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Factors Influencing College Course Selection Among Grade 12 General Academic Strand Students at St. Jude College of Dasmarinas Cavite, Inc.

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Abstract

We will discuss the background of the study, the statement of the problem, and present as well the objective of the study, researchers further discuss the scope and limitations, the significance of the study, and the definition of terms used. The purpose of this study is to investigate the complex process by which Grade 12 General Academic Strand (GAS) students make the significant decision of their college course. And analyze the various factors that affect their decision making of their college path. A major's selection may be influenced by a variety of factors, including the college's reputation, location, cost, socioeconomic status, student expectations, school size, and many more. The ideal professional path for students to pursue professional education is very important and will have a big impact on their future success and professional life. This decision will therefore impart them throughout their lives.

Keywords: College course selection, Grade 12 students, General Academic Strand (GAS), Parental influence, Personal interest, Job opportunities, Practicality, Academic decision-making, Career guidance.

1. Introduction

Every year, graduating high school students face the decisive task of choosing a college course. Smith and Johnson (2020) describe this decision-making process as a complex interplay of personal interests, parental expectations, and societal influences; while some students feel confident, others remain troubled by the choice (Balindong et al., 2018). Perceptions broaden over the course of adolescence, with students beginning to settle on a path during the latter half of high school as personal interests, parental influence, societal expectations, financial constraints, and academic performance all play pivotal, interacting roles.

Many first-year college students later find that their enrolled program does not match their hobbies and professional goals, leaving them unhappy, unmotivated, and slow to progress academically (Partenie, 2019). Reflecting this concern at a policy level, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET, 2018) lists, among South Africa's National Plan of Higher Education goals, the regulation of enrollment by academic specialty to better match the demands of the economy and society. Parents also weigh heavily on the decision: Dagang and De Mesa (2017) found that parents significantly shape their children's choice of university, consistent with the Filipino cultural reverence for elders and children's financial dependence on their parents, a dynamic that likewise produces a more moderate effect from friends, family, and classmates. Affordability of tuition, followed by the availability of scholarships, were additional considerations noted.

Within St. Jude College of Dasmariñas Cavite specifically, course selection among Grade 12 GAS students reflects a nuanced mix of personal, social, and practical considerations. Parental discretion is prominent, with parents often guiding choices based on their own convictions rather than solely on their child's interests and skills. Friends, peers, and teachers exert meaningful social influence, particularly on students who remain unsure of their academic path. Affordability and practicality are critical: students often opt for lower-tuition courses despite personal preference, due to financial constraints. Personal interest still drives many decisions, underscoring the role of individual motivation within this specific school setting.

Because a gap remains in understanding these specific variables, this study surveyed Grade 12 GAS students at St. Jude College of Dasmariñas Cavite using a quantitative approach to identify and measure the key factors behind their course selection. The findings are intended to help DepEd, CHED, career counselors, and educational institutions build stronger support systems for students navigating this decision, since career success depends on guidance that aligns a student's course with their personality, capabilities, and intellect. The study also underscores the value of integrating career planning into the K-12 curriculum and of close collaboration among school administrators, educators, and parents in building tailored career plans for students.

2. Statement of the Problem

This study generally aims to investigate the various factors that influence the college course selection of Grade 12 General Academic Strand (GAS) students at St. Jude College of Dasmariñas Cavite. Specifically, it seeks to answer:

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of (a) age and (b) sex?

2. What factors significantly influence the decision-making process of Grade 12 GAS students at St. Jude College of Dasmariñas Cavite when selecting their college courses?

3. What is the basis of the students in choosing courses?

4. What recommendations can be given to the respondents in terms of college course selection?

3. Conceptual Framework

The study is organized around an Input–Process–Output (IPO) paradigm, a structured approach for understanding how a system converts resources into outcomes. Inputs are the resources, data, and information fed into the process; the process is the set of procedures performed on those inputs; and the output is the final result produced. In this study, the Input consists of the respondents' profile (age, sex, and section); the Process consists of the distribution of questionnaires and the collection, analysis, and interpretation of the resulting data; and the Output is the expected outcome of the study, an understanding of the factors that shape college course selection.

Assumption of the Study

The researchers assumed that respondents make course-selection decisions based on their individual preferences and goals.

Scope of the Study

This study analyzes the attitudes, beliefs, and factors that Grade 12 GAS students at St. Jude College of Dasmariñas Cavite weigh when choosing a college major, including their interests, career objectives, the guidance they received, and their perceptions of social expectations. By focusing specifically on Grade 12 GAS students, the study aims to provide insight into decision-making within this academic strand and to deepen understanding of the factors shaping educational and career choices at the institution.

