



Ano ang Kukunin Mo sa College?: A Qualitative Study of Grade 12 GAS Students' Career Path Choices

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.23683316

Mary Ahmberlee T. Villafranca

Lewis Chance M. Catina

Kurt Yazzer A. Pada

Shanelle Diane S. Bana

Hanna Vyel T. Mira

Raizell Ann M. Saycon

Joseph L. Torres

Tanjay City Science High School, Tanjay City, Division, Negros Oriental, Philippines

<https://orcid.org/0009-0008-1516-1743>

Abstract

Career decision-making can be challenging for Grade 12 students in the General Academic Strand (GAS) because its broad curriculum exposes them to various career paths without directing them toward one specific field. While previous studies have identified factors affecting students' career choices, fewer have explored how students personally experience and navigate the decision-making process, particularly among GAS students. This study explored how Grade 12 GAS students experience career decision-making, the factors influencing their choices, the challenges they encounter, and the support they find helpful. An exploratory qualitative design was used, with data gathered through a face-to-face group discussion using a semi-structured interview guide. Participants were Grade 12 GAS students from Lourdes Ledesma Del Prado Memorial National High School, selected through purposive sampling. Findings showed that students' career decisions were influenced by personal interests, family involvement, financial support, and their awareness of their skills and abilities. However, many remained uncertain about their final career path. Financial constraints, limited strand or school offerings, and fear of making the wrong decision emerged as major challenges. Family, peers, and personal research served as important sources of guidance. GAS flexibility was viewed as both an advantage, allowing students to explore different fields, and a challenge, as having many choices sometimes delayed commitment. The findings highlight the need for schools and counselors to provide structured career exploration, financial guidance, and responsive support to help GAS students make informed and confident career decisions.

Keywords: *Career decision-making, General Academic Strand, Grade 12 students, qualitative study, career path choices*

Introduction

Choosing a career is a complex, high-stakes process that shapes a person's future, daily satisfaction, and sense of identity. This challenge is especially pronounced for Grade 12 students under the General Academic Strand (GAS), since the strand's broad, non-specialized curriculum exposes them to a wide range of possible career paths without pointing them toward any one direction. Unlike students in specialized strands such as STEM, ABM, HUMSS, or TVL, GAS students often reach the end of senior high school still facing an unusually wide set of career and college-course options, with less built-in guidance to help them narrow their choices. As a result, many struggle to navigate this decision, pulled in different directions by their own interests, family expectations, and social or cultural pressures. Career choice has long been recognized as one of the most significant decisions in a person's life, influencing economic stability, psychological well-being, and self-concept. In the past, career decisions were often shaped more strongly by family tradition, economic necessity, or community expectation, since career options were more limited. Today, individuals face a much wider array of career paths, made possible by evolving industries, technology, and globalization. While this expansion offers greater freedom of choice, it has also made the decision-making process more complex and, for many students, more overwhelming — particularly those in generalist tracks like GAS, who lack the strand-specific preparation that helps other students narrow their focus early on. While the importance of career choice is widely recognized, most existing literature tends to concentrate on post-decision outcomes — job satisfaction, employee retention, career success — rather than on the decision-making process itself, especially among senior high school students. Few studies closely



examine how students actually think through their options, manage the pressures placed on them by family and society, and ultimately arrive at a final decision. This is a significant gap, because without understanding the process itself, teachers and school leaders are left addressing symptoms — confusion, indecision, mismatched choices, or delayed decisions — rather than the root cause: a poorly supported decision-making process. This study seeks to address this gap by closely examining how students go through the process of choosing a career, focusing on the personal reasoning, social pressures, and outside factors that shape their final decision. By understanding not just what students choose but how they arrive at that choice, this study hopes to provide meaningful insights that can help schools and counselors design more effective, responsive support systems for students navigating this critical stage of their academic lives.

Research Questions

1. How do Grade 12 General Academic Strand (GAS) students experience the process of choosing a career?
2. What factors influence the career choices of Grade 12 GAS students?
3. What challenges do Grade 12 GAS students encounter during their career decision-making process, and how do they cope with these challenges?
4. What support systems do Grade 12 GAS students identify as helpful or needed in making career decisions?

Literature Review

The Concept of Career Choice and Career Decision-Making

Career decision-making has been widely studied as a developmental process rather than a single, isolated event. One of the most influential frameworks used to explain this process is Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), developed by Lent, Brown, and Hackett (1994) and grounded in Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory. SCCT proposes three interconnected models: the development of career interests, the process of career decision-making, and the attainment of career-related performance. Central to the theory are the constructs of self-efficacy, or an individual's belief in their capacity to carry out career-related tasks, and outcome expectations, or the anticipated results of pursuing a given path. These beliefs, shaped by personal characteristics and background context, influence the interests that students form, the goals they set, and ultimately the actions they take toward a career. Beyond the formation of interests and goals, scholars have also examined the specific difficulties that arise as individuals attempt to commit to a career decision. Gati, Levin, and Landman-Tal (2019) explained that career decision-making is often a complex and overwhelming process because of the sheer volume of options and information that must be weighed, and they organized common decision-making difficulties into clusters related to a lack of readiness, a lack of information, and inconsistent information. This framework is useful for understanding why some students remain undecided even when career guidance and information are made available to them, since indecision may stem not only from a lack of exposure to options but also from unresolved internal barriers such as low readiness or conflicting information from different sources.

Within the Philippine setting, this relationship between indecision and self-efficacy has likewise been documented. Navarez (2018) found that career indecision among Filipino senior high school students was significantly and negatively related to career decision-making self-efficacy, meaning that students who doubted their ability to make sound career decisions tended to experience greater indecision. Interestingly, the same study reported no significant difference in the level of career indecision when students were grouped according to their academic strand, suggesting that uncertainty in career decision-making is not confined to any single track but is a broader experience shared across the senior high school population.

Career Decision-Making Among Filipino Senior High School Students

The implementation of the K to 12 program introduced academic tracks and strands intended to help students align their secondary education with their intended college courses and future careers. However, studies suggest that this alignment is not always straightforward. Yazon and Manaog (2020) examined senior high school students' perspectives on career decision-making across the different tracks and strands and found that students' experiences of choosing a career path vary considerably depending on the structure and specialization of the strand they belong to, with students in more generalized tracks reporting greater uncertainty about their eventual college course. A mixed-methods study by Fernandez, Balijon, and Ancho (2023) involving Grade 12 students and guidance counselors in Cebu City further illustrated the layered nature of these decisions. Their findings showed that students often chose careers based on what suited the needs of their family, on the popularity of a course or degree,



or on impressions gathered from social media platforms, and that many students admitted they lacked a clear motivation or deeper reason for the courses they intended to pursue. The guidance counselors interviewed in the same study reported being unable to provide adequate support because of heavy caseloads, sometimes exceeding a thousand students per counselor, alongside a shortage of guidance materials and budget. These findings point to a decision-making process that is shaped as much by practical and structural constraints as by students' personal interests.

The General Academic Strand and the Experience of Career Indecision

The General Academic Strand occupies a distinct position among the academic tracks precisely because it was designed for students who remain undecided about their intended college course. Tagsip (2025) described GAS as a pathway that allows students to pursue higher education despite this indecision, while cautioning that selecting a career remains a complex and overwhelming process given the number of options students must consider. The same study noted that a mismatch between the GAS curriculum and a student's eventual college degree can require bridging programs, adding both time and financial burden for families who are already navigating the uncertainty of their child's chosen path. A phenomenological study by Baret, Arquino, Awyan, Bucod, and Ortiz (2024) offered a closer look at how GAS students themselves experience this process. Drawing on in-depth interviews with seven Grade 12 GAS students, the study found that participants viewed the strand as a flexible learning foundation that allowed them to explore different subject areas before settling on a specific college course, and that many developed a genuine emotional connection to their studies despite the pressure of schoolwork and looming decisions. At the same time, the participants described real struggles in choosing a career, most notably financial constraints that forced some to set aside a preferred course in favor of one their family could afford, parental influence that at times overrode their own preferences, and peer pressure that made it difficult to distinguish their own aspirations from the opinions of friends and family. Despite these difficulties, the study observed that participants continued to approach their career decisions with determination, drawing on their personal aspirations to work through the obstacles they faced.

Factors Influencing Career Choice: Family, Peers, and Culture

The influence of family and community on career decision-making is particularly pronounced in collectivist societies such as the Philippines. Markus and Kitayama (2010) explained that in collectivist cultural contexts, an individual's sense of self is deeply interconnected with the expectations and opinions of family and community, which helps account for why many Filipino students consult a wide circle of people and often defer to their parents' aspirations when deciding on a career. This cultural backdrop shapes not only what students choose but how much autonomy they feel they have in making that choice.

Parental influence, in particular, can be a source of both support and conflict. Middleton & Loughhead (1993) observed that when parents impose their own preferred career paths on their children without regard for the child's personal aspirations, the result can be feelings of anxiety and resentment, along with a diminished sense of confidence in pursuing a path of their own choosing. Peers exert a comparable degree of influence: Hashim and Embong (2015) found that peer groups are among the most powerful sources of influence on students' professional choices, as students frequently seek validation from friends when weighing their options and may adjust their preferences to align with what their peer group considers a better or more flexible course.

Financial considerations add yet another layer of constraint to this process. In a study of STEM students at a South African university, Abe and Chikoko (2020) found that career decisions were heavily dependent on parents' income, with financial limitations directly restricting the range of courses students felt they could realistically pursue. This pattern echoes findings among Filipino students, where financial instability has similarly been shown to narrow the range of career options students consider viable, regardless of their personal interest in a particular field.

Career Guidance, Support Systems, and Research Gaps

Recognizing the importance of structured support in career decision-making, the Philippine government has established policies mandating career guidance for senior high school students, most notably Republic Act No. 11206, or the Secondary School Career Guidance and Counseling Act of 2019, and DepEd Order No. 41, series of 2015, which requires schools to implement career guidance programs and early registration procedures. These



policies reflect an institutional recognition that students need structured assistance in navigating career decisions rather than facing the process alone.

