

Employment Intentions and Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Among Chinese Fine Arts Education College Students

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ABSTRACT

The increasing demand for fine arts education professionals in China, coupled with the challenges posed by an evolving job market, has underscored the importance of career decision-making self-efficacy and employment intention among university students. While research on career self-efficacy in various disciplines is well-established, limited studies have focused on the unique context of fine arts education majors, particularly in the Chinese setting. This study aims to explore the career decision-making self-efficacy and employment intention of fine arts education majors, focusing on how demographic factors such as gender, grade level, and place of origin influence these factors. This study was conducted with 490 fine arts education students across eight universities in Chengdu, Sichuan Province. Using statistical analysis methods including descriptive statistics and correlation analysis, this study examines the levels of career decision-making self-efficacy, the dimensions of employment intention, and their interrelationships. The findings aim to inform educational policies and career guidance strategies, highlighting the need for tailored support to improve the career decision-making processes and employment outcomes for fine arts education majors in university.

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Contribution/Originality: This study examines the relationship between career decision-making self-efficacy and employment intention among fine arts education majors in China, analyzing how factors like gender, grade level, and place of origin influence career confidence. The findings offer insights for career counseling, educational policy, and strategies to enhance students' employment readiness.

1. Introduction

In 2020, the number of fresh graduates from regular universities in China reached a record high of 8.74 million, according to relevant statistics (Belle et al., 2022). This increase in the number of graduates has inevitably intensified employment pressure, which is closely linked to both the psychological well-being and physical health of individuals. Career development is also intrinsically connected to employment pressure (Bathmaker, 2021). As such, it is crucial to explore training models that are better suited to the current situation—models that can effectively enhance the employability and overall job quality of university graduates (Zhang & Long, 2019). With the rapid development of China's economy and the global economy at large, the employment pressure faced by college students has grown substantially. This is particularly evident among art majors, where the demand for fine arts professionals has seen a significant increase (Lin, 2021). As of now, the number of students pursuing fine arts majors in high school has reached approximately 600,000. It is also important to note that the admission threshold for art colleges and universities in China is around 60% of that for regular undergraduate programs, prompting some students and their families to pursue fine arts as a "backup option" (Zhang & Long, 2019). This has contributed to the growing number of students specializing in fine arts. In this context, it is essential for students majoring in fine arts education not only to plan for their future careers but also to enhance their self-efficacy through the study of cultural and artistic knowledge. By doing so, they can build a solid cultural foundation and self-belief that will support their future development.

Given the focus of the research on the relationship between career decision-making self-efficacy and employment intention among college students, and considering the declining employment rates in recent years, it is both necessary and urgent to investigate the connection between art majors' psychological states regarding employment intention and their self-efficacy in career decision-making. Self-efficacy among college students majoring in fine arts education is closely tied to their aesthetic education abilities and their self-perception in effectively coping with environmental challenges (Luo et al., 2022). The employment choices of these students, driven by their aesthetic education skills, represent a critical decision point. High-quality employment choices often stem from a deep and comprehensive understanding of oneself. The level of self-efficacy among students is influenced by their academic achievements and psychological resilience (Zhang et al., 2022). Therefore, studying the relationship between decision-making self-efficacy and employment intention among art graduates is essential. This research can enhance the teaching quality at colleges and universities, guide students toward making informed employment choices, help graduates better realize their personal values, and improve their self-efficacy. Additionally, it provides valuable guidance for the employment process of art students, contributing to the maintenance of their psychological well-being.

1.1. Research Objectives

The research objectives of this study can be summarized as follows:

- i. To explore students' level of confidence in their career decision-making abilities and to assess the factors that influence their sense of self-efficacy.
- ii. To analyze employment intention among fine arts education majors.
- iii. To examine the influence of demographic factors (gender, grade level, and place of origin) on career decision-making self-efficacy and employment intention.

- iv. To investigate the relationship between career decision-making self-efficacy and employment intention.
- v. To provide insights for educational policies and career guidance strategies.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy

2.1.1. Theories of Self-Efficacy in Career Decision-Making

Self-efficacy theory was first proposed by [Bandura and Adams \(1977\)](#), a professor at Stanford University, who defined self-efficacy as an individual's belief in their ability to perform tasks successfully. It encompasses one's cognition of personal capability, the evaluation of their abilities, and their confidence in completing a task.

Occupational decision-making theory, rooted in occupational psychology and economics, encompasses key elements such as decision-making models, the decision-making process, and the factors influencing these decisions ([Duffy et al., 2016](#)). [Jiang \(2014\)](#) suggested that the study of factors affecting occupational decision-making self-efficacy should be considered a core component of occupational decision-making theory.

Building on behavioral cognitive theory, [McAuliffe \(1992\)](#) introduced a method to enhance self-efficacy by challenging irrational beliefs. Specifically, cognitive restructuring begins with identifying beliefs that hinder career development, often with the assistance of a professional counselor and a comprehensive assessment using the Career Decision-Making Scale. The counselor guides the individual in recognizing their underlying assumptions, evaluates the likelihood and reasonableness of these beliefs, and helps the individual explore alternative options. Ultimately, the counselor assists the individual in making a rational, reality-based career choice.

In this study, career decision-making self-efficacy refers to an individual's awareness of personal development and their perceived ability to successfully accomplish tasks ([Choi et al., 2012](#)). This concept, initially proposed by [Taylor and Betz \(1983\)](#), has been applied to various measurements in the education field ([Koe et al., 2021](#); [Noordin et al., 2024](#)). For these students, career decision-making self-efficacy reflects their self-assessment of their ability to perform the tasks and duties associated with their future careers as they approach graduation. The present study applies this concept to explore the career decision-making self-efficacy of fine arts education majors.

