

Course Preference of Senior High School Students in the 1st District of Capiz: Input to Program Reviews among Heis

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ABSTRACT: In the pursuit of the goals of the government that no child shall be left behind to attain higher learnings and that no Grade 12 applicants shall be denied entry in HEIs which offer free tuition and miscellaneous fees altogether. As a result, it is no surprise that the number of enrollees for the S.Y. 2018-2019 for the incoming freshman students among HEIs went up. To prepare for this transition, HEIs are mandated to help formulate and implement strategies to ensure a smooth transition into the new K to 12 system. This includes being able to formulate programs and improve college curriculum to address student's needs in the community. This study conducted a preliminary survey among the senior high school students in the First District of Capiz. For the purpose of having a bird's eye view on what courses are most preferred by senior high school students. Results showed that the courses most preferred by senior high school students are the Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education, Bachelor of Science in Hotel and Restaurant Management, Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, Bachelor of Science in Information Technology and Bachelor of Science in Computer Science. Teacher education is seen or the consistent choice among high school graduates with the full implementation which still needs additional teachers in most academic areas. Business and technology courses are do preferred as technology becomes an integral part of the human existence.

KEYWORDS: K to 12 education, higher education, quantitative research

INTRODUCTION

Choosing a course is one of the most important and one of the most difficult decisions to make, especially among the youth nowadays because the career of which they have chosen could make or break their chances to opportunities in life. It is the time when they would decide which path they would take for the rest of their lives. It is therefore important that in choosing a course, students are very much aware of the road where this chosen career would lead them. The importance of having effective career planning is emphasized by SREB. It was found that students who receive help in exploring careers and planning programs of study related to their career interest are more likely to see school as meaningful.

However, the process of preferring a course depends on the available offerings of nearby colleges and universities. The prevalent concern on degrees offered by universities and colleges are becoming irrelevant to the demands of companies or industries (Briones & Rubi, 2021).

Pascual (2014) concord that the availability of work after graduating is the first consideration of students in choosing a course in college. Most of the students prefer to take scientific related field courses, or the popular courses for Filipinos. The least preferred course is in the Agricultural field. Most of the student-respondents were inclined to take professional courses. Students preferred courses are related to their fathers' occupation. Other factors such as mothers' occupation, monthly family income, student's sibling position and student's third year general average grades are not related to the students preferred course in college.

Psychologically junior high school students are at a stage of adolescence that is still unstable affected by various things in choosing competency skills in Vocational High Schools. The decision to adopt is complex because it involves many aspects of its implementation (Gusdiandika & Sinduwiatmo, 2012). Errors in choosing expertise competencies can occur when students choose expertise competencies that are influenced by external factors besides their interests and talents. These external factors include parental guidance factors, peer group factors, school promotion factors, and career information factors.

Meanwhile, the change in curriculum is another contributing factor. According to Daquioag (2012) the benefits of K to 12 program includes graduates who are prepared for higher education. Due to an enhanced curriculum that will provide relevant content and attuned with the changing needs of time, basic education will ensure sufficient mastery of core subjects to its graduates much graduates may opt to pursue higher education if they choose to.

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In this regard, the higher education institutions must be aware and prepare to cater the needs of these incoming first year college students. The higher education institutions must see to it that they are offering courses suited, attractive, and interesting to the students.

Hence, this study was conducted as preliminary survey among the senior high school students in the first district of Capiz. This is for the purpose of having a bird's eye view on what courses are most preferred by senior high school students. This study determined the course preference of the grade 12 senior high school students in the first district of Capiz and the factors affecting their choice.

Specifically, this study answered the following questions: 1) What are the leading preferred courses of senior high school students as a whole and when grouped according to: sex, age, parent's educational attainment, chosen track in the senior high school. 2) What are the contributing factors affecting students' career choice? 3) What type of higher education institution is most preferred by senior high school students? 4) What program review can be suggested from the results of the study?

METHODOLOGY

The researchers employed descriptive-survey research method to gather information on the preferred courses in college among the K to 12 senior high school students.

