

**THE EFFECT OF SCHOOL CAREER GUIDANCE
AND COUNSELING ON STUDENTS' SUBJECT
CHOICE: A CASE STUDY OF HIGH SCHOOLS
IN RURAL AREA**

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UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA

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by

DENG YUXIAO

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANOVA	Analysis, Correlation Analysis, and Analysis of Variance
CA	Career Awareness
CGC	Career Guidance and Counselling
CVEA	China Vocational Education Association
HKACM	Hong Kong Association of Careers Masters
ISPs	Individual Student Planning Tools
NCEE	National College Entrance Examination
SCGC	School Career Guidance and Counseling
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SSC	Students' Subject Choices

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A Questionnaire

Appendix B Interview

**KESAN BIMBINGAN DAN KAUNSELING KERJAYA SEKOLAH
TERHADAP PILIHAN MATA PELAJARAN PELAJAR: KAJIAN KES DI
SEKOLAH MENENGAH KAWASAN LUAR BANDAR**

ABSTRACT

Kajian ini meneliti impak Bimbingan dan Kaunseling Kerjaya (CGC) terhadap pemilihan subjek dalam kalangan pelajar sekolah menengah luar bandar di China susulan pelaksanaan semula Peperiksaan Kemasukan Kolej Kebangsaan (NCEE). Pelajar luar bandar menghadapi kekangan seperti kesedaran kerjaya yang rendah, kekurangan kaunselor terlatih dan bahan rujukan tempatan. Kajian ini bertujuan menilai tahap kesedaran kerjaya pelajar, mengenal pasti faktor yang mempengaruhi pemilihan subjek, dan menilai keberkesanan CGC. Pendekatan kaedah campuran digunakan. Data kuantitatif dikumpulkan daripada 400 pelajar melalui soal selidik, manakala data kualitatif diperoleh daripada 15 peserta (7 pelajar, 8 kaunselor). Analisis melibatkan statistik deskriptif, regresi dan pengekodan tema menggunakan NVivo. Dapatan menunjukkan pengaruh ibu bapa, minat akademik dan rakan sebaya memainkan peranan penting. Akses kepada CGC membantu pelajar membuat keputusan dengan lebih yakin dan bermaklumat. Namun, kekangan seperti sesi kaunseling yang terhad, latihan tidak mencukupi dan kekurangan bahan kerjaya turut dikenal pasti. Berpandukan teori keberkesanan sendiri, modal budaya dan modal sosial, kajian ini mencadangkan penambahbaikan CGC melalui latihan, integrasi kurikulum dan sokongan keluarga bagi meningkatkan kesaksamaan pendidikan luar bandar.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of Career Guidance and Counseling (CGC) on subject selection among rural high school students in China under the reformed National College Entrance Examination (NCEE). Rural students often face challenges such as limited career awareness, a lack of trained counselors, and scarce localized resources, which hinder informed decision-making. The study aims to examine students' career awareness, identify key factors influencing subject selection, and evaluate the effectiveness of CGC interventions. A mixed-methods design was adopted. Quantitative data were collected from 400 students in Guizhou Province via a structured questionnaire. Qualitative insights were drawn from interviews with 15 participants (7 students, 8 counselors). Analysis involved descriptive statistics, regression, and thematic coding using NVivo. Findings indicate that parental expectations, academic interest, and peer influence significantly shape subject choices. Access to CGC enhanced students' confidence and clarity. However, constraints such as limited session frequency, inadequate training, and a lack of career materials were reported. Applying Self-Efficacy, Cultural Capital, and Social Capital theories, the study underscores CGC's potential to promote equitable decision-making. It suggests enhancing CGC delivery in rural schools through targeted training, curriculum integration, and school-family partnerships.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Career guidance and counselling (CGC) are crucial in education and have garnered significant attention in international and national education policies. This is especially true for adolescents who are navigating the challenges of puberty, as they are required to make pivotal decisions about their future careers during this period (Barnes, 2023; de Snoo-Trimp et al., 2022; Shefska & Backes, 2020). However, it is important to note that adolescents in this developmental stage are still shaping their career interests and awareness (Savickas, 2020; Woods et al., 2021). Consequently, their career choices often display a degree of instability. CGC is vital in helping students establish meaningful goals, assess their progress, stay motivated, and ultimately achieve valuable outcomes (Covarrubias et al., 2020). Research has demonstrated that students actively engaging in career exploration activities tend to exhibit higher attendance rates and reduced dropout rates (Chen & Zhang, 2023; Cho et al., 2023; Kim & Lee, 2023; Sweeder et al., 2021). Therefore, it becomes evident that CGC is significant for high school students.

