

Factors that Impact the College Program Selection of Senior High School Students

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Abstract: *The process of choosing a college program is a significant decision for senior high school students as it can shape their future academic and career paths. Various factors influence this decision, and they can have both positive and negative impacts on students' mental and academic well-being. In this regard, this study focused on the factors influencing senior high students of Saint Paul University Surigao in choosing their college program, the school year 2022-2023. The participants in this study were Grade 12 students of Saint Paul University Surigao, providing a diverse range of data for collection. The researcher employed a quantitative-descriptive research methodology. The study was conducted by handing out survey questionnaires to 4 strands consisting of 12 sections using a simple random technique. The survey questionnaires focused on the factors influencing students' college course choices based on two identified variables: considerations about the institution and future job opportunities. After gathering and analyzing the data using One-way ANOVA, the study shows that certain factors had adverse repercussions on the overall health and academic performance of Grade 12 students. Moreover, the study identified a significant difference between the factors influencing senior high school students in choosing their college program, particularly in considerations about the institution and future job opportunities. An increase in the impact of these factors led to an increase in students' decision-making processes. Overall, the study emphasizes the importance of understanding the factors that influence senior high school students in choosing their college program. Certain factors can negatively impact students' well-being, and there is a significant difference in the factors that influence their decision-making processes. These findings can provide valuable insights for educators and policymakers in developing effective strategies to support students in making informed decisions about their academic and career paths.*

Keywords: College Courses, Senior High School students, Considerations about the Institution, Future Job Opportunities

I. INTRODUCTION

The challenge of choosing future job routes is one that high school graduates must deal with every year. Two crucial decisions that students make now are whether or not to pursue further education and which institution to enroll in. As the world develops, life gets more interconnected, and to be successful, people must consider the financial benefit of each profession they take on. A student graduating from high school nowadays may find him/herself in a challenging situation due to the number of courses available. Selecting a course is a crucial step. Several more elements might influence a high school graduate's course selection.

Career development is deciding on a career, honing skills, and progressing in a chosen field. A person's career is a continuous progression in life, shaped by their experiences, beliefs, knowledge, and personal growth. In today's complex educational system, particularly in the Philippines, students often face challenges in making career choices due to factors such as lack of knowledge, interest, and personal issues that may affect their motivation. Decision-making in a career choice is not easy, as it requires careful consideration of various interconnected components, including a student's experiences, moments, and perspectives on their future.

The researcher has observed that many students need more confidence in their talents and are often hesitant and uncertain when choosing a college program while dealing with various influencing factors. This has motivated the

researcher to conduct this study to analyze the factors that impact students' career choices and how counselors, parents, and universities can design effective career counseling and guidance programs to support students in making informed and appropriate career decisions.

The current educational environment presented students with significant difficulties in career development because of several elements that influence their decision-making. A person's experiences, beliefs, knowledge, and personal growth all affect the complicated career development process. Their life experiences continuously shape an individual's destiny and level of success in the workplace. Given the complexity of the educational system today, selecting a professional route can be a complex undertaking for students. Numerous reasons, such as a lack of information, interest, and personal issues that could deter motivation, cause difficulties for many students when choosing a vocation.

II. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The process of selecting a future career path is a crucial and challenging aspect of high school graduates' lives. As they complete their education journey, they are confronted with two significant decisions: whether to pursue further education and which institution to enroll in for their chosen course. In today's rapidly developing world, marked by increased interconnectedness and a strong emphasis on financial success, these choices carry even more weight and importance.

Saint Paul University Surigao, like many educational institutions, faces the ongoing task of guiding its senior high school students through the process of choosing college programs that align with their interests, skills, and aspirations. The diverse array of courses available in the current educational landscape adds complexity to this decision-making process, leaving many students uncertain and hesitant about their future paths.

Career development plays a pivotal role in this journey, encompassing the critical steps of identifying a career, honing relevant skills, and advancing within a chosen field. A person's career trajectory is shaped by their life experiences, beliefs, knowledge, and personal growth, making it a continuous journey of self-discovery and achievement.

