

## Motives in Chosen Strand of Grade 12 Senior High Students Studying at Isabela National High School

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**ABSTRACT:** This study explored the motives behind the selection of academic strands among Grade 12 Senior High School students at Isabela National High School. Using a descriptive research design, the study examined the personal, social, and practical factors that influenced students' strand preferences. Data were gathered through a researcher-developed survey administered to Grade 12 learners across various strands. Results revealed that personal interest and perceived alignment with future career goals were the primary reasons for strand choice. Parental guidance, peer influence, and teachers' recommendations also contributed to students' decisions, although to a lesser extent. Practical considerations such as job opportunities, academic strengths, and the perceived difficulty of subjects further shaped their choices. The findings highlight the importance of providing adequate career guidance and relevant information to help students make informed academic decisions. Recommendations for school administrators, guidance counselors, and educators include strengthening career orientation programs and fostering supportive environments that help students align their choices with their aspirations and abilities.

**KEYWORDS:** Strand/Specialization, motives, senior high school students, basic physiological needs, incentives, feeling, prospects, leisure.

### I. INTRODUCTION

The implementation of the K–12 Senior High School (SHS) in the Philippines provides students with the opportunity to choose an academic strand that aligns with their interests, abilities, and future career goals. Implemented under the K–12 Curriculum, the SHS program offers various strands such as Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), Accountancy, Business and Management (ABM), and Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS). The selection of a strand is a crucial decision because it influences students' preparedness for college courses, career paths, and long-term professional development. However, many students face challenges in choosing a strand due to limited career guidance, lack of self-awareness, peer pressure, and insufficient understanding of each strand's requirements and prospects. Understanding the motives behind students' strand selection is therefore essential in ensuring that they make informed decisions that support their academic success and future aspirations.

This study focuses on the motives of Grade 12 Senior High School students at Isabela National High School in choosing their respective academic strands. The research examines five key motivational factors: basic physiological needs, incentives, feelings, future prospects, and leisure. By assessing the extent to which each factor influences students' decisions, the study seeks to provide insights into their personal preferences, emotional considerations, and long-term goals. This curricular reform was designed to better prepare Filipino learners for higher education, employment, or entrepreneurship. However, the process of strand selection has proven challenging for many students due to several external and internal factors. Students often make decisions based on limited information about the strands, unclear personal goals, or the influence of parents, peers, and societal expectations. In some cases, choices are made not because of genuine interest or aptitude, but due to convenience, popularity, or perceived difficulty of subjects. As a result, some students experience academic mismatch, low motivation, or regret over their chosen pathway.

Understanding the motives behind students' choice of academic strand is essential for improving the SHS experience. Motivational factors such as basic physiological needs, incentives, feelings, future prospects, and leisure play a significant role in influencing these decisions. At Isabela National High School, where multiple strands such as STEM, ABM, and HUMSS are offered, examining these motives can provide valuable insights into how and why students make educational decisions that shape their future.

To examine the motives in chosen strand of Grade 12 Senior High School students at Isabela National High School in choosing their academic strand.

1. Demographic profile of the respondents in terms of:

- a. Sex
- b. Family income
- c. Chosen academic strand

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2. To determine the level of motives of the respondents in choosing their academic strand in terms of:

- a. Basic physiological needs
- b. Incentive
- c. Feeling
- d. Prospect
- e. Leisure

3. To analyze whether there are significant differences in the motives of students when grouped according to their demographic profile.

4. To provide recommendations based on the findings that can help students, teachers, guidance counselors, and school administrators in making informed decisions regarding strand selection.

### Related Literature

This chapter presents a review of related literature and studies that provide a theoretical and empirical foundation for the present study. It discusses the concepts of student motivation, academic strand selection, and the factors influencing students' educational decisions. Highlighting findings relevant to the motives of Grade 12 students in choosing their academic strand.

