"Unsay Akong Pili-On?": The Involvement of Parents in The Career Choice of Grade 12 Students Amid Pandemic Home Learning

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Abstract — This study has demonstrated the importance of role models, comprehensive career information, and career interests and choices, in the development of career of grade 12 students of Sirawan National High School, Toril, Davao City. It can thus be concluded that events which are directed at high school learners will be beneficial to them. Critically, career talks, career advising, and career counseling are more effective when conducted with professionals in the field sharing their journeys, since that encourages learners to select and pursue similar career paths. The findings in this study also point to the need for teachers of careers advising to ensure enough time are included in the career advising so learners do not suffer from mental fatigue and confusion as well as gathering input from learners on the careers they would like to learn about. However, when colleting input from learners, teachers must also include lesser-known careers in their schedules to broaden learners' information and knowledge on these careers. This study's findings can be beneficial to the students because it indicates the importance of stakeholder relationships in enhancing career-related learning and development. Additionally, the education department and especially the provincial school would benefit from creating relationships with local and national businesses and organizations for the purpose of providing career talks to learners.

Keywords — Grade 12 students, career choices, strong influence, experience, planning

I. Introduction

The concept of career guidance can be understood by its simplest definition of helping people choose work in which they will be happy and content, where a person's aptitude, interests and personality are required (Vaughan, 1970). Similarly, Drummond and Ryan (1995), define career guidance as activities that are used to work with people who are exploring careers, planning for, and making decisions about their careers in relation to their environments. Career guidance definition can even be taken a step further and stated that it involves the idea of guiding an individual towards a career that will be almost completely absorbing, to a life that will be fulfilled by work. The OECD, the European Commission, and the World Bank, provide the following much quoted definition:

Career guidance refers to services and activities intended to assist individuals, of any age and at any point throughout their lives, to make educational, training, and occupational choices

and to manage their careers. Such services may be found in schools, universities, and colleges, in training institutions, in public employment services, in the workplace, in the voluntary or community sector and in the private sector. The activities may take place on an individual or group basis and may be face-to-face or at a distance (including help lines and web-based services). They include career information provision (in print, ICT-based and other forms), assessment and self-assessment tools, counselling interviews, career education programs (to help individuals develop their self-awareness, opportunity awareness, and career management skills), taster programs (to sample options before choosing them), work search programs, and transition services (OECD, 2004).

When an individual chooses a career, we assume that the person is making a decision as important as choosing life-long friends, a spouse, whether to have children or not, or even a way of living (Drummond & Ryan, 1995). The choice of a career remains one of the most difficult decisions that the late adolescent will have to make in his or her lifetime (Bernard-Phera, 2000). Miles (2008) highlights that it is a process that requires a number of cognitive and behavioral activities that can be utilized for obtaining information about the persons themselves and the environment. Moreover, a meaningful and productive career is the single most effective psychological way to attain and maintain contact with reality and provides an economic means to effect significant social change (Crites, 1981).

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 county'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 21sth 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).

Batches of the K to 12 Curriculum program has already graduated, but many senior high school students were still hesitant and worried if they will be able to land a job, establish a business of their own, proceed to college or take higher vocational course. Although the DepEd has already prepared the students to decide the possible career exits they will have through the Career Guidance Program (DO 41, s. 2015), still uncertainty exist to the minds of the Grade 12 students. To address these concerns and worries of the Grade 12 graduating students, this research is conducted by the researcher.

This study focuses on Sirawan National High School, its grade 12 students, the experiences of these students in making their career choices, the influences in their career choices, and their recommendations to improve their career choices. Interviews will be used to collect the narratives of these students.

The purpose of this qualitative, narrative study was to explore and describe the experiences of career choice and career guidance for Grade 12 learners at a public secondary school in Sirawan National High School, Sirawan, Toril, Davao City.

