

# Factors Affecting Students' Decision in Choosing their Subject Specialization: The Case of College Students in a State University in the Philippines

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**Abstract:** This research examined at the variables influencing freshmen education students' decisions regarding their academic specializations in a higher education institution in the Philippines. The descriptive-correlational research design was adopted in this study wherein the respondents received a survey questionnaire from the researchers via Google Forms via their e-mails and/or instant messaging accounts. As the main tool, the researchers modified a questionnaire to assess the demographic profile, personal, social, and opportunity aspects. The results of this study show that respondents' age, sex, Senior High School strand, family monthly income, and mother's educational level all influence their decision to choose a subject specialization, while their father's educational level has no direct bearing on their choices. Social influences, such as those of the respondents' professors, guidance counselors, and friends, had no discernible influence on their decision regarding their chosen field of study. On the other side, their parents' influence may have an effect on their choice. Personal and opportunity-related factors had no discernible influence on the respondents' decision to specialize in a particular field of study. This study suggests that in addition to personal, social, and opportunity factors, students should take other factors into consideration. Schools should run career path programs and think about hosting a variety of exhibits to pique students' interest and help them excel in their chosen fields of study.

**Keywords—**Students' Decision; Subject Specialization; Social Influences; Factors

## 1. INTRODUCTION (Heading 1)

In the modern world, where globalization and the technological revolution are continuously in demand, education becomes one of the key catalysts for those socioeconomic changes and progress across the globe (Tolegenova, 2017). As a result, education may be viewed as a crucial component in the development of human capital because it imparts knowledge and skills that are used to address the various requirements of people and societies in various regions of the world. Accordingly, the Philippine government enacts Republic Act No. 10931, also known as the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education, which waives tuition and other school fees for students enrolled in state universities and colleges (SUCs) and local universities and colleges (LUCs). This initiative aims to provide quality education for all incoming college students (Official Gazette, 2017). This law provides students with more options to pursue their chosen fields of study, graduate, and later find steady employment. Numerous studies, however, demonstrate that some students find it challenging to select their courses, and some chose to enroll in courses they did not particularly prefer. This highlighted the importance of the students' course selection because it will have an impact on their future career. Sarwar and Masood (2015) assert that picking a certain specialist area is crucial for both one's academic career and future personal life because it affects factors including academic continuity, student satisfaction, career and employment options, remuneration, and social standing.

The biggest enigma and problem in a student's life is choosing a career. Numerous elements that are tightly interwoven with one another have a significant impact on it. It is a challenging task that requires a complicated decision-making process (Kazi & Akhlaq, 2017). For prospective undergraduate students, choosing occupations, disciplines, and courses of study, as well as the future professional paths to take, is typically a nightmare (Issa & Nwalo, 2008). Indeed, picking the appropriate career may be a very difficult endeavor, especially in a society where many different pathways seem to lead to a single golden rule (Braza & Guillo Jr., 2015). There are several studies conducted abroad that specifically pinpoint the elements influencing students' decisions regarding their course of study and area of concentration. According to the research done by Kaneez & Medha (2018), parents' choices about their children's careers have a big impact. The choice of career among secondary school students can also be influenced by elements including the environment, opportunities, and personality, according to Eremie & Okwulehie (2018). The students' family background, socioeconomic status, and the groups they are a part of all have a significant impact on their decision in terms of the environment, while education and mentoring as opportunity factors also had an impact on their choice of career as well as personality factors such as their interests, values, and skills.

In the Philippines, a study on the factors influencing students' career choices has identified gender, aptitude, learning experiences, and other external factors as prime determinants of the students' career decisions (Braza and

Guillo Jr., 2015). They contend that every person tends to select a profession that reflects their personality. They emphasized once more that after graduating, students should base their job decision on the opportunities offered in their area. Students also said that they look up to their parents as role models when asked about their parents' greatest level of education. They did, however, rationalize that they did not want to experience financial stress related to paying for their education fees.

Additionally, a number of research on career choice and factors influencing preferences had been carried out among high school and college students (Montes, 2019; Gagante-Dilig, 2019). The factors that influence Grade 10 students' decision to pursue their selected job in senior high school were the subject of an investigation by Montes (2019). She claims that when selecting their course of study in high school, pupils take into account a variety of environmental, professional, and personal considerations. According to the results of her research, opportunity and personal factors have a moderate influence on students' career decisions, whilst environmental elements related to the chosen professional path have a minor impact.

Students come across various internal and external elements that can affect their decision while choosing a professional path and topic specialties. According to Kaneez and Medha's (2018) study, there are three categories of elements that can influence a student's profession decision: (a) personality characteristics, (b) environmental or social factors, and (c) opportunity factors. Studies have indicated a considerable correlation between students' academic achievement and their family's socioeconomic level (Sollano et al., 2018). Egbo (2017) also demonstrates that parents' socioeconomic status, occupational history, and educational attainment have a major impact on their children's career decisions. The results of Tsikati's (2019) research showed that factors influencing prospective students' choice of a specialty at teacher training institutions included student interest, attitude, and impression, associated exposure, and the nature of topic specialization. The development of students' intellectual self-concept can help them choose their professional routes, according to a study by Zaini, et al. (2021).

