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THE INFLUENCE OF FUTURE ORIENTATION ON CAREER DECISION-MAKING SELF-EFFICACY AMONG SENIOR HIGH AND VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract

Despite documented linear relationships between future orientation and career self-efficacy globally, there remains a gap in understanding how these specific psychological variations influence upper secondary school students across different educational tracks in the Indonesian context. This study aims to examine the empirical effect of future orientation on career decision-making self-efficacy (CDMSE), specifically addressing this gap by analyzing how long-term cognitive awareness drives career confidence. Employing a quantitative predictive-correlational design, data were collected through a hybrid survey using adapted scales involving 576 upper secondary students from Padang City. The findings reveal that future orientation exerts a significant, robust positive influence on CDMSE, independently contributing 13.4% to its variance, with a highly positive descriptive distribution showing no students in low categories. This research contributes to the field of education by directly filling the identified geographic gap and providing empirical evidence that links internal cognitive visualization to active adolescent career tasks. The implications suggest that school counselors should pivot from merely distributing occupational brochures to designing integrated interventions that actively cultivate students' long-term goal-setting and internal control.

Keywords: Future orientation; Career decision-making self-efficacy; Quantitative research; Adolescent career dynamics; Educational track

INTRODUCTION

Late adolescence represents a crucial phase wherein individuals are confronted with demands to determine their future academic and professional trajectories (Harring, 2024). For senior high school students, the transition toward higher education or the workforce necessitates mature psychological readiness in career decision-making (Bazargaliyeva et al., 2026; Bubić & Ivanišević, 2016; Kravchenko et al., 2020). One of the most vital internal factors determining the success of this process is career decision-making self-efficacy (CDMSE), which refers to an individual's belief in their ability to successfully execute the tasks required to make effective career decisions (Baglama & Uzunboylu, 2017; Kenny & Claudius, 2020). When students possess high CDMSE, they tend to be more active in career exploration and demonstrate greater resilience when encountering academic barriers (Chen et al., 2021). Conversely, low CDMSE potentially triggers prolonged anxiety, role confusion, and uncertainty regarding their future (Lee & Jung, 2022; S. Li & Pan, 2026; Müceldili et al., 2025).

Theoretically, the development of CDMSE is heavily influenced by how students perceive and conceptualize their future, a concept known as future orientation (Alm et al., 2019; Bozzato, 2024). Future orientation encompasses an individual's cognitive representation, motivation, and evaluation of forthcoming future events based on their current life experiences and knowledge (Bozzato, 2024; Tanguay et al., 2020). Through the aspect of instrumentality, future-oriented students are capable of recognizing that their current actions or academic performance exert a direct impact on the attainment of their long-term goals (Janeiro et al., 2017; Y. Liu et al., 2025). Beyond internal factors, the social environment, such as family support, specifically positive maternal parenting, has been empirically proven to strengthen adolescents' future orientation by mediating and enhancing their self-efficacy beliefs during the career decision-making process (Rubiyanti et al., 2026; Su et al., 2026).

The urgency of this study is predicated on the high prevalence of college major mismatch among university students and career misalignment within the workforce, both of which are largely rooted in the deficient readiness of upper secondary school students. Many senior high school students make crucial career decisions hastily, merely following prevailing trends or simply succumbing to environmental expectations without a solid foundation of self-efficacy (Chunlei Xu & Maria Theresa Cardano, 2026; Kenny & Claudius, 2020). If this issue remains unaddressed

without clear psychological interventions, students risk experiencing diminished life satisfaction and decreased long-term productivity due to an inability to appropriately direct their personal potential (Canoğulları, 2025; Fält-Weckman et al., 2024; Perrella et al., 2026). Consequently, understanding the interaction between future orientation and CDMSE is highly imperative so that educational institutions can avert the loss of time, financial resources, and academic potential among the younger generation.

