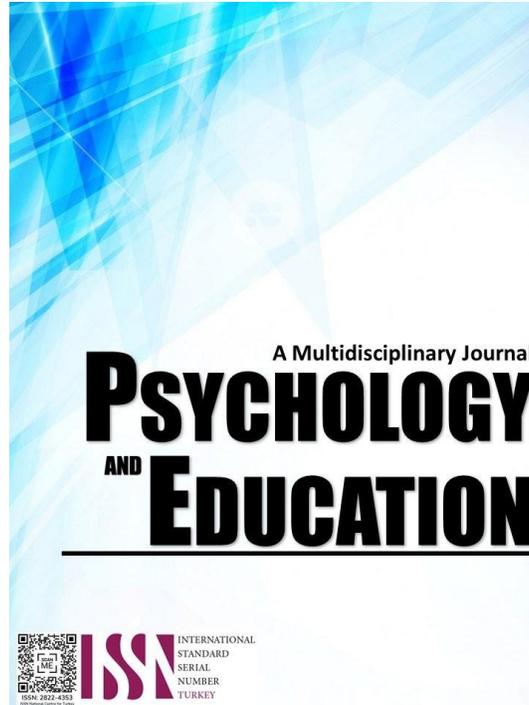


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Factors Influencing SHS Track Selection of Grade 10 TVL Students: Basis for a Readiness Program

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Abstract

This study examined the factors shaping Senior High School (SHS) track selection among Grade 10 Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) students, with attention to demographic, personal, and social influences, as well as challenges in decision-making. Findings indicate that although most students demonstrate satisfactory academic performance, they largely come from low-income households and parents with limited educational attainment. Track choice was primarily driven by personal considerations, especially alignment with future career goals, and was reinforced by social influences such as parental guidance, employment prospects, and financial support. Personal factors showed a positive relationship with students' academic performance and parents' educational level. Despite these influences, students commonly experienced heightened anxiety arising from uncertainty about career direction and external constraints, including financial limitations, parental expectations, and concerns about academic readiness. In response, the study proposes a comprehensive SHS Track Selection Readiness Program that integrates financial literacy, structured parent-student-counsellor engagement, and self-efficacy development activities to support informed, practical, and personally meaningful track decisions.

Keywords: *senior high school track selection, personal factors, social factors, TVL students, career readiness*

Introduction

The transition from junior high school to senior high school represents a critical juncture in students' educational trajectories, particularly in relation to academic track selection. Under the Philippine K-12 educational reform, students are expected to make informed and deliberate choices among Senior High School (SHS) tracks that align with their interests, abilities, and future career goals. The Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) track, in particular, is positioned by policy as a pathway that promotes employability, skills development, and economic mobility. Implicit in this policy framework is the assumption that students possess sufficient agency, access to information, and support systems to engage in rational and self-directed decision-making.

However, emerging evidence suggests that SHS track selection is not solely an individual cognitive process but is shaped by a complex interaction of personal, social, and structural factors. Drawing from social and career decision-making perspectives, existing studies highlight the influence of peer relationships, family background, and socio-economic context on students' educational choices. For instance, Vit et al. (2025) demonstrated that peer networks, particularly friendships with students from higher socio-economic backgrounds, can indirectly steer students toward more academically demanding tracks, underscoring the socially mediated nature of educational decision-making. These findings challenge the policy assumption that track choice is primarily driven by individual preference and informed rationality.

Similarly, Celmar et al. (2024) identified the combined influence of internal aspirations and external constraints, such as economic considerations and perceived career opportunities, on students' academic decisions, while Bondoc and Malawit (2020) explored the use of systematic tools to align student preferences with suitable academic tracks. Although these studies acknowledge the multifaceted nature of track selection, they tend to examine students as a general population, offering limited insight into how these dynamics operate among TVL-track students who often come from economically constrained households.

Research further establishes that SHS track selection has significant long-term consequences. Manugas et al. (2022) found that students who perform well within their chosen SHS track are more likely to sustain strong academic performance in college, reinforcing the importance of early and appropriate track alignment. Nazareno et al. (2021) likewise reported a strong association between students' chosen SHS tracks and their intended college programs, emphasizing the role of contextual and labor-market considerations in shaping educational pathways.

