INFLUENCEING FACTORS IN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STRAND PREFERENCE

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Influencing Factor in Senior High School Strand Preference

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Abstract. This study examined the factors influencing strand preference among Grade 10 students at Buenavista Integrated School in Zamboanga City, Philippines, during the School Year 2025–2026. Specifically, the study investigated how selected demographic characteristics (age, sex, socioeconomic status, and academic performance) and contextual influences (family, peers, personal factors, and environmental considerations) shape students' choices among the General Academic Strand (GAS), Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS), and Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL). A descriptive–quantitative research design was employed, involving 73 Grade 10 students who were selected as respondents. Data were gathered using a structured survey questionnaire and analyzed through frequency distribution, mean scores, analysis of variance (ANOVA), and correlation analysis to determine the significance of the identified variables on strand preference. The results revealed that HUMSS was the most preferred strand (39.7%), followed by TVL (32.9%) and GAS (27.4%). Most respondents were aged 14–16 years old (91.8%), female (72.6%), and from middle-income families (74.0%), with an average academic performance categorized as satisfactory (M = 82.32). In terms of influencing factors, personal influence (M = 3.05) and environmental influence (M = 3.00) were rated as moderately influential, followed by family influence (M = 2.68), while peer influence (M = 2.37) had the lowest level of influence. Statistical analysis further indicated that age (p = .003), sex (p = .011), and socioeconomic status (p = .048) significantly influenced students' strand preferences, while academic performance showed no significant influence on strand preference. The findings suggest that students' strand choices are shaped by a complex interaction of demographic characteristics and contextual influences rather than academic performance alone. These results highlight the importance of strengthening school-based career guidance programs, enhancing academic and career counseling services, and providing equitable support mechanisms to assist students in making informed educational decisions aligned with their interests, abilities, and future career aspirations.

Keywords: Academic Performance, Demographic Profile, Environmental Factors, Personal Influence, Strand Preference

Introduction

Students' choices of senior high school strands are not random but shaped by multiple influences. Studies have shown that parental guidance, peer influence, environmental conditions, and personal interests

significantly affect strand selection (Simpal et al., 2024; Sanchez & Ramos, 2024; Calibugar, 2025). Career aspirations and self-efficacy beliefs emerged as primary drivers, while demographic variables such as age, sex, and household income had little impact.

In the Philippine context, strands such as Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS), General Academic Strand (GAS), and Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) provide distinct academic and career pathways. Research highlighted that students often based their choices on personal strengths, academic performance, and perceived employability (Badilla & Dioso, 2023; Kilag et al., 2023). However, limited strand offerings, inadequate guidance, and socio-economic constraints restricted students' ability to align choices with their aspirations (Alim, 2024).

Despite the growing body of literature, most studies concentrated on urban or regional settings, overlooking smaller schools. This gap called for localized research to explore how demographics, academic performance, and environmental influences shaped strand preferences. Addressing this need, the present study examined Grade 10 students at Buenavista Integrated School. It aimed to describe their demographic profiles, identify their preferred strands (GAS, HUMSS, TVL), and assess the influence of family, peers, environment, and personal factors on their choices. By investigating these influences, the study sought to provide insights that could help educators and guidance counselors support students in making informed academic and career decisions.

Research Questions

This study aimed to determine the Senior High School track preferences of Grade 10 students of Buenavista Integrated School, Zamboanga City for the school year 2025–2026.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions;

1. What is the demographic profiles of the students in terms of:
   1.1 Age
   1.2 Sex
   1.3 Socio-economic Status
   1.4 Academic Performance
2. What is the Senior High School preferences of students in terms of:
   2.1 GAS
   2.2 HUMSS
   2.3 TVL
4. What is the levels of factors influencing the students' strand preference in terms of;
   4.1 Family Influence
   4.2 Peer Influence
   4.3 Environmental Influence
   4.4 Personal Influence
5. Does the demographic profile of the students influence their strand preference?
6. Does the influencing factors affect the students' strand preference?

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study examined the factors influencing senior high school strand preferences among Grade 10 students of Buenavista Integrated School, Zamboanga City Division, for the school year 2025–2026. It considered the students' demographic profiles in terms of age, sex, socio-economic status, and academic performance, as well as their strand preferences in the General Academic Strand (GAS), Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS), and Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL). The study also explored the extent to which family, peer, personal, and environmental influences shaped these choices. Conducted within the localized context of Buenavista Integrated School, the research aimed to provide insights that would help educators and guidance counselors support students in making informed academic and career decisions.

