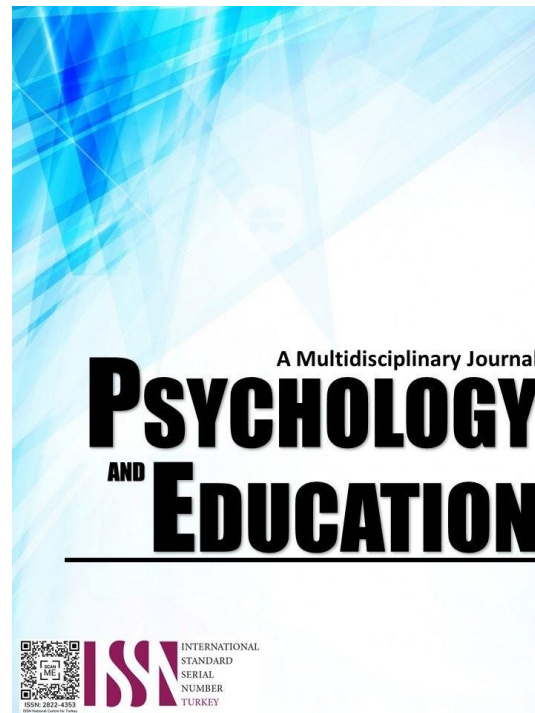


FACTORS INFLUENCING CAREER CHOICES OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES GRADE 12 STUDENTS IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF ROSALES: BASIS FOR POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS



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Factors Influencing Career Choices of Humanities and Social Sciences Grade 12 Students in the Municipality of Rosales: Basis for Policy Recommendations

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Abstract

This study investigates the factors influencing the career choices of Grade 12 Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) students in the Municipality of Rosales for the school year 2024–2025, which served as the basis for policy recommendations. Utilizing a descriptive-correlational research design, the study assesses the socio-demographic profile and the extent of parental and external influences faced by 164 purposively selected respondents from four public high schools. Key findings identify financial considerations as the most significant factor affecting career decisions, followed by the school environment, societal and cultural expectations, and family expectations. On the other hand, peer influence was rated low. Correlation analysis reveals that socio-demographic variables, including age, sex, family income, and parental education, do not have a statistically significant relationship with the extent of these external influences, suggesting they are pervasive across the student population. The study proposes policy recommendations focused on implementing inclusive and strand-specific career guidance, integrating financial literacy workshops, and strengthening partnerships with families and industries. Recommendations also include enhancing career guidance delivery through regular orientation programs and increased exposure to real-world work environments. The study emphasizes the necessity of a responsive career support system to assist HUMSS students in making informed decisions aligned with both their aspirations and economic realities.

Keywords: *career choices, HUMSS grade 12 students, policy recommendations, financial considerations, career guidance*

Introduction

Career decision-making stands as a developmental milestone for senior high school students in the Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) strand. At this stage, students make choices that affect their academic paths and future professions. The researcher's observations in Rosales show that this process involves family expectations, economic factors, personal interests, peer relationships, and perceptions of career stability (Santos & Dela Cruz, 2024). The educational and economic conditions of Rosales Municipality require an examination of these influencing factors to develop effective interventions.

The HUMSS strand in the Philippine Senior High School Program prepares students for careers in social sciences, communication, education, law, and public service. Despite this curriculum, the researcher notes that many HUMSS students face uncertainty when selecting career paths. Garcia and Lorenzo (2025) report that students' career preferences develop from both internal motivations and external pressures like family background, socio-economic status, job market conditions, and school guidance. Rosales, a first-class municipality in Pangasinan with both rural traditions and increasing urbanization, offers a practical setting to study these factors' effects on student aspirations.

Preliminary interviews with HUMSS students and guidance counselors indicate that family influence remains a primary factor in career decision-making. Parents often direct students toward specific careers based on perceptions of job security and prestige (Mariano & Pascual, 2024). In Rosales, where families work in agriculture, small businesses, and local government, students often receive encouragement to follow family traditions or pursue careers with economic advantages. Student conversations also show that peer influence affects decision-making, as social belonging needs guide adolescent behavior (Reyes, 2024).

Educational institution availability also affects career preferences. Initial research reveals that while Rosales has several schools offering tertiary education, specialized courses exist only in nearby urban centers. This geographic factor causes students to change preferred career paths or consider relocation. Family financial capacity and scholarship availability also complicate decision-making. Lim and Bautista (2025) note that financial limitations reduce students' perceived options, often leading them to select affordable courses rather than those matching their interests.

The researcher's professional experience shows gaps in career guidance implementation in senior high schools. Though the Department of Education directs schools to strengthen career counseling, studies support the observation that many schools provide general or insufficient guidance that fails to address student strengths, potentials, or socioeconomic conditions (Tolentino & Ignacio, 2024). In Rosales, evaluating these programs helps determine if students receive adequate support for informed career choices.

Economic conditions also affect career aspirations. Digital transformation and automation have changed job market requirements (Manalo, 2025). HUMSS students face additional challenges as humanities-related careers often appear less financially rewarding than STEM fields. Understanding how labor trend awareness affects HUMSS students' career choices in Rosales Municipality matters for policy development.