However, the practical implementation of these support systems has been uneven. As previously noted, Fernandez, Balijon, and Ancho (2023) documented that guidance counselors in public schools often manage caseloads far beyond what is manageable, leaving many students without the individualized guidance the policies intend to provide. Gati and Levin (2014) emphasized that effective counseling for career decision-making difficulties requires interventions tailored to the specific type of difficulty a student faces, whether related to readiness, information, or conflicting inputs, suggesting that generic or under-resourced guidance programs may fail to address the particular struggles individual students encounter.

Taken together, the reviewed literature shows that career decision-making among Filipino senior high school students is shaped by an interaction of personal, familial, cultural, and structural factors, and that GAS students in particular experience this process against a backdrop of open-ended options and limited built-in direction. However, much of the existing Philippine literature remains descriptive or correlational in design, concentrating on identifying the factors that influence career choice rather than examining how students actually experience and navigate the decision-making process itself.

Where qualitative accounts of GAS students' experiences do exist, they remain concentrated in a small number of localities, leaving the lived process of career decision-making among GAS students in other communities largely unexplored. This underscores the need for further qualitative inquiry that closely examines how Grade 12 GAS students' reason through, cope with, and ultimately arrive at their career decisions, thereby providing a fuller understanding that can inform more responsive guidance and support systems

Methodology

This study employed an exploratory qualitative research design to gain an in-depth understanding of the career decision-making experiences of Grade 12 General Academic Strand (GAS) students, focusing on how they choose their college courses and future career paths within their real-life educational context. The participants consisted of Grade 12 GAS students from the selected senior high school who had experienced making career-related decisions, and they were selected through purposive sampling to ensure that they could provide rich, relevant, and detailed information that addressed the objectives of the study. Data were gathered through a face-to-face group discussion using a semi-structured, researcher-developed interview guide based on the research questions, allowing participants to openly discuss their experiences, influencing factors, challenges, coping strategies, and the support systems that shaped their career choices. A survey was also administered to the selected students to provide additional information that supported the findings from the group discussion. Before the data gathering activities were conducted, informed consent was obtained from the participants. The group discussion was documented through audio recording, with the participants' permission, and written notes were also taken. The discussion was transcribed and carefully reviewed to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the collected data. The group discussion responses and survey results were analyzed using thematic analysis, while triangulation was conducted by comparing the information gathered from the survey and group discussion. To ensure the trustworthiness of the study, the researchers observed the qualitative criteria of credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability by maintaining an organized record of the research process, documenting the collected data, conducting careful and consistent data analysis, and ensuring that the findings accurately reflected the participants' perspectives. Throughout the study, ethical principles were strictly observed by protecting the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants, securing all research data, ensuring voluntary participation, informing participants of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without penalty, and using the collected information solely for academic and research purposes.

Research Design

This study employed an exploratory qualitative research design to explore the experiences, perceptions, and decision-making processes of Grade 12 General Academic Strand (GAS) students regarding their college course and career choices. An exploratory qualitative design was considered appropriate because the study sought to gain a deeper understanding of a topic by exploring the experiences, perspectives, challenges, and factors that influence students' career decision-making. Rather than measuring variables or testing hypotheses, the study focused on discovering and describing the meanings and patterns found in the participants' experiences.



The researchers explored how students' personal interests, skills, family expectations, financial circumstances, social influences, educational opportunities, and experiences shaped their career decisions. Data were gathered through a face-to-face group discussion using a semi-structured interview guide with purposely selected Grade 12 GAS students who had firsthand experience in making career-related decisions. A supplemental survey questionnaire was also administered to gather additional information that supported the group discussion findings. The researchers compared the group discussion and survey data through triangulation to identify similarities and differences in the information gathered. Through this exploratory approach, the study provided insights into how Grade 12 GAS students understand and navigate the process of choosing their future careers.

Research Locale

One of the most essential considerations in conducting research is the identification of the research locale. It is the actual site where the research investigation is carried out and serves as a significant component of the study since it directly influences the process of data collection and the credibility of the research findings. Selecting a locale that is relevant to the research problem and accessible to the target participants is crucial to obtaining reliable and meaningful data, particularly in studies exploring the career decision-making experiences of General Academic Strand students within their school setting (Gatpandan et al., 2019).

Relatively, the locale of this study is Lourdes Ledesma Del Prado Memorial National High School, a public senior high school offering the General Academic Strand (GAS), within the Schools Division of Tanjay City, Negros Oriental. This school was chosen because it provides an appropriate setting for exploring the career decision-making experiences of GAS students, as it consists of students with diverse socioeconomic backgrounds and varying family circumstances, including differing levels of financial capacity to support a specialized track. The school also contains the target participants who meet the study's inclusion criteria — Grade 12 GAS students allowing the researchers to gather the rich, in-depth narratives needed regarding students' interests, financial circumstances, and experiences of guidance and counseling in career decision-making. Furthermore, the accessibility of the school makes participant recruitment and data collection feasible. Prior to conducting the study, the researchers secured the necessary permission from the school administration to conduct the research at the chosen school. The researchers also obtained the necessary consent from the participants to ensure that the study was conducted ethically while maintaining confidentiality and voluntary participation.

Research Participants

The participants of this study were 10 Grade 12 students, consisting of one (1) male and nine (9) female students, enrolled in the General Academic Strand (GAS) at Lourdes Ledesma Del Prado Memorial National High School. These students were selected as the sole source of data because the study centers on their decision-making process in choosing a career path, their own reflections on interests, financial circumstances, family expectations, and experiences of guidance and counseling. Purposive sampling was used to select participants, as the study required individuals who could speak directly and meaningfully to the phenomenon under investigation. To be included, participants must be Grade 12 students currently enrolled in the GAS strand at the selected senior high school, currently in the process of choosing or have recently decided on a college course or career path, and willing to share their personal experiences, thoughts, and decision-making process during the group discussion; they must also provide informed consent to participate, with parental or guardian consent obtained as well if required by the school. Purposive sampling was appropriate here because the study is concerned with information-rich cases — students who meet these criteria are positioned to reflect meaningfully on how their interests, financial circumstances, and family expectations have shaped their career direction — rather than a statistically representative cross-section of the broader student population.

Research Instrument

The main instruments used in this study were a semi-structured interview guide and a supplemental survey questionnaire. The interview guide used a set of prepared questions but still allowed for a natural, back-and-forth conversation. The guide was made up of open-ended questions, which meant the questions did not have fixed "yes" or "no" answers. Instead, they were designed to give the participants the freedom to share their thoughts, experiences, and feelings in their own words. This was important because the researchers wanted to truly understand the personal stories of the Grade 12 General Academic Strand (GAS) students and the struggles they faced when picking a career. Alongside the interviews, the researchers distributed a survey that collected additional data on students' preferences and decision-making patterns. The interview guide helped the researchers



gather detailed and personal information about the participants' experiences, while the survey provided additional information that supported the responses gathered from the group discussion.

The questions were carefully created to find out how students made their career decisions and what pushed them toward one path over another. Because the interview was semi-structured, the researchers had the chance to ask follow-up questions whenever a participant shared something interesting or unclear. This flexibility helped the researchers dig deeper into the students' answers and allowed them to get richer and more meaningful information than they would have from a standard questionnaire alone. To ensure comprehensive and credible results, the researchers applied methodological triangulation by comparing and integrating the interview narratives with the survey data. This helped the researchers identify similarities and differences between the two sources of data and provided stronger support for the findings.

The interview mainly covered several key areas. These included the students' personal interests and natural abilities, the expectations set by their families, the influence of their friends and the wider community, the specific difficulties they encountered when making career choices, and how they handled situations where different people or factors gave them conflicting advice. By covering these topics and cross-validating them with survey responses, the researchers were able to see the whole picture of what affected a GAS student's career choice. These areas helped the researchers gather information directly related to the research questions and identify the different factors that influenced the students' career decision-making.

To make sure that no important detail was missed, the researchers used two ways to record the interview data. First, with the full consent of the participants, they used an audio recorder to capture the exact words spoken during the interview. Second, they took written notes throughout the session. The note-taking helped the researchers jot down immediate observations, such as the participant's tone or hesitation, which might not have been obvious from the audio alone. The data from the combined survey and group discussion were likewise compiled and reviewed manually to identify recurring patterns and supporting insights. Combining these multiple methods, specifically interviews, surveys, and triangulation, ensured that all responses were properly documented, cross-checked, and accurately kept for the later stages of analysis. These methods helped the researchers maintain accurate records of the participants' responses, organize the collected information, and provide sufficient data for the thematic analysis of the study.

Data Analysis

The data gathered from the group discussion were analyzed using thematic analysis. To supplement the group discussion, the researchers also gathered additional data from the same Grade 12 GAS students through a survey questionnaire. First, the researchers reviewed the group discussion responses carefully to understand the participants' answers. Next, similar ideas and experiences were grouped. These groups were then organized into common themes based on the factors that influenced the students' career choices. The researchers compared the group discussion responses with the data gathered from the survey to identify both similar and different experiences among the participants. To strengthen the credibility of the findings, the researchers employed triangulation by cross-checking the themes identified from the group discussion with the information gathered from the survey. The themes were then interpreted to answer the research questions and explain how Grade 12 GAS students at Lourdes Ledesma Del Prado Memorial National High School (LLDPMNHS) made decisions about their future careers.

Data Gathering Procedure

Pre-Data Gathering

Before conducting the study, the researchers prepared the necessary research documents, including the letter of request and the researcher-developed interview guide based on the objectives and research questions of the study. The researchers visited Lourdes Ledesma Del Prado Memorial National High School to formally endorse the study and request permission to conduct the research. After presenting the study to the school administration, approval was granted to conduct the research among the selected Grade 12 GAS students. The researchers then coordinated with the appropriate school personnel regarding the participants and the schedule of data collection. The selected participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, and the voluntary nature of their participation. Consent was obtained before the data gathering activities were conducted.



During Data Gathering

The researchers went to the selected school on the scheduled date and conducted a face-to-face group discussion with the selected Grade 12 GAS participants. The researchers used the prepared semi-structured interview guide to ask questions related to the participants' experiences, factors influencing their career choices, challenges in decision-making, and support systems. Follow-up questions were asked when necessary to clarify participants' answers and obtain more detailed information. The discussion allowed the participants to openly share their experiences and perspectives regarding their career decision-making process.

In addition to the group discussion, the researchers administered a survey to the selected students to gather additional information that could support the interview findings. The survey responses were collected and documented together with the information obtained from the group discussion. The researchers used these two sources of data to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the participants' career decision-making experiences.