Despite these contributions, a clear research gap remains. There is limited empirical work that situates SHS track selection, particularly among Grade 10 TVL students, within the intersection of K-12 policy expectations and students' lived realities of socio-economic constraint, parental influence, and academic self-efficacy. Specifically, little is known about how personal agency interacts with social and structural pressures in contexts where students may have restricted access to resources and guidance, thereby complicating the policy ideal of informed and autonomous choice.

Addressing this gap, the present study investigates the factors influencing SHS track selection among Grade 10 TVL students at Lourdes Empinado National High School. Anchored in decision-making and social cognitive frameworks, the study examines how demographic characteristics, personal motivations, and social influences shape students' choices and the challenges they encounter during this process. In response to the identified needs, the study proposes an SHS Track Selection Readiness Plan for TVL students, designed to bridge the gap between policy intent and student experience by strengthening guidance mechanisms, enhancing self-efficacy, and

supporting informed, context-sensitive educational decision-making.

Research Questions

This study aimed to determine the personal, social, and demographic factors influencing the Senior High School track selection of Grade 10 TVL students at Lourdes Empinado National High School, as a basis for a proposed SHS Track Selection Readiness Program SY: 2025-2026. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions.

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of:
 - 1.1. age;
 - 1.2. gender;
 - 1.3. general weighted average (GWA) in grade 10 quarter 2 of 4;
 - 1.4. family's monthly income; and
 - 1.5. parent's highest educational attainment?
2. What is the level of influence of personal and social factors on students' selection of a Senior High School track?"
3. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' demographic profile and the factors influencing their SHS track selection?
4. Is there a significant relationship between personal and social factors influencing students' SHS track selection?
5. What challenges and difficulties do Grade 10 TVL students encounter in selecting their Senior High School track?"
6. Based on the findings, what SHS Track Selection Readiness Program can be developed to guide Grade 10 TVL students in making informed choices?

Literature Review

Senior High School (SHS) track selection is a critical educational decision shaped by the interaction of individual agency, social influence, and structural conditions. In the Philippine context, this decision is institutionalized under the K–12 reform, which requires students to select an academic track aligned with their interests, abilities, and career goals. However, research increasingly suggests that this policy expectation of informed and autonomous choice does not fully account for the socio-economic and contextual realities faced by many students, particularly those in the Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) track.

Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) provides a central framework for understanding SHS track selection by emphasizing the roles of self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and environmental supports or barriers. Philippine studies applying SCCT consistently report that students' educational choices are strongly shaped by family background and social context. Manugas et al. (2022) found that academic performance and persistence are associated with parental educational attainment, while Pepito et al. (2024) observed that students from low-income households rely more heavily on parental guidance and perceived employability outcomes when choosing a track. These findings suggest that self-efficacy in track selection is socially conditioned and unevenly distributed across socio-economic groups.

Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory further explains how students' decisions are influenced through observation and social modeling. Dizon (2023) demonstrated that parental expectations, peer choices, and teacher recommendations significantly affect SHS track preferences, particularly when students lack clear career goals. When considered alongside SCCT-based studies, this evidence highlights that students' choices are often shaped by social reinforcement rather than independent decision-making.

Constructivist perspectives complement these theories by framing track selection as an interpretive process through which students make sense of their academic experiences and social environments. This view aligns with Philippine research emphasizing the need for context-sensitive analyses of educational decision-making in public schools, where access to guidance resources varies widely.

Policy-based literature further underscores the gap between the intent and implementation of the K–12 reform. Republic Act No. 10533 mandates comprehensive career guidance to support informed track selection, yet studies indicate persistent implementation challenges. Cardinas (2020) reported inadequate career guidance delivery in public schools, while Maestrado and Bucar (2024) emphasized that weak guidance systems hinder students' ability to align personal interests with appropriate SHS tracks, particularly in the TVL strand.

Empirical studies on SHS track preference consistently identify academic achievement, career prospects, personal interest, and family influence as key determinants. Celmar et al. (2024) and Kilag et al. (2023) similarly found that track selection results from a combination of internal motivations and external pressures. However, these studies largely treat SHS students as a homogeneous group, offering limited insight into the specific experiences of Grade 10 TVL students in economically constrained settings.

