



## Gender Analysis of Student Career Self-Efficacy and Implications in Career Guidance Services at State Vocational Schools

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**Abstract.** Women and men have the same opportunities to find self-actualization in various fields, including careers. However, various data show that the female population generally lags behind the male population in the career field. One of the essential factors which influence the development and success of an individual's career is self-efficacy. This study aims to determine the differences in career self-efficacy of female and male students at SMK Negeri Makassar City. The study took a population of high school students in Makassar City, with a sample of 426 students, consisting of 215 girls and 211 boys. The career self-efficacy variable data collection instrument was developed and adapted from the Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale (CDSE-SF) from Betz, Klein, & Taylor. The results of the study show that there was no significant difference in the career self-efficacy scores of female students and male students at SMK Negeri Makassar City. Significant differences were seen only in the maritime skills program, where female students' self-efficacy was higher than male students. In contrast, in the six skill programs, both sexes showed no significant difference in career self-efficacy.

**Keywords:** career self-efficacy, gender analysis, career counseling, guidance, and counseling services.

## INTRODUCTION

Gender equality is a tool to promote social development and create social change” (Government Offices of Sweden, 2019). Also, gender equality can promote development and reduce poverty (UNFPA, 2018) and positively impact both individuals and society (EIGE, 2017). In Indonesia, the index of gender equality is low. Based on the UNDP report (2018), Indonesia has a new Gender Inequality Index (GII) of 0.453. In 2017 Indonesia was ranked 104th in the world (160 countries) and seventh out of 11 ASEAN countries, behind Singapore,

Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, Vietnam, Thailand, and the Philippines. South Sulawesi Province shows a GII figure of 0.441, below the national achievement.

In the employment sector, gender inequality in the labor participation rate is still above 30%. However, in the last ten years, it has decreased from 34.4% in 2010, 33.84 in 2015, to 29.26% in 2020 (Central Bureau of Statistics Indonesia, 2019). Losses due to gender inequality related to the quality of life and empowerment in Indonesia are 43.6 percent nationally and 44.1 percent in South Sulawesi.

Education is a pathway to breaking the chain of gender inequality. Through education, students can develop their potential in a gender-fair manner before entering the world of work. As an educational institution that aims to prepare students to enter the workforce, develop professional attitudes (Government Regulation No. 29 of 1990), and meet the community's need for labor (Evans in Djojonegoro, 1998: 36). Vocational high schools (SMK) are responsible for developing students in a gender-fair manner that includes all essential aspects needed by male and female students to enter the world of work, including strengthening career self-efficacy.

One crucial factor that influences career decision-making in the education process in SMK is self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is an essential indicator of career determination (Bandura, 2000; Pappas & Kounenou, 2011). Self-efficacy contributes to performance effectiveness and increases personal stability through determination and commitment to hard work, persistence, flexibility, and resistance to pressure and depression (Bandura, 2000; Bandura & Locke, 2003). Various studies have shown a positive relationship between career self-efficacy and behavior in career and entrepreneurship (Markman et al., 2002; Bradley & Roberts, 2004).

Budiningsih (2012) showed that self-efficacy could predict career decision-making up to 45.22%. Also, Widyastuti and Pratiwi (2013) found that self-efficacy affects the stability of career decision-making compared to family social support, with a contribution of 30.8%. Therefore, self-efficacy is essential in determining one's career decision-making behavior.

#### *Self-Efficacy*

Self-efficacy is closely related to a person's belief in his abilities (Lenox and Subich; 1994:302). According to Elliot, Kratochwill, Cook, and Traver (2000: 352), self-efficacy is "individual beliefs in their abilities to exert control over their lives; feeling of competency." Hjelle and Ziegler (1992:34) define self-efficacy as "an individual believes that he or she can execute the behavior required to produce certain response outcomes." Also, Sullivan and Mahalik (2000:54) suggest that "self-efficacy is considered a cognitive structure created by cumulative learning-ing experiences that leads to the belief or expectation that one can successfully perform a specific task or activity."

