

Determinants of Career Paths Among Grade 12 Students, Division of Agusan del Norte, Philippines

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Gunning Fog Index: 12.09 • Originality: 99% • Grammar Check 99%
Flesch Reading Ease: 44.55 • Plagiarism: 1%



ABSTRACT

A career path is an important part of one's life that is influenced by several factors. This study aimed to ascertain one of the determinants of career path among Grade 12 students in the division of Agusan del Norte. The researcher utilized the descriptive-correlational research design. The respondents of the study are the Grade 12 students who were officially enrolled in the school year 2019-2020, their parents and guardians, their teachers, and their guidance advocates. Collected data were tabulated and treated with appropriate statistical techniques. Based on the findings, school and community factors have a high extent of manifestation than peer factors in the social and environmental influence of career paths among the respondents. In addition, the college pathway is the first preference of the respondents after completing senior high school degree than taking technical-vocational courses, work while studying, and seeking employment. Engaging in the business venture after graduation is the least preferred path. Moreover, family characteristics, social and environmental influence, and access and equity significantly relate to student's career pathways. It was recommended that the school heads consider stakeholders' involvement, including teachers, parents, community, and guidance counselors, to enhance career guidance programs at school. The empowerment of teachers and guidance counselors shall be sustained by involving them in the school improvement planning and activities, providing them career guidance trainings and seminars.

KEYWORDS

Career paths, peer influence, school influence, community influence, descriptive-correlational, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

The decision towards a career depends on the individual's milieu's cognitive factors and social structures (Braza & Guillo, 2015). Choosing a career is one of the most important life decisions a person must make (Pascual, 2014). It is a decision that most human beings make in their lives; it is a decision that should be carefully considered since it can affect the rest of a person's life (Eyo & Edet, 2011).

Career-related decisions are very complex, with long-term consequences that are not always obvious. Because of the complexity of decisions towards a career, many people require assistance in exploring alternatives and weighing the consequences of various options (Najar & Yousuf, 2019). Amoah et al. (2015) reported that high school years are critical for adolescents because they are a transitional period from school to work. Failure by students to make the right choices may lead to unhappiness and disapproval by society (Mtemeri, 2017).

The right career choice for the students entering professional education or employment is critical, impacting their life and future achievement. This is the turning point: it cannot be left on intuition, preconceived notions, wild imaginations, or popular concepts. This individual action is manifested on a larger scale in the economic prosperity of a nation. Individuals who are misfits in their workplace tend to be less productive and efficient and, therefore, cannot achieve their goals. The concept has been explained by Clutter (2010), who defines occupation as a means of living, which has the power to change personalities, determine social status, predict expected earnings, and determine social groups. Thus, its importance cannot be undermined.

The wrong choice of course taken by most high school students adds to new graduate students' unemployment and underemployment rate. Pascual (2014) stated that misfit graduates are considered reasons why there are still youths who are unemployed and underemployed. The reasons could be either that the produced course of graduate's misfit the demand of the present economy, or the graduates do not pose the characteristics required by the industries in need. Mashige & Oduntan (2011) also enunciated that career choice is a complex decision for students since it determines their profession to pursue in life; as students try to make career choices while in secondary school, they face a problem of matching their career choices with their abilities and performance in school. Watson et al. (2010) also acknowledge that students often experience problems when deciding on their career choices.

While uncertainty about a career path is shown to have several disadvantages, having excellent career guidance programs, on the other hand, produced immense benefits to both social and economic development (Olamide & Olawaiye, 2013). One of the primary responsibilities of every school is to provide students an avenue where they can explore and optimize their potentials and consequently prepare them for the real world.

Over the past years, the Philippine Department of Education (DepEd) ensures that Filipino graduates are prepared with what career to take before exiting from high school. DepEd Order No. 41, S. 2015 or otherwise known as “Guidelines on the Senior High School Career Guidance Program and Early Registration” along with the implementation of K to 12 Basic Education Program, highlights include that in the end view of the full implementation of Senior High School (SHS) in SY 2016-2017, the DepEd shall ensure that all Grade 10 completers, including those who are outside the formal education system, are enrolled in the SHS. DepEd order 25 series of 2013 were also issued on the conduct of Career Guidance Week. Furthermore, through the SHS Career Guidance Program, the DepEd shall assist SHS entrants in making informed decisions regarding their choice of track and promote awareness of the importance of choosing a track that suits their skills and interests that matches the available resources and needs of the society.

The State recognizes the important role of guidance and counselors in nation-building. It promotes the sustained development of a reservoir of guidance and counselors whose competence has been determined by honest and credible licensure examinations whose standards of professional practice and service are internationally recognized and globally competitive through their continuing professional development as stipulated in Republic Act No. 9258, an act professionalizing the practice of guidance and counseling.

Career guidance is one of the areas strengthened along with the K-12 implementation. Under DepEd Memorandum No. 161, s. 2016 is the conduct of senior high school career guidance program aimed to prepare Grade 10 students in making informed decisions regarding their choice of SHS track suitable to their skills and interest. The strict implementation of a career guidance program is alongside with Department of Education’s K-12 program goals to produce graduates who are equipped with knowledge and skills to be productive citizens and an additional workforce to promote economic development in the country even after high school. Its main goal is to make every graduate equip with life and career skills ready to go into different paths: further education, employment, or entrepreneurship. Indeed, recognizing the importance of career guidance programs in Philippine schools is not any more an issue.

However, despite DepEd’s effort and remarkable investment in the career guidance program, the experiences of several teachers unfold that majority of pioneering senior high school graduates in the Philippines are uncertain regarding the career path to take. Career awareness during exit from senior high school is not well documented. Poor career guidance assessment and monitoring made school guidance counselors uncertain

on areas that needed to be improved or enhanced. Unfortunately, this will continue to produce graduates unprepared for the real world of employment if not addressed.