Although the linear relationship between future orientation and CDMSE has been widely documented in global literature (Badwy et al., 2025; Kvasková & Almenara, 2021; Rubiyanti et al., 2026), a significant research gap remains, particularly within the context of the Indonesian education system. Most prior studies have generalized the characteristics of secondary school students or focused on career efficacy macroscopically without considering specific educational track dynamics. Senior high school (SMA) students are institutionally prepared with an academically oriented curriculum directed toward pursuing higher education. This fundamentally contrasts with vocational high school (SMK) students, who are designed from the outset to immediately enter the practical labor market. These differing curricular focuses give rise to contrasting psychological variations in how they perceive the urgency of the future (future orientation) and how this subsequently influences their career decision-making self-efficacy beliefs (Sthephani et al., 2019).

Based on the background, urgency, and research gaps presented, this study specifically aims to examine the empirical effect of future orientation on career decision-making self-efficacy among the senior high school student population. The findings of this study are expected to provide novel theoretical contributions to the literature on developmental and educational psychology regarding adolescent career dynamics within academic tracks. Practically, this study is anticipated to serve as a reference for school counselors or guidance and counseling (BK) teachers in designing integrated career guidance programs that do not merely train technical major selection skills, but rather focus on constructing long-term awareness (future orientation) among students so that their career decision self-efficacy beliefs can be optimally and sustainably developed.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Career decision-making self-efficacy (CDMSE)

Career decision-making self-efficacy (CDMSE) was first introduced by Hackett & Betz (1981) as an individual's evaluation of their ability to make career decisions (Hackett & Betz, 1981). This concept was later expanded by Lent & Hackett (1987), who linked it to career development and adaptation behaviors (Lent & Hackett, 1987), and further reinforced by Anderson & Betz (2001) as an individual's belief in managing career choices and long-term career development (Anderson & Betz, 2001). In a broader context, Sawitri (2009) highlighted CDMSE as the capacity to perform self-appraisals, gather information, set goals, make plans, and solve career-related problems (Sawitri et al., 2014). Although experts generally agree that CDMSE focuses on an individual's confidence in managing career decisions, their specific emphases differ: Taylor & Betz (1983) focused on problem-solving and accurate self-appraisal, Lent & Hackett (1987) emphasized career adaptation, Sawitri (2009) underscored comprehensive planning, while Anderson & Betz (2001) placed greater emphasis on long-term career success.

The researcher chose to adopt the CDMSE framework proposed by Taylor & Betz (1983) due to its detailed, structured, and practical operationalization. The advantage of this theory lies in its systematic and applicable guidance for daily life, ranging from objective self-evaluation to navigating uncertainty through problem-solving. This approach enables individuals to build strong self-confidence in planning their future careers. The selection of this theory is also supported by Anderson & Betz (2001), who posited that strong CDMSE enhances overall career management success.

According to Taylor & Betz (1983), CDMSE consists of five key dimensions that collectively measure an individual's level of confidence in completing tasks required for effective career decision-making (Taylor & Betz, 1983):

1. *Self-appraisal*: The individual's confidence in accurately assessing their strengths and weaknesses to identify behaviors that need improvement.
2. *Gathering occupational information*: The confidence to seek and collect relevant information regarding occupational fields of interest.
3. *Goal selection*: The ability to set clear career goals aligned with personal interests, skills, and values.
4. *Planning*: The confidence to formulate strategic plans to achieve future career choices.
5. *Problem-solving*: The ability to analyze career obstacles, design alternative solutions based on reliable data, and effectively evaluate the outcomes.

Future orientation **(FO)**

Future orientation (FO) is a concept referring to the extent to which an individual thinks about, plans for, and prepares for the future, encompassing cognitive, affective, and motivational aspects in responding to upcoming challenges and opportunities (Cui et al., 2025; Finn et al., 2025; T. Li et al., 2024; J. Liu et al., 2025; Steinberg et al., 2009). According to Seginer (2009), FO refers to an individual's personal image or outlook regarding their future, which aids in adapting to major life transitions such as education, career, or marriage (Seginer, 2009). Generally, scholars agree that FO is closely tied to how individuals perceive and plan their future through goal-directed decision-making. Nevertheless, their emphases vary: Seginer (2009) highlighted personal aspirations and adaptation to life transitions, whereas Steinberg et al. (2009) focused more on cognitive aspects and the ability to anticipate the long-term consequences of present decisions.

