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Birth Order and Gender as Predictors of Career Self-Efficacy among High School Students

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Abstract. This study aimed to analyze the relationship between birth order and gender with career self-efficacy among high school students. The study was grounded in Alfred Adler's Individual Psychology theory, particularly the concepts of family constellation and birth order, and was further supported by Social Cognitive Career Theory in explaining the development of students' career beliefs. This research employed a quantitative correlational approach involving 174 tenth- and eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Gowa. Data were collected using a career self-efficacy questionnaire and analyzed through Point-Biserial Correlation, Spearman Rank Correlation, and Multiple Linear Regression using IBM SPSS Statistics. The findings revealed that gender had a significant relationship with career self-efficacy, whereas birth order did not show a significant relationship. Simultaneously, gender and birth order significantly influenced career self-efficacy, although their contribution was relatively low. These findings indicate that students' career beliefs are more strongly influenced by psychological dynamics, social experiences, and environmental support than by birth order alone.

Keywords: Career Self-Efficacy, Gender, High School Students, Birth Order, Family Constellation.

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Introduction

Adolescence at the senior high school level represents an important developmental phase in the formation of self-identity, future orientation, and educational as well as career decision-making. At this stage, students begin determining choices related to university majors, further education, fields of expertise, and occupations that align with their interests, abilities, and socio-familial conditions. Pratama and Muttaqin (2024) emphasized that adolescence is a crucial period for vocational identity formation because students begin evaluating life choices associated with higher education and employment.

This study employs Alfred Adler's Individual Psychology as its grand theory. From the Adlerian perspective, individual development is strongly influenced by family structure, particularly through the concepts of family constellation and birth order. First-born, middle-born, last-born, and only children may experience different patterns of responsibility, parental treatment, expectations, and family relationships. These differences potentially shape students' self-confidence, independence, decision-making courage, and beliefs regarding future career planning (Derin & Şahin, 2023; Koç & Uzun, 2024; & Kaufman, 2012).

In addition to Adlerian theory, this study also adopts the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) proposed by Robert W. Lent, Steven D. Brown, and Gail Hackett (1994) to explain the development of career self-efficacy. SCCT posits that career development is influenced by self-efficacy, outcome expectations, personal goals, learning experiences, and contextual supports and barriers. Thus, Adlerian

theory explains the psychological and familial foundations of students, whereas SCCT explains how those experiences relate to students' confidence in exploring, planning, and making career decisions.

One factor associated with career self-efficacy is gender. Gender may influence learning experiences, family expectations, role models, and students' confidence in exploring career choices. Gail Hackett and Nancy E. Betz (1981) explained that gender socialization processes may affect self-beliefs in certain career behaviors. Within the Indonesian context, Hadi and Aryani (2023) identified a relationship between perceptions of gender roles and career choices among twelfth-grade students, whereas Sahin et al. (2026) found differences in career decision-making self-efficacy based on gender among public high school students in Semarang.

Besides gender, birth order is also important to examine because, within the Adlerian perspective, children's positions in the family shape distinct psychological experiences. First-born children are often associated with responsibility, middle-born children with competition and role searching, last-born children with family protection, and only children with more intensive parent-child relationships. Therefore, birth order in this study is understood as an indicator of family dynamics that may relate to students' self-confidence and certainty in making career decisions.

The role of family support in the formation of career self-efficacy has also been reinforced by recent studies. Pratama and Muttaqin (2024) found that career decision-making self-efficacy mediated the relationship between parental career support and vocational identity among 400 high school students aged 15–18 years. Similarly, Dwiyanthi et al., (2025) reported that family influence enhanced career decision-making self-efficacy through the strengthening of vocational identity. These findings indicate that families are not merely sources of practical support, but also the earliest contexts for the formation of students' career beliefs.