In China, the development of Career Guidance and Counseling (CGC) faces challenges stemming from socio-economic factors and a lack of awareness about career development. While economically advanced cities such as Hong Kong (Hua et al., 2021; Hui et al., 2020; Wu et al., 2021) have made notable progress in CGC implementation, many regions, particularly rural areas, are still in the early stages of exploring how to integrate CGC into their educational systems effectively. The National College Entrance Examination (NCEE) reform has introduced more diverse

and flexible subject choices. This reform offers several advantages, including tailoring subject options to students' interests, enhancing motivation, and promoting proactive learning. However, it also comes with potential disadvantages, such as increased academic pressure and the risk of making irrational choices influenced by external factors. In this context, CGC is pivotal in assisting students with their subject choices. It can help students consider their interests, abilities, and future goals, providing valuable insights into various subjects to facilitate informed decisions. Meanwhile, it also can improve their career awareness. This chapter introduces the study on subject choice guidance for high school students in China. It focuses on how senior schools provide career guidance, which has grown in importance due to changes in college entrance exams. The discussion highlights the impact of informed decisions on students' education choices. It covers the research background, the problem, questions, objectives, and a summary.

1.2 Background of the study

In China, high school students face a critical decision: selecting a subject for the new National College Entrance Examination (NCEE). The recent reforms in the education system have altered the mode of subject selection, introducing greater diversity and flexibility. However, this shift has brought about new challenges, particularly for students from rural areas. Due to limited resources, career guidance, and fluctuating career awareness among adolescents (Agyemang & Adjei, 2020; Pittet et al., 2022), they may encounter additional difficulties and pressures that affect their subject choices.

1.2.1 National College Entrance Examination (NCEE) and subject choice in China

Many countries, like China, use the National College Entrance Examination (NCEE or Gaokao) as the primary method to match students with colleges and fields of study. In China, students complete three years of high school, spanning grades 10 to 12, with the NCEE held annually on June 7th and 8th after completing the 12th-grade curriculum. It is a high-stakes exam, given only once a year, and failing or missing it requires retaking the 12th grade. This setup significantly heightens pressure and anxiety for students, making it a formidable challenge in China. At the end of their first year of high school in China, students face a crucial decision about their future education. This choice revolves around selecting academic disciplines, which fall into two main categories: Arts and Sciences. These choices shape their NCEE exams and lay the groundwork for future academic and career paths. Students can access specific universities and majors depending on their chosen stream and scores. Later, upon university graduation, their field of study significantly impacts career prospects. Thus, the first-year high school course selection holds immense importance for Chinese students, though many may underestimate its significance or feel overwhelmed by the decision.

In 2014, the Chinese government implemented the NCEE reform to give students greater flexibility in choosing their subjects (Fang et al., 2022). The new subjects' choices include 3+X, 3+3, and 3+2+1 models. The exam includes three mandatory subjects—Chinese, Foreign Languages, and Mathematics—as well as optional subjects such as Biology, Chemistry, Geography, History, Physics, and Politics (Jian-Xin et al., 2023). This reform mainly focuses on changing the subject selection process for students and includes two main models: the "3+3" model and the

"3+1+2" model, as shown in Table 1.1. The reform is divided into five batches to ensure smooth implementation and prompt resolution of issues arising during the reform process. Firstly, in 2014, Shanghai and Zhejiang Province implemented the "3+3" model, eliminating the distinction between arts and sciences. Secondly, in 2017, Beijing, Tianjin, Shandong, and Hainan provinces adopted the "3+3" model. However, during the earlier reforms in some provinces, there were issues with certain subjects becoming extremely popular or unpopular. As a result, the subsequent subject selection was reformed to be the "3+1+2" model, still without differentiating arts and sciences. The model will be implemented in three stages for the reform process. The breakdown is as follows: (a) In 2018, Hebei, Liaoning, Jiangsu, Fujian, Hubei, Hunan, Guangdong, and Chongqing began the reform. (b) In 2021, Heilongjiang, Gansu, Jilin, Anhui, Jiangxi, Guizhou, and Guangxi initiated the reform. (c) In 2022, Shanxi, Henan, Shaanxi, Inner Mongolia, Sichuan, Yunnan, Ningxia, and Qinghai started the reform (DXSDD online, 2023).

