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**CAREER TRACK CHOICE AND OCCUPATIONAL INTEREST OF GRADE 9  
SPECIAL PROGRAM IN SPORTS (SPS) STUDENTS OF EDUKASYON  
SA PAGPAKATAO**

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### ABSTRACT

This qualitative research design aimed to determine the track choice and occupational interests of Grade 9 SPS students. There were 12 key informants that answered the different themes. The study will consider selected students of the Grade 9 SPS composed of 2 sections Bluejay and Bowerbird. The researcher will be choosing twelve (6) students in each section which include the key informants of the study. The shared experiences of people are more than enough to reach the saturation point of data collection.

The objectives of the study are the following: To determine the track choice of Grade 9 SPS students in terms of their occupational interest; to determine the reasons for the track choice of Grade 9 SPS that affects their occupational interests of students; to find out the relationship between track choice and occupational interest of Grade 9 SPS students and to document the best practices employed by the different Grade 9 SPS students in track choice, occupational interest and reasons of parents for the occupational choice of their children.

The researchers have done in-depth interviews and data analysis on the responses from 12 informants. The insights gained from the informants in this study and the review of the literature play a major role in the determination of track choice and occupational interests and reasons of students and parents.

An important implication for this as an educator is the way it sheds light on the process of discovering strategies, decision making and exploring one's active participation in resolution as

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a means of incorporating ideas and insights. The information provided by the informants offers meaningful and empowering themes ripe for exploration on career development in school. The findings of this study can also be applicable to educators, especially those who are on the career development committee. Provided that the result is timely as issues in the organizational setting are very common nowadays, the application of the best practices shared by the informants may deliver insightful content to educators so as to prevent or minimize dissatisfaction of students to decide on their careers in the future. The expertise of the teachers is to expose the students to the career world by means of mock interviews, on-the-job training, making application letters and resumes in preparation for a job, and others.

The study uses a phenomenological approach that has provided insights and understandings in relation to the objectives of the study. Future research may reflect on the content of the findings, refine the objectives of the study, and elaborate on the gaps found in this study. A certain topic like this should further be updated as the growing number and the diversity of people in the school setting are updating and developing over the years. School administrators should look into the career and psychological well-being experience of the students after they make a career decision.

Likewise, this research will always be open for the abovementioned opportunities for the development of the understanding of the importance of suitability of a career in a person in the future.

In line with the findings of the study and the drawn conclusions, the following are recommended for the relationship of track choice and occupational interest of Grade 9 SPS students are the following: strengthen the exploration of career development as part of the instructional materials in the K to 12 class; inform EsP department head and the guidance counselor regarding the usefulness of career exploration of Grade 9 students as to their career decision making and as the results of the NCAE ratings and enhance the career exploration and enhancement in the Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao Grade 9 modules and instructional materials.

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**Keywords:** *career development, track choice, Senior High School, occupational interest*

## Introduction

The rapid increase in educated but unemployed individuals over the recent past years, coupled with daily advertisements of diverse job opportunities in the labor market indicated that there was amiss between what the educational institutions were training and the labor market needs. Little attention has been paid to student's career guidance. Students make ignorant career choices by owing it to themselves to find out what career opportunities exist and those that are compatible to their talents, interests and academic ability (Getange, 2016).

Career exploration is important during adolescence as they begin to engage in self-exploration involving potential career options (Dupont & Gingras, 1991; Gati & Saka, 2001; Julien, 1999; Super, 1990). The process of career exploration and decision making can be particularly a stressful time in an adolescent's life (Taveira et al, 1998). In reaction to this stress, adolescents may attempt to place the responsibility for making a career decision onto others and may even delay or avoid making a choice, which could ultimately lead to a low optimal decision (Gati, 2001). In the educational institutions worldwide, the track preferences are important for the students to be equipped with the appropriate track which is in-line with their aptitude and abilities (DepEd, 2015). In the Philippines, the National Career Assessment Examination (NCAE) serves as a tool for the students to help them identify a specific track that suits their aptitude and skills. The result of the test then becomes recommendatory for K to 12 programs: career guidance for choosing the tracks in Senior High School (Oliveros, 2013).

