

THE POWER OF PERSONALITY AND SELF-EFFICACY IN SHAPING STUDENTS' CAREER DECISIONS

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the influence of personality and self-efficacy on career choice in college students. Personality is understood as a set of psychological characteristics that shape an individual's mindset, feelings, and behavior in adapting to their environment, while self-efficacy describes a person's belief in their ability to organize and carry out the necessary actions to achieve career goals. This study uses a quantitative approach with multiple linear regression analysis methods to test the relationship between variables. The study sample consisted of 105 college students selected by simple random sampling. Data collection was conducted using a questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale. Data were analyzed through classical assumption tests, correlation tests, t-tests, F-tests, and coefficient of determination (R^2). The results showed that personality did not have a significant influence on college students' career choice, while self-efficacy had a positive and significant influence. The coefficient of determination (R^2) value of 0.773 indicates that 77.3% of the variation in career choice can be explained by these two variables, while the remaining 22.7% is influenced by other factors outside this study. These findings support Bandura's theory, which asserts that individuals with high self-efficacy tend to be more confident, persistent, and courageous in making career decisions. In conclusion, self-efficacy is a crucial factor in determining students' career choices, and therefore needs to be developed through skills training, career guidance, and increased self-confidence to navigate the world of work professionally.

Keywords:

Personality, Self-Efficacy, Career Choice, College Students, Bandura's Theory

Introduction

The Career choice is one of the most important decisions in a person's life, especially for students preparing to enter the professional world. The career choice process is not only about securing a job after graduation, but also about aligning an individual's personality, values, and competencies with career goals and the demands of the workplace. In this context, psychological factors such as personality and self-efficacy play a significant role in shaping students' career decision-making process. Personality describes a set of psychological characteristics that influence how a person thinks, feels, and behaves in various situations, while self-efficacy reflects an

individual's belief in their ability to organize and execute the necessary actions to achieve desired outcomes. Students with high levels of self-efficacy tend to be more confident, persistent, and goal-oriented when making career choices.

Several previous studies have shown mixed results regarding the influence of personality and self-efficacy on career choice. Some studies found a significant relationship between self-efficacy and confidence in career decision-making, while others suggest that personality factors alone are insufficient to determine one's career direction. The inconsistency of these research results highlights the need for further empirical studies to understand how these two factors simultaneously influence students' career decisions, particularly in the context of higher education in Indonesia. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the influence of personality and self-efficacy on career choices of Pamulang University students. The results are expected to provide theoretical and practical contributions to universities, educators, and career counselors in designing programs that can help students make more informed and confident career decisions.

Theoretical Framework

Career selection is a complex process influenced by various internal and external factors. Two psychological factors that often attract attention in career behavior studies are personality and self-efficacy. Personality describes relatively stable patterns of behavior, feelings, and thoughts within an individual, while self-efficacy reflects an individual's belief in their ability to achieve specific goals. Both variables are believed to contribute to how students determine their career paths after completing higher education.

According to Holland's theory (1997), individuals will choose careers that match their personality types. Holland's model classifies personality into six main categories: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional (RIASEC). Individuals who choose careers aligned with their personality types tend to be more productive, satisfied, and persistent in their jobs. Thus, the congruence between personal characteristics and the work environment becomes a key factor in the career decision-making process. This theory emphasizes that personality can be a strong predictor of students' career choices.

Meanwhile, Bandura (1997), through the Social Cognitive Theory, highlights the importance of self-efficacy in explaining human behavior, including in the career context. Self-efficacy is defined as a person's belief in their ability to organize and execute actions required to achieve desired outcomes. Individuals with high self-efficacy tend to be more confident in facing challenges, have stronger motivation, and are more consistent in pursuing their career goals. Lent, Brown, and Hackett (2002) further expanded this concept through the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), which asserts that self-efficacy has a direct relationship with one's interests, aspirations, and career decisions.

A number of empirical studies support the influence of self-efficacy on career choice. Betz and Hackett (2006) found that students with high self-efficacy demonstrated greater confidence in choosing and pursuing suitable careers. Creed, Prideaux, and Patton (2009) added that self-efficacy plays an important role in overcoming psychological barriers during the career exploration process. In Indonesia, Sutrisno (2020) and Pradana (2021) also reported that self-efficacy has a positive and significant effect on students' career choices, while the influence of personality varies depending on the dimensions examined.

