

A Study on Career Decision-making Self-efficacy among College Students in Guilin, China

Liu Yang¹, Hongyu Zhou¹, Phawani A. Vijayaratnam², Shuang You³

1. Guilin Tourism University, Guilin City, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region 541006

2. INTI International University, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia 71800

3. Guilin University, Guilin City, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region 541006

Abstract: This study aimed to explore the effects of extracurricular activities, academic satisfaction, and career guidance courses on the career decision - making self - efficacy of Guilin college students, aiming to enhance their career decision - making confidence for better career - related outcomes. Using a quantitative approach with online questionnaire data collection and SPSS for analyses, it found that these factors positively correlated with students' career decision - making efficacy, with career guidance courses having the most significant impact. Given the scarcity of prior research on this topic in Guilin, this study innovatively examined career guidance courses as an independent variable.

Keywords: Career decision-making self-efficacy; Extracurricular activities; Academic satisfaction; Employment of college students

Introduction

Since 2022, the number of university graduates in China has exceeded 10 million, reaching 11.79 million in 2024. Per China Zhaopin, slow employment among fresh grads has risen yearly, from 15.9% in 2022 to 19.1% in 2024, a 3.2% jump in three years. Mayhew (2022) pointed out that one of the main reasons for students' slow employment is low career decision-making self-efficacy(CDMSE), which often leads to difficulties for students in making career decisions. Therefore, in order to better understand and solve the employment problems of college students, it is crucial to study the factors that affect CDMSE.

CDMSE, as a psychological mechanism, has become the key to studying college students' employment issues. It refers to an individual's self-evaluation or confidence in his or her ability to complete various work tasks when making career decisions. The higher the CDMSE, the more it helps them make successful career decisions, lay a solid foundation for future career development, and thus predict career achievements. In response to this situation, this study explores the impact of three key factors, extracurricular activities (EA), academic satisfaction (AS), and career guidance courses (CGC) on CDMSE.

Career decision-making self-efficacy

The study of self-efficacy theory originated in the United States and was first proposed by the famous psychologist Bandura. He defined self-efficacy as an individual's assessment of his or her ability to plan and implement actions to achieve specific goals. In 1983, Betz and Taylor described CDMSE as an individual's self-evaluation or confidence in his or her ability to complete various work tasks when making career decisions (Pordelan et al., 2020). CDMSE as a psychological mechanism has become the key to studying college students' employment issues.

Extracurricular activities

EA are integral to university life. Broadly, EA pertain to students' engagement beyond regular academic curricula. Mogonea (2023) defines EA as school - supported extracurriculars occurring outside class hours and not part of the course. Research validates the significance of extracurriculars in students' personal growth. King et al. (2021) state EA foster transferable skills valuable for future jobs. These skills boost personal development, enhance social connections, and drive skill acquisition, thus being vital for personal, career advancement, and employability. Hence, this paper examines both the breadth (participation numbers and types) and depth (like core - membership, activity - planning) of EA in the research tool to comprehensively explore its impact on college students' CDMSE.

Academic satisfaction

AS is a key indicator for evaluating students' learning experience and academic achievement, and is closely related to students' learn-

ing motivation and overall success. Liu et al. (2023) mentioned in the article that AS is a comparison between students' expectations based on their own academic activities and their actual gains. The smaller the difference between the two, the higher the AS. Higher AS can not only improve social status, but also increase employment opportunities, thereby increasing students' confidence in career choices. This shows that AS plays an important role in shaping individual abilities and cognition, which in turn affects individual career decision-making confidence and decision-making behavior. However, there are not many studies on the self-efficacy of career decision-making of Guilin college students from the perspective of AS, which needs further exploration.

Career guidance courses

In China, CGC are compulsory for college students. They aim to equip students with essential skills and knowledge for future careers. In 1997, the Ministry of Education issued the "Interim Regulations on Employment of Graduates from Ordinary Colleges and Universities", officially launching China's graduate employment guidance work. Career guidance plays an important role in motivating students to pursue higher education, make more informed career decisions, if college graduates are dissatisfied with the school's career guidance, it may affect their career planning. At the same time, Zou et al. (2022) suggested in their study of career decision-making that future research should explore the inclusion of CGC in employment services and support to enhance students' self-efficacy. Therefore, this study uses CGC as a key dimension to explore Guilin students' CDMSE.

Hypothesis

H1: There is a significant effect of EA on CDMSE of college students in Guilin, China.

H2: There is a significant effect of AS on CDMSE of college students in Guilin, China.

H3: There is a significant effect of CGC on CDMSE of college students in Guilin, China.

Methodology

To explore relationships among EA, AS, CGC, and CDMSE in Guilin's college students, this study used stratified random sampling. 385 students from three local universities were sampled. Data were collected via an online questionnaire and analyzed with SPSS, using correlation and multiple linear regression analyses.

Findings and data analysis

This study collected 385 samples. As Table 1 shows, the data detail respondents' gender, major, education, and school. Among them, 202 (52.5%) are female, 183 (47.5%) male. For majors, 236 (61.3%) are in humanities and social sciences. Regarding education, 50 (13.0%) have non - bachelor's degrees, and 327 (84.9%) hold Bachelor's Degrees.

Table 1. Demographic Profile

		Frequency(n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	183	47.5
	Female	202	52.5
Type of major studied	Humanities and Social Sciences	236	61.3
	Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM), and Medical Sciences	149	38.7
Education Level	Diploma	50	13.0
	Bachelor's Degree	327	84.9
	Other	8	2.1
Schools	Guilin University	99	25.7
	Guilin Tourism University	123	31.9
	Guilin University of Aerospace Technology	163	42.3

Table 2 presents the correlation coefficients among EA, AS, CGC, and CDMSE. Results indicate a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.602 between EA and CDMSE, 0.646 for AS, and 0.713 for CGC. All show strong positive correlations.

Table 2. Correlations

		EA	AS	CGC	CDMSE
EA	Pearson Correlation	1			
AS	Pearson Correlation	.804**	1		
CGC	Pearson Correlation	.710**	.792**	1	
CDMSE	Pearson Correlation	.602**	.646**	.713**	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
 Extracurricular Activities (EA) ; Extracurricular Activities (AS) ; Career Guidance Courses (CGC);
 Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy (CDMSE)

Table 3 shows multiple linear regression results. The ANOVA reveals an F - value of 144.050 and $P < 0.001$, highlighting the model's overall significance. Predictors impact students' CDMSE significantly. CGC has the highest standardized coefficient at 0.530 ($P < 0.001$), indicating the strongest influence on CDMSE. Next are EA and AS, with coefficients of 0.124 and 0.139 respectively ($P < 0.001$).

Table 3. Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error				Beta	Tolerance
	(Constant)	.761	.128		5.962	.000	
EA	.124	.060	.124	2.065	.040	.339	2.946
AS	.146	.073	.139	2.005	.046	.256	3.914
CGC	.530	.060	.515	8.772	.000	.357	2.798
R ²			.531				
Adjusted R ²			.528				
F			F=144.050;p=0.000				
D-W			1.918				

a. Dependent Variable: Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy
 b. Extracurricular Activities (EA) ; Extracurricular Activities (AS) ; Career Guidance Courses (CGC)

Discussion

H1: *There is a significant effect of EA on CDMSE of college students in Guilin, China.*

EA have a significant impact on the CDMSE among college students in Guilin, China (Beta = 0.124). Previous studies have mainly focused on the impact of the breadth of EA on CDMSE (Bouckennooghe, 2021), while the questionnaire of this study also specifically added questions about the depth of activities, the results still show that EA have a positive impact on CDMSE. Schools can utilize EA as a platform. Encourage students to engage in diverse activities like student clubs, volunteering, internships, and sports. This helps cultivate social, teamwork, communication, and leadership skills. It also offers exploration and creativity opportunities, guiding career choices and personal achievements.

H2: *There is a significant effect of AS on CDMSE of college students in Guilin, China.*

The results of the study showed that AS had a significant impact on the CDMSE of Guilin college students (Beta = 0.139). Students with higher AS showed stronger self-confidence and decision-making ability in the career decision-making process. Enhancing AS makes students more satisfied with academic performance and confident in their skills. This finding is consistent with existing research, indicating that students' academic experiences are not only important for CDMSE, but also have an important impact on the entire life course. School administrators can effectively improve students' AS and CDMSE by creating a supportive and motivating academic environment.

H3: *There is a significant effect of CGC on CDMSE of college students in Guilin, China.*

The results of the study showed that CGC have a significant impact on the CDMSE among college students in Guilin (Beta=0.530). CGC provide students with systematic career planning and employment training, helping them to plan their career development paths more clearly

and make career decisions that are more suitable for them. The talent cultivation philosophy and values of schools can also be organically integrated into curriculum content, which can not only enhance students' sense of identification with career guidance, but also significantly improve the success rate of career development goals, thereby enhancing learning outcomes (Martins et al., 2022).

Conclusion

This study collected 385 samples from three universities in Guilin and analyzed variables such as EA, AS, CGC and CDMSE. The results showed that there was a positive correlation between them. In addition, regression analysis confirmed that EA, AS, and CGC had a significant positive impact on CDMSE. Among all predictors, CGC had the greatest impact on students' CDMSE. Based on these findings, educational institutions can design and implement more effective CGC and strategies.

References

- [1] Mayhew, L. R. (2022). *An Examination of Career Orientation Courses and College Students' Career Decision Self-Efficacy* [MA, West Virginia University Libraries]. <https://doi.org/10.33915/etd.11386>
- [2] Pordelan, N., Sadeghi, A., Abedi, M. R., & Kaedi, M. (2020). Promoting student career decision-making self-efficacy: An online intervention. *Education and Information Technologies*, 25(2), 985–996. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-019-10003-7>
- [3] Mogonea, F. (2023). Extra-Curricular Activities As An Educational Alternative For The Training Of Transversal Competencies. *Analele Universității Din Craiova, Seria Psihologie-Pedagogie*, 45(1), 175–185.
- [4] King, A. E., McQuarrie, F. A. E., & Brigham, S. M. (2021). Exploring the Relationship Between Student Success and Participation in Extracurricular Activities. *SCHOLE: A Journal of Leisure Studies and Recreation Education*, 36(1–2), 42–58. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1937156X.2020.1760751>
- [5] Zou, R., Zeb, S., Nisar, F., Yasmin, F., Poulouva, P., & Haider, S. A. (2022). The Impact of Emotional Intelligence on Career Decision-Making Difficulties and Generalized Self-Efficacy Among University Students in China. *Psychology Research and Behavior Management*, Volume 15, 865–874. <https://doi.org/10.2147/PRBM.S358742>
- [6] Martins, C., Ribeiro, C., Carvalho Sousa, J., & Novo, R. (2022). *BELIEFS ABOUT SCHOOL: MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES*. 10363–10368. <https://doi.org/10.21125/edulearn.2022.2513>

Author's Profile: Liu Yang (December 1997), male, Han ethnicity, native of Sichuan Province, title: Assistant Lecturer, Master's degree, affiliated with Guilin Tourism University, Postal Code: 541006, Location: Yanshan District, Guilin City, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, Research Direction: Educational Management.