In the context of the Philippines, the intricacies of the educational system present unique challenges to students when making career choices. Some of these challenges include the lack of access to comprehensive information about various professions, personal issues that may hinder motivation, and a limited understanding of their own interests and strengths. Such factors can cause confusion and indecision among students, impacting their ability to make well-informed and appropriate career decisions.

Recognizing the significance of these challenges, researcher has taken an interest in understanding the factors that influence the career choices of senior high school students at Saint Paul University Surigao. The researcher aims to delve into the complexities of this decision-making process and identify the key elements that shape students' career preferences. By gaining insights into these factors, the study seeks to bridge the gap between students' aspirations and the available resources and support systems that can guide them towards suitable career paths.

The outcomes of this study are expected to provide valuable information that can aid educators, counselors, parents, and the university administration in designing effective career counseling and guidance programs. With a better understanding of the factors influencing career choices, institutions can offer targeted support and resources to empower students in making informed decisions about their futures.

In conclusion, as the world evolves, the significance of choosing the right career path becomes increasingly crucial for the success and fulfillment of high school graduates. Understanding the factors that influence their career decisions is essential in providing the necessary guidance and support to shape their futures positively. Through this study, Saint Paul University Surigao aims to contribute to the holistic development of its students, preparing them for the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead in their chosen professions.

III. METHODOLOGY

The research employed a quantitative-descriptive research design, primarily utilizing descriptive research to define respondent characteristics through close-ended questions. The use of close-ended questions aimed to derive concrete conclusions about the respondents' perspectives. The study's main focus was to explore the Factors Influencing College Program Selection among Senior High School Students at Saint Paul University Surigao. Additionally, this research design was utilized to compare and validate existing conditions.

The researcher opted for a descriptive-survey approach, distributing questionnaires to the participants to gather information. The study's participants comprised Grade 12 students from the Senior High School department of St. Paul University Surigao, enrolled during the school year 2022-2023. The total number of participants in the study was 219, and their selection was carried out using a simple random sampling method.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results revealed a complex interplay of factors that influence the college program selection of senior high school students at Saint Paul University Surigao. The findings underscore the importance of fostering students' self-awareness, exploring their interests and passions, and providing adequate support and guidance from parents and counsellors to facilitate well-informed and suitable career decisions. Moreover, the study's results can serve as a valuable resource for educational institutions in designing effective career counselling programs that address the diverse needs and aspirations of their students.

TABLE 1: PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Profile		f (n=219)	%
Sex			
	Male	87	39.70
	Female	132	60.30
Strand			
	Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)	105	47.90
	Accountancy Business and Management (ABM)	45	20.50
	Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS)	54	24.70
	Arts and Design Track (ADT) / Technical Vocational Livelihood (TVL)	15	6.80

Table 1 presents the distribution of participants based on their sex. The majority of the participants were female, accounting for 132 (60.30%) of the total sample. On the other hand, the number of male participants was the lowest, comprising 87 (39.70%) of the total respondents.

Regarding the participants' academic strands, out of the 219 participants, nearly half belonged to the STEM strand, representing 105 (47.90%) of the total sample. The HUMSS strand had the next highest representation, with 54 (24.70%) participants. Following that, the ABM strand accounted for 45 (20.50%) participants. The least frequently represented strand was ADT/TVL, constituting 15 (6.80%) of the entire sample.

TABLE 2: FACTORS INFLUENCING ON SHS STUDENTS IN THEIR COLLEGE PROGRAM

INDICATORS	M	SD	VI	QD
Considerations About the Institution				
1. I know the school's reputation and track record in producing successful graduates in my field of study.	3.27	0.61	SA	VH
2. I consider the school's location and accessibility to ensure a convenient education experience.	3.37	0.67	SA	VH
3. I took into account how well my chosen school can teach my chosen course.	3.41	0.64	SA	VH
4. I consider the faculty's expertise and credentials to ensure high-quality education.	3.34	0.63	SA	VH
5. I look into the school's resources, including internships and networking opportunities, to support my future career goals.	3.29	0.67	SA	VH
6. I examine the resources and support services offered, such as counseling, tutoring, and career services	3.10	0.66	A	H

