

Factors influencing Grade 8 in choosing their field of specialization in TLE

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Abstract

This paper explores the preferred TLE specialization of Grade 8 learners in Tuba, Benguet. Since, the grade 8 will have to choose their specialization upon their enrollment in Grade 9. Hence, the grade 8 learners will consider several factors in choosing, this study seeks to understand the factors that affect or influence the decision that Grade 8 consider in finalizing their decision into what specialization they are going to continue in their Grade 9 and Grade 10. Also, this explores the experiences of the learners on their TLE subject during which is an important factor to consider in choosing their field. To further understand this Descriptive statistic was utilized in understanding the different factors, experiences, perceptions of the Grade 8 learners. There are 111 students from different field of Specialization; Home Economics, Industrial Arts, Agriculture and Information and Communication technology. The results show that the preferred specialization of the grade 8 learners is Industrial Arts and the main factor that affects their decision-making is the “peer influence.” The learners also exemplify that they are facing several challenges in their TLE subjects which are difficulty understanding concepts, lack of Resources or materials, Limited Practical Application and Heavy Workload. Further this study revealed that Grade 8 students have already idea towards the benefits of TLE subject to them; mainly acquiring specific skills for a job, providing a foundation for further education, broadening career options and Building Professional Network.

Keywords: Grade 8 learners, TLE specialization, experiences, factors to consider, perceptions

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1. Introduction

Tuba Central National High School located at Upper Poblacion, Tuba, Benguet is offering 4 fields of specialization in TLE: Industrial Arts, Agriculture, Home Economics, and Information Communication Technology. Technology and Livelihood Education is seen to be one of the most important subjects since it gives opportunities to every student to learn skills that will be useful in their everyday life. The TLE program is specifically made for students in grade 7. It seeks to support students' training in work skills and value orientation. The learner is exposed to a range of experiences that are significant and pertinent to his growth. The following topics are covered, and each lesson presents them. (Castolo & Goyenechea, 2007) The TLE curriculum is thought to be effective by the pupils in grade 10. It is highly effective, but only if the teacher adopts a student-centered approach and uses the localization strategy. Teachers have consistently used effective teaching methods in TLE. The majority of the time, teachers practiced using a collaborative approach and practicing explanations and demonstrations in TLE activities. These are the best corrective actions that teachers can take to the inadequate tools used in TLE instruction (Dawili, 2021).

Background of the Study - According to (Edwards, & Quinter, 2011), students should be ready and have a clear idea of what they want to study in senior high school to avoid confusion and problems later on. It's important to understand what factors influence students' decision so that teachers and leaders can create better programs and policies to help students make informed choices. Guidance counselors can also use this information to help students identify their strengths and interests in choosing the track. Making a decision involves being creative, trying different things, and understanding how to make good choices for the future. One of the main challenges to students when making their decisions is that the student may not have access to significant information about the different specialization that can be available for them. (LeTendre, Hofer, Shimizu, 2017) conducted research on how students choose their academic track and how well they perform in it. They found that cultural beliefs influence students' decisions and capabilities in their chosen field. The study compared students from the United States, Japan, and Germany and found that they share similar cultural values and attitudes that affect their academic choices.

In the Philippines, the students who had a clear understanding of their career goals to be more decisive in choosing their preferred strands. It was found that student's decision making was also influenced by their academic experiences (Vallente, et. Al. 2015). There are instances that children may choose career that their parents want them to take just to please them (Taylor, et. Al. 2004). The Technical Livelihood Education subject in the Philippines helps students prepare for their future careers by offering specialized strands. However, choosing the preferred strands is a difficult decision influenced by factors like career goals, family income, grades, interests, and skills. It's important to understand what factors influence students' decisions so that teachers and leaders can create better programs and policies to help students make informed choices. Guidance counselors can also use this information to help students identify their strengths and interests and choose the right track (McCarthy, J.P., & Sheard, M. 2017).

In a study conducted by (Briones, 2019) it was found that there are several factors that can greatly impact the decision-making process of grade 8 students, when it comes to choosing their preferred specialization. These factors include the students' interests and preferences, the influence of their parents, the level of support and guidance they receive from their family. It is important to consider all of these factors when making a decision about which specialization to pursue, as they can greatly impact the overall experience and success of the student. Also, the factors that affect decision making among grade 8 students is to help them make better choices about their studies. When students have the right information, they are more likely to be motivated and engaged in their studies, leading to better academic outcomes. By understanding the factors that influence decision making, we can

identify any issues that may be preventing some students from making informed choices. This understanding will help educators develop better ways to help students succeed in their chosen careers by providing them with the necessary skills and knowledge.

