

A MIX METHOD DESIGN ON THE DETERMINANTS OF SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STRAND SELECTION AMONG GRADE 11 STUDENTS: BASIS FOR GUIDANCE PROGRAM

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the perceived influence of career guidance, personal, family, peer, and socioeconomic factors on students' selection of senior high school strands, and analyzed whether these influences varied by sex, age, strand, and school type. It utilized a concurrent mixed-method research design. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analyzed simultaneously to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. The quantitative phase gathered data from 422 Grade 11 students at Arellano University, Pasig Campus, who completed a researcher-developed questionnaire, while 11 participants were purposively selected for qualitative interviews using a semi-structured guide. The results indicated that personal factors have a dominant influence on students' strand selection, followed by career guidance, while family, peer, and socioeconomic factors demonstrated moderate influence. No significant differences were found in the overall perceived influence across the profile variables; however, specific differences were identified in career guidance (by school type), personal factors (by age), and peer factors (by sex). Qualitative data revealed that students based their decisions mostly on career goals while also being moderately affected by social influences, and highlighted deficiencies in the implementation of career guidance programs. This study concludes that students show self-directed decision-making, with personal factors serving as the primary influence and external factors as secondary supports. Based on these findings, the implementation of enhanced and earlier career guidance programs is recommended to better assist students in making informed strand choices.

Keywords: *Guidance Program, Career Guidance factor, Family Factor, Peer Factor, Personal Factor, Socioeconomic Factor, Senior High School, Strand,*

INTRODUCTION

With the enactment of Republic Act No. 10533, the K–12 educational system was implemented in the Philippines. It added two more years to basic education with the goal of aligning the country's education with the global standards ("Republic Act No. 10533," 2013). Prior to its implementation, the Philippines was one of the few countries with only 10 years of basic education (Official Gazette, n.d.).

The K–12 program implemented substantial reforms within the Philippine education system by adding senior high school. The program asks students to choose a track and strand that correspond to their career goals (Andaya et al., 2023). The program offers tracks such as academic, technical-vocational, livelihood, arts and design, and sports. Some tracks contain specialized strands intended to help students with their career path. Selecting a track and strand is a significant step in students' career development, as it affects their readiness for higher education, immediate employment, or entrepreneurship (Andaya et al., 2023). However, making this decision is complex, as students are influenced by personal, social, and environmental factors. Patton and McMahon (2006) state that career decision-making is shaped by interacting systems, including the individual system, social influences, and environmental conditions.

Although career guidance programs aim to assist students in making informed decisions, research has revealed inconsistencies between students' chosen strands and their intended career paths (Maestrado & Bucar, 2024). This finding suggests that students' decision-making processes are complex and may not be adequately addressed by existing interventions.

In line with these, examining the factors that influence students' selection of senior high school strands and how these factors interact to shape their decisions is essential. Identifying these factors can yield insights to enhance career guidance programs and better support students in making informed career choices.

Background of Study

With the change of the education system to K-12, junior high school students are now faced with the challenge of selecting which track they will choose. This choice is one of their important steps toward their future career, as it helps prepare them for college, work, or other opportunities (Malaguial et al., 2022). According to Gonzales et al. (2021), if senior high school students have a clear idea of what they want to take, they can choose the best training and education in the form of senior high school strands. This suggests the importance of understanding the students' reasons for making the choice for the senior high school strand.

Several local studies have attempted to identify the factors that influence students' choices of senior high school strands. They found that personal factors are usually the most dominant, outweighing family, peers, and socioeconomic background (Kilag et al.,

2023; Malaguial et al., 2022). Still, other research shows that family expectations, academic experiences, and social influences also play a role (Valliente et al., 2016). Together, these studies suggest that both personal preferences and external influences shape career decisions, which aligns with social cognitive career theory.

Career guidance programs aim to help students make informed choices about their education and future careers. The Department of Education introduced structured guidance for Grade 10 students to help them choose the right academic tracks and strands (DepED Order No. 41, s. 2015). Some studies show these programs can shape students' career preferences (Flores, 2023), but other research finds that guidance does not always lead to matching career choices (Maestrado & Bucar, 2024). There are also cases where students' chosen strands do not fit their skills or the college courses they eventually take, suggesting that current programs may not fully meet students' needs (Sarabia & Bapilar, 2021).

Even though much research has been done, an important gap remains. Earlier studies have examined personal factors, family and peer influence, and socioeconomic factors. But career guidance is often studied separately, not alongside these other factors in a single framework. As a result, we still do not fully understand how career guidance compares to other influences on students' decisions.

Existing studies show inconsistent findings regarding the effectiveness of career guidance programs and the alignment between students' chosen strands and their actual career paths. These inconsistencies suggest that the interactions among different influencing factors are not yet fully understood. In addition, there is limited research examining whether the influence of these factors varies when students are grouped by profile variables such as sex, age, strand, and school type, particularly within the local context of Pasig City and nearby areas.

To address this gap, this study aims to determine the perceived level of influence of career guidance, personal, family, peer, and socioeconomic factors on students' choices of senior high school strand, and to examine whether these influences differ when respondents are grouped according to sex, age, strand, and school type.

Review of Related Literature

A. Senior High School Strand: A study by Retes et al. (2023) found that Grade 10 students are having a hard time choosing their strand that will align with the career due to different factors such as peer influence, parents' advice, teachers' guidance, and others. Deciding on what senior high school strand to take is the first commitment a student will make for their career (Nazareno et al., 2020).

B. Career Choice: Studies conducted in Mauritania, Antigua and Barbuda, and the United States demonstrate that both personal interests and external influences, including parental guidance and teacher support, significantly shape students' career choices (Eli & Hamou, 2022; Grundall & Mack, 2023; Dick & Rallis, 1992). Additionally, research from

Indonesia and the United States emphasizes the importance of learning experiences in developing self-efficacy and informing career aspirations (Tang et al., 2008; Hadiyati & Astuti, 2023). Collectively, these findings suggest that career decision-making results from ongoing interactions between individuals and their environments.

C. Career Guidance: Flores (2023) found that career guidance interventions led to changes in students' track preferences, suggesting that structured programs can influence career-related decisions. While Maestrado and Bucar (2024) found that these programs do not directly affect students' career choices due to issues such as limited funding, insufficient training, and challenges in implementation.

D. Personal Factor: Research from different places finds that students often pick academic paths that match their interests, abilities, and self-awareness (Hadiyati & Astuti, 2023; Nyamwange, 2016; Ajayi et al., 2023). However, contrasting findings indicate that personal factors are not always the primary influence. Studies by Abe and Chikoko (2020) and Kazi and Akhlaq (2017) demonstrate that family influence can outweigh personal interest in shaping career choices. These results suggest that although personal factors are significant, their influence varies according to cultural and contextual conditions, with external expectations sometimes overriding individual preferences.

E. Family Factor: Lalantacon et al. (2024) identified a moderate positive relationship between family influence and career decisions among Filipino students, emphasizing the importance of parental engagement and cultural values. On the other hand, some studies show that family influence is not always important. Giang and Nhung (2022) found no significant link between family influence and career choice. Instead, personal interest and financial factors were stronger predictors. This suggests that the role of family can change depending on the situation, especially where people have more independence or where money matters more.

F. Socioeconomic Factor: Laroco (2023) found that students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds often have higher academic and career ambitions. However, other studies report contrasting findings regarding the role of socioeconomic status (SES). Namazova (2023) identified no significant relationship between household income and educational attainment, although a relationship was observed with career choice.

G. Peer Factor: Studies underscore the positive impact of peer influence on educational outcomes. Evidence consistently demonstrates that peer relationships are linked to academic performance, motivation, and engagement (Moneva & Legaspino, 2020; Shao et al., 2024). Contrasting findings indicate that peer influence is not always a dominant factor. Kilag et al. (2023) and Keller (2022) reported that peer influence had minimal or no significant impact on students' career choices compared to factors such as personal interest and family influence.

Theoretical Framework

The Systems Theory Framework (STF)

The Systems Theory Framework (STF) by Patton and McMahon and the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) by Lent, Brown, and Hackett serve as the theoretical foundations of this study. These frameworks provide a comprehensive perspective for understanding

how students select their senior high school strand by examining both sources of influence and the cognitive processes involved.

The Systems Theory Framework posits that career development results from the dynamic interaction of multiple systems: the individual system, social system, and environmental-societal system, all operating over time and subject to chance events (Patton & McMahon, 2006). The individual system comprises internal attributes such as interests, abilities, and self-concept. The social system includes immediate influences such as family, peers, and school-related agents. The environmental-societal system refers to broader contextual factors, including socioeconomic conditions and access to opportunities. These systems interact continuously to shape an individual's career decisions.

Within this study, the STF offers a structural explanation of how various influences shape students' selection of a senior high school strand. Personal characteristics may predispose students toward specific strands, however these preferences are continually shaped by interactions with family, peers, and school-based influences such as career guidance programs. Furthermore, environmental conditions, including socioeconomic status, can either enable or constrain available choices. Consequently, strand selection is understood as the outcome of interconnected systems rather than a single influencing factor.