7. I rely on the opinions of friends and peers to gauge the quality of the professors in my field.	2.97	0.78	A	H
8. I consider the core programs of the school to choose my preferred course.	3.20	0.62	A	H
9. I am motivated to learn by the school's facilities and services that could offer me the best education.	3.35	0.70	SA	VH
10. I investigate the school's alumni network to gauge their success and potential for professional connections	2.99	0.76	A	H
Average:	3.23	0.67	A	H

Table 2 provides compelling evidence indicating that participants highly prioritize considering the institution as a critical factor influencing their college course choices. The data reveals a significant level of agreement among the participants, with a general average (M) of 3.23 and a standard deviation (SD) of 0.67. This high qualitative rating underscores the students' deep appreciation for various institutional factors, such as the institution's reputation, location and accessibility, faculty expertise and credentials, available resources like internships and networking opportunities, and the strength of the alumni network, all of which significantly influence their college course decisions.

The results underscore the crucial role institutional factors play in shaping the decision-making process of senior high school students when selecting their college programs. In particular, one statement stood out as being of utmost importance to the participants: "I took into account how well my chosen school can teach my chosen course." This statement garnered the highest mean (M=3.41, SD=0.64), signifying a strong agreement and a qualitatively described very high rating. Evidently, students prioritize the academic preparedness offered by their chosen institution, recognizing the institution's role in preparing them for future endeavors. Additionally, the participants strongly agreed that assessing their capabilities in their chosen field is essential, further highlighting the significance of academic preparedness in their decision-making process.

Further exploration of the reasons behind students' emphasis on academic preparedness from their chosen institution could lead to the development of effective strategies and programs that meet these expectations. This, in turn, could enhance student satisfaction and success rates, aligning with findings from previous studies conducted by Nwankwo&Bamidele (2019) and Yulianti&Hadiwidjojo (2018) that emphasized students' preference for universities known for offering top-notch instruction and producing outstanding graduates.

The statement "I consider the school's location and accessibility to ensure a convenient education experience" received the second-highest mean (M=3.37, SD=0.67), further indicating a strong agreement and a qualitatively described very high rating. This finding suggests that accessibility is a significant factor influencing students' decisions when choosing institutions offering their desired courses. Factors like proximity to home, cost of living, and transportation accessibility likely impact students' choices (Alao et al., 2020 and Fakunle and Ojo, 2018).

In contrast, two statements received less agreement from the participants. "I rely on the opinions of friends and peers to gauge the quality of the professors in my field" had the lowest mean (M=2.97, SD=0.78), followed by "I investigate the school's alumni network to gauge their success and potential for professional connections," which had the second lowest mean (M=2.99, SD=0.76). Both statements were still classified as "Agree" and described as high in agreement. These findings indicate that a majority of the participants did not consider peer opinions and alumni network analysis as highly relevant factors in their decision-making process. Instead, students appear to prioritize more concrete details when selecting institutions, focusing on factors such as reputation and academic quality, as supported by previous research (Nwankwo and Bamidele, 2019).

In conclusion, the study's findings underscore the significance of academic preparedness and institutional accessibility as influential factors in the decision-making process of senior high school students when selecting their college programs. Educational institutions must acknowledge and consider these factors when designing their strategies and programs. Moreover, encouraging students to explore multiple sources of information when evaluating the quality of professors and courses and conducting student satisfaction surveys and focus group discussions can provide valuable insights to enhance student decision-making and satisfaction with their college choices.

TABLE 3: FACTORS INFLUENCING ON SHS STUDENTS IN THEIR COLLEGE PROGRAM

INDICATORS	M	SD	VI	QD
Future Job Opportunities				
1. I compare job market trends in my field of study to ensure strong job prospects in the future.	3.22	0.70	A	H
2. I weigh the balance between my personal interests and the practicality of employment opportunities before selecting my education and career path.	3.31	0.70	SA	VH
3. I carefully consider the job stability and prospects of my chosen course to ensure a secure future.	3.40	0.67	SA	VH
4. My course selection is based on the prospect of ease in securing employment.	3.26	0.71	SA	VH
5. I consider the job options offered by my selected education and the stability they would provide for me.	3.32	0.63	SA	VH
6. When choosing my course, I consider how the available job opportunities could challenge and enhance my skills work.	3.33	0.68	SA	VH
7. I am pursuing a career that aligns with my passions and where I believe I can excel.	3.34	0.70	SA	VH
8. My career choice is driven by a combination of my interests and potential for success.	3.42	0.65	SA	VH
9. In determining my career path, I am considering both my skills and limitations to find the best fit for me.	3.48	0.62	SA	VH
10. I go after a career that correlates with my potential to extinguish and strengthen my skills.	3.37	0.65	SA	VH
Average:	3.34	0.68	SA	VH

