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Research Article

Career Guidance Advocacy Program and The Grade 10 Completers' Career Choice

Julie T. Maestrado[1], Jimmy D. Bucar[2]*

[1]Guidance Counselor III, Trinidad Municipal College, Philippines
[2]Part-time Instructor, Holy Name University, Philippines

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**Corresponding author:*
E-mail:
juliemaestrado2023@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Upon entering senior high school, students choose a career track. School counselors/designates through the career guidance advocacy activities play a vital role in student's readiness for related career decision. With this, the study determined the extent of implementation of the Career Guidance Advocacy Program and its relation to the actual career choice of the Senior High School students. A descriptive correlational research design using documentary data was utilized and conducted in 60 selected public secondary schools in the Division of Bohol which involved 1,200 Grade 11&12 students enrolled in school year 2019-2020; with 60 guidance counselors/designates and 60 homeroom advisers. The instrument used were adapted and modified by the researcher based on the guidelines stipulated in Enhance Basic Education Act of 2013; DepEd Order No. 41, series of 2015, and Developing for National Standard for School Counseling in the Philippines questionnaire by Clemeña 2010. The result showed that educational qualification, job description, years of experience, lack of training and resources and time constrained affect the conduct of the career guidance activities. For the actual choice of the students, the majority were not able to follow the NCAE result due to a lot of intervening factors. The test of correlation revealed that the career guidance activities did not directly relate with the choices of the students. Hence, areas for enhancement of the career guidance advocacy program were put forward.

Keywords*: Career choice, Career guidance advocacy, SHS, Strand, Tracks*

Introduction

Career guidance for Junior High School students, especially those in Grade 10, is crucial as they stand at a crossroads, making decisions that will significantly influence their future academic and professional paths. The transition from Junior High to Senior High School entails selecting a track and strand aligned with their aspirations and college career choices. This complex decision-making process

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requires informed guidance, ensuring students' choices echo with their interests, abilities, and future career prospects (Park et al., 2020). As the K-12 program emphasizes, it aims to prepare graduates for college, employment, or entrepreneurship (Parojenog et al., 2022). While career development is a lifelong process, high school students face the pivotal decision of choosing a path aligned with their interests and abilities. Understanding their strengths and multiple intelligences guides them towards informed career choices and smoother transitions after graduation.

Recognizing the crucial role of career guidance in the students' educational journey, the Department of Education (DepEd) in the Philippines has initiated advocacy programs targeted at Grade 10 learners, mandated by DepEd Order No. 41, series of 2015. These initiatives are strategically designed to facilitate the crucial decision-making process of selecting a Senior High School track, aligning students' choices with their future career aspirations. Implemented by guidance counselors, career advocates, or homeroom advisers, these annual career guidance activities, encompassing information sessions and counseling, aim to equip Grade 10 students with the necessary tools to decide effectively in the modern world.

Despite efforts to prepare students for future careers, studies have documented a persistent misalignment between Senior High School tracks/strands and college degree programs (Moya, 2018; Ngo & Melguizo, 2020). This misalignment raises concerns about the efficacy of the career guidance provided to students and its ability to facilitate informed and strategic decisions regarding their educational and career paths. For example, Quintos et al. (2020) found a high mismatch rate (39% in 2017-2018, 31% in 2018-2019) between students' high school strands and college courses. The top reasons for mismatch include family pressure, program accessibility, and peer pressure. These findings suggest that there is a need for improved career guidance programs that can help students make more informed choices about their college majors and future careers.

Meanwhile, in the province of Bohol, this issue is particularly pronounced, with evident discrepancies between students' career choices and the tracks and strands from which they graduate in Senior High School (Sarabia and Bapilar, 2021). One of the reasons pointed out by Cardinas (2020) in her study in Tagbilaran City Division is that public schools did not effectively implement Career Guidance Program, which may contribute to students making career choices that do not align with their assessed aptitudes. This misalignment not only reflects the challenges at a local level but also highlights the need for a more targeted and effective career guidance advocacy program that addresses the unique needs and contexts of students in Bohol. Tailoring career guidance efforts to the specific dynamics of the province is crucial in bridging the gap between education and career outcomes.

Given these considerations, the study investigated the implementation of the Career Guidance Advocacy Program in Bohol and its impact on the career choices of Grade 10 completers. Through the examination of the current state of career guidance in Bohol and identifying the factors contributing to the misalignment between educational tracks and career choices, this study sought to propose improvements to the career guidance program. Enhancing the program's effectiveness is vital not only for aligning students' educational paths with their career aspirations but also for optimizing the overall educational outcomes in the Bohol Division. The findings of this study are expected to contribute valuable insights into the development of more robust and responsive career guidance programs that can better serve the needs of students, thereby facilitating more informed and strategic decision-making regarding their future educational and career paths.

