

# Attitudes of Senior High School Students Towards Career Decision Making

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## ABSTRACT

Choosing the best career is vital and needs a long process and serious planning for the students to make the right decision. This descriptive study investigated the attitude towards career decision-making of the 302 senior high school students of Gingoog City Comprehensive National High School, Gingoog City, Misamis Oriental. Factors such as sex, grade level, and socioeconomic status were focused on determine their influence on students' career decisions. The researchers utilized mean, frequency, and percentage, T-test, and F-test/ANOVA, Scheffe Post Hoc Testing, and Multiple Comparisons to organize the data in the study. The results reveal that parents stand as the most prominent factor in students' career decisions. Likewise, males and females vary in their career choice such that males are more decisive in their career decision-making than females. Further, students who have lower family incomes tend to be more fixed in their career

choice than those whose families earn high salaries. It was recommended that school guidance counselors provide counseling for students to be more aware of the possible courses they pursue and the factors that influence them as delineated in this study. Moreover, the parents let their children decide on the courses they desire to pursue in their tertiary education and the profession they carry out in the future.

**Keywords** — Education, Career choice, career decision making, career factors, descriptive, Philippines

## INTRODUCTION

The future of a country depends on its citizens' education. This is the sole reason why the Philippines adapted the global standard in its educational system. Philippine Educational System has changed since the implementing the K to 12 Program signed by virtue of Republic Act 10533 or Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, on May 15, 2013. With such a revamp in the curriculum, Filipino students are expected to develop 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills for them to become prepared for employment, entrepreneurship, middle-level skills development, and higher education after the completion of 6-years in high school, including the two additional years, comprising Grade 11 and 12 (Abarro, 2016; Braza & Guillo, 2015; Guirguiz, Tuting, & Balila, 2016; Lagajino, Ibanez, Guirguiz, Tuting, & Balila, 2016).

Before implementing the program, the Philippine government got alarmed by the increasing number of unemployed college graduates and job mismatch because of insufficient preparedness for choosing a career or lack of career information. Some college graduates are jobless, and if they get jobs, their specialization or course does not fit them (Braza & Guillo, 2015; Lagajino et al., 2015; Pascual, 2014).

It is therefore important to enhance the educational system in the Philippines and career guidance activities. Thus, schools throughout the country conduct Career Guidance Week for Grade 10 students to enhance their knowledge about K to 12 Program and recognize their abilities and interests, which serve as bases for choosing what they want to be in the future.

Choosing the best career is vital and needs a long process and serious planning for the students to make the right decision (Aguado, Laguador, & Deligero, 2015; Braza & Guillo, 2015; Ghuangpeng, 2011; Gokuladas, 2010;

Pang, 2014).

Braza and Guillo (2015) stressed that students' career life is affected by many factors. These include family factor, such as socioeconomic status, parents' education, and family influence (Abarro, 2016; Aguado et al., 2015; Lagajino et al., 2015; Su, Chang, Wu, & Liao, 2016), and personal factors, including the mental ability (Abarro, 2016; Su et al., 2016).

Students and their parents face dilemmas that result in confusion and doubt in choosing a career. After Grade 10 completion, they must select their specific track, which will be pursued in college. Their choice must be based on their career preference mulled over before Grade 11, considering their capacity, aptitude, and interest to develop them to the best (Braza & Guillo, 2015).

Gingog City Comprehensive National High School, as a public institution, offered two tracks: academic track with 4 strands, namely: Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS), Accountancy, Business and Management (ABM), and General Academic Strand (GAS); and technical-vocational track. The school's varied offerings help to secure students' future and be competitive individuals. The school ensures the effectiveness of career decision-making since the career determination of the students affects their future.

The study highlighted the senior high school student's career preferences. It sought to determine the senior high school students' attitudes toward career decision-making. It also looked into the most pressing factor that impacted on the career decision-making of students in terms of career choice and career factors. The researchers saw the need to conduct this study to determine whether or not the demographic profiles of the students in terms of sex, grade level, and socioeconomic status are factors in career decision-making. This study aimed to help the school specify the factors that influence students' decisions for choosing a career in life.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

A descriptive-comparative research design was used in the conduct of the study, where the researchers sought to explore and discuss the interaction of the dependent and independent variables using quantitative means.

