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Influencing Factors of Students' Preference Towards Specialization Selection of Grade 9 Students

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A B S T R A C T:

This study aimed to determine the influencing factors of students' preference towards specialization selection of Grade 9 students, with a total of 80 student respondents. The decision-making influencing factors involved are the following: parental influence, peer influence, socio-economic factors, personal interests, and prior knowledge. This study utilized descriptive correlational methods to describe the relationship between two or more variables without manipulating them. A scale/questionnaire was given to the respondents to conduct the study.

The finding recommends that the decision-making influencing factors as peer influence, socio-economic, personal interests, and prior knowledge, are more influential, while decision-making influencing factors, such as parents, are moderately influential in choosing specialization. In specialization selection, prior knowledge has the strongest influence, while parental influence has a moderate influence in terms of choosing specialization.

Specialization selection agrees that opportunities have significantly influenced the decision-making of the learners. The null hypothesis stating that decision-making influencing factors are not significantly related to specialization selection variables is therefore not sustained.

Keywords: Parents' Influence, Peer Influence, Socio-Economic Factors, Personal Interests, Prior Knowledge

Introduction

In today's rapidly evolving world, education plays a critical role in shaping the future workforce and contributing to societal development. At the core of this process is the ability of students to make informed decisions regarding their academic paths, which often begins with the choice of specialization in secondary education. This decision, typically made during Grade 9, is affected by a variety of factors, including societal expectations, parental guidance, peer influence, and individual interests. As students navigate these influences, the choice they make can significantly impact their academic performance, future career options, and personal development. Understanding the decision-making factors that affect this pivotal moment is crucial, as it sheds light on how external and internal pressures shape educational outcomes and the long-term success of students.

In an increasingly complex world, education is vital for both personal and societal advancement. One of the most essential aspects of educational development is the process by which students select their academic specialization. This decision-making process often begins in secondary school, particularly in Grade 9, when students are required to select an area of study that aligns with their interests, abilities, and future ambitions. Many variables influence this decision, including society and familial expectations, personal preferences, and peer pressure. These attributes not only influence students' specialized choices but also have a significant impact on their academic accomplishment and future success.

Choosing a specialization in Grade 9 is a critical decision for many students, marking the beginning of a more focused educational journey that will shape their future academic and career paths. However, this decision is fraught with challenges that can make the process overwhelming and stressful. Understanding these challenges is crucial for students, parents, and educators to provide the necessary support during this pivotal time.

One of the primary difficulties faced by Grade 9 students is a lack of self-awareness. At this stage, many students are still exploring their interests, talents, and passions. They may not yet have a clear understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses, making it challenging to commit to a particular field of study. Without a deep sense of self-knowledge, students risk making choices that do not align with their true potential or long-term goals, leading to dissatisfaction and, potentially, lower academic performance.

On a more individual level, a student's interests, aptitudes, and career aspirations are crucial factors in the decision-making process. When students are genuinely interested in a subject or field of study, they are more likely to be motivated and engaged, leading to better academic performance. Self-awareness and a clear understanding of one's strengths and weaknesses can guide students toward specializations where they are more likely to excel. However, not all students have fully developed these insights by Grade 9, making the decision-making process more challenging. Without proper

guidance, some students may choose a specialization based on limited knowledge or temporary interests, which may not sustain their engagement in the long term.

An important factor in the decision-making process is also the educational system itself. Schools may provide students with differing degrees of direction and assistance in order to help them make decisions. A student's choice may occasionally be significantly impacted by the availability of tools like career counseling, aptitude testing, and exposure to various fields. Furthermore, the curriculum's organization and the availability of particular programs or specializations might restrict or increase the range of possibilities accessible to students. Students who attend schools with extensive guidance programs typically become better informed decision makers, which can have a favorable effect on their future opportunities and academic achievement.

In conclusion, there are many different and intricate variables that go into selecting a specialization for Grade 9 learners. These factors include parent's influence, peer influence, socio-economic background, personal interests and prior knowledge. Every one of these elements has a significant impact on how a learner will do in the classroom and in the future. Giving students the right direction and assistance at this critical juncture is imperative to ensuring that they make deliberate, well-informed decisions. Teachers, parents, and society at large can assist learners in selecting specializations that are in line with their skills and goals by being aware of the different demands and influences they encounter. This will ultimately promote academic success as well as personal fulfillment.

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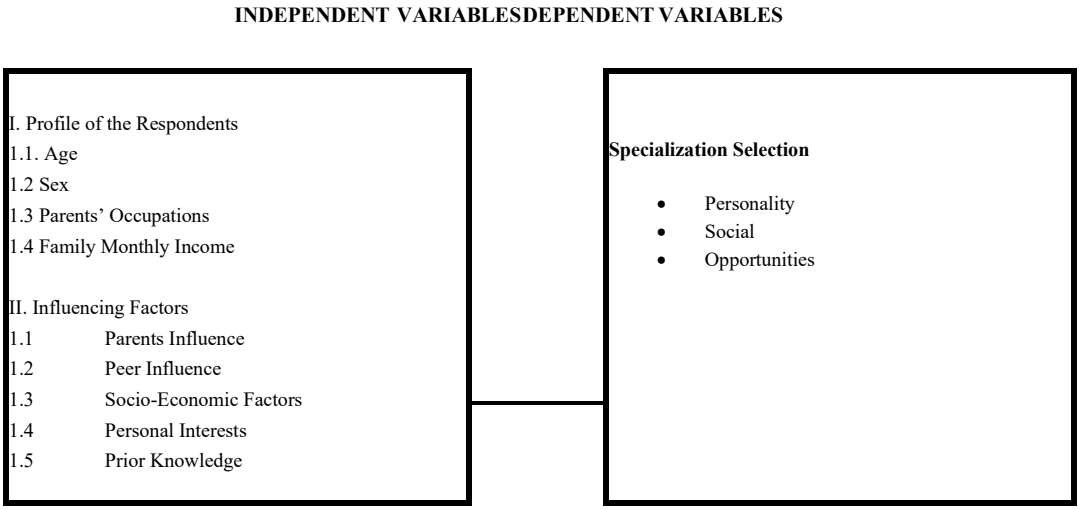

Figure 1. Research Paradigm

Research Problem

This study sought to answer the following questions of decision making and students' specialization selection of the Grade 9 students.

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of:

1.1 Age;
1.2 Sex;
1.3 Parents' Occupation; and
1.4 Monthly Family Income?

2. How do the following factors influence the students in choosing specialization course:

2.1 Parents Influence;
2.2 Peer Influence;
2.3 Socio-Economic Factors;
2.4 Personal Interest; and
2.5 Prior Knowledge?

3. How do the respondents perceive the specialization selection as to:

3.1 Personality;
3.2 Social; and
3.3 Opportunities?

4. Is there a significant relationship between decision making influencing factors and specialization selection variables?

