

## Career Decision Making Based On Gelatt's Theory Among Secondary School Students In The Hashemite Kingdom Of Jordan

Dr. Omar Soud Al-Khamaiseh\*

\*Associate Professor in Psychological and Educational Counseling Department of Special Education, Princess Rahma University College, Al-Balqa Applied University, Jordan. dr-omarsoud@bau.edu.jo

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### ABSTRACT

This research aims to assess the career decision making abilities of secondary school students in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (HKJ) during the academic year 2022/2023 AD. The sample comprises 470 high school students selected from various educational schools. Career decision making competence is assessed using the Gelatt model, developed by Alzaben and Abuased (2017). The researcher used a descriptive-analytical method to detect the participants' abilities in making career-related decisions. It was revealed that secondary school students in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan possess a notably high level of career decision making abilities. Furthermore, the results indicate that students in scientific education exhibit a superior aptitude for career decision making compared to their counterparts following the literary education stream.

**Keywords:** Career decision making, Gelatt's theory, Secondary school students, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

### Introduction

Vocational guidance is universally recognized as a cornerstone in guidance and developmental endeavors. Its profound significance lies in its capacity to steer students toward making well-informed career decisions, a pivotal choice that significantly influences their future life trajectories. Since individuals typically devote a substantial portion of their lives to their chosen professions, selecting a career path is paramount.

The origins of the vocational guidance movement can be traced to the pioneering work of the distinguished scholar Frank Parsons in 1908 in the United States of America. Parsons' seminal work, "Choosing a Vocation," stands as a seminal and indispensable contribution to vocational guidance and counseling. Parsons elucidated two fundamental principles that underpin vocational guidance and counseling practices. These principles entail a comprehensive analysis of an individual's unique attributes, encompassing their inclinations, aptitudes, and competencies. Subsequently, the individual is equipped with essential information concerning the multifaceted realm of professions, including the requisite qualifications and competencies demanded by each. This comprehensive approach empowers individuals to make informed career choices aligning with their inherent attributes and aspirations (Abu Hammad, 2008).

Pierrofesa and Splete underscore the profound significance of the career choice decision, noting its far-reaching implications for both individual and societal well-being. This recognition has elevated the act of making career decisions to a central and pivotal concept within professional psychological counseling and its practical applications (Al-Safasfeh and Abu Asaad, 2011). In accordance with the perspectives of Brown and Brooks, career psychological counseling is a dynamic, interactive intervention process designed to provide support to individuals who encounter challenges in making career choices, fostering professional growth, achieving compatibility within it, and progressing therein (Al-Khatib, 2009).

The career decision making process is a fundamental and crucial requirement applicable to all segments of society, including secondary school students. This stage has a distinctive character due to its role in shaping a multitude of decisions encompassing academic choices, the selection of specializations upon completing the secondary level, approaches to studying those specializations, and considerations regarding the financial and economic aspects and the associated obligations that ensue (Al-Sharida; Besharh and Abu Darwish, 2010).

## Study Problem and Importance

The secondary stage holds a pivotal position within the framework of public education in Jordan. It is characterized by distinct features necessitating cautious oversight and the development of effective guidance programs (Faraj, 2009). Many secondary students often struggle with uncertainty when deciding about their future careers. They face questions regarding the appropriate major to study and whether their chosen career paths will align with their abilities and the labor market demands. Therefore, the researcher embarked on this study to shed light on these pressing concerns and offer insights into this pivotal issue, in addition to the scarcity of applied research that relied on Gilat's theory in making professional decisions within the limits of the researcher's knowledge and knowledge.

The theoretical significance of this research is evident, owing to the importance of the age group under investigation and the relevance of its subject matter concerning the assessment of this group's aptitude in making career decisions. This study may contribute to the career decision-making process's theoretical discourse, remaining attuned to contemporary global and technological developments.

The practical importance of this study is twofold. First, it offers valuable guidance to students in identifying the factors that influence their career decision making, aiding their decision making process. Furthermore, it enhances the competencies of counselors in effectively guiding students toward sound career choices. Lastly, it assists educational authorities in devising strategic initiatives to formulate professional programs tailored to the needs of secondary school students. The applied significance of this research is manifest through the formulation and execution of vocational guidance programs rooted in sound scientific principles to enhance the quality and effectiveness of career decision making, ultimately benefiting both students and the education system. The study will address this issue through answering the following questions:

1. To what extent do secondary school students in Jordan possess the skills necessary to make career choices based on Gilatt's theory ?
2. Is there statistical significance, at a significance level of  $\alpha = 0.05$ , in the domain of career decision making among secondary school students in Jordan, attributed to the variable of the educational branch ?