Limitations of the Study

While the study offers valuable insight into the decision-making process, several limitations affect the generalizability and strength of its findings: it is constrained by the researchers' available time and funding; it focuses solely on the factors influencing college course selection; these factors can vary widely among GAS students due to differing individual experiences; and the dynamic nature of personal and external influences on students' decisions may not be fully captured within the study's static framework.

Significance of the Study

Students: gain knowledge of the factors that influence college course selection.

Parents: are better equipped to support and guide their children in choosing a college course.

School Administrators: can refine curricula and career guidance services to better assist students.

Government: can use the findings to promote more holistic, student-centric approaches to career planning.

Future Researchers: gain a data foundation for further studies on this topic.

Definition of Terms (Conceptual)

Aspirations, ambition of achieving something. Course, a class offered by a college or university. Determinants, a factor which decisively affects the nature or outcome of something. Factors, a circumstance or influence that contributes to a result. Generalizability, a measure of how useful a study's results are for a broader group or situation. Nuance, a subtle distinction or variation. Respondents, a person who answers a survey, question, or similar instrument.

4. Review Of Related Literature And Studies

Foreign Literature

The first year of college is among the most demanding periods of a student's life, and choosing a field of study can be daunting; when students find their chosen course does not fit their expectations, abilities, or professional aspirations, some quit early absent intervention, with significant effects on their lives. Duran et al. (2023) examined how Grade 12 SHS students choose courses and found that career opportunities weigh heavily as a determining factor, underscoring the importance of aligning educational paths with future prospects even amid differing personal tastes, while peer influence plays a comparatively limited role, pointing to a need for individualized guidance and support systems; the study contributes to understanding the complexity of SHS students' decision-making and supports the design of targeted interventions to optimize learning outcomes.

Machaba et al. (2022) note that universities need reliable ways to identify students who feel their course does not fit their interests, in order to provide guidance and improve retention; since few short-term, generalizable studies exist that evaluate student-course fit, their study assessed the psychometric properties of a person-job fit scale adapted to measure student perception of fit with their course of study, examining validity and reliability through measurement invariance, reliability, and differential item functioning analyses.

Eremie and Okwulehie (2019) found that secondary students' profession choices are shaped by opportunity, personality, and environmental factors: environmentally, family, peer groups, and socioeconomic status significantly affect career choice; in terms of

opportunity, education and mentorship matter; and personality factors such as interests, values, and course-selection ability also play a role. Kaneez and Medha (2018) similarly found that parental influence has a significant effect on children's career choices.

Sadjail et al. (2022) identified six common factors influencing Filipino students' college course choices: parental discretion (parents choosing courses based on their own convictions rather than their child's interests or skills); social/external influence (friends, peers, and teachers, especially for students unsure of their path); affordability and practicality (opting for lower-tuition courses due to financial constraints, despite preference); and personal preference and interest (students deciding independently based on their own interests). By contrast, Kazi and Akhlaq (2019) found that a person's upbringing, aptitudes, and academic accomplishments shape their profession choice.

Foreign Studies

Environmental, opportunity, and personality factors were found to influence career choice among secondary school students: environmentally, family, socioeconomic status, and peer groups were significant; opportunity factors such as education and mentorship also mattered; as did personality factors such as students' interests, values, and skills (Eremie and Okwulehie, 2020). Comparably, Kazi and Akhlaq (2019) found that an individual's environment, talents, skills, and academic achievements influence career choice. Ahmed, Sharif, and Ahmad (2019) found weaker correlation for some factors in course choice, though high-paying positions were still seen as an important element in course selection; a lack of knowledge was also found to cause misconceptions about certain occupations that deterred students from choosing them. Grade 12 SHS students were found to weigh interest and decision-making, peer pressure, institutional considerations, and potential career paths, with institutional considerations, cost, location, educational resources, and employment prospects, mattering most (Moneva et al., 2019).

Local Literature

Bautista (2020) links the Philippines' high unemployment and underemployment rates partly to a mismatch between graduates' qualifications and industry demand, often stemming from unguided course selection; a poorly fitted course can leave graduates unable to meet the competencies companies require, preventing them from reaching their full potential.

Respect for family strongly shapes career preference among Filipino students, who as a sign of respect tend to follow their parents' advice on career or job choices, consistent with Maru (2019), who found that parental influence on career preference begins early in a child's life through socialization, parental decisions, and school choice.

Daen (2019) found academic ability to be the primary demographic attribute influencing the perceived importance of college-choice factors, significant for 12 of 13 factors studied; academic ability and gender were pertinent attributes among Philippine private high school students, while parental education levels were less influential, mirroring patterns found in U.S. college-choice research, with the same major factors relevant in both contexts, though not every demographic attribute (e.g., parental education) carried equal weight.

Ouano et al. (2019) found that Grade 12 SHS students weigh interest and decision-making, peer pressure, institutional considerations, and potential career paths when choosing courses, with institutional factors, location, educational resources, affordability, and career prospects, mattering most.

