

EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF FACTORS INFLUENCING HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' CAREER DECISION MAKING

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the influence of environmental factors, interests and talents, learning experiences, and personality on students' career decision-making. The study used a quantitative approach, employing a survey method, with 206 grade XI students of SMA Negeri 15 Surabaya selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using a questionnaire that had met the validity and reliability tests ($\alpha = 0.90$). Data analysis used multiple linear regression. The results showed that environmental factors, interests and talents, learning experiences, and personality had a significant influence on students' career decision-making ($p < 0.05$), both in partial and simultaneous analyses ($F = 1203.884$). Environmental factors were the most dominant variable ($\beta = 0.613$), followed by personality ($\beta = 0.464$), learning experiences ($\beta = 0.268$), and interests and talents ($\beta = 0.185$). The coefficient of determination (R^2) value of 0.960 indicated that 96.0% of the variation in career decision-making could be explained by these four factors.

Keywords: career decision making; internal factors; external factors; career guidance

INTRODUCTION

Career choice is a crucial developmental task during adolescence, particularly for high school students transitioning to further education and the workforce. At this stage, students are challenged to determine their career path in a mature, rational manner, and in alignment with their potential. The ability to make career decisions is crucial because it is closely related to the continuation of their studies and their future preparedness. This is supported by research that states that career decision-making is a complex process involving self-understanding, exploring options, and conscious future planning (Azhenov et al., 2023). Furthermore, during adolescence, career decisions become increasingly important because individuals are in a transitional phase that determines the direction of their future education and work (Pratiwi et al., 2025). Research shows that adolescents with strong career decision-making skills tend to be better prepared for the transition from school to higher education and the workforce, and have higher levels of career adaptability (Zhou et al., 2023).

Theoretically, the career decision-making process can be explained by Krumboltz's (1976) Social Learning Theory of Career Decision-Making. This theory emphasizes that career decisions are shaped by the interaction among individual interests and talents, environmental factors, learning experiences, and personality. Interest and talents relate to innate potential, such as interests and abilities; environmental factors include social influences and surrounding conditions; learning experiences shape an individual's perception of various career alternatives; and personality plays a role in determining how an individual responds to situations and makes decisions. These four factors are interrelated in shaping an individual's preferences and readiness to make career choices. Empirically, career decisions are influenced not only by internal factors but also by external factors that operate dynamically. Various studies in Indonesia have shown that environmental factors, learning experiences, career interests, personality, and social support play significant roles in enhancing the maturity and accuracy of students' career decision-making (Lent & Brown, 2022; Saputri et al., 2023).

However, empirical reality shows that some students still experience difficulties in determining career choices. This condition is characterized by doubt, confusion, and uncertainty in determining future directions. Research findings indicate that many high school students lack clarity regarding career choices and are less accustomed to exploring career information in depth (Pratiwi et al., 2025). Furthermore, difficulties in career decision-making are often characterized by doubts and irrational beliefs, which cause students to delay or avoid important decisions regarding their future (Fajriani et al., 2024). Other research also reveals that high school students experience anxiety and confusion in career choice due to the complexity of choices and limited self-understanding and career information (Nguyen et al., 2024).

These issues highlight the importance of targeted interventions, such as guidance and counseling services, in schools. Career guidance services play a strategic role in helping students recognize their potential, understand various alternative options, and develop their ability to make independent decisions. This is supported by research showing that career guidance interventions in schools positively impact students' career decision-making skills, career exploration, and self-efficacy (Wang, 2024). Furthermore, career guidance services have been shown to help students improve their job readiness, self-confidence, and ability to plan for the future more thoroughly. Career guidance programs are effective in helping students recognize their potential, explore career options, and develop the skills needed to face the world of work (Yamamoto et al., 2025).

Based on these conditions, a research gap exists regarding the need for a more comprehensive analysis of the factors influencing career decision-making. This study examines the factors of interest and talent, environment, personality, and learning experience within an integrated analytical framework for students at SMAN 15 Surabaya. The novelty of this study lies in its analytical approach, which not only identifies the influencing factors but also quantitatively measures each factor's contribution as a percentage, thus providing a more comprehensive picture of the dominant and supporting factors in students' career decision-making.