Although studies concerning career self-efficacy, gender, family support, and career decision-making have developed considerably, research specifically examining the relationship between birth order and gender with career self-efficacy among high school students remains limited. Previous studies generally treated gender, family social support, or career self-efficacy as separate variables (Dwatra, 2023; Yanli, 2025). In reality, students' psychological identities are multidimensional and layered, such as first-born girls, middle-born boys, last-born girls, or only-child boys. The combination of family position and gender may shape different developmental experiences, decision-making patterns, levels of self-confidence, and career orientations in each individual. Recent studies demonstrated that birth order is associated with differences in decision-making styles and individual self-confidence (Lomotey, 2025), while gender remains an important factor influencing students' career decision-making self-efficacy (Prathibha et al., 2025). Furthermore, studies on educational inequality within families revealed that the interaction between gender and birth order may produce different developmental experiences within the same family environment, particularly in collectivistic societies characterized by strong familial expectations toward children (Zozoungbo, 2024). In the Indonesian cultural context, where families continue to function as sources of values, support, social control, and career expectations, the combination of gender and birth order becomes important to investigate in understanding the formation of career self-efficacy among high school students.

This gap is important to address because school counselors require empirical foundations to understand students more personally and comprehensively. Guidance and counseling teachers should not only consider students' academic interests or grades, but also their family positions, gender experiences, and social dynamics that shape career beliefs. Jemini Gashi et al. (2023) demonstrated that structured career guidance interventions could improve adolescents' career self-efficacy and career goals.

Based on the foregoing discussion, this study aims to empirically examine the relationship between birth order and gender with career self-efficacy among high school students. The primary hypothesis proposes that there is a significant correlation between birth order and gender with students' levels of career confidence. The independent variables in this study are birth order and gender, whereas the dependent variable is career self-efficacy. This study employs a quantitative correlational approach, with preliminary data tabulation conducted using Microsoft Excel and correlational analysis performed using IBM SPSS Statistics.

Method

This study employed a quantitative approach with a correlational design to examine the relationship between birth order and gender with career self-efficacy among high school students. A correlational design was selected because the study aimed to investigate the direction, strength, and significance of relationships among variables without administering any experimental treatment. This approach is consistent with the

study conducted by Hadi and Aryani (2023) concerning the relationship between gender perceptions and students' career choices.

The participants consisted of 174 students from SMA Negeri 1 Gowa in grades X and XI who completed an online questionnaire in May 2026. The respondents comprised 75 male students and 99 female students, including 43 tenth-grade students and 131 eleventh-grade students. The sampling technique used was convenience sampling, in which participants were selected based on the researcher's accessibility to students who met the research criteria. The use of online questionnaires in career self-efficacy research is also consistent with the approach utilized by Sahin et al. (2026).

The research instrument consisted of a questionnaire divided into two sections. The first section contained demographic information, including gender and birth order. Gender was treated as a dichotomous variable, whereas birth order was treated as ordinal data. The second section comprised a career self-efficacy scale consisting of 18 items measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Uncertain to Strongly Certain, with a total score range of 18–90. The scale measured students' confidence in self-assessment, career information seeking, goal selection, future planning, career problem-solving, and utilization of social support. These dimensions align with the concept of career decision-making self-efficacy, which includes self-assessment, information gathering, goal selection, planning, and problem-solving, as described by Dwiyanthi et al., (2025).

Data collection was conducted through the voluntary distribution of questionnaire links to students. The collected data were subsequently processed through coding procedures, response completeness checks, and tabulation using Microsoft Excel before being imported into IBM SPSS Statistics for analysis. The reliability test results indicated a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of α=0.937\alpha = 0.937α=0.937, indicating that the instrument demonstrated very high reliability.

Data analysis was conducted using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics were used to describe respondent distributions, means, and standard deviations. Inferential analyses included Point-Biserial Correlation to examine the relationship between gender and career self-efficacy, Spearman Rank Correlation to examine the relationship between birth order and career self-efficacy, and Multiple Linear Regression to assess the simultaneous contribution of gender and birth order to career self-efficacy at a significance level of α=0.05\alpha = 0.05α=0.05. Multicollinearity diagnostics were evaluated using Tolerance values and the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). This study has several limitations, including the use of convenience sampling, self-report instruments that may produce social desirability bias, and a correlational design that identifies associations among variables rather than causal relationships.