It is for this reason, that the study intends to focus on the National Career Assessment Examination (NCAE) results and the occupational interests of the Grade 11 students Senior High Schools students since they are the first batch to complete the K to 12 Program Curriculum. This will serve as the bases for the course offerings of colleges and universities to assure appropriate

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matching of student skills and needs of the society. The researcher is concerned on the track choice of Grade 9 Special Program in Sports in terms of their occupational interest. How can I answer the concerns of every student on the track choice of Grade 9 Special Program in Sports in terms of their occupational interests?

### Research Questions

1. To determine the track choice of Grade 9 SPS students in terms of their occupational interest.
2. To determine the reasons of the track choice of Grade 9 SPS that affects their occupational interests of students.
3. To find out the relationship between track choice and occupational interest of Grade 9 SPS students.
4. To document the best practices employed by the different Grade 9 SPS students in track choice, occupational interest and reasons of parents for the occupational choice of their children.

### Materials and Methods

#### Research Design

The research study is phenomenological in nature because the facts being solicited are remarkably and impressively great. Data will be collected from the participants will be analyzed qualitatively for this study covering the track choice of students and why they are choosing the specific occupational interests. As mentioned by Bizar (2007), qualitative study in general employing phenomenology describes and interprets phenomena within the context of human experiences.

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According to Boman (2006), the purpose of phenomenological study is to describe and interpret by the people who have participated in it.

### ***Participants / Informants***

The study will consider selected students of the Grade 9 SPS composed of 2 sections Bluejay and Bowerbird. The researcher will be choosing six (6) students per section which include the key informants of the study. The shared experiences of people are more than enough to reach the saturation point of data collection.

### **Results and Discussion**

This chapter highlights the different emergent themes obtained from the narratives of the informants on identifying the track choice and occupational interests of SPS students. The informants' storylines were carefully read, reviewed, and encoded in order to identify the significant statements.

### **Categorization of Themes**

1. Research Objective No. 1: To determine the track choice of Grade 9 SPS students in terms of their occupational interests.

Several thoughts and ideas were drawn out from the informants' responses as regards research objective number 1. Informants were asked several questions which include the reactions and the feelings the informants have concerning the diverse views of the SPS students.

The themes are presented in Figure 1. It was found that informants' responses fall under one main theme; differences of opinion which sub-themes include students of different views towards track choice and occupational interests. When asked about her perspective about views on track choice and occupational interests, Informant A replied:

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*People have different point of views and they tend to stick more on what they believe. Actually, there are instances students will have misunderstandings on things and will be the root for complications or about the choice of career in Grade 11. Many factors will be affected also because of the different views that they tend to be firm of. Some students would decide on something that has been planned and parents might not agree because of unpractical process of the plan, this will further lead to misfit of career choice as to interests towards occupations.*

When Informant B was asked with the same question, he explicated:

*It is inevitable that choosing the right track in Grade 11 is significant for every student to know and would be fitted in the interests where into. There are different opinions and outlook of people in the environment and mostly, would prefer to choose their opinions or creation of doubtfulness in the part of the students whether wat the right track choice to be followed that suits in their occupational interests. Especially when you are the Grade 9, that this stage is a confusion stage that of course you'll be stagnant to your decisions since you lead by your parents and others fellow students in the school.*

In addition, some of the informants' responses fall under parents to students. This includes different views of the parents and resulted in arguments. When asked about how Informant C responded to track choice that is, she said that:

*Students sometimes have conflicts in their minds about what the best and right track choice to be chosen in Grade 11. There are misunderstandings between parents and students in choosing a career in the future. Parents have also diverged opinions and sometimes insists that they are correct in the practically in life.*