In line with this, the purpose of this study is to analyze the factors influencing career decision-making among students at SMAN 15 Surabaya and to identify the most dominant contributing factors. This research is expected to provide empirical contributions to the development of more effective, targeted, and needs-based career guidance services. Furthermore, the results of this study have practical implications for strengthening guidance and counseling services in schools, particularly in career guidance. Information on the dominant factors obtained can serve as a basis for guidance and counseling teachers to design more systematic, contextual, and tailored service programs to students' developmental needs. Furthermore, the findings of this study are expected to serve as a reference for developing educational policies that improve students' career readiness, enabling them to plan for their future more realistically and responsibly.

METHOD

This study used a quantitative survey approach to analyze the influence of environmental factors, interests, talents, learning experiences, and personality on career decision-making among high school students. The quantitative approach was chosen because this study aimed to obtain an objective picture of the factors influencing students' career decision-making using statistically analyzed data (Creswell & Creswell, 2022).

This quantitative study, using a survey method, aims to determine the influence of environmental factors, interests, talents, learning experiences, and personality on students' career decision-making. The study was conducted at SMAN 15 Surabaya in response to the phenomenon of students still experiencing confusion about career choices after graduation. The data obtained were analyzed using multiple linear regression to determine the influence of each variable, both individually and jointly, on students' career decision-making.

The study population consisted of 11th-grade students at SMAN 15 Surabaya who were in the career planning stage, with a sample size of 206. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, a sampling method based on specific criteria: students considering career options after graduating from high school (Sugiyono, 2022).

The data collection technique uses a questionnaire instrument with a Likert scale. The questionnaire was designed to measure four main variables, namely: (1) talent interest factors, which include interests, talents and abilities; (2) environmental factors, which include family, peer and teacher support; (3) personality factors, which include self-confidence, independence, and perseverance; and (4) learning experience factors which include career exploration experiences, both formal and informal. Before the instrument is used, a trial is conducted to assess its validity and reliability. The item validity testing indicated that 24 statements were valid and 1 was invalid. The reliability calculations using Cronbach's alpha yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.90.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings from the multiple linear regression analysis. To evaluate the individual impact of environmental factors, interests and talents, learning experiences,

and personality on students' career decision-making, a partial t-test was conducted. The detailed coefficients and significance values are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. T-test

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.276	.303		-.910	.364
	Environmental Factors	.252	.007	.613	38.695	<.001
	Interest and Talent Factors	.256	.023	.185	11.353	<.001
	Learning Factors	.253	.013	.268	18.841	<.001
	Personality Factors	.261	.008	.464	31.464	<.001

a. Dependent Variable: Career Decision Making

Based on the results of a multiple linear regression analysis, environmental factors, interests and talents, learning experiences, and personality had a significant influence on students' career decision-making at SMAN 15 Surabaya. The results of the t-test showed that the calculated t-values for environmental factors (38.695), interests and talents (11.353), learning experiences (18.841), and personality (31.464) were greater than the t-table value of 1.971, with significance values of $0.000 < 0.05$. These results indicate that all variables partially had a positive and significant influence on students' career decision-making. Based on the standardized beta coefficient, environmental factors were the most influential variables in students' career decision-making ($\beta = 0.613$), followed by personality factors ($\beta = 0.464$), learning experiences ($\beta = 0.268$), and interests and talents ($\beta = 0.185$).

Table 2. F-test

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	362.146	4	90.537	1203.884	<.001 ^b
	Residual	15.116	201	.075		
	Total	377.262	205			

a. Dependent Variable: Career Decision Making

b. Predictors: (Constant), Personality Factors, Learning Factors, Environmental Factors, Interest and Talent Factors

The F-test results show that the calculated F-value of 1203.884 exceeds the F-table value of 2.42 ($1203.884 > 2.42$), with a significance level of $0.000 < 0.05$. Based on these results, H_0 is rejected, and H_1 is accepted. Therefore, it can be concluded that environmental factors, interests and talents, learning experiences, and personality simultaneously have a positive and significant influence on students' career decision-making. These results indicate that the four independent variables, when examined together, can explain changes in students' career decision-making.

