

Choice of Strand among Senior High School Students: Perspectives, Problems and Opportunities



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INTRODUCTION

Philippine Educational System has taken a great innovative stride in adopting the Senior High School (SHS) of K to 12 Program which was implemented School Year 2016 – 2017. One of the leaps that the program has introduced along with it was that a senior high school student is expected to be enrolled to the Senior High School Track that is in line with their interest, ability, skills and higher education course they wish to pursue. However, it has been a perplexing question among senior high school students what track and strand to take that is in line with their choice. The researcher as a teacher wanted to find out what are the choices of strand among students in senior high school focusing on the perspectives, problems and opportunities with the hope that it can give insight to senior high school students, parents and mentors to understand the choice of strand among senior high school students. And possibly the result of the study may lead to the understanding why the importance and the need on having a Career Guidance Program for Grade 10 students before taking Grade 11.

For social entrepreneur Filipino French Henry Motte-Muñoz, the key is to help students determine the best senior high school track for them and the university courses they can eventually take should they wish to get a college degree. In the last quarter of 2015, Motte-Muñoz launched Edukasyon.ph, an online platform that aims to solve the labor mismatch by giving students a comprehensive look at where the choices will lead them: "Out of the one million and a half kids who will finish high school, only 300,000 at most will go on to higher education, graduate, and find a job," he said. That means there are more than one million Filipinos who are left behind because they cannot afford college, or because they go in and drop out or end up taking the wrong subjects (Schnabel, 2016).

Thus, the senior high school students' choice of track and strand must be in line with their capability and interest to avoid labor mismatch, unemployment and drop out. It is in this premise that the researcher was desirous to find out the choice of strand among senior high school students and their perspectives, problems and opportunities. The purpose of this research is for the senior high school students to have an overview on the status or challenges on a certain strand as well as the opportunities that could be available to them with their choice of strand. This research study also aims to provide an insight to stakeholders of education like the community constituencies, school administrators/ operators, parents, curriculum designers and educators in general and may provide direction also to senior high school students on their choice of strand and track.

METHODOLOGY

This study used descriptive cross – sectional survey research design to gather the perceptions of selected Grade 12 students about senior high school. It is a descriptive research as it describes the opinions of the respondents on their choice of strand. It is cross – sectional as the data were collected in Marawi City, Cagayan de Oro City and Lanao del Norte at a single point in time during the School Year 2018 – 2019.

A researcher-made questionnaire was employed in this study. It consisted of five (5) parts, namely: Part I is the profile of the respondents. Part II is the factors that influence the choice of strands of the Grade 12 students. Part III is the perspectives of the Grade 12 respondents on senior high school. Part IV is the problems encountered by Grade 12 students. And Part V is the opportunities of the Grade 12 students after senior high school graduation.

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions: 1) What are the profiles of the respondents in terms of sex, age, track and strand?; 2) What are the perceived factors that influence the respondents' choice of strands in terms of family, school policy, peer influence, residence and academic performance?; 3) What are the perspectives of the respondents in

Choice of Strand among Senior High School Students: Perspectives, Problems and Opportunities

terms of Senior High School status, facility, faculty strength, student admission, curriculum, library holdings, school plant and student services?; 4) What are the problems encountered by the respondents in terms of lack of preparation, financial, parents' perception and teacher performance?; and 5) What are the perceived opportunities of the respondents after senior high school graduation in terms of higher education, employability, entrepreneurship and middle-level skill development? To analyze the data, statistical tools such as Frequency Count and Simple Percentage, Weighted Mean and Standard Deviation were used.

RESULTS

On the profile, it revealed that majority (62.30%) of the respondents were female; a little majority (54.97%) of the respondents were between 17-18 years of age; many (20.16%) of the respondents had chosen the academic track (HUMSS strand).

While on the factors that influence their choice of academic track and strand, it revealed that among others, most of the respondents considered their peers and classmates as an important factor that made them chose their strand so that they would be in the same class again (WM= 2.48; SD= 0.6937). Another important finding was that the respondents admitted they matched their academic performance or skills to the strand that they opted (WM= 2.55; SD= 0.7074). Also, according to the respondents, there was more fun where the home and the school were in the same place (WM= 2.35; SD= 0.7587). Moreover, on the average, the respondents failed to agree that the family influenced their choice of strand (WM= 2.29; SD= 0.7110) though they believed that parental support and encouragement are important factors that could influence career choice (WM= 2.58; SD= 0.6898). Lastly, the respondents revealed that school policy did not generally influence their career choice (WM= 2.24; SD= 0.7582).