Individuals undergo several stages of career development. In their career development process, several factors play a vital role in determining one's career path. Super (1990) introduced the archway model recognizing social learning experiences, personality development, needs, values, and abilities as factors influencing career development. Similarly, Lent et al. (1994) developed the social cognitive career theory (SCCT), defining three overlapping models in which one was aimed at explaining the career choice process (choice model). This model noted interest, learning experiences, values, and environmental factors as constructs affecting career development.

Though theories in career development have already been established, only a few studies relate these theories to the career track choice of individuals at the early stage of their career development. Particularly in the Philippine context, factors associated with career track choice are still understudied. Hence, this study will seek to explore factors related to the career track choice of SHS students. Specifically, six major factors were hypothesized to influence the career track choice.

Socio-demographic factors such as gender, age, and socioeconomic status are among the factors that influence the career track choice. In the study by Kim (2011), men and women may differ in their ways of thinking when making a choice; men are more liberal and progressive, while women engage more in hierarchical thinking. Age – alongside gender – is a significant predictor, especially in the students' perceived career anchors (Schein 1978). Socio economic status, such as the family's monthly income and parents' educational attainment and occupation, motivates students' career choices (Eccles 2009; Wang & Degol 2013).

If financial resources are limited, students tend to choose a career requiring a short education period (Ngesi, 2003). Moreover, students with lower family income resort to career decisions requiring minimal investments but resulting in an immediate reward. Students belonging to the high-income class, on the other hand, tend to seek careers needing relatively bigger investments but with better returns (Sanz et al. 2007).

Appropriate career choice does not only impact a person's life but society in general. Several studies about K to 12 have been published in recent years. In the Philippines, studies were mainly on the assessment of the program and its challenges. Few studies have been published about factors affecting career track choice. An investigation of this aspect may be useful in facilitating the success of this educational reform. In this study, the factors that might be associated with the career track choice of Grade 11 students and the extent of influence of some factors in deciding which track to pursue were examined.

The K to 12 Program covers Kindergarten and 12 years of basic education (six years of primary education, four years of Junior High School, and two years of Senior High School [SHS]) to provide sufficient time for mastery of concepts and skills, develop lifelong learners, and prepare graduates for tertiary education, middle-level skills development, employment, and entrepreneur ship.

Each student in Senior High School can choose among three tracks: Academic; Technical-Vocational-Livelihood; and Sports and Arts. The Academic track includes three strands: Accountancy, Business Management (ABM); Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS); and Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM). Students undergo immersion, which may Include earn-while-you-learn opportunities, to provide them relevant exposure and actual experience in their chosen track (Official Gazette, 2012).

Filipinos are known to be competitive in the international community. However, our current education system hinders us from becoming even more competitive. Starting in the 2012-2013 school year, the education system of the Philippines was enhanced from the ten years of basic education to a 12-year program through an initiative called the K-12 Education Plan sponsored by the Department of Education (Hub Pages Inc. 2016).

The K-12 program offers a decongested 12-year program that gives students sufficient time to master skills and absorb basic competencies. The K-12 program accelerates mutual recognition of Filipino graduates and professionals in other countries (K-12 Philippines, 2015).

Super's (1980) Life-Career Rainbow suggests that when a person makes a transition from career growth and exploration stages to establishment and maintenance stages, his or her roles of child and student are transformed into that of worker and home worker, with the roles of leisurite and citizen crossing over all stages. Thus, career transitions may happen as the person needs to move on to the next phase of his or her life. Super's (1980) theory suggests that career maturity is reached gradually as an individual progress through a number of life stages. The concept of career

maturity assumes that children pass gradually from an immature view of careers towards an adult appreciation, in keeping with the evolution of their personalities from childhood towards career maturity (Super, 1957). This continuous, life-long process of career guidance can be seen as an individual's career development, beginning early in life, and proceeding along a curve until late in life (Super, 1957). Career development enables individuals to convey who they are and how they want to be perceived in their career choices; it also enables implementation of the self-concept (Super, 1988). This does not only include career aspects but takes note that an individual's ability to make or reach career decisions is affected by his/her background as a whole (Super, 1988).