The researcher selected the future orientation concept from Steinberg et al. (2009) due to its emphasis on proactively considering long-term consequences. The strength of this theory lies in providing a solid foundation for individuals to make more mature and well-planned decisions while avoiding hasty actions. This approach is highly relevant in the context of high-stakes decision-making, such as career choices and education, and serves to motivate individuals to act with full readiness in facing future challenges.

According to Steinberg et al. (2009), future orientation comprises three main interrelated dimensions (Steinberg et al., 2009):

1. *Time perspective*, the degree to which an individual thinks about the future and projects their future outlook.
2. *Anticipation of future consequences*, the individual's ability to consider the impacts or outcomes of present actions on their future life.
3. *Planning ahead*, the extent to which an individual formulates concrete plans and prepares strategic steps to achieve long-term goals.

METHOD

Research Design and Track

This study employs a quantitative approach. This method was selected to empirically and objectively examine the predictive pattern and influence of the independent variable, namely future orientation, on the dependent variable, which is career decision-making self-efficacy (CDMSE) among secondary school students.

Participants and Sampling

The target population in this study comprises all active upper secondary school students across Padang City enrolled in 2025, totaling 44,912 students (consisting of 26,668 senior high school [SMA] students and 18,244 vocational high school [SMK] students). The sampling technique applied is a non-probability sampling strategy, specifically the accidental sampling (convenience sampling) method, wherein subjects were selected based on structural accessibility and the willingness of both the participating schools and students to cooperate in the data collection process. Based on the minimum sample size calculation utilizing Cochran's formula for large populations ($N > 10{,}000$) with a 5% margin of error, a minimum target of 385 subjects was obtained. However, to enhance data representativeness, the actual sample successfully recruited for this study consisted of 576 students distributed across five schools, namely SMAN 4 Padang (18.9%), SMAN 10 Padang (22.2%), SMAN 15 Padang (17.7%), SMA SMAK Padang (20.0%), and SMKN 1 Padang (21.2%).

Instruments and Materials

Primary data collection was conducted using a concurrent hybrid approach combining web-based surveys (*Google Forms*) and printed questionnaires, utilizing two adapted psychometric instruments:

1. Future Orientation Scale (FOS): Developed based on the framework established by Steinberg et al. (2009), this scale measures an individual's capacity to conceptualize, anticipate consequences, and plan for the future. The scale consists of 15 items evaluating three foundational dimensions: *time perspective*, *anticipation of future consequences*, and *planning ahead*. The response model utilizes options ranging from a score of 1 to 4.
2. Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Short Form (CDMSE-SF): Rooted in the theory of Taylor and Betz (1983), this instrument gauges students' confidence levels in successfully executing the tasks required to make effective career decisions. This instrument consists of 25 *favorable* items that evenly encompass five dimensions (5 items per dimension): *self-appraisal*, *gathering occupational information*, *goal selection*, *planning*, and *problem solving*. The response options range from a score of 1 (not confident at all) to 5

(highly confident).

Validity and Reliability of the Instruments

Evidence of content validity for both instruments was obtained through expert judgment involving three psychology experts, followed by a quantitative analysis using Aiken's V formula. The resulting Aiken's V coefficients demonstrated values of 1 for the CDMSE-SF instrument and 1 for the FOS instrument, indicating that all items possessed good relevance and were highly appropriate for use. Field-based item selection was conducted via corrected item-total correlation analysis, employing a discrimination index threshold of ≥0.30. For the reliability test, this study utilized the Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency technique. The test results revealed remarkably high reliability coefficients, specifically 0.844 for the future orientation variable and 0.913 for the career decision-making self-efficacy variable; thus, both instruments were declared highly reliable.

