

Socio- Demographic Characteristics and Career Choice of Private Secondary School Students

Asia Pacific Journal of
Multidisciplinary Research
Vol. 3 No. 4, 78-84
November 2015 Part IV
P-ISSN 2350-7756
E-ISSN 2350-8442
www.apjmr.com

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Date Received: September 18, 2015; Date Revised: October 31, 2015

Abstract - *This study determined the career choice of the high school students of the different private institutions in San Jose, Batangas as a basis for developing a career program guide to help the students in choosing their career. The descriptive method was used the study with the questionnaire and standardized test as the main data gathering instruments. Parents, students and teachers served as respondents of the study. The study revealed that most preferred career of the respondents is the academic track particularly the Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) strand.*

The proposed program guide formulated focused on how to help the students decide on their future career. When properly given, it will benefit the students. The researchers recommended that the proposed career program guide that has been formulated may be shown to school heads for their suggestions; the students should be provided with effective orientation on what career is really all about. This could be done by the school guidance counselor or by the teachers and parents as well and there must be a close-up tie among the guidance personnel, teachers, students, and parents to promote a better understanding of the factors which influence the career choice of the students.

Keywords: career program, career choice, career track, program guide, private school

INTRODUCTION

A famous adage tells us “If you chose the career you love, you don’t have to work a single day in your life “. This means that choosing a career can be very satisfying if you have made the right choice. On the other hand, a wrong decision can leave you wishing that you had trodden a different path. Career is defined as the series of events that constitute a life – the series of career activities and other life roles that when put together express a person’s dedication to work for his or her overall pattern of self – development. Indeed, choosing the right career can be a very daunting task especially in a world which refers an array of paths, all of which seem to be leading to a golden goal. Careers can actually make or break a person, thus choosing a career is one of the important decisions one has to make in life. If a person takes a wrong career path, he or she may end up a broken person.

Career choice are determined by socio-economic factors, mental and physical abilities, personal characteristics and the opportunities to which persons

are exposed as reflected in Donald Super’s theory on developmental self-concept theory. Most individual find job satisfaction through work roles in which people can express themselves and develop their self-concepts. Career guidance and maturity is manifested in the successful accomplishment of age and stage developmental tasks across the life span as a main concept in Super's theory [1].

In the Philippines, initiatives for career guidance started when the Philippine government got alarmed with the growing number of unemployed college graduates and some who got employed in areas not related to their specialization [2]. The lack of career information that could help students make rational decisions was found to be the foremost reason for unemployment, job mismatch, and underemployment. Moreover, parents tend to influence their children with their own deeply ingrained prejudice about what they perceive to be low status and high status occupations / professions.

At present, the Philippines is the only country in Asia and among the three remaining countries in the

world that operate a 10 – year basic education. Because of the congested basic education curriculum, high school graduates apparently are insufficiently prepared for making rational career decisions, hence contributing to the increasing unemployment and job mismatch rate among the young and educated. The report of Labor Force Survey done in January 2012 revealed that there are around 7.1 million underemployed Filipinos or an underemployment of 19.4 percent, a result of congested basic education system and unassisted career decision making. With the given facts, there is a need for an enhanced educational system and career guidance activities that will help students choose the appropriate career oath based on their interest and competency, as well as the market demand must be strengthened [3].

To address the current dilemma, the Philippine Congress ratified law in the implementation of K to 12 Enhanced Basic Education. The K to 12 Education Program, a functional basic education system is composed of a year of Kindergarten Education, six years of elementary and six years of secondary education. The six years of secondary education is divided into four years of junior high school and two years of senior high school.

Senior High School (SHS) is specialized upper secondary education; students may choose a specialization based on aptitude, interests, and school capacity. The choice of career track will define the content of the subjects a student will take in Grades 11 and 12. These subjects fall under Core Curriculum or Career Pathways. Preparation in education and occupation is very important and must be supported by every educational organization. Students must select the appropriate field of study considering their capacity, aptitude and interest to develop them to the best.

Choosing a career is not easy. It is a fact that work is the center of all human activities and that it is not meant only as a means of earning a living but also for achieving a satisfaction. Students need to look for possible factors that affect their decision making. They need to choose a career that fits in their skills and abilities which they want to engage in. If they are properly educated, chances are they will have a better future and ever ready to face the world of work for the improvement of their lives.

