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Academic Self-Efficacy and Career Decision-Making Efficacy of Senior High School Students

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ABSTRACT

Aligned with the Department of Education's vision of producing nationally relevant and globally competitive learners, this study examined the influence of academic self-efficacy (ASE) on the career decision-making efficacy (CDME) of senior high school students in the Schools Division of Camarines Norte for School Year 2025-2026. Using a mixed-methods design, the study combined descriptive-correlational-evaluative survey procedures with qualitative accounts to determine students' ASE and CDME levels, test their relationship, identify contributory factors in career choice, and develop an action plan for career readiness. Findings revealed high levels of ASE (M=3.03) and CDME (M=2.95). Pearson correlation analysis showed a very highly significant positive relationship between ASE and CDME (r=0.585, p=0.001), with ASE explaining 34.22% of the variance in CDME. Significant differences were also found among the aspects of ASE and CDME, indicating uneven strengths across academic and career-related competencies. Thematic findings identified parental advice, financial and economic dependency, peer-driven conformity, teachers as career igniters, institutional accessibility of local courses, and social media as key influences on students' career decisions. The study concludes that academic confidence is a crucial determinant of career decision-making efficacy and recommends targeted interventions to strengthen time management, planning, problem-solving, occupational information-seeking, and contextual career support among senior high school students.

Keywords: *academic self-efficacy, career decision-making efficacy, senior high school students, career readiness, mixed-methods research, Camarines Norte*

INTRODUCTION

The Department of Education envisions Filipino learners whose values and competencies enable them to realize their full potential and contribute meaningfully to nation-building. This vision supports AmBisyon Natin 2040, which imagines Filipinos as healthy, smart, innovative, and economically secure citizens. Within the K to 12 Enhanced Basic Education Program, senior high school students are expected to acquire the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for productive citizenship and informed career preparation.

Academic self-efficacy is central to this preparation because it reflects students' confidence in their ability to perform academic tasks, manage learning demands, and persist despite challenges. Students with stronger academic self-efficacy are more likely to engage in goal-directed learning, regulate their study behaviors, and approach academic tasks with greater resilience. These capacities are closely connected to career decision-making efficacy, or students' confidence in their ability to assess themselves, gather occupational information, select goals, plan, and solve career-related problems.

This study examined the influence of academic self-efficacy on the career decision-making efficacy of senior high school students in the Schools Division of Camarines Norte. It also identified other contextual factors that shape students' career decisions and proposed a strategic action plan to strengthen students' career readiness.

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The study is anchored on the view that academic confidence does not only improve school performance but also supports deliberate, informed, and realistic career choices among young learners.

Literature Review

Academic self-efficacy and social cognitive theory

This study is anchored in Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, which explains self-efficacy as a person's perceived capability to organize and execute actions required to attain desired goals (Bandura, 2023). In the academic context, self-efficacy is not merely a measure of ability but a belief system that influences effort, persistence, and resilience. Recent applications of the theory emphasize that students' beliefs in their academic capabilities shape their aspirations, motivation, and persistence in challenging learning situations (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2021).

Academic self-efficacy is strengthened by mastery experiences, supportive relationships, self-regulation, and access to learning resources. Studies have shown that academic engagement mediates the influence of self-efficacy on performance (Meng & Zhang, 2023), while time management contributes to both confidence and academic success (Wang & Syafiq, 2023). Teacher-student relationships also support students' psychological needs for autonomy, relatedness, and competence, which are necessary for sustained engagement (Jederlund & Rosen, 2022; Ryan & Deci, 2022).

Career decision-making efficacy and vocational choice

Career decision-making efficacy refers to students' confidence in performing tasks related to career choice, including self-appraisal, goal selection, planning, occupational information-seeking, and problem-solving. Holland's Theory of Vocational Choice, particularly the RIASEC model, explains that career satisfaction improves when individuals' interests and personality orientations fit their occupational environments (Holland, 1997; Nauta, 2020). Contemporary studies further suggest that career choice is increasingly mediated by digital literacy and adaptability, especially as students navigate complex labor markets (Su et al., 2021).