The self-efficacy construct consists of two parts: self-confidence (efficacy belief) and outcome expectations (outcome expectancies). (Elliot, et al., 2000:352; Luzzo and McWhirter, 2001:62). Self-confidence relates to one's belief in being able to master the behaviors needed to achieve an achievement well. A person's self-confidence is different because of differences in the dimensions of the level of task difficulty (magnitude), the broad area of behavior (generality), and stability of belief (strength). Outcome expectations are related to a person's estimation of the consequences of the actions he will take. How much a person assesses that he or she will experience a barrier in carrying out certain activities can be seen in coping self-efficacy, namely the level of confidence in one's ability to overcome or manage difficult and complex situations (Luzzo & McWhirter, 2000).

The dynamics of self-efficacy are formed from dynamic interactions between three common factors (triadic reciprocal causation), namely (1) behavioral statements, (2) internal processes in the form of cognitive, affective, and biological events, and (3) external environment (Linge et al., 2021; Šabić et al., 2021). Furthermore, the dynamics of the development of self-efficacy take place through two main stages, namely (1) the motivational stage and (2) the volitional stage. In the motivation phase, individuals develop an intention to act. This stage is mainly influenced by three types of cognition: perceptions of risk, expectations of results, and perceptions of one's abilities. In the volitional stage, individuals plan actions in detail, act, try their best, survive, prepare for possible failures, and rise from failure (Pandang et al., 2022).

According to (Linge et al., 2021), the quality of self-efficacy in individuals is formed and changed due to learning outcomes consisting of four sources, namely: (1) achievement of performance, the experience of success, and failure to achieve the expected results; (2) the results of observations of other people's behavior; (3) the level of emotional tension in facing situations full of challenges and obstacles; and (5) verbal persuasion, encouragement, or motivation from others.

#### *Career Self-Efficacy*

A career is a sequence of work-related activities of the behavior, values, and aspirations of individuals during the individual's life span (Simamora, 2004). A career as an object of self-efficacy can be seen in three aspects: choice

behavior, performance, and tenacity in trying (Umar et al., 2022).

According to Taylor and Betz (Ardiyanti, 2014), self-efficacy in making career decisions refers to an individual's confidence in his ability to make appropriate career decisions. Self-efficacy towards career decision-making is an individual's belief in his ability to complete tasks related to career decision-making.

Career self-efficacy is a person's perception of his ability to choose and develop optimally in a particular field of work (Presti et al., 2013). Career self-efficacy consists of two domains: the content of career choice and the career choice process. Career choice content refers to the content of the field of study related to a particular type of career. On the other hand, the career choice process refers to how a person chooses and implements a choice in a particular career field (assertiveness in choosing, belief in success, and tenacity in trying). Therefore, in this study, *career self-efficacy* is defined as firmness in choosing, encouragement to perform, and tenacity in responding to tasks related to specific fields of study and employment.

Betz, Klein, & Taylor (Isik, 2010) developed an instrument to measure career self-efficacy based on five main aspects: problem-solving, occupational information, goal selection, self-appraisal, and planning. This instrument was adapted for use in this study.

#### *Gender Disparity*

Gender disparities between women and men are caused by a unique socialization process (Chua et al., 2021; Fleischmann & Van Berkel, 2021). The different experiences that men and women go through in the early days of life cause them to have a fundamentally different perspective on seeing the world (Fleischmann & Van Berkel, 2021). This particular experience causes men and women to develop their unique resources, which impacts identifying opportunities to enter the field of work (Chua et al., 2021).

In terms of self-potential, there is no difference between men and women (Zeffane in Das, 2018). The study's results found that the personal characteristics of female entrepreneur workers were relatively the same as their male counterparts (Gatewood et al., 2002). However, gender-stereotyped beliefs about women, such as the traditional thought that women's traits and abilities are different from men's, have often prevented them from showing career intentions. Women are generally perceived as expressive,

emotional, and indecisive, while men are perceived as more assertive, objective, aggressive, and frivolous. These stereotypes further influence job choices among men and women (Williams & Best, 1982; Das & Jaiswal, 2018).

According to Cornejo & Escot (2018), career behavior and entrepreneurial practices are best understood in the context of gender stereotypes embedded in work. This gender stereotype can be seen in its influence in two ways. First, there is a tendency to create occupational segregation by gender. The world of work has traditionally been considered a male-dominated field. Masculine stereotypes are generally associated with the business world (thin, hungry, predatory, hostile). Second, traditional gender roles or norms generally associate women with domestic work (taking care of the household and raising children) and men with the role of earning a living.