In synthesis, existing literature establishes that SHS track selection is shaped by intertwined cognitive, social, and policy-related factors. However, there remains limited empirical work that integrates social-cognitive theory with the realities of K-12 policy implementation for TVL students. Addressing this gap, the present study examines the factors influencing SHS track selection among Grade 10 TVL students at Lourdes Empinado National High School, situating student decision-making within both social–cognitive frameworks and the Philippine education policy context to inform the development of responsive track selection guidance interventions.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods research design to provide a comprehensive analysis of the factors influencing Senior High School (SHS) track selection among Grade 10 Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) students at Lourdes Empinado Memorial National High School for the 2025-2026 school year. The integration of quantitative and qualitative approaches was intended not only to measure the strength of influencing factors but also to explain how and why these factors shape students' decision-making.

Quantitative data were collected using a structured survey questionnaire as the primary instrument. The questionnaire utilized a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Not Influential) to 5 (Highly Influential), allowing students to rate the extent to which personal and social factors affected their track selection. In addition, demographic variables such as age, sex, General Weighted Average (GWA), parental educational attainment, and monthly family income were gathered to enable statistical analysis of relationships between students' profiles and identified influencing factors.

Qualitative data were used to complement and extend the quantitative findings by providing contextual depth to the statistical results. While the survey identified which factors were most influential and how strongly they affected track selection, the qualitative component explored students' personal experiences, perceptions, and challenges underlying these influences. In particular, qualitative responses helped clarify the sources of students' reported anxiety, the nature of parental influence, and the ways financial and academic concerns shaped their perceived readiness for specific SHS tracks. This explanatory role of the qualitative data allowed for a deeper interpretation of patterns observed in the quantitative results.

By integrating both data strands, the mixed-methods design enabled triangulation and enhanced the validity of the findings. Quantitative results established general trends and relationships, while qualitative insights illuminated the lived realities behind those trends. Together, these approaches provided a more nuanced understanding of SHS track selection among Grade 10 TVL students and informed the development of a context-responsive SHS Track Selection Readiness Program.

Respondents

The respondents of this thesis are the grade 10 students of Lourdes Empinado Memorial National High School.

Instrument

A modified survey questionnaire was used as the primary research instrument to examine factors influencing Senior High School (SHS) track selection among Grade 10 Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) students. The instrument was adapted from related studies and contextualized to the Philippine K-12 setting.

The questionnaire consisted of four parts. Part I collected demographic data, including age, sex, second-quarter Grade 10 General Weighted Average (GWA), monthly family income, and parents' educational attainment. Parts II and III measured the influence of personal and social factors on track selection using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Not Influential to 5 = Highly Influential). Part IV included open-ended questions that explored challenges encountered during the track selection process and informed the development of the proposed SHS Track Selection Readiness Plan.

Content validity was established through expert review by educators in guidance counseling and senior high school instruction. The instrument was pilot-tested among students not included in the final sample, and reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha showed acceptable internal consistency ($\alpha \geq 0.70$) for the Likert-scale items, indicating that the questionnaire was reliable and appropriate for the study.

Procedure

To begin the data gathering process, the researcher first secured official permission by sending a formal letter of request to the School Head. Upon receiving approval, the researcher personally administered the modified survey questionnaires to the Grade 10 TVL students. This direct approach allowed for proper guidance and clarification, ensuring that the students completed the forms accurately and on time.

The survey was conducted during the academic year 2025-2026 at a time that was convenient for the students, such as during homeroom or a designated class period. The collected data were then tallied and encoded into a computer program for statistical analysis and interpretation.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed to identify trends and relationships influencing Grade 10 TVL students' SHS track selection. Frequencies and percentages summarized demographic profiles, including age, sex, GWA, family income, and parental educational attainment. Weighted means and standard deviations were calculated to assess the level of influence of personal and social factors. Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) was used to examine the relationships between demographic variables and influencing factors, as well as between personal and social factors themselves, allowing for inferential interpretation of how student characteristics relate to

decision-making.

Qualitative data from open-ended responses were analyzed using Thematic Analysis to identify the specific challenges students encountered during track selection. These insights complemented the quantitative findings by providing contextual explanations for observed patterns, informing the development of the SHS Track Selection Readiness Plan for TVL students.

Ethical Considerations

Researching the factors that influence Grade 10 TVL students' senior high school track selection requires careful attention to ethical considerations to protect the participants and ensure the study's integrity. Informed consent is paramount; researchers must clearly explain the study's purpose, procedures, and potential risks and benefits to students and their parents or legal guardians. Researchers must ensure that participation is voluntary and that no one feels pressured to take part, with a clear understanding that they can withdraw at any time without penalty.