Self-appraisal provides students with clarity about their abilities, interests, and aspirations, while planning and problem-solving help them translate personal awareness into actionable career choices. Prior research has shown that career decision-making self-efficacy predicts employability, career adaptability, and career action steps (Cordova, 2022; Puertos & Puertos, 2022; Rahim et al., 2021; Zhou et al., 2023). However, students may still experience career difficulty when they lack problem-solving resilience or sufficient occupational information (Odaci et al., 2023; Rafiola et al., 2023).

Contextual influences on students' career decisions

Career decisions among senior high school students are shaped not only by academic confidence but also by family, financial, peer, teacher, institutional, and digital influences. Parental support and family communication patterns significantly affect students' career decision-making self-efficacy (Baldon et al., 2023; Valencia et al., 2023). Financial capacity also constrains career choice, particularly among low-income and first-generation students whose options may depend on affordability and family resources (Peng & Yue, 2022; Scott, 2024).

Peers can provide motivation and career information, although peer pressure may also lead to conformity and indecision (Kaur, 2020; Mtemeri, 2020). Teachers serve as career igniters when they model professional behavior and provide meaningful guidance (Wong et al., 2020). Institutional accessibility of local courses influences whether students can pursue preferred programs near home, while social media expands exposure to professional possibilities but may also present unrealistic career portrayals (Fukubayashi, 2021; Nguyen, 2024). These strands of literature indicate that students' career readiness must be understood as a product of both internal self-efficacy and external contextual conditions.

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METHODS

This study used a mixed-methods research design to examine both the statistical and experiential dimensions of the relationship between academic self-efficacy and career decision-making efficacy. The quantitative component employed a descriptive-correlational-evaluative design to determine students' ASE and CDME levels, examine significant relationships, and test differences among their component aspects. The qualitative component used a descriptive-evaluative approach to explore students' lived experiences and identify additional factors influencing their career decisions.

The respondents were senior high school students from the Schools Division of Camarines Norte during School Year 2025-2026. Quantitative data were gathered using a structured survey instrument that measured ASE across five aspects: study goal orientation, learning process, teacher-student relationship, utilization of resources, and time management. CDME was measured across five aspects: self-appraisal, occupational information, goal selection, planning, and problem-solving. Both instruments used a four-point scale interpreted as Very Low, Low, Average, High, and Very High based on the corresponding score intervals.

Qualitative data were gathered through students' narratives regarding factors influencing their career decisions. These narratives were analyzed thematically to identify patterns in parental, financial, peer, teacher, institutional, and social media influences. Quantitative data were analyzed using weighted means, Pearson correlation, coefficient of determination, one-way ANOVA, and Tukey's HSD post-hoc comparisons. The study observed ethical research practices by maintaining voluntary participation, confidentiality, and responsible use of participants' responses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Level of academic self-efficacy

Table 1. *Level of Academic Self-Efficacy per Aspect*

Aspects	Mean	Interpretation
Learning Process	3.18	High
Teacher-Student Relationship	3.14	High
Study Goal Orientation	3.09	High
Utilization of Resources	3.00	High
Time Management	2.75	High
Overall Mean	3.03	High

Table 1 shows that senior high school students had a high level of academic self-efficacy, with an overall mean of 3.03. The strongest aspect was learning process (M=3.18), indicating that students were generally confident in engaging with academic tasks and learning activities. This supports the Social Cognitive Theory premise that mastery experiences strengthen self-efficacy (Bandura, 2023).

Time management recorded the lowest mean (M=2.75), although it remained within the high range. This suggests that students possessed academic confidence but experienced comparatively weaker confidence in scheduling, prioritizing, and sustaining study routines. This gap is meaningful because time management is closely linked to academic performance and digital competence (Domínguez & Bezanilla, 2021; Wang & Syafiq, 2023).