Data Analysis

Prior to hypothesis testing, the data were subjected to a series of prerequisite statistical tests, which included a normality test (One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov), a linearity test, and a heteroscedasticity test. Once all parametric assumptions were satisfied, simple linear regression analysis was applied as the primary data analysis technique to examine the hypothesis, specifically evaluating the independent predictive capacity of future orientation on CDMSE. All statistical computations were performed using the SPSS software package.

Research Design and Context

This study is rooted in the positivist paradigm, which aims to uncover objective truths and predict behavioral outcomes through empirical measurement and statistical analysis. The research design employed is a quantitative predictive-correlational design. The use of this design is highly justified as the primary objective of the study is to statistically test and predict the independent function of an internal psychological trait (future orientation) on a specific domain of self-beliefs (career decision-making self-efficacy) without active experimental manipulation. The context of this research is situated in Padang City, West Sumatra Province, Indonesia. The data collection process was carried out within a specific timeframe, commencing from February 2026 until March 2026. The institutional settings in this study involved several public upper secondary education institutions, consisting of four senior high schools (SMA) and one vocational high school (SMK). Administrative clearance and formal ethical approval were officially obtained from the West Sumatra Provincial Education Department under letter number 000.9.2/1048/PSMASLB/DISDIK-2026, dated February 9, 2026.

Participants and Sampling

The target population in this study comprises all active upper secondary school students across Padang City, totaling 44,912 individuals (consisting of 26,668 senior high school [SMA] students and 18,244 vocational high school [SMK] students) based on the latest 2025 statistical census data. A non-probability accidental sampling (convenience sampling) strategy was utilized due to operational constraints, school accessibility, and the willingness of the participating institutions to cooperate during the active field duration of the study. To determine the minimum required sample size for a large population where N>10.000, Cochran's sample size formula was applied:

$$n_0 = \frac{Z^2 \cdot p \cdot (1-p)}{e^2}$$

With a 95% confidence level (Z=1.96), an estimated proportion (p=0.50), and a 5% margin of error (e=0.05), the mathematically minimum required sample size was 385 subjects. To maximize statistical power and minimize sampling error, the actual sample successfully recruited consisted of 576 students.

The inclusion criteria required participants to be active students in grades X, XI, or XII at the participating schools. The exclusion criteria were applied to students who were absent during the active data collection days or returned incomplete questionnaire packets. The primary demographic attributes of the 576 participants are detailed as follows:

1. Gender: 327 female students (56.8%) and 249 male students (43.2%).
2. Age Profile: 4 participants were aged 14 (0.7%), 50 individuals aged 15 (8.7%), 221 individuals aged 16 (38.4%), 196 individuals aged 17 (34.0%), 103 individuals aged 18 (17.9%), 1 individual aged 19 (0.2%), and 1 individual aged 22 (0.2%).
3. Grade Level: 195 students from Grade X (33.9%), 225 students from Grade XI (39.1%), and 156 students from Grade XII (27.1%).

4. School Type: 339 students pursued the general high school track (58.9%) and 237 students pursued the vocational track (41.1%).
5. School Origin Distribution: SMAN 4 Padang ($n = 109$; 18.9%), SMAN 10 Padang ($n = 128$; 22.2%), SMAN 15 Padang ($n = 102$; 17.7%), SMA SMAK Padang ($n = 115$; 20.0%), and SMKN 1 Padang ($n = 122$; 21.2%).

Instruments and Materials

Two standardized psychometric instruments were adapted and structurally modified to suit the demographics of upper secondary school students in Indonesia:

1. Future Orientation Scale (FOS)

   Derived from the structural framework established by Steinberg et al. (2009), this instrument operationalizes an individual's capacity to conceptualize, evaluate, and plan for their future periods. The scale consists of 15 items evaluating three foundational latent dimensions: *time perspective* (5 items), *anticipation of future consequences* (5 items), and *planning ahead* (5 items). The items are structured using a dual-statement forced-choice format scored on a 4-point continuum (1 = *Sangat Sesuai dengan Pernyataan A* to 4 = *Sangat Sesuai dengan Pernyataan B*).

