

# Parental Support and Future Orientation as Predictors of Career Decision-Making Among High School Students: A Correlational Study

Elvia Kurniawati<sup>1</sup>, Zadrian Ardi<sup>2</sup>, Daharnis<sup>3</sup>, Putra Suharnadi<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Universitas Negeri Padang, Padang, Indonesia; [elviakurniawati09@gmail.com](mailto:elviakurniawati09@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup> Universitas Negeri Padang, Padang, Indonesia; [zadrian@fip.unp.ac.id](mailto:zadrian@fip.unp.ac.id)

<sup>3</sup> Universitas Negeri Padang, Padang, Indonesia; [daharnis@fip.unp.ac.id](mailto:daharnis@fip.unp.ac.id)

<sup>4</sup> Universitas Negeri Padang, Padang, Indonesia; [putrasuharnadi1@gmail.com](mailto:putrasuharnadi1@gmail.com)

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## ABSTRACT

Career decision-making is a key developmental task in adolescence. However, many high school students struggle with indecision due to limited external support and underdeveloped internal motivation. This study explores the relationship between parental support, future orientation, and career decision making, focusing on their individual and combined influence. A descriptive correlational design was used involving 122 eleventh-grade students from Adabiah 2 High School in Padang, Indonesia, selected via stratified random sampling. Data were collected using validated Likert-scale questionnaires measuring parental support, future orientation, and career decision making. Analyses included simple and multiple regression, as well as multicollinearity diagnostics. Parental support ( $\beta = 0.834$ ,  $R^2 = 0.694$ ) and future orientation ( $\beta = 0.937$ ,  $R^2 = 0.879$ ) were both significant predictors of career decision making. However, in the combined model, only future orientation remained a significant predictor ( $\beta = 1.017$ ,  $p < .001$ ), while parental support became non-significant. Multicollinearity tests showed high shared variance between predictors ( $VIF = 5.658$ ), indicating conceptual overlap. The findings suggest that future orientation is a direct driver of career decision making, while parental support likely influences it indirectly by fostering future-oriented thinking. Schools should implement future-planning modules in counseling programs, and structured parental involvement should be encouraged. These results highlight the need to strengthen both internal capacities and external support to promote confident career choices in adolescents.

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## Corresponding Author:

Elvia Kurniawati

Universitas Negeri Padang, Padang, Indonesia; [elviakurniawati09@gmail.com](mailto:elviakurniawati09@gmail.com)

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Career decision-making is one of the most crucial developmental tasks in adolescence, especially during the high school years when students are expected to crystallize their understanding of self, education, and work. According to Super's career development theory, this stage—referred to as the

crystallization phase—requires adolescents to explore various occupational alternatives and start forming a career identity (Afdal, 2014). However, in practice, many students experience confusion and uncertainty when making career choices. This phenomenon is increasingly evident among Indonesian high school students, who often struggle to align their interests, values, and capabilities with realistic career paths (Simbolon & Rasyid, 2021). Career indecision can stem from various factors, including limited career maturity, insufficient access to career information, and a lack of support from influential figures, particularly parents (Kurniawan, Daharnis, & Karneli, 2020).

Parental support has long been recognized as a significant external factor in adolescents' educational and career outcomes. Parents are often the primary source of emotional encouragement, practical advice, and even material resources that shape students' self-efficacy and decision-making confidence. Santrock (2011) emphasizes that parental support not only provides psychological security but also reinforces adolescents' beliefs in their ability to succeed. Hariko and Anggriana (2019) further note that active parental involvement in career planning helps students clarify goals, understand opportunities, and develop realistic expectations. However, not all students receive such support; some face indifference or excessive pressure that leads to confusion and self-doubt. Without adequate parental encouragement, adolescents may lack the motivation or clarity to pursue specific career paths.

In addition to parental support, future orientation is a psychological construct that plays a pivotal role in shaping career-related behavior. Future orientation refers to an individual's capacity to imagine, plan, and strive toward desired future outcomes (Nurmi in Hadiani & Krisnani, 2017). Adolescents who possess a strong future orientation are typically more motivated to set goals, evaluate consequences, and engage in behaviors that align with long-term aspirations. According to Hurlock (1997), developing a clear future orientation is a sign of cognitive and emotional maturity in adolescence, indicating that the individual is preparing consciously for adult roles and responsibilities. Research by Dambara (2021) shows that future-oriented adolescents are more likely to be proactive in seeking career-related information, engaging in preparatory activities, and committing to chosen pathways.

