



Factors Influencing the Preferences of Grade 10 Students in Choosing their Preferred Senior High School Track

Key C. Rio³, Shaneley L. Quilario³, Michelle D. Torno³, Leojen B. Adlawan³, Justin Bryle Pando³, Jupith S. Cabalan³, John Michael Sasan^{1,2}*

¹Research Coordinator, ²Lecturer, ³Student

Department of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics, PAU Excellencia Global Academy Foundation, Inc., Cebu, Philippines

*Corresponding Author: John Michael Sasan

ABSTRACT

Choosing a right track is crucial for a student who has yet to make a decision on what track to take in senior high school. The primary purpose of the study was to determine junior high school students' career interests in order to better prepare them for senior high school studies. The researchers employed the descriptive research design to investigate the research objectives and generate a new understanding of the data collected. From all of the schools in Toledo City, the researchers chose two private and four public high schools because these schools openly welcome the researchers to conduct a study on their learners and they provide all the data that the researchers need. Moreover, the researchers used an online survey questionnaire as a key instrument to collect and summarize data based on the five factors, utilizing a 5-point Likert scale for each indication, and analyzing the responses of the samples.

Keywords: Career preference, career selection factors, future job opportunities, decision-making and interest

Introduction

The K to 12 Basic Education Program in the Philippines includes the introduction of senior high school (SHS), or grades 11 and 12, the final two years of a new 6-year secondary education system. Rather than merely focusing on post-secondary education preparedness, the SHS Curriculum aims to prepare students for either higher education or work. (Development Asia, 2019).

Students in JHS Grade 10 will follow a shared curriculum and can choose from four specialization options: Academics, Technical-Vocational and Livelihood (TVL), Sports, or Arts and Design. Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMMS), Accountancy, Business and Management (ABM), Science, Technology and Engineering (STEM), and General Academic are the four strands that make up the Academic Track. Then there's the Technical Vocational Track, which includes Information and Communications Technology (ICT), Agri-Fishery Arts, and Industrial Arts. (Ibid.).

The government's adoption of the K-12 program will assist students to improve their abilities, become more competent, and grasp and deal with new courses. The curriculum has been improved to satisfy the needs of students on a local level, allowing them to choose a specialty that best suits their interests.

The choice of a job path is crucial to the lives of a young man or woman. The careers that students choose will have an influence on the rest of their life. Grades, age, personal interests, experiences, and other things affected students' career choices, and it was through their learning experiences that these students selected what they wanted to accomplish in terms of their future professions (Quinter et al., 2011). Furthermore, the senior high school students observed that decision-making, motivation, peer pressure, institutional concerns, and future employment chances all had an impact on their choices (Ibid.).

Creativity, trial and error, decision-making, and sound judgment are all required in career choices. To create and cultivate an interest in a given vocation, it is vital to have prior understanding about that career. Self-defining activities that are vital for one's soul, heart, and power are powerfully pulled to passion. A person's professional success is best achieved when his course selection is based on the correct career for his talent, personality, background, and intelligence. Many students make judgments based on their personal preferences rather than what the work market requires. According to the findings, understanding entrepreneurship and its processes requires passion (Magdadaro, 2020).

In addition, the type of the sources from which the individual acquired information about the course of study has an impact on the decision of this degree of ambition. Role expectations in the family unit, for example, are different from those in the occupational social system. A person's personal traits are evaluated in the home, whereas a person's performance is evaluated in the job (Eskola, 1962).

Employees who create and administer professional programs have been able to enhance their careers and raise their businesses' professional commitment (Ismail et al., 2013). It is especially beneficial to pupils who attend larger schools or live-in locations with many career resources. Exploring your options in terms of a career is a great thing to do. It is critical for high school students to figure out which strand matches them best, as

well as which strand is closest to the heart.

The study's principal goal was to assess junior high school students' professional interests in order to prepare them for senior high school studies, which would serve as a springboard for future senior high school studies. This prompted the researchers to conduct this research in order to understand more about the factors that influence junior high school students' preferences for the senior high school track. Furthermore, this will serve as a guide for educational institutions in assisting students in preparing for the greatest career option available based on their interests.

Background of the Study

The Philippines, along with Djibouti and Angola in Africa, is one of only three nations in the world with a 10-year pre-university curriculum. Filipinos find it challenging to compete with other nations that have at least 12 years of basic education due to this short duration (Japitan et al., 2015). It's time, according to Ramos (n.d.), to reexamine how public education aids kids in deciding their educational and professional aspirations. We must think about the future of students who will immediately enter the workforce following graduation.