Ferdinand (Esnard-Flavius, 2010) highlights the dual role (caretaker, wife, child-bearer) as the causative factor preventing many women from being involved in business activities and careers. Many female workers have dual responsibilities: taking care of work and family duties. This gender role and identity at the micro-level affect their behavior and performance compared to male entrepreneurs (Cornejo & Escot, 2018). The experience of women facing negative responses from society to women who work outside the home is also an obstacle for many women entering the business career field (Esnard-Flavius, 2010). Several researchers have shown that women are less likely to choose usually male-dominated jobs because they have lower perceptions of self-efficacy in doing this type of work (Baughn et al., 2006; Urban, 2010).

Although gender norms in society are changing, in reality, even in the most developed societies, most households still have two incomes. This change process takes a long time, so the increase in women's participation in the field of employment is not always in line with a large number of men's involvement in household work (Raley et al., 2012). Research conducted in Makassar City Middle and High School (Pandang, 2019) shows that female students' career self-efficacy differs significantly from higher than that of male students.

In the aspect of entrepreneurial work, research on entrepreneurial self-efficacy in vocational students in Makassar (Pandang, 2022) shows that female students' ESE scores are higher

than those shown by male students. Female ESE scores appear to be higher than male students, especially in areas of expertise traditionally considered compatible with female gender stereotypes. In contrast, male students show higher ESE scores in areas of expertise that are stereotyped as male dominant. In areas of expertise that are more gender-neutral, such as ICT and Business Management, the ESE scores of the two sexes do not show any significance.

## METHOD

Career Self Efficacy is a sense of self-confidence to choose and carry out tasks and activities related to making career decisions. It covers five aspects: Problem Solving, Occupational Information, Goal Selection, Self-Appraisal, and Planning.

The population in this study were students at the State Vocational High School (SMK) in Makassar City. A sample of 456 students was selected randomly in clusters by considering the representation of male and female students in the seven skill program groups in Makassar City Vocational School. The gender distribution of the sample in the seven skill programs can be seen in Table 1 below:

**Table 1.** Distribution of Research Samples

| Expertise Program                           | Male       | Female     | Total      |
|---|------------|------------|------------|
| 1. Agribusiness and Agrotechnology          | 64         | 5          | 69         |
| 2. Business Management                      | 18         | 61         | 79         |
| 3. Maritime                                 | 35         | 37         | 72         |
| 4. Health and Social Work                   | 20         | 51         | 71         |
| 5. Tourism                                  | 11         | 43         | 54         |
| 6. Technology and Engineering               | 41         | 16         | 57         |
| 7. Information and Communication Technology | 37         | 17         | 54         |
| <b>Total</b>                                | <b>226</b> | <b>230</b> | <b>456</b> |

Measurement of career self-efficacy variables using a career self-efficacy scale developed and adapted from the Career Decision

Self-Efficacy Scale (CDSE-SF) from Betz, Klein, & Taylor (1996) as published in the article Isik (2010). It was arranged in the form of a scale of 25 items with five answer options from 1 – 5. Number 1 means “Not sure you can do it,” and number 5 means “very sure you can do it. Thus, the score ranges from 25 – 125. Background data of students and parents of students are obtained through documentation and questionnaires.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Result

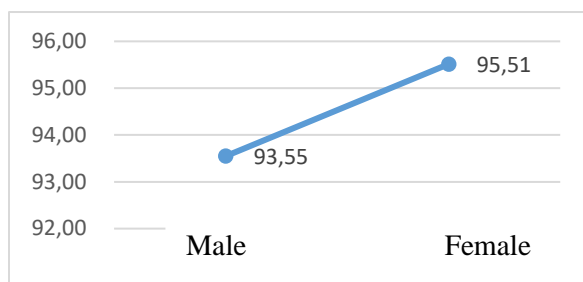
#### 1. Overview of Student Career Self-Efficacy