Literature Background

This research is anchored on Holland's (1997) Career Choice theory and the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013. It emphasizes the significance of work in human life, not only as a means of sustenance but as a source of fulfillment. The study highlights the necessity for students to make informed career choices, aligning their skills and abilities with appropriate career paths. This decision-making process is influenced by various factors including an

individual's unique traits, values, interests, and personality.

Holland (1990) suggests that individuals' career choices are shaped by their dominant personality types, such as an investigative/social type potentially excelling as a science teacher. Holland observes that certain personality types (realistic and investigative) tend to have more stable career choices, while others (enterprising, social, and artistic) aspire higher educationally and exhibit creativity. Watson and Stead (1999) reinforce Holland's theory, emphasizing the importance of matching individual characteristics with the work environment for optimal career satisfaction and success. Oladele (2000) further supports this, asserting that career choices reflect an individual's personality, with congruence between personality and work environment dictating vocational satisfaction and achievement. Lawer (2015) adds that career choice is influenced by factors like reality, educational influences, emotional aspects, and personal values.

The Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 mandates integrating career concepts into the curriculum, conducting assessments, and establishing a career advocacy unit. The Department of Education (DepEd) Order No. 55 of 2016 specifies conducting the National Career Assessment Examination (NCAE) for Grade 9 students to guide educational and career choices and address unemployment due to career mismatches. The NCAE results determine students' eligibility for various Senior High School tracks, with specific criteria for STEM, Sports, Arts and Design, and other tracks.

Abao Tan and Balasico's (2018) study on the NCAE results at Central Mindanao University reveals a positive correlation between students' general scholastic aptitude and various abilities (e.g., technical-vocational, non-verbal, logical reasoning, and entrepreneurial skills) with academic performance. Ferrer & Cruz (2017) find a significant correlation between NCAE results and subsequent academic performance, while Cabigao (2019) notes that students' NCAE occupational interest ratings moderately align with their college course preferences.

Notably, Escudero (2016) suggests that career choice begins with understanding personal strengths, shaping the decision-making process. Donald Super's Life Space theory (1990) views career choice as a dynamic process influenced by various life stages. Super (1957) emphasizes the importance of self-awareness in career decisions during the growth and exploration stages of life. Similarly, Dulay & Viray (2019) highlight the evolving nature of career choices across different life stages.

Career development is viewed as an ongoing process that involves stages of decision-making leading to employment (Siddiqui, 2008). This development is critical during the growth and exploration stages, common among Grade 10 students preparing for higher education. Dulay S. and Viray J. (2019) conclude that career readiness is essential for students and must be developed early in high school.

Moreover, various researchers examines socio-economic influences on career choices, such as the studies by Misra and Jain (1988) and Gupta (2002), which show differing future orientations and career aspirations based on socio-economic status. Hewitt (2010) and Natalie (2006) discuss the impact of parental influence on career decisions, while Stebleton (2007) and Pascual (2014) note the role of political, economic, and family factors. Salazar-Clemena (2002) underscores the influence of family and financial considerations on Filipino adolescents' career choices.

Notably, career guidance is paramount in educational settings. Daley (2010) and Silva (2014) point out that many students enter college unprepared, with poor career decision-making skills. Villar (2009) emphasizes the need for career awareness and experiences to aid in career planning. The study also reviews career guidance approaches in Singapore and Malaysia, highlighting the evolution and integration of career guidance with technology and the role of school counselors in preparing students for future transitions.

Along this line, this study evaluated the implementation of the Career Guidance Advocacy Program in the Division of Bohol and its relation on the career choices of Grade 11 and 12 students for the academic year 2019-2020. It sought to understand the qualifications and professional development experiences of

Career Guidance Counselors/designates, including their educational backgrounds and participation in training and seminars. Furthermore, the research assessed the program's implementation across homeroom guidance, career orientation, and career counseling dimensions. The study also analyzed the respondents' profiles concerning their preferred career choices, National Career Assessment Examination (NCAE) results, and actual Senior High School selections. Additionally, it investigated the relationship between the program's implementation level and the career choices of Senior High School students, as well as any perceived differences in the program's implementation as viewed by Grade 10 completers in relation to their actual career decisions.