Materials and Methods

Research Design

The researcher used a descriptive quantitative method in determining the decision-making influencing factors and specialization selection. The descriptive correlational method is a type of research design that aims to describe the relationship between two or more variables without manipulating them. It seeks to determine whether and how these variables are related and the degree of the relationship..

Respondent /Participants

The members population or total enumeration were considered respondents of the study; thus, no sampling techniques were applied. These are the students from section Apitong and section Kalumpit, personally managed by the researcher in Cotta National High School, Lucena City, Quezon.

Instruments of the Study

A survey instrument was the tool or device used by researchers to collect, measure, and analyze data related to their study. It helped in gathering information from respondents or subjects systematically. The researcher used a modified questionnaire adapted from the study of Japitan et al (2015). In this study, the survey instrument Part I comprises the profile of the respondents, and Part II covers the survey about the perception of the students about the Decision-Making Influencing Factors in terms of Parents Influence, Peer Influence, Socio-Economic Factor, Personal Interest, and Prior Knowledge.

Procedure

The research procedure for the study on the influencing factors of students' preference towards specialization and selections of Grade 9 students conducted at Cotta National High School was carried out through a systematic approach, beginning with obtaining necessary permissions.
A formal letter of permission was prepared and submitted to the Division Office, detailing the study's objectives, methodology, and potential benefits to the school and its students. Approval from the Division Office was crucial to ensure that the research was conducted in compliance with educational policies and that it aligned with the school's academic goals. Upon receiving the necessary permissions, communication with the school administration and teachers was established to organize the logistics of the study, including the selection of participants and the scheduling of assessments.
Once all the materials were prepared, the survey questionnaires were forwarded to Grade 9 student respondents. The respondents checked the level of influence to determine the most influential factors towards specialization selection.

Data Analysis

Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents' profiles as to **"Age"** of the respondents and equal distribution of percentage based on the given survey. The chart clearly shows most of the respondents are 14-year-olds, with the percentage of thirty-seven (37) or 46%, followed closely by the age of 15 with the percentage of thirty-four (34) or 43%. Age 16 got the percentage of four (4) or 5%, and age eighteen (18) got 2 or 3%. The remaining age groups, including thirteen (13) or 1%, seventeen (17) or 1%, and twenty-one (21) or 1%, occupy significantly smaller portions of the chart, with the percentage of one (1) or 1%. This indicates that age fourteen (14) is the highest proportion than the other portions, which means that age fourteen 14 affects their preference towards specialization selection. The data labels provide exact percentages, making it easier to interpret the distribution.

Table 2 shows the distribution of respondents' profiles as to **"Sex"** of the respondents and equal distribution of percentage based on the given survey. It is divided into two sections: one representing males and the other representing females. Based on the chart, females constitute forty-three (43) or 54% of the dataset, while males make up the remaining thirty-seven or 46%. This indicates a relatively balanced gender distribution, with a slightly higher proportion of females than males. This result suggests that the dataset consists of a nearly equal number of individuals from both genders, though there is a slight female majority. The chart provides a straightforward way to understand gender demographics within the given population.

Table 3 shows the distribution of respondents profile as to **"Fathers' Education"** of the respondents which visually represents the distribution of different education levels among fathers in a dataset. The pie chart is divided into multiple segments, each labeled with a specific education category and its corresponding percentage. The largest portion of the chart, accounting for twenty-seven (27) or 34%, represents High School Graduate (HSG), indicating that this education level is the most common among fathers. The second-largest category is Elementary Graduate (EG), got fourteen (14) or 17%, followed by College Graduate (CG), got ten (10) or 12%. Other education levels, including Elementary Undergrad (EU) earned seven (7) or 9%, College Undergrad (CU) obtained seven (7) or 9%, Diploma Course (DC) earned four (4) or 5%, High School Undergrad (HSU) received seven (7) or (9%), Vocational Course (VC) got three (3) or 4%, and Master (M) gained one (1) or 1%, contribute to the remaining distribution. Based on the results, a significant portion of fathers' education in the dataset has completed HSG, while other education levels are less prevalent. This result provides a clear and concise understanding of the educational background of fathers' education, which can be useful for analyzing trends in parental education and its potential impact on various factors such as socioeconomic status or children's academic performance.

Table 4 shows the distribution of respondents' profiles as to **"Mothers' Education",** which visually represents the distribution of different education levels among mothers in a dataset. The pie chart consists of multiple segments, each labeled with a specific education category and its corresponding percentage. The largest portion is labeled HSG with the percentage of twenty-nine (29) or 36%, indicating the highest education of their mother. The

second largest category is CG, with a percentage of sixteen (16) or 20%, followed by HSU, which got ten (10) or 13%, and EG obtained ten (10) or 12%. The education levels with the lowest and nearest percentage to each other are CU with five (5) or (6%), DC with four (4) or (5%), EU with three (3) or (4%), VC with two (2) or (3%), and M with one (1) or 1%, make up the remaining distribution. The distribution highlights maternal education, which could have implications for family socioeconomic status, children's educational opportunities, and other social factors.

Table 5 shows the distribution of respondents' profiles as **to "Family Monthly Income"** of the respondents' parents, which visually represents the distribution of different income categories within a dataset. The pie chart represents the numerical category with its numerical equivalent. The pie chart is divided into six segments, each labeled with a numerical category (1–6) and its corresponding frequency and percentage. Based on the result, the largest portion belongs to category 2 with nineteen (19) or 24%, followed by category 1 obtained sixteen (16) or 20%, category 4 acquired fifteen (15) or 19%, and category 3 got fourteen (14) or 17%. The smallest portion belongs to Categories 5 and 6, which gained eight (8) or 10%.
This result provides a clear understanding of income distribution, which can be useful for analyzing financial demographics, economic trends, and potential disparities within the dataset. The balanced distribution across different categories suggests some level of diversity in income levels, though certain groups appear more dominant.

Table 6 shows the decision-making influencing factors in terms of parents' influence, with an overall mean of 3.06 (Moderately Influenced). The highest mean score 3.58 (More Influenced) was recorded for "I chose this specialization because my parents are in the same profession," suggesting that this specific factor exerts a stronger parental impact while "I chose this specialization because I want to follow prestigious and traditional career path," got the lowest mean score of 2.75 (Moderately Influenced). The results suggest that parents have a moderate influence overall, with p1 showing a high impact compared to the other parameters.
Related to the findings, there is a strong belief in society that parental involvement has a strong positive effect on students' academic performance. Student learning not only takes place in schools, but also the contexts of families and communities play a great role (Ma, Shen, Krenn, Hu & Yuan, 2016). Therefore, parental involvement is seen as quite significant in students' learning and academic achievement. The relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement has long been an area of research across the world (Boonk, Gijselaers, Ritzen & Brand-Gruwel, 2018; Epstein, 1991; Roy and Giraldo-García, 2018).