Several studies mentioned some reasons why job mismatch is evident in the country. These include; knowledge and skills of graduates, instruction, placement program, physical and laboratory facilities, On-the-job training (OJT), industry linkages, and skills enhancement program (Blazar & Kraft, 2017). The management of secondary schools should create an organization to improve academic areas like Science, English, and Mathematics because it will help the students to choose their desired course (Ramirez & Dizon, 2014). Hence, a career guidance program should be strengthened so that students' career path will be given attention in the earlier stages.

The gap in the implementation of the career guidance program is also evident in the division of Agusan del Norte. This is reflected in the study of Autentico & Alerta (2020), which shows that poor career guidance program in Butuan City leads to a high incidence of job-mismatch among pioneering Senior High School graduates. The said division produces ample senior high school graduates almost every year since the pioneering batch of K-12 curriculum. Problems mentioned in the preceding paragraph are highly evident. Still, no documented data yet about the career path graduates of senior high school take; thus, there is no appropriate basis for proactively acting on the issue.

This research considers the above-mentioned research gap as its main springboard. Mudhovozi & Chireshe (2012) noted that understanding the determinants of career choice will help educators' orient students in career path planning. Besides, it will help policymakers to understand students' career decisions. Investigating and better understanding the factors that contribute to career choice is a recurring interest in higher education as it can impact the development of a society.

The results and findings of the study will hopefully provide the students with a wide range of information on the career paths before making choices. More importantly, the study will provide updated evidence-based data to public and private high schools, particularly in the division of Agusan del Norte, as benchmark data for senior high curricular offerings and implementations and a basis for enhanced career guidance program.

FRAMEWORK

The study is anchored in Krumboltz's Social Learning Theory and Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory in examining the determinants that influence the career paths among high school students. The two theories were chosen because of the relevance to career choices. These include both social and cognitive factors while being sensitive to cultural aspects. Students live in a social world and interact with the environment as they seek guidance towards careers. These theories deal with the cognitive aspects of the students by making decisions.

John Krumboltz's Social Learning Theory, developed in 1979, emphasizes the importance of behavior (actions) and cognition (knowing and thinking) (Sharf, 1997). The essence of Krumboltz's view is that certain generic processes, such as learning experiences, affect the career development of all persons regardless of their cultural affiliations (Lent & Worthington, 2000).

The types of learning experiences that affect an individual depend on the culture (Lent & Worthington, 2000). Krumboltz identified four factors that play an important role in selecting a specific career: genetic endowment, environmental conditions, learning experiences, and task approach skills (Ireh, 1999). According to the Social Learning Theory, genetic endowment refers to those aspects of the individual that are inherited or innate rather than learned. This may set limits on individual career opportunities. Environmental conditions are those conditions that are generally outside the control of the individual and influence skills development and career preferences.

Krumboltz, learning experiences include a) one's career performances because of prior learning experiences; b) individuals' prior learning experiences that eventually influence their career decisions; and c) that individuals' prior learning experiences have a direct effect on their career choices.

Njogu (2019), in his present study titled "Analysis of Factors Influencing Career Choice among Public Secondary School Students in Meru County, Kenya," revealed that individuals might make career decisions based on their observations of their environment. Krumboltz emphasized task approach skills such as goal setting, values clarification, generating alternatives, and obtaining occupational information in career decision-making. Observations about the study include capabilities, interests, and work values. Ireh (1999) explained that the interaction between genetic endowment, environmental conditions, and learning experiences lead to the skills required for completing a variety of tasks.

The Social Learning Theory by Krumboltz is relevant to this study because it includes environmental factors such as family, school, and peers. Beliefs shape the behavior about selves and how to relate to society (Schnorr & Ware, 2001). People make assumptions and generalizations about themselves, and the world of work based on limited experiences. In this case, high schools have limited experience to choose an appropriate career hence the need for a counselor and a supportive environment. In short, Krumboltz's theory of career decision-making and development is based on social learning or environmental conditions, genetic influences, and learning experiences. People choose careers based on past learnings.

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), developed by Albert Bandura in 1986, purports that contextual variable such as social support, which includes friends, family, and relatives, influence an individual's career choice (Choo, Norsia & Tan, 2012). Roger & Creed (2011) cited the study of Lent et al. (2000), which posited that social persuasion also affects an individual's choice of career because there is a dialogue between children and the environment. Similarly, Bandura also posited that when individuals watch their

peers succeeding, they are likely to believe that they can also succeed (Mills, 2009).

Social Cognitive Theory focuses on several cognitive variables (for example, self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and goals) and on how these variables interact with other aspects of the person and his or her environment (for example, gender, ethnicity, social support, and barriers) to shape the course of career development (Lent & Brown, 2013).

According to Bandura (2002), the theory distinguishes three modes of agency: a) personal agency exercised individually; b) proxy agency in which people secure desired outcomes by influencing others to act on their behalf; and c) collective agency in which people act in concert to shape their futures. These three modes influence students in high schools in choosing careers, among many variables. The environment, which imposes itself on them, also impacts the choice of careers. This theory is used in this study to investigate factors that influence career choices among Grade 12 students of the Agusan del Norte division.

According to Social Cognitive Theory, career development is influenced by both objectives and perceived environmental factors (Lent & Worthington, 2000). Examples of objective factors include the quality of educational experiences a person has been exposed to, such as school counseling and the financial support available from family or guardians for pursuing training. People live their lives in socio-cultural milieus that differ in their shared values, customs, social practices, and institutional constraints and opportunities (Bandura, 2002).

