
Factors influencing career preference of junior high school students for senior high school study

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Abstract

Choosing a senior high school career or tracks to pursue is one of the most challenging decision any junior high school student may undertake. As a response, the objectives of this research were to investigate junior high school student's career preferences for senior high school studies, as well as the determinants that may influence their career selection. Using a stratified random sample technique, a total of one hundred sixty-six students were chosen at random. To quantify the influence of the indicated career selection determinants on students' career preferences, the researchers used a descriptive and predictive correlational research design. The required data was gathered using a standardized survey questionnaire. Personality, parents, job opportunities, and interest were found to be statistically significant in influencing and predicting students' career preferences, out of the five career selection determinants. In the model, only the peer component (LRT p-value = 0.110) was shown to be statistically insignificant. Among the career selection determinants, the variable interest was found to have the strongest influence on students' course preferences. It can be inferred that diverse career selection factors have statistically significant effects on students' senior high school career choices. Since students' preparation in senior high school is crucial to their subsequent studies in tertiary education, or employment after senior high school, the study gives vital inputs for students, parents, and school officials on how to lead and develop their career plans. A similar study may well be conducted using additional course selection characteristics discussed in the study, or this study could be conducted in a different location to corroborate or refute the findings.

Keywords: *Career preference, career selection factors, Interest, Job opportunities, Personality, Peer influence*

Introduction

One of the most difficult decisions for students to make for their studies was choosing a career that will determine their future professional path (Ouano et al., 2019; Kaneez & Medha, 2018). Career management for students is vital. That makes them seek information and advice from different sources, even looking for professionals which can guide them throughout the career

planning stage (Witko, 2005). According to Staunton (as cited in Rafanan & De Guzman, 2020), selecting the 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 senior high school studies must be taken

seriously. Many students did not place enough focus on their career choices, and as a result, they believe that the career or track they are pursuing in secondary education are unrelated to the profession they may later specialize in a higher education level (Cabañas, 2021). The importance of career planning on what courses or fields of specialization we are about to take cannot be denied. According to Olaosebikan and Olusakin (2014) and exploring career opportunities prior deciding to on a career path, according to Navin (2009), strengthens career development success and satisfaction.

Several studies have been carried out to determine the various aspects that affect, relate to, and influence a student's career decision. The majority of research that looked at the elements that influence students' career and course preferences was focused on senior high school students' career and course preferences for college (Rin, 2021; Dangoy & Madrigal, 2020; Okwulehie, 2018; Penedilla & Rosaldo, 2017; BUENAFLORES & Buenaflor, 2015; Khoo et al., 2015; Fizer, 2013). There were just a few studies that looked into the impact of junior high school students' job decisions on their senior high school academics (Caluma, 2019; Ouano et al., 2019; Kaneez & Medha). In the local study, there were a few studies undertaken that focused on the examination of junior high school career preferences (Caluma, 2019; Ouano et al., 2019).

Although this topic has received more attention, no research on career choice junior high school students in rural public schools in the Philippines' eastern region has been published. Furthermore, this research will guide students about the factors they should consider when planning their careers. Similarly, this will provide input to students' parents on how they will help their children in selecting senior high school courses, as well as to school administrators on how to develop the school's career enhancement activities to further guide the students in their career goals. As a result of the aforementioned dearth of research in the literature and the benefits that this study may provide, the current study was realized.

The study focused on the effects of personality, parents, interest, job opportunities, and peer impact on junior high school student's career preferences. According to Ouano et al.

(2019), Okwulehie (2018), Kaneez and Medha (2018), and Pascual (2014), the personality of the student is critical in selecting the appropriate area of career. The most common concept in the preference of a college course is based on the student's personal decision, followed by values and financial concerns.