Although numerous studies have explored the individual effects of either parental support or future orientation on student achievement and well-being, very few have examined the combined influence of both variables on career decision making. Most previous studies adopt a unidimensional approach, focusing either on external influences (e.g., family, peers) or internal characteristics (e.g., motivation, personality traits), but rarely on how these dimensions interact. For instance, Sugiati and Fitri (2020) investigated the impact of career guidance on decision making but did not account for familial or psychological factors. Similarly, Syahputra and Ernawati (2022) explored future orientation among adolescents facing family disruptions but without linking it to career outcomes.

The absence of studies that integratively examine both parental support and future orientation leaves a theoretical and practical gap. From a theoretical standpoint, it is essential to understand how social and cognitive factors jointly influence adolescent career development. From a practical angle, such knowledge can inform the design of more effective guidance and counseling programs in schools, particularly in contexts where students may lack access to individualized support systems.

To address this gap, the present study investigates the relationship between parental support and future orientation with students' career decision making, both individually and simultaneously. The research is conducted at Adabiah 2 Padang High School, where preliminary interviews with guidance and counseling (BK) teachers reveal that many students—particularly in grades XI and XII—struggle to make confident and informed career choices. Students tend to exhibit passivity, lack of exploration, and limited awareness of career alternatives, issues that are further exacerbated by rigid parental expectations and limited school-based support systems.

Therefore, this study has three specific objectives:

- (1) to determine the relationship between parental support and career decision making;
- (2) to examine the relationship between future orientation and career decision making; and
- (3) to analyze the combined influence of parental support and future orientation on career decision making among grade XI students at Adabiah 2 Padang High School.

Based on existing literature and theoretical perspectives, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- (1) H1: There is a significant positive relationship between parental support and career decision making.
- (2) H2: There is a significant positive relationship between future orientation and career decision making.
- (3) H3: Parental support and future orientation simultaneously have a significant effect on students' career decision-making.

By addressing these hypotheses, this study seeks not only to contribute to academic discourse in the fields of educational psychology and counseling but also to offer evidence-based recommendations for practitioners, especially school counselors and educators, in guiding adolescents toward more deliberate and informed career decisions.

## 2. METHOD

### 2.1 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative approach with a descriptive correlational design to examine the relationships between parental support, future orientation, and students' career decision making. As is typical of correlational research, no variables were manipulated. The goal was to measure the strength and direction of naturally occurring associations among variables without implementing any experimental intervention (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012).

### 2.2 Sampling

The population of this study consisted of 176 eleventh-grade students at Adabiah 2 Padang High School, distributed across six classes (F1–F6). Using the Slovin formula with a margin of error of 5%, a sample size of 122 students was determined. Stratified proportional random sampling was applied to ensure representation from each class in proportion to their class size. Randomization was conducted by assigning numbers to all students and drawing samples using a computerized random generator. Demographically, the sample included 49 male students (40.16%) and 73 female students (59.84%), with ages ranging from 16 to 17 years ( $M = 16.5$  years,  $SD = 0.48$ ).

### 2.3 Instrumentation

The data collection instrument was a structured self-report questionnaire, constructed using a five-point Likert scale that ranged from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." The questionnaire consisted of three subscales representing each variable: (1) Parental Support, (2) Future Orientation, and (3) Career Decision Making. The items for each scale were adapted from previously validated instruments developed in relevant educational and counseling literature. The Parental Support scale was based on frameworks by Hariko and Anggriana (2019), while the Future Orientation scale referred to indicators from Nurmi (in Hadianti & Krisnani, 2017). The Career Decision Making scale was developed following dimensions suggested by Afdal (2019) and validated through expert judgment. To ensure the internal consistency of the instruments, Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients were calculated:  $\alpha = 0.86$  for Parental Support,  $\alpha = 0.89$  for Future Orientation, and  $\alpha = 0.91$  for Career Decision Making, indicating high levels of reliability for all subscales (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

### 2.4 Ethics

This study was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Ethics Committee of Universitas Negeri Padang. Prior to data collection, informed consent was obtained from all participants. Students were informed about the purpose of the study, their right to withdraw at any time, and the confidentiality of their responses. Parental consent was also secured for participants under the age of 18.

