

## **CAREER INDECISION INTERVENTION: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW**

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### **Abstract**

This study was conducted to examine and analyze various interventions related to career indecision so that it can serve as a reference for career counselors in applying appropriate interventions. This study employed a systematic literature review (SLR) methodology following the PRISMA guidelines, which include identification, screening, and inclusion. Data were collected over the past five years (2020–2025) through the Google Scholar, Scopus, and ScienceDirect databases, yielding 1,135 data points, which were then screened to produce nine articles for review. The results of the analysis show that there are several effective interventions to overcome career uncertainty, including Online Career Development Program (OCDP), Life Design Counseling, Solution-Focused Brief Career Group Counseling), and classroom-level interventions.

**Keywords:** Career Indecision, Intervention, Students, PRISMA

### **Abstrak**

Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk mengkaji dan menganalisis berbagai intervensi yang berhubungan dengan keraguan karier (*Career Indecision*) sehingga menjadi referensi bagi konselor karier dalam menerapkan intervensi yang tepat. Penelitian ini menggunakan metodologi tinjauan literatur sistematis (*SLR*) dengan mengikuti pedoman PRISMA "*Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta Analyses (PRISMA)*" yaitu identifikasi, penyaringan dan penyertaan. Pencarian data selama 5 tahun terakhir (2020-2025) melalui basis data *Google Scholar*, *Scopus* dan *ScienceDirect* diperoleh 1135 data dan kemudian dilakukan proses penyaringan sehingga data berupa artikel yang akan dilakukan peninjauan adalah 9 artikel. Hasil analisisnya adalah terdapat beberapa intervensi yang efektif untuk mengatasi keraguan karier diantaranya pengembangan karier Online (*Online Career Development Program (OCDP)*), Konseling desain kehidupan (*Life Design Counseling*), konseling kelompok berfokus pada solusi karier (*Solutian-Focused Brief Career Group Counseling*), intervensi tingkat kelas.

**Kata kunci:** Keraguan Karier, Intervensi, Siswa, PRISMA

### **INTRODUCTION**

A person's career journey begins from the high school decision to choose college, work or other career choices. A phenomenon that often occurs in adolescents is the inability to decide on career choices during the transition period, which is synonymous with doubt or indecision. Research in Tukri Kuzgun (2000) noted that grade 9 students experience a high level of career indecision and further showed that the reason is a lack of awareness

such as interests and abilities (Korkut-Owen & Şeremet, 2023). Miller and Rottinghaus (2014) in the same literature, stated that high school students experience obstacles in the career decision-making process, feel confused and unable to choose a career path or build a professional career. Based on sources from Kompas online media, 80 percent of students work not following their majors and BPS data in 2023 shows that there are still hundreds of thousands of S1, S2 and S3 graduates with an age range of 15-24 years who do not work, go to school or receive training (*not in employment, education and training/NEET*).

Career indecision experienced during high school is related to early choices in making future career decisions. Career decision-making refers to a person's process in determining a profession that suits their characteristics (Amir & Gati, 2006). According to Oztemel (2012), some people experience uncertainty because career decision-making turns out to involve a series of complex processes (Korkut-Owen & Şeremet, 2023). Clarified by (Gati & Amir, 2010) One of the most common vocational problems experienced by individuals is difficulty in making career decisions. The transition period needs special attention because it is synonymous with doubts in making career decisions that cause anxiety due to the uncertainty of future career choices. Some studies by Patton et al., (2003); Okutan & Göncü-Akbaş, (2019); Demir (2020), points out that high career indecision is considered one of the biggest obstacles in adolescent career development, and other findings confirm that career indecision is experienced at a very high rate during secondary education and is one of the fundamental problems (Korkut-Owen & Şeremet, 2023). Teenagers in high school, Career indecision experienced leads to doubts in making decisions that are in accordance with their passions, personality skills, and career direction in terms of the desired job. Individuals who are indecisive about their desired career direction are career-indecisive, and certainly a critical problem among high school and college students (Gyarteng-Mensah et al., 2022).

Career indecision in general can be described in the circumstances in which a person has not decided on their education, job, or career path, with various factors that cause uncertainty in making career decisions. Historically, by Osipow (1999), career indecision has been defined as the inability to contain educational or employment decisions when asked to do so, as well as delays in completing the career decision-making process (Xu & Bhang, 2019). In the same literature, career indecision is defined as a state of not being undecided about an educational, occupational or career path caused by the inability to choose and actively pursue a satisfactory education, occupation and/or career path. Career indecision by Gati & Levin (2014); Nota and Soresi (2004) refer to the difficulties faced by individuals before or during the career decision-making process and people with a high level of career indecision are known to be at risk of not being able to take advantage of professional development opportunities and making unsatisfactory career choices (Russo et al., 2023). Another study on career indecision was also researched by Holand (1964,1977,1980,1997), proposing that postponement of vocational choice is not just illness or confusion as described by previous research, but rather factors such as lack of confidence in decision-making skills (Bian, 2021).