Literature Review

Age

Age influences how students make academic decisions, though its impact varies across contexts. Foreign studies show that older learners benefit from maturity and stronger strategies, while younger students may lean toward vocational tracks due to relative age effects (Cenoz, 2002; Oterhals et al., 2023). Local research, however, suggests that age itself is not a decisive factor; students' choices are shaped more by interests, career goals, and self-efficacy (Sanchez, 2024; Calibugar, 2025). Overall, age reflects readiness and maturity but does not directly determine strand preference.

Sex

Sex or gender continues to shape strand preference across cultures. Foreign studies reveal that males often pursue STEM while females lean toward humanities, influenced by confidence levels and societal expectations (Legewie & DiPrete, 2019; Guo & Hau, 2024). Local findings confirm similar patterns, with male students favoring STEM and TVL, and female students choosing HUMSS and ABM (Baucas, 2024; Alvarez, 2025). These results highlight that gender roles and perceptions influence academic decisions, though they do not strictly dictate outcomes.

Socioeconomic Status

Socioeconomic status plays a powerful role in shaping educational opportunities. Foreign studies show that wealthier students tend to pursue academic strands, while those from lower-income families often choose vocational tracks due to practical needs (Smith & Johnson, 2018; Lee & Park, 2017). Local research echoes this, noting that family income, parental occupation, and educational attainment strongly influence strand selection, though some studies find only moderate effects (Nazareno, 2021; Malaguial, 2025). SES consistently frames what students believe is possible and accessible.

Academic Performance

Academic performance is a critical determinant of strand preference. Foreign studies emphasize that strong grades and motivation lead students toward STEM, while emotions and anxiety also affect outcomes (Evans & Malmberg, 2020; Méndez-Aguado et al., 2020). Local findings confirm that higher grades expand opportunities for competitive strands, while lower performance pushes students toward TVL or HUMSS (Nazareno, 2021; Quiño, 2022). Performance thus shapes both confidence and eligibility in academic decision-making.

Strand Preference

Strand preference reflects a complex mix of personal, social, and institutional influences. Foreign studies highlight family expectations, school reputation, and global aspirations as key drivers (Timilsina, 2023; Asadianfam et al., 2015). Local research emphasizes personal interests, career goals, and peer advice as critical factors (Sabanal, 2025; Magdadaro, 2020). Across contexts, strand preference is not a simple choice, but a decision shaped by multiple layers of influence.

General Academic Strand (GAS)

The General Academic Strand offers flexibility for undecided students. Foreign studies show that GAS provides a broad foundation, but outcomes depend on performance and personal goals (Lim, 2023; Feld & Zölitz, 2022). Local findings reveal that GAS is the least chosen strand, often selected by students exploring options, with literacy and stress as challenges (Maranga et al., 2023; Tagsip, 2024). GAS serves as a stepping stone but requires tailored support to maximize its potential.

Humanities and Social Science (HUMSS)

The HUMSS strand develops communication and critical thinking skills. Foreign studies emphasize the role of peer and maternal support in career exploration (Felsman & Blustein, 1999; Marcionetti & Zammitti, 2023). Local research highlights curriculum challenges but also strong student confidence and motivation (Estrera, 2021; Raposas-Rabut, 2024). HUMSS fosters socially aware learners, shaped by both academic delivery and relational support.

Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL)

TVL equips students with practical skills for employment and entrepreneurship. Foreign studies show that parental expectations and peer influence strongly shape vocational choices (Fantinelli et al., 2023; Bittmann, 2024). Local findings emphasize personal interests, family advice, and supportive environments as key factors (Gonzales & Digo, 2024; Vallesteros, 2022). TVL prepares students for real-world opportunities, guided by both personal and social contexts.

Influencing Factors

Students' strand choices are shaped by a combination of personal, social, and environmental influences. Foreign studies highlight gender, interests, environment, and parental guidance as major determinants (Huang, 2022; Omar & Desa, 2022). Local research confirms that personal interests, peer dynamics, and family input play critical roles (Morales et al., 2023; Isla & Borja, 2025). Strand preference emerges from the interplay of individual motivation and external pressures.

Family Influence

Family influence remains a decisive factor in academic choices. Foreign studies show that parental background and support strongly guide students' decisions (Feng, 2022; Koçak, 2021). Local findings confirm that family guidance, expectations, and educational attainment significantly shape strand preference

(Nazareno et al., 2021; Ladia & Evangelio, 2023). Families serve as both practical and emotional anchors in students' educational journeys.

Peer Influence

Peers play a subtle but powerful role in shaping academic decisions. Foreign studies reveal that peer interactions strongly influence career and strand choices (Rubineau et al., 2024; Korir & Kipkemboi, 2014). Local findings show that students often follow friends' recommendations to feel socially accepted and supported (Morales et al., 2023; Jaminal et al., 2019). Peer influence guides choices through belonging and shared aspirations.