This research offers significance in multiple ways. First, it provides localized evidence on factors influencing career choices among HUMSS Grade 12 students in Rosales, giving information for school administrators, policymakers, and career counselors. Second, it identifies gaps in current educational practices, particularly in career guidance, allowing for improvement of programs to help students make informed career choices.

The findings will improve career guidance frameworks by increasing relevance to students' experiences. By identifying specific factors shaping career choices, the study can propose policy recommendations that align with students' situations, goals, and changing labor market needs. These may include personalized career counseling, increased parent and community involvement in guidance programs, and industry partnerships offering exposure to various career options.

Education must go beyond content delivery to prepare students for effective societal participation. Career decision-making forms a basic part of this preparation. Therefore, studying career choice factors among HUMSS Grade 12 students in Rosales constitutes a necessary effort to promote educational equity, socioeconomic mobility, and personal fulfillment for youth. This study aimed to contribute to an educational system that helps students make effective career choices.

Research Questions

This study aimed to determine the factors influencing, as well as the extent to which these factors affect, the career choices of Grade 12 Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) students in the Municipality of Rosales, serving as a basis for policy recommendations to address gaps in career support for learners. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the socio-demographic profiles of HUMSS Grade 12 students in terms of:
 - 1.1. age;
 - 1.2. sex;
 - 1.3. socio-economic status; and
 - 1.4. parental education level?
2. What is the extent of influence on the career choices of HUMSS Grade 12 students in terms of:
 - 2.1. family expectations;
 - 2.2. financial considerations;
 - 2.3. peer influence;
 - 2.4. school environment; and
 - 2.5. societal and cultural expectations?
3. What are the significant relationships between socio-demographic factors and the extent of external influence on the career choices of HUMSS Grade 12 learners?
4. What are the existing career guidance programs and support mechanisms available to HUMSS Grade 12 students in the Municipality of Rosales, and how effective are they in assisting learners in making informed career choices?
5. What are the specific gaps or limitations perceived by the Grade 12 students in the delivery of career guidance services in the public senior high schools of the Municipality of Rosales?
6. What policy recommendations can be formulated to enhance career guidance programs and support mechanisms for HUMSS Grade 12 students in the Municipality of Rosales?

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design, which aimed to describe the characteristics of a population or phenomenon and examine the relationship between two or more variables without manipulating them, to investigate the factors influencing the career choices of Grade 12 HUMSS students in the Municipality of Rosales. The associations between sociodemographic factors - like age, sex, socioeconomic status, and parental education - and extrinsic factors - like peer pressure, family expectations, financial concerns, the school environment, and societal and cultural expectations - were ascertained using the descriptive-correlational design. Without changing any variables, the researchers were able to gauge how strongly these aspects correlate with the students' professional selections thanks to this design.

Respondents

This study employed purposive sampling to determine the respondents. The participants consisted of 164 Grade 12 students enrolled under the Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) strand from four public high schools in the Municipality of Rosales. These schools were purposively selected since they are among the public senior high schools in the Municipality of Rosales that offer the Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) strand and are easily accessible for data gathering. The population of Grade 12 HUMSS students from each school is as follows: Rosales National High School with 93 students, Guiling-Coliling National High School with 28 students, Robert B. Estrella Memorial National High School with 26 students, and San Luis National High School with 17 students. This brings the total number of respondents to 164.

Purposive sampling was employed for the study as it allowed the deliberate selection of participants who were most relevant to the research objectives. Since the study focused on the factors influencing the career choices of HUMSS Grade 12 students, schools that specifically offered the HUMSS strand were chosen to ensure that the data gathered aligned with the scope and purpose of the investigation. This method ensured that the sample reflected the target population and provided meaningful insights into the research topic.

Only students who were enrolled in the HUMSS strand and were in the process of deciding on a career were included in the study. This method guaranteed that the data collected were targeted and relevant to the study topics, particularly in determining the factors that influenced career choices and in creating policy recommendations suited to the needs of this specific group.

Instrument

A survey questionnaire created specifically to collect information on the factors influencing career choices among Grade 12 HUMSS (Humanities and Social Sciences) students in the Municipality of Rosales served as the research tool for this study. The questionnaire consisted of four primary sections: the sociodemographic profile, variables impacting career choices, career guidance programs and support methods, and perceived gaps or limitations in career guidance services. Using a mix of multiple-choice questions and Likert scale evaluations, it aimed to gather quantitative data to measure the factors that influenced students' career choices.

Simple questions about the students were asked in the first section of the questionnaire, such as their age, sex, family income, and the length of time their parents spent in school. These inquiries aided in understanding the various contexts in which the students were operating. For example, some did not have many resources at home, while others had parents who could guide them better because of their own education. Knowing these factors helped reveal how family background and life circumstances affected the kinds of careers learners dreamed about or felt were possible for them.

The second section examined the impact of external influences on a learner's career choices. It included statements about family expectations, financial concerns, peer pressure, school environment, and cultural or societal norms. Learners rated how much each factor influenced them on a scale from 1 (No Influence) to 4 (Very High Influence (VHI)). This helped identify which areas had the greatest impact on their decisions. For instance, it explored whether students felt pressured by family to choose certain careers or how much their friends and school environment shaped their choices. It also assessed whether cultural traditions or community values made them feel obligated to follow a specific career path.

