



## UTILIZATION OF PHILIPPINE APTITUDE CLASSIFICATION TEST (PACT) RESULT IN CAREER AWARENESS PROGRAM

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### ABSTRACT

*This study determined the alignment of students' Senior High School track and course preference in college with their aptitude and probable performance in educational programs. It is descriptive in nature. The respondents were the Junior High School students who took the Philippine Aptitude Classification Test (PACT) of School Year 2014–2015 and were enrolled Grade 12 at the Senior High School of Holy Name University for School Year 2017–2018. Frequency counting of the aptitude, probable performance in different educational programs, preferred school track and career choice were made. Results revealed that majority of the respondents were enrolled in the STEM track. More than half of the respondents got low aptitudes that fit to only one to three educational programs based on the nine (9) clusters of educational programs identified in the PACT and a significant number of respondents did not fit to any educational programs. Many of the college courses chosen by the respondents while they were still in Grade 9 are under services, engineering and manufacturing, and health and welfare clusters. More so, college course preferred by the respondents in STEM track are related to health and welfare followed by engineering and manufacturing cluster while those in ABM and HUMMS track preferred Social Science, Business and Law cluster. Career choices made by the respondents are not aligned with their aptitude which could be a source of future job-skills mismatch or misfit graduates. Career guidance is seen as an imperative for a successful future career choice and career awareness program is viewed as a possible intervention as early as Grade 7 to Grade 10.*

*Keywords: Philippine Aptitude Classification Test, career awareness program, aptitude, career choice*

### INTRODUCTION

Career choice early on in life when aligned with one's aptitude and interest are determinants of a successful career in the future.

It is the goal of any educational institution to ensure that students get employed and excel in jobs they were trained for. However, a survey conducted by the Philippine Statistics Authority in 2017 revealed that unemployment of high school graduates is high due to job - skills mismatch. As stated in the study of Pascual (2014), unemployment rate in the country is commonly associated with the misfit graduates produced by universities and colleges and the workforce

needed by different companies. The study further stressed that the wrong choice of course taken by most high school students adds to unemployment and the underemployment rate of the fresh graduates.

According to the Department of Labor and Employment of the Philippines (DOLE), job mismatch cases in the country is so common among today's workforce and one of the reasons identified is wrong choice of college course either because of strong parental influence in decision-making, or taking a course pertaining to a job that is "in" not because the interest is there.

This poses a challenge for Basic Education: how to help students make career



choices that is aligned with their aptitude, interest, and job skills demand. The Department of Education (DepEd) through DepEd Order No. 25 series of 2013 stated that there is a mismatched between interest, aptitude, and career of students. Likewise, there is a mismatch in career and labor demands in the country; and the education, training and career results are from uninformed and misguided students, thus mandated that all secondary schools in the Philippines should hold an annual career week. Recognizing the need to assist students in the preparation of their future careers, the Department of Education has released 4 modules of Career Advocacy Manual attached to DepEd Order No. 25 series of 2013.

Donald Super's Theory of Career Development emphasized that occupational choice should be an unfolding process, not a point-in-time decision. Super and his colleagues stressed that at ages 4 to 13, children develop their capacities, attitudes, interests, socialize their needs, and form a general understanding of the world of work. At ages 14-24, individuals attempt to understand themselves and find their place in the world of work. Through classes, work experience, and hobbies, they try to identify their interest and capabilities and figure out how they fit with various occupations, make tentative occupational choices, and eventually obtain an occupation.

So early on in school, students need to be gradually exposed to different real-life careers. When considering the educational stage at which choice is to be made, secondary school is the best option (Ogunlade and Akeredolu 2012). Basic education must offer programs that would guide the students towards future careers. VanMeter-Adams et al. (2014) found out that extracurricular experience, classroom factors, hands-on projects help cultivate the students' interest in their chosen fields.