The process of choosing a career takes a long period of time for some people. Typically, it requires thinking and serious consideration of several factors

because, in the end, one might not be able to land in a job that he has dreamed of. It is a fact that everybody wants prosperity in life. One should not make a rush decision in choosing a career and has to be careful enough to avoid mistakes on it since the heedful choice of a career determine one's future

The importance of serious planning or choosing a vocation especially for those whose decisions are greatly influence by their parents, relatives and friends leave them with problems of choosing what they really want to be. The influences in choosing a vocation can affect one's career life. It is important for an individual to know his abilities and interests.

Students are making decisions that greatly affect their future educational and career paths. Many times they do not have the necessary information or assistance to help them make decisions that would engender success in their educational and career paths. For students to be able to think about their career plans, they must have a foundation of career awareness and experiences. These experiences can help them realize what is required of them when interested in a certain career or career cluster and help them form realistic career plans.

Many students who are studying in the upper secondary schools will enter college without visualizing their talents, gifts, abilities and strengths. They cannot see where they are going to or what they want to become. They randomly follow life or career paths that seem interesting for the moment but for which they may be ill – suited and run into repeated dead ends [3]. The researcher observed that students have inadequate information about the different career choices. Some students tend to base their career choice on the result of the aptitude tests and interest tests administered to them while others' choices are based on their parent's preferences, peer influence, role models and the chance of working abroad.

From the situation and condition cited, the researchers felt that is deemed necessary to undertake a study that may point out the career preferences of Grade 9 students to help them discover the gift in themselves as well as to prepare them for Senior High School (grades 11 and 12) because one of the identified reasons for job and skills mismatch and underemployment is the lack of career information. It also serves as a guidepost to determine such factors affecting their career choice. In addition to this, helping the students become aware of the importance of choosing a right career will lessen the number of

students who are possibly shifting courses and eventually minimize the risk of dropping from the school. Furthermore, it will strengthen the career guidance and counseling services of the school since it will help the students to make good career choices and prevent them from falling into the unemployment and job mismatch traps. Since the researcher's school is going to open a Senior High School (SHS) Program, this study will be of great help to determine the courses/programs to be offered by the school that will lead the students in their proper choice of tracks.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main concern of the study is to determine the socio demographic characteristic of the subjects in terms of residence, parents' highest educational attainment, family income, number of children in the family, sibling's position in the family; and mental ability; career choice of the respondents and their reason for choosing the career.

METHODS

The study made use of the descriptive method of research. The main source of data was a research-made questionnaire which was validated by the experts in the field of education handling graduate courses and tried out in one class of a central school. The researcher asked permission from the administrators of the private secondary institutions and personally administered the distribution of instrument and data gathering. The researcher explained some instructions in accomplishing the instrument.

The respondents of the study were the 189 Grade 9 students from a total population of 358 students from the private institutions in San Jose Batangas during academic year 2014 – 2015. Random sampling was used to determine the sample population. The private schools are St. Joseph Academy, Oblates of St. Joseph Minor Seminary, St. Anthony Montessori and Concepcion Aguila Memorial College. Frequency, percentage, ranking and mean were the statistical tools used in the study.

The questionnaire made use of Likert's scale to determine the factors and reason for choosing a career and how the career choice relates to their profile characteristics. Ravens standard mental ability test was utilized to determine the mental ability of the students. The five point rating scale was used in rating the responses of the respondents. Thus, Very Strongly

Agree (VSE) 5points, Strongly Agree (SA) 4points, Agree (A) 3points and Disagree (D) 2points and Strongly Disagree (SD) 1point.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-demographic characteristics of the subjects

The demographic profile of the subjects involved in the study were described as residence, educational attainment of their parent, family income number of children in the family, sibling's position in the family and their mental ability. Majority of the student respondents were female (52.91%) and residing in rural areas (61.90%) in San Jose, Batangas. Most father (79.90%) and mother (85.19%) of the student-respondents was able to finish college education and secondary level and significant number of parent was able to reach college level. The data show that parents possess good standing in terms of educational attainment and they give high regards in the education of their children.

