



THE 3RD INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING
“INVENTING GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING'S ADAPTABILITY TOWARD NEW
FORCE IN COUNSELING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY”

CAREER GUIDANCE PROGRAMS AS CAREER INDECISION
INTERVENTION: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to conduct a systematic literature review by examining and analyzing career guidance programs in overcoming career indecision among adolescents, thereby providing a basis for practitioners and guidance and counseling teachers to implement appropriate career guidance programs. This study uses a systematic literature review (SLR) methodology following the PRISMA guidelines with data searches for articles from 2020-2025 through the Google Scholar, Scopus, and PubMed databases, conducted with the help of the Publish or Perish application and searches on the ScienceDirect publication journal. The search results yielded 991 data points, which were reviewed based on five inclusion criteria, resulting in eight relevant articles. The results showed that intervention programs such as courses or online program development programs, goal-based career coaching, future time perspective, career management applications, career guidance workshops, and classroom-level programs were effective in improving readiness, confidence, and career decision-making skills, thereby overcoming career indecision. These findings provide an empirical basis for guidance and counseling teachers to develop systematic, effective, culturally relevant, and age-appropriate career guidance programs that can help adolescents overcome indecision related to career decision-making.

Keywords: career decision, career indecision, guidance program, intervention, adolescent

INTRODUCTION

Career decision-making is related to the selection process carried out by an individual regarding several options related to future plans. Among adolescents at the high school level, the career development process undergoes changes in career selection due to the transition from the tentative phase to the realistic phase, leading to issues related to career indecision, uncertainty about choosing a career that aligns with interests and talents, and anxiety about the uncertainty of future job choices. According to developmental psychology theory for ages 15–24, the exploration stage involves understanding interests, abilities, and pursuing goals (Dwatra et al., 2023). However, there are common issues among high school students regarding confidence in choosing the right career due to uncertainty in making career decisions. A study conducted by Pramudi (2015) on 11th-grade students at a school found that 77% of students were unable to decide on their own career choices. Additionally, based on a survey by Putri (2018) of over 400,000 student and university student profiles across Indonesia, it was found that 92% of high school/vocational school students were confused and did not know what they wanted to become in the future, and 45% of university students felt they had chosen the wrong major (Syakarofath, 2024).

The ability to make career decisions requires a deep understanding of the desired career because making career decisions is not an easy task. (Gati et al., 2010) states that difficulty in making career decisions is one of the most common vocational problems experienced by individuals. Among high school students, there are barriers in the career decision-making process, feeling confused and unable to establish a career path or build a professional career (Korkut-Owen & Şeremet, 2023). Research conducted by Muhajirin (2014) demonstrates that the profile of difficulties in making career decisions experienced by students in the 11th grade of high school in Bandung falls into the high category, indicating that high school students face challenges and uncertainties in making career decisions aligned with their circumstances. The difficulties experienced can lead individuals to avoid the career decision-making process, halt or make suboptimal career decisions, and in adolescents, cause anxiety due to uncertainty about future career choices. Career decision-making issues in adolescents are also closely related to natural doubts that arise as part of the process of exploring values, interests, and talents, as well as determining life goals. However, if not addressed with appropriate intervention, individuals may feel overwhelmed and eventually develop internal resistance to making career decisions (Dwatra et al., 2023).

Career indecision among high school students is an issue that should receive attention in schools, especially from school counselor. This is related to the anxiety and pressure experienced by high school students as students when making decisions and committing to career choices. According to the meta-analytic research by Brown and Rector (2008), career indecision stems from four primary sources related to career decisions: uncertainty/negative affect, need for information, interpersonal barriers, and more complex and heterogeneous factors related to unclear self-image and insufficient confidence in one's ability to make decisions (Domingues et al., 2024). The complex issues related to career decision-making uncertainty require appropriate interventions in the form of career guidance programs that align with the career challenges faced by students. Based on the findings from the systematic literature review conducted by the author, some information regarding interventions in career indecision was obtained; however, only

a few literature sources were found in the form of programs, namely online career development programs and classroom-level interventions (Fitri et al., 2025). Therefore, there is a need for various literature in the form of planned, systematic, and continuous career programs to help students understand themselves, overcome career decision-making uncertainty, and determine career choices that align with their interests, talents, values, opportunities, and environmental conditions.