Research Methodology

Design

This study employed Descriptive-Correlational Design. It used data mining for the profile of the school counselors in terms of educational qualifications, job descriptions and years of experience so with the student's profile through their National Career Assessment Examination (NCAE) result. Moreover, it also used survey questionnaire to obtain data on the extent of the implementation of Career Guidance Advocacy Program conducted in 60 selected public secondary schools across Bohol Division

Environment and Participants

The study was conducted at the selected public secondary schools in the Division of Bohol offering Senior High School. The respondents are composed of 60 Guidance Counselors/Guidance Designates, 60 Homeroom Guidance Advisers, and 1,200 randomly selected Grade 11 and 12 students from different tracks and strand and specializations for the year 2019-2020. Total enumeration was employed in recruiting 60 guidance counselors/designates from 60 public schools. On the other hand, simple random sampling was employed in getting the sample size of Homeroom Guidance Advisers and Senior High School students.

Instrument

The modified survey questionnaire was used to determine the level of implementation of the Career Guidance Advocacy Program based from the Career Guidance Advocacy guidelines as stipulated in Enhance Education Act of 2013 and DepEd Order No. 41, series of 2015 and the Developing of National Standards for School Counseling in the Philippines by Rose Marie Salazar-Clemeña. It has a 10 items inventory for each category for the conduct of Homeroom Guidance; Career Information; and Career Counseling. The items in the questionnaire were reviewed and validated by experts. It also underwent pilot testing and Cronbach's Alpha analysis to determine its reliability. The results showed that the survey-tool was valid and reliable.

In getting the data of the guidance counselors/designates, a School Guidance Counselors' Profile Survey was distributed to the selected schools. For student respondents' profile, a documentary data based on NCAE result for their preferred and inclined track and enrollment record for their actual choice of track were used.

Data Gathering Procedure

To ensure a rigorous and ethical approach, the researcher secured formal permissions from the Dean of the College of Advanced Studies, the Director of BISU Main Campus, the Schools Division Superintendent, and the Principals of participating schools. The purpose of the study was clearly communicated to all respondents, including students, school guidance counselors/designates, and Grade 10 advisers, ensuring their informed consent and guaranteeing the complete confidentiality of their responses.

Moreover, a debriefing session was conducted post-participation to clarify any queries and to reinforce the confidentiality and use of the data collected. This study was classified as low risk, indicating minimal potential for harm or discomfort to participants. Data analysis and interpretation were initiated only after the comprehensive collection of survey questionnaires, reflecting a strong commitment to data integrity. Throughout the process, the highest ethical standards, including the principles of beneficence and non-maleficence, were meticulously adhered to, ensuring the integrity and ethical rigor of the research.

Statistical Treatment

This study employed several statistical techniques to analyze and interpret the collected data. Respondent profiles were constructed using frequency counts and percentages. Weighted means were then calculated to determine the extent of implementation of career guidance activities, categorized into high, moderate, low, and very low levels. Importantly, normality testing was conducted before further analysis. To explore the relationship between implementation extent and students' career choices, a Chi-square test was used. The Kruskal-Wallis test examined differences in the Career Guidance Advocacy Program's implementation level based on actual career choices.

Results nd Dicussion

Profile of the Guidance Counselors

Table 1.1 reveals most respondents (53.3%) hold an education bachelor's degree; for master's, guidance and counseling is prevalent (41.67%), but doctoral pursuits are rare, notably in educational management and human resource (3.33% each), with no advancements to doctorates in guidance and counseling or clinical psychology. Regarding employment, 81.67% are teachers with guidance roles, but only 18.33% have specific guidance positions, of which just 6.67% are fully qualified guidance counselors.

Table 1.1. Profile of the Career Guidance Counselors in terms of Educational Qualifications, Job Descriptions and Experience

N=60

Category	Course	(f)	(%)
Bachelor's Degree	Bachelor of Secondary Education	32	53.3
	BS in Psychology	22	36.7
	Qualifying Course in Education	6	10
Master's Degree	Educational Management	4	6.7
	Guidance and Counseling	25	41.67
	Clinical Psychology	2	3.33
Doctorate Degree	Educational Management	2	3.33
	Guidance and Counseling	0	0
	Human Resource and Management	2	3.33
	Clinical Psychology	0	0
Position	Guidance Item	11	18.33
	Teaching Item	49	81.67
Years of Service as School counselor/designate	One (1) Year	6	10.00
	Two (2) Years	11	18.33
	Three (3) Years	11	18.33
	Four (4) Years	8	13.33
	Five (5) Years and above	24	40

The Department of Education (DepEd) faces significant challenges in recruiting guidance counselors, a situation highlighted by Hernando-Malipot (2020) who notes that out of 3,553 authorized guidance-related positions, only 42% are filled, and just 393 of these are by Registered Guidance Counselors (RGCs). This shortage is pronounced in the public sector, with only 12% of RGCs employed by DepEd, as the majority prefer private institutions and state universities. Additionally, variability in educational qualifications, job descriptions, and years of experience among counselors implies diverse approaches to Career Guidance Advocacy programs, with those holding degrees in Guidance and Counseling presumably more adept in implementation due to their professional knowledge.