A student's personality has to be self-motivated, as to examine career options from early years, and not the procrastinating type that needs to wait until they are faced with the decision (Splaver, 2000). On the other hand, the parent's factor influence is considered as one of the most influential factors for a student's career choice (Ouano et al., 2019; Kaneez & Medha, 2018; Dagang & de Mesa, 2017; Khoo et al., 2015). According to Đurišić and Bunijevac (2017), parents are significantly interested and influential in their strong children's education selections. In the studies of Umar (2014) and Al-Rfou (2013), it was asserted that parents had a significant influence on children's career choices, as well as other factors such as family, classmates, job chances, teachers, and media. Giustinelli (2016) highlighted two key points regarding the influence of parents on students' career planning.

For instance, even in a system in which individual family members' preferred careers were incited at the time of the final decision, only about half of the participating families' reported preferences for curricula were aligned and coincided with observed choices. Second, in homes where both parents and children openly expressed decisions on what career to be taken, parental stated preferences were observed to be chosen in a much higher percentage of circumstances than in families where parental stated desires were not observed to be accepted. Furthermore, Giustinelli (2016) contends that parents and children have insufficient knowledge of each other's choice preferences, which parents know their children's desires considerably better than vice versa, and then that relatives who revealed making decisions more collectively did seem to have a clearer idea of each other's decision - making choices.

Students' interest factor, on the other hand, is regarded as the most critical element in the selection of a career major or education course is what you desire or your interests

(Giustinelli, 2016). Okwulehie (2018) and Rababah (2016) gave importance to students' interest as one of the factors for career decision-making. This was supported in the study of Penedilla and Rosaldo (2017), who stated that personal preferences influenced high school student's career and college degree selections. Similarly, the study of Ahmed et al. (2017), found that the interest in a course has a significantly positive relationship with career planning, while academics, financial repercussions, and potential career opportunities have a little effect on student's intention to attend a particular career. Edward and Quinter (2011) and Malgwi et al. (2005), concluded that interest in the career was the most influential indicator seconded by the career progression opportunity and the availability of prospective employment.

A student's career decision is also influenced by the job opportunities aspect (Rababah, 2016; Malubay et al., 2015; Ahmed et al., 2017; Splaver, 2000). Students' economic demands are more crucial than their interest in the field. This was supported by Ahmed et al. (2017)'s findings, which shows that job opportunities have a minor impact or influence on students' career decisions when compared to their interest in the field. According to Pascual (2014), the availability of potential work is the primary concern for students when choosing a college course.

According to Pimpa (2001), peer groups can influence students' choices in three ways: information, competitiveness, and persuasion. Work options and information from peers about the prices of living and education standards, as well as the cost of living, may influence students' career decisions. Rin (2021), Rababah (2016), Pascual (2014), and Umar (2014) found a significant influence of peer factors on student's career preferences. However, it was the opposite in the study of Ouano et al. (2019) that concluded an insignificant influence of peer factor on student's career choice, and similar results were yielded in the study of Kaneez and Medha (2018) and Pascual (2014) that peer factor has only less effect on students career choice.

Objectives of the study

The general purpose of the study was to determine junior high school student's career

preferences for senior high school studies that would serve as their preparation for further studies at the tertiary level, or preparation for employment. Particularly, examining the factors that influenced or explained students' overall course preferences. It is hypothesized that established career preference factors such as personality, parents, interest, availability of job opportunities, and peer have had a significant influence on students' career choices. Looking at the factors that influenced the majority of students' career decisions.

Theoretical and conceptual framework of the study

The study is anchored in the theory of Social Cognitive Career Theory advocated by Lent et al. (1994). The theory was based on Bandura's overall social cognitive theory, which was mainly focused on the influential theory of cognitive and motivational practices and has been gradually expanded to the research of several areas of psychosocial functioning, including student achievement, health-related behaviors, and management effectiveness (Bandura, 1986). The theory defined three interrelated areas of professional growth: fundamental professional and vocational interest development, academic and professional decision, and academic and career achievement.

The theory integrates several ideas such as interest, skills, and environmental influences that have been proved to influence career development in previous career models. The core building blocks of the theory were three closely related variables: self-efficacy beliefs, result expectancies, and goals. Self-efficacy pertains to an individual's private ideas about his or her ability to undertake specific actions or courses of action. Self-efficacy beliefs, unlike global confidence or self-esteem, are rather dynamic and tailored to certain activity domains.