The Life-Career Rainbow builds on key assumptions which are applicable to this study and stated as learners which are the following: Differ in their self-characteristics and self-concepts; Each occupation requires specific traits but is flexible to allow differences; Their respective self-characteristics make them eligible for a number if occupations; Self-concepts evolve over time; and making choice and adjustment are continuous over time.

II. Methodology

To make sense of the experiences and social situations of the learners in their real world and natural setting (Terre Blanche, et al., 2006), narratives and stories were gathered and analyzed through thematic inquiry methods (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). The thematic approach used in this research provides descriptive knowledge which must be understood in context.

The current study took place at a public national high school in an urban area just outside the capital city of Davao. Davao is a city in the southern part of Mindanao, Philippines. Davao City is one of the country's metropolitan cities. Sirawan is a locality and a pert of Toril, a southern part of Davao City. The school is specifically located in the district of Toril where most of the learners reside.

The study focused on Grade 12 learners since they are in a transition period where they have to make decisions about whether they want to further their studies or go into the world of work. The expected average age of the learners is 17 to 18 years. The majority of the learners come from middle-income families.

The study used purposive sampling which is commonly used in qualitative studies. The study has ten (10) participants. Other inclusion criteria for the participants are: currently enrolled as grade 12 in the selected school; of either sex; and willing to participate in the study.

In order to identify case stories of the experiences of career choices for Grade 12 learners, interviews were conducted with ten (10) learners (five boys and five girls). The research approach allowed learners to tell their own unique stories. The reason for this smaller group was to allow all learners to participate and to allow the researcher to capture a variety of stories on the research topic. Both male and female learners were included in the research population to ensure that the

findings reflected the gender diversity at the school. The method of this study and the selection of the cases were designed to ensure that the learners met certain criteria in order to participate in the study.

In order to analyze the learners' stories (group interviews and narrative essays), I used a narrative framework that serves as a screen through which the stories of the learners may be examined. I used the theoretical writings of Mishler (1986, 1999), and Connelly and Clandinin (1990, 2000) to analyze the learners' words into something meaningful. The stories of the learners' experiences are not works of art, rather they reflect "a kind of life story" which enabled me to study "how humans make meaning of experience by endlessly telling and retelling stories about themselves" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990).

III. Results and Discussion

Experiences of learners in making their career choices

Five themes which emerged from the data on the benefits of career choices are related to whether *the learners felt motivated, the information they gained on different careers, how to choose a career; time in choosing a career; and unmet expectations.*

Strong influences in making the learners' career choices

There are strong influences in the learners' career choices. Based on their narratives and comments, the following influences were identified: *parents' desire or parental pressure; peer persuasion; past performance; potential of learners: placements; personality driven; and affordability.*

Influence 1. Parents' Desire/Parental Pressure. Choosing a career just to live up to the parents' expectation is the most common decision taking by students at an early stage, which they tend to regret later.

Influence 2. Peer Persuasion. This is the easiest way of getting away from taking self-decision. Most of the students want to follow the crowd to get to their destination. 'Follow your friends' is the most trending exercise visible during the selection of a university/college. Majority choice is considered the best choice. This mindset has increased the count in the mediocre group where students fail to succeed in their career and just keep on it with an average performance.

*Influence 3. Past Performance. T*his is in fact the most unjustified and distorted basis of analyzing one's performance and interest area. We are not only churned in an old education system of rote learning, but we believe in the numbers to prove our caliber. This practice of determining one's interest field based on one-time exam performance has often led to a wrong career decision.

Influence 4. Potential of Learner. Potential of a student can be legitimate criterion for choosing a career. Very few are able to identify their potential and choose their subject of knowledge based on it. A career selected on the basis of one's potential has greater prospect of assuring success.