## Study Objectives

The current study aimed to reveal the level of secondary school students' ability to make career decisions using Gilatt's theory. It also seeks to reveal whether there are differences in participants' abilities to make career decisions attributable to the variable of the education branch among secondary school students in Jordan.

## Definitions

**Career decision making:** It involves selecting one of the academic or career options to attain specific objectives, following a defined path that leads to a resolution, thereby closing the door to further contemplation of alternative choices (Toma, 2010).

Operationally, it is the score obtained by sample members responding to the career decision making scale based on Gilatt's theory used in the study, with its overall significance and sub-dimensions.

**Gilatt's theory:** It posits that numerous external factors beyond an individual's control significantly shape their life journey, encompassing career decisions and choices. It underscores that an individual's perceived autonomy in making career decisions is often more limited than they realize, and self-expectations are intertwined with societal expectations. Furthermore, the theory assumes that society tends to offer occupational options that correspond to an individual's social class ( Sheikh Hammoud, 2011).

## Study Limitations

The generalization of the results in the current study is limited to a sample of secondary school students in schools in Jordan during the second semester of the academic year (2022/2023). The generalization of the results is also limited to the study tool, which is the career decision making scale based on Gilat's theory and its psychometric properties.

## Literature Review

The career decision making process represents the culminating phase within the broader spectrum of decision making, characterized by selecting the optimal course of action. According to Al-Khatatna (2011), decision making is a cognitive and intellectual procedure in which an individual endeavors to choose one alternative from a set of available options to address a specific issue. Mayer further delineates that the effectiveness of a decision is contingent upon three dimensions of outcomes: the quality of the decision's rationality, the individual's level of acceptance of its execution, and the time required for implementation.

Mausrick underscores the conscious selection of behavioral alternatives as a crucial component of decision making (Mousa, 2010).

The decision making process traverses a series of stages and sequential steps, all aimed at arriving at sound decisions capable of effectively resolving extant issues. These steps encompass problem identification, data and information gathering, exploration of options and alternatives, evaluation of these choices, their organization based on priority, the selection of the most favorable alternative, implementation of the decision, and ultimately, monitoring the execution of the decision (Salman, 2012).

Gilat posits that most human decisions occur in conditions of uncertainty and, in many cases, involve a blend of uncertainty and risk. Gilat categorizes the circumstances in which decisions are made into several distinct states: certainty, wherein each choice leads to an outcome known with certainty; risk, where each choice results in multiple possible outcomes with known probabilities; uncertainty, where each choice yields multiple potential outcomes with unknown probabilities; and lastly, the amalgamation of risk and uncertainty, wherein an individual is uncertain about the precise degree of outcome probabilities but possesses data enabling an estimation of the likelihood of success for each (Jarwan, 1986).

Building upon the framework above, Jarwan (1986) delineates four distinct decision making strategies, each representing a structured approach grounded in a set of foundational principles, values, objectives, available information, and risk assessment. These strategies encompass The Desire Strategy, which entails selecting the most appealing, irrespective of the associated cost, risk, or probability. It necessitates a firm grasp of the individual's desires and a degree of insight into potential outcomes. The Safe Strategy involves opting for the path deemed most likely to yield success. It is more intricate than the Desire Strategy, requiring deeper goal specificity, analysis of additional choices, and associated probabilities. The Evasion Strategy revolves around selecting options that minimize the likelihood of unfavorable outcomes. It calls for a primary understanding of possible outcomes and an identification of the perceived worst-case scenario.

Finally, the Combined Strategy is the most comprehensive. It involves choosing alternatives that are both desirable and likely to succeed. While this approach may appear the most rational, it is also the most challenging to implement. It necessitates a clear comprehension of an individual's values and goals, an awareness of available options, the ability to anticipate potential outcomes, the capacity to gauge the probability of events, and the aptitude to prioritize desires or determine the relative value of various elements.