As shown in Table 3, the participants strongly emphasized the significance of future job opportunities as a crucial factor influencing their college course decisions, with a mean score of 3.34 (SD=0.68), qualitatively described as very high. This highlights the participants' awareness of the importance of earning potential and future career prospects when making their choices.

Various factors such as personal skills, job stability, passion, and career interests were highly valued by the students during their college program selection (Akinmoladun and Akintayo, 2016; Shafiq et al., 2019). Notably, the aspect of comparing market trends appeared to be less relevant to the participants.

Among the indicators assessed, the statement "In determining my career path, I am considering both my skills and limitations to find the best fit for me" received the highest mean score of 3.48 (SD=0.62), indicating a strong agreement and qualitatively described as very high. This suggests that students carefully consider their abilities and limitations as determining factors when choosing their college program for future endeavors. Additionally, the statement "My career choice is driven by a combination of my interests and potential for success" obtained the second-highest mean score of 3.42 (SD=0.65), also receiving a verbal interpretation of strongly agree and a qualitative description of very high. This highlights the importance of considering one's skills and interests in the college course selection process, as it provides insight into one's capabilities and passions, influencing their career aspirations and goals. This finding aligns with previous research by Wang & Huang (2017) and Ozdemir (2019), emphasizing the significance of personal passions and interests in the college course selection process.

However, the indicator "I compare job market trends in my field of study to ensure strong job prospects in the future" obtained the lowest mean score of 3.22 (SD=0.70), indicating agreement and qualitatively described as high. This suggests that students may not strongly prioritize comparing job market trends in their chosen field of study when making their college course decisions. Similarly, the indicator "My course selection is based on the prospect of ease securing employment" received the second lowest mean score of 3.26 (SD=0.71), with a verbal interpretation of strongly agree and a qualitative description of very high. This indicates that while students agree on the importance of

considering their chosen course's alignment with future job prospects, they may not heavily rely on market trends when selecting their college programs. Nonetheless, students do acknowledge the significance of analyzing the current job market trends and employment prospects in their chosen field. This includes factors such as demand, which plays a crucial role in determining employment opportunities. Previous studies by Alao, Lawal, and Isiaka (2020) and Ozdemir (2019) have also highlighted that students often choose programs that are in high demand in the job market and offer ample opportunities for career progression.

In conclusion, the findings from this study underscore the students' awareness of the importance of future job opportunities and aligning their skills and interests with their college program choices. While comparing market trends may not be the primary concern, considering the alignment of their chosen course with future job prospects remains significant. This insight can aid educational institutions in understanding the factors that students prioritize when making college course decisions, assisting in the development of programs and strategies that cater to students' needs and aspirations. According to Rasoulinezhad et al. (2019), fuel plays a crucial role in various sectors of the economy, including transportation, agriculture, industry, and households, making it a key factor in production. Higher commodity prices have long-term effects on inflation expectations, particularly impacting the prices of imported food items and other consumption goods.

Participants agreed with this indicator, as evidenced by a mean score of 2.71 and a standard deviation of 0.85, with a qualitative description of "High." As fuel prices rise, the cost of producing petrochemicals, a key ingredient in plastic manufacturing, also increases. This results in higher prices for plastic products, such as containers, bottles, cups, and more. Additionally, supply disruptions and increased demand for plastic products can further contribute to price increases. The impact of higher plastic prices is significant for businesses heavily reliant on plastic packaging. To mitigate the effects of price increases, some microenterprises may explore alternative materials and production methods or increase the prices of their final products. The study shows that microenterprise owners in Bad-as recognized the high effect of fuel price hikes on plastic-related products.