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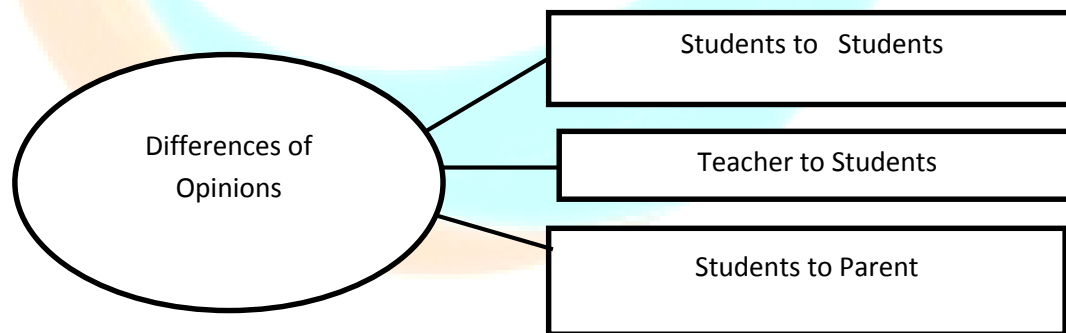
Informant A also shared about a certain situation that would relate to student to parent track choice as to their occupational interest, she said:

*As I've seen, there are times that students also share different opinions on definite circumstances in what the track choice in Grade 11. Students have ideas of their own and have their views in doing things or choosing the best career wherein they are attracted to. The influence of the fellow students has a big role in choosing a career in the future.*

The responses also had drawn another subtheme as student views, he responses of Informant C and D shared the same thought of track choice that affects the individual occupational interest:

*There would be a time that parents would not like the views of students towards their children especially when their children will choose a track that has a big influence from their classmates or friends in school, a financial reason would be acknowledged in the family. Parents always consider finances in choosing a course.*

**Figure 1. Responses of the informants on the research objective: To determine the track choice of Grade 9 of SPS students in terms of their occupational interest.**



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2. Research Objective No. 2: To determine the reasons of the track choice of Grade 9 SPS that affects their occupational interests of students.

Several themes were drawn out from the in-depth interviews conducted to the six informants. Figure 2 pointed out another theme which was generated from their responses.

From among the responses, goaded, and disconcerted as a theme was drawn out. The following sub-themes emerged: listening skills, analyzing skills, and understanding as strategy. The subthemes in conclusion resulted to one theme: to know the reasons of the track choice that affects the occupational interest of the students. According to Informant B when asked about how he handles and decide in choosing a track choice, he answered:

*Obviously the first part again will be that I listen to my teachers and parents in choosing a track so that there will be a good flow of conversation and won't cause any complexities like misunderstandings in deciding occupational interest. The consideration of the finances and the easy to find job after graduation is the right way to put in mind in order for me to be a successful career woman and man.*

Similarly, Informant C shared what she experienced about reasons of the track choice that affects occupational interest as she said:

*They need a person to listen to them honestly like teachers and parents, with all sensitivity because an older person all the time has a big role in influencing youngsters. You have to listen at least to the extent that the person wants to speak, so that you will correlate the thoughts of that person or the point he or she wanted to imply.*

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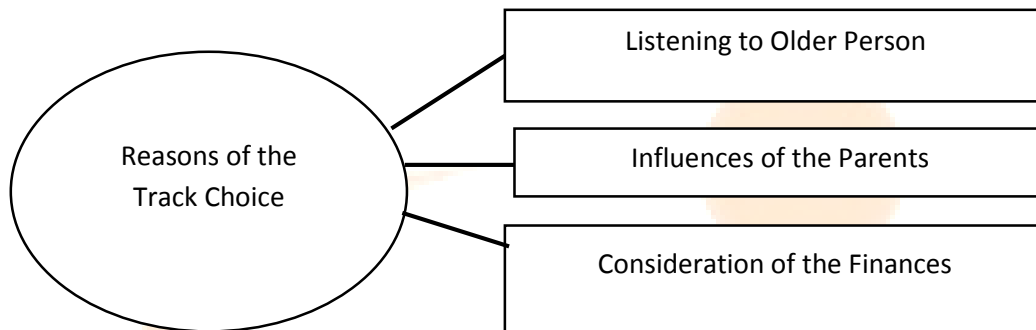
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**3. Figure 2. Responses of the informants on research objective 2. To determine the reasons of the track choice of Grade 9 SPS that affects their occupational interests of students.**



3. Research Objective No. 3: To find out the relationship between track choice and occupational interest of Grade 9 SPS students.