**Table 2.** Overview of Student Career Self-Efficacy

| Expertise Program                           | Male         | Female       | Total        |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1. Agribusiness and Agrotechnology          | 78,66        | 80,40        | 78,78        |
| 2. Business Management                      | 77,33        | 76,03        | 76,32        |
| 3. Maritime                                 | 68,63        | 77,30        | 73,16        |
| 4. Health and Social Work                   | 75,60        | 77,51        | 77,00        |
| 5. Tourism                                  | 71,73        | 77,28        | 76,10        |
| 6. Technology and Engineering               | 70,44        | 66,75        | 69,45        |
| 7. Information and Communication Technology | 75,92        | 76,41        | 76,01        |
| <b>Total Sample</b>                         | <b>74,45</b> | <b>76,27</b> | <b>75,38</b> |

From the descriptive analysis, there appear to be differences in the acquisition of the mean scores between male and female students. Female students showed higher Career Self Efficacy scores than male students. Female students got an average value of Career Self Efficacy = 95.51, while male students got an average value of Career Self Efficacy = 93.55.

Graphically, the Career Self Efficacy scores between male and female students in Makassar City can be seen in Figure 4.



**Figure 1.** Comparison Graph of Students' Career Self Efficacy Values by Gender

Based on the inferential analysis with Anova statistics, the results show that the difference in Career Self Efficacy scores between male and female students has a significance value of 0.008 or lower than 0.05, so  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_a$  is accepted. Thus, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference in the value of self-efficacy in a career between male and female students in Makassar City.

### Discussion

The results of the descriptive analysis showed that the average score obtained by female students was 76.27 and male students 74.45. It means that the achievement of the self-efficacy value in a student's career in Makassar City is in the reasonably high category. Given that the purpose of vocational education is to "prepare students to enter the workforce and develop professional attitudes" (Government Regulation 29 of 1990), the category of student career self-efficacy values still needs to be further improved, both for male and female students. Teachers and school counsellors need to help students to further strengthen the quality of students career self-efficacy by paying attention to the four primary sources as stated by (Pandang & Umar, 2021) namely (1) performance accomplishment, (2) vicarious learning, (3) emotional arousal, and (4) verbal persuasion.

The statistical analysis results through the independent sample t-test showed that the difference in career self-efficacy between the two sexes was generally insignificant. Except for the maritime skills program, in the other six skill program groups, no significant difference was found in the career self-efficacy scores between female and male students. This result is

somewhat different from the research findings on high school students in Makassar City (Pandang, 2019), which showed a higher self-efficacy value for women than men.

Career self-efficacy is one of the leading personal characteristics that affect work and entrepreneurial intentions and behaviour (Pihie & Begheri, 2011). This analysis's results indicate that female students are mentally prepared and confident, which is relatively high and is no different from male students to enter and engage in various fields of work that align with the vocational skills program. Teachers and school counsellors can use these findings as guidance and counselling materials for career motivation and aspirations, especially for female students who may still be worried and hesitant about entering the public world for a successful career as boys.

In the maritime expertise program, the analysis results show that the career self-efficacy of female students is significantly different and higher than the career self-efficacy of male students in the maritime program. This result is in line with the findings of previous research (Pandang et al., 2022) that the entrepreneurial self-efficacy of female students in SMK is higher than that of male students ( $p = 0.019$ ). This finding is interesting to study from the perspective of gender analysis, considering that so far, the maritime sector has traditionally been assessed as a field of work associated with men. It turned out that the experience of learning and interacting with work assignments in the maritime field did not make female students from this skill program reduce their confidence in pursuing a career. The female students have higher career self-efficacy than male students in this skill program. Dimensions of work measured by this research instrument with the specific dimensions of work in the maritime field that have been trained and taught by students in the maritime skills program vocational school. If the measuring indicator refers to a specific field of work in the maritime sector, women's self-efficacy may be different. In order to obtain certainty about this second factor, an empirical study is needed in further research.

### CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Descriptively, the career self-efficacy scores for female students tend to be higher than male students at SMK Negeri Makassar City, but both are in the reasonably high category.

However, the statistical analysis results on the total sample showed no significant difference in career self-efficacy of female and male students at SMK Negeri Makassar City.

The analysis of the seven groups of vocational skills programs showed that the significant difference with female students' scores being higher than male students was only offered in the maritime expertise program. Meanwhile, there are no differences in career self-efficacy for female and male students in the other six skill groups. The six groups in this research are agribusiness and agrotechnology, business management, health and social workers, technology and engineering, and information and communication technology.

It can be concluded that female students at Makassar State Vocational School have high self-confidence and are equal to male students in entering the career world.

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