Motivation is a key factor influencing students' academic choices worldwide. According to Ryan and Deci (2000), motivation can be categorized into **intrinsic** (internal desires, personal interests, and enjoyment) and **extrinsic** (external incentives such as rewards or recognition). Students who are intrinsically motivated tend to select courses or academic programs that align with their personal interests and goals, whereas extrinsically motivated students often focus on tangible benefits, such as scholarships, higher income, or career advancement.

Leisure and personal comfort have also been noted as minor yet influential factors. Students may consider the perceived difficulty of subjects or the compatibility of the curriculum with their lifestyle when choosing programs (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002). Overall, literature emphasizes that motivation is multi-faceted, combining both emotional, cognitive, and practical considerations.

A study by Lee and Song (2017) on high school students in South Korea revealed that students' academic choices are heavily influenced by intrinsic motivation, personal interest, and long-term career goals. Incentives such as scholarships and parental expectations were secondary factors. Similarly, a study in the United States by Lent, Brown, and Hackett (2000) found that students' self-efficacy and career expectations significantly influenced the selection of academic programs, highlighting the importance of aligning personal abilities with educational choices.

SHS students face the critical task of strand selection under the K–12 curriculum. According to Calizo (2018), students are influenced by factors such as personal interests, academic preparedness, family guidance, and societal expectations. The Department of Education (DepEd) also highlights the importance of **career guidance programs** in helping students make informed choices, emphasizing that understanding students' motivations is crucial for aligning strand choice with their future career goals.

Eccles and Wigfield (2002) emphasized the role of **expectancy-value theory**, suggesting that students choose academic paths based on their expectations of success and the value they attach to the outcomes. Factors such as enjoyment, interest, future prospects, and perceived competence are significant determinants in educational decision-making.

Atkinson, McClelland and other theorist believe that the strength of the motivation to perform a particular task is a product of three variables: Motives, Skills, and Values on the particular task and goal to which it leads.

Motivation is an important condition of admission to and success in academic studies and employment, no less important than knowledge and grades (Kaplan & Asor, 2001).

Motivation is a theoretical concept that refers to the urges, motives, and actions of an individual, and describes how individuals respond to a need and takes various actions to achieve their goals. In recent decades, the role of motivation in learning and in the process of adjustment to learning, such as attitudes toward learning, and dealing with problems and failure, has gain increasing recognition. In the educational sphere, motivation for learning is a variable that explains the degree to which a student shows interest and exerts effort to achieve goals (Beck, 2021).

Maslow' humanistic theory of the hierarchy of needs (1954) stresses the meaning of behavior for the individual. This theory argues that the source of motivation lies in the individual's inherent needs and assumes that motivation varies as needs are satisfied across situations. The theory focuses on the most general motivational processes such as self-esteem and realization of one's potential. self-determination theory is based on the humanistic approach and assumes that there are three inherent needs that underlie human behavior: a need for autonomy, a need for competence, and a need for relatedness and belonging. According to this theory, when these needs are satisfied, the individual will become more deeply and qualitatively engaged in the activities in which they are involved, while when the denial of these needs reduces the quality of motivation and sometimes its intensity as well. For example, this theory argues that when students feel that the teacher is forcing them to learn things that are unrelated to their authentic tendencies, plans, or values, the quality of their motivation for learning will be low.

Furthermore, support for the three basic needs will cause the student to internalize behaviors that were initially performed as a result of purely extrinsic motivation (Kaplan & Asor, 2001).

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Gruzd et al. (2012) argued that students expect to receive rewards for their behavior, and incentives can be transformed and obtained from internal sources. Although students may not be autonomous, the acquisition of achievement-related motivation or the transformation of motivation into needs for self-development in the learning process can trigger efficient internalization of motivation. Students with an essential learning motivation have no need for incentives. They can make independent decisions and gain a sense of enjoyment and achievement from the learning process. According to this study, in learning students' internal areas of interest can be combined with external rewards granted by teachers or parents, to create motivation for learning.