Data Gathering Instrument

A validated ($\alpha=.84$) researcher-made descriptive checklist was used to gather needed data. The checklist was divided into three parts: Part I includes students' socio demographic status, Part II students course preference and Part III are the factors affecting their course choice.

Data Gathering Procedure

In gathering data pertinent of the study, permission from the office of the schools' division superintendents for both divisions in the province of Capiz were secured and were presented to the office of the school principal and/ or to the senior high school coordinator of each respondent school. Senior high school students were then grouped based on their academic strand. The sample from each strand was then computed. Once the number of respondents per strand in each school was established, students were then allowed to give their response on the researcher-made checklist. The selection of respondents in each strand was done through simple random sampling.

Data Analysis

Descriptive data analysis was used in determining the socio-demographic profile of the grade 12 senior high school students. As the respondents were asked to rank the pre-determined courses, the mean rank was used to identify the top five courses preferred by senior high school students. The rank and mean rank were also used to identify the top contributing factors that may affect the preferred college courses of students.

The scale for interpretation used were as follows;

Mean Rank	Verbal Interpretation
1.00 – 2.33	Preferred
2.34 - 3.67	Slightly Preferred
3.68 – 5.00	Least Preferred

RESULTS

Course Preference of students' when taken as a whole

Table 1. Course Preference of Students' when taken as a Whole

Top 5 Course choice	Mean Rank	Verbal Interpretation
BSED	1.73	Preferred
BSHRM	2.29	Preferred
BSBA	4.82	Least Preferred
BSIT	4.95	Least Preferred
BSCS	5.00	Least Preferred

Note: Interpretation in based on the scale "1.00 – 2.75 = Most preferred", "2.76-4.75 = Preferred", "4.76 – 6.00=Least Preferred"

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Table 1 shows the top five preferred courses of students when taken as a whole. It can be noted that, regardless of variables presented in this study, the course Bachelor in Secondary Education ($\bar{x}=1.73$) is the first preferred course among senior high school students. Followed by BSHRM ($\bar{x}=2.29$), BSBA ($\bar{x}=4.82$), BSIT ($\bar{x}=4.95$), and the course in their fifth list is BSCS ($\bar{x}=5.00$)

Course Preference according to Sex

Table 2. Course preference in terms of sex.

Top 5 Course Choice	Male	Mean Rank	Verbal Interpretation	Female	Mean Rank	Verbal Interpretation
1 st choice	BSED	1.61	Preferred	BSED	1.76	Preferred
2 nd choice	BSHRM	2.27	Preferred	BSHRM	2.25	Preferred
3 rd choice	BSBA	2.67	Preferred	BSBA	2.27	Least Preferred
4 th choice	BSIT	4.12	Least Preferred	BSIT	3.78	Least Preferred
5 th choice	BSCS	4.75	Least Preferred	BSCS	4.25	Least Preferred

Note: Interpretation in based on the scale “1.00 – 2.75 = Most preferred”, “2.76-4.75 = Preferred”, “4.76 – 6.00=Least Preferred”

Table 2 illustrates the top five preferred courses of senior high school students. Data revealed that male and female students preferred Bachelor in Secondary Education as their number one choice. Followed by Bachelor of Science in Hotel, Restaurant and Management, Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, Bachelor of Science in Information Technology and their fifth choice is the Bachelor of Science in Computer Science. Considering their mean ranks, BSED ($\bar{x}=1.61$, $\bar{x}=1.76$) and BSHRM ($\bar{x}=2.27$, $\bar{x}=2.25$) are the preferred courses. On the other hand, BSBA ($\bar{x}=2.67$, $\bar{x}=2.27$), BSIT ($\bar{x}=4.12$, $\bar{x}=3.78$) and BSCS ($\bar{x}=4.75$ and $\bar{x}=4.25$) are the least preferred courses of students according to male and female respondents, respectively.

Course Preference according to Age

Table 3. Course preference in terms of age.

