**Exploring career choice factors among Bachelor of Science in Industrial Technology freshmen of a state university in the Philippines**

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ABSTRACT

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| A good choice of a course where a student will enjoy learning will ensure chances of a better future, especially in the world of work. The study identified the dominating factors of the career choice of first year students taking up Bachelor of Science in Industrial Technology in UEP Laoang Campus. The data derived from the study were used to draw inputs on enhancing career guidance services. Employing a descriptive research design, the study was conducted in the University of Eastern Philippines Laoang Campus, Department of Industrial Technology during the Second Semester of SY 2022-2023. Two hundred eight first year students participated in the study which used an open-ended survey instrument. The respondents were made to write the top three reasons of choosing BS Industrial Technology (BSIT) as their course. The responses were subjected to thematic analysis. Majority of the respondents stated that the course was not their first option. Using thematic analysis, BSIT freshmen took the course due to lack of opportunities in other courses, skills development, interest, work opportunities, prior learning experience, and influences. |

*Keywords: career choice, career preference, college freshmen, Bachelor of Science in Industrial Technology*

1. INTRODUCTION

The choice of a course in college is very essential in establishing a good career. With a good choice of a course where a student will enjoy learning, it will be ensured that the student will have chances of a better future, especially in the world of work. Choosing the right career is important in ensuring that individuals lead rewarding lives, are motivated at their jobs and can achieve remarkable productivity, thus setting the stage for organizational success and sustainability (Nyamwange, 2016). According to Maina (2013), career choice is the selection of a course of study which leads to a specific profession according to one’s interest, passion and ability as influenced by factors such as parental factors, peers, and role model.

Literature is rich in empirical evidence about the factors influencing career decision-making. In the study of Leal & Zavala (2022), the top five factors of career choice are: multiple areas in which to work, the class