In this study, the variables that are considered as determinants of career paths among Grade 12 students are family demographic characteristics which composed of parental philosophy towards education, parental nature of work, and nature of family income; social influences which composed of peer influence, school influence and community influence; and access and equity which composed of host industry, business environment, and scholarship and grants. These independent variables may affect the preferred career path that Grade 12 students want to pursue after graduation, which serves as a dependent variable.

As shown in the literature review, parental philosophy towards education influenced students' views on career choice (Fizer, 2013; Shumba & Naong, 2012). Occupation and income of parents are also shown as strong factors to students' career path (Pfungst, 2015; Abiola, 2014; Uka, 2015). This is because most low-income parents, particularly those in the far-flung areas, would instead choose to send their children to the farm for food rather than sending them to schools with an empty stomach. Peer influence is another critical variable that is considered when dealing with high school graduates' career path (Stair et al., 2016). Most students who do not receive career guidance at home solicit and follow advice from a circle of friends (Fizer, 2013; Edwards & Quinter, 2011).

In taking business-related courses, the business environment variable is included as this study subscribes to the conclusion of Jena (2020), which states that business-related courses in college are taken mainly by students with a family business or who have been

into a business venture. The last variable considered is access to scholarships and grants. Especially for students from low-income families, their hopes to pursue college degrees rely on the availability of scholarship grants and programs (Pascual, 2014). Hence, the career of students who relied on scholarships and grants will be limited depending on the coverage of the said scholarship programs.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The study sought to establish the determinants of career paths among Grade 12 students in the division of Agusan del Norte, Philippines.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The researcher utilized the quantitative descriptive-correlational research design. It is descriptive because it determines the extent of manifestation of the family characteristics in terms of parental philosophy towards education and career, and economic background; the level of social-environmental influence in terms of peer influence, school influence, and community influence; the level of access and equity to host industry, business environment, and scholarships and grants; and the likelihood of career pathways of Grade 12 students after senior high school whether they enroll in college for a degree program, enroll in a technical-vocational course, work while studying, seek employment after high school graduation or engage in business/ entrepreneurship. It is correlational because it tries to establish a significant relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

Research Locale

This study was conducted in the Division of Agusan del Norte during the school year 2019-2020. Agusan del Norte is situated in Mindanao's western section of Caraga, Philippines. It is bordered on the northwest by the Butuan Bay; northeast by Surigao del Norte; mid-east by Surigao del Sur; southeast by Agusan del Sur. And southwest by Misamis Oriental. Agusan del Norte has a total land area of 2,730.24 square kilometers or 1,054.15 square miles.

Agusan del Norte is a third-class province and the second smallest in the Caraga Region. The central portion of the province forms the lower basin of the third-longest river in the country, the Agusan River, its mouth located at the Butuan Bay. Consequently, the terrain surrounding the river features flat to rolling lands. Mountainous terrain dominates the northeastern and western areas (RA 4979).

The Division of Agusan del Norte is composed of ten (10) municipalities namely: Buenavista, Carmen, Jabonga, Kitcharao, Las Nieves, Magallanes, Nasipit, Remedios T. Rumualdez, Santiago, and Tubay.

Research Respondents

The respondents of the study were the Grade 12 students who were officially enrolled in the school year 2019-2020, their parents/guardians, Grade 12 teachers/advisers, and the school guidance counselors or teachers who were designated as guidance advocates.

These were done through a stratified sampling technique and random sampling. The division of Agusan del Norte has ten municipalities, forty-five public secondary schools, and eight private secondary schools.

The total participating schools in the study were ten public secondary schools and eight private secondary schools. In choosing the public secondary schools, the researcher chose the schools with the highest Grade 12 population to represent each municipality, while all the private secondary schools were automatically included in the study.

The total student respondents were computed from the total population of the students in all participating schools using Slovin’s formula at 5% error. Then it was proportionated into the type of schools, either public or private. This was the first stratification. Then, the computed total number of respondents was proportionated to the number of representatives per school, which was the second stratification. The researcher randomly selected the student respondent per school through their number in the class record.

The total number of parent respondents was automatically based on the computed number of student respondents since the parent respondents are the parents of the student respondents.

Table 1. Distribution of the Respondents by School

Agusan del Norte Division	Total Population of Grade 12 students	No. of Grade 12 students	No. of Parents of Grade 12 Students	No. of Grade 12 Teachers/ Advisers	No. of Guidance Counselors/ Guidance Advocate	Total	%
Public Secondary Schools							
1. Agay NHS	257	33	33	6	1	73	9%
2. Buenavista NHS	156	20	20	5	1	46	6%
3. Carmen SHS	121	16	16	5	1	37	5%
4. Jabonga NHS	85	11	11	3	1	26	3%
5. Kitcharao NHS	140	18	18	3	1	40	5%
6. Las Nieves NHS	136	17	17	4	1	40	5%
7. Magallanes NHS	279	36	36	7	1	80	10%
8. Nasipit NVS	240	31	31	5	1	68	9%
9. Santiago NHS	131	17	17	4	1	39	5%

10. Tubay NHS	103	13	13	3	1	30	4%
Private Secondary Schools							
11. Buenavista Institute	56	7	7	1	1	16	2%
12. Caraga Institute of Technology	79	10	10	3	1	24	3%
13. Fr. Urios Academy	64	8	8	2	1	19	2%
14. Immaculate Heart of Mary	83	11	11	2	1	24	3%
15. Northwestern Agusan Colleges	60	8	8	2	1	18	2%
16. Our Lady of Carmen Academy	20	3	3	1	1	7	1%
17. Saint James High School	247	32	32	7	1	71	9%
18. Saint Michael College of Caraga	459	59	59	12	1	131	17%
Total Respondents	2,716	349	349	75	18	791	100%

All class advisers and guidance counselors/advocates were automatically included in the study. Each of them rated ten students depending on the number of student respondents from their school who participated in the study. They have chosen those student respondents who very familiar to them and that have background knowledge and information.

