

## **Navigating Career Decisions: The Influence of Gender Perception among High School Students**

Abdul Hadi<sup>1</sup>, Eka Aryani<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup> Program Studi Bimbingan dan Konseling, Universitas Mercu Buana Yogyakarta

\*Corresponding Author E-mail: [hadi@mercubuana-yogya.ac.id](mailto:hadi@mercubuana-yogya.ac.id)

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study delves deeply into the intricate association between perceived gender roles and career selection among students in the twelfth grade at MAN 2 Bantul. It utilizes a sophisticated correlational research design to draw precise and nuanced conclusions about the intricate dynamics between these two constructs. The analytic method employed was a product-moment correlation, which robustly demonstrated the existence of a significant and strong positive relationship between gender perceptions and career choices. The study also unearthed an intricate web of influential factors, with social support from family, teachers, and peers being pivotal in shaping students' career decision-making trajectories. Additionally, our findings provide substantial evidence suggesting a negative correlation between perceived parental and teacher support and the complexity of career decision-making. Conversely, we observed a positive correlation between the frequency of classmate and close friend social support and career decision-making difficulties. This research enhances our understanding of gender as a socially constructed concept deeply entwined with cultural roles, shaping the trajectory of career choices. It also underscores the profound influence of societal norms and perceptions regarding gender roles on students' career preferences. This influence signifies the necessity of further research into the subtle ways these perceptions may shape or restrict career aspirations. It is evident that guidance and counseling services have a pivotal role in helping students navigate the often complex and challenging landscape of career decisions. They are also instrumental in providing students with the necessary understanding to identify and challenge prevailing gender perceptions that may inadvertently impact their career decisions. Therefore, the results obtained from this research highlight the pressing need for an educational environment that is both cognizant and inclusive of the various gender perceptions in existence and their potential impacts on career decisions. This is crucial in ensuring informed guidance, fostering student self-efficacy, and empowering students in their journey of selecting and navigating their respective career paths effectively.

**Keywords:** gender perception; career choices; adolescent career development; correlation study; high school students

### **INTRODUCTION**

Education signifies an automatic and systematic process of knowledge transfer from one individual to another, aimed at maturing the mind (Wulandari et al., 2021). The process of education is designed to modify the behavior of learners, transforming them into independent adults capable of surviving as members of their local community. This goal aligns with the purpose of education which is to enhance or depict the intelligence potential of learners. The growth and development of learners' potential and intelligence are expected to enhance self-reliance and creativity. This process can be cultivated and developed in school settings, with guidance and counseling teachers playing a vital role (Sudibyo, 2013). Guidance and counseling teachers' roles within their services are hoped to assist learners in understanding and accepting themselves, strengths and weaknesses included, familiarizing them with their environment, career decision-making, and providing direction for learner development. This service caters not only to learners with problems but also to all learners. Consequently, career becomes a critical component for learners in planning or choosing suitable jobs.

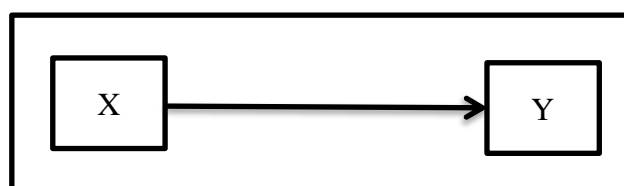
Adolescents in high school are faced with several career-related issues, including difficulties in choosing study programs, lack of motivation in seeking career information,

confusion in selecting jobs, and indecision regarding specific higher education institutions post-graduation (Naz et al., 2014). Such career-related issues experienced by learners include inadequate understanding of choosing appropriate study programs based on their abilities and interests, insufficient job-related information, inability to select jobs matching their abilities and interests, lack of decision on specific higher education or further education options, and learners not optimally demonstrating the characteristics, requirements, abilities, and skills needed for their future career jobs. Based on observations and interviews conducted in August 2020, researchers observed ongoing disparities between career choices and suitable jobs for males and females. The results of these observations were supported by interviews with three learners in school, who stated that gender perceptions condition children from a young age to act according to their gender roles. Apart from these issues, during interviews with learners at MAN 2 Bantul, the researcher encountered learners who were still confused about their future careers. Referring to this issue, the career choice process for teenagers encompasses three main elements: fantasy, tentative, and realistic. The role of guidance and counseling services is expected to bridge or provide alternative solutions concerning career decisions (Kusumawati et al., 2020). As is the case with research that has been conducted by Zamzani (2021), that there is no difference in career maturity that affects career choices for vocational students based on individual gender. This research was supported by Ratnaningsih et al (2016) which stated that there was no difference in career maturity in terms of gender. Based on some of these previous studies, it can be seen that gender roles are not the only aspect that influences individual career choices