DepEd Secretary Leonor M. Briones, in 2019, emphasized the urgent need for guidance

counselors, especially for addressing issues faced by Generation Z students at junior and senior high school levels. However, the recruitment difficulties stem from the disparity between the high qualification standards, such as a Master's degree and licensure exams, and the relatively low entry-level salary (salary grade 11). This mismatch leads to a dearth of applicants within DepEd, reflecting a broader trend where the profession struggles to attract graduates, particularly in the public sector. To mitigate this, the government allows non-PRC registered career and employment counselors to conduct career advocacy in schools, subject to specific training, under the Enhance Basic Education Act of 2013 and Guidance and Counseling Act of 2004.

The scarcity of guidance counselors is a global issue, as evidenced by Gagnon and Mattingly's (2016) finding that only 17.8% of U.S. school districts meet the recommended student-to-counselor ratio. Similarly, the Chinese Psychological Society (2004) reported a ratio of only 2.4 counselors per million people, starkly contrasting with the United States' 3000 per million. This shortage of trained counselors, as noted by Lim et al. (2010), is pervasive, leading to a situation where guidance counselors often prefer employment in colleges and universities, and those in public schools face limitations such as the absence of dedicated counseling offices (Orenge, 2011).

Table 1.2. Profile of the School Counselors in Terms of Career Congress, Trainings and Seminars Attended

N=60

Year	Trainings	Attendance	%	Seminars	Attendance	%	Congress	Attendance	%
2015	1	28	46.67	0	0	0.00	1	25	41.67
2016	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	1	1	1.67
2017	1	35	58.33	1	7	11.67	1	35	58.33
2018	1	24	40.00	0	0	0.00	1	1	1.67
2019	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	1	27	45.00
Total	3	29	48.33	1	7	11.67	5	18	30%

Table 1.2 illustrates the participation of career counselors in congresses, trainings, and seminars related to career guidance advocacy program implementation. The data reveals that a significant portion of counselors (48.33%) have attended trainings, while a smaller number participated in seminars (11.67%) and congresses (30%). However, 70% have rarely or not attended such events, possibly due to budget constraints, communication issues, or being newly designated without prior training, leading to confusion in handling their tasks. Furthermore, previous trainees may no longer be designated as school counselors, adding to the inconsistency in training attendance.

The survey also highlights a lack of adequate training for counselors and homeroom advisers in implementing Grade 10 modules, with only school principals receiving orientation. Each school received limited resources, further complicating the implementation. Many counselors, especially those newly designated, expressed feelings of incompetence and inadequacy in addressing student needs in career development. This sentiment points to a broader issue of counselors being overwhelmed by additional responsibilities and a lack of sufficient resources and training.

These challenges are not unique to one region. For instance, Orenge (2011) found that public secondary schools in Nairobi face similar issues such as inadequate time allocation, resource scarcity, and an ever-changing job market, all impacting the effectiveness of career guidance programs. Furthermore, the American School Counseling Association (NOSCA, 2012) noted that school counselors often lack clear role identity and continuity,

leading to gaps in education and professional responsibility. This situation underscores the need for improved training and competency standards to better equip counselors in managing their complex roles and effectively implementing career counseling programs in schools.