Research Instrument

The instrument used in collecting data is a researcher-made survey questionnaire. It contains different sets of questions that captured measurable items of the variables under the study and used the language that all the participants understood.

Part I deals with the Family Characteristics, which are composed of Parental Philosophy towards Education and Career, and Economic Background; Social Environmental Influence which consisted of Peer Influence, School Influence, and Community Influences; Access and Equity, which are also composed of Host Industry, Business Environment and Scholarships and Grants. Each section has statements rated by the respondents by choosing the best statement based on their perceptions using the rating “5” (Very High), “4” (High), “3” (Moderate), “2” (Low), “1” (Very Low).

Part II deals with the Career Path of the Grade 12 students after their high school graduation, whether they enroll in college for a degree program, enroll in a technical-vocational course, work while studying, seek employment or engage in business/ entrepreneurship. Each career path is rated by the respondents by checking the rating “5” (Very Highly Preferred), “4” (Highly Preferred), “3” (Undecided), “2” (Least Preferred), “1” (Not Preferred).

The researcher's adviser checked the questionnaires, critically examined by the panel, and validated by other experts in the area, such as senior high school teachers, school principals, and registered guidance counselors. Their suggestions were the basis of its amendments, for its face and content validity.

Before the main survey, the pilot study was conducted on the fifteen (15) Grade 12 students, their parents/guardians, their class advisers, and guidance counselors/advocates from public and private schools in the division of Cabadbaran City last February 20, 2020, to test for the reliability of the instrument. The average Cronbach's alpha result of the reliability testing was 0.8250. After the testing, the instrument's statements that showed ambiguity were modified to ensure that the research instrument is clear and can be easily understood by the respondents to obtain consistent information.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher asked permission to conduct the study by sending a written authorization to the Schools Division Superintendent and the School Heads of the different public and private secondary schools in the division of Agusan del Norte.

When the authorization letters have been approved, and the sample size of the respondents per school was computed, the researcher visited the respective schools for the questionnaire distribution and orientation.

During the orientation, the researcher explained that the respondents of the study are the Grade 12 students, their parents/guardians, their teachers/ class advisers, and their Guidance counselor/ advocates.

The students were informed that they received two sets of questionnaires, one for themselves and one for their parents. The class advisers/teachers and the guidance counselors/advocates received questionnaires depending on the number of their students. They were instructed to answer each question with the specific student they know and are also a respondent in the study.

Then, respondents were assured that the data gathered from them would be confidential. Collection dates of the instrument were set and were assisted by the class advisers and school principals.

Upon completion, the questionnaires were retrieved, tallied, and were subjected to statistical analysis.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher prepared a consent letter for the permission of the respondents to be part of the current study. The participants were informed about the study in detail. The purpose of the study, together with details about the data collection process, was explained to the participants. The participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time without questions being asked. Participation in the said survey was completely voluntary. In administering the questionnaire, the privacy statement

was written promising that the answers are purely confidential and would only be solely used for the study. The researcher assured the confidentiality of the respondents.

Statistical Treatment

The following treatments were employed in the study: mean, Pearson correlation coefficient, and regression analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2. Summary of the extent of family characteristics

Family Characteristics	Student Mean Rating	Parent Mean Rating	Teacher Mean Rating	Guidance Counselor Mean Rating	Overall Mean	Verbal Description
1. Parental philosophy towards education and career	3.98	3.93	3.70	3.88	3.87	High
2. Economic background	3.87	2.68	2.96	3.88	3.35	Moderate
Grand Mean	3.93	3.31	3.33	3.88	3.61	High

Table 2 shows the parental philosophy towards education and career, which is rated high (3.87) shows that education emerged as a top priority in the family. On the other hand, the economic background that is moderately rated (3.35) means that the family income level is on the average bracket because they rely on income from regular jobs while having no other sources. The grand mean of 3.61 is explained by the larger mean score (3.87) of respondents' perception of philosophy towards education and career compared to economic background (3.35).

Parents' socio-economic background further supports that most of them are getting their source of living from agriculture-related resources. The empirical data substantiate this specific result that 90% of the studied community relied on farming.

Table 3. Summary of the extent of manifestation of social and environmental influence

Influences	Student Mean Rating	Parent Mean Rating	Teacher Mean Rating	Guidance Counselor Mean Rating	Overall Mean	Verbal Description
Peer	3.14	3.48	3.22	3.37	3.30	Moderate
School	3.38	3.66	3.63	3.73	3.60	High
Community	3.55	3.62	3.52	3.49	3.54	High
Grand Mean	3.36	3.59	3.46	3.53	3.48	Moderate

Table 3 shows the school and community influence garnered respective overall means of 3.60 and 3.54 and are highly manifested based on the perception of the respondents. On the other note, peer influence obtained the least overall mean of 3.30 which suggests its moderate extent of manifestation. The grand mean however still pulls the perception to a moderate extent with a numerical mean value of 3.48. Hence, the extent of manifestation of social influence remains moderate.

The results unveiled that the respondents put their trust in the school and to the community rather than in their peers. The combination of social and economic status influences play an important role in decision making regarding the field of study and career choices since the needs of the community can be turned into positive and helpful career options. Pascual (2014) stated that when it comes to a career path, not much is affected by the decisions of the peer which is well reflected in the findings.

