

# An Overview of Career Maturity Among Grade XII-I Students at SMA Negeri 1 Pintu Pohan Meranti

Jesslyn Novita Sibuea\*, Hannisa Heriadi, Era Fazira, Priskila Adelisa Simbolon, Anika Sari Ayu  
Universitas Negeri Medan, Medan, Indonesia

## ABSTRACT

Career planning is a crucial aspect of student development, as it determines future directions after completing secondary education. However, many students still demonstrate inadequate levels of career maturity, which hinders their ability to make career choices aligned with their interests and potential. This study aimed to analyze the level of career maturity among students at SMA Negeri 1 Pintu Pohan Meranti and to identify the aspects that most influence their readiness in making career decisions. A descriptive quantitative method was employed, involving 40 students as respondents who completed a 38-item Likert-scale questionnaire. The research instrument measured four dimensions of career maturity: career planning, career information exploration, informational competence, and career decision-making. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency and mean calculations, and total scores were classified into low, moderate, and high categories.

The results revealed that 32.5% of students were categorized as having low career maturity, 35.0% as moderate, and 32.5% as high. These findings indicate that the majority of students exhibit low to moderate levels of career maturity, underscoring the importance of systematic and structured career guidance services in schools. This study provides practical implications for guidance and counseling teachers in designing more targeted and effective interventions to enhance students' career maturity.

## ARTICLE HISTORY

Received : 7 November 2025  
Accepted : 27 December 2025

## KEYWORDS

Career Maturity; Career guidance; Career planning

\* Corresponding Author: [jesslynsibuea88@gmail.com](mailto:jesslynsibuea88@gmail.com)

© 2026 The Author(s). Published by Era Scientific Publisher (ERA).

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited. The terms on which this article has been published allow the posting of the Accepted Manuscript in a repository by the author(s) or with their consent.

## Introduction

In Indonesia, numerous studies have reported that the level of career maturity among senior high school students remains in the moderate to low category. Many students experience uncertainty when determining their field of study and future occupations that align with their personal potential. This condition is influenced by several factors, including limited exploration of career-related information, insufficient guidance provided by schools, and the influence of social and environmental contexts.

Adolescence represents a transitional stage in human development, during which individuals encounter various challenges, seek self-identity, and approach adulthood (Herlina, 2013). From early adolescence, individuals are required to make choices and begin preparing themselves for future career involvement (Milah et al., 2021). Ideally, adolescents enter the career exploration stage, in which they identify their interests, talents, and personal values, while initiating plans for their educational and occupational pathways. Developmental psychology suggests that individuals aged 15–24 years are in the exploration stage, characterized by career planning that considers interests, values, abilities, and alternative career options (Empati et al., 2019).

Previous research on high school students' career planning emphasizes that career planning is a fundamental developmental task during adolescence and is influenced by multiple internal and external factors (Rohma, 2023). Similarly, studies on career maturity highlight its critical role in supporting long-term career development (Sari et al., 2023). Therefore, adolescents should not only focus on formal education but also be guided to develop self-understanding, gain insight into the world of work, make informed career decisions, and prepare for transitions to higher education or employment.

The senior high school period constitutes a critical phase of transition toward adulthood and marks the beginning of actual career engagement (Pratama & Suharnan, 2015). At this stage, students enter the crystallization phase, during which they acquire knowledge and skills through formal and informal education as preparation for future careers (Aini & Nastiti, 2024).

SMA Negeri 1 Pintu Pohan Meranti, a senior high school located in Toba Regency, exhibits similar conditions. Preliminary observations indicate that many students lack clear career plans and sufficient readiness to make career-related decisions. This situation highlights the importance of examining students' levels of career maturity as a foundation for designing effective and responsive career guidance programs. Accordingly, this study aims to describe the level of students' career maturity and the distribution of students across low, moderate, and high categories. The findings are expected to provide valuable input for guidance and counseling teachers in developing more effective career guidance services. Despite the expectation that adolescents are capable of understanding themselves and planning their careers maturely, many students continue to experience confusion, limited self-awareness, inadequate guidance, and strong environmental influences that significantly shape their career development.

