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An Analysis of the Factors Affecting Senior High School Students' in Career Decision Making for Incoming College

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to identify the factors affecting the career choices of Grade 12 students at Laguna University-SHS. To achieve this, a total of 151 students from the STEM and ABM strands were selected through stratified proportional sampling method. The results showed that, although career choices seemed not to matter much, parent influence and friends' approval were equally valued. Other powerful influences also included academic expectations and conflicting personal interests. With these conclusions, the study recommends more behavioral activity programs, counseling, development of clear guidance occupational documents, and guidance personnel intervention to enable the students to make better choices. The focus of the study utilizing two strands is insightful, and perhaps further studies on all the Grade 12 students would provide a more rounded understanding.

Keywords: career choices, parent influence, academic expectations, and guidance intervention.

Introduction:

Senior High school graduation establishes the start of college attendance as students begin a fresh phase in their lives. Students need to make an essential decision regarding which college program will form their future professional path. Various internal along with external elements pose hurdles to this important choice. Young people examine their existing knowledge together with their current abilities and personal interests during the course selection process. Several external variables including family matters and peer relationships and social and economic circumstances guide students toward their selected course programs. Students primarily base their decisions on environmental and personality factors and opportunity factors play only a minor role in their decision-making process according to Kaneez and Medha (2018).

Some academic majors serve as enrollment preferences according to data from the Commission on Higher Education (CHED, 2020) because of economic constraints and family pressures. Although outside factors affect student choices about undergraduate programs some students stick with their initial preferences while others adjust programs according to their financial situation. The transition of university students is complicated by both classes ending and students changing their majors. Several students must select their college majors because financial constraints and logical considerations play stronger roles than pure passion-based choices.

The purpose of this investigation studies the decisive factors which affect Grade 12 students from Laguna University-Senior High School as they select their college major courses. Academic organizations together with researchers can enhance their support for students to choose programs that match their aspirations and produce academic success by learning these processes.

Methodology:

Design:

This study utilized a descriptive-correlational research design in its attempt to describe and determine the relationship between the influences in career decision making of grade 12 in Laguna University-SHS. Descriptive correlational research design describes the variables and measures the extent of the relationships that occur between and among the variables, Apprecia, et al. (2022). It also provides appropriate means through which the researchers could give account of the various factors influencing the options of career paths by the senior high school students and the interactions of all these variables.

Population of the Study:

The researchers identified 151 respondents or 37 percent of all the Grade 12 senior high school students in different strands. LU Senior High School was selected to consider various factors in students' decisions about college. In this selection process, one is able to provide for the characteristics of the persons, environmental factors, and even socio-economic factors.

Instrument:

The survey methodology served researchers to collect data about student career influences. The survey took the form of both a questionnaire and a Likert scale and included fifteen checklist questions together with three open-ended questions. Subjects who take part in this survey can report their level of agreement or disagreement through the Likert scale questions. The analytic process for fixed responses would be faster but the open-ended questions gave respondents space for extended detailed explanations that enabled researchers to grasp students' complex perspectives.

Data Gathering Procedure:

This research investigates the variables that affect the career choices of Grade 12 students at LU Senior High School (LUSHS) located in Bubukal, Sta. Cruz, Laguna. The research includes one hundred fifty-one students attending different strands. The survey stands as the main data collection approach because it enables quick and organized information retrieval from extensive sample groups. A questionnaire has been developed by the researcher under professorial approval to gather the necessary information for the study. The survey examines the variables affecting career options by exploring how students respond to family impact and monetary aspects as well as social media effects and academic obstacles together with dual aspirations for career choices and the connection between strands and research tasks in addition to peer group impact.

To gather the data, The researchers will start by obtaining authorship from the Dean of the Senior High School to collect data. Once the institution approves the researchers will conduct their survey of ABM and STEM Senior High School students. The researchers utilize stratified proportional sampling to achieve equal representation of particular groups of students throughout their sample selection. The researchers depend on this method because different educational strands show different potentials to affect student career choices. The researcher starts by explaining both the value of participant involvement as well as the research purpose to the survey recipients. Before beginning the survey, the researcher provides definitions that help inform the participants about their rights and duties as study participants. Selected students receive the survey as the researcher stresses their duty to provide truthful responses. The researcher swiftly gathers questionnaires from respondents upon their survey completion to secure data integrity. The research team properly manages and computes all obtained data for subsequent studies. A statistician advised the researchers which analytic tools would be ideal for interpreting their gathered information. The researchers applied descriptive statistics for mean and standard deviation calculations and Pearson's correlation test with additional appropriate statistical methods. The researchers use statistical data to interpret results and establish meaningful conclusions that answer the research inquiry. The investigators derive their conclusions about Grade 12 students' career decision factors by analyzing their data while also proposing recommendations. These suggestions intend to enhance career research methods while coding mental health priorities to build better career direction systems and reinforce career counseling programming at the school.