Career decision choices are influenced by individual belief development obtained through the learning process (Mahir et al., 2019). Learners can take their parents' and other community members' prejudices through the learning process. Gender can be understood as equivalent treatment that is not discriminated against based on their gender identities (Taher et al., 2009). Social and psychological theories about career behavior emphasize how culture, gender, and life events interact with individual career preferences to determine career aspirations and choices (Larasati & Ayu, 2020). The role of guidance and counseling as part of education functions to assist learners in achieving optimal developmental tasks, one of which is for learners to achieve career developmental tasks, that is, making appropriate career decisions that they desire. Guidance and counseling also play a critical role in providing information related to various career choices available, giving students many opportunities in the process of making their career decisions. Female learners tend to desire to work and choose further education in the health field, whereas male learners tend to prefer further education in technical or technology-related fields (Qomariah, 2019). Many learners are still unsure about their ability to make career decisions (Jufriadi et al., 2022). Based on these problems, researchers wish to understand the relationship between gender role perceptions and career choices in grade XII learners at MAN 2 Bantul as a consideration for continuing education to higher education institutions and choosing jobs that match their favored majors. This is consistent with the purpose of this study, namely to determine the relationship between perceptions of gender roles on career choices for class XII students at MAN 2 Bantul.

## **METHOD**

This study employs a correlational research technique. Correlational research intends to detect the extent to which variations in a factor are associated with more variations in other factors based on the correlation coefficient. Correlational research aims to determine the relationship between one or more variables. The design of this research is as follows:



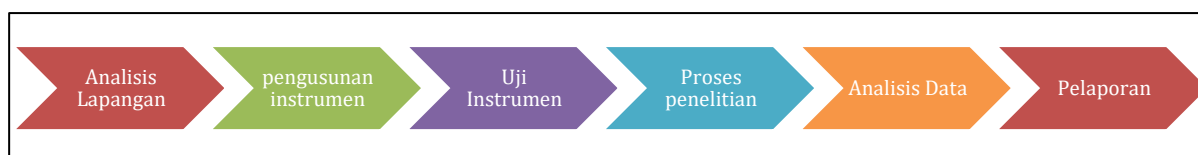
**Figure 1. Research design**

The subjects of this study are grade XII students from MAN 2 Bantul, with a population of 158 students. The sampling technique utilizes a proportional random sampling method, with a sample size of 32 students (Sedgwick, 2013). Data collection is carried out using a gender perception scale and a career choice scale. The validity of the instrument is assessed using the product-moment correlation formula (DeVellis, 2016). The population in this study can be seen in table 1 below:

**Table 1. The research population of class XII MAN 2 Bantul students**

No	Class	Major	Student
1	XII	IPA	33
2		IPS	30
3		Multimedia	25
4		Fashion	22
5		Automotive	25
6		THP	23
Amount			158

The sampling technique for this research was proportional random sampling technique with a sample size of 32 students. The data collection method uses a gender perception scale and career choice scale. The validity of the instrument uses the product moment correlation formula. The figure below provides a visual representation of this research flow (see Figure 1).



**Figure 2. Research Flowchart**

The research process encompasses several stages, which include: 1) Field Analysis: This stage involves assessing the research context to identify key issues that the study will address. It may include literature review and preliminary observations or interviews (Creswell, 2013). 2) Instrument Development: In this phase, the researcher develops tools for data collection, which may include questionnaires, interview guides, or observational protocols (Trochim, 2006). 3) Instrument Testing: This step is critical to ensure that the instruments are reliable and valid for the study. Techniques such as Cronbach's alpha, factor analysis, or test-retest reliability can be used (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). 4) Research Process: The actual data collection takes place during this phase. Depending on the study design, this could involve surveys, interviews, observations, or a combination of these methods (Kothari, 2004). 5) Data Analysis: Data

collected are analyzed to answer the research questions or test hypotheses. Methods used could be quantitative (e.g., t-tests, ANOVA) or qualitative (e.g., thematic analysis) (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). 6) Reporting: Finally, the researcher presents the study findings in a clear and structured manner. This typically involves writing a research report or article that includes the study's purpose, methods, results, and conclusions (Wolcott, 1990).