The questionnaire's third section focused on the resources accessible to students for career assistance and support. It examined the kinds of services students had received, such as career orientation seminars, individual counseling, and career fairs, whether they had participated in any career assistance sessions, and how effective they believed these services were. The purpose of this section was to evaluate the career services already provided by schools and identify areas where students felt more assistance was needed. For example, students expressed a need for more practical experiences, such as internships, or greater exposure to professionals from different industries. It also gathered feedback on what services could be added or improved to help students make better career choices.

The fourth section of the questionnaire delved into identifying the gaps or limitations in the career guidance services offered by the school. It included various items that represented commonly expected elements of an effective career support program, such as individualized counseling, access to career information, frequency of orientation activities, and exposure to real-world career opportunities.

All things considered, the research tool was designed to gather comprehensive information that enabled the researcher to examine how educational, familial, social, and personal factors interacted to influence career choices. Multiple-choice questions and Likert scale evaluations worked together to ensure that the data collected were precise and quantifiable. The insights gathered from this instrument were then used to develop policy recommendations aimed at improving career guidance programs in schools to better assist students in making appropriate and well-informed career choices.

Procedure

The data collection process followed specific guidelines to ensure that the information gathered was both reliable and useful. To examine the factors influencing the career choices of Grade 12 students, the researcher first developed a survey questionnaire. This instrument underwent a review for clarity, was pilot tested with a small group of students, and was revised as necessary based on feedback to ensure its accuracy and alignment with the study objectives.

After the questionnaire was finalized, the researcher sought approval from school authorities. Formal requests were sent to the school heads of San Luis National High School, Rosales National High School, Robert B. Estrella Memorial National High School, and Guiling-Coliling National High School. These letters included an explanation of the study's purpose and requested permission to administer the survey. When required by institutional policies, the researcher also secured ethical clearance or approval from the Local Government Unit (LGU).

After obtaining the necessary permissions, the survey questionnaires were disseminated online using Google Forms. The link to the survey was shared with the target respondents—Grade 12 HUMSS students—through official school communication channels or

coordination with designated school personnel such as class advisers or guidance counselors. Purposive sampling was employed to ensure the inclusion of a diverse group of participants based on demographics such as sex and socioeconomic status.

Participants were informed that their responses would remain confidential, participation was voluntary, and clear instructions were provided at the beginning of the form. The responses were collected through Google Forms, and then the researcher reviewed the data for completeness and consistency. Incomplete or questionable responses were flagged for further validation. The collected data were then systematically organized, analyzed, and interpreted in line with the objectives of the study. Ethical standards were upheld throughout the process to protect participants' rights and ensure data confidentiality, thereby supporting the credibility and trustworthiness of the study results.

Following data collection, the responses were arranged and loaded into a statistical analysis application. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, means, and standard deviations were used to code and evaluate the quantitative data from the Likert scale questions. The researcher ensured that the rights of the students were respected and that data gathering was carried out carefully. There were no repercussions for students who decided to decline or withdraw from the study at any point, as participation was entirely voluntary. All responses were combined to prevent any individual from being identified, and their names and identities were kept confidential. Additionally, students were assured that any information they provided would remain private. Throughout the study, these measures were implemented to ensure that every participant felt valued and safe.

Data Analysis

This study employed appropriate statistical tools to analyze the data collected from the respondents. The statistical methods were selected based on the research questions to ensure a meaningful interpretation of the results. To answer the first research question regarding the socio-demographic profile of the HUMSS Grade 12 students in terms of age, sex, socio-economic status, and parental education level, frequency counts, percentages, and means were used. These descriptive statistics provided a clear picture of the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

For the second research question, which sought to determine the extent of external influences on career choices, weighted means and standard deviations were computed. A four-point Likert scale interpretation was used to describe the level of influence of each factor. To address the third research question concerning the relationships among socio-demographic factors and the extent of external influence on career choices, the Chi-Square of Independence was employed. This statistical tool determined whether there was a significant association between students' socio-demographic variables—such as age, sex, socio-economic status, and parental education level—and the degree to which external factors influenced their career choices. The results helped identify patterns of dependency or independence among these variables, providing a basis for targeted policy interventions and guidance strategies.

For the fourth research question on existing career guidance programs and their perceived effectiveness, frequency counts, and percentages were used to describe the data. For the fifth research question on perceived gaps or limitations in career guidance services, the appropriate statistical treatment was also frequency counts and percentages. This method aligned with the categorical nature of the data and was consistent in identifying the most common gaps perceived by the students. For the sixth research question on policy recommendations, qualitative analysis was conducted based on the findings from the previous research questions. The policy recommendations were formulated through the synthesis of quantitative and qualitative data, focusing on addressing identified gaps in current career guidance practices.

All quantitative data were processed using appropriate statistical software, with a significance level set at $\alpha = 0.05$ for all inferential statistics. This comprehensive approach to data analysis provided the necessary insights to understand the factors influencing career choices among HUMSS Grade 12 students and to develop evidence-based policy recommendations.

Results and Discussion

This section presents the data gathered in this study and the analysis and interpretations of the results. These are presented in accordance with the sequence of the stated problems.

