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DETERMINING STUDENTS' TRACK PREFERENCES: BASIS FOR SCHOOLS' CURRICULUM

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ABSTRACT

The study highlighted the transition rate of Grade10-Junior High School (JHS) completers to Grade 11-Senior High School (SHS) enrolment, and students' track preferences. The study utilized quanti-quali approach. Quantitative data were collected and analyze from school's records/forms. Qualitative data were based from direct responses of the respondents. It employed descriptive-evaluative type of research design and applied purposive sampling to 41 students to obtain descriptions out from the results of evaluation. The high percentage distribution of "Balik-aral" students, classified as parent-students, contributed an increase of Grade 11 enrolment. The career goals of SHS program, College and Business/Commerce, encouraged the community to patronize to study the track offered by the school. Students' mastery level did not suffice the passing standard in education that the SHS track offered by the school was not relevant to the preferences of students. Thus, the school may assess or evaluate school's program and curriculum instruction suited to learners' learning style to prepare them according to their level of preferences.

KEYWORDS: *Students' Preferences, SHSTrack, Curriculum, Transition Rate*

INTRODUCTION

On the process of learning, learners are the center of education. The wrong choice of course taken by most of students adds to the unemployment and underemployment rate of graduate students (Pascual, 2014).Thus, the focus of education is the development of students. This study attempts to examine the students' track preference as basis for developing the school's curriculum.

The insights of determining and developing students' preferences have been proven by the different studies; Mlambo (2011), Harb & El-Shaarawi (2006), Kuhn & Pease (2008), and Kyd (2014). Mlambo (2011), students' preferences contribute to the factors that affect student academic performance, and it can be manage by teacher's teaching style (Harb & El-Shaarawi 2006); Kuhn & Pease (2008) emphasized the improvement of students' enthusiasm and motivation through inquiry-based learning; and Kyd (2014) addressed the valuable contribution of graduates from vocational education to the economy. Though, the different

authors contribute to the perception on the prominence of students' preference in education and economy, this study still needs to explore.

The cited studies manifest a means of meeting quality of education towards global economy needs. This goal is to invest human capital through aligning curriculum standards globally. Particularly, in Pakwan Integrated School, there were 8 students among 12 Junior High School (JHS) completers of School Year 2015-2016 who remains enrolled in Grade 11 (Senior High), School Year 2016-2017, while, 4 of them enrolled in other institution. Though, the Grade 11 enrollment was evidently increasing but many of them were "Balik-aral" and they were student-parents. Based from the observation, the attendances of these "Balik-aral" (Returnees) students were constantly decreasing, so, there is a possibility that the enrolment of the opening of Grade 12 would be decreasing and the quality of graduates would be sacrifice. This study attempts to determine the recent grade 10 students' preference to give as basis for intervention on Senior High School (SHS) enrollments and its curriculum.

Determining student's preference is desirable in evaluating and assessing school's level of academic performance and in offering program as satisfaction of the clients. The unique of this study is significant in educational system that student's preference is the highlights in building economy capital. The study can be utilized in developing school's curriculum and sustaining a positive school's enrollment. Thus, the unique is that findings are not only base to the results of evaluation but the direct responses of the respondents give essence to this study.

CONCEPTUAL/THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

The study claimed that determining students' track preference is a major consideration in developing school's curriculum which is a key factor in improving human capital. Determining individuals' track preference anchored from the claim of David Tiedeman's Career Theory. This theory claimed that individual must start his/her own career theory (Jepsen, 2008), determining individuals' career theory is the basis in career intervention. Likely, schools' must be aware of learners learning needs as it is a basis in offering curriculums or programs. As school offers programs related to individuals' preference, learners are always in the process of emergence. Students are conceptualizing personal outlook through discovering his/her life existential meanings. Thus, it is not difficult for an economy to produce a competent human capital for it is started and developed by individuals during his/her learning stage and self-awareness.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