A contextual understanding of career indecision is also related to the factors that shape it. A Research on a systematic literature review found seven determinants of career uncertainty/doubt, namely career decision-making difficulties, differences in adolescents, individual and situational career decision-making profiles, level of individual readiness to have a career, individual differences, contextual/environmental factors and social factors (Priyashantha et al., 2022). These seven factors are believed to be determinants in influencing one's career uncertainty or doubt, implying that each individual has a different determining area in making career decisions. This can of course be due to difficult conditions and or the level of readiness and factors outside the individual such as social factors or support from the environment are also different. Therefore, various references are needed in carrying out interventions that are in accordance with individual conditions and factors that influence the uncertainty of career decision-making. The determinants of career indecision have been shown to be empirically beneficial for policymakers and career counselors in determining the necessary actions and treatment (Zobell et al., 2019). Various actions or interventions of career indecision are important for further review to examine relevant interventions. However, previous research has mostly discussed interventions on career decision-making while Career indecision have been few references that the authors found.

A study highlights Weaknesses in the literature that provide practical insights for career counselors, educators, social workers and individuals who need treatment in the face of career indecision (Bian, 2021). Therefore, various literature reviews are needed that contain more in-depth theoretical and practical information about interventions on career indecision. Career indecision are normal and common in an individual's career life, but it is more profound that Career indecision will affect mental health conditions when not properly intervened. Individuals will feel insecure to be able to make the right career decisions so that they can achieve the life goals they want to achieve. It is very important for career counselors or professionals related to one's career to understand the various interventions that are appropriate and in accordance with the conditions of the individual who experiences career indecision.

Therefore, this study was conducted as a systematic literature review (*SLR*), which systematically and quantitatively analyzed selected empirical literature on interventions related to career uncertainty/doubt in the last 5 years. Various interventions were collected from a variety of sources related to career indecision interventions dominated by research from outside countries. The purpose of this study is to examine and analyze various interventions related to Career indecision so that they become a reference for career counselors both in the world of education and globally in implementing appropriate interventions for individuals experiencing Career indecision in making the right career decisions for the future.

## **METHOD**

This research was conducted in an *SLR* (*Systematic Literature Review*) by following the guidelines "*Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses*

(PRISMA)". *PRISM* focuses on how researchers can ensure transparent and complete reports in systematic reviews and meta-analyses (Liberati et al., 2009). *PRISM* is highly recommended for *SLR* because it can prevent bias in article selection, analysis, and general reporting. The *PRISMA diagram* is used to select articles consisting of three steps, namely "identification, filtering, and inclusion." The identification stage includes the selection of search terms, criteria, and databases. The selection of search terms by writing the keywords "*Career Indecision, Intervention, Students*" as the search criteria. Meanwhile, the databases used are *Google Scholar, Scopus and ScienceDirect*, using the help of information search on the "*Publish or Perish*" application to make it easier to collect bibliographic metadata of scientific works published in journals.

Article screening includes automatic and manual screening, retrieval of articles that have been screened based on several criteria pre-set by the researcher. The first inclusion criterion is that articles are published within the last 5 years (2020-2025) using the keywords *career indecision, intervention, students*. The second criterion is the type of publication in the form of an article that is not a book, a thesis, a proceeding, or part of a book (*Book Chapter*). The third inclusion criterion is articles in English and Indonesian. The fourth inclusion criterion is the suitability of the article title with the article to be reviewed, namely *career indecision*. The fifth criterion is an article that contains *career indecision* interventions by manually filtering based on titles and abstracts. The sixth criterion is empirical research using quantitative, meta-analytical and qualitative methods with relevant cases and research participants who are high school students or college students.