Post-Data Gathering

After the group discussion and survey were completed, the researchers organized and reviewed the collected data. The discussion was transcribed and the survey responses were compiled for analysis. The researchers compared the information gathered from the survey with the responses obtained during the group discussion as part of the triangulation process. Similarities and differences between the two sources were examined to strengthen the credibility and accuracy of the findings. All collected data, including discussion records, transcripts, survey responses, and field notes, were kept confidential and securely stored. The data were then prepared for thematic analysis in accordance with the research questions and objectives of the study.

Trustworthiness of the Study

To ensure the rigor and quality of this qualitative study, the researchers employed the framework of trustworthiness proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985). Trustworthiness serves as the qualitative counterpart to validity and reliability in quantitative research and provides criteria for evaluating the quality and rigor of qualitative findings. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), trustworthiness is established through four key criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. These criteria ensure that the research findings accurately represent the participants' experiences, provide sufficient information about the research context, remain consistent throughout the research process, and are grounded in the collected data rather than the researchers' personal opinions or biases.

Credibility

To establish credibility, the researchers used several strategies to ensure that the findings accurately represented the participants' experiences and perspectives. First, the researchers conducted a face-to-face group discussion using a semi-structured interview guide, allowing participants to openly express their thoughts and experiences. Follow-up questions were also asked when necessary to clarify responses and obtain more detailed information. Second, the researchers administered a survey to the selected students to support the findings gathered from the group discussion. Third, triangulation was conducted by comparing the data obtained from the survey with the responses gathered during the group discussion. This comparison allowed the researchers to identify similarities, differences, and recurring information between the two sources of data. Through these strategies, the researchers strengthened the credibility of the findings and reduced the possibility of relying on only one source of information.

Transferability

Transferability refers to the extent to which the findings of the study may be applicable to other contexts or groups with similar characteristics. To support transferability, the researchers provided a clear description of the research setting, participants, research procedures, and data gathering process. The study specifically described the Grade 12 GAS students who participated, the school where the research was conducted, and the procedures used in gathering information through the group discussion and survey.

Providing these contextual details allows readers and future researchers to determine whether the findings may be relevant or applicable to students in similar educational settings. The researchers did not intend to statistically



generalize the findings but instead provided sufficient information about the research context to support informed judgments about its applicability to similar populations.

Dependability

To ensure dependability, the researchers maintained consistency throughout the data gathering and research process. The same prepared interview guide was used during the group discussion, while the survey was administered to the selected participants for additional supporting information. The researchers also documented the procedures followed during the endorsement, participant selection, group discussion, survey administration, data organization, and analysis.

The researchers maintained records of the collected discussion responses and survey results to ensure that the research process could be followed and reviewed. Following a systematic procedure helped maintain consistency and transparency in the collection and handling of the data.

Confirmability

To establish confirmability, the researchers ensured that the findings were based on the actual information provided by the participants rather than on the researchers' personal opinions or assumptions. The researchers used the recorded and documented responses from the group discussion together with the survey results as the basis for interpreting the findings.

Triangulation further supported confirmability by allowing the researchers to compare the survey data with the group discussion data. The researchers examined the collected information objectively and based the identified themes on recurring patterns and evidence found in the participants' responses. This process helped ensure that the conclusions were grounded in the data collected from the participants rather than influenced by the researchers' personal perspectives

Findings

Thematic analysis of the group discussion and survey responses produced nine themes describing how Grade 12 GAS students experience career decision-making: Financial Constraints & Access Barriers, Strand / School Structural Limitations, Family Influence & Support, Career Uncertainty & Decision Stress, Exploration & Self-Discovery (GAS Flexibility), Personal Strengths & Interests, Life Experiences & Social Influences, Future Plans & Aspirations, and Guidance & Recommendations. Table 1 presents the initial codes generated from the data and the themes into which they were organized. Each theme is discussed below, in turn, along with its connection to the relevant literature.

Table 1
Thematic Map

Codes	Themes
Financial Problems	Financial Constraints & Access Barriers
Transportation costs/difficulties	
Unaffordable education/college / private school limitations	
Job opportunities	
Financial support (as family help)	
University/school accessibility	
Limited options/strand availability	



Codes	Themes
Strand unavailability Limited educational opportunities No practical opportunity to enroll Unable to enroll in desired strand GAS limitations/lack of specialization Bridging subjects/course misalignment Limited choices Preferred strand Preferred school STEM or Nursing preference University accessibility General curriculum Other strand preference Educational limitations	Strand / School Structural Limitations
Family/relatives Family opinions Family expectations Family support Advice, encouragement, guidance Differences in interests vs. family Better / future decisions influenced by family Asking for advice	Family Influence & Support
Undecided Career uncertainty Uncertainty/confusion Self-doubt Fear of wrong decision Decision-making stress Difficulty focusing/choosing Balancing decisions / conflicting expectations Personal goals Career preferences	Career Uncertainty & Decision Stress



Codes	Themes
Career decision-making Clear career goals Multiple career interests	
Flexibility Exposure to multiple fields / different disciplines Broadened knowledge Various career possibilities/exploration Multiple career interests Online research, career quizzes, educational videos Self-reflection Asking for advice Exploring options Practical considerations Motivation to explore more options Final decision Different fields / many different areas Advantages and disadvantages	Exploration & Self-Discovery (GAS Flexibility)
Interest and strength-based subject preference Matching abilities and interests Mathematics, communication, artistic skills Consistency, physical strength, caring for others Self-reflection on strengths Consistent interests Know your strengths Self-reflection	Personal Strengths & Interests
Daily experiences Conversations with others Personal challenges Positive and difficult experiences Reflection on goals Motivation to explore options Role models, personal experiences	Life Experiences & Social Influences
Continue to college Apply for scholarships / entrance exams Work temporarily to support self / family Determined to pursue higher education	Future Plans & Aspirations



Codes	Themes
Career aspirations: Nursing, Dentistry, Engineering, Military, Business, Social Work, Teaching, Accountancy, RadTech, Medicine	
Career aspiration	Guidance & Recommendations
Think carefully / choose wisely	
Explore careers / research first	
Follow your passion	

Discussion

Financial Constraints & Access Barriers

Financial Constraints & Access Barriers refers to the difficulties students experience when financial resources affect their ability to choose a strand, school, college course, or career. In the present study, this theme represents more than simply not having enough money. It includes tuition fees, transportation expenses, limited financial resources, the availability of educational programs, and the inability to attend preferred schools or programs. The participants' experiences show that financial considerations became part of their career decision-making process because they had to think not only about what they wanted, but also about what they could realistically afford. This finding is consistent with Almario (2021), who identified socioeconomic conditions as among the factors affecting the career choices of Senior High School students. Similarly, Buzan and Sheehy-Skeffington (2024) found that financial adversity can influence students' career preferences and lead them to deprioritize opportunities that may provide better long-term career progression. These findings support the present study by showing that financial circumstances can influence career decisions even when students already have particular interests and aspirations.

This theme was selected because financial concerns appeared repeatedly throughout the participants' responses. In Question 1, some participants explained that they wanted to take STEM, ABM, or HUMSS but could not because these strands were unavailable nearby or because of financial difficulties. The same concern appeared again in Questions 16, 17, and 19, where students mentioned financial limitations when discussing their preferred strands, college courses, and future careers. Therefore, financial constraints were not an isolated problem but a factor that continued to influence their decisions at different stages. This finding is supported by Tabigne (2021), who reported that students' course and career preferences were influenced by financial capacity and the availability of courses in their chosen institutions. Gestia et al. (2023) likewise emphasized the importance of contextual factors in Senior High School students' career-track decisions through the framework of Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT). Thus, the present findings suggest that students' career decisions are influenced not only by their preferred careers but also by whether the educational pathways toward those careers are accessible to them.

The participants' experiences suggest that career choice is sometimes influenced by practicality rather than preference alone. A student may have a particular career in mind, but the cost of pursuing that career can make the goal seem less attainable. This can result in students considering alternative strands, schools, or careers that are more financially accessible. In this sense, financial limitations can narrow the range of choices available to students even when they already have personal interests and aspirations. The participants' preference for careers such as Nursing, Engineering, Dentistry, and Medicine illustrates this situation because pursuing these professions may require considerable educational expenses. Buzan and Sheehy-Skeffington (2024) similarly found that financial adversity can influence students' willingness to pursue career opportunities based on their expected long-term benefits. This suggests that students may evaluate not only whether they are interested in a career but also whether they can realistically manage the costs associated with pursuing it.

The findings also show that financial constraints are closely connected with access to educational programs. Some participants could not choose their preferred strand because it was unavailable nearby, while others considered transportation expenses and the cost of attending schools outside their immediate area. This demonstrates that access is not limited to whether a program exists; students must also be able to reach and afford the institution offering it. Tabigne (2021) found that the availability of courses within an institution was related to students' course and career preferences. Similarly, Gestia et al. (2023), in developing a career decision tool for Filipino



Senior High School students based on SCCT, recognized the role of contextual factors in students' career-track decisions. These findings support the present study because the participants' choices were influenced by both the availability of educational programs and their ability to access those programs financially and geographically.

This finding is also related to Nobis (2025), who examined the career paths of first-year criminology students in the Philippines and identified challenges involving opportunity and financial circumstances. Although the study focused on criminology students rather than Grade 12 GAS students, it provides a relevant comparison because it demonstrates that Filipino students may continue to experience barriers even after developing a clear career interest. Likewise, De Mesa et al. (2025) identified financial constraints among the factors influencing the career aspirations of Filipino out-of-school youth and discussed unequal access to educational and economic opportunities. Although the participants in the present study are still enrolled in Senior High School, both studies demonstrate that financial circumstances can influence young people's ability to pursue the educational and career pathways they desire.