The career decision making process, as conceptualized by Gelatt, constitutes a continuous and intricate sequence of interrelated procedures guiding individuals toward specific career choices. These decisions are shaped by various influencing factors, encompassing genetic traits, aptitudes, environmental conditions, educational experiences, and personal competencies (Al-Safasfeh and Abu Asaad, 2011). However, the practical significance of Gelatt's theory becomes evident in its ability to elucidate the counselor's role in an educational setting. It underscores the counselor's role in fostering the development of decision making skills regarding deciding on a future career as part of career growth and guidance. This entails considering the influence of prior experiences and the intricate interplay between current choices and future trajectories (Tolbert, 1980).

One of the primary responsibilities shouldered by vocational counselors is to guide students in the process of making career decisions. This process begins early in the educational journey, starting in the primary grades and continuing throughout the secondary stage. During the secondary stage, students embark on a crucial vocational guidance and counseling phase. Here, vocational advisors assume the responsibility of directing and mentoring students, equipping them with a diverse skill set, including problem-solving, job interview preparation, CV creation, and, most importantly, the aptitude for making informed career decisions.

### Previous Studies

Numerous prior studies have delved into the field of career decision making among secondary school students, examining various factors, and have been conducted at local, Arab, and international levels. Among these studies, Jaradat (1991) stands out, as it sought to assess the efficacy of an educational and vocational guidance program grounded in the Gelatt model of career decision-making in enhancing professional maturity, decision making skills, and augmenting educational knowledge among tenth-grade female students. The study's findings revealed the program's effectiveness in equipping female students with decision making skills, expanding their educational and vocational awareness, and raising their professional maturity levels.

In another notable investigation by Lozo (1995), the study explored the link between the alignment of professional aspirations (current profession) and professional maturity. This research was conducted among undergraduate students from diverse academic disciplines. The results demonstrated that students exhibiting a closer alignment between their chosen profession and their professional aspirations displayed higher levels of professional maturity when making career decisions. Peng (2001) conducted a study that assessed the effectiveness of two distinct vocational education courses to enhance career decision making skills among first-year university students in Taiwan. These courses included a foundational knowledge course and a skill-based course for career decision making. The findings indicated a significant influence of

the students' treatment method on the job frequency scale, irrespective of gender. Nonetheless, no significant differences were observed between the two groups exposed to different treatment methods.

In a study by Nota and Soresi (2004), the researchers aimed to validate a program designed to enhance problem-solving and academic and career decision making skills among middle and secondary school students. This investigation concluded that implementing a program geared towards bolstering overall competence positively influenced decision-making skills while simultaneously reducing hesitancy levels among adolescent students when contemplating their future careers. The study underscored the significance of implementing intervention programs to address these students' decision making challenges and hesitancy. Al-Balushi (2007) conducted a study to assess the impact of a training program grounded in the Gelatt model and gauge its effectiveness in enhancing career decision making among tenth-grade students in the Sultanate of Oman. A statistically significant effect of the interaction between the student group and gender on the overall performance on the career decision making scale was observed. However, the results did not reveal any influence of the interaction between the program and the educational levels of the students' fathers and mothers on the overall performance of vocational decision-making.

In another study by David and Mayo (2010), the focus was on engaging secondary school students in decision making. A decision making scale developed by the researchers was employed. The findings indicated that 95% of the study's participants expressed their desire to participate in decision-making. Furthermore, the results revealed no significant gender-based differences in decision making abilities.

Al-Sharida, Besharh, and Abu Darwish (2010) conducted a study to assess the decision-making capabilities of first-year students at Al-Hussein Bin Talal University and explore any potential associations with gender and academic specialization. The study found that the students exhibited average decision making skills, with no statistically significant differences in decision making ability based on gender, academic specialization, or interaction.

Additionally, Al-Salama and Tarawneh (2012) conducted to investigate the decision making skills of students at King Abdullah II Schools for Excellence. The results revealed that the participants generally possessed above-average decision making skills, with a notably high level of proficiency in selecting the most suitable alternative. The study also identified statistically significant differences due to gender, favoring males, the tenth-grade level, and the interaction effect between grade and gender.