2.1.2. Factors Affecting Self-Efficacy in Career Decision-Making

To analyze the relationship between self-efficacy and career decision-making in greater detail, [Taylor and Betz \(1983\)](#) developed the "CDMSE" questionnaire scale, which is primarily used to measure and assess an individual's confidence in making career decisions. The CDMSE is directly linked to decision-making outcomes. According to their survey and analysis, several factors influence the CDMSE, primarily manifesting in five key areas of ability. The first is the ability to obtain information, which reflects the decision-maker's understanding of their environment and position; the stronger the ability to gather information, the better the understanding of these aspects. The second is the ability to screen targets, which influences whether an individual can enhance their skills according to the requirements of the position. The third factor is self-evaluation

ability, which is based on one's level of self-awareness; individuals with accurate self-knowledge are able to objectively evaluate themselves. The fourth is problem-solving ability, which reflects the individual's capacity to handle challenges and difficulties in the workplace. The fifth is career planning ability, which encompasses the individual's capacity for self-career planning and making sound career decisions. This framework integrates decision-making theory with occupational psychology, forming a comprehensive career decision-making theory aimed at empirical research.

Jiang et al. (2017) examined the impact of four factors—verbal persuasion, past achievements, emotional evaluation, and multiple learning experiences—on career decision-making and found that group support significantly boosts self-efficacy in career decision-making. Group activities such as interactive games, experience sharing, group interactions, and celebrity interviews were particularly effective, especially for women.

Garcia et al. (2015) conducted career exploration training with seventh-grade students. The training focused on four key areas: career exploration, information collection, career development, and personal career needs. The training, which consisted of five ten-hour sessions, demonstrated that effective career decision-making training helped students improve their career awareness and significantly enhanced their career decision-making self-efficacy.

Based on the research on career decision-making self-efficacy and its influencing factors, we can better understand the trajectory of career decision-making self-efficacy for fine arts education majors and develop effective strategies rooted in the self-evaluation model to guide their career decisions.

2.2. Employment Intention of College Students

Chinese scholars have conducted extensive research and discussion on the conceptual definition of employment intention. Xu (2006) argued that college students' views on career choice represent a personal career selection standard, which allows them to evaluate and judge the advantages and disadvantages of different careers. This view reflects their ideals, aspirations, and personal beliefs about the profession they wish to pursue, representing a central aspect of students' individual roles in the career decision-making process.

2.2.1. Conceptual Research on the Employment Intention of College Students

Betcherman (2012) defines employment as labor engagement, where individuals who have reached working age and possess the ability to work engage in lawful labor activities in exchange for compensation. Those involved in such activities are considered employed.

Subsequently, Luo (2005) analyzed the characteristics of employment and proposed that an activity qualifies as employment if it meets three criteria: first, individuals with the ability to work must engage in labor activities voluntarily; second, the labor activities must be recognized by society as legitimate social labor; and third, the labor should yield corresponding compensation.

In a similar vein, [Qu \(2015\)](#) suggested that occupational decision-making self-efficacy is a psychological predisposition that triggers specific behaviors through objective psychological tendencies.

[Wei \(2017\)](#) argues that intention is a form of motivation, representing an unfulfilled need. Intentions are temporary, unspecified needs that are not directly realized and may either dissipate or evolve into a motivating force that drives behavior. He contends that intention is only an initial stage in the development of motivation, with the potential to transition into motivation, but not directly influencing behavior by itself.

Meanwhile, [Wang and Li \(2016\)](#) contend that employment intentions exhibit considerable uncertainty. These intentions do not dominate the career decision-making process but rather represent a superficial demand. Employment intention may evolve into career motivation or, due to external factors, fade away.

Similarly, [Achchuthan and Balasundaram \(2012\)](#) argues that "employment intention is a shallow inclination during the career choice process. Unlike motivation, employment intention may dissipate under the influence of external factors."

2.2.2. Empirical Research on Employment Intention of College Students

[Wei et al. \(2019\)](#) noted that the employment concepts and career choice intentions of contemporary college students have evolved to some extent. Through their analysis, they found that these changes are often in conflict with and hindered by the national and social distribution of employment opportunities. The authors emphasize the importance of college students establishing a proper outlook on their own development and societal progress, and they offer optimization suggestions to address these issues.

Similarly, [Young and Jin \(2020\)](#) built the employment intention structure of contemporary college students based on Petrovsky's motivational system theory and conducted practical research on selective employment issues. He argued that college students' job search intentions have significantly shifted, moving beyond the simple job matching described in Parsons' Trait Factor Theory. Students now have higher expectations for their jobs, but their own qualifications may not meet the demands of the desired roles. This gap between expectations and reality intensifies various contradictions. In the study's conclusion, Bai recommended further research on the dynamics of employment intention and provided insights into the development of employment guidance courses in universities.

[Sun and Ling \(2011\)](#) conducted an empirical analysis showing that female undergraduates with average family backgrounds, strong academic performance, and good organizational skills are more likely to engage in grassroots projects and express higher satisfaction with such experiences. The study revealed that graduates preferred job opportunities that offered "developmental measures and opportunities." However, issues such as insufficient government attention and the lack of preferential policies were identified as major barriers to grassroots employment.

[Wei \(2017\)](#), in an empirical study of the employment intention of Yunnan college graduates, emphasized the importance of understanding the occupational values behind employment intentions. Through modeling and analysis, it was found that an

individual's attitude toward their occupation, career goals, and expectations for future career prospects significantly influenced their employment intention.

He (2020) conducted a questionnaire survey on college students' employment intentions using a large sample and analytic hierarchy process (AHP). Their empirical analysis concluded that stronger employment intention is closely associated with stronger career resilience. By enhancing employment intention, career resilience can also be strengthened, improving college students' adaptability in the job market.