Furthermore, the theory assumes that individuals are more likely to become interest in, choose to explore, and work better at areas in which they have a strong sense of self-belief, as provided as they also have the requisite competencies and environmental supports. The theory was linked in the current study since the study focused on the investigation of the factors

that influenced career preferences among students.

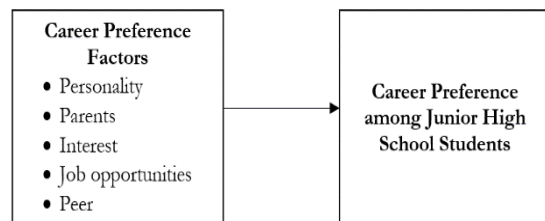


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

Figure 1 shows the variables that were assessed and hypothesized to obtain the objectives of the study. The set of career preference factors were set as the independent variables, whereas the course preference was a dependent variable. The variables were interval scale and categorical-nominal for the course preference variable with the following categories: medicine, engineering, business, languages, arts and sciences, social sciences, and education-related courses. The variables were treated descriptively to describe the level of influence of the course selection factors as perceived by the students in selecting their course preference for senior high school study, and determining the course preference distribution. In addition, multinomial logistic regression analysis was computed to measure the significance of the influence of the course selection factors and identify which factors significantly predict the overall course preference of students.

Methodology

Research Design

The study used the descriptive and predictive correlational design (Cox, 2016; Christenen et al., 2011; Sousa et al., 2007) to investigate the study objectives. It is descriptive since the study delves into describing student's demographic profile characteristics, the level of influence of the career preference factors as perceived by the students in terms of personality, parents, interest, job opportunities, and peer, and course preference distribution. Likewise, it is correlational and predictive in the sense that it tends to measure significant relationship and influence of the career preference factors on the student's course preference and predict the variance of the dependent variable based on the

variance of another variable. Descriptive and regression analyses were employed in the study.

Research respondents

Two hundred Eighty-Five (285) grade 10 students of Tanauan National High School of Tanauan, Leyte, Philippines enrolled in the academic year 2018 to 2019 were the target respondents of the study. One hundred sixty-four random samples were computed using the sample size estimation formula for a finite population (Israel, 1992). The samples were proportionately selected per class section using a stratified random sampling design. The percent of the respondents, 66.9%, were females between the ages of 16 and 17, which is considered middle adolescence. For senior high school studies, 24.7 percent of students suggest taking Education-related careers, while 18.1 percent prefer Industry ones.

Research instrument

A researcher's made survey questionnaire was used in the study to be the primary tool in measuring the career selection factors and the career preferences of students. The survey tool consisted of the following parts: Part I includes the profile characteristics of respondents according to age, sex, occupation of parents, parents educational attainment, and monthly income of the family; Part II is composed of the different options of potential preferred careers of students for senior high school study; and Part III asks the students level of perception as to what level of influence that the five identified career preference factors may influence their course preferences – personality, parents, peers, interest and job opportunities. Students were asked to score the career selection determinants on a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 being the least influential and 5 being the most influential (Vagias, 2006).

Further, Cronbach's alpha was computed to evaluate the reliability of the instrument item's consistency of what construct they mean to measure in assessing the level of influence of the career selection factors. A 0.79 coefficient was calculated in the overall reliability of the tool, while the reliability coefficients of the entire factors were ranging from 0.71-0.80, respectively. According to Vaske et al. (2017) and

Kock and Lynn (2012), the computed Cronbach's alpha value must be equal to 0.070 or greater than to have accepted the reliability of items. Since all computed coefficients were greater than 0.70, all the factors were reliable.

Data gathering procedure

The researchers ensured all the protocols prior, during, and after were followed. The research questionnaires were distributed to respondents in person after first emphasizing the goal and significance of the study. The chosen responders' voluntary cooperation is encouraged in which a letter of consent was secured and assuring them that the data collected will be kept anonymous and utilized only for the study. The questionnaires were recorded digitally and stored for later analysis.