According to a recent research, peer buddies are a crucial element of the socialization process, and their effect and pressure in molding an individual's trajectory has been generally acknowledged. It aids in the development of career options and decision-making among young people (Victorovna, 2017). Adolescents in the Philippines are frequently unable to make independent judgments. Parents, professors, acquaintances, and classmates are commonly sought for advice (Manapsal, 2018). When it comes to making career options, there are a number of elements that impact students' indecisiveness. Students are not given adequate guidance in selecting subjects based on their interests and aptitude. The majority of high school students make poor course selections, contributing to high unemployment and underemployment rates (Manapsal, 2018). No one is forced to work, and our society does not ensure that those who choose to work will be able to do so. Those who choose a profession are required to solve the issue of choice based on their best guesses of their long-term interests (Care, 1984).

In the Philippines, for example, parents frequently encourage their children to seek low-wage jobs that provide a steady source of income. Nursing, accounting, and engineering are all quite popular among Filipino households (Saysay, 2011).

Every job path that one wishes to pursue has various options. As a consequence of the methods and measures they take, some people may be able to discover better career opportunities. It is definitely worth your time to take time out of your daily routine to explore for fresh career prospects.

The significance of career management for students cannot be overstated. Many students assume that the vocational or track they choose in secondary school has nothing to do with the career in which they would later specialize (Cabaniyas, 2021). The study looked into senior high school students' career and course interests. The research looked at how personality, parents, hobbies, employment opportunities, and peer pressure affected junior high school students' career decisions.

Methodology

Research design:

The purpose of this study was to discover the factors that influence Grade 10 students' choices of Senior High School Tracks. The researcher employed the descriptive research design to investigate the research objectives and generates a new understanding of the data collected. To study the research objectives, the researcher employed a descriptive research strategy to generate a fresh understanding of the data obtained. The study is descriptive, as it aims to determine if there is an effect of the decision-making of junior high (JHS) on what strand should be chosen.

Respondents:

The selection of respondents was done through stratified random sampling. The population of this research were grade 10 students, both male and female adolescents aged 15-17 years old, enrolled in the school year 2021-2022. Two schools from private and four schools from the public were selected to represent the division of Toledo City. The research selects these schools among all the schools in Toledo City because the school is openly welcomed the researchers to conduct a study on their learners and the school provides all the data that the researcher's need. Furthermore, the respondents were informed that they can assure that their responses will be kept anonymous and confidential.

Research Instrument:

The researcher utilized the online questionnaire as a primary tool to collect and describe the data. The specific online survey tool has three parts. Part 1 provides the explanation, purpose, importance of the study, and general instructions. Part 2 includes the demographic profile of the respondents, such as their age, gender, annual family income, and the school they are affiliated with. Part 3 of the survey is composed of the five identified career preference factors that affect students' preferences includes family influence, peer influence, job opportunities, financial condition, and personal interest.

Data Gathering:

The selected participants were provided an identical survey question through a Google form link. The researchers and the volunteered participants strictly followed the process for better emphasis and quality answers on the research objectives.

Data Analysis:

The researchers measured the evidence that there were significant connections between family influence, peer influence, job opportunities, financial condition, and personal interest, as well as the students' course preferences. Microsoft Excel was used to tabulate and calculate the data. Furthermore, descriptive statistical tests, such as frequency, percentage, weighted mean, and standard deviation were analyzed and interpreted to substantially describe and demonstrates the factors behind Grade 10 students' decisions in choosing the right Senior High School track.

Result and Discussion

This chapter covers the survey's results and the findings of the study.

Table 1.0 Demographic of respondents

Age	15	16	17	
• frequency	98	49	32	
• Percentage	(55%)	(27%)	(18%)	
Gender	Female	Male	Prefer not to say	
• frequency	113	63	3	
• Percentage	(63%)	(35%)	(2%)	
Monthly Family Income	Below 5,000	5,000-10,000	10,000-20,000	20,000+
• frequency	83	53	24	19
• Percentage	(46%)	(30%)	(13%)	(11%)

Upon analyzing table 1.0, the total number of respondents is 179. The frequency of the age 15 respondents has a number of 98 (55%), the age 16 respondents has a frequency of 49 (27%), and the age 17 respondents has the least frequency, which is 32 (18%). In terms of gender, there were 113 (63%) female respondents and 63 (35%) male respondents. While respondents who preferred not to say so accounted for 3 (2%). In the listed income, the monthly family income of 5000 below has a frequency of 83 (46%), the monthly family income of 5000-10,000 has a frequency of 53 (30%), the monthly family income of 10,000-20,000 has a frequency of 24 (13%), and the monthly family income of 20,000+ has a frequency of 19 (11%).