In Grades 7 and 8, every TLE subject is exploratory. As a result, every student will have the opportunity to investigate the following four core TLE courses: Industrial Arts, Information and Communication Technology, Home Economics, and Agri-Fishery Arts. Pupils are free to select a minimum of four mini courses in Grade 7 and an additional four in Grade 8, depending on the needs of the school and the community (Dawili, 2021). Currently at Tuba Central National High School, there are 4 teachers, and 4 specialization presents. In grade 7 & grade 8 these teachers fixed their schedules have their rotation in every section and are tasked to provide introduction of each specialization. When they are already in Grade 9 these students are required to choose what field of specialization they are going to take. This study focuses on the factors affecting the decision of the learners in choosing their preferred specialization in TLE.

In the Department of Education Memorandum No. 149, s. 2011 mentioned that “in accordance with the mandate of secondary education to prepare students for lifelong learning and the world of work, every school must orient its students on the various career pathways to pursue after high school. Technical Livelihood Education is one of the various curricular programs that have been designed to enable students to understand their strengths, pursue their interests and develop their multiple intelligences. TLE subjects really play a great role in every life of the student. It is also the task of the school together with the teachers to provide and allow the students to explore, discover and pursue their strengths through the help of the subject. Skills is a lifetime achievement of the students that they can apply in their everyday life and it may be a leading way for the building of their careers in the future.

Significance of the study - This study is important to aims and identify what factors influence grade 8 students when making choices about their studies. The results of this study can be very useful in creating better programs and strategies to help students make informed decisions about their academic paths. The results of this study can also help develop better career guidance programs. By understanding what influences students' choices, guidance counselors can make personalized counseling programs that address students' specific needs. These programs can help students find out what they like and what kind of job they want in the future. By providing teachers, school administrators, and guidance counselors with information on what influences students' choices, they can create better programs and strategies that help students make informed decisions about their academic paths. This study focuses on the exploration and understanding of the factors that influence or affect the decision of the students to take or choose their specialization. This will be a help for the school to determine strategies and develop the implementation and teaching TLE subjects. This will provide a broader understanding of each factors and the experiences and so with the challenges faced by the students for the school to be aware and come up with a plan or strategy combating those challenges that will lead into more interactive and helpful subject to all of the students starting from grade 7 until they leave the school.

Statement of the Problem - This study sought to answer the following questions:

- What is the preferred Technical Livelihood Education specialization of Grade 8 students?
- What are the factors that influence the grade 8 students in choosing their specialization?
- What are the experiences of grade 8 students during their TLE subject?

2. Methodology

Research Ethics - When conducting research involving student participants, it is crucial to address ethical considerations and implement measures to safeguard the rights and well-being of those involved. This involves several key steps. Firstly, maintaining confidentiality is paramount to protect participants' privacy; data should be collected anonymously and accessible only to the research team. Secondly, efforts should be made to minimize

potential harm, allowing participants to opt out of uncomfortable activities or questions and monitoring their well-being throughout the study. Thirdly, fairness and equity must be upheld, conducting the study in an unbiased manner without excluding participants based on demographic factors like race, gender, or ethnicity. Prior to conducting the study, ethical approval should be obtained from an institutional review board or a relevant authority, and ethical considerations should be regularly reviewed and updated during the study. Following these steps enable researchers to conduct studies involving human participants responsibly and ethically, prioritizing the safety and well-being of those individuals.

Research Design - The researchers used descriptive design to easily obtain information and investigate relationships between variables without controlling or manipulating any of them. The descriptive method of research described the preferred specialization in Technical and Livelihood Education of Grade 8 learners at Tuba Central National High School. According to Singh (2023), descriptive research is a type of research design is a methodological technique that aims to illustrate the features of a phenomenon or research topic. It is a fundamental instrument in science that researchers use to watch, document, and examine the minute details of a given subject. This approach offers a comprehensive and in-depth description that facilitates comprehension, classification, and interpretation of the content.

Population of the Study - The participants of this study were chosen using the total enumeration method. Total enumeration is a form of purposive sampling in which the researchers select to investigate the entire population sharing a specific set of characteristics. The Grade 8 learners have a total enumeration of 111 wherein there are 49 females and 62 males. The grade 8 learners of Tuba Central National High School answered the given questionnaire.