## 2.5 Procedure

The research procedure was conducted in several structured stages. First, an orientation session was held in collaboration with the school's Guidance and Counseling teacher to explain the study's objectives and ethical considerations to the participants. This session ensured students' understanding and voluntary participation. In the second stage, questionnaires were distributed to students in their respective classrooms during school hours. The researcher and the BK teacher were present to supervise the process and address any inquiries. The data collection process was completed over three consecutive days in October 2021. On average, students required 20–30 minutes to complete the questionnaire. All completed forms were collected immediately and checked for completeness.

## 2.6 Data Analysis

The collected data were coded and entered into SPSS version 25 for statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to present means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions for each variable. Normality and linearity tests were conducted to assess the assumptions of regression analysis. Hypothesis testing employed both simple linear regression (to assess the individual influence of each independent variable) and multiple regression analysis (to examine the simultaneous influence of parental support and future orientation on career decision making). The significance level was set at  $\alpha = 0.05$  for all inferential analyses.

## 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents and interprets the empirical findings of the study, focusing on the relationships between parental support, future orientation, and students' career decision making. The discussion integrates descriptive patterns, inferential statistical outcomes, theoretical implications, and methodological considerations—including the potential influence of multicollinearity.

### 3.1 Descriptive Findings

Descriptive statistics revealed that the majority of students reported moderate levels across all three measured variables. Specifically, 59.84% perceived their parental support as moderate, with 26.23% reporting high support and 13.93% low support. Similarly, 56.56% of students showed moderate future orientation, while 22.95% fell in the high range and 20.49% in the low range. For career decision making, 56.56% reported moderate levels, 24.59% high, and 18.85% low.

These findings indicate that while most students are not severely lacking in support or future planning abilities, they also do not demonstrate strong preparedness or confidence in making career decisions. The dominance of moderate scores may reflect a broader systemic limitation in structured guidance, both within families and school environments. This aligns with Simbolon and Rasyid (2021), who observed that many Indonesian high school students experience indecision and a lack of proactive engagement in career planning, often linked to limited access to career information and insufficient psychosocial support.

The predominance of moderate levels across parental support, future orientation, and career decision making suggests that many students are functioning within average developmental expectations but are not fully equipped to make informed, confident career choices. This pattern may indicate a lack of intensive, targeted interventions both at home and in school that promote future planning skills and career exploration. Research by Gati and Levin (2014) highlights that adolescents often require structured support systems and proactive guidance to overcome career indecision, especially during transitional periods such as high school. Without such systems, students may stagnate at a moderate level of readiness, lacking both the motivation and the cognitive tools to move forward with their career planning. Moreover, parental involvement that is perceived as only

moderately supportive may not be sufficient to foster a strong sense of agency or long-term goal orientation in adolescents.

This situation also points to a gap in the integration of career education within the broader educational experience. As noted by Watson and McMahon (2017), career development should be seen as a lifelong and holistic process, requiring collaboration between schools, families, and communities. When students receive only sporadic or minimal exposure to career-related information and future planning strategies, their developmental progress in this domain may plateau. The moderate levels of future orientation found in this study echo the concerns raised by Dilla and Widiastuti (2020), who found that Indonesian students often lack the skills and opportunities needed to envision and plan for their futures effectively. These findings underscore the need for schools to embed future-oriented career guidance more systematically within the curriculum, while also fostering stronger partnerships with families to ensure that students are supported in both cognitive and emotional aspects of their career development.

### 3.2 Inferential Findings: Simple Regression

To assess the independent contributions of parental support and future orientation to students' career decision making, two separate simple linear regression analyses were conducted. The first model examined the effect of parental support and found it to be a significant predictor, accounting for 69.4% of the variance in career decision making ( $R^2 = 0.694$ ,  $F(1,120) = 275.10$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The standardized regression coefficient was  $\beta = 0.834$ , with a 95% confidence interval ranging from 0.765 to 0.903, indicating a strong and meaningful effect. This result reinforces the idea that students who receive consistent emotional, informational, and instrumental support from their parents tend to exhibit greater clarity and confidence in making career-related decisions. These findings align with previous research by Hariko and Anggriana (2019), which emphasized the importance of parental involvement in fostering adolescents' decision-making efficacy and planning behaviors.