It was found out that majority of the respondents (65.66%) have the family income of 25,000 and below while rest of the parents of the respondents have monthly income up to more than one hundred thousand pesos. This shows that most parent earn their income from a well-compensated business or occupation.

As regards to number of siblings, the data indicate that most of the families have 5 or less children with 87.83%. It can be inferred that parents are capable in sending their children in private schools during the conduct of the study since not all of their children are in secondary level. It can be disclosed that sending children in basic education to private schools in the Philippines somehow give impression of being in better economic status. The data shows that there are 73 respondents or 38.62 percent who are eldest sibling in the family. Fifty three or 28.04 percent are youngest sibling in the family. It was found out that 105 respondents or 55.56 percent of the respondents are definitely above the average using the standardized test in assessing their mental ability.

Career Choice of the Students

Career choice refers to the act of choosing a profession for which to train and undertake as a permanent calling [4]. It is operationally defined as the preference of an individual in which he chooses a course that will bring him to his future stability.

It can be viewed also in the table that there are 20 respondents or 10.58 percent who preferred Arts and Design Track. From this total number of respondents, both 5 of respondents or 2.65 percent chose the strand of Media Arts and Visual Arts and Dance strand. Four of the respondents or 2.12 percent chose Music and Theater strands. Least of the chosen strand is the Literary Arts with 1 respondent or 0.53 percent.

It may be interpreted that some of the students are business minded in nature. They see that through Arts and Design, it will help them observe the movement of the industry so they can put up their own business right after they finished senior high school. Those artistically inclined are satisfied by a variety of activities including writing, editing, performing in music, drama or dance and painting or sculpting.

Table 1: Distribution of the Respondents in terms of Career Choice

Career Choice	F	%	R
Academic			
Accountancy, Business and Management	49	26.92	2
Humanities and Social Sciences	11	5.82	6
Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics	68	35.98	1
General Academic Strand	14	7.41	4
Total	142	75.13	
Sports			
Arts and Design			
Media Arts and Visual Arts	5	2.65	8.5
Literary Arts	1	0.53	15
Dance	5	2.65	8.5
Music	4	2.12	11
Theater	4	2.12	11
Performing Arts Production	1	0.53	15
Total	20	10.58	
Technical – Vocational Livelihood			
Home Economics	6	3.18	7
Information Communication Technology	3	1.59	13
Agri – Fishery Arts	2	1.06	14
Industrial Arts	4	2.12	11
Total	15	7.94	3
Over – all Total	189	100	

Furthermore, the table displayed that 15 respondents or 7.94 percent chose the Technical–Vocational Livelihood Education Track. Six respondents or 3.18 percent of this chose the Home

Economics strand, 4 respondents or 2.12 percent chose Industrial Arts strand, 3 respondents or 1.59 percent preferred Information Communication Technology strand and two respondents or 1.06 percent wanted Agri–Fishery Arts. Presumably, these students are the few ones who had low family income. This can also be interpreted that since there are few business firm, factory and company within the locality, the students are not that interested to pursue technical or vocational courses.

Based from the result, it can be interpreted that majority of the respondents are interested to enroll in Academic Track this is because they want to pursue their tertiary education. They would rather engage in education upon entering to college than to be employed or to be an entrepreneur. For them they would like to prepare themselves for better opportunities in the future by pursuing college education. According to Ref [5], in the society, still most people believe that a good education or a college degree is a key to success for a better future.

There are 142 respondents or 75.13 percent who like to enroll in Academic track. Of these 142 respondents or 75.13 percent, 68 or 35.98 percent chose Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. Forty – nine or 26.92 percent chose Accountancy, Business and Management. Fourteen respondents or 7.41 percent chose General Academic Strand and 11 respondents or 5.82 percent chose Humanities and Social Sciences.