In response to the disparities in previous research findings, the present study adopted a methodology akin to prior relevant studies, including selecting the study population, sample, and research instrument. However, it is noteworthy that contradictions were observed in the results of these earlier investigations. The current study, examining career decision making based on Gelatt's theory among secondary school students in Jordanian schools, treated both the dependent and independent variables. This divergence in findings provides the impetus for further exploration in this domain. Given the limited number of previous studies focused on the topic and scope of the present research, this study builds upon this knowledge gap. It seeks to contribute to the existing body of research.

## **Methodology**

The study procedures describe its approach, population and sample, instrument, variables, and the statistical processing methods used to process its data.

### **Approach**

The descriptive analytical approach was used in this paper as it aligns with the study's subject, objectives, and the characteristics of the variables and data employed. This methodology extends beyond merely collecting descriptive data about the study's subject matter. It encompasses this data's diagnosis, analysis, association, and interpretation, ultimately formulating generalizations concerning the phenomenon under investigation.

### **Population and Sample**

The study's population encompassed all secondary school students in the secondary schools in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan during the academic year (2022/2023). The subjects, comprising 470 secondary school students, were selected using a random cluster sampling method. Table (1) displays the distribution of the sample respondents based on the demographic variable of educational branch among secondary school students in Jordan (including scientific, literary, industrial, and comprehensive health education).

**Table 1.** Distribution of the study subjects by demographic variables

Variables	N	Percent
Branch		
Scientific	145	% 31
Literary	225	% 48
Industrial	48	% 10
Comprehensive health education	52	% 11
Total	470	% 100

Table (1) demonstrates that (470) secondary school students from schools in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan participated in this study, distributed over four categories (education branches) and classified according to their responses to the type of education.

### Instruments

The instrument employed in this study is the Career Decision Making Scale, based on the Gilat model developed by Alzaben and Abuased (2017). The scale comprises a total of 39 items distributed across four sub-dimensions. These sub-dimensions include the Desire Strategy Dimension with nine items, the Safe Strategy Dimension with ten items, the Evasion Strategy Dimension with ten items, and the Combined Strategy Dimension with ten items.

Alzaben and Abuased assessed the reliability of the scale using the Cronbach Alpha method, yielding an internal consistency coefficient of 0.88. They also conducted a test-retest reliability analysis, which resulted in a coefficient of 0.92. In this study, the researcher independently calculated the reliability coefficient using the Cronbach Alpha method and applied it to a separate pilot sample comprising 20 students. The internal consistency coefficient of the scale was found to be 0.815. Therefore, the scale's reliability is affirmed, rendering it suitable for research in the study sample.

The responses to the scale's items were recorded using a five-point Likert scale, wherein scores of 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 were allocated to positive statements. In contrast, negative statements were assigned scores of 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. The scale primarily consists of positive statements, except for items 7, 11, 13, 19, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 29, and 37.

The scale can be administered either individually or collectively. A student's overall score on the scale ranges from 39 to 195. In the sub-dimensions, the score range differs. The first dimension ranges from 9 to 45, while the second, third, and fourth dimensions span from 10 to 50. Upon data collection from the study sample and subsequent data analysis, the five-point Likert scale was transformed into a three-point scale to assess the levels of career decision making based on Gilat's theory among secondary school students in Jordan. The range for this categorization was determined to be 1.33, calculated by subtracting the upper limit from the lower limit and dividing it by the number of ranks ( $5-1 \div 3 = 1.33$ ).

Consequently, the criteria for evaluating the results of the quantitative study are as follows: Scores falling between 1.00 and 2.33 indicate a low level of high in the skill of making professional decisions based on Gelatt's theory, scores between 2.34 and 3.67 indicate a moderate level, and scores between 3.68 and 5.00 signify a high level of proficiency in the skill of making professional decisions based on Gelatt's theory.

### Variables

This study encompassed an independent factor, namely the educational branch (comprising scientific, literary, industrial, and comprehensive health education) within the context of Jordan's secondary school students. The dependent factor, denoting career decision making, was gauged through the participants' replies to the research instrument, the 'Career Decision Making Scale, rooted in Gelatt's theory, administered among secondary school students in Jordan.

### Results and Discussion

**Results of the first question:** To what extent do secondary school students in Jordan possess the skills necessary to make career choices based on Gilatt's theory?

Descriptive analysis was conducted to obtain results from the study subjects' responses. Results are presented in Table (2) below.