Results and Discussions

1. Point-Biserial Correlation Test of Gender and Career Self-Efficacy

Table 1. Results of the Point-Biserial Correlation Test between Gender and Career Self-Efficacy

		Gender	**Self-Efficacy**
Gender	Pearson Correlation	1	-.201**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.008
	N	174	174
Self-Efficacy	Pearson Correlation	-.201**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.008	
	N	174	174

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Based on the results of the point-biserial correlation test presented in Table 1, the correlation coefficient was obtained at rpb=−0.201r_{pb}=-0.201rpb=−0.201 with a significance value of p=0.008p=0.008p=0.008. Since the significance value was lower than α=0.05\alpha=0.05α=0.05, the hypothesis was accepted, indicating a significant relationship between gender and students' career self-efficacy. The negative direction of the correlation indicates differences in the tendency of career self-efficacy based on gender categories according to the coding used in this study. If the coding applied was 1 = male and 2 = female, the findings indicate that female students tended to demonstrate lower levels of career self-efficacy than male students. Nevertheless, the correlation coefficient of r=−0.201r=-0.201r=−0.201 falls within the low correlation category, suggesting that gender cannot be interpreted as the sole determinant of students' career self-efficacy.

From Alfred Adler's perspective, these differences may be understood through the concept of Individual Psychology, which posits that individual self-beliefs are not formed independently of the social environment, but rather through subjective experiences within the family, interpersonal relationship patterns, social expectations, and individuals' psychological positions within family structures. Therefore, gender should not merely be interpreted as a biological or demographic category, but also as a social experience that shapes students' courage, sense of competence, responsibility, and future orientation. These findings may also be associated with Social Cognitive Career Theory, which explains that career self-efficacy develops through interactions among personal factors, learning experiences, environmental support, role models, and contextual barriers.

The study conducted by Sahin et al., (2026) demonstrated that gender remains relevant in the study of career decision-making self-efficacy among high school students, although teacher support also plays an important role in strengthening students' career confidence. Similarly, Situmorang and Lewoleba (2025) emphasized that career decision self-efficacy is influenced by gender and socio-cultural contexts, indicating that differences in career self-efficacy should be interpreted within broader social experiences. Furthermore, Theresia, Puspitasari et al., (2025) found that parental career support was associated with career search efficacy, reinforcing the Adlerian assumption that the family constitutes the earliest context for the development of self-confidence and future orientation. This finding is also consistent with the study by Kusumawati and Salim (2026), which revealed that parent–child career congruence and grit were associated with career decision self-efficacy among high school students, particularly within low socioeconomic contexts. In addition, Tong et al.,(2025) demonstrated that self-efficacy was positively associated with career maturity through psychological mechanisms such as creativity and achievement motivation.

Therefore, the findings of this study indicate that gender has a significant but weak relationship with students' career self-efficacy. Consequently, the discussion should not merely emphasize differences between male and female students, but should also be linked to family dynamics, social experiences, educational support, and individual psychological constructions, as emphasized in Alfred Adler's theory and further clarified through the framework of Social Cognitive Career Theory.

2. Spearman Rank Correlation Test between Birth Order and Career Self-Efficacy

Table 2. Results of the Spearman Rank Correlation Test between Birth Order and Career Self-Efficacy

			Birth Order	**Self-Efficacy**
Spearman's rho	Birth Order	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.030
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.695
		N	174	174
	Self-Efficacy	Correlation Coefficient	-.030	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.695	.
		N	174	174

The Spearman Rank Correlation test was employed because the birth order variable was ordinal in nature, whereas career self-efficacy was obtained from the total score of a psychological scale. Based on Table 2, the analysis yielded a Spearman's rho coefficient of ρ=−0.030\rho=-0.030ρ=−0.030 with a significance value of p=0.695p=0.695p=0.695 for N=174N=174N=174. Since the significance value exceeded α=0.05\alpha=0.05α=0.05, the alternative hypothesis was rejected and the null hypothesis was accepted. This indicates that there was no significant relationship between birth order and students' career self-efficacy.