Therefore, this study was conducted as a systematic literature review that systematically and quantitatively analyzed selected empirical literature on career guidance programs as an appropriate intervention to overcome uncertainty in career decision-making. The various literature collected from diverse research data sources will provide a comprehensive understanding of career guidance programs that can be implemented in schools to assist school counsellor in developing systematic programs to address career decision-making uncertainties. The objective of this study is to obtain empirically validated literature that can serve as a guideline or foundation for designing effective programs. Additionally, it can be used as a basis for developing a program structure that includes methods, materials, and media tailored to career-related issues, particularly the career-related uncertainties experienced by secondary school students. School counselor can develop a career guidance program structure with complexity based on the results of the literature review analysis outlined in this study, thereby addressing the uncertainties students face in making future career decisions.

METHOD

This study was conducted using SLR (Systematic Literature Review) following the guidelines of “Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta Analyses (PRISMA)”. PRISMA focuses on ways in which researchers can ensure transparent and complete reporting in systematic reviews and meta-analyses (Liberati et al., 2009). The PRISMA diagram was used to select articles through three steps: identification, screening, and inclusion. The identification stage involved selecting search terms, criteria, and databases. The search terms were selected by entering the keywords “Career Decision, Career Indecision, Intervention, Program, Guidance” as search criteria. The databases used were Google Scholar, Scopus, and PubMed, with the assistance of the “Publish or Perish” application to facilitate the collection of bibliographic metadata from published scientific works in journals. On the ScienceDirect database, the search was conducted using the researcher's ScienceDirect account page.

Article screening includes automatic and manual screening, and the selection of screened articles based on several predetermined criteria. The first inclusion criterion is articles published within the last 5 years (2020–2025) using the keywords “Career Decision, Career Indecision, Intervention, Program, Guidance.” The second criterion is the type of publication, which must be an article, not a book, thesis, proceedings, or part of a book chapter. The third inclusion criterion is articles written in English and Indonesian. The fourth inclusion criterion is the relevance of the article title to the review, and the fifth criterion is articles that include interventions, programs, or career guidance for secondary school students, with manual screening based on the article abstract.

Automatic and manual screening was performed by entering the first to fourth criteria by copying data from Publish or Perish and transferring it to MS Excel for screening based on the criteria. Manual screening was performed by reviewing the suitability of the article titles and abstracts and assessing them based on the inclusion criteria. Researchers manually and independently examine the remaining articles for methodological validity. The validity assessment ensures that articles with accurate and high methodological quality will be used for further analysis (Priyashantha et al., 2023). The following is a detailed table of inclusion criteria:

Table 1. Inclusion Criteria

Inclusion Criteria	Description Focus Criteria
1	Publication Year 2020-2025 (Keyword: Career Decision, Career Indecision, Intervention, Program, Guidance)
2	Publications in the form of articles
3	Articles in English and Indonesian
4	Relevance of the title to the article to be reviewed, Research Participants (Adolescents)
5	Include Interventions, Program, Career Guidance (Abstract Analysis)

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

SLR research using the PRISMA method establishes the initial steps by identifying research data in accordance with the criteria set for selecting articles to be reviewed. Based on a search using Publish or Perish with the Google Scholar, Scopus, and Pubmed databases using the keywords Career Decision, Career Indecision, Intervention, Program, and Guidance, the bibliographic metadata of the published scientific articles totaled 957 articles, with 920 data points in Google Scholar (maximum search of 1,000 data points), 28 data points in Scopus (maximum search of 200 data points), and 9 data points or articles in PubMed. Additionally, a search in the ScienceDirect journal using the same keywords yielded 34 data points or articles. The first criterion was filtered using the Publish or Perish application, setting the article year from 2020 to 2025, and on the ScienceDirect publication journal, the article search was also automatically set from 2020 to 2025. In the first criterion, the number of data or articles identified was 991 articles from 1,243 databases.

Filtering based on the second and third criteria resulted in 31 data points being excluded or not meeting the second and third criteria, with details as follows: 19 data points from Google Scholar and 2 data points from ScienceDirect in the second criterion, while 10 data points from Google Scholar in the third criterion were excluded from the criteria. Thus, the remaining data consists of 960 articles that will proceed to the next filtering process. The fourth criterion is one of the determining factors for the subsequent review process as it will filter article titles that match the defined keywords. The manual screening process was conducted with the assistance of MS Excel, the results showed that on Google Scholar there were 716 data that did not match and 175 data that matched, on Scopus there were 20 data that did not match and 8 data that matched, on PubMed there were 2 data that did not match and 7 data that matched, and on ScienceDirect there were 20 data that did not match and 12 data that matched, so the remaining data for