In a review of career guidance and counseling literatures, it was found out that there is a positive impact of career guidance on students. Students' career success can best be attained if proper guidance is given in choosing the right course in college, suited to students' personality, ability, and intellect (Pascual, 2014).

It is clear in the study and findings of Ogunlade and Akeredolu (2012) that counseling is

influencing the career choices of students in secondary schools.

The result of the Hanover Research on Effective Career Awareness and Development Program for K-8 Students (2012) suggested that in developing career guidance program there must be an identification and articulation of interests and skills as well as clear understanding of career paths. Career plan for students must be made in a continuous manner and should start from an earlier grade level to help students identify thoroughly the suited course for them (Pascual, 2014).

As career is very important in an individual's life, it is essential for students to develop career maturity and self-concept during the high school years (Poh Li, et al., 2011). Adolescents are still developing their career awareness and career interest, which can result in their occupational choices continuously fluctuating (Heiwig, 2003) as cited by Poh Li, et al., (2011). However, if students are provided with effective career guidance during their state of occupational inconsistency, they can become both knowledgeable and focused on their career development (Trusty, Niles, & Carney, 2005) as quoted by Poh Li, et al, (2011).

One of the final processes of career planning is taking aptitude test (Aslam & Aslam, 2011) as it is revealed that different aptitude patterns fit different skills, tasks, and careers. This information is very helpful when evaluating career options and college majors. Self-knowledge is core to making good career choices.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study primarily aimed to determine the alignment of students' senior high school track and college course preference with their aptitude and probable performance in educational programs. Specific aims included the following: (1) to establish the profile of respondents in terms of senior high school track currently enrolled, aptitude and probable performance in educational programs, course preference in college chosen during Grade 9 and Grade 12; (2) to determine the percentage of respondents with senior high school track aligned with their course preference in Grade 9 and Grade 12, senior high school tract aligned



with their aptitude and probable performance in educational programs, and college course preference aligned with their aptitude and probable performance in educational programs in Grade 9 and Grade 12; and (3) to determine the percentage difference between Grade 9 and Grade 12 college course preference that is aligned with aptitude and probable performance in educational programs, and not aligned with aptitude and probable performance in educational programs

## METHODOLOGY

The study is descriptive- survey in nature. The respondents of the study were the Grade 9 students at Holy Name University- Junior High School for School Year 2014-2015. These were also the same students who were enrolled Grade 12 at the same institution for School Year 2017-2018.

Data were based on the results of the Philippine Aptitude Classification Test on students' aptitude, probable performance in educational programs and course preference given by the Center for Educational Measurement Incorporated (CEM) among Grade 9 students at Holy Name University Junior High School in School Year 2014 – 2015. The said institution pioneered the development of locally made educational tests designed to measure levels of academic proficiencies of Filipino students. Primarily it provides testing services for the evaluation and assessment needs of both private and public sectors of education in the Philippines.

The Philippine Aptitude Classification Test (PACT) used in the study is one of the services offered by CEM, a battery test for high school and college that measures several aptitudes or dimensions that are useful in classifying students into different fields of study.

The study also utilized a researcher-made questionnaire to gather data on the respondents' college course preference chosen in Grade 12 of school year 2017-2018. Part A of the questionnaire is respondents' profile in terms of Senior High School track/strand enrolled in with their corresponding section and their TLE specialization in Grade 9. Part B contains clusters of college courses patterned from the Philippine Aptitude

Classification Test (PACT) wherein the respondents were required to choose top three preferences.

With the permission granted by the school authorities, the researcher-made questionnaires were administered to the identified respondents in their respective classrooms. The data gathered were tabulated for the purpose of analysis and interpretation. Each choice made by the respondent was tallied according to their priorities. The data were recorded per senior high school track/strand. Frequency counting was employed and percentages were computed. The percent difference was computed to determine alignment of track/strand enrolled and college course preference made when the respondents were enrolled in Grade 9 and Grade 12, respectively. Alignment between aptitude and track enrolled and aptitude and preferred college course were also ascertained.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data for this study were taken from the Philippine Aptitude Classification Test results given to students in School Year 2014-2015. It aimed to determine the alignment of students' career choice with their aptitude as a basis for a proposed career awareness program in the Basic Education Department.