Wang and Dong (2024), in a meta-analysis, identified a significant relationship between supportive parental behaviors and students' career adaptability, emphasizing the role of parents in helping adolescents navigate complex career landscapes. Kukreja and Mahapatra (2024) found a positive correlation between parental encouragement and self-efficacy in career decision-making among young adults in India.

Table 7 shows the decision-making factors in terms of peer influence, with an overall mean of 3.45 (More Influenced). "I need to fit in and be accepted by the group," got the highest mean of 3.71 (More Influenced) and "I feel that supportive friends can provide the confidence and encouragement needed to pursue these paths" and "I chose this course because I was inspired/advised by my friends," interpreted as the lowest mean of 3.22 (Moderately Influenced).

Peer influence is an additional social factor that shapes the choice of specialization. During adolescence, peers become a critical reference group, and students often look to their friends when making important decisions, including academic ones. Peer pressure can either encourage students to pursue their interests or push them toward more popular or socially acceptable choices, regardless of their abilities or preferences.

According to Waldman (2016), students need to feel safe both mentally and physically before they can thrive academically. A safe learning environment also requires that students feel valued, encouraged, and welcomed. Students' abilities to think critically, solve complex problems using knowledge and information, collaborate with others, communicate effectively, learn how to learn, and cultivate academic mindsets are all enhanced by personalized learning (Raccoon Gang, 2018). Students also need to experience a sense of belonging to other students, staff, and teachers. By emphasizing students' social and emotional learning (SEL), schools can foster these relationships. Mujiyati and Adiputra (2018) proved that with the support, mutual understanding, and encouragement from peers develop high self-esteem in adolescents. This is because they feel that they are highly accepted, valued, and acknowledged.

Table 8 shows the decision-making influencing factors in terms of peer influence, with an overall mean of 3.82 (More Influenced). Moreover, "I will find a better job in the future" got the highest mean of 4.05 (More Influenced), which has a strong influence on choosing specialization. In connection, "there is assurance of financial security and a stable job," acquired the lowest mean of 3.66 (Moderately Influenced). This result has a strong influence, particularly "I will find a better job in the future," having the most significant impact in choosing specialization.

Parents from higher socioeconomic backgrounds are more interested in their children's education than parents from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, according to a substantial body of evidence. Additionally, Morrissey et al. (2016) thought that children's poor academic achievement was related to low family income. Low family poverty may have an impact on children's academic development through increased rates of tardiness and absenteeism from school.

Table 9 shows decision-making influencing factors in terms of personal interest, with an overall mean of 3.72 (More Influenced). "The salary is high, and it can support my needs" got the highest mean of 3.93 (More Influenced) while "I enjoy what I do, and it will further develop my skills acquired" got the lowest mean of 3.51 (More Influenced). All the variables gained an interpretation of More Influenced, which means personal interest has a strong impact on decision making in choosing specialization.
The data present that personal interest plays a vital role in influencing individuals' engagement and learning experiences. This result is consistent with

existing literature emphasizing the importance of aligning educational strategies with students' interests to enhance motivation and learning outcomes.

Table 10 shows the decision-making influencing factors in terms of prior knowledge, with an overall mean of 3.78 (More Influenced). Similarly, "I know a lot about specialization that can enhance my skills" has the highest mean of 4.02 (Greatly Influenced), while "It will give me confidence to share my knowledge and improve myself" gained the lowest mean of 3.57 (More Influenced). This means that their prior knowledge has a big impact on decision-making in choosing a specialization.

Prior knowledge, or what one already knows, serves as the foundation for learning anything new. According to earlier research, prior knowledge significantly affects learning engagement (Rodrigues, 2007; Pecore et al, 2017). According to van Riesen et al. (2019), prior knowledge may improve learning engagement by lowering cognitive burden. According to Yang et al. (2018), self-regulated learning improved the connection between learning and prior knowledge. Consequently, past knowledge should be considered when evaluating its impact on learning engagement since it interacts with cognitive load and the assistance that self-regulated learning provides to influence learning engagement.

Table 11 shows the summary of decision-making influencing factors with an overall mean of 3.57 (More Influenced). Among the listed factors, Socio-economic factors exhibited the highest mean score of 3.82 (More influenced). Prior knowledge gained with a mean of 3.78, while personal interest with a mean score of 3.72. Both factors were interpreted as more influential, suggesting that individuals are strongly driven by their intrinsic motivations and prior learning experiences. These results indicate that personal inclination and accumulated knowledge significantly impact decision-making processes. Peer influence has a mean of 3.45 (More Influenced). In contrast, the lowest influencing factor is parents' influence, with a mean of 3.06 (Moderately Influenced).
This implies that influencing factors such as peers, economic background, and personal interest and prior knowledge substantially shape individual decisions, with parental influence having slightly less impact.

Table 12 shows the perceived specialization selection as to personality with an overall mean of 3.85 (Agree). "My attributes should be ideal for the career that I would focus on" gained the highest mean of 4.02 (Agree), while "Boost my confidence to work hard that shaped my personal growth" got the lowest mean of 3.66 (Agree). It means that the decision-making influencing factors have an impact on the personality of the learner in choosing specialization. This suggests among participants that personality traits significantly influence individual actions and decisions.
The result data aligns with contemporary research indicating that personality traits play a pivotal role in honing individual behaviors, social interactions, and overall well-being. Perceiving the impact of personality can inform interventions aimed at enhancing personal development and social functioning.

Table 13 shows the perceived specialization selection as to social, with an overall mean score of 3.67 (Agree). "It gives assurance and freedom to express myself and shows my abilities" gained the highest mean of 3.93 (Agree), while "It gives me a strong relationship with the people surrounding me" got the lowest mean of 3.41 (Agree). Based on the results, all individual items, as well as the overall mean, fall under the "agree" category. This suggests that respondents generally agree with the statements or aspects measured within the social dimension. The result consistently shows that social influences have a big impact on students' behavior and choices. Understanding these influences can determine the strategies to promote positive social interactions and personal development.

Table 14 shows the perceived specialization selection as to opportunities. With an overall mean of 3.90 (Agree). "It gives me an opportunity to find a better job" gained the highest mean of 4.07 (Agree), and "It gives me an opportunity to find a scholarship to pursue my study" acquired the lowest mean of 3.72 (Agree). This suggests that respondents generally perceive opportunities positively and consistently express agreement with the related statements. In line with the results, the influencing factors are influenced in terms of opportunities.