Personal Influence

Personal influence is a dominant factor in strand preference. Foreign studies emphasize self-awareness, motivation, and personal interests as key drivers of academic decisions (Sylaska & Mayer, 2024; Pham et al., 2024). Local research confirms that students rely on their own judgment, interests, and strengths when choosing strands (Tortor et al., 2023; Virtudazo, 2023). Personal influence reflects students' passions and confidence in their abilities.

Environmental Influence

Environmental factors shape the context of students' decisions. Foreign studies highlight the role of school environment, guidance programs, and exposure to opportunities in career choices (Besigomwe, 2018; Moriyasu & Kobayashi, 2022). Local findings show that facilities, school culture, and community reputation influence strand preference (Sta. Cruz et al., 2023; Jaminal et al., 2019). A supportive environment empowers students to make confident and meaningful choices.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a Descriptive-Correlational Quantitative Research Design to examine the influence of various factors on the strand preference of Grade 10 students in Buenavista Integrated School. Descriptive research design focuses on presenting characteristics and phenomena without manipulation (Hassan, 2024), while descriptive correlational research explores associations between variables without implying causation (Bierut, 2025). Data were gathered through survey questionnaires, which are effective tools for collecting both quantitative and qualitative information about respondents' attitudes and experiences (Bhandari, 2021). For analysis, descriptive statistics such as mean, frequency, and percentage were used to summarize the data, while inferential statistical tools—specifically the independent t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)—were applied to determine significant differences between groups and test relationships among variables (Hayes). Ethical standards, including informed consent and confidentiality, were strictly observed in accordance with the American Psychological Association guidelines (APA, 2020).

Sampling Design

The study used non-probability purposive sampling to intentionally select Grade 10 learners of Buenavista Integrated School, Zamboanga City Division, as they were at a crucial stage in deciding their senior high school strand preference. Purposive sampling is appropriate when researchers focus on individuals with specific characteristics relevant to the study's objectives (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). To ensure full coverage, the study employed total enumeration, inviting all Grade 10 learners who met the criteria to participate. Total population sampling, a type of purposive sampling, involves examining the entire population that shares the defined characteristics (Lead Dissertation).

Research Locale

This study was conducted at Buenavista Integrated School with Grade 10 learners during the school year 2025–2026. The school was selected as the research site because its students were qualified to participate. The study focused on understanding the factors influencing strand preference, as many students in the school experienced challenges in making decisions about their chosen strand. Its primary aim was to identify and analyze the factors that shaped these preferences.

Research Participants

The study included all Grade 10 learners of Buenavista Integrated School, with a total population of 109 students. Grade 10 Ubay had the largest group with 56 participants, while Grade 10 Rico had 53. Using total enumeration, all qualified Grade 10 learners were invited to participate, ensuring complete coverage of the population.

Research Instrument

The study utilized both researcher-made and adapted instruments composed of three parts. Part I covered the demographic profile of students in terms of age, sex, socioeconomic status, and academic performance. Part II focused on strand preference (GAS, TVL, HUMSS), with respondents instructed to check the box corresponding to their answer. Part III addressed influencing factors—family, peer, environmental, and personal—using an adapted version of instruments developed by Kilag (2023) for personal influence and Buenaventura (2023) for family, peer, and environmental influence. A four-point Likert scale was applied in Part III (4 = Strongly Agree, 3 = Agree, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly Disagree). The administration of the instrument was conducted with the permission of the research teacher and in compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 of the Republic of the Philippines.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher began by securing an approval letter from the Research Adviser, which served as formal authorization to conduct the study. Once the Endorsement Letter was obtained, the researcher sought permission from the school principal to conduct the study inside the campus. Upon receiving the principal's approval, the researcher submitted all required documents including the Endorsement Letter, principal's approval letter, consent forms, and the survey questionnaire. This letter was essential for gaining permission to collect data from students in Buenavista Integrated School, specifically Grade 10 learners. Once the Principal granted the approval, the researcher was authorized to gather data from the target participants inside the campus. To recruit respondents, the researcher conducted a face-to-face survey with the students of Buenavista, focusing on senior high school strand preference among those who met the study's criteria. Students who were available and willing to participate in the study were approached. The survey was conducted during a time that was convenient for the students, and clear instructions were provided before they completed the questionnaire. Any questions or concerns raised by the students were addressed immediately to ensure they understood the study's purpose and procedure. Prior to administering the survey, the researcher obtained informed consent from each participant, emphasizing that their involvement was voluntary and their responses would remain confidential. The survey was conducted in person to ensure the researcher could provide proper guidance and assistance if needed during the questionnaire completion.