   Evidence of content validity was obtained through a rigorous qualitative and quantitative review process by three independent expert judges specializing in psychology. Quantitative evaluation of their assessments using Aiken's V formula yielded a high content validity index of 1, validating its contextual and conceptual relevance. Item discrimination analysis confirmed that all items satisfied the corrected item-total correlation coefficient threshold of ≥0.30. Internal consistency testing demonstrated strong reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of α=0.844.
2. Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Short Form (CDMSE-SF)

   Adapted from Taylor and Betz (1983), this scale gauges students' self-efficacy beliefs regarding their capacity to successfully execute critical tasks required in the career selection process. The 25-item instrument captures five dimensions evenly (5 items per dimension): *self-appraisal*, *gathering occupational information*, *goal selection*, *planning*, and *problem solving*. Participants' responses are quantified using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *Tidak yakin sama sekali* to 5 = *Sangat yakin*).

   Expert judgment analysis combined with Aiken's V computational formula produced an excellent content validity index of 1. Field testing confirmed item quality, with all items satisfying the standard item-total correlation coefficient threshold (≥0.30). The scale also displayed exceptional internal consistency, achieving a Cronbach's alpha value of α=0.913.

Procedure and Data Collection

The research procedure progressed through clear chronological phases designed to control the emergence of systematic procedural bias:

1. Administrative Phase (August 2025 - January 2026): This phase encompassed proposal development, scale translation, adaptation, and formal validation by an expert panel. Research clearance was officially requested and approved by the West Sumatra Provincial Education Department.
2. Field Coordination Phase (Early February 2026): The researcher established institutional communication with the principals and Guidance and Counseling (BK) departments across the five targeted schools to schedule the questionnaire distribution sessions.
3. Active Data Collection Phase (February 11 - March 25, 2026): Data collection employed a concurrent hybrid approach combining physical paper-and-pencil questionnaires and web-based digital surveys (Google Forms) to accommodate varying school infrastructures. To minimize situational bias and social desirability effects, the surveys were administered in structured classroom blocks under the direct supervision of the researcher and BK teachers. The instruction script was read aloud, explicitly emphasizing that responses carried no academic consequences. Participants required approximately 20-30 minutes to complete the entire instrument packet.

Data Analysis Strategy

Statistical computations were executed utilizing the SPSS software package version 25. Prior to hypothesis testing, a systematic data cleaning procedure was implemented; questionnaire packets containing missing values exceeding the 5% threshold were immediately excluded from the dataset.

Prerequisite parametric assumption testings were meticulously conducted to prevent model misspecification:

- Normality: Evaluated using the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test on the model's residual values, confirming a normal distribution pattern ($KS = 0.200$; $p > 0.05$). This statistical finding was visually corroborated by the close alignment of data points along the diagonal line of the Normal P-P Plot.
- L inearity: Assessed via the ANOVA Deviation from Linearity test, which demonstrated a highly linear structural relationship between future orientation and CDMSE (p=0.550, indicating no significant non-linear deviation).
- Homoscedasticity: Verified through both visual residual plot examinations and a quantitative variance test, confirming a stable error variance structure across the variables (p=0.876; p>0.05).

Once all parametric assumptions were fully satisfied, a simple linear regression analysis was deployed as the primary inferential statistical technique to evaluate the predictive capacity and determine the effect size (R^2) of future orientation on career decision-making self-efficacy.

Ethical Considerations

This study strictly adhered to national and institutional research ethics standards governing the involvement of minor participants. Prior to the administration of the instruments, institutional approval was obtained from the respective school authorities. An informed consent disclosure sheet was transparently presented on the front page of both the physical and digital questionnaires. Participants were explicitly provided with detailed information regarding:

1. The purely academic and non-commercial nature of the research project.
2. The guarantee of strict confidentiality and anonymity, which was implemented by replacing participants' real names with numerical codes during the data coding phase.
3. Their absolute right to voluntary participation, including the option to withdraw from the study at any time without facing any institutional penalties or sanctions.