Table 2.0 Listed Schools

Name of School	Number of Respondents
Private:	
West Bay Learning Center Inc.	11
University of The Visayas	4
Public:	
Don Andres Soriano National High School	51
Luray National High School	17
Matab-ang National High School	32
Toledo National Vocational School	64
Total:	179

Table 2.0 presents the number of respondents from the 2 private and 4 public schools. Specifically, they are the following: In private schools, West Bay Learning Center Inc. had 11 total respondents and 4 total respondents from the University of the Visayas. In public schools, Don Andres Soriano National High School had 51 total respondents, compared to 17 total respondents from Luray National High School. There are 32 total respondents from Matab-ang National High School, and lastly, Toledo National Vocational School has 64 total respondents.

Table 3.0

Factors		Weighted mean	Standard Deviation	
Personal Interest:				
1	I choose based on my desire	4.0	0.7	Agree
2	I consider my aptitudes and capabilities in choosing the senior high school strand	3.9	0.7	Agree
3	I choose out of my freedom	3.8	0.9	Agree
4	My personality and habits are suited to the track I choose	3.8	0.7	Agree
5	I choose the track that fits my skills and interest	4.1	0.8	Agree
Overall		3.9	0.1	Agree
Family Influence:				
		Weighted mean	Standard Deviation	
1	I consider my parents' career in choosing my senior high school track/ strand	3.4	1.0	Neutral
2	I choose my track based on my parents' preferences	3.2	1.0	Neutral
3	My parents pushed me to enroll in the specific strand	2.6	1.0	Disagree
4	I chose the strand out of my parents' influence	3.1	1.0	Neutral
5	My parents advised me to choose this strand	3.2	1.0	Neutral

	Overall	3.0	0	Neutral
Peer Influence:		Weighted mean	Standard Deviation	
1	I was influenced by my classmates	2.6	1.0	Disagree
2	I am afraid to be left out by my friends	2.6	1.1	Disagree
3	My friend's decision is my decision as well	2.2	0.9	Disagree
4	I talked to my friend before choosing a strand	2.9	1.0	Neutral
5	My peer group and I shared the same preferences	3.0	0.9	Neutral
Overall		2.7	0.1	Neutral
Job Opportunities:		Weighted mean	Standard Deviation	
1	I choose the strand based on its demand	3.6	0.8	Agree
2	I choose a strand based on salary expectation	3.5	0.8	Agree
3	I prefer a strand based on its employability and stability	3.8	0.8	Agree
4	I choose a strand based on its future work environment	4.1	0.6	Agree
5	I choose a strand based on its availability in the news and job market	3.6	0.8	Agree
Overall		3.8	0.1	Agree
Financial Condition:		Weighted mean	Standard Deviation	
1	I choose this strand based on my parents' income	3.5	1.0	Agree
2	I choose the strand based on tuition cost	3.4	0.8	Neutral
3	I choose the strand based on scholarship opportunities	3.6	0.9	Agree
4	I choose the strand that would not cause financial stress for my parents	3.8	0.9	Agree
5	I choose the strand that would not stress my present work	3.8	0.8	Agree
Overall		3.7	0.1	Agree

N=179

Legend:

Strongly Agree=4.21-5

Agree=3.41-4.2

Neutral= 2.61-3.4

Disagree= 1.81-2.6

Strongly Disagree= 1-1.8

Table 3 shows the weighted mean and standard deviation. It states the five indicators in each factors above.

Personal Interest:

This component has a complete interpretation of "agree" and has an overall weighted mean of (3.9) and an overall standard deviation of (0.7). Both aptitude and interest, which allude to a student's personality, were discovered to be crucial elements in deciding on a career path. Because a student's experiences are impacted by their own talents, their opinions regarding professional ideals are influenced in both directions (Dick et al., 1991). Respondents agree that they chose their track depending on their desires in response to question number one. The statement has a (4.0) weighted mean and a (4.0) standard deviation (0.7). The fourth question asks if the respondents agree with the statement. They choose their track based on their personality and habits, with a weighted mean (3.8) and a standard deviation of (0.7). When a student is choosing on a path of study, it has been seen to be an agreeable element. Brown (2002) points out that in psychologically focused studies of career choice, personality factors that incline a person to pursue a certain sort of work are highly highlighted.