Table 4. Summary rating on the level of access and equity

Influences	Student Mean Rating	Parent Mean Rating	Teacher Mean Rating	Guidance Counselor Mean Rating	Overall Mean	Verbal Description
1. Host industry	3.30	3.40	3.28	3.38	3.34	Moderate
2. Business environment	3.40	3.45	3.32	3.32	3.37	Moderate
3. Scholarship and grants	4.14	4.14	4.20	4.20	4.17	High
Grand Mean	3.61	3.66	3.60	3.63	3.63	High

Table 4 shows that access to the hosting industry and business environment is coupled with moderate verbal descriptions. Noticeably, the most significant mean score (4.17) associating with scholarship and grants pooled the grand mean rating, resulting in a high level of access and equity.

The data above manifested that all respondents were aware of the scholarships and grants offered from different departments and colleges. A study made by Nolan (2011) states that Filipinos have a deep regard for education, which they view as the main avenue for social and economic advances. It is also stated that the Philippines maintains an exceptionally good education system and that the government and various universities offer numerous scholarship programs that provide students from low-income families with access to higher education. The financial assistance that the government is providing, such as the Voucher Program and the Free Tertiary Education, motivates and inspires the students to receive a higher education so that they can be more competitive in the employment market.

Data show that scholarship programs are getting available and accessible in the area. Government institutions like the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), and even State Colleges and Universities (SUCs) sustainably offer scholarship programs to deserving students.

Table 5. Likelihood of career paths

	Career Path	Student Mean Rating	Parent Mean Rating	Teacher Mean Rating	Guidance Counselor Mean Rating	Overall Mean	Verbal Description
1.	Enroll in college for a degree program	4.50	4.58	4.53	4.55	4.54	Very highly preferred
2.	Enroll in Technical-Vocational course	3.00	3.22	3.32	3.53	3.27	Moderately preferred
3.	Work while studying	3.39	3.08	2.99	2.95	3.10	Moderately preferred
4.	Seek employment after high school graduation	2.95	2.89	2.67	2.24	2.69	Moderately preferred
5.	Engage in business/ entrepreneurship	2.09	1.94	1.80	1.95	1.95	Very least preferred

Table 5 shows the pursuing a college degree marks the number 1 preference of the student respondents as supported by the largest mean score of 4.54. Enrolling in a technical-vocational course serves as the students' second priority, with a mean rating of 3.27. Work while studying and seeking employment right after graduation are both moderately preferred by the students. The latter two preferences rank 3rd and 4th concerning associated mean scores of 3.10 and 2.69. Lastly, the least preferred is engagement in business and entrepreneurship, with the lowest mean score of only 1.95.

Numerical findings shown above entail the positive outlook of students to pursue a career in higher education. Others would even wrestle with taking technical-vocational courses. The students' preferences seem to show light on the reality that these students do not desire a job after graduating from senior high. Others are even willing to work while studying at the same time. This further manifest that students have viewed career more than what a senior high school degree can offer. However, others may take the odds of employment after finishing senior high school due to some undeniable and uncontrolled reasons. Further, it must be noted that students do not show a preference for pursuing a business-related career.

Entrepreneurship is seen as a solution to the ever-growing problem of unemployment among graduates. However, it has been found that this career path is not favored by younger people, especially graduates, who see entrepreneurship as their last option only (Ishak et al.,2012). The students' career choice is also influenced by the level of their social class, financial resources, affordability, and future employability (Ahmed et al., 2017).

Entrepreneurship is the least favored career option not only here in the Philippines but for Malaysian graduates. Graduates usually expect to secure positions in the public and private sectors. Unfortunately, positions in those sectors were getting lesser

and even freeze due to policy changes. The situation increases unemployed citizens. Moreover, the new graduates keep adding to the statistics rapidly. The unemployed graduate phenomenon has been in a critical state for almost a decade, as reported in the Department of Statistics Malaysia in September 2013 (Ismail & Ahmad, 2013).

Table 6. Result of the test of the significant relationship between variables

Independent Variable	Pearson R-value	Dependent Variable	Remarks	Decision
Family characteristics	0.597		Moderate	
Social and environmental influence	0.400	Career Path	Moderate	Reject Ho
Access and equity	0.232		Low	

Table 6 shows correlation analysis results between the independent variables against the career path. A Pearson R-value of 0.597 supports a moderate relationship between family characteristics and career paths. This further leads to the rejection of the research null hypothesis. This finding shows coherence with the published article of Korir & Wafula (2012). The authors stated that family characteristics are significant indicators that determine students' careers after high school. In another study by Barker (2010), the decision of many senior high school graduates to pursue higher degrees is hampered by the socio-economic status of their parents. However, some parents tend to show a positive outlook towards education.

In the study conducted by Braza & Guillo (2015) at Batangas State University, titled "Socio-Demographic Characteristics and Career Choice of Private Secondary School Students" the respondents agreed that family income influences in choosing their career path. The study revealed that the students experience or witness the financial capabilities and experiences of their respective families. It further showed that they do not want to pressure their families for college expenses financially.

Further, the study of Wang (2015) in Singapore revealed that parental involvement and philosophy towards education and career are high and have significance in choosing their children's career path. On the contrary, Zhang, Yuen & Chen (2015) in Chinese-American youth established that parents' nature of work does not always influence students' choice of career path. Their study also reflected that, as children grow older, the desire to find fulfillment in their own career choice versus pleasing the family can influence adolescents' decisions about their career choices.