The study utilized quantitative and qualitative approach to address the objectives of the study. It involved collecting quantitative data and analyzing it using statistical methods from teacher's school form and test result. Qualitative approach on the other hand, addressed the objectives of the study that involved collecting qualitative data through direct responses of the respondents. Furthermore, the study employed descriptive-evaluative type of research design and applied purposive sampling to 41 students. Its concern was to obtain descriptions out from the results of evaluation. Thus, the researcher adapted a tool from Cuenca (2016) to address the objectives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1
Transition of Enrolment

JHS-Grade 10 Report on Promotion S.Y. 2015-2016		SHS-Grade 11 Report of Enrolment S.Y. 2016-2017	
Indicators	**Frequency (%)**	**Indicators**	**Frequency**
Promoted	12 (92.31%)	JHS-Grade 10 Completers	8(36.36%)
Retained	1 (7.69%)	Balik-Aral	14 (63.63%)
Total	**13 (100%)**	**Total**	**22 (100%)**

Table shows the transition of enrolment of Junior High School (JHS) promotion School Year 2015-2016 to Senior High School (SHS) Enrolment School Year 2016-2017. As it compare, the transition of promotion rate of JHS to SHS enrolment is increase. Thus, the implication of the increase of transition is due to "Balik-Aral" students (returnees). These "balik-aral" are parent-students who wish to enroll school's track offered, the Handicraft. The investigation reveals that 4 (33.33%) of promoted students are enrolled in other institution. It implies that track or specialization offered by the school is not match to the preference of those students. It is same implication cited by Hermann, et. al. (2015) that the improvement of curricula can be explains from the satisfaction of students.

The enrolling of students to other schools and the indication of "Balik-aral" students highlighted the claim of Tiedeman's Career Theory that institution must be oriented to learning needs of individuals for it is a basis on how to intervene schools' program/curriculum relevant to learners'

satisfaction. Whereas, students' satisfaction to curricula is the proof of internalization of individuals' decision process that develop his/her personal sense of significances. Thus, thought and action both work simultaneously (Jepsen, 2008).

Table 2
Students' Responses

Students'Category	Factors	Frequency(%)	Rank
Junior High School (JHS) Completers	Enrolled to other school	4 (33.33%)	1
	Parents' Decision	1 (8.33%)	5
	Financial Status	2 (16.66%)	3.5
	Loyalty	3 (25%)	2
	School's Distance	2 (16.66%)	3.5
	Total	**12 (46.15%)**	
Balik-Aral	Aim to finish Tertiary level	4 (28.57%)	2
	Acquire skills in handicraft	8 (57.14%)	1
	Aim to finish SHS level	2 (14.28%)	3
	Total	**14 (53.84%)**	
	Grand Total	**26 (100%)**	

Tabular shows the responses of Grade 11 students that gathered from the focus group discussions of respondents and teacher as factors of their reasons of remaining study in school. Grade 11 is categorized in two: JHS completers, and "Balik-Aral students. As shown in JHS completers' category, there is a percentage distribution of factors that JHS completers enrolled in other school. Students enrolled in other institution because they found it that the track offered was according to their choice. It is evident from the interview; students wish to enroll to other school to experience another learning environment. Pursuing to remain to study in school for loyalty is described as promoting the track offered by school. School distance and financial status are close related factors. It implies that low economic status is the main reasons why they remain to study in same school. It implies further that there was a possibility that the transition of Grade 11 enrollment was strongly deflated. As to "Balik-aral" category, "to acquire skills in handicraft" shows a high percentage distribution, and "to finish tertiary level" is half percentage distribution to the first rank. It posits that the impact of school's offering Senior High School program motivates to the community the goals "Kolehiyo" (College) and "Negosyo" (Business/Commerce) which are evident during interview that these students aim to have a business on handicrafts products and continue their unfinished college courses. Thus5, if these 4 students were not enrolled to other school, the transition of enrollment would positively increase.

The factors were the direct responses of the respondents claimed the process of human career as part of occupational roles; it is anchored in Tiedeman's Career Theory. Such as, the factors claimed by the respondents, as their reasons of enrolling the said schools' program, were an act of emergence oneself, a mechanism of deciding and mapping of self (Tiedeman, 1971, as cited by Jepsen, 2008). Mapping of self was likely the envisioning of individuals oneself in career goals.