Data analysis

The data was collected, recorded, and statistically treated to answer the problem of the study. The researchers measured the hypothesis of no significance of the relationships between course selection factors such as personality, parents, peers, interest, and job opportunities, and the course preference of the students. Specifically, to identify which course selection factors significantly predict the student's course preference. The multinomial logistic regression analysis was conducted to measure the study hypothesis (El-Habil, 2012; Starkweather & Moske, 2011). This measurement was used when the dependent variable is nominal with more than two levels or categories and with one or more independent categorical, or scale variables (El-Habil, 2012; Starkweather & Moske, 2011). Moreover, descriptive statistical measurements such as percentage, weighted mean (WM), standard deviation (SD), and coefficient of variations (CV) were calculated to describe the respondents' profile distributions and the level of perception of the factors. Data tabulations and calculations were done using Microsoft Excel and IBM SPSS. The level of significance alpha was set at 5% in rejecting the study null hypothesis.

Result and discussion

This study utilized descriptive and predictive correlation analyses to achieve the study

objectives. Multinomial logistic regression was applied to examine the research hypothesis. The presentation of results begins with the level of perception of students towards career selection factors and is followed by the regression analysis results.

Students perceived level of influence of career selection factors

Table 1 shows that factor Interest obtained the highest mean score of 4.17 (SD = 0.90), interpreted as a very influential factor in choosing a course for senior high school study as perceived by the students. The Peer factor, on the other hand, yielded the lowest mean score of 3.04 (SD = 0.64), interpreted as somewhat influential. The overall mean was calculated at 3.88 (SD=0.74, CV=19.1%), interpreted as very influential. It is noticeable that only the factor peer was not interpreted as very influential among the course selection factors. There was a 19.1% variation of responses was calculated as whole

Table 1. Students Perceived Level of Influence of Career Selection Factors

| Variable | WM | SD | CV (%) | Interpretation |
|-------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| Personality | 4.09 | 0.93 | 22.7 | Very Influential |
| Parents | 3.65 | 0.57 | 15.6 | Very Influential |
| Interest | 4.17 | 0.90 | 21.6 | Very Influential |
| Job Opportunities | 3.95 | 0.67 | 17.0 | Very Influential |
| Peer | 3.04 | 0.64 | 21.1 | Somewhat Influential |
| Overall | 3.88 | 0.74 | 19.1 | Very Influential |

Note: 1.0-1.80 – Not at all Influential; 1.81-2.60 – Slightly Influential; 2.61-3.40 – Somewhat Influential; 3.41-4.20 – Very Influential; & 4.21-5.00 – Extremely Influential
Overall CV = 19.1%

Influence of career selection factors on career preferences among junior high school students

Table 2 presents the significance of the overall model with the career selection factors as predictors in predicting the course preference of the students in comparison with intercept only in the model. The result revealed that overall, the

course selection factors statistically improve the model. The unexplained variation decreases from 355.006 in the model with intercept only, to 299.185. Also, the result implies that the model statistically significantly predicts the course preference variable, $\chi^2(11) = 55.821, p = 0.004$. This indicates a good model fit of the data

Table 2. Overall Model Test between the Career Selection Factors and Career Preferences

| Model | -2 LL | χ^2 | Df | p-value |
|--------------------------|---------|----------|----|---------|
| Intercept Only | 355.006 | | | |
| Course Selection Factors | 299.185 | 55.821 | 11 | 0.004 |

Note: -2LL is -2 Log Likelihood, $p < .05$ – Significant

Goodness-of-Fit: Pearson = 267; $p = 0.334$

Similarly, the Chi-Square (χ^2) Goodness-of-Fit explains how the model fits the data that will assess the significance of the overall in influencing and predicting the outcome variable. A statistically significant p-value on the Pearson measurement indicates that the model does not well fit with the data. Based on Table 2, the computed p-value of the Pearson measure was 0.334 ($p > 0.05$), implying that the overall (career selection factors), fits the data well in influencing or predicting the outcome variable (career preferences).