## **Respondents**

The respondents of this study were the randomly chosen 302 students of the Senior High School of Gingoog City Comprehensive National High School constituting different tracks and strands, namely: Accountancy, Business, and Management (ABM) strand, the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) strand, the General Academic Strand (GAS), and the Technical-Vocational Livelihood (TVL) track.

## **Instrumentation**

This study adapted the questionnaire from the study of Sugeng (1989) entitled “Attitudes of State Senior High School Students of Yogyakarta toward Career Choice, Factors of Career Choice, Career Guidance Program, and Career Guidance Package Outcomes in Indonesia” to measure students’ career choice and career factors.

The questionnaires used underwent reliability testing to ensure the internal consistency of the items. The reliability coefficient resulted in 0.706 for the questionnaire on students’ career choice; and 0.885 for the questionnaire on students’ career factors.

The five-point scales with the ranges below guided the researcher in the organization of the data for the two variables under investigation, namely, *Career choice and Career factors*:

## **Data Gathering**

Before the conduct of the study, the researcher informed the school authorities of the intent to gather information from the students. After obtaining the necessary permissions from the concerned authorities, the questionnaires were floated to the target population. Subsequently, the data were tabulated, analyzed, and interpreted.

## **Statistical Treatment**

Descriptive statistics, independent samples T-test, F-test/Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), and Scheffe Post Hoc Testing and Multiple Comparison were utilized to treat and organize the data.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents by Some Characteristics

Demographics	Frequency	Percentage
A. Sex		
Male	104	34.4
Female	198	65.6
Total	302	100
B. Grade Level		
Grade 11	181	59.9
Grade 12	121	40.1
Total	302	100
C. Parents Monthly Income		
P5, 000 and below	141	46.7
5, 001 – P7, 000	53	17.5
P7, 001–P9, 000	34	11.3
P 9, 001 – P11, 000	26	8.6
P11, 001 – above	48	15.0
Total	302	100

Table 1 shows that 66 % of the respondents were females while the males constituted only 34%. In addition, more than half of the respondents were Grade 11 comprising 181 students or 60%, while 121 students or 40% of the overall sample were Grade 12 students.

In terms of students' socioeconomic status, almost 50% of them have a family monthly income of Php5, 000 and below. Furthermore, 18 % of the students have parents' monthly income of 5, 001 – P7, 000; 11% for P7, 001–P9, 000; 26 out of 302 students (9%) have Php 9, 001 – P11, 000 parents' monthly income while there were exactly 15% of them having P11, 001 – above monthly income.

Table 2. Distribution of Statistics of Career Decision Making in terms of Career Choice

	Items	Mean	Description
1.	There should only be one career choice for each person.	2.28	Agree
2.	I am decided about what school I will attend after graduation.	2.13	Agree
3.	Both boys and girls should be given the same chance in making a career choice.	1.46	Strongly Agree
4.	I am decided about what occupation I will choose after completing my education.	1.91	Agree
5.	Senior High School students should be given freedom in making their career choice.	1.36	Strongly Agree
6.	It is too early for senior high school students to make a career choice.	2.82	Moderate
7.	My career choice will be similar to my career ambition.	1.93	Agree
Overall Mean: 1.98		Description: Agree	SD: 0.48

Table 2 presents the distribution of statistics of students' career decision-making in terms of career choice. It shows the overall mean of 1.98 with a standard deviation of 0.48 interpreted as agreeing. It implies that the majority of the respondents had a positive attitude towards their career choice.

Indicator 5, "*Senior High School students should be given freedom in making their career choice.*" had the mean of 1.36 interpreted as strongly agree. It suggests that students were decisive to emphasize that their decision in choosing their career must be respected and that they should decide for themselves. It does not mean that students will choose based on their own personal experiences and mental capacity per se. However, they should be given proper guidance in choosing precise career plans through career assessment and career guidance sessions.