Top 5 Course Choice	15-17 y.o	Mean Rank	Verbal Interpretatio	18-20 y.o.	Mean Rank	Verbal Interpretatio	21y.o. and above	Mean Rank	Verbal Interpretation
1 st choice	BSED	1.91	Preferred	BSED	1.75	Preferred	BSED	1.31	Preferred
2 nd choice	BSHRM	2.17	Preferred	BSHRM	2.29	Preferred	BSHRM	3.54	Least Preferred
3 rd choice	BSBA	2.66	Preferred	BSBA	2.31	Preferred	BSBA	4.21	Least Preferred
4 th choice	BSIT	4.12	Least preferred	BSIT	4.01	Least preferred	BSIT	4.33	Least Preferred
5 th choice	BSCS	4.22	Least preferred	BSCS	4.25	Least preferred	BSCS	4.40	Least Preferred

Note: Interpretation in based on the scale “1.00 – 2.75 = Most preferred”, “2.76-4.75 = Preferred”, “4.76 – 6.00=Least Preferred”

Table 3 below revealed the course preference of senior high school students when categorized according to their age. It can be noted that all age brackets : 15-17, 18-20 and 21 and up, considered Bachelor in Secondary Education as their primary course choice. Followed by Bachelor of Science in Hotel and Restaurant Management, Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, Bachelor of Science in Information Technology. While, Bachelor of Science in Computer Science was their top five course choice. Among these courses, BSED ($\bar{x}=1.91$, 1.75, 1.31, respectively) course ranked highest among the categories under the variable age, followed by BSHRM ($\bar{x}=2.17$, 2.29, 3.54 respectively), followed by BSBA ($\bar{x}=2.66$, 2.31, 4.21, respectively), BSIT ($\bar{x}=4.12$, 4.01, 4.33, respectively) and BSCS ($\bar{x}=4.22$, 4.25 and 4.40, respectively) as the least preferred courses in terms of age.

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Course Preference according to Parents' Highest Educational Attainment

Table 4. Course preference in terms of parents' educational attainment.

Mother's educational attainment	Course Preference		
	Course	Mean Rank	Verbal Interpretation
Post Graduate	BSED	1.73	Preferred
	BSHRM	1.90	Preferred
	BSBA	3.98	Least preferred
	BSIT	4.00	Least preferred
	BSA	4.33	Least preferred
College Level	BSED	1.84	Preferred
	BSHRM	2.28	Preferred
	BSBA	4.28	Least preferred
	BSIT	4.51	Least preferred
	BSCS	4.93	Least preferred
High School Graduate	BSED	1.80	Preferred
	BSHRM	2.27	Preferred
	BSBA	4.81	Least Preferred
	BSIT	4.98	Least Preferred
	BSCS	5.00	Least Preferred
High School Undergraduate	BSED	1.46	Preferred
	BSHRM	2.28	Preferred
	BSBA	4.76	Least Preferred
	BSIT	4.82	Least Preferred
	BSCS	4.91	Least Preferred
Elementary Graduate	BSED	2.13	Preferred
	BSHRM	2.26	Preferred
	BSBA	2.33	Preferred
	BSIT	4.34	Least Preferred
	BEED	4.47	Least Preferred
Elementary Undergraduate	BSED	1.60	Preferred
	BSHRM	2.22	Preferred
	BSBA	4.04	Least Preferred
	BSCS	4.16	Least Preferred
	BSIT	4.25	Least Preferred

Note: Interpretation in based on the scale "1.00 – 2.75 = Most preferred", "2.76-4.75 = Preferred", "4.76 – 6.00=Least Preferred"

Table 4 and 5 presents students' course preference when grouped according to parents' highest educational attainment. Results showed in all categories of mothers' educational attainment students' like to pursue Bachelor in Secondary Education (\bar{x} =1.73, 1.84, 1.80, 1.46, 2.13 and 1.60) as their top course choice when grouped according to post graduate, college level, high school graduate, high school undergraduate, elementary graduate and elementary undergraduate, respectively. This was followed by Bachelor of Science in Hotel and Restaurant Management (\bar{x} =1.90, 2.28, 2.27, 2.28, 2.26 and 2.22) respectively. Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (\bar{x} =3.98, 4.28, 4.81, 4.76, 2.33 and 4.04) respectively, ranks third.

