

Career Pathway of Senior High School Learners and Their Career Decision Considering Curriculum Exits

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ABSTRACT: This study delved into the career and educational interests and choices of learners in the Senior High School (SHS) level. It investigated the correlation between learners' career preference based on Holland's RIASEC model and their chosen SHS Strand/Track. It aimed to gain insights into career decision-making, to provide suggestions for enhancing career guidance programs and educational courses, and to improve the implementation of Senior High Programs in schools. The study involved descriptive and inferential methods. Weighted Mean, Standard Deviation, and Pearson Correlation Coefficient were utilized after careful sampling with adherence to ethical guidelines. Results revealed that based on the RIASEC Model, learners in the SHS tend to choose jobs that align with their personalities. Although there is a clear inclination towards rapid employment and higher education, there is a lack of emphasis on entrepreneurship and the development of medium-level skills. The study also demonstrated that there is a distinction between intended pathways and actual decisions. The results supported the enhancement of career counseling initiatives, providing diverse educational opportunities, and prioritizing measures to enhance future educational and employment prospects. In order to facilitate SHS learners in making well-informed career choices and successfully transitioning into their desired career tracks, it is essential for teachers, career counselors, and policymakers to consider learners' preferences and offer them suitable resources and support.

KEYWORDS: career development, Career Guidance Programs, educational pathways, Hollands' RIASEC Model

I. INTRODUCTION

The Senior High School (SHS) program of the K to 12 Basic Education Curriculum has been institutionalized through the implementation of Republic Act 10533, also known as the Enhanced Basic Education Curriculum. This program, a response to the 10-year cycle that previously left high school graduates in need of further education, offered an additional two-year basic education aimed at equipping learners with competencies at par with international standards.

Despite its aims, the SHS program faced criticism from both public and private sectors. The added cost of education and the scarcity of government resources were primary concerns, leading to scrutiny. The shortage of teachers with specialization in secondary education further complicated matters, with teachers often required to teach subjects outside their expertise. This was aggravated by a lack of appropriate strategies, instructional materials, and references, as well as inadequate classrooms and laboratories shared by junior and senior high learners.

As the SHS program entered its 7th year since implementation in SY 2016-2017, the first batch of SHS graduates who completed four-year college degrees should have graduated by SY 2021-2022. Alongside their career decisions, these graduates faced three other exit pathways: middle skills development, entrepreneurship, or employment. Learners entering the SHS program chose a strand that aligned with their preferred career path. Those opting to join the workforce immediately could pursue certificates that enhanced their qualifications, such as Certificate of Competencies (COCs) and National Certificates (NC) from the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA). These certificates could be used to apply for both local and overseas jobs requiring specific skills.

However, many SHS learners struggled to choose a strand due to a lack of availability in their local schools. They were often forced to select strands they did not intend to pursue post-graduation. This misalignment between SHS and higher education programs was highlighted by Avi et al. (2021) and Botoms (2022), who noted that many graduates were unprepared for postsecondary studies or high-demand, well-paying jobs.

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As a result, secondary schools, especially at the SHS level, had to recalibrate and redesign their offerings to meet the community's demands while maximizing learners' strengths and capabilities. Guzman and Rogayan (2020) emphasized the importance of enrolling in a strand aligned with learners' strong interests. Their study found that STEM learners who based their career goals on personal interests in Biology and other STEM-related courses successfully pursued STEM-related careers post-graduation.

Hence, the researcher aimed to explore preferred career pathways and career decisions among SHS learners in the Senior High Schools of South District, Division of Cagayan de Oro City. Providing learners with the opportunity to express their preferred career paths based on interests, personality, and strengths was crucial for informed career decision-making. Schools had to update their SHS curricula and build career pathways accordingly. A district-wide evaluation of SHS offerings was therefore essential.

The study was carried out in the South District of Cagayan de Oro City, comprising both the highly urbanized and rural secondary schools, to wit; Cagayan de Oro City National High School, Macasandig National High School, Camaman-an National High School, and Indahag National High School.

This study was anchored on Holland's Theory of Interests that is organized based on six personality types and six parallel environments, the Realistic, Artistic, Investigative, Social, Enterprising and Conventional Model (RIASEC Model) is the most common framework for identifying people's interests (Khazi, 2019). There may be too many models developed to determine one's interest, but the researcher found the practicability and applicability of Holland's RIASEC Model in this study. The model posited that the interests of the majority of individuals can be classified as a combination of six personality types. Each of this type is characterized by a collection of preferred activities, beliefs, abilities, values, and characteristics. Khazi cited John Holland that only when one does the work in the areas of our interests will our passion shine through.⁴

In this study, Holland's RIASEC Theory of Vocational Interests served as an assessment framework that helps learners understand their interests and relate them to appropriate career decisions. The career choices of Senior High School learners were examined through four curriculum exits: middle-level skills development, entrepreneurship, employment, and higher education. Usslepp et al. (2020) supported the relevance of the RIASEC framework by finding that learners' vocational interests were significantly associated with their choices between general and vocational educational pathways. Their findings indicated that individual interests and personality differences should be considered when helping learners select educational and career pathways that correspond to their preferences and characteristics.