The second regression model investigated the impact of future orientation and revealed an even stronger relationship. Future orientation significantly predicted career decision making, explaining 87.9% of the variance ( $R^2 = 0.879$ ,  $F(1,120) = 870.74$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The standardized beta coefficient was  $\beta = 0.937$ , with a 95% confidence interval between 0.899 and 0.975, suggesting a very large effect size. These results highlight the critical role of future orientation—defined as the ability to envision, plan, and commit to long-term goals—in shaping students' career choices. This supports the theoretical framework proposed by Nurmi (in Hadiani & Krisnani, 2017), which views future orientation as a key motivational-cognitive process underlying purposeful behavior and self-regulation. Collectively, these findings emphasize that while both parental support and future orientation are influential, future orientation emerges as the more dominant factor in guiding career decision making among adolescents.

The significant predictive role of parental support in students' career decision making reflects the foundational influence that family environments have on adolescents' cognitive and emotional development. When parents provide consistent encouragement, share career-related information, and demonstrate interest in their children's aspirations, students are more likely to develop confidence and clarity in choosing a career path (Hariko & Anggriana, 2019). This aligns with social cognitive career theory, which posits that supportive social contexts contribute to the development of career self-efficacy and outcome expectations (Lent et al., 1994). In particular, emotional and instrumental support from parents can help adolescents navigate uncertainties, reduce indecision, and set realistic goals, thereby enhancing their readiness to make informed career choices (Ali & Saunders, 2009). As such, the strong effect of parental support found in this study reinforces the notion that parental engagement remains a critical external resource in students' career development processes.

However, the even stronger predictive power of future orientation indicates that internal psychological factors may play a more direct and immediate role in career decision making. Adolescents who are future-oriented tend to have clearer goals, stronger motivation, and a greater sense of purpose—factors that are essential for making deliberate and confident career choices (Seginer,

2009). According to Nurmi's (1991) motivational theory of future orientation, individuals who actively plan for the future are more likely to regulate their behavior in alignment with long-term goals, thereby increasing the likelihood of effective decision making. This study's findings support that perspective, suggesting that future orientation may serve as a cognitive-emotional framework through which external supports like parental involvement exert their influence. Consequently, interventions aimed at fostering future orientation—through goal-setting workshops, mentoring, or reflective practices—may be especially effective in enhancing students' career readiness, particularly when paired with supportive family environments.

### 3.3 Inferential Findings: Multiple Regression

The third regression model involved both parental support and future orientation as predictors. Together, the two variables explained 88% of the variance in career decision making ( $R^2 = 0.880$ ,  $F(2,119) = 437.83$ ,  $p < .001$ ), indicating a very strong model fit.

However, when entered simultaneously:

1. Future orientation remained a strong and significant predictor with a beta coefficient of  $\beta = 1.017$  ( $p < .001$ ), suggesting that even when controlling for parental support, students' future orientation is the dominant factor influencing career decision making.
2. In contrast, parental support showed a non-significant and slightly negative beta coefficient ( $\beta = -0.063$ ,  $p = 0.227$ ). While the bivariate relationship between parental support and career decision making was strong, the multivariate model suggests that much of that effect may be mediated by future orientation, or possibly reflect shared variance between the two predictors.

These results invite the interpretation that while parental support is essential, its effect on career decision making might be indirect—possibly through fostering a stronger orientation toward the future in adolescents, which then acts as the more immediate driver of career planning behavior. Future studies using structural equation modeling (SEM) could test this mediation pathway more directly.

### 3.4 Critical Consideration of Multicollinearity

Multicollinearity diagnostics revealed identical VIF values of 5.658 and tolerance values of 0.177 for both predictors. While these values remain below the commonly accepted multicollinearity threshold ( $VIF < 10$ ), they are notably high and identical, which suggests a strong shared variance between the two predictors. This raises concerns about redundancy in the predictors and the potential for inflated standard errors, which may obscure the unique contribution of each variable in the model.