Table 3
Grade 10 Students' Tracks MPS

TRACKS	SUBJECT	MPS(%)	Description	Rank	Average MPS (%)	Rank	DESCRIPTION
ACADEMIC	ENGLISH	37.33	D	2.5	31.33	2	Least Ready
	MATHEMATICS	25.33	L	11			
	SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY	31.33	D	5			
TECHNICAL-VOCATIONAL-LIVELIHOOD (TVL)	AGRICULTURE	30.67	D	6.5	32.00	1	Least Ready
	AUTOMOTIVE SERVICES	38.67	D	1			
	DRESSMAKING	32.00	D	4			
	COMPUTER SERVICING	37.33	D	2.5			
	ELECTRICAL INSTALLATION	30.67	D	6.5			
	ELECTRONIC SERVICES	26.67	D	10			
	NAIL CARE	28.00	D	9			
SPORTS AND ARTS	SPORTS & ARTS	29.33	D	8	29.33	3	Least Ready
Average		**31.58**	**Developing**		**30.89**	**Least Ready**	

Legend: 89-100 - Exemplary (E)/Very Much Ready; 67-88 – Proficient (P) / Much Ready ; 47-66 - (AP)/ Moderately Ready;
45-46 – Approaching Proficiency 26-44 – Developing (D) / Least Ready ; 01-25 - Learning (L)/ Not Ready

Table 3 is the Mean Percentage Score (MPS) and competencies of students in different tracks; Academic, TVL, and Sports and Arts. TVL and Academic track are close. All of the competencies in TVL track are in the level of "Developing". While, competencies of Academic track are between "Learning" and "Developing". Hence, Sports and Art track is the lowest rank among the three tracks still the mastery level is "Developing". Thus, the implication of it is evident in students' profile records that the learning styles of 12 among 16 students are "tactile". Specifically, among eleven (11) subjects, Mathematics is the only rank in "Learning" level. The implication of it is evident in the focus group discussion responses that 13 students admitted that they are poor and not interested to study numbers and logics. Automotive is in the highest rank but still in the level of "Developing". It indicates that most of the students' capacity is align in automotive services and it is evident in the focus group discussion that 52.63% (10) of them are interested to enroll in automotive services and they are male students. Generally, tabular reveals that all students' tracks are in "Least Ready" level. It results that the students' level in each track is "Developing". It implies that students' mastery level does not suffice the passing standard in education (Cuenca, 2016).

Pashler, et. al., (2008) stressed that effective instruction can only be undertaken if the learner's learning preferences are diagnosed and the instruction is clearly manipulated. The tabular manifested in the claim of Tiedeman's Career Theory that students' determine his own interest in which it is the essence of manifesting his/her personal outlook in career. Significantly, the role of the school is to offer curriculum or program according to the needs of learners.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. The transferring of 4 JHS completer-students signified that school's course offer was not relevant to their preference.
2. The number of "Balik-aral "/parent-students contributed a positive inflation in the transition of Grade 11 enrollment.
3. Low economic status factor was the main reason why JHS completer-students remain enrolled in Grade 11.
4. The opening of school's SHS program gave impact to the parent-students to envision the "Negosyo" and "Kolehiyo" goals.
5. Students' mastery level did not suffice the passing standard in education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are the recommendations of this study:

1. The school may evaluate the preference of the students to assess the schools' curriculum/program.
2. The school may conduct a SHS campaign/caravan to encourage the

community and to increase more the number of clients.

3. The school/Department of Education may extend/create financial assistance to the students such as Grant/Scholarship Program to encourage and to sustain their study.
4. The school may extend/innovate community services that relate to entrepreneurial and educational skill such as livelihood training-workshop, and seminar/symposium on education.
5. The school may assess/evaluate school's curriculum instruction suited to learners' learning style to prepare them according to their level of preferences.
6. Future researchers are encouraged to deepen more this study.

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