When it comes to selecting a life vocation, personal considerations also demonstrated to have a substantial impact on career decision-making (Caldera et al., 2003; Bojuwoye and Mbanjwa, 2006; Gokuladas, 2010; Lent et al., 2010; Choi and Kim, 2013; Atitsogbe et al., 2018). According to Bojuwoye and Mbanjwa (2016), around half of young people's profession decisions are influenced by personal characteristics. Additionally, a person's environment, talents, skills, and academic accomplishment have an impact on their profession decision, in accordance with Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli (2001). However, Ferry (2006) noted that other elements, including life circumstances and academic success, have also been shown to influence profession choice. Furthermore, a study by Keck (2016) shows that the majority

of students select their majors based on their interest in them, making interest the most important element. Additionally, students' personal objectives, degree of aptitude, and most significantly, interest all have an impact. However, the academic component, which includes the quality of the course material, the level of difficulty of the subject, and the workload, is equally crucial when students are choosing their careers, according to a study by Sarwar and Masood (2015). According to Kazi and Akhlaq (2017), this is supported by the fact that a person's environment, talents, skills, and academic accomplishments have an impact on their profession choice.

Students were also influenced by many different people including faculty members, friends, and family members (Keck, 2015). In the study by Khoo, Ban, Neng, Hooi, and Joan (2015), it was found that both college students and non-college students agreed that their parents were the most influential or important person when picking their choice of college or university and course of study because parents consider them as their main source of finance and typically seek their advice because they believe parents have the relevant knowledge or experience with relation to higher education. Another finding of a single qualitative study indicates that family responsibilities, cultural capital, parental expectations, and parental values all have an effect on a person's choice of job (Polenova et al., 2018). Additionally, Kazi & Akhlaq's (2017) research revealed that parents' influence is thought to be the most important element influencing kids' profession decisions, followed by peer influence, gender, print media, financial considerations, interest, and others. According to Kaneez & Medha's (2018) research, there is proof that parents have an impact on their children's professional decisions. Similar to this, a study by Dagang and De Mesa (2017) finds that, among non-school factors, parental counsel had the greatest impact on participants' job decisions, followed by parental judgment. In general, the non-school variables had a moderate impact on the participants' job decisions. Further, researchers found that teachers are regarded as important individuals in both collectivist and individualistic societies, as well as agents of change who can have an impact on students' career decisions (Howard et al., 2009; Cheung et al., 2013). In two studies carried out in both cultural contexts, peer influence was also discovered to be a third potent factor (after parents and instructors) that can significantly impact young people's career decisions, particularly girls (Howard et al., 2009; Cheung et al., 2013). Other studies claim that peers are a subset of close friends who influence their groups through social comparisons and acceptance as social agents (Yamashita et al., 1999; Lee, 2001; Bojuwoye and Mbanjwa, 2006).

In addition, the possibility of career growth and the prospective employment prospects related to the major are said to be some of the important aspects that students take into account, according to Malgwi, Howe, and Burnaby (2005). The most important aspects influencing students' job decisions are the availability of progression prospects and educational options (Kochung and Migunde, 2011). Al-Rfou (2013)

asserts that of all criteria, the employment prospects, job security, and income potential are the most crucial. Another study examined how college students perceived the hospitality and tourism sectors, and it found that Korean students were less adaptable than their American counterparts in that they were more likely to concentrate on current market trends, such as employment opportunities (Choi and Kim, 2013). In a different study, it was discovered that personality traits, in both cultural contexts, were more predictive of career explorations than job opportunities and professional interest (Fan et al., 2012). According to a study by Malubay, Mercado, and Macasaet (2015) on the variables influencing first-year students' decisions to enroll in a certain course program, the opportunity factor, which includes steady economic income and a demand for jobs, is what students take into account the most when deciding on a vocation. In Palawan, a study by Montes (2019) similarly found that opportunity factors have a moderate impact on students' job decisions.

In light of these remarks, a study was done to ascertain the variables influencing the choice of subject specialty made by first-year education students at a higher education institution in the Philippines. The findings of this study will be used to create a career path program for incoming college students and to reduce the negative effects that inappropriate profession choice and subject concentration have on each individual.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

This study is specifically aimed to investigate for the factors influencing first-year education students' decision to choose their academic concentration at Palawan State University-College of Teacher Education. The descriptive-correlational research design, which involves gathering data to evaluate the hypothesis, was employed in this study. Descriptive-correlational studies, in accordance with Mendez (2007), characterize the variables and the relationships that naturally exist between and among them. Similar to this, the nature of the situation that exists at the time of the investigation is described using the descriptive-correlational method (Bucac, 1998). Information is gathered using this research strategy without altering the study subject in any way. The researchers created a survey questionnaire in Google Forms and distributed it to the respondents via their corporate emails and/or instant messaging accounts in order to gather the statistical data required for this investigation. Three sections made up the questionnaire. The students' names, ages, genders, majors, types of schools, and Senior High School strand are all included in the first section. Additionally, the second section offers information on the sociodemographics of the respondents' parents, while the third section discusses the variables that influence students' decisions regarding their area of specialization. These variables comprise the three components listed as (a) personal; (b) social; and (c) opportunity. Ten statements on a 5-point Likert Scale made up this questionnaire.