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Table 5. Course preference in terms of parents' educational attainment

Father's Educational Attainment	Course Preference		
	Course	Mean Rank	Verbal Interpretation
Post Graduate	BSED	2.15	Preferred
	BSHRM	2.28	Preferred
	BSBA	3.96	Least Preferred
	BEED	4.17	Least Preferred
	BSA	4.36	Least Preferred
College Level	BSED	1.80	Preferred
	BSHRM	2.12	Preferred
	BSBA	2.24	Preferred
	BSIT	4.11	Least Preferred
	BSCS	5.00	Least Preferred
High School Graduate	BSED	1.89	Preferred
	BSHRM	2.22	Preferred
	BSBA	4.91	Least Preferred
	BSIT	4.96	Least Preferred
	BSCS	5.00	Least Preferred
High School Undergraduate	BSED	1.78	Preferred
	BSHRM	2.23	Preferred
	BSBA	4.36	Least Preferred
	BSIT	4.39	Least Preferred
	BSCS	4.92	Least Preferred
Elementary Graduate	BSED	1.74	Preferred
	BSHRM	2.16	Preferred
	BSBA	4.42	Least Preferred
	BSIT	4.48	Least Preferred
	BSCS	4.73	Least Preferred
Elementary Undergraduate	BSED	2.17	Preferred
	BSHRM	2.23	Preferred
	BSBA	2.27	Preferred
	BSIT	3.70	Least Preferred
	BSCS	4.19	Least Preferred

Note: Interpretation in based on the scale "1.00 – 2.75 = Most preferred", "2.76-4.75 = Preferred", "4.76 – 6.00=Least Preferred"

On the other hand, fathers' highest educational attainment revealed that similar to mothers' highest educational attainment, BSED (\bar{x} =2.15, 1.80, 1.89, 1.78, 1.74 and 2.17, respectively) ranks first. BSHRM (\bar{x} =2.28, 2.12, 2.22, 2.23, 2.16 and 2.23, respectively) was the respondents' second choice. Likewise, BSBA (\bar{x} =3.96, 2.24, 4.91, 4.36, 4.42 and 2.27, respectively) came out as the students third choice.

Meanwhile, students whose mother's educational attainment belong to post-graduate also included Bachelor of Science in Accounting (\bar{x} =3.98) in their top five course choice. In the meantime, there are students whose father's educational attainment belong to the post-graduate level chose Bachelor of Elementary Education (\bar{x} =4.17) as one of their top five options of courses preferred.

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Course Preference according to strand in senior high school

Table 6. Course Preference in term of track in senior high school

Senior High School Strand	Top five course Choice	Mean Rank	Verbal Interpretation
General Academic Strand	BSED	1.75	Preferred
	BSHRM	2.28	Preferred
	BSBA	3.87	Least Preferred
	BSIT	4.19	Least Preferred
	BSCS	4.79	Least Preferred
Accountancy Business and Management	BSED	1.79	Preferred
	BSBA	1.94	Preferred
	BSHRM	3.87	Least Preferred
	BSA	4.24	Least Preferred
	BSIT	4.54	Least Preferred
Science Technology and Engineering	BSED	2.01	Preferred
	BSHRM	2.27	Preferred
	BSBA	4.77	Least Preferred
	BSIT	4.96	Least Preferred
	BSCS	5.00	Least Preferred
Technology and Vocational Education	BSED	1.71	Preferred
	BSHRM	2.21	Preferred
	BSBA	3.79	Least Preferred
	BSIT	4.11	Least Preferred
	BSCS	4.23	Least Preferred

Note: Interpretation in based on the scale "1.00 – 2.75 = Most preferred", "2.76-4.75 = Preferred", "4.76 – 6.00=Least Preferred"

