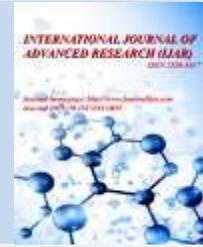




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### RESEARCH ARTICLE

## CAREER AND SCHOOL PREFERENCES OF SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ACADEMIC YEAR 2017-2018.

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### Abstract

The choice of a course and which school to enter in college is one of the major decisions faced by graduating students which is an important element of their learning process. The course and school selection decision will most likely define their future success. The paper was aimed at assessing the students' course and school preference using a descriptive research design. A survey was administered to respondents totaling 2,231 comprised of grade 12 students enrolled in La Consolacion University Philippines (LCUP) during the second semester of school year 2017-2018. Findings revealed that Accountancy, Education and Hotel and Restaurant Management were the three courses most preferred. However, LCUP was not the top school of choice among respondents. Seven out of ten most preferred courses are current offerings at LCUP, three of which are board courses. The provision of a more intensive internal marketing program is suggested. Likewise, a study on the impact of programs and services and their influence on career and school selection decisions may be conducted to determine which program or service made available to senior high students singly or in combination are determinants of their retention. Follow-up research on the reasons why students choose a course or a school may be also be considered.

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### Introduction:-

The choice of a course and which school to enter in college is one of the major decisions faced by graduating students which is an important element of their learning process. The course and school selection decision will most likely define their future success.

Labor mismatch is considered among the many reasons why the unemployment and underemployment rate of the Philippines has somewhat increased over time. The reasons could be either that the graduates' courses do not match the need of the current economy, or the graduates do not possess the necessary skills, and qualifications required by the industries in need. This could likewise be due to the wrong choice of course and of school by most of the college students brought about by unguided decision making in choosing courses (Pascual, 2014) which is evident through reports (Business Mirror, 2016; ILO.org, 2017) that mentioned that high percentage of skills mismatch in the country.

Tiedeman's (Harren, 1976, as cited in Patton and McMahon, 2006) approach to career development and decision making is the assumption that an individual is responsible for his own behavior because he has the capacity for

choice and lives in a world which is not deterministic. In the Journal of Higher Education Theory and Practice vol. 11(4) 2011, it was pointed out that “college success was important to students because it demonstrated that they were meeting the expectation to achieve desired learning goals and, thereby, improved their chances of meeting long-term personal and career goals” (Kim, et al., 2010). On the other hand, the institution gives importance to students’ academic success because it is a concrete evidence of its accomplishment of its mission to educate and equip students for life beyond college (Kim, et al., 2010).

The study assessed the Grade 12 students’ course preference and school choice. It sought to specifically answer the following: (1) Who comprise the Grade 12 roster of students? (2) What are the top ten courses preferred by the respondents? (3) What is the overall school preference of the respondents? (4) What implications may be drawn from the results of this study?

### **Materials and Methods:-**

The study made use of a descriptive research design which utilized a survey that elicited the respondents’ course and school preferences.

Respondents of the study was composed of 2,321 grade 12 students enrolled during the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester of academic year 2017-2018 from both campuses - Catmon and Barasoain.

### **Results and Discussions:-**

#### **Composition of Grade 12 students:-**

It could be gleaned from the data from Table 1 that Grade 12 students totaled 2,321 comprising of 907 completers from private schools representing 39%, and 1,414 students from DepED schools or 61% of the total Grade 12 population.

The strong enrolment figure of 1,414 from DepEd or public schools can be attributed to the students’ availment of the Senior High School (SHS) voucher, for which LCUP has no top-up. This meant that beneficiaries are not required to pay for the difference in the amount of the DepED voucher and the actual school fees. Moreover, LCUP has likewise provided public school completers (DepEd) of free books to be used during the semester. LCUP, by far, has the biggest SHS enrolment in the region.

**Table 1:-** *Composition of Grade 12 students*

Grade 12 students	f	%
Private Completers	907	39%
DepEd completers	1,414	61%
Total	2,321	100%

#### **Top ten preferred courses:-**

Apparently, the data in Table 2 shows that Accountancy is the most preferred course by majority of the grade 12 students totaling 273 students or 12% of the total Grade 12 population of 2,321. Education course ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> with 212 students claiming preference for it. This is followed by the Hotel and Restaurant Management (HRM) course which was the preferred choice of 165 students. The aforementioned courses comprise of 9% and 7% of the total population of grade 12, respectively.

Student-respondents showed preference to other courses in the Top ten list in the order of rank as follows: Tourism (4<sup>th</sup>, 169 students), Business Administration (5<sup>th</sup>, 159 students), Civil Engineering (6<sup>th</sup>, 157 students), Information Technology (7<sup>th</sup>, 146 students), Architecture (8<sup>th</sup>, 92 students, Criminology (8<sup>th</sup>, 79 students), and Medical Technology (10<sup>th</sup>, 62 students).

It is noteworthy to mention that of the top ten courses preferred by Grade 12 respondents, seven are current courses offered at LCUP. Three are board courses namely: Accountancy, Education, and Medical Technology. The other four are non-board courses – Tourism, Hotel and Restaurant Management, Business Administration, and Information Technology.