Results and Discussions

Problem 1: what is the demographic profile of the students in terms of Age, Sex, Socioeconomic Status, and Academic Performance?

Table 1: The student's demographic profile in terms of Age

Age	Frequency	Percent
14-16 years old	67	91.8%
17-20 years old	6	8.2%
21 and above years old	0	0%
Total	**73**	**100.0%**

Table 1 shows that most respondents were aged 14–16 years old (f = 67, 91.8%), which is the typical age bracket for senior high school students. This supports findings by Alim (2024) and Ayat (2025), who emphasized that strand choice and career guidance are most relevant during mid-adolescence. Akosah-Twumasi et al. (2018) likewise noted that adolescence is a critical stage for career decisions. In contrast, only six respondents (8.2%) were aged 17–20, and none were 21 or older, suggesting that strand preference decisions are less common among older students. This aligns with A'ishah and Basher (2025), who observed that career shifts usually occur after senior high school, and Asadianfam et al. (2015), who highlighted that academic major decisions are typically made during adolescence. Overall, the distribution confirms that strand preference is primarily decided during the typical senior high school years.

Table 2: The student's demographic profile in terms of Sex

Sex	Frequency	Percent
Male	20	27.4%
Female	53	72.6 %
Total	**73**	**100.0%**

Table 2 shows that most respondents were female (f = 53, 72.6%), while males accounted for 27.4% (f = 20). This reflects the common trend in senior high school where female students often outnumber males. Similar findings were reported by Badilla and Dioso (2023), who noted higher female participation in strand preferences, and Ballon Angeles et al. (2024), who observed that HUMSS and academic strands tend to attract more female learners. Arthur, Lei, and Woodend (2023) also highlighted that gender differences influence career decisions across contexts. Overall, the results suggest that female perspectives may weigh more heavily in strand preference outcomes, consistent with Alvarez (2025), who found that demographic factors such as sex and income shape perceptions of strand choice among Grade 10 students.

Table 3: The student's demographic profile in terms of Socioeconomic Status.

Socioeconomic Status	Frequency	Percent
Low Income	19	26.0%
Middle Income	54	74.0 %
High Income	0	00.0%
Total	**73**	**100.0%**

Table 3 showed that most respondents belonged to the middle-income group (f = 54, 74.0%), while 26.0% (f = 19) were from low-income families. No respondents came from the high-income group. This indicated that the majority of participants came from households with moderate financial capacity. This finding was consistent with Alvarez (2025), who noted that income levels affected strand choice, with middle-income students having greater access to opportunities. The APA (n.d.) also emphasized that socioeconomic status influenced educational pathways, while Billaiya, Malaiya, and Parihar (2017) confirmed that financial background shaped academic experiences. Oppositely, the lowest frequency was recorded for high-income respondents (f = 0, 0.0%), showing no representation from this group. This suggested that strand preference decisions in this study were concentrated among middle- and low-income families. Calibugar (2025) found that socioeconomic background strongly influenced track preferences, while Blanco and Tingzon (2024) emphasized that financial capacity often determined access to certain strands. Overall, the distribution showed that middle-income students dominated the sample, confirming that strand preference was largely shaped by families with moderate resources. This aligned with Alvarez (2025), who stressed that middle-income learners balanced aspirations with available means.

Table 4: Academic Performance of the Students for 2nd Quarter, School Year 2025-2026

Indicator	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Description
General Weighted Average Grade	82.32	5.68	Satisfactory

Table 4 showed the general weighted average grade of the students for the second quarter of School Year 2025–2026. The mean score was 82.32 with a standard deviation of 5.68, which fell under the "Satisfactory" category based on DepEd Order No. 8, s. 2015. This meant that most students were able to meet the expected standards, showing adequate mastery of the competencies. The spread of scores, reflected in the standard deviation of 5.68, suggested that while some students performed higher and others lower, the majority clustered around the satisfactory level. This finding resonated with Malaguial, Dela Peña, and Cruz (2023), who emphasized that academic performance was a central factor in strand selection, and with Kilag (2023), who noted that grades often reflected readiness and alignment with chosen tracks. Similarly, Nazareno, Lopez, and Relente (2021) highlighted that academic achievement served not only as a measure of competence but also as a basis for parental and personal decisions in career planning. Overall, the satisfactory performance of students indicated steady progress, but it also pointed to the need for continuous support to elevate achievement to higher levels of mastery.

Problem 2: what are the students strand preference in terms of GAS, HUMSS, and TVL?

Table 5: The students strand preference in terms of GAS, HUMSS, TVL.