Family Influence:

Families, particularly parents and guardians, have a critical influence in shaping their children's career aspirations and goals. Students and young adults are typically unwilling to pursue – or even explore – a range of professional alternatives without parental permission or support. (Taylor et al., 2004). However, in Table 3, under the factor (family influence), it has an overall weighted mean score of (3.0) and an overall standard deviation of (0). The overall interpretation is "neutral." When it came to indicators 2 and 4, the majority of respondents chose neutral. On the other hand, the respondent disagreed with statement number three, which has a weighted mean of (2.6) and a standard deviation of (1.0).

Peer Influence:

The third factor in table 3, has a total interpretation of "neutral", an overall weighted mean of (2.7), and an overall standard deviation of (0.1). Individuals' peers and friends have a significant influence on their future self's behavior, personality development, career decisions, adaptation, and positive and negative behavior (Victorovna, 2017). However, respondents to item number 1 (I was influenced by my classmates) disagreed and had a weighted mean of (2.6) and a standard deviation of (1.0). While statement 5 has a weighted mean of (3.0) and a standard deviation of (0.3), the interpretation remains neutral. And the third item, respondents disagree with the statement "My friend's decision is my decision as well." with a standing weighted mean of (2.2) and a standard deviation of (0.9).

Job Opportunities:

The fourth factor, which is job opportunities, has an overall weighted mean (3.8) and an overall standard deviation of (0.1). The total interpretation remains agreeable to the students. Item 1-5 has the same interpretation as agreed. Statement number 2: "I choose a strand based on salary expectations." has a standard deviation of (0.8) and a weighted mean of (3.5). When these students are deciding on a major or a career path, they seek higher-paying professions or majors with the best employment stability. Some students may even look forward to retirement in addition to professional security. Students may think about getting a job to ensure their financial security for the rest of their lives (Wildman et al., 2001).

Financial Condition:

Lastly, factor 5 shows that some students originate from poorer socioeconomic backgrounds and their families' financial condition is inadequate. This difficulty can sometimes be passed on to students when they are reminded that their education costs a lot of money (Target study, 2018). Students agree with the statements 1, 3, 4, and 5, while for statement 2 (I chose the strand based on tuition cost), respondents disagree. The total interpretation is agreed upon. The overall weighted mean has (3.7) and (0.1) as standard deviation. Hence, it is normal for Filipino parents to look for other options because they still believe that a good education is the key to success (Dumaran et al., 2015).

Students want to be treated as the adults they are expected to be, with an equal opportunity to make the best career choices imaginable (Borchert, 2002). Respondents agreed that economic stability, job opportunities, career advancement chances, and job satisfaction influenced their career decisions (Koech, 2016). When students have a clear grasp of what they want to achieve, they are more engaged and motivated. What students need is a meaningful career – a career for a lifetime (Positive Action, n.d).

Conclusion

The importance of choosing a track for students in grade 10 cannot be overstated. According to the findings, the different elements that impact students' choices are adaptable regardless of their age, gender, or family wealth. Students who pursue their dreams are those who consider their abilities and knowledge.

In all parts of their life, including decision-making, students required parental supervision. Parents can influence their children, but young adults must make their own judgments about what career path they wish to take. They may be anyone they want to be, demonstrating to others that they can attain their goals without their parents' assistance. In order to achieve that goal, they must become self-sufficient.

Some student considers their present financial problems and how they could affect their parents' ability to work. They are concerned that their parents may be unable to meet the standards for the profession they desire. Scholarships, on the other hand, are available to students who are willing to take advantage of the chance and therefore reduce their financial hardships.

Adolescents share a lot of things with their friends, including their dreams. We can't disregard that since they're always around. They can occasionally affect the judgments people have to make. Students, on the other hand, choose to work alone and choose their SHS track with or without the help of their classmates or peers. They disregard this issue because they believe they can attain their objective on their own.

Due to the strong demand for many professions, students select the career that is most suited to them and demands their labor. They are aware that the country's unemployment rate has risen, which gives them the confidence to seize the chance.

Recommendations

The following are the suggestions based on the study's findings and analysis of the data obtained:

1. In order to make educated judgments, students must be provided the chance to do self-assessment and career exploration.
2. To educate students on their vital responsibilities in decision-making, a good career advising program including school personnel, parents or guardians, and students is necessary.
3. Teachers and parents should be receptive to preventative strategies that help reduce the harmful impacts of peer pressure in the classroom.
4. Students should perform a background investigation on the advantages and offers of their selected track before enrolling in it.
5. For students with financial difficulties, the school must provide a counseling program.

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