The present findings can also be explained through Social Cognitive Career Theory. SCCT proposes that career development is influenced by the interaction of personal factors, learning experiences, goals, and contextual supports and barriers. Gestida et al. (2023) applied this framework specifically to Senior High School career-track decision-making in the Philippine setting. From this perspective, a student's interest in a particular career does not automatically lead to the pursuit of that career because contextual barriers may affect whether the student can act on that interest. In the present study, financial limitations, transportation costs, distance, and program availability functioned as contextual barriers. Therefore, a participant may have a strong interest in a particular career but still consider another option if the preferred pathway is financially or geographically difficult to access. However, financial limitations did not completely determine the participants' career choices. Rather, they interacted with other factors such as personal interests, available strands, family considerations, academic preferences, and perceived practicality. This is important because career decision-making is not simply a choice between a preferred and an affordable career. Instead, students appear to negotiate between what they want, what is available, and what they can realistically afford. This interpretation is consistent with Nguyen et al. (2023), who emphasized that career choice is influenced by multiple personal and contextual factors rather than by a single consideration. Thus, the present findings suggest that financial constraints should be understood as one component of a broader career decision-making process.

Overall, this theme is important because it demonstrates that career decision-making cannot always be understood as a matter of personal interest and ability alone. The participants may have different dreams, strengths, and preferred careers, but their choices are also shaped by what is financially and geographically possible for them and their families. The findings of Almario (2021), Tabigne (2021), Gestida et al. (2023), Buzan and Sheehy-Skeffington (2024), Nobis (2025), and De Mesa et al. (2025) generally support the present findings by demonstrating that socioeconomic conditions, financial capacity, program availability, and access to educational opportunities can influence students' career-related decisions. Therefore, Financial Constraints & Access Barriers was appropriately identified as a theme because the participants repeatedly connected money, transportation, tuition, school accessibility, and educational opportunities to their career decisions. The theme ultimately demonstrates that students may have clear career aspirations, but the realization of these aspirations can depend partly on whether the educational pathways required to achieve them are financially and practically accessible.

Strand / School Structural Limitations

Strand / School Structural Limitations refers to the educational conditions and systemic realities that restrict students from freely choosing the strand or academic pathway they truly prefer and aspire to pursue. These constraints include the unavailability of specialized strands such as STEM, ABM, or HUMSS within their own schools, the limited range of program options offered by their institution, significant transportation challenges that make attending distant schools impractical, and the potential misalignment between the broad curriculum of the General Academic Strand and the specific requirements of their intended college course. The participants' lived experiences clearly demonstrate that their decisions were frequently shaped not by what they genuinely wanted, but by what their schools could realistically provide. This underscores a critical reality: career choices are not always driven solely by personal interest, talent, or ambition. Instead, they are heavily influenced by the structure, distribution, and accessibility of educational opportunities within their communities (Gatpandan et al., 2019).

This theme emerged prominently and consistently across the participants' responses because so many shared that they had very few viable alternatives when selecting their senior high school strand. In answering Question 1,



several students explained directly that their schools offered only GAS and TVL, leaving them with practically no other option but to enroll in the General Academic Strand simply to continue their education. Others described clearly that they had hoped to pursue specialized tracks such as STEM, ABM, or HUMSS — pathways that would have aligned more closely with their interests or future goals — but were unable to do so because these strands were simply not available in their immediate locality. This same concern reappeared with equal force in Question 16, where participants elaborated on how the absence of desired strands, combined with difficult commuting conditions and a shortage of nearby educational institutions, stood as the primary barriers preventing them from enrolling in the programs they actually preferred and intended to pursue (Yazon & Manaog, 2020).

Interestingly, the participants did not perceive the structure and nature of the GAS strand in entirely negative terms; their perspectives were balanced and nuanced. Some students genuinely appreciated the broad, general curriculum because it afforded them a valuable opportunity to encounter and explore multiple fields of learning, helping them discover interests and strengths they may not have recognized otherwise. However, many others also came to realize that the very lack of specialization that makes GAS flexible could also create meaningful difficulties when they transitioned to higher education. They expressed awareness that they may be required to take additional bridging subjects or adjustment courses in college if their chosen degree program did not directly correspond with the generalist foundation they received through GAS. This observation reveals an important duality: while the educational structure offers space for exploration and self-discovery, it can simultaneously place additional academic demands, time commitments, and financial considerations upon students who eventually decide to pursue a specialized or technical career path (Tagsip, 2025).

These findings build upon and extend existing literature in meaningful ways. They align closely with the study conducted by Gatpandan, Cruz, and de Taza (2019), titled *A Phenomenological Inquiry of Experiences of Pioneer Senior High School Graduates under General Academic Strand: Influence on Career Decision Making*, which examined how the learning experiences and subjects encountered within GAS contributed to students' identity formation and career development. Their research emphasized the positive role of GAS as a platform for exploration and self-awareness. The present study supports these insights but further broadens the perspective by highlighting that factors beyond the classroom — specifically the availability of specialized strands, the geographic location of schools, transportation access, and curriculum alignment with college requirements — also exert powerful influence over what students can realistically choose. This suggests that career decision-making is not merely a personal or internal process shaped by what students learn in school; it is equally and significantly shaped by what the educational system makes accessible, available, and attainable for them (Fernandez et al., 2023).

Family Influence & Support

Family Influence & Support refers to the role of parents, siblings, relatives, and other family members in shaping, supporting, or sometimes affecting students' career decisions. For the participants, family members were not simply people who gave opinions. They were also sources of financial assistance, encouragement, advice, guidance, and motivation. At the same time, some participants experienced differences between their own career interests and what their families expected. This makes family influence a complex part of career decision-making because it can provide support while also creating situations in which students must balance personal goals with family expectations. This finding is supported by Pratama and Muttaqin (2024), who found that parental career support was associated with adolescents' career decision-making self-efficacy, which in turn contributed to career exploration and commitment. Similarly, Álvarez-Juste (2024) emphasized the importance of family support and self-confidence in students' academic and career decision-making. These findings suggest that family involvement can provide students with resources and confidence while they consider their future career paths.

The theme was selected primarily because family influence appeared consistently in several questions. In Question 7, participants identified parents, siblings, relatives, and other family members as major influences on their career thinking. Question 10 further showed that families provided advice, encouragement, guidance, and financial support. These statements demonstrate that family involvement was not an isolated experience but a recurring influence across different aspects of career planning. This is consistent with Lalantacon et al. (2024), who examined family influence on career decisions among Filipino ABM students and found that family dynamics, support, and guidance were relevant to students' career decision-making. The present findings therefore reinforce the idea that students' career planning occurs within a family context rather than independently from their relationships with family members.



The participants also showed that family influence was not always about forcing students to follow a particular career. Most participants said their families supported whatever career they wanted. However, a few participants experienced differences between their personal interests and family expectations. These students had to balance their own goals with their families' opinions. This is an important distinction because it shows that family influence can be supportive without necessarily being completely controlling. Li et al. (2023) found that parental career-related support and parent–adolescent career congruence were positively associated with career decision-making self-efficacy, while higher self-efficacy was associated with lower ambivalence in career decision-making. This supports the present finding that agreement between students and their parents can facilitate career decision-making. At the same time, the participants' experiences show that differences in preferences may still occur, requiring students to negotiate between personal aspirations and family expectations.

The findings are further supported by Pratama and Muttaqin (2024), who examined 400 Senior High School students and found that career decision-making self-efficacy mediated the relationship between parental career support and vocational identity. Their findings suggest that parental support may influence students' career development partly by strengthening their confidence in making career decisions. This supports the present participants' descriptions of parents and other family members as sources of encouragement, advice, and guidance. However, the present study adds a qualitative perspective by showing that support was not limited to emotional encouragement. Participants also described practical and financial assistance, demonstrating that family support may take different forms depending on the student's circumstances.

Similarly, Visande and Insigne (2021) found a positive and moderate relationship between perceived parental support and career decision-making self-efficacy among Grade 10 students in Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines. This finding supports the present study because both studies demonstrate that family support can be associated with students' confidence in making career-related decisions. However, the present findings also show that support does not automatically remove uncertainty. Some Grade 12 GAS participants continued to experience confusion and difficulty deciding even when their families provided advice and encouragement. This suggests that family support can strengthen the decision-making process without necessarily eliminating other factors, such as personal uncertainty, academic considerations, financial limitations, or uncertainty about future careers.

The role of family expectations can also be understood through the concept of parent–adolescent career congruence. Söner and Gültekin (2025) found that career-related parental support and adolescent–parent career congruence were related to students' career and ability self-efficacy. Their study further explained that students' perceptions of parental support and their sense of compatibility with their parents' career expectations are important aspects of adolescent career development. This is particularly relevant to the present study because most participants experienced supportive families, while some participants had to consider differences between their own interests and their families' expectations. Therefore, family influence may be most helpful when students perceive their families as supportive while still having room to develop their own career preferences.

The findings can also be explained using Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), which recognizes social and environmental factors as important influences on career development. Gestida et al. (2023) applied SCCT in developing a career decision tool specifically for Senior High School students in the Philippines. From this perspective, family members can function as contextual supports by providing encouragement, information, financial assistance, and guidance. At the same time, family expectations may also become a contextual influence that students must consider when making career decisions. This helps explain why the participants did not make their decisions completely independently. Their career choices developed through the interaction of personal interests and abilities with the support, expectations, and resources available within their families.

Overall, this theme is appropriate because the participants repeatedly described their families as important sources of advice, encouragement, financial assistance, motivation, and career guidance. At the same time, the presence of family expectations and differences in interests demonstrates that family influence can be both helpful and challenging. Recent studies generally support this interpretation, showing that parental support is associated with career decision-making self-efficacy, career exploration, vocational identity, and career congruence (Li et al., 2023; Pratama & Muttaqin, 2024; Söner & Gültekin, 2025). The present findings add to this literature by showing that, among Grade 12 GAS students, family influence was experienced not only through expectations but also through everyday forms of emotional, informational, and financial support. Thus, students do not make career decisions completely alone, but they also do not necessarily surrender their personal goals to their families. Instead, many participants appear to negotiate between what they want and what their families believe is best for them.



Career Uncertainty & Decision Stress

Career Uncertainty & Decision Stress refers to the confusion, hesitation, self-doubt, anxiety, and emotional pressure that students experience when faced with the significant responsibility of deciding which college course or career path to pursue. This theme captures one of the most consistent and deeply felt realities shared by the participants. Many students described themselves as still actively exploring different possibilities, weighing multiple options, and searching for clarity, while only a small number expressed complete confidence and certainty about their intended career direction. For a great many, this uncertainty was not merely a neutral state of being undecided; it was often accompanied by genuine fear of making the wrong choice, lingering questions about their own abilities, practical concerns about financial capacity, and the heavy pressure of receiving differing or conflicting advice from family members and trusted people around them (Navarez, 2018).

