

Career decision-making difficulties among socioeconomically disadvantaged students (Bidikmisi Students)

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Abstract: This study aims to explore the career decision-making difficulties (CDMD) of Bidikmisi students, especially the factors that may cause difficulties, such as parents' education level and students' gender. The measuring instrument used was Career Decision-making Difficulties Questionnaire. Random cluster sampling was conducted, and there were 154 Unpad students from four selected faculties. The CDMD data were analyzed using descriptive and differential tests. The results of the study showed that the majority of Bidikmisi students had moderate CDMD, with the highest difficulty in the Lack of Readiness category. There was a significant difference in CDMD based on parents' education level in which individuals with parents with secondary and college levels of education had higher CDMD. There was no significant difference between male and female students regarding CDMD. These findings highlight the importance of career guidance for Bidikmisi students to make appropriate career decisions, mainly those with parents from specific educational backgrounds.

Keywords: career decision-making difficulties; bidikmisi students; socioeconomically disadvantaged

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memahami gambaran kesulitan dan faktor yang berpotensi mempengaruhi kesulitan pengambilan keputusan karier (CDMD) pada mahasiswa Bidikmisi, seperti tingkat pendidikan orang tua dan jenis kelamin. Alat ukur yang digunakan adalah *Career Decision-making Difficulties Questionnaire*. Sampling kluster acak dilakukan terhadap 154 mahasiswa Unpad yang berasal dari empat fakultas terpilih. Data CDMD dianalisis secara deskriptif dan menggunakan uji beda. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa mayoritas mahasiswa Bidikmisi memiliki CDMD yang sedang, dengan kesulitan tertinggi pada kategori *Lack of Readiness*. Terdapat perbedaan CDMD yang signifikan berdasarkan tingkat pendidikan orang tua, di mana individu dengan orang tua dengan tingkat pendidikan menengah dan perguruan tinggi memiliki CDMD yang lebih tinggi. Tidak ada perbedaan yang signifikan antara mahasiswa laki-laki dan perempuan dalam CDMD. Temuan ini berfokus terhadap pentingnya bimbingan karier bagi mahasiswa Bidikmisi untuk membuat keputusan karier yang tepat, terutama mereka dengan jenjang pendidikan orangtua tertentu.

Kata kunci: kesulitan pengambilan keputusan karier; mahasiswa bidikmisi; keterbatasan sosial-ekonomi

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INTRODUCTION

In the era of digitalization, career choices are now becoming more expansive, with wider options of majors and types of work (Gati et al., 2014). More diverse career choices make careers more difficult to predict and more demanding of greater individual flexibility. College students also face this challenge when transitioning from their education to their careers (Oishi, 2012). One example of the college students' population facing the challenge of making career decisions is Bidikmisi students. Bidikmisi students are gifted students who are academically capable, but socioeconomically disadvantaged, so the government provides them with educational allowances or scholarships (Mufidah, 2017). Bidikmisi students have low socioeconomic status (SES) or are socioeconomically disadvantaged due to their economic backgrounds. Bidikmisi students are students who meet the following criteria: having the maximum combined gross income of parents/guardians divided by the number of family members of IDR 750,000.00 per month, with S1 or D4 as their parents' highest education level, and having a high academic potential based on Principal/Rectorate's recommendations. Because of their shortcomings, they face different paths and options when making career decisions and choices, which leads to a certain level of difficulty.

Career decision-making difficulties (CDMD) are conditions in which individuals experience difficulties in finding career alternatives, comparing various career alternatives, and choosing a career choice. Gati (2014) classified career decision-making difficulties in the CDMD taxonomy into three main categories and ten sub-categories, namely:

1. Lack of readiness, which includes difficulties that arise before the career decision-making process
 - a. Lack of motivation to be involved in the career decision process
 - b. General indecisiveness or doubts in making decisions in general
 - c. Dysfunctional beliefs that can influence individual decision-making
2. Lack of information, which arises during the career decision-making process
 - a. Lack of information about career decision-making process
 - b. Lack of information about oneself
 - c. Lack of information about occupations
 - d. Lack of information about ways of obtaining additional information and help
3. Inconsistent information, which includes difficulties due to conflicting information

- a. Unreliable information, unclear and unreliable information
- b. Internal conflict, gaps between individual preferences and abilities
- c. External conflicts, which originate from outside the individual, such as conflicts involving the influence of significant people.

