Career Path of Senior High School Graduates in the University of Northern Philippines

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ABSTRACT

Challenges in different paths await graduates as they continue their journey towards their goals in life. This study aimed to determine the career path of the 307 pioneer graduates of UNP-Senior High School. This study used the descriptive-correlational method of research. The profile of the graduates, career path, and the reasons of the career path were described. The relationship between the profile and the career path of graduates were, likewise, determined. The results showed that female senior high school graduates outnumbered males whose parents do not have professional work. Most of them were STEM graduates and were honor graduates who agreed that family and social media were the main sources of information. In addition, pursuing college education was the number one career path. Most of the students enrolled in college were aligned to their strands in the Senior High School. Students chose their career path because it was their personal preference. Furthermore, the profile of the graduates was not significantly related to their career path.

Keywords

Career Path, Reasons, Relationship, Senior High School Graduates, Alignment

Introduction

Challenges in different paths await graduates as they continue their journey towards their goals in life. Many believe that K-12, especially the Senior High School (SHS), helps graduates to be wiser in choosing the path they want to take. Whatever path it is, it is hoped that they are ready to face the real world and its challenges.

As a student finished Junior High School, Grade 10, the student must choose what track and strand to take. A student who wants to be an engineer, nurse or doctor, or any courses related to mathematics and sciences should take the academic track and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) as the strand. If one wants to be teacher, lawyer, policeman or other related courses to social sciences, Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) should be the appropriate strand under academic track. If one wishes to be an accountant or businessman someday, the student should take the Accountancy, Business and Management strand still under the academic track. For undecided ones, they may enroll in the General Academic Strand (GAS) of the academic track. Of course, if the student is a painter and artist, Arts and Design should be the track. If sports-minded

individuals, the Sports track awaits. If one wants to be a chef, electrician, technician, and the like, he should enroll in the Technical, Vocational, and Livelihood track.

In SHS, students take on core curriculum as well as specialized subjects in their preferred track. SHS aims to empower graduates for any of the different exit points: skills development (further technical-vocational training), entrepreneurship, employment, and higher education (college) [1].

After graduation, the learners decide on what to continue on the four exits envisioned for SHS graduates – higher education, entrepreneurship, employment, or middle-level skills development – so that they will become full-fledged contributors to social development and nation-building as envisioned by the Department of Education (DepEd).

The Department of Education says that the K to 12 Basic Education Program has equipped SHS graduates with values, knowledge, and skills that communities, businesses, and industries need. The K to 12 Program was crafted in close coordination with the Commission on Higher Education (CHEd), TESDA, and representatives of the business community. It aims to produce lifelong

learners who are locally and globally competitive and ready to pursue their desired path [2].

Specifically, DepEd Order 30 Series 2017, or Guidelines for Work Immersion, provides learners with access to industry partners' facilities and employment simulation, where they are given opportunities to apply their competencies, gain practical industrial skills and develop good work ethics and values relevant to pursuing further education and joining the world of work [3].

SHS creates opportunities for students, which may help them to be employed in the future. Standard requirements are applied to make sure graduates know enough to be hirable. Students can apply for TESDA Certificates of Competency (COCs) and National Certificates (NCs) to provide them with better work opportunities. Partnerships with different companies are offered for technical and vocational courses. They get work experience while studying, and companies can even hire them after graduation.

Entrepreneurship courses are included. Instead of being employed, they can choose to start their own business after graduating or choose to further their education by going to college [4]. Graduates of K to 12 only have a "small chance" of landing white-collar jobs due to competition with college graduates [5].

The first batch of the K-12 Program graduated in 2018. Many wonders if what exits they have gone. If college, then what courses did they take, and are these courses aligned to their tracks and strands in SHS?

This study determined the career path of the pioneer batch of Senior High School graduates of the University of Northern Philippines. The results of this study could be used to trace graduates of senior high school on what career path they have taken. It would also be a basis for orientation and seminars for senior high school teachers and students, and also to parents. Moreover, it can be a good basis for career advocacy activities for Senior High School graduates.

This study determined the career path of the pioneer graduates of UNP-Senior High School.

Specifically, it sought to determine 1) the profile of the graduates in terms of sex, parents' occupation, monthly family income, strand in senior high school, general average in senior high school, source of information, and career advocacy activities attended; 2) the career path of Senior High School graduates, 3) the reasons for SHS graduates in their career path; and 4) the relationship between the profile of the graduates and their career path.

Methods

Research Design

This study used the descriptive-correlational research design. The graduates were described in terms of their profile, career path, and the reasons for their career path. The relationship between the profile and the career path of graduates were also determined.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study covered around 50% of the pioneer graduates of Senior High School in the University of Northern Philippines during the School Year 2017-2018. The respondents consisted of 183 female and 124 male graduates.

Research Instrument

A questionnaire-checklist composed of the profile of the graduates, career path, and reasons for the career path was used to gather the data needed in the stud. The questionnaire was validated by experts in the field.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher first asked permission from the proper authorities for the conduct of the study. Consent forms were personally or electronically handed/sent to the respondents. The means of gathering data were personal, via e-mail, call, message, or any other form of media. The questionnaires were collected, tabulated, treated, and interpreted.

Data Analysis

The gathered data were described and analyzed through the use of frequency and percentage, rank, and bivariate correlation analysis.

Ethical Considerations

Research ethics was properly observed in the conduct of the study. Permission to gather data was asked from proper authorities. The researchers provided informed consent for the respondents assuring the anonymity of their names. There was no conflict of interest in the study. The researchers' interest was to determine the career path of senior high school graduates. Privacy and confidentiality were considered. Any records that were acquired were for the study only. There were passwords to laptops and cellphones used in gathering and storing data, and only the researchers had only access to it. Records were properly sealed and stored in a safe box. Records are to be destroyed/thrown a year after the study is completed. The terms and conditions of the study were put in the Informed Consent Form. The rights of the respondents were included in the form.

Results and Discussions

The profile of the graduates

The majority of the senior high school respondents are female (183 or 59.61%), with have parents who do not have professional works (161 or 52.44%). Sixty-one (19.87%) of the respondents' monthly family income is below Php 5,000 followed by the range Php5,001-Php10,000 (18.89%). Among the 307 respondents, 99 (32.25%) are graduates of the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) strand. In addition, the majority of the graduates have 90 and above general average in senior high school. No one has an average lower than 80.

Almost all the respondents (300 or 97.72%) agreed that the family is the number one human source of information, followed by friends (296 or 96.42%). On the other hand, neighbors (113 or 36.81%) are perceived as the least human source of information. Social media (302 or 98.37%) is seen as the most used non-human source of information. It is followed by the internet (286 or 93.16%) and cellphone (278 or 90.55%). Almost all (306 or 99.67%) attended the senior high school orientation. More students attended the exit interviews (274 or 89.25%) than the enrolment interview (252 or 82.08%).

The career path of Senior High School graduates

The career path of senior high school graduates is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Career Path of Senior High School Graduates

Career Path	f	%
College	302	98.37
Skills Development	2	0.65
Business	1	0.33
Stopped Schooling	2	0.65
Total	307	100.00

There were 302 (98.37%) of the respondents who choose college as their career path. There are two in the TVL track who want to pursue skills development; one pursues business while two stopped schooling. No one chooses to work as a career path. This implies that regardless of the four exits as higher education, entrepreneurship, employment, or middle-level skills development pursuing college/higher education is the top priority of the respondents.

The findings conform to the study of Marces, Aling, and Maravilla [6] that the number one curriculum exit path of the senior high school graduates is higher education/college. Mapa [7] also claimed that almost all senior high school students plan to enter college. Around half of the senior high school graduates would proceed to college [8]. Bacaling [9] found out that the majority of the senior high school graduates enrolled in college/university, followed by finding a job and enrolled in a vocational school.

Moreover, 222 (73.51%) of the respondents have enrolled in courses related or aligned to their strands in senior high school, and only 80 (26.49%) did not take related courses to their strands. This implies that many of them want to pursue what they took in senior high school, and they are sure of what course to take in college. It

also denotes that their chosen strands in senior high school help them choose their current preferential course in college.

This supports the study of Santos, Blas, Panganiban, Reyes, & Sayo [10] that most of the pioneer SHS graduates of Bulacan State University Laboratory High School are aligned to their current course.

The Policy on the Admission of Senior High School Graduates to the Higher Education Institutions Effective Academic Year 2018-2019, stated that all senior high school graduates beginning Academic Year 2017-2018 are eligible to enter college regardless of the track or strand took in the Senior High School [11].
Also, students who enrolled in courses not related to their strands in senior high school should take "bridging programs" to connect the gap between the previous strand and course. The bridging program in the Philippines is more like a set of remedial courses that are given only over a few weeks [12].

The reasons for SHS graduates in the career path

Table 2 presents the reasons for senior high school graduates in choosing their career paths.

Table 2. Reasons for Senior High School Graduates in Choosing the Career

Reasons for the Career Path	f	%	Rank
Personal Preference	279	90.88	1
Parents' Preference	76	24.76	2
Financial Problem	8	2.61	6
Family Problem	1	0.33	10.5
Did not pass College Admission Exam	11	3.58	5
Did not meet the required rate of admission for the course	43	14.01	3
Practicality	33	10.75	4
Poor support system from family and relatives	7	2.28	7
Peer pressure	3	0.98	8
Laziness	2	0.65	9
Others (go to mission)	1	0.33	10.5

The number one reason for the graduates in choosing their career path is personal preference (279 or 90.88%). Parents' preference (76 or 24.76%) ranked second as the reason for choosing

the career path. This implies that graduates, supported by their parents, are decided to follow their own choice in taking their courses.

Also, many of the respondents changed their preferred courses due to not passing the College Admission Exam or not meeting the required rate of admission for the course. This implies that students did not take related courses to their strands because of not meeting the required rate of admission for the preferred course.

Two respondents stopped schooling due to going to the mission (ABM) and financial problems (Caregiving). A graduate of ABM pursued business particularly online business due to practicality. Two (Automotive and Cookery graduates) pursued skills development because of practicality and laziness of going to college.

Holland's Theory of Vocational Types focuses on personality types as the main factor in career choice and development that the respondents believed that a person's work satisfaction is linked to similarities between their personality and job environment [13].

The result is supported by Limjuco [14] that students are likely to consider their personality in choosing their career choice. Also, career choice is influenced by parents who play a critical role in directing their children. Penedilla and Rosaldo [15] also agreed that senior high school students' choice of career and a college degree are mostly personal choices. Senior high school graduates chose their course according to their interest in their future profession in connection to their previous senior high school strands [10].

Relationship between the profile of the graduates and their career path

The significance of the relationship between the profile and career path of senior high school graduates is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Correlation Coefficients between the Profile and Career Path of the Graduates

Profile of the Graduates	Career Path (r)	r-prob
Sex	.098	.087

Parents Occupation	.035	.544
Monthly Family Income	.050	.385
Strand	-.016	.783
Preferred Course	.037	.513
General Average in SHS	-.002	.970
Human Sources	-.016	.781
Non-human Sources	.012	.833
Career Guidance Activities Attended	-.004	.950

The profile of the graduates is not significantly related to the career path chosen by the graduates. This implies that the profile of the respondents do not have a bearing on their career path.

A study on factors affecting the choice of career [16] found out that there is no significant relationship between the profile of students, such as parents' occupation and sex, to their choice of career. Also, the profile of students like parents' occupation, monthly family income, and general average grades are not significantly related to their career preference [17].

Conclusion

The study concluded that 1) majority of the senior high school graduates are female with parents who do not have professional work, whose monthly family income is below Php 5,000, and who are family and social media-informed; 2) regardless of work and business, pursuing a college education is the number one career path, and most of the graduates enrolled in courses aligned to their strands in senior high school; 3) senior high school graduates are independent enough to choose their personal preferences for career paths; and 4) the career path of senior high school graduates is not influenced by their profile.

Acknowledgement

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