### 1. Profile of respondents in terms of senior high school track

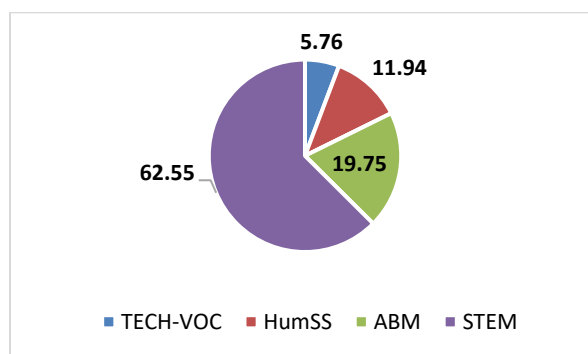


Figure 1. Respondents' Profile in terms of Currently Enrolled Senior High School Track (SY 2017-2018)



The profile of respondents in terms of Senior High school track/strand currently enrolled, aptitude and probable performance in educational programs, course preference in college chosen during Grade 9 and Grade 12

For the second semester of School Year 2017-2018, there are 598 students enrolled in Grade 12 Senior High School of Holy Name University of whom 243 or 40.64% were the respondents of the study. Figure 1 shows the distribution of respondents based on their track enrolled. STEM track comprises the largest portion which is 62.55% of the total population.

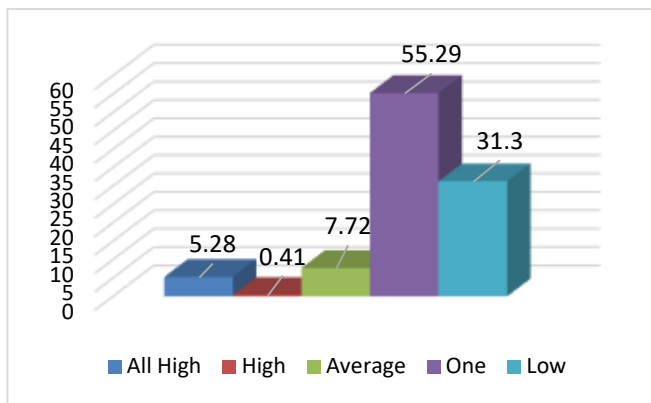


Figure 2. Respondents' Profile in terms of Aptitude and Probable Performance in Educational Programs Grouped by Senior High School Track Currently Enrolled

Descriptions:

- All High – aptitude fits to any educational program
- High – fits to 6-8 out of 9 educational programs
- Average – fits to 4-5 out of 9 educational programs
- Low – does not fit to any educational program
- Specific Program – fits to one to three specific educational programs

Figure 2 shows that 86.6% of the respondents got aptitudes that either fit to only one program or have low aptitude, which means that they do not fit to any educational program. Tech-Voc and HumSS students belong to this group. There were 47.92 % of the students enrolled in ABM enrollees have aptitudes ranging from average to all high while 5.92% of the STEM students have all high aptitude. ABM students have higher aptitudes compared with students from other tracks.