All collected physical questionnaire sheets were stored in a locked private cabinet, and the digital database was securely archived on an encrypted cloud computing server accessible exclusively to the principal investigator.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Descriptive Statistical Analysis

Descriptive statistics were utilized to provide an overview of the empirical score distributions for the variables of career decision-making self-efficacy (CDMSE) and future orientation (FO) across the 576 research participants. A detailed statistical description of both the theoretical (hypothetical) and real-field (empirical) data is presented in Table 1:

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Hypothetical and Empirical Scores

Variable	Hypothetical Mean	Hypothetical SD	Empirical Mean	Empirical SD	Min. Score (Empirical)	Max. Score (Empirical)
Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy (CDMSE)	75	16,7	98,53	14,132	29	125
Future Orientation (FO)	37,5	7,5	47,12	6,734	35	60

Based on Table 1, the empirical mean of CDMSE ($M = 98.53$, $SD = 14.132$) was observed to be higher than its hypothetical counterpart ($M = 75$). A similar pattern emerged for the future orientation variable, where the empirical mean ($M = 47.12$, $SD = 6.734$) stood well above its theoretical level ($M = 37.5$).

To map the psychological conditions of the subjects more specifically, score categorizations were performed based on the empirical data interval distribution across five distinct levels. The categorization results for both variables are presented in Table 2:

Table 2. Distribution of Subject Score Categorization (N=576)

Category	CDMSE (Frequency)	CDMSE Percentage (%)	Future Orientation (Frequency)	Future Orientation Percentage (%)
Very High	308	53,5%	257	44,6%
High	188	32,6%	168	29,2%
Moderate / Medium	63	10,9%	151	26,2%
Low	12	2,1%	0	0%
Very Low	5	0,9%	0	0%
Total	**576**	**100%**	**576**	**100%**

Data from Table 2 indicates a high internal capacity among the students, with the accumulated positive levels (High and Very High) reaching 86.1% for the CDMSE aspect and 73.8% for future orientation. Interestingly, not a single participant (0.0%) was found to possess future orientation levels falling within the Low or Very Low categories.

Prerequisite Assumption Testing

The data model strictly satisfied the parametric assumption criteria. Residual values were normally distributed as evaluated by the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test (*KS*=0.200; *p*>0.05). The linearity test demonstrated a significantly linear relationship between FO and CDMSE (*p Linearity*=0.001<0.05; *p Deviation from Linearity*=0.550>0.05). Furthermore, the model was free from heteroscedasticity, as verified by the residual variance analysis (*p*=0.876>0.05).

Hypothesis Testing (Simple Linear Regression Analysis)

Hypothesis testing was conducted to examine whether future orientation independently predicts the level of career decision-making self-efficacy among high school and vocational school students in Padang City. A summary of the simple linear regression analysis results is presented in Table 3:

Table 3. Results Summary of Simple Linear Regression Analysis

Predictor Variable	Regression Coefficient (B)	Beta (β)	Calculated t (t-value)	Significance (p)	R Square (R^2)
Konstanta	29,174	-	6,729	0,000	0,134
Future Orientation	0,294	0,294	9,460	0,000	

Based on Table 3, the linear regression equation is formulated as follows: Y=29,174+0,294X

The constant value of 29.174 indicates that if a student's future orientation remains constant at zero, the predicted CDMSE score would be 29.174. The positive regression coefficient of 0.294 demonstrates that for every one-unit increase in the future orientation score, the student's level of career decision-making self-efficacy is predicted to increase by 0.294.

The results of the partial coefficient test (t-test) revealed a calculated t-value of 9.460 with a significance level of p=0.000 (p<0.05). This statistical finding indicates that the hypothesis is accepted, confirming that future orientation exerts a significant and robust positive influence on career decision-making self-efficacy among high school students. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.134 demonstrates that future orientation independently provides an effective contribution of 13.4% to the variance in students' CDMSE levels, while the remaining percentage is explained by other factors outside the scope of this research article.