Meanwhile, Wang and Yuan (2020) surveyed graduates from local teacher training colleges and universities in Hebei Province. Their findings showed that the desire to pursue graduate studies has surpassed the intention to enter direct employment, with many graduates preferring urban employment over grassroots positions. While employment choices have become more diversified, graduates tend to prioritize enterprises and institutions, with teaching jobs being the most sought-after. However, graduates' salary expectations often contradict the realities of available positions. Additionally, the professional background, subjective and objective conditions of graduates, as well as the quality of employment guidance services, significantly impact their decisions.

Li (2019) surveyed 1,180 college students, analyzing their willingness to work at the grassroots level. The study considered individual characteristics, background resources, and knowledge of employment policies. It revealed that while graduates were not opposed to serving at the grassroots level, they were reluctant to do so for the long term due to limited career development opportunities at these positions. The study also found that while most graduates lacked substantial family and social resources, government policies promoting grassroots service had created a "push-pull effect." However, this effect was not strong enough to retain graduates in these roles for extended periods, thus hindering the accumulation of high-quality human resources at the grassroots level.

For this study, we adopt the definition provided by Xu (2021), who defines employment intention as an individual's desire, tendency, and attitude toward pursuing a particular occupation. This definition is analyzed and examined through three key dimensions: career values, employment expectations, and employment preparation. The occupational value system refers to college students' beliefs and perceptions regarding their career choices. The employment expectation system involves individuals' expectations about various factors, such as location, industry, and anticipated salary. The employment preparation system encompasses the conditions one considers when choosing a career and the preparations made in advance to secure employment. The adequacy of these preparations has a direct impact on employment intention.

2.2.3. College Students' Self-Efficacy in Career Decision and Employment Intention

Liu (2015) suggests a close correlation between college students' employment intention and the economic environment. He argues that there is a significant positive relationship between the development of the national economy and college students' employment prospects. In a favorable economic environment, the overall economic development enhances the growth of businesses and enterprises, leading to an increased number of job opportunities for college graduates. Additionally, these opportunities are often accompanied by more competitive salaries, which naturally boosts college students'

career decision-making self-efficacy, as they feel more confident in their ability to secure desirable positions.

Wang and Chen (2016) conducted a survey of nursing graduates to explore their career decision self-efficacy and employment intentions. The study revealed that while 56% of the graduates reported experiencing significant work-related stress, 70.3% still expressed a desire to pursue a career in the medical field or related areas. The results indicated that perceived employment stress had a dampening effect on career decision self-efficacy, while higher compensation packages contributed positively to it. Overall, nurse practitioner interns displayed relatively high career decision self-efficacy, which increased with rising employment stress and more attractive compensation. This study highlights a directional relationship between career decision self-efficacy and employment intention, with employment compensation acting as a mediating factor.

Park and Jung (2015) used literature analysis, questionnaires, and other methods to explore the relationship between career decision self-efficacy and employability among college students. Their findings indicated that when economic development is weak or stagnant, college students experience increased anxiety and uncertainty about the country's economic prospects, which negatively affects their job search and psychological well-being. In contrast, a stable economic environment boosts graduates' confidence and is conducive to the formation of career decision-making self-efficacy. Similarly, Li (2019) reached the conclusion that employment intention and career decision self-efficacy are significantly positively correlated. In other words, graduates who have higher employment intentions also tend to have greater career decision self-efficacy.

Austin (2010) conducted a psychological analysis of college graduates' employment intentions, considering factors such as preferred employment geography, salary, and industry. Their study found that the career decision self-efficacy of college students with a proactive personality significantly impacted their resilience in navigating their careers post-graduation.

This body of research on the relationship between career decision self-efficacy and employment intention provides valuable insights into the factors influencing college students' employment choices. By focusing on empirical research, this study contributes to understanding the employment intention and career decision-making self-efficacy of fine arts education majors, addressing an underexplored area in the field.

2.3. Conceptual framework

This study explores the relationship between career decision self-efficacy and employment intention among college students majoring in fine arts education. Career decision self-efficacy refers to the student's confidence in making career choices, while employment intention represents their desire to pursue specific career paths. The aim is to understand how self-efficacy influences students' employment intentions and how various factors affect both.

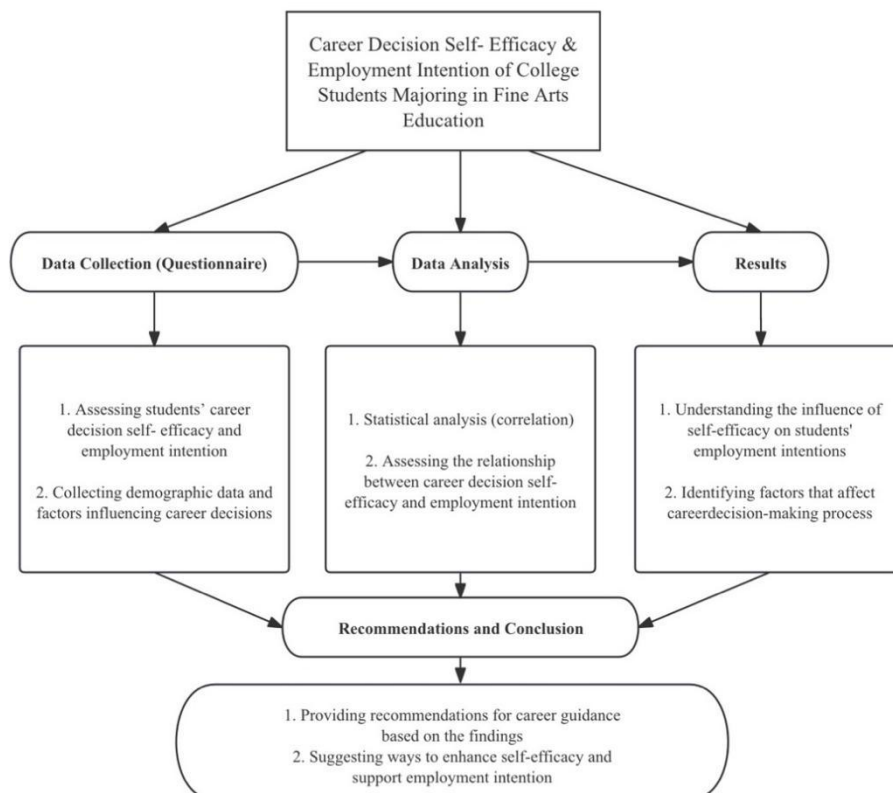
The study begins with data collection through surveys or questionnaires, assessing students' self-efficacy levels, employment intentions, and demographic information. It also gathers insights into factors that might influence their career decisions, such as psychological state, economic environment, and external support.