Holland's Theory of Interests believes that Realistic people like working mainly with their hands making, fixing, assembling or building things, using operating equipment, tools and machines. The Investigative people like to discover and research ideas, observe, experiment, ask questions and solve problems. The Artistic people love to use words, art, music or drama to express themselves, communicate or perform or they like to create or designs things. The Social people like to work with people to teach, train, inform, help, treat, heal, cure, serve, and greet. They are concerned for others' well-being and welfare. Those who like to meet other people, leading, talking to and influencing others, encouraging others, working in business are the characteristics of Enterprising people. Interest on indoors and at tasks that involve organizing and being accurate, following procedures, working with data or numbers, planning work and events are the traits of Conventional people.

Career decisions in this study are based on the four Senior High School curriculum exits identified by the Department of Education: middle-level skills development, entrepreneurship, higher education, and employment. Selecting among these pathways is an important decision because it influences learners' education, training, and occupational direction after graduation. Padios et al. (2021) found that 90.82% of the Senior High School graduates they studied pursued higher education, while considerably smaller percentages entered employment or entrepreneurship. These findings demonstrated that although Senior High School provides several possible exits, higher education remains the predominant choice among Filipino graduates. Thus, career decisions concerning the four curriculum exits constitute an important variable in the present study.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study employed the descriptive-correlational method of research with applications of inferential approaches. The two-fold research approach was not only used to describe the career pathways of the respondents but also to assess their career interests.

Furthermore, this involved various statistical and analytical methods to infer associations and relationships between the variables. To assess the respondents' career pathways, the researcher adapted Holland's RIASEC Model. The career decisions were determined based on the curriculum exits which were the employment, middle-skills development, entrepreneurship, and higher education.

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Statistical treatment is a set of procedures for analyzing data to answer research questions. This helped to identify patterns and relationships in data, summarize and describe data, and make inferences and predictions based on the data.

For Problem 1 and 2, Weighted Mean and Standard Deviation were used to describe the career pathways and the career decisions of the respondents. The weighted mean was used to calculate the average value of a set of values, while the standard deviation was used to measure the dispersion or spread of the values around the mean. For Problem 3, Pearson Correlation Coefficient was used to determine the relationship between the preferred career pathways and the career decisions of the respondents. The Pearson correlation coefficient measured the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two variables.

These statistical tools allowed the researcher to analyze the data and draw meaningful conclusions about the career pathways and career decisions of the respondents.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Problem 1. What is the preferred career pathway of Senior High School learners considering the following:

- 1.1 RIASEC Model, and
- 1.2 SHs Strand /Track?

Table 1 presents the Senior High School learners' preferred career pathway based on the RIASEC model. This model classifies careers into six personality types: Realistic, Investigative, Social, Artistic, Enterprising, and Conventional. The overall Mean of 3.26 with $SD = 0.91$, qualitatively described as Highly Preferred/chosen interest. This suggests that the learners have a high preference for careers that align with their personality and interests. Tett and Turban (2021) emphasized that the RIASEC Model plays an important role in guiding the career choices and interests of our learners. Here, the Senior High learners show a strong inclination towards career choices that match their personality traits and interests as per the RIASEC model. This finding provides a valuable insight into how learners' personality types relate to their career interests, which can have practical implications for career guidance, education, and workforce development.

Furthermore, among the six career pathways, the Conventional Pathway attained the highest Overall Mean of 3.56 with $SD = 0.93$, qualitatively described as Highly Preferred. This means that the Senior High School learners have strong inclination towards the Conventional Pathway.

In Holland's Theory of Career Choice, the Conventional Pathway is commonly known as the Organizers. The Organizers have a strong preference for activities that need a well-defined framework, clear instructions, attention to detail, and tasks related to office work. Seedhouse et al. (2020) selected data administration and secretarial labor as roles that necessitate meticulousness and a high level of attention to detail. They classified individuals attracted to accounting, banking, clerical, and computational tasks as the traditional type.

Moreover, the indicator 4, *I like to cook*, under the Realistic Pathway has the highest Mean of 3.60, with $SD = 0.94$, qualitatively described as Highly Preferred. The data indicate that Senior High School learners show a strong preference for cooking in comparison to their other pursuits. This preference suggests that cooking is not merely a hobby, but a profoundly ingrained passion among learners in this discipline. Seedhouse et al. (2020) highlighted their finding that learners maintain high levels of enthusiasm when learning new languages if the assignments are related to or include cooking. The study highlighted the fact that culinary activities provide substantial chances to link classroom education with learners' domestic environment, thereby explaining the high level of interest in cooking among learners.

Johnson (2019) asserted that cooking is not only a skill, but also a powerful method of acquiring knowledge and making discoveries. It provides a tangible and meaningful structure for learners to apply their information and skills, thus, enhancing their engagement and importance in their learning experiences. Cooking fosters creativity and independence, allowing learners to experiment with a wide range of ingredients, flavors, and methods. This experiment promotes self-expression and encourages the development of a unique cooking style, in line with the Realistic Pathway's emphasis on autonomy and creativity.