It is therefore important to develop the effectiveness of career orientation to ensure that students know about the careers they will pursue. It is the school guidance counselors who have the primary task to make it possible for individuals to visualize and delve into unlimited career choices (Braza & Guillo, Jr., 2015; Pascual, 2004)

Students are already decided about what occupations they will choose after they finish their senior high school education according to indicator 2, "*I am*

*decided about what school I will attend after graduation,*” with the mean of 1.91 interpreted as agreeing. It further shows that different career activities conducted by the guidance counselors are effective. Amoah, Kwofie, I., and Kwofie, F. A. A. (2015) stressed that career guidance and counseling in high school are effective intervention activities for students to decide easily for a particular course in college.

It was proven by the study of Mudulia (2017) that a career guidance session in an institution is productive when students have their final career decision in accordance with their interests, aptitude, skills, and capability. Nonetheless, Getange and Sagwe (2016) contradicted that the extent of the presence of career guidance sessions was not adequate even though the respondents indicated that they had career guidance sessions in their school. Furthermore, the problem exists when there are no trained teachers to manage the career of the students in their school.

Career factor refers to the influence of external entities towards choosing a career. Table 3 presents the items with the highest mean scores on career factors. It shows that on average, the respondents are influenced strongly by the identified factors given the overall mean of 1.94 with the standard deviation of 0.53.

Table 3. Items with the Highest Mean Scores on Career Factor

	Items	Mean	Description
1	Availability of Jobs	1.98	Strong
4	Faith, religion	1.72	Strong
5	Economic condition of the family	1.86	Strong
7	Interests	1.71	Strong
9	Parents	1.49	Very Strong
12	School, teachers	2.01	Strong
13	Skills	1.67	Strong
Overall Mean: 1.94		Description: Strong	SD: 0.53

Table 3 presents the items with the highest mean scores on career factors. It shows that, on average, the respondents are influenced strongly by the identified factors, given the overall mean of 1.94 with the standard deviation of 0.53.

Further, the table discloses that the best factor that influences students’ career decisions is the “*parents*” (m=1.49). This implies that most of the students’ career decisions depend on parental exhortation. Perhaps, not all students can choose or have the desire to choose for their own, and parents’ role comes in. The

study of La (2009) showed that parents had a strong influence on students' career decision-making. Further, parents were consulted most often for advice and help in deciding for their children upon high school completion.

Most specifically, students' parents are the most influential people who play a great role in the selection of career decisions. The power of the parents to persuade their children to choose the best career for them is great (Aguado et al., 2015; Abarro, 2016; Braza & Guillo, Jr., 2015; Lagajino et al., 2015; Leonard, 2009; Pafili & Mylonakis, 2011; Pascual, 2014).

Other factors which were found to be influencing students' career decision for a career are their "*skills*" ( $M=1.67$ ) and their "*interest*" ( $M=1.71$ ).

In the study of Pang (2014), it was found out that the majority of the students enrolled in their fields indicated that their career decisions were in line with their field of study. Students would enroll in a particular course in college and search for employment relating to specialization after graduation based on their innate skills. In addition, through their intellectual ability, students satisfied their chosen careers (Braza & Guillo, 2015).

Moreover, the course choice of the individuals is in accordance with their interests and desires that give them a firm decision making. Students choose their profession depending on what they preferred, and it is still supported by their parents (Aguado et al., 2015). Based on the study of Obiyo and Eze (2015), the vocational aspirations of students are influenced by their interest in a subject and subject teachers who make them like a subject. Nevertheless, students' own interest or ability is where students molded their educational and career plans (La, 2009).