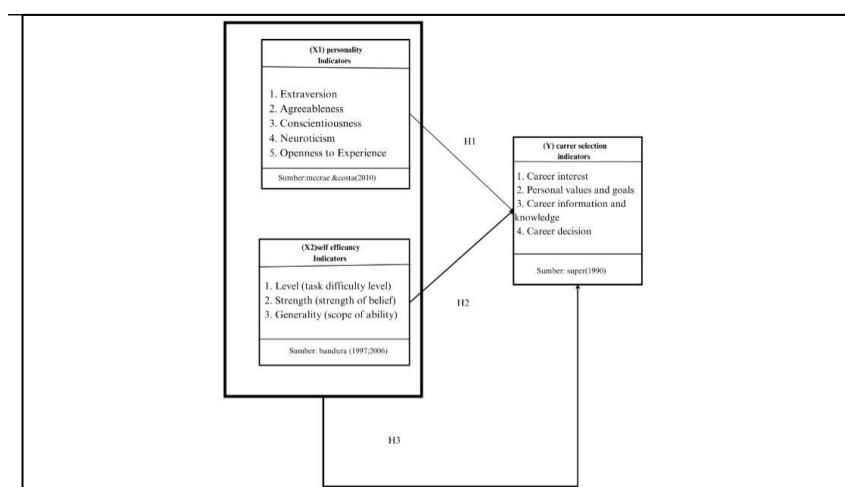
However, other studies have found inconsistent results. Putri (2023), for example, revealed that personality does not have a direct effect on career decisions but rather through self-efficacy as a mediating variable. These differing results indicate a research gap in the literature, particularly regarding the direct relationship between personality, self-efficacy, and students' career selection. Therefore, this study aims to provide new empirical evidence on how these two variables interact in the context of Indonesian students, who possess distinct cultural and social values compared to previous study populations.

Based on the theories and prior studies, the conceptual framework can be formulated as follows: personality (X_1) and self-efficacy (X_2) are two independent variables that influence career selection (Y). Individuals whose personalities align with specific fields of work and who possess high self-efficacy will find it easier to make appropriate career choices. Thus, the relationships among the variables can be summarized as follows:

H1: Personality has a significant influence on students' career selection.

H2: Self-efficacy has a significant influence on students' career selection.

H3: Personality and self-efficacy simultaneously have a significant influence on students' career selection.



Method

This study employs a quantitative approach with an associative research design aimed at determining the influence of personality and self-efficacy on career selection among university students. The population of this research consists of all active students at Pamulang University in the 2024/2025 academic year. The sampling technique used is purposive sampling, with the criteria being final-semester students who are preparing for their careers after graduation. The total number of respondents in this study is 103 students, which is considered representative of the research population.

Data were collected using a five-point Likert scale questionnaire, ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” The research instrument consists of three main variables: personality, self-efficacy, and career selection. The personality scale was adapted from the Big Five Personality Theory by Costa and McCrae, while the self-efficacy scale was adapted from Bandura’s (1997) theory. Prior to use, the instrument was tested for validity and reliability using Cronbach’s Alpha analysis to ensure internal consistency.

Data analysis was carried out using multiple linear regression with SPSS version 26.0. This analysis aimed to examine both the partial and simultaneous effects of personality and self-efficacy on students’ career selection.

Results

This research results section presents the research findings clearly and systematically in accordance with the stated objectives. Data analysis was carried out using the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) program to test the influence of Personality (X_1) and Self-Efficacy (X_2) on Career Selection (Y) in 103 student respondents. Using SPSS helps researchers obtain more accurate and objective results in the data testing process. This study focuses on how students' internal factors, such as personality and self-efficacy, can influence their career choices, specifically to find out which factors have a stronger influence. The data analysis process includes several stages of statistical tests, namely simple regression test, multiple regression test, F test, t test, and coefficient of determination test (R^2). A simple regression test was used to examine the effect of each independent variable separately on career choice, while a multiple regression test was used to examine the effect of both simultaneously. The results showed that personality had a positive but insignificant effect, while self-efficacy had a positive and significant effect. The results of this test are the basis for drawing conclusions regarding the extent to which these two factors influence students' tendencies to select a career.

