

# Factors Influencing the Career Preference of Senior High School Students during Pandemic

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**ABSTRACT:** *Selecting the appropriate course is critical for a student who has not yet decided which career path to pursue most especially during this time of pandemic. The study's primary objective was to determine students' career interests in senior high school in order to better prepare them for college. The researcher used a descriptive research design to investigate the research objectives and gain a new understanding of the collected data. The respondents were 231 Senior High School students enrolled in 2nd Semester SY 2020-2021 using a stratified random sampling technique. Researcher used an online survey questionnaire to collect and sum up data on the five factors, using a five-point Likert scale for each one and analyzing the responses who took the survey. Results revealed that the factors influencing a student's decision to enroll in college are financial aid, educational quality, tuition affordability, and environment and culture. The findings imply that the various factors that influence students' choices are adaptable regardless of their age, gender, or family wealth.*

**KEYWORDS** -Career preference, career selection factors, future job opportunities, decision-making and interest, senior high school

## I. INTRODUCTION

A student's career choice is one of the most significant problems and obstacles that they face during their academic career. It entails the exchange of a large number of intricately intertwined components. According to Nyamwange (2016), a student's current circumstances, gifts, abilities, and scholarly achievements all influence career choice. It is not an easy task; it entails a lengthy decision-making process. Students must consider a variety of factors, particularly during this pandemic period, which causes them to second-guess their choices. In the event of a poor choice, disappointment and frustration are likely to follow. According to research, a student's career choice is influenced by their home, school, and social environment. Their career choices are influenced by financial considerations, as they must pay for family expenses. Many studies have found that factors like fitness, life circumstances, and academic achievement all play a role in career choices (Kazi, A. S., & Akhlaq, A. 2017). Students' career choices will impact the remainder of their lives. Students' career choices were influenced by their grades, ages, personal interests, and experiences, among other factors, and it was through their educational experiences that these students determined what they wanted to accomplish in their future careers (Quinter et al., 2011). Senior high school students also said that their decisions were influenced by factors like decision-making, motivation, peer pressure, institutional concerns, and future job prospects, among other things.

Career choices require a high level of creativity, experimentation, decision-making, and sound judgment. To generate and nurture interest in a particular career, it is critical to have a working knowledge of that field. Self-defining activities that are necessary for the soul, heart, and power of an individual are

powerfully attracted to passion. Professional success is most likely to occur when an individual's career path is aligned with his talents, personality, background, and intelligence. Numerous students make decisions based on personal preferences rather than what the labor market requires. According to the findings, it takes passion to comprehend entrepreneurship and its processes (Magdadaro, 2020). Additionally, the type of sources used to gather information about the course of study has an effect on the determination of this degree of ambition. Role expectations, for example, vary significantly within the family unit and within the occupational social system. In the home, a person's personal characteristics are evaluated, whereas their performance on the job is evaluated (Guney, B., Richter, M., & Tsur, M., 2011). Employees who develop and administer professional programs have been able to advance their careers and increase their organizations' commitment to professionalism (Ismail, 2018). It is especially advantageous for students who attend larger schools or live in areas with abundant career opportunities. It's a good idea to investigate your career options. It is critical for high school students to determine which strand best fits their personality and which strand is closest to their heart.

The implementation of K to 12 programs is one of the most significant educational reforms in the Philippines. Its mission is to "develop a holistically developed Filipino with 21st-century skills who is prepared for employment, entrepreneurship, middle-level skill development, and higher education after completing Grade 12." The kindergarten to Grade 12 Basic Education Program is the Department of Education's flagship program, introducing two additional years of senior high school—Grades 11 and 12. From Kindergarten to Grade 12, students are equipped to holistically develop Filipinos who are prepared for the world. Additionally, schools must conduct Career Guidance Program activities to assist senior high school students, as mandated by the Department of Education. Because COVID-19 is present, DepEd Secretary Leonor Briones said that face-to-face classes will be suspended until a vaccine is available.

Senior high school (SHS) is the final two years of a new six-year secondary education system in the Philippines. Rather than simply preparing students for postsecondary education, the SHS Curriculum aims to prepare students for either higher education or work (de Jesus, E., 2019). Academics, Technical Vocational and Livelihood (TVL), Sports, or Arts and Design are the four specialization options available to SHS students. The Academic Course is divided into four strands: Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMMS), Accounting, Business, and Management (ABM), Science, Technology, and Engineering (STEM), and General Academic. Then there's the Technical Vocational Course, which encompasses Information and Communications Technology (ICT), Agriculture and Fisheries Arts, and Industrial Arts. The adoption of the K-12 program by the government will assist students in developing their abilities, increasing their competence, and grasping and coping with their college journey. The curriculum has been changed to better meet the needs of students in the area by letting them choose a specialization that fits their interests.