Local Studies

At STI College Legazpi, Grade 12 SHS students were affected by 13 different factors: 50.5% based course selection on their interests, talents, and abilities; 61.6% were influenced by their individual traits; 46.5% were influenced by parents or other family members; and 26.3% chose courses based on market demand, confirming that such factors significantly affect post-secondary course choice (Ouano et al., 2019).

Sadjail et al. (2022) similarly found that several factors affect Filipino students' enrollment decisions, and that current courses are often not chosen entirely independently; because others' influence can help or hinder a student's eventual success, the study recommends proper support, such as seminars or conferences on career guidance, to help students reach their full potential.

A study at MSU-TCTO's College of Education identified the specific external influences on students who chose Education as their course, and explored the strategies these students use to manage their coursework, with findings of value to administrators, educators, parents, students, and future researchers seeking fresh perspective on the decision-making process.

Synthesis

Across these foreign and local literatures and studies, several variables consistently emerge as significant to this stage of decision-making. Family plays a central role, with parents often prioritizing their own convictions over their children's specific interests and skills. Social influences, particularly friends and peers, also significantly affect course choice, especially among students who remain undecided about their academic path. Students additionally gravitate toward courses associated with higher earning potential and weigh economic considerations such as a program's practicality and affordability. These recurring themes directly inform the two variables examined in the present study: the factors influencing decision-making, and the basis on which students ultimately choose their courses.

5. Methodology

Research Design

A descriptive quantitative research design was employed to collect and analyze data on the factors influencing college course selection, providing a structured approach to understanding these factors among Grade 12 students.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents were the Grade 12 GAS students of St. Jude College of Dasmariñas Cavite, selected through purposive sampling so that the researchers could identify respondents best able to provide information relevant to the study's objectives.

Locale of the Study

The study was conducted at St. Jude College of Dasmariñas Cavite, located at San Carlos Trinidad Avenue, Salitran IV, City of Dasmariñas, Cavite.

Sampling Technique

The researchers used purposive sampling, selecting participants based on specific criteria tied to the study's research questions and objectives, in the context of analyzing the factors influencing college course selection among Grade 12 GAS students at the college.

Instrumentation

A structured questionnaire was the primary data-collection instrument, designed to gather quantitative and qualitative data on the factors influencing GAS students' college course selection. It comprised three parts: (1) demographic profile of respondents (age, sex, grade, and section); (2) questions on the factors influencing college course selection; and (3) questions on the basis on which students decide which college courses to enroll in, together intended to give a comprehensive picture of the influences on the target population's course selection.

Methods and Procedures

After approval, the researchers prepared paper copies of the instrument for respondents to complete. Collected data were thoroughly evaluated and interpreted, with conclusions drawn from the respondents' responses.

Statistical Treatment of Data

The researchers used descriptive statistical analysis, applying the following treatments:

Simple Percentage, used to interpret the demographic profile variables, computed as $P = (F \div N) \times 100\%$, where P is percentage, F is frequency, and N is the total number of respondents.

Frequency, the number of occurrences of a particular item within a set of data.

Weighted Mean, used to compute the average weight of questionnaire responses, computed as $WM = \Sigma fx \div N$, where WM is the weighted mean, Σfx is the sum of the products of frequency and weight, and N is the sample size.

Weighted Mean Range	Verbal Interpretation
4.01 – 5.00	Strongly Agree
3.01 – 4.00	Agree
1.01 – 3.00	Disagree
0.01 – 1.00	Strongly Disagree

6. Presentation, Analysis, And Interpretation Of Data

Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 20)

Age	Frequency	Percentage
15 and below	0	0%
17	9	36%
18	9	36%
19	2	8%

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Female	5	20%
Male	15	60%

The majority of respondents were 17 or 18 years old (36% each, N = 9 each), reflecting the typical age range for Grade 12 GAS students at the college. The sample skewed male, with 60% (15) male versus 20% (5) female respondents, suggesting a need for gender-sensitive approaches when analyzing these factors.

Factors Influencing Decision-Making (Statement of the Problem 2)

#	Survey Question	Yes	No
1	Does the demand of the course influence your decision-making process?	80% (Rank 1)	20% (Rank 2)
2	Do your parents/guardian dictate what course you should take?	60% (Rank 1)	40% (Rank 2)
3	Do your friends or peers influence your course decision?	55% (Rank 1)	45% (Rank 2)
4	Are you still undecided on what course to take?	60% (Rank 1)	40% (Rank 2)
5	Do you consider practicality when deciding your course?	75% (Rank 1)	25% (Rank 2)
6	Does the course vary depending on the university you attend?	50% (Rank 1)	50% (Rank 1)
7	Do you consider job-opportunity availability in your chosen field?	75% (Rank 1)	25% (Rank 2)
8	Are you swayed by the prestige/reputation of certain courses?	70% (Rank 1)	30% (Rank 2)
9	Are you swayed by trends in course selection among students?	50% (Rank 1)	50% (Rank 1)
10	Are you concerned about oversaturation of graduates affecting job opportunities?	45% (Rank 2)	55% (Rank 1)

Course demand, parental dictation, peer influence, indecision, practicality, job-opportunity availability, and course prestige all registered as majority-Yes influences, while responses on university-dependent course variation and susceptibility to peer trends split evenly at 50/50. A slim majority (55%) reported no concern about graduate oversaturation affecting future job prospects.