The principle of confidentiality and anonymity is crucial. Researchers must protect participants' identities and personal information by assigning codes or pseudonyms and storing data securely. When reporting the findings, individual responses should never be linked to specific students, especially when discussing sensitive topics like family income or academic performance (GWA). Furthermore, the study must be designed to avoid any form of harm to the participants, whether physical, psychological, or social. This includes ensuring that the questions are non-intrusive and that the research process does not create anxiety or stress for the students as they make an important life decision. The findings should also be used responsibly to benefit the students and the educational community, not to create labels or reinforce negative stereotypes.

Results

This section presents the demographic and socio-economic profile of the student respondents and their families through a series of frequency distribution tables.

Demographic Profile of Respondents

This section presents the demographic characteristics of the 175 student respondents, including age, gender, academic performance (General Weighted Average or GWA), family income, and parental educational attainment. Understanding these profiles allows for a nuanced interpretation of the study's findings, particularly in the context of educational strategies, behavioral interventions, and resource allocation.

Table 1. Age Profile of the Students

Age	Frequency	Percentage
13 y.o.	1	0.6
14 y.o.	2	1.1
15 y.o.	154	88.0
16 y.o.	16	9.1
17 y.o.	1	0.6
19 y.o.	1	0.6
Total	175	100.0

The data indicate a highly homogeneous age distribution, with 88% of respondents aged 15. This concentration suggests that instructional approaches, social-emotional programs, and behavioral interventions can be largely tailored to the developmental stage typical of mid-adolescents.

However, the few students at either end of the age spectrum (13-14 and 17-19) may experience challenges that differ from the majority. This disparity highlights the need for differentiated support strategies for these students to prevent them from feeling socially or academically marginalized. Schools may need to implement flexible groupings or mentorship programs to ensure inclusivity without compromising the needs of the majority.

Table 2. Gender Profile of the Students

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	65	37.1
Female	110	62.9
Total	175	100.0

The gender composition shows a notable predominance of female students (62.9%). This imbalance implies that student perspectives and behavioral patterns captured in the study may be more reflective of female experiences, potentially limiting the generalizability of findings to male students. In research that compares genders, caution is warranted because the unequal group sizes can affect statistical validity. Practically, this distribution may guide school programs, suggesting that initiatives, particularly those targeting engagement or participation, may need additional adaptation to reach male students, who are underrepresented effectively.



Table 3. *General Weighted Average (GWA) of Grade 10 Students (Quarter 2)*

<i>Grades</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
90-94	47	26.9
85-89	62	35.4
80-84	55	31.4
75-79	11	6.3
Total	175	100.0

The majority of students (62.3%) achieve high-average to excellent grades (85–94), indicating strong overall academic performance. Only a small proportion (6.3%) fall in the lowest passing range (75–79), suggesting that remedial interventions may only be needed for a minority. These results imply that school resources could focus on maintaining and enhancing performance for the majority, possibly through enrichment programs or advanced challenges, while providing targeted support for the few at risk of underperformance. Additionally, the clustering in the 80–89 range may reflect opportunities to elevate motivated students toward higher achievement, emphasizing differentiated instructional strategies and personalized learning goals.

Table 4. *Family Monthly Income*

<i>Family's Monthly Income</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
₱10,000–₱20,000	54	30.9
₱20,001–₱30,000	19	10.9
₱30,001–₱40,000	17	9.7
Above ₱40,000	10	5.7
Total	175	100.0

The data reveal that over 73% of students come from families earning ₱20,000 or less per month, highlighting a predominance of low socio-economic status. This financial limitation may affect students’ access to educational resources, nutrition, and home study environments, with potential consequences for academic performance and behavior. Interventions such as positive discipline strategies or enrichment activities must therefore be cost-effective and contextually appropriate. Schools may also consider supplementing learning with material or financial support programs to address these socio-economic disparities, ensuring equity in educational outcomes.

Table 5. *Fathers' Educational Attainment*

<i>Fathers' Educational Attainment</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Elementary Level	29	16.6
Elementary Graduate	37	21.1
High School Level	35	20.0
High School Graduate	41	23.4
College Level	11	6.3
College Graduate	20	11.4
Master's Degree	2	1.1
Total	175	100.0

Most fathers (81.1%) have an education at the high school level or below. This suggests that parental involvement in academically complex tasks may be limited, potentially affecting students’ study habits, aspirations, and communication with schools. Schools could enhance engagement by using accessible language and practical strategies in parent-teacher interactions. Additionally, this educational profile aligns with the observed low family income, emphasizing the importance of integrating socio-educational considerations when designing programs for students, particularly for academic support and behavioral guidance.