Table 2.0. Extent of Implementation of Career Guidance Advocacy Program

N=120		
	AWM	DV
Homeroom Guidance		
1. Conduct self-awareness sessions.	2.88	ME
2. Distribute the student primer…	2.95	ME
3. Explain the different curricular…	3.54	HE
4. Emphasize the importance and benefits …	3.27	HE
5. Conduct career decision-making sessions.	2.89	ME
6. Present the NCAE result of the students…	2.95	ME
7. Present and explain to the parents …	3.10	ME
8. Present the labor market information …	2.90	ME
9. Assist students in their career……	3.30	HE
10. Facilitate the SHS early registration.	3.26	HE
	3.10	ME
Career Information		
11. Conduct awareness campaigns through…	2.27	LE
12. Conduct career and job fairs within…	2.28	LE
13. Conduct career orientation activities …	3.33	HE
14. Conduct career talks to the Grade 10 …	2.48	LE
15. Provide an offline search facilities …	1.92	LE
16. Post the SHS program offerings as well…	2.58	ME
17. Post the Labor Market Information…	2.66	ME
18. Disseminate information drive about SHS	2.28	LE
19. Secure brochures, handouts or other …	2.43	LE
20. Conduct orientation/forum to the …	2.88	ME
	2.51	ME
Career Counseling		
21. Conduct assessment of career interests …	2.60	LE
22. Conduct one on one career counseling …	1.90	ME
23. Present and discuss the comprehensive…	2.76	ME
24. Conduct sessions emphasizing the …	3.10	ME
25. Conduct sessions on the importance…	3.08	ME
26. Train students how to use conflict mgt…	3.10	ME
27. Conduct work-ethics sessions to help…	3.20	ME
28. Make the student understand that work…	3.27	HE
29. Help the student realize that there are…	3.42	HE
30. Provide students with quality life	2.52	HE
	2.82	ME
Composite Mean	**2.89**	**ME**

Legend:

Weight	Level of Implementation
3.26 – 4.0	High Extent
2.51 – 3.25	Moderate Extent
1.74 – 2.50	Low Extent
1.00 – 1.73	Very Low Extent

The implementation of career guidance programs in secondary schools is mandated by the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 (R.A. 10533), particularly under its Career Guidance and Counseling Advocacy section. Table 2.0 indicates a moderate level of implementation for homeroom guidance, career information, and career counseling activities overall. Activities such as explaining the curricular characteristics of senior high school tracks and potential career paths are implemented to a greater extent, whereas one-on-one career counseling using assessment results is less common. Limited implementation of certain activities, like career awareness campaigns and information drives, is attributed to time and financial constraints.

Research by McDonough (2006) highlights the significant impact school counselors have on students' post-secondary planning, aspirations, and knowledge about financial aid. However, challenges such as high student-to-counselor ratios, heavy workloads, and a lack of training and information, as noted by Bangser (2008), impede counselors' ability to prepare students adequately for post-secondary education and the workforce. Additionally, Hilling (2017) references a College Board research brief which found that increasing the number of counselors in a high school boosts four-year college enrollment by 10 percent, emphasizing the need for more counselors and time devoted to career counseling.

The current student-to-counselor ratios, as estimated by the National Association for College Admissions Counseling, allow for less than an hour of postsecondary education counseling per student for an entire school year (McDonough, 2006). This constraint often leads counselors to use large group settings for career information dissemination, as individual counseling sessions are time-intensive and challenging to implement given the high caseloads and administrative responsibilities (Indiana Business Journal, 2016 as cited by Hilling, 2017). This situation underscores the difficulty in fully implementing career guidance activities, especially in one-on-one settings, due to the overwhelming demands placed on school counselors

Table 3.1. Preferred Choice and the NCAE Result

	N=1,200				
Tracks/Strand	Preferred Choice	%	NCAE Result	%	Ratio
Academic					
ABM	148	12.33	195	16.25	.75:1
HUMSS	280	23.33	243	20.25	1.2:1
STEM	164	13.66	158	13.16	1:1
GAS	132	11.00	-	-	-
TVL Track					
AFA	29	2.41			
IA	84	7.00	322	26.23	1:1.2
H.E.	90	7.50			
ICT	60	5.00			
Sports Track	119	9.91	170	14.16	1:1.4
Arts and Design	94	7.83	112	9.33	1:1.2
Total	1,200	100	1,200	100	

Legend:

- Academic Tracks:ABM- Accountancy and Business Management
- HUMSS-Humanities and Social Sciences
- STEM – Science and Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
- GAS- General Academic Strand
- TVL -Technical, Vocational and Livelihood Tracks
    - AFA- Agri-Fishery Arts
    - IA- Industrial Arts
    - H.E. – Home Economics
    - ICT – Information and Communication Technology

Table 3.1 showed that preferred choice and inclined track based on NCAE result were closed in ratio (1:1). It implies that most of the students based their preferred choice on what they love to do which jibe in their NCAE result. General Academic Strand is not included in the NCAE result because it is just an option if ever the school cannot offer ABM, STEM and HUMSS since the electives of GAS shall be taken from the three strands.

