

Students' Career Choices: A Guide For Senior High School Preparation

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Abstract

This study was conducted to determine what Senior High School (SHS) track and strands Adventist University of the Philippines (AUP) should offer starting school year 2016-2017 based on the career choices of 160 AUP Academy grades 7 to 9 students. DepEd mandates four tracks in SHS under the K+12 program, namely: Academic, Sports, Arts and Design, and Technical-Vocational (Tech-Voc)- Livelihood tracks. For each track, specialization strands are offered. Descriptive statistics were used. Variables on profile, awareness of track offering and interpersonal, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation were assessed. Results showed that 98% of the respondents would proceed to SHS. A total of 49% would pursue courses under the academic track while 13% would take sports, 8% will take the arts and design track, while 3% will take the track on technical-vocational and livelihood. A total of 95% were planning to still enroll in AUP for collegiate degrees. The researchers recommend that AUP prepare and enhance facilities for the academic track, particularly in the sciences, engineering, and business strands. It should also prepare programs and facilities in sports and arts, but also device strategies to make other strands attractive. Likewise, AUP should maintain its Adventist Christian standards, while parents continue to support their children's career choices.

Key words: Assessment, Career Choices, Junior High School, K-12 Program, Senior High School, Strands, Tracks

I. INTRODUCTION

School years 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 is a turning point in the educational system of the Philippines. This is because of the addition of the 2-year senior high school level which comprise grades 11 and 12 to fully implement the final phase of DepEd's K-12 program, also known as RA 10533 or the Basic Education Act all throughout the country. The Philippine government declared the start of a fundamental overhaul of the country's educational system under a policy called K-12 Program in 2012 (Okabe, 2013). The senior high school which is an upper secondary education program consists of a common core curriculum with four tracks namely: Academic, TechnicalVocational, (Tech-Voc), Livelihood, Sports, and Arts. Each of the tracks has specialization strands which students with the help of their parents and guidance counselors can choose from.

According to SAMEO INNOTECH (2012), the learning goal in the new "K to 12"

curriculum is the acquisition of the following 21st century skills; 1) learning and innovation skills, 2) IT and media skills, 3) effective communication skills, and 4) life and career skills. The "K to 12" Program aimed at promoting holistic skill development leading to employment and higher education.

A comparative data on the length of basic education and pre-university education in Asia was explained in the article "Additional Years in the Philippine Basic Education" by SEAMEO- INNOTECH (2010). It showed that the Philippine education system provides only 10 years for the basic education cycle and as preparatory education for the collegiate level while most of the countries worldwide have either 11 or 12 years of basic education. The basic education system in the Philippines became a disadvantage for Filipino professionals who desired to work abroad and students who desired to study outside the Philippines (Cabansag, 2014)

For many years the present curriculum has

led parents to spend so much money and resources for education yet many students drop out of school or end up jobless after graduation. Philippine economy has been suffering over the years partly due to its idle and jobless citizens brought about by this job mismatch. According to Nicholas Antonio T. Mapa, associate economist at the Bank of the Philippine Islands, despite robust economic growth, unemployment among college graduates was expected to stay high due to a mismatch between the degrees completed and the jobs that were available.

To avoid mismatch, CHED has consistently encouraged incoming freshmen to enroll in what it regarded were “in-demand” courses. According to CHED, for academic years 2014-2015 to 2017-2018 the ‘in-demand’ courses are agriculture, engineering, science and math, information technology, teacher education and health sciences (Obang, 2014). The new curriculum intends to alleviate the economic status of the country by providing better job opportunities and wider options for the graduates, as well as to help students choose which programs are relevant to their interests and career choices. With the new educational reform in place, SDA schools, despite their sectarian status, should provide a common curriculum guide or model to operate and comply with the Philippine Government’s vision and objectives in implementing the Senior High School program, without compromising the tenets of the church; for as a traditional SDA adage would say, “We should be the head and not the tail.” The first phase of this study is a survey of the career choices of AUP Academy students.

Objectives of the study The study seeks to determine the answers to the following:

1. Percent of the respondents who will proceed to senior high school.
2. Percentages of the respondents that will choose the Academic, Sports, Arts and Design, and the Technology-Vocational, Livelihood Tracks.
3. Percentage of the respondents who will study in AUP.
4. Reasons why the respondents will study in AUP?
5. The necessary preparations for the senior high school track/strand offerings based on career choices of the learners?

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the *curriculum theory* (CT) which is an academic discipline devoted to examining and shaping educational curricula. The interpretation of CT in this context is the lifelong learning path an individual takes. MacDonald (1971) states that CT is fundamentally concerned with values, the historical analysis of curriculum, ways of viewing current educational curriculum and policy decisions, and theorizing about the curricula of the future. He further cited Jerome Bruner who said that curriculum theory also depends on a multiplicity of factors: the situation, the human goals, the hypothesizing, and the testing. It is actually intelligence operating in the real world. An assessment of students’ interests among the four tracks offered in the senior high school level, the school facilities, personnel, and programs, values or philosophies that are essential to the school, the community support groups will all contribute to the lifelong learning of the individual and the development of the community towards nation building in the real world. Findings on the study of junior high school career choices will help determine the kind types of curriculum senior high schools should prepare. *Choice theory* by William Glasser plays a major role in this study. According to Glasser as cited in Charles (2008), the fundamental premises of the school are: that all people are curious by nature; that the most efficient, long-lasting, and profound learning takes place when started and pursued by the learner; that all people are creative if they are allowed to develop their unique talents; that age-mixing among students promotes growth in all members of the group; and that freedom is essential to the development of personal responsibility. This is why the school should take the student’s career choices seriously and a basis for offering specialized courses. In the classroom, mentors “help students

envision a quality existence in school and plan the choices that lead to it.

II. METHODS Research Design

Descriptive survey was used in the study in which the goal of the is to describe a single variable or when multiple variables are involved, to obtain separate description for each variable (Gravetter & Forsano, 2003).

Population and Sampling

Purposive sampling was used since the study involves students in all grade seven, eight and nine levels enrolled in AUP Academy during the school year 2014-2015. They are the first three batches that will experience senior high school or grades 11 and 12 starting school year 2016-2017. AUP Academy has been chosen by the researchers since it has the largest enrollment among

Seventh-day Adventist high schools in North Philippines.

Respondents of the Study

Among the 160 respondents, 80 or 50% of them are Grade 9 students, the first batch of students under the K to 12 Curriculum, 31% or 49 were Grade 8 and the rest are Grade 7 students. Male respondents are 83 or 52% and the 48% or 77 are female.

III. RESULTS

Respondents Who Will Proceed to Senior High School Results of the study shows that most of the respondents (98%) are planning to enroll in Senior High School and the rest (2%) are still undecided if they will pursue their studies.

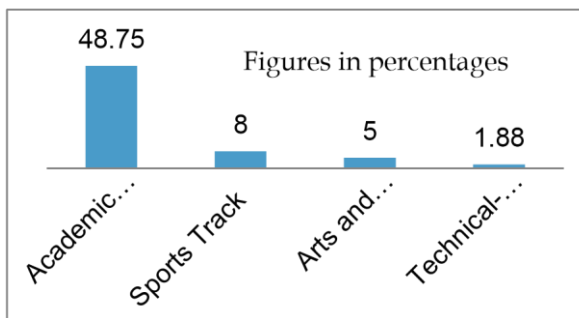


Figure 1. Respondents' Career Choice/Track

Respondents' School Choice

Among the 160 respondents, 152 or 95% are planning to enroll in AUP, 5 or 3% will go to public or government operated schools and the rest will enroll in other private schools.

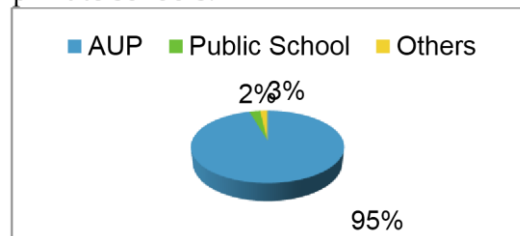


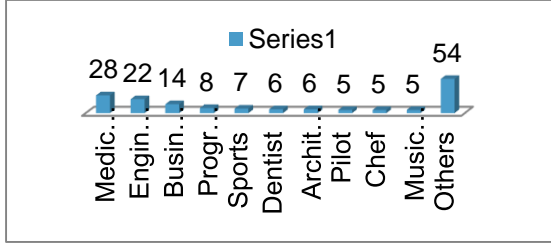
Figure 3. Respondents' School

Most of the respondents (78 or 48.75%) are planning to enroll in Academic Track; Eight percent (13 or 8%) are in Sports Track like safety and first aid, fundamentals of coaching, fitness, sports and recreation leadership; Five percent (8 or 5%) will enroll in Arts and Design Track, while 3 or 1.88 % will enroll in Tech-Voc, Livelihood track.

	Freq	Percent
Christian/Adventist school	48	30
Parent's choice/decision	21	13
Location/near to their home	18	11
School Environment	29	18
School curriculum	12	8
Good/qualified teachers	15	9

Figure 2. Academic Track Strands

After senior high school twenty-eight or 17.5% of the total respondents are dreaming of being in medical field, 22 or 13.85 want to be engineers, 14 or 8.8% will be in business, eight or 5 % want to be a programmer or computer technician, some respondents want to be in sports, to be dentist, architect, pilot, chef, musician and other careers.



Respondents' School Choice

Among the 160 respondents, 152 or 95% are planning to enroll in AUP, 5 or 3 % will go to public or government operated schools and the rest will enroll in other private schools.

Reasons for Enrolling at AUP

Table 1 presents some of the reasons why the respondents are still planning to enroll in AUP. Around 48 or 30% still want to study in AUP because this is an Adventist and Christian school and they want the culture of the school. Twentyone (21 or 13%) perceived that it was their parents' choice. Other reasons why the respondents are still planning to enroll in AUP are because of the school's location, environment, curriculum and good and qualified teachers.

Table 1
Reasons for enrolling at AUP

IV. DISCUSSION

The greatest strength of the K-12 Program is that graduates can already be employed especially if they have nothing to spend for college. This is because of the in-depth specialization in the courses of senior high school and their age which makes them qualified for work not only in the Philippines but in other countries as well since the credentials are recognized worldwide. This may as well solve the problem of unemployment in the country; according to the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), only 40% of over 500,000 graduates every year become employed one year after finishing college, and 18% of all unemployed Filipinos are college graduates. The National Statistics Office said that 21.3% of all unemployed Filipinos are new graduates (Silverio, July 2014). The result of this study was trying to prove that education is important as that 98% of the respondents are planning to enroll in Senior High and most of the respondents (78 or 48.75%) are planning to enroll in Academic Track.

Another interesting result from these students was that they will still enroll at AUP for the reason that this is an Adventist and Christian school. As what James, Baldwin, & McInnis (1999) found in their study that the field of study preference , courses, and institutional reputation of the universities has been more important factor for choosing a schools among college students. AUP is becoming well known because of the excellent performance of graduates and the university as a whole

Parent's choice is a number one reason for choosing a career according to the respondents of this study. Choosing a career is usually considered a major turning point in a student life. Research suggests that family, school, community, and social and economic factors are likely to influence students' career decision (Ferry, 2006). Of these factors, parents have the greatest influence on which career they choose (Kniveton, 2004). According to Olamide & Olawaiye (2013, p.33), "how the young people of today meet the problems of tomorrow will depend upon the amount of success they make in planning for that tomorrow". Planning for the children's brighter tomorrow is primarily the responsibilities of the parents, teachers and school counselor.

Other influences for career choice among students are accessibility because the school is near their homes, and qualified teachers.

Education is universally recognized as the answer to any socio-economic related problems of the world. Everybody look up to education to provide solution for poverty, ignorance, drought, excessive rainfall, mental deficiency, joblessness, bad government, poor communication system, hunger and inadequate shelter among other things. So, every individual would aspire for higher quality of education. This may be attributed to the result of this study that most of the respondents would proceed to senior high school choosing the academic track. Revealed in this study was the specific academic track that respondents are planning to pursue. Some prefer to enroll in the medical field (17.5%), in Engineering (13.85 %), business (8%), computer programming or technician (5%), sports, dentistry, architect, pilot, chef, music and other careers.

V. CONCLUSION

The researchers conclude that majority of the students will enroll in senior high school and that the majority priority choice of the students is the Academic track, particularly in the field of medicine and engineering under the STEM strand and business under the ABM stand, and the Tech-Voc Livelihood track particularly the computer strand; but there are also a number who choose to take other academic strands and those under the

specialized tracks of Sports, Arts and Design, and Tech-voc/Livelihood. The motivational factors that influenced the choices of the respondents are the Christian education, environment, parents' choice, school location, qualification of teachers, and school curriculum. Christian education and environment were the two main reasons for enrolling at AUP.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

To School Administrators: To enhance facilities and programs in the field of medicine, engineering, business, and computer and to find creative means to make the curriculum of other courses attractive to learners and parents, courses such as education, theology, psychology, sports, arts, and tech- voc/livelihood. *To guidance counselors:* To assist students in their career choices so that even as early as grade 7, they already have something in mind.

To classroom teachers: To enhance classroom instruction and content on the priority courses.

To the parents: To continue supporting the child's career choices.

To the student: To find ways and means to acquire the maximum knowledge and skills they need in their chosen field of specialization.

To faculty and staff: To continue and strengthen Adventist Christian values and relationships to sustain an Adventist Christian environment for the students. Ellen G. White (2005), stated in the story of Patriarchs and Prophets, that the student should be led to see God even in the sciences and in all the works of creation. Teachers should copy the example of the Great Teacher, who from the familiar scenes of nature drew illustrations that simplified His teachings and impressed them more deeply upon the minds of His hearers. The birds caroling in the leafy branches, the flowers of the valley, the lofty trees, the fruitful lands, the springing grain, the barren soil, the setting sun gilding the heavens with its golden beams— all served as means of instruction. He connected the visible works of the Creator with the words of life which He spoke, that whenever these objects should be presented to the eyes of His hearers, their thoughts might revert to the

lessons of truth He had linked with them. *To future researchers*: To conduct a similar study in other SDA schools that will implement senior high school; and an assessment of other essential variables.

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