Automatic and manual filtering is carried out by entering the first to fourth criteria by copying data from *Publish or Perish* and then moved to *MS Excel* to be filtered. Manual screening is done by reviewing each downloaded title and article abstract and graded based on intuition criteria. The authors manually and independently check the remaining articles for their methodological feasibility. The feasibility assessment guarantees that articles of accurate and high methodological quality will be used for further analysis (Priyashantha et al., 2022). The following are the details of the inclusion criteria in table 1:

**Table 1.** Inclusion Criteria

<u>Kriteria Inklusi</u>	<u>Fokus pada</u>
1	<u>Tahun publikasi 2020-2025, Kata Kunci Career Indecision, Intervention, Students</u>
2	<u>Publikasi berbentuk artikel</u>
3	<u>Artikel berbahasa Inggris dan Indonesia</u>
4	<u>Judul artikel "Career Indecision"</u>
5	<u>Intervensi Career Indecision</u>
6	<u>Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Meta Analisis, Kualitatif intervensi konseling, Partisipannya adalah Mahasiswa dan Siswa</u>

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Initial steps in the method *Systematic Literature Review* (SLR) is identifying research data according to the criteria set by using diagrams *PRISM* to make a selection in selecting the articles to be reviewed. Based on search using the app *Publish or Perish* with database *Google Scholar* and *Scopus* who uses keywords *career indecision, intervention, students* There is bibliographic metadata from scientific publications in total, reaching 1015 research data with details *Google Scholar* 997 data with a maximum search of 1000 data and *Scopus* 18 data with a maximum search of 200 data. The search was also carried out using publication journals *ScienceDirect* Using keywords *career indecision, intervention* There are 120 research data in the journal.

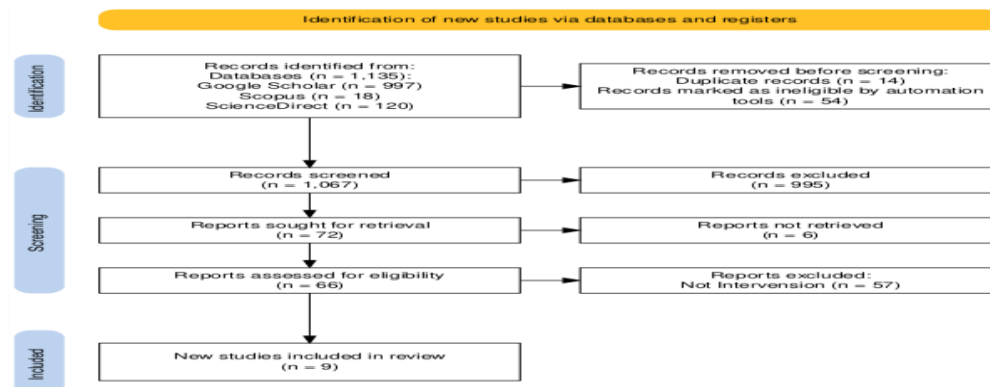
Automatic filtering on the first criterion in accordance with table 1 has been carried out at the beginning of the data search using inclusion criteria in the form of years and keywords so that of the 1200 bibliographic metadata available on the *publish or perish application with Google Scholar and Scopus* databases identified as many as 1015 data that will be further selected using other inclusion criteria. Meanwhile, in *ScienceDirect* there are 120 data found in disbursements based on year and also the same keywords, making a total of 1135 data. Filtering duplicate data uses "*Mendeley*" so that there are 14 of the same data. The automatic screening in the second and third criteria amounted to 54 data issued with details on the second inclusion criterion, there were 28 data extracted from the *Google Scholar* database and 1 data from *Scopus* and 5 data from *ScienceDirect*. In the third inclusion criterion, there were 20 articles other than English on *Google Scholar* and 1 on *ScienceDirect*. The remaining amount of data is 1067 data in the form of articles

The fourth criterion screening is done manually using *MS Excel*. The data in the *Publish or Perish application* is stored in the form of *MS Excel* which contains titles, authors, journals, year of publication, data type and *links* for journal publications. The fourth inclusion criteria screening resulted in 66 articles from *Google Scholar* and a total of 875 articles were excluded. From the *Scopus* database there are 6 corresponding articles and 6 articles are issued. In the journal *ScienceDirect*, when manually filtered, it turned out that the author did not find an article that contained the title of *career indecision*, so all 114 articles were issued. So that out of a total of 1067 articles, there are 72 articles that are retained for screening in the next criteria. The fifth inclusion criteria screening process narrows the area to obtain articles to be reviewed by manually screening articles that contain interventions on *career indecision*. Of the 66 articles on *Google Scholar*, there are 14 articles that contain interventions and in the *Scopus database* there is 1 article that is indicated to contain interventions out of 6 available articles.