Technical-Vocational and Livelihood track in NCAE result were given in whole component only. It does not give specific specialization. It is up to the students which TVL strand they would like to enroll. More students also were inclined in Sports and Arts and Design tracks based on NCAE result than the preferred choice.

Holland (1997) suggests that individual career aspirations and preferences, influenced by genetics, socioeconomic status, gender, personality, and learning history, are shaped early in life. These inclinations are further molded by societal factors, such as labor market constraints and educational opportunities. Cabigao's 2019 study on Grade 10 learners reveals a moderate correlation between their National Career Assessment Examination (NCAE) occupational interest ratings and their college course preferences, which include personal and professional services, engineering, military, law enforcement, and business. Students' course choices are influenced by personal interests, external advice, family financial status, and job prospects. Escudero (2016) adds that career selection should begin with an assessment of a student's skills, leading to careers that match these abilities. The NCAE serves as a comprehensive guide for graduating students in choosing higher studies, technical-vocational courses, or entrepreneurship, encompassing four key domains for career guidance.

Table 3.2. NCAE Result and Actual Senior High School Choice

	N-1,200				
Tracks/Strand	NCAE Result	%	Actual SHS Choice	%	Ratio
Academic					
ABM	195	16.25	40	3.33	5:1
HUMSS	243	20.25	260	21.67	1:1
STEM	158	13.16	60	5.00	3:1
GAS	-	-	400	33.33	-
TVL					
AFA			20	1.67	
IA	322	26.23	160	13.33	1:1.2
H.E.			140	11.67	
ICT			80	6.67	
Sports Track	170	14.16	20	1.67	9:1
Arts and Design 1	112	9.33	20	1.67	6:1
Total	1,200	100	1,200	100	

Table 3.2 showed that National Career Assessment Examination (NCAE) result was not actually followed by most of the students. Based on the ratio, Sports tracks were least followed because in every eight students who were inclined in sports only one had the chance to take the track; in Arts and Design track one got the chance while five were force to enroll in other tracks available. Also ABM has five is to one and STEM strand has three is to one.

The National Career Assessment Examination (NCAE) serves as a crucial tool in evaluating students' aptitudes and skills for specific occupational fields, guiding their career and course choices to mitigate unemployment and career mismatch issues. Ferrer & Cruz (2017) found a significant correlation between students' NCAE performance and their academic achievements in subsequent grade levels, emphasizing the need for curriculum developers to incorporate NCAE results into Senior High School (SHS) program designs. However, the utilization of NCAE results in public schools for determining SHS tracks is limited, often constrained by available resources and facilities. Despite this, the majority of public secondary schools in the Bohol Division predominantly offer Technical-Vocational and Livelihood (TVL) and Academic Tracks, with General Academic, Home Economics, and Industrial Arts strands being the most common.

DepEd Order No. 55, series of 2016, mandates the use of NCAE results for guiding SHS track/strand choices in both public and private schools, aiming to align students' aptitudes with their educational and career paths. Specific criteria have been established for entry into certain SHS tracks: a minimum final grade of 85 in Science and Math for Grade 10 and a percentile rank of 86 or above in the STEM subtest for the STEM strand; at least a 51 percentile rank in relevant subtests, along with additional skills assessments for Sports and Arts and Design tracks. No specific cutoffs are set for HUMSS, ABM, General Academic, and TVL Tracks. These criteria reflect the Department of Education's effort to align student choice with various factors including academic aptitude, skills-related fitness tests, and performance assessments. While the ABM strand does not have mandated entry requirements, it demands organized personalities and critical thinking skills, influencing students' decisions to pursue other strands.

Table 3.3. Preferred Choice and Actual SHS Choice

N=1,200

Tracks/Strand	No. of Schools Offered	Preferred Choice	%	Actual SHS Choice	%	Ratio
Academic						
ABM	6	148	12.33	40	3.33	3.7:1
HUMSS	30	280	23.33	260	21.67	1.1:1
STEM	6	164	13.66	60	5.00	2.7:1
GAS	50	132	11.00	400	33.33	1:8
TVL						
AFA	4	29	2.41	20	1.67	1.5:1
IA	15	84	7.00	160	13.33	1:2
H.E.	20	90	7.50	140	11.67	1:1.5
ICT	10	60	5.00	80	6.67	1:1.5
Sports Track	2	119	9.91	20	1.67	6:1
Arts and Design	1	94	7.83	20	1.67	5:1
Total		1,200	100	1,200	100	

Table 3.3 showed that in Academic Track, the Humanities and Social Sciences strand got almost 1:1 ratio which means that those students who preferred to enroll in this strand was given an opportunity to enroll their preferred choice while in ABM and STEM strand, most students were not able to enroll due to some factors. But in General Academic Strand the

ratio is 1:8, it means that majority of the students opted to enroll on this strand even if they don't preferred it. It could be that it is the only strand available in their school or they were not qualified in other track and strand.