Between social and environmental influence and career path, it exposes a Pearson R-value of 0.400. This implies that a moderately significant relationship between the two variables exists. Hence, this value leads to the rejection of the study null hypothesis. It also further entails that social and environmental influence is a determinant of a student's career path. In the study of Miheso (2015), it is highlighted that social

influence, including teachers and friends, mostly dictates the career choices of Grade 12 students. In the article of Balin & Hirschi (2010), the authors mentioned that if a school has a well-established career guidance program, graduates are more likely to explore what they want to do while considering their embedded abilities and skills.

Alika (2010); Obwoye & Kibor (2016) espoused that peer suggestions and approval were critical in influencing American students' choice of careers. This is in line with Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, which states that realistic encouragement leads to greater effort and eventually to greater success. Since high school students are adolescents, they may rely on people of their age. Eliamani et al. (2014) established that school career guidance teachers play a key role in preparing students to successfully proceed to the next level, whether for further education or a job.

The same study also revealed that access to guidance and counseling services influences students' attitudes towards studies, consequently influencing their choice of career path. As such, schools engage in a variety of activities to help students cope with the complexity of career path choices. Hence, career guidance was seen in Nigeria as enabling guidance counselors to assist individuals in identifying and learning the skills for more effective planning and choosing jobs, making effective transitions and adjustments to work, and managing their careers and career transitions effectively (Lazarus & Ihuoma, 2011).

Further, Pascual (2014) stated that most Filipino students prefer to take scientific-related field courses or the "popular courses" for new global trends. Also, the study conducted by Ahmed et al. (2017) implied that students consider the new trends and other variables in their environment in choosing their career path. The study further revealed that the technology, financial issues, human asset administration, data framework, hierarchical conduct, advertising, research routines, and so on had an impact on the students in selecting a business-related career.

Lastly, it exposes a low relationship between access and equity and career path. This is supported by the corresponding R-value of 0.232. The significant relationship between access and equity and the career path leads to the rejection of the research null hypothesis. This means that access and equity is a significant determinant to a student's career path. The availability of industries and job opportunities is one of the strategies ensured by DepEd before implementing the K to 12 curriculum. Whenever access to industry opportunities is evident, senior high school graduates are more likely to pursue jobs completing a senior high school degree (Saysay, 2011). However, this seemed to be a huge challenge since industries do not yet fully guarantee and commit to hiring senior high school products.

On the other note, higher education scholarship grants are getting available and accessible, especially to the marginalized (RA 10931). In the study conducted by Pascual (2014) titled "Factors affecting the fourth-year high school students' career preference of University of Rizal System' Laboratory School in Morong Rizal," the findings revealed that the availability of work after their graduation is the first consideration of students in

choosing a career path. The availability of advancement opportunities and the hosting industry for employment after their graduation are the most influential factors affecting career choices among students, as revealed by Edwards & Quinter (2011). Rae and Woodier-Harris (2012) also argued that the connections of government and private institutions that help individuals access between enterprise, education, development/new venture support, graduate employability, innovation, and academic enterprise also impacted choosing a career path.

Though there are more financial aid programs now than in the past, and they are often larger and serve more types of students (Dynarski and Scott-Clayton 2013), aid has not kept pace with rising costs, and there have been recent cuts. Moreover, youth—particularly African American, Latino, and low-income youth often lack awareness of college costs and financial aid options (George-Jackson & Gast, 2015). Among students who leave college after one year or less, 31 percent cite financial reasons (Ross et al., 2012).

Table 7. Determinants of college career pathway

Predictor	Coef	SE Coef	T	P
Constant	1.7363	0.3907	4.44	0.000
Parent	0.9870	0.0617	16.00	0.000
School	-0.4803	0.1072	-4.48	0.000
Community	0.6746	0.1042	6.47	0.000
Business	-0.5036	0.0768	-6.55	0.000

S = 0.5359 R-Sq = 54.9% R-Sq(adj) = 54.4%

Analysis of Variance

Source	DF	SS	MS	F	P
Regression	4	120.689	30.172	105.07	0.000
Residual Error	345	99.068	0.287		
Total	349	219.757			

The regression equation is:

$$\text{College} = 1.74 + 0.987 \text{ Parent} - 0.480 \text{ School} + 0.675 \text{ Community} - 0.504 \text{ business}$$

Table 7 shows that all predictors of the likelihood of students pursuing a college degree are significant. This implies that combining these variables best predicts the level of preference of students to enroll in a college degree after completing senior high school programs.

The equation further emphasizes that parent and community-contributed positively to a career while school and business variables negatively affect a student's

career in college. According to Abarro (2016), the influence of parents and community shows more likelihood for students to pursue a college degree. As previously discussed, the socio-economic status of every Filipino family is a critical factor towards access to higher education (Ahn et al., 2016). There are also cases of students who can afford higher education yet uncertain about the career to take. In most cases, these students are influenced by the community, including friends and peers (Bett, 2013).

Khoo et al. (2015) showed that college students and non-college students who were involved in their study agreed that parents are the most influential or important person when choosing career choice of college or university and course of study because parents perceive as their main source of finance and normally seek advice from them due to the perception that parents have the relevant information or experience with regards to higher education. Hence, parents are viewed as credible sources of advice. Dagang & de Mesa (2017) also stressed that parents are very influential towards the student's career choice because, in a Filipino family, children are financially dependent on their parents.

Theoretically, schools have the primary roles in shaping all student's career choices and paths (Shumba & Naong, 2012). However, the negative regression coefficient manifests that the perceived career choice of students is much influenced by the school's career guidance but more with parents and community.