Table 1. Simple Regression Test of Personality Variabel (X₁) Carees Choice Variabel(Y)

Coefficients ^a										
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations			Collinearity Statistics
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance VIF
1	(Constant)	.298	2.404		.124	.902				
	Personality	.592	.058	.706	10.129	.000	.706	.706	.706	1.000 1.000

a. Dependent Variable: Career Choice

Based on the table above, the constant value is 0.298 and the regression coefficient for the personality variable (X₁) is 0.592, so the regression equation is:

$$Y = 0.298 + 0.592X_1$$

The significance value (Sig.) of $0.000 < 0.05$ indicates that personality has a positive and significant effect on career choice. This means that the better a person's personality, the higher their likelihood of making a career choice.

Table 2. Simple Regression Test of Self-Efficacy Variable (X₂) Career Choice Variabel (Y)

Coefficients ^a										
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations			Collinearity Statistics
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance VIF
1	(Constant)	-1.068	1.401		-.762	.448				
	Self Efficacy	.774	.042	.878	18.455	.000	.878	.878	.878	1.000 1.000

a. Dependent Variable: Career Choice

Based on the table above, the constant value is -1.068 and the regression coefficient for the self-efficacy variable (X_2) is 0.774, resulting in the following regression equation:

$$Y = -1.068 + 0.774X_2$$

The significance value (Sig.) of $0.000 < 0.05$ indicates that self-efficacy has a positive and significant effect on career choice. This means that the higher a person's confidence in their abilities (self-efficacy), the higher their likelihood of making a career choice.

Table 3. Multiple Linear Regression Test of X_1 and X_2 Against Y

Coefficients ^a											
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	-1.819	1.637		-1.111	.269					
	Personality	.057	.062	.069	.921	.359	.706	.091	.043	.402	2.485
	Self Efficacy	.726	.065	.825	11.099	.000	.878	.740	.524	.402	2.485

a. Dependent Variable: Career Choice

Source: Output SPSS (2025)

Based on the table above, the constant value is -1.819, the regression coefficient for personality (X_1) is 0.057, and self-efficacy (X_2) is 0.726. Therefore, the regression equation is:

$$Y = -1.819 + 0.057X_1 + 0.726X_2$$

The significance value for personality ($0.359 > 0.05$) indicates that personality has no significant effect on career choice.

Meanwhile, the significance value for self-efficacy ($0.000 < 0.05$) indicates that self-efficacy has a positive and significant effect on career choice.

This means that the higher a person's self-efficacy, the higher their likelihood of making a career choice, while personality has no significant effect in this model.

Table 4. t-Test (Partial)

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-1.836	1.647		-1.115	.268
	X1	.056	.063	.067	.890	.375

	X2	.728	.067	.826	10.895	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Y						

Source: Output SPSS (2025)

The t-test results show that:

Personality (X_1) has a calculated t-value of 0.890 with a significance of $0.375 > 0.05$, indicating no significant influence on students' career choice.

Self-efficacy (X_2) has a calculated t-value of 10.895 with a significance of $0.000 < 0.05$, indicating a positive and significant influence on students' career choice.

This indicates that students with high levels of self-confidence and belief in their abilities will be more confident in making career choices.

Tabel 5. F Test (Simultaneous)

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1952.198	2	976.099	170.347	.000 ^b
	Residual	573.006	100	5.730		
	Total	2525.204	102			
a. Dependent Variable: Y						
b. Predictors: (Constant), X2, X1						

Source: Output SPSS (2025)

Based on the F test results, the calculated F value was 170.347 with a significance level of $0.000 < 0.05$, greater than the F table (3.09). This means that simultaneously, personality (X_1) and self-efficacy (X_2) significantly influence students' career choice (Y). In other words, the regression model used in this study is suitable for predicting the dependent variable.