Table 15 shows the Summary of Specialization Selection, which includes the Personality, Social, and Opportunities, with an overall mean of 3.81 (Agree). Opportunities received the highest mean score of 3.91 (Agree), indicating strong agreement that opportunities play a significant role. This suggests that access to resources, career advancements, and favorable circumstances are key determinants in shaping one's decisions and success. In addition, the personality factor recorded a mean of 3.85 (Agree). This suggests that individual traits, behaviors, and characteristics significantly influence decision-making and personal development. Social factors have the lowest mean of 3.67 (Agree). This implies that social interactions, relationships, and environmental influences are less recognized as important contributors to an individual's choices and experiences.

The correlation values (r-values) between various factors influencing students' choice of specialization courses and how they perceive these specializations in terms of personality, social aspects, and opportunities. Each factor—either Parents' Influence, Peer Influence, Socio-Economic Factors, Personal Interest, and Prior Knowledge—is evaluated across these three dimensions, with correlation values indicating the strength and significance of relationships.
For Personality, the determined correlation is observed with Prior Knowledge (r = .622**), indicating that students' existing knowledge greatly influences how they perceive a specialization about their personality.
Personal Interest (r = .549**) and Socio-Economic Factors (r = .538**) also demonstrate powerful correlations, while Parents' Influence (r = .357**) and Peer Influence (r = .298**) exhibit weaker yet still meaningful correlations.
For Social perception, Prior Knowledge also has the highest correlation with the result of (r = .574**), indicating that students' familiarity with a specialization significantly affects their social perception of it. Personal Interest (r = .533**) and Parents' Influence (r = .432**) also contribute notably, while Socio-Economic Factors (r = .408**) and Peer Influence (r = .308**) have relatively lower but still essential correlations.
For Opportunities, Prior Knowledge (r = .591**) and Personal Interest (r = .587**) show the most influential correlations, suggesting that students who

have prior knowledge or personal interest in a specialization perceive more opportunities in that field. Socio-Economic Factors (r = .464**) and Parents' Influence (r = .446**) also have moderate correlations, while Peer Influence (r = .324**) has the least correlation but remains significant.
The data clearly show that every factor that has been identified has a significant impact on the choice of specialization, with prior knowledge and personal interest having the greatest influence across all dimensions. These results underscore the significance of fostering early exposure and authentic interest in academic subjects while simultaneously recognizing the ongoing impact of peers, family, and socioeconomic circumstances in determining educational paths.

Furthermore, while peer influence can affect behavior and choices, its relationship to core aspects of a person's identity and life path, such as personality, social development, and opportunities, is relatively less influential. These domains are more deeply influenced by early life experiences, family dynamics, and wider societal structures. Therefore, while peers matter, their influence is more superficial and short-term compared to the foundational forces that shape who we are and what we become.

Similarly, while many factors can influence the choice of a specialization, prior knowledge plays the most pivotal role. It empowers individuals to make informed, confident, and realistic decisions based on their strengths, experiences, and aspirations. As such, fostering early exposure and learning in various fields is essential in helping students choose specializations that truly align with their abilities and future goals.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was secured from the school administration before the conduct of the study. Informed consent was obtained from students and their parents or guardians prior to participation in both the pretest and posttest. Participants were assured that their responses would remain confidential and used solely for academic and research purposes. They were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any point without penalty. The study ensured that all procedures complied with ethical standards for conducting research involving minors in an educational setting.

Result and Discussions

This chapter presents the data gathering of the study and, interpretation of the results conducted in the study. They were presented in the form of tables and were pre-tabulated, giving the reader a concrete and itemized view of the item.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents' Profile as to Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage
13 years old	1	1
14 years old	37	46
15 years old	34	43
16 years old	4	5
17 years old	1	1
18 years old	2	3
21 years old	1	1
Total	**80**	**100**

Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents' profiles as to "age" of the respondents and equal distribution of percentage based on the given survey. The chart clearly shows most of the respondents are 14-year-olds, with the percentage of thirty-seven (37) or 46%, followed closely by the age of 15 with the percentage of thirty-four (34) or 43%. Age 16 got the percentage of four (4) or 5%, and age eighteen (18) got 2 or 3%. The remaining age groups, including thirteen (13) or 1%, seventeen (17) or 1%, and twenty-one (21) or 1%, occupy significantly smaller portions of the chart, with the percentage of one (1) or 1%. This indicates that age fourteen (14) is the highest proportion than the other portions, which means that age fourteen 14 affects their preference towards specialization selection. The data labels provide exact percentages, making it easier to interpret the distribution.

Table 2. Distribution of Respondents Profile as to Sex

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	`37	46
Female	43	54
Total	**80**	**100**

Table 2 shows the distribution of respondents' profiles as to "sex" of the respondents and equal distribution of percentage based on the given survey. It is divided into two sections: one representing males and the other representing females. Based on the chart, females constitute forty-three (43) or 54% of the dataset, while males make up the remaining thirty-seven or 46%. This indicates a relatively balanced gender distribution, with a slightly higher proportion of females than males. This result suggests that the dataset consists of a nearly equal number of individuals from both genders, though there is a slight female majority. The chart provides a straightforward way to understand gender demographics within the given population.

Table 3. Distribution of Respondents Profile as to Fathers' Education

Educational Attainment	Frequency	Percentage
College Graduate	10	12
College Undergraduate	7	9
Diploma Course	4	5
Elementary Graduate	14	17
Elementary Undergraduate	7	9
High School Graduate	27	34
High School Undergraduate	7	9
Masters	1	1
Vocational Course	3	4
Total	**80**	**100**

Table 3 shows the distribution of respondents profile as to **"Fathers' Education"** of the respondents which visually represents the distribution of different education levels among fathers in a dataset. The pie chart is divided into multiple segments, each labeled with a specific education category and its corresponding percentage. The largest portion of the chart, accounting for twenty-seven (27) or 34%, represents High School Graduate (HSG), indicating that this education level is the most common among fathers. The second-largest category is Elementary Graduate (EG), got fourteen (14) or 17%, followed by College Graduate (CG), got ten (10) or 12%. Other education levels, including Elementary Undergrad (EU) earned seven (7) or 9%, College Undergrad (CU) obtained seven (7) or 9%, Diploma Course (DC) earned four (4) or 5%, High School Undergrad (HSU) received seven (7) or (9%), Vocational Course (VC) got three (3) or 4%, and Master (M) gained one (1) or 1%, contribute to the remaining distribution. Based on the results, a significant portion of fathers' education in the dataset has completed HSG, while other education levels are less prevalent. This result provides a clear and concise understanding of the educational background of fathers' education, which can be useful for analyzing trends in parental education and its potential impact on various factors such as socioeconomic status or children's academic performance.