Another factor that was found to be influencing students' career decisions for a career is the "*Economic condition of the family*" ( $M= 1.86$ ). La (2009) asserted that socioeconomic status plays a tremendous part in making a decision, particularly in students' academic and career choices. In addition, La (2009) said that financially challenged families, could influence the perceptions of the students toward the types of institution, career, and the kind of academic decision they choose. Moreover, Holmes (2014) divulged that students usually face dilemmas whenever they chose their degree, especially when their family does not have the financial sustainability to support their studies.

Another factor that was found to be influencing students' career decisions for a career is the "*availability of jobs*" ( $M= 1.98$ ). This implies that some students decide on their career choices depending on foreseeing available and in-demand jobs, which enable them to feel safe and secured in the future as Braza and Guillo, Jr. (2015) emphasized that the first thing students consider in choosing a course



in college is the job availability in their locality. The students' first consideration in choosing a course in college is the availability of possible work. This could be the common response of students since nowadays graduates find it difficult to find a job even if they have already finished college. The course chosen that is not fitted to the students may lead to their inability to qualify for the competencies needed by companies. This is because their ability is not suited to the course they have taken, thus not unleashing their maximum potentials (Pascual, 2014).

Table 4. T-Value for the Differences in Career Choice (Sex)

Sex	N	Mean	T-Value	Sig
Male	104	1.8860	-2.524	0.012 S
Female	198	2.0303		
Total	302	1.9806		

Table 4 shows that there is a significant difference between male and female respondents as regards their career choice. Given the t-value of -2.524 with a p-value of 0.012, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Given the mean scores of 1.89 and 2.03 for males and females, respectively, which is statistically significant, males seemed to be more decisive in choosing their careers than females.

Based on the result, males got a mean score of 1.89 while females got a mean of 2.03. This implies that as regards career choice, males are career decision-makers than females. It was further supported by the study of Buser et al. (2014) entitled, "Gender, Competitiveness and Career Choices" that males are more confident than females regarding their decision processes. Indeed, sex is a factor in students' scholastic choices and resulting professional decisions.

Table 5. T-Value for the Differences in Career Choice (Grade Level)

Grade Level	N	Mean	T-Value	Sig
Grade 11	181	1.9669	-0.613	0.540 NS
Grade 12	121	2.0012		
Total	302	1.9806		

Table 5 shows that there is no significant difference between Grade 11 and Grade 12 students as regards their career choice. Given the t-value of -0.613 with a p-value of 0.540, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Even though the result is not significant, studies found that students who are in Grade 12 need more career information than those who are in Grade 10 or Grade 11 because they are those who are more pressured to decide what course is best for them in college. Based on the result of the study of Bennett-Smith (2011), grade level is an important factor that influences the need for knowledge of students.

Nevertheless, Pascual (2014) justified in the result of his study that career plans should begin in advance from an earlier part of the year level for them to look for various courses that suit students' preferences. This implies that when students reached the last year of high school, they will not have confusion to decide the course they will take in college. They will have prior knowledge about career information, and they have so-called career awareness.

Table 6. F-Value for the Differences in Career Choice (Socioeconomic Status)

Parents Monthly Income	N	Mean	F-Value	Sig
P5, 000 and below	141	1.9402	3.961	.004 S
P5, 001 – P7, 000	53	1.9137		
P7, 001–P9, 000	34	1.8697		
P 9, 001 – P11, 000	26	2.0714		
P11, 001 – above	48	2.2024		
Total	302	1.9806		

Table 6 shows the F-value for the differences in career choice in terms of socioeconomic status. It further shows that there is a significant difference in career decision-making when grouped according to socioeconomic status. Given the f-value of 3.961 with a p-value of 0.004, the mean values of the categories of socioeconomic studies are statistically significant considering the margin of error of 0.05. This means that the null hypothesis is rejected.

There are 141 students whose families earn roughly 5,000php and below ( $M=1.94$ ). It means that most students enrolled in public schools belong to lower socioeconomic status.

Studies found out that socioeconomic background may influence career decision-making, career choice, career plans, and career options that have a connection to students' educational and career development (Edwards & Quinter, 2011; La, 2009; Obiyo & Eze, 2015). It is also a crucial factor in attaining and conserving employment (Eshelman, 2013) and the decision for the

students to pursue a college degree (Abarro, 2016). La (2009) emphasized that socioeconomic status may impact career ambition and college education status.

