

# The Influence of Self-efficacy on Career Planning of Adolescents in High School

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## ABSTRACT

Career planning is a crucial indicator of life success, but many high school teenagers face obstacles, such as confusion and low self-understanding, when determining their future. This study aims to examine the influence of self-efficacy on career planning among high school students. The method used is library research with a qualitative approach, synthesizing scientific literature from the years 2015-2025, accessed through academic databases such as Google Scholar and ScienceDirect. The research findings indicate that self-efficacy has a positive and significant impact on career planning, as reported in various previous studies, with contributions ranging from 38.9% to 65.52%. Students with high self-efficacy demonstrate lower levels of career indecision and better job readiness, especially in the context of vocational education. Theoretically, these results reinforce the role of self-efficacy as the primary driver of exploring career options and setting challenging goals. The practical implications of this research emphasize that career guidance programs in schools should shift from merely providing job information to strengthening internal psychological factors through psychoeducational interventions and fostering a supportive learning culture. In conclusion, self-efficacy is a fundamental psychological foundation that enables students to plan and prepare themselves to face the workforce more maturely.

**Keywords:** Self-efficacy, Career Planning, Adolescent, Counseling Guidance, Job Readiness.

## I. Introduction

Career planning is an important developmental task for high school students. Students are required to decide whether to pursue higher education or enter the workforce. Many of them experience uncertainty due to low self-confidence and limitations in self-understanding. According to Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, self-efficacy plays an important role in motivation, perseverance, and career-related decision-making. Therefore, career decision-making requires serious attention, as the choices made will determine an individual's future direction. Atmaja (in Rosyid & Kurniawan, 2022) states that a person's success can be seen in the career levels they have achieved. The statement emphasizes that career planning is not an instant process, but requires readiness, self-understanding, and strong conviction from an early age. Some students still have difficulty developing a career plan that aligns with their stage of development. This shows that career planning is an important aspect of adolescent development (Aryani, 2025). The career-determination process should ideally begin in adolescence, especially at the high school level. High school is an important transitional phase in individual development, during which adolescents are in their late teens, aged about 15-18. In this

phase, students begin to face significant developmental demands, including career decision-making, such as deciding whether to continue their education in college, pursue job training, or enter the world of work (Wijaya et al., 2025). These decisions are often a source of stress and confusion for students if they are not balanced with adequate psychological readiness. The field's phenomenon shows that many high school students still have difficulty planning and preparing for their future careers. This unpreparedness leads some students to leave their career decisions entirely to their parents, without considering their interests, talents, and potential (Nengsih, 2019). This condition is exacerbated by students' limited understanding of themselves, including their career interests, abilities, and available opportunities, leading to confusion and doubt in determining an appropriate career choice (Adelia et al., 2025). The low readiness for career planning among high school students has a serious impact, one of which is reflected in the high unemployment rate among high school graduates. Many graduates lack a clear career picture and feel unsure about their abilities in the world of work and in further education (Nur Santi et al., 2024). From an educational psychology perspective, an individual's belief in his or her ability to organize and carry out the actions necessary to achieve a particular goal is known as self-efficacy (Nengsih, 2019).

Self-efficacy is an individual's belief in his or her ability to complete tasks, deal with various situations, and achieve desired goals. Individuals with high self-efficacy tend to be more confident in their decision-making and can overcome obstacles to achieving their goals. This belief in self-efficacy is one of the important aspects in adolescent self-development, including in the process of planning their future career. The research results (Rhamandani & Meinawati, 2023) indicate that self-efficacy positively influences students' career planning. Students with higher self-efficacy tend to have better career-planning skills than those with lower self-efficacy. This shows that confidence in one's own abilities can increase students' readiness to determine their future educational and career choices. Self-efficacy plays a crucial role in the career planning process. Individuals with high self-efficacy tend to be more confident in exploring career options, setting realistic goals, and persevering in the face of obstacles and failures. In contrast, individuals with low self-efficacy tend to be hesitant, give up easily, and avoid career-related challenges. (Adelia et al., 2025) stated that self-efficacy plays a crucial role in increasing motivation, courage to make decisions, and students' ability to assess career opportunities and risks rationally and realistically. In addition to influencing career planning, self-efficacy has been shown to significantly contribute to an individual's readiness to enter the workforce. Research (Rahmawati & Ahmad, 2021) shows that self-efficacy has a positive, significant effect on students' work readiness, indicating that confidence in one's abilities is an important factor in shaping career readiness from the secondary education level onward.