Table 1.1

New NCEE's implementation timeline and regional coverage

Time	Batch	Province	Model	Scores
In 2014	The first batch	Shanghai 、 Zhejiang Province	“3+3” model	750 scores
In 2017	The second batch	Beijing, Tianjin, Shandong, and Hainan provinces	“3+3” model	
In 2018	The third batch	Hebei, Liaoning, Jiangsu, Fujian, Hubei, Hunan, Guangdong, and Chongqing	"3+1+2" model	
In 2021	The fourth batch	Heilongjiang, Gansu, Jilin, Anhui, Jiangxi, Guizhou, and Guangxi initiated the reform.		
In 2022	The fifth batch	Shanxi, Henan, Shaanxi, Inner Mongolia, Sichuan, Yunnan, Ningxia, and Qinghai		

Regardless of the model used, the total score for the examination is 750. (Graff Zivin et al., 2020). Exam scores are the key determinant for university program eligibility and available majors. The university's reputation and chosen field of study significantly influence future job prospects. (Yang, 2018). Higher NCEE scores boost the likelihood of elite university admission, which is strongly linked to future opportunities and earnings. Graduates from elite universities tend to earn 40% more per month than their peers from lesser institutions (Jia, 2016). These findings emphasise urban and rural students' strong desire to enter elite universities. NCEE scores are crucial in securing admission to prestigious institutions and shaping future career prospects.

1.2.2 Establishment and Development of CGC in China

Career Guidance and Counseling (CGC) in China has evolved since 1917, beginning with the China Vocational Education Association (CVEA) laying the foundation for vocational education (1917-1965). The Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) disrupted CGC, causing a ten-year vocational development hiatus. State-controlled employment weakened vocational guidance. From 1987 to 1989, China piloted vocational counselling. Between 1990 and 2000, CGC gained traction in developed cities with professional institutions. Economic shifts, particularly towards the service industry, impacted employment (1990-2000). In 2014, NCEE reforms sparked a new phase, promoting career planning in middle schools. This concept is integrated into daily life, aided by government policies in secondary schools. China's vocational education faces limited service coverage, a shortage of qualified personnel, and inadequate institutional support. Solutions involve resource bridging, research promotion, and equitable CGC service access. China adapts to societal needs but lags

behind developed nations, necessitating efforts to narrow urban-rural gaps and ensure equal CGC service access.

Regarding career development in secondary schools, in 2004, the Educational Development Research Center began rural secondary school career education. In 2008, the Ministry introduced mandatory career education through 'Career guidance' guidelines for secondary vocational schools. By 2014, the Ministry had highlighted high school career guidance in the 'Implementation Opinions on the General High School Academic Proficiency Examination.' The 2010 'National Medium- and Long-Term Education Reform and Development Plan Outline' also encouraged eligible high schools to incorporate career education into their student guidance systems for practical purposes. China recognises CGC's importance but unevenly implements it. Only cities like Shanghai, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Macau offer CGC programs. Hong Kong excels in CGC. Senior-year career education is limited in China, and economically struggling cities lack CGC services. Rural students may choose ill-fitting or competitive majors, causing job-hunting challenges. Some make irrational choices, like dropping out, due to unclear goals. This underscores the need to investigate the factors influencing subject choice in rural high schools (Alam & Mohanty, 2023; Di Pietro, 2020; Eam et al., 2021).

1.3 Problem Statement

Chinese students face significant challenges and opportunities as they navigate their academic journeys under the recently introduced National College Entrance Examination (NCEE) system. Research by Davidson and Hughes (2020) highlights the critical role of school career guidance in shaping students' topic preferences and career decisions. Factors such as career awareness, parental influences, school

environment, and cultural experiences significantly impact students' decision-making processes, ultimately shaping their academic and career trajectories (Hua et al., 2022). Career awareness, defined as students' understanding of various occupations, professional growth objectives, and aspirations, plays a pivotal role in this process (Fawcett, 2021). Empirical evidence suggests a strong correlation between students' self-concept and career awareness, with higher self-concept linked to greater career awareness (Varshney, 2023). This underscores the importance of fostering career awareness to enable students to make informed and aligned academic and career decisions.

However, students in rural areas face unique challenges that exacerbate these decision-making difficulties. Limited access to educational resources (Liu & Villa, 2020), a lack of trained career guidance professionals, and socioeconomic constraints (Wang & Wang, 2021) hinder their ability to make optimal academic and career choices (Chen et al., 2022). While parental influence significantly impacts students' academic decisions (Aina et al., 2022), the capacity of parents and educators to provide personalized career guidance is often constrained by their professional backgrounds, gender biases, and familiarity with career counseling (Gati, 2023). This lack of support often leads to suboptimal decision-making among students, particularly in rural settings.

Professional school career guidance and counseling (CGC) programs are essential in addressing these challenges. Studies, including a comparative investigation by Wu et al. (2020), demonstrate that structured career guidance enhances students' self-assessment and problem-solving abilities. Bandura's self-efficacy theory further emphasizes the importance of purposeful instruction and supervision in developing these skills (Bandura, 1986). Despite the proven efficacy of career interventions,

Chinese secondary schools, particularly in rural areas, face significant obstacles, including a shortage of well-trained career education professionals and a lack of locally derived theoretical frameworks and assessment tools (Sefain, 2023; Chen et al., 2022).