The participants in the study were first-year students from Palawan State University's College of Teacher Education majoring in secondary education who are enrolled for the second semester of the academic year 2020–2021. The stratified sampling technique was used to identify them. Given that 117 students make up the first-year student body of the Bachelor of Secondary Education, only 60 students were eligible to participate in the survey. Of these, 14 majored in English, 13 in science, 10 in Filipino, 10 more in values education, 7 in mathematics, and the remaining 40 majored in social studies. These students, who were chosen at random from each major, served as the study's participants.

Moreover, both descriptive and inferential measurements were used to address the questions posed in this study. The distribution of the respondents' personal profiles in terms of their age, gender, area of specialization, Senior High School strand, parent's educational attainment, and family monthly income were examined using descriptive statistics such as frequency count, percentages, and rank. Additionally, mean was used to represent the respondents' replies on the three identified factors—personal, social, and opportunity factors—as measured by the 5-point Likert scales. The information gathered was tallied, including the connection between personal, societal, and opportunity aspects and their decision to pursue a subject specialization. On the other hand, the Chi-Square Test and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient ( $r$ ) were employed in this study to examine the link between the respondents' personal profiles, the identified determinants, and their choice of subject specialization. For the purpose of data analysis, the aforementioned inferential measure was applied in SPSS version 20 and assessed for significance at the 0.05 level.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 RESPONDENTS' PERSONAL PROFILES

The following tables on the succeeding pages show the profile of the respondents in terms of their age, gender, area of specialization, Senior High School strand, parent's educational attainment and family monthly income. Frequency distribution was utilized to present the statistical data gathered. Each variable was also ranked based on the frequency and percent

**Table 1.1.** Age of the Respondents  
 $n = 60$

Age	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
16-17	1	1.67%	3 <sup>rd</sup>
18-19	50	83.33%	1 <sup>st</sup>
20-Above	9	15%	2 <sup>nd</sup>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100%</b>	

Table 1.1 shows that fifty (50) or 83.33% of the respondents ages from 18-19 years old. While, there are nine (9) or 15% respondents ages 20 years old and above, then only one (1) or 1.67% of the respondents ages from 16-17 years old.

**Table 1.2.** Gender of the Respondents  
*n* = 60

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Female	51	85%	1 <sup>st</sup>
Male	9	15%	2 <sup>nd</sup>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100%</b>	

Table 1.2 shows that fifty-one (51) or 85% of the respondents are female. While, nine (9) or 15% of the respondents are male.

**Table 1.3.** Area of Specialization of the Respondents  
*n* = 60

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
English	14	23.33%	1 <sup>st</sup>
Filipino	10	16.67%	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Mathematics	7	11.67%	5 <sup>th</sup>
Science	13	21.67%	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Social Studies	6	10%	4 <sup>th</sup>
Values	10	16.67%	3 <sup>rd</sup>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100%</b>	

Table 1.3 shows that fourteen (14) or 23.33% of the respondents are English majors. On the other hand, there are thirteen (13) or 21.67% respondents who major in Science. While, ten (10) or 16.67% of the respondents are majoring in Filipino, the same as in Values major.

**Table 1.4.** Senior High School Strand of the Respondents  
*n* = 60

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
General Academic Strand (GAS)	14	23.33%	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Humanities and Social Sciences	20	33.33%	1 <sup>st</sup>
Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics	20	33.33%	1 <sup>st</sup>
Agri-Fishery Arts Strand	2	3.33%	4 <sup>th</sup>
Home Economics Strand	2	3.33%	4 <sup>th</sup>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100%</b>	

Table 1.4 shows that twenty (20) or 33.33% of the respondents choose Humanities and Social Sciences as their Senior High School strand, the same frequency is the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics strand. Meanwhile, fourteen (14) or 23.33% of the respondents took General Academic Strand, while only two (2) or 3.33% of the respondents took Agri-Fishery Arts Strand, the same frequency is the Home Economics Strand and Information and Communication Strand.

**Table 1.5.1.** Educational Attainment of the Respondents' Parent (Father)  
*n* = 60

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Elementary Level	8	13.33%	4 <sup>th</sup>
Elementary Graduate	3	5%	6 <sup>th</sup>
High School Level	7	11.67%	5 <sup>th</sup>
High School Graduate	14	23.33%	1 <sup>st</sup>
College Level	14	23.33%	1 <sup>st</sup>
College Graduate	14	23.33%	1 <sup>st</sup>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100%</b>	

Table 1.5.1 shows that fourteen (14) or 23.33% of the respondents' fathers are high school graduates, the same frequency is the college level and college graduate. While, eight (8) or 13.33% of the respondents' fathers have an educational attainment of elementary level, then there are seven (7) or 11.67% respondents' fathers attained high school level.