Location of the Study - This study was conducted at Tuba Central National High School in the Tuba, Poblacion, Benguet who are in the process of choosing their preferred Technical Livelihood Education. The researcher chooses the location because the researcher is part of the institution and he would like to bring back the result to the school and come up with a program that will help the learners to properly and correctly choose the specialization they really want.

Data Collection Instrument and Procedures - Survey questionnaires was used to collect the data and to determine the responses of the grade 8 learners at Tuba Central National High School about their preferred specialization to continue on their Grade 9 level. A survey questionnaire was a widely used way to gather information about the attitudes and opinions of a large group of people (Ahmed, 2015). The survey questionnaire was adopted from the study of Kilag (2023) and Balluda (2023). Also, a Likert scale questionnaire was employed in the research study to collect data since it was a suitable instrument for quantitative research. The Likert type scale (Ducker, 1983) was employed to measure respondents' perceptions of the many concerns brought up in this research. The questionnaire was divided into 4 parts. First the preferred TLE specialization of grade 8 learners. Second, are the different statements that correspond to factors that affect the TLE specialization preference of the grade 8 learners. Also this part used the Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA) for 1, Disagree (D) for 2, Agree (A) for 3 and Strongly Agree (SA) for 4. Furthermore, there are 5 statements in each category such as interests, financial, parental influence, and peer influence. Fourth, is the enumeration of the experiences of Grade 8 Learners in their TLE subject: Resources available in their school to enhance learning, Challenges they faced in their TLE subject while they are in exploratory level and the views or perceptions of grade 8 students how their subject will benefit them in the future.

For the reliability of the instrument, the researchers also employed Cronbach's alpha for the self-made questionnaire. The result of part 1, personality type is 0.98 which has an internal consistency of excellent. To ensure the questionnaire's validity, experts in the field reviewed and validated the content, appropriateness, and structure, taking into account comments and recommendations. A pilot test was also carried out before the main survey to guarantee its reliability.

Data Analysis - The study focused on the senior high strand preference of Grade 8 learners at Tuba Central

National High School. To obtain the answer for the statement of the problem, the gathered data was treated using computation of percentage and ranking to knowing preferred TLE specialization of Grade 8 learners. Weighted mean has been used to determine the factors affecting the preferred specialization of grade 8 learners. Also, the four-point Likert scale was used to determine the factors affecting the senior high strand preference of Grade 8 learners at Tuba Central National High School. The researchers computed using weighted mean.

3. Results and discussions

This section presents the results and discussions on the preferred TLE specialization of grade 8 learners. Mainly, the data is divided according to TLE specialization preference and factors that affect the decision of Grade 8 learners in choosing the TLE specialization they are going to continue in succeeding years.

TLE specialization preference of grade 8 learners

Table 1.1

TLE Specialization Preference of Grade 8 Learners in terms of their sex.

STRANDS	Female	%	Male	%	Overall %	RANK
1. Home Economics	19	38.78	13	20.97	28.83	2
2. Industrial Arts	18	36.73	29	46.77	42.34	1
3. Agriculture	7	14.29	11	17.74	16.22	3
4. Information and Communication Technology	5	10.20	9	14.52	12.61	4

Table 1 shows the preferred TLE specialization of Grade 8 Learners. It shows that most of the grade 8 learners preferred Industrial arts 29 (46.77 %) male students see themselves taking up industrial arts and there are also 18 (36.73%) female students who are interested in the subject mentioned. There is a total of 19 (38.78%) Female students who would like to pursue home economics while in male there are 13 (20.97 %) students who are interested in continuing home economics. Followed by Agriculture there are 7 females (14.29) who plans to take agriculture as their field of specialization while in Male there are 11 (16.22%). Lastly in Information and Communication Technology there are 5 (10.20%) female students and 9 (14.52%) males who are interested in continuing ICT. As mentioned by Haynie, 2003 Industrial arts had not drawn much attention. Female instructors or students, although there were some early signs that the more a curriculum focused on modern technology would appeal more to female students. This supports the result that male outnumbered the female in pursuing industrial arts as their field of Specialization.