Social Cognitive Career Theory

The Social Cognitive Career Theory complements STF by explaining how individuals cognitively process these influences. SCCT emphasizes the importance of self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and personal goals in career decision-making. Students are more likely to select academic strands in which they believe they can succeed (self-efficacy), that are expected to yield desirable outcomes (outcome expectations), and that align with their long-term aspirations (goals). This perspective suggests that career decisions are shaped not only by external influences but also by how individuals interpret and respond to them.

Drawing on these frameworks, the study identifies five key factors—personal, career guidance, family, peer, and socioeconomic factors—as operational representations of the systems outlined in STF. Personal factors correspond to the individual system, reflecting students' interests, abilities, and self-concept. Career guidance, family, and peer factors represent the social system, as they involve direct interpersonal and institutional influences. Socioeconomic factors correspond to the environmental-societal system, reflecting broader contextual conditions that shape opportunities and constraints.

SCCT further supports the relevance of these factors by explaining their roles in the decision-making process. Personal factors are linked to self-efficacy and personal goals, which directly influence students' choices. In contrast, career guidance, family, peer, and socioeconomic factors function as contextual supports or barriers that shape students' outcome expectations and learning experiences.

The integration of STF and SCCT provides both structural and cognitive explanations for strand selection. STF identifies the origins of various influences, while SCCT elucidates how students interpret these influences during decision-making. Collectively, these frameworks offer a comprehensive and theoretically grounded approach to understanding the factors that influence students' choice of senior high school strand.

Research Questions

This study aims to determine the perceived level of influence of various factors on the students' choice of senior high school strand, including career guidance factors, personal factors, family factors, peer factors, and socioeconomic factors. Additionally, it aims to determine if there is a difference in the perceived level of influence when grouped according to sex, age, school strand, and school type.

1. What is the profile of the respondents with respect to their:
 - 1.1 Sex
 - 1.2 Age
 - 1.3 School strand
 - 1.4 School type during junior high school: Private or Public
2. What is the perceived level of influence of the following factors in choosing a school strand among Grade 11 students?
 - 2.1 Career Guidance factor
 - 2.2 Personal factor
 - 2.3 Family factor
 - 2.4 Peer factor
 - 2.5 Socioeconomic factor
3. Is there a significant difference between the perceived level of influence of these factors in choosing school strand among grade 11 students when they are group according to profile?
 - 3.1 Career Guidance factor
 - 3.2 Personal factor
 - 3.3 Family factor
 - 3.4 Peer factor
 - 3.5 Socioeconomic status factor
4. How do the participants describe the influence of personal, career guidance, family, peers and socioeconomic factors on their strand decision making?
5. What program can be recommended based on the findings of the study?

Hypotheses

H01: There is no significant difference in the perceived level of influence of career guidance factors in choosing a school strand among grade 11 students when they are grouped according to sex, age, strand, and school type.

H02: There is no significant difference in the perceived level of influence of personal factors in choosing a school strand among grade 11 students when they are grouped according to sex, age, strand, and school type.

H03: There is no significant difference in the perceived level of influence of family factors in choosing a school strand among grade 11 students when they are grouped according to sex, age, strand, and school type.

H04: There is no significant difference in the perceived level of influence of peer factors in choosing a school strand among grade 11 students when they are grouped according to sex, age, strand, and school type.

H05: There is no significant difference in the perceived level of influence of socioeconomic factors in choosing a school strand among grade 11 students when they are grouped according to sex, age, strand, and school type.

H06: There is no significant difference in the overall perceived level of influence of the factors in choosing a school strand among grade 11 students when they are grouped according to sex, age, strand, and school type.

Scope and Delimitations

This study aims to determine the perceived level of influence of various factors on the students' choice of senior high school strand, including career guidance factors, personal factors, family factors, peer factors, and socioeconomic status factors. Additionally, it aims to determine if there is a difference in level of influence according to sex, age, school strand, and school type.

The study was limited to grade 11 senior high school students at the Arellano University Pasig Campus. As the institution accepts and was part of the senior high school voucher program, where students from public junior high school receive financial assistance when they enroll in a private school for their senior high school education. Arellano University Pasig Campus had plenty of students coming from different public junior high schools in Pasig City and nearby municipalities. The available strands of choice at this campus were 1. STEM, 2. HUMSS, 3. ABM, 4. GAS, 5. Cookery, 6. Tour Guiding Services, 7. ICT, 8. MRAC (machining, refrigeration, and Air-conditioning), 9. Home Economics. The population of grade 11 students was 4060 during the time of the study. Using Slovin's formula to compute the sample size, the minimum required sample size was computed to be 365 grade 11 respondents. However, a total of 422 respondents were gathered to ensure better representation of each strand and to increase the reliability of the results. A Larger sample size provides better generalizability and more accurate statistical results. For the qualitative phase, 11 respondents were purposively selected from the quantitative participants to ensure representation across all strands, with additional participants drawn from the larger-population strands. This sampling strategy facilitated the inclusion of diverse perspectives regarding strand selection. As interviews progressed, recurring patterns and themes emerged, suggesting that data saturation had been reached.

Therefore, the sample size was deemed sufficient to support meaningful qualitative analysis.

The variables considered in this study included age, sex, academic strand, school type, and perceived levels of influence, specifically career guidance, personal, family, peer, and socioeconomic status factors. Stratified random sampling was used to select the study population.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A mixed-methods research design, specifically a concurrent mixed-methods approach, was employed to examine the factors influencing students' choice of senior high school strand. In this design, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analyzed simultaneously to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. The quantitative component used a descriptive-comparative design to determine the perceived influence of various factors, including personal, career guidance, family, peer, and socioeconomic factors. It also examined whether significant differences in perceived influence exist across groups defined by profile variables such as sex, age, strand, and school type. Statistical tools such as mean, t-test, and ANOVA were used for data analysis.

Within this study, the profile variables serve as moderating variables, influencing the strength and variation of the relationship between the identified factors and students' strand choice.

Concurrently, the qualitative component explored respondents' lived experiences through semi-structured interviews. This component aimed to provide deeper insights into how students interpret and experience the influence of various factors in their decision-making process. The data collected were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis to identify patterns and emerging themes.

Integration of quantitative and qualitative findings was undertaken to provide a more comprehensive explanation of the phenomenon under study. The quantitative results identified the dominant influencing factors, while the qualitative findings elucidated the context and meaning behind these influences.

This concurrent mixed-methods approach enabled the study to capture both measurable trends and students' lived experiences, ensuring a more holistic understanding of the factors influencing their choice of senior high school strand.

Locale of the Study

The study was conducted at the Arellano University-Andres Bonifacio campus, located on Pag-asa Street, Barangay Caniogan, Pasig City. This campus serves as an annex of Arellano University-Main Legarda and was established in July 1946. The institution

overcame challenges during the Japanese occupation and has maintained its commitment to providing quality education that addresses the needs of the global community. The founder, the late Florentino Cayco, Sr., advocated for inclusive education by eliminating entrance exams and grade requirements, thereby ensuring equal opportunities for all students. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the university continued to fulfill its mission by promptly adopting blended learning modalities and providing a learning management system for both students and faculty.

Currently, the campus offers educational programs from pre-school through college, including elementary, junior high school, and senior high school levels. All levels implement a blended learning modality, with designated days for online instruction and others for face-to-face classes. In addition to academic offerings, the institution provides various extracurricular activities, such as annual band concerts, intramurals, strands week, college week, and university week. Arellano University participates in the NCAA basketball league and has achieved five consecutive championships in cheerleading competitions. The Arellano University School of Law consistently ranks among the top ten schools in the bar examination.

Given the institution's inclusive admissions policy, this study aims to assist stakeholders in understanding the potential influence of various factors on students' career decisions. The insights obtained from this research are expected to inform the development of career programs that support stakeholders, particularly students and their parents.

Participants

Quantitative

The study participants comprised Grade 11 senior high school students from Arellano University – Andres Bonifacio Campus in Pasig City. The institution's participation in the senior high school voucher program enables the enrollment of students from both public and private junior high schools, resulting in a diverse respondent group.

At the time of the study, the total Grade 11 student population was 4,060. Slovin's formula determined a minimum required sample size of 365 respondents. However, 422 respondents were included to ensure broader representation across different strands and to enhance the reliability and stability of the results. Increasing the sample size beyond the minimum requirement is a recognized research practice that improves the accuracy of findings.

The variables considered in this study include age, sex, strand, school type during junior high school, and the perceived level of influence of career guidance, personal, family, peer, and socioeconomic status factors.

Qualitative

For the qualitative component, 11 respondents were purposively selected from the quantitative participants to ensure representation across various strands. This approach

enabled the study to capture a range of perspectives related to strand selection. As the interviews progressed, recurring patterns and themes emerged, suggesting that data saturation had been reached. Therefore, the number of participants was deemed sufficient to capture the lived experiences and perspectives relevant to the research objectives.

