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# Self-efficacy in Relation to Career Decision-Making

**Gabriel MAREŞ** [1]
**Venera-Mihaela COJOCARIU** [2,*]
**Cristina CÎRTIȚĂ-BUZOIANU** [3]
**Brînduşa-Mariana AMĂLĂNCEI** [4]
**Liliana MÂȚĂ** [5]

[1] Associate Professor, PhD, Department of Physical and Occupational Therapy, "Vasile Alecsandri" University of Bacău, Romania, https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9477-328X, mares.gabriel@ub.ro
[2] Professor, PhD, The Pre- and In- service Teacher Training Department, "Vasile Alecsandri" University of Bacău, Romania, https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3129-7102, venera_1962@yahoo.com
[3] Associate Professor, PhD, Department of Romanian Language and Literature and Communication Sciences, "Vasile Alecsandri" University of Bacău, Romania, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0286-4537, buzoianu.cristina@ub.ro
[4] Associate Professor, PhD, Department of Romanian Language and Literature and Communication Sciences, "Vasile Alecsandri" University of Bacău, Romania, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6871-8196, amalancei.brindusa@ub.ro
[5] Associate Professor, PhD, habil., The Pre- and In-Service Teacher Training Department, "Vasile Alecsandri" University of Bacău, Romania, https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9293-3286 , liliana.mata@ub.ro
* corresponding authors: venera_1962@yahoo.com; buzoianu.cristina@ub.ro

**Abstract:** *Our study is rooted in a theoretical analysis of the concepts of personal self-efficacy and career choice, which are deeply interconnected. In response to the question, "What is the relationship between self-efficacy and career decision-making?" we have synthesised various insights from the literature with potential applications in career counselling within higher education. This study was conducted with a group of 377 students and focused on three hypotheses: H1 - we assume there are significant differences among participants regarding how general self-efficacy is influenced by the students' level of education; H2: general self-efficacy positively predicts job searching self-efficacy; H3: career crafting positively predicts students' self-efficacy in career searching. The results obtained, as well as the validation of the hypotheses based on these results, allow us to recommend that it is important to assess self-efficacy in career counselling activities and to initiate action plans aligned with the findings.*

**Keywords:** *self-efficacy, career choice, career decision-making, career counselling, higher education.*

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## Personal Self-Efficacy and Career Choice: Interconnected Concepts and Realities

Our research was driven by a complex set of factors. Among the most significant are the following: the rapid advancement of technology (DeLoach, 2023); the unprecedented dynamics of the labour market in relation to global economic development (Schulz, 2024; Donovan et al., 2023; Shibata, 2019; McLaren, 2017); the rapid emergence of occupations, some of which with tenuous or indirect connections to the labour market (DeLoach, 2023; Sowell, 2022; Felstead, 2012; Cascio, 2009); and the varying degrees of alignment between academic training and labour market demands (Negoiţă, 2022; Oswald-Egg & Renold, 2021; Segovia & Checa, 2021; Meyer & Wise, 1982). Additionally, the distinct ways in which Generation Z learns, develops, and prepares for the future (Fraser, 2024; Malinić et al., 2024; Slepian et al., 2024; Mosca et al., 2019; Seemiller & Grace, 2017) have also played a significant role. In light of these factors, higher education leaders, professors, and career counsellors are increasingly asking the following questions: "What variables best mediate optimal career decisions? Which aspects of personality should be focused on in the development of young people to ensure their career choices are authentic, meaningful, and genuinely their own choices that are well-suited to their abilities and can be energetically sustained, motivated, and successfully implemented?"

One increasingly prominent answer in the scientific analyses of current social change (Bandura, 1995) is the correlation between career choice and self-efficacy (Pham et al., 2024; Turda, 2024; Baharudin & Chin, 2023; Njiku et al., 2022; January, 2003). It is important to reaffirm researchers' growing interest and enthusiasm for this interplay of factors (Betz & Hackett, 2006), which underscores the need for a robust theoretical foundation and a deep appreciation and application of social learning theory (Bandura) and self-efficacy theory.