This theme emerged as central and essential because career uncertainty appeared repeatedly throughout the participants' responses, touching nearly every aspect of their experience. In Question 1, several students explained that choosing the General Academic Strand was directly linked to their uncertainty — they had selected GAS precisely because they had not yet settled on a specific college course and needed more time to explore. In Question 5, this feeling was restated clearly and openly, as many participants admitted that they remained uncertain about their future career path and were still in the process of discovering what suited them best. This demonstrates that uncertainty was not an isolated or minor concern; rather, it was a defining experience that shaped their choice of strand, their daily outlook, and their sense of direction as they approached graduation (Gati et al., 2019).

The participants also vividly described the emotional weight and personal struggle that came with this uncertainty. In Question 17, they shared that choosing a college course could be genuinely stressful because they feared making a decision they would later regret. Beyond simply not knowing what to choose, they worried about whether they were capable enough, whether they could afford the path they wanted, and whether the opinions and expectations of their family aligned with their own hopes and dreams. These responses reveal that career uncertainty was not just a matter of missing information; for many students, it was an emotionally taxing experience because they fully understood that the choice they made now could have lasting effects on their future opportunities, lifestyle, and sense of fulfillment (Fernandez et al., 2023).

These findings connect closely to the study conducted by Navarez (2018), titled *Career Indecision and Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy of Filipino Senior High School Students*, which found a significant negative relationship between career indecision and career decision-making self-efficacy. In short, students who felt more confident in their ability to make sound decisions tended to experience less uncertainty. The present study supports this general observation but offers a deeper, more nuanced perspective: the participants' uncertainty was not simply the result of low confidence alone. Instead, it arose from multiple overlapping factors — personal doubts about their strengths, practical concerns about finances, conflicting expectations from family, and the sheer number of options available to them all at once. Their hesitation stemmed not from one single cause but from the complex interaction of internal feelings and external realities they faced daily (Navarez, 2018).

The findings also relate to the work of Abaya-Garcia (2016), which examined career decision-making efficacy and indecision among Filipino college students and similarly found that greater confidence in one's decision-making abilities corresponded with lower indecision. However, the present study differs meaningfully because the participants were Grade 12 students — still in the transitional phase of senior high school, preparing to enter college rather than already enrolled in it. Their uncertainty was therefore tied to this pivotal moment of transition: they stood at the threshold of higher education, with many possibilities before them but not yet fully committed to any single path. Their hesitation reflected not a lack of ability, but the natural difficulty of making a life-shaping decision at a young age with so much at stake (Abaya-Garcia, 2016).

This theme is strongly supported by the codes: undecided, career uncertainty, self-doubt, fear of making the wrong decision, difficulty focusing, and decision-making stress. Together, these show that uncertainty took different forms for different students. Some felt overwhelmed simply because there were too many appealing options to choose from. Others questioned whether they truly possessed the talent or ability to succeed in the fields that interested them. Still others worried about the practical consequences — whether they could afford their chosen path, whether their family would support it, or whether they would end up regretting their choice. Consequently, Career Uncertainty & Decision Stress accurately and comprehensively represents the participants' experiences



because it captures both the mental challenge of sorting through options and the very real emotional pressure that accompanied this important life decision (Lent et al., 1994).

Ultimately, this theme highlights that choosing a career is rarely a straightforward or easy process, especially for students navigating the General Academic Strand. The flexibility that GAS provides — often seen as one of its greatest strengths — can also contribute to uncertainty, as students are exposed to a wide range of subjects and possibilities without a clear, predefined direction. Their experiences remind us that feeling unsure is not a sign of failure; it is a natural and understandable part of growing into one's future. What matters most, as the participants demonstrated, is not arriving at a decision instantly, but moving forward with awareness, seeking guidance, and gradually building the confidence needed to choose a path that feels right and true (Tagsip, 2025).

Exploration & Self-Discovery (GAS Flexibility)

Exploration & Self-Discovery (GAS Flexibility) refers to the process through which students explore different fields, careers, interests, and opportunities while learning more about themselves before making a final career decision. In the present study, this theme represents the flexibility that GAS provides because students are exposed to different disciplines instead of being limited to one specialized field. The participants described GAS as an opportunity to broaden their knowledge, explore different career possibilities, and consider multiple interests. They also explored careers through online research, career quizzes, educational videos, self-reflection, and asking others for advice. These findings show that the participants viewed career decision-making as a gradual process in which they needed to discover what they wanted before committing to a specific career path.

This theme was selected because exploration appeared repeatedly in the participants' responses, particularly when they discussed their experiences in GAS and how they were trying to decide on a future career. In Question 5, many participants explained that they were still exploring different possibilities and were not yet completely certain about their career path. Questions 13, 14, and 15 further showed that students appreciated GAS because it allowed them to learn about different fields and disciplines. However, the same flexibility sometimes made decision-making more difficult because students developed multiple career interests. This finding suggests that GAS gave students freedom to explore, but that freedom did not always lead directly to certainty. Instead, it allowed them to learn more about themselves while they were still trying to determine which direction was most appropriate for them. The participants' experiences are supported by Aplaca and Torrión (2025), who examined the level of interest toward career exploration among Grade 12 students. Their study found that students strongly agreed with the importance of career exploration, although the actual exploration process was the least prevalent element among the different components measured. This is connected to the present study because both groups recognized career exploration as important when preparing for the future. However, the results differ because the participants in the present study described several concrete ways of exploring careers, including searching online, watching educational videos, taking career assessments, reflecting on their abilities, and asking for advice. This difference suggests that while students generally recognize the value of exploration, the extent to which they actually engage in exploration may differ depending on their experiences and educational context.

The use of online resources in the present study also has a connection with Chen and Kizilcec (2024), who investigated how online information about academic and career trajectories could influence students' career exploration. Their randomized field experiment involving 234 students found no overall main effect from the information tool, although it improved self-efficacy and behavioral intentions among students who were already at a later stage of career decision-making. This finding is different from the experiences of the participants in the present study because online research appeared to be one of the practical ways they actively gathered information about careers. However, the study also helps explain why online information may not automatically produce career clarity. Simply accessing information does not guarantee that students will immediately know what career to choose. In the present study, students still needed self-reflection and personal evaluation to make sense of the information they found.

The findings can also be compared with Liu, Mei, and Ji (2024), who examined career decision-making self-efficacy among 510 Chinese high school students. Their study identified four groups of students based on their levels of career decision-making self-efficacy and exploration. Students with high career decision-making self-efficacy demonstrated greater learning engagement, while students with weaker internal or external exploration showed different patterns of engagement. The researchers emphasized the importance of career education that connects academic learning, career interests, and future professions. This supports the present study because the GAS participants were also using exploration to understand their interests and possible careers. However, the



present findings are different because many of the participants remained uncertain even though they were actively exploring. Their experiences show that exploration can increase awareness of possibilities without necessarily producing an immediate final decision.

Another important aspect of this theme is that GAS flexibility had both positive and negative effects. The participants appreciated the opportunity to study different disciplines because it allowed them to consider careers that they might not have considered otherwise. At the same time, some participants admitted that learning about many different areas made it harder to focus on one career. They became interested in multiple possibilities, which sometimes created confusion instead of clarity. This finding is important because it shows that flexibility should not automatically be considered beneficial in every situation. For undecided students, having many options can be helpful, but too many possibilities may also make the decision more complicated.

This finding is related to Pratama and Muttaqin (2024), who studied 400 senior high school students and found that career decision-making self-efficacy mediated the relationship between parental career support and vocational identity. Their findings showed that support can help students develop the confidence necessary for career exploration and commitment. The difference is that the present participants emphasized GAS itself as a major space for exploration, while the 2024 study focused more on the role of parental career support and self-efficacy. Nevertheless, the studies can be connected because both suggest that exploration becomes more meaningful when students have resources or support that help them understand and evaluate their choices. In the present study, these resources included online information, career assessments, family advice, and personal reflection.

The participants' experiences also suggest that career exploration is not limited to formal school activities. Students reported searching online, watching videos, taking career quizzes, reflecting on their strengths, and asking family members or professionals for advice. This shows that students are using both formal and informal sources to make sense of their possible futures. Their approach is understandable because Grade 12 students are facing an important transition toward college or employment, and they may feel pressure to make a decision even when they are not completely certain. Rather than making a rushed choice, the participants preferred to gather information first. This reflects a more cautious approach to career decision-making, where students attempt to reduce uncertainty by learning more about the options available to them.

Overall, the theme Exploration & Self-Discovery (GAS Flexibility) demonstrates that GAS provided participants with an environment where they could explore different fields and learn more about themselves. The findings generally agree with Aplaca and Torrior (2025), Chen and Kizilcec (2024), Liu et al. (2024), and Pratama and Muttaqin (2024) in showing that career exploration, information, self-efficacy, and support are relevant to students' career development. However, the present study differs because its participants showed that exploration does not always lead to immediate career certainty. Instead, GAS flexibility sometimes created additional choices and multiple interests, making it harder for students to settle on one path. Therefore, exploration should not simply mean giving students more career options. It should also involve helping them evaluate those options, understand their strengths, reflect on their experiences, and gradually narrow their choices. In this sense, GAS served as both a space for self-discovery and a challenge for decision-making, which makes this theme significant to understanding the career experiences of Grade 12 GAS students.

Personal Strengths & Interests

Personal Strengths & Interests refers to the students' awareness of their own abilities, interests, skills, and personal qualities and how these characteristics influence the careers they consider for the future. In the present study, this theme includes students' recognition of skills in Mathematics, communication, art, consistency, physical strength, and caring for others. The participants also considered the subjects and school activities they enjoyed when thinking about their possible career paths. Their responses suggest that students were not choosing careers based only on external factors such as salary, family expectations, or available courses. They were also asking themselves what they were good at, what they enjoyed doing, and what kind of work could match their abilities and interests. This theme was selected because personal strengths and interests appeared repeatedly in the participants' descriptions of how they were making career decisions. In Question 3, participants identified subjects such as HOPE, CPAR, Mathematics, Research, and Science as enjoyable because these subjects allowed them to express themselves, develop skills, or connect their learning to possible careers. In Question 4, some participants explained that they reflected on their strengths when considering whether their interests had changed. Question 9 provided even clearer evidence because participants directly identified Mathematics, communication, artistic abilities, consistency, physical strength, and caring for others as skills that helped them think about careers.



