

## **TRAIT AND FACTOR CAREER THEORY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS IN CAREER GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING SERVICES FOR SPECIAL NEEDS LEARNERS**

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### **Abstract**

Career development is a crucial aspect of an individual's life, particularly in the face of rapidly evolving social, economic, and cultural changes. One of the most influential approaches in career progression theory is the Trait and Factor Theory. This theory emphasizes the importance of compatibility between individual characteristics (traits) and occupational characteristics (factors). Through this theory, researchers and practitioners try to understand how individuals can choose career paths that suit their interests, personality, abilities, and existing environmental conditions. This article will outline the core concepts in Trait and Factor Theory, and the application in the career counseling process to help individuals achieve optimal career suits, including students with special needs.

**Keywords:** career development theory, trait and factor, individual-job fit, career counseling, students with special needs

### **Abstrak**

*Perkembangan karier merupakan aspek penting dalam kehidupan individu, khususnya dalam menghadapi perubahan sosial, ekonomi, dan budaya yang semakin dinamis. Salah satu pendekatan yang paling berpengaruh dalam teori perkembangan karier adalah Teori Trait and Factor. Teori ini menekankan pentingnya kesesuaian antara karakteristik individu (traits) dan karakteristik pekerjaan (factors). Tujuan penelitian ini yakni mendeskripsikan terkait teori karier trait and factor dan implikasinya dalam layanan bimbingan dan konseling karier. Metode penelitian dalam artikel ini menggunakan study literatur yang didukung dengan bibliometrik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan penggunaan teori trait and factor dalam bimbingan dan konseling karier bisa digunakan, hasil analisis trend penelitian karier dan analisis penelitian yang menggunakan teori trait and factor menunjukkan penggunaan trait and factor dalam layanan bimbingan dan konseling masih sedikit, termasuk untuk peserta didik berkebutuhan khusus.*

**Kata kunci:** karier, teori trait dan faktor, bimbingan dan konseling karier, peserta didik berkebutuhan khusus

## INTRODUCTION

Career development is a lifelong process, where individuals face a variety of choices that affect their career path. One of the classic theories in career development is the Trait and Factor Theory, which focuses on the fit between individual characteristics and job demands. This theory is the foundation of career counseling that aims to help individuals find a fit between themselves and their environment, so that they can achieve job satisfaction and success. Trait and Factor theory is the basis for many career assessment tools used in the world of education and counseling. (Jannah & Hidayat, 2022)

Career maturity as a process refers to how individuals determine, make choices or decisions and how individuals combine their own conditions with their environment. Meanwhile, career maturity as a result refers to what an individual has achieved, whether he or she is steady with the choices or decisions he has chosen. Career development theory has become a central topic in the discipline of Guidance and Counseling, given the importance of the role of counselors in helping individuals navigate their career journeys. One of the most fundamental and early career theories in this field is the theory of Trait and Factor, which was first introduced by Frank Parsons in the early 20th century. This theory focuses on matching personal characteristics and job demands to achieve optimal career suitability. (Taherong & Taherong, 2019)

Career maturity has an influence on the family, school and environment. With this, information knowledge will greatly contribute to a person's career maturity and can provide confidence and talent interests possessed by each individual in increasing career maturity. Education is an effort of each individual in developing their potential in accordance with existing rules and can be passed on to the next generation, Education can also be interpreted as one of the experiences of learning that is carried out directly in the environment and throughout life. Not all students with special needs lack confidence, although some are too confident. However, from the results of observations and interviews, it is known that students with special needs have doubts, tend to avoid, lack initiative, are easily anxious, lack of confidence, lack of enthusiasm, and lack the courage to appear in front of a crowd. Therefore, it is important for students with special needs to obtain counseling guidance services (Mustika, 2023). Various types of counseling guidance services in schools, the preparation of the program refers to the deliberations of counseling guidance teachers (MGBK), based on the input of teachers and homeroom teachers, parents of students, both students with special needs and students in general, as well as input and consideration of the principal and prepared by BK teachers in their respective schools by adjusting to the needs of students and the circumstances of each school (Slamet & Pratiwi, 2016). The form of counseling guidance services for students with special needs uses several models including guidance as a constellation of services, developmental guidance, guidance as a science of purposeful action, guidance as personal development, and guidance as psychological education, including student career guidance (Awwad, 2015). In increasing the maturity of shiva's career, a relevant theory and counseling technique is needed. One of the right counseling techniques used in increasing students' career maturity is the trait and factor counseling technique. This is because at that time they must have mature career readiness to make the desired career plan. The