Table 1.2

The interest of Grade 8 learners

Specialization	FEMALE				MALE				TOTAL	RANK
	H.E	IA	AGRI	ICT	H.E	IA	AGRI	ICT		
Food Processing	12	1	2	1	8	1	5	3	33	4
Programming	1	2	1	1	2	1		5	13	9
Electronics		11			2	14	3	5	35	3
Animal Husbandry		1		1	2	1			4	15
Wirings		5				11	2	4	22	5
Cooking	17	6	4	1	9	2	7	6	52	1
Gardening			3			2	4	1	10	10
Tailoring	1	1				1	1	1	5	14
Automotive		3			1	6	4	4	18	6
Blogging	1	2		2	1	1		2	9	11
Carpentry	2	7			4	22	5	1	41	2
Teaching	1				1	1	1	2	6	13
Computerization		4		3		3		6	16	7
Illustrating/ Drafting	2	2		6	2	2		1	15	8
Dancing	2				3	1		1	7	12

In the study of Yowson, et al, 2020 the findings showed that students' choice of specialization is influenced by culture and outside variables. It also showed that students' attitudes toward selecting TLE are influenced by their perceptions and beliefs. Finally, the cost of each specialization's practical work presents a problem for parents and students alike. Table 1.2 shows that the Grade 8 learners have different interests and with those interests it may

affect their decision in choosing and taking up the TLE specialization they would like to study further. Cooking ranks number 1 with 52 students who are interested in cooking. Rank 2 is Carpentry. 41 students claimed that their interest is in carpentry. Third, is electronics with 35 number of students who are curious about electronics.

Table 2.1

Factors that influence the preferred TLE specialization of Grade 8 students - Interest

STATEMENTS	SD (1)	D (2)	A (3)	SA (4)	WEIGHTED MEAN	INTERPRETATION
1. I choose the specialization that fits my skill	11	11	57	29	2.88	DISAGREE
2. I consider my aptitudes and capabilities in choosing the specialization	6	14	78	10	2.77	DISAGREE
3. I choose because of the opportunities of hands-on experience	8	13	69	17	2.78	DISAGREE
4. My personality and hobbies are suited to the specialization I choose	11	16	62	19	2.74	DISAGREE
5. I choose my specialization because of the job prospects after graduation	5	22	69	12	2.73	DISAGREE

The table above shows that the grade 8 students disagree that their interest affects their decision in choosing the field of specialization that they will pursue when in grade 9 level. They disagree that supposedly their specialization fits their skills. They also don't consider their aptitudes and capabilities in choosing. Grade 8 students do not see any hands-on opportunities and they don't also consider their specialization to be a help in their career in the future. Decision-making are crucial in a variety of ways, such as verifying one's identity in terms of hobbies, disposition, personality, values, abilities, talents, aspirations, and hopes and dreams; affecting the kinds of people, situations, and activities which one is interested in, feels most at ease, content, and fulfilled with; affecting the decisions (Nyamwange, 2016).

Table 2.2

Factors that influence the preferred TLE specialization of Grade 8 students - Financial

STATEMENTS	SD (1)	D (2)	A (3)	SA (4)	WEIGHTED MEAN	INTERPRETATION
1. I choose this specialization based on my parent's income	10	4	47	47	3.12	AGREE
2. I choose my specialization based on cost.	9	44	50	5	2.40	DISAGREE
3. I choose the specialization based on scholarship opportunities.	6	38	59	7	2.26	DISAGREE
4. I choose the specialization that will not cause financial stress to my parents	5	11	62	30	3	AGREE
5. I choose the specialization based on the offered specialization in the school	8	11	42	47	3.09	AGREE

Table 2.2 shows that the Grade 8 learners agree that they consider their parent's income in choosing their field of specialization with 3.12 (agree) weighted mean and the students also consider that the specialization they will choose will not give their parents financial stress with the weighted mean of 3 (agree). Also, this grade 8 learners only choose from the specialization that are present in the school with the weighted mean of 3.09 (agree) which is home economics, Industrial Arts, Agriculture and Information and communication Technology.

Table 2.3 shows that the decision of Grade 8 learners in choosing their field of specialization were affected or influences by their parents in terms of considering their parent's preferences (WM-3.15-agree) and they listen to their parents' advice in choosing their field of specialization (WM-3.32). While they claimed that they disagree in don't see the connection of their parent's career in their field of specialization (WM-2.25). Also, their parents did not push them to take the specialization (WM-2.26). Lastly, choosing their specialization in TLE has nothing to do with the notion of inheriting their parent's work position (WM-2.54).