Finally, in Question 20, participants advised future GAS students to know their strengths and understand their interests before making career decisions. The importance of personal strengths is supported by Gimarino (2024), who examined career choice and self-efficacy among 308 Grade 12 students in the Philippines. The study investigated students' career choices and their career development self-efficacy and considered differences according to demographic characteristics and educational strand. This is connected to the present study because the participants similarly recognized that their abilities could help guide their career choices. However, the findings are different in an important way. Gimarino's study measured career choice and self-efficacy quantitatively, whereas the present study captures how students personally describe their strengths and connect them to possible careers. In other words, the present findings provide a more personal explanation of what "strength" means to students because participants themselves identified the abilities they believed could help them choose a career.

The findings are also related to Liu, Mei, and Ji (2024), who found that career decision-making self-efficacy is closely associated with students' professional interests and their engagement in learning. Their research showed different categories of career decision-making self-efficacy among high school students and emphasized that career education should connect academic learning, career interests, and future professions. This supports the present findings because participants used their experiences in school to identify subjects and activities that matched their interests and abilities. However, the participants in the current study did not necessarily demonstrate complete confidence in their final career choices. They could identify what they were good at while still being unsure about which profession would be the best fit. This difference shows that self-awareness and career certainty are related but are not necessarily the same thing.

The participants' responses also show that interests can remain stable while career knowledge continues to develop. Most participants said their interests had remained the same since Grade 11, although some reported changes after learning more about careers, reflecting on their strengths, or considering financial stability and job opportunities. This suggests that students' interests are not always fixed decisions about a specific profession. Instead, an interest may serve as a starting point that becomes clearer as students gain more information about themselves and different career options. This is important because a student may enjoy Mathematics, Science, art, communication, or helping others without immediately knowing which occupation should be connected to that interest.

This finding can also be connected to Thunpuattadom et al. (2024), who examined the influence of personal interests, self-efficacy beliefs, and outcome expectations on senior high school students' decisions to pursue accounting in Thailand. Their study is relevant because it demonstrates how personal interests and beliefs about one's abilities can be considered when students decide whether to pursue a particular profession. The difference, however, is that their research focused on students considering accounting, while the present participants were considering a much wider range of careers, including Nursing, Dentistry, Engineering, Military Service, Social Work, Business, Teaching, Accountancy, RadTech, and Medicine. Therefore, the participants' strengths helped them generate career possibilities, but their broad range of interests did not always allow them to immediately choose one specific profession.

Another study that provides a useful comparison is Pratama and Muttaqin (2024), who found that career decision-making self-efficacy plays an important role between parental career support and vocational identity among senior high school students. Their findings suggest that students who receive career-related support can develop stronger confidence in exploring and committing to career choices. The present study produces a slightly different picture because the participants' awareness of their own strengths did not always result in strong certainty. Even when students knew that they were good at Mathematics, communication, art, physical activities, or caring for others, they could still be unsure about which career would allow them to use those abilities. This suggests that identifying one's strengths is only one stage of career decision-making; students also need opportunities to understand how those strengths relate to specific courses, occupations, and future work environments.

The participants' advice to incoming GAS students further emphasizes the importance of knowing one's strengths before making a career decision. They encouraged future students to think carefully, explore careers, follow their interests, choose wisely, and research first. These recommendations show that the participants had learned from their own experiences that knowing what they enjoy or what they are capable of can make career exploration more meaningful. At the same time, their advice reflects an awareness that strengths and interests should be investigated rather than simply assumed. A student may believe that they are good at a particular subject, but understanding how that ability connects to a career requires additional information and reflection.



Overall, Personal Strengths & Interests demonstrate that the participants viewed self-awareness as an important foundation for career decision-making. Their interests in particular subjects and activities, together with skills such as Mathematics, communication, artistic ability, consistency, physical strength, and caring for others, helped them identify careers that might fit them. The findings are generally supported by Gimarino (2024), Liu et al. (2024), Thunputtadom et al. (2024), and Pratama and Muttaqin (2024), which all emphasize the relevance of interests, self-efficacy, personal characteristics, or support in career development. However, the present study adds an important difference: being aware of one's strengths does not automatically mean being certain about one's career. Some participants knew what they were good at but were still exploring different possibilities. Therefore, career guidance should not stop helping students identify their strengths. It should help students connect those strengths and interests with realistic college courses, career requirements, work environments, and opportunities. For GAS students in particular, self-awareness can serve as the starting point for career exploration, while further guidance can help transform that self-knowledge into a clearer and more confident career decision.

Life Experiences & Social Influences

Life Experiences & Social Influences refers to the meaningful way that everyday moments, personal conversations, challenges, admired role models, and unexpected encounters shape how students understand, imagine, and plan for their future careers. Career decisions do not come only from formal guidance programs, class discussions, or school subjects. Students also learn about themselves — their true interests, values, and what they might want to pursue — through the wide range of situations they experience in daily life. These real-life moments influence how they see their own abilities, recognize what genuinely matters to them, set meaningful goals, and form realistic expectations for what lies ahead. A simple conversation with someone can open their eyes to a career they had never considered before. In the same way, facing personal difficulties can push them to look deeper and reflect more clearly on what they truly want to achieve (Gatpandan et al., 2019).

This theme emerged clearly and consistently because so many participants shared specific experiences that changed, shaped, or strengthened how they viewed their career paths. In Question 8, they explained that daily interactions, new opportunities, unexpected setbacks, and personal challenges all affected how they looked at their future. These moments were not always connected to school or organized career programs — they were simply part of their ordinary, everyday lives. Both positive and difficult experiences encouraged them to think more deeply about their goals and what they hoped to do after graduating from senior high school. This shows that career development does not happen in just one moment of decision; it unfolds little by little through many different experiences over time (Baret et al., 2024).

The participants also shared that the people around them played a big and ongoing part in shaping their career thinking. New opportunities helped them discover interests they did not even know they had, while challenges made them pause, rethink, and carefully weigh their plans. Some experiences gave them greater confidence and direction, while others made them question whether a certain path was truly right for them. This makes it clear that students do not make these important decisions alone. Their understanding of the future grows and takes shape as they connect with family, friends, teachers, working professionals, and others around them (Markus & Kitayama, 2010).

Question 7 further supports this perspective, as participants named professionals, admired individuals, and personal encounters as important influences on their career choices. Seeing someone succeed and find fulfillment in a particular field can inspire students to imagine themselves following a similar path. Hearing about another person's journey — including both achievements and struggles — also gives them insights and perspectives they may not learn inside the classroom. Role models make career paths feel more real, understandable, and reachable, because students can see with their own eyes what that kind of life and profession actually looks like (Hashim & Embong, 2015).

These findings align closely with the study by Gatpandan, Cruz, and de Taza (2019), which explored how real-life experiences guided the career decisions of pioneer GAS graduates. Their work confirms that career development is shaped by personal encounters and interactions, not just by formal guidance or classroom lessons. The present study builds upon this by highlighting more specifically how everyday conversations, personal struggles, admired role models, and unexpected moments influence students while they are still actively figuring out their direction — not after everything has already been decided.



This difference is meaningful because it shows that even students within the same strand can experience career planning in different ways and at different paces. Gatpandan et al. (2019) focused on graduates looking back on the journey they had already traveled. In contrast, the participants in this study described experiences happening right now — while they were still weighing options, comparing possibilities, and searching for clarity. This means career development is not something fully understood only after graduation; it is an ongoing, living process that unfolds as they grow, learn, and encounter new things along the way (Tagsip, 2025).

The participants' stories also show that challenges do not stop progress. Difficult moments often made them think more carefully about what they truly wanted and why. One setback might cause them to reconsider a path they had taken for granted, while another experience could strengthen their determination to keep going despite the difficulties. This is important because choosing a career is rarely a straight, smooth, or predictable journey. A meaningful conversation, a personal struggle, a disappointment, or a newly discovered opportunity can shift their perspective, open their eyes to new possibilities, or push them to explore directions they had never considered before (Gati et al., 2019).

Personal experiences and social influences also work hand in hand. A student may face something difficult and then turn to family, teachers, or friends for advice. The guidance they receive shapes how they understand what happened and what they should do next. This means career decisions often grow from both what they live through and the people they trust. Their social environment can introduce entirely new possibilities or help them think more deeply and confidently about the plans they already have in mind (Betty, 2015).

This theme is supported by the codes: daily experiences, conversations with others, personal challenges, positive and difficult experiences, reflection on goals, motivation to explore options, role models, and personal experiences. Together, these show that career awareness and direction grow from real life just as much as from formal education. Moments that may seem ordinary at first can become deeply meaningful when students begin connecting them to the question of what they want to do and who they want to become in the future.

Overall, Life Experiences & Social Influences captures how the participants' career decisions were shaped by the world around them. Their stories remind us that choosing a career is not just about grades or what courses are available in school. It is also about learning from experiences, listening to others, overcoming challenges, and discovering what truly matters. Their view of the future develops gradually through the people they meet and the situations they face. In this way, everyday life itself becomes an important and powerful part of planning for what lies ahead (Fernandez et al., 2023).

Future Plans & Aspirations

Future Plans & Aspirations refers to the participants' hopes, goals, and plans for life after senior high school. Despite the uncertainty and barriers they experienced, many participants still expressed a desire to continue their education and pursue a career. Students' goals and expectations are closely connected to their motivation, educational choices, and persistence toward desired outcomes (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). This theme demonstrates that uncertainty does not necessarily mean that students have no ambitions. Instead, many students have dreams but are still figuring out how to reach them. Their aspirations provide an important understanding of what motivates them to continue studying and preparing for their future.

The theme was selected because Question 2 showed that most participants planned to continue to college. Some intended to apply for scholarships or take entrance examinations, while others considered working temporarily to support themselves or their families before continuing their education. These responses demonstrate that higher education remained an important goal even when financial challenges existed. Educational and career decisions can be influenced by students' expectations, available opportunities, and personal circumstances (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). For the participants, continuing to college represented an opportunity to move closer to their desired careers and improve their future possibilities.