trait and factor counseling approach is considered effective in contributing to finding the strengths, talents, skills, shortcomings, and strengths that students have in carrying out career planning and setting their future life goals. This article will discuss the basic principles of Trait and Factor theory, its implications in the context of Guidance and Counseling, and its relevance in the development of career teaching methods in the classroom (Rahayu & Rifqi, 2022).

## METHOD

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach with a literature review method to analyze the theory of Trait and Factor in career counseling. Data was collected from secondary sources such as books, journal articles, and case studies, including the work of Frank Parsons and E.G. Williamson. The data collection process is carried out through databases such as Google Scholar with keywords related to the Trait and Factor theory. Thematic analysis techniques are used to identify key themes, such as the concepts of "trait" (individual characteristics) and "factors" (job characteristics). To ensure accuracy, sources are triangulated by comparing various references. This study was limited to the English and Indonesian literature without primary data, aiming to provide an in-depth review of the relevance of Trait and Factor theory in helping individuals find the right career.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

*Trait and factor theory career* emphasizes the understanding of the individual's personality and the environment that forms the basis of individual career selection (person  $\times$  environment ( $P \times E$ ) fit approach). (Chartrand, 1991) *Trait-and-Factor* in career counseling emphasizes matching individual traits, such as skills and abilities, to the requirements of a particular job. This approach suggests that successful career choices are obtained by accurately assessing both personal and environmental traits (or job characteristics). This model includes a diagnostic approach, using psychometric tests and individual assessments, to help clients make informed decisions regarding their career path. Historically, this approach evolved into the *Person  $\times$  Environment ( $P \times E$ ) Fit model*, which includes a more dynamic and reciprocal understanding of how individuals interact with their environment, not only considering the nature but also how people shape and adapt to their environment over time. (Su et al., 2014)

Parsons posits that vocational guidance should be based on three elements. The first element is a clear understanding of the individual and his or her abilities, values, interests, ambitions, resources, and personality. For Parsons, this information is usually obtained through clinical interviews. The second element is knowledge of the world of work. It includes knowledge regarding the advantages and disadvantages, compensation, opportunities, and requirements of each job. The third important element in trait and factor theory is the rational relationship between the first two elements. By linking individual traits to employment factors, one can make logical decisions regarding one's suitability or possible satisfaction in that vocational position. (Flanigan, 2011)

Trait and Factor *Theory* is applied to assist students in making career decisions during their transition period from school to the workforce by matching their personal traits (such as talents, interests, and abilities) to the requirements of different career fields, through student personality assessments and counseling guidance that helps them make informed career choices, as well as exploring career paths or appropriate advanced education options, so that students can make career decisions that align with their individual characteristics, which ultimately leads to better career satisfaction and personal development (Anggi et al., 2023). In special needs education, counselors know that their students have shortcomings, but must believe that students have potential to develop. What matters is how the counselor can create an environment that allows the child to develop as well as possible. The environment created is one that is full of warmth, acceptance, and provides the widest possible opportunity for students to explore themselves and the environment (Awwad, 2015). Trait-Factor Theory is the view that a person's personality can be explained by identifying a number of traits, as far as the results of psychological tests that measure each dimension of personality are seen. Trait and factor theory prioritizes the student's traits and personality in matching the right choice for the student. It is hoped that the student's career choice that suits his character and personality will be able to strengthen his career planning . (Ficanysha et al., 2022)