The identical VIF values imply that both parental support and future orientation may be capturing overlapping aspects of the student's developmental context. This is theoretically plausible: parental support may serve as a foundational influence on how students perceive and plan for their futures. Adolescents who are consistently encouraged, emotionally supported, and provided with resources by their parents may internalize a stronger future orientation, thereby becoming more proactive and decisive in making career-related choices. The suppression of parental support in the multivariate model may reflect this underlying interdependence rather than its lack of influence.

This finding resonates with developmental research suggesting that adolescents' motivation and agency are shaped in part by the family climate and relational attachment to caregivers (Santrock, 2011). It also reflects the perspective of Krumboltz's social learning theory (Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1976), which posits that career beliefs and behaviors develop through a combination of environmental reinforcement and cognitive-emotional processing.

### 3.5 Theoretical Implications

Theoretically, these findings strengthen the argument that adolescent career decision making is a multi-layered process, involving both interpersonal (social support) and intrapersonal (cognitive

planning) dimensions. Future orientation appears to function as a proximal determinant, directly influencing decision making behavior, while parental support may act as a distal or enabling condition.

In alignment with Super's theory of career development (Afdal, 2014), the current results emphasize the importance of the crystallization stage, in which students begin to formulate clear ideas about their career interests and goals. Students with strong future orientation seem to navigate this stage more effectively, regardless of the level of direct support from their parents—though such support may have played a formative role earlier in development.

The findings also affirm the need for more integrated theoretical models, such as ecological frameworks, which account for the interaction of individual and environmental factors in career development. The overlapping influence between future orientation and parental support calls for a deeper exploration of how family contexts shape cognitive and motivational pathways.

### **3.6 Practical Implications**

Practically, the findings highlight the need for comprehensive career guidance interventions that consider both psychological and familial factors. In school settings, guidance and counseling services should be designed to cultivate future orientation skills in students, including time management, goal setting, career pathway visualization, and clarification of personal values. These components help students develop a clearer sense of direction and build motivation for long-term planning. Equally important is the active involvement of parents in the career development process. Schools should implement structured programs that help parents understand how their support, communication, and expectations influence their children's outlook on the future. Activities such as workshops, parent-teacher meetings, and joint counseling sessions can serve as effective platforms for fostering this involvement. Furthermore, school policies should formally integrate career education into the broader curriculum. While future-oriented cognitive skills can be directly taught, the emotional and social environments in which they are nurtured—particularly those shaped by parental support—must also be strategically developed to ensure holistic student growth.

### **3.7 Limitations and Directions for Future Research**

While the study demonstrates strong statistical associations, its cross-sectional design limits the ability to draw causal conclusions. To better understand how these variables evolve over time and influence long-term career outcomes, future research should adopt longitudinal approaches. Such designs would allow for the examination of developmental trajectories and more robust predictions.

In addition, further investigation is needed into potential mediating and moderating variables that could influence the relationships identified in this study. Factors such as self-efficacy, peer influence, and socioeconomic status may either strengthen or weaken the effects of parental support and future orientation on career decision making. Incorporating qualitative methods could also provide deeper insights into how students interpret and internalize career-related experiences, as well as the dynamics of family support in shaping those perceptions.

Moreover, the presence of high shared variance between parental support and future orientation suggests conceptual overlap that warrants closer examination. Future studies are encouraged to apply advanced multivariate techniques, such as path analysis or structural equation modeling (SEM), to more precisely explore the complex interrelationships and potential indirect effects among these variables. Such approaches would offer a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms underlying adolescent career decision making.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This study investigated the relationship between parental support, future orientation, and career decision making among high school students, revealing that while both variables independently predicted career decision making, future orientation emerged as the stronger predictor when considered simultaneously. The diminished significance of parental support in the combined model suggests its influence may be indirect, operating through the development of students' internal cognitive and motivational capacities. These findings highlight the importance of future orientation as a key driver in adolescents' ability to make confident, purposeful career choices, while also affirming the foundational role of parental support in fostering the conditions necessary for such orientation to develop. However, the study's cross-sectional design limits causal interpretation, and the potential influence of mediating or moderating variables such as self-efficacy, peer support, or socioeconomic status was not explored. Future research is encouraged to adopt longitudinal designs and employ advanced analytical techniques, such as structural equation modeling, to better understand the pathways through which external support and internal factors interact over time in shaping students' career development.

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