To determine where the significant difference lies in the five categories of socioeconomic status, a Scheffe Post Hoc Testing, and Multiple Comparisons in the respondents' career choice in terms of parents' monthly income was conducted.

Table 7. Scheffe Post Hoc Testing and Multiple Comparisons in the Respondents' Career Choice (Parent's Monthly Income)

<b>Parents' Monthly Income</b> (Comparison Group)	<b>Parents' Monthly Income Categories</b>	<b>Mean Difference (PMI-PMIC)</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
P5, 000 and below	5, 001 – P7, 000	.02648	.997 <b>NS</b>
	P7, 001 – P9, 000	.07047	.934 <b>NS</b>
	P 9, 001 – P11, 000	-.13121	.682 <b>NS</b>
	P11, 001 – above	-.26216*	.008 <b>S</b>
	P5, 000 and below	-.02648	.997 <b>NS</b>
5, 001 – P7, 000	P7, 001–P9, 000	.04400	.993 <b>NS</b>
	P 9, 001 – P11, 000	-.15768	.622 <b>NS</b>
	P11, 001 – above	-.28863*	.018 <b>S</b>
	P5, 000 and below	-.07047	.934 <b>NS</b>
P7, 001–P9, 000	5, 001 – P7, 000	-.04400	.993 <b>NS</b>
	P 9, 001 – P11, 000	-.20168	.463 <b>NS</b>
	P11, 001 – above	-.33263*	.014 <b>S</b>
	P5, 000 and below	.13121	.682 <b>NS</b>
P 9, 001 – P11, 000	5, 001 – P7, 000	.15768	.622 <b>NS</b>
	P7, 001–P9, 000	.20168	.463 <b>NS</b>
	P11, 001 – above	-.13095	.779 <b>NS</b>
	P5, 000 and below	.26216*	.008 <b>S</b>
P11, 001 – above	5, 001 – P7, 000	.28863*	.018 <b>S</b>
	P7, 001–P9, 000	.33263*	.014 <b>S</b>
	P 9, 001 – P11, 000	.13095	.779 <b>NS</b>

Table 7 reveals that the students whose family monthly income is low are seemed to have a firmer career decision compared to those who have families with higher monthly salaries.

High school students aspired to work opportunities based primarily on the economic aspects. Income and earning power are indeed a factor of students' career decision-making (La, 2009).

Looking closer at table 7 reveals that there is a statistically significant difference in the career choices between students with a family income of P7, 001–P9, 000 and those with income ranging from P11, 001 – above monthly. This finding is strongly supported by Obiyo and Eze (2015) that there is a significant difference in the students' aspirations from the middle socioeconomic to those of higher socioeconomic status. Such results revealed by the study of (Okunniyi, 2004; Udoh, Nsison, & Kudirat, 2012) as cited by Obiyo and Eze (2015). It implies that children from families with a high level of income appeared to have high career ambitions because their parents were able to provide them with pertinent support (Ghuampeng, 2011).

Students from a high level of SES intended to take non-vocational schools more than those who came from lower SES. In addition, families with higher income support their children and suggest where to pursue their careers or what school to attend. Higher SES family has more opportunities to include the material provision and wider horizon regarding information about professions and has children who are assured to be given more opportunities to go to expensive universities (Ukaegbu, 2017; Obiyo & Eze 2015).

Low Socio-Economic Status can influence students' career decision-making. Families that have low monthly incomes tend to send their children to public schools. However, some students in this situation don't have high expectations towards fulfilling their dreams due to a lack of financial support. Thus, they are contented enough with what they have instead of aiming more for expensive courses (Aguado et al., 2015).