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Level of career decision-making efficacy

Table 2. *Level of Career Decision-Making Efficacy per Aspect*

Aspects	Mean	Interpretation
Self-Appraisal	3.17	High
Planning	2.94	High
Occupational Information	2.89	High
Goal Selection	2.87	High
Problem-solving	2.87	High
Overall Mean	2.95	High

Table 2 indicates that students also had a high level of career decision-making efficacy, with an overall mean of 2.95. Self-appraisal obtained the highest mean (M=3.17), implying that students were most confident in identifying their strengths, interests, and values. This result is consistent with studies that describe self-appraisal as a central component of career decision-making self-efficacy (Gupta, 2024; Valencia et al., 2023).

Goal selection and problem-solving received the lowest means (M=2.87), though both remained high. This suggests that students may know themselves well but feel comparatively less confident when translating self-awareness into concrete career plans or when resolving career-related obstacles. Career interventions must therefore move beyond self-awareness and strengthen practical career planning and problem-solving skills.

Influence of academic self-efficacy on career decision-making efficacy

Table 3. *Influence of Academic Self-Efficacy on Career Decision-Making Efficacy*

ASE Aspect	CDME Aspect	r	r^2	p-value	Interpretation
Study Goal Orientation	Self-appraisal	0.390	0.1521	0.001	Very Highly Significant
Study Goal Orientation	Problem-solving	0.346	0.1197	0.001	Very Highly Significant
Study Goal Orientation	Goal Selection	0.332	0.1102	0.001	Very Highly Significant
Study Goal Orientation	Planning	0.323	0.1043	0.001	Very Highly Significant
Study Goal Orientation	Occupational Information	0.295	0.0870	0.001	Very Highly Significant
Learning Process	Self-appraisal	0.438	0.1918	0.001	Very Highly Significant
Learning Process	Goal Selection	0.419	0.1756	0.001	Very Highly Significant
Learning Process	Problem-solving	0.362	0.1310	0.001	Very Highly Significant
Learning Process	Planning	0.336	0.1129	0.001	Very Highly Significant
Learning Process	Occupational Information	0.280	0.0784	0.001	Very Highly Significant
Teacher-Student Relationship	Self-appraisal	0.372	0.1384	0.001	Very Highly Significant
Teacher-Student Relationship	Goal Selection	0.362	0.1310	0.001	Very Highly Significant
Teacher-Student Relationship	Planning	0.334	0.1116	0.001	Very Highly Significant

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Teacher-Student Relationship	Problem-solving	0.296	0.0876	0.001	Very Highly Significant
Teacher-Student Relationship	Occupational Information	0.270	0.0729	0.001	Very Highly Significant
Utilization of Resources	Self-appraisal	0.373	0.1391	0.001	Very Highly Significant
Utilization of Resources	Planning	0.346	0.1197	0.001	Very Highly Significant
Utilization of Resources	Occupational Information	0.321	0.1030	0.001	Very Highly Significant
Utilization of Resources	Goal Selection	0.306	0.0936	0.001	Very Highly Significant
Utilization of Resources	Problem-solving	0.299	0.0894	0.001	Very Highly Significant
Time Management	Planning	0.474	0.2247	0.001	Very Highly Significant
Time Management	Goal Selection	0.473	0.2237	0.001	Very Highly Significant
Time Management	Problem-solving	0.472	0.2228	0.001	Very Highly Significant
Time Management	Self-appraisal	0.426	0.1815	0.001	Very Highly Significant
Time Management	Occupational Information	0.360	0.1296	0.001	Very Highly Significant
Overall ASE	Overall CDME	0.585	0.3422	0.001	Very Highly Significant

Table 3 shows that all examined relationships between ASE and CDME aspects were very highly significant (p=0.001). The overall correlation between ASE and CDME was r=0.585, indicating a moderate-to-strong positive relationship. The coefficient of determination (r^2=0.3422) shows that ASE explained 34.22% of the variance in CDME, while the remaining 65.78% may be attributed to contextual and other personal factors.

