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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 government and the Department of Education's vision to foster job-ready and globally significant graduates, and in support of the country's long-term development goals, this study investigated the influence of Academic Self-Efficacy (ASE) on the Career Decision-Making Efficacy (CDME) of Senior High School (SHS) students within the Schools Division of Camarines Norte for the School Year 2025-2026. Specifically, this research sought to determine the level of students' ASE and CDME, identify contributing factors to career decision-making efficacy, and develop a strategic action plan to enhance students' career readiness. The research utilized a mixed-methods approach involving quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews. The study statistically analyzed the relationship between ASE and CDME and explored lived experiences to identify additional influencers on career choices. Findings revealed that while students possessed high levels of both ASE and CDME, a very highly significant positive relationship existed between them, alongside significant, non-uniform differences in efficacy across specific aspects. The study concluded that academic confidence is a crucial determinant for successful career choices and suggested that targeted support is needed to address the uneven nature of these strengths in senior high school students to empower them and evolve into globally competitive graduates and impactful nation-builders who contribute meaningfully to the workforce.

Keywords: *Education, Academic Self-Efficacy, Career Decision-Making Efficacy, Senior High School Students*

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INTRODUCTION

The Department of Education's vision for all Filipino learners is to be globally and nationally relevant, competent and value-laden for them to become nation-builders. This vision is in support of the country's long-term development agenda, AmBisyon Natin 2040. The Senior High School students as products of the K to 12 Enhanced Basic Education Program anchored on these competencies to emerge as productive citizens and proactive community assets. A decisive factor in this process is academic self-efficacy, which profoundly influences their confidence and ability to navigate their future professional paths.

This study is anchored in Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) to investigate the correlation between ASE and CDME among SHS students. This theory gives leeway to this study as self-efficacy views not as a stationary collection of skills, but as a student's perceived capacity to mobilize the cognitive and behavioral resources necessary for career goal attainment (Bandura, 2023). Recent applications of this theory emphasize that a student's belief in their academic capabilities acts as a primary driver of their career aspirations and persistence (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2021).

Complementing Bandura's work is John Holland's Theory of Vocational Choice, popularly known as the RIASEC model. It remains a cornerstone of vocational psychology. Recent scholarship highlights that this fit is increasingly mediated by digital literacy and adaptability, where the congruence between a student's interests and their chosen career cluster acts as a primary motivator for sustained academic and professional engagement (Nauta, 2020; Su et al., 2021).

This study sought to establish a critical link between ASE and the CDME of senior high school students. Furthermore, this investigation explored the diverse contributory factors in their career decision-making This study posited that fostering vigorous academic confidence leads to informed career selections, empowering students to evolve into globally competitive graduates and impactful nation-builders who contribute meaningfully to the workforce. Finally, this research extended beyond the mere collection of data across ASE and CDME; it culminated in the proposal of a targeted Action Plan specifically designed for the Schools Division of Camarines Norte.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study utilized a mixed methods design to address both the statistical and phenomenological aspects of the investigation. The quantitative phase employed a descriptive-correlational-evaluative design using survey questionnaires to examine student efficacy levels and the relationships between academic and career-related variables. Complementing this, the qualitative phase used a descriptive-evaluative approach through an In-Depth Interview (IDI) Guide to provide a nuanced exploration of emergent factors in students' career decision-making.

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The quantitative component involved 344 Senior High School (SHS) students from 10 public schools in Camarines Norte, derived from a total population of 2,874 using Cochran's Formula for finite populations to ensure statistical representation. For the qualitative phase, a purposive sub-sample of 17 participants (5% of the quantitative respondents) was selected from schools offering diverse SHS tracks. By integrating these methods, the study ensures that quantitative trends are substantiated by qualitative depth, forming a robust empirical foundation for the proposed action plan.

To ensure objective and reliable analysis, this study employed descriptive weighted means and a five-point Likert scale to profile ASE and CDME. Inferential analysis was conducted using Pearson's r to test relationships, while ANOVA and Tukey's HSD identified significant differences among variables. These quantitative measures were integrated with thematic analysis to capture recurring patterns in students lived experiences, providing a robust empirical foundation for the SPRING CIP integration plan.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Level of Academic Self-Efficacy of Students

A primary objective of this study is to determine the level of SHS students' ASE along five different aspects. Academic self-efficacy is the level of confidence of senior high school students in their capacity to effectively and efficiently achieve excellence in their academic goals. Table 1 shows five indicators on how the senior high school students engaged in academic work.

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
Mean	3.03	High

Legend: Very Low (0.00-0.80), Low (0.81-1.60), Average (1.61-2.40), High (2.41-3.20), Very High (3.21-4.00)

The results presented in Table 1 reveal a High Level of ASE among SHS students, evidenced by an overall mean of 3.03. This indicates that students generally feel confident in their ability to succeed despite academic challenges, possessing the resilience needed to manage difficult situations. Such a strong sense of competence suggests that these learners are better prepared to make informed, proactive decisions regarding their future career paths.

Within the specific aspects of ASE, the 'Learning Process' emerged as the most dominant catalyst for ASE, yielding the highest mean score of 3.18. This strong engagement aligns with Bandura's (2023) Social Cognitive Theory, which posits that mastery experiences are the

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most influential source of self-efficacy. Conversely, while 'Time Management' recorded the lowest mean at 3.03, it still maintains a "High" efficacy rating. This reflects that students possess the foundational executive skills required to prioritize scholastic tasks and adhere to study schedules, effectively avoiding last-minute pressures and fostering long-term professional habits.

The study revealed that the learning process serves as a vital mediator between a student's self-efficacy and their academic performance. By fostering resilience and motivation through meaningful educational experiences (Arcangel, 2022), the learning environment cultivates learning agility, which effectively converts individual confidence into sustained academic engagement (Jian, 2022). This interaction creates a stabilizing point where the learning process bridges the gap between a student's belief in their abilities and their actual achievement (Meng & Zhang, 2023).

Likewise, structured time management and ASE function as reciprocal mediators that enhance overall student success and digital competence (Wang & Syafiq, 2023; Domínguez & Bezanilla, 2021). This relationship forms a positive feedback loop: effective time management behaviors significantly boost self-efficacy, which in turn reinforces a student's confidence to maintain rigorous schedules and achieve superior academic outcomes (Wang & Syafiq, 2023; Domínguez & Bezanilla, 2021).

Level of Career Decision-Making Efficacy of Students

Table 2 exhibits the Level of CDME of SHS students along the five aspects. Significantly, all the 5 aspects show high level of confidence which means that learners have positive outlook in each of these aspects, which in turn strengthens their confidence to achieve successful outcomes in the end.

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
Mean	2.95	High

Legend: Very Low (0.00-0.80), Low (0.81-1.60), Average (1.61-2.40), High (2.41-3.20), Very High (3.21-4.00)

The results in Table 2 indicate a High Level of Career Decision-Making Efficacy (CDME) among SHS students, with an overall mean of 2.95. This score suggests that students possess strong confidence in their ability to handle the responsibilities required to make informed professional choices. A robust synergy exists between self-appraisal, goal selection, and problem-solving, which together serve as the pillars of CDME. This foundation enables students to not only identify ideal career paths but also to navigate the complexities and shifts of the professional landscape with accuracy and poise.

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Self-Appraisal emerged as the most significant contributor to this efficacy, recording the highest mean of 3.17. This indicates that students' confidence is primarily anchored in their ability to accurately assess their own strengths, interests, and values to align them with potential careers. However, Goal Selection and Problem-Solving recorded the lowest means at 2.87; however, these still remain within the "High" range. This suggests that while students find navigating career challenges slightly more demanding than self-reflection, they remain highly capable of resolving mismatches between their personal attributes and professional requirements.

The relationship between self-efficacy and personal development is inherently cyclical, as higher self-efficacy directly correlates with a more profound sense of purpose in life (Zurbano, 2022). This confidence empowers students to adapt more effectively to their chosen careers (Rahim et al., 2021) and serves as the primary predictor of successful employability upon graduation (Puertos & Puertos, 2022). However, the capacity to navigate professional hurdles depends heavily on problem-solving resilience, as deficiencies in this area can result in unfavorable outcomes (Odaci et al., 2022). To bridge these gaps, Rafiola et al. (2023) recommend solution-focused career counseling to bolster problem-solving efficacy and foster a more accurate understanding of various professional paths.

Influence of Academic Self-Efficacy Aspects on Career Decision-Making Efficacy

Table 3 exhibits the Influence of ASE aspects on the aspects of CDME. The data show the significant relationships across all the aspects of both variables. As shown in the table, a Very Highly Significant correlation was revealed after cross - examining all the aspects of both ASE and CDME. It confirmed that ASE is a powerful and reliable predictor of CDME. The Pearson correlation coefficients revealed a statistically significant relationship across all aspects of both variables. With all correlations reaching a very high significance level ($p = 0.001$), the data confirmed that Academic Self-Efficacy is a crucial determinant in shaping students' CDME.

The overall correlation was recorded at $r = 0.585$, yielding a coefficient of determination (r^2) of 0.3422. This indicates that approximately 34.22% of the variance in CDME is directly explained by ASE. While this represents a moderate-to-strong relationship, it also implies that the remaining 65.78% of the variance is influenced by external factors beyond academic confidence.

A strong positive correlation indicates that senior high school students who possess high academic confidence are also likely to exhibit greater efficacy in making informed career decisions. This suggests that academic success and self-belief effectively translate into the career domain, where high academic self-efficacy serves as a catalyst for more ambitious career goal setting. Furthermore, elevated confidence in both areas is consistently associated with reduced career indecision and fewer obstacles during the decision-making process.

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Table 3. Influence of ASE on CDME

Aspects of Academic Self-Efficacy	Aspects of Career Decision-Making	Pearson Correlation	Coefficient of Determination	p-value	Interpretation
Study Goal Orientation	Self-appraisal	0.390	0.1521	0.001	Very Highly Significant
	Problem-solving	0.346	0.1197	0.001	Very Highly Significant
	Goal Selection	0.332	0.1102	0.001	Very Highly Significant
	Planning	0.323	0.1043	0.001	Very Highly Significant
	Occupational Information	0.295	0.0870	0.001	Very Highly Significant
Learning Process	Self-appraisal	0.438	0.1918	0.001	Very Highly Significant
	Goal Selection	0.419	0.1756	0.001	Very Highly Significant
	Problem-solving	0.362	0.1310	0.001	Very Highly Significant
	Planning	0.336	0.1129	0.001	Very Highly Significant
	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
	Goal Selection	0.362	0.1310	0.001	Very Highly Significant
	Planning	0.334	0.1116	0.001	Very Highly Significant
	Problem-solving	0.296	0.0876	0.001	Very Highly Significant
	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
	Planning	0.346	0.1197	0.001	Very Highly Significant
	Occupational Information	0.321	0.1030	0.001	Very Highly Significant
	Goal Selection	0.306	0.0936	0.001	Very Highly Significant

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	Problem-solving	0.299	0.0894	0.001	Very Highly Significant
Time Management	Planning	0.474	0.2247	0.001	Very Highly Significant
	Goal Selection	0.473	0.2237	0.001	Very Highly Significant
	Problem-solving	0.472	0.2228	0.001	Very Highly Significant
	Self-appraisal	0.426	0.1815	0.001	Very Highly Significant
	Occupational Information	0.360	0.1296	0.001	Very Highly Significant
Academic Self-Efficacy	Career Decision-Making	0.585	0.3422	0.001	Very Highly Significant

Legend: $p \leq 0.001$ very highly significant, $p \leq 0.01$ highly significant, $p \leq 0.05$ significant, $p > 0.05$ not significant

The study identifies time management as the most critical dimension of ASE influencing career decision-making efficacy (CDME), showing the strongest correlation ($r = 0.473$ to 0.474). With a coefficient of determination of $R^2 = 0.2247$, nearly a quarter of a student's ability to plan their career is directly influenced by their time management skills. This suggests that students who are disciplined in their academic routines are significantly better prepared to map out their professional futures.

On the other hand, teacher-student relationships and resource utilization exhibited the weakest correlations, with the relationship between teacher support and occupational information yielding the lowest R^2 value of 0.0729 (7.29%). These findings imply that while academic support is a valuable asset, it does not serve as a substitute for the personal capacity developed through individual self-regulation. Ultimately, the results highlight that ASE is a significant predictor of CDME but underscores that internal discipline—rather than external institutional support—is the primary driver of a student's ability to navigate the complexities of the career landscape.

Establishing a foundation through small, realistic goals enables students to accurately assess their capabilities and gauge their potential for professional success (Reppa et al., 2023). This sense of self-efficacy motivates learners to pursue the interventions needed to identify suitable career paths (Virgianto & Priyambodo, 2023), while individual personality serves as a key mediator in the decision-making process (Ryan, 2020). Ultimately, high self-efficacy acts as a vital forecaster for employability skills and career selection (Puertos & Puertos, 2022; Zhou et al., 2023), granting students the confidence to pursue fulfilling goals that align with their unique personal profiles.

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The implementation of structured time management further bolsters this academic self-efficacy and performance, creating a reciprocal cycle where increased confidence strengthens self-regulation skills (Wang & Syafiq, 2023). Within the Philippine educational landscape, specific academic tracks have been found to directly influence these efficacy levels and subsequent career trajectories (Fernandez et al., 2023). This confidence is intrinsically linked to career preparation, where effective planning drives successful decision-making (Lee et al., 2022). Furthermore, the synergy between CDME and planning is essential for fostering long-term adaptability (Rahim et al., 2021), a process that requires students to rigorously evaluate alternatives and gather detailed information before finalizing their professional choices (Hapsari et al., 2022).

Significant Differences among Aspects of Academic Self-Efficacy

The data in Table 4 revealed a very highly significant differences across the five aspects of ASE among SHS students.

Table 4. Significant Differences among Aspects of ASE

	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				

Legend: $p \leq 0.001$ very highly significant, $p \leq 0.01$ highly significant, $p \leq 0.05$ significant, $p > 0.05$ not significant

The ANOVA results in Table 4 indicate a very highly significant difference among the various aspects of Academic Self-Efficacy, as evidenced by an F-value of 30.028 and a p-value of 0.000. This suggests that SHS students do not possess a uniform level of confidence across all academic aspects. The high F-ratio confirms that these variances are not due to chance but rather reflect distinct strengths and weaknesses in how students perceive their academic capabilities.

High-quality teacher–student relationship is widely recognized as a fundamental component of effective education (Jederlund & Rosen, 2022), as it significantly bolsters students' academic self-efficacy and their confidence to achieve goals within the teaching-learning process. According to Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2022), these positive relationships allow students to fulfill essential psychological needs - autonomy, relatedness, and competence - which are vital for academic success. Consequently, this supportive environment acts as a catalyst for increased academic engagement, ensuring students are more deeply connected to their studies (Li, 2022).

The discrepancy between high goal-setting efficacy and lower confidence in areas like time management and resource utilization creates a significant risk for senior high school students. While they may establish ambitious academic and career goals, a lack of confidence in

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the practical skills needed to execute them can lead to frustration and academic burnout. Furthermore, these specific weaknesses in academic self-efficacy can artificially limit a student's career horizons. Students may prematurely abandon certain career paths not due to a lack of talent, but because they feel inadequate in the self-regulatory tasks - such as managing a heavy workload or navigating institutional resources - required for that profession.

Effective time management strategies are essential for improving students' ASE, with structured approaches significantly boosting both confidence and potential academic performance (Wang & Syafiq, 2023). This relationship is reciprocal, as higher self-efficacy further enhances a learner's ability to manage time effectively, while both factors serve as critical mediators for developing digital competence (Domínguez & Bezanilla, 2021). Furthermore, self-efficacy plays a vital role in the successful realization of achievement goals by significantly impacting how students utilize various learning resources throughout the instructional process (Gautam et al., 2023).

These findings indicated that academic self-efficacy is not a distinctive trait, but a complex set of varying competencies. The significant disparity between aspects - particularly the gap between high aspirations and lower functional skills like time management - underscores the need for targeted intervention. Rather than providing generalized academic encouragement, teachers and counselors should focus on strengthening these specific weaker indicators to ensure that students' practical capabilities can effectively support their high career ambitions.

While the ANOVA results confirm that significant differences exist, they do not specify which individual pairs of academic self-efficacy aspects differ from one another. To identify these specific differences, a Tukey's Honestly Significant Difference (HSD) post-hoc test was conducted. The results of this analysis, presented in Table 5, provide a detailed comparison between each pair of aspects. It identifies exactly which groups differ from one another following a significant ANOVA result.

Table 5. Tukey HSD Multiple Comparisons Table on Differences among Aspects of ASE

(I) Aspects	(J) Aspects	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.	Interpretation
Study Goal Orientation	Time Management	0.34012*	0.000	Very Highly Significant
	Utilization Of Resources	0.09535	0.192	Not Significant
	Learning Process	-0.08256	0.329	Not Significant
	Teacher-Student Relationship	-0.05102	0.774	Not Significant
Learning Process	Time Management	0.42267*	0.000	Very Highly Significant
	Utilization Of	0.17791*	0.001	Very Highly

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	Resources			Significant
	Teacher-Student Relationship	0.03154	0.952	Not Significant
Teacher-Students Relationship	Time Management	0.39113*	0.000	Very Highly Significant
	Utilization Of Resources	0.14637*	0.008	Highly Significant
Utilization of Resources	Time Management	0.24477*	0.000	Very Highly Significant

Legend: $p \leq 0.001$ very highly significant, $p \leq 0.01$ highly significant, $p \leq 0.05$ significant, $p > 0.05$ not significant

The statistical analysis in Table 5 reveals that Time Management is the most significant area of weakness in academic self-efficacy among senior high school students. Specifically, Study Goal Orientation exhibits a significant positive mean difference of 0.34012 ($p < 0.001$) over Time Management, highlighting a gap between goal-setting confidence and execution. Similarly, the Learning Process shows the largest disparity against Time Management with a mean difference of 0.42267 ($p < 0.001$), while the Teacher-Student Relationship also yields a very highly significant difference of 0.39113 ($p < 0.001$). These figures consistently demonstrate that students feel more capable in their learning methods and interpersonal rapport than in their self-regulatory scheduling habits.

Furthermore, students report varying levels of efficacy regarding external vs. internal factors. The Learning Process is rated significantly higher than the Utilization of Resources, with a mean difference of 0.17791 ($p = 0.001$), suggesting greater confidence in cognitive skill acquisition than in leveraging tools. However, Utilization of Resources itself shows a very highly significant difference of 0.24477 ($p = 0.000$) when compared to Time Management. Collectively, these data points indicate that while students feel efficacious in defining objectives and engaging in the learning process, they remain significantly less confident in managing their academic schedules.

The results reveal a distinct planning-action gap among SHS students, who demonstrated proficiency in setting academic goals but lack the temporal discipline to execute them. While the current curriculum effectively fosters an achievement-oriented mindset and a clear vision of objectives, it appeared to fall short in developing essential soft skills like task prioritization. This disconnect leaves students highly susceptible to procrastination and academic stress, as their high ambitions are frequently hindered by a lack of practical implementation and systematic time management skills.

Moreover, the data identified a "unstable graduate" profile, characterizing learners who possess the cognitive capacity to master learning methods and academic tools but struggle with organizational demands. Although students find it relatively easy to manipulate learning resources and grasp academic procedures, the inability to manage their schedules creates

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significant internal friction. This suggests that even when students are provided with adequate resources and have mastered the learning process, their overall success is compromised by the stress of meeting deadlines and managing a heavy workload.

Academic self-efficacy acts as a vital mediator that connects goal orientation to superior academic outcomes and engagement (Alhadabi & Karpinski, 2020). This confidence is significantly bolstered by structured time management, which creates a reciprocal relationship where increased self-efficacy further improves a student's ability to manage their schedule and develop digital competence (Wang & Syafiq, 2023; Domínguez & Bezanilla, 2021). Furthermore, self-efficacy serves as a strong predictor for the effective utilization of learning tools, ranging from home access to electronic library resources to the adoption of blended learning technologies (Waldman, 2023; Ye et al., 2022). Underlying these developments is the quality of teacher-student relationships, which remains a fundamental pillar in fostering the supportive environment necessary for educational success (Jederlund & Rosen, 2022).

These findings suggest that while current institutional orientations and technical training provide a foundational knowledge base, a significant gap remains in students' ability to execute tasks through effective scheduling and timely completion. These findings underscore a critical need for schools to evolve beyond traditional technical instruction. By integrating comprehensive time management initiatives - specifically workshops focused on strategic time-blocking and priority-setting, institutions can foster the executive functions necessary for academic success. Such interventions not only empower students to meet rigorous academic demands but also serve as a vital strategy for mitigating the psychological stress associated with systemic planning deficiencies.

Significant Differences among Aspects of Career Decision-Making Efficacy

Table 6 presents the results of the ANOVA comparing the five aspects of CDME among senior high school students. The data revealed a very highly significant difference between these aspects $F(4, 1715) = 15.328$, $p < 0.001$. This statistical evidence indicates that SHS students do not feel equally effective across all aspects of career decision-making; rather, their confidence levels vary significantly depending on the specific CDME aspect being compared and measured.

Table 6. Significant Differences among Aspects of CDME

	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				

Legend: $p \leq 0.001$ very highly significant, $p \leq 0.01$ highly significant, $p \leq 0.05$ significant, $p > 0.05$ not significant

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The results indicated that mean scores across the five CDME aspects are not similar, indicating that at least one aspect differs significantly from the others. For example, while senior high school students may exhibit high self-efficacy in Self-Appraisal, they may simultaneously report lower confidence in Goal Selection or Problem-Solving. The very highly significant p-value ($p < 0.001$) confirms that these disparities are not the result of random variation; rather, they represent substantive differences in how students perceive their capabilities across various career-related tasks.

Zhang et al. (2023) confirmed that Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy (CDMSE), which include problem-solving as a component, is critical for students to make well-informed career choices, especially in a dynamic environment. A high degree of self-efficacy is correlated with less difficulty in career decision-making. CDMSE is directly associated to concrete career action steps, which are a direct manifestation of career planning (Cordova, 2022). Xinqiao Liu et al. (2023) revealed that the improved career adaptability as planned was due to CDMSE.

These findings underscore that CDME is a multi-dimensional construct rather than a single, uniform skill. The significant variance across aspects suggests that a student's high level of self-awareness does not automatically translate into proficiency in strategic planning or conflict resolution. This disparity highlights a critical need for targeted career interventions that move beyond general guidance, focusing instead on balancing students' high self-perception with the practical, tactical skills required to navigate complex career choices.

To further explore the significant differences identified by the ANOVA, a Tukey HSD post-hoc analysis was performed. The results, illustrated in Table 17, clarify the relationships between the various CDME aspects and highlight where the most significant differences exist. The data reveals a very clear pattern regarding how senior high school students perceive their own confidence in making career decision for themselves.

Table 7. Tukey HSD Multiple Comparisons Table on Differences among Aspects of CDME

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

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Legend: $p \leq 0.001$ very highly significant, $p \leq 0.01$ highly significant, $p \leq 0.05$ significant, $p > 0.05$ not significant

The multiple comparisons revealed that Self-Appraisal is the distinct outlier. There is a statistically "Very Highly Significant" difference ($p = 0.000$) between Self-Appraisal and every other aspect of CDME. The mean differences between Self-Appraisal and all other aspects are all negative and significant. These differences suggest that students feel more confident in their ability to assess their own strengths compared to other career decision-making processes and aspects. Specifically, Self-Appraisal outperformed Goal Selection, ($M_{diff} = -0.30073$, $p = 0.000$), Occupational Information ($M_{diff} = -0.28038$, $p = 0.000$), Planning ($M_{diff} = -0.23735$, $p = 0.000$), and Problem-Solving ($M_{diff} = -0.30712$, $p = 0.000$). However, there were no significant differences between Goal Selection, Occupational Information, Planning, and Problem-Solving, as all comparisons yielded $p > 0.05$. This suggests that while students possess a high degree of self-awareness, their confidence in the technical and tactical aspects of career mapping remains at a uniform, albeit significantly lower, level.

Moreover, these findings implied that senior high school students generally feel capable and have solid grasp of evaluating their own career-related strengths, interests, and identities. However, they struggled with aspects related to goal selection, occupational information, planning, and problem-solving. They know and understand themselves fully but feel significantly less effective of navigating the processes needed to accomplish their goals and overcoming external challenges along the career journey. This suggests a potential gap between self-awareness and the actual execution of career decision-making processes.

Self-appraisal enables learners to pursue fulfilling career paths by providing clarity on their personal strengths, values, and aspirations (Gupta, 2024). This developmental process is moderated by a proactive personality, which significantly predicts career decision-making self-efficacy (Darmayanti & Salim, 2020; Zhou et al., 2021). Although self-appraisal is the primary contributor to this self-efficacy (Valencia et al., 2023), high confidence in one's decision-making also serves as a vital forecaster for employability skills, self-regulation (Paril & Dulla, 2023; Enrico, 2022; Puertos & Puertos, 2022; Zhou et al., 2023), and entrepreneurial intentions (Jian et al., 2023).

Other Factors that Contribute to the Career Decision-Making Efficacy of Senior High School Students

Career Decision-Making Efficacy represents the level of confidence senior high school students possess in their ability to navigate and execute strategic career choices. The collective narratives illustrate how such multifaceted factors either bolster or constrain a student's perceived course in selecting a professional career path. The findings of this study provided nuanced insights of the participants clustered into seven themes - *Parental Advice, Financial and Economic Dependency, Peer-Driven Conformity, Teachers as Career Igniters Institutional Accessibility of Local Courses and Social Media as a Career Catalyst*.

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Parental Advice. This refers to familial guidance and strategic persuasion exercised by parents or guardians to influence the students' choice of college degree or courses to be taken in the higher education institutions. The following narratives illustrate the lived experiences of SHS students regarding the ways in which parental advice of their parents and extended family has shaped their professional aspirations and career decision-making processes:

> *"My parents are among those who influence my choice of course because they suggest specific courses, noting that they are 'good' and currently in-demand in our country. ... it is more important to ensure job security once I finish my studies".*
>
> *"My parents influence my choice of college course. I believe in their advice that pursuing a preferred course is futile if it does not lead to immediate employment due to low demand from employers".*
>
> *"... it's my parents' advice that influences me; since they are both teachers—as with my sibling - they are encouraging me to become a teacher as well.".*
>
> *"... I will follow whatever course they want for me. I believe I have nothing to lose by obeying them."*
>
> *"... I'll follow what my mother says. I have great trust in her advice because all her past decisions have yielded good results.".*
>
> *"My uncle who serves as my second parent is encouraging me to take Electrical Engineering. I look up to him as a role model, which motivates me to follow the path he envisions for me."*

Family influence provides a critical supportive foundation for students' career decision-making by offering emotional backup, financial funding, and a nurturing environment for skill development. Beyond just morale-boosting, parents and relatives use their own professional networks and experiences to provide real-world insights, widening the students' career perspectives. However, this involvement can inadvertently limit exploration; students often focus on familiar fields to secure family approval or financial ease—such as high-salary paths with low tuition—rather than following personal interests. Ultimately, while economic necessity and family ambitions can motivate perseverance and hard work, the powerful role-modeling of older family members can lead to professional dissatisfaction if students prioritize these external expectations over their own career choices.

Baldon et al. (2023) posited that parental career behavior is a crucial determinant in enhancing students' self-efficacy regarding career decisions, noting that consistent parental engagement yields a significantly positive effect on children. This finding is complemented by the studies of Amparo et al. (2022) and Ersaga et al. (2022), which indicate that a student's positive attitude and high self-efficacy, when bolstered by family support, are primary drivers in the decision to pursue higher education. Furthermore, Valencia et al. (2023) and Jiang et al.

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(2022) emphasize that specific family dynamics - including healthy communication patterns, parental warmth, and the granting of autonomy - are pivotal in fostering the psychosocial development necessary for successful career journey.

Financial and Economic Dependency. This refers to the conditions of total or partial reliance of students on their parents or guardians for financial support of their collegiate education. Student's professional aspirations are negotiated against the family's budget, often leading to a practical compromise between personal choice and educational affordability. The following narratives illustrate the lived experiences of students regarding the ways in which financial reliance on their parents and extended family has shaped their professional aspirations and career decision-making processes:

> *"My family wants me to be a teacher, but I actually want to be a police officer. I feel powerless because they are the ones funding my education, so I will just follow them."*
>
> *"...I have no one else to depend on but my parents, so I will just take a course that fits their budget. What matters most is that I get to go to college..."*
>
> *"... My parents cannot afford what I want because they don't have stable jobs. Therefore, I will only take a course that fits their finances..."*
>
> *"... My parents fund the course I want; they will take care of all the expenses. They told me I can choose any course because they have the financial means to support my studies."*
>
> *"... I am dependent to my parents when it comes to financing my studies. ... They told me they can handle it, so it is not an issue."*

Narrative accounts from senior high school students revealed that financial precarity fundamentally reshapes career decision-making, transforming it from a pursuit of passion into a calculation of socio-economic feasibility. While affluent students possess the capacity and resources to align their career paths with personal career interests, those facing economic instability are often forced into a compromise, prioritizing fields their families can immediately afford. This financial dependency frequently leads to risk aversion, causing students to bypass high-cost professions in favor of less lucrative courses. In the end, the disparity in financial capability creates a divide where professional development is dictated more by the economic and financial condition of the family than by a student's long-term aspirations or true potential.

In the context of career decision-making, socio-economic status and financial capability serve as critical determinants that shape a student's professional trajectory and their capacity to pursue high-earning fields. **Peng and Yue (2022)** establish that self-efficacy is a significant factor in an individual's employability and overall career decision status; however, these psychological drivers are often challenged by external economic pressures. Specifically, **Scott**

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(2024) identifies financial stress as a primary stressor for low-income, first-generation college students, noting that monetary constraints are the leading cause of degree non-completion.

Peer Driven Conformity. This refers to the social and psychological tendency of students to align their career choices with the preferences and decisions of their immediate circle of friends. The following lived experience accounts of senior high school students illustrate the various ways peer influence manifests in the career decision-making process:

> *"I am heavily influenced by my peers, often following their lead. I plan to enroll in the same college course as my friends …".*
>
> *"Within our circle of friends, one particular individual strongly encourages us to enroll in the same university for college. The primary motivation is to maintain our group's togetherness after high school…"*
>
> *"…we allow each other the autonomy to choose. There is no pressure regarding our individual choices; rather, our shared commitment is that every member of the group must pursue and complete a college degree…"*

Peer influence serves as a vital catalyst for career decision-making among SHS students, providing a robust source of support, motivation, and shared information regarding diverse professional pathways and market trends. By leveraging their deep understanding of each other's passions and financial constraints, positive peer groups offer tailored encouragement that helps students align their academic choices with their actual abilities.

This social dynamic is particularly impactful within high-achieving circles, where collective aspirations drive individuals toward more ambitious educational goals and greater professional effort. The validation and push provided by peers significantly bolster a student's career decision-making self-efficacy, reinforcing their confidence in choosing and successfully pursuing a suitable career path.

Mtemeri (2020) highlights that positive peer relationships - characterized by active sharing of information, mutual advice, and encouragement - can effectively inspire students to align their career aspirations with their personal passions and innate abilities. However, this social dynamic is dual-natured; while supportive peers bolster confidence, Kaur (2020) identifies peer pressure as a significant contributor to career indecisiveness among high school students, often complicating their ability to make independent and firm professional choices.

Teachers as Career Igniters. This refers to teachers as the transformative influencers who move beyond traditional instruction to spark and empower student's professional aspirations. The succeeding narratives provide insight into how senior high school students perceive the role of their teachers as catalysts for their career aspirations and informed decision-making.

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"...My teacher's influence inspired me to follow a similar path; seeing her dedication motivated me to pursue a degree in education..."

"... my favorite teacher, encouraged me to pursue Medicine. Based on her assessment of my current abilities and interests, she believes that I am capable of succeeding in the field..."

"My Mathematics teacher inspired me because of my own affinity for numbers. I intend to pursue Engineering after high school…"

Teachers significantly bolstered the CDME of students by serving as role models and sources of encouragement. By demonstrating effective problem-solving and coping strategies, teachers provide a practical guide for students to emulate as they navigate complex career paths. This influence is reinforced through constructive feedback and consistent support, which strengthens students' self-belief and motivates them to persist through the challenges of professional exploration.

When teachers successfully ignite this confidence, they effectively reduce the difficulties students face in choosing their future careers. Students with higher self-efficacy are more likely to set ambitious goals and maintain a resilient mindset, viewing teaching not just as content delivery but as the modeling of professional behavior. Schools should prioritize professional development and mentorship training for teachers to help them seamlessly integrate career guidance into their daily classroom interactions.

Schools are increasingly prioritizing the preparation and training of students during their basic education years to ensure they are equipped for life beyond the classroom. Transitioning students effectively from school to the workforce has become a global imperative, driven by volatile labor market conditions and rapid technological advancements (Mtemeri, 2021; Wong et al., 2020). This shift underscores the critical role of teachers, whose guidance in molding future life skills directly influences the professional trajectories and long-term success of their students.

Institutional Accessibility of Local Courses. This refers to the geographic and structural availability of specific degree programs within the community or locality where SHS students reside. It encompasses the availability - or lack thereof - between a student's professional aspirations and the curricular offerings of nearby local college or university. The succeeding accounts highlight how students navigate these boundaries when their preferred courses are available or not offered by local educational institutions.

"It is encouraging that we now have a state college with free tuition and boasts a high passing rate in Engineering professional licensure examinations …"

"… our local State College offers the Accountancy program I desire. This is a significant advantage for me because of the free tuition and the minimal transportation costs …"

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"… While state college is the only option within our financial reach, it often does not offer the specific programs I desire. … this lack of affordable options prevents me from pursuing my intended career path."

"The range of available courses in our locality seems to restrict my options, forcing me to seek alternatives to my preferred programs…"

The scarcity of course offerings within a community significantly diminished students' CDME by restricting their exposure to diverse professional paths and hindering their ability to explore global opportunities. When local career options are limited, students are deprived of the vital skills and job market insights typically gained through varied curricula, necessitating that state colleges align their programs with actual market demands and student interests, such as medical and engineering fields. To bridge this gap, schools must move beyond local constraints by integrating virtual simulations, digital mentorship, and webinars, while guidance counselors play a crucial role in empowering students to navigate distance education as a viable alternative for achieving their broader career aspirations.

The community environment serves as a primary determinant in a student's post-graduation trajectory, with Intad (2021) finding that both school and community factors exert a high influence on the career paths chosen. External variables - including school location, transportation accessibility, and the local availability of courses - act as significant environmental stressors that can deplete a student's mental energy and obstruct informed decision-making (Taylor & Mitra, 2021; Mohammed et al., 2021). Despite these pressures, most students prioritized pursuing higher education over other options, such as technical-vocational tracks, working while studying, or seeking immediate employment.

Social Media as a Career Catalyst. This refers to the informational influence of online platforms through media influencers that spark, model, or accelerate a student's professional aspirations. It encompasses the role of virtual role models and curated success narratives - found in advertisements, posters, and influencers content - that serve to ignite career interest. Below are the first-hand accounts of how social media exposure impacts the career pursuit of senior high school students.

"Social media plays a significant role in influencing my career choices. I am frequently amazed by the portrayals of successful individuals in digital content, commercials, and advertisements. It motivates me to pursue similar career paths..."

"… "In this era, social media has become an integral part of our daily existence. … This influence extends to my career decision-making, particularly in identifying which courses suit me and which paths offer the best earning potential."

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"... My interest is in Information Technology (IT), my extensive use of social media serves as a significant resource for the alternative career path I am considering..."

Social media significantly enhanced the CDME of SHS students by providing broader exposure to diverse pathways and professional roles than traditional methods. By following successful influencers and industry professionals, students gain access to inspirational content and a wider perspective on viable careers that may exist beyond their immediate local knowledge. While this digital exposure offers invaluable insights and a sense of "unending possibility," it is a dual-edged tool that requires careful navigation; thus, students must be guided to distinguish between genuine professional inspiration and the unrealistic portrayals often found in curated online advertisements.

Social media functions as a powerful digital environment that significantly shapes the career trajectories of students through both informational exposure and psychological comparison. Diem Nguyen (2024) highlights this dual impact, noting that while social media provides invaluable access to diverse career possibilities and role models, it simultaneously poses a risk through unrealistic depictions that can distort a student's professional expectations. This influence is further clarified by Fukubayashi (2021), whose research demonstrates that daily social media engagement conditions an individual's career perceptions through social comparisons, which can either bolster inspiration or lead to career frustration depending on the nature of the interaction. These studies emphasize that continuous digital exposure serves as a primary tool for conditioning a student's mindset regarding professional success, necessitating a balanced approach to navigating online career-related content.

Proposed Action Plan Based on the Results of the Study

To operationalize the study's findings, the researcher proposed the SPRING-CIP (Socio-economic, Parental, Relational, and Institutional Navigational Guidance - Career Integration Plan), a five-component program designed to transform student self-awareness into professional readiness. This strategic plan integrates a career path toolkit workshop series for operational capability, high-performance self-management for technical discipline, and career resilience problem-solving sessions to enhance cognitive agility. Furthermore, it incorporates financial literacy seminars to align parental guidance with socio-economic realities and digital career mentorship to leverage social media for occupational intelligence. By bridging the gap between academic learning and industry demands, the SPRING-CIP empowers SHS students to overcome institutional barriers and transition into resilient, well-informed, and flourishing professionals in a global market.

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CONCLUSIONS

This study concluded that SHS students possessed a consistently High Level of ASE and CDME across all five investigated ASE aspects and established a significant positive relationship between the aspects of these two main variables. Furthermore, results also revealed that all aspects of ASE exerted a very high relationship across every aspect of CDME. Additionally, there are very highly significant differences among the various aspects of both ASE and CDME. This confirmed that SHS student's efficacy is not uniform across all aspects. Moreover, The Thematic analysis of the participants lived experiences revealed six emergent factors that affect their decision-making efficacy: (1) Parental Advice, (2) Financial and Economic Dependency, (3) Peer-Driven Conformity, (4) Teachers as Career Igniters, (5) Institutional Accessibility of Courses, and (6) Social Media as a Career Catalyst. And finally, an action plan titled "SPRING CIP" (Socio-economic, Parental, Relational, and Institutional Navigational Guidance Career Integration Plan was proposed.

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