In contrast, Hong Kong has made significant strides in addressing similar challenges through initiatives such as the Hong Kong Association of Careers Masters (HKACM), which provides professional training for career advisors and supports the implementation of career guidance programs in schools (Tsui et al., 2019). However, the feasibility of replicating these strategies in rural China remains unexplored, highlighting a critical gap in the existing literature. This study aims to address this gap by examining the unique challenges faced by rural students (Herro et al., 2023) and exploring the potential for adapting successful urban interventions to rural contexts.

1.4 Research Gap

While the problem statement highlights the challenges and opportunities students face under the NCEE system, it lacks a comprehensive analysis of the disparities between rural and urban areas. Existing literature, such as Lenette (2022), de Souza et al. (2021), and Hammad (2023), provides valuable insights into the general challenges of academic decision-making but fails to address the distinct difficulties encountered by rural students. Rural students face unique challenges, including limited access to educational resources, a shortage of career guidance professionals, and socioeconomic constraints that differ significantly from those in urban areas.

Additionally, while the problem statement acknowledges effective strategies implemented in Hong Kong (Pan & Du, 2021), it does not explore their applicability to rural China. This represents a significant research gap, as the feasibility of adapting urban interventions to rural settings remains unexamined. Addressing this gap is

crucial for developing tailored career counseling strategies that meet the unique needs of rural students. By drawing on prior research (Herro et al., 2023), this study aims to provide valuable insights into the challenges faced by rural students and the potential for adapting successful urban interventions to rural contexts. This focused inquiry will contribute to the development of comprehensive and equitable educational policies that address the diverse needs of students across different geographical settings.

1.5 Research Questions

The present study examines the correlation between the selection of subjects by students with average grades and the provision of career counselling and guidance in high schools in rural areas. This analysis will be conducted using the criteria outlined in the problem description, and the study will address the following research questions:

- i) What is the level of career awareness among high school students in rural areas in China?
- ii) What are the factors influencing high school students' subject selection within China's new National College Entrance Examination (NCEE) framework?
- iii) What is the effect of school Career Guidance and Counseling (CGC) on students' decision-making processes regarding subject choices in Chinese high schools?
- iv) What is the feedback from students and counsellors regarding the CGC intervention on students' decision-making processes regarding subject choices in Chinese high schools?

1.6 Research Objectives

The present study has established the following aims to address the research questions.

- i) To identify the level of career awareness among high school students in rural areas in China.
- ii) To identify factors influencing high school students' subject selection within China's new National College Entrance Examination (NCEE) framework.
- iii) To examine the effect of school Career Guidance and Counseling (CGC) on students' decision-making processes regarding subject choices in Chinese high schools.
- iv) To explore the feedback from students and counsellors regarding the CGC intervention on students' decision-making processes regarding subject choices in Chinese high schools.

1.7 Hypothesis Development

The following hypotheses are proposed based on the research questions and objectives outlined in the study.

- i) **H1:** The level of career awareness among rural high school students is generally moderate or low, indicating a need for increased career education intervention.
- ii) **H2:** Family background and socioeconomic status significantly influence high school students' subject selection in the new NCEE in China.

- iii) **H3:** School Career Guidance and Counseling (CGC) programs positively influence rural high school students' confidence and clarity in making subject choices.

1.8 Operational Definition for Keywords

To ensure the research maintains clarity and precision, operational definitions are supplied for important terms utilised in the study.

Career Guidance and Counseling (CGC): Career Guidance and Counselling refers to a systematic and organized set of activities and interventions designed to assist students in making informed decisions about their academic and career paths. It includes services such as personalized counselling, career development workshops, and educational programs aimed at enhancing students' understanding of various professional fields (Keshf & Khanum, 2021).

National College Entrance Examination (NCEE): The National College Entrance Examination, commonly known as Gaokao, is a standardized assessment administered in China to evaluate the academic performance of high school students and determine their eligibility for admission to tertiary education institutions. In this study, the term specifically refers to the revised examination system implemented in 2014, which grants students greater autonomy in selecting subjects for evaluation (Zivin et al., 2020).

Rural Areas: In the context of this research, rural areas are defined as geographic locations characterized by lower population density, limited access to urban amenities, and unique socioeconomic conditions compared to urban areas. The

term specifically refers to secondary educational institutions in these rural regions of China (Li et al., 2019).

Subject Choices: The term "subject choices" refers to the selection of academic disciplines and individual courses by high school students, particularly within the context of the NCEE reform. It encompasses the decisions made during the initial year of secondary education regarding the subjects to be assessed in the National College Entrance Examination (NCEE), which subsequently influence students' future academic and career paths (Gächter et al., 2022).

Career Awareness: Career awareness refers to high school students' understanding of various vocations, their ability to formulate career development strategies, and their capacity to set professional goals. In the context of this study, it specifically examines students' comprehension of alternative career paths, career development objectives, and aspirations, particularly in relation to subject selection and the National College Entrance Examination (NCEE) reform (Han et al., 2021).