Specifically, it presents the socio-demographic profile of the student-respondents, the extent of external influence on career choices, the extent of external Influence on career choices along financial considerations, the extent of external Influence on career choices along peer influence, the extent external influence on career choices along school environment, the extent of external influence on career choices along societal and cultural expectations, the relationship between socio-demographic profile and the extent of external influence on career choices, career guidance services and support mechanisms, and the perceived gaps/Issues in career guidance services in the career choices of humanities and social sciences Grade 12 students in the Municipality of Rosales

Socio-Demographic Profile of the Student-Respondents

This section presents the socio-demographic characteristics of the HUMSS Grade 12 student-respondents, including their age, sex, family income, and parents' educational attainment. Understanding these profiles provides context for analyzing how personal and family backgrounds may shape students' career choices and access to guidance resources.

The demographic characteristics of the respondents provide the necessary context for understanding the background from which they make their career decisions. Table 1 presents the socio-demographic profile of the student-respondents in terms of age, sex, family monthly income, and parents' highest educational attainment.

Table 1. *Socio-Demographic Profile of the Student-Respondents*

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Age	17 years old	110	67.1
	16 years old	31	18.9
	18 years old	20	12.2
	19 years old	2	1.2
	20 years old and above	1	0.6
Sex	Male	74	45.1
	Female	87	53.1
	Prefer not to say	3	1.8
Family monthly income (in Php)	above 40,000	4	2.4
	30,001-40,000	2	1.2
	20,001-30,000	16	9.8
	10,001-20,000	22	13.4
	below 10,000	120	73.2
Parents' highest educational attainment	Father		
	Post Graduate Studies	6	3.7
	College Graduate	39	23.8
	High School Graduate	104	63.4
	Elementary Graduate	15	9.1
	Mother		
	Post Graduate Studies	5	3.1
	College Graduate	43	26.2
	High School Graduate	104	63.4
	Elementary Graduate	12	7.3

Note: N=164. Family monthly income brackets are reported in Philippine pesos and reflect self-reported estimates by the respondents. Parents' highest educational attainment is reported separately for fathers and mothers and refers to the highest completed level of formal schooling.

Table 1 presents the socio-demographic profile of the 164 Grade 12 Humanities and Social Sciences student respondents in the Municipality of Rosales. Half of the respondents (56.7%) came from Rosales National High School, followed by Guiling-Coliling National High School (17.1%), Robert B. Estrella Memorial National High School (15.8%), and San Luis National High School (10.4%).

The majority of the respondents were 17 years old (67.1 percent), followed by those aged 16 years (18.9 percent) and 18 years (12.2 percent), indicating that the sample is concentrated in late adolescence, which is often identified in career development literature as a critical period for crystallizing career preferences.

In terms of sex, there was a slight predominance of female students (53.1 percent) compared with male students (45.1 percent), with a small proportion (1.8 percent) who preferred not to disclose their sex. With respect to family monthly income, more than two-thirds of the respondents (73.2 percent) reported that their households earned below ₱10,000, while only a small minority fell within the higher income brackets above ₱20,000. This pattern suggests that most HUMSS learners in the four participating public schools are situated in economically disadvantaged contexts.

The educational attainment of parents shows a similar concentration at the lower formal education levels. For both fathers and mothers, the modal category was high school graduate (63.4 percent), with only about one fourth having completed college and very few holding postgraduate degrees. This profile indicates that many respondents come from families with limited formal schooling and constrained financial resources, a context which previous studies associate with narrowed perceived career options and a heightened need for systematic, school-based career guidance.

Extent of External Influence on Career Choices

This part explores the degree to which various external factors - such as family expectations, financial considerations, peer influence, school environment, and societal norms - affect the career choices of HUMSS students. The analysis helps identify which domains exert the strongest influence and how students navigate these pressures in making career-related decisions.

Table 2 presents the extent to which family expectations influence the career choices of HUMSS Grade 12 students in the Municipality of Rosales. It summarizes student responses to five indicators related to parental expectations, encouragement, advice seeking, and perceived pressure, using a four-point Likert scale where higher weighted means indicate stronger influence.

Table 2. *Extent of External Influence on Career Choices along Family Expectations*

Indicators	WM	Descriptive Equivalent
1. My family encourages me to choose a career based on my skills and interests.	3.09	High Influence
2. My parents have specific expectations about the career I should pursue.	2.84	High Influence
3. I often seek advice from my family when making career choices.	2.67	High Influence
4. My career choice aligns with my family's wishes.	2.43	Low Influence
5. I feel pressured by my family to follow a particular career path.	2.23	Low Influence
Average Weighted Mean	2.65	High Influence

Note: 1.00-1.49 (No Influence); 1.50- 2.49 (Low Influence); 2.50- 3.49 (High Influence); 3.50- 4.00 (Very High Influence)

Based on the data presented in Table 2, the Extent of External Influence on Career Choices along Family Expectations is perceived as a strong influence, with an average weighted mean (AWM) of 2.65. The data indicate that this influence is primarily positive and supportive rather than coercive. The highest-rated indicator, "My family encourages me to choose a career based on my skills and interests" (WM=3.09), falls within the High Influence range. This suggests that while families are deeply involved in the process, which is evidenced by students actively seeking their advice (WM=2.67), they prioritize the student's personal aptitude over rigid imposition.