Table 8. Determinants of technical-vocational career pathway

Predictor	Coef	SE Coef	T	P
Constant	3.2042	0.6456	4.96	0.000
Parent	-0.7974	0.0840	-9.49	0.000
Economic	-0.3398	0.1116	-3.04	0.003
Peer	1.4327	0.2057	6.97	0.000
School	-0.5420	0.1577	-3.44	0.001
Industry	-0.3741	0.0709	-5.27	0.000
Scholarship	0.6181	0.1217	5.08	0.000

S = 0.6950 R-Sq = 28.3% R-Sq(adj) = 27.1%

Analysis of Variance

Source	DF	SS	MS	F	P
Regression	6	65.417	10.903	22.57	0.000
Residual Error	343	165.670	0.483		
Total	349	231.086			

The regression equation is:

$$\text{Techvoc} = 3.20 - 0.797 \text{ Parent} - 0.340 \text{ Economic} + 1.43 \text{ Peer} - 0.542 \text{ School} - 0.374 \text{ industry} + 0.618 \text{ Scholarships}$$

The likelihood of pursuing a technical-vocational degree is significantly explained by the combinations of several predictors as indicated in the model. Peer influence and access to scholarship opportunities posited positive coefficients towards the dependent variable. It is more likely for students to take technical-vocational after senior high school because of peer influence and the availability of scholarships like technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA).

Shumba & Naong (2012) revealed that students' choices were based on their perceived career and scholarship opportunities. The study of Thoppilan et al. (2019) stated that Filipino Grade 12 students agreed that their career after senior high school would rely on scholarships.

In the paper published by Valles (2012), many economically challenged students pursue technical-vocational programs of TESDA due to the availability of scholarships and the influence of peers and friends. On the other hand, the other variables, including parent, economic, school, and industry, unfolded negative coefficients, which show the opposing likelihood for students to pursue technical-vocational courses (Orbeta & Decano, 2019).

TESDA aims to address equity and access by providing direct financial assistance to deserving enrollees across all countries. One of its many scholarship programs is the Private Education Student Financial Assistance (PESFA). This program was established through Section 8 of Republic Act No. 8545, otherwise known as the Expanded Government Assistance to Students and Teachers in Private Education (GASTPE) Act. PESFA offers educational grants to qualified and deserving first-year college students both in degree and non-degree courses. The program seeks to: extend financial assistance to marginalized but deserving students in post-secondary non-degree courses; promote Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), and contribute to the development of a competent, skilled workforce. The PESFA directed the beneficiaries on the choices of careers to the critical skills requirements of in-demand jobs in the labor market. It also allows for equitable distribution of the opportunities made available through government subsidies (RA, 8545).

Table 9. Determinants of work and study career pathway

Predictor	Coef	SE Coef	T	P
Constant	8.0190	0.4686	17.11	0.000
Parent	-0.5908	0.0752	-7.86	0.000
Economic	-0.5107	0.0994	-5.14	0.000
Peer	0.7194	0.1806	3.98	0.000
School	-0.7780	0.1381	-5.63	0.000
Industry	0.4572	0.0953	4.80	0.000
Business	-0.6600	0.1377	-4.79	0.000

S = 0.6107 R-Sq = 35.9% R-Sq(adj) = 34.8%

Analysis of Variance

Source	DF	SS	MS	F	P
Regression	6	71.742	11.957	32.07	0.000
Residual Error	343	127.903	0.373		
Total	349	199.645			

The regression equation is:

$$\text{Work\&Study} = 8.02 - 0.591 \text{ Parent} - 0.511 \text{ Economic} + 0.719 \text{ Peer} - 0.778 \text{ School} + 0.457 \text{ industry} - 0.660 \text{ business}$$

Table 9 shows significant predictors of the likelihood of work and study career pathways. The regression equation exposes that peer and industry variables bear positive coefficients that further reflect its positive influence on work and study career pathways. The remaining variables such as a parent, economic, school, and business are in combination pull the like hood of students to land on a work and study career pathway.

Findings unfolded in the equation show similar conclusions in the study of Quinter & Edwards (2011). The authors found out that jobs and opportunities for industries increased the proportion of working students. Alike (2010) further argued that influence from peers, besides the availability of job placements, urged students to enroll in degree programs while working in private industries or government agencies.

Dagang & de Mesa (2017) further highlighted that many Filipino families have income sufficient for basic needs. This makes career choice dependent on the availability of scholarship opportunities, either public or private. Eremie & Okwulehie (2018) indicated that environmental, opportunity, and personality factors could influence career choice among secondary school students. In terms of environmental factors, it revealed that family, socioeconomic status, and peer groups have a significant influence on the students' choice of career while opportunity factors such as education and mentorship

also had an influence on the choice of career as well as the personality factors such as the students’ interest, values, and skills in choosing their courses (Arcilla et al., 2020).

Table 10. Determinants of employment career pathway

Predictor	Coef	SE Coef	T	P	
Constant	12.5478	0.6341	19.79	0.000	
Parent	-1.0184	0.0817	-12.46	0.000	
Economic	-0.4630	0.0842	-5.50	0.000	
School	-0.5440	0.1293	-4.21	0.000	
Scholarship	-0.6153	0.1216	-5.06	0.000	
S = 0.6960 R-Sq = 54.2% R-Sq(adj) = 53.6%					
Analysis of Variance					
Source	DF	SS	MS	F	P
Regression	4	197.426	49.357	101.88	0.000
Residual Error	345	167.140	0.484		

The regression equation is:

$$\text{Employment} = 12.5 - 1.02 \text{ Parent} - 0.463 \text{ Economic} - 0.544 \text{ School} - 0.615 \text{ Scholarships}$$

Table 10 present all significant predictors to the employment career pathway. These variables include; parent, economic, school, and scholarship with respective regression coefficients of -1.02, -0.463, -0.544, and -0.615. All coefficients in the equation together pull the likelihood of students to pursue employment after graduation from the senior high school program.