The purpose of this study was to determine the factors that influence senior high school students' college course selections. This motivated the researcher to conduct this study in order to gain a better understanding of the factors influencing senior high school students' references for college courses. As a guide for educational institutions, this will help students choose the best career for their interests.

This study aims to answer the following:

1. What are the factors influencing the career preference of senior high school students during pandemic?
2. What factors does Senior High School Students consider when choosing a school to enroll in college?

## **II. METHODOLOGY**

The purpose of this study was to determine the factors that influence senior high school students' college course selections. The researcher used a descriptive research design to investigate the research objectives and gain a new perspective on the data collected. To investigate the research objectives, the researcher used a descriptive research strategy in order to gain a new perspective on the data gathered. If you

want to know if senior high school decision-making affects which course you should take, this study is going to look into it.

### **Participants**

Respondents were chosen using a stratified random sampling technique. The sample population consisted of 231 Senior High School students, 46 of whom were HUMSS students, 60 of whom were STEM students, 66 of whom were ABM students, and 59 of whom were GAS students enrolled in 2nd Semester school year 2020–2021. Additionally, respondents were informed that their responses would remain anonymous and confidential.

### **Research Instrument**

The researcher collected and described data primarily through the use of an online questionnaire. Three components comprise the online survey tool in question. Part 1 explains the study's purpose, significance, and general instructions. Part 2 includes information about the respondents' demographic characteristics, such as their age, gender, and senior high school course. Part 3 of the survey is made up of five identified career preference factors that influence students' preferences. These factors include family influence, peer influence, job opportunities, financial situation, and personal interest. Part 4 of the survey is made up of factors affecting the senior high school students' decision in choosing a school to enroll in college. These factors include Affordability of tuition Environment and culture, Quality of education, Scholarship, Parent's choice, Peer's influence, Religious atmosphere, Athletic opportunities, Closeness to hometown, and Student-Professor ratio.

### **Data Analysis**

The data was tabulated and calculated using Microsoft Excel. As a result, descriptive statistical tests like frequency and percentage, weighted mean and standard deviation, and standard deviation were used to fully describe and show the factors that influence senior high school students' college course selection decisions.

## **III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The study's findings were presented in terms of each of the problem's statements. As a result, the interview's emergent themes were coded.

1. What are the factors influencing the career preference of senior high school students during pandemic?

### **Personal Interest**

According to the results, this component utilized a broad definition of "agree". Both aptitude and interest, as indicators of a student's personality, have been identified as critical factors in choosing a career path. Because a student's experiences are shaped by their own abilities, their attitudes toward professional ideals are influenced in both directions (Fink, L. D., 2013). Respondents agreed that they chose their course based on their desires. Also, the respondents chose a course in accordance with their personality and habits. Blustein (2013) asserts that psychological research on career choice places a lot of emphasis on the personality traits that influence an individual's choice of a job.

### **Family Influence**

Families, particularly parents and guardians, have a sizable influence on their children's career aspirations and goals. According to Olaosebikan, O. I., & Olusakin, A. M. (2014), without parental permission or support, students and young adults are frequently unwilling to pursue – or even consider – a variety of career opportunities. However, its entirety interpretation is "neutral."

### **Peer Influence**

According to the results, this factor was interpreted as "neutral". Peers and friends have a substantial impact on the respondents' future selves' behavior, personality development, career choices, adaptation, and positive and negative behavior (Borisovich, M. A., et.al, 2017). However, respondents disagreed with the statement "My friend's decision is also my decision" this indicates that students already have their sense of decision making in terms of their choice of school for college.

### **Job Opportunities**

Based on the results, the students in this factor continued to be satisfied with the interpretation as "agreed". The indicator, "I select a strand based on anticipated salary" has a standard deviation of  $SD=0.8$  while the weighted mean is  $x=3.5$ . This implies that when these students select a major or career path, they prioritize higher-paying occupations or majors with the greatest job security. Along with job security, some students may anticipate retirement. Students may want to think about getting a job to make sure they have money for the rest of their lives (Wildman et al., 2001).