Technical-Vocational and Livelihood track has a closer ratio but still lot of them opted to choose the track since it is the best way for them to acquire skills and NC II certification from TESDA. Some of them also wanted to find a work after high school graduation due to socio-economic reasons.

The National Career Assessment Examination (NCAE) results over the years reveal a predominant inclination of high school graduates towards technical-vocational (tech-voc) occupations. In response, the Department of Education has focused on strengthening tech-voc high schools through curriculum enhancements, training, and policy support. Additionally, socio-economic status significantly influences students' choices of Senior High School tracks, as found in Monena and Malbas's 2019 study. Constraints like limited school offerings and financial conditions often compel students to opt for General Academic and TVL tracks over their preferred ones like ABM, HUMSS, or STEM. This aligns with Super's (1957) theory that students' career choices are shaped by their environment, interests, needs, capacities, values, and family income.

Despite efforts to standardize career development, disparities persist in career programs and students' choices, as highlighted in the Met Life American Survey of American Teachers. Many students regret not taking different courses in high school, and career exploration opportunities are often limited until the later stages of their education. This situation reflects a lack of consistency in career development within the high school setting. While career guidance programs provide benefits, students frequently have to conform to the available tracks and their financial limitations, leading to a gap between their aspirations and the reality of their choices. This supports the Careership theory by Hodkinson and Sparkes (1997), which suggests that career decisions are influenced by a combination of subjective personal choices within social and cultural contexts and objective factors like the available educational tracks and socio-economic constraints.

Table 4. Relationship between the Extent of Implementation and the Career Choice of the Grade 10 Completers

Homeroom Guidance and Student Profile					
Profile	**X^2**	**df**	**Critical value**	**Decision on H_0**	**Result**
Preferred Track	16.974	24	36.415	Failed to Reject	Insignificant
NCAE Result	15.281	21	32.671	Failed to Reject	Insignificant
Actual track/strand	14.714	15	24.996	Failed to Reject	Insignificant
Career Information and Student Profile					
Preferred Track	29.107	24	36.415	Failed to Reject	Insignificant
NCAE Result	38.452	21	32.671	Rejected	Significant
Actual track/strand	23.665	15	24.996	Failed to Reject	Insignificant
Career Counseling and Student Profile					
Preferred Track	56.691	16	26.296	Rejected	Significant
NCAE Result	15.95	14	23.685	Failed to Reject	Insignificant
Actual track/strand	14.447	10	18.307	Failed to Reject	Insignificant
Overall Extent of Implementation and Student's Profile					
Preferred Track	16.306	21	36.415	Failed to Reject	Insignificant
NCAE Result	20.782	24	32.671	Failed to Reject	Insignificant
Actual track/strand	9.65	15	24.996	Failed to Reject	Insignificant

Table 4.0 showed that the extent of implementation of the career guidance advocacy program and the career choice of the students were insignificant. This implies that the extent of career guidance implementation did not realte with the actual senior high school choice of tracks enrolled by the students. Instead their career choice was affected by the reality factor that there were certain criteria to be followed during enrollment and also the school has limited resources and therefore cannot offer the tracks and strand they preferred.

The study aligns with Dennehy's (2003) assertion that effective career guidance should be a lifelong process, necessitating collaboration at national and international levels among policymakers, researchers, and practitioners to ensure comprehensive integration and evaluation of career guidance services. Limjuco et al. (2018) found personality as the primary factor influencing students' career choices, indicating that students often select careers based on personal interests, potentially encouraged by parents or guardians. Other factors like skills, opportunities, environment, and values also play a role, with guardians, friends, and teachers exerting less influence. Dulay and Viray (2019) emphasize the significance of career development competencies in fostering career readiness, noting that these competencies are best developed early in high school education. Curry (2013) reinforces the idea that schools are pivotal in offering diverse curricula and educational opportunities, enabling students to explore various career paths and develop necessary skills for future success.

Career guidance activities could be significant to the students if the Senior High School curriculum were aligned to the personality, interest and inclinations of the students. The result revealed a great challenge to the career counselors and curriculum maker on how to address the gap of mismatch and to achieve the purpose of career guidance advocacy program.