**Table 1.5.2.** Educational Attainment of the Respondents' Parent (Mother)  
*n* = 60

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Elementary Level	5	8.33%	4 <sup>th</sup>
Elementary Graduate	1	1.67%	7 <sup>th</sup>
High School Level	4	6.67%	5 <sup>th</sup>
High School Graduate	19	31.67%	1 <sup>st</sup>
College Level	13	21.67%	3 <sup>rd</sup>
College Graduate	16	26.67%	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Master's Degree	2	3.33%	6 <sup>th</sup>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100%</b>	



Table 1.5.2 shows that nineteen (19) or 31.67% of the respondents' mothers are high school graduates. While, sixteen (16) or 26.67% of the respondents' mothers are college graduate, then there are thirteen (13) or 21.67% respondents' mothers at least attained college level.

**Table 1.6.** Monthly Income of the Respondents' Family  
*n* = 60

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
₱20,000.00 and below	47	78.33%	1 <sup>st</sup>
₱21,000- ₱30,000	11	18.33%	2 <sup>nd</sup>
₱41,000 and above	2	1.67%	3 <sup>rd</sup>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100%</b>	

Table 1.6 shows that forty-seven (47) or 78.33% of the respondents have a family monthly income that ranges from ₱20,000.00 and below. While, eleven (11) or 18.33% of the respondents' family are earning ₱21,000- ₱30,000, and there are only two (2) or 1.67% respondents that have a family monthly income that ranges from ₱41,000 and above.

### 3.2 FACTORS AFFECTING RESPONDENTS' DECISION IN CHOOSING THEIR SUBJECT SPECIALIZATION

The following tables show the effect of identified factors including personal, social, and opportunity factors in the respondents' decision in choosing their subject specialization. 5-point Likert scale was used to allow the individual to express how much they agree or disagree with a particular statement. Each statement was arranged in decreasing order according to its degree.

**Table 2.1.** Personal Factors

Statements	Mean Rating	Qualitative Description
I personally love the subject of specialization I choose.	4.38	Strongly Agree
I choose my subject of specialization aligned to my Senior High School chosen track/strand.	4.20	Strongly Agree
I choose my subject of specialization in college based on the academic performance I had in senior high school.	4.03	Agree
I consider my family economic status in choosing my subject specialization in college.	4.02	Agree

I consider the difficulty of the subject in choosing my specialization.	4.00	Agree
<b>OVERALL MEAN RATING</b>	<b>4.13</b>	<b>Agree</b>

**Legend:** 1.0 – 1.79 - Strongly Disagree; 1.80 – 2.59 – Disagree; 2.60 – 3.39 – Undecided; 3.40 – 4.19 – Agree; 4.20 – 5.00 – Strongly Agree

Table 2.1 shows that the statement “I choose my subject of specialization in college based on the academic performance I had in senior high school” got the third highest mean rating of 4.03, while the statement “I choose my subject of specialization aligned to my Senior High School chosen track/strand” ranked second with a mean rating of 4.20. Lastly, the statement “I personally love the subject of specialization I choose” got the highest mean rating which is 4.38. With an overall mean rating of 4.13 and a qualitative description of agree for personal factors, this implies that the respondents consider their personal factors presented in choosing their subject of specialization. This finding is also supported by the study of Keck (2015) which reveals that the majority of the students choose their subject specialization because of their interest on it, and by the study of Braza and Guillo (2015) and Montes (2019) who stated that other variables such as family monthly income and the respondents' Senior High School strand moderately influence the choice of subject specialization of the students.

**Table 2.2.** Social Factors

Statements	Mean Rating	Qualitative Description
My choice of specialization was influenced by my teacher/guidance counselor.	2.92	Undecided
My choice of specialization was decided mainly by my parents.	2.40	Disagree
The subject specialization choice of my friends influenced me in choosing my own specialization.	1.97	Disagree
<b>OVERALL MEAN RATING</b>	<b>2.43</b>	<b>Disagree</b>

**Legend:** 1.0 – 1.79 - Strongly Disagree; 1.80 – 2.59 – Disagree; 2.60 – 3.39 – Undecided; 3.40 – 4.19 – Agree; 4.20 – 5.00 – Strongly Agree

Table 2.2 shows that the statement “The subject specialization choice of my friends influenced me in choosing my own specialization” got the lowest mean rating of 1.97, while the statement “My choice of specialization was decided mainly by my parents” ranked second with a mean rating of 2.40. Lastly, the statement “My choice of specialization was influenced by my teacher/guidance counselor” got the highest

mean rating which is 2.92. With an overall mean rating of 2.43 and a qualitative description of disagree for social factors, this implies that the respondents do not consider their social factors in choosing their subject of specialization. This finding contradicts the study conducted by Gaganta-Dilig (2019) which mentions that parents, teachers, and peers moderately influence the career decision-making of the respondents. It also contradicts the research done by Kazi & Akhlaq (2017) that showed how parents influence is considered to be the most significant factor that influence students' decision of career, followed by influence from peers.