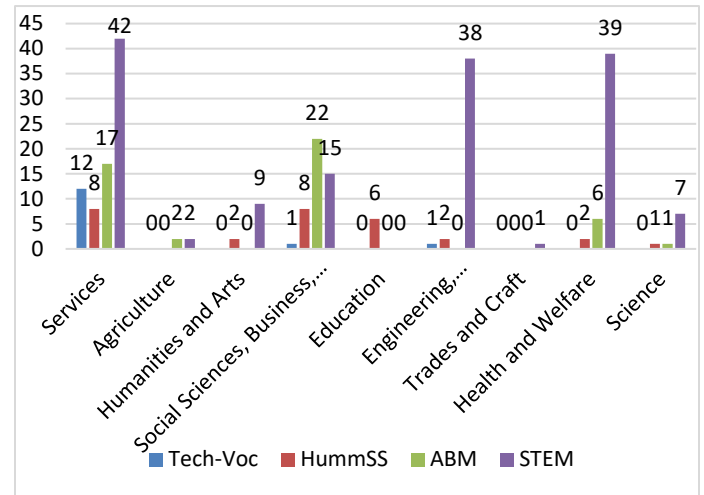


Figure 3. Respondents' Profile in terms of Grade 9 Preferred College Course Grouped by Senior High School Track Currently Enrolled

Figure 3 below shows the distribution of respondents based on the college course preference during Grade 9, when the respondents were grouped by senior high school track. Those who are currently enrolled in the STEM track chose services, engineering and manufacturing, and health and welfare- related courses. Those enrolled in this track showed varied choices for college course. This implies that a bigger percentage of the respondents chose college course not aligned with their enrolled Senior High school track. Although these students were enrolled in STEM track, a bigger percentage chose to take services- related courses.

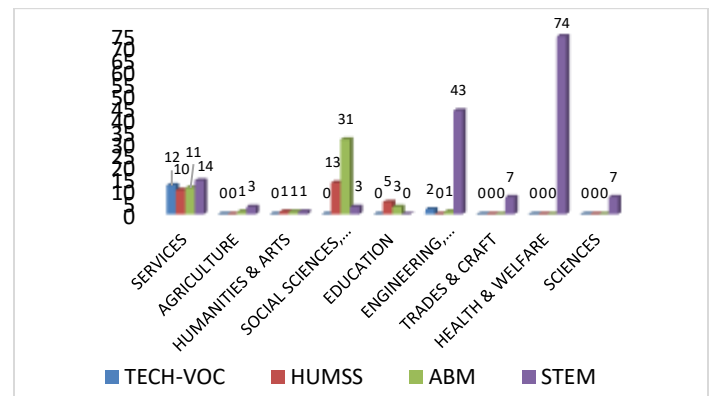


Figure 4. Respondents' Profile in terms of Grade 12 College Course Preference Grouped by Senior High School Tract Currently Enrolled



Respondents currently enrolled in the Tech-Voc track chose services- related courses. Although they exhibited low aptitudes, their choice of course in Grade 9 is aligned with the track they are currently enrolled. Those enrolled in the ABM and HumSS track chose services, social sciences, business and law clusters aligned on their chosen track.

Majority of the STEM students preferred to take health and welfare- related courses followed by engineering and manufacturing clusters. For those enrolled in ABM and HuMSS, majority preferred to take Social Sciences, Business and Law cluster while those taking Tech.Voc track chose to take courses under Services cluster. The figure below shows that there is an alignment of Senior High school track currently enrolled and Grade 12 college course preference without considering their aptitude as revealed in the results of Philippine Aptitude Classification Test (PACT).

**2. Percentage of respondents with senior high school track aligned with their course preference in Grade 9 and Grade 12**