Conversely, indicators related to strict compliance received lower ratings. "I feel pressured by my family to follow a particular career path" obtained the lowest mean of 2.23 (Low Influence), and alignment with family wishes was also rated as Low Influence (WM=2.43). This dynamic supports the findings of Smith and Green (2023), who noted that in many collectivist cultures, parental influence operates as a support system rather than a source of conflict. While parents do hold specific expectations (WM=2.84), the respondents perceive this as guidance rather than a mandate, allowing them to retain a sense of agency in their decision-making.

Financial stability is often a primary determinant in career planning, particularly for students facing economic constraints. Table 3 presents the extent of external influence on career choices in terms of financial considerations. It assesses five indicators regarding how economic factors such as salary, job security, and family financial status affect the students' career planning.

Table 3. *Extent of Influence on Career Choices along with Financial Considerations*

Indicators	WM	Descriptive Equivalent
1. The potential for financial growth in a career affects my choice.	3.03	High Influence
2. I consider the future salary of a career when making my decision.	3.00	High Influence
3. I think about job security and stability when choosing a career.	3.00	High Influence
4. I prefer career options that provide financial independence early on.	3.00	High Influence
5. My family's financial situation influences my career choices.	2.93	High Influence
Average Weighted Mean	2.99	High Influence

Note: 1.00-1.49 (No Influence); 1.50- 2.49 (Low Influence); 2.50- 3.49 (High Influence); 3.50- 4.00 (Very High Influence)

Based on the data presented in Table 3, Financial factors were identified as the most influential domain, with an AWM of 2.99. This indicates that economic viability is the most critical filter for HUMSS students in Rosales when selecting a profession. The respondents rated "The potential for financial growth" as the most influential indicator (WM=3.03), followed closely by future salary, job security, and early financial independence, all of which obtained a weighted mean of 3.00. These findings highlight a pragmatic approach to career decision-making. Given that the majority of respondents come from low-income households, their choices are driven by a need for economic mobility and security rather than just personal interest. This aligns with the observations of Liu (2022) and Lopez and Garcia (2024), who posit that for students from economically vulnerable backgrounds, the "return on investment" of a degree, specifically its ability to provide immediate financial stability, often outweighs passion or prestige. The strong influence of the family's financial situation (WM=2.93) further confirms that students are acutely aware of their role in alleviating their family's economic burdens.

Adolescence is often characterized by a strong reliance on social circles; however, career decision-making may present a different dynamic. Table 4 presents the extent of external influence on career choices in terms of peer influence.

Table 4. *Extent of External Influence on Career Choices along with Peer Influence*

Indicators	WM	Descriptive Equivalent
1. The career choices of my peers help guide my own career decision-making.	2.50	High Influence
2. I feel influenced by what my friends and peers think is a "good career".	2.36	Low Influence
3. I often discuss career options with my friends and peers before deciding.	2.36	Low Influence
4. I consider the career paths of my peers when making my own decisions.	2.31	Low Influence
5. My friends' opinions influence my career choice.	1.85	Low Influence
Average Weighted Mean	2.28	Low Influence

Note: 1.00-1.49 (No Influence); 1.50- 2.49 (Low Influence); 2.50- 3.49 (High Influence); 3.50- 4.00 (Very High Influence)

Unlike financial and school factors, Peer Influence received an overall rating of Low Influence, with an Average Weighted Mean (AWM) of 2.28. The data suggests that while students may observe their peers, they do not rely on them for final decisions. The highest-rated indicator, "The career choices of my peers help guide my own career decision-making," yielded a mean of 2.50, bordering on strong influence. This implies that peers serve as a passive reference point rather than active advisors. Notably, the statement "My friends' opinions influence my career choice" received the lowest rating (1.85), indicating that students actively separate their friends'

preferences from their own life goals. This finding diverges from studies conducted in highly urbanized settings, such as those by Garcia (2021) and Fabros (2024), which often cite peer pressure as a dominant force. In the context of Rosales, the results indicate a more independent decision-making process regarding peers, likely because the stakes of the decision driven by the financial realities are too high to be left to social conformity.

The educational environment serves as the primary setting where students explore their interests and aptitudes. Table 5 presents the extent of external influence on career choices in terms of the school environment.

Table 5. Extent of External Influence on Career Choices along School Environment

<i>Indicators</i>	<i>WM</i>	<i>Descriptive Equivalent</i>
1. I believe the academic subjects I excel in influence my career path.	3.08	High Influence
2. Career guidance activities in school helped shape my career choice.	2.92	High Influence
3. My school offers programs that provide real-world career exposure and opportunities.	2.84	High Influence
4. The career fairs organized by my school impacted my career choice.	2.78	High Influence
5. Teachers and school counselors influenced my career choice.	2.59	High Influence
Average Weighted Mean	2.84	High Influence

Note: 1.00-1.49 (No Influence); 1.50- 2.49 (Low Influence); 2.50- 3.49 (High Influence); 3.50- 4.00 (Very High Influence)