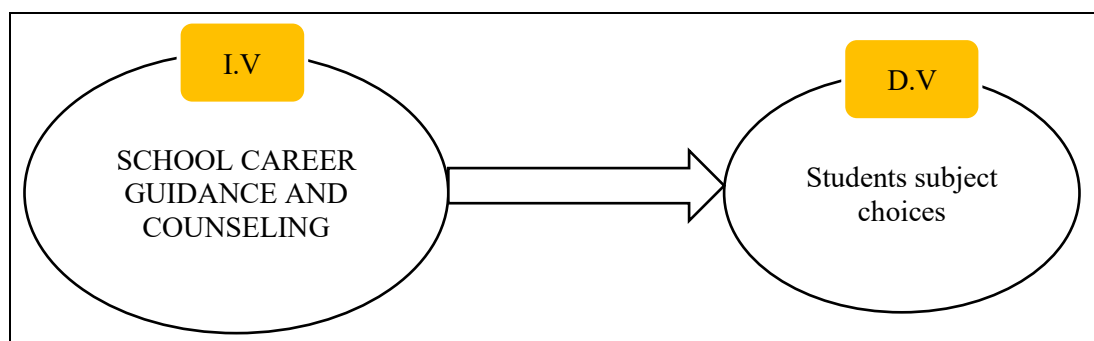
Effectiveness of CGC: The effectiveness of Career Guidance and Counselling (CGC) is determined by analyzing the impact of CGC programs and interventions on students' decision-making processes, subject selection, and overall academic and career outcomes. This assessment can be conducted using various indicators, including students' self-assessments, problem-solving skills, and feedback from both counsellors and students regarding the perceived value of the services provided by the CGC (Zhou et al., 2019).

1.9 Conceptual Framework

This study's main goal is to deepen the understanding of the relationship between students' topic preferences, who maintain an average GPA, and the accessibility of career support and guidance in rural high schools. The study employs a range of theoretical perspectives to elucidate the complex dynamics between individual, social, and educational factors that shape students' academic choices. Figure 1.1 shows the Conceptual Model for the study.

Figure 1.1

Conceptual Framework



1.10 Summary

Chapter 1 establishes a foundation for investigating career guidance and counseling (CGC) among Chinese high school students, emphasizing the challenges and opportunities arising from the National College Entrance Examination reform. The introduction stresses the need for Career Guidance and Counseling (CGC) for teens making career options in high school. The background section examines NCEE system changes, while the section on CGC establishment and growth in China acknowledges career-guiding challenges and milestones. The issue statement emphasises Chinese students' complicated issues and how external factors affect their academic and career decisions. A study gap suggests the necessity for carefully analysing rural-urban

distinctions and the feasibility of adopting urban strategies in rural contexts. The study's research questions and goals focus on career awareness, subject choices, school career guidance counsellors, and their efficacy. The study focuses on rural China, compares rural and urban students' challenges, and examines China's CGC (Civic and Moral Education) history. The study's importance is highlighted, with potential implications for educational policies, strategies, and practices to address children's unique challenges in different regions. Chapter 1 provides context, identifies research gaps, proposes clear study objectives, and aims to set the stage for the next chapters. This chapter details how CGC (Career et al.) influences rural Chinese high school students' subject choices. It guides a detailed assessment of this issue in the shifting NCEE (National College Entrance Assessment) system.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter comprehensively analyses Chinese students' challenges and opportunities when undertaking the National College Entrance Examination (NCEE). The initial segment of the chapter delves into the crucial subject of career awareness and its impact on the selection of academic topics. This analysis meticulously examines the various factors contributing to this understanding, including the substantial roles played by cultural experiences, the educational environment, and parental influence. An analysis is conducted to investigate the intricate interplay of these factors to ascertain their impact on students' decisions regarding their academic trajectories. Additionally, the chapter provides an in-depth analysis of the vital role of career guidance and counseling (CGC) programs in professional schools. It recognises CGC as an essential instrument for addressing challenges about topic selection. The chapter elucidates how practical CGC courses can empower students to form informed assessments, engage in self-assessment, and refine their problem-solving skills by thoroughly analysing the literature. The analysis underscores the need to provide students with targeted advice and supervision to facilitate their holistic development as they navigate their academic and career trajectories.