Among the six career pathways, the Artistic Pathway obtained the lowest overall mean of 2.96 ($SD = 0.90$), qualitatively described as Sometimes Preferred. This result indicates that the Senior High School learners had a comparatively lower preference for careers involving creative and expressive activities, such as language, visual arts, and music. Gfrörer et al. (2022) found that Artistic interests, together with several other RIASEC dimensions, declined during early adolescence, demonstrating that learners' vocational interests may change as they develop and encounter different experiences. Furthermore, Nweke and Uzun (2025) found that monetary considerations significantly influenced learners' career choices, suggesting that learners may favor occupations perceived as offering greater financial stability and rewards. These factors may have contributed to the comparatively lower preference for the Artistic Pathway in the present study.

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On the other hand, the indicator 16, *I like to play instruments or sing*, received the lowest Mean score of 2.90, with SD = 0.90. This score indicates agreement and is understood as a preference that is Sometimes Preferred. The results indicate that senior high school learners may exhibit a limited propensity for either playing musical instruments or singing. A potential rationale is that senior high school learners may perceive playing musical instruments or singing as less engaging or intriguing compared to other activities. This supports the study of Davis et al. (2023), which suggested that while music education is available to all learners, their interest in music declines as they age.

Senior High School learners may show a stronger preference for career or academic-driven pursuits, leading them to give priority to activities that they perceive to be more closely associated with their long-term goals. This can cause them to become less inclined to engage in hobbies like singing or playing musical instruments because they will not be seen as having a direct impact on their success in school or the workplace.

In addition, Mei and Yang (2021) have shown that factors such as limited exposure, restricted access to instruments, and attitudes of the difficulties of learning music contribute to the low interest in playing instruments and singing. Engaging in the playing of musical instruments and singing frequently demand a specific degree of proficiency and dedication, thus dissuading learners from openly favoring these pursuits. Learners may view that acquiring musical skills necessitates a substantial commitment of time and exertion, which may impact their inclination towards activities that are perceived as more attainable or immediately gratifying.

Table 1. SHS Learners' Preferred Career Pathway based on RIASEC Model

Interests and Characteristics (Indicators)	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description
Realistic Pathway			
1. I like to do experiments.	3.05	0.90	Sometimes Preferred
2. I like to take care of animals.	3.54	0.91	Highly Preferred
3. I like putting things together or assembling things.	3.56	0.93	Highly Preferred
4. I like to cook.	3.60	0.94	Highly Preferred
5. I am a practical person.	3.56	0.93	Highly Preferred
6. I like working outdoors.	3.52	0.91	Highly Preferred
Overall	3.47	0.92	Highly Preferred
Investigative Pathway:			
7. I like to do puzzles.	3.04	0.90	Sometimes Preferred
8. I like to do experiments.	3.08	0.91	Sometimes Preferred
9. I enjoy Science.	3.10	0.92	Sometimes Preferred
10. I enjoy trying to figure out how things work.	2.92	0.88	Sometimes Preferred
11. I like to analyze things (problems/ situations).	3.05	0.90	Sometimes Preferred
12. I like working with numbers or charts.	2.97	0.89	Sometimes Preferred
Overall	3.03	0.90	Sometimes Preferred
Artistic Pathway			
13. I am good at working independently.	2.96	0.89	Sometimes Preferred
14. I like to read about art and music.	3.01	0.91	Sometimes Preferred
15. I am a creative person.	2.94	0.90	Sometimes Preferred
16. I like to play instruments or sing.	2.90	0.90	Sometimes Preferred
17. I like acting in plays.	3.02	0.91	Sometimes Preferred
18. I like to draw.	2.93	0.91	Sometimes Preferred
Overall	2.96	0.90	Sometimes Preferred
Social Pathway			
19. I like to work in teams.	2.97	0.90	Sometimes Preferred
20. I like to teach or train people.	3.04	0.90	Sometimes Preferred
21. I like trying to help people solve their problems.	3.02	0.91	Sometimes Preferred
22. I am interested in healing people.	3.06	0.90	Sometimes Preferred
23. I enjoy learning about other cultures.	3.07	0.92	Sometimes Preferred
24. I like to get into discussions about issues	3.06	0.92	Sometimes Preferred
Overall	3.04	0.91	Sometimes Preferred

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Enterprising Pathway				
25. I am an ambitious person, I set goals for myself.	3.46	0.92	Highly Preferred	
26. I like to try to influence or persuade people.	3.52	0.92	Highly Preferred	
27. I like selling things.	3.53	0.94	Highly Preferred	
28. I am quick to take on new responsibilities.	3.49	0.94	Highly Preferred	
29. I would like to start my own business.	3.41	0.91	Highly Preferred	
30. I like to give speeches.	3.53	0.92	Highly Preferred	
Overall	3.49	0.93	Highly Preferred	
Conventional Pathway				
31. I like to organize things, (files, desks/offices).	3.56	0.93	Highly Preferred	
32. I like to have clear instructions to follow.	3.52	0.93	Highly Preferred	
33. I pay attention to details.	3.59	0.93	Highly Preferred	
34. I like to do filing or typing.	3.57	0.93	Highly Preferred	
35. I am good at keeping records of my work.	3.58	0.92	Highly Preferred	
36. I would like to work in an office.	3.51	0.91	Highly Preferred	
Overall	3.56	0.93	Highly Preferred	
Overall	3.26	0.91	Highly Preferred	
Note: 3.26 – 4.00 Highly Preferred/chosen interest. 2.51 – 3.25 Sometime preferred/chosen interest, 1.76 – 2.50 Rarely preferred chosen interest 1.00 – 1.75 Definitely not preferred/chosen interest.				