Table 5 shows that the school environment was rated as having a strong influence (AWM = 2.84). Among the specific indicators, academic performance emerged as the strongest factor, obtaining the highest weighted mean of 3.08. This suggests that students rely heavily on their curricular experiences, specifically their self-efficacy in HUMSS-related subjects, to gauge their suitability for future professions. Structured career interventions also play a pivotal role, with career guidance activities (WM=2.92) and real-world exposure programs (WM=2.84) both rated as highly influential. Notably, while the programs received high ratings, the direct influence of Teachers and School Counselors received the lowest mean in this category (2.59), though it remains within the High Influence range. This disparity suggests that while students value the activities and curriculum provided by the school, they may be relying less on one-on-one advice from school personnel. This supports the findings of Gonzalez and Cruz (2024) and Lopez (2020), who emphasize that a school's structural support, through curriculum and organized events, is often more impactful than individual counseling in resource-constrained settings.

Career choices are rarely made in a vacuum. They are often reflections of the values and examples present in the wider community. Table 6 presents the extent of external influence on career choices in terms of societal and cultural expectations.

Table 6. Extent of External Influence on Career Choices along Societal and Cultural Expectations

<i>Indicators</i>	<i>WM</i>	<i>Descriptive Equivalent</i>
The success stories of professionals in my community impact my career choices.	2.87	High Influence
I feel a sense of duty to choose a career that aligns with community values.	2.73	High Influence
The social prestige of certain careers influences my decision-making.	2.71	High Influence
I consider societal expectations when choosing a career.	2.58	High Influence
Cultural traditions in my community influence my career choice.	2.48	Low Influence
Average Weighted Mean	2.67	High Influence

Note: 1.00-1.49 (No Influence); 1.50- 2.49 (Low Influence); 2.50- 3.49 (High Influence); 3.50- 4.00 (Very High Influence)

Based on the data presented in Table 6, societal and cultural expectations were also rated as highly influential (AWM = 2.67). Students were influenced by success stories in their community (WM = 2.87). This suggests that students look to tangible examples of success within Rosales to validate their own aspirations. Furthermore, students expressed a strong sensitivity to social validation, as seen in the high ratings for feeling a "sense of duty" (WM=2.73) and valuing "social prestige" (WM=2.71). Interestingly, the influence of "cultural traditions" received the lowest rating of 2.48 (Low Influence). This divergence indicates a shift in values. While students seek careers that are respected and prestigious (modern success), they feel less bound by historical or traditional community customs. This supports the observations of Bautista and De Guzman (2024), who note that in evolving economies, the definition of a "good career" is increasingly defined by professional prestige and economic viability rather than by adherence to traditional roles.

To provide a holistic view of the forces shaping student decision-making, it is necessary to compare the relative weight of each external factor. Table 7 presents the summary of the extent of external influence on career choices, ranking the domains from highest to lowest impact.

Table 7. Summary of the Extent of Influence on Career Choices

<i>Domains</i>	<i>WM</i>	<i>Descriptive Equivalent</i>
Financial Considerations	2.99	High Influence
School Environment	2.84	High Influence
Societal and Cultural Expectations	2.67	High Influence
Family Expectations	2.65	High Influence
Peer Influence	2.28	Low Influence
Overall Weighted Mean	2.69	HIGH INFLUENCE

Note: 1.00-1.49 (No Influence); 1.50- 2.49 (Low Influence); 2.50- 3.49 (High Influence); 3.50- 4.00 (Very High Influence)

The overall extent of external influence on career choices was rated as a strong influence as perceived in Table 7, with an overall weighted mean of 2.69. This is followed closely by the School Environment (AWM = 2.84) and Societal and Cultural Expectations (AWM = 2.67). Family Expectations ranked fourth but remained within the High Influence range (AWM = 2.65). Notably, Peer Influence was the only domain rated as Low Influence, ranking last with an AWM of 2.28.

The overall weighted mean of 2.69 indicates that, collectively, external factors exert a High Influence on the career choices of HUMSS Grade 12 students. This hierarchy reveals a highly pragmatic decision-making process wherein students prioritize economic viability and institutional guidance over social conformity with peers. This aligns with the study's conceptual framework, which posits that students navigate a complex network of pressures where "return on investment" (financial) and structural support (school) outweigh the horizontal influence of friendship groups.

Significant Relationship between Socio-Demographic Profile and the Extent of External Influence on Career Choices

To determine if a student's background dictates the level of pressure they face, the study analyzed the relationships between socio-demographic profiles and external influences. Table 8 presents the test statistics for these associations.

Table 8. Socio-Demographic Profile and Its Relationship to the Extent of Factors Influencing Career Choice

Socio-Demographic Profile	Test Statistics	Extent Of Factors Influencing Career Choice							
		Financial Considerations		School Environment		Societal and Cultural Expectations		Peer Influence	
		Correlation Value	p-value	Correlation Value	p-value	Correlation Value	p-value	Correlation Value	p-value
Age	Pearson's r	r= -0.840**	0.020	r= -0.820**	0.030	r= 0.800**	0.040	r= -0.00084	0.992
Sex	Chi-Square of Independence	$\chi^2= 8.91$ **	0.030	$\chi^2= 9.91$ **	0.040	$\chi^2= 7.50$ **	0.020	$\chi^2= 8.91$	0.710
Family monthly income	Chi-Square of Independence	$\chi^2= 15.62$ **	0.040	$\chi^2= 14.40$	0.030	$\chi^2= 15.00$ **	0.040	$\chi^2= 19.62$	0.074
Parents' highest educational attainment	Spearman's rho	rho= -0.820**	0.030	rho= -0.800**	0.040	rho= -0.805**	0.040	rho= -0.044	0.629

** significant at .05

To determine if a student's background dictates the level of pressure they face, the study analyzed the relationships between socio-demographic profiles and external influences. Table 8 presents the test statistics for these associations.