### *What is self-efficacy?*

In addition to being a stimulating concept for many authors interested in human behaviour, it was identified and structured by Bandura (1977) in a way that has had a significant theoretical impact over time, and continues to be applied and relevant today in different formative contexts and at different school levels. The scientific basis for his explanations is represented by two complementary theories, namely social-cognitive theory and self-efficacy theory "in which he proposed that self-efficacy and outcome expectancies are key to behaviour initiation and maintenance"

(Lippke, 2020, 4722). Following his review of *Differing Perspectives on Self-efficacy* (1977, 203-205) Bandura comes to the conclusion that self - efficacy defines a person's beliefs/convictions/trust in their own abilities for organising and performing necessary actions in order to produce the concrete expected results; to exercise control over their own becoming (motivation, action, outcome, social environment) (1977, 1997), respectively "metacognitive capability to reflect upon oneself and the adequacy of one's thoughts and actions" (Bandura, 2006, 165). At the same time, self-efficacy "involves a dynamic set of self-beliefs that are specific to particular domains of performance and that interact in a complex way with other person, behaviour, and environmental factors" (Al-Bahrani et al., 2021, 368).

As the issue has been researched, the results have led to the emergence of a veritable extended family of related, interrelated and interdependent terms/concepts that overlap and connect the psychological dimension of the concept with sociological, pedagogical, vocational psychology and career counselling: general versus specific self-efficacy (January, 2003); perceived self-efficacy (Reddan, 2015); self-efficacy beliefs, self-efficacy outcomes, self-efficacy expectations (Reddan, 2015; Betz & Hackett, 2006; Bandura, 1977, 1997; Jan, 2003), occupational self-efficacy, task-specific self-efficacy, career self-efficacy (Betz & Hackett, 1981), career decision-making self-efficacy (Al-Bahrani et al., 2021; Arjanggi et al., 2020; Betz & Hackett, 2006), career-related self-efficacy expectations (Betz & Hackett, 1981).

Current studies (Gheorghiu & Stărică, 2020) have continued to broaden the understanding of self-efficacy by classifying it as a non-cognitive skill, "being one of the main types of such skills associated with the personal and social dimensions of a person" (p.52 ); or to reconfirm the understanding of self-efficacy as a metacognitive skill (Al-Bahrani et al., 2021; Bandura, 2006), which predicts "career-related attitudes from early high school through college" (p. 367), the most dynamic and vulnerable period in the career choice journey of young people.

***From career decision-making to career decision-making self-efficacy***

Choosing a career can be a stimulating and difficult challenge for a person's entire development and for their full individual and socio-professional fulfilment. It involves a wide and diversified constellation of vectors (personal-social; psychological-economic; cognitive-skills) that should ensure young people's self-understanding (Azhenov et al., 2023), self-knowledge and career decision substantiation. It is often highly charged with unpredictability and the clash between trial and error, between the self and the labour market, filled with uncertainties, difficult, indefinite, and all the

more so because, although it begins in adolescence, it is not immune from the impact of lifelong learning and the continuous search for the self, and it can extend beyond an age at which, at another time, decisions were already socio-professionally validated (Mareş et al., 2022; Gati & Kulcsár, 2021; Kulcsár et al., 2020).

Undoubtedly, making a career decision does not only mean choosing a job, but also experiencing a much more complex process of getting to know one's needs and aspirations, one's strengths and weaknesses as well as a representation of one's own potential and an anticipation of one's own future (Azhenov et al., 2023). The connotation of this term in the present study is limited to the one according to which career decision-making refers to "the process people go through when they search for viable career alternatives, comparing them, and then choosing one" (Gati & Asher, 2001, 7).

Educational institutions (high school, university) have been concerned about how career decisions are made, the mechanisms by which they can be successful and the ways in which pupils and students, first and foremost, can be supported in this process. Based on this need, research on this topic has found that "self-efficacy theory has great potential as well for the understanding and facilitation of career adjustment" (Betz & Hackett, 2006, 286).

A combination of these has led to the concept of *career decision-making self-efficacy (CDMSE)* (Asma et al., 2024; Arjanggi et al., 2020; Betz & Hackett, 2006). CDMSE can be defined from this perspective as the confidence of the young in their successful achievement of their career decision-making tasks (Asma et al., 2024). According to the same authors (Asma et al., 2024), CDMSE is expressed, cumulatively, by: the ability to self-assess, to gather career information, to set goals, to make plans, and to solve problems. Precisely due to its complexity, CDMSE "is considered a primary element for an adolescent's career-choice interests, goals, choices, experiences, and performance" (Turda, 2024, 58).