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this investigative inquiry, the primary objective was to delineate the magnitude and significance of the relationship between perceptions of gender roles and the subsequent career choices amongst students in the twelfth grade at MAN 2 Bantul. The methodological approach adopted was primarily rooted in the mathematical analysis of product moment correlation. As per the calculated correlation coefficient (r-value), an intriguing finding emerged, suggesting a significant positive association between the two variables of interest. The empirical r-value calculated was 0.727, superseding the tabulated threshold of 0.349, with a p-value of less than 0.001, thereby statistically affirming a strong correlation as per Cohen's guidelines (1988). The analytical results are succinctly summarized in the table below.

**Table 1: Correlational Analysis between Variables**

		Correlations	
		Gender	Karier
Gender	Pearson Correlation	1	.727**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	32	32
Karier	Pearson Correlation	.727**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	32	32

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The resultant matrix table showcases an insightful pattern, indicating that a higher score on positive gender role perception correlates strongly with a more robust score in career choice. Consequently, the study's core hypothesis - that there exists a meaningful, positive correlation between gender role perceptions and career decisions amongst twelfth grade students at MAN 2 Bantul - was corroborated.

To ascertain whether the examined variables - the independent (gender role perception) and dependent (career choice) - shared a linear relationship, a linearity test was conducted. The decision criterion in this test was whether the Significance of Deviation from Linearity exceeded or was less than the statistical threshold of 0.05. If it exceeded this value, it would indicate a linear relationship; conversely, if it was less than this value, it would suggest a non-linear relationship. The subsequent results from the linearity test are displayed in the following table:

**Table 2: Linearity Test between Variables**

ANOVA Table			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Karier * Gender	Between Groups	(Combined)	1182.083	15	78.806	3.568	.008
		Linearity	810.615	1	810.615	36.698	.000
		Deviation from Linearity	371.468	14	26.533	1.201	.359
		Within Groups	353.417	16	22.089		
		Total	1535.500	31			

The Significance of Deviation from Linearity, as evidenced in the linearity test results, was computed as 0.359, exceeding the threshold of 0.05, thereby leading to the conclusion that there is a linear relationship between the variables of gender role perception and career choice (Field, 2013). Moreover, the correlation and linearity results from this study complement the findings from the work of Agus Giriando (2018), which identified a significant positive correlation between the degree of family support and career indecision, estimated at 72%. It was explicitly noted that an increase in family social support coincided with a rise in career uncertainty amongst students, and vice versa. This finding underscores the family's vital role in shaping career maturity, which tends to be more decisive than environmental influences. Students with less familial social support were found to exhibit lower career maturity, subsequently impeding their progression to subsequent stages of career development (Chandra et al., 2017).

A secondary, yet crucial, finding from the correlation analysis of this research was the manifestation of a negative correlation between the perception of social support from parents and teachers and the difficulty in making career decisions. Contrarily, the frequency scale of social support from classmates and close friends presented a positive correlation. This evidence suggests that a higher frequency of social support can paradoxically amplify decision-making difficulties, although higher values of social support can alleviate such challenges. In essence, while social support can help to mitigate difficulties in decision making, an excess frequency of provided social support can exacerbate such difficulties, as it might exceed an individual's coping capacity.

Synthesizing these findings with prior literature, it can be deduced that the gender role perceptions significantly contribute to a student's career decision-making abilities, as evidenced by the identified positive correlation (Ho & Lam, 2014). This research effort aligns with previous empirical studies, demonstrating that gender role perception significantly influences a teenager's career choice. This choice is affected by a myriad of factors encompassing internal attributes such as intelligence, talent, interests, personality traits, physical conditions, life values, and knowledge, and external factors such as familial socioeconomic status, educational environment, peer influence, and cultural heritage (Saripudin et al., 2022). However, parental influence and support have been highlighted as key contributors in assisting adolescents with career developmental tasks and making effective career decisions (Hadi et al., 2020).

In conclusion, this study contributes to the scholarly dialogue on the socially constructed nature of gender, beyond the mere biological dichotomy of male and female. The findings reinforce the notion that gender is intrinsically linked to societal and cultural roles within a

specific community, and these roles significantly influence the trajectories of career choices. The positive correlation identified between gender role perceptions and career choices amongst the twelfth-grade students at MAN 2 Bantul offers valuable insights for educators, guidance counsellors, and policymakers, emphasizing the necessity to acknowledge and address these perceptions in the process of career guidance and decision-making.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study successfully demonstrated a significant positive correlation between gender perception and career choices among twelfth-grade students at MAN 2 Bantul. The analysis reinforced the linear relationship between the two variables, with family support playing a key role in students' career decisions. A nuanced understanding of the role of social support emerged, with high frequency potentially leading to decision-making difficulties. The conclusion drawn is that gender, as a social construct, significantly influences career choice trajectories, emphasizing the importance of understanding its impact on career decision-making in educational environments.

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