Strand	Frequency	Percent
GAS	20	27.4%
HUMSS	29	39.7%
TVL	24	32.9%
Total	**73**	**100.0%**

Table 5 shows that most respondents preferred the HUMSS strand (f = 29, 39.7%), followed by TVL (f = 24, 32.9%) and GAS (f = 20, 27.4%). This indicates that HUMSS was the most popular choice, reflecting its appeal to students interested in communication, social sciences, and public service. Ballon Angeles et al. (2024) noted that HUMSS attracts many learners due to its alignment with careers in education, law, and governance, while Badilla & Dioso (2023) emphasized that strand preference often reflects interest in humanities and social sciences. Arthur, Lei, & Woodend (2023) further highlighted that academic choices are shaped by personal interest and social context. In contrast, GAS had the lowest frequency, suggesting it was less preferred as it is often viewed as a general option rather than a specialized track. Calibugar (2025) and Blanco & Tingzon (2024) observed that students tend to choose strands with clearer career pathways, making GAS less dominant. Overall, the distribution confirms that HUMSS was the most chosen strand, followed by TVL and GAS, consistent with Alvarez (2025), who stressed that strand preference reflects both career aspirations and available opportunities.

Problem 3: What is the level of factors influencing the students strand preference in terms of family influence, peer influence, personal influence and environmental influence?

Table 6: The level of Factors Influencing the Students Strand Preference in terms of Family Influence.

	Statements ***The student…***	**Mean**	**Verbal Description**	**Interpretation**
1.	I consider my parents career in choosing my senior high school strand.	2.84	Agree	Moderately Influenced
2.	I chose my strand because my parents believed it would secure my future, not because I wanted it.	2.97	Agree	Moderately Influenced
3.	I felt pressured to choose a strand because my parents compared me to others.	2.22	Disagree	Fairly Influenced
4.	My parents' expectations led me to choose this strand.	2.67	Agree	Moderately Influenced
5.	My parents advise me to choose this strand.	2.70	Agree	Moderately Influenced
	Over-all Mean	**2.68**	**Agree**	**Moderately Influenced**

Table 6 shows that the highest mean was 2.97 with a standard deviation of 0.71 for the statement *"I chose my strand because my parents believed it would secure my future, not because I wanted it."* This was followed by *"I consider my parents' career in choosing my senior high school strand,"* which had a mean of 2.84 and a standard deviation of 0.71. Both were rated "agree" and interpreted as moderately influenced, indicating that parental beliefs and career backgrounds guided students' choices. Casas (2024), Cancino (2016), and Besigomwe (2018) similarly emphasized the strong role of family in career decisions. The lowest mean was 2.22 with a standard deviation of 0.89 for *"I felt pressured to choose a strand because my parents compared me to others,"* rated "disagree," suggesting that comparison was not a major factor. Chen, Allen, and Hesketh (2023) and Bittmann (2024) confirmed that peer and comparison pressures were weaker than direct parental guidance. The overall mean was 2.68 with a standard deviation of 0.72, rated "agree," showing that parents moderately influenced strand preference, with students balancing parental advice with their own aspirations. This aligns with Breitkreuz (2022), who noted that while parents remain central, personal goals also shape decisions.

Table 7: **The level of Factors Influencing the Students Strand Preference in terms of Peer Influence**

	Statements *The student…*	Mean	Verbal Description	Interpretation
1.	I am influenced by my classmates	2.40	Disagree	Fairly Influenced
2.	I am afraid to be left out my friends	2.40	Disagree	Fairly Influenced
3.	I am afraid to be left out my friends	2.27	Disagree	Fairly Influenced
4.	I talk my friends before choosing a strand.	2.74	Agree	Moderately Influenced
5.	My peer group and I share the same preference	2.02	Disagree	Fairly Influenced
	Over-all Mean	**2.37**	**Disagree**	**Fairly Influenced**

Table 7 shows that the highest mean was 2.74 with a standard deviation of 0.69 for the statement *"I talk to my friends before choosing a strand,"* rated "agree" and interpreted as moderately influenced. The second highest mean was 2.40 with a standard deviation of 0.72 for *"I am influenced by my classmates,"* rated "disagree" and fairly influenced, suggesting that classmates have some impact but not a decisive role. The lowest mean was 2.02 with a standard deviation of 0.67 for *"My peer group and I share the same preference,"* also rated "disagree," indicating that students do not necessarily follow identical choices as their peers. The overall mean was 2.37 with a standard deviation of 0.72, rated "disagree" and interpreted as fairly influenced. These results show that while students often consult peers before making strand decisions, peer influence remains limited compared to family and personal factors. This is consistent with Nasayao (2025), Lee and Park (2017), Korir and Kipkemboi (2014), Marcionetti and Zammitti (2023), Kilag (2023), Ladia and Evangelio (2023), and Nazareno, Lopez, and Relente (2021), who all emphasized that peer input contributes to decision-making but is secondary to family expectations, socioeconomic background, and individual aspirations.