Influence 5. Placements. We wish to choose a profession that can provide for our bread and butter. Placement opportunities in a particular school are thus considered most important factor for the students when they harp about their career choice. Good placement options are an important motivation driver for students in their career planning.

Influence 6. Personality Driven. Most of the people choose their interest field on the basis of their personality and character. It can be the other way around also, when a career chooses them based on their personality. Here personality includes not only the outward presentation of a student but the perception he/she holds about society. A good communicator, who has good command on his/her language skills, is more inclined towards a mass communication stream. Similarly, a good leader who has the capacity to influence masses chooses a management field. Personality traits always help in deciding a good career, for it is easy to hone the skills we already acquire.

Influence 7. Affordability. This is the basic and the most essential criterion for most of them who set out to make their career. Affordability determines the purchasing power of individuals who dares to dream. One, who can afford it, can only receive the ace quality training, knowledge, and plum opportunities. Most of the students neglect their interest and choose a career that fits their pocket well.

Learners' recommendations to improve career choices in high school

Recommendation 1. Students' career success can be best attained if the right course suited to their personality, ability and intellect serves as their guide in choosing the course they are to take in college.

Recommendation 2. Collaborative effort of the school administrations, guidance counselor and parents should also be made to come up with better career plan for every individual student.

Recommendation 3. Further study on the basis of students' choice of their preferred course in college should be made using other factors aside from the ones used in the study as well as the course taken by students in college and its relationship to the preferred course and the suited careers for students.

Recommendation 4. When students enter ninth grade, the school counseling and career guidance standards state that students should be able to assess the relationship between aptitudes and interests to develop a six-year academic plan, formulate long term educational and career goals, and correlate courses of study to long-term goals.

Discussion

Over any one person's lifespan, students will face many challenges that can alter the trajectory of their life and career. Since there are many interrelated factors affecting their trajectory, it is clear that students need help to see more clearly their path in life.

Career counseling can help students better deal with these challenges in order to shine the light on a new pathway forward. In fact, the many theories utilized by career counselors may help to explain the development of a student in order to assist them in shaping or reshaping his or her course in life.

A strong support system of family, friends, and mentors is the essential element in constructing a successful life. Clearly, most theories recognize that the social environment as an important aspect of development. For this reason, the greatest value of career counseling is found in helping students without the supportive social and familial environment.

Helping an individual to gain or regain a perspective of their self-concept is the essential element offered by any of the career assessments available. Achieving a healthy self-concept can lead to greater self-efficacy for success over a lifespan to become a self-actualized individual.

IV. Conclusion

Given the lack of career role models, many learners in disadvantaged communities are faced with difficult issues such as dropping out of school, teenage pregnancy, or hopelessness which unattended can lead to suicide (Buthelezi, Alexander & Seabi, 2009). Many abandon their education or stop pursuing a career due to low self-efficacy.

Inviting working professionals to discuss their careers is beneficial for learners, because research shows that the latter are more prone to believe the first-hand information they receive about varied occupations (Stanley J, Mann A. 2014).

Career interests and choices are partly dependent on self-efficacy expectations, while learners' expectations are developed if they have access to sources that reinforce their self-efficacy expectations (Falco & Summers, 2019).

There is a need for sufficient time in choosing career. This ensures that learners remain comfortable throughout the choosing and are able to retain information being shared and do not experience information overload (Maddox, 2019; Morton, 2016).

Mothers were regarded as the most significant family member that impacted positively on students' career choices (Bojuwoye & Mbanjwa, 2006). Fathers (18.75%) were the second most significant individual, followed by siblings or guardians (16.25%) (Bojuwoye & Mbanjwa, 2006).

Peers influence students' career choices. This is consistent with Bandura's social cognitive theory which purports that peers are sources of social learning as they model and sanction styles of conduct and serve as comparative references for appraisal and validation of personal efficacy (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). Friends and peers influence students' choices of careers. Career guidance teachers in this study revealed that both male and female students were likely to be influenced by peers in choosing careers. There was no gender segregation on the influence of peers. In other words, both boys and girls were equally influenced by peers in their choice of careers.

