

FACTORS THAT AFFECT STUDENTS' SELECTION OF STRAND OR TRACK AND THEIR IMPACT ON FUTURE CAREER CHOICES

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Choosing a strand or track in senior high school is a crucial decision that significantly shapes a student's future career path. Various factors, ranging from personal interests to family expectations, play an essential role in determining a student's academic journey and professional prospects.

According to a study published by Philippines E-Journals (2022), the common factors influencing students who choose Education as their college course include personal preferences and interests, parental guidance, external influences, affordability, practicality, and socio-economic challenges.

A student's interests and passions are among the primary factors in their decision-making process. Many students select a track based on subjects they enjoy or feel a natural inclination toward. For example, those interested in technology and engineering often choose the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) strand, while students passionate about the arts or humanities may gravitate toward the Arts and Design or Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) strand. Aligning their track with their interests helps students remain motivated and engaged, increasing their chances of success.

Family influence is another significant factor. Cultural expectations or a family's career background often guide students in their choices. Some students may feel pressured to select strands that align with their family's preferences, even when their personal interests differ. Additionally, external factors, including support from friends,

peer relationships, faculty resources, and challenges encountered in their educational environment, also impact students' decisions.

Academic strengths are equally influential. Students tend to choose strands that align with their capabilities. Those excelling in mathematics and sciences might prefer the STEM strand, while students with strong communication skills or a flair for social sciences may opt for the HUMSS strand. This alignment allows students to excel academically and enhances their potential for long-term success.

Socio-economic factors also play a critical role in strand selection. Key considerations include social status, access to education, and geographic location. Social status can influence perceptions of career prestige and societal expectations. Students from privileged backgrounds may lean toward careers in law, medicine, or finance, while those from less advantaged backgrounds might choose more accessible career paths. Limited access to education can further restrict career options, particularly for students in low-income areas where resources and opportunities are scarce.

Geographic location is another determinant. In areas with limited economic opportunities, students may have to choose careers based on availability rather than personal interests or skills. Conversely, urban centers often offer a wider range of career options, providing students with more diverse choices aligned with their aspirations.

Moreover, students' awareness of career opportunities and job market trends plays a significant role in their decision-making. Many prioritize strands that offer promising career prospects, considering the potential for future employment.

In conclusion, several factors play a crucial role in determining students' strand selection, including personal interests, academic strengths, family influence, socio-economic status, and career opportunities. These elements not only shape their educational experiences but also have a significant impact on their future professional

success. By understanding these key influences, students can make thoughtful decisions that align with their aspirations and long-term goals.

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