**Table 2.3.** Opportunity Factors

Statements	Mean Rating	Qualitative Description
I can get a job right after schooling because it is an in demand profession.	4.23	Strongly Agree
I make decision based on the career growth, salary and opportunities provided by the job.	3.63	Agree
<b>OVERALL MEAN RATING</b>	<b>3.93</b>	<b>Agree</b>

**Legend:** 1.0 – 1.79 - Strongly Disagree; 1.80 – 2.59 – Disagree; 2.60 – 3.39 – Undecided; 3.40 – 4.19 – Agree; 4.20 – 5.00 – Strongly Agree

Table 2.3 shows that Statement 2 “I make decision based on the career growth, salary and opportunities provided by the job” got the lowest mean rating of 3.63. On the other hand, Statement 1 “I can get a job right after schooling because it is an in demand profession” which has a mean rating of 4.23 ranked first for opportunity factors. With an overall mean rating of 3.93 and a qualitative description of agree for opportunity factors, this implies that the respondents consider the opportunity factors in choosing their subject of specialization. The result supports the study conducted by Al-Rfou (2013) which stated that the most important factors among all considerations are the job opportunities, job security and earning potential of the job. Furthermore, the same research initiated by Montes (2019) that mentioned opportunity factors has a moderate influence on the career choice of the students supported the above claim.

### 3.3 Relationship Between the Respondents' Personal Profile and their Decision in Choosing Their Subject Specialization

The table below shows the relationship of the respondents' personal profile and their decision in choosing their subject specialization. The data gathered was analyzed using Chi-Square Test done in the SPSS version 20 for better reading and understanding, and presented in tabular form.

**Table 3.** Relationship of Respondents' Personal Profile and Choice of Subject Specialization

Personal Profile	Chi-square Value	p-value	Interpretation
Age	69.100	.00001	Significant relationship
Sex	29.400	.00001	Significant relationship
Senior High School Strand	40.800	.00001	Significant relationship
Father's Educational Attainment	11.000	.051	No significant relationship
Mother's Educational Attainment	37.067	.00001	Significant relationship
Family Monthly Income	56.700	.00001	Significant relationship

Table 3 presents the Chi-square value and p-value of the respondents' personal profile which explains the relationship of it with their chosen subject specialization. Using the Chi-square test, the age of the respondents has a Chi-square value of 69.100 and a p-value of 0.00001. Comparing the p-value to the alpha level of 0.05, 0.00001 is less than 0.05 which signifies that the respondents' age and subject specialization has a significant relationship. This result is contradicted by the study of Akpochofo, (2021) stated that there are no significant differences in terms of age and type of school attended, but there was a significant difference between private and public schools. In addition, the gender of the respondents has a Chi-square value of 29.400 and a p-value of 0.00001 which also indicates the significant relationship of their gender and chosen subject specialization. This finding is contradicted by the study of Morales, et al (2016) stated that gender inequality is not a great predictor of career choice in science and/or mathematics teaching.

The respondents' Senior High School strand has a Chi-square value of 40.800 and a p-value of 0.00001. 0.00001 is less than the alpha level 0.05, it means that the respondents' Senior High School strand and chosen subject specialization has a significant relationship. This is supported by the study of Zaini, et al. (2021) revealed that developing students' academic self-concept can assist them to decide on their career paths. Meanwhile, the respondents' family monthly income obtained a Chi-square value of 56.700 and a p-value of 0.0001 which is less than to alpha level 0.05. This suggests the significant relationship of the respondents' family monthly income and their chosen subject specialization. This is supported by the study of Egbo (2017) shows that there is a significant influence of parents' socio-economic status and occupational background on the career choice of students.

Furthermore, the educational attainment of the respondents' mother has a Chi-square value of 37.067 and a p-value of 0.0001 which signifies the significant relationship of it with their chosen subject specialization. On the other hand, the respondents' father educational attainment has a Chi-square value of 11.000 and a p-value of 0.051. Comparing the p-value to alpha level 0.05, 0.051 is greater than 0.05, which signifies that the educational attainment of the respondents' father has no significant relationship with their chosen subject specialization. This result is contradicted the study of Kumar, (2016) shows that the occupation of father and the expected father's preference of occupation are found to be statistically significant influence on career choice decision making. On the contrary, there is no statistically significant contribution of respondent's perceived expectation of their mother on career choice. This implies that the respondents' age, sex, Senior High School strand, their mother's educational attainment and family monthly income affects their decision in choosing their subject specialization whereas their father's educational attainment do not directly affect their decisions.

### 3.4 Relationship Between the Identified Factors and Their Decision in Choosing Their Subject Specialization

The following tables display the correlation of the identified factors including personal, social, and opportunity factors and the respondent's decision in choosing their subject specialization. The data gathered was analyzed through Pearson Correlation  $r$  using the SPSS version 20 for better reading and understanding, and presented in tabular form.

**Table 4.1**  
Correlation of Personal Factors and Choice of Subject Specialization

Personal Factors	$r$	p-value	Interpretation
I personally love the subject of specialization I choose.	.010	.937	No significant relationship
I choose my subject of specialization aligned to my Senior High School chosen track/strand.	-.230	.077	No significant relationship
I consider my family economic status in choosing my subject specialization in college.	-.141	.281	No significant relationship
I choose my subject of specialization in college based on the academic performance I had in senior high school.	-.132	.314	No significant relationship

I consider the difficulty of the subject in choosing my specialization.	-.095	.469	No significant relationship
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**Legend:** 0.0 – 0.19 – Very Weak Correlation; 0.20 – 0.39 – Weak Correlation; 0.40 – 0.59 – Moderate Correlation; 0.60 – 0.79 – Strong Correlation; 0.80 – 1.0 – Very Strong Correlation