### **Financial Condition**

Finally, this factor demonstrates that some students come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and that their families are in financial distress. Occasionally, when students are reminded of the high cost of education, this difficulty can be transferred to them (Lambros, A., 2004). Students agree with these statements: "I choose this strand based on my parents' income", "I choose the strand based on scholarship opportunities", "I choose the strand that would not cause financial stress for my parents", and "I choose the strand that would not stress my present work", but take a contrary position on statement "I choose the strand based on tuition cost". This implies that, Filipino parents are naturally inclined to explore other options, as they continue to believe that a good education is necessary for success (Alampay, L. P., & Garcia, A. S., 2019). Students want to be treated like adults and given an equal opportunity to make the best career choices possible (Gottfredson, L. S., 2005). Economic stability, job opportunities, career advancement opportunities, and job satisfaction all influenced respondents' career choices (Ko, W. H., 2012). Students who have a firm grasp on their objectives are more motivated and engaged. What students need is a rewarding career that will last a lifetime (Lent, R. W., & Brown, S. D., 2013).

2. What factors do Senior High School Students consider when choosing a school to enroll in college?

**TABLE 1. Factors Senior High School Students Consider When Choosing a School to Enroll in College**

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
Affordability of tuition	4.66	0.65	Very Important
Environment and culture	4.56	0.65	Very Important
Quality of education	4.83	0.52	Very Important
Scholarship	4.83	0.50	Very Important
Parent's choice	3.77	1.07	Very Important
Peer's influence	3.50	1.16	Very Important
Religious atmosphere	3.91	1.15	Very Important
Athletic opportunities	3.52	1.27	Very Important
Closeness to hometown	3.98	1.13	Very Important
Student/professor ratio	4.18	1.01	Very Important

3.26-4.00 – Very Important      2.51 – 3.25 – Moderately Important      1.76- 2.50 – Little Importance      1.00- 1.75 – Not Important

Table 1 summarizes the factors that senior high school students consider when selecting a college to enroll. Scholarship ( $x= 4.83$ ), educational quality ( $x= 4.83$ ), tuition affordability ( $x= 4.66$ ), and environment and culture ( $x= 4.56$ ) are the top three factors influencing their decision to enroll in a college.

Results imply that students recognized that scholarships were a means of financing their education. Scholarships that assist or cover the costs of pursuing an advanced education provide a variety of benefits to recipients. From alleviating the financial burden of an advanced degree's rising costs to providing students with additional time and energy to focus on examinations rather than low-maintenance work, scholarships are one piece of the puzzle of what makes a strong institution for assisting students in pursuing and completing a degree. According to Sherraden, M., et.al (2018), scholarships can provide students with the financial support necessary to take the leap and choose a degree, as well as a boost to resolve and a student's trust in their ability to pursue a better future. Scholarships can also help students succeed by allowing for greater financial flexibility in terms of the requirement for students to work during college (Pingel, S., Parker, E., & Sisneros, L., 2016). Alemu, A. M., and Cordier, J. (2017) discovered that student satisfaction is influenced by academic and educational quality, as well as living and support experiences. Crick, R., & Bentley, J. (2020) of the Buck Institute of Education is an authority on student choice, as it is a critical component of the Buck Institute's model of project-based learning. He acknowledges that a student's choice also reclassifies the educator's position from one of information authority to one of learning guide. Thus, colleges/universities require students to learn how to make decisions, weigh options, and advocate for their conclusions. As a result, it is necessary to incorporate students' choices as a whole procedure toward that goal.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

According to the study's findings, the factors influencing a student's decision to enroll in college are financial aid, educational quality, tuition affordability, and environment and culture. It cannot be overstated how critical course selection is for students in senior high school. The findings imply that the various factors that influence students' choices are adaptable regardless of their age, gender, or family wealth. Students who pursue their dreams are conscious of their abilities and knowledge. Parents must supervise their children in all aspects of their lives, including decision-making. While parents can influence their children's career choices, young adults must make their own. They may be anyone they wish, demonstrating to others that they are capable of accomplishing their goals without parental assistance. To accomplish that goal, they must first attain self-sufficiency. Certain students consider their current financial difficulties and how they might affect their parents' ability to work. They fear that their parents will be unable to meet the requirements of the profession they wish to pursue. Scholarships, on the other hand, are available to students who are willing to seize the opportunity and thus alleviate their financial difficulties. Adolescents share a great deal of information with their peers, including their dreams. This cannot be ignored, as they are perpetually present. They can have an effect on the judgments that individuals must make on occasion. On the other hand, students can work independently and choose their SHS course with or without assistance from classmates or peers. They are unaware of this problem because they believe they can achieve their objective on their own. Due to the high demand for a variety of occupations, students select the ones that fit them best and require their labor. They are aware of the rising unemployment rate in the country, which gives them the confidence to seize the opportunity.

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