This suggests that the availability of resources such as musical instruments, music teachers, and performance opportunities significantly influences pupils' preferences. If there is a scarcity of these materials, pupils may be deprived of the opportunity to cultivate a profound passion for playing musical instruments or singing.

Table 2 presents the preferred career pathways of Senior High School (SHS) learners under the Academic Track. The overall Mean of 3.58 SD = 0.92, qualitatively described as Highly Preferred. This means that most of the learners have expressed a high level of agreement with all the career pathways based on Holland's RIASEC Theory. This suggests that the Senior High School learners are likely to have a broad range of interests and may be open to exploring various career paths when they graduate in the secondary level.

Table 2. SHS Learners' Preferred Career Pathway based on Academic Track

Interests and Characteristics (Indicators)	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description
Realistic Pathway			
1. I like to do experiments.	3.60	0.92	Highly Preferred
2. I like to take care of animals.	3.59	0.93	Highly Preferred
3. I like putting things together or assembling things.	3.61	0.92	Highly Preferred
4. I like to cook.	3.65	0.94	Highly Preferred
5. I am a practical person.	3.62	0.93	Highly Preferred
6. I like working outdoors.	3.58	0.91	Highly Preferred
Overall	3.61	0.93	Highly Preferred
Investigative Pathway:			
7. I like to do puzzles.	3.60	0.92	Highly Preferred
8. I like to do experiments.	3.63	0.93	Highly Preferred
9. I enjoy science.	3.66	0.94	Highly Preferred
10. I enjoy trying to figure out how things work.	3.48	0.90	Highly Preferred
11. I like to analyze things (problems/ situations).	3.61	0.92	Highly Preferred
12. I like working with numbers or charts.	3.52	0.90	Highly Preferred
Overall	3.58	0.92	Highly Preferred
Artistic Pathway			
13. I am good at working independently.	3.51	0.90	Highly Preferred
14. I like to read about art and music.	3.56	0.92	Highly Preferred

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15. I am a creative person.	3.50	0.90	Highly Preferred
16. I like to play instruments or sing.	3.48	0.90	Highly Preferred
17. I like acting in plays.	3.57	0.92	Highly Preferred
18. I like to draw.	3.49	0.91	Highly Preferred
Overall	3.52	0.91	Highly Preferred
Social Pathway			
19. I like to work in teams.	3.52	0.90	Highly Preferred
20. I like to teach or train people.	3.60	0.92	Highly Preferred
21. I like trying to help people solve their problems.	3.58	0.93	Highly Preferred
22. I am interested in healing people.	3.61	0.92	Highly Preferred
23. I enjoy learning about other cultures.	3.63	0.94	Highly Preferred
24. I like to get into discussions about issues	3.62	0.94	Highly Preferred
Overall	3.59	0.93	Highly Preferred
Enterprising Pathway			
25. I am an ambitious person, I set goals for myself.	3.57	0.91	Highly Preferred
26. I like to try to influence or persuade people.	3.59	0.92	Highly Preferred
27. I like selling things.	3.62	0.93	Highly Preferred
28. I am quick to take on new responsibilities.	3.54	0.94	Highly Preferred
29. I would like to start my own business.	3.46	0.90	Highly Preferred
30. I like to give speeches.	3.59	0.92	Highly Preferred
Overall	3.56	0.92	Highly Preferred
Conventional Pathway			
31. I like to organize things, (files, desks/offices).	3.60	0.92	Highly Preferred
32. I like to have clear instructions to follow.	3.58	0.93	Highly Preferred
33. I pay attention to details.	3.61	0.92	Highly Preferred
34. I like to do filing or typing.	3.61	0.94	Highly Preferred
35. I am good at keeping records of my work.	3.62	0.93	Highly Preferred
36. I would like to work in an office.	3.58	0.91	Highly Preferred
Overall	3.60	0.93	Highly Preferred
Overall	3.58	0.92	Highly Preferred
Note: 3.26 – 4.00 Highly Preferred/chosen interest.			
1.76 – 2.50 Rarely preferred chosen interest			
2.51 – 3.25 Sometime preferred/chosen interest,			
1.00 – 1.75 Definitely not preferred/chosen interest.			

The Academic Track, as outlined in DepEd Order No. 31, s. 2012, consists of four strands that provide learners with a strong grounding in fundamental subjects and the opportunity to focus on their specific areas of interest. The strands are categorized as follows: (1) Accountancy, Business, and Management (ABM); (2) Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM); and (3) Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS). These strands are intended for learners with a keen interest in careers in accounting, business, finance, and management.

Su et al. (2019) corroborated these findings, asserting that learners in the Academic Track like educational environments that emphasize intellectual challenges and structured learning experiences that support the development of Investigative and Conventional interests. Obviously, the Academic Track provides such an environment by fostering analytical skills and systematic knowledge acquisition.

