



The Role of Assertiveness on Career Adaptability and Career Decision Making and Self-efficacy

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Abstract: The purpose of the present research was to evaluate how assertiveness affected career adaptability and self-efficacy in making career decisions. Participants in this study included 152 people who were 18 to 30 years old. Assertiveness, career adaptability, and self-efficacy in making career decisions were measured using the Assertiveness Inventory, Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS), and Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form (CDSE-SF), respectively. A statistical analysis was performed to determine the association among the three variables. Findings indicated assertiveness and both career decision making self-efficacy and career adaptability possessing a strong positive association. This suggests that assertive people are usually a lot certain with their ability to determine professional choices and successfully overcome obstacles linked to their careers. Given the moderate link with career decision making self-efficacy, the correlation with career adaptability was rather weak, indicating assertiveness could have been more crucial for decision-making confidence than for general adaptability.

Keywords: *Assertiveness, Career Adaptability, Career Decision Making Self-Efficacy*

1. Introduction

Assertiveness is a balanced communication style that enables individuals to express their thoughts and emotions confidently without infringing on others' rights. It has been linked to psychological well-being, fostering self-esteem, effective stress management, and strong interpersonal relationships. Assertiveness training enhances self-confidence and communication skills, making it a valuable tool in therapeutic, educational, and professional settings (Postolati, 2017; Jakubowski-Spector, 1973; Pato, 2023).

Career adaptability refers to an individual's ability to manage job-related challenges and transitions effectively. It encompasses key psychosocial resources, including confidence, control, curiosity, and concern for the future, which facilitate career navigation. Research indicates that career adaptability is positively correlated with professional success, employability, and resilience amid technological and economic shifts (Savickas, 1997; Johnston, 2016; Chen et al., 2020).

Career decision-making self-efficacy (CDMSE) reflects an individual's confidence in handling essential career-related tasks, including self-assessment, goal-setting, and planning. Based on Bandura's self-efficacy theory, it has been found to reduce career-related anxiety, enhance job exploration, and improve career outcomes (Betz & Hackett, 1981; Taylor & Betz, 1983; Lent et al., 1994; Milledzi et al., 2024). Factors such as family support, emotional intelligence, and practical exposure significantly enhance CDMSE (Savugathali & Mustafa, 2025; Asma & Widayanti, 2023).

Assertiveness plays a crucial role in career adaptability by promoting career self-management behaviors. Assertive individuals are better equipped to request occupational resources, negotiate transitions, and maintain career flexibility. Studies indicate that assertiveness predicts career initiative, job negotiation, and adaptability, particularly for young adults transitioning into professional roles (Norris, 2016; Creed et al., 2009; Yayvan et al., 2023).

The relationship between assertiveness and CDMSE is strengthened by proactive personality traits. Assertiveness enhances career-related decision-making confidence, promoting workplace behaviors such as job negotiation and career initiative (Moturu & Lent, 2023; Duru & Söner, 2024). This bidirectional relationship is particularly relevant for students, as CDMSE supports assertive behavior in professional environments, leading to improved career management (Milledzi & Asamani, 2024; Pignault et al., 2023; Nevill & Schlecker, 1988).

Research highlights the significance of assertiveness in career adaptability and decision-making efficacy. It fosters autonomy, resource utilization, and effective career planning, ultimately improving employability and job satisfaction (Oliveira et al., 2023). Assertiveness training reduces stress and enhances decision-making confidence, offering practical applications for career development strategies across diverse cultural contexts (Eslami et al., 2016).

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Objectives

- a) To ascertain the role of assertiveness on career-decision making self-efficacy.
- b) To ascertain the role of assertiveness at career adaptability.
- c) To analyze the role of gender on assertiveness, career decision making self-efficacy and career adaptability.

2.2 Hypotheses

H1: There is a significant relationship between assertiveness & career decision-making self-efficacy in the youthful population.

H2: There is a significant relationship between assertiveness & career adaptability in youthful people.

2.3 Research Design

The present investigation used the cross-sectional research design. The information is collected from an entire population or sample that is representative for one particular moment over time using a cross-sectional research design. For this study, a cross-sectional research design is ideal as it enables an investigation on connections amongst assertiveness, career flexibility, and career decision self-efficacy over a particular moment in time. It provides an effective and convenient approach for collecting data and identifying patterns or connections between variables within a certain group. This methodology also allows for the exploration of gender disparities, and although it does not show causality, it can provide useful insights that can direct future study.