In terms of perspectives on choice of strand, the respondents affirmed that the curriculum prepared the Senior High School students to learn more advanced skills in college as it offered subjects like Research 1 (Qualitative) and Research 2 (Quantitative) (WM= 2.70; SD= 0.5974). Another was that the respondents confirmed they underwent work immersion which included earn-while-you-learn opportunities (WM= 2.64; SD= 0.6145). As to faculty strength, the respondents revealed that the Senior High School teachers demonstrated knowledge, skills and expertise in their area of specialization (WM= 2.57; SD= 0.7019). Along the aspect of student services, the respondents agreed that during enrollment, the Career Guidance Program (CGP) helped Senior High School in making informed choices regarding their future career path (WM= 2.48; SD= 0.7305); the Registrar's Office was always ready with students' academic record (WM= 2.48; SD= 0.7305); and the school principal disseminated clear and accurate information/memoranda (WM= 2.48; SD= 0.7553). The most visible facility that the respondents observed was the school's multi-functional social hall for Senior High School program (WM= 2.40; SD= 0.7126); sufficient classroom for Senior High School (WM= 2.48; SD= 0.7051); and laboratory faculties for computer, science and Home Economics (WM= 2.40; SD= 0.7451). As reported by the respondents, the school plant in general was conducive to learning for Senior High School (WM= 2.44; SD= 0.7903); the school environment had good sanitation (WM= 2.44; SD= 0.7534); and functional multi-purpose auditorium, gymnasium and social hall for students' activities (WM= 2.44; SD= 0.7529). Computers and electronic equipment were accessible in the library (WM= 2.39; SD= 0.7514); the library resources such as books were new and relevant (WM= 2.36; SD= 0.7897); and the library featured Information and Communication Technology suited to complement research activities (WM= 2.34; SD= 0.7755).

Most of the respondents admitted lack of preparation for Senior High School as the most often problem encountered like they had less time to read and study because of being hooked to social media such as Facebook (WM= 3.01; SD= 0.9693). Another problem often encountered by the respondents was parents' perception that spending more money was the disadvantage of having Senior High School (WM= 3.02; SD= 0.9971). Most of the respondents had agreed that irregular daily allowance due to family's financial problem (WM= 3.08; SD= 0.9386) was often experienced. The respondents enumerated problems on teacher performance that were often encountered like teachers' lack mastery in the subject taught (WM= 2.65; SD= 1.0230); teachers did not give attention to each student individually (WM= 2.60; SD= 1.0963); and some of the Senior High School teachers were not well prepared when they come to class (WM= 2.57; SD= 1.0935).

Among the opportunities after Senior High School, the respondents considered higher education as the highest opportunity for them to gain standard knowledge, skills and competencies needed in college (WM= 2.53; SD= 0.6704). Also, Senior High School graduates achieve higher opportunity in middle-level skill development like specialized skills in technical-vocational school (WM= 2.43; SD= 0.7240). Further, Senior High School graduates have higher opportunity in engaging small-scale business activities because of what they learned in entrepreneurship subject (WM= 2.52; SD= 0.6629). Lastly, most of the respondents perceived that there was only moderate opportunity of employability after Senior High School (WM= 2.30; SD= 0.7404).

Choice of Strand among Senior High School Students: Perspectives, Problems and Opportunities

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the findings of the study, among the factors that influence the choice of strand, most of the respondents considered their peers and classmates as an important factor that made them chose their strand. The respondents matched their academic performance or skills to the strand. They admitted that there was more fun where the home and the school were located. However, the respondents failed to agree that the family influenced their choice of strand and that the school policy did not generally influence their career choice.

In terms of perspectives on Senior High School, the respondents affirmed that the curriculum prepared the Senior High School students to learn more advanced skills; they underwent work immersion; the Senior High School teachers demonstrated knowledge, skills and expertise; the Career Guidance Program (CGP) helped Senior High School in making informed choices regarding their future career path; the most visible facility observed by the respondents was the school's multi-functional social hall, classroom and laboratory faculties; the school plant in general was conducive to learning for Senior High School with functional multi-purpose auditorium, gymnasium and social hall; and computers and electronic equipment were accessible in the library.

On the problems encountered, most of the respondents admitted that they lacked preparation for Senior High School as the most often problem encountered like they had less time to read and study because of being hooked to social media such as Facebook. Another problem often encountered by the respondents were parents' perception, irregular daily allowance due to family's financial problem and teacher performance like teachers' lack mastery of the subject taught.

While on the opportunities after Senior High School, the respondents considered higher education as the highest opportunity, higher opportunity in middle-level skill development and higher opportunity in engaging small-scale business activities. But most of the respondents perceived that there was only moderate opportunity of employability after Senior High School.

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Choice of Strand among Senior High School Students: Perspectives, Problems and Opportunities

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AUTHOR'S PROFILE



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