Several thoughts and ideas were drawn out from the informants' responses as regards to research objective number 3. Informants were asked several questions which include the relationship between track choice and occupational interests of Grade 9 SPS students.

Theme 3 is presented in Figure 3. It was found out that informants' responses were drawn from "relationship" which sub-themes include practically in life, listening to parents and teachers, patience and right choice, and good communication. When asked about the relationship between the track choice and occupational interests, Informant E replied:

*"I believe that a relationship between track choice and occupational interests which I answered in the ESP module give impact to the course which was presented, and the results are the Education and Training. I believe that the teachers have a big influence to the students when it comes to career. I believe that following the footsteps of the teachers in school has a big impact in achieving an occupation that interests me much.*

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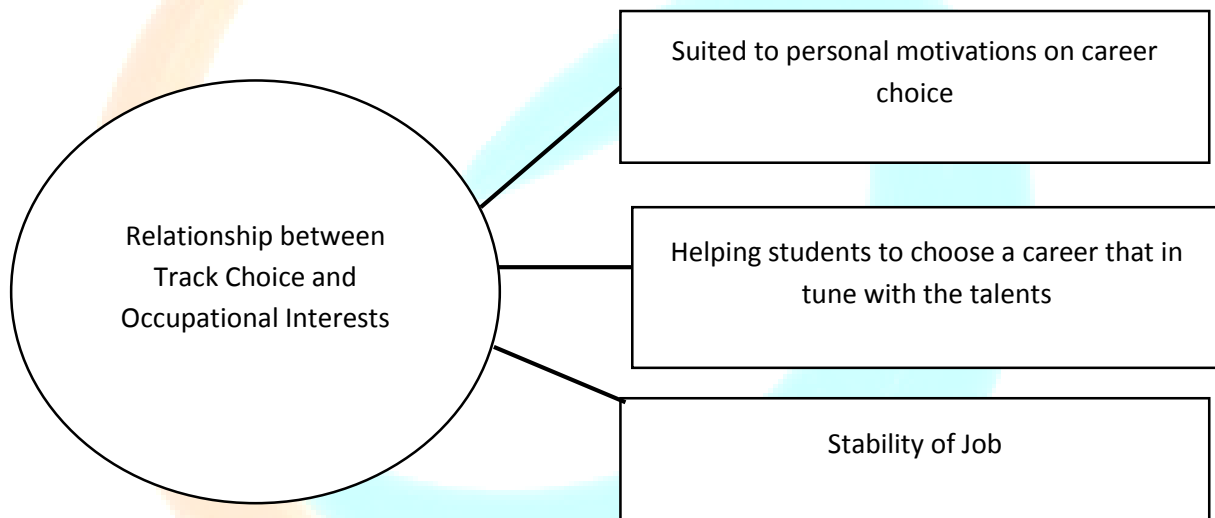
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The responses also had drawn subtheme as communication. The responses of Informant A shared that having a good communication can also have managed a conflict as she declared:

Similarly, to the previous statement, Informant 6 shared his point of view stating:

*"Communication can be achieved in the family if we, the students will listen and understanding what life we are going to be in the future, it is better for us to follow our parents and teachers"*  
*The importance of the aptitude skills what we got from our grade 9 general average ratings and the occupational interests we had.*

**Figure 3. Responses of the informants on the research objective: To find out the relationship between track choice and occupational interest of Grade 9 SPS students.**



4. Research Objective No. 4: To document the best practices employed by the different Grade 9 SPS students in track choice, occupational interest and reasons of parents for the occupational choice of their children.