Table 4. Distribution of Respondents Profile as to Mothers' Education

Educational Attainment	Frequency	Percentage
College Graduate	16	20
College Undergraduate	5	6
Diploma Course	4	5
Elementary Graduate	10	12
Elementary Undergraduate	3	4
High School Graduate	29	36
High School Undergraduate	10	13
Masters	1	1
Vocational Course	2	3
Total	**80**	**100**

Table 4 shows the distribution of respondents' profiles as to "mothers' education," which visually represents the distribution of different education levels among mothers in a dataset. The pie chart consists of multiple segments, each labeled with a specific education category and its corresponding percentage. The largest portion is labeled HSG with the percentage of twenty-nine (29) or 36%, indicating the highest education of their mother. The second largest category is CG, with a percentage of sixteen (16) or 20%, followed by HSU, which got ten (10) or 13%, and EG obtained ten (10) or 12%. The education levels with the lowest and nearest percentage to each other are CU with five (5) or (6%), DC with four (4) or (5%), EU with three (3) or (4%), VC with two (2) or (3%), and M with one (1) or 1%, make up the remaining distribution. The distribution highlights maternal education, which could have implications for family socioeconomic status, children's educational opportunities, and other social factors.

Table 5. Distribution of Respondents Profile as to Family Monthly Income

Family Monthly Income	Frequency	Percentage
Below Php 5,000	16	20
Php 5,001-Php 10,000	19	24
Php 10,001-Php 15,000	14	17
Php 15,001-Php 20,000	15	19
Php 20,001-25,000	8	10
Php 25, 001 above	8	10
Total	**80**	**100**

Table 5 shows the distribution of respondents' profiles as **to "family monthly income"** of the respondents' parents, which visually represents the

distribution of different income categories within a dataset. The pie chart represents the numerical category with its numerical equivalent. The pie chart is divided into six segments, each labeled with a numerical category (1–6) and its corresponding frequency and percentage. Based on the result, the largest portion belongs to category 2 with nineteen (19) or 24%, followed by category 1 obtained sixteen (16) or 20%, category 4 acquired fifteen (15) or 19%, and category 3 got fourteen (14) or 17%. The smallest portion belongs to Categories 5 and 6, which gained eight (8) or 10%.

This result provides a clear understanding of income distribution, which can be useful for analyzing financial demographics, economic trends, and potential disparities within the dataset. The balanced distribution across different categories suggests some level of diversity in income levels, though certain groups appear more dominant.

Table 6. Factors Influencing the Students in Choosing Course in Terms of Parents' Influence

Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. I chose this specialization because my parents are in the same profession.	3.58	1.23	More Influenced
2. I chose this specialization because this is part/related to our parents/family business.	2.95	1.25	Moderately Influenced
3. I chose this specialization because my parents get a high salary.	2.86	1.28	Moderately Influenced
4. I chose this specialization because I want to follow prestigious and traditional career path.	2.75	1.28	Moderately Influenced
5. I chose this specialization because I want to uplift my self-esteem, growth and development.	3.16	1.51	Moderately Influenced
Overall	**3.06**	**1.31**	**Moderately Influenced**

Legend: 4.20-5.00 – Greatly Influenced; 3.40-4.19 -More Influenced; 2.60-3.39- Moderately Influenced;1.80-2.59 -Less Influenced; 1.00-1.79-Did not Influence

Table 6 shows the decision-making influencing factors in terms of parents' influence, with an overall mean of 3.06 (Moderately Influenced). The highest mean score 3.58 (More Influenced) was recorded for "I chose this specialization because my parents are in the same profession," suggesting that this specific factor exerts a stronger parental impact while "I chose this specialization because I want to follow prestigious and traditional career path," got the lowest mean score of 2.75 (Moderately Influenced). The results suggest that parents have a moderate influence overall, with p1 showing a high impact compared to the other parameters.

Related to the findings, there is a strong belief in society that parental involvement has a strong positive effect on students' academic performance. Student learning not only takes place in schools, but also the contexts of families and communities play a great role (Ma, Shen, Krenn, Hu & Yuan, 2016). Therefore, parental involvement is seen as quite significant in students' learning and academic achievement. The relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement has long been an area of research across the world (Boonk, Gijselaers, Ritzen & Brand-Gruwel, 2018; Epstein, 1991; Roy and Giraldo-García, 2018).

Wang and Dong (2024), in a meta-analysis, identified a significant relationship between supportive parental behaviors and students' career adaptability, emphasizing the role of parents in helping adolescents navigate complex career landscapes. Kukreja and Mahapatra (2024) found a positive correlation between parental encouragement and self-efficacy in career decision-making among young adults in India.

Table 7. Factors Influencing the Students in Choosing Course in Terms of Peer Influence

Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. I have the same interests as them.	3.57	1.20	More Influenced
2. I need to fit in and be accepted by the group.	3.71	1.04	More Influenced
3. I chose this specialization because my teacher made me feel that I could succeed in this specialization.	3.52	1.15	More Influenced
4. I feel that supportive friends can provide the confidence and encouragement needed to pursue these paths.	3.22	1.30	Moderately Influenced
5. I chose this course because I was inspired/advised by my friends.	3.22	1.38	Moderately Influenced
Overall	**3.45**	**1.22**	**More Influenced**

Legend: 4.20-5.00 –Greatly Influenced; 3.40-4.19 -More Influenced; 2.60-3.39- Moderately Influenced; 1.80-2.59 -Less Influenced; 1.00-1.79-Did not Influence

Table 7 shows the decision-making influencing factors in terms of peer influence, with an overall mean of 3.45 (More Influenced). "I need to fit in and be accepted by the group," got the highest mean of 3.71 (More Influenced) and "I feel that supportive friends can provide the confidence and encouragement needed to pursue these paths" and "I chose this course because I was inspired/advised by my friends," interpreted as the lowest mean of

3.22 (Moderately Influenced).

Peer influence is an additional social factor that shapes the choice of specialization. During adolescence, peers become a critical reference group, and students often look to their friends when making important decisions, including academic ones. Peer pressure can either encourage students to pursue their interests or push them toward more popular or socially acceptable choices, regardless of their abilities or preferences.

According to Waldman (2016), students need to feel safe both mentally and physically before they can thrive academically. A safe learning environment also requires that students feel valued, encouraged, and welcomed. Students' abilities to think critically, solve complex problems using knowledge and information, collaborate with others, communicate effectively, learn how to learn, and cultivate academic mindsets are all enhanced by personalized learning (Raccoon Gang, 2018). Students also need to experience a sense of belonging to other students, staff, and teachers. By emphasizing students' social and emotional learning (SEL), schools can foster these relationships.