The analysis reveals significant negative correlations between Age and external factors such as Financial Considerations ($r = -0.840$, $p = 0.020$) and School Environment ($r = -0.820$, $p = 0.030$). This indicates an inverse relationship: younger respondents tend to perceive higher levels of external influence, while older students demonstrate greater autonomy. This supports the findings of Valdez and Bautista (2022), who noted that as students mature in Grade 12, they become more capable of making deliberate, independent judgments.

Socio-economic Status (Income) and Parents' Educational Attainment also showed significant relationships with Financial, School, and Societal influences. Notably, Parents' Education displayed strong negative correlations (e.g., Financial: $\rho = -0.820$). This implies that students with parents who have lower educational attainment feel significantly more pressure from financial and societal expectations. This corroborates Mendoza and Recio (2022) and Aquino (2023), who observed that students from lower-income or less educated households often prioritize practical, secure career paths due to heightened economic pressure. Conversely, students from higher-status backgrounds may possess the "safety net" that allows for more independent choices.

Finally, Peer Influence yielded no significant relationships across any demographic variable ($p > 0.05$). This suggests that the low impact of peers (established in Table 4) is a universal trend among the respondents, unaffected by their age, sex, or economic status.

Career Guidance Services and Support Mechanisms

This portion highlights the career guidance programs and support mechanisms available to HUMSS students in Rosales. It identifies the types of interventions students have experienced, such as seminars, counseling, and career fairs, and evaluates their effectiveness in helping students make informed career choices.

The availability of structured support systems is crucial for guiding students through the complexities of career planning. Table 9 presents the career guidance services and support mechanisms utilized by the respondents, detailing the types of interventions most frequently accessed.

Based on the data presented in Table 9, the career guidance model in Rosales is dominated by mass-oriented activities. Career orientation seminars were the most frequently reported service, accounting for 42.5% of the total responses, followed by individual career counseling (22.8%) and career fairs (15.5%). This distribution suggests that while schools are active in disseminating general information, the approach is heavily skewed toward "one-size-fits-all" seminars rather than personalized or tech-driven interventions. Notably, the use of online career assessment tools was minimal, comprising only 8.3% of the responses.

Table 9. Career Guidance Services and Support Mechanisms

Intervention/Activity	Frequency	Percent
Career orientation seminars	82	42.5
Individual career counseling	44	22.8
Career fairs	30	15.5
Online career assessment tools	16	8.3
Multiple combined (2 or more stated)	10	5.2
None / wala / NA	6	3.1
Career guidance (general/program)	5	2.6
Total	193	100.0

Note: There are 193 given answers. Percentages are based on the total number of responses provided, as students were permitted to select multiple or combined interventions.

This reliance on traditional, broad-spectrum methods aligns with the observation of the UP Career Services Department (2023), which notes that effective guidance requires a more diversified approach. The current framework may leave gaps in personalization, as evidenced by the 3.1% of responses indicating no services received ("None / wala / NA") and the low utilization of combined services (5.2%). To fully support HUMSS students, schools may need to pivot from purely informational seminars to more interactive and individualized support mechanisms.

Perceived Gaps/Issues in Career Guidance Services

This section outlines the limitations and challenges students perceive in the delivery of career guidance services in their schools. It includes concerns such as a lack of regular programs, insufficient strand-specific support, and limited exposure to real-world career environments, which may hinder students from making well-informed decisions. Effective policy planning requires a clear identification of existing deficiencies. Table 10 presents the perceived gaps and issues in the delivery of career guidance services in the public senior high schools of Rosales.

Table 10. Perceived Gaps/Issues in Career Guidance

Gaps/Issues	Frequency	Percent
1. Lack of regular career orientation programs.	73	44.5
2. Lack of exposure to work environments (field trips, internships, job shadowing).	49	29.9
3. Career guidance is not tailored to strands (e.g., HUMSS).	40	24.4
4. Career talks/seminars are infrequent or poorly attended.	39	23.8
5. Insufficient involvement of parents.	38	23.2
6. Career guidance is not integrated into class activities.	35	21.3
7. Students' feedback not collected/considered.	31	18.9
8. Students unaware of schedule/availability of services	31	18.9
9. Career guidance focused only on college (not employment/entrepreneurship)	30	18.3
10. Career planning materials not available	27	16.5
11. No assessment of students' interests/strengths	26	15.9
12. Inadequate number of guidance counselors	24	14.6
13. Limited access to updated career/labor market info	21	12.8
14. Lack of one-on-one career counseling	20	12.2
15. No industry/university partnerships	15	9.1

Note: There are 15 gaps/issues recorded. Multiple responses were allowed. Percentages represent the proportion of the 164 respondents who identified each specific gap.