Reasons for Choosing the Career in Relation to Socio Demographic Characteristics of the Subjects

Reasons for Choosing Career as to Residence

As indicated by the weighted mean of 3.55, respondents strongly agree that they are aware of the available opportunity at their locality when they graduate. This ranked first in the identified reasons for choosing career as to residence. The data supports the findings revealed that the availability of work after college is the first consideration of students in choosing a course in college [6]. It was found out that the least reasons for choosing career are: it is the only course in the university which is near/close to their home; they are limited to a career choice by what is schooling in their area and they are limited to a career choice by the industry in their area. These items obtained the weighted mean of 2.67. Availability of advancement opportunities and learning experiences are the most influential factors affecting career

choices among students as revealed by Kochung and Migunde [7].

Table 3: Reasons for Choosing the Career as to Residence

Items	WM	VI	Rank
I choose the course because:			
1. I am aware of the available opportunity at my locality when I graduate.	3.55	Strongly Agree	1
2. I feel the prospects of landing a job near my residency.	3.24	Agree	2
3. It is the only course in the university which is near/close to our home.	2.67	Agree	4
4. I am limited to a career choice by what is schooling in my area.	2.67	Agree	4
5. I am limited to a career choice by the industry in my area.	2.67	Agree	4
Composite Mean	2.96	Agree	

Reasons for Choosing Career as to Parents' Educational Attainment

It was found out that respondents strongly agree that they look up to their parents as role models for their future career. It obtained the weighted mean of 3.56. It is followed by the items that they were thinking of their parents' occupation and they are aware of the very high standards their parents set regarding their future. These obtained the weighted means of 3.40 and 3.35 respectively and rated agree by the respondents. Moreover, rated as agree but lowest in the rank order distribution and obtained the weighted mean of 2.65 is that they are expected to follow their parents' footsteps. The composite mean

of 3.12 revealed that the respondents agreed on the identified reasons for choosing career as to parents' educational attainment. There are intrinsic or extrinsic factors that influences the career choice of the students. Most people are influenced by careers that their parents favour, others follow the careers that their educational choices have opened for them, some choose to follow their passion regardless of how much or little it will make them while others choose the careers that give high income[8]. Students perception of being suitable for particular jobs also has been found to be influenced by a number of factors including ethnic background, year in school, level of achievement, choice of science subjects, attitudes and differences in job characteristics[9].

Reasons for Choosing Career as to Family Income.

As obtained by the weighted mean of 3.40, the respondents agreed that the reasons for choosing career as to family income show that they do not want to have a feeling of financial pressure regarding the payments for their college expenses followed by dreaming of putting up business by themselves to help their respective family financially (3.32). Lowest in rank are the items that they are self - supporting students and they believed it to be the most low cost course as obtained by the weighted mean of 2.43 respectively.

The composite mean of 2.97 reveal that the respondents agreed on the identified reasons of choosing career as to family income for the reasons that the students experiences or witness the financial capabilities and experiences of their respective family. Ref [8] disclosed in his study that others choose the careers that give high compensation.

Table 3: Reasons for Choosing Career as to Parents' Educational Attainment

I choose the course because:	WM	VI	Rank
1. I am thinking of my parent's occupation.	3.35	Agree	3
2. I am expected to follow my parent's footsteps.	2.65	Agree	10
3. I am considering the business of the family.	2.87	Agree	8
4. I look up to my parents as role models for my future career.	3.56	Strongly Agree	1
5. I am following my parents' work and some of my uncles/aunties do that kind of work also.	3.18	Agree	5
6. I am trained by my parents in the field related to their work.	2.78	Agree	9
7. I am aware of the very high standards my parents set regarding my future.	3.40	Agree	2
8. I am expected to observe family tradition and practices.	3.0	Agree	7
9. I am considering the achievement of my parents.	3.10	Agree	6
10. I am thinking of the amount of schooling my parents received.	3.31	Agree	4
Composite Mean	3.12	Agree	

Table 4: Reasons for Choosing Career as to Family Income

I choose the course because:	WM	VI	Rank
1. I am self – supporting student.	2.43	Disagree	9.5
2. I am considering the tuition fee.	3.23	Agree	3
3. I do not want additional expenses for my family.	3.15	Agree	5
4. I am fortunate to have parents who want me in prestigious school just like theirs before.	3.18	Agree	4
5. I want to put up business to help my family financially.	3.32	Agree	2
6. I do not want to feel financial pressure regarding the payments for my college expenses.	3.40	Agree	1
7. I am dependent on my elder siblings for financial support.	2.74	Agree	8
8. I am considering the expenses of the other members of the family.	2.75	Agree	7
9. I am only allowed to take the course that can be supported by my family earnings.	3.09	Agree	6
10. It is believed to be the most low cost course.	2.43	Disagree	9.5
Composite Mean	2.97	Agree	

