

TRACK PREFERENCES OF GRADE 10 STUDENTS IN CENTRAL MINDANAO COLLEGES

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ABSTRACT

The aimed of the study was to find out the factors that affect the track preferences of Grade 10 students. It made use of descriptive survey method. Frequency and percentage count and mean were the statistical tools used to determine the extent of track influence of the said respondents. Among the four indicators on track preferences were Personality, Interest, Family/Relatives and Job Opportunities. Findings showed that the most of the respondents would like to pursue a career in Business. Most of the respondents selected Academic Track as their track going to senior high school. As a strand choice under the Academic Track the respondents selected STEM and ICT and Home Economics were both chosen specialization for Technical Vocational and Livelihood. Based on the results, the findings showed that the main factor affecting the track preference was interests, followed by personality and job opportunities. The family/ relatives somewhat influenced their track preference.

Keywords: education, STEM, GAS, HUMMS, academic track, descriptive

INTRODUCTION

The Philippine educational system has evolved in order to address the needs and capabilities of the millennial learners. Along with this evolution is the birth of varied teaching strategies that will prepare them to be holistically honed and equipped with necessary information and skills to face the vast competitive world. In line with this, the Department of Education has upgraded their educational program from its former 10 years of basic and secondary education to 12 years which is called the K-12 program. Its main purpose is to produce individual who can compete with the international standards. The products of this program are believed

to be equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills that one should possess to promote economic development.

In the K- 12 curriculum, all core subjects, namely: Science, Mathematics, Araling Panlipunan, MAPEH and Edukasyonsa Pagpapakatao will be taught wherein learning is a process of building upon previously learned knowledge. In this curriculum, track has been introduced. The tracks are as follows: (1) Academic, which is further subdivided into three strands. Accountancy, Business and Management (ABM), Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS), Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). (2) Technical-Vocational, which is further subdivided into four strands. Agriculture-Fisheries, Home Economics, Industrial Arts, Information and Communication Technology (ICT). (3) Sports and Arts and Design.

In this program, several strands are offered that is why choosing a right career path after graduating in junior high is very vital. Unfit graduates are one of the considered reasons why the country has high unemployment and underemployment rate. The reasons could either be the graduates are incompetent to the demands of the present world, or the graduates do not contain the characteristics required to meet the economic standards. The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) released its Labor Force Survey (LFS) on which revealed that the Philippines' unemployment rate was at 4.7 percent as of October 2016. The rate was the lowest in 11 years since the government adopted the International Labor Organization's (ILO) definitions on employment and unemployment. Thus, it is essential to figure out the career path the students are going to take and should put into consideration the factors that may affect their decision-making process.

METHOD

This study utilized the descriptive method of research to determine the factors that affect in selecting track preferences of the Grade 10 students of Central Mindanao Colleges of the academic year 2017-2018. The respondents of the study were 43 Grade 10 students of Central Mindanao Colleges. Grade 10 students refer to those who were officially enrolled for the school year 2017-2018. The questionnaire used in this study was adopted from the study of Japitan, et al. (2014) on Factors Affecting Senior High School Track Preferences of Grade 9 Students of Don Bosco Technology Center, Inc. The statistical tools used in this study were frequency and percentage count and mean. Frequency and percentage

count was used to describe the profile and track preferences while weighted mean was utilized to determine the factors that influence the decision of the track preference of the respondents.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio demographic profile of the respondents

The demographic profile shows that the majority of the respondents are 16-17 years old with the frequency of 24 or 55.9%. 18 or 41.90% students are 14-15 years old and only one respondent is 18 years old. This implies that the common age of the Grade 10 students is between 16 to 17 years old. Table shows also that 23 out of 43 respondents were females and the remaining 20 were males.

Career Preferences

As shown in table 2, majority of the students would pursue Business courses comprising the 23.2% of the population. This is followed by Medicine, Engineering and other fields obtaining the identical frequencies of 16.3% each. The rest careers such languages, arts, education, sciences, social sciences and management register the lowest frequencies of 2 or 4.7% and 1 or 2.3% respectively.

Table 2
Career Preferences

Career	Frequency	Percent
Medicine	7	16.3%
Engineering	7	16.3%
Business	10	23.2%
Languages	2	4.7%
Arts	2	4.7%
Sciences	1	2.3%
Social Sciences	1	2.3%
Education	2	4.7%
Management	1	2.3%
Others	7	16.3%
Did not answer	3	6.9%
Total	40	100%

The results show that most students prefer to Business course. This supports to the study of Schweitzer (2017) that there are more opportunities for specialization in business than the other fields. Business majors can choose to specialize in accounting, finance, human resources, marketing, non-profits, management, real estate, or any path that relates to business and industries. The knowledge

and skills that the students obtain in these core classes are easily transferable to entrepreneurial pursuits, which means that you could easily start your own business after you earn your business degree.