Furthermore, previous research has linked individuals' career choices to family factors (Slaten & Baskin, 2014). Workman (2015) stated that parents play an important role in their children's career development, including career aspiration and exploration. Furthermore, Noreen and Khalid (2012) stated that individuals' career choices are influenced by their parents' occupation, knowledge, socioeconomic status, educational background, and cultural background. Lower SES families commonly demonstrate poor parenting practices, parental support, and parental involvement in their children's career development (Bornstein & Bradley, 2003). Socioeconomically disadvantaged families tend to interfere with individuals' career choices, and parents tend to worry about their children's future because of the family's economic situation (Wood & Smith, 2020). Parents with lower education and poor economic backgrounds tend to prioritize the fulfilment of their own daily needs over their children's education (Istiqomah et al., 2016). Parents with higher levels of education, however, spend more time interacting with their children and fostering child development (Guryan, et al., 2008). In addition, previous research has also linked gender to individual career difficulties (e.g., Zhou & Santos, 2007; Gati, 2011; Bacanli, 2016; Fatimah, 2020).

Bidikmisi students who are socioeconomically disadvantaged often experience more complicated and complex decision-making process than other individuals (Jung & Young, 2019). They face numerous challenges, such as limited access to education and health services, financial problems, and lack of good career role models. Their economic situation makes career exploration not a priority for them. Individuals who grow up in economically disadvantaged families tend to view work as the fulfilment of basic survival needs. Socioeconomically disadvantaged individuals can experience poor career self-efficacy, low career aspiration for the future, and limited access to career development resources (Aries & Seider, 2007).

Difficulties in decision-making can have several consequences for individuals, including preventing individuals from making decisions and producing non-optimal decisions (Gati et al., 1996). Then, these consequences can also lead to a

decrease in the quality and satisfaction of career choices with results that can interfere with job achievement and individual well-being (Udayar et al., 2020). However, there have not been many studies on the difficulty in making career decisions among Bidikmisi students as socioeconomically disadvantaged individuals in Indonesia. Understanding individual career choice decisions, especially the aspects of the challenges they face, is the first step that can be taken to help them make better career choices. Therefore, this study aims to examine career decision-making experience among Bidikmisi students, especially the factors that may cause difficulties, such as parent's education level and students' gender.

METHOD

This study used a quantitative approach. The population of this study was Bidikmisi students of Universitas Padjadjaran as socioeconomically disadvantaged individuals with low SES or income. This research adopted random cluster sampling. Respondents of 154 Unpad students from four selected faculties had been randomized using UnpadSAS, consisting of 36 Faculty of Nursing students, 28 Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences students, 45 Faculty of Social and Political Sciences students, and 45 Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences students.

The difficulties in career decision-making variables were measured using the Career Decision-making Difficulties Questionnaire (CDDQ) by Gati and colleagues (1996), which was adapted by Jayanti (2018). This questionnaire measures the difficulties that individuals may face while making career-related decisions. CDDQ consists of 34 items, with a Likert scale of 1-9, ranging from "very inaccurate" to "very accurate". The questionnaire consists of three dimensions: Lack of Readiness, Lack of Information, and Inconsistent Information. The reliability and validity coefficient for the CDDQ instrument has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.941 and an S-CVI of 0.88.

This study used descriptive statistical analysis to discover the difficulties in making career decisions experienced by Bidikmisi students, along with an explanation of each dimension and categorization of difficulty in making specific career decisions. Amir and colleagues (2008) classified career decision-making difficulties into three levels, namely negligible ($M < 3.33$), moderate ($M = 3.33 - 6.33$), and salient ($M > 6.33$). A differential test was also conducted based on demographic data that could affect individual CDMD, such as parents' education levels and students' gender. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test based on parents' education level and students' gender showed 0.192 and 0.143, meaning data were not normally distributed. Furthermore, this study also used the Kruskal Wallis and Mann-Whitney tests to see the differences in CDMD for the variables of parents' education level and students' gender. The Research Ethics Commission has approved this research of Padjadjaran University with the number: 904/UN6.KEP/EC/2022.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The results of descriptive statistics, including the Mean and Standard Deviation of career decision-making difficulties for Bidikmisi students, are shown in Table 1. The total CDMD score ($M = 4.51$, $SD = 1.17$) showed that Bidikmisi students had moderate difficulties. The highest difficulty encountered by Bidikmisi students was in the dimension of Lack of Readiness ($M = 4.95$, $SD = 0.95$). Overall, regarding the levels of difficulties experienced by Bidikmisi students in making career decisions, 18.2% of students were included in the negligible category, meaning that students are sufficient to make career decisions. The perceived difficulties are minimal and can be disregarded. However, 74% students fell into the moderate category, suggesting that individuals experiencing perceived difficulties necessitate some attention, and 7.8% fell into the salient category, indicating that students require focused attention from both the counselor and the counselee.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