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Several thoughts and ideas were drawn out from the informants' responses as regards to research question number 4. Informants were asked several questions which include about the best practices employed by the different Grade 9 SPS students in track choice, occupational interest and reasons of parents for the occupational choice of their children.

The themes are presented in Figure 4. It was found that informants' responses fall under "personal and social factors" which sub-themes include the ability to consider events from multiple perspectives, getting to know the future will bring them, and developing respect and understanding to teachers and parents in the society. According to informant E when asked about how she managed to answer the confusion in his mind considering the events in multiple perspectives of each party, she answered:

*"It's been many years since I studied in junior high school and knowing my talents and skills which focus in choosing a career at school and one of our way is that we consider choose a right job that suits my interests"*

Moreover, Informant C revealed how he handles decision making in choosing a career and job and made a resolution out of it as she highlighted:

*"We start by identifying all the parties whose interests may be potentially affected by the situation. We make sure each party can influence much and gets the chance to give the own perspective, uninterrupted."*

Based on the responses, one of the ways to employ a choice in career decision that suits once talents, aptitude and interest through personal and social factors is getting to know each other better as what Informant A and D answered:

*"Of course, conflict in mind is inevitable, that's why we, managed to be responsive in the discussion of every teacher in the school"*

*"We let them find themselves with a deeper understanding of the other person and/or of themselves. Through that, they may be able to get to know where each party stands."*

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According to Informant A when asked about how she decided in choosing a career, she answered:

It is important to develop respect and understanding in deciding a career. The reason why there is an occurrence of confusion, it is because there is a lack of communication between students, teachers and parents. Informant D revealed how they develop a skill in decision making as he answered:

*"We let them discussed together with their peers and parents since it builds communication and intimacy with both parties and by that it gains insights of what the better ways in choosing a right career and job"*

On the other hand, some responses fall social factor that includes democratic environment-enriched thoughts, meeting at common grounds in the organization, engaging to different organizations. Sometimes, expressing oneself can also lead to a better as choice in job in the future articulated by Informant D:

Similarly, Informant D indicated that every decision can be resolve in a way as he highlighted:

*"Since everyone expresses himself, there is a relaxed atmosphere."*

*"They can defend their own ideas based on a democratic framework. When managed well, decision making can be beneficial in every individual"*

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In like manner, the same declaration was made by Informant F when asked the same question as to how they decided in track choice and occupational interest and parents' choice to their children. He said that:

"Everyone expresses their thoughts and opinions about the decision on track choice and occupational interests. I let my peers tell what their perspectives on the issue. I let them analyze and comprehend with the teachers and parents thought about career"

Considering and listening to the holistic perspective of a decision towards track choice can actually create an easier way of suiting an occupation in the future. Informant D responded on the question about how they handle each party to meet at the same ground in the organization, as he answered:

*"A good decision making can be a great help and everyone's efforts can be a creative way to learn ideas on right choice in career development."*

*"Everyone learns about different views, and it is realized that a decision making is a complicated manner and should have more than one great solution."*

Furthermore, of the total responses, developing new/different solutions emerged. Informants C and E asserted when asked about the development of new/different solutions in decision-making in track choice and occupational interest:

**Figure 4. Responses of the informants on the research objective: To document the best practices employed by the different Grade 9 SPS students in track choice, occupational interest and reasons of parents for the occupational choice of their children.**