## Method

This study employed a descriptive quantitative approach, as it sought to describe the actual condition of students' career maturity based on data obtained through a questionnaire. This approach was selected to provide an objective overview of students' readiness and planning for future careers.

The population of this study consisted of all eleventh- and twelfth-grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Pintu Pohan Meranti during the 2024/2025 academic year, totaling 37 students. Given the relatively small and accessible population, a total sampling technique was applied, whereby all members of the population were included as research respondents. Consequently, the sample size was also 37 students.

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including the calculation of means and standard deviations, as well as the classification of total scores into three categories—low, moderate, and high—based on tertile distribution. The analysis was conducted using Microsoft Excel software. The research instrument employed was a career maturity scale questionnaire developed based on four core dimensions: career planning, referring to students' ability to formulate goals and strategies for their future careers; career exploration, which reflects students' efforts to seek information about the world of work or further education; informational competence, indicating students' understanding of various career options and their requirements; and career decision-making, defined as students' ability to make independent and realistic career choices. The instrument consisted of 38 items measured using a four-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (4) to Strongly Disagree (1). The total score obtained represented the level of students' career maturity, with higher scores indicating higher levels of career maturity. Content validity was assessed through expert judgment involving three validators, who evaluated each item based on utility, feasibility, and accuracy. The validation results indicated that all items were relevant and appropriate for research purposes. Instrument reliability was established through conceptual consistency, as all items were systematically designed to measure the same construct—students' career maturity—thereby confirming that the instrument possessed adequate conceptual reliability for use with senior high school students.

## Result and Discussion

### Results

#### RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of data processing from 40 respondents, the distribution of students' career maturity levels is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of students' career maturity categories

| Category | Frequency | percentage |
|----------|-----------|------------|
| Low      | 13        | 32.5%      |
| Moderate | 14        | 35.0%      |
| High     | 13        | 32.5%      |

From the table above, it can be seen that the majority of students fall into the moderate category, while the proportions of the low and high categories are relatively balanced. These results indicate that the overall level of students' career maturity remains at a moderate stage and still requires improvement through effective career guidance services at school.

## Discussion

The results of this study support Super's theory (1990), which posits that students' career development is at the exploration stage, where individuals begin to identify their interests, values, and abilities. According to Ghufron and Risnawati (2010), individuals at this stage typically possess personal characteristics such as self-confidence, optimism, objectivity, responsibility, rationality, and realism. As cited in Purworahayu and Rasmawati (2020), Super explained that students with a high level of career maturity tend to have realistic career plans and a clear understanding of the steps needed to achieve them. The level of students' career maturity is influenced by career exploration activities and social support from teachers and parents. Furthermore, the findings emphasize that group career counseling interventions can significantly enhance students' career maturity. Therefore, guidance and counseling (BK) teachers play a strategic role in helping students understand their potential and make appropriate career decisions. The implementation of career information services, individual counseling, and industrial visit programs can serve as effective strategies to enhance students' career maturity. The findings revealed that the career maturity level of students at SMA Negeri 1 Pintu Pohan Meranti mostly falls into the moderate to low category. This condition illustrates that many students still lack mature career planning and sufficient ability to determine their future direction. To understand this more deeply, the discussion can be elaborated based on the four key aspects measured in the instrument: career planning, career information exploration, informational competence, and career decision-making.

### 1. Career Planning

Career planning is the process of setting career goals, planning educational or training steps, and monitoring progress toward achieving them. The results showed that many students were unable to formulate clear career goals or create concrete plans to achieve them. This indicates the need for guidance to help students recognize their potential and design realistic career plans. This finding is consistent with Rohma (2023), who stated that career planning is an important developmental task for adolescents and is influenced by self-understanding and environmental support. In this context, the use of a valid career planning scale instrument helps illustrate the extent to which students possess direction and readiness for their future careers.