Table 5: Reasons for Choosing the Career as to Mental Ability

I choose the course because:	WM	VI	Rank
1. I am good in solving problems.	3.17	Agree	9
2. I am fond of reasoning.	3.26	Agree	8
3. I have the ability to think of logical solution quickly.	3.31	Agree	7
4. I am capable of expressing thoughts verbally and non-verbally.	3.36	Agree	6
5. I am mentally capable of what is required of the course.	3.47	Agree	3.5
6. I excel in major subjects.	3.15	Agree	10
7. I am confident that I will have an outstanding performance here.	3.47	Agree	3.5
8. I feel confident about my ability to do well in the course.	3.67	Strongly Agree	2
9. I have my grade point average that is suited for the course.	3.38	Agree	5
10. I believe that I am intellectually satisfied with it.	3.80	Strongly Agree	1
Composite Mean	3.40	Agree	

Reasons for Choosing Career as to Mental Ability

The highest weighted mean of 3.80 indicates that the respondents strongly agreed on the belief that they are intellectually satisfied. It ranked first on the list of identified reasons for choosing career. The composite mean of 3.40 revealed that the respondents agreed on the identified reasons of choosing career as to mental ability. The finding is in line with the notion that some organizational and industrial and psychologists are in disagreement on the issue of the significance of mental ability in aspects of work such as personnel selection and job performance. According to Anderson [10] mental ability results are very good predictors of real-world accomplishments. Within the world of work, general mental ability has been found to be associated with job performance and career success [11]. Gottfredson [12] has claimed that

mental ability as measured by IQ tests is the single most effective predictor known of individual performance at school and on the job in the future. It also predicts many other aspects of human being.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Career choices of most of the students are influenced by numerous factors like outcome expectancies, individual variants such as sex, personal interests, learning experiences, environmental factors and personal contacts. Individuals' career success can be best realized if the right career choice suited to his ability, personality, background and intellect serves as his guide in choosing the course he has to take in tertiary education. Experiencing the career suited to students by integrating career plan with the curriculum help students make good decisions in what course to

take in college. Every individual tend to choose a career that is reflective of his personality. Because people tend to be attracted to certain jobs, the environment then reflects this personality.

In this study, majority of the respondents are female, residing in rural areas whose parents are college graduate and are employed with average monthly income of Php15, 000.00. Majority of the respondents are eldest son or daughter with 3 – 5 numbers of siblings in the family and with above average mental ability. They preferred the STEM strand of the academic track. The reason for choosing the career as to sex and residence is that the respondents are aware of the available opportunity at their locality when they graduate. As to parents' highest educational attainment, most of the respondents believed that they look up to their parents as role models for their future career. The respondents reasoned out that they do not want to feel financial pressure regarding the payments for their college expenses. Lastly, they believed that they are intellectually satisfied with their career choice.

The socio-demographic profile of the respondents such as sex, parents' educational attainment, family income and mental ability show significant relationship to career choice of the respondents. The assessed behavior and attitudes of the respondents greatly affect their career choice. Significant variables from the findings of the study may be utilized in proposing a career program guide focused on how to help the students decide on their future career.

The students should be provided with effective orientation on what career is really all about. This could be done by school's guidance counselor, the teachers or parents. Secure a close – up tie among the guidance personnel, teachers, students, and parents to promote a better understanding of the factors which influence the career choice of the students. It is the desired of the researchers that the implementation of the recommended actions be done for the development of the career guidance program to help the students choose proper courses which will eventually bring them to their desired employment/job for their satisfaction and improvement of their status in life as a whole.

A similar study may be conducted utilizing other group of respondents specifically from the public secondary schools and additional variables that would enrich the findings uncovered in this study like the

psycho – social factors associated with the preferences for academic professions over technical courses.

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