Moreover, the indicator 3 under Investigative Pathway, *I enjoy Science*, got the highest Mean of 3.66 with the Standard Deviation of 0.94, qualitatively described as Highly Preferred by the SHS- Academic Track learners. This means that the learners enrolled in the Academic Track are highly enthusiastic about the Science teachings and activities. Kemboi (2019) corroborated this, stating that learners taking up the Academic Track at the upper secondary level exhibit personalities congruent with their career choices. Specifically, these learners often have dominant investigative personality types, which align well with the ABM, STEM, and HUMSS strands. Archer et al. (2020) noted that secondary learners' scientific engagement and enjoyment are crucial to their Science career interest.

On the other hand, the indicator 5 under Enterprising Pathway, *I would like to start my own business*, got the lowest Mean of 3.46 with SD = 0.90, qualitatively described as Highly Preferred. Although the learners in the SHS-Academic Track classified

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establishing their own business as Strongly Agree, the lower mean indicates that they have less enthusiasm for entrepreneurship in comparison to other interests. According to Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) 2019/2020 report, young people's entrepreneurial intentions are often hampered by a lack of practical entrepreneurship education and support systems within their schooling environment (Bosma et al., 2020). The diminished attention in entrepreneurship among SHS-Academic Track learners may suggest a preference for well-defined and secure professional pathways rather than the unpredictability of starting a commercial venture.

The SHS Academic Track learners' inclination toward non-entrepreneurial pathways may be associated with an educational environment and curriculum that place greater emphasis on preparation for higher education and established professions than on business creation. Abbasianchavari and Moritz (2021) found that exposure to entrepreneurial role models can influence learners' entrepreneurial attitudes, intentions, and behavior by providing inspiration, practical knowledge, guidance, and support. Similarly, Amofah and Saladrighes (2022) emphasized the importance of entrepreneurship education, institutional support, and exposure to entrepreneurial role models in developing learners' entrepreneurial intentions. These findings indicate a possible need to strengthen experiential entrepreneurship education, mentorship, and interaction with successful entrepreneurs among Academic Track learners. However, further investigation is necessary before concluding that the existing curriculum is inadequate.

Table 3 presents the preferred career pathways of Senior High School (SHS) learners under the TVL Track. The overall Mean of 2.93 with SD = 0.90, qualitatively described as Sometimes Preferred. These findings indicate that the SHS-TVL Track learners had a weaker preference for these paths compared to learners in other tracks considering the RIASEC (Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional) model.

It is important to note that the result reveals that although there is a general consensus among learners enrolled in the TVL Track with regard to the job paths, there is also a degree of confusion over the professional paths that they would choose to pursue. Vergara (2023) provided more evidence that learners who are unsure about their post-high school education or who want to enter the workforce immediately tend to select the TVL Track. This is further supported by the fact that the TVL Track is favored by learners.

Furthermore, these results suggest that learners who are enrolled in the SHS-TVL Track may possess varying motivation when it comes to selecting their future fields of study. Nazareno et al. (2021) identified several characteristics that could influence individuals' job decisions. These determinants encompass socioeconomic status, parental educational attainment and occupation, and individual situations. Learners with low financial resources are more inclined to choose a career option that offers a shorter duration for completing their education. If learners perceive that their parents lack the financial means to support their college education, they choose courses that entail little expenses.

The indicator 33, *I like to do experiments*, under the Conventional Pathway, has the highest Mean value of 3.56 with SD = 0.93, qualitatively described as Strongly as Highly Preferred. Similarly, the Conventional Pathway exhibited the highest average Mean of 3.50 with SD = 0.93, qualitatively described as Highly Preferred among the professional pathways of the RIASEC Model. This shows that the SHS - TVL Track learners possess a profound inclination towards systematic and organized tasks which need rigorous attention to detail, organization, and strict adherence to established protocols.

Wang and Hu (2020) corroborated the findings, indicating that TVL learners exhibit a significant inclination towards the Conventional pathway. This preference shows that their educational experiences are characterized by a high degree of structure and organization, which in turn reinforces their Conventional skills. TVL programs frequently incorporate structured instruction and regular assignments, which are well-suited to the preferences and aptitudes of those with Conventional traits. The Conventional type includes positions like administrative assistants, clerical work, and data management.

Table 3. SHS Learners' Preferred Career Pathway based on TVL Track

Interests and Characteristics (Indicators)	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description
Realistic Pathway			
1. I like to do experiments.	2.50	0.87	Sometimes Preferred
2. I like to take care of animals.	3.48	0.88	Highly Preferred
3. I like putting things together or assembling things.	3.51	0.93	Highly Preferred
4. I like to cook.	3.54	0.93	Highly Preferred
5. I am a practical person.	3.50	0.92	Highly Preferred
6. I like working outdoors.	3.46	0.91	Highly Preferred
Overall	3.33	0.91	Highly Preferred