Next, the collected data undergoes statistical analysis, primarily focusing on the relationship between career decision self-efficacy and employment intention. Correlation analysis is used to examine how students' confidence in their career decisions affects their employment intentions, as well as the role of external factors like family support and economic conditions.

Following the analysis, the interpretation of results provides insights into how career decision self-efficacy impacts students' employment intentions. The study identifies key factors that influence this relationship, helping to understand the psychological and contextual elements shaping career decisions.

Finally, the research concludes with recommendations to enhance career guidance programs. Based on the findings, the study suggests ways to improve students' career decision-making confidence and support their employment intentions through targeted interventions, such as mentorship, workshops, or curriculum adjustments. The conceptual framework is shown in [Figure 1](#).

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research design, utilizing survey-based data collection and statistical analysis. The well-established Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale and Employment Intentions Scale served as standardized instruments to assess students' development, while a questionnaire was used to examine the impact of various demographic factors on career decision-making and employment intentions.

3.2. Research Location

The research was conducted in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, China, which was chosen due to its diverse higher education landscape, universities with public, private, comprehensive, and specialized art institutions. This location provides a broad representation of fine arts education students in China. Additionally, the researcher is a teacher in the field, bringing both academic and practical expertise to the study. This background allows for a deeper understanding of the pedagogical challenges and opportunities within fine arts education, ensuring that the research is grounded in real-world teaching experiences.

3.3. Research Population

The target population for this study comprises undergraduate students majoring in fine arts education across multiple universities in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, China. This population was selected due to the increasing demand for fine arts educators in China and the growing number of students pursuing fine arts degrees yet facing uncertainties in employment opportunities. Fine arts education majors often encounter unique career decision-making challenges compared to students in other fields due to factors such as market demand, skill specialization, and subjective career aspirations.

3.4. Research Sample

This study included a total of 490 undergraduate students majoring in fine arts education across eight universities in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, China. After data cleaning and verification, 485 valid responses were retained, resulting in a 98.98% effective response rate.

The sample size was determined based on both theoretical and statistical considerations. Prior research suggests that for correlational and comparative studies, a minimum of 300-500 participants is generally sufficient to ensure statistical power and generalizability. The chosen sample size aligns with similar studies on career decision-making self-efficacy and employment intention ([Myburgh et al., 2015](#); [Mijoč et al., 2016](#)).

The study employed a random sampling method facilitated through WenJuanXing, a widely used online survey platform in China, to ensure equal representation of students from various universities and minimize selection bias. Random sampling was chosen for its ability to capture a diverse range of perspectives across different academic levels and backgrounds, enhancing the representativeness of the sample ([Acharya et al., 2013](#)). By allowing all eligible participants an equal chance of selection, this method prevents the overrepresentation of specific groups and improves the generalizability of the findings to a broader population of fine arts education majors. Additionally, WenJuanXing's randomized distribution of surveys ensures a systematic and unbiased data collection process, reinforcing the validity and reliability of the research. This rigorous sampling approach, grounded in theoretical and statistical justification, strengthens the study's ability to accurately assess career decision-making self-efficacy and employment intentions among fine arts education students in China.

3.5. Research Instrument

3.5.1. *The Scale of Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy*

The Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy scale used in this study is the version revised by Peng and Long (2001). This scale primarily measures individuals' confidence in their ability to make career decisions. It is divided into five key dimensions: self-assessment, collecting information, selection of objectives, planning and development, and problem-solving, with a total of 39 items. The overall alpha coefficient of the scale is 0.94, indicating high internal consistency. Additionally, as an authoritative tool for measuring career decision self-efficacy, the scale has undergone repeated validation by researchers over the years and has demonstrated strong expert validity. The reliability of the individual dimensions is also notable, with the following alpha coefficients: self-assessment (0.807) for items 1, 6, 21, 24, 31; collecting information (0.921) for items 2, 7, 11, 17, 19, 25, 26, 32, 34, 36; selection of objectives (0.911) for items 3, 8, 12, 13, 16, 18, 27, 28, 29, 33, 37; planning and development (0.833) for items 4, 9, 14, 22, 30, 38; and problem-solving (0.865) for items 5, 10, 15, 20, 23, 35, 39, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1: The Coefficient of Internal Consistency of Dimensions and Questions.

Dimension	Questions in the Scale	Coefficient of Internal Consistency
Self-Assessment	1, 6, 21, 24, 31	0.807
Collecting Information	2, 7, 11, 17, 19, 25, 26, 32, 34, 36	0.921
Selection of Objectives	3, 8, 12, 13, 16, 18, 27, 28, 29, 33, 37	0.911
Planning and Development	4, 9, 14, 22, 30, 38	0.833
Problem Solving	5, 10, 15, 20, 23, 35, 39	0.865
Overall Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy	1-39	0.94

3.5.2. The Scale of Employment Intention

The Employment Intention scale used in this study is based on the Employment Intention Questionnaire for College Students developed by Xu (2021). This scale assesses students' actual employment intentions across three dimensions: career values, employment expectations, and employment preparation. The overall alpha coefficient of the scale is 0.925, as presented in Table 2, based on 28 items.