### 2. Career Information Exploration

Career information exploration refers to students' active efforts to seek, evaluate, and utilize information about the world of work, further education, and self-suitability for various career options. The study found that some students were still less active in exploring career information through activities such as career counseling, industrial visits, or the use of digital information media. Yet, career exploration plays a vital role as the initial stage in making appropriate career decisions. In line with Milah et al. (2021), a low level of career exploration may lead to confusion in determining educational and occupational directions. Therefore, guidance and counseling teachers should enhance exploration-based activities through experiential learning and the use of digital career information resources.

### 3. Informational Competence

Informational competence refers to students' ability to access, evaluate, and use career information effectively in the decision-making process. In this study, informational competence was found to be at a moderate level, indicating that students could access information but had not fully developed the ability to assess its relevance and usefulness for their personal career goals. According to Sari et al. (2023), informational competence serves as a bridge between career exploration and decision-making; without it, the information obtained cannot be utilized optimally. Therefore, improving career information literacy through technology-based guidance and reflective discussions is crucial to help students integrate career data with self-understanding.

### 4. Career Decision-Making

The final aspect is career decision-making, which involves choosing career alternatives (such as majors or occupations) after considering available information, interests, values, and abilities. The findings indicate that several students were not yet able to make independent and realistic

career decisions. This supports Super's theory (1990) as cited in Purworahayu and Rusmawati (2020), which asserts that individuals in the exploration stage still require direction and experience to develop mature decision-making abilities. Effective decision-making is influenced not only by available information but also by self-confidence, self-efficacy, and social support. Therefore, implementing group career counseling sessions and career decision-making training can serve as effective strategies to enhance students' career maturity.

## Conclusion

This study concludes that the career maturity level of students at SMA Negeri 1 Pintu Pohan Meranti falls within the moderate to low category. A number of students have not yet developed well-structured and realistic career plans. Therefore, it is necessary to implement structured and continuous career guidance services in schools.

Guidance and counseling teachers are recommended to conduct student-centered career guidance programs that address individual needs, including interest and aptitude assessments, career exploration activities, and career decision-making training. Such programs are expected to enhance students' self-awareness, career readiness, and ability to make informed choices about their future educational and occupational paths.

## References

- Aini, A. N., & Nastiti, D. (2024). *DESCRIPTION OF CAREER MANTURITY IN HIGH SCHOOL Pendahuluan*. 7(3), 983–1002.
- Empati, J., Almaida, D. S., Febriyanti, D. A., & Psi, S. (2019). *PADA SISWA KELAS XI SMK YAYASAN PHARMASI SEMARANG*. 8, 87–92.
- Milah, M. T., Sudirman, D., & Fridayanti. (2021). Kematangan Karier Siswa: Peranan Tipe Kepribadian dan Dukungan Sosial. *Indonesian Psychological Research*, 4(1), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.29080/ipr.v4i1.644>
- Pratama, B. D., & Suharnan, S. (2015). Hubungan Antara Konsep Diri Dan Internal Locus Of Control Dengan Kematangan Karir Siswa SMA. *Persona:Jurnal Psikologi Indonesia*, 3(03), 213–222. <https://doi.org/10.30996/persona.v3i03.411>
- Purworahayu, D., & Rusmawati, D. (2020). Hubungan Antara Kepercayaan Diri Dengan Kematangan Karir Pada Siswa Sma Negeri 1 Kemangkon Di Kabupaten Purbalingga. *Jurnal EMPATI*, 7(2), 716–721. <https://doi.org/10.14710/empati.2018.21703>
- Rohma, R. N. (2023). *Perencanaan Karir Siswa SMA: Tinjauan Literatur yang Sistematis*. 03(01), 50–60.
- Sari, A., Nanere, Y. E., Ernawati, R., & Indonesia, U. K. (2023). *No Title*. 11(1).