Table 6. *Mothers' Educational Attainment*

<i>Fathers' Educational Attainment</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Elementary Level	24	13.7
Elementary Graduate	28	16.0
High School Level	33	18.9
High School Graduate	48	27.4
College Level	18	10.3
College Graduate	22	12.6
Master's Degree	2	1.1
Total	175	100.0

Similarly, most mothers (58.1%) have secondary-level education or less. Given that mothers often play a key role in supporting students’ learning and emotional development, this educational distribution may impact academic guidance at home and engagement with school initiatives. Schools may need to provide structured parental guidance and community education programs that accommodate parents’ educational backgrounds, ensuring they can effectively participate in their children’s learning and behavior management.

Overall Implications of the Demographic Profile: The student population is predominantly 15 years old, female, high-achieving academically, and from lower-income families with parents whose education is largely at the secondary level. These patterns suggest that educational and behavioral interventions should:

Be developmentally appropriate for mid-adolescents. Consider gender-specific engagement strategies. Leverage existing academic strengths while supporting students at risk of underperformance. Be mindful of socio-economic constraints and resource limitations at home. Include parent-focused initiatives that are accessible to those with limited formal education. This comprehensive understanding of the demographic and socio-economic context ensures that policies, programs, and interventions are both effective and equitable.

Level of Influence of Personal and Social Factors on Students' Selection of a Senior High School Track

This study examined the relative influence of Personal and Social Factors on students' selection of a Senior High School (SHS) track. Overall, Personal Factors exert a stronger influence, with an overall weighted mean of 3.51 (High Influence), compared to Social Factors, which register a moderate overall influence (WM = 3.33).

Personal Factors appear to guide students' choices primarily through a forward-looking, goal-oriented lens. The strongest influences were beliefs that the track would help achieve future career goals (WM = 3.89) and provide personal fulfillment (WM = 3.67), highlighting a pragmatic orientation: students view SHS as a stepping stone toward long-term aspirations rather than purely immediate satisfaction or enjoyment. While alignment with personal interests, skills, and talents remains moderately influential, the lower weighting suggests students are willing to prioritize tracks that promise career benefits over present-day passion or perceived ability. This reflects a utilitarian decision-making style in which students exercise personal agency to navigate educational pathways strategically. The high rating for-career guidance counselor recommendations (WM = 3.50) further underscores the importance of professional input, indicating that students value structured, credible advice when aligning their personal goals with educational opportunities. Collectively, these findings suggest that interventions aimed at helping students make informed SHS track decisions should focus on career planning, self-assessment of goals, and fostering long-term motivation, rather than merely appealing to immediate interests.

Social Factors, in contrast, exert a moderate influence overall but reveal critical patterns in students' decision-making. Parental advice (WM = 3.59), availability of scholarships or financial aid (WM = 3.46), and employment prospects associated with specific tracks (WM = 3.50) stand out as high-influence factors. These results indicate that students weigh familial guidance and economic considerations heavily, reflecting the role of social and financial pragmatism in educational choices. Peer and teacher input, as well as school reputation, were rated as moderate influences, suggesting that while social networks contribute to decision-making, their impact is secondary to family and career-oriented considerations. This implies that students' SHS choices are not made in isolation; rather, they are embedded within a socio-familial and economic context where parents act as primary advisors, reinforcing long-term stability and career viability.

The synthesis of Personal and Social Factors reveals a decision-making process that is both strategic and context-sensitive. Students demonstrate personal initiative by prioritizing future goals and career fulfillment, yet they remain attuned to practical social inputs, especially parental guidance and financial opportunities. This pattern aligns with prior research indicating that adolescents weigh personal aspirations against familial expectations and socio-economic realities when making educational decisions (Fan et al., 2021; Nazareno et al., 2021; Isla & Borja, 2025). It also suggests that schools and counselors can maximize the effectiveness of SHS guidance programs by integrating career-focused counseling, family engagement, and financial planning support, thereby addressing both internal motivations and external constraints.

In essence, SHS track selection emerges as a deliberate, multi-dimensional process, driven by the interplay of personal ambitions, career-oriented pragmatism, and key social supports. Recognizing this dynamic can guide educators, policymakers, and counselors in designing interventions that are not only informative but also actionable, helping students make choices that are aligned with both their personal goals and socio-economic realities.