Table 2: Coefficient of Internal Consistency of Employment Intention and Questions

Dimension	Questions in the Scale	Coefficient of Internal Consistency
Career Values	1, 5, 7, 11, 14, 16, 19, 25, 26, 27	0.884
Employment Expectations	2, 4, 8, 15, 17, 20, 22, 23, 28	0.857
Employment Preparation	3, 6, 9, 10, 12, 13, 18, 21, 24	0.845
Overall Employment intention	1-28	0.925

Specifically, the career values dimension has an alpha of 0.884, with items 1, 5, 7, 11, 14, 16, 19, 25, 26, and 27; the employment expectations dimension has an alpha of 0.857,

with items 2, 4, 8, 15, 17, 20, 22, 23, and 28; and the employment preparation dimension has an alpha of 0.845, with items 3, 6, 9, 10, 12, 13, 18, 21, and 24. The scale demonstrates high internal consistency across all dimensions.

3.6. Data Collection and Analysis

This study primarily utilized SPSS 22.0 statistical analysis software to process and analyze the data. The main data analysis methods employed include basic descriptive statistics, independent sample t-tests to examine gender and place of origin differences, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to assess variations across academic grades, and correlation analysis to explore the relationship between career decision self-efficacy and employment intention.

4. Findings

This study was aimed at investigating undergraduates majoring in fine arts education of eight Chinese universities in Chengdu City. A random sampling method, using WenJuanXing (an online survey platform in China), was employed to select 490 students for the study. The survey targeted various demographic factors, including gender, academic grade, and place of origin. A total of 485 valid questionnaires were collected, yielding an effective response rate of 98.98%. As shown in [Table 3](#), this study examined the basic characteristics of students across different genders (male, female), academic levels (1st year, 2nd year, 3rd year, 4th year), and places of origin (rural, urban).

Table 3: The Demographics of the Valid Questionnaire ($n=485$)

Demographics		Number of people (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	74	15.3
	Female	411	84.7
Grade	Freshman	185	38.1
	Sophomore	104	21.4
	Junior	51	10.5
	Senior	145	29.9
Place of Origin	Rural	206	42.5
	Urban	279	57.5
Total		485	100.0

4.1. Analysis of Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy

4.1.1. Descriptive Statistics Results of Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy of Fine Arts Education Majors

As shown in [Table 4](#), the results of the study on career decision-making self-efficacy among fine arts education majors revealed that the overall mean self-efficacy score was 3.62, which is higher than the theoretical mean of 3. This indicates that the career decision-making self-efficacy of fine arts education majors is generally at a moderately high level. In terms of the specific dimensions, the scores, in descending order, were as follows: problem-solving, collecting information, selection of objectives, planning and development, and self-assessment. The problem-solving dimension scored the highest, while self-evaluation ranked the lowest.

Table 4: Analysis of the Overall Level of Self-Efficacy in Career Decision-Making ($n=485$)

Dimension	M	SD
Self-Assessment	3.57	0.66
Collecting Information	3.63	0.68
Selection of Objectives	3.61	0.65
Planning and Development	3.61	0.67
Problem Solving	3.70	0.63
Overall Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy	3.62	0.63

4.1.2. Differential Test of Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Among College Students Majoring in Fine Arts Education Based on Gender, Grade Level, and Place of Origin

An independent samples t-test was conducted to analyze the differences in career decision-making self-efficacy between male and female fine arts education majors. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: An Analysis of Gender Differences in Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy

Dimension	Group	N	M	SD	t	p
Self-Assessment	Male	74	3.73	0.74	2.310*	0.021
	Female	411	3.54	0.64		
Collecting Information	Male	74	3.80	0.75	2.302*	0.022
	Female	411	3.60	0.66		
Selection of Objectives	Male	74	3.79	0.74	2.612*	0.009
	Female	411	3.58	0.63		
Planning and Development	Male	74	3.80	0.74	2.792*	0.005
	Female	411	3.57	0.65		
Problem Solving	Male	74	3.88	0.68	2.635*	0.009
	Female	411	3.67	0.61		
Overall Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy	Male	74	3.80	0.71	2.620*	0.009
	Female	411	3.59	0.61		

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

The results of the comparative analysis of career decision-making self-efficacy between male and female fine arts education majors indicated significant gender differences across the five dimensions: self-assessment, collecting information, selection of objectives, planning, and development, problem-solving, as well as in the overall mean self-efficacy score. The mean self-efficacy score for males was significantly higher than that of females ($p < 0.05$).

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to analyze the differences in career decision-making self-efficacy among fine arts education majors at different grade levels. The results of the statistical analysis are presented in the Table 6.

The results of the comparative analysis of career decision-making self-efficacy among fine arts education students at different grade levels revealed significant differences ($p < .05$) across the five dimensions: self-assessment, collecting information, selection of objectives, and planning and development and problem-solving, as well as in the overall mean self-efficacy score.