Table 8: **The level of Factors Influencing the Students Strand Preference in terms of Personal Influence**

	Statements *The student…*	Mean	Verbal Description	Interpretation
1.	I choose based on my desire.	3.12	Agree	Moderately Influenced
2.	I consider my aptitudes and capabilities in choosing the senior high school strand.	3.14	Agree	Moderately Influenced
3.	I choose out of my freedom.	32.77	Agree	Moderately Influenced
4.	My personality and habits are suited to the track I choose.	2.99	Agree	Moderately Influenced
5.	I choose the track that fits my skills and interest.	3.25	Strongly Agree	Highly Influenced
	Over-all Mean	3.05	Agree	Moderately Influenced

Table 8 shows that the highest mean was 3.25 with a standard deviation of 0.70 for *"I choose the track that fits my skills and interest,"* rated "strongly agree" and interpreted as highly influenced. This indicates that students prioritized aligning their strand choice with their skills and interests. The second highest mean was 3.14 with a standard deviation of 0.80 for *"I consider my aptitudes and capabilities in choosing the senior high school strand,"* rated "agree" and moderately influenced, highlighting the role of self-assessment in decision-making. These findings are consistent with Magdadaro (2020) and Malaguial, Santos, and Dela Cruz (2023), who emphasized that skills and personal interest are major determinants of strand selection. The lowest mean was 2.77 with a standard deviation of 0.84 for *"I choose out of my freedom,"* rated "agree" and moderately influenced, suggesting that freedom of choice mattered but was less significant compared to skills and aptitudes. Marcionetti and Zammitti (2023) explained that adolescents balance personal freedom with external influences, while Nazareno, Lopez, and Relente (2021) confirmed that career track choices are shaped by a mix of personal, family, and socioeconomic factors. The overall mean was 3.05 with a standard deviation of 0.79, rated "agree" and interpreted as moderately influenced. This indicates that personal influence was an important factor in strand preference, with students balancing skills, interests, and self-perception in their decisions. Kilag (2023) and Malaguial, Dela Peña, and Cruz (2023) further highlighted that personal interest and academic performance remain central in strand selection.

Table 9: The level of Factors Influencing the Students Strand Preference in terms of Environmental Influence.

	Statements *The student…*	Mean	Verbal Description	Interpretation
1.	The career I want can help my community.	3.03	Agree	Moderately Influenced
2.	I want to help someone in his/her job.	2.95	Agree	Moderately Influenced
3.	The career I choose can help address environmental issues in my home and community.	3.00	Agree	Moderately Influenced
4.	I believe my chosen strand can provide benefits to my community, such as skills for education, communication, or practical services.	3.16	Agree	Moderately Influenced
5.	My career track has a great contribution in the society.	2.86	Agree	Moderately Influenced
	Over-all Mean	**3.05**	**Agree**	**Moderately Influenced**

Table 9 showed the statements on the extent of environmental influence among students in choosing their strand. The highest mean was 3.16 with a standard deviation of 0.65 for "I believe my chosen strand can provide benefits to my community, such as skills for education, communication, or practical services." This was rated "agree" and interpreted as moderately influenced, showing that students valued the potential of their strand to contribute to community development. The second highest mean was 3.03 with a standard deviation of 0.62 for "The career I want can help my community," also rated "agree" and moderately influenced, indicating that students considered the social impact of their career choices. Kilag (2023) emphasized that strand preference was shaped not only by personal and family factors but also by perceived contributions to society, while Malaguial, Santos, & Dela Cruz (2023) highlighted that community relevance was a growing determinant in strand selection. On the other hand, the lowest mean was 2.86 with a standard deviation of 0.64 for "My career track has a great contribution in the society." This was rated "agree" and moderately influenced, showing that while students recognized societal contributions, they placed stronger emphasis on direct community benefits. Nazareno, Lopez, & Relente (2021) confirmed that career track choices were shaped by a mix of personal, family, and community considerations, while Morales et al. (2023) found that strand selection often reflected students' desire to serve their immediate environment. The overall mean was 3.05 with a standard deviation of 0.65, rated "agree" and interpreted as moderately influenced. This indicated that environmental factors played a meaningful role in strand preference, with students considering how their chosen track could benefit both their community and society. Lee & Park (2017) noted that environmental and social factors complemented family and peer influences, while Lim (2023) stressed that strand choices often reflected students' awareness of broader societal needs.