The correlation coefficient of ρ=−0.030\rho=-0.030ρ=−0.030 indicates that the relationship between birth order and career self-efficacy was very weak. The negative direction of the correlation merely reflects a tendency toward an inverse relationship; however, it was not statistically meaningful due to the value of p=0.695p=0.695p=0.695. Therefore, students' positions as only children, first-born children, middle-born children, or last-born children were not proven to have a significant relationship with career self-efficacy in this study.

From the perspective of Alfred Adler's grand theory, these findings do not necessarily reject the concepts of birth order or family constellation. Adler viewed birth order as a psychological position within the family that may shape responsibility, sibling relationships, parental attention, and family expectations. However, the findings of this study suggest that birth order as a demographic category is not sufficiently

strong to explain students' career self-efficacy. Accordingly, Adlerian theory remains relevant, but should be interpreted contextually through the quality of family experiences rather than merely through birth position.

These findings are consistent with the study conducted by Setiawan et al.,(2026), which demonstrated that birth order may relate to self-confidence and emotional stability, although the relationship is influenced by family expectations, academic experiences, and individuals' social backgrounds. This supports the present findings, in which ρ=−0.030\rho=-0.030ρ=−0.030 and p=0.695p=0.695p=0.695 indicate that birth order was unable to significantly explain differences in career self-efficacy.

The absence of a significant relationship may also be explained through Social Cognitive Career Theory, which posits that career self-efficacy develops through learning experiences, environmental support, outcome expectations, and personal goals. Dwiyanthi et al., (2025) demonstrated that the influence of family on career decision-making self-efficacy operates through the development of vocational identity. Thus, the more influential family aspect is not merely birth position, but rather the quality of family support in shaping students' identity and career confidence.

Khasanah, Wahdah, and Surawan (2025) found that parental support and intimate friendship significantly influenced career decision-making self-efficacy, contributing approximately 59% of the variance. Ceasaria and Virlia (2025) also demonstrated that academic resilience positively contributed to career decision-making self-efficacy, whereas authoritarian parenting patterns produced ambivalent effects on career exploration. These findings reinforce the Adlerian perspective that family influence should be understood through parenting style, emotional support, social relationships, and students' opportunities for autonomy in determining career choices.

Furthermore, Ismiati, Andriyani, Duri, and Muttaqin (2026) identified a positive and significant relationship between self-determination and career decision-making among high school students, with a coefficient of r=0.533r=0.533r=0.533 and p=0.000p=0.000p=0.000. This finding suggests that internal factors such as autonomy, competence, and social connectedness may more strongly explain career readiness than demographic categories such as birth order.

Therefore, the findings of ρ=−0.030\rho=-0.030ρ=−0.030 and p=0.695p=0.695p=0.695 indicate that birth order was not significantly associated with students' career self-efficacy. Nevertheless, within Alfred Adler's framework, these results remain meaningful because birth order should not be interpreted deterministically, but rather as an entry point for understanding more complex family dynamics. The implication is that school counselors should examine not only students' birth positions, but also parental support, sibling relationships, family expectations, success experiences, independence, and students' courage in exploring career opportunities

3. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis of Gender and Birth Order on High School Students' Career Self-Efficacy

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Self-Efficacy	64.49	12.905	174
Gender	1.57	.497	174
Birth Order	2.75	.981	174

Based on the descriptive statistics presented in Table 3, the total number of respondents in this study was 174 students. The career self-efficacy variable obtained a mean score of 64.49 with a standard deviation of 12.905, indicating that students' levels of career self-efficacy were generally moderate with relatively diverse response variations. The gender variable yielded a mean score of 1.57, indicating that female respondents slightly outnumbered male respondents based on the coding system used in the study. Meanwhile, the birth order variable showed a mean value of 2.75 with a standard deviation of 0.981, suggesting that the majority of respondents were positioned as second-born to third-born children within their families.