2.2 Parental Influences on Academic Performance and Career Choice

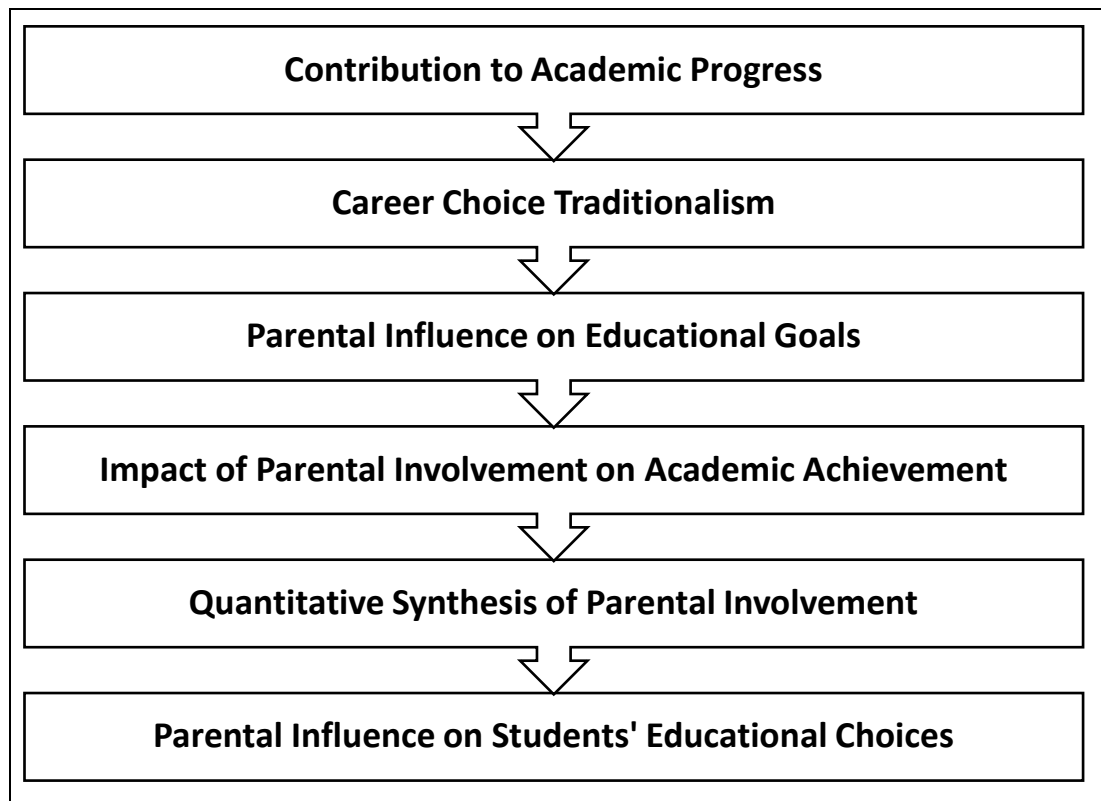
Their parents greatly influence students' academic performance and decisions regarding their future professions. Numerous studies shed light on the ways parents affect their children's educational experiences. Many have highlighted the strong

influence of parents on their children's academic success. This study explores various methods to understand how parental involvement boosts teenagers' academic performance, highlighting the critical role of a supportive home environment (Farooq & Asim, 2020). To obtain a more intricate understanding of professional traditionalism, one can study the influence that parents exert on the career decisions of their offspring, specifically among college students. This research investigates the complex relationship between parental involvement and personal ambitions by analyzing how parental guidance affects career decisions among students in specific Ethiopian cities (Kassahun et al., 2022). Research conducted since 1974 examines the degree of agreement between parents and children regarding educational goals.

The aim of this data analysis, involving male students in the ninth and twelfth grades along with their parents, is to identify how aligned families are regarding educational goals and aspirations (Danaa et al., 2022). Recent studies have investigated the impact of parental involvement on children's academic success. This research focuses on how parental engagement affects the academic growth of high-achieving teenagers, deepening our understanding of parents' roles in educational development (Shrestha, 2023). A meta-analysis is included to explore the link between parental involvement and academic success. Emphasis on the influence of parental engagement in children's education is evident in a quantitative meta-analysis across 37 kindergarten studies (Tan et al., 2020). Conducted in 2002, this study examines Sweden's education system, providing critical insights into educational class disparities. Moreover, the study emphasises the broader societal implications of parental participation by examining how parental impact helps to elucidate disparities in educational achievement based on social class (Tan et al., 2020). The following Figure 2.1 shows insights into parents' diverse educational influences.

Figure 2.1

Insights on parents' diverse educational influences



2.2.1 School Career Guidance and Counseling in High Schools in Rural China

Rural China has a range of distinct opportunities and challenges in terms of providing school career help and counselling in high schools. Not many specific studies focus on rural areas, but more general research provides valuable information about the broader picture. Rural colleges and universities in China often face challenges due to insufficient resources, particularly a shortage of proficient professionals who offer career guidance. The lack of comprehensive counselling services may impact students' comprehension of the diverse educational and career options (Reich et al., 2020). The findings of studies examining students' opinions on school counsellors in urban areas like Beijing provide insights into potential challenges. A comprehensive awareness of different viewpoints is crucial to ensure that

counselling strategies are customised to effectively connect with students residing in rural regions (Rosvall, 2020). The research on career aid and counselling in Shanghai provides a historical viewpoint. However, it does not primarily concentrate on agricultural areas.