Mujiyati and Adiputra (2018) proved that with the support, mutual understanding, and encouragement from peers develop high self-esteem in adolescents. This is because they feel that they are highly accepted, valued, and acknowledged.

Table 8. Factors Influencing the Students in Choosing Course in Terms of Socio-Economic Factors

Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. I will get high salary that supports my needs and wants.	3.83	1.11	More Influenced
2. I will have the ability to enhance my skills and attend trainings.	3.73	1.09	More Influenced
3. I will find better job in the future.	4.05	1.04	More Influenced
4. There is assurance of financial security and stable job.	3.66	1.12	Moderately Influenced
5. I will have the ability to allocate funds to continue my education.	3.81	1.08	More Influenced
Overall	**3.82**	**1.09**	**More Influenced**

Legend: 4.20-5.00 –Greatly Influenced; 3.40-4.19 -More Influenced; 2.60-3.39- Moderately Influenced; 1.80-2.59 -Less Influenced; 1.00-1.79-Did not Influence

Table 8 shows the decision-making influencing factors in terms of peer influence, with an overall mean of 3.82 (More Influenced). Moreover, "I will find a better job in the future" got the highest mean of 4.05 (More Influenced), which has a strong influence on choosing specialization. In connection, "there is assurance of financial security and a stable job," acquired the lowest mean of 3.66 (Moderately Influenced). This result has a strong influence, particularly "I will find a better job in the future," having the most significant impact in choosing specialization.

Parents from higher socioeconomic backgrounds are more interested in their children's education than parents from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, according to a substantial body of evidence. Additionally, Morrissey et al. (2016) thought that children's poor academic achievement was related to low family income. Low family poverty may have an impact on children's academic development through increased rates of tardiness and absenteeism from school.

Table 9. Factors Influencing the Students in Choosing Course in Terms of Personal Interest

Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. The salary is high, and it can support my needs.	3.93	1.12	More Influenced
2. I enjoy what I do, and it will further develop my skills.	3.51	1.12	More Influenced
3. My academic ability will determine my specialization.	3.67	.93	More Influenced
4. I chose this specialization because I can fulfill the merit requirement.	3.68	.94	More Influenced
5. It is based on my own dreams and desires.	3.81	1.06	More Influenced
Overall	**3.72**	**1.04**	**More Influenced**

Legend: 4.20-5.00 – Greatly Influenced; 3.40-4.19 -More Influenced; 2.60-3.39- Moderately Influenced; 1.80-2.59 -Less Influenced; 1.00-1.79-Did not Influence

Table 9 shows the decision-making influencing factors in terms of personal interest, with an overall mean of 3.72 (More Influenced). "The salary is high, and it can support my needs" got the highest mean of 3.93 (More Influenced) while "I enjoy what I do, and it will further develop my skills acquired" got the lowest mean of 3.51 (More Influenced). All the variables gained an interpretation of More Influenced, which means personal interest has a strong impact on decision making in choosing specialization.

The data present that personal interest plays a vital role in influencing individuals' engagement and learning experiences. This result is consistent with existing literature emphasizing the importance of aligning educational strategies with students' interests to enhance motivation and learning outcomes. Personal interest refers to the students' interest in their chosen professions (Liaw, et al, 2017). According to Holland's theory of "Career Typology," individuals choose career environments that best fit their personality and interests (Holland, 1966). Personal interests are learned from parents, in school, from friends, and from your lifelong experiences. Interest plays a very important role in motivating people to do the right things that they like. A very strong and motivating interest in anything will boost one to do it wholeheartedly. Studies done in many countries and in different cultures came up with different results; for example, personality types and interests are a factor that impacts career choices made by the students (Kenya Ahmed et al, 2017).

When people choose careers, they should consider their interests because: 1) people would do better in the field that interests them; 2) people who choose careers that match their interests are usually successful; and 3) people could get greater satisfaction and happiness when working in the field of interest. For instance, a person who is interested in communication may be a politician or teacher, and he or she may not like to be a mechanic or chemist. According to Chiang (2015) advised that interest can serve as the entry point for the transition from a student to a working professional, which indicates that career choices based on interest are more reliable. One's entire career could be affected if interests and background are not taken into consideration when choosing a job. Otherwise, it could lead to a lifetime of regret.

Table 10. Factors Influencing the Students in Choosing Course in Terms of Prior Knowledge

Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. I know a lot about specialization that can enhance my skills	4.02	1.06	Greatly Influenced
2. I will explore new interests and talents that could align in my abilities	3.86	1.02	More Influenced
3. It will develop my broader perspective in life related to specialization I will choose.	3.68	1.03	More Influenced
4. It will allow me to have a deeper understanding of myself through the specialization I will choose	3.75	1.00	More Influenced
5. It will give me confidence to share my knowledge and improve myself	3.57	1.25	More Influenced
Overall	**3.78**	**1.07**	**More Influenced**

Legend: 4.20-5.00 – Greatly Influenced; 3.40-4.19 -More Influenced; 2.60-3.39- Moderately Influenced; 1.80-2.59 -Less Influenced; 1.00-1.79-Did not Influence

Table 10 shows the decision-making influencing factors in terms of prior knowledge, with an overall mean of 3.78 (More Influenced). Similarly, "I know a lot about specialization that can enhance my skills" has the highest mean of 4.02 (Greatly Influenced), while "It will give me confidence to share my knowledge and improve myself" gained the lowest mean of 3.57 (More Influenced). This means that their prior knowledge has a big impact on decision-making in choosing a specialization.

Prior knowledge, or what one already knows, serves as the foundation for learning anything new. According to earlier research, prior knowledge significantly affects learning engagement (Rodrigues, 2007; Pecore et al, 2017). According to van Riesen et al. (2019), prior knowledge may improve learning engagement by lowering cognitive burden. According to Yang et al. (2018), self-regulated learning improved the connection between learning and prior knowledge. Consequently, past knowledge should be taken into account when evaluating its impact on learning engagement since it interacts with cognitive load and the assistance that self-regulated learning provides to influence learning engagement.

Students with low prior knowledge need more assistance to decrease cognitive load, while those with high prior knowledge more easily form new schema and perceive a lower cognitive load (Myhill and Brackley, 2004; van Riesen et al., 2019).

Therefore, prior knowledge is a positive energy that builds the students' impression (Imam Suyitno, at al., 2019) Students' prior knowledge is their previous knowledge before taking given learning and this prior knowledge is a prerequisite which should have been retained so as student's performed learning process will have a good run. This corresponds with the glance of Mulyono (2021), which stated that prior knowledge is the learners' pre-acquired learning outcome before leaping to a higher knowledge.