Learning is accompanied by an interesting emotional and cognitive experience that challenges the learner. The relevance of learning and the materials that are studied are linked to the learner's existing knowledge base. The learner views the material as being interesting and as contributing to their personal and moral growth. The studied material is considered to be important for the individual and for society. The learning process invites in-depth understanding, encourages academic and social achievements, excellence, realization of individual potential, and cognitive development (Sasy, 2016).

Based on the reviewed literature and studies, it is evident that students' strand selection is influenced by a combination of intrinsic motives (personal interest, feelings, enjoyment) and extrinsic motives (future prospects, incentives, parental guidance). Highlights contextual factors such as family income, career guidance, and accessibility to specific strands.

The present study aligns with these findings by examining the motives of Grade 12 students at Isabela National High School, focusing on basic physiological needs, incentives, feelings, prospects, and leisure. Understanding these motives is crucial for providing effective guidance and ensuring that students make informed academic and career decisions.

## II. METHODOLOGY

This chapter present the descriptive research is appropriate because it seeks to **describe, analyze, and interpret** the motives of Grade 12 students at Isabela National High School in choosing their academic strand. This approach allows the researcher to gather numerical data, summarize patterns, and determine the level of influence of various motivational factors such as **basic physiological needs, incentives, feelings, prospects, and leisure**.

The study was conducted at **Isabela National High School**. The school offers multiple Senior High School strands including **STEM, ABM, and HUMSS**, making it a suitable setting for examining the factors that influence students' choice of academic strand.

The respondents of the study consisted of 250 Grade 12 students enrolled in STEM, ABM, and HUMSS strands. A stratified random sampling technique was used to ensure that each strand was proportionally represented in the sample. Each strand served as a stratum, and respondents were randomly selected from each group to maintain fairness and accuracy in representation.

A **researcher-made survey questionnaire** was the primary instrument for data collection. The questionnaire consisted of two parts:

### 1. Part I – Demographic Profile:

Included variables such as **sex, family income, and chosen strand**.

### 2. Part II – Motives for Strand Selection:

Contained five motivational factors:

- Basic physiological needs
- Incentives
- Feelings
- Prospects
- Leisure

### 3. To analyze whether there are significant differences in the motives of students when grouped according to their demographic profile.

### 4. To provide recommendations based on the findings that can help students, teachers, guidance counselors, and school administrators in making informed decisions regarding strand selection.

Each item was measured using a **Likert scale**, with corresponding qualitative descriptions (*Always, Sometimes, never*).

**Data Analysis:** The following statistical tools were employed:

- **Frequency and Percentage** – To describe the demographic profile of respondents (sex, family income, and strand).
- **Weighted Mean** – To determine the level of motives in terms of **basic physiological needs, incentives, feelings, prospects, and leisure**.
- **Qualitative Descriptions** – To interpret the weighted means based on the Likert scale.
- **Inferential Statistics** – To determine whether significant differences exist in motives when respondents are grouped according to demographic profiles.

Data collected were used solely for academic purposes, and no identifying information was disclosed in the study.

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### III: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results, finding insight that the researchers gathered.

#### Demographic Profile

**Table 1. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Respondent by Sex**

| Sex    | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------|-----------|------------|
| Male   | 123       | 49.20      |
| Female | 127       | 50.80      |
| Total  | 250       | 100%       |

Respondents are nearly equally distributed by sex, with a slightly higher number of **female students (50.8%)** than males (49.2%). This balanced representation ensures fairness in examining motives across gender.

**Table 2. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of students According to their Strand**

| Strand | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------|-----------|------------|
| STEM   | 91        | 36.5       |
| ABM    | 76        | 30.3       |
| HUMSS  | 83        | 33.2       |
| Total  | 250       | 100%       |

Most respondents are enrolled in the **STEM strand (36.5%)**, followed closely by HUMSS (33.2%) and ABM (30.3%). This indicates that STEM is slightly more popular among Grade 12 students at Isabela National High School.