Table 5.0. Difference on the Extent of Implementation of Career Guidance Advocacy Program as perceived by the Grade 10 completers with their actual career choice

Variables	**Kruskal-Wallis Test value**	**df**	**Critical value at α=0.05**	**Decision**	**Interpre-tation**
Homeroom Guidance	12.893	5	11.071	Significant, Ho:Rejected	Different
Career Information	16.89	5	11.071	Significant, Ho:Rejected	Different
Career Counseling	4.037	5	11.071	Igsignicant, Ho:Accepted	Equal
Overall Interpretation	19.684	5	11.071	Significant, Ho:Rejected	Different
Pairwise Comparison of Groups					
Extent of Implementation	**Group Pair**	**Test Value**	**p-value @ α=0.05**	**Decision**	**Interpre- tation**
Homeroom Guidance	All Pairs	Cannot be determined			
Career Information	ABM-STEM	253.48	0.009	Significant, Ho:Rejected	STEM Perceived Higher Implementation
Career Counseling	HUMMS-STEM	167.292	0.012	Significant, Ho:Rejected	STEM Perceived Higher Implementation
Overall Implementation	GAS-STEM	201.631	0.001	Significant, Ho:Rejected	STEM Perceived Higher Implementation
	TVL-STEM	167.512	0.009	Significant, Ho:Rejected	STEM Perceived Higher Implementation

Table 5.0 showed significant difference of the extent of implementation as perceived by the students on their actual senior high school choice hence most of them were controlled of some factors that affect their career choice. Although career counseling had a weak relation on their choices but still some of them still opted to enroll the tracks available in their locality.

On the pairwise comparison of groups, it showed that STEM perceived higher implementation since the ratio of NCAE result and preferred choice of the students on this strand was one is to one (1:1). Students anticipated that they can enroll their preferred track since it jibed with their NCAE result but in reality they were not able to enroll hence not all school offered STEM. Moreover, it requires high scholastic aptitude so that one can enroll the strand.

Manansala's 2018 study on high school students' career choices highlights several issues affecting their decisions, such as insufficient family income to afford private schooling, the unavailability of desired courses locally, and the reluctance to be separated from friends by choosing different courses. Lawer (2015) found that students often depend on external factors more than self-awareness or understanding of their capabilities when making career choices, especially when they lack sufficient knowledge about the world of work. Meanwhile, Divino et al. (2016) observed that Grade 10 students vary in their readiness for track choice, influenced by their ability to anticipate choices, explore alternatives, and gather relevant information, indicating a need for educators, researchers, and counselors to consider these factors in curriculum planning and career guidance.

Escudero (2016) suggests that career exploration should begin by identifying a student's strengths and matching them with suitable careers. The National Career Assessment Examination (NCAE) assists in this process by providing an assessment across four domains, guiding students whether to pursue higher studies, technical-vocational courses, or entrepreneurship. Despite significant government investment in career assessments to determine students' aptitudes and interests, Lawer (2015) emphasizes that vocational choices are influenced by multiple factors, including reality constraints, educational influences, emotional factors, and individual values. This underscores the complexity of career decision-making among high school students.

Conclusion

The result showed that educational qualifications, job description, years of experienced, lacked training, financial resources and time constrained affect the conduct of the career guidance activities. For the actual choice of the students, the majority of them were not able to enroll their inclined track since NCAE result were not utilized resulted to misalignment of Senior High School track offering. The test of correlation revealed that the career guidance activities does not correlate with the actual career choice of the Grade 10 completers and a difference were found on student perception to the extent of career guidance implementation. Hence, areas for enhancement of the career guidance advocacy program were put forward.

Recommendation

Based from the findings of the study, the researcher proposed the following:

1. The Department of Education (DepEd) should increase the number of registered guidance counselors and encourage teachers to specialize in guidance and counseling. To maintain program consistency, designate guidance teachers for at least five years.
2. Provide ongoing training for school counselors to implement a standardized career development program across all schools in the division.
3. School administrators and curriculum developers should consider National Career Assessment Examination (NCAE) results and student preferences when offering Senior High School tracks, ensuring alignment with students' occupational interests.
4. School counselors should assess available career resources in secondary schools and consider establishing an online repository for career education materials, aligned with best practices and curriculum standards. Additionally, they should seek professional

development opportunities to enhance their counseling skills.

5. Reduce the teaching workload of guidance counselors to allow them more time for career guidance activities.
6. Counselors should provide students with profiles of potential schools for Grade 11, including available courses and programs, to help students match their talents, skills, interests, and qualifications with appropriate educational opportunities.

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