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Investigative Pathway:			
7. I like to do puzzles.	2.49	0.87	Sometimes Preferred
8. I like to do experiments.	2.52	0.88	Sometimes Preferred
9. I enjoy science.	2.54	0.89	Sometimes Preferred
10. I enjoy trying to figure out how things work.	2.36	0.86	Sometimes Preferred
11. I like to analyze things (problems/ situations).	2.49	0.88	Sometimes Preferred
12. I like working with numbers or charts.	2.41	0.87	Sometimes Preferred
Overall	2.47	0.88	Sometimes Preferred
Artistic Pathway			
13. I am good at working independently.	2.40	0.88	Sometimes Preferred
14. I like to read about art and music.	2.45	0.89	Sometimes Preferred
15. I am a creative person.	2.39	0.89	Sometimes Preferred
16. I like to play instruments or sing.	2.32	0.90	Sometimes Preferred
17. I like acting in plays.	2.46	0.89	Sometimes Preferred
18. I like to draw.	2.37	0.91	Sometimes Preferred
Overall	2.40	0.89	Sometimes Preferred
Social Pathway			
19. I like to work in teams.	2.41	0.90	Sometimes Preferred
20. I like to teach or train people.	2.48	0.88	Sometimes Preferred
21. I like trying to help people solve their problems.	2.47	0.89	Sometimes Preferred
22. I am interested in healing people.	2.50	0.87	Sometimes Preferred
23. I enjoy learning about other cultures.	2.51	0.90	Sometimes Preferred
24. I like to get into discussions about issues	2.50	0.90	Sometimes Preferred
Overall	2.48	0.89	Sometimes Preferred
Enterprising Pathway			
25. I am an ambitious person, I set goals for myself.	3.35	0.92	Highly Preferred
26. I like to try to influence or persuade people.	3.45	0.91	Highly Preferred
27. I like selling things.	3.43	0.94	Highly Preferred
28. I am quick to take on new responsibilities.	3.43	0.93	Highly Preferred
29. I would like to start my own business.	3.36	0.91	Highly Preferred
30. I like to give speeches.	3.47	0.91	Highly Preferred
Overall	3.42	0.92	Highly Preferred
Conventional Pathway			
31. I like to organize things, (files, desks/offices).	3.51	0.93	Highly Preferred
32. Realistic Pathway	3.46	0.92	Highly Preferred
33. I like to do experiments.	3.56	0.93	Highly Preferred
34. I like to take care of animals.	3.52	0.93	Highly Preferred
35. I like putting things together or assembling things.	3.53	0.92	Highly Preferred
36. I like to cook.	3.44	0.92	Highly Preferred
Overall	3.50	0.93	Highly Preferred
Overall	2.93	0.90	Sometimes Preferred

Note: 3.26 – 4.00 Highly Preferred/chosen interest. 2.51 – 3.25 Sometime preferred/chosen interest

1.76 – 2.50 Rarely preferred chosen interest 1.00 – 1.75 Definitely not preferred/chosen interest.

However, the indicator 16, *I like to play instruments or sing* got the lowest Mean of 2.32 with SD = 0.90, qualitatively described as Sometimes Preferred. In the same way, the Artistic Pathway of Holland's RIASEC Model got the lowest Mean of 2.40 with SD = 0.89, qualitatively described as Sometimes Preferred. This finding suggests that while there is some interest in musical and other activities under the Artistic Pathway among the Senior High School Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) learners, it is not a strong or prevalent interest among this group.

Basically, the TVL programs are designed to provide practical skills and vocational training aligned with specific trades and careers. According to Wang and Sun (2021), the vocational programs often focus on technical skills which may not heavily

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emphasize artistic or musical training. Therefore, it is not surprising that interest in musical activities is not highly prevalent among TVL learners.

This study supports the findings of Gao and Wang (2020) that the SHS-TVL Track learners be provided with opportunities to integrate more diverse extracurricular activities, including Music and Arts, to cater to a broader range of learner interests. This could enhance overall learner engagement and provide a more holistic educational experience. Lamont (2019) also emphasized that engagement in musical and other artistic activities has shown to have positive effects on learner well-being and emotional health. Even though it is sometimes preferred, offering opportunities for musical engagement could help support the emotional and social well-being of TVL learners, contributing to a more supportive school environment.

Table 4. Overall Preferred Career Pathways of Senior High Learners

Variables	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description
RIASEC Model	3.26	0.91	Highly Preferred
Academic Track	3.58	0.92	Highly Preferred
TVL Track	2.93	0.90	Sometimes Preferred
Overall	3.26	0.91	Highly Preferred

Note: 3.26 – 4.00 Highly Preferred/chosen interest. 2.51 – 3.25 Sometime preferred/chosen interest
1.76 – 2.50 Rarely preferred chosen interest 1.00 – 1.75 Definitely not preferred/chosen interest.

Table 4 illustrates the professional pathways favored by Senior High School learners according to Holland's RIASEC Model, encompassing both the Academic and Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) Tracks within the Senior High School curriculum. The preferred career pathways have an overall Mean of 3.26 with SD =0.91, qualitatively described as Highly Preferred. This suggests that the majority of SHS learners find all career pathways as important and useful in understanding their career preferences and aligning career choices with personal interests and skills. These findings support Vergara (2023) study and asserted a strong correlation between personality types and career choices. Learners who align their career choices with their personality types may experience a greater sense of fulfillment and success in their chosen fields, as they have developed self-actualization and can launch their own future careers.

The Senior High School - Academic Track as a professional option received the highest Mean score of 3.58 with SD=0.92, qualitatively described as Highly Preferred. This shows that a significant proportion of the learners in the Senior High School (SHS) program perceive the Academic track as pertinent and valuable in comprehending their career preferences. The data suggest that a significant proportion of SHS learners perceive the RIASEC model as pertinent and valuable for comprehending vocational inclinations and aligning career decisions with individual interests and aptitudes. Nauta (2019) supported this discovery and emphasized the significance of the RIASEC model in assisting individuals in identifying career options that are in line with their interests and abilities.