Table 4. Correlation Matrix

		Self-Efficacy	Gender	Birth Order
Pearson Correlation	Self-Efficacy	1.000	-.201	-.044
	Gender	-.201	1.000	.053
	Birth Order	-.044	.053	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Self-Efficacy	.	.004	.283
	Gender	.004	.	.244
	Birth Order	.283	.244	.
N	Self-Efficacy	174	174	174
	Gender	174	174	174
	Birth Order	174	174	174

Based on the correlation matrix presented in Table 4, the correlation coefficient between gender and career self-efficacy was -0.201 with a significance value of 0.004. Since the significance value was lower than 0.05, there was a significant relationship between gender and students' career self-efficacy. The negative direction of the relationship indicates that male students tended to demonstrate higher levels of career self-efficacy than female students based on the coding system used in this study. Meanwhile, the relationship between birth order and career self-efficacy yielded a correlation coefficient of -0.044 with a significance value of 0.283, indicating that there was no significant relationship between birth order and students' career self-efficacy.

Tabel 5. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.204[a]	.042	.030	12.708

a. Predictors: (Constant), Birth Order, Gender

Based on the Model Summary table, the multiple correlation coefficient (R) was 0.204, indicating that the simultaneous relationship between gender and birth order with career self-efficacy was categorized as low. The R Square value of 0.042 indicates that both independent variables were only able to explain 4.2% of the variance in students' career self-efficacy, while the remaining 95.8% was influenced by other factors outside the scope of this study. Furthermore, the Adjusted R Square value of 0.030 indicates that after controlling for the number of variables and sample size, the model's ability to predict career self-efficacy remained relatively low.

Table 6. ANOVA Table

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1196.256	2	598.128	3.704	.027[a]
	Residual	27615.238	171	161.493		
	Total	28811.494	173			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Birth Order, Gender
b. Dependent Variable: Self-Efficacy

Based on the ANOVA table, the F value obtained was 3.704 with a significance value of 0.027. Since the significance value was lower than 0.05, the regression model was considered statistically significant. This indicates that gender and birth order simultaneously influenced high school students' career self-efficacy. Nevertheless, the magnitude of the influence of these two variables remained relatively low based on the obtained coefficient of determination.

Tabel 7. Coefficients Table

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	73.821	4.095		18.028	.000					
	Gender	-5.179	1.948	-.199	-2.658	.009	-.201	-.199	-.199	.997	1.003
	Birth Order	-.437	.987	-.033	-.442	.659	-.044	-.034	-.033	.997	1.003

a. Dependent Variable: Self-Efficacy

Based on the coefficients table, the gender variable obtained a regression coefficient of -5.179 with a significance value of 0.009. Since the significance value was lower than 0.05, gender significantly influenced students' career self-efficacy. The negative coefficient indicates that male students tended to demonstrate higher levels of career self-efficacy than female students based on the coding system used in this study. Meanwhile, the birth order variable obtained a coefficient value of -0.437 with a significance value of 0.659, indicating that birth order did not significantly influence students' career self-efficacy. Therefore, gender emerged as a more influential variable than birth order in explaining variations in students' career self-efficacy.

Table 8. *Collinearity Diagnostics*

Model	Dimension	Eigenvalue	Condition Index	Variance Proportions (Constant)	Gender	Birth Order
1	1	2.867	1.000	.01	.01	.01
	2	.097	5.444	.00	.40	.65
	3	.036	8.863	.99	.59	.34

a. Dependent Variable: Self-Efficacy

Based on the collinearity diagnostics table, the tolerance value for each variable was 0.997 and the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) value was 1.003. These values indicate that there was no multicollinearity problem in the regression model because the tolerance values were above 0.10 and the VIF values were below 10. Therefore, the gender and birth order variables did not exhibit excessive linear relationships and were appropriate to be included simultaneously in the regression model.

The regression results demonstrated that gender and birth order simultaneously had a significant effect on high school students' career self-efficacy, with F=3.704 and a significance value of p=0.027. However, the R^2=0.042 value indicates that both variables explained only 4.2% of the variance in career self-efficacy, whereas the remaining 95.8% was influenced by other factors outside the model. These findings are consistent with the study conducted by Azhar and Nugraheni (2026), which demonstrated that self-esteem and perceived parental expectations explained 29.8% of the variance in high school students' career decision self-efficacy, suggesting that psychological factors and parental expectations may serve as stronger predictors than demographic categories.