Table 6: An Analysis of Grade Level Differences in Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy

Dimension	Group	N	M	SD	F	p	LSD
Self-Assessment	① Freshman	185	3.45	0.65	10.812***	0.000	④ > ①②③
	② Sophomore	104	3.44	0.62			
	③ Junior	51	3.53	0.63			
	④ Senior	145	3.82	0.64			
Collecting Information	① Freshman	185	3.50	0.66	12.546***	0.000	④ > ①②③
	② Sophomore	104	3.47	0.68			
	③ Junior	51	3.64	0.61			
	④ Senior	145	3.90	0.64			
Selection of Objectives	① Freshman	185	3.49	0.64	13.484***	0.000	④ > ①②③
	② Sophomore	104	3.44	0.66			
	③ Junior	51	3.65	0.56			
	④ Senior	145	3.88	0.62			
Planning and Development	① Freshman	185	3.48	0.67	12.955***	0.000	④ > ①②③
	② Sophomore	104	3.45	0.68			
	③ Junior	51	3.62	0.58			
	④ Senior	145	3.88	0.62			
Problem Solving	① Freshman	185	3.60	0.63	10.711***	0.000	④ > ①②
	② Sophomore	104	3.56	0.65			
	③ Junior	51	3.74	0.50			
	④ Senior	145	3.93	0.59			
Overall Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy	① Freshman	185	3.50	0.63	12.974***	0.000	④ > ①②③
	② Sophomore	104	3.47	0.63			
	③ Junior	51	3.64	0.55			
	④ Senior	145	3.88	0.60			

*** $p < .001$

In the four dimensions of self-assessment, collecting information, selection of objectives, and planning and development, the mean scores of fourth-year students were significantly higher than those of freshmen, sophomores, and juniors. In the problem-solving dimension, fourth-year students also scored significantly higher than freshmen and sophomores. Furthermore, when comparing the overall mean career decision-making self-efficacy scores, fourth-year students had significantly higher scores than freshmen, sophomores, and juniors.

An independent samples t-test was conducted to analyze the differences in career decision-making self-efficacy between fine arts education majors from different places of origin. The results of the statistical analysis are presented in the [Table 7](#).

Table 7: An analysis of Place of Origin Differences in Career Decision-making Self-efficacy

Dimension	Place of Origin	N	M	SD	t	p
Self-Assessment	Rural	206	3.54	0.64	-0.722	0.471
	Urban	279	3.58	0.67		
Collecting Information	Rural	206	3.58	0.66	-1.279	0.202
	Urban	279	3.66	0.68		
Selection of Objectives	Rural	206	3.57	0.64	-1.199	0.231
	Urban	279	3.64	0.66		
Planning and Development	Rural	206	3.57	0.66	-.924	0.356
	Urban	279	3.63	0.68		

Dimension	Place of Origin	N	M	SD	t	p
Problem Solving	Rural	206	3.67	0.62	-.899	0.369
	Urban	279	3.73	0.64		
Overall Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy	Rural	206	3.59	0.62	-1.042	0.298
	Urban	279	3.65	0.64		

The results of the comparative analysis of career decision-making self-efficacy among fine arts education majors from different places of origin revealed no significant differences in the five dimensions—self-assessment, collecting information, selection of objectives, planning and development, problem-solving—nor in the overall mean self-efficacy score ($p > 0.05$).

4.2. Analysis of Employment Intention

As shown in Table 8, descriptive statistics were employed to analyze the overall level of employment intention among students in fine arts education majors: the results of the study on employment intention among fine arts education majors revealed an overall mean score of 3.601, which is higher than the theoretical mean of 3. This indicates that the overall employment intention of fine arts education majors is at a medium-high level. The dimensions of employment intention, ranked from highest to lowest, are as follows: employment expectation, employment preparation, and career values. Employment expectations ranked the highest, while career values ranked the lowest.

Table 8: Analysis of the Overall Level of Employment Intentions ($n=485$)

Dimension	M	SD
Career Values	3.59	0.59
Employment Expectations	3.62	0.61
Employment Preparation	3.60	0.64
Overall Employment intention	3.60	0.59

Differential Test of Employment Intention Among College Students Majoring in Fine Arts Education Based on Gender, Grade, and Place of Origin: An independent samples t-test was conducted to analyze the differences in employment intention between male and female fine arts education majors. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 9 below:

Table 9: Analysis of Gender Differences in Employment Intention

Dimension	Group	N	M	SD	t	p
Career Values	Male	74	3.70	0.69	1.654	.099
	Female	411	3.57	0.57		
Employment Expectations	Male	74	3.73	0.68	1.675	.095
	Female	411	3.60	0.60		
Employment Preparation	Male	74	3.71	0.69	1.640	.102
	Female	411	3.58	0.62		
Overall Employment intention	Male	74	3.71	0.67	1.735	.083
	Female	411	3.58	0.57		

The results of the comparative analysis of employment intention between male and female fine arts education majors revealed no significant gender differences in the three dimensions—career values, employment expectations, and employment readiness—nor the overall mean employment intention score ($p > 0.05$).

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to analyze the differences in employment intention among fine arts education majors at different grade levels. The results of the statistical analysis are presented in [Table 10](#).

Table 10: An Analysis of Grade-Level Differences in Employment Intentions

Dimension	Group	N	M	SD	F	p	LSD
Career Values	① Freshman	185	3.46	0.59	9.471***	0.000	④ > ①②③
	② Sophomore	104	3.54	0.62			
	③ Junior	51	3.56	0.51			
	④ Senior	145	3.80	0.56			
Employment Expectations	① Freshman	185	3.46	0.60	15.785***	0.000	④ > ①②③
	② Sophomore	104	3.51	0.60			
	③ Junior	51	3.63	0.55			
	④ Senior	145	3.89	0.56			
Employment Preparation	① Freshman	185	3.43	0.63	24.497***	0.000	④ > ①②③
	② Sophomore	104	3.40	0.58			
	③ Junior	51	3.62	0.55			
	④ Senior	145	3.94	0.57			
Overall Employment intention	① Freshman	185	3.45	0.58	17.470***	0.000	④ > ①②③
	② Sophomore	104	3.48	0.57			
	③ Junior	51	3.60	0.51			
	④ Senior	145	3.87	0.53			

*** $p < .001$

The results of the comparative analysis of employment intentions among fine arts education majors at different grade levels revealed significant grade-level differences ($p < 0.05$) across the three dimensions: career values, employment expectations, and employment preparation, as well as in the overall mean employment intention score.