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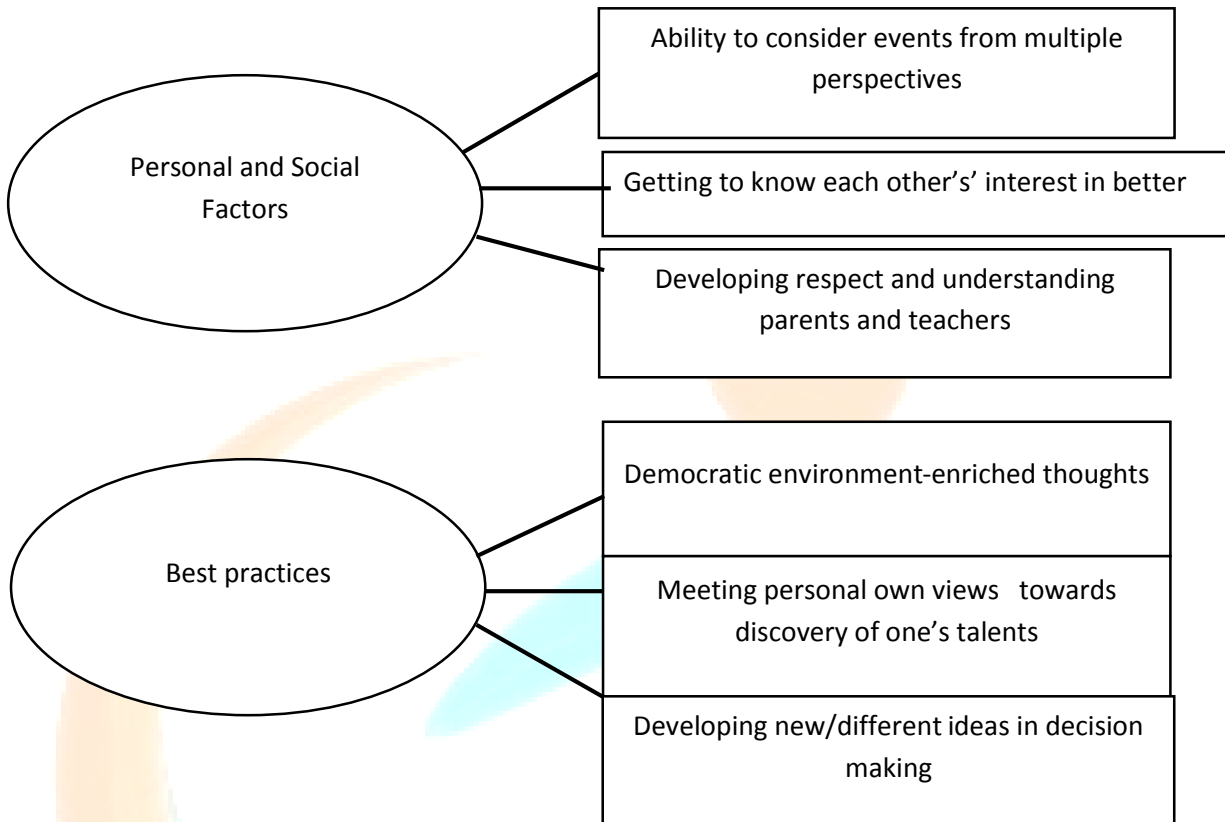
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### Conclusion

This chapter recounts discussions and conclusions from the themes that surfaced from data analysis in relation to the objectives of the study this study intend to answer.

1. To determine the track choice of Grade 9 SPS students in terms of their occupational interest.

One theme was determined from the data analysis. The main theme was *differences of opinion*. The informants shared their experiences about the variety of ideas associated by

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students, peers, teachers and parents. This variety of ideas or opinions may lead to decision making purposes. Little attention has been paid to students' career guidance. Students make ignorant career choices by owing it to themselves to find out what career opportunities exist and those that are compatible to their talents, interests, and academic ability (Getange, 2016).

The interaction between the pairs must have something to do with their diverse ideas and will remain on what they believe. However, expressing a different opinion does always lead to a situation where damage can occur. These can include differences in ideas, perspectives, priorities, preferences, beliefs, values, and goals and organizational structure can also contribute.

**2.** To determine the reasons for the track choice of Grade 9 SPS that affects their occupational interests of students.

The theme determined from the responses of the informants was a good decision making towards reasons on track choice. This revolves around how they decide or find solution on a good decision on choosing to track choice and occupational interests. The following sub-themes emerged: listening skills, analyzing skills, and understanding as strategy. The subthemes in conclusion resulted to one theme: to know the reasons of the track choice that affects the occupational interest of the students. From the informants' answers which are concerned on how they cope and manage the existing complexities, skills and strategies could be employed as perceived by them.