2.4 Sample

A total of 152 participants in the age range of 18 to 30 years were selected using convenience sampling. Participants were recruited through online platforms, academic institutions, and social networks. The chosen strategy is useful for student-led research since it provides for

quick and efficient data collecting from easily accessible individuals, such as classmates, peers, or people in a specific educational or professional setting.

2.4.1 Inclusion Criteria

- a) Individuals aged between 18 and 30 years.
- b) Ability to read and comprehend English.
- c) Willingness to give informed consent for participation.

2.4.2 Exclusion Criteria

- a) Individuals outside the specified age range.
- b) Individuals with any diagnosed psychological conditions.

2.5 Measures

2.5.1 The Assertiveness Inventory

Michael L. Emmons and Robert E. Alberti developed the tool. It was designed to evaluate an individual's level of assertiveness. It has 35 items, each of which addresses a distinct scenario where assertiveness plays a role. On a scale that commonly goes between 0 to 3, respondents score their answers. 0 means "no or never," 1 means "somewhat or sometimes," 2 means "usually or a good deal," and 3 means "practically always or entirely."

2.5.2 Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS)

In 2012, Mark L. Savickas and Erik J. Porfeli developed this scale. One frequently employed instrument to assess a person's professional adaptability is the Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (CAAS). The CAAS has its foundation on career construction theory and has been verified in several countries, making it a credible tool for studying career adaptation in different cultural situations. It has become a widely acknowledged method for assessing career adaptability across many sociocultural and professional settings.

2.5.3 Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form (CDSE-SF)

In 1996, Karen M. Taylor, Nancy E. Betz, with Karla L. Klein created the Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form (CDSE-SF). It is a quick and accurate way to gauge one's level of self-efficacy in choosing a vocation. It serves as a tool which assesses a person's confidence about his or her ability of selecting a vocation. There are 25 items on the short version instead of their initial 50. On a 5-point rating system, participants displayed "no confidence at all" till "complete confidence." Greater self-efficacy in choosing a vocation is indicated by greater ratings. It's

commonly used in career counselling as well as research in order to assist people and professionals better grasp career-related self-efficacy.

2.6 Procedure

Participants were contacted directly. Google Forms had been employed to gather information throughout the research. The goal for the research was explained to the participants prior to gathering data. They were also assured that their responses would remain confidential and will only be used for research purposes. Hence, they should express their views freely. Informed consent was given to the subjects. For reaching the intended audience, Google Form link was circulated online via a variety of means such as social media platforms, and academic networks. Participation was purely voluntary, with no monetary rewards provided. Participants have to be between the ages 18-30 years. Data was collected over a set time, and replies were downloaded into a spreadsheet format for examination. To assure data quality, any missing or identical submissions were evaluated and eliminated. The final dataset was analysed with statistical software. Finally, the data was interpreted.

2.7 Statistical Analysis

The acquired data were analyzed with Jamovi, an open-source statistical software. Descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, and frequency distributions were computed to summaries the demographics of the participants and the main variables—assertiveness, career adaptability, and professional decision-making self-efficacy. The relationships between assertiveness and career decision-making self-efficacy and assertiveness and career adaptability were examined using Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient.

3. Results

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1: *Descriptive Statistics for the variables of the study*

<i>Descriptives</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Assertiveness</i>	<i>CDSE</i>	<i>CAAS</i>
N	1	107	107	107
	2	45	45	45
Mean	1	46.1	80.4	61.1
	2	46.1	87.0	67.3
Standard deviation	1	11.9	13.8	20.3
	2	10.9	13.1	16.5
Minimum	1	25	48	11

	2	26	49	24
Maximum	1	88	120	96
	2	91	114	94

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of assertiveness, self-efficacy in career decisions and career adaptability as stratified by gender. Males were categorized as two, and females as one. Of the 152 participants in the sample, 107 were classified as gender one (female) and 45 as gender two (male).

Table 2: *Correlation between Assertiveness and CDSE*

		Assertiveness
CDSE	Pearson's r	0.372***
	df	150
	p-value	<.001

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

The association among assertiveness and career decision self-efficacy (CDSE) has been investigated using a Pearson correlation, as Table 2 demonstrates. The findings showed that assertiveness and CDSE had a somewhat favorable correlation ($r(150) = .372$, $p < .001$). This demonstrates that those who are more assertive also typically have greater confidence in their capacity to choose a vocation.