Partially, gender significantly influenced career self-efficacy with coefficients of B=-5.179, \beta=-0.199, t=-2.658, and a significance value of p=0.009. In contrast, birth order did not significantly influence career self-efficacy, with coefficients of B=-0.437, \beta=-0.033, t=-0.442, and a significance value of p=0.659. These findings indicate that gender played a more substantial role than birth order in explaining variations in students' career self-efficacy. Loan et al. (2025) further emphasized that career-related parental support significantly influences career decision-making self-efficacy, while gender may moderate the relationship between family support and career confidence.

From the perspective of Social Cognitive Career Theory, career self-efficacy develops through interactions among personal factors, learning experiences, environmental support, and outcome expectations. Therefore, the relatively low contribution of gender and birth order in this model suggests that students' career self-efficacy is more strongly shaped by social experiences, family support, school support, and career exploration processes. Asriyana, Sugiharto, Sunawan, and Mugiarso (2026) also demonstrated that career decision self-efficacy plays an important role in the relationship between career search efficacy and student life satisfaction among vocational high school students.

These findings should also be interpreted through Alfred Adler's grand theory. From the Adlerian perspective, the non-significant influence of birth order does not imply that birth order is irrelevant; rather, it suggests that its influence is neither direct nor deterministic. Birth order should instead be understood as

part of the family constellation operating through family relationship patterns, responsibility demands, emotional support, sibling relationships, and students' perceptions of their positions within the family. Ningsih and Rejeki (2025) demonstrated that democratic parenting styles and self-efficacy positively influenced students' educational decision-making, whereas authoritarian parenting styles exerted negative effects.

Therefore, the findings of this study indicate that gender and birth order simultaneously exerted a significant influence on career self-efficacy, although their contribution remained relatively low. Within Alfred Adler's perspective, these findings reinforce the understanding that birth position should not be interpreted rigidly, but rather should be associated with broader family dynamics. Bagaskara and Maryam (2025) further demonstrated that self-efficacy training can produce significant improvements in high school students' readiness for career decision-making. Consequently, the role of school counselors remains essential in assisting students to develop career confidence through understanding family experiences, parental support, social relationships, and students' personal potential.

Conclusions and Suggestion

The findings of this study indicate that gender and birth order simultaneously had a significant relationship with students' career self-efficacy, although the contribution of both variables remained relatively low. Gender demonstrated a significant influence on career self-efficacy, whereas birth order did not show a direct significant influence. These findings suggest that career self-efficacy among high school students cannot be explained solely through demographic categories, but rather should be understood through broader psychological and social experiences. From the perspective of Alfred Adler's Individual Psychology, birth order should not be interpreted deterministically, but rather as part of the family constellation that shapes students' subjective experiences, responsibilities, interpersonal relationships, parental expectations, and self-perceptions within the family environment.

This study reinforces the relevance of Adlerian theory within the context of contemporary career guidance by demonstrating that family dynamics remain important in understanding students' career beliefs, even though birth order is not the dominant predictor. On the other hand, the findings also support the perspective of Social Cognitive Career Theory, which explains that career self-efficacy is influenced by interactions among personal factors, learning experiences, environmental support, and social contexts. Therefore, students' career confidence is more likely to develop through a combination of family support, school experiences, self-esteem, career exploration opportunities, and guidance interventions rather than merely through children's positions within the family.

The practical implication of this study is that school guidance and counseling services should develop more contextual and individualized approaches in supporting students' career development. School counselors should not only consider students' academic achievement or demographic backgrounds, but also explore family relationships, parental expectations, social support, and students' subjective experiences in shaping their career confidence. The novelty of this study lies in the integration of Alfred Adler's birth order perspective with career self-efficacy within the context of Indonesian high school students, particularly through the simultaneous examination of gender and family constellation in shaping students' confidence regarding future career planning

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