Category	Mean	SD
Lack of Readiness	4.95	0.95
Lack of Information	4.47	1.73
Inconsistent Information	4.12	1.47
Total CDMD	4.51	1.17

A study by Murry (2017) found a similar finding that the Lack of Readiness category got the highest mean score ($M= 5.45$) among students with low SES, followed by the Lack of Information and Inconsistent information categories ($M= 4.98$). Lack of readiness is characterized by a lack of motivation to engage in career decision making, indecisiveness in decision making, and a dysfunctional belief in career decision making. According to Murry (2017), people with lower SES have lower career readiness because they face financial constraints and lack social access, lack confidence in their abilities, and have difficulty seeing future career opportunities. Furthermore, Arulmani's (2001) research on career beliefs and SES levels revealed that those with lower SES have more negative career beliefs and dysfunctional thinking. Hsieh and Huang (2014) also discovered that students from lower SES have less confidence in their ability to complete career decision-making tasks, which could affect their readiness in career decision making.

Limited knowledge about the steps of the career decision-making process, as well as insufficient information about oneself, various occupations, and how to obtain additional information, characterize the Lack of Information category. Socioeconomically disadvantaged individuals often receive less career guidance at school and at home. Recent research from Lindstrom and colleagues (2022) discovered that socioeconomically disadvantaged students might have limited access to role models or mentors who can help them deal with career transition, resulting in poor knowledge and awareness of career options. They are also less likely to engage in job exploration activities and prefer to prioritize more urgent and immediate demands, such as finding a job immediately (Hu et al., 2020). According to Yaghi and Alabed (2021), lower SES individuals may only apply for jobs near their home, ignoring other career opportunities. As a result, they suffer from the Lack of Information category in CDMD.

The Inconsistent Information category is defined as contradictions in the information individuals have about themselves and their jobs, and also a gap between their preferences and those of significant others. Individuals from lower SES families reported having more contradiction in which they are pressured to contribute to the family financially, while also receiving less family support in their career development processes (Xing & Rojewski, 2018). Thus, this contradiction may cause career difficulties in the Inconsistent Information category, particularly in the External Conflict category.

Despite their limited access to information and services, socioeconomically disadvantaged students will find their own way to learn about career needs (Wood & Smith, 2020). They have the potential to have various skills learned in their everyday life to fulfil their life demands (Wood & Smith, 2020). They can hone their problem-solving, time-management, negotiation, and creativity skills. These abilities are beneficial for them to advance in their careers in the future. In addition, Sheehy-skeffington & Rea (2017) discovered that being low in SES means being less certain about one's career aspirations; however, this uncertainty leads to having more open-minded and realistic career aspirations, and they end up doing better than their higher SES peers with fixed or highly optimistic aspirations.

To better understand the CDMD experienced by Bidikmisi students, Table 2 displays the results of differential tests on parents' education level. There was a 0.037 ($p < 0.05$) difference in the overall difficulty of making career decisions experienced by Bidikmisi students. Furthermore, a significant difference in the General Indecisiveness was discovered, which was 0.045 ($p < 0.05$), while sub-dimensions showed no significant difference ($p > 0.05$). These findings indicate that CDMD is higher in Bidikmisi students with parents who have college and secondary education levels than parents who only have a primary education level.