Specifically, in the dimensions of career values and employment expectations, the mean scores of fourth-year students were significantly higher than those of freshmen, sophomores, and juniors. In the dimension of employment preparation, fourth-year students also had significantly higher mean scores than freshmen, sophomores, and juniors, while juniors scored significantly higher than freshmen and sophomores. Regarding the overall mean employment intention, fourth-year students had significantly higher scores than those of freshmen, sophomores, and juniors.

An independent samples t-test was conducted to analyze the differences in employment intention between fine arts education majors from different places of origin. The results of the statistical analysis are presented in [Table 11](#).

The results of the comparative analysis of employment intentions among fine arts education majors from different places of origin revealed no significant differences in the three dimensions—career values, employment expectations, and employment readiness—nor in the overall mean employment intention score by place of origin ($p > 0.05$).

Table 11: An Analysis of Differences in Place of Origin in Employment Intentions

Dimension	Group	N	M	SD	t	p
Career Values	Rural	206	3.56	0.55	-1.033	0.302
	Urban	279	3.61	0.62		
Employment Expectations	Rural	206	3.57	0.56	-1.577	0.116
	Urban	279	3.65	0.65		
Employment Preparation	Rural	206	3.55	0.58	-1.492	0.136
	Urban	279	3.63	0.67		
Overall Employment intention	Rural	206	3.56	0.54	-1.437	0.151
	Urban	279	3.63	0.62		

4.3. Correlation Between Career Decision Self-Efficacy and Employment Intention

Correlation Between Career Decision Self-Efficacy and Employment Intention, the correlation between career decision-making self-efficacy and employment intention among fine arts education majors was analyzed using Pearson correlation matrix analysis. The results are presented in Table 12.

Table 12: Correlation of Career Decision-making Self-efficacy and Employment Intention

	Career Values	Employment Expectations	Employment Preparation	Overall Employment intention
Self-Assessment	0.732***	0.771***	0.783***	0.799***
Collecting Information	0.772***	0.824***	0.815***	0.842***
Selection of Objectives	0.768***	0.821***	0.820***	0.842***
Planning and Development	0.753***	0.795***	0.816***	0.826***
Problem Solving	0.748***	0.800***	0.787***	0.816***
Overall Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy	0.782***	0.831***	0.833***	0.854***

*** $p < .001$

The Pearson correlation matrix reveals that the dimensions of career decision self-efficacy among fine arts education majors are significantly positively correlated with the dimensions of employment intention ($p < 0.001$). In other words, the stronger the career decision self-efficacy of fine arts education majors, the more pronounced their employment intention. The present study further examined the predictive effect of career decision self-efficacy on employment intention using regression analysis.

5. Discussion

5.1. Discussion on Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy

5.1.1. Overall Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy of Fine Arts Education Majors

The study found that the overall career decision-making self-efficacy of fine arts education majors is at a medium-high level. This suggests that the challenging employment situation has prompted art majors to develop a certain level of psychological preparedness and anticipation for their career planning. Among the various dimensions, problem-solving was the highest, while self-evaluation was the lowest. This indicates that students exhibit strong problem-solving abilities and a fair degree of control over their career choices. However, their self-evaluation tends to be more critical, reflecting a heightened awareness of career interests and self-knowledge, though perhaps with a more self-critical perspective.

5.1.2. Gender Differences in Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy

There was a significant gender difference in career decision-making self-efficacy, with male students scoring higher than female students. Historically, many occupations have been perceived as more accommodating to women, but gender role socialization has led to enduring stereotypes that undermine women's confidence. These stereotypes, combined with various external factors, act as barriers that prevent women from achieving equal access to employment opportunities, which in turn lowers their self-efficacy in career decision-making. Despite equal education and capabilities, industries, including those in fine arts education, often favor men due to perceived advantages in physical attributes. This trend contributes to the lower self-efficacy observed among female students in this field.

5.1.3. Grade-Level Differences in Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy

Significant differences were found in the career decision-making self-efficacy of fine arts education majors across grade levels. Fourth-year students exhibited higher self-efficacy compared to freshmen and sophomores. This disparity can be attributed to several factors. Freshmen and sophomores, having recently transitioned from high school, are still adjusting to university life and often neglect the pressures of career planning. For many, the professional knowledge required for art education has not yet been introduced, and the employment challenges feel distant. Additionally, younger students tend to rely on their parents for guidance, limiting their ability to make independent decisions. In contrast, fourth-year students, as they approach graduation, are more focused on career planning and goal setting. Despite the ongoing pressures of the job market, their self-efficacy grows significantly with increased exposure to advanced professional knowledge and career preparation.

5.1.4. Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Based on Place of Origin

The study found no significant difference in the career decision-making self-efficacy of fine arts education majors based on their place of origin. While it is well-known that rural and urban areas differ in terms of spiritual culture and material resources, the impact of these differences on students' career decision-making self-efficacy seems minimal in this context. Urban students generally have access to a broader range of new experiences and opportunities, while rural students tend to be more connected to nature and face relatively limited resources, including education and living standards. However, fine arts education majors, regardless of their background, often share a unique set of experiences. Many students from rural areas have been learning art and painting skills from a young age, giving them a broader understanding of the world beyond superficial impressions. Similarly, urban students, though exposed to a diverse

and sometimes complex university environment, perceive university life as multifaceted, where academic performance is important but not the sole measure of success. Therefore, despite differences in their socioeconomic backgrounds, both rural and urban students appear to have similar self-evaluations and perceptions, leading to no significant differences in their career decision-making self-efficacy.