## Theoretical perspectives on the correlation between self-efficacy and career decision- making

It was inevitable that Bandura's theory of self-efficacy would not come to have extensions and applications related to career choice and development. Ever since '80s (Betz & Hackett, 2006; Betz & Hackett, 1986) this association has become operational and has been subjected to studies from different points of view: gender (Branch & Lichtenberg, 1987; Betz & Hackett, 1986; Betz & Hackett, 1981), age, educational level, students (Njiku

et al., 2022) (at different stages of the educational system) (Njiku et al., 2022), students, different categories of professionals.

The connection between self-efficacy and career decision-making leads to an extremely important dimension in pupils'/students' becoming (Yiming et al., 2024; Njiku et al., 2022).

Most studies indicate significant and constructive associations between self-efficacy and career decision-making (Baharudin & Chin, 2023; Njiku et al., 2022; Sandra & Mularsih, 2021; Reddan, 2015), career exploration or career adaptability (Yiming et al., 2024).

Regarding the question: "What is the relationship between self-efficacy and career decision making?" we present some of the answers identified in the literature:

- "an important factor to be included in the models of career development" (Betz & Hackett, 1981);
- a major role in "career exploration and career decision-making self-efficacy among college students" (Yiming et al., 2024);
- a predictor of career choice (Branch & Lichtenberg, 1987; Betz & Hackett, 1981), identified since the 80s;
- an internal factor that directly or indirectly influences the intentions and behaviours of those involved in career choice (Pham et al., 2024);
- a motivational construct significantly contributing to career-choice behaviour and performance" in scientific/technical domains (January, 2003, 2);
- a mediator "strongly related to career interests across genders" (Al-Bahrani et al., 2021, 373) or "among variables such interests, outcome expectations, and career choices in relation to career development" (Al-Bahrani et al., 2021, 368);
- "a tool for understanding the development of an individual's self-efficacy beliefs" (Reddan, 2015, 293);
- the means for modification individual's self-efficacy beliefs through interventions utilising positive applications (Reddan, 2015, 293);
- an important indicator of students' cognitive engagement during educational activities, serving as a source for their academic performance and its correlation with future career choices (Davidescu, 2019).
- a major source of motivation and academic success (Basileo et al., 2024).

In conclusion, based on recent studies (Asma et al., 2024; Pham et al., 2024) we emphasise and support the direct and very close connection between general self-efficacy and career decision-making. Those students

who feel confident about themselves and about their ability to make future career decisions will try to do something in the direction they want, thus exploring alternatives, having expectations of projected outcomes, and behaving in ways which are geared to help them achieve their goals. In the research we conducted, we aimed to support the perspective that it is important to assess self-efficacy in career counselling activities and to initiate action plans aligned with the findings. Such results can be useful not only for all higher education institutions (not just small and medium-sized ones) but also for other entities with a formative role (non-governmental organisations, leisure organisations, youth or student associations).

## Research methodology

### *Research objectives*

The objectives of this study were as follows:

- to explore the correlation between self-efficacy in general and formal learning experiences specific to our research group students;
- to determine whether there are elements linking self-efficacy and career guidance that influence the effectiveness of career guidance approaches;
- to examine whether career crafting impacts students' self-perception of their self-efficacy.

The findings from the exploratory approaches addressing these objectives will be correlated with the specific characteristics of career guidance processes.

### *Research hypotheses*

In order to achieve the objectives, we formulated the following hypotheses:

H1: We assume that there are significant differences among participants regarding how their overall self-efficacy is influenced by their educational level.

H2: General self-efficacy is a positive predictor of self-efficacy in career search activities.

H3: Career crafting positively influences students' career-seeking self-efficacy.

H4: Changing the relational boundaries ($\alpha$=0.921) mediates the relationship between general self-efficacy and job search self-efficacy.

H5: Exploiting the relational resources (α=0.850) mediates the relationship between general self-efficacy and job search self-efficacy.

H6: Reflecting on the positive significance of a career (α=0.904) mediates the relationship between general self-efficacy and job search self-efficacy.