Treatment of Data:

The Chi-Square Test was used in this research to study elements that influence Grade 12 learners when making their career choices. Statistics rely on Chi-Square as a tool to determine whether two categorical variables have a meaningful association between them such as students who choose specific majors and why they made those choices. The gathered data were arranged systematically into contingency tables to examine the observed frequencies against expected frequencies. The Chi-Square formula analyzed which extent parental influence and peer influence together with financial aspects and employment opportunities caused changes in students' career choices or if these factors remained independent variables.

Using Chi-square analysis showed whether the noted career decision trends were actual statistical patterns or random results. The research study delivered a crucial understanding regarding the levels at which these elements affect student career selection. A conclusive analysis and recommendation framework will be constructed by merging quantitative and qualitative data to improve career exploration methods mental health support programs and career guidance delivery and elevate the career counseling services at the school. This methodology provides better insights into the diverse elements affecting students' career choices by evaluating numerical data and firsthand personal experiences together.

Results:**Table 1. Mean Level of the Factors Affecting the Decision Making of the Learner's in Choosing College Program**

Decision Making Factors	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
Parental Influence	3.19	0.70	Moderate
Peer Influence	2.36	0.84	Low
Job Opportunities	4.03	0.77	High
Weighted Mean	3.19		Moderate

Legend

Scale	Range	Description	Verbal Interpretation
5	4.21 - 5.00	Strongly Agree	Very High
4	3.41 - 4.20	Agree	High
3	2.61 - 3.40	Neutral	Moderately
2	1.81 - 2.60	Disagree	Low
1	1.00 - 1.80	Strongly Disagree	Very Low

As shown in Tables 1. Grade 12 senior high school students have factors that affect their decision-making. Factor 1, "Parental Influence," was ranked 2nd with a weighted mean of 3.19. Factor 2, "Peer influence," was ranked 3rd with a weighted mean of 2.36. Factor 3, "Job Opportunities," was ranked 1st with a weighted mean of 4.03. All the factors were interpreted as positive. The results showed that job opportunities had the highest effect on the decision-making of Grade 12 senior high school students, and the factors had a positive effect on the decision-making of Grade 12 senior high school students, as evidenced by their average weighted mean of 3.19.

Table 2. The factors that influence Grade 12 students' decisions relate to the specific college program they choose.

Career Decision-Making Factors	r - value	P - value	Degree of relationship	t0.05(152)	Decision
Parental Influence	0.079	0.337	Negligible Relationship	0.159	Not Significant
Peer Influence	0.049	0.552	Negligible Relationship		Not Significant
Job Opportunities	0.060	0.466	Negligible Relationship		Not Significant
OVERALL	0.096	0.243	Negligible Relationship		Not Significant

The result of table 2. interprets the significant relationship between the chosen program and the factors affecting the decision making of the Grade 12 SHS students. The computed R-values had an interpretation of negligible relationship. Career decision-making factors had coefficients of correlation of 0.079 and p-value of 0.337 for parental influence, 0.049 and p-value of 0.552 for peer influence and 0.060 and p-value of 0.466 for job opportunities. All of the computed R-values are less than the critical value of 0.159.