Instruments of the Study

The study utilized both quantitative and qualitative instruments to collect data, consistent with the concurrent mixed-methods design.

Quantitative

The quantitative component utilized a two-part, researcher-developed questionnaire. Part 1 collected demographic information from respondents, including sex, age, strand, and school type. Part 2 assessed respondents' perceived levels of influence of various factors on their selection of a senior high school strand, specifically career guidance, family, peer, personal, and socioeconomic factors. The questionnaire items were developed based on the study's identified variables and measured using a 5-point Likert scale to determine the degree of influence for each factor.

The instrument underwent a validation process by a panel of three experts to ensure content validity. Feedback and suggestions from the experts were incorporated to improve the final instrument. After validation, the instrument was pilot-tested with respondents not included in the main study to assess internal reliability and consistency. Data from the pilot test were analyzed using Cronbach's alpha, which yielded a coefficient of 0.89, indicating high internal consistency. These results demonstrate that the instrument reliably and consistently measured the intended constructs and was suitable for use in the main data collection.

Qualitative

The qualitative component employed a semi-structured interview guide comprising open-ended questions intended to elicit respondents' experiences and perspectives on factors influencing their selection of senior high school strand, such as career guidance, personal, family, peer, and socioeconomic considerations.

To ensure content validity, three subject matter experts evaluated the interview guide. Their feedback was incorporated to improve the clarity, relevance, and alignment of the questions with the study objectives.

The semi-structured format allowed flexibility for probing and follow-up questions, which supported the collection of rich and detailed responses. This approach facilitated a deeper understanding of how students interpret and experience the factors influencing their strand selection.

Data Gathering Procedure

The study on the Factors that influence the Choice of School Strand as perceived by Grade 11 Students:

1. A formal letter was sent to the Senior High School Principal of Arellano University Pasig Campus to request permission to conduct the study. Necessary approvals and communication with the school administrator were secured.
2. Coordination with the senior high school principal and coordinator was undertaken to stratify students for sampling purposes.
3. The schedule for data collection was planned in consultation with school administrators.
4. Randomly selected sections from each strand were visited, and instructions regarding the survey were provided. As most participants were minors, parent and guardian consent forms were distributed to explain the study and the voluntary nature of participation. Student assent was also obtained.
5. After the quantitative surveys were administered and the data organized, qualitative interviews were conducted with a total of 11 respondents representing all available strands at the institution. The interviews were conducted in a private counseling room within the guidance office.
6. An appropriate statistical tool and a thematic analysis framework were used to interpret the data gathered.

Data Analysis

To ensure valid and reliable interpretation of the collected data, statistical and thematic analyses were conducted as follows:

Quantitative

1. Frequencies and percentages were used to determine the demographic profile of respondents, including age, sex, strand, and school type (public or private junior high school). According to Kaplan et al. (2013, p. 31), “the frequency distribution displays scores on a variable or a measure to reflect how frequently each value was obtained.”
2. Weighted and composite means were calculated to summarize respondents' answers to each questionnaire item. The mean, defined as the average score of a data set (Kaplan et al., 2013, p. 39), was used to assess the perceived influence of various factors on students' selection of senior high school strands.
3. The t-test was employed to determine whether significant differences exist between two variables, specifically sex and school type (public or private junior high school), regarding the level of influence of various factors on students' choice of senior high school track and strand (“The t-test”, 2024).
4. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to examine whether significant differences exist in the perceived level of influence among groups based on age and strand. ANOVA is “a test used to determine differences between research results from three or more unrelated samples or groups” (“What is ANOVA?”, 2024).
5. A 5-point Likert scale was utilized in the study. According to Tripathi (2024), “A Likert scale is a rating system that analyzes the attitude, perspective, or level of agreement of the respondents to a survey question or a statement.”

Qualitative

The Braun and Clarke Thematic Analysis Framework was employed to identify patterns of meaning, or themes. The process included familiarization with the data, coding responses, identifying patterns, and developing themes. This approach facilitated the identification of key themes that elucidate how students interpret and experience the factors influencing their strand choice.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher adhered to established ethical guidelines throughout the study. Open communication was maintained with school administrators to ensure they remained informed about the research process and participant status. The necessary permit was obtained prior to data collection. Written informed consent was secured from both students and their parents. Participant identities were kept confidential. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time. Data, findings, and conclusions were used exclusively for educational research purposes. The objectives of the study were clearly explained to respondents and relevant stakeholders. All participant questions were addressed by the researcher.

RESULTS

Research Question 1. Profile of the respondents with respect to their:

- 1.1 Sex
- 1.2 Age
- 1.3 School strand
- 1.4 School type during junior high school: Private or Public

Table 1.1
Profile of the Respondents in Respect to Sex

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Female	245	58.1
Male	177	41.9
Total	422	100.0

Table 1.1 indicates that the majority of respondents were female (58.1%), while males comprised a minority (41.9%). This finding demonstrates a higher representation of female students in the study. However, this gender imbalance does not necessarily determine the factors influencing strand choice. According to the Systems Theory framework, sex is considered part of the **individual system**, but the framework emphasizes the significance of interactions among all systems.

Table 1.2
Profile of the Respondents in Respect to Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage
14-16 years old	206	48.8

17-19 years old	211	50.0
20-22 years old	5	1.2
Total	422	100.0

Table 1.2 indicates that the majority of respondents were aged 17 to 19 years (50%), followed by those aged 14 to 16 years (48.8%), with only 1.2% aged 20 to 22 years. These findings suggest that most respondents fall within the typical age range for senior high school students. According to the System Theory Framework, age, similar to sex, constitutes a component of the individual system and plays a significant role in interactions with other systems.

Table 1.3
Profile of the Respondents in Respect to Strand

Strand	Frequency	Percentage
HUMMS	115	27.3
STEM	96	22.7
ABM	59	14.0
ICT	53	12.6
Cookery	41	9.7
HE	27	6.4
TG	18	4.3
MRAC	5	1.2
GAS	8	1.9
Total	422	100.0

Table 1.3 shows that the majority of respondents were from HUMMS (27.3%), followed by STEM (22.7%), ABM (14%), ICT (12.6%), COOKERY (9.7%), HE (6.4%), TG (4.3%), GAS (1.9%), and MRAC (1.2%). This distribution reflects the sampling technique employed in this study, in which the number of respondents was proportionate to the total population of each strand. This result indicates that the sample successfully represents the distribution of students across different academic strands. In relation to the Systems Theory Framework, the choice of strand may be understood as an outcome of the interaction between individual interests and contextual influences within the educational environment.

Table 1.4
Profile of the Respondents in Respect to School Type

School Type	Frequency	Percentage
Private	37	8.8
Public	385	91.2
Total	422	100.0

Table 1.4 shows that the majority of respondents (91.2%) attended public schools, while a minority (8.8%) attended private schools. The research was conducted at Arellano

University – Pasig, a private institution. This distribution indicates that a significant number of students from public schools were able to transfer to a private school. This outcome may reflect the effectiveness of the Department of Education's voucher program. According to systems theory, this voucher program constitutes a socioeconomic factor within the environmental-societal system.

Research Question 2. Perceived level of influence in choosing school strand among grade 11 students of these factors.

2.1 Career Guidance factor

2.2 Personal factor

2.3 Family factor

2.4 Peer factor

2.5 Socioeconomic status factor

Table 2.1
Perceived Level of Influence in Choosing School Strand Among Grade 11 Students in
Terms of Career Guidance Factor

Career Guidance Factor	WM	VI
1. The school's career guidance activities assisted me in narrowing down my strand options.	3.38	N
2. The career orientation programs organized by the guidance office influenced my choice of strand.	3.35	N
3. The guidance counselor's explanation of the different strands helped me choose my strand.	3.46	A
4. The information provided by the school guidance office helped me decide which strand to take.	3.41	A
5. The guidance counselor's explanation of how different strands relate to future careers influenced my strand choice.	3.66	A
Composite Mean	3.45	A

Legend: 5(4.21-5.00) - Strongly Agree (SA), 4(3.41-4.4.20) – Agree (A), 3(2.61-3.40)-Neutral(N), 2(1.81-2.60)-Disagree(D), 1(1.00-1.80)-Strongly Disagree (SD)

Table 2.1 indicates that the career guidance factor achieved a composite mean of 3.45, interpreted as “Agree.” This result demonstrates that career guidance is generally perceived as influential in students’ strand selection.

A detailed comparison of the items reveals variation in the level of influence. The highest mean was observed for “The guidance counselor’s explanation of how different strands relate to future careers influenced my strand choice” (WM = 3.66), followed by items concerning direct explanations from guidance counselors (WM = 3.46 and 3.41), all interpreted as “Agree.” These findings indicate that direct and specific guidance from counselors exerts a stronger influence on students’ decisions.

In contrast, lower means were recorded for career orientation programs (WM = 3.35) and assistance in narrowing down strand options (WM = 3.38), both interpreted as “Neutral.” Compared to counselor-led explanations, these general activities exert less influence on

students' strand choices. This comparison demonstrates that although career guidance is influential overall, its impact varies according to the type of support provided. Personalized and explanatory approaches are more effective than general orientation activities.

This finding aligns with studies indicating that career guidance is more effective when it provides clear and relevant information that directly supports decision-making (Flores, 2023). It also supports evidence that general programs may have limited influence if not closely aligned with students' individual needs (Maestrado & Bucar, 2024).

Table 2.2
Perceived Level of Influence in Choosing School Strand Among Grade 11
Students in Terms of Personal Factor

Personal Factor	WM	VI
1. The personal interests that I have influenced my choice of strand	4.16	A
2. The academic skills that I possess influenced my decision to choose this strand	3.88	A
3. The future goals that I have set for myself influenced my choice of strand.	4.19	A
4. The confidence that I have in my ability to succeed influenced my strand selection.	3.87	A
5. The profession that I want to pursue in the future influenced my strand choice.	4.05	A
Composite Mean	4.03	A

Legend: 5(4.21-5.00) - Strongly Agree (SA), 4(3.41-4.4.20) – Agree (A), 3(2.61-3.40)-Neutral(N), 2(1.81-2.60)-Disagree(D), 1(1.00-1.80)-Strongly Disagree (SD)

Table 2.2 indicates that the personal factor achieved a composite mean of 4.03, classified as “Agree,” which suggests that personal factors exert a strong influence on students' strand selection.

A comparison of the items reveals consistently high ratings across all indicators, with minimal variation. The highest mean was observed for “The future goals that I have set for myself influenced my choice of strand” (WM = 4.19), followed by personal interests (WM = 4.16) and desired profession (WM = 4.05). These findings suggest that future-oriented considerations, including goals and intended careers, exert the strongest influence on students' decisions.

In contrast, slightly lower means were recorded for academic skills (WM = 3.88) and confidence in ability (WM = 3.87), although both remain within the “Agree” range. Relative to goals and interests, these results suggest that students prioritize their aspirations over their current perceived abilities when selecting a strand. Overall, the analysis demonstrates that while all aspects of personal factors are influential, future goals and aspirations are the most dominant drivers, with perceived ability playing a secondary role. This pattern aligns with Social Cognitive Career Theory, which posits that career decisions are shaped by the interaction of personal goals, interests, and self-beliefs. In this case, the stronger influence of goals and aspirations indicates that students' outcome

expectations may guide their choices more significantly than their current self-assessment of ability.

This finding is consistent with previous studies indicating that personal interest and career goals are primary influences in career decision-making (Kilag et al., 2023; Malaguial et al., 2023).

Table 2.3
Perceived Level of Influence in Choosing School Strand Among Grade 11
Students in Terms of Family Factor

Family Factor	WM	VI
1. The example set by my parents' careers influenced my strand choice.	2.83	N
2. The approval of my parents influenced my decision in choosing my strand.	3.34	N
3. The discussion of my family regarding strands influenced my final choice.	3.02	N
4. The expectation of my family to support them financially in the future influences my strand choice.	3.44	A
5. The recommendation of my parents influenced my choice of a strand.	2.86	N
Composite Mean	3.10	N

Legend: 5(4.21-5.00) - Strongly Agree (SA), 4(3.41-4.4.20) – Agree (A), 3(2.61-3.40)-Neutral(N), 2(1.81-2.60)-Disagree(D), 1(1.00-1.80)-Strongly Disagree (SD)

Table 2.3 indicates that the family factor yielded a composite mean of 3.10, classified as “Neutral.” This result suggests that family influence is moderate and not consistently strong in students’ strand selection.

A comparison of the items reveals variation in the experience of family influence. The highest mean was recorded for the item, “The expectation of my family to support them financially in the future influences my strand choice” (WM = 3.44), interpreted as “Agree.” This finding implies that financial expectations from the family exert a relatively stronger influence compared to other forms of family involvement.

In contrast, lower means were observed for items such as parents’ career example (WM = 2.83) and parental recommendation (WM = 2.86), both classified as “Neutral.” Similarly, family discussions (WM = 3.02) and parental approval (WM = 3.34) also remained within the neutral range. These results suggest that, compared to financial expectations, direct parental influence through advice, modeling, or discussion is less consistently impactful. This comparison indicates that family influence is not uniform and becomes more pronounced when associated with practical concerns, such as financial responsibility,

rather than direct guidance or expectations regarding specific strand choices. This pattern aligns with the Systems Theory Framework, which posits that the family, as part of the social system, interacts with the individual system but does not always dominate decision-making. The variation in responses suggests that students balance family expectations with their personal preferences. This finding is consistent with studies indicating that, while family can influence career decisions, its effect varies depending on context and is often balanced with students' own interests and goals (Valliente et al., 2016).

Table 2.4
Perceived Level of Influence in Choosing School Strand Among Grade 11 Students in
Terms of Peer Factor

Peer Factor	WM	VI
1. The strand choices of my friends influenced my decision to select the same strand.	2.62	N
2. The feedback given by my friends regarding my career plans influenced my strand decision.	2.92	N
3. The opinions and suggestions of my friends affected how I decided on my strand.	2.86	N
4. The desire to stay in the same strand as my friends influenced my final choice.	2.64	N
5. The discussions I had with my friends before enrollment influenced my strand selection.	2.88	N
Composite Mean	2.78	N

Legend: 5(4.21-5.00) - Strongly Agree (SA), 4(3.41-4.4.20) – Agree (A), 3(2.61-3.40)-Neutral(N), 2(1.81-2.60)-Disagree(D), 1(1.00-1.80)-Strongly Disagree (SD)

Table 2.4 indicates that the peer factor yielded a composite mean of 2.78, classified as “Neutral.” This result suggests that peer influence is generally low to moderate in students’ strand selection.

A comparison of the items reveals that all indicators fall within the neutral range, exhibiting only minor variation. The highest mean was recorded for “The feedback given by my friends regarding my career plans influenced my strand decision” (WM = 2.92), followed by discussions with friends before enrollment (WM = 2.88) and opinions and suggestions (WM = 2.86). These findings indicate that peers contribute primarily through discussions and feedback rather than exerting direct influence.

In contrast, lower means were observed for choosing the same strand as friends (WM = 2.62) and the desire to stay with friends (WM = 2.64). Compared to peer discussions, students are less likely to base their strand decisions on companionship or group alignment. This comparison demonstrates that, although peer interaction exists, it does

not strongly determine strand choice. Rather, peers serve primarily as a source of input instead of a decisive factor.

This pattern aligns with the Systems Theory Framework, which posits that peers are components of the social system interacting with the individual system, yet do not override personal decision-making. The relatively uniform and low scores suggest that students prioritize their own preferences over peer influence. This finding is consistent with previous studies, which report that peer influence exists but is generally secondary to personal and family factors in career decision-making (Keller, 2022; Kilag et al., 2023).

Table 2.5
Perceived Level of Influence in Choosing School Strand Among Grade 11 Students in
Terms of Socioeconomic Status Factor

Socioeconomic Status Factor	WM	VI
1. The financial capacity of my family influenced my strand choice.	3.08	N
2. The availability of an educational voucher influenced my strand choice.	3.36	N
3. The transportation expenses influenced my strand choice.	2.73	N
4. The consideration of practical employment opportunities influenced my strand choice.	3.60	A
5. The proximity of the school influenced my strand choice.	3.19	N
Composite Mean	3.19	N

Legend: 5(4.21-5.00) - Strongly Agree (SA), 4(3.41-4.4.20) – Agree (A), 3(2.61-3.40)-Neutral(N), 2(1.81-2.60)-Disagree(D), 1(1.00-1.80)-Strongly Disagree (SD)

Table 2.5 indicates that the socioeconomic factor yielded a composite mean of 3.19, classified as “Neutral,” which reflects a moderate influence on students’ strand selection. Analysis of individual items reveals a distinct pattern. The highest mean was associated with the statement, “The consideration of practical employment opportunities influenced my strand choice” (WM = 3.60), interpreted as “Agree.” This finding demonstrates that future job prospects and practicality are the most significant socioeconomic considerations. In contrast, lower means were recorded for transportation expenses (WM = 2.73) and family financial capacity (WM = 3.08), both within the neutral range. School proximity (WM = 3.19) and educational voucher availability (WM = 3.36) also remained neutral. These results suggest that, compared to employment considerations, direct financial constraints and logistical factors exert less influence on strand choice. Overall, the data indicate that socioeconomic influence is selective rather than uniform, with students prioritizing long-term practical outcomes, such as employment opportunities, over immediate financial or logistical concerns.

This pattern aligns with the Systems Theory Framework, which positions socioeconomic conditions within the environmental-societal system that shapes both opportunities and constraints. Although these factors are present, they do not consistently override students' personal preferences. This observation is consistent with previous research indicating that socioeconomic factors influence career-related decisions primarily through perceived opportunities rather than direct limitations (Laroco, 2023). Thus, students tend to consider practicality while not being fully constrained by socioeconomic conditions.

Table 2.6
Summary of Perceived Level of Influence in Choosing School Strand Among Grade 11 Students

Factor	WM	VI
1. Career Guidance Factor	3.45	A
2. Personal Factor	4.03	A
3. Family Factor	3.10	N
4. Peer Factor	2.78	N
5. Socioeconomic Factor	3.19	N
Composite Mean	3.31	N

Legend: 5(4.21-5.00) - Strongly Agree (SA), 4(3.41-4.4.20) – Agree (A), 3(2.61-3.40)-Neutral(N), 2(1.81-2.60)-Disagree(D), 1(1.00-1.80)-Strongly Disagree (SD)

Table 2.6 provides a comparative overview of the perceived influence of five factors on students' selection of senior high school strands. The personal factor recorded the highest mean (WM = 4.03), followed by the career guidance factor (WM = 3.45). In contrast, socioeconomic (WM = 3.19), family (WM = 3.10), and peer factors (WM = 2.78) all fall within the neutral range. This comparison reveals a distinct pattern: internal influences, specifically the personal factor, rank highest, suggesting that students predominantly consider their own interests, goals, and abilities in decision-making. Institutional support, represented by career guidance, also exerts a relatively strong influence. Conversely, external social and environmental factors, including family, peer, and socioeconomic considerations, exhibit lower and more moderate levels of influence.

Among external factors, socioeconomic considerations rank slightly higher than family influence, while peer influence is the lowest overall. This suggests that companionship and social alignment exert minimal influence on strand selection. The pattern indicates that, although multiple factors contribute to decision-making, students prioritize self-related considerations over external influences, with career guidance functioning as a secondary yet meaningful support.

These findings align with previous research indicating that personal factors, particularly interests and goals, are the most influential in career decision-making (Kilag et al., 2023; Malaguial et al., 2023). However, the present results differ from those of Nazareno et al. (2021), where career guidance was identified as the least influential factor, whereas in this study it ranks second. From the perspective of the Systems Theory Framework, the results illustrate the interaction of various systems in career decision-making. The individual system (personal factor) emerges as the dominant influence, while the social system (career guidance, family, peers) and the environmental-societal system

(socioeconomic factors) provide varying degrees of support. This interpretation is further supported by the Social Cognitive Career Theory, which emphasizes that personal goals and self-beliefs are primary drivers of career decisions, while external factors function as contextual influences rather than determining factors.

Research Question 3. Difference between the perceived level of influence of these factors in choosing school strand among grade 11 students when they are group according to profile.

3.1 Career Guidance factor

3.2 Personal factor

3.3 Family factor

3.4 Peer factor

3.5 Socioeconomic status factor

Table 3.1

Difference in the Perceived Level of Influence of Career Guidance Factor in Choosing School Strand Among Grade 11 Students When Group According to Profile

Profile	Mean	Computed Value	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Sex					
Female	3.49	Computed t-value = 0.970	0.333	Do not Reject the Null Hypothesis	Not Significant
Male	3.40				
Age					
14-16 years old	3.41	Computed ANOVA Value = 0.729	0.483	Do not Reject the Null Hypothesis	Not Significant
17-19 years old	3.50				
20-22 years old	3.15				
Strand					
HUMMS	3.57	Computed ANOVA Value = 1.312	0.236	Do not Reject the Null Hypothesis	Not Significant
STEM	3.43				
ABM	3.36				
ICT	3.22				
Cookery	3.45				
HE	3.70				
TG	3.58				
MRAC	3.72				
GAS	3.10				

School Type					
Private	2.75	Computed t-value = -5.144	0.001	Reject the Null Hypothesis	Significant
Public	3.52				

Note: p-value ≤ 0.05 – significant, p-value > 0.05 – not significant

Table 3.1 presents differences in the perceived influence of the career guidance factor across sex, age, strand, and school type. The results indicate no significant differences for sex ($p = 0.333$), age ($p = 0.483$), or strand ($p = 0.236$). Group means comparisons reveal only minimal variation across these categories. For example, female ($M = 3.49$) and male ($M = 3.40$) respondents reported comparable levels of influence. Similarly, the means across age groups and strands are closely aligned, suggesting consistent perceptions of career guidance. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) is not rejected for sex, age, and strand.

In contrast, a significant difference emerged when respondents were grouped by school type ($p = 0.001$). Students from public schools ($M = 3.52$) reported a higher perceived influence of career guidance than those from private schools ($M = 2.75$). This finding suggests that the experience of career guidance varies across school contexts, with public school students perceiving greater influence. Consequently, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected for school type.

This difference implies that variations in the delivery, accessibility, or emphasis of career guidance programs may exist between public and private schools. According to the Systems Theory Framework, career guidance, as a component of the social system, may operate differently depending on institutional context. This interpretation is further supported by the Social Cognitive Career Theory, which suggests that differences in learning experiences shape how students perceive and utilize career guidance in decision-making.

Table 3.2

Difference in the Perceived Level of Influence of Personal Factor in Choosing School Strand Among Grade 11 Students When Group According to Profile

Profile	Mean	Computed Value	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Sex					
Female	4.03	Computed t-value = -0.016	0.987	Do not Reject the Null Hypothesis	Not Significant
Male	4.03				
Age					
14-16 years old	4.03	Computed ANOVA Value = 4.396	0.013	Reject the Null Hypothesis	Significant
17-19 years old	4.05				

20-22 years old	3.00				
Strand					
HUMMS	4.08	Computed ANOVA Value = 1.737	0.056	Do not Reject the Null Hypothesis	Not Significant
STEM	4.23				
ABM	3.87				
ICT	3.86				
Cookery	4.01				
HE	4.00				
TG	4.07				
MRAC	3.84				
GAS	3.38				
School Type					
Private	4.04	Computed t-value = - 0.402	0.688	Do not Reject the Null Hypothesis	Not Significant
Public	4.03				

Note: p-value ≤ 0.05 – significant, p-value > 0.05 – not significant

Table 3.2 displays the differences in perceived influence of the personal factor among respondents grouped by sex, age, academic strand, and school type. The results indicate no significant differences in perceived influence of personal factors when respondents are grouped by sex ($p = 0.987$), academic strand ($p = 0.056$), or school type ($p = 0.688$). Mean comparisons reveal minimal variation across these categories. For example, both female ($M = 4.03$) and male ($M = 4.03$) respondents reported identical levels of influence, and the means for academic strands and school types are similarly close. These findings indicate that personal factors exert a consistent influence regardless of sex, academic strand, or school type. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) is not rejected for these variables.

In contrast, a significant difference emerged when respondents were grouped by age ($p = 0.013$). Students aged 17–19 years ($M = 4.05$) reported a slightly higher perceived influence of personal factors compared to those aged 14–16 years ($M = 4.03$), while respondents aged 20–22 years ($M = 3.00$) reported a substantially lower mean. These results indicate that the influence of personal factors varies across age groups, with older respondents reporting lower levels of influence. Consequently, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected for age.

This pattern suggests that the role of personal factors changes as students progress through developmental stages. This finding is consistent with research indicating that career-related self-concept and decision-making evolve with age as individuals gain experience and clarity in their goals (Super, 1980). Similarly, studies show that self-efficacy and career preferences become more defined over time, influencing reliance on personal factors in decision-making (Lent et al., 1994). Social Cognitive Career Theory also supports this, positing that self-efficacy and personal goals develop through accumulated experience.

Table 3.2.1
Post Hoc Analysis on Perceived Level of Influence of personal Factor When Grouped
According to Age

Variables	Mean Difference	p-value	Interpretation
14-16 years old vs 17-19 years old	-0.0247	0.938	Not Significant
14-16 years old vs 20-22 years old	1.0271	0.016	Significant
17-19 years old vs 20-22 years old	1.0519	0.013	Significant

Table 3.2.1 presents the post hoc analysis of the perceived level of influence of personal factors when respondents are grouped by age. The results indicate no significant difference between respondents aged 14-16 years and those aged 17-19 years. However, significant differences were observed between respondents aged 14-16 years and 20-22 years, as well as between those aged 17-19 years and 20-22 years. These findings suggest that students aged 20-22 years perceive the influence of personal factors differently compared to their younger counterparts. Table 3.2 further shows that respondents aged 20–22 years attribute lower importance to personal factors. From the perspective of the systems theory framework, these results reflect variations in how individual systems interact with other systems depending on the respondent's age. This observation is also consistent with Social Cognitive Career Theory, which posits that self-efficacy changes over time.

Table 3.3
Difference in the Perceived Level of Influence of Family Factor in Choosing School
Strand Among Grade 11 Students When Group According to Profile

Profile	Mean	Computed Value	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Sex					
Female	3.10	Computed t-value = 0.185	0.854	Do not Reject the Null Hypothesis	Not Significant
Male	3.09				
Age					
14-16 years old	3.13	Computed ANOVA Value = 2.155	0.117	Do not Reject the Null Hypothesis	Not Significant
17-19 years old	3.08				
20-22 years old	2.20				
Strand					
HUMMS	3.09	Computed ANOVA	0.526	Do not Reject the	Not Significant
STEM	3.15				
ABM	2.93				

ICT	3.29	Value = 0.888		Null Hypothesis	
Cookery	3.05				
HE	3.08				
TG	3.22				
MRAC	2.60				
GAS	2.88				
School Type					
Private	3.17	Computed t-value = 0.493	0.622	Do not Reject the Null Hypothesis	Not Significant
Public	3.09				

Note: p-value ≤ 0.05 – significant, p-value > 0.05 – not significant

Table 3.3 presents differences in the perceived level of influence of the family factor across the strands and school type. The results indicate no significant differences across all profile variables: sex ($p = 0.854$), age ($p = 0.117$), strand ($p = 0.526$), and school type ($p = 0.622$). Mean comparisons reveal minimal variation among groups. For example, female ($M = 3.10$) and male ($M = 3.09$) respondents reported nearly identical levels of influence. Similarly, the means across strands and school types are closely distributed. Although respondents aged 20–22 years reported a slightly lower mean ($M = 2.20$), this difference is not statistically significant compared to other age groups. These findings suggest that the influence of family factors remains consistent across different demographic groups. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_03) is not rejected for sex, age, strand, and school type.

This pattern indicates that family influence is relatively stable and does not significantly vary based on respondents' demographic profiles. According to the Systems Theory Framework, the family, as a component of the social system, interacts with the individual system in a consistent manner across contexts. Although slight variations in influence exist, these differences are not statistically significant across groups.

Table 3.4
Difference in the Perceived Level of Influence of Peer Factor in Choosing School Strand
Among Grade 11 Students When Grouped According to Profile

Profile	Mean	Computed Value	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Sex					
Female	2.67	Computed t-value = - 2.512	0.012	Reject the Null Hypothesis	Significant
Male	2.94				
Age					
14-16 years old	2.76	Computed ANOVA Value = 0.207	0.813	Do not Reject the Null Hypothesis	Not Significant
17-19 years old	2.81				

20-22 years old	2.55				
Strand					
HUMMS	2.99	Computed ANOVA Value = 0.973	0.456	Do not Reject the Null Hypothesis	Not Significant
STEM	2.76				
ABM	2.64				
ICT	2.67				
Cookery	2.58				
HE	2.70				
TG	2.87				
MRAC	3.00				
GAS	2.85				
School Type					
Private	2.76	Computed t-value = - 0.161	0.872	Do not Reject the Null Hypothesis	Not Significant
Public	2.79				

Note: $p\text{-value} \leq 0.05$ – significant, $p\text{-value} > 0.05$ – not significant

Table 3.4 presents differences in perceived peer influence across sex, age, strand, and school type. The results indicate no significant differences for age ($p = 0.813$), strand ($p = 0.456$), or school type ($p = 0.872$). Mean comparisons reveal minimal variation across these groups. The closely distributed values across age groups and strands suggest that peer influence remains consistent within these categories. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H04) is not rejected for age, strand, and school type.

In contrast, a significant difference emerged when respondents were grouped by sex ($p = 0.012$). Mean comparisons indicate that male respondents ($M = 2.94$) reported a higher level of peer influence than female respondents ($M = 2.67$). This finding suggests that peer influence varies by sex, with male students demonstrating greater susceptibility to peer-related factors in strand selection. Consequently, the null hypothesis (H04) is rejected for sex.

These results suggest that peer influence operates differently across sexes. This aligns with previous research indicating that peer interactions and social influence can differ between male and female students, particularly in decision-making contexts (Batool & Ghayas, 2020). From the Systems Theory Framework perspective, this demonstrates how individual characteristics such as sex interact with the social system of peers, resulting in differential influence. Social Cognitive Career Theory further supports this, as variations in social learning experiences may lead to differences in how peer input affects decision-making.

Table 3.5

Difference in the Perceived Level of Influence of Socioeconomic Status Factor in Choosing School Strand Among Grade 11 Students When Grouped According to Profile

Profile	Mean	Computed Value	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Sex					
Female	3.14	Computed t-value = -1.411	0.159	Do not Reject the Null Hypothesis	Not Significant
Male	3.26				
Age					
14-16 years old	3.19	Computed ANOVA Value = 0.121	0.886	Do not Reject the Null Hypothesis	Not Significant
17-19 years old	3.20				
20-22 years old	3.00				
Strand					
HUMMS	3.34	Computed ANOVA Value = 1.008	0.429	Do not Reject the Null Hypothesis	Not Significant
STEM	3.15				
ABM	3.14				
ICT	3.21				
Cookery	3.06				
HE	2.98				
TG	3.12				
MRAC	3.48				
GAS	3.20				
School Type					
Private	3.14	Computed t-value = -0.402	0.688	Do not Reject the Null Hypothesis	Not Significant
Public	3.20				

Note: $p\text{-value} \leq 0.05$ – significant, $p\text{-value} > 0.05$ – not significant

Table 3.5 presents the differences in the perceived influence of the socioeconomic factor when respondents are grouped by sex, age, strand, and school type. The results indicate no significant differences across all profile variables: sex ($p = 0.159$), age ($p = 0.886$), strand ($p = 0.429$), and school type ($p = 0.688$). Mean comparisons reveal minimal variation among groups. For example, female ($M = 3.14$) and male ($M = 3.26$) respondents reported comparable levels of influence. Similarly, the means across age groups, strands, and school types are closely distributed, indicating consistent perceptions of socioeconomic factors across different groups. Although slight variations are present, such as a higher mean in MRAC ($M = 3.48$) and a lower mean in HE ($M = 2.98$), these differences are not statistically significant. Therefore, socioeconomic influence does not vary meaningfully across respondents' profiles, and the null hypothesis (H_{05}) is retained for sex, age, strand, and school type.

This finding aligns with previous research indicating that, although socioeconomic factors influence career decisions, their effects may not differ significantly among groups with comparable access to opportunities (Laroco, 2023).

Table 3.6
Difference in the Over All Perceived Level of Influence of the Factors in Choosing School Strand Among Gradev11 Students When Group According to Profile.

Profile	Mean	Computed Value	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Sex					
Female	3.29	Computed t-value = -0.998	0.319	Do not Reject the Hypothesis	Not Significant
Male	3.34				
Age					
14-16 years old	3.30	Computed ANOVA Value = 2.610	0.075	Do not Reject the Hypothesis	Not Significant
17-19 years old	3.33				
20-22 years old	2.76				
Strand					
HUMMS	3.41	Computed ANOVA Value = 1.257	0.265	Do not Reject the Hypothesis	Not Significant
STEM	3.34				
ABM	3.19				
ICT	3.25				
Cookery	3.23				
HE	3.29				
TG	3.37				
MRAC	3.33				
GAS	3.08				
School Type					
Private	3.17	Computed t-value = -1.594	0.112	Do not Reject the Hypothesis	Not Significant
Public	3.32				

Note: p-value ≤ 0.05 – significant, p-value > 0.05 – not significant

Table 3.6 displays the differences in the overall perceived influence of the factors when respondents are categorized by sex, age, strand, and school type. The results indicate no significant differences across all profile variables: sex ($p = 0.319$), age ($p = 0.075$), strand ($p = 0.265$), and school type ($p = 0.112$). Mean comparisons reveal minimal variation among groups. For example, female ($M = 3.29$) and male ($M = 3.34$) respondents reported similar overall levels of influence. Similarly, the means across age groups, strands, and school types are closely distributed, suggesting that the combined

influence of all factors is generally consistent across different groups. Although slight variations are present, such as a lower mean among respondents aged 20–22 years ($M = 2.76$), these differences are not statistically significant. Therefore, the overall pattern of influence remains stable regardless of respondents' profiles, and the null hypothesis (H_0) is not rejected.

Although the overall result shows no significant difference, analysis of individual factors in Tables 3.1–3.5 revealed specific variations. For example, career guidance differed by school type, peer influence differed by sex, and personal factors differed by age. These findings indicate that while the combined influence of factors is consistent, certain factors may vary under specific conditions.

This pattern suggests that students generally experience a similar overall decision-making framework, even though particular influences may differ in specific contexts. According to the Systems Theory Framework, this reflects the interaction of multiple systems, including individual, social, and environmental factors, which collectively shape decision-making in a consistent manner across groups. Social Cognitive Career Theory further supports this interpretation, suggesting that while contextual factors may vary, the core cognitive processes guiding decision-making remain consistent across individuals.

Research Question 4. How do the participants describe the influence of personal, career guidance, family, peers and socioeconomic factors on their strand decision making?

Qualitative data were analyzed to further examine the factors influencing respondents' strand selection. Using Braun and Clarke's reflexive thematic analysis, distinct themes were identified for each factor.

A. Personal Factor

Theme 1: Self-Interest and Career Alignment

Participants consistently reported selecting their academic strand according to their personal interests, aspirations, and long-term career objectives.

“pangarap ko po kasi talaga is mag-chef sa barko so ang iniisip ko is mag-focus po ako sa cookery.”

These findings suggest that students prioritize intrinsic motivation and future-oriented goals when making academic decisions. The aspiration to align their chosen strand with their intended career path significantly influenced their selection.

Theme 2: Perceived Ability and Self-Confidence

Participants considered their perceived strengths and abilities as significant factors in selecting an academic strand.

“since doon po ako magaling... yun po yung strength ko.”

These findings suggest that decision-making is influenced by both personal interest and students' confidence in their academic capabilities. The integration of these themes indicates that students select strands in which they feel both interested and competent, thereby reinforcing the significance of self-concept in the decision-making process.

This finding aligns with the quantitative result, in which the personal factor obtained the highest weighted mean ($WM = 4.03$), identifying it as the most influential factor. This outcome is consistent with previous studies that emphasize personal interest as a primary determinant in career decision-making (Kilag et al., 2023; Malaguial et al., 2023). Within the Systems Theory Framework, this result reflects the dominance of the individual system, while Social Cognitive Career Theory underscores the importance of self-efficacy and personal goals.

B. Career Guidance Factor

Theme 1: Career Awareness and Exposure

Several participants recognized that school-based career guidance activities contributed to their decision-making processes.

“may pumunta sa school... dine-discuss yung iba't ibang strands.”

This finding indicates that career guidance facilitates initial awareness and exposure to the various academic strands and potential future opportunities.

Theme 2: Institutional Gap in Guidance Delivery

Although career guidance programs are present, participants identified several limitations regarding their effectiveness.

“may test pero hindi po nilabas yung results... parang useless.”

This suggests that although career guidance activities are available, they are not consistently implemented or fully utilized. Consequently, a divergence emerges between quantitative and qualitative findings: students acknowledge the importance of career guidance, yet their experiences reveal gaps in program delivery.

This finding aligns with previous studies that report inconsistencies in the effectiveness of career guidance (Maestrado & Bucar, 2024). According to the Systems Theory Framework, such inconsistencies reflect challenges within the environmental-societal system.

C. Family Factor

Several participants reported experiencing direct parental influence when selecting their academic strand.

“gusto po ng mama ko mag-criminology ako... kaya po pumayag ako.”

These findings suggest that family expectations exert a significant influence on students' academic decision-making.

Theme 2: Supportive Autonomy

Some participants indicated that they were granted autonomy in making their own choices.

“bahala na daw po ako kung ano gusto ko piliin.”

This illustrates an alternative experience in which parents offer support without dictating decisions. These divergent themes help explain the quantitative finding that family influence was neutral ($WM = 3.10$). Family influence is heterogeneous and varies among households.

This finding aligns with existing literature indicating that family influence may either guide or permit autonomy in career decision-making (Valliente et al., 2016). Within Social Theory Framework (STF), this demonstrates the interaction between individual and social systems.

D. Peer Factor

Theme 1: Peer Alignment and Social Belonging

Several participants reported that their selection of academic strands was influenced by their peers.

“tara HUMMS tayo... dalawa daw kami.”

This statement illustrates how peer relationships contribute to decision-making processes, especially regarding the desire for social belonging.

Theme 2: Peer as Secondary Influence

However, many participants emphasized that they ultimately prioritized their individual decisions.

“hindi naman sila yung mag-aaral... kaya hindi ko sinunod.”

These findings indicate that peer influence exists but is not dominant. This observation is consistent with the quantitative result ($WM = 2.78$), which reflects a low level of influence. Peers function as secondary influencers rather than primary decision-makers.

This finding corroborates previous studies indicating that peer influence is frequently moderate and context-dependent (Keller, 2022; Kilag et al., 2023).

E. Socioeconomic Factor

Theme 1: Practical Decision-Making and Economic Awareness

Participants evaluated financial factors and potential employment prospects when making decisions.

“I think yung socio-economic background po namin had a significant effect po on my choice since for me po parang iniisip ko yung long term run, yung long term consequences if pinili ko yung STEM and I'm also considering the career opportunities once I graduate so i think it had a significant impact in my choice.”

This response demonstrates participants' awareness of financial constraints and practical considerations.

Theme 2: Financial Support as a Buffer

However, students emphasized that financial constraints did not strongly limit their choices due to available support systems such as vouchers. This explains the quantitative finding where socioeconomic factor was rated as neutral ($WM = 3.19$). The integration suggests that while socioeconomic factors are relevant, their influence is moderated by institutional support.

“So, my family's situation— financial status didn't really, ah affect in choosing my strand— since, again like the other students meron din ako ESC vouchers so wala naman po akong binabayaran sa school except sa transportation expenses”

This aligns with literature indicating that financial assistance can reduce the impact of socioeconomic constraints (Laroco, 2023).

Integration Of Quantitative and Qualitative

The integration of qualitative and quantitative findings demonstrates both convergence and divergence among the examined factors. Personal factors consistently emerged as the most influential, as evidenced by both statistical analyses and participant narratives.

A divergence was observed in the area of career guidance: while quantitative results indicated its perceived importance, qualitative data revealed significant gaps in its implementation. Family and peer factors exhibited variability, indicating that their influence is context-dependent rather than uniformly experienced. Socioeconomic factors

were moderated by institutional support systems, which reduced their direct impact on students' decision-making processes.

Overall, these findings support the Systems Theory Framework, which posits that career decisions are shaped by the interaction of individual, social, and environmental systems. The results further align with Social Cognitive Career Theory by underscoring the significance of self-efficacy, personal goals, and contextual influence. The integration of both data sets offers a more comprehensive understanding of students' strand decision-making. Quantitative data identifies general trends, whereas qualitative data elucidates the complexity and variation of individual experiences.

Research Question 5. What program can be recommended based on the findings of the study?

The results of the study indicate that personal factors exerted the most significant influence on respondents' strand selection, followed by career guidance based on quantitative data. Family, peer, and socioeconomic factors demonstrated a moderate influence on respondents' choices. However, qualitative data revealed a gap in the availability and effectiveness of career guidance programs. These findings suggest that students' strand decision-making is shaped by multiple systems, as outlined in the Systems Theory Framework of career development: personal factors (individual system), guidance, family, and peer (social system), and socioeconomic factors (environmental-societal system).

Based on the study's findings, the implementation of "STRANDWISE: Enhanced Comprehensive Career Guidance Program" is recommended. This program aims to strengthen students' self-awareness, improve access to career guidance, and facilitate the integration of social systems. The primary goal is to support junior high school students in making informed decisions regarding their strand selection.

The program is anchored in the Systems Theory Framework, which emphasizes the interactions among systems in career decision-making, particularly in strand selection. It includes activities designed to strengthen the individual system, such as self-awareness and identification of interests, and integrates social systems, including family and peer involvement, as well as the environmental-societal system. Furthermore, the program is grounded in Social Cognitive Career Theory, which underscores the significance of self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and personal goals in career decision-making. Progressive activities are included to enhance students' confidence in their abilities, clarify the relationship between strands and future careers, and guide students in setting realistic and meaningful career goals.

The program will be implemented from Grade 7 to Grade 10 to ensure that students are adequately prepared for strand selection. The detailed program structure is presented below.

Table 5

STRANDWISE: Enhanced comprehensive career guidance program

GRADE 7 – self awareness						
Objectives	Activities	Timeline	Person Responsible	Resources	Expected Output	Success Indicator
Student's increase self-awareness such as interest and strengths	Interest survey	1 st and 2 nd quarter	Guidance counselor	Survey forms	Student profile	* Completing more than 70% of total population *Record of student interest profile
Introduce concept of career	Homeroom career talk session	3 rd and 4 th quarter	Guidance counselor	Visual presentation	Increase career awareness	Increase on the post-test result about career
GRADE 8 – Career Exploration						
Objectives	Activities	Timeline	Person Responsible	Resources	Expected Output	Success Indicator
To broaden career knowledge related to strands	Career research activity	1 st and 2 nd quarter	Guidance counselor	Internet and library	Report of career exploration	Students are able to identify different careers
Choose a possible career(s) based on self-awareness such as interest and strength	Match researched career to self-interest or strength	3 rd and 4 th quarter	Guidance counselor	Internet and library	Several career choices based on self-interest or strength	Students are able to accurately match their interest and career choice
GRADE 9 – Introduction of Strands						
Objectives	Activities	Timeline	Person Responsible	Resources	Expected Output	Success Indicator
Introduction to strands	Seminar on different shs strands	1 st and 2 nd quarter	Guidance counselor	Visual presentations	Strand Awareness	Student identifying strand correctly
Pilot strand choice	Homeroom career talk about strand selection	3 rd and 4 th quarter	Guidance counselor	Work sheets	Top 3 selected strand	Students are able to accurately match their strand and career choice
GRADE 10 – Choosing a strand						
Objectives	Activities	Timeline	Person Responsible	Resources	Expected Output	Success Indicator
Increase self-awareness in relation to strand selection	Career assessment - test -counseling	1 st and 2 nd quarter	Guidance counselor	Assessment tool	Career plan	Students understand the career plan
Integration of Family and peers	-Conference with the parents -Group career counseling	3 rd and 4 th quarter	Guidance counselor	Conference room	Career plan	Students understand the career plan
Exposure to strand selection	Career fair	4 th quarter	Guidance counselor, School administrator	School partners, Resource Partners, Booths, Brochures	Strand and school selection record	Student able to select strand confidently

Summary of Findings

The objective of the study is to determine the perceived level of influence of various factors on the student's choice of senior high school strand, including career guidance factor, personal factor, family factor, peer factor, and socioeconomic status factor. Additionally, it aims to determine if there is a difference in the perceived level of influence according to sex, age, school strand, and school type. Based on the results of the data gathered and analyzed, the following are the major findings of the study:

1.(Research question no. 1 Respondents Profile)

The study found that the majority of respondents were female (58.1%) and primarily aged 17 to 19 years (50%), with a comparable proportion aged 14 to 16 years (48.8%). Most respondents were enrolled in the HUMMS (27.3%) and STEM (22.7%) strands, followed by ABM (14%), ICT (12.6%), and Cookery (9.7%). Additionally, the study revealed that most respondents previously (91.2%) came from public schools. This suggests that students from public schools were able to transfer to private institutions such as Arellano University – Pasig, possibly due to the Department of Education's educational assistance program.

2.(Research question no. 2 What is the perceived level of influence of the following factors in choosing a school strand among Grade 11 students?)

The study revealed that, among the factors examined, the personal factor was the most influential (4.03WM), indicating that students' strengths, abilities, and interests primarily determined strand selection. The career guidance factor ranked second (3.45WM), underscoring the significance of career guidance programs. Socioeconomic (3.19WM), family (3.10WM), and peer factors (2.78WM) were also influential, but only to a moderate extent. These findings suggest that, aside from career guidance, other external factors exert limited influence on respondents' strand choices.

3.(Research question no. 3 What is the perceived level of influence of the following factors in choosing a school strand among Grade 11 students?)

The study demonstrates that there is no significant difference in the overall perceived influence of various factors on respondents' strand selection when grouped by variables such as age, sex, strand, or previous school type, as indicated by computed p-values greater than 0.005. This finding suggests that the influence of personal, career guidance, family, peer, and socioeconomic factors is perceived similarly regardless of sex, age, strand, or past school type. However, further analysis reveals that when these factors are examined individually, specific interactions with certain variables emerge. For the career guidance factor, school type shows a significant difference, with a computed p-value of 0.001, indicating that public and private school respondents may experience career guidance differently. In the case of the personal factor, a significant difference is observed when respondents are grouped by age (p-value = 0.013), suggesting that age impacts decision-making. For the peer factor, a significant difference is found when respondents are grouped by sex (p-value = 0.012), implying that peer influence varies by sex. These findings indicate that while the overall perceived influence does not differ significantly across variables, certain factors interact differently with specific variables when considered independently.

4.(Research question no. 4 How do the participants describe the influence of personal, career guidance, family, peers and socioeconomic factors on their strand decision making?)

The qualitative data identified three primary themes among interview respondents: Career Alignment, Social Influence, and Institutional Gap. Career Alignment refers to selecting a strand as a direct means to achieve a specific professional goal. Social Influence denotes decisions shaped by family and peer input. Institutional Gap highlights the absence of early, specialized career orientation at the junior high school (JHS) level. From a systems theory perspective, there is an interaction between the individual system (career alignment), the social system (social influence), and a gap within the environmental-societal system (institutional gap) when respondents select their strand. Integrating both qualitative and quantitative findings enhances the robustness of the study's conclusions. The statistical results were both corroborated and challenged by respondents' qualitative explanations. Nonetheless, the findings remain consistent with the systems theory framework of career development, which posits that individuals' career decisions—in this context, the choice of senior high school strand—are influenced by multiple systems, including the individual, social, and environmental-societal systems.

5.(Research question no. 5 What program can be recommended based on the findings of the study?)

Based on the findings of the study, the “STRANDWISE: Enhanced Comprehensive Career Guidance Program” is recommended. This program aims to strengthen students' self-awareness, improve access to career guidance, and facilitate the integration of relevant social systems. Its primary objective is to assist junior high school students in making informed decisions regarding their strand selection. The program includes activities designed to enhance individual systems, such as self-awareness and identification of interests. It also incorporates social systems, including family and peer support, within the broader environmental and societal context. The program will be implemented from grade 7 to grade 10 to ensure that students are adequately prepared when selecting their strand.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions are formally drawn:

1.Students demonstrate considerable autonomy in selecting their academic strand, as evidenced by the significant influence of personal factors. This finding suggests that students align their strand choices with their interests, skills, and long-term career objectives, with minimal influence from external factors.. Within the Systems Theory Framework, this underscores the prominent role of the individual system. Social Cognitive Career Theory further accounts for this phenomenon by emphasizing the influence of self-efficacy and personal goals in career decision-making.

2. Career guidance plays a significant role in student decision-making regarding strand selection, highlighting the necessity of institutional support. Qualitative findings indicate a gap in current career guidance programs. Although influential, these programs require enhancement, particularly at the junior high school level where students must choose a strand upon graduation. As a component of the social system in STF, career guidance could more effectively shape student decisions if implemented consistently and at an earlier stage. According to Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), improved guidance can enrich students' career-related learning experiences, thereby strengthening their self-efficacy and outcome expectations.

3. The moderate influence of socioeconomic, family, and peer factors suggests that social and environmental systems serve primarily as supportive elements rather than as the main determinants in students' strand selection. This finding indicates that students' decisions are predominantly shaped by their individual systems. Such results align with the Systems Theory Framework's interaction of systems and the Social Cognitive Career Theory's perspective that contextual factors influence decisions indirectly by affecting cognitive processes.

4. The absence of significant differences in the overall perceived influence of the various factors suggests that these factors function similarly across different profiles. Nevertheless, notable variations exist, such as significant differences in the career guidance factor by school type, the personal factor by age, and the peer factor by sex. These findings support STF's concept of dynamic interaction and SCCT's recognition of contextual variability in learning experiences. Therefore, certain aspects of decision-making are context-sensitive and may vary depending on specific circumstances.

5. The qualitative findings indicate that students select their academic strand primarily based on their career goals, viewing it as a foundational step toward their intended professions. This decision-making process is influenced by guidance from their social networks, including family members and peers. Furthermore, the qualitative data highlight the presence of a career guidance program, although it is currently insufficient.

6. Comprehensively The data collected and analyzed supports the System Theory Framework, which posits that career decision-making results from the interaction among individual, social, and environmental-societal systems. Notably, the findings indicate that the individual system exerts the most significant influence on students, affecting both their choice of academic strand and their responses to other systemic influences.

Recommendations

1. To the Guidance Counselors:

Guidance counselors should implement a structured and progressive career guidance program, such as the proposed STRANDWISE: Enhanced Comprehensive Career

Guidance Program, beginning at the junior high school level (Grades 7–10). Implementation may include conducting annual career assessment activities, including interest and aptitude tests starting in Grade 7, and facilitating quarterly career exploration sessions that introduce various strands and career pathways. Additionally, guidance counselors are advised to provide individual or small-group counseling sessions for Grade 9 and 10 students prior to strand selection and ensuring that results of career assessments, such as the NCAE, are clearly explained and discussed with students. These measures directly address the identified gap in career guidance delivery and strengthen students' capacity to make informed decisions.

2.To the School Administrators:

It is recommended that school administrators institutionalize and enhance career guidance programs by ensuring sufficient support and resources. This should involve allocating specific time within the school calendar for career guidance activities, providing budgets for assessment tools and career-related events, and facilitating the professional development of guidance counselors through targeted training and seminars. Additionally, administrators should implement a system to monitor and evaluate the execution of career guidance programs to maintain consistency and effectiveness across all grade levels.

3.To the teachers:

Teachers are encouraged to integrate career awareness and self-reflection activities into classroom instruction. Such integration may involve assigning brief reflection tasks that link lesson content to potential career pathways, offering targeted feedback on students' strengths and skills, and collaborating with guidance counselors to identify students requiring additional support. These strategies can enhance students' self-awareness, which has been identified as a key factor influencing strand selection.

4.To the Parents:

Parents should assume an active and supportive role in their child's career decision-making process. This involvement may include attending career orientation programs and parent–teacher conferences, engaging in open discussions regarding the child's interests and future goals, and offering guidance without imposing decisions. Such participation fosters student development while promoting autonomy in selecting an academic strand.

5.To the students:

Students are encouraged to actively participate in career planning by engaging in career guidance programs, consulting with guidance counselors, teachers, and parents, and conducting self-reflection to better understand their interests, strengths, and goals. These actions enable students to make more informed and appropriate decisions regarding strand selection.

6.To future researchers:

Subsequent research should expand upon this study by examining additional variables, including academic performance, personality traits, and career readiness, while also

ensuring a more balanced sample across school types. Future investigations may also assess the effectiveness of the proposed career guidance program or replicate the study in diverse educational contexts to improve generalizability.

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