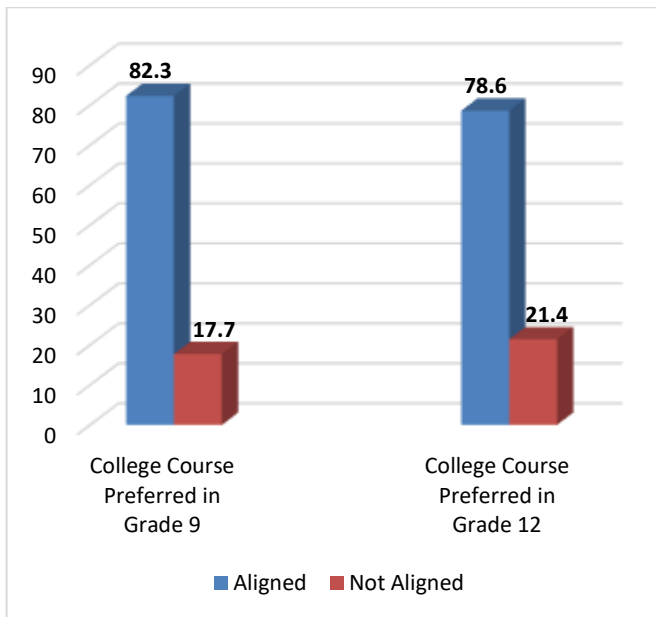


Figure 5. Summary of Alignment between Senior High School Track/Strand and Preferred College Course Identified in Grade 9 and Grade 12

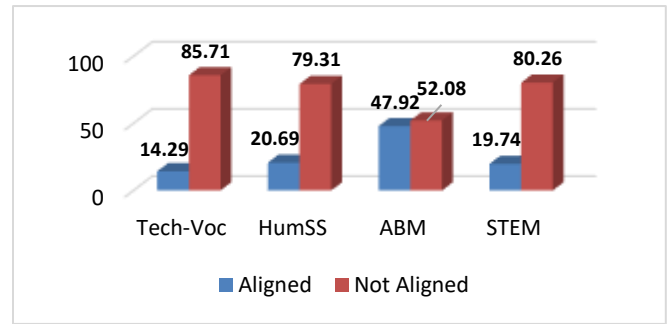


Figure 6. Summary of Alignment of Senior High School Track/Strand Currently Enrolled with Aptitude and Probable Performance in Educational Programs.

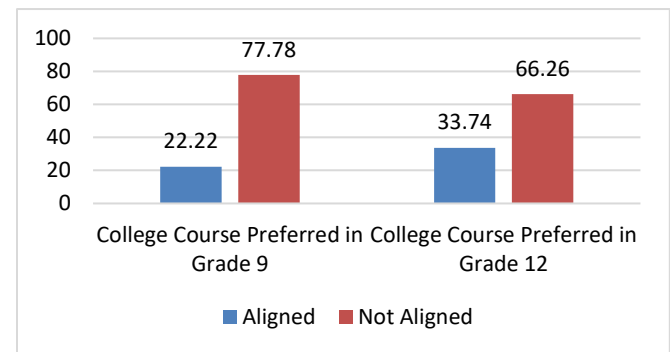


Figure 7. Summary of Alignment of Grade 9 and Grade 12 College Course Preference and Aptitude and Probable Performance in Educational Programs

Based on the PACT result in grade 9, 77.78% of the respondents chose careers not aligned with their aptitude. Survey results in grade 12 showed 66.26% of the respondents had college course preference not aligned with their aptitudes. The highest percentage of misalignment in grade 12 is shown among students in the Technical Vocational strand. The profile of respondents enrolled in Tech Voc strand showed their aptitudes do not fit to any of the educational programs as revealed in the PACT result. This could explain misalignment of their career choices between grade 9 and grade 12.

However, the study revealed that as early as grade 9 respondents already had preferred college courses which are consistent with their grade 12 career choice. They are enrolled in senior high school strand aligned with their course preference in college.

The results are consistent with Donald Super's Theory of Career Development, which



emphasized that occupational choice should be seen as an unfolding process, not a point-in-the-time decision. Super and his colleagues stressed that at ages 4 to 13, children develop their

capacities, attitudes, interests, socialize their needs, and form a general understanding of the world of work.