Table 3: *Correlation between Assertiveness and CAAS*

		Assertiveness
CAAS	Pearson's r	0.136*
	df	150
	p-value	0.048

Note. *Ha is positive correlation*

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$, one-tailed

The association among assertiveness with career adaptability, which was established via CAAS, was examined using another Pearson correlation, as Table 3 demonstrates. The analysis revealed a small but statistically significant positive correlation, $r(150) = .136$, $p = .048$ (one-tailed). Despite the weak correlation, the analysis implies that those who are more assertive might also be marginally more flexible in their career adaptability processes.

4. Discussion

This study examines the relationship between assertiveness, career adaptability, and career decision-making self-efficacy (CDMSE). Findings indicate that gender does not significantly impact assertiveness in urban young adults ($M = 46.1$), as metropolitan environments encourage egalitarian social norms. Previous research supports this, highlighting the role of progressive socialization in fostering similar assertiveness levels among men and women (Gupta, 2023; Gevorgyan, 2024). Despite historical biases, assertiveness is increasingly perceived as a universal trait, particularly in inclusive settings (Kakkar & Kumari, 2024; Bista et al., 2025).

Gender disparities were observed in CDMSE, with males scoring higher ($M = 87.0$, $SD = 13.1$) than females ($M = 80.4$, $SD = 13.8$). Cultural expectations often position men as decision-makers, reinforcing confidence in career-related tasks (Sharma, 2021; Adachi, 2023). Collectivist societies may further influence this disparity by socializing women to balance career decisions with familial obligations, reducing perceived autonomy (Mau, 2002). Cross-cultural studies highlight the persistence of these trends, with stronger CDMSE in Taiwanese men compared to their female counterparts (Mau, 2002).

Career adaptability also varied by gender, with men scoring higher ($M = 67.3$, $SD = 16.5$) than women ($M = 61.1$, $SD = 20.3$). Traditional gender roles encourage men to take career risks and manage transitions with greater confidence (Sun et al., 2023). Structural barriers, such as limited mentorship opportunities for women, may restrict their adaptability (Andrés & Machí, 2024). Although parental support influences career adaptability equally for both genders, workplace inequalities often outweigh familial impacts (Sun et al., 2023).

Assertiveness exhibited a moderate positive correlation with CDMSE ($r = .372$, $p < .001$), supporting the hypothesis that assertive individuals demonstrate higher confidence in career decision-making. Assertiveness fosters proactive behaviors, such as negotiation and exploration of non-traditional career paths (Nevill & Schlecker, 1988). Research highlights the effectiveness of assertiveness training in enhancing CDMSE, equipping individuals with strategies for professional self-advocacy (Betz & Luzzo, 1996; El-Bialy et al., 2013).

A smaller yet significant positive correlation ($r = .136$, $p = .048$) was found between assertiveness and career adaptability. Assertive individuals are more likely to seek resources, engage in problem-solving, and display curiosity in vocational pursuits (Oliveira et al., 2023).

Studies indicate that assertiveness strengthens self-regulation, a key mediator of adaptability, by promoting goal-directed behaviors and resilience (Paszowska-Rogacz, 2024).

While correlations were modest, the findings underscore assertiveness as a valuable psychological resource for career development. Urban environments further amplify these effects by providing diverse opportunities and mentorship, reinforcing assertiveness-linked adaptability and decision-making efficacy (Zacher, 2014). These insights contribute to the understanding of career-related behaviors, supporting targeted interventions for young professionals.

5. Conclusion

This study highlights the crucial role of assertiveness in career adaptability and career decision-making self-efficacy (CDMSE). Findings confirm a positive correlation between assertiveness and both career adaptability and CDMSE, reinforcing that assertive individuals feel more confident in their career choices and better navigate job-related challenges. However, the correlation with career adaptability was relatively small, suggesting assertiveness might be more influential in decision-making confidence than in overall adaptability. Gender differences were observed in CDMSE and career adaptability, but assertiveness levels remained consistent across sexes. These insights emphasize assertiveness as a psychological resource that supports professional growth among young adults.

Despite its contributions, the study has limitations that should be addressed in future research. The sample, restricted to urban young adults, limits generalizability, as assertiveness and career development may vary across different age groups and locations. Gender distribution imbalance, cross-sectional design, and self-administered tools introduce potential biases, affecting result interpretation. Expanding research to include diverse demographics, longitudinal methods, and additional psychological and contextual factors—such as socioeconomic status and personality traits—could offer a more comprehensive understanding. Practical applications include integrating assertiveness training into career counseling programs to enhance decision-making confidence and adaptability, ultimately improving career development outcomes.

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