The findings align with the research (Kausar et al., 2024), which shows that self-efficacy contributes significantly to motivation to excel and to individuals' ability to face academic and professional challenges. Individuals with high self-efficacy show greater confidence in their abilities. They can plan future goals more clearly and with greater specificity. Pratama (2024) explains that Career decision-making self-efficacy (CDSE) is an individual's belief in his or her ability to make the right career choice. Students with high levels of self-efficacy tend to be more active in exploring career information, have clarity in setting goals, and are better prepared for future planning challenges. The results of the study show that Parental Career Support (PCS) had a positive and significant effect on CDSE, with both paternal ( $\beta = 0.20$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) and maternal ( $\beta = 0.39$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) support contributing. Furthermore, CDSE had a significant effect on career exploration ( $\beta = 0.760$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) and career commitment ( $\beta = 0.68$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), but not on Career Reconsideration. Overall, these findings show that parental support does not directly affect students' career identities, but rather through increased self-efficacy in career decision-making, so the higher the support parents provide, the stronger the student's exploration and career commitment.

Various empirical studies at the high school level also confirm the important role of self-efficacy in career planning. Research at SMA Negeri 3 Pemalang indicates that self-efficacy significantly contributes to students' career planning skills (Nur Santi et al., 2024). Similar results were also found in SMA Negeri Gemolong, which confirmed a positive and significant influence of career self-efficacy on student career planning (Rosyid & Kurniawan, 2022). In addition, Wijaya et al. (2025) confirm that students with high self-

efficacy tend to be more active in career exploration and to have greater clarity of purpose after graduating from high school. Based on this description, it can be concluded that self-efficacy is a psychological factor that strongly influences high school students' planning and preparation for their future careers. Therefore, this article was compiled through a literature review of studies examining the influence of self-efficacy on the career planning of high school students.

## II. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

### 2.1. Literature Review

Career planning and development is an ongoing process that is very important for individuals, especially adolescents, in determining the direction of their professional future. The phenomenon shows that many students face obstacles in career planning due to a lack of self-understanding and low confidence in their abilities (Adelia et al., 2025; Nengsih, 2019). One of the main psychological variables that determines how individuals navigate these career challenges is self-efficacy (self-esteem). Self-efficacy, defined as an individual's belief in his or her ability to organize and carry out actions to achieve certain goals, has proven to be a key pillar in the development of adolescent agency during the educational transition period (Ahn et al., 2025). This confidence not only affects learning outcomes but also helps students regulate emotions and maintain motivation when facing academic difficulties (Hermawan et al., 2025). In addition, a positive learning culture in the school environment strengthens students' self-efficacy (Aprilia et al., 2021). In the context of careers, self-efficacy is closely related to career maturity, with individuals with high self-efficacy showing greater readiness to plan and explore career options (Safitri & Prapunoto, 2025). Strengthening self-efficacy through interventions such as psychoeducation has also been shown to improve the quality of career planning (Jalal et al., 2022). On the other hand, low self-efficacy is the main cause of the increase in the unemployment rate among school graduates, due to unpreparedness for immediate planning after graduation (Nur Santi et al., 2024).

### 2.2. Theoretical Framework

This research is based on Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, which posits self-efficacy as the primary determinant of cognitive, affective, and individual selection. In this perspective, self-efficacy acts as a stimulant of mental resources, affecting satisfaction with the learning process and academic performance (Santi et al., 2023). This theory explains that individuals with strong career self-efficacy will be more persistent in facing obstacles and more competent in making decisions that are crucial for their future (Wijaya et al., 2025)

### 2.3. Hypothesis Development

Based on a comprehensive literature review, the hypotheses in this study are formulated as follows:

1. The Relationship between Self-Efficacy and Career Planning. Self-efficacy consistently and significantly influences students' career planning across educational levels. Various empirical studies show that the higher students' self-confidence, the more mature and well-directed their career plans are (Mujiyati, 2016; Rosyid & Kurniawan, 2022). The contribution of self-efficacy to career planning variables was found to be very substantial in the vocational and high school environments (Scott, 2022; Rhamandani & Meinawati, 2023). Based on these findings, a hypothesis is proposed:
2. The Relationship between Self-Efficacy and Decision Making. Self-efficacy is the strongest predictor in career decision-making. Students with high confidence can explore various career options and make more stable commitments than those experiencing career instability (Ahn et al., 2025). Belief in self-fulfillment helps individuals overcome doubts when faced with difficult

choices, such as whether to continue their studies or go straight to work (Wijaya et al., 2025). Therefore, the hypothesis continues:

3. The Effect of Self-Efficacy on Maturity and Job Readiness. Self-efficacy not only affects planning but also the outcome, in terms of work readiness and overall career maturity. High self-confidence among vocational students encourages them to be better prepared for the world of work and to improve their employability by strengthening their technical and soft skills (Arif et al., 2025; Rahmawati & Ahmad, 2021). The study on final-year students also confirmed a strong positive correlation between self-efficacy and career maturity (Safitri & Prapunoto, 2025). Thus, a hypothesis is proposed:

- H1: There is a positive and significant relationship between self-efficacy and student career planning (Scott, 2022; Mujiyati, 2016; Nur Santi et al., 2024; Rhamandani & Meinawati, 2023; Rosyid & Kurniawan, 2022).
- H2: There is a positive and significant relationship between self-efficacy and students' career decision-making skills. (Ahn et al., 2025; Wijaya et al., 2025).
- H3: Self-efficacy has a significant effect on the career maturity and work readiness of students. (Darmansyah et al., 2019; Rahmawati & Ahmad, 2021; Safitri & Prapunoto, 2025).

### III. Research Method

This research uses a qualitative design grounded in library research. Relevant literature was collected from Google Scholar, DOAJ, and ScienceDirect. The inclusion criteria include peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2015 and 2025 that focus on adolescents, self-efficacy, and career planning. About 30 scientific sources were selected using purposive sampling techniques. Data are analyzed using qualitative content analysis, including thematic synthesis and comparison. This method focuses on the activity of studying, analysing, and synthesising previously published scientific literature relevant to the research topic. A literature review is an important part of scientific research because it not only summarizes the literature but also critically analyzes previous research to build a strong theoretical foundation. The literature review method was chosen because it enables the researcher to gain a comprehensive and systematic understanding of the development of concepts and empirical research results related to self-efficacy and adolescent career planning, thereby enabling theoretical synthesis without direct field data collection.

The scope of the research is Guidance and Counseling, especially career counseling, to conduct a literature review of the concepts of self-efficacy and career planning in adolescents at the high school level. Career planning in this study is interpreted as an individual process of recognizing one's potential, exploring career options, and setting educational and work goals in a realistic and directed manner. Meanwhile, self-efficacy is an individual's belief in his or her ability to manage tasks, make decisions, and face career-related challenges. The research was conducted online through literature reviews and the use of various trusted academic databases, including Google Scholar, DOAJ, ScienceDirect, and Microsoft Academic. The study population included all relevant literature on self-efficacy and adolescent career planning, and sampling was purposive. The selected literature criteria include scientific articles and books that are credible, peer-reviewed, relevant to the fields of guidance and counseling or educational psychology, and published within the past 10 years (2015-2025). The number of literature analyzed is estimated at least 20 main sources, comprising scientific journal articles and reference books, as well as tools such as computers or laptops, and library data recording worksheets.

Data collection was carried out through systematic stages, which included the identification of literature using relevant keywords, such as self-efficacy, career planning, adolescents, and high school students; literature selection based on topic suitability, year of publication, and quality of sources; as well as documentation of bibliographic data and important findings from each literature analyzed. The data analysis technique used is qualitative content analysis, which includes reading and understanding literature thoroughly, grouping information into thematic categories (e.g., the concept of self-efficacy, factors that affect

career planning, and the relationship of self-efficacy with maturity and career planning), and synthesize research findings to formulate theoretical conclusions regarding the effect of Self-Efficacy on Career Planning in High School Students.