Significant Relationship Between Respondents' Demographic Profile and Factors Influencing SHS Track Selection

The correlational analysis reveals nuanced insights into how students' demographic and socio-economic profiles relate to Personal and Social Factors in their SHS track selection. Notably, Grade 10 General Weighted Average (GWA), Father's Educational Attainment, and Mother's Educational Attainment exhibit significant positive relationships with Personal Factors. At the same time, only Father's Educational Attainment is significantly associated with Social Factors. Age, Gender, and Family Monthly Income show no significant correlations.

The positive correlation between GWA and Personal Factors ($r = 0.200$, $p = 0.008$) suggests that students with higher academic performance are more likely to rely on their own interests, skills, and future aspirations when selecting a track. This highlights self-efficacy and academic confidence as drivers of internalized decision-making. Similarly, the significant relationships between parental education and Personal Factors indicate that students from more educated families are inclined to integrate parental guidance with their own career-focused considerations. The singular association of Father's Educational Attainment with Social Factors ($r = 0.153$, $p = 0.043$) may reflect fathers' perceived role in providing practical, employment-oriented advice, reinforcing the "pragmatic" social



influences identified earlier.

Conversely, the lack of significant correlations with Family Income underscores an important implication: economic resources alone do not dictate how students weigh personal or social influences, suggesting that parental guidance and educational values may have a stronger role than mere financial capacity. These findings are consistent with Nazareno et al. (2021) and Endrika et al. (2020), who emphasize the pivotal role of parental educational background and involvement over socioeconomic status in shaping adolescents' educational trajectories. Practically, this suggests that career guidance interventions should consider family educational context when supporting students' SHS track decisions, rather than assuming financial status is the primary determinant.

Table 7. Significant Relationship Between the Respondents' Demographic Profile and the Factors Influencing Their SHS Track Selection

Demographic Variables	Personal Factors			Social Factors		
	Correlation Coefficient (r)	P-value	Interpretation	Correlation Coefficient (r)	P-value	Interpretation
Age	-0.137	0.071	Not Significant	-0.047	0.539	Not Significant
Gender	0.075	0.325	Not Significant	-0.099	0.191	Not Significant
Grade 10 GWA	0.200	0.008	Significant	-0.056	0.459	Not Significant
Family's Monthly Income	0.045	0.558	Not Significant	0.080	0.295	Not Significant
Father's Educational Attainment	0.184	0.015	Significant	0.153	0.043	Significant
Mother's Educational Attainment	0.263	0.000	Significant	0.127	0.094	Not Significant

The study highlights that Grade 10 TVL students are academically capable yet come from predominantly low socio-economic backgrounds, with over 73% of families earning below Php 20,000 per month and a majority of parents possessing a high school education or less. These contextual factors, socio-economic status and parental education, play a critical role in shaping students' Senior High School (SHS) track selection. Students' track choices are primarily influenced by Personal Factors, particularly the track's perceived ability to fulfill future career goals and provide personal satisfaction. Social Factors exert a moderate influence, with parental advice, job opportunities, and financial aid emerging as the most impactful, reflecting pragmatic, career-oriented considerations. Personal Factors are significantly associated with students' academic performance and parental educational attainment, indicating that higher achievement and more educated families foster self-directed, goal-oriented decision-making.

The study further finds a moderate, significant positive correlation between Personal and Social Factors, suggesting that internal motivation and external support function as integrated drivers of the decision-making process. The main challenge students face is negotiating the tension between pragmatic barriers, financial constraints, and parental expectations, and internal uncertainty regarding academic preparedness and career aspirations. This underscores that SHS track selection is a complex process, shaped by the interplay of economic realities, family influence, and self-perception.

The analysis (Table 8) demonstrates a moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.504$, $p = 0.000$) between Personal and Social Factors, indicating these influences are complementary rather than mutually exclusive. Students who are internally motivated, guided by interests, skills, and career goals, also actively seek external validation and advice from parents, educators, and peers.

This interplay suggests that SHS track selection is not driven solely by intrinsic preferences or external pressures but rather a dynamic negotiation between personal aspirations and social reality. Students leverage social input to reinforce confidence in their personal choices, which can reduce decision-related anxiety and enhance alignment with academic and career objectives. The findings align with Alim (2024) and Sabanal (2025), emphasizing that effective educational guidance requires acknowledging both internal motivations and external support structures.