Wang and Hu (2020) explicitly categorized diverse individuals' occupational interests into RIASEC's six distinct personality types, each corresponding to specific activities and environments. These types include: (1) Realistic (R) personality, individuals of this type are often drawn to hands-on, practical activities. They prefer to work with objects, tools, machines, or animals rather than ideas, data, or people. They frequently succeed in domains such as engineering, construction, agriculture, or skilled trades; (2) Investigative (I) personality types are analytical, inquisitive, and derive satisfaction from problem-solving. They prefer to work with ideas, data, or people rather than objects or machines. They often excel in scientific research, technical fields, or academic pursuits; (3) Artistic (A) personality type, are individuals who are creative, imaginative, and enjoy expressing themselves through various forms of art. They prefer to work with ideas or objects rather than data or people. They love visual arts, performing arts, writing, or design; (4) Social (S) personality type, are individuals who are empathetic, nurturing, and enjoy helping others. They prefer to work with people rather than objects, ideas, or data. They excel in domains such as education, counseling, healthcare, or social work; the Enterprising (E) personality type comprises persons who are ambitious, forceful, and derive satisfaction from convincing or leading others. They favor collaboration with individuals or concepts over inanimate objects, data, or machinery. Individuals frequently thrive in domains such as sales, marketing, management, or entrepreneurship; and the Conventional (C) personality type comprises those who are organized, detail-oriented, and derive satisfaction from engaging with data or processes. They favor engaging with facts or objects above individuals or concepts. They demonstrate proficiency in domains such as accountancy, administration, finance, or technology. These personality types can significantly influence learners' career choices and preferences.

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Problem 2. What is the career decision of Senior High School learners considering curriculum exits:

- 2.1. Middle Skills Development;
- 2.2. Entrepreneurship;
- 2.3. Higher Education, and
- 2.4. Employment?

Table 5 provides a summary of Senior High School learners' career decision preferences across four different areas- Middle Skills Development, Entrepreneurship, Higher Education, and Employment. The Overall Mean for all variables combined is 3.13 with an SD of 0.91, qualitatively described as Sometimes Preferred. This suggests that, on average, learners are somewhat likely to consider each of these career decisions, with a stronger preference for employment over the other options.

Furthermore, the data indicate that while learners are open to various post-graduation paths, there is a clear tendency toward entering the job market directly after finishing senior high school reflecting the curriculum exit on employment with the highest Mean of 3.36 and an SD = 0.92, qualitatively described as Highly Preferred. The second highest preference on Middle Skills Development is consistent on the desire of the SHS learners to take short-term courses which offers faster and often more cost-effective pathway to employment according to Bailey and Belfield (2019).

Table 5. Overall SHS Learners' Preferred Career Decision

Variables	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description
Middle Skills Development	3.20	0.92	Sometimes Preferred
Entrepreneurship	2.81	0.87	Sometimes Preferred
Higher Education	3.14	0.92	Sometimes Preferred
Employment	3.36	0.92	Highly Preferred
Overall	3.13	0.91	Sometimes Preferred
Note: 3.26 – 4.00 Highly Preferred/chosen interest.		2.51 – 3.25 Sometime preferred/chosen interest	
1.76 – 2.50 Rarely preferred chosen interest		1.00 – 1.75 Definitely not preferred/chosen interest	

Smith and Feldman (2020) acknowledged the growing recognition of the value of middle skills development, which typically involves technical or vocational training, that can lead to well-paying jobs without requiring a four-year degree. The inclination towards short-term courses may also be driven by the immediate employment opportunities they present, which can be particularly appealing in contexts where financial constraints or the need for quick entry into the workforce are significant considerations (Jang & Tang, 2021).

Entrepreneurship (*Negosyo*), while still of interest, appears to be a less preferred option compared to the others reflecting the lowest Mean of 2.81 with SD = to 0.87, qualitatively described as Sometimes Preferred. This indicates that learners are moderately interested in starting their own business. Orbeta (2019) as similar finding that of the four curriculum exits the less preferred by the Senior High School learners is putting up their own business. Consistently, a high preference among learners is on seeking immediate employment (*trabaho*) after graduating from SHS.

Fayolle and Gailly (2021) underscored the importance of fostering entrepreneurial skills and mindsets among SHS learners. Educational institutions should enhance their entrepreneurship education programs, ensuring they not only cover theoretical aspects but also provide practical experiences such as business simulations, internships, and mentorship opportunities. Bacaling (2018) emphasized the importance of addressing the factors that may be limiting the appeal of entrepreneurship as a career option, such as perceived risks and uncertainties, lack of exposure to entrepreneurial opportunities, or the influence of societal norms and family expectations.

Furthermore, strengthening the support systems available to learners, including family, teachers, and friends, can significantly impact their entrepreneurial success. Peterman and Kennedy (2019) suggested that schools should facilitate organizing workshops, networking events, and creating platforms where learners can connect with potential mentors and advisors from entrepreneur social circles.

Moreover, there is a need to instill confidence in learners regarding their employment prospects after graduating from SHS. This could involve creating more pathways for practical experience, internships, and mentorship programs, as well as fostering a supportive environment for entrepreneurship within the SHS curriculum.