Table 4.1 above shows the correlation coefficient  $r$  and the p-value which explains the relationship of the respondents' choice of subject specialization and each of the statement for personal factors. Looking at the table, the Pearson Correlation  $r$  of the statement "I personally love the subject of specialization I choose" is 0.010 which is, positive very weak correlation. However, looking at the p-value of the first statement, the p-value is 0.937. Comparing the computed p-value to alpha level 0.05, 0.937 is greater than 0.05 which signifies failure to reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, there is no significant relationship between the respondents' choice of subject specialization and their love for the subject itself. Considering the second statement, "I choose my subject of specialization aligned to my Senior High School chosen track/strand", the Pearson Correlation  $r$  is -0.230 which is, negative weak correlation while its p-value is 0.077. Comparing again the computed p-value to alpha level 0.05, 0.077 is greater than 0.05 which indicates failure to reject the null hypothesis. Thus, there is no significant relationship between the respondents' choice of subject specialization and its alignment to their Senior High School strand. Meanwhile, for the third statement "I consider my family economic status in choosing my subject specialization in college", it has a Pearson Correlation  $r$  of -0.141 which is negative very weak correlation. With a p-value of 0.281 which is greater than to alpha level 0.05, this signifies another failure to reject the null hypothesis. We can then conclude that the respondents' choice of subject specialization and them considering their family economic status has no significant relationship. Similarly, the statement "I choose my subject of specialization in college based on the academic performance I had in senior high school" has a Pearson Correlation  $r$  of -0.132 which is negative very weak correlation. Comparing the computed value of the fourth statement which is equal to 0.314 to alpha level 0.05, 0.314 is greater than 0.05. It suggests failure to reject the null hypothesis and a conclusion that there is no significant relationship between the respondents' choice of subject specialization and their Senior High School academic performance. Lastly, considering the result computed for the statement "I consider the difficulty of the subject in choosing my specialization", it has a Pearson Correlation  $r$  of -0.095, a negative very weak correlation. It also has a p-value of 0.461 which is greater than the alpha level 0.05 thus, it fails to reject the null hypothesis. Hence, there is no significant relationship between the respondents' choice of subject specialization and the difficulty of the subject. The result implies that personal factors have no

significant relationship with the respondents' decision in choosing their subject specialization.

**Table 4.2**  
Correlation of Social Factors and Choice of Subject Specialization

Social Factors	r	p-value	Interpretation
My choice of specialization was influenced by my teacher/guidance counselor.	-.114	.386	No significant relationship
My choice of specialization was decided mainly by my parents.	-.334	.009	Significant relationship
The subject specialization choice of my friends influenced me in choosing my own specialization choice.	-.004	.973	No significant relationship

**Legend:** 0.0 – 0.19 – Very Weak Correlation; 0.20 – 0.39 – Weak Correlation; 0.40 – 0.59 – Moderate Correlation; 0.60 – 0.79 – Strong Correlation; 0.80 – 1.0 – Very Strong Correlation

Table 4.2 depicts the correlation coefficient  $r$  and the  $p$ -value which explains the relationship of the respondents' choice of subject specialization and each of the statement for social factors. Considering the table, the Pearson Correlation  $r$  of the statement "My choice of specialization was influenced by my teacher/guidance counselor" is 0.010 which is, negative very weak correlation. However, looking at the  $p$ -value of the first statement, the  $p$ -value is 0.386. Comparing the computed  $p$ -value to alpha level 0.05, 0.386 is greater than 0.05 which signifies failure to reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, there is no significant relationship between the respondents' choice of subject specialization and the influence of their teacher or guidance counselor. For the second statement, "My choice of specialization was decided mainly by my parents", the Pearson Correlation  $r$  is -0.334 which is, negative weak correlation while its  $p$ -value is 0.009. Comparing again the computed  $p$ -value to alpha level 0.05, 0.009 is less than 0.05 which indicates rejection of the null hypothesis. Thus, there is a significant relationship between the respondents' choice of subject specialization and the influence of their parents' decision. Meanwhile, for the last statement "The subject specialization choice of my friends influenced me in choosing my own specialization choice", it has a Pearson Correlation  $r$  of -0.004 which is negative very weak correlation. With a  $p$ -value of 0.973 which is greater than to alpha level 0.05, this signifies another failure to reject the null hypothesis. We can then conclude that the respondents' choice of subject specialization and their

friends' influence has no significant relationship. The result implies that the social factors such as the influence of the respondents' teachers, guidance counselor and friends has no direct effect to their decision in choosing their subject specialization. On the other hand, the influence of their parents might have an impact on their decision.