Table 11. Summary of Decision-Making Influencing Factors

Variables	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. Parents Influence	3.06	1.31	Moderately Influenced
2. Peer Influence	3.45	1.22	More Influenced
3. Socio-Economic Factors	3.82	1.09	More Influenced
4. Personal Interest	3.72	1.04	More Influenced
5. Prior Knowledge	3.78	1.07	More Influenced
Overall	3.57	1.15	More Influenced

Legend: 4.20-5.00 –Greatly Influenced; 3.40-4.19 -More Influenced; 2.60-3.39- Moderately Influenced; 1.80-2.59 -Less Influenced; 1.00-1.79-Did not Influence

Table 11 shows the summary of decision-making influencing factors with an overall mean of 3.57 (More Influenced). Among the listed factors, Socio-economic factors exhibited the highest mean score of 3.82 (More influenced). Prior knowledge gained with a mean of 3.78, while personal interest with a mean score of 3.72. Both factors were interpreted as more influential, suggesting that individuals are strongly driven by their intrinsic motivations and prior learning experiences. These results indicate that personal inclination and accumulated knowledge significantly impact decision-making processes. Peer influence has a mean of 3.45 (More Influenced). In contrast, the lowest influencing factor is parents' influence, with a mean of 3.06 (Moderately Influenced).

This implies that influencing factors such as peers, economic background, personal interest and prior knowledge substantially shape individual decisions,

with parental influence having slightly less impact.

Table 12. Perceived Specialization Selection as to Personality

Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. Shows my personality and abilities	3.83	1.08	Agree
2. Boost my confidence to work hard that shaped my personal growth.	3.66	1.00	Agree
3. My traits and understanding of them will give me an advantage on landing to my pursued career.	3.77	.95	Agree
4. My attributes should be ideal for the career that I would focus on.	4.02	.89	Agree
5. It contributes self-awareness and positive mindedness.	3.95	.93	Agree
Overall	**3.85**	**0.97**	**Agree**

Legend: 4.20-5.00-Strongly Agree (SA); 3.40-4.19 -Agree (A); 2.60-3.39 -Neither Agree or Disagree (NA or DA); 1.80-2.59 - Disagree (D); 1.00-1.79-Strongly Disagree (SD)

Table 12 shows the perceived specialization selection as to personality with an overall mean of 3.85 (Agree). "My attributes should be ideal for the career that I would focus on" gained the highest mean of 4.02 (Agree), while "Boost my confidence to work hard that shaped my personal growth" got the lowest mean of 3.66 (Agree). It means that the decision-making influencing factors have an impact on the personality of the learner in choosing specialization. This suggests among participants that personality traits significantly influence individual actions and decisions.

The result data aligns with contemporary research indicating that personality traits play a pivotal role in honing individual behaviors, social interactions, and overall well-being. Perceiving the impact of personality can inform interventions aimed at enhancing personal development and social functioning. According to Staunton, as cited in Rafanan & De Guzman (2020), selecting a prospective career or education program for a student's personality will result in improved career well-being, success-job satisfaction, good grades, and timely graduation. For a junior high school student, the selection of which career or track to pursue in senior high school studies must be taken seriously (Dublin et al., 2020).

Table 13. Perceived Specialization Selection as to Social

Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. I feel, I belong to the group/society and accepted.	3.62	1.04	Agree
2. I have the same status in life.	3.71	1.16	Agree
3. It gives assurance and freedom to express my-self and shows my abilities.	3.93	.97	Agree
4. It gives me strong relationship with the people surrounding me.	3.41	.85	Agree
5. It gives enable me to handle different situations.	3.66	1.13	Agree
Overall	**3.67**	**1.03**	**Agree**

Legend: 4.20-5.00-Strongly Agree (SA); 3.40-4.19 -Agree (A); 2.60-3.39 -Neither Agree or Disagree (NA or DA); 1.80-2.59 - Disagree (D); 1.00-1.79-Strongly Disagree (SD)

Table 13 shows the perceived specialization selection as to social, with an overall mean score of 3.67 (Agree). "It gives assurance and freedom to express myself and shows my abilities" gained the highest mean of 3.93 (Agree), while "It gives me a strong relationship with the people surrounding me" got the lowest mean of 3.41 (Agree). Based on the results, all individual items, as well as the overall mean, fall under the "agree" category. This suggests that respondents generally agree with the statements or aspects measured within the social dimension. The result consistently shows that social influences have a big impact on students' behavior and choices. Understanding these influences can determine the strategies to promote positive social interactions and personal development.

According to Wentzel et al. (2017), social ties with classmates and teachers are crucial for students' learning outcomes and stress levels because they serve as resources for enhancing learning and reducing stress. According to Christi Bergin, students are more likely to learn when they sense that their teacher values and cares for them. People whom students most trust can be extremely helpful in assisting them in making career decisions. To help students make wise decisions, career selection and development initiatives that are geared toward these important stakeholders (parents and the community) should be supported.

Table 14. Perceived Specialization Selection as to Opportunities

Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. It gives me an opportunity to excel my abilities and hone personal growth	4.00	1.09	Agree
2. It gives me an opportunity to interact with people surround me with same specialization	3.87	.95	Agree
3. It gives me an opportunity to find a scholarship to pursue my study	3.72	1.01	Agree
4. It gives me an opportunity to find higher salaries in the future	3.85	.98	Agree
5. It gives me an opportunity to find a better job.	4.07	.89	Agree

Overall	**3.90**	**0.98**	**Agree**

Legend: 4.20-5.00-Strongly Agree (SA); 3.40-4.19 -Agree (A); 2.60-3.39 -Neither Agree or Disagree (NA or DA); 1.80-2.59 - Disagree (D); 1.00-1.79-Strongly Disagree (SD)

Table 14 shows the perceived specialization selection as to opportunities. With an overall mean of 3.90 (Agree). "It gives me an opportunity to find a better job" gained the highest mean of 4.07 (Agree), and "It gives me an opportunity to find a scholarship to pursue my study" acquired the lowest mean of 3.72 (Agree). This suggests that respondents generally perceive opportunities positively and consistently express agreement with the related statements. In line with the results, the influencing factors are influenced in terms of opportunities.

According to a study by Mncayi and Dunga (2016), students who are exposed to the opportunities available in their community are more likely to choose the best vocation that fits their aptitudes. There are chances for work shadowing, real-world field experience, and academic progress. But that would be an employment opportunity if there were any chance at all. According to statistics, career choice is significantly influenced by opportunity (Gwelo, 2019).