Table 10 shows that the most pervasive issue, identified by nearly half of the respondents (44.5%), is the "Lack of regular career orientation programs." This indicates that students view the current interventions as sporadic events rather than a continuous support system. This finding corroborates the observations of Tolentino and Ignacio (2024), who noted that many schools provide insufficient guidance that fails to address student needs comprehensively.

Furthermore, 29.9% reported a "Lack of exposure to work environments" such as field trips and internships. This deficit negates the ideal setup described by Gonzalez and Cruz (2024), who argue that strong career counseling programs must include mentorship and exposure to various job sectors to build student confidence. Additionally, 23.8% noted that "Career talks or seminars are infrequent or poorly attended," highlighting a consistency gap.

A significant portion of the students felt the guidance provided was too generic. "Career guidance is not tailored to specific strands" was a concern for 24.4% of respondents. This aligns with the findings of Tolentino and Ignacio (2024), who emphasized that generic guidance often fails to address the specific strengths and potentials of students in specialized tracks like HUMSS. Additionally, 21.3% noted that "Career guidance is not integrated in regular class activities," while 18.3% observed that guidance "Focuses only on college, not on employment or entrepreneurship." These findings suggest a disconnect between the curriculum and practical career planning, echoing Manalo (2025), who stressed the need for education to adapt to changing job market requirements like automation and digital transformation.

The data also highlights systemic communication gaps. "Insufficient involvement of parents" was cited by 23.2% of students. This is

a critical gap given the study's earlier finding (Table 2) that family expectations significantly influence choices. It suggests schools are failing to leverage the family unit as a partner, a strategy recommended by Bautista (2022). Institutional communication is also lacking, with 18.9% stating they are "Unaware of the schedule or availability of career services," and another 18.9% (\$f=31\$) reporting that "Students' feedback is not collected or considered."

Finally, students identified tangible resource deficits. 16.5% indicated that "Career planning materials" are not readily available, and 12.8% reported "Limited access to updated career and labor market information." In terms of personnel, 14.6% perceived an "Inadequate number of trained guidance counselors," contributing to the "Lack of one-on-one career counseling opportunities" noted by 12.2%. This supports Santos and Reyes (2024), who found that when schools lack sufficient resources or qualified personnel, students are forced to rely on potentially unreliable outside sources. Assessments are also underutilized, with 15.9% stating there is "No assessment of students' interests and strengths." The least cited but still relevant gap is the "No established partnership with industries or universities", which limits the "real-world" exposure students desire.

Collectively, these gaps paint a picture of a career guidance system that is often irregular and generic. The findings strongly validate the "Input" constraints identified in the study's conceptual framework, confirming that without consistent, tailored, and resource-backed interventions, students are left to navigate their career choices with insufficient institutional support.

Conclusions

The following conclusions were drawn from the results of the study.

Career choices among HUMSS students are shaped more by external influences than by personal demographics. Financial considerations and school-based support play a dominant role, while peer influence is minimal. Students from low-income families are highly pragmatic in their career choices, prioritizing financial stability and accessibility over personal interest or long-term aspirations. Parental expectations remain influential, but students demonstrate a degree of autonomy, especially when family support aligns with their skills and interests. School environments significantly contribute to career awareness, but current career guidance programs are often generic and lack depth, particularly for HUMSS students. Societal and cultural norms continue to guide students toward traditionally prestigious careers, sometimes at the expense of personal interest or creativity. There is no significant correlation between socio-demographic factors and the extent of influence, suggesting that career guidance interventions should be inclusive and universally accessible.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance career guidance and support mechanisms for HUMSS students in Rosales:

Career guidance programs should be designed to be inclusive and universally accessible, regardless of students' age, sex, income level, or parental education. Schools should avoid assumptions based on demographic profiles and instead focus on individual needs and aspirations. Schools and LGUs should implement financial literacy workshops and provide information on scholarships, grants, and affordable career paths. Career guidance should include discussions on the cost of education, return on investment, and alternative pathways such as technical-vocational careers or entrepreneurship. Schools should organize family-inclusive career planning sessions to foster open communication between students and parents. Materials and seminars should help parents understand modern career trends and support their children's interests and strengths. Provide strand-specific career guidance, especially tailored for HUMSS students, conduct regular career orientation seminars, career fairs, and immersion programs, and train teachers and guidance counselors to deliver personalized career advice and integrate career topics into classroom discussions.

Career guidance should include awareness campaigns that promote diverse career options, including those in the arts, humanities, and social sciences. Schools should highlight success stories from non-traditional fields and encourage students to pursue careers aligned with their passions and talents. LGUs and schools should collaborate with local industries, universities, and professionals to offer internships, job shadowing, and field trips, career talks, mentorship programs, and online career assessment tools and platforms. Schools should establish a career guidance calendar with scheduled activities throughout the school year, ensure career planning materials are available and updated, collect and use student feedback to improve career services, and advocate for additional trained guidance counselors in schools. Future studies should explore additional variables such as personality traits, academic performance, and regional labor market trends. Comparative research across strands, municipalities, and school types can provide broader insights to inform national and local policy development.

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