**Table 4.3**  
Correlation of Opportunity Factors and Choice of Subject Specialization

Opportunity Factors	r	p-value	Interpretation
I can get a job right after schooling because it is an in-demand profession	-.104	.428	No significant relationship
I make decision based on the career growth, salary and opportunities provided by the job.	-.235	.071	No significant relationship

**Legend:** 0.0 – 0.19 – Very Weak Correlation; 0.20 – 0.39 – Weak Correlation; 0.40 – 0.59 – Moderate Correlation; 0.60 – 0.79 – Strong Correlation; 0.80 – 1.0 – Very Strong Correlation

Table 4.3 indicates the correlation coefficient  $r$  and the  $p$ -value which explains the relationship of the respondents' choice of subject specialization and each of the statement for opportunity factors. Looking at the table, the Pearson Correlation  $r$  of the first statement "I can get a job right after schooling because it is an in-demand profession" is -0.104 which is, negative very weak correlation. However, looking at the  $p$ -value of the first statement, the  $p$ -value is 0.428. Comparing the computed  $p$ -value to alpha level 0.05, 0.428 is greater than 0.05 which signifies failure to reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, there is no significant relationship between the respondents' choice of subject specialization and the demand of the profession for them. On the other hand, the Pearson correlation  $r$  of the second statement "I make decision based on the career growth, salary and opportunities provided by the job" is -0.235, a negative weak correlation. With a  $p$ -value of 0.071 which is greater than to alpha level 0.05, this signifies another failure to reject the null hypothesis. We can then conclude that the respondents' choice of subject specialization and the career growth, salary, and opportunities provided by the profession has no significant relationship. The result implies that the opportunity factors stated in the table has no direct impact on the respondents' decision in choosing their subject specialization.

**Table 4.4**  
Overall Correlation of Three Identified Factors and Choice of Subject Specialization



	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Interpretation	p-value	Interpretation
<b>Personal Factors</b>	-.238	Negative Weak Correlation	.067	No significant relationship
<b>Social Factors</b>	-.211	Negative Weak Correlation	.105	No significant relationship
<b>Opportunity Factors</b>	-.235	Negative Weak Correlation	.071	No significant relationship

**Legend:** 0.0 – 0.19 – Very Weak Correlation; 0.20 – 0.39 – Weak Correlation; 0.40 – 0.59 – Moderate Correlation; 0.60 – 0.79 – Strong Correlation; 0.80 – 1.0 – Very Strong Correlation

Table 4.4 provides the overall correlation coefficient  $r$  and the  $p$ -value which explains the relationship of the respondents' choice of subject specialization and personal factors. Looking at the table, the Pearson Correlation  $r$  of Personal Factors is  $-0.238$  which is, negative weak correlation. It means that the personal factors affect the respondents' choice of subject specialization in 23.8%. However, looking at the  $p$ -value of Personal Factors, the  $p$ -value is  $0.067$ . Comparing the computed  $p$ -value to alpha level  $0.05$ ,  $0.067$  is greater than  $0.05$  which signifies failure to reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, there is no significant relationship between the respondents' choice of subject specialization and personal factors. The result opposes the studies that personal factors play a significant role in career decision-making when it came to choosing a life vocation (Caldera et al., 2003; Bojuwoye and Mbanjwa, 2006; Gokuladas, 2010; Lent et al., 2010; Choi and Kim, 2013; Atitsogbe et al., 2018). Furthermore, the result also contradicts the findings of Sarwar and Masood (2015) and Keck (2016) which mentioned that the majority of the students choose their major because of their interest on it and academic background including quality of course content, difficulty level of the subject and the workload.

Meanwhile, the above table also provides the overall correlation coefficient  $r$  and the  $p$ -value of the respondents' choice of subject specialization and social factors. Considering at the table, the Pearson Correlation  $r$  of Social Factors is  $-0.211$  which is also a negative weak correlation. It means that the social factors affect the respondents' choice of subject specialization in 21.1%. With regard to the  $p$ -value of Social Factors, comparing it the computed to alpha level  $0.05$ ,  $0.105$  is greater than  $0.05$  which signifies failure to reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, there is also no significant relationship between the respondents' choice of subject

specialization and social factors. The study conducted by Khoo, Ban, Neng, Hooi & Joan (2015) contradicts the findings as it was revealed that college students and non-college students agreed that their parents are the most influential or important person when choosing their career. Likewise, the report of Howard et al., (2009) and Cheung et al., (2013) that revealed how influential teachers are in the career-decision making of the students as well as the peer influence, also refutes the data analyzed.

Lastly, for opportunity factors, Table 4.4 displays the overall correlation coefficient  $r$  and the  $p$ -value which describes the relationship of the respondents' choice of subject specialization and opportunity factors. Looking at the table, the Pearson Correlation  $r$  is  $-0.235$  which is negative weak correlation. It means that the opportunity factors affect the respondents' choice of subject specialization in 23.5%. Yet, consider the  $p$ -value which is equal to  $0.071$ . Comparing the computed  $p$ -value to alpha level  $0.05$ ,  $0.071$  is greater than  $0.05$  which for the 3<sup>rd</sup> time signifies failure to reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, there is no significant relationship between the respondents' choice of subject specialization and opportunity factors. This also contradicts the findings of Al-Rfou (2013) that the most important factors among all considerations are the job opportunities, job security and earning potential of the job. In the same way, a study by Malubay, Mercado, and Macasaet (2015) concerning how economic stable wages and job demand are the most considered factors of the students in choosing their career also opposes the table above.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study was conducted to determine the factors affecting freshmen education students of Palawan State University (Main Campus) in choosing their subject specialization. It analyzed the relationship of respondents' personal profiles and the three identified factors namely personal, social and opportunity factors with their chosen subject specialization. Likewise, it is the researchers' primary purpose and willingness to assist learners in becoming aware of many factors to consider when selecting a subject of specialization, since this will affect their future job and the life that awaits them after completing their chosen career path. This research used the descriptive-correlational design to test the hypothesis. In addition, the researchers utilized survey questionnaires in Google Forms which was given to the students through their corporate emails and/or messenger accounts from May to June 2021. The respondents of the study were the first year Bachelor of Secondary Education students of Palawan State University- College of Teacher Education who are officially enrolled during the second semester, academic year 2020-2021. They were identified using the stratified sampling method. Only 60 randomly selected students from each major became the respondents of the study.