Then access is made to review the articles to be analyzed as study material so that the results of 8 articles (n 8) can be opened and downloaded (*open access*) and as many as 6 articles (n 6) cannot be accessed so that they are not continued to be reviewed as literature material to be analyzed and include articles that will be published in the *Scopus* database

There are 1 articles left. The sixth inclusion criterion screening is the deepening of research methodology and research participants, which is limited to students and students. Based on manual filtering by reading the research article thoroughly, all the remaining articles are 9 articles. The filtration process is outlined in the PRISMA diagram in Figure 1:

**Figure 1.** Prism Diagram



The results of the screening process resulted in 9 articles, which were then reviewed and summarized in depth. In general, the results of the study include various interventions related to career indecision, but some contain career counseling as one of the factors that affect Career indecision (Galhena & Kumanayake, 2022). In addition, several studies contain interventions related to career indecision, both programs and career counseling, including the development of Online career programs (*OCDP*), career counseling related to psychological disorders, life design counseling (*Life Design*) to communities with limited resources, career construction to address career indecision, short career counseling focused on solutions and classroom-level interventions on career indecision variables (Korkut-Owen & Şeremet, 2023) ; (Setya Budi et al., 2021) ; (Tide & Magère, 2023) ; (Jude et al., 2023) ; (Schams, 2022). Meanwhile, some articles test the model of incompatibility with career goals from parents with career goals that young adults feel are related to career uncertainty or doubt (Widyowati et al., 2024).

Based on the data above, there were several interventions with research participants in high school and college. Interventions with high school student participants consisted of 3 articles, one of which was in the form of a program, and the rest were career counseling applied in schools by career counselors. There are 6 articles whose participants are students with interventions in the form of career counseling for students who are entering the young adult phase. Several literature review sources provide information that the literature on Career indecision that focuses on adolescents for the last 5-year period (2020-2025) is not as extensive as the participants are students who aim to help students make the right decisions for their future related to the world of work.

## DISCUSSION

The main findings from the article review show the effectiveness of interventions in the form of programs or counseling to overcome career doubts. Online career development



programs are effective in reducing career indecision in a group of students. However, it takes the ability to be able to identify the right problem areas, especially for online-based services. Some career counseling-based interventions also showed positive psychological changes, clear self-identity and career, and strong expectations, which were shown to be effective in reducing career indecision, choice/commitment anxiety, and also helping individuals to have the ability to write autobiographies related to the development of career stories in their lives. Another interesting finding in the article review is counseling interventions aimed at participants with certain characteristics, namely, high school students with limited resources or in the lower middle class. This intervention is interesting to study further because it is carried out in countries with limited resources in certain communities. So the implication of this study is that the interventions provided in the form of life design can strengthen the ability to face career indecision when undergoing a transition from school to the world of work or continuing their studies, especially for disadvantaged students.

The findings of the literature review on interventions strengthen the understanding of career doubt, which has a broader meaning, not only to decide on a career choice but also to a psychological condition that is the focus of the inability to make career decisions. A review of the career indecision intervention literature shows that there are several factors that should be studied more deeply by career counselors related to career doubt. Based on the results of the study, it was found that self-confidence is a significant factor related to career indecision well as the influence of parents and career guidance services as external factors. The mismatch between the career goals desired by parents and the career that young adults want to choose reinforces feelings of regret, self-sadness, and fatigue of self-regulation. The results of this study are also strengthened by previous research on the determinants of a person's career indecision, namely individual factors such as level of readiness, career anxiety, self-confidence, and also environmental and social factors such as emotional support from parents and career counselors at schools and universities.

## CONCLUSION

Various interventions related to career indecision from various studies have become interesting literature review material as a more in-depth study material in an effort to overcome career indecision in both adolescents and young adults. The results of identification and screening through *PRISMA* regarding relevant articles as study materials make it easier for authors to obtain articles that are in accordance with the purpose of the systematic literature review. The difficulty of finding literature on *career indecision* interventions in the last 5 years made the author try to compile a literature review that can increase understanding of interventions as counselors in schools. The development of career programs and the application of career counseling interventions are study materials that can be developed based on a collection of articles on interventions against career doubts. The availability of literature will provide an in-depth study so that it can be a source in implementing career programs or counseling in schools or universities. The study materials in this study are expected to be reviewed more in-depth

so as to produce more complex knowledge related to career indecision, both from a theoretical and practical perspective. The researcher hopes that the literature review in this article can be a reading for career counselors to enrich their scientific insights and find a more comprehensive understanding of careers, especially career indecision related to career decision-making in both adolescents and young adults, as well as interventions that can be used to overcome career indecision.

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