Table 10: Summary of the level of Factors Influencing the Students Strand Preference

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
Family Influence	2.68	Moderately Influence
Peer Influence	2.47	Fairly Influence
Personal Influence	3.05	Moderately Influence
Environmental Influence	3.00	Moderately Influence
Over-All Mean	**2.80**	**Moderately Influence**

Table 10 presents the summary of the four indicators under SOP No. 3 on factors influencing strand preference. The highest mean was 3.05 with a standard deviation of 0.79 for Personal Influence, interpreted as moderately influenced, showing that students prioritized their skills, interests, and self-perception in making strand choices. This aligns with Magdadaro (2020) and Malaguial, Santos, and Dela Cruz (2023), who emphasized that personal interest and aptitude are major determinants of strand selection. The same mean of 3.05 with a standard deviation of 0.65 was recorded for Environmental Influence, also interpreted as moderately influenced, indicating that students considered how their chosen track could benefit their community and society. This is consistent with Kilag (2023) and Nazareno, Lopez, and Relente (2021), who noted that career track choices are shaped by personal, family, and community factors. The lowest mean was 2.37 with a standard deviation of 0.72 for Peer Influence, interpreted as fairly influenced, showing that while peers provided guidance, they were not decisive in strand preference. Nasayao (2025) and Lee and Park (2017) confirmed that peer opinions were secondary to family expectations and self-assessment. The overall

mean was 2.80 with a standard deviation of 0.72, interpreted as moderately influenced, confirming that strand preference was shaped by multiple factors, with personal and environmental considerations exerting stronger influence than peers, while family expectations remained a steady guiding force.

Problem 4: Does the demographic profile of the students influence their strand preference?

Table 11:The influence of the demographic profile of the students in their strand preference in terms of Age

Variable	Mean	F-Value	P-Value	Interpretation
X Age	Y Strand Preference	9.466	.003	Significant

Table 11 showed that the highest computed value was the F-value of 9.466 with a p-value of .003. Since the p-value was less than 0.05, the result was statistically significant, indicating that age did influence strand preference among the respondents. This finding supported Akosah-Twumasi et al. (2018), who emphasized that adolescence was a critical stage for career decisions. Similarly, Ayat (2025) noted that younger learners made more decisive strand choices, while Alim (2024) confirmed that age played a role in shaping academic direction during senior high school. Conversely, no significant result was found for older age groups, as shown in the frequency table where respondents aged 21 and above had zero representation. This suggested that strand decisions were concentrated among younger students. A'ishah & Basher (2025) observed that most career shifts occurred after senior high school, while Asadianfam et al. (2015) highlighted that academic major decisions were typically made during adolescence. Overall, these results confirmed that age, as part of the demographic profile, significantly influenced strand preference. This implied that interventions in career guidance should have been concentrated during adolescence, when students were most likely to make decisive academic choices.

Table 12: The influence of the demographic profile of the students in their strand preference in terms of Sex

Variable	Mean	F-Value	P-Value	Interpretation
X sex	Y Strand Preference	7.007	.011	Significant

Table 12 shows that the computed F-value of 7.007 with a p-value of .011 was below the 0.05 threshold. This result was statistically significant, confirming that age influenced strand preference among senior high school students. Younger learners, within the typical age bracket, were more decisive in their choices, consistent with Akosah-Twumasi et al. (2018), Ayat (2025), and Alim (2024), who emphasized adolescence as a crucial stage for career and academic decisions. Respondents aged 21 and above were absent, suggesting that strand preference decisions were concentrated among younger students. This finding is further supported by A'ishah & Basher (2025) and Asadianfam et al. (2015), who noted that career shifts and academic major decisions are typically made during adolescence. Overall, the results highlight that age significantly influenced strand preference, underscoring the need to focus career guidance interventions during adolescence.

Table 13:The influence of the demographic profile of the students in their strand preference in terms of Socioeconomic Status

Variable	Mean	F-Value	P-Value	Interpretation
X Socioeconomic Status	Y Strand Preference	4.118	.048	Significant

Table 13 shows that the computed mean of 4.118 with an F-value of .048 and a p-value below 0.05 indicated a statistically significant result. This confirmed that socioeconomic status influenced strand preference among senior high school students. Learners from higher-income families were more decisive in their academic choices, as financial stability provided access to resources and opportunities (Alvarez, 2025; American Psychological Association, n.d.). In contrast, lower-income students faced financial constraints that limited their options, creating disparities in attainment. Prior studies also emphasized the role of socioeconomic factors in shaping career decisions and access to quality education (Besigomwe, 2018; Billaiya et al., 2017; Bittmann, 2024). Overall, the findings underscore the importance of scholarships and financial

support to ensure equitable strand choices, consistent with Blanco & Tingzon (2024), who highlighted the role of financial stability in track decisions.

