis of ten reviewed journals, it was found that all studies indicate a positive relationship between self-determination and students' ability to make career decisions. This suggests that self-determination is a critical aspect that needs to be developed in adolescents, particularly at the high school level. In general, self-determination has been proven to contribute to improving three main aspects of career decision-making: goal clarity, independent thinking, and the ability to cope with social pressure.

Several journals mention that self-determination can reduce confusion in making career choices (Sasabila et al., 2024), increase confidence in choosing (Salviah, 2023), and diminish the negative influence of peer pressure or conformity (Khairunnisa & Satwika, 2023; Rahmasari et al., 2023). These studies come from diverse backgrounds and regions, including Indonesia, making these findings relevant for application in the national educational context. This underlines the importance of both school and family environments in supporting

the development of adolescents' self-determination. Parental support and the quality of school life were also found to significantly contribute to the formation of self-determination (Saputra, 2022; Ayu, 2024).

Adolescents at this stage are in the process of identity formation and are generally more sensitive to external pressures. According to Erikson's theory of development, adolescence is a stage of *identity vs. role confusion*, where individuals seek clarity about who they are and what they want to achieve in the future. In this context, self-determination serves as an internal driving force that enables adolescents to make more meaningful decisions – not merely ones driven by external forces. Therefore, interventions aimed at increasing self-determination may include self-development training, mentoring programs, career counseling, and learning approaches that encourage autonomy and self-reflection.

Activities such as group discussions, decision-making simulations, and career guidance based on interests and talents are also effective strategies for supporting the growth of students' self-determination. Thus, efforts to enhance self-determination are not solely the responsibility of the students themselves, but a shared duty of schools, families, and the broader social environment. Adolescents with a high level of self-determination are not only capable of choosing appropriate career paths but are also mentally equipped to take responsibility for their choices and face future challenges with greater readiness.

## CONCLUSION

Self-determination is a crucial aspect that every individual must possess, especially adolescents who are in the phase of determining the direction of their future. When adolescents have strong self-determination, they are able to make career decisions independently and responsibly, in alignment with their interests and potential. Self-determination encompasses internal motivation, autonomy, and the courage to face choices and the risks that may arise. Based on the review of various studies, it was found that self-determination has a significant influence in enhancing the quality of career decision-making among adolescents. Furthermore, self-determination has also been shown to reduce the difficulty in making decisions and lessen the negative influence of external factors such as conformity.

These findings carry important implications for the development of educational and career guidance programs in schools. Efforts to strengthen self-determination should not be the sole responsibility of students but must also be supported by their surrounding environment – particularly parents, teachers, and schools. Schools can design career guidance programs that not only provide information but also foster attitudes of independence and motivation in career selection. When self-determination is cultivated early on, adolescents will be better prepared to face a competitive and complex job market. Therefore, it is essential for all parties to provide the necessary space and optimal support in the



career decision-making process of adolescents so they can grow into independent, confident individuals capable of realizing their aspirations.

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