Table 2.3

Factors that influence the preferred TLE specialization of Grade 8 students - Parental Influence

STATEMENTS	SD (1)	D (2)	A (3)	SA (4)	WEIGHTED MEAN	INTERPRETATION
1. I consider my parent's career in choosing specialization	11	42	47	11	2.52	DISAGREE
2. I choose my specialization based on my parent's preferences	11	9	43	48	3.15	AGREE
3. My parents pushed me to enroll in the specific specialization	19	55	26	11	2.26	DISAGREE
4. I choose specialization out of my parent's advice	9	3	42	57	3.32	AGREE
5. I choose this specialization to inherit one of my parent's work position.	11	44	40	16	2.54	DISAGREE

Table 2.4

Factors that influence the preferred TLE specialization of Grade 8 students - Peer Influence

STATEMENTS	SD (1)	D (2)	A (3)	SA (4)	WEIGHTED MEAN	INTERPRETATION
1. I was advised by my classmates	4	20	45	42	3.12	AGREE
2. I am afraid to be left out by my friends	4	21	49	37	3.07	AGREE
3. My friend's decision is my decision as well	5	20	49	37	3.06	AGREE
4. My peer group and I shared the same preference	6	20	32	50	3.08	AGREE
5. I talked to my friends before choosing a specialization	11	16	27	58	3.20	AGREE

Table 2.4 shows that peer have a great influence on the decision of students towards their specialization in grade 9. Grade 8 learners consider their friend's advice (WM-3.12). They also consider the feeling of being left out by friends (WM-3.07). their decision is also their friends' decision (WM-3.06) and their circle of friends have the same preferences (WM-3.08) and lastly before they are going to choose their specialization they will talk to their friends and decide (WM-3.20)

Table 3.1

The experiences of Grade 8 Learners in their TLE subject - Resources

STATEMENTS	HE	IA	AGRI	ICT	Total	Rank
1. Textbook	6	6	5	2	19	4
2. Online Resources	5	11	2	3	23	3
3. Laboratory Equipment	13	10	2	3	29	2
4. Expert Faculty	6	17	5	4	33	1
5. Industry Partnership	3	5	4	2	14	5

Table 3.1 shows that the students from different fields of specialization have different perspectives in terms of the resources available in the school for better teaching and learning experiences. For Home Economics it was resulted that they have a laboratory equipment where they were allowed to apply what they have learned. While in Industrial Arts, the expert faculty was one of the resources that contributed to the learning experience. Third, in Agriculture Textbook are present and the expertise of the teacher greatly affects the learning of the students. Fourth, Information and Communication Technology, students used online resources and the expertise of the faculty was observed.

Table 3.2

The experiences of Grade 8 Learners in their TLE subject - Challenges

STATEMENTS	HE	IA	AGRI	ICT	Total	Rank
1. Difficulty understanding concepts	13	13	5	7	38	1
2. Lack of Resources/ Materials	0	15	4	0	19	4
3. Limited Practical Application	0	17	0	4	21	3
4. Heavy Workload	20	4	9	3	37	2
5. Lack of support from faculty and staff	0	0	0	0	0	5

Table 3.2 shows that the students are experiencing challenges in their TLE subjects. First is the Difficulty in understanding concepts 28 grade 8 students found it difficult in familiarizing the concepts in the different field of

specialization: Home Economics, Industrial Arts, Agriculture and Information and communication Technology.

Table 4

The views of Grade 8 Learners - benefit of TLE in their future

STATEMENTS	HE	IA	AGRI	ICT	Total	Rank
1. Acquiring specific skills for a job	27	19	9	5	60	1
2. Providing Foundation for further education	5	15	4	2	26	2
3. Broadening career options	1	10	2	4	17	3
4. Building Professional Network	0	5	2	3	10	4
5. Others	0	0	0	0	0	5

Table 4 above shows that the Grade 8 Learners are aware on how they will benefit from their chosen specialization in the future. There are 60 students from the different specialization that claims that with the learning experiences they have they will be able to use it in acquiring specific skills for a job. With the 26 number of students also believe that their learnings would provide a foundation for further education. There are also 17 students that invest their learnings with the aim of broadening career options. Lastly Building Professional Network where 10 students have claim to be the benefit of their specialization in their life.

4. Conclusion

- The technical Livelihood Education specialization preference of Grade 8 Learners at Tuba Central National High School is Industrial Arts.
- The main interests of Grade 8 learners are first is cooking, second is carpentry and third is electronics.
- The main factor that influences the decision of Grade 8 learners in choosing their field of specialization is Peer influence. The result says that peer influences the decision of the Grade 8 learners in choosing their field of specialization that they will continue in the future.

Recommendation - Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following are recommended.

- The schools must conduct in-depth guidance in explaining to the students each strand offered in the school.
- The parents must be involved in choosing the specialization each students, so they also need to understand each specialization and how it will help their child.

Research agenda for future consideration: a) competency of the teachers teaching TLE, and b) the significance of TLE subject to the life of the students.

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