The participants' plans also demonstrate that their future decisions were not limited to one immediate step. Some students considered different possibilities depending on their financial situation and circumstances. For example, temporarily working before continuing their education shows that some participants were willing to adjust their plans rather than completely abandon them. This reflects flexibility and determination because they were considering practical ways to continue pursuing their goals despite possible obstacles. Career development can



involve adapting to changing circumstances and constructing one's career through decisions and experiences over time (Savickas et al., 2009).

Question 19 provides another strong basis for this theme. Participants identified a wide range of career aspirations, including Nursing, Dentistry, Engineering, Military Service, Social Work, Business, Teaching, Accountancy, Radiologic Technology, and Medicine. The diversity of these aspirations reflects the broad interests of GAS students. It also demonstrates why some participants valued a strand that exposed them to multiple fields. Since GAS provides opportunities to encounter different areas of knowledge, students can consider career paths from different disciplines. This is consistent with the idea that career development occurs across different stages of life and involves the development and expression of interests, abilities, and roles (Super, 1980).

The wide range of aspirations also shows that the participants were not necessarily limited to one type of career. Some were interested in health-related professions, while others preferred education, business, engineering, public service, or social work. This variety supports the idea that GAS students can have different interests and future goals. At the same time, having many possible career options can make decision-making more complicated because students may have to compare several careers before settling on one. Gati et al. (1996) explained that career decision-making can involve difficulties related to uncertainty, lack of information, and problems in choosing among alternatives.

The findings are related to Tagsip's (2025) study, which examined the career choices and intended degree programs of Grade 12 GAS students. The study showed that GAS students were actively considering different degree programs and that their GAS experiences could help them identify programs related to their competencies and interests. This supports the present finding that GAS students have diverse educational and career aspirations. However, the present study differs because participants expressed a wide range of career aspirations while simultaneously facing financial constraints, family expectations, uncertainty, and limited educational opportunities.

This difference is important because the present findings show that having an aspiration and being certain about achieving it are not the same thing. A participant may strongly desire to become a nurse, engineer, teacher, or doctor while still wondering whether the career is financially possible or whether they have selected the correct path. The participants' responses suggest that dreams can exist alongside uncertainty. Therefore, uncertainty should not automatically be interpreted as a lack of ambition. Research on career decision-making recognizes that individuals may experience uncertainty and difficulties while exploring and selecting among possible career alternatives (Gati & Levin, 2014).

The participants' aspirations also appeared to motivate them to consider practical steps toward their goals. Applying for scholarships, taking entrance examinations, continuing to college, or temporarily working are examples of how students were thinking about the actions needed to move forward. These plans show that their aspirations were not simply imagined careers. For many participants, their goals were connected to concrete plans for education and employment. Motivation research emphasizes the importance of goals, expectations, and the value individuals place on future outcomes in shaping their choices and actions (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002).

The theme is therefore justified because future aspirations remained visible despite the challenges identified in the other themes. The codes continuing to college, scholarships, entrance examinations, temporary work, determination to pursue higher education, and diverse career aspirations all demonstrate that participants were actively thinking about their futures. These responses show that the participants continued to look forward even when their paths were not completely clear.

Overall, Future Plans & Aspirations provides an important balance to the findings because it shows that the participants should not be viewed only through their struggles and uncertainties. They also have goals, ambitions, and hopes that motivate them to continue moving forward. Their experiences demonstrate that career planning can involve both uncertainty and determination at the same time. The participants may still be exploring their exact career paths, but their desire to pursue higher education and build meaningful careers shows that they remain actively engaged in shaping their futures.

Guidance & Recommendations



Guidance & Recommendations represents the heartfelt and practical advice that participants shared with incoming and future GAS students, drawn directly and deeply from their own two-year journey of choosing a strand, discovering themselves, and planning for their future careers. Their guidance was rooted in the lessons they had lived firsthand, and it centered on several clear and consistent principles: thinking carefully before making any commitment, exploring different opportunities early and thoroughly, researching possibilities deeply, recognizing and valuing one's own strengths and genuine interests, and never rushing into a life-shaping decision simply to have it done. Because these words came directly from students who had experienced both the genuine challenges and the unexpected advantages of the General Academic Strand, they offer a perspective that is authentic, grounded, and deeply practical — a reflection of what they truly wish they had known when they were standing where future students stand now (Visande & Insigne, 2021).

This theme emerged with remarkable clarity and consistency because Question 20 specifically invited participants to share what they would pass on to those entering the strand. Their responses were not casual or fleeting; they were thoughtful, earnest, and clearly shaped by personal experience. Again and again, they emphasized the importance of pausing to reflect, exploring options early rather than waiting until the last moment, understanding one's own capabilities and preferences, and avoiding decisions made in haste or under pressure. They did not merely describe what had happened to them; they stepped back from their own journey to identify what truly mattered, offering lessons that could help others navigate similar paths with greater confidence, clarity, and peace of mind (Tagsip, 2025).

One of the most important pieces of advice they offered was the value of doing genuine research before making a commitment. This recommendation grew directly from their own practice — the way they had turned to online resources, taken career assessments, watched educational content, asked trusted family members, and reflected deeply on what truly suited them. They wanted future students to understand clearly: no one should choose a strand simply because it is available, or because everyone else is doing it, or because someone else thinks it is the right choice. Instead, they should take the time to learn what the strand actually involves, what opportunities it opens, what challenges it may bring, and how it connects to the kind of life they hope to build. Making a choice based on knowledge rather than convenience, they learned, is one of the most valuable investments a student can make in their own future (Gati et al., 2019).

They also stressed, with great emphasis, how essential it is to know oneself first — to understand one's own strengths, genuine interests, and personal preferences before looking outward. This advice came directly from their own realizations, as expressed in Question 9, where they shared how their abilities in mathematics, communication, arts, physical skills, or caring for others had helped them see which career paths felt natural and fulfilling. Their message to future students is clear: matching a career to what one is actually good at and what one truly enjoys matters far more than choosing something simply because it is popular, prestigious, or expected by others. When students build on their own strengths, they are not only more likely to succeed — they are more likely to find meaning and satisfaction along the way (Lent et al., 1994).

Another strong and recurring recommendation was to avoid rushing the decision. Their own experiences — dealing with uncertainty, financial concerns, differing family opinions, and multiple competing interests — taught them that taking enough time to weigh options is not a sign of weakness; it is an act of wisdom. Some of them entered GAS feeling unsure of their direction, and they know firsthand how unsettling that can be. Their message is reassuring: it is better to explore thoughtfully, ask questions, and take the time needed to find the right fit, than to settle too quickly and realize later that the path chosen does not truly reflect who you are or what you want. Rushing to decide does not make the uncertainty disappear — it often leads to more confusion later on (Navarez, 2018).

These findings connect meaningfully to the work of Visande and Insigne (2021), whose study highlighted how parental support strengthens students' confidence in making career decisions. The present study agrees fully that guidance and support from trusted people — parents, teachers, mentors — are invaluable. Yet it adds a vital and distinct perspective: students must also take an active, leading role in their own planning. The participants did not simply advise future GAS students to listen to others; they encouraged them to research, explore, reflect, and decide for themselves — turning the advice they receive into personal understanding. Guidance is a gift, but the decision is ultimately one's own to make (Fernandez et al., 2023).

This balance between seeking guidance and taking personal responsibility is important because it clarifies what support truly means. Parents, teachers, and mentors can offer wisdom, experience, and care — and their input



deserves to be heard — but they cannot live the student's life or walk the student's path. The participants' advice reflects this truth: seek help, listen with an open mind, and be grateful for those who care enough to guide you, but also look inward, gather information, weigh your own heart, and decide carefully for yourself. The choice you make will shape your future, so it must be one you can stand behind with confidence (Betty, 2015).

Their recommendations also connect directly and deeply to the earlier themes in this study. Encouraging exploration reflects the flexibility they experienced within the GAS strand; advising self-awareness grows from their recognition of personal strengths and interests; and urging careful, unhurried decision-making responds to the very real uncertainty many of them faced. Their guidance is not something separate from their journey — it grew directly out of the challenges they overcame, the questions they asked, the doubts they worked through, and the discoveries they made along the way. Every piece of advice is rooted in the reality of their lived experience (Baret et al., 2024).

This theme carries special meaning because it shows how participants made sense of their own experience. They acknowledged that GAS offers wonderful freedom and broad learning opportunities, but they also recognized that without direction, that same freedom can feel overwhelming and confusing. Their advice transforms this challenge into opportunity: use the flexibility of GAS as a chance to explore, learn, and discover — not as a reason to delay deciding or remain uncertain. The openness of the strand is a gift, but it becomes truly valuable only when students use it to move gradually toward a clearer, more confident sense of direction (Yazon & Manaog, 2020).

Ultimately, Guidance & Recommendations serves as a thoughtful, heartfelt conclusion to this entire study. It demonstrates that career decision-making should be intentional — shaped by curiosity, self-knowledge, careful research, and wise guidance. The participants not only learn about their own futures; they turned their personal experiences into something that can help others. Their hope is clear: that future GAS students will explore thoughtfully, choose wisely, and build a career path that is not only realistic and practical, but deeply, authentically their own (Gatpandan et al., 2019).

Conclusion

Based on the experiences shared by the participants, this study concludes that choosing a career is a complex process for Grade 12 GAS students. Many selected this strand due to uncertainty about their college course, limited availability of specialized tracks in their school, financial constraints, or distance to accessible institutions. While GAS provides the opportunity to explore various fields, this flexibility can sometimes lead to confusion when making a final decision. Career choices are influenced by personal interests, skills, family support, financial situation, life experiences, and available opportunities. Students actively seek information and guidance to better understand themselves and their options. The study shows that effective career decision-making requires self-awareness, practical assessment, and balancing personal goals with real-life circumstances. Although GAS serves as a flexible foundation for exploration, proper guidance is essential to help students turn this freedom into a clear direction. This study holds great significance as it helps students understand that uncertainty is a normal part of planning for the future, and encourages them to explore their interests wisely. For schools and guidance counselors, it highlights the need for accessible and structured guidance programs tailored to support undecided students. For parents and families, it promotes the value of providing supportive guidance that respects both the student's aspirations and practical realities. For curriculum planners and policymakers, this research serves as a basis to improve the accessibility and relevance of educational pathways, ensuring that all students have fair opportunities to pursue their desired careers. This study is limited to participants from a specific school setting, so the findings may not fully represent the experiences of all GAS students in different locations or backgrounds. As a qualitative study, it provides deep insights into the topic but cannot be generalized to a larger population. The responses reflect the participants' perceptions at the time of the study, which may change as they gain new experiences and progress to college. Additionally, the study focused mainly on the students' perspective and did not include inputs from other stakeholders such as teachers or guidance counselors. Future research may cover more areas and include diverse participants to further expand the understanding of career decision-making among GAS students.