## IV. Results and Discussion

### 4.1. Analysis Result

Based on the data analysis, this study shows that self-efficacy has a significant, positive influence on various aspects of student career development, including planning and decision-making, as well as job readiness. The key findings in this section can be summarized as follows:

1. **Influence on Career Planning:** Data show a strong correlation between self-efficacy and career planning maturity. Quantitatively, the contribution of self-efficacy was found to be significant, ranging from 38.9% (Nur Santi et al., 2024) to 65.52% (Mujiyati, 2016). These findings are reinforced by a study of vocational school students that shows that partial self-efficacy positively affects students' ability to plan their future steps (Scott, 2022; Rhamandani & Meinawati, 2023).
2. **Relationship with Decision Making:** The results of the analysis showed that students with high levels of self-efficacy had lower levels of career guidance. There is a significant positive relationship between self-confidence and the ability to make career decisions (Wijaya et al., 2025). Self-efficacy acts as the strongest predictor in adolescent career development agencies during the educational transition period (Ahn et al., 2025)
3. **Work Readiness and Employability:** In the context of vocational schools, self-efficacy has been proven to empirically affect students' work readiness directly (Rahmawati & Ahmad, 2021). In addition, self-efficacy is identified as one of the crucial components of personal input in improving graduates' employability or competitiveness in the job market (Arif et al., 2025; Darmansyah et al., 2019).

### 4.2. Discussion

This section interprets the above findings by linking them to previous theories and research to provide a deeper understanding. The strong influence of self-efficacy on career planning indicates that students' perceptions of their abilities are the primary driver of career exploration. When students are confident in their competencies, they tend to be more courageous in setting challenging career goals and strategizing to achieve them (Rosyid & Kurniawan, 2022). This is in line with the social cognitive theory that self-efficacy stimulates the mental resources (cognitive and motivational) necessary to achieve academic and career success (Santi et al., 2023). In comparison with previous research, the findings in this study are consistent with the existing literature. For example, a positive relationship between self-efficacy and career maturity was found among final-year students (Safitri & Prapunoto, 2025). It has also been found among secondary-level students (Nengsih, 2019). This shows that self-efficacy is a stable variable that influences career development across various age stages. Additionally, self-efficacy plays a role in building academic resilience, helping students stay focused on their career planning despite difficult transition challenges (Hermawan et al., 2025).

The implications of these findings have important implications for the practice of guidance and counseling. Given that self-efficacy can be improved through interventions such as psychoeducation (Jalal et al., 2022), career development programs in schools should not only focus on providing job information but also on individuals' internal development. Strengthening a supportive learning culture is also needed to sustainably foster students' self-efficacy (Aprilia et al., 2021)—limitations and future directions. Although self-efficacy plays a dominant role, this study also notes that other factors, such as social support and resilience, affect students' career outcomes (Putri et al., 2025). Therefore, future research is recommended to integrate

external variables, such as family support and the school environment, to provide a more comprehensive picture of the factors that shape adolescent career success. In conclusion, this analysis confirms that self-efficacy is a fundamental psychological construct that influences career planning among high school students. Literature consistently affirms its significant role in shaping exploratory behavior, decision-making confidence, and job readiness. Further research is recommended to examine external variables, such as parental support and school climate, to provide a more comprehensive understanding.

## V. Conclusion

This study confirms that self-efficacy is the primary psychological foundation for career planning success among high school students. Self-efficacy is not just self-confidence but a driving force that enables students to explore career choices, set realistic goals, and navigate the challenges of the educational transition. The findings show that a high level of self-efficacy is positively and significantly correlated with career planning maturity, accounting for 38.9% to 65.2% of the variance. Theoretically, this research underscores the relevance of social cognitive theory in contemporary career guidance. These findings show that self-efficacy is a stable predictor of career development across age and educational levels, from high school to college. Self-efficacy acts as a stimulant of mental resources (cognitive and motivational) that are crucial for adolescent self-development during the transition from education to the world of work or further education.

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