Time management emerged as the strongest ASE dimension influencing CDME, particularly planning (r=0.474), goal selection (r=0.473), and problem-solving (r=0.472). This suggests that students who can manage academic schedules and tasks are better prepared to plan careers and address decision-related challenges. Conversely, teacher-student relationship and resource utilization showed weaker but still significant associations, suggesting that external support is valuable but cannot replace individual self-regulation.

Significant differences among aspects of academic self-efficacy

Table 4. *ANOVA Results on Differences among Aspects of Academic Self-Efficacy*

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Interpretation
Between Aspects	39.891	4	9.973	30.028	0.000	Very Highly Significant
Within Aspects	569.568	1715	0.332			
Total	609.459	1719				

Table 5. *Tukey HSD Multiple Comparisons among Academic Self-Efficacy Aspects*

Aspect I	Aspect J	Mean Difference	Sig.	Interpretation
Study Goal Orientation	Time Management	0.34012*	0.000	Very Highly Significant
Study Goal Orientation	Utilization of Resources	0.09535	0.192	Not Significant
Study Goal Orientation	Learning Process	-0.08256	0.329	Not Significant

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Study Goal Orientation	Teacher-Student Relationship	-0.05102	0.774	Not Significant
Learning Process	Time Management	0.42267*	0.000	Very Highly Significant
Learning Process	Utilization of Resources	0.17791*	0.001	Very Highly Significant
Learning Process	Teacher-Student Relationship	0.03154	0.952	Not Significant
Teacher-Student Relationship	Time Management	0.39113*	0.000	Very Highly Significant
Teacher-Student Relationship	Utilization of Resources	0.14637*	0.008	Highly Significant
Utilization of Resources	Time Management	0.24477*	0.000	Very Highly Significant

The ANOVA results reveal very highly significant differences among ASE aspects, F (4,1715) =30.028, p=0.000. The Tukey HSD results identify time management as the most consistently weaker area when compared with study goal orientation, learning process, teacher-student relationship, and utilization of resources. This indicates a planning-action gap: students are confident in learning and goal setting but less confident in the self-regulatory discipline needed to execute these goals.

This finding has practical implications for schools. General academic encouragement may not be sufficient; interventions should specifically target time-blocking, priority-setting, deadline management, and study routine development. Strengthening these areas can help students translate academic aspirations into consistent performance and better career preparation.

Significant differences among aspects of career decision-making efficacy

Table 6. *ANOVA Results on Differences among Aspects of Career Decision-Making Efficacy*

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Interpretation
Between Aspects	22.815	4	5.704	15.328	0.000	Very Highly Significant
Within Aspects	638.167	1715	0.372			
Total	660.982	1719				

Table 7. *Tukey HSD Multiple Comparisons among Career Decision-Making Efficacy Aspects*

Aspect I	Aspect J	Mean Difference	Sig.	Interpretation
Goal Selection	Occupational Information	-0.02035	0.992	Not Significant
Goal Selection	Planning	-0.06337	0.652	Not Significant
Goal Selection	Problem-Solving	0.00640	1.000	Not Significant
Goal Selection	Self-Appraisal	-0.30073*	0.000	Very Highly Significant
Occupational Information	Planning	-0.04302	0.887	Not Significant
Occupational Information	Problem-Solving	0.02674	0.979	Not Significant
Occupational Information	Self-Appraisal	-0.28038*	0.000	Very Highly Significant
Planning	Problem-Solving	0.06977	0.563	Not Significant
Planning	Self-Appraisal	-0.23735*	0.000	Very Highly Significant
Problem Solving	Self-Appraisal	-0.30712*	0.000	Very Highly Significant

The ANOVA results show very highly significant differences among CDME aspects, F (4,1715) =15.328, p=0.000. Tukey HSD results reveal that self-appraisal was significantly higher than all other aspects. Students therefore demonstrated stronger confidence in knowing themselves than in performing tactical career tasks such as gathering occupational information, selecting goals, planning, and solving career problems.