5.2. Discussion on Employment Intention

5.2.1. Overall Employment Intention of Fine Arts Education Majors

The study found that the overall employment intention of fine arts education majors is at a medium-high level. The dimensions of employment intention, ranked from highest to lowest, are as follows: employment expectation, employment preparation, and career values. Employment expectations were the highest, while career values ranked the lowest. This suggests that fine arts education majors have a strong employment intention. With the expansion of higher education in China, the number of graduates has been steadily increasing, resulting in a more competitive employment environment. As the pressure on college students grows, it is essential for them to have a clearer understanding of their employment intentions. According to Deng Yawen (2018), while large and medium-sized cities approach saturation in terms of professionals, a significant number of college students still aspire to work and live in these urban areas. The expansion of art education institutions, coupled with the time and effort needed to train qualified professionals, means that art education majors must accumulate experience to enhance their employability. However, with the increasing enrollment in art education programs and uneven student quality, some students may lack motivation to develop the necessary skills, which leads to a decline in professional standards and increased difficulty in securing employment. Consequently, their employment intentions become more pronounced.

5.2.2. Gender Differences in Employment Intention

The study revealed no significant gender differences in the employment intention of fine arts education majors. Despite this, objective realities and traditional gender roles often influence women's experiences in the job market, where they may encounter gender discrimination. Women tend to have clearer employment intentions, seeking positions that align with their personal development goals. However, factors such as physical fitness, personality, job nature, and family responsibilities present challenges as well as opportunities for female students in fine arts education. These factors influence their career decisions, making their employment journey uniquely complex.

5.2.3. Grade-Level Differences in Employment Intention

There were significant grade-level differences in employment intention, with fourth-year students exhibiting the strongest employment intentions, followed by third-year students. Freshmen and sophomores demonstrated weaker employment intentions. Freshmen and sophomores, having just transitioned from high school, are still adjusting to university life and enjoying the freedom from parental supervision. The lower academic workload in the early years allows them to focus more on exploring personal interests rather than worrying about employment. However, as students' progress through their studies, especially in the later years, their awareness of the importance of professional skills and the increasing pressure of impending graduation leads to a

stronger sense of employment intention. Fourth-year students begin to realize the significance of fine arts education for their future career prospects, leading to heightened concerns about employability and professional development.

5.2.4. Employment Intention Based on Place of Origin

No significant differences were found in the employment intention of fine arts education majors based on their place of origin. Both rural and urban students exhibited similar levels of employment intention. This can be attributed to the specific characteristics of fine arts education, where most rural students have already developed skills in painting and drawing from an early age. They are familiar with the art world and often have clear self-development goals. Some rural students choose to work near their hometowns, which reduces their employment pressure. Urban students, on the other hand, are naturally inclined to seek employment in cities, where more opportunities are available. The convenience of employment opportunities in cities, combined with access to better resources, provides urban students with clearer career intentions. In both cases, the employment intention aligns with the opportunities and conditions available in their respective environments.

5.3. Discussion on Correlation between Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy and Employment Intention

The analysis revealed a significant positive correlation between career decision-making self-efficacy and employment intention among fine arts education majors. This suggests that students with higher self-efficacy in career decision-making are better able to navigate the challenges and pressures associated with their careers. These students are less likely to be overwhelmed by difficulties and possess a more objective understanding of their career paths. As a result, they can maintain clarity, adjust to workplace challenges, and embrace new employment opportunities.

Furthermore, a higher level of career decision-making self-efficacy often reflects stronger expectations to achieve personal goals and ambitions. Students with greater self-efficacy tend to possess a solid psychological foundation, inner strength, and confidence. Over time, these self-motivated individuals harness their potential at work, actively seeking and seizing opportunities for career advancement.

In contrast, students with lower self-efficacy in career decision-making may struggle with the determination to succeed. These students are more likely to become discouraged in the face of employment challenges, with feelings of confusion and distress potentially obstructing their career progress. As a result, they experience heightened employment pressure, which further diminishes their self-efficacy and employment intention.

6. Discussion

This study underscores the significant relationship between career decision-making self-efficacy and employment intention among fine arts education majors in China. The findings reveal that students with higher self-efficacy are more adept at navigating the complexities of career decision-making, leading to stronger, more focused employment intentions. This is particularly evident among fourth-year students, who, nearing graduation, demonstrate heightened career awareness and employability concerns.

These results highlight the importance of fostering career decision-making self-efficacy throughout students' academic journeys, especially in light of the competitive employment landscape in China's fine arts sector.

Gender differences in self-efficacy and employment intention further emphasize the need for targeted support, particularly for female students who may face additional societal and structural barriers in their career paths. Despite the lack of gender differences in employment intention, it remains critical to address the unique challenges women encounter in the job market, which may influence their professional trajectories.

Grade-level variations indicate that career decision-making and employment intention intensify as students approach graduation. This finding calls for an earlier, more integrated approach to career preparation, providing students with the resources and guidance to develop self-efficacy from the outset of their university experience. Moreover, the absence of significant differences based on place of origin suggests that while rural and urban students may face different challenges and opportunities, the core factors influencing their career intentions and self-efficacy remain similar, underlining the universal relevance of career guidance and support.

Ultimately, this study contributes to the understanding of how self-efficacy influences employment intentions in the context of fine arts education, offering valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and career counselors. By fostering career decision-making self-efficacy early on, universities can better equip students to face the dynamic challenges of the modern job market, ensuring that they not only pursue their career aspirations with confidence but also navigate the complexities of the employment landscape with resilience and clarity.

Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate

This study has strictly adhered to all ethical procedures involving the use of human subjects. Informed consent was obtained from all respondents who were ascertained of their anonymity, with their responses kept strictly private and confidential. They were also informed that the study was of low risk and that they could stop participating at any time without any repercussions.

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