Problem 5: Does the influencing factors influence the students strand preference

Table 14: The influence of the demographic profile of the students in their strand preference in terms of Academic performance

Variable Mean		R-Value	P-Value	Interpretation
X Academic Performance	Y Strand Preference	.068	.566	Not Significant

Table 14 shows that the correlation between academic performance and strand preference obtained a mean value of .068, with an R-value of .566 and a p-value of .566, which is greater than the 0.05 level of significance. This indicates that academic performance did not significantly influence the strand preference of the students. This finding suggests that the students' academic achievement was not a determining factor in their choice of senior high school strand. Although academic performance may contribute to learners' confidence in selecting a strand, the results of this study indicate that students may have considered other factors, such as personal interests, peer influence, parental guidance, and perceived career opportunities, when making their decisions. The result contrasts with the findings of Baucas (2024) and Badilla and Dioso (2023), who reported that academic performance significantly influenced track and strand selection among senior high school students. However, the present finding is consistent with the study of Bacaling, Dizon, and Orpilla (2021), which emphasized that students' strand preferences are often shaped by multiple external and personal factors rather than academic achievement alone. The findings imply that while academic performance may play a role in students' educational experiences, it does not significantly determine their strand preference. Therefore, school administrators and guidance counselors should continue to provide comprehensive career guidance programs that help students explore their interests, abilities, and career aspirations when choosing their senior high school strand.

Table 15: The influence of the influencing factors on students strand preference

Variable Mean		R-Value	P-Value	Interpretation
X Influencing Factors	Y Strand Preference	.720	.043	Significant

Table 15 shows a mean of .720 with an R-value of .043, and since the p-value was below 0.05, the result was statistically significant. This indicates a clear relationship between Variable X and Variable Y, meaning students' choices were influenced by underlying factors rather than being random. The connection between performance and preference was evident, though not absolute, suggesting that while academic and personal factors mattered, other influences also played a role. Prior studies by Badilla and Dioso (2023) and Baucas (2024) highlighted how achievement guided strand decisions, while Bacaling, Dizon, and Orpilla (2021) and Casas (2024) emphasized the importance of guidance programs in helping students make informed choices. Overall, the findings confirm that Variable X significantly affected Variable Y, underscoring the need for strong academic support and career guidance initiatives. This aligns with Calibugar (2025), who advocated for structured guidance tailored to students' profiles to ensure confident and well-informed decisions.

Ethical Considerations

This study followed ethical standards in educational research to safeguard the rights and welfare of participants. Approval to conduct the research was obtained from the Department of Education Division Office and the School Principal of Buenavista Integrated School. Informed consent was secured from all participants after explaining the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, and their right to participate voluntarily or withdraw at any time without penalty. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly observed by using codes instead of names, and no personal information was disclosed in the analysis or report. Academic records were accessed only with proper authorization and handled in compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173). All data collected were used solely for research purposes and stored securely. The study ensured that participants were not exposed to physical, psychological, or emotional harm. Survey questions were non-intrusive, and data collection was conducted during students' free time to avoid disruption or coercion. Principles of fairness, objectivity, and academic integrity were upheld throughout the research process.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the study concluded that strand preference among Grade 10 learners was not a simple choice, but a multifaceted decision shaped by both their demographic profile and the influences around them. Age, sex, socioeconomic status, and academic performance all played important roles in shaping their decisions. Among the influencing factors, personal influence emerged as the most decisive, showing that students valued their skills, interests, and aptitudes above all else. Environmental influence also mattered, as students considered how their chosen strand could contribute to their community. Family influence remained a steady guide, though students balanced parental advice with their own aspirations. Peer influence was the weakest, suggesting that while students consulted friends, they ultimately relied more on themselves and their families. Overall, strand preference was best understood as a combination of personal readiness, family guidance, community awareness, and demographic realities.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the study recommended that schools strengthen career guidance programs that helped students assess their skills and interests, ensuring that strand choices aligned with their abilities and goals. Administrators were advised to provide academic support systems such as tutorials, mentoring, and enrichment activities to build confidence among students with lower performance. Policymakers and school leaders were encouraged to expand scholarship and financial aid programs to reduce the impact of socioeconomic disparities on strand access. Parents were encouraged to provide supportive guidance rather than pressure, allowing students to explore strands that matched their aptitudes and interests. Students themselves were advised to take time for self-reflection and actively participate in career orientation activities to broaden their awareness of opportunities. Finally, future researchers were recommended to use this study as a reference for further investigations on strand preference, particularly in exploring other variables such as motivation, teacher influence, or cultural factors.

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