Therefore, with regards to the statements above, it signifies that we fail to reject the null hypothesis; chosen program have no significant relationship to the factors affecting the decision making of the Grade 12 SHS student

Table 3. Relationship between the Strand and the Chosen Program of the Grade 12 SHS Students

Strand/Track	r - value	P - value	Degree of Relationship	$\alpha = 0.05$	Decision
STEM	0.276	0.2	Weak Positive	0.232	Significant
ABM	0.008	0.943	Negligible	0.217	Not significant
OVERALL	0.183	0.243	Negligible	0.159	Significant

Legend

r-value ~=
 +.70 or Higher
 +.40 to +.69
 +.30 to +.39
 +.20 to +.29
 +.01 to +.19
 0
 -.01 to -.19
 -.20 to -.29
 -.30 to -.39
 -.40 to -.69
 -.70 or Higher

Degree of Relationship
 Very Strong Positive Relationship
 Strong Positive Relationship
 Moderate Positive Relationship
 Weak Negative Relationship
 No or relationship
 No relationship (zero correlation)
 No or negligible relationship
 Weak negative relationship
 Moderate negative relationship
 Strong negative relationship
 Very strong negative relationship

Table 3. interprets the significant relationship between strand and the chosen program affecting the decision making of the Grade 12 SHS students. The computed R-values had an interpretation of negligible relationship. STEM strand had coefficients of correlation of 0.276 and p-value of 0.2 and for ABM strand had coefficients of correlation of 0.008 and p-value of 0.943. The computed R-values show a value greater than the critical value of 0.159.

Discussion:

The interpretation of the results revealed that Parental Influence, Peer Influence and Job Opportunities are not significant factors to consider in choosing a college program. However, though interviews conducted by the researchers they found out numerous factors that they consider in choosing courses and these are; family influence, financial consideration, external Influences such as social and media, academic challenges and second thought, conflicting Desires and challenges in decision making, strand alignment and research, and lastly peer influence.

Family influence plays a pivotal role in providing a sense of direction and confidence. It contributes to the continuation of family legacies and traditions in education and career choices. Encouraging positive family discussions about career choices can enhance the supportive environment. Offering mentorship and sharing experiences within the family can positively impact decision-making.

Financial constraints significantly impact college decisions, sometimes leading to compromises in course choices. The desire for financial stability and easing the family's burden are dominant factors. Promoting financial literacy among students can help them make informed decisions. Providing resources for scholarships and financial aid can alleviate some financial pressures.

Academic challenges, including concerns about language proficiency and struggles with specific subjects, affect decision-making. Second thoughts about chosen courses highlight the need for ongoing reflection. Providing academic support services can assist students facing challenges. Encouraging self-reflection and seeking guidance from mentors can help in navigating uncertainties.

Challenges related to commuting and university program availability add complexity to decision-making. Facilitating open communication between parents and students can help align expectations. Addressing geographical challenges may involve exploring local educational opportunities or considering relocation options.

Aligning career choices with high school strands leverages existing knowledge and skills. Researching future trends and industry demand aids informed decision-making. Providing career guidance resources within educational institutions can assist students in making informed choices. Encouraging mentorship programs can connect students with professionals in their chosen fields.

Peer influence is a significant societal factor impacting decision-making. Friends with similar aspirations create a supportive community that fuels academic journeys. Educating students about the influence of peers and promoting independent decision-making can foster autonomy. Building a positive peer environment can enhance support and collaboration.

The decision-making process for Grade 12 students choosing a college program is multifaceted, with family influence, financial constraints, academic challenges, and strand alignment being key considerations. While factors like peer influence and job opportunities may play a lesser role, they still contribute to the overall environment in which decisions are made. Schools, families, and communities can provide more targeted support to help students make choices that are both informed and aligned with their long-term goals.

Conclusion:

Most students from Grade 12 Senior High School at Laguna University selected strands within the Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and Accountancy Business Management (ABM) categories. During the program selection process, students focused on College programs offering better career potential in business administration fields and engineering as well as healthcare.

The research found a meaningful connection between high school academic strands of students and their selected college majors because student education tracks from high school shaped their college degree selection.

Job opportunities and parental influence as well as peer influence appeared to be the dominant external elements affecting students in their decision-making process. The examination of external factors revealed they have weak effects that do not affect significantly the career selection process of Grade 12 Senior High School students studying at Laguna University. Other determinants like the financial capabilities of family units and environmental conditions with concurrent interests and academic challenges play a bigger role in shaping their career path than personal academic performance. These factors lead to recurring career changes and academic transitions in both college and high school as well as study termination and sometimes financial joblessness.

Decision-support initiatives should expand their influence assessment base to help students select careers with better knowledge and improved decision quality. Students direct their career choices through conventional factors such as peer groups and familial guidance and at the same time allow financial and conscientious peer-based elements and academic hurdles to play a role in their decision-making. Students need expanded guidance systems that recognize multiple factors because these frameworks will support them through their complicated career selection process with actual choices.

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