Table 3. Regression Analysis between Career Selection Factors and Career Preferences

| Model | B | e^B | SE ^B | Wald | p-value |
|-------------------|------|-------|-----------------|------|---------|
| Personality | 0.20 | 0.90 | 0.04 | 3.89 | 0.03 |
| Parents | 0.19 | 0.70 | 0.05 | 2.11 | 0.04 |
| Interest | 0.22 | 0.88 | 0.07 | 5.56 | 0.01 |
| Job Opportunities | 0.20 | 0.60 | 0.09 | 2.31 | 0.04 |
| Peers | 0.09 | 1.02 | 0.12 | 0.08 | 0.23 |

Note: Psuedo R²: McFadden = 0.19; Nagelkerke = 0.21

Dependent variable: Career Preferences
Likelihood Ratio Tests (LRTs): Personality – p-value = 0.04; Parents – p-value = 0.43; Interest – p-value = 0.009; Job Opportunities – p-value = 0.038; Peer – p-value = 0.110

$p < .05$

e^B = odds ratio

A significant 19% to 21% proportion of variation was explained by the model, indicating the model's level of influence in terms of students' career preferences ($2(11) = 55.821, p = 0.004$; McFadden = 0.19; Nagelkerke = 0.21). Only the peer variable was shown to be not statistically significant in the model in influencing or predicting students' overall career preferences (LRT p-value = 0.110). Among the criteria indicated, variable interest was determined to be the most influential on overall student career preferences

Discussion

Different career selection factors have a considerable influence on junior high school student's career preferences. This emphasizes the significance of the characteristic, personality, interests, parents, and job opportunities have on students' career decision-making. Several research studies verified the study's findings. Ouano et al. (2019), Okwulehie (2018), Kaneez and Medha (2018), and Pascual (2014) all found that student personality had a substantial influence. Similarly, the significant positive influence of interest factor on the career choice of students in the study was explained and supported by the studies of Okwulehie (2018), Penedilla and Rosaldo (2017), Ahmed et al. (2017), Giustinelli (2016), Rababah (2016), and Malgwi et al. (2005).

On the other hand, the significance of the availability of job opportunities after taking the career in the study was similar in the available studies conducted (Rabah, 2016; Ahmed et al., 2017; Malubay et al., 2015; Pascual, 2014; Splaver, 2000). The study results of no significance of the influence of the peer factor on career decision making based on the evidence gathered were contradicted in the studies of Rin (2021), Rababah (2016), Pascual (2014), and Umar (2014), and Pimpa (2001) who found that peer factor has a strong link on student's career selection. The research of Ouano et al., (2019), Kaneez and Medha (2018), and Pascual (2014), however, validated the factor's smaller effect and insignificance.

The study's findings strongly imply the specific facets influencing students' career preferences in rural public schools, which are similar to the factors in prior research that were

not performed in a rural setting. It is not easy to choose future careers; various considerations must be addressed to have meaningful and successful education and career path in the long run

Conclusion and recommendations

According to the results and discussions of the study, it can be concluded that student's personalities, interests, parents, and availability of job opportunities had a significant bearing on their career preferences. Out of five identified career selection factors, only the peer factor was found to have no sufficient evidence to claim that this factor significantly influences students' career preference based on the study samples and evidence gathered. A student's decision on what course to be enrolled in senior high school education is based on different factors. This may be according to the type of personality students have the career or the field of specialization that captures their interest, the suggestions of their parents, and the availability of job opportunities that students may look into in the future.

The study findings may serve as a guide to students, specifically junior high school students, on what factors they need to consider in their career planning. Similarly, this will provide inputs to the parents of the students on how they are going to guide their children on choosing senior high school courses. Similarly, the study findings will help school administrators in strengthening the school's career orientation programs to further guide the students in their career plans. The researchers suggest the following for future research: expanding the sample size and including students from private institutions as respondents; including other course selection factors that were not considered in the study but may influence students' course preferences, such as academic and demographic factors; and conducting current studies aligned with the present educational modality.

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Declaration of no conflict of interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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