The significance of these simultaneous influences indicates that career decision-making is not driven by a single factor but rather by the interaction of interrelated internal and external factors. Internal factors such as interests, talents and personality play a role in helping students recognize their potential, abilities, and characteristics. On the other hand, external factors such as the environment and learning experiences provide information, support, and experience that help students understand the various alternative career options available to them. Thus, the better the condition of these factors, the greater the students' ability to make appropriate and realistic career decisions.

Table 3. R Square (R^2)

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.980 ^a	.960	.959	.274

a. Predictors: (Constant), Personality Factors, Learning Factors, Environmental Factors, Interest and Talent Factors

Based on the results of the multiple linear regression analysis, the correlation coefficient (R) was 0.980. This value indicates that the relationship between environmental factors, interests and talents, learning experiences, and personality and students' career decision-making is very strong. This indicates that the four independent variables are closely related to the career decision-making variable. Furthermore, the R Square (R^2) value was 0.960 (96.0%). This result indicates that 96.0% of the variation in students' career decision-making can be explained by environmental factors, interests and talents, learning experiences, and personality, while the remaining 4.0% is influenced by other factors outside the research model that were not examined.

The Adjusted R Square value of 0.959 indicates that, after adjusting for the number of predictor variables in the model, the ability of the environmental variables, interests and talents, learning experiences, and personality to explain variation in career decision-making remains very high at 95.9%. Thus, the regression model used has strong predictive power. Furthermore, the Std. The Error of the Estimate of 0.274 indicates that the model's prediction error rate is relatively low. The smaller the standard error, the better the regression model predicts the dependent variable.

This finding is in line with the Social Learning Theory of Career Decision Making proposed by Krumboltz, which places individual ability as one of the main determinants in the career selection process. In an empirical context, the results of this research are also supported by Fatihah et al. 's (2025) study, which shows that internal factors, including interests, skills, and self-perception, are the primary psychological basis for determining an individual's career direction. Apart from that, Hariyanto's research suggests that students' personal characteristics, including individual potential and abilities, are important factors influencing students' career choices (Hariyanto et al., 2024).

An individual's ability to recognize their potential is also closely related to their level of self-confidence when making career decisions. Students with a good self-understanding tend

to be more confident in making career choices and are better able to consider the risks they may face (Zhou et al., 2023). On the other hand, low self-understanding is often associated with increased career indecision, namely, a state of confusion and uncertainty in making career choices. Levin explained that unclear information about oneself and a lack of evaluation of personal potential are among the main causes of career decision-making difficulties in adolescents (Levin et al., 2024). These findings show that understanding one's interests, talents, and abilities remains an important aspect in the career planning and decision-making process.

The results of this study indicate that interest and talent factors have a positive and significant influence on students' career decision-making, as evidenced by the calculated t-value of 11.353, which exceeds the critical t-value of 1.971, with a significance value of $0.000 < 0.05$. However, based on the Standardized Coefficients Beta value of 0.185, the influence of interest and talent factors is relatively lower than that of environmental factors, personality, and learning experiences. This finding indicates that understanding interests and talents still plays a role in helping students make career choices that align with their potential, but students' career decisions are not determined solely by these internal factors. Environmental support, personality characteristics, and students' learning experiences also contribute significantly to shaping career decisions.

This finding aligns with research indicating that interests, skills, and self-perception are internal factors that shape individual career choices (Fatimah et al., 2025). Furthermore, Hariyanto explains that an individual's ability to recognize their potential is a crucial basis for determining an appropriate career direction (Hariyanto et al., 2024). However, the results of this study indicate that while interests and talents are important foundations for self-awareness, their influence is most effective when supported by a conducive environment, adequate learning experiences, and positive personality traits. Therefore, career guidance services in schools need to focus not only on identifying students' interests and talents but also on fostering a supportive environment, strengthening self-confidence, and expanding career-related learning experiences.

These results also reinforce Krumboltz's Social Learning Theory of Career Decision Making, which explains that career decisions result from the interaction between individual characteristics and environmental factors, shaped by learning experiences acquired throughout life. Therefore, interests and talents are not the sole factors determining career choice, but rather one component that works alongside other factors to inform a mature and realistic career decision.