**Table 3. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of students as to Family Income**

| Monthly Income/Family | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------------|-----------|------------|
| 20,000 and above      | 29        | 11.6       |
| 10,000-19,000         | 37        | 14.8       |
| 5,000 - 9,000         | 96        | 38.4       |
| Below 4,000           | 88        | 35.2       |
| Total                 | 250       | 100%       |

The majority of students come from low-income families, with 73.6% earning, **₱9,000** or below per month. Only a small portion (11.6%) belong to high-income households. This suggests that financial considerations may influence strand selection, particularly the preference for strands with better future prospects.

**Table 4. To determine the motives of students in choosing their strand Weighted Means Analysis**

| Factors                      | Weighted Mean | Qualitative Description |
|------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|
| A. Basic Physiological Needs | 2.37          | Always                  |
| B. Incentives                | 2.29          | Sometimes               |
| C. Feeling                   | 2.39          | Always                  |
| D. Prospect                  | 2.72          | Always                  |
| E. Leisure                   | 2.41          | Always                  |

**Prospects (2.72)** is the most influential factor, indicating that students prioritize future opportunities and career prospects.

**Feelings (2.39)**, **leisure (2.41)**, and **basic physiological needs (2.37)** are also strong motives, suggesting students value personal interest, enjoyment, and comfort in their strand choice.

**Incentives (2.29)** received a lower score, indicating that external rewards or material benefits are less significant in influencing decisions.

| Scale | Range     | Qualitative description |
|-------|-----------|-------------------------|
| 3     | 2.33-3.00 | Always                  |
| 2     | 1.66-2.32 | Sometimes               |
| 1     | 1.00-1.65 | Never                   |

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| A. Motives of students in terms of basic physiological needs | Weighted Mean X | Qualitative Description |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 1.I drink glasses of water to quench my thirst               | 2.33            | Always                  |
| 2.I eat nutritious foods to be strong                        | 2.32            | Sometimes               |
| 3.I rest to relax                                            | 2.6             | Always                  |
| 4.I eat for good health                                      | 2.06            | Sometimes               |
| 5.I wear good dresses for comfort                            | 2.65            | Always                  |
| 6.I take medicine for healing                                | 2.28            | Sometimes               |
| <b>OWAM</b>                                                  | <b>2.37</b>     | <b>Always</b>           |

| B. Motives of students in terms of incentives                       | Weighted Mean X | Qualitative Description |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 1.I study hard to receive good grades                               | 2.74            | Always                  |
| 2.I want to receive medal, to make my parents happy                 | 2.54            | Always                  |
| 3.I am conscious of my study in order to receive my daily allowance | 2.14            | Sometimes               |
| 4.I take my part time job to have additional pocket money           | 1.74            | Sometimes               |
| <b>OWAM</b>                                                         | <b>2.29</b>     | <b>Sometimes</b>        |

| C. Motives of students in terms of feeling                                   | Weighted Mean X | Qualitative Description |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 1.I want to be happy to live longer                                          | 2.79            | Always                  |
| 2.I consider anger as negative behavior                                      | 2.24            | Sometimes               |
| 3.I enjoy surprises because it's thrilling                                   | 2.35            | Always                  |
| 4.I afraid of having low grades because it is demoralizing                   | 2.50            | Always                  |
| 5.I am disgusted with my grades, I can't show them to my parents and friends | 2.09            | Sometimes               |
| <b>OWAM</b>                                                                  | <b>2.39</b>     | <b>Always</b>           |