Table 8. Significant Relationship Between Personal and Social Factors Influencing Students' SHS Track Selection

Variables	Correlation Coefficient (r)	P-value	Level of Significance	Decision	Interpretation
Personal and Social Factors Influencing Students' SHS Track Selection	0.504	0.000	0.05	Reject the null hypothesis	Significant

Challenges and Difficulties Encountered by Grade 10 TVL Students in Selecting Their SHS Track

The qualitative findings reveal that students face interconnected challenges in selecting an SHS track, spanning academic preparedness, financial constraints, and parental or societal pressures.

Theme 1: Academic Preparedness

Students frequently express anxiety regarding their academic skills and readiness for specific tracks. Statements such as, "My grades or skills might not be enough for certain tracks," reflect a pervasive sense of self-doubt. Research (Salape & Cuevas, 2020; Firdaus &

Arjanggi, 2020) links low academic self-efficacy to indecision, highlighting the need for interventions that enhance students' confidence and self-awareness. Schools should integrate skills assessments and preparatory programs to support informed decision-making.

Theme 2: Financial Constraints

Economic limitations significantly restrict students' options, forcing compromises between personal interests and financial feasibility. Respondents cited difficulties affording materials, uniforms, and associated track costs. These findings are consistent with Maestrado & Bucar (2024) and Arbona et al. (2023), emphasizing that financial support mechanisms, including scholarships, are crucial in ensuring equitable access to preferred tracks.

Theme 3: Parental and Societal Expectations

Students navigate complex familial and societal pressures. Parental influence often conflicts with personal aspirations, as illustrated by responses like, "I'm torn between the track my parents choose and the one I want." Such conflicts can exacerbate stress and impede autonomous decision-making (Celmar et al., 2024; James et al., 2024). Structured family engagement and communication in career guidance programs can help balance student autonomy with parental input.

Theme 4: Uncertainty and Self-Perception

Many students struggle with a fear of making the wrong choice, reflecting limited self-knowledge and uncertainty regarding career fit. Respondents shared concerns such as, "I fear making the wrong choice that won't match my skills." Cultivating self-efficacy and career exploration is essential for improving decision-making effectiveness and long-term satisfaction (Arbona et al., 2023; 2021).

Theme 5: Recommendations for Improving the Track Selection Process

Students suggest enhancing career guidance programs, simplifying track selection procedures, and providing financial support through scholarships. Responses highlight the value of hands-on exposure to tracks, mentorship opportunities, and real-life professional interactions, reinforcing evidence from Zamfir et al. (2024) and Elmetenawee (2024) on experiential learning and accessible processes. Implementing these strategies can reduce anxiety, improve alignment between personal interests and track selection, and promote educational equity.

Discussion

Demographic and Socio-Economic Profile

The respondents were primarily 15 years old (88%), indicating a largely homogenous adolescent population. This age concentration suggests that educational interventions and guidance strategies can be designed to match the cognitive and socio-emotional development typical of this stage, while also remaining mindful of the minority younger or older students who may require differentiated support. Female respondents represented the majority (62.9%) compared to males (37.1%), suggesting that the perspectives captured in this study may predominantly reflect female experiences and attitudes, necessitating caution when generalizing findings across genders.

Academic performance among respondents was generally high, with 93.72% achieving grades above the minimum passing level. This indicates that the majority of students possess the foundational skills necessary to engage in reflective decision-making about their SHS track. Socio-economically, the student population is predominantly from low-income households. Over three-quarters (73.8%) of families reported a monthly income of Php 20,000 or less, with 42.9% earning below Php 10,000. This low-income context underscores the pragmatic constraints influencing track selection, highlighting the critical role of financial accessibility and support in students' decision-making processes. Parental educational attainment is primarily at the secondary level or below, with 81.1% of fathers and 58.1% of mothers having completed high school or less. Limited parental familiarity with academic planning and SHS track requirements suggests a strong need for schools to provide accessible, simplified guidance to support both students and parents in making informed choices.

Level of Influence of Personal and Social Factors

Students' track selection is guided by a strategic balance of internal motivation and external, practical considerations. Personal factors exert a high overall influence (WM = 3.51), with career guidance recommendations from counselors rated as highly influential (WM = 3.50). Factors directly reflecting personal passion or perceived skills, such as "passion for the subjects" (WM = 3.25) and "skills and talents are suitable" (WM = 3.34), were rated lower, indicating that students prioritize pragmatic, outcome-oriented considerations over intrinsic interest when choosing their track. Social factors exert a moderate overall influence (WM = 3.33), but parental advice, job opportunities, and financial aid are particularly persuasive, reflecting the external realities that shape students' decisions. Peer influence was rated the lowest among social factors (WM = 2.99), demonstrating that students' decisions are largely insulated from peer pressure and are instead guided by more substantive social considerations.