The text describes the developmental stages, offering insights into rural high schools' challenges and necessary enhancements (Paul et al., 2022). The historical studies emphasise the initiatives undertaken to establish career courses for high schools in China. These studies specifically focus on the experimental career guidance and counselling phase conducted at Beijing Normal University from 1987 to 1989. This historical context may offer valuable perspectives for adjusting counselling courses in rural areas (Rowe et al., 2020). Career instructors are individuals tasked with offering guidance on career trajectories to secondary school students in Hong Kong and the broader Asian area. By comprehending these educators' duties, it may be feasible to get insights into potential frameworks for rural regions (Escueta et al., 2020).

2.3 Students' Subject Choice: Factors and Implications

The selection of subjects by students is a crucial element of their academic progression, which is influenced by many circumstances. Research offers a valuable understanding of the factors and outcomes of these decisions.

2.3.1 Parental Influence on Career Choice: Unraveling the Dynamics

Multiple studies examine the complex correlation between parental influence and students' job decisions. Research highlights parents' significant role in the continuous advancement of academic performance, elucidating the intersection

between parental supervision and academic achievement (Rall, 2021). Investigating how parental influence shapes the traditional nature of career choices among college students is a pertinent subject. Research in certain urban areas of Ethiopia analyzes how parental expectations and cultural norms affect students' job selections (Zewude & Habtegiorgis, 2022). The influence of parents extends beyond employment choices to include educational aspirations. By examining data collected from students in ninth and twelfth grades and their parents, these studies seek to ascertain the degree of agreement between parents and children regarding educational objectives and how this agreement influences students' academic trajectories (Hogsett, 2020).

2.3.2 Parental Involvement in Academic Achievement

Research consistently emphasizes the important role of parental involvement in shaping children's academic achievements. One study examines the complex relationship between parental participation and students' academic performance, analyzing parents' contributions to their children's educational growth (Tazouti & Jarlégan, 2019). A comprehensive meta-analysis synthesizes quantitative data on the connection between parental involvement and academic success. This analysis, covering 37 studies, offers valuable insights into how parental participation benefits adolescent academic achievements (Tan et al., 2020). Another study explores the subtle relationship between parental engagement and children's academic outcomes, aiming to understand its impact. This research enhances our understanding of how various parental involvement strategies influence academic success by focusing on the quantitative aspects of parental engagement (Barger et al., 2019).

2.3.3 Quantitative Synthesis of Parental Involvement

The "Quantitative Synthesis of Parental Involvement and Academic Achievement" study examines the complex connection between parental involvement and adolescents' academic performance. This extensive research endeavour seeks to offer a detailed comprehension by amalgamating data from a thorough examination of 37 pertinent studies (AlGerafi et al., 2023). The research explores many aspects of parental engagement, encompassing tasks such as aiding with schoolwork and maintaining communication with teachers. This comprehensive analysis aims to determine the measurable influence of various types of parental involvement on academic performance. This meta-analysis employs advanced statistical techniques to synthesize research findings and assess the overall impact of parental involvement, taking effect size into account. By applying rigorous statistical methods, the analysis measures the strength of the relationship between parental involvement and academic performance. It aims to uncover patterns and correlations in the data, offering crucial insights into how different facets of parental involvement affect various academic outcomes. The results of this quantitative analysis could influence educational policies. Understanding the quantifiable effects of parental involvement can offer important guidance for enhancing collaboration between parents and schools to improve student outcomes.

2.3.4 Parental Influence on Educational Choices

The parental impact on students' educational decisions is a complex phenomenon that significantly impacts their academic trajectories and professional routes. This effect spans multiple aspects, such as the choice of subjects, career counselling, and decisions on higher education. Parents often play a vital part in

guiding their children's educational journey. This influence extends to helping students make informed choices regarding subjects, coursework, and extracurricular activities. How parents participate in these decisions can affect a student's academic achievement and prospects for the future. Parental influence encompasses parents' impact on their children's job choices, as they offer guidance, instil values, and establish expectations that shape their children's vocational aspirations. This influence can be demonstrated through engaging in conversations regarding various career choices, being exposed to various professions, and receiving motivation to pursue particular sectors. Cultural and socioeconomic factors significantly impact parental influence. Various cultural backgrounds can lead families to prioritise certain professions or educational pathways, which in turn can influence the choices made by their offspring. Socioeconomic status can also influence the availability of resources, educational opportunities, and exposure to many career options. Parents frequently provide academic guidance, assisting their children in making intricate choices, such as selecting a college or university. These guidelines involve evaluating factors such as academic standing, the range of programs available, and future professional prospects.