Career exploration is important during adolescence as they begin to engage in self-exploration involving potential career options (Dupont & Gingras, 1991; Gati & Saka, 2001; Julien, 1999; Super, 1990). The process of career exploration and decision making can be particularly stressful in an adolescent's life (Taveira *et al*, 1998). In reaction to this stress, adolescents may attempt to place the responsibility for making a career decision onto others and may even delay or avoid making a choice, which could ultimately lead to a low optimal decision (Gati, 2001).

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In educational institutions worldwide, the track preferences are important for the students to be equipped with the appropriate track which is in-line with their aptitude and abilities (DepEd, 2015). In the Philippines, the National Career Assessment Examination (NCAE) serves as a tool for the students to help them identify a specific track that suits their aptitude and skills. The result of the test then becomes recommendatory for K to 12 programs: career guidance for choosing the tracks in Senior High School (Oliveros, 2013).

**3.** To find out the relationship between track choice and occupational interest of Grade 9 SPS students.

The theme elaborated the “relationship” which sub-themes include practically in life, listening to parents and teachers, patience and right choice, and good communication.

The first theme is how they are related to track choice and occupational interests relate each other in the career choice of students in Grade 11 senior high school years. The decision making will depend on the students’ knowledge and skills and the parents’ influences them for the career in the future. Career exploration is important during adolescence as they begin to engage in self-exploration involving potential career options (Dupont & Gingras, 1991; Gati & Saka, 2001; Julien, 1999; Super, 1990).

**4.** To document the best practices employed by the different Grade 9 SPS students in track choice, occupational interest and reasons of parents for the occupational choice of their children.

Two themes had emerged in the final research objective. The first theme known is *personal and social factors*. Personal outcomes of decision making towards track choice and occupational interests include ability to consider events from multiple perspectives, getting to know each other’s interests, developing respect and understandings parents and teachers.

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## Implications for Practice

The objectives of the study are the following: To determine the track choice of Grade 9 SPS students in terms of their occupational interest; to determine the reasons of the track choice of Grade 9 SPS that affects their occupational interests of students; to find out the relationship between track choice and occupational interest of Grade 9 SPS students and to document the best practices employed by the different Grade 9 SPS students in track choice, occupational interest and reasons of parents for the occupational choice of their children.

The researchers have done in-depth interviews and data analysis on the responses from 12 informants. The insights gained from the informants in this study and the review of the literature plays a major role in determination of track choice and occupational interests and reasons of students and parents.

An important implication for this as educator is that the way it sheds light on the process of discovering strategies decision making and exploring one's active participation to resolution as a means of incorporating ideas and insights. The information provided by the informants offers meaningful and empowering themes ripe for exploration on career development in school.

The findings of this study can also be applicable to educators, especially those who in career development committee. Provided that the result is timely as issues in the organizational setting are very common nowadays, application of the best practices shared by the informants may deliver insightful contents to educators so as to prevent or minimize dissatisfaction of students to decide on their career in the future. Through the expertise of the teachers to expose the students in the career world by means of mock interviews, on the job trainings, making application letters and resume in preparation for a job and others.

## Implications for Future Researches

The study uses a phenomenological approach that has provided insights and understandings in relation to the objectives of the study. Future research may reflect on the

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content of the findings, refine the objectives of the study, and elaborate the gaps found in this study. A certain topic like this should further be updated as the growing number and the diversity of people in the school setting is updating and developing over the years. School administrators should look into the career and psychological well-being experience by the students after the make a career decision.

Furthermore, future research may probe the extent to which specific sources of career development that contribute to specific response patterns, and whether specific types of decision making may elicit specific behavioral, emotional and psychological responses. This points to a need also for more systemic theories of career development and exposure that not only reveal causality between antecedent conditions, sources and experienced effects of right career, but also adequately account for personal (e. g. psychological), institutional and broader contextual factors that relate to the phenomenon of workplace. Likewise, this research will always be open for the abovementioned opportunities for the development of the understanding of importance of suitability of career in a person in the future.

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