Trait and Factor *Theory* is applied in career counseling with an emphasis on helping individuals understand their traits and how they relate to career decisions. The application of this theory helps students explore their talents, abilities, and potential, while providing guidance for choosing a career that suits their unique personality traits. By assessing these traits, counselors can assist students in choosing the career that best suits their strengths and preferences, thus improving decision-making. This approach is considered effective, especially in guiding students through career decisions during their transition period, ensuring that the chosen career path matches their personality, abilities, and interests. Additionally, this theory is applied through tools such as self-assessment, which helps students clarify their strengths and weaknesses, which ultimately aids in better career planning. (Costa & McCrae, 2006)

The *Trait and Factor* approach is applied in career counseling to assist confused high school students in making career choices after graduation. This approach focuses on students' self-understanding through psychological testing, such as identifying students' talents, interests, and skills, as well as matching students' personal characteristics to their chosen career requirements. By understanding their potential and career requirements, students can make more mature career decisions and match their characteristics. This approach is used to help students overcome their indecision and achieve career maturity, allowing them to make more informed and realistic career choices. (Ristian et al., 2020)

The *Trait and Factor* approach is applied to assist students in exploring careers and making informed career decisions. This approach emphasizes matching students' personal traits (such as talents, interests, and abilities) with existing job characteristics, including for students with special needs. Proper career exploration, including knowing one's

potential and adjusting to career opportunities, can reduce career anxiety experienced by students. Although the results showed that career exploration had no significant effect on career anxiety, parental social support was found to play an important role in reducing career anxiety, leading to more informed decisions regarding their career choices. This approach assists students in identifying and matching personal traits with appropriate career choices. (Rahmadani et al., 2023)

The basic assumptions of the trait-factor theory applied especially to career counseling are: (Richard James et al., n.d.)

1. Each individual has a unique and stable trait pattern that can be measured.
2. There are unique trait patterns that are necessary for successful performance in the critical tasks of any job.
3. It is possible to match the nature of the individual with the needs of the nature of the job rationally and on an actuarial basis.
4. The closer the match is between a person's nature and the needs of the nature of the job undertaken, the more likely it is for successful job performance and personal satisfaction
5. Personal traits can be seen in the context of the extent to which they fit into the environmental system in which the individual operates. Environmental systems can be viewed in a broad ecological context that includes geographical, local, cultural heritage, family background and its influences, socioeconomic class, work/school environment, community environment, and economic climate.
6. In a broader context, "work" or "vocational" counseling can be replaced by one of life's developmental tasks such as going to school, raising a family, or planning for retirement.

The following research data related to traits and factors in guidance and counseling services taken by researchers from google scholar using the Publish or Persih application:

CIT IES	AUTHORS	TITLE	YEA R	SOURCE	PUBLIS HER	GSR ANK
10	W Hartati, Y Karneli	The use of trait and factor individual counseling approaches in career planning in male victims of sexual abuse	2020	THERAPE UTIC: Journal of Guidance and ...	journal.u nindra.ac .id	3

6	AH Putra, M Iswari	Trait and Factor Theory: Concepts and Applications in Career Coaching and Counseling	2022	Journal of Educational and Social Sciences	putrapubli sher.org	1
2	IN Aziza	Development of Self-Help Books for Career Decision Making in the Perspective of Traits and Factors for Students at SMAN 50 Jakarta	2018		repositor y.unj.ac.id	5
2	NG Tiarasani	Efforts to Reduce Students' Anxiety in Career Selection Through Trait and Factor Counseling in Class XI B at SMK Negeri 1 Wirosari Regency ...	2012	Semarang State University		11
1	AK Rangkuty, M Nisa, DN Firdaus...	The Relationship Between Trait And Factor Theory And Guidance And Counseling Techniques In The Career Field	2024	... Multidisciplinary Journal	gudangju rnal.com	2