Track preferences

Table 3 presents the track preferences of the respondents. Majority of the students prefer the Academic Track which comprises 27 Or 62.9% while Technical-Vocational and Arts and Design have registered similar frequencies of 6 or 13.9%. Lastly, Sports track has the frequency of 4 or 9.3%.

Table 3.
Track Preferences

Tracks	Frequency	Percentage
Academic	27	62.9
Technical-vocational	6	13.9
Sports	4	9.3
Arts and Design	6	13.9
Total	43	100%

The preferred academic track among the respondents indicates that most likely they will pursue their college study as noted in the table in which business course as top priority and followed by medicine and engineering.

Strand under academic track

Out of 27 respondents who chose Academic track, 13 or 48.2% have chosen STEM. On the other hand, HUMMS and ABM have both the same frequency and percentage of 7 or 25.9% of the total respondents.

Table 4.
Strand under academic track

Specializations	Frequency	Percentage
HUMSS	7	25.9
ABM	7	25.9
STEM	13	48.2
Total	27	100%

Contrasting results has been noted. The result of the career preferences does not match with the strand choice under the Academic track. Majority of the respondents prefer to take up Business courses hence, it is expected to choose ABM but eventually

STEM strand has been selected by most of the respondents. This is an implication that the respondents do not have yet sufficient information about the alignment of the track with its strand.

Strand under Technical-Vocational Livelihood

As presented in table 5, only 3 or 50% of the respondents decide to take Home Economics and Information Communication Technology (ICT) in technical-vocational livelihood strand. No one selects for Industrial Arts and Agriculture- Fishery.

Table 6
Extent of the Factors' Influence on Track Preference

Factors	Mean	Description
Personality	3.84	Influenced
Family/relatives	3.30	Influenced
Interest	3.97	Influenced
Job opportunities	3.62	Influenced
Overall Mean Score	3.68	Influenced

The results imply that the students' interest influenced their decision in selecting the track. It is in this premise that students have their own perspective towards acquisition of knowledge and skills that will relate someday for future job. Several studies reveal that to take a degree in college or a technical vocational is influenced by personal observation and experiences. Professionals who have been closed to them can be attributed to this influenced. Hence, interest is the inner desire of the students that nobody can get out of it. Social cognitive career theory (SCCT) is grounded in Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory, and explores how career and academic interests mature, how career choices are developed, and how these choices are turned into action. There are many opportunities that surround the career a person wants to pursue. Being investigative with opportunities makes him discover more, and those opportunities would make his career life better. Job opportunities that await a good career abroad are one of factors that students often consider. Investigating for career opportunities is well worth taking time (Mind Tools, 2014). By doing this, one can discover opportunities that are job opening before anyone else, and identify ways of expanding the knowledge and skills needed for that career.

This is contrast to family/relatives somewhat affect their preference because the students can trust on the support that their

families give them. Many Filipinos do take up upon the parents' or relatives' suggestion on what they should specialized when they grow up. Sometimes they suggest career that wouldn't cost that much, and at the same time, are stable sources of income. Filipinos values the respect for family as a result, it is the most influential factor in student's career decision. It is said that "out of respect and loyalty, it may not be appropriate to express personal desires; rather, Filipino children want to do well for the sake of the family, follow parent's advice about choosing a job or major in college and lastly, make sacrifices for the family (Finlayson, 2009). Most students, when making career choices, will say "I want something interesting".

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, the following conclusions are drawn. Majority of the students would pursue a career in Business, followed by Medicine, Engineering and other fields. The students are influenced by Personality, Interests and Job Opportunities factors in choosing their Track preference. Family/Relatives factors somewhat influence the students in choosing their track preference. In the area of Personality factors, fitting the personality to career is the leading factor. The same goes for awareness of the family support on the aspect family factors. Interest on the career among interest factors and opportunities close to chosen career among the factors the when it comes to job opportunities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A career guidance program is to be developed, aiming at the students' self-awareness of their personality, interests, strengths and weaknesses, among others. From that, the guidance counsellor can provide guidance towards orientation and choice of Track, a precursor towards pursuing chosen careers. Career and Track course options are to be provided to the students as early as possible so that they will not be misled with information that they will acquire in choosing their future career. Competency-based curriculum that responds to industry's needs is to be implemented so that students are guided in their career choice. Information seminar is to be developed so that the students may know essential information regarding careers, annual incomes, and personal information awareness.

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