**Table 2.** Results of the descriptive analysis for subjects' responses on the career decision making scale

Dimensions	Total mean	Mean	Std,	Rank	Level
Compound	40.22	4.0210	.41588	1	high
Desire	38.85	4.3071	.41639	2	high
Safe	37.26	3.7260	.44835	3	high
Evasion	31.99	3.1989	.62478	4	medium
Total	148.32	3.8132	.30628		high

Table (2) shows that secondary school students in Jordan exhibit a notable ability to make career decisions grounded in Gilat's theory. The assessment scores across various dimensions affirm this observation, with the highest dimension, the Compound dimension, registering a mean score of 40.22, indicating a high level of competence, and the lowest dimension, Evasion, recording a mean score of 31.99, signifying a moderate level of competence. The overall average score for students was 148.32, with a standard deviation of 0.30628, indicating a considerable level of aptitude in career decision making.

These results imply that these students possess a strong aptitude for career decision making. They exhibit clarity and realism in identifying their prospective professional objectives from their perspective and based on their assessments. This aptitude also indicates their substantial understanding of the mechanisms involved in career decision making. Such proficiency can be attributed to the influential roles played by their families in raising awareness, nurturing interest, and providing guidance regarding their future careers. Furthermore, the school system and career counselors are pivotal in guiding students in selecting careers and offering insights into various professions.

This phenomenon is further underscored by the career guidance lectures provided by educators, which elucidate the intricacies of career decision making. Additionally, students' high degree of career decision making ability can be ascribed to a supportive and motivating social environment that encourages students to strive for an enhanced economic and social status. Moreover, the impact of their learning experiences and the school curriculum within the educational environment significantly contribute to developing their decision making abilities for their future careers.

**Results of the second question:** Is there statistical significance, at a significance level of  $\alpha = 0.05$ , in the domain of career decision making among secondary school students in Jordan, attributed to the variable of the educational branch ?

Descriptive analysis was conducted to obtain results from the study subjects' responses by variables. Results are presented in Table (3) below.

**Table 3.** Results of the descriptive analysis for subjects' responses on the Career Decision making scale by variables

Variables		Desire	Safe	Evasion	Compound	Total
Scientific	Mean	4.40	3.70	3.02	4.02	3.77
	N	145	145	145	145	145
	Std.	0.40	0.53	0.69	0.45	0.35
Literary	Mean	4.25	3.79	3.33	3.98	3.83
	N	225	225	225	225	225
	Std.	0.47	0.42	0.47	0.39	0.28
Industrial	Mean	4.34	3.64	3.07	4.16	3.79
	N	48	48	48	48	48
	Std.	0.35	0.42	0.64	0.36	0.27
Comprehensive health education	Mean	4.32	3.68	3.91	4.42	4.06
	N	52	52	52	52	52
	Std.	0.19	0.60	0.82	0.22	0.34
Total	Mean	4.30	3.73	3.21	4.03	3.79
	N	470	470	470	470	470
	Std.	0.41	0.44	0.61	0.41	0.30

The results presented in Table (3) reveal significant differences in the estimates of the study sample related to career decision making among secondary school students in Jordan based on the education branch variable. To ascertain the level of statistical significance, a one-way analysis of variance (One-way ANOVA) was employed for the estimates of the study subject on the career decision making scale, as illustrated in Table (4).

**Table 4.** Results of the One Way ANOVA for subjects' responses on the career decision making scale by the variable education branch

Variables	Source of variance	Sum of square	Degree of freedom	Mean square	F-value	P-value
Desire	Between groups	2.646	3	0.87	5.22	*0.00
	Within groups	79.325	467	0.19		
	Total	81.962	469			
Safe	Between groups	0.930	3	0.30	1.52	0.22
	Within groups	94.127	467	0.20		
	Total	95.035	469			
Evasion	Between groups	17.566	3	5.85	16.48	*0.00
	Within groups	167.002	467	0.35		
	Total	184.577	469			
Compound	Between groups	4.730	3	1.55	9.61	*0.00
	Within groups	77.035	467	0.15		
	Total	81.765	469			

Total	Between groups	1.453	3	0.45	5.46	*0.00
	Within groups	41.488	467	0.09		
	Total	42.938	469			

\*Statistically significant at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ).