Table 2. CDMD Differences Based on Parents' Educational Level

	Parents' education level	Mean	N	Prob/Sig.	Interpretation
Total of CDMD	Primary	3.99	25	0.037 < 0,05	There is a significant difference
	Secondary	4.65	103		
	College	4.46	26		

General Indecisiveness	Primary	5.28	25	0.045 < 0,05	There is a significant difference
	Secondary	6.16	103		
	College	5.73	26		

General indecisiveness in career decision-making difficulties characterized by individuals' doubts in making decisions in general, such as individuals' inability to make decisions, lack of confidence in making decisions independently, and fear of failure. Family opinion tends to adversely influence the career choices of individuals with lower SES, and parents tend to worry about their children's future because of the family's economic situation (Wood & Smith, 2020). According to Bornstein & Bradley (2003), SES families tend to influence the parenting practices, parental support, and parental involvement in children's career development. Parents with lower education backgrounds tend to prioritize fulfilling their own daily lives over their children's education (Istiqomah et al, 2016), so individuals are left to decide whether to follow in their parent's career or pursue better careers. Parents with lower education level may give their children inaccurate or out-of-date information about careers (Albien & Naidoo, 2017). On the other hand, educated parents spend more time interacting with their children and fostering their child development (Guryan et al., 2008). According to Hsieh and Huang (2014), parents with higher education levels are more likely to support and encourage their children's self-exploration and provide knowledge and tools for career planning and decision-making. Parents' education level increases their comfort and confidence in their ability to involve and intervene in their children's career and educational systems (Faisal, 2014).

Previous studies have found that parents and their involvement have various effects on children's development, particularly in terms of careers. Parents are one of the most important career role models (Sattler, 2021). Individuals begin to form a career identity based on the types of jobs they see in their family and social circles (Barnes, et al., 2020). Therefore, Yavuz (2019) suggested that parental education and socioeconomic status could predict career readiness.

Several studies have found that parents' expectations, values, involvement, and demands positively influence the careers of Asian children because they help children understand education levels, career choices, and fields of work (Shea et al., 2007). Other studies have found that certain types of parental involvement can be disadvantageous to decision-making. Parents who exert pressure and control can potentially cause their children to doubt themselves and make career decisions difficult (Kenny, et al., 2007). Zhang and colleagues (2019) discovered that parental career interference negatively correlated with individuals' career decision self-efficacy. This supports the idea that people from overly controlling and involved families are more likely to struggle with decision-making in general (Lopez & Andrews, 1987). Parents may notice their kids' poor decision-making and decide to step in. Their children, in turn, may perceive it as pressure because of too much involvement, resulting in passivity and indecisiveness due to low decision-making self-efficacy, as suggested by Guay and colleagues (2003). However, Mbagwu & Ajaegbu (2016) has somewhat negated this finding that parents from higher educational backgrounds have more consistency and less difficulty in making career decisions.

Table 3 displays the results of the differential test by gender, which are 0.433 ($p > 0.05$), indicating that there was no statistically significant difference in the CDMD experienced by male and female Bidikmisi students. This finding is aligned with Albion's (2000) and Outei's (2017) researches, which found there was no significant difference between boys and girls in the level of difficulty they faced when making career decisions and CDMD was experienced by both genders. Darmasaputro (2018) also discovered similar research findings in Indonesia where there were no gender differences in career decision-making.

Table 3. CDMD Differences Based on Gender

	Gender	Mean	N	Prob/Sig.	Interpretation
Total of CDMD	Male	4.59	54	0.433 > 0,05	

Female 4.48 100

There is no significant difference

CONCLUSION

The current study concludes that the majority of Bidikmisi students had moderate difficulty in making career decisions. Lack of Readiness is the area in which Bidikmisi students had the most difficulty making career decisions. This study not only describes the career difficulties among Bidikmisi students, but also reveals a significant difference in career decision-making difficulties depending on parents' education level in which individuals with parents with secondary and college levels of education had higher CDMD. However, there was no statistically significant difference between male and female students regarding career decision-making difficulties. These results highlight the importance of career counselors assisting socioeconomically disadvantaged students in order to help them make appropriate career options despite their shortcomings. Institutions and educators must improve career advising and education for Bidikmisi students. Parents can also learn about their children's career needs, and modern work demands to give good career support, encouragement, and advice.

Some limitations were found in this study and can be used for further research considerations. The current study used a small sample of college students from one university, limiting its generalizability. The findings may not apply to all students at this institution level. The research was quantitative and descriptive. Descriptive studies are ineffective in understanding the causal effect of a described phenomenon, making it difficult to understand the context. This study also used a survey technique, contributing to self-report bias because participants may have answered questions based on desirability. Although there are some limitations, this study contributes to the CDMD phenomenon for socioeconomically disadvantaged students, specifically Bidikmisi students. Overcoming these limitations will help future research better understand the CDMD among socioeconomically disadvantaged students.

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