### 3. Difference between Grade 9 and Grade 12 college course preference

**Table 1**

*Percentage Difference of Alignment between College Course Preference and Aptitude and Probable Performance in Educational Programs*

Senior High School Tract Currently Enrolled	Percentage of Alignment between College Course Preference and Aptitude and Probable Performance in Educational Programs				Percentage Difference	
	Grade 9		Grade 12		Aligned	Not aligned
	Aligned	Not aligned	Aligned	Not aligned		
Tech Voc	14.29	85.71	7.14	92.86	-50.03	8.34
HumSS	27.59	72.41	34.48	65.52	24.99	-9.50
ABM	50.00	50.00	66.67	33.33	33.34	-33.34
STEM	13.16	86.84	25.66	74.34	94.98	-14.39

Table 1 shows that among the four tracks, respondents enrolled in HumSS, ABM, and STEM have shown alignment in their course preference and aptitude and probable performance in educational performance both in grade 9 and grade 12. The respondents are also enrolled in the track/strand where their career choice is clustered. Those enrolled in the Tech Voc showed a negative percentage difference, which indicates non-alignment between course preference and aptitude and probable performance in educational performance during grade 9 and grade 12. Those who enrolled in this track either chose courses not aligned with the track they are currently enrolled or has a preferred course not belonging to the Tech Voc track.

The increase of percentages of respondents with aligned results from Grade 9 To Grade 12 among HumSS, ABM, and STEM track/strand could be attributed to students' exposure to different subjects or fields in Senior High school that allowed them to consider other career opportunities which led them to change their course preference when they enrolled in Grade 12. Phillips and Pazienza (1998) as cited by Hughes and Karp (2004), in a wise choice of a vocation, there are three broad factors: (1). a clear understanding of yourself, your aptitudes, abilities, interests, ambitions, resources, limitations, and their causes; (2). a knowledge of the requirements

and conditions of success, advantages and disadvantages, compensation, opportunities, and prospects in different lines of work; (3). true reasoning on the relations of these two groups of facts.

Secondly, the level of students' maturity has probably increased with their two- years of stint in senior high school. Developmental theories recognize the changes that people go through as they mature; they emphasize a life-span approach to career choice and adaptation. As revealed by Donald E. Super in his Theory of Career Development, career development is seen as a lifelong process unfolding in a series of developmental stages and career selection is not a one-shot decision but a cumulative outcome of a series of decisions.

Research results revealed that there is a misalignment of career choices and aptitude among high school students. Thus, this study proposed for a career awareness program to be implemented to all Junior High School students from Grade 7 to 10. The focus of the proposed career awareness program is exposing students to various real-life career and job opportunities and understanding ones aptitude and interest as the basis of choosing life's career right at the start of their high school life. Students' career success can be best attained if proper guidance is given in choosing the right course in college, suited to



students' personality, ability and intellect (Pascual, 2014).

## CONCLUSIONS

In light of the findings, the following conclusions are drawn.

1. Majority of the respondents make their future career choices without utmost consideration of their aptitude.
2. Students' aptitudes are generally low with fitness levels ranging from zero to three out of the nine clusters of educational programs; thus, likeliness to succeed in future career choices is low.
3. Career choices made by the respondents are not aligned with their aptitude, which could be a source of future job-skills mismatch or misfit graduates.
4. Career guidance is seen as an imperative for a successful future career choice. Career awareness program is viewed as a possible intervention as early as Grade 7 to Grade 10.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are hereby offered:

1. Results of the study be utilized as basis for designing a Career Guidance Program directed towards helping the students understand themselves, their career choices and the importance of one's aptitude and interest as determinants of a successful career in the future.
2. A system of monitoring graduates from school to the workplace (from Grade 10, Senior High Tract enrolled, college course and work) must be created to determine employability of graduates.
3. A policy for a year-round career awareness advocacy must be formulated through:
  - Basic Education Administration's alignment of co-curricular activities for career awareness;
  - Subject areas' integration of career options in the lesson plan whenever

these are applicable in a topic/lesson;

- Student Activity Program coordinator who designs activities which provide career options during monthly celebrations;
  - School Clubs' enhancement of activities whose aim is to provide gauges for possible career consideration.
4. Further studies be done to monitor the actual course enrolled by the respondents and do the follow-up after a 4–5-year period to determine success rates.

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