Table 15. Summary of Specialization Selection

Variables	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
1. Personality	3.85	0.98	Agree
2. Social	3.67	1.03	Agree
3. Opportunities	3.91	0.99	Agree
Overall	**3.81**	**1**	**Agree**

Legend: 4.20-5.00-Strongly Agree (SA); 3.40-4.19 -Agree (A); 2.60-3.39 -Neither Agree or Disagree (NA or DA); 1.80-2.59 - Disagree (D); 1.00-1.79-Strongly Disagree (SD)

Table 15 shows the Summary of Specialization Selection, which includes the Personality, Social, and Opportunities, with an overall mean of 3.81 (Agree). Opportunities received the highest mean score of 3.91 (Agree), indicating strong agreement that opportunities play a significant role. This suggests that access to resources, career advancements, and favorable circumstances are key determinants in shaping one's decisions and success. In addition, the personality factor recorded a mean of 3.85 (Agree). This suggests that individual traits, behaviors, and characteristics significantly influence decision-making and personal development. Social factors have the lowest mean of 3.67 (Agree). This implies that social interactions, relationships, and environmental influences are less recognized as important contributors to an individual's choices and experiences.

Based on the study of Kemboi, Kindiki, and Migio (2016), since people choose the profession that best reflects their unique character and personality, their personality has a significant impact on their decision regarding a career. Gwelo (2019) further adds that students are more likely to choose a career that best suits their personality so that they can enjoy learning and gain satisfaction. This suggests that respondents are more likely to think about their abilities. This result demonstrates that personality plays a significant role in selecting the appropriate career. According to Khare (2015), students should have a self-motivated personality type who explores career options early in life rather than a procrastinating personality who waits until they are forced to make a choice.

In some cases, student support strategies that are designed to identify the risk factors of the at-risk students and follow up with a series of workshops have successfully resulted in a retention rate of 90% (Merritt, 2021). It has also been found that individual student supports, such as individualized assistance for low performers provided by instructors after the class, increased the chances of program completion (Lavy & Schlosser, 2005) and may lead to improvement (Woolcott et al., 2021).

Opportunities for academic advancement, practical field experience, and work shadowing are all possible. But if there were a chance at all, it would be a job opportunity. Statistics demonstrate that opportunity has a substantial impact on professional choice (Gwelo, 2019).

Table 16. Significant Relationship Between Influencing Factors and Specialization Selection

	Personality	Social	Opportunities
Parents Influence	.357**	.432**	.446**
Peer Influence	.298**	.308**	.324**
Socio-Economic Factors	.538**	.408**	.464**
Personal Interest	.549**	.533**	.587**
Prior Knowledge	.622**	.574**	.591**

*Legend: significant at .01** level of significance*

The table above presents the correlation values (r-values) between various factors influencing students' choice of specialization courses and how they perceive these specializations in terms of personality, social aspects, and opportunities. Each factor—either Parents' Influence, Peer Influence, Socio-Economic Factors, Personal Interest, and Prior Knowledge—is evaluated across these three dimensions, with correlation values indicating the strength and significance of relationships.

For Personality, the determined correlation is observed with Prior Knowledge (r = .622**), indicating that students' existing knowledge greatly influences how they perceive a specialization about their personality.
Personal Interest (r = .549**) and Socio-Economic Factors (r = .538**) also demonstrate powerful correlations, while Parents' Influence (r = .357**) and Peer Influence (r = .298**) exhibit weaker yet still meaningful correlations.
For Social perception, Prior Knowledge also has the highest correlation with the result of (r = .574**), indicating that students' familiarity with a specialization significantly affects their social perception of it. Personal Interest (r = .533**) and Parents' Influence (r = .432**) also contribute notably, while Socio-Economic Factors (r = .408**) and Peer Influence (r = .308**) have relatively lower but still essential correlations.

For Opportunities, Prior Knowledge (r = .591**) and Personal Interest (r = .587**) show the most influential correlations, suggesting that students who have prior knowledge or personal interest in a specialization perceive more opportunities in that field. Socio-Economic Factors (r = .464**) and Parents' Influence (r = .446**) also have moderate correlations, while Peer Influence (r = .324**) has the least correlation but remains significant.
The data clearly show that every factor that has been identified has a significant impact on the choice of specialization, with prior knowledge and personal interest having the greatest influence across all dimensions. These results underscore the significance of fostering early exposure and authentic interest in academic subjects while simultaneously recognizing the ongoing impact of peers, family, and socioeconomic circumstances in determining educational paths.

Furthermore, while peer influence can affect behavior and choices, its relationship to core aspects of a person's identity and life path, such as personality, social development, and opportunities, is relatively less influential. These domains are more deeply influenced by early life experiences, family dynamics, and wider societal structures. Therefore, while peers matter, their influence is more superficial and short-term compared to the foundational forces that shape who we are and what we become.
Similarly, while many factors can influence the choice of a specialization, prior knowledge plays the most pivotal role. It empowers individuals to make informed, confident, and realistic decisions based on their strengths, experiences, and aspirations. As such, fostering early exposure and learning in various fields is essential in helping students choose specializations that truly align with their abilities and future goals.
A choice is a decision that most human beings make at some time in their lives; it is a decision that should be given careful consideration since it can affect the rest of a person's life and determine one's future career (Som, 2016).

According to Kaneez & Medha's (2018) research, there is proof that parents have an impact on their children's professional decisions. Chan (2016) noted how parental career advice is considered very influential and can serve as guiding principles for their children to become better people and workers. Waldman (2016) observed that before students can succeed academically, they must feel safe, both physically and mentally, and to have a safe learning environment, students must feel welcomed, supported, and respected.

Lower family support results in greater financial stress and anxiety in selecting a strand (Tran et al., 2018). Additionally, family socio-economic status also has a significant relation to the academic performance of students (Sollano et al., 2018). Because family size, parents' backgrounds, parents' qualifications, and parents' level of income are significant in affecting the academic performance and selection of strands (Abdu-Raheem, 2015). However, students who have different levels of socio-economic status also have different levels of academic achievement (Bhat et al., 2016).

Furthermore, personal interest is also a factor in decision-making in choosing a specialization. When competency is evaluated against a performance or excellence criterion, academic motivation is the desire of the learners as demonstrated by their approach, perseverance, and degree of interest in the subject (Hu et al., 2021). It might also be compared to a learner's desire to participate in the available learning opportunities (Hulleman et al., 2016). It is anticipated that highly motivated students will work harder to improve their social and academic performance during the learning process.

Lastly, Adeokun and Opoko (2015) also affirm that students with greater clarity about why they choose their course and whether the chosen course has a direct pathway to their preferred career have better outcomes in terms of academic performance. However, selecting a strand was influenced by the security and motivation, which are highly ranked factors such as exploration, advancement, opportunities, exposure, and knowledge, which are responsible for selecting a career. This concludes that having background knowledge about the career is essential in building an interest towards the career (Nyamwange, 2016).

CONCLUSION

The null hypothesis stating that decision-making influencing factors are not significantly related to specialization selection variables is therefore not sustained.

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