References

Abaya-Garcia, A. L., & Ballada, C. J. A. (2017). Exploring the factor structure of career decision-making efficacy among Filipino students. *Philippine Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 19(1), 110–123.



- Abe, E. N., & Chikoko, V. (2020). Exploring the factors that influence the career decision of STEM students at a university in South Africa. *International Journal of STEM Education*, 7, Article 60. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40594-020-00256-x>
- Aplaca, J., & Torrior, V. B. (2025). Level of interest toward career exploration among Grade 12 students. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Educational Research and Innovation*.
- Álvarez-Juste, J. (2024). Self-confidence and family support in academic and career decision making of secondary school students. *REOP - Revista Española de Orientación y Psicopedagogía*, 35(2), 7–24. <https://doi.org/10.5944/reop.vol.35.num.2.2024.41944>
- Almario, O. P. (2021). Factors affecting the career choice decision of SHS in Central Luzon. *Cosmos: An International Journal of Management*, 11(1). <https://doi.org/10.46360/cosmos.mgt.420212011>
- Bandura, A. (1986). Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory. Prentice-Hall.
- Baret, A. P. S. A., Arquino, A. B., Awyan, J. T., Bucod, R. C. D., & Ortiz, R. E. (2024). Understanding career choices among Grade 12 General Academic Strand students: A phenomenological approach. *Canadian Journal of Research, Society and Development*, 1(1), 13–18. <https://journals.ciracq.ca/index.php/crsd/article/view/>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Buzan, J., & Sheehy-Skeffington, J. (2024). Barriers in the transition from school to work: How student financial adversity predicts deprioritizing jobs with the best long-term career progression. *Journal of Social Issues*, 80, 1460–1483. <https://doi.org/10.1111/josi.12658>
- Chen, Y., & Kizilcec, R. F. (2024). Showing authentic examples of academic and career trajectories to influence college students' career exploration. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 153, 104026.
- Chopitea, A. A. (2022). Determinants influencing career choices of senior high school students of Cebu City Division. *International Journal of Recent Advances in Multidisciplinary Topics*, 3(7), 55–59.
- Department of Education. (2015). Guidelines on the early registration for senior high school for school year 2016–2017 (DepEd Order No. 41, s. 2015). Republic of the Philippines.
- De Mesa, R. A., Jacob, A. J. A., Basas, J. S., & Kasilag, A. V. (2025). Shaping futures: A qualitative exploration of the factors influencing career aspiration among out-of-school youth. *The Research Probe*, 5(1), 52–66. <https://doi.org/10.53378/trp.175>
- Del Rosario, R. A. T., Cruz, A. R. L., Bartolome, C. N. P., Manipon, N., Dela Cruz, A. M. I., & Villarama, J. A. (2024). Understanding how senior high school students choose a college degree program: A phenomenological study. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 2(7), 118–127. <https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2024.0151>
- Eccles, J. S., & Wigfield, A. (2002). Motivational beliefs, values, and goals. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 53, 109–132. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.53.100901.135153>
- Fernandez, C. B., Balijon, M. B., & Ancho, I. V. (2023). Career preferences of Filipino senior high school students. *CTU Journal of Innovation and Sustainable Development*, 15(3), 81–91. <https://doi.org/10.22144/ctujoisd.2023.053>
- Fulache, A. P. P. (2022). Factors influencing the senior high school students' track choice: A convergent parallel approach. *Multicultural Education Journal*, 2022, 27–44.
- Gati, I., Krausz, M., & Osipow, S. H. (1996). A taxonomy of difficulties in career decision making. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 43(4), 510–526. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.43.4.510>
- Gati, I., & Levin, N. (2014). Counseling for career decision-making difficulties: Measures and methods. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 62(2), 98–113. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-0045.2014.00073.x>
- Gati, I., Levin, N., & Landman-Tal, S. (2019). Decision-making models and career guidance. In J. A. Athanasou & H. N. Perera (Eds.), *International handbook of career guidance* (pp. 115–145). Springer International Publishing.
- Gatpandan, M. A. B., Cruz, F. E., & de Taza, E. G. (2019). A phenomenological inquiry of experiences of pioneer senior high school graduates under General Academic Strand: Influence on career decision making. *ASEAN Journal of Education*.
- Gestiada, G., Nazareno, A., & Roxas-Villanueva, R. M. L. (2017). Development of a senior high school career decision tool based on Social Cognitive Career Theory. *Philippine Journal of Science*, 146(4), 445–455.
- Gimarino, E. T. (2024). Career choice and self-efficacy toward senior high school students' career goals in the Philippines. *Indonesian Journal of Education Research*, 5(5).
- Hashim, H. M., & Embong, A. M. (2015). Parental and peer influences upon accounting as a subject and accountancy as a career. *Journal of Economics, Business and Management*, 3(2), 252–256. <https://doi.org/10.7763/JOEBM.2015.V3.189>
- Holland, J. L. (1997). Making vocational choices: A theory of vocational personalities and work environments (3rd ed.). Psychological Assessment Resources.



- Jordan, C. E., Dela Cruz, C. V., & Salvador, K. R. (2013). Career-related parent support as predictor of career decision-making self-efficacy. *Harvest*, 9(1).
- Lalantacon, X. F., Bayogog, L. S., Bawe, A., Abad, A. J., & Decena, J., III. (2024). Promoting SDG4 (Quality Education): The influence of family on career decisions among ABM students at Tacurong National High School. *Psychology and Education: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, 22(6), 744–750. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.12820956>
- Lent, R. W., Brown, S. D., & Hackett, G. (1994). Toward a unifying social cognitive theory of career and academic interest, choice, and performance. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 45(1), 79–122. <https://doi.org/10.1006/jvbe.1994.1027>
- Li, S., Pan, Q., & Nie, Y. (2023). The relationship between parental career-related factors and adolescents' ambivalence in career decision-making: A longitudinal mediation study. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 31(2), 262–281. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10690727221107678>
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage Publications.
- Liu, X., Mei, X., & Ji, G. (2024). "Walking with dreams": The categories of career decision-making self-efficacy and its influence on learning engagement of senior high school students. *Behavioral Sciences*, 14(12), 1174.
- Markus, H. R., & Kitayama, S. (2010). Cultures and selves: A cycle of mutual constitution. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 5(4), 420–430. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691610375557>
- Middleton, E. B., & Loughead, T. A. (1993). Parental influence on career development: An integrative framework for adolescent career counseling. *Journal of Career Development*, 19(3), 161–173. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF01353275>
- Navarez, J. C. (2018). Career indecision and career decision-making self-efficacy of Filipino senior high school students. *Guidance Journal*, 45(1), 45. https://animorepository.dlsu.edu.ph/faculty_research/5754
- Nguyen, T. L., Nguyen, H. T., Nguyen, N. H., & Nguyen, D. L. (2023). Factors affecting students' career choice in economics majors in the COVID-19 post-pandemic period: A case study of a private university in Vietnam. *Journal of Innovation & Knowledge*, 8(2), 100338. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jik.2023.100338>
- Nobis, M. L., Jr. (2025). Career paths in criminal justice: Intersection of passion, opportunity and overcoming challenges of first-year criminology students in the Philippines. *Asian Journal of Advanced Research and Reports*, 19(4), 198–205. <https://doi.org/10.9734/ajarr/2025/v19i4974>
- Pratama, M. F., & Muttaqin, D. (2024). Career decision-making self-efficacy as mediator of parental career support and vocational identity. *Journal of Educational, Health and Community Psychology*, 13(4), 1748–1767
- Republic Act No. 11206, Secondary School Career Guidance and Counseling Act of 2019 (2019). Republic of the Philippines.
- Savickas, M. L., Nota, L., Rossier, J., Dauwalder, J.-P., Duarte, M. E., Guichard, J., Soresi, S., Van Esbroeck, R., & van Vianen, A. E. M. (2009). Life designing: A paradigm for career construction in the 21st century. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 75(3), 239–250. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2009.04.004>
- Söner, O., & Gültekin, F. (2025). Middle school students' career parental support and adolescent–parent career congruence: The mediating role of self-efficacy. *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance*, 25, 981–1003. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10775-024-09658-7>
- Super, D. E. (1980). A life-span, life-space approach to career development. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 16(3), 282–298. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0001-8791\(80\)90056-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/0001-8791(80)90056-1)
- Tagsip, D. M. S. (2025). Valuing General Academic Strand (GAS): Exploring attitude of the senior high school graduating class on their career choice. *Pantao International Journal*. <https://pantaointernationaljournal.com/2025/07/20/publication-319-valuing-geneal-academic-strand-gas-exploring-attitude-of-the-senior-high-school-graduating-class-on-their-career-choice/>
- Tabigne, P. N. (2021). Course and career preferences alignment among selected state college students. *LAMDAG*, 12(1).
- Thunputtadom, P., Suwanna, B., Srikeaw, B., & Thaworncharoen, P. (2024). Factors affecting the decision to pursue the accounting profession of senior high school students in the Eastern Economic Corridor of Thailand. *Asian Administration and Management Review*, 7(1), 176–186. <https://doi.org/10.14456/aamr.2024.16>
- Valencia, A. D., Flores, C. N. B., & Ventosa, P. J. (2019). Family communication patterns and their roles to Grade 10 Filipino students' career decision self-efficacy. *Binh: Letran-Calamba Student Research Journal*, 19(1).
- Visande, S. K. C., & Insigne, J. Z. (2021). Correlates of career decision self-efficacy and parental support among Grade 10 students. *Progressio Journal on Human Development*, 15(1).
- Whiston, S. C., & Keller, B. K. (2004). The influences of the family of origin on career development: A review and analysis. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 32(4), 493–568. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000004265660>
- Yazon, A. D., & Manaog, M. L. (2020). Senior high school tracks and strands in the Philippines: Students' perspectives on career decision-making. *International Journal of Education and Practice*, 8(3), 408–419. <https://doi.org/10.18488/journal.61.2020.83.408.419>