**Top ten preferred courses by completers' type:-**

It could be further culled from Table 2 that a total of 1,514 students have signified their choice of college course which are included among the Top ten preferred courses listed on the said Table. The figure includes 920 grade 12 students who were DepED/public school completers, and 594 who were private school completers.

For the individual programs, and the number of completers per school type whose course preferences were made known, the following list is presented accordingly: Accountancy (82 – Private, 191 – DepEd), Education (107 – Private, 105 – DepEd), Hotel and Restaurant Management (39 – Private, 130 – DepEd), Tourism (81 – Private, 84 – DepEd), Business Administration (50 – Private, 109 – DepEd), Civil Engineering (86 – Private, 71 – DepEd), Information Technology (35 – Private, 111 – DepEd), Architecture (39 – Private, 53 – DepEd), Criminology (31 – Private, 79 – DepEd), and Medical Technology (44 – Private, 18 – DepEd).

**Over-all school preference:-**

Overall, it could be said as evinced by the results in Table 3 that approximately 92.6% of the total Grade 12 population signified that they prefer to go to college at Bulacan State University (BSU), or in other schools after graduation. A total of 1,211 students accounting to 52.2% chose BSU while 938 students or 40.4% prefer to go to other schools.

La Consolacion University Philippines (LCUP) was considered by only 117 students or five percent of the total respondents. Centro Escolar University (CEU), Baliuag University (BU), Yanga Colleges, and Bulacan Polytechnic College (BPC) were found to have been considered by a total of 59 students representing 2.5% of the total: 1.4%, 0.3%, 0.8%, and 0.1%, respectively.

**Table 2:- Top ten Preferred Courses**

Course	Private Completers	DepEd Completers	Total	% to N	Rank
Accountancy	82	191	273	12%	1
Education	107	105	212	9%	2
Hotel and Restaurant Management	39	130	169	7%	3
Tourism	81	84	165	7%	4
Business Administration	50	109	159	7%	5
Civil Engineering	86	71	157	7%	6
Information Technology	35	111	146	6%	7
Architecture	39	53	92	4%	8
Criminology	31	48	79	3%	9
Medical Technology	44	18	62	3%	10
Total	564	920	1,514		
N = 2,321					

**Table 3:- Overall Data on School Preference**

Preferred School	BSU	LCUP	CEU	BU	Yanga	BPC	Others	N
No. of students	1,211	117	32	6	19	2	938	2,321
Percent to Total	52.2%	5.0%	1.4%	0.3%	0.8%	0.1%	40.4%	100%

*Legend:* BSU – Bulacan State University; LCUP – La Consolacion University Philippines; CEU – Centro Escolar University; BU – Baliuag University; BPC – Bulacan Polytechnic College

**School Preference for top ten courses:-**

Table 4 shows data indicative of the Grade 12 students' choice of what particular school they would want to pursue their preferred course. The researchers considered the colleges and universities that are proximate to La Consolacion University Philippines (LCUP) and can be regarded as competitors.

Apparently, Bulacan State University (BSU) is the students' number one choice with regards to the school they would like to pursue their preferred course. Based on the data gathered, 61% or 923 students out of the 1,514 grade 12 whose preferred courses were among the top ten list, has chosen BSU. Only 76 students representing five percent has considered LCUP while 1.2% has chosen Centro Escolar University (CEU). Both Baliuag University

(BU) and Bulacan Polytechnic College (BPC) are preferred by 0.2% of the total. Thirty-two percent or 494 grade 12 students prefer other schools.

**Table 4:-** School Preference of Grade 12 students

Course	School							f
	BSU	LCUP	CEU	BU	BPC	Yanga	Others	
Accountancy	174	9	5	1			84	273
Education	157	11					44	212
Tourism	80	28	6				55	169
Hotel & Restaurant Mgt	104	10					51	165
Business Administration	98	5	4		1		51	159
Civil Engineering	89	1					67	157
Information Technology	98	1			1		46	146
Architecture	55	5	3				29	92
Criminology	63						16	79
Medical Technology	5	6					51	62
Total	923	76	18	1	2	0	494	1,514
Percent to Total	61%	5%	1.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0%	32.6%	100%

Legend: BSU – Bulacan State University; LCUP – La Consolacion University Philippines; CEU – Centro Escolar University; BU – Baliwag University; BPC – Bulacan Polytechnic College

### Conclusions and recommendations:-

Based on the findings of the study, it could be inferred that DepEd completers outnumbered private completers in Grade 12. Accountancy, Education and Hotel and Restaurant Management were the three courses most preferred. La Consolacion University Philippines (LCUP) was not the top school of choice among respondents. Seven out of the ten top preferred courses are current course offerings at LCUP, three of which are board courses.

It is highly recommended: (1) that an intensive internal marketing and promotions program among the senior high school students be provided to ensure a high retention rate (2) that a study on the impact of programs and services and their influence on students' course and school selection decision be conducted to determine which program or service singly or in combination are determinants of retention (3) that a follow-up research on the reasons why students choose a course/school be also considered, and (4) that scholarship grants be solicited for marginalized but deserving students to keep them.

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