The result shows that most of the respondents or 83.33% of them were aged 18-20 years old which composed of fifty

one (51) or 85 % female students and nine (9) or 15% male students. In the area of specialization, the result shows that fourteen (14) or 23.33% of the respondents are English majors. On the other hand, there are thirteen (13) or 21.67% respondents who major in Science. While, ten (10) or 16.67% of the respondents are majoring in Filipino, the same as in Values major. Their Senior High School strand shows that twenty (20) or 33.33% of the respondents choose Humanities and Social Sciences as their Senior High School strand, the same frequency is the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics strand. Meanwhile, result shows that fourteen (14) or 23.33% of the respondents' fathers are high school graduates, the same frequency is the college level and college graduate and nineteen (19) or 31.67% of the respondents' mothers are high school graduates. Lastly, the monthly family income of the respondents ranges 20, 000.00 and below. To determine the factors that affect the respondents' decision in choosing their subject specialization namely personal, social factors, and opportunity factors, mean rating were used along with its qualitative description. For personal factors, the result shows that with an overall mean rating of 4.13 and description of agree, it implies that the respondents consider their personal factors presented in choosing the subject of specialization. However, the social factors with an overall mean rating of 2.43 and qualitative description of disagree implies that the respondents do not consider the social factors presented in choosing their subject of specialization. Meanwhile, the opportunity factors with an overall mean rating of 3.93 and description of agree implies that the respondents consider the opportunity factors presented in choosing their subject of specialization

On the other hand, to determine the relationship between the respondents' personal profiles and the identified factors and their decision in choosing subject specialization, Chi-Square Test and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient ( $r$ ) were used. The said inferential measure was performed in the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20 for analyzing the data, tested at 0.05 level of significance. The analysis reveals that there is a significance relationship between the respondents' personal factors such as age, sex, Senior High School strand, their mother's educational attainment and family monthly income and their decision in choosing their subject specialization while there is no significant relationship between their father's educational attainment and their decision in choosing their subject specialization.

To analyze the Correlation of personal factors, social factors, and opportunity factors and choice of subject specialization, correlation coefficient  $r$  and the  $p$ -value were used to explain the relationship of the respondents' choice of subject specialization and each of the statements. The analysis showed that there is no significant relationship between the personal factors and the respondents' decision in choosing their subject specialization. In addition, the result shows that there is no significant relationship between the social factors such as the influence of the respondents' teachers, guidance

counselor and friends and their decision in choosing their subject specialization. On the other hand, influence of their parents has a significant relationship on their decision. Meanwhile, the Correlation of Opportunity Factors and Choice of Subject Specialization implies that the opportunity factors stated in the table has no direct impact on the respondents' decision in choosing their subject specialization.

Correlation coefficient  $r$  and the  $p$ -value were used to determine the overall correlation of three identified factors and choice of subject specialization. The Pearson Correlation  $r$  of personal Factors is -0.238 which is, negative weak correlation with the  $p$ -value of 0.067. Comparing the computed  $p$ -value to alpha level 0.05, 0.067 is greater than 0.05 which signifies failure to reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, there is no significant relationship between the respondents' choice of subject specialization and personal factors. Meanwhile, the overall correlation coefficient  $r$  and the  $p$ -value of the respondents' choice of subject specialization and social factors. The Pearson Correlation  $r$  of social factors is -.211 which is also a negative weak correlation with a  $p$ -value of .105 comparing it the computed to alpha level 0.05, 0.105 is greater than 0.05 which signifies failure to reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, there is also no significant relationship between the respondents' choice of subject specialization and social factors. Lastly, for opportunity factors, the Pearson Correlation  $r$  is -.235 which is negative weak correlation. The  $p$ -value which is equal to 0.071 comparing to alpha level 0.05, 0.071 is greater than 0.05 which for the third time signifies failure to reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, there is no significant relationship between the respondents' choice of subject specialization and opportunity factors.

After examination of the findings and conclusion of the study, the following are strongly recommended for the utilization of the results of this study.

1. Students may consider other factors aside from their personal, social, and opportunity factors in choosing their subject specialization.
2. Schools may conduct career path program that will help the student in deciding for their future career.
3. The administration may consider doing variety of exposition to make the students more interested and became excellent with their subject of specialization.
4. It is also recommended that to increase student's motivation in choosing their subject of specialization, parents may give them advice is highly recommended to direct them in the career path that they want and love.
5. A follow-up study for future researchers may be conducted in order to explore other factors that significantly affect students' decision in choosing their subject specialization.

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