| D. Motives of students in terms of prospect                  | Weighted Mean X | Qualitative Description |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 1.I want to be expert in my field to be efficient            | 2.57            | Always                  |
| 2.I want to be professional in my behavior to gain respect   | 2.81            | Always                  |
| 3.I want to master my lesson to have high grades             | 2.77            | Always                  |
| 4.I want to land on a good job and earn and have better life | 2.78            | Always                  |
| 5.I want to be skillful along my dream                       | 2.69            | Always                  |
| <b>OWAM</b>                                                  | <b>2.72</b>     | <b>Always</b>           |

| E. Motives of students in terms of leisure                       | Weighted Mean X | Qualitative Description |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 1.I enjoy dating with my friends because they make me happy      | 2.37            | Always                  |
| 2.I watch movie to ease out tension                              | 2.27            | Sometimes               |
| 3.I listen to music for entertainment                            | 2.62            | Always                  |
| 4.I enjoy singing/dancing because it makes me feel young         | 2.35            | Always                  |
| 5.I like reading books/ magazine/comics for additional knowledge | 2.45            | Always                  |
| <b>OWAM</b>                                                      | <b>2.41</b>     | <b>Always</b>           |

The findings reveal that Grade 12 students at Isabela National High School choose their academic strand primarily based on future prospects, personal interest, and comfort, rather than external incentives.

The nearly equal distribution of respondents by sex suggests that gender does not significantly influence strand selection, while the predominance of low-income students may explain why future prospects are prioritized. These findings highlight the importance of career guidance and counseling in helping students make informed decisions that balance both personal interest and practical considerations.

### Findings

This study aimed to determine the motives of Grade 12 Senior High School students at Isabela National High School in choosing their academic strand. Data were gathered from **250 respondents** across STEM, ABM, and HUMSS strands. The key findings are summarized as follows:

#### 1. Demographic Profile:

- Strand: STEM (36.5%), HUMSS (33.2%), ABM (30.3%)
- Sex: Male (49.2%), Female (50.8%)
- Family Income: Majority (73.6%) belong to low-income families earning ₱9,000 or below.

#### 2. Motives in Strand Selection:

- **Prospects (WM=2.72)** is the most influential motive, indicating that students prioritize future opportunities and career growth.

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- **Feelings (2.39), Leisure (2.41), and Basic Physiological Needs (2.37)** are also significant, showing that personal interest and comfort are important.
  - **Incentives (2.29)** is the least influential factor.
3. **Interpretation:**
- Students generally choose their strands based on **intrinsic motivation** (personal interest and enjoyment) and **future-oriented considerations** (career and higher education opportunities), rather than purely external rewards.
  - Sex does not significantly affect strand choice, but family income may influence the emphasis on prospects.

## IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, the study concludes the following:

1. **Grade 12 students at Isabela National High School are primarily motivated by future prospects** when choosing their academic strand.
2. **Personal interest, comfort, and emotional satisfaction** are strong factors, indicating that intrinsic motivation plays a key role in decision-making.
3. **External incentives are less influential**, suggesting that students prioritize long-term goals over immediate rewards.
4. **Demographic factors** such as sex have minimal impact on motives, while family income may influence priorities related to future opportunities.

### Recommendations:

Based on the results and conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed:

#### For Students

Reflect on personal interests, strengths, and career goals when choosing a strand.  
Seek guidance from teachers, counselors, and parents to make informed decisions.

#### For Teachers

Support students in understanding each strand's curriculum and opportunities.  
Incorporate motivational strategies to enhance students' awareness of career prospects.

#### For Guidance Counselors

Provide comprehensive career guidance programs highlighting **future prospects, personal interest, and aptitude**.  
Conduct workshops and orientation sessions to help students make well-informed strand choices.

#### For School Administrators

Develop programs that consider students' intrinsic motivation and future aspirations.  
Ensure accessible resources and counseling for students from low-income families to support informed decision-making.  
This concludes the study on the **motives in chosen strand of Grade 12 students in choosing their academic strand** at Isabela National High School, providing insights that can guide students, educators, and school administrators in improving strand selection processes and career guidance programs.

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