The environmental factor has a calculated t-value of 38.695, which exceeds the critical t-value of 1.971 ($38.695 > 1.971$), with a significance value of $0.000 < 0.05$. Furthermore, the environmental factor has a Standardized Beta Coefficient of 0.613, the highest among the variables. These results indicate that environmental factors are the most dominant variable influencing students' career decision-making. Therefore, the hypothesis that environmental factors influence career decision-making is accepted.

These findings demonstrate that the environment plays a crucial role in helping students make career choices. Environmental factors include the influence of family, peers, teachers, and the school, as well as the sociocultural conditions surrounding students' lives. A

conducive environment can provide emotional support, career information, motivation, and a variety of experiences that help students understand various educational and career options. Conversely, a less supportive environment can create doubt and make it difficult to determine a future career path.

This aligns with Krumboltz's Social Learning Theory of Career Decision Making, which explains that the environment is a key determinant in the career decision-making process. According to Krumboltz, individuals gain various learning experiences through interactions with their social environment, so career decisions result from a learning process shaped by that environment. The environment not only provides information and opportunities but also serves as a source of support and obstacles in an individual's career development (Krumboltz, 1976). This research is also supported by Basri et al. (2024), who show that environmental factors play a significant role in shaping students' interests, considerations, and preferences in making educational and career choices. A supportive environment allows students broader access to career information, enabling them to make more informed and rational decisions.

In addition to family, peers are a crucial part of the environment that influences students' career decision-making. During adolescence, peer groups often serve as sources of information and references in determining educational and career choices. Research findings indicate that peer social support is positively associated with students' career decision-making abilities (Cahyani & Hadi, 2024). The greater the support from peers, the greater students' confidence in making their career choices. This finding is reinforced by Majid's research, which found that peer conformity significantly influences students' career decision-making (Majid, 2024). This suggests that social interactions with peer groups can influence how students perceive available career opportunities, challenges, and alternatives.

The family environment also plays a significant role in shaping students' career orientation. Parents are often the primary source of emotional support, motivation, and information regarding education and employment. This is in line with Putri's research, which shows that the family environment positively influences students' educational direction and future planning (Putri, 2024). Furthermore, Widiawati's research explains that a family's socioeconomic conditions also influence students' aspirations and career choices. Students from supportive families tend to have clearer career goals, higher levels of self-confidence, and greater preparedness for the career choice process (Widiawati et al., 2024).

In addition to family and peers, the school environment also plays a strategic role in supporting students' career development. Teachers and school counselors serve as facilitators, helping students identify their potential, understand further education opportunities, and obtain information about the world of work. A school environment that provides structured career guidance services will help students develop career maturity and more effective decision-making skills.

Overall, environmental factors are the primary determinant of students' career decision-making. The dominant influence of environmental factors indicates that students' career decisions are determined not only by their abilities and personal characteristics but also by the social, cultural, and educational support they receive. Therefore, efforts to improve the quality of students' career decision-making should be carried out through collaboration

among family, school, and the social environment to create an ecosystem that supports optimal career development.

The personality factor in this study had a calculated t-value of 31.464, which is greater than the t-table value of 1.971 ($31.464 > 1.971$), with a significance value of $0.000 < 0.05$. Furthermore, the personality factor had a standardized coefficient (Beta) of 0.464, the second-largest influence after environmental factors. These results indicate that personality factors have a positive and significant influence on students' career decision-making. Therefore, the better a student's personality characteristics, the better their ability to make appropriate and targeted career choices.

Personality factors in this study encompass various psychological aspects, such as self-confidence, independence, perseverance, responsibility, and decision-making skills. These characteristics are important assets for students in recognizing their potential, evaluating various alternative career choices, and determining steps that align with their future goals. The results of this study indicate that personality factors play a strong role in shaping students' career readiness, as individuals with positive personalities tend to be more confident in their ability to face the challenges and uncertainties that arise in the career decision-making process. Individuals with positive psychological characteristics are better able to use the information and experience they have gained to make mature, realistic career decisions. These findings align with research showing that a positive self-concept, as part of personality, plays a significant role in increasing students' confidence in their abilities, thereby supporting a more mature career decision-making process (Rosyidah, 2024). Furthermore, independence, self-competence, and self-direction are important factors in career planning because students with high levels of these qualities tend to be better prepared to determine their career goals and choices (Astuti et al., 2024).