H7: Expanding task boundaries (α=0.928) mediates the relationship between general self-efficacy and job search self-efficacy.

***Participants and research tools***

Our study was conducted between May and November 2024, involving 377 students from different Bachelor's and Master's degree study programmes at "Vasile Alecsandri" University of Bacău, Romania. Their participation was voluntary, and the research followed the university's ethical standards, being approved by the Research Ethics Commission. Ethical considerations were aligned with the principles defined in the Declaration of Helsinki regarding human participants for research purposes. We used a convenience-based sample, and the participants were distributed by educational level as follows: first-year Bachelor's students - 34%; second-year Bachelor's students - 32%; third-year Bachelor's students - 16%; first-year Master's students - 12%; second-year Master's students - 6%. Regarding faculty representation, participants were distributed as mentioned: Faculty of Movement, Sport, and Health Sciences - 43%; Faculty of Letters - 39%; Faculty of Sciences - 16%; Faculty of Engineering - 2%.

***Research tools***

1. *Job Search Self-Efficacy Scale (JSSES)* - is based on self-regulatory theory and the theory of planned behaviour (Dixon & Tiernan, 2024; Teye-Kwadjo, 2021; Saks et al., 2015). In the context of career orientation, self-efficacy is a strategic element in planning a career, strongly correlated with job search behaviours (Saks et al., 2015). Developed by Saks et al. (2015), the JSSES includes 20 items divided into two dimensions of 10 items each: job-search self-efficacy behaviour and Job-search self-efficacy outcomes. A 5-point Likert scale was used, recording responses from 1 (Not at all confident) to 5 (Totally confident) (Teye-Kwadjo, 2021).

*2. General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE)* – is a scale developed by Ralf Schwarzer and Matthias Jerusalem and in 1981. It assesses self-efficacy and predicts elements such as coping capacity, quality of life, self-efficacy, and life participation. It is a 10-item Likert scale ranging from 1 (Not at all true) to 4 (Exactly true) (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995).

3. *Career Crafting Assessment (CCA)* - includes 15 items grouped into four categories: Changing Relational Boundaries, Utilising Relational Resources, Reflecting Positive Career Meaning, and Expanding Task Boundaries. A 7-point Likert scale, from 1 (Does not describe me at all) to 7 (Completely describes me) (Chifor & Oprea, 2023; Lee et al., 2021) was used to record the responses. The CCA focuses on adopting a proactive approach to career development, aligning one's career with their potential, expectations, and personal attributes (Ge et al., 2023). The CCA was administered online.

***Result analysis and discussions***

Before conducting the statistical tests required to verify our hypotheses, we examined the descriptive statistics. First, the internal consistency index was calculated for each instrument. Next, we assessed whether the data followed a normal distribution, using the acceptable limits of -2 to +2 for Skewness and Kurtosis as benchmarks. The table below presents the Alpha reliability coefficients, Skewness and Kurtosis values, mean, standard deviation, and minimum and maximum values.

**Table 1.** Descriptive Statistics and Internal Consistency Coefficients

| | M | SD | α | Min | Max | Skewness | Kurtosis |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Self-efficacy in job search | 71.69 | 13.84 | 0.959 | 20 | 100 | -.02 | .189 |
| 2. General self-efficacy | 31.23 | 5.07 | 0.885 | 13 | 40 | -.42 | .188 |
| 3. Career Crafting | 78.04 | 18.04 | 0.952 | 18 | 105 | -.61 | .108 |

In order to observe the connections between these variables, we made use of Pearson's correlation analysis (Table 2). The results indicate a significant positive correlation between self-efficacy in job search and general self-efficacy ($r = 0.657$; $p < 0.001$), suggesting that as one increases, so does the other. Additionally, self-efficacy in job search is significantly positively correlated with career crafting ($r = 0.554$; $p < 0.001$) and with each of its dimensions: changing relational boundaries ($r = 0.513$; $p < 0.001$), exploiting relational resources ($r = 0.491$; $p < 0.001$), reflecting on the positive significance of a career ($r = 0.483$; $p < 0.001$), and expanding task boundaries ($r = 0.460$; $p < 0.001$).