According to Domingo & Halevi (2022), more than 99% of plastic is derived from fossil fuels, making it a substantial contributor to global climate change. In the past, crude oil was a major contributor to inflation due to its economic importance and role as a key ingredient in petrochemicals used for plastic production. Consequently, high oil prices lead to higher prices for products made with plastic (Lioudis, 2022).

Overall, the average response to the effect of fuel price hikes on inflation for microenterprises in Bad-as, Placer, Surigao del Norte can be verbally interpreted as "Agree" and qualitatively described as "High," with an average mean of 3.10 and a standard deviation of 0.80. The study highlights the significant impact of fuel price hikes on inflation, causing a ripple effect through transportation costs, production expenses, and consumer prices, affecting microenterprises in the region.

V. CONCLUSION

The study delved into the factors influencing the college program selection of senior high school students at Saint Paul University Surigao. The research utilized a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection methods to gain a comprehensive understanding of the decision-making process. The findings shed light on the key elements that significantly influence students' career choices and provided valuable insights into their preferences and considerations.

One of the prominent factors that emerged from the study was the importance of students' interests and passions in guiding their college program choices. The majority of the participants highlighted the significance of pursuing a course that aligns with their personal interests, emphasizing the role of intrinsic motivation in shaping their decisions. Parental influence was another influential factor, with many students considering their parents' guidance and suggestions when making career choices.

Career opportunities and job prospects emerged as critical considerations for the participants. Students recognized the importance of selecting a college program that offers potential for growth and financial stability in their future careers. Additionally, academic performance played a role in the decision-making process, as students considered their strengths in particular subjects and sought courses that aligned with their academic achievements.

The study's results also underscored the importance of institutional factors in influencing students' college program choices. Factors such as the reputation of the school, faculty expertise, available resources, and alumni network were crucial considerations for the participants. Accessibility and location of the institution were also significant factors impacting their decisions.

In terms of career development, students showed a strong awareness of their capabilities and limitations, considering these aspects when determining their career path. Aligning their skills and interests with their chosen course was a vital factor in shaping their college program decisions.

However, the study revealed that comparing market trends in their chosen field of study was not a highly emphasized factor for the participants. While students acknowledged the importance of considering future job prospects and the ease of securing employment, they seemed to prioritize other considerations when selecting their college programs.

In conclusion, the findings from this study highlight the complexity of the decision-making process faced by senior high school students when choosing their college programs. Personal interests, parental influence, career opportunities, and institutional factors all play significant roles in shaping their decisions. Educational institutions can use these insights to develop effective career counseling and guidance programs, aligning with students' needs and aspirations. By providing comprehensive support and information, institutions can empower students to make well-informed and suitable career decisions, ultimately fostering their success and fulfillment in their chosen professions. Moreover, the distinct impact of high oil prices varies depending on the type of microenterprise. While some businesses can pass on costs to customers, others face challenges due to their reliance on fuel for operations.

Consumer expenditure was also found to be heavily affected by fuel price hikes. The rise in fuel prices puts a strain on microenterprises, making it difficult for them to cover their business operations adequately. Even though they may earn more profit, it is often insufficient to sustain their businesses, impacting their long-term viability.

Overall, the results indicate that fuel price hikes have profound implications for microenterprises in Bad-as, Placer, Surigao del Norte. These businesses are particularly sensitive to changes in fuel costs due to their dependence on transportation and the production of goods and commodities. It is evident that fuel prices play a crucial role in shaping their operational costs, pricing decisions, and overall financial stability.

As fuel prices continue to fluctuate in the global market, it is essential for microenterprise owners in the region to remain vigilant and adapt their strategies to mitigate the impact of such price changes. Exploring alternative transportation methods, sourcing locally, and implementing cost-saving measures can aid in alleviating the effects of fuel price hikes on their businesses.

In light of these findings, policymakers and stakeholders need to recognize the importance of supporting microenterprises in managing the challenges posed by fuel price fluctuations. Providing access to resources, financial assistance, and sustainable business practices can contribute to the resilience and growth of these vital components of the local economy.

Overall, this study sheds light on the complexities of fuel price hikes and their effects on microenterprises, emphasizing the need for proactive measures and support to ensure their continued contribution to economic growth and development in the region.

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