The results of this study are also supported by Şeker's research, which shows that self-efficacy and locus of control are significantly related to career decision-making ability. Individuals with high self-efficacy tend to be more confident in their ability to complete career-planning tasks, thereby reducing doubts about making career choices. Conversely, low self-efficacy is often associated with career indecision or confusion in determining career direction (Şeker, 2025).

Furthermore, self-confidence is crucial to helping students make independent decisions. Rahayu's research shows that students with high levels of self-confidence tend to be more optimistic about the future and are better able to set clear career goals. Self-confidence enables students to believe in their abilities, making them less susceptible to doubt or environmental pressure (Rahayu et al., 2024).

Other personality factors that play a role are independence and perseverance. Students with a high level of independence tend to be self-directed, actively seek career information, and objectively consider various alternative options before making a decision. This is in line with research findings showing that characteristics related to self-determination, such as independence, self-control, and intrinsic motivation, are significantly related to students' career planning and decision-making abilities. Independent individuals are not only able to clearly define career goals but also demonstrate the commitment and perseverance to achieve them (Ismiati et al., 2026). The significant influence of personality factors in this study

indicates that students' success in making career decisions is determined not only by the career information they possess but also by their psychological readiness to manage that information. Students with positive personalities are more likely to recognize their strengths and weaknesses, are more confident in making choices, and are better able to face the various challenges that arise during the career planning process.

It can be concluded that personality factors are among the main determinants of students' career decision-making, ranking second only to environmental factors. This finding indicates that students' career development needs to be accompanied by efforts to strengthen personality aspects, such as increasing self-efficacy, self-confidence, independence, responsibility, and perseverance. Therefore, career guidance and counseling services in schools need to be designed not only to provide career information, but also to help students develop character and psychological readiness that support independent, rational, and sustainable career decision-making.

The learning experience factor has a calculated t-value of 18.841, which exceeds the critical t-value of 1.971 ($18.841 > 1.971$), with a significance value of $0.000 < 0.05$. In addition, the learning experience factor has a Standardized Coefficient Beta of 0.268, indicating a positive and significant effect on students' career decision-making. These results indicate that the more learning experiences students have, both through formal education and non-formal settings, the better their ability to make appropriate, well-directed career choices.

In this study, learning experiences encompass various forms of learning that students acquire through academic activities at school, career guidance and counseling services, extracurricular activities, training, seminars, and their social environment. These experiences provide students with opportunities to recognize their potential, understand the world of work, and learn about various educational and career options. Through learning experiences, students not only gain knowledge but also develop the skills and attitudes necessary for career planning. According to Krumboltz, learning experiences help individuals form beliefs about themselves and the work environment they will face. These experiences then become the basis for developing interests, preferences, and career choices. In other words, the more learning experiences relevant to career development, the greater the individual's ability to make mature and realistic career decisions (Krumboltz, 1976). This finding is supported by research showing that career guidance services that provide learning experiences and career information systematically help students understand their interests and talents and determine more appropriate career choices (Khoirunnisa and Lestari, 2024).

The results of this study support Wang's research, which shows that learning experiences and career exploration positively influence students' career readiness and career decision-making. Through career exploration activities, students gain a broader understanding of various educational and career options, enabling them to make more informed decisions. These findings suggest that learning experiences serve as a means for students to connect their potential with available career opportunities (Wang, 2024). Furthermore, learning experiences in formal contexts also play a crucial role in supporting students' career development. Research shows that career guidance services provided in schools help students recognize their abilities, understand career information, and develop more focused career plans.

Through these services, students can explore various career options and understand the consequences of each choice (Ismawati et al., 2025).