According to the results of the ANOVA, no statistically significant differences were observed among the mean scores in the dimension of safety, where the calculated (F) value was 1.52. Notably, this (F) value did not reach statistical significance at the  $\alpha$  level of 0.05. Students pursuing various educational branches appear to pay similar attention to the safety dimension. Conversely, significant differences were identified at the  $\alpha$  level of 0.05 in the dimensions of desire, evasion, compound, and total score, as evidenced by the (F) values of 5.22, 16.48, 9.61, and 5.46, respectively. The Scheffé test was employed for post-hoc comparisons to delineate these differences further. Results are detailed in Table (5).

**Table 5.** Scheffé post-hoc comparisons of the differences between the means for career decision making in (desire, evasion, compound) and total grade by the education branch variable.

Dimensions	Categories	Literary		Industrial		Comprehensive health education	
		Means	P value	Means	P value	Means	P value
Desire	Scientific	0.17	*0.00	0.05	0.89	0.91	0.77
	Literary	-	-	-0.13	0.15	-0.08	0.93
	Industrial	-	-	-	-	0.06	0.97
Evasion	Scientific	0.31	*0.00	-0.09	0.78	-0.92	*0.00
	Literary	-	-	-0.21	*0.048	-0.63	*0.00
	Industrial	-	-	-	-	-0.82	*0.00
Compound	Scientific	0.07	0.58	-0.15	0.12	-0.38	*0.00
	Literary	-	-	-0.21	*0.00	-0.44	*0.00
	Industrial	-	-	-	-	-0.24	0.18
Total	Scientific	-0.05	0.57	-0.05	0.83	-0.33	*0.00
	Literary	-	-	0.00	1.00	-0.28	*0.012
	Industrial	-	-	-	-	-0.27	*0.012

\*Statistically significant at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ).

Table (5) reveals statistically significant differences across various education branches in the dimensions of the career decision making scale. Evidently, disparities are evident in career decision making, specifically in the desire dimension, favoring the scientific education branch over the literary branch. This implies that students in the scientific stream exhibit superior professional decision making compared to their counterparts in the literary stream, possibly owing to their heightened interest and motivation to enhance their level of achievement.

Furthermore, differences are observed between the scientific and literary education streams, again favoring the scientific stream. Similar disparities are evident between the scientific and comprehensive health education branches, favoring the latter in making professional decisions.

In addition to the above, differences are identified between the literary and industrial branches, with a preference for the industrial branch regarding professional decision making. Similarly, differences emerge between the literary and comprehensive health education branches, once more in favor of the comprehensive health education branches. Additionally, differences arise between the industrial and comprehensive health education branches, again in favor of the comprehensive health education branches, particularly after accounting for evasion.

The results also show that students enrolled in the industrial and comprehensive health education branches demonstrate superior performance in the evasion dimension compared to students in the scientific and literary branches. Differences persist between the scientific and comprehensive health education branches, favoring the latter in the evasion dimension. Equally, differences are evident between the literary and industrial branches, with a preference for the industrial branches. Substantive differences exist between the literary branch and comprehensive health education, once more in favor of comprehensive health education, particularly within the compound dimension.

Lastly, differences are identified between the scientific and comprehensive health education branches, favoring comprehensive health education, along with variances between the literary and industrial branches, again in favor of the industrial branch. Additionally, differences are observed between the literary branch and comprehensive health education, with a preference for comprehensive health education, notably in the total score.

### Recommendations

In light of the literature related to career decision making and the results of this study, the researcher suggests enhancing career decision making skills, especially in the Evasion dimension, by activating vocational guidance and counseling programs for students in the secondary stage. In addition to providing

adequate guidance for secondary school students on making professional decisions more accurately, especially in areas related to Safe and Evasion dimensions. And guiding students, facilitating their understanding of job market dynamics, including analyzing supply and demand for various professions and steering them towards suitable career prospects that align with their individual goals and benefit their communities. The researcher advocates implementing targeted guidance and counseling programs for students pursuing the literary branch of education to enhance their competency in making well-informed career decisions, aiming to align this branch with other educational streams regarding career choices. Furthermore, it is advisable to undertake further investigations and scholarly inquiries into the determinants impacting career decision making, including the influence of familial dynamics and environment on the process.

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