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This pattern suggests that the main challenge is not the absence of self-awareness but the translation of self-awareness into action. Career programs should therefore emphasize occupational research, decision mapping, alternative career planning, and problem-solving simulations.

Other factors contributing to career decision-making efficacy

The qualitative findings identified six major factors that shape students' career decision-making efficacy. First, parental advice influenced course choice through guidance, persuasion, and family role modeling. Parents and guardians often encouraged students toward courses perceived as in demand, stable, or aligned with family professions. While this support strengthens confidence, it may also limit exploration when students prioritize family expectations over personal aspirations.

Second, financial and economic dependency shaped career options. Students from financially constrained families tended to select courses that fit their family budget or were available through free or low-cost institutions. This indicates that career decision-making is partly negotiated through affordability rather than interest alone. Third, peer-driven conformity influenced students who preferred to remain with friends or follow peer decisions, although supportive peer groups also encouraged college completion and ambition.

Fourth, teachers acted as career igniters by modeling professional dedication and encouraging students to consider specific fields. Fifth, institutional accessibility of local courses shaped decisions, especially when preferred programs were unavailable nearby or when free-tuition institutions offered limited options. Finally, social media served as a career catalyst by exposing students to role models, industries, and success narratives, while also requiring guidance to distinguish realistic occupational information from curated portrayals.

Proposed action plan

Based on the findings, the study proposed SPRING-CIP, or the Socio-economic, Parental, Relational, and Institutional Navigational Guidance-Career Integration Plan. The plan includes career path toolkit workshops, high-performance self-management sessions, career resilience problem-solving activities, financial literacy seminars, and digital career mentorship. These components are designed to strengthen career readiness by bridging the gap between self-awareness, academic discipline, and practical career decision-making.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that senior high school students possessed high levels of both academic self-efficacy and career decision-making efficacy. However, their confidence was not uniform across all dimensions. In ASE, time management emerged as the most notable area needing support, while in CDME, self-appraisal was stronger than planning, occupational information, goal selection, and problem-solving. These findings indicate that students generally know themselves and believe in their academic abilities, but they require stronger support in translating confidence into disciplined academic action and concrete career planning.

Academic self-efficacy significantly influenced career decision-making efficacy, with an overall correlation of r=0.585 and a coefficient of determination of 34.22%. This confirms that academic confidence is a meaningful predictor of students' ability to make informed career decisions. Nevertheless, a substantial portion of career decision-making efficacy is shaped by other factors, particularly family expectations, financial capacity, peer influence, teacher support, local course availability, and social media exposure. Therefore, career readiness among senior high school students must be addressed through integrated academic, psychosocial, institutional, and socioeconomic support.

Recommendation

Schools should implement targeted academic self-management interventions, particularly on time management, strategic scheduling, and priority-setting, to help students convert academic goals into consistent action. Guidance counselors should strengthen career planning programs by emphasizing occupational information-seeking, goal selection, and problem-solving, since these CDME aspects were weaker than self-appraisal.

The Schools Division of Camarines Norte may adopt the proposed SPRING-CIP as a career readiness framework. Its implementation should involve parents, teachers, guidance personnel, and community partners to address the combined influence of family advice, financial constraints, peer support, teacher mentorship, local course availability, and social media. Career guidance programs should also include financial literacy, digital career mentorship, and exposure to realistic labor market information so that students can make informed and attainable career decisions.

Future researchers may extend the study by examining the influence of socioeconomic status, academic strand, school location, and parental occupation on ASE and CDME using larger samples or longitudinal designs. Further qualitative studies may also explore how students negotiate conflicts between personal interests, family expectations, and financial realities in selecting college programs or career pathways.

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