The learning experiences gained through career development training have also been shown to improve career decision-making skills. This is in line with Arman's research, which shows that training programs focused on developing career planning, self-management, and social skills can improve students' understanding of their potential and desired career goals. Through this training, students not only gain knowledge about the world of work but also develop important skills such as communication, collaboration, problem-solving, and decision-making (Arman et al., 2025). Similar findings were presented by Zhang, who found that structured career education programs can improve students' career adaptability, career decision-making self-efficacy, and readiness to make career choices. These results indicate that systematically designed learning experiences can help students navigate various challenges during the transition from education to the world of work (Zhang et al., 2025).

Although learning experience was not the most dominant variable in this study, it remained significant for students' career decision-making. This suggests that career decisions are influenced not only by individual characteristics and the social environment, but also by learning experiences that provide insight, skills, and understanding of various career alternatives. Students with more diverse learning experiences tend to have more comprehensive information, a higher level of preparedness, and a better ability to evaluate available career options. Learning experiences gained through academic activities, career exploration, guidance and counseling services, and direct work experience can help students understand their potential and various career opportunities that align with their interests and abilities. The more relevant learning experiences students have, the more mature their judgments will be when making career choices. This finding aligns with research that states that experience and skills acquired during the learning process play a significant role in improving students' career decision-making abilities (Azizah, 2023).

It can be concluded that learning experience is an important factor in shaping students' career decisions. This finding supports research suggesting that career decisions are influenced by the interaction among individual characteristics, learning experiences, environmental support, and access to career information (Liu et al., 2024). Furthermore, Bisilangsi's research explains that career decision-making readiness results from a combination of internal factors, such as personality and self-understanding, and external factors, such as social support, learning experiences, and career guidance services (Bisilangsi et al., 2025).

Overall, the results of this study indicate that students' career decision-making is driven by the interaction between internal factors, namely interests, talents, and personality, and external factors, namely the environment and learning experiences. This finding is in line with research showing that career decisions are influenced by a combination of individual characteristics such as interests, personality, and abilities, as well as family support, social conditions, and access to career information that interact dynamically with each other (Liu et al., 2024). In addition, the integration between internal and external factors indicates that students are not only required to have good self-understanding, but also require adequate environmental support in the career decision-making process. This is supported by research

indicating that career decision-making ability is influenced by internal factors such as self-efficacy, self-understanding, and personality, as well as external factors such as social support, family, and career guidance services, which together shape individual career readiness (Bisinglasi et al., 2025).

In line with this, effective career guidance services need to be designed systematically by integrating various aspects that influence students' career decision-making, such as self-understanding, interests, talents, and adequate career information, because career guidance services have been proven to have a significant impact in helping students recognize their potential and reduce confusion in determining career choices (Noer et al., 2025). In addition, the role of Guidance and Counseling teachers as facilitators of structured and creative services is an important factor in improving students' career decision-making abilities.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that environmental factors, interests and talents, learning experiences, and personality have a significant influence on the career decision-making of class XI students of SMA Negeri 15 Surabaya. The results of the simultaneous test show that the four factors together have a significant influence on students' career decision-making, with an F-value of 1203.884, which exceeds the F-table value of 2.42 and a significance level of $0.000 < 0.05$. In addition, the coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.960 indicates that 96.0% of the variation in students' career decision-making is explained by these four factors. Partially, environmental factors are the variables with the strongest influence on students' career decision-making ($\beta = 0.613$), followed by personality factors ($\beta = 0.464$), learning experiences ($\beta = 0.268$), and interests and talents ($\beta = 0.185$). These findings indicate that students' career decision-making is influenced not only by individual characteristics but also by environmental support, learning experiences, and students' psychological conditions.

The results of this study strengthen the Social Learning Theory of Career Decision Making proposed by Krumboltz, which explains that career decisions result from interactions between individual and environmental factors through learning experiences gained throughout life. Therefore, the development of career guidance and counseling services needs to be carried out comprehensively by involving schools, families, and the broader social environment to help students make career decisions that are appropriate, realistic, and aligned with their potential. However, this study was limited to grade XI students of SMA Negeri 15 Surabaya and examined only four factors influencing career decision-making, so further research is recommended to involve a wider sample and include additional relevant variables to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence students' career decision-making.

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