The findings of the present study are parallel to the idea that career technical education or an elective course are perceived positively by school counselors. The implementation of elective courses as which is an integration of academics to career focused courses is important. Furthermore, exam results can be used as a basis in the elective subject to be taken by the students in preparation for their college degree.

Students are in a way related to the course suited to them, but it does not necessarily mean that all of the students' preferred courses are suited to their skills and abilities. Furthermore, students only agree that their preference of course is a reflection of their talent. Although suited course is measured based on the interest and personality of the students, other criteria relevant in choosing a career such as individuals' aptitude and intellectual abilities are equally of great importance.

Most of the people choose their interest field on the basis of their personality and character. It can be the other way around also when a career chooses them based on their personality. Here personality includes not only the outward presentation of a student but the perception he/she holds about society. A good communicator, who has good command on his/her language skills, is more inclined towards a mass communication stream. Similarly, a good leader who has the capacity to influence masses chooses a management field. Personality traits always help in deciding a good career, for it is easy to hone the skills we already acquire.
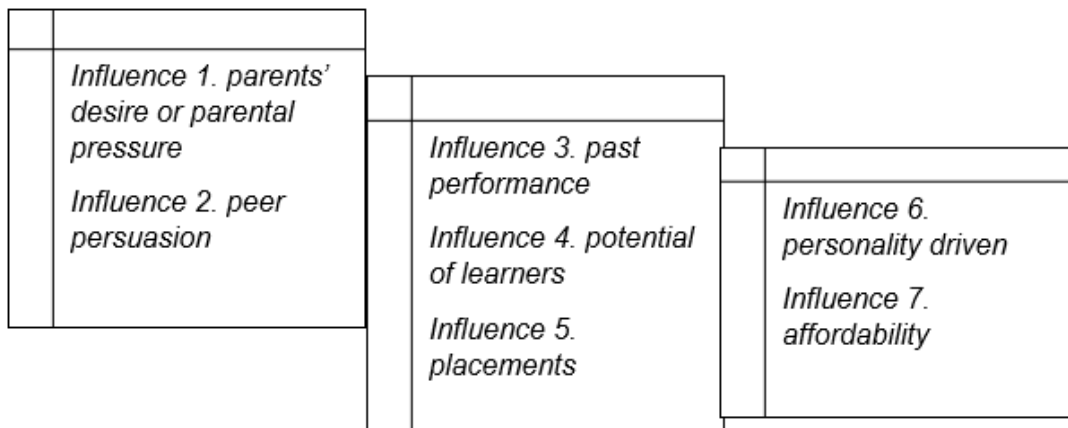
The findings of the present study do not support the situation that the course preference of Filipinos is mostly affected and influenced by the decision of their parents and family. Reasons may vary depending on the family orientation of the study.

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Appendix

Influence 1. parents' desire or parental pressure	Influence 3. past performance	Influence 6. personality driven
Influence 2. peer persuasion	Influence 4. potential of learners	Influence 7. affordability
	Influence 5. placements	

Strong influences in making the learners' career choices

AUTHOR'S PROFILE

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She is an experienced teacher at a private school, Davao Central College for 7 years. Sheis currently connected at the Department of Education, handling Junior high and Senior High Learners.

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In addition to her teaching responsibilities, Carmelita is dedicated and devoted to nurturing young minds. She is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Educational Management at Rizal Memorial Colleges, Inc. in Davao City, Philippines, a testament to her commitment to continuous learning and professional growth.

Outside of her professional duties. Carmelita finds joy in traveling. She loves to travel to other places and experience their culture and traditions. She loves to explore and discover new things. That's one way of her self-expression and relaxation.

She also believed that Education is a continuous process, never stop learning, there isno age limit in learning as long as we are alive.