Significant Relationships Between Variables

Correlational analyses highlight that academic achievement and parental education are key predictors of students' decision-making orientation. Grade 10 General Weighted Average (GWA) shows a significant positive correlation with Personal Factors ($r = 0.200$, $p = 0.008$), indicating that higher-performing students are more likely to be internally motivated and guided by self-confidence and career goals. Maternal educational attainment also exhibits a strong positive relationship with Personal Factors ($r = 0.263$, $p = 0.000$), while paternal educational attainment significantly correlates with both Personal ($r = 0.184$, $p = 0.015$) and Social Factors ($r = 0.153$, $p = 0.043$). These patterns suggest that parents' educational backgrounds shape both intrinsic motivations and responsiveness to pragmatic advice, with maternal influence emphasizing personal aspirations and paternal influence reinforcing socially and financially oriented considerations. Notably, family monthly income did not show a significant relationship with either Personal or Social Factors, reinforcing the finding that parental education, rather than income, is the more substantial determinant of decision-making orientation.

Further analysis reveals a moderate positive correlation between Overall Personal Factors and Overall Social Factors ($r = 0.504$, $p = 0.000$). This indicates that internal motivations and external guidance are not independent but mutually reinforcing. Students who are driven by personal goals, such as career aspirations or academic interests, also actively seek and are influenced by social factors, including parental advice and financial considerations, to ensure that their decisions are viable and supported. This interdependence highlights the complexity of SHS track selection as a holistic process integrating personal and social dimensions.

Challenges and Difficulties in SHS Track Selection

Qualitative findings provide a nuanced understanding of the obstacles students face, complementing the quantitative results. Academic preparedness emerged as a central challenge, with respondents expressing anxiety about whether their skills and grades are sufficient for certain tracks. This concern aligns with the significant relationship between GWA and Personal Factors, suggesting that while students are internally motivated, self-doubt may limit their confidence in pursuing aspirational tracks. Financial constraints were identified as a pervasive barrier, limiting options and compelling students to make pragmatic compromises. This is consistent with the strong influence of social factors related to financial aid and job opportunities, reflecting the low-income context of the majority of respondents. Parental and societal expectations further complicated decision-making, as students often faced tension between pursuing personal interests and conforming to parental guidance. This finding corresponds with the statistical evidence that parental advice is the most influential social factor, underscoring the critical role of family dynamics in the decision-making process.

Overall, the respondents demonstrate a strategic, forward-looking approach to track selection, weighing career prospects, financial realities, and parental approval alongside personal goals. The integration of these factors illustrates that SHS track selection is not merely a trade-off between competing influences but a complex, multi-dimensional process shaped by internal motivations, external guidance, and pragmatic considerations.

Conclusions

Based on the findings, the study reaches several key conclusions regarding the characteristics of the grade 10 TVL student population and the complex factors that drive or impede their senior high school (SHS) track selection.

The study highlights that Grade 10 TVL students are academically capable yet come from predominantly low socio-economic backgrounds, with over 73% of families earning below Php 20,000 per month and a majority of parents possessing a high school education or less. These contextual factors, socio-economic status and parental education, play a critical role in shaping students' Senior High School (SHS) track selection.

Students' track choices are primarily influenced by Personal Factors, particularly the track's perceived ability to fulfill future career goals and provide personal satisfaction. Social Factors exert a moderate influence, with parental advice, job opportunities, and financial aid emerging as the most impactful, reflecting pragmatic, career-oriented considerations. Personal Factors are significantly associated with students' academic performance and parental educational attainment, indicating that higher achievement and more educated families foster self-directed, goal-oriented decision-making.

The study further finds a moderate, significant positive correlation between Personal and Social Factors, suggesting that internal motivation and external support function as integrated drivers of the decision-making process. The main challenge students face is negotiating the tension between pragmatic barriers, financial constraints, and parental expectations, and internal uncertainty regarding academic preparedness and career aspirations. This underscores that SHS track selection is a complex process, shaped by the interplay of economic realities, family influence, and self-perception.

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