screening in the next criterion was 202 data. The fifth criterion screening process narrowed the scope, and manual screening was conducted, resulting in 16 articles meeting the criteria from 175 articles on Google Scholar and 1 article meeting the criteria from 18 articles on Scopus. Meanwhile, no data meeting the fifth inclusion criteria were found on PubMed and ScienceDirect, leaving no remaining data for further review. Out of the 16 data or articles, 3 were inaccessible, and there were still inconsistencies in the overall review of the article content in 5 articles, leaving 8 articles to be reviewed and analyzed in matrix form. The following is the identification and screening process based on the criteria in the PRISMA diagram in Figure 1:

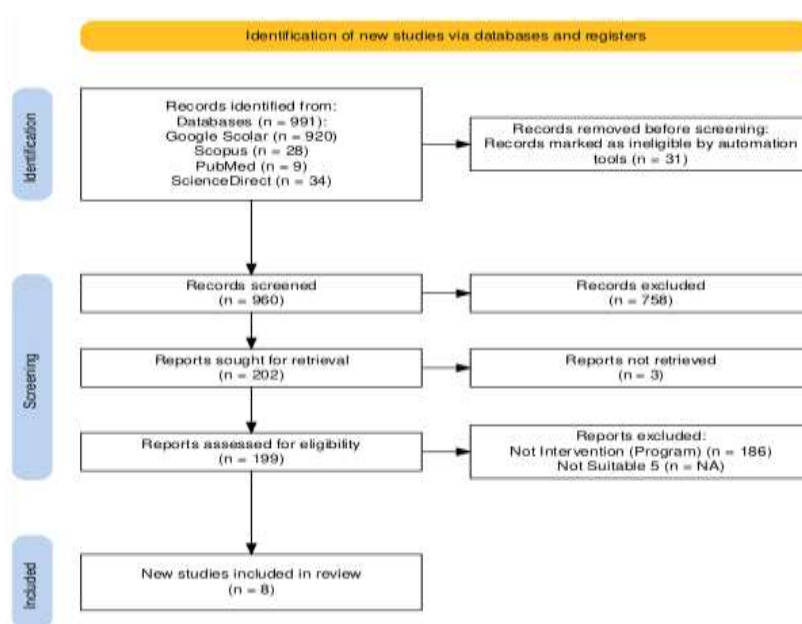


Figure 1 (Diagram PRISMA)

The results of the screening process based on inclusion criteria yielded 8 articles, which were then reviewed and analyzed in depth. Based on the analysis of the 8 articles, several interventions, programs, or career guidance related to career decisions among adolescents in high school or college (aged 15–24) were identified. Some of the results from the analysis of articles that met the inclusion criteria include “An Online Program to Reduce Students’ Career Indecision: A Turkish Pilot Study” (Korkut-owen, 2023), Effects of a Future Time Perspective-Based Career Intervention on Career Decision (Park et al., 2020), Career decision-making readiness among students in the higher education system: career course intervention (Azhenov et al., 2023), “Coping with career indecision: the role of courage and future orientation in secondary education students from Greek provincial cities” (Argyropoulou et al., 2021), “Effect of purpose-based career coaching on career decision-making” (Otu, 2024), Effectiveness of career guidance workshops on the career self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and career goals of adolescents: an intervention study” (Gashi et al., 2023), “Effects of a Career Course on Chinese High School Students’ Career Decision-Making Readiness” (Gu et al., 2020), “Effects of Career Management Applications on Nursing Students’ Career Decisions, Academic Motivation and Career Decision Regrets” (KUŞCU KARATEPE et al., 2021). The following

Table 2 summarizes the analysis of eight articles that can serve as literature for career decision-making interventions:

Table 2 : Article Summary Matrix

Researcher, Title	Research Objective	Type of Research	Sample	Data Collection Method	Research Results	Research Description/Implications
Fatma Korluç-Owen (2023), "An Online Program to Reduce Students' Career Indecision: A Turkish Pilot Study"	evaluated the effectiveness of a specially designed Online Career Development Program (OCDFP) to reduce career indecision of 9th grade students in Turkey.	Quantitative research with a quasi-experimental design.	13 Students (8 girls, 5 boys) in the experimental group and 14 students in the control group.	Program evaluation form, pre-post test questionnaire and interview.	It showed that the Online Career development program was effective in reducing career indecision of the experimental group participants. Quantitative data showed an increase in confidence in making career decisions, making the program an effective intervention.	Online programs require not only technical, academic, and creative skills, but also additional components of cognitive and behavioral flexibility. It requires the ability to identify problem areas among high school students, design potential treatment approaches, and acquire technical skills to deliver services using various platforms.
In-Je Park, Jui-Rie, Hyung-Sook Kim, and Hyeon-Park (2020) "Effects of a Future Time Perspective-Based Career Intervention on Career Decision "	The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of a future time perspective (FTP)-based career intervention on career decisions.	Quantitative research with intervention group and control group experimental methods.	41 undergraduate students enrolled in an introductory psychology class at Gyeongsang National University in South Korea.	CDSE-SF Questionnaire (25 items), Future Time Perspective (FTP) Scale and FTP intervention with 3 sessions.	The results showed that the FTP-based career intervention led to improved scores on the CDSE-SF and CSES which corroborated with previous findings regarding the relationship of FTP and career decisions.	This study contributes to clarify the relationship between FTP and career decision by using FTP-based career intervention to students. If there are students who have difficulties in making career decisions, career decision attitudes can be improved through increasing FTP.
Askar Azhizov, Anahit Kadyshova, Natalya Fominykh and Galina Tolokova (2023) "Career decision-making readiness among students in the system of higher education: career course intervention."	The purpose of this study was to understand the effect of an implemented career development program on students' career exploration process and their career decision-making readiness.	Quantitative research with experimental method of intervention group and control group.	104 Students (21 People) Tvergryevsk University.	Using the CDDQ questionnaire and a career development course with 3 modules: career and self-awareness, career exploration and implementation and career decision.	The results showed significant differences in pre-course and post-course term on each cluster of career decision-making difficulties: (1) Lack of Readiness; (2) Lack of Information; and (3) Inconsistent Information in the experimental group compared to the control group.	Future research could focus on external and internal factors that influence students, for example, further studies on students' cultural characteristics. Differences in accessing reliable information related to vocational activities and career opportunities for undergraduate and postgraduate students who already have work experience should be investigated.
Kamran Agayevpoev, Adilbek Kalin, Aigra Charkopolski and Panagiotis Katsiouda (2021)	This study examined the relationships among courage, strategies of coping with career indecision, and future orientation in a sample of high school students.	Quantitative research correlation.	In this research participated 470 adolescents (15-17 Years).	Courage measure, SCCI, My Future Question (DMF).	The results indicated that courage indirectly predicted future orientation through productive coping strategies. In particular, it was found that productive coping strategies fully mediated the relationship between courage and future orientation given that	The main conclusion refers to the fact that specific intervention could promote productive coping strategies and courage, which in turn, may foster the future
indecision: the role of courage and future orientation in secondary education students from Greek provincial cities"					significant.	occupational pathway, cope with various career and life decision and, overall, orient themselves positively towards the future.
Mpepeleke Sunday Odu (2024) "Effect of purpose-based career coaching framework on career decision-making differentiation."	The purpose of the study was to determine the effectiveness of a goal-based career coaching framework on career decision-making differentiation.	Quantitative research with randomized experimental methods and interviews combined.	80 adolescents who met the study criteria and completed all phases of the study.	Methods included the CDDQ scale, interview protocol and repeated measures analysis of variance.	Results showed that participants successfully identified goals and skillfully matched appropriate careers. The impact of goal-based career coaching was found to be significant on career decision-making.	The findings have practical significance for career counseling, policy implementation, institutionalization, research, and career development.
Liridona Jemini Ombi, Elisabete Betevidi, Ana Konecova & Laura Cakelli (2023) "Effectiveness of career guidance workshops on the career self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and career goals of adolescents: an intervention study"	The purpose of the study was to evaluate the effectiveness of a career guidance workshop intervention by analyzing changes in career self-efficacy, outcome expectations and career goals.	Quantitative research experimental method pre and post test design Single intervention group.	43 high school students (16-18 years old).	Career self-efficacy questionnaire, outcome expectations and career goals (Paired-t-test).	The results showed significant improvements in participants' career self-efficacy and career goals. Although the findings on outcome expectations were not significant, the findings also showed improvement after the intervention.	Career guidance interventions are considered a valuable basis for improving career decision-making skills of adolescents. Educational institutions and Communities can use this intervention to help adolescents make informed career choices and achieve expected goals.
Xueying Gu, Mei Tang, Shi Chen, and Meredith L. T. Mooneyham (2020) "Effects of a Career Course on Chinese High School Students' Career Decision-Making Readiness"	The purpose of this study was to determine whether a career intervention can reduce the difficulties students face in making career decisions and increase confidence in career exploration.	Quantitative research experimental method before and after intervention.	413 high school students.	Demographic questionnaire, primary decision-making confidence scale and Chinese version of CDDQ.	Results indicated that the intervention had a positive impact on reducing students' career decision-making difficulties. Proactive, systematic, multilevel and sustained interventions over a longer period of time are likely to help adolescents develop their career decision-making skills.	The findings of this study provide insights into the development of career education programs for career guidance and interventions in a high school setting and suggest that schools need to develop systematic and multilevel career guidance programs for all students.
Karayer Yigitcan Ugurlularlarin Hemisimli Olguslerinin Karayer Kararlar,	The purpose of the study was to determine the impact of career management applications on nursing students' career decisions, academic motivation.	Quantitative research with experimental research.	40 nursing students.	Using questionnaires: CDS, AMS, VGES, Career Decision Regret Scale.	Research results: there is a significant difference between the scores.	Further research can be conducted for career planning of students studying in different faculties. Career management apps can also be developed for individuals who work in different fields.
Akademik Motivasyonu ve Karayer Karar Piyasasindaki Cansur Etkileri (2020) "Effects of Career Management Application on Nursing Students' Career Decisions, Academic Motivation and Career Decision Regrets"	vocational outcome expectations and career decision regrets.	design with pre-application and post-application control groups.			career decision, career decision regret, career outcome expectations, and academic motivation (p<0.05). Conclusion: Career management application is effective in improving career decisions, academic motivation, career outcome expectations, and reducing career decision regret.	finds. It is recommended that the scope of similar applications be expanded and implemented in different groups at various ages.