2.4 Career Awareness and Academic Topic Preference

The study explores how cultural values, career adaptability, and parental expectations affect Chinese students. This review summarizes research findings from earlier studies and examines the complex factors influencing Chinese students' career choices and satisfaction. Research involving Chinese university students also assesses how parental expectations and cultural disputes impact the challenges faced in making career decisions. The study elucidates the complex correlation among cultural norms, parental assistance, and students' challenges when selecting career choices (Fisher et

al., 2020). A different study utilises latent profile analysis to ascertain occupational adaptability profiles and their impact on academic advancement in high school students. This long-term research provides key insights into the evolving relationship between workplace adaptation and educational outcomes in Chinese high schools (Kiuru et al., 2020). Additionally, this qualitative analysis investigates the risk aversion and pursuit of job stability among Chinese college students amid the global COVID-19 pandemic.

This research explores various perspectives on how external obstacles affect decision-making and job selection (Lent & Brown, 2020). It analyzes factors influencing international students' happiness, with special attention to China's push for globalizing higher education. The study contributes valuable insights into the holistic well-being of Chinese students studying abroad (Wang et al., 2021). It also reviews Chinese students' perceptions of academic stress and its effects on depression. Additionally, this investigation delves into the psychological aspects of academic stress, providing useful viewpoints on students' mental health challenges in educational contexts (Baltà-Salvador et al., 2021). Another study identifies the factors that South African STEM majors consider when choosing careers. Soylu Yalcinkaya and Adams's (2020) work offers a cross-cultural look at students' career preferences in STEM fields, including science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Together, these diverse studies reveal a comprehensive understanding of the complex factors affecting Chinese students' career choices and overall well-being. Table 2.1 summarises the primary studies, their areas of concentration, and the noteworthy findings related to Career Awareness and Academic Topic Preferences within the scope of your research.

Table 2.1

Summarising the significant findings related to Career Awareness and Academic Topic Preferences

Author and years	Focus	Key Finding
Pinquart and Ebeling (2020)	Cultural Values and Parental Expectations	they investigated the impact of cultural values conflict and family expectations on the challenges faced by Chinese university students when making professional decisions.
Jackson and Tomlinson (2020).	Career Exploration of High School Students	A systematic review examining the current state and difficulties of career exploration in high schools, focusing on the student groups engaged.
Shen (2021)	Career Planning Education	We investigated the impact of career planning education on professional preparedness, utilising social learning theory as a guiding framework.
Wang et al. (2020)	Factors Influencing Career Decision-Making	We investigated the factors that impact the process of professional decision-making among students majoring in STEM fields, with a specific focus on the role of parents.
Burnette et al. (2020)	Career Planning Scale for Junior High	I created a career planning scale for junior high pupils utilising the career theory of Cognitive Information Processing (CIP).

2.5 Parental Influence on Academic Course Selection

Empirical evidence indicates that career course interventions in Chinese high schools significantly affect students' preparedness for making informed choices about their future careers. Gu et al. (2020) highlight the positive impact of career courses, particularly in assisting students to overcome decision-making difficulties, boosting career self-efficacy, and supporting professional choices. Additionally, research indicates that socio-demographic factors and parenting styles greatly affect both students' academic performance and the career paths they choose. A suggested method to improve undergraduate readiness for future employment is the introduction of career planning education programs. Moreover, introducing innovative methods for choosing subjects in secondary schools provides students with a broader array of choices,

presenting a challenge to educational institutions and teachers while enhancing academic performance (Falloon, 2020).

The strong impact of parental autonomy support on career adaptability and decision-making self-efficacy in Chinese secondary vocational students underscores the link between family dynamics and job growth (Fantinelli et al., 2023). In conclusion, research conducted in Thailand explored the factors influencing high school students' university selection. This study sheds light on the intricate nature of decision-making processes during educational transitions (G'ulomovna, 2023). The section following Table 2.2 provides a brief summary of the key findings regarding parental influence on academic course selection.

Table 2.2

Research on Career Development Factors

Author and year	Focus	Main Findings
Lent and Brown (2020)	Career Course Intervention	Positive impact on career decision-making readiness
Pisaniello et al. (2019)	Academic Performance and Career Choices	Influence on academic performance and career decisions
Pak et al. (2020)	Career Readiness	Enhancement of undergraduates' career readiness
Jansen et al. (2021)	High School Subject Choices	Introduction of more choices and increased academic standards
Chen et al. (2020)	Career Adaptability	Influence on career adaptability and decision-making self-efficacy
Abbas et al. (2019)	University Selection	Investigation into factors influencing high school student's choice of University

Table 2.2 displays a range of research studies examining factors that impact career development. These studies explore subjects including job search behaviour among college students, career preferences and trajectories, career exploration