Tabel 6. Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.879 ^a	.773	.769	2.39375
a. Predictors: (Constant), X2, X1				

Source: Output SPSS (2025)

The R^2 value of 0.773 indicates that 77.3% of the variation in students' career choice can be explained by personality and self-efficacy, while the remaining 22.7% is explained by factors outside this research model, such as family environment, personal interests, work experience, or social influen.

In presenting the results, tables and figures must be numbered consecutively according to their appearance in the text. The title of each table should be placed above the table and centered. Conversely, the title of each figure should be written below the figure and centered. All tables and figures must be referenced in the text to ensure consistency between the description and the data presented.

Discussion

The results of the study showed that self-efficacy had a positive and significant influence on students' career choices, while personality did not show a significant influence when tested simultaneously. This finding aligns with the study's objective, which was to determine the extent to which psychological factors influence students' career decision-making process. Students with positive personalities and high levels of self-efficacy tend to have stronger beliefs, clearer goals, and greater confidence in their career choices.

Theoretically, these results support Bandura's (1997) Social Cognitive Theory, which states that individuals with high levels of self-efficacy believe in their ability to carry out the necessary actions to achieve desired outcomes. This self-confidence makes them more persistent, focused, and resilient to stress when facing career decisions. Furthermore, these results align with Costa and McCrae's (1992) Big Five Personality Theory, which emphasizes that personality dimensions such as openness to experience, conscientiousness, and extroversion are closely related to a person's ability to plan and choose a career effectively.

This research also supports the findings of previous studies, such as those conducted by Lent, Brown, and Hackett (2002), which found that self-efficacy plays a significant role in confidence in career decision-making. Meanwhile, Lounsbury et al. (2003) stated that personality contributes to career satisfaction and stability. However, unlike several previous studies that placed personality as the dominant factor, this study found that self-efficacy has a stronger influence on students' career choices. This suggests that confidence in one's abilities is a key determining factor in the context of Indonesian students preparing to enter the workforce.

From a scientific perspective, this study contributes to the growing literature on psychological factors influencing career choice, particularly by integrating personality and self-efficacy into a single analytical framework. Practically, the results can serve as a basis for universities and career counselors to develop self-efficacy-boosting programs through training, career guidance, and activities that can increase students' confidence in their abilities.

However, this study has several limitations. The limited number of respondents from one university makes the results less generalizable. Furthermore, the use of questionnaires as instruments can introduce perceptual bias due to their subjective nature. Future research is recommended to involve more universities and employ mixed methods for more comprehensive results.

Overall, this study confirms that self-efficacy is a significant factor in determining students' career choices, while personality has a limited influence. Self-efficacy plays a more dominant role in this research model. Strengthening these two aspects is believed to help students make more informed and confident career decisions.

Conclusion

Based on the results of research conducted on the influence of personality and self-efficacy on career choice in college students, it can be concluded that both variables play a significant role in the career decision-making process. The analysis shows that personality has a positive but insignificant effect on career choice, while self-efficacy has a positive and significant effect. This indicates that an individual's belief in their own abilities has a greater impact than personality traits in determining a student's career direction.

Simultaneously, personality and self-efficacy together significantly contributed to career choice, with a coefficient of determination of 77.3%. This means that most of the variation in students' career decisions can be explained by these two factors, while the remainder is influenced by other factors such as social environment, family support, learning experiences, and economic conditions. These findings reinforce Bandura's (1997) theory regarding the importance of self-efficacy in shaping individual behavior and decisions and expand the application of the Big Five personality theory to the context of student careers in Indonesia.

This research has practical implications for higher education institutions, particularly in planning student self-development programs. Universities can provide career training and guidance aimed at improving student self-efficacy, for example through mentoring activities, soft skills workshops, and interest- and personality-based career counseling. This way, students can better understand their potential and gain confidence in choosing a career that aligns with their abilities and personal values.

The limitations of this study lie in the limited number of respondents from one university and the use of solely quantitative methods, which do not fully reflect the qualitative factors influencing career decisions. Therefore, future research is recommended to involve a larger sample size from various universities and use a mixed methods approach to explore psychological aspects in greater depth.

Overall, this study emphasizes the importance of strengthening students' self-efficacy in the career choice process, while personality has a more limited influence. Increasing self-efficacy can help students develop a more mature, focused, and confident approach to choosing and pursuing their careers.

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