Based on the article summary matrix in Table 2, there are several interventions in career decision-making in the form of career programs and career guidance to address uncertainty in career decision-making. Although not all interventions address career indecision, the interventions analyzed have an impact on career decision-making in both school students and university students. Out of the eight articles, four are aimed at high school students, and four are aimed at university students as research samples, where all populations still fall within the adolescent age category (15–24 years old), which, in developmental psychology, is in the exploration stage. Some literature review sources provide information that there are interventions in the form of programs, courses, or training to address adolescent career issues, particularly in career decision-making. Thus, the literature review provides theoretical and empirical understanding of the difficulties or uncertainties faced by adolescents in determining their future career choices.

DISCUSSION

Findings from the literature review provide some insights into which interventions have been empirically proven over the past 5-6 years in relation to career decision-making among adolescents. The criteria for career decision-making interventions are limited to those that include career programs or guidance, so counseling interventions are not included in the literature review. The first article on an online career development program demonstrated its effectiveness in reducing career indecision and enhancing self-confidence in decision-making among high school students, making it a valuable reference for online career programs. However, this program still requires adjustments, particularly in terms of cognitive flexibility and behavior. The second article conducted research in South Korea on the impact of FTP-based career interventions on career decisions, which proved effective in increasing confidence in career decision-making. The literature review in this article can be used as a basis for program development by analyzing the relationship between future time perspective and career decisions, and the stages of intervention can be used as a basis for developing career guidance programs. The results of the third article reveal significant differences between the group that received career development program interventions and the group that did not, in terms of career exploration processes and readiness to make career decisions. However, further studies are needed regarding the cultural characteristics of the research subjects.

The findings in the fourth article examine the relationship between courage, strategies for coping with career indecision, and future orientation among high school students, with research results indicating that productive coping strategies can mediate the relationship between courage and future orientation. This article does not use experimental methods but rather a theoretical study of coping strategies, which can serve as literature for developing programs related to career decisions among adolescents. The fifth article presents findings on the effectiveness of a goal-based career coaching framework for adolescents in addressing career decision-making difficulties, with significant research results. This study is expected to have practical significance for career counselors, research, and career development. The sixth article shows a significant increase in participants' career self-efficacy and career goals. Although the findings on expected outcomes were not significant, they showed an increase after the intervention involving high school students as research subjects. The literature review in the sixth article explains that career counseling interventions are considered a valuable foundation for improving career decision-making skills, making

them a consideration for educational institutions, particularly school counselor, to assist adolescents in making informed career choices and achieving their desired goals.

The seventh article provides findings on proactive, systematic, multilevel, and structured career interventions in the form of courses for high school students, which are likely to help adolescents develop career decision-making skills. The findings of this literature review provide an overview of the development of career education programs for career guidance and intervention in secondary school settings, enabling school counselor to develop systematic and tiered career guidance programs for all secondary school students. The findings in the eighth article regarding research results indicate that effective career management enhances career decisions, academic motivation, career outcome expectations, and reduces career decision regret, particularly among university students, and is expected to enable them to plan their careers in alignment with their field or program of study. Based on the literature review of eight articles, it is confirmed that various career guidance programs over the past 5–6 years have proven effective in enhancing adolescents' confidence, readiness, and career decision-making skills, while reducing career indecision and regret. Structured, culturally relevant, and developmentally appropriate interventions are key to success, providing a foundation for school counselor to develop adaptive and sustainable career programs.

Various studies in eight articles show that interventions in the form of career guidance programs are an effective approach in helping adolescents overcome doubts in career decision-making. This is based on several empirical study results analyzed, revealing that online-based programs, goal-based career coaching, future time perspective, career management applications, career guidance workshops, and classroom-level interventions have a positive effect on increasing students' confidence, motivation, and readiness in determining career choices. In addition, findings from other studies conducted by Park et al. (2020) and Jin et al. (2022) related to culture show that interventions that are integrated with the cultural context and appropriate to the developmental stage of adolescents tend to have a more positive impact, thereby increasing the success of the program. This suggests that career guidance programs should be tailored to the diverse characteristics of students and use a culture-based approach. The analysis also found significant differences between online programs that are flexible and adaptive to individual needs and programs that are general and standardized. Thus, the results of this study confirm that a systematic and sustainable program design that takes into account cultural aspects and developmental stages is the key to the success of a program.

On the other hand, different studies also emphasize that the success of interventions is also greatly influenced by extrinsic factors such as environmental support and family involvement, which are important aspects even though some literature sources do not discuss in depth the involvement of external factors in the success of a program intervention. Several programs have been proven effective in increasing confidence and readiness in career decision-making, which can be used as literature for developing a career guidance program in schools. However, further research is needed to examine the long-term effectiveness and impact of a program, especially its success in overcoming doubts in career decision-making. This study emphasizes the importance of developing programs that are not only theory-based but also adaptable and

sustainable in terms of the cultural, social, and psychological context of adolescents. Thus, the various strengths and weaknesses in the interventions that have been analyzed can be taken into consideration in developing programs tailored to the problems or needs of adolescents in accordance with the cultural, social, and psychological context so as to increase the success of career guidance program interventions. In addition, findings in literature reviews that present the basic theoretical concepts of an intervention can be used as a basis for designing and developing adaptive and systematic career guidance programs.

CONCLUSION

Based on a systematic literature review, career guidance programs have been proven effective in helping adolescents and college students overcome uncertainty and improve their readiness for career decision-making, particularly through structured, systematic, and culturally relevant interventions. Various approaches, such as online programs, goal-based coaching, and future time perspective-based interventions, have shown positive results in enhancing self-confidence, motivation, and career decision-making skills. Therefore, the development and implementation of systematic and adaptive career guidance programs in school settings are crucial to facilitating the process of exploring and selecting career options that align with the needs and characteristics of adolescents, thereby supporting their future success.

Literature reviews related to interventions for career decision-making uncertainty in the form of programs were not widely found in searches and screenings based on inclusion criteria, suggesting that further research is needed on the development of systematic and structured career guidance programs to address the career issues faced by adolescents. The results of the literature review can serve as a reference for education practitioners, particularly school counselor, to conduct a more in-depth examination of appropriate interventions to be implemented according to the problems and needs of students in secondary schools and universities. The study materials can enhance scientific knowledge related to career decision-making, especially regarding students' career uncertainties, thereby providing a more comprehensive understanding of students' needs for programs or interventions related to their career issues.

The implication of this study is that school counselor can adapt career guidance programs or models to improve career decision-making skills so that students become more confident and can overcome career doubts. School counselor can design programs that are adaptive to students' needs and cultural characteristics and are continuous throughout secondary school. For educational institutions, they can support the integration of career guidance programs into the curriculum or extracurricular activities to strengthen students' career readiness and provide training for school counselor to be skilled in implementing career guidance interventions, whether in the form of guidance programs or career counseling. For future researchers, this encourages further research to test the effectiveness of career guidance programs in cultural contexts and the development of evaluation instruments for intervention outcomes, as well as testing the effectiveness of systematic and structured career guidance programs related to career issues, particularly in career decision-making uncertainties.

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