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Problem 3. Is there a significant relationship on the preferred career pathway of the Senior High learners to their career decision considering curriculum exits?

Table 6 presents the results of the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation analysis conducted to determine the relationship between the preferred career pathway and the career decision of Senior High School learners considering the curriculum exits. The analysis revealed r -values of 0.457 and 0.482, with corresponding p -values of 0.001, indicating that the relationships were statistically significant at the 0.05 level of significance. Since the p -values were less than 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected.

The obtained r -values indicate a weak positive relationship between the respondents' preferred career pathways and their career decisions. This suggests that learners who express stronger preferences for particular career pathways also tend to demonstrate career decisions that are more consistent with those preferences. However, the relatively low correlation coefficients indicate that preferred career pathway alone does not strongly determine learners' career decisions. Other factors may also contribute to the career decisions they make regarding the curriculum exit they intend to pursue.

Table 6. Correlation Between Career Pathway and Career Decision

Variables	r-value	p-value	Level of Correlation	Decision	Interpretation
Career Pathway	0.457	0.001	Weak Positive Correlation	Reject Ho	Significant
Career Decision	0.482	0.001	Weak Positive Correlation	Reject Ho	Significant

Note: Significant when computed p -value < 0.05 .

This finding is similar to the study of Nazareno et al. (2021), who examined factors associated with career track choice among 3,813 Grade 11 learners in the Philippines. Their findings showed that learners' intended college courses are strongly associated with their SHS track or strand choices, while personal preference and parental influence are also important factors. The study further found associations involving socioeconomic characteristics, parents' educational attainment and occupation, and learners' academic performance. These findings are similar with the present study in showing that learners' career preferences are related to their educational and career choices, but such choices are influenced by several interacting factors.

Similarly, Fernandez et al. (2023) found that Filipino Senior High School learners' career preferences are influenced by family needs, personal abilities, practicality, availability of career information, and parental influence. Their findings indicate that learners may choose careers not only because of their personal interests but also because of perceived economic realities, family expectations, and the information available to them. This provides possible explanation for the weak positive correlations observed in the present study. The role of the family is further supported by Valencia et al. (2023), who examined career decision self-efficacy among Filipino learners and emphasized the influence of family communication on career decision-making. Likewise, Baldon et al. (2023) reported a relationship between parental career behavior and career decision-making self-efficacy among Senior High School learners. These studies suggest that learners' career decisions develop within a social environment where parents and other significant individuals may influence how learners evaluate their interests, abilities, and future career opportunities.

The findings may also be understood through the more recent application of Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), which emphasizes the interaction of personal factors, learning experiences, self-efficacy, outcome expectations, interests, and contextual influences in career development. Recent literature continues to recognize the importance of both individual and environmental factors in explaining learners' career decision-making. Therefore, the significant but weak positive relationship found in the present study suggests that preferred career pathway is an important component of learners' career decision-making, but it is not the sole determinant of the curriculum exit they intend to pursue. Learners may consider their interests and preferences alongside parental expectations, academic performance, financial circumstances, perceived employment opportunities, personal abilities, career information, and available guidance services. The finding highlights the importance of comprehensive career guidance that helps learners examine whether their preferred pathway is consistent with their interests, abilities, educational opportunities, and long-term career goals.

Moreover, the study of Nota and Rossier (2022) corroborated with the findings that the weak correlation may reflect an insufficiently aligned structure and content of the SHS curriculum to the needs of the job market, resulting in learners choosing pathways that do not directly influence their career decisions. Savickas (2019) identified personal interests, family expectations, socioeconomic status, availability of opportunities, and external guidance as primary career decision influences. Hence, Lent et al. (2020) suggested that there is a need for curriculum reform affecting the weak correlation between SHS preferred career pathways

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and career decisions. Also, the effectiveness of career guidance programs in schools may be limited, necessitating improvements to better support learners in making informed career decisions.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the significant findings of the study the following conclusions are formulated:

1. The RIASEC model shows that Senior High School (SHS) learners favor career paths that match their personality types. The Academic Track learners typically agree with the job pathways, showing that the educational programs match their interests compared to TVL Track learners.
2. SHS learners prefer employment for financial freedom and self-sufficiency. This trend is caused by perceived risks, uncertainties, society standards, and familial expectations.
3. The SHS strands/tracks do not match job market skills and knowledge.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study's results and conclusions the following are offered:

1. Schools may implement comprehensive career counseling programs that utilize the RIASEC model to better match learners' personality types with suitable career pathways. Educational institutions may also consider curriculum review to ensure that it continues to align with learner interests, identify and address any gaps in curriculum implementation.
2. Include more practical financial education within the curriculum to help learners understand financial management, which could reduce the fear of financial instability associated with entrepreneurship. Schools may provide opportunities for learners to learn from successful entrepreneurs through guest lectures, case studies, and mentorship programs to mitigate the perceived risks and uncertainties of entrepreneurship.
3. Schools may foster stronger collaborations with industry partners to ensure the curriculum is aligned with current job market demands and future trends. School leaders may also conduct regular reviews and updates of the SHS curriculum to incorporate emerging skills and knowledge areas, ensuring learners are well-prepared for the job market.

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