Urban students prefer to choose vocational schools. Although parents with a higher SES level contemplate supporting their children, it doesn't mean that parents with lower income don't care and tend things whatever they could. Moreover, parents with low income and who did not finish high school have a blurry expectation of their children's education or career. It is up to their children to decide on their own whether to pursue their studies or to choose their careers (La, 2009).

Parents with low income find it difficult to motivate their children even though they have intellectual ability. The problem is students' inability to aspire because of the said issue regarding SES. Parents may not know the exact way on how to help their children, especially when the finances are unavailable (Obiyo & Eze, 2015).

Table 8. T-Value for the Differences in Career Factor (Sex)

Sex	N	Mean	T-Value	Sig
Male	104	1.9334	-.966	.335 NS
Female	198	1.9877		
<b>Total</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>1.9690</b>		

Table 8 shows that there is no significant difference between male and female respondents as regard career factors. Given the t-value of  $-.966$  with a p-value of  $0.335$ , the null hypothesis is accepted.

In the study of Taylor et al. (2004), as cited by Edwards and Quinter (2011), parents are the most influential factors that affect their children’s decision in choosing their careers. Taylor et al. (2004) study noted that sex is not a factor that influences their career decision.

Table 9. T-Value for the Differences in Career Factor (Grade Level)

Grade Level	N	Mean	T-Value	Sig
Grade 11	181	1.9724	.153	.878 NS
Grade 12	121	1.9640		
Total	302	1.9690		

Table 9 shows that there is no significant difference between Grade 11 and Grade 12 students as regards career choice. Given the t-value of  $.153$  with a p-value of  $0.878$ , the null hypothesis is accepted.

This implies that in terms of career factors, parents are still the persons who influenced their children’s career decisions whether they are in grade 11 or 12. The maturity level of students does not affect their own decision-making. In fact, the majority of the students are dependent on their parents. However, at their age level, they choose to please their parents by following their decisions for their careers.

Table 10. F-Value for the Differences in Career Factor (Socioeconomic Status)

Parents Monthly Income	N	Mean	F-Value	Sig
P5, 000 and below	141	2.0142	.765	.549 NS
P5, 001 – P7, 000	53	1.9084		
P7, 001–P9, 000	34	1.9139		
P 9, 001 – P11, 000	26	1.9148		
P11, 001 – above	48	1.9717		
Total	302	1.9690		

Table 10 shows the F-value for the differences in career factors in terms of socioeconomic status. It further shows that there is no significant difference in career decision-making when grouped according to socioeconomic status. Given the f-value of 0.765 with a p-value of 0.549, it is not statistically significant considering the margin of error of 0.05. This means that the null hypothesis is rejected.

La (2009) showed in the results of her study that there is no significant difference between students with high and low incomes in choosing a career. Both students from high- and low-income families choose to pursue similar studies or fields of studies. This means that SES background does not have a great deal of influence in career decision-making. It was clearly supported by Obiyo and Eze (2015) that parental socio-economic status is not a strong indicator of the vocational aspirations of secondary school students. To prove, the hypothesis was tested by Ukaegbu (2017) and Su et al. (2016) and found out that it does not significantly influence the students' career choice since it does not reach that significant difference threshold.

## CONCLUSIONS

The study aimed to determine the attitudes of senior high school students of Gingoog City Comprehensive National High School towards career decision-making based on conceptual and research literature discussed. It was on this premise that the following conclusions were drawn:

Students' attitudes towards career decision-making may be affected by a lot of factors. Some of them are sex, parents, and socio-economic status. For this reason, students know the influence of sex in their decision-making in the way

of choosing their career knowing their sexuality. Socio-economic status is also a factor of the students' perception regarding career decision-making. Students expand their horizons more about occupational information and choose the right course considering their financial status.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The researchers recommend that school guidance counselors provide counseling for students to be more aware of the possible courses that they pursue as well as the factors that influence them as delineated in this study. It is also recommended that parents let their children decide on the courses they desire to pursue in their tertiary education and the profession they carry out in the future. Likewise, future researchers conduct a similar study on career decisions exploring an assessment of other essential variables not captured in this study.

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