There is a significant and positive correlation between general self-efficacy and career crafting ($r = 0.477$; $p < 0.001$), as well as with changing relational boundaries ($r = 0.450$; $p < 0.001$), exploiting relational resources ($r = 0.421$; $p < 0.001$), reflecting on the positive significance of a career ($r = 0.422$; $p < 0.001$), and expanding task boundaries ($r = 0.382$; $p < 0.001$).

Furthermore, academic studies are positively correlated with general self-efficacy (r = 0.118; $p$ = 0.023) and career crafting (r = 0.113; p = 0.030).

From the perspective of career guidance and decision-making, assessing self-efficacy in job search and career shaping, given their strong positive correlation, can serve as a predictor of career success (Njiku et al., 2022; Sandra & Mularsih, 2021), career exploration, or career adaptability (Yiming et al., 2024). According to Tims et al. (2014), "job crafting positively correlates with work performance and job satisfaction, supporting the idea that these results can be used to predict future job satisfaction among graduates". Similarly, Kim and Park (2024) emphasised that "career commitment significantly contributes to higher professional performance, which is driven by job crafting".

**Table 2.** Associations between our study's variables

| Variables | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Self-efficacy in job search | - | | | | | | | |
| 2. General self-efficacy | .657** | - | | | | | | |
| 3. Career Crafting | .554** | .477** | - | | | | | |
| 4. Dimension 1: Changing relational boundarie | .513** | .450** | .896** | - | | | | |
| 5. Dimension 2: Exploiting relational resources | .491** | .421** | .898** | .765** | - | | | |
| 6. Dimension 3: Reflecting on the positive significance of a career | .483** | .422** | .886** | .731** | .709** | - | | |
| 7. Dimension 4: Expanding task boundaries | .460** | .382** | .833** | .636** | .652** | .684** | - | |
| 8. Education | .074 | .118* | .113* | .154** | .113* | .122* | -.005 | - |

Subsequently, the differences related to general self-efficacy between the involved Bachelor's and Master's students were examined based on an independent T-test. The results revealed significant differences (t(370) = -2.290, $p$ = 0.023), with Master's students (M = 32.53) demonstrating a higher level of general self-efficacy than Bachelor's students (M = 30.96). These findings suggest that educational experience is strongly associated with general self-efficacy, as higher educational levels correspond to greater self-efficacy (Pham et al., 2024; Yiming et al., 2024; Njiku et al., 2022; Bonsaksen et al., 2019).

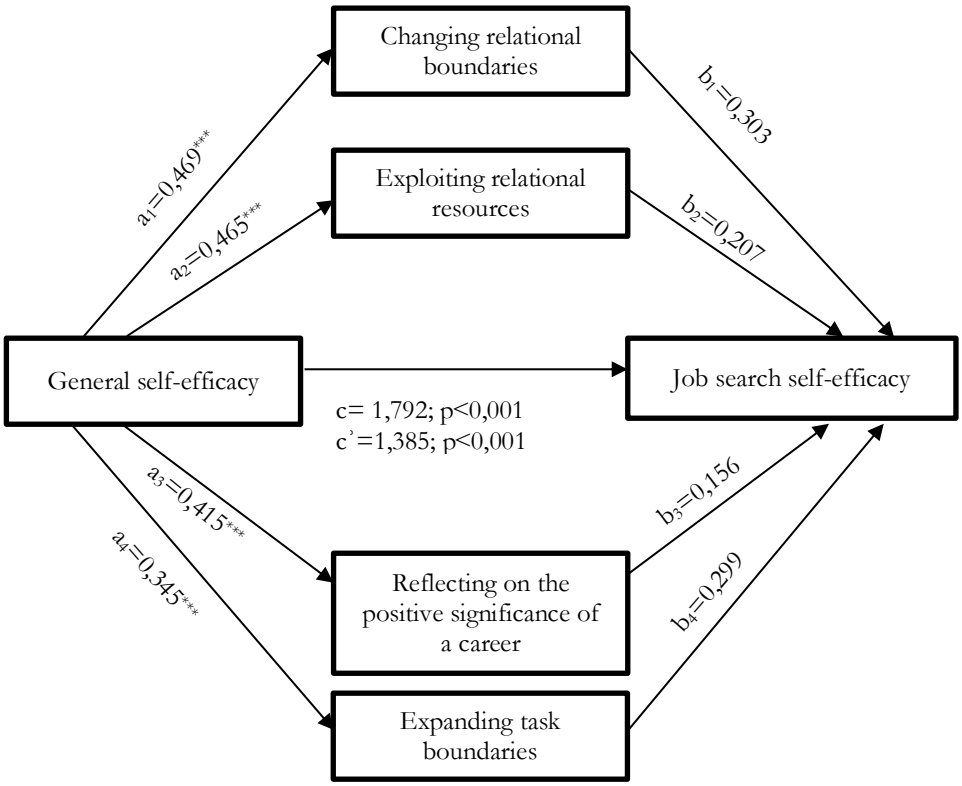
Additionally, significant differences were found between Bachelor's and Master's students in career crafting (t(370) = -2.183, p = 0.030), with Master's