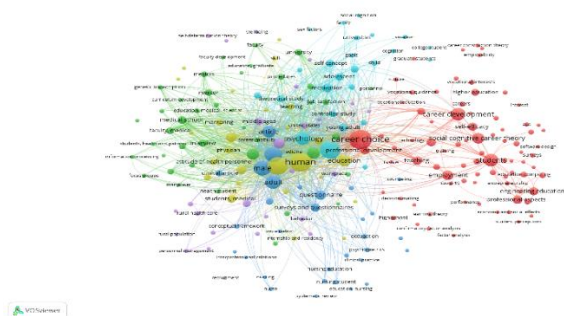
1	By Basri, Darminto...	Development of Career Guidance Handbook with Trait and Factor Theory	2021	..., Social, and Cultural	jurnal.ide aspublish ing.co.id	4
1	C Erlinda, S Sulistiyana	The Effectiveness of the Trait and Factor Counseling Model to Improve the Career Decision Making Ability of Grade XI Students at SMA Negeri 5 Banjarmasin	2016	Fitrah	academia .edu	8
1	R Rachmayanie, S Sulistiyana, N Permatasari...	THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE TRAIT AND FACTOR COUNSELING MODEL TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' CAREER DECISION-MAKING ABILITIES...	2016		Fitrah	10
0	RS Dewi, PR Angelina...	Trait and Factor Counseling to Increase Students' Career Maturity	2024	... , Journal of Education and ...	jurnal.fai unwir.ac. id	6
0	AA Agustin, TM Martika...	The Effectiveness of Trait and Factor Group	2023	... National Guidance and...	prosiding .unipma. ac.id	7

		Counseling to Reduce Anxiety in Career Planning in Students			
0	C WULANDARI	DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-HELP BOOKS FOR CAREER DECISION MAKING IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF TRAITS AND FACTORS FOR STUDENTS AT SMK ...	2018	repositor y.unj.ac.id	9
0	Rachmayan	PEER REVIEWER: The Effectiveness of the Trait and Factor Counseling Model to Improve the Career Decision Making Ability of Class XI Students in ...	2016	Lambung Mangkurat University	12
0	P Nina	... PLAGIARISM: THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE TRAIT AND FACTOR COUNSELING MODEL TO IMPROVE	....	Lambung Mangkurat University	13



		CAREER DECISION- MAKING ABILITIES...		
0	E.G. Sari	The ..... Effectiveness of the Trait and Factor Counseling Model to Improve the Career Decision Making Ability of Class XI Students at SMA Negeri 5 ...		14
0	C Erlinda, S Sulistiyana, N Permatasari...	Peer Review: 2016 The Effectiveness of Trait and Factor Counseling Models to Improve the Career Decision Making Ability of Grade XI Students in High School ...	Lambung Mangkur at Universit y	15

The following is a bibliometric analysis conducted by the research related to the results of career research using the VOSviewer application (data from Scopus in 2014-2024 with the keywords career theory, career choice and career development):



From the two analyses conducted by the researchers, it can be seen that many career-related research in guidance and counseling have been carried out. However, for related research *on traits and factors in careers, including for students with special needs, there is still a lack of widespread research (according to the results of Google Scholar's analysis), which presents a challenge for future researchers in developing and applying career theory traits and factors.*

Cultural values also play an important role in career selection, as they influence the way individuals view and choose careers based on their cultural background. For example, individualistic cultures prioritize personal goals and independence, which may lead individuals to choose careers that align with their interests. In contrast, collectivist cultures place more emphasis on group goals and social norms, which influence individuals to choose careers that benefit their communities or families. This cultural context shapes the way individuals view job prestige, career success, and job suitability based on cultural expectations. Understanding these cultural differences is essential for career counselors to be able to provide guidance that respects and aligns with individual cultural values in making career choices (Majid et al., 2014).

## CONCLUSION

Teori Trait and Factor memberikan landasan yang penting dalam pemahaman dan pengembangan karier. Teori ini menekankan pentingnya kecocokan antara karakteristik individu dengan tuntutan pekerjaan, serta memberikan metode sistematis dalam memilih karier yang sesuai. Meskipun memiliki keterbatasan dalam konteks perkembangan dinamis individu dan faktor lingkungan, teori ini tetap relevan dan bermanfaat terutama dalam tahap awal eksplorasi karier. Dengan pendekatan berbasis trait and factor, individu dapat memahami kebutuhan, minat, dan potensinya, sehingga lebih mampu menentukan jalur karier yang mendukung aktualisasi diri dan kesejahteraan mereka di masa depan.

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