Weighted Mean Assessment of Influencing Statements

#	Statement	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1	Parental influence has significant effects on my college course selection decisions.	3.25	1.80	Agree
2	Personal interest and passion are key factors in my decision-making.	3.60	1.90	Agree
3	The demand for a course plays a significant role in shaping my preferences.	3.05	1.75	Agree
4	I consider our family's financial status when selecting a course.	3.40	1.84	Agree
5	The reputation/prestige of the institution is influential in my decision.	3.35	1.83	Agree
6	I base my choice on the university's location and affordability.	3.10	1.76	Agree
7	Social influences (friends, peers, teachers) are important in my decision.	2.65	1.63	Agree
8	Flexibility/versatility in course offerings influences my decision.	2.95	1.72	Neutral
9	Course demand affects my confidence in future career opportunities.	2.95	1.72	Neutral
10	The number of students enrolled in a field influences my view of its relevance.	2.65	1.63	Neutral

Students placed the greatest weight on personal interest, family financial status, and institutional reputation, with social influence rated as comparatively less powerful. Course flexibility, course demand's effect on career confidence, and enrollment volume in a field of study were viewed neutrally, indicating a smaller role in the decision-making process.

Basis of Course Selection (Statement of the Problem 3)

Basis for Course Selection	Total Respondents
Personal Interest	20
Career Goals / Desired Profession	16
Passion and Motivation	12
Practical Considerations	10
Advice and Guidance	9
Parental Influence and Expectations	8
Academic Strength (excelling academically)	7
Friends or Peers	7
Institutional Location	6
Flexibility and Versatility	6
Institutional Factors (reputation, facilities, programs)	4
Feedback/Reviews from Current or Former Students/Alumni	3
Trends	2

Personal interest was the most frequently cited basis for course selection, followed by career goals/desired profession and passion and motivation, with institutional reputation, alumni feedback, and following trends cited least often.

7. Discussion of Findings

The demographic data show a clear male majority (60% vs. 20% female) among respondents, pointing to a need for gender-sensitive approaches when addressing these influencing factors in further research. Most students (80%) reported that course demand shapes their decision-making, suggesting broad awareness of employment prospects and market trends; the remaining 20% appear to rely more on personal interest, passion, or intrinsic motivation regardless of market demand.

Parental or guardian influence was substantial, with 60% of students reporting that their parents dictate their course choice, likely reflecting parents' desire for their children to pursue stable, high-earning careers, family tradition, or parents' own beliefs about certain fields, while the remaining 40% appear to decide more independently or under other influences. Peer influence was similarly significant (55%), suggesting that the social environment meaningfully shapes students' academic and career perspectives.

A notable 60% of respondents remained undecided about their college course at the time of the survey, pointing to a need for additional support and guidance, potentially reflecting a lack of information, insufficient career counseling, or unresolved internal conflict about interests and career goals, with implications for students' preparedness for college and eventual success in their chosen fields. Practicality emerged as the most influential factor overall: the high share of students weighing job opportunities, career stability, and potential earnings indicates a broadly practical approach to course selection, and points to a benefit from wider access to information on job market trends, in-demand skills, and career paths tied to specific courses.

A large majority (70%) reported being swayed by the perceived prestige or reputation of certain courses, though a meaningful 30% prioritize other factors instead. Susceptibility to peer trends was evenly split, suggesting that individual preferences and personal considerations matter as much as social trends for many students. Overall, students prioritize personal interest, family financial concerns, and institutional reputation over social influence, while viewing course demand, program flexibility, and enrollment volume more neutrally, a pattern that supports institutions building inclusive guidance systems that accommodate students' varied backgrounds and preferences, in support of their academic success and career fulfillment.

8. Conclusion

This study concludes that college course selection among Grade 12 General Academic Strand (GAS) students is driven primarily by personal interest, practical considerations (such as job opportunities and family financial status), and strong parental influence. While students demonstrate a high awareness of career demand and institutional prestige, a significant portion (60%) remains undecided, highlighting a critical gap in structured career guidance. Addressing this gap requires enhanced career counseling, close collaboration between parents and educators, and curriculum integration to help students align their capabilities with suitable academic and career paths.

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