In the research authored by Cho & Jyung (2014), students who belong to economically challenged families are hooked to employment regardless of how parents prioritized education, how effective is school’s guidance career program, and the availability of scholarship programs.

Students tend to seek employment after graduation if their parents give them more insights, teachers, friends about the career field, including factors such as how big of a salary it offers, how fast a student can advance, or the benefits that come with that job field (Herren et al., 2011).

Table 11. Determinants of business career pathway

Predictor	Coef	SE Coef	T	P
Constant	12.4839	0.6988	17.87	0.000
Parent	-1.0832	0.0996	-10.88	0.000
Economic	0.2976	0.1251	2.38	0.018
Peer	-0.4989	0.2309	-2.16	0.031
School	-0.9619	0.1829	-5.26	0.000
Community	0.8401	0.1956	4.29	0.000
Industry	-1.6361	0.1523	-10.74	0.000
Business	1.5777	0.1875	8.42	0.000
Scholarship	-1.1883	0.1459	-8.14	0.000

S = 0.7461 R-Sq = 60.8% R-Sq(adj) = 59.8%

Analysis of Variance

Source	DF	SS	MS	F	P
Regression	8	293.958	36.745	66.01	0.000
Residual Error	341	189.829	0.557		
Total	349	483.787			

The regression equation is:

$$\text{Business} = 12.5 - 1.08 \text{ Parent} + 0.298 \text{ Economic} - 0.499 \text{ Peer} - 0.962 \text{ School} \\ + 0.840 \text{ Community} - 1.64 \text{ industry} + 1.58 \text{ business} - 1.19 \text{ Scholarships}$$

Table 11 displays significant predictors of the business career pathway. Variables involving the economic, community, and business posit positive coefficients in the equation with respective numerical values of 0.298, 0.840, and 1.58. Access to business industries scored the largest and positive coefficient. It empirically implies that a business career is more likely when students are exposed to business and other entrepreneurial opportunities.

There are instances shown in the literature where community influences and social media development enticed students to pursue business to greener profits (Ardagna & Lusardi, 2010.)

Alika (2015) revealed that students' choices were based on their perceived availability of career and scholarship opportunities in each department and the grade point averages marks earned by the student when selecting the options.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the revealed findings of the study, the following conclusions are made:

1. Among the family characteristics of the respondents, parental philosophy towards education is highly manifested than economic status, which validates the concepts and findings of Fizer (2013), which unfolds that education has always been a priority of many parents towards their children regardless of economic status.
2. School and community factors have a high extent of manifestation than peer factors in the social and environmental influence of career paths among the respondents, which validates the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) developed by Albert Bandura.
3. Respondents have wide access to scholarships and grants than to host industries and businesses in the locality which is a coherence to the conclusion of Jena (2020) which reveals that education is now getting accessible as government programs across the globe offer scholarships and grants for all.
4. The college pathway is the first preference of the respondents after completing a senior high school degree than taking technical-vocational courses, work while studying, and seeking employment. Engaging in a business venture after graduation is the least preferred path, which conforms to the concepts of George-Jackson (2015) that highlight the priority of completing a college degree after high school graduation.
5. Family characteristics, social and environmental influence, and access and equity significantly relate to the student's career pathway, which conforms to several published articles of Stair et al. (2016); Fizer (2013); Pascual (2014) that show empirical evidence which established causalities between career path and student's family characteristics, social and environmental influence, and access and equity.
6. Family characteristics, social and environmental influence, and access and equity are significant determinants to students' career pathways. Particularly, the study concludes the following:
 - Parents and community factors influence a college career path.
 - Peer influence and access to scholarship determine the choice of a technical-vocational career.
 - Peer influence and the presence of industries in the locality determine the work and study career pathway.
 - Employment after graduation is the least preferred among the career paths.
 - The economic situation of the family, the community, and the business environment play a determining role in the business pathway of the respondents.

7. The enhanced career guidance is designed incorporating the key points of study results which will hopefully provide students with appropriate career guidance programs and prepare them for wider views of job opportunities and choices.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the conclusions previously shown, this study recommends the following;

School heads. School heads shall consider stakeholders' involvement, including teachers, parents, community, and guidance counselors, to enhance career guidance programs at school. This will eventually shed light and certainties on the future career of Grade 12 students who are the source of competent human capital and workforce in the region. The school heads are hereby encouraged to institutionalize collaborative efforts between parents, students, and teachers, following the framework that is proposed in this study.

Teachers and Guidance Counselors/Advocates. The study results will ignite the interest of teachers and guidance counselors while adopting the suggested framework for a more enhanced career guidance program. Teachers will be guided on the study findings regarding the steps to do towards better career awareness and understanding among students and parents.

Students. The primary outcome of this endeavor is positioned at the welfare of students' futures through the enhancement of a sustainable career guidance program. Through the programs that are lined up, current and future students will be more guided with their career choices with the help of teachers and parents.

Parents. Study outcomes will promote strong parental involvement in school activities that aim to foster better career pathways among student graduates. The views of parents on the importance of education will also be enlightened through line-up activities and programs.

Peers. Students, who mostly constitute peers, will also be given awareness of their influential role in every graduate's career choice.

Government Institutions. Study findings will also be recommended for government agencies to align and host scholarship programs accessible to deserving graduates. This implies that the major findings of this research will serve as benchmarks for government institutions to apportion significant funds for scholarship programs.

Future Researchers. It is further recommended that the study's limitations can serve as a springboard for future researchers to investigate any possible factors that would significantly increase the robustness/predictive ability of the regression models. Possible areas to consider are student's skills, readiness to the real world of work, acceptability of industries to the senior high school graduates, and survey on the availability of scholarship programs vis-à-vis the number of graduates.

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