students (M = 82.46) outperforming Bachelor's students (M = 77.11). These results indicate that educational experience significantly impacts career-related perspectives, supporting the development of a realistic, flexible, and adaptive approach to career guidance (Akkermans & Tims, 2017).

For the second and third hypotheses, we used regression analysis. The predictive model was significant ($F(2, 369) = 189.48$, $p < 0.001$), with overall self-efficacy ($\beta = 0.508$, $p < 0.001$) and career crafting ($\beta = 0.312$, $p < 0.001$) identified as significantly positive predictors of self-efficacy in career research. These findings underline the importance of general self-efficacy and career crafting in operational career guidance processes.

In order to test Hypotheses 4, 5, 6, and 7, which implied that the dimensions of the career crafting variable (changing relational boundaries, exploiting relational resources, reflecting on the positive significance of a career, and expanding task boundaries) mediate the relationship between general self-efficacy and job search self-efficacy, a parallel mediation analysis was conducted during the process.

**Figure 1** Analysis of mediation relationships



Following the analysis, it was observed that the indirect effects of general self-efficacy on job search self-efficacy through changing relational boundaries (a1b1 = 0.142, [-0.029; 0.320]), exploiting relational resources (a2b2 = 0.096, [-0.050; 0.257]), reflecting on the positive significance of a career (a3b3 = 0.064, [-0.100; 0.230]), and expanding task boundaries (a4b4 = 0.103, [-0.015; 0.234]) are statistically insignificant, as the confidence intervals from the Bootstrap analysis do not include the value 0. Thus, the four dimensions of career crafting do not serve as mediators in our study, and the final hypotheses were not confirmed.

Our study is based on the appreciation and impact of *social learning theory* and *self-efficacy theory*. Starting from the acceptance of the self-efficacy concept approach in the specialised literature consulted (Al-Bahrani et al., 2021; Gheorghiu & Stărică, 2020; Lippke, 2020; Bandura, 2006; Bandura, 1977, 1997), we identified correlations between self-efficacy and career decision-making and proposed formative approaches to enhance the impact of self-efficacy on career decision-making. Moreover, following the conducted research, we argue that these proposals should materialise into an integrated, combined approach involving two categories of actions: academic and non-academic, specialised in career counselling. From the multitude of meanings and approaches to the concept of career decision-making, we have selected and utilised the definition proposed by Gati & Asher (2001): "the process people go through when they search for viable career alternatives, comparing them, and then choosing one" (p.7). In line with the cited specialised literature, we also believe that the career decision-making process alone is not sufficient; it must evolve to a higher level of achieving results, becoming career decision-making self-efficacy, as demonstrated by Asma et al. (2024), with all its theoretical and, especially, practical value (Turda, 2024). We consider that the proposals we promote are thus theoretically grounded, viable, and achievable based on a validated scientific foundation.

General self-efficacy is globally correlated with job search self-efficacy. However, when analysing the separate dimensions through mediation, it is revealed that while these dimensions are correlated individually with general self-efficacy, they do not have a significant impact on job search self-efficacy.

## Conclusions

We consider our research valuable due to several contributions. First, the validation of the three proposed hypotheses allowed us to correlate important variables that are worth monitoring and developing. Specifically, we demonstrated that general self-efficacy is related to various educational

levels, that general self-efficacy positively influences career search self-efficacy, and that career crafting contributes positively to career search self-efficacy.

Second, we successfully selected, combined, applied, and utilised three research instruments: the Job Search Self-Efficacy Scale (JSSES) (Dixon & Tiernan, 2024; Teye-Kwadjo, 2021; Saks et al., 2015), the General Self-Efficacy Scale (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995), and the Career Crafting Assessment (CCA) (Chifor & Oprea, 2023; Lee et al., 2021). These instruments merge the classical dimension of research, represented by the General Self-Efficacy Scale, with the contemporary approach of the Job Search Self-Efficacy Scale and the Career Crafting Assessment.

Finally, we propose an integrated approach to career decision-making self-efficacy. This approach emphasises the shared responsibility between academic efforts and career counselling activities, involving the academic environment as a whole, including professors and the subjects they teach. The suggestion for an integrated approach (both academic and through career counselling, rather than a unilateral one that leaves this responsibility solely to career counselling activities) emphasises the shared responsibility between the academic efforts and career counselling activities, involving in the entire academic environment, including professors and the subjects they teach, in the process of career decision-making self-efficacy. This is supported by *concrete proposals* for optimising the training process, targeting both general competencies involved in career decision-making and specific components that enable its transition to career decision-making self-efficacy. These proposals include organising specific sessions for the specialised assessment of general competencies such as self-observation, self-control, self-assessment, and self-esteem. Additionally, exploratory workshops, team projects, and case studies with comparative analyses are recommended. Meetings and debates between Bachelor's and Master's students, either from the same field or different fields, can further enrich the process. Lastly, joint sessions mediated by career counsellors, involving alumni, labour market representatives, and students from both Bachelor's and Master's programmes, are proposed. These sessions would address psychological, social, cultural, professional, and economic aspects (both general and specific) of the career decision-making self-efficacy process.

The statistical analysis supports the following conclusions:

H1: The hypothesis according to which significant differences in general self-efficacy occur at various educational levels is confirmed. From an academic perspective, training should focus not only on intellectual or practical skills but also on developing general competencies that directly

enhance self-efficacy. At the same time, this validation supports the need and the importance of a larger number of students to go through the Master's degree cycle, with an impact on the general self-efficacy development.

H2: The hypothesis that general self-efficacy positively predicts career search self-efficacy is confirmed. This underscores the importance of evaluating general self-efficacy in career guidance to support effective decision-making and prevent dropout from academic or professional training programmes. In this way, students' interest in participating in such activities can be stimulated, along with their desire and confidence to succeed in searching for the most suitable career.

H3: The hypothesis that career crafting positively predicts career search self-efficacy is also confirmed. These results suggest that integrating problem-based learning, decision-making strategies, and project-based approaches into student training can enhance career crafting and self-efficacy in career exploration. The role of the counselling strategies together with the heuristic, collaborative, and experiential training is implicitly validated. Based on the analysis of the specialised literature, its selection and interpretation, the results obtained in the conducted research, and the validation of the assumed hypotheses, we believe that the previously presented proposals are realistic and pragmatic.

H4, H5, H6, and H7 are not validated, as the dimensions 1 (changing relational boundaries), 2 (exploiting relational resources), 3 (reflecting on the positive significance of a career), and 4 (expanding task boundaries) do not correlate significantly with job search self-efficacy. Therefore, the dimensions do not mediate the relationships between general self-efficacy and job search self-efficacy. These results motivate us to further explore the factors that contributed to the insignificant correlation of dimensions (1-4) with job search self-efficacy in future research.

Among the limitations of our study, we mention the relatively small number of respondents, the interpretation of the results in relation to a medium-sized university in the NE region of Romania, considered the poorest development area in Europe (which may generate a local specificity of the obtained data), as well as the limited duration of the research. However, we believe that the obtained results are useful, and of course, there are other universities operating in relatively similar conditions for which some of the results we obtained may be applicable and can at least generate valuable efforts in preparing higher education graduates for a successful encounter with the labour market.

Despite its limited sample size, our research highlights the importance of incorporating general competencies - such as self-observation, self-control, and self-esteem - into academic curricula. These aspects should be emphasised in career guidance and counselling strategies, and formal and non-formal academic approaches should prioritise heuristic, collaborative, and experiential learning methods.

## Future Research Directions

Our findings suggest future research should explore the correlation between low self-efficacy and the tendency to drop out of university studies. Further investigation could also examine the relationship between university dropout rates and career crafting.

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