Discussion

The empirical findings of this study confirm that future orientation serves as a crucial internal factor driving the development of career decision-making self-efficacy (CDMSE) among upper secondary school adolescents. The statistical results demonstrate a significant positive predictive capacity, implying that a more optimal capacity in students to envision their future, weigh consequences, and plan ahead corresponds to a higher degree of confidence in successfully executing their career decision-making stages.

The psychological dynamics underlying the influence of future orientation on CDMSE can be understood through its three primary dimensions based on the framework by Steinberg et al. (2009): *time perspective*,

anticipation of future consequences, and *planning ahead*. When adolescents possess an extended *time perspective*, their cognitive focus is not confined merely to immediate short-term gratification; rather, they habitually project their self-image 5 to 10 years into the future. This mature capacity for future visualization cognitively guides them to anticipate the consequences (*anticipation of future consequences*) of their current academic actions and specialization choices on their eventual career path (Steinberg et al., 2009).

Adolescents who habitually think strategically exercise the *planning ahead* aspect by breaking down their overarching career aspirations into small, tangible, and structured steps. Through this active process, the essential components that construct CDMSE according to Taylor and Betz (1983) are systematically honed. Consequently, students become more confident in conducting objective self-appraisals (*self-appraisal*), intrinsically driven to gather occupational information and academic program trends (*gathering occupational information*), and resilient in establishing commitments toward their life targets (*goal selection*) (Taylor & Betz, 1983).

From the perspective of developmental psychology literature, the descriptive analysis results showing an absolute absence of students within the Low and Very Low future orientation categories (0.0%) closely reflect the distinct characteristics of late adolescence (aged 15–18 years). Being situated in a crucial transitional phase toward emerging adulthood subjects them to intense social, academic, and occupational pressures to rapidly detach from their childhood identity (Guo et al., 2026; Gustafsson, 2024; Vanluydt et al., 2026). Furthermore, the real-world labor market context indicates that the Open Unemployment Rate (*Tingkat Pengangguran Terbuka* [TPT]) for senior high and vocational high school graduates in the West Sumatra region remains critically high, exceeding 7%. This alarming economic indicator triggers a heightened sense of vigilance among students, compelling them to be proactive in deliberating and planning for their future livelihood (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2024).

The predictive findings of this study align with and strengthen prior empirical evidence demonstrated by Alif Muarifah and Nurliyana (2022) within vocational student cohorts, which posits future orientation as an internal compass that guides career decisions to become more realistic (Alif Muarifah & Nurliyana, 2022). A longitudinal study conducted by Kvasková and Almenara (2021) further supports this notion, demonstrating that individuals with a sharp forward-looking time perspective consistently display lower levels of career anxiety and robust self-efficacy when navigating dynamic labor market conditions (Kvasková & Almenara, 2021).

Although future orientation independently accounts for 13.4% of the variance in students' career self-efficacy, this proportion indicates that internal cognitive foundations require synergy with other contextual social environment variables to fully manifest career confidence. Nevertheless, these results offer valuable practical recommendations for school guidance and counseling (*Bimbingan Konseling* [BK]) practitioners. Career interventions should no longer merely focus on distributing informational brochures regarding college majors or occupations; instead, they must actively target students' cognitive capacities through long-term goal-setting training and the cultivation of internal control, ensuring that a structured vision of the future is formed early on.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the empirical data analysis and discussion conducted among 576 senior high and vocational high school students in Padang City, it can be concluded that future orientation exerts a significant and robust positive influence on career decision-making self-efficacy (CDMSE) among upper secondary school students. This predictive finding implies that a more optimal internal capacity within students to plan, anticipate the consequences of current actions, and project long-term steps forward corresponds to a stronger self-confidence in successfully completing all stages of their career choice tasks. Separately, future orientation is proven to provide an effective contribution of 13.4% to the variance in students' career decision-making self-efficacy levels, while the remaining variance is influenced by other variables outside the scope of this research model. Furthermore, the descriptive profile indicates a highly positive data distribution, as the majority of the subjects fall into the upper tiers (High and Very High categories), and notably, not a single student was found within the Low or Very Low categories regarding their future orientation aspect.

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