Table 6 presents students' course choice when they are grouped according to the academic strand they chose in their senior high school. These strands include, the General Academic Strand (GAS), Accountancy Business and Management (ABM) strand, Science Technology and Engineering (STE) strand and the Technology and Vocational Education (TVE) strand. Data revealed that in all strands, students preferred Bachelor in Secondary Education (\bar{x} =1.75, 1.79, 2.01, and 1.71, respectively) as their first choice. Students of ABM strand favor Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (\bar{x} =1.94) as their second choice, whereas, students from GAS, STE and TVE favor Bachelor of Science in Hotel and Restaurant Management (\bar{x} =2.28, 3.87, and 2.27) as their second option. Meanwhile, Bachelor of Science in Information Technology (\bar{x} =4.19,4.54, 4.96, 4.11, respectively) and Bachelor of Science in Computer Science (\bar{x} =4.79, 5.00 and 4.23) were in the top five choices of most students in GAS, STE and TVE except for the ABM strand.

Factors affecting students' course choice in college

Table 7. Factors affecting students' course preference

Factors	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
It is the current demand in the market.	3.88	1.78	Preferred
It is the distance or the accessibility of the school offering.	4.12	1.82	Preferred
it is due to the influence of my friends.	4.19	1.60	Preferred
It is the course that my parents benefactors could afford.	4.22	1.52	Preferred
It is the information I get from the media.	4.36	1.93	Preferred

Note: Interpretation in based on the scale "1.00 – 2.75 = Most preferred", "2.76-4.75 = Preferred", "4.76 – 6.00=Least Preferred"

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Table 7 presents the factors that students consider when choosing the course, they want to pursue in college. Results revealed that the first thing that most students consider when choosing a degree in college was the current demand in the market ($\bar{x}=3.88$) followed by the distance or the accessibility of the school offering the course ($\bar{x}=4.12$). Friends choice and influence ($\bar{x}=4.19$) ranked third influential factors in choosing course in college. Parents' or guardians' ability to support students' education in college ($\bar{x}=4.22$) was also in consideration in most of the student-respondents. Results also revealed that media information ($\bar{x}=4.36$) affect the course preference of senior high school students.

Results of this study concurs the study of Pascual (2014) which stated that availability of work is the first consideration in choosing a career. On the other hand, Borchert (2002) classified that personal interest as the most influential factor that contributes to career choice of students.

Higher Education Institution Preferred by students

Table 8. Higher education institution preferred by senior high school students.

Type of School	Frequency	Percentage
State University and Colleges/ Local University and Colleges	972	44.2%
Private Sectarian HEI	441	20.1%
TESDA Supervised Vocational Institution	411	18.7%
Private Non-Sectarian HEI	208	9.5%
Private Vocational Institution	166	7.6%

Table 8 displays the type of higher education institution most preferred by students. It can be noted that almost majority of the respondents chose state university and colleges or the local university and colleges ($f=972$) as the type of institution where they wanted to spend their college days. This is followed by the private sectarian higher education institution ($f=441$), TESDA supervised vocational institution ($f=411$), private non-sectarian ($f=208$) and private vocational institution ($f=166$) as their choices respectively.

DISCUSSION

The choice of course to take in college is one of the major decisions faced by the graduating students which is an important element of their learning process. The course decision will most likely define their future success Dayao and Alamaro, 2017).

The course preference of students, as noticed, resulted to Bachelor in Secondary Education (BSED) as being the most preferred course followed by Bachelor of Science in Hotel and Restaurant Management (BSHRM), Business Administration (BSBA), Information Technology (BSIT) and Computer Science (BSCS) as the least preferred one. The result of this study do not support the writings of Pascual (2014) that students in this generation usually choose those "popular" or those well-known courses such as engineering, medical related courses, and accounting to be their preferred courses. This result may suggest that students do not necessarily go with the trend. They opt to choose the courses that they are more inclined to take.

Parents educational attainment matters on course preference of the students as the result yield that Bachelor in Secondary Education is likely to be pursued in all categories of mothers' educational attainment, may it be because, since father as regarded as bread winner and is expected to be often out of the house, the mother's presence and inspiration to the students greatly affect their sense of decision when it comes to career choice. This directly negates the writings of Pascual (2014) that says, since the fathers are typically the bread winner of the family, thus provides the financial needs of family, and since the students consider the financial stability for his own family in the future, the biggest decision relies on the greater possibility to land a job after graduation

As per result of the course choice when grouped according to the academic strand they chose in their senior high school, it was found out that in all tracks, students choose the course, Bachelor in Secondary Education. This shows inconsistencies to the student respondent's response regarding their dreams and aspirations in life as part of their career from their enrolled high school academic tracks. This means that they enrolled in subjects which may not deemed helpful with their preparation to their choice of college degree or career (Penedilla and Lilibeth, 2017)

In the aspect of the factors affecting the career choice of students, findings showed that the career decisions of senior high school students strongly affect their choice of academic programmes. It was also found out from the study that possibility of employment and availability of job in the future is also considered by students (Pascual, 2014). This result clearly states that the students' first consideration in choosing a course is the possibility to land a job after a graduation. This may be true these days since graduates, commonly find it difficult to find a job even if they have graduated from these "in-demand" courses.

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From the presented result of the study, the researchers suggest to those in-charge of the program offerings of the university to look into the results and to try to ponder on the attractiveness of the courses offered by the university. It can be noted that some courses currently offered in the campus are not that appealing to many students anymore. Therefore, it may just be the right time to start campaigning or “selling” their courses in the market so students – who are the important clientele of the university, could be informed of the course offerings. With this, researchers of this study proposed an action plan for program review and enhancement.

SUGGESTED ACTION PLAN FOR PROGRAM REVIEW AND ENHANCEMENT

Program	Activity	Persons' Involved	Time Frame
Institutional Program Review / Evaluation	SWOT analysis Needs Assessment Tracer study Others.	Campus Administrator Quality Assurance Chair Deans Program Coordinator	2 nd semester
Program Promotion	Social media promotion. Use of posters/ flyers/tarpaulins Print and TV Advertisements Others.	Campus Administrator Quality Assurance Chair Deans Guidance Counsellor Program Coordinator Teachers Students	2 nd semester and Summer (In preparation for the opening of classes)
External Program Review	Subject courses offered to: CHED monitoring AACUP accreditation ISO certification	Administrative Personnel	

Institutional program review is deemed necessary to best identify the strengths and weaknesses of the programs offered and have it realigned to better cater to the needs and demands of the students (clientele). Through this, the university's program offerings may be well chosen and improved which will entice students' interests. On the other hand, the institution should submit itself to periodic evaluation and monitoring to maintain the standard and quality education it offers which is instrumental for it to help the students reach their full potential. Meanwhile, Program promotion may be enhanced and intensified to market and promote the programs offered. This way, it could elicit awareness of the programs offered to possible clientele.

CONCLUSION

The courses most preferred by grade 12 students are: Bachelor in Secondary Education, Bachelor of Science in Hotel and Restaurant Management, Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, Bachelor of Science in Information Technology and Bachelor of Science of Computer Science. This choice reflects the current demand in the respective workplace in the society. Teacher education is seen or the consistent choice among high school graduates with the full implementation of the k to 12 education which still needs additional teachers in most academic areas. Business and technology courses are do preferred as technology becomes an integral part of the human existence.

With the free college education intended in the public higher education institutions, the preferred institution for higher learning is naturally state universities and colleges.

RECOMMENDATION

After considering the results of the study, the following recommendations are advanced:

1. Higher education institution may consider the courses that are most preferred by senior high school students.
2. Higher education institution may reflect on the factors chosen by senior high school students in choosing their course.
3. Higher education institution may conduct regular review of their course offerings to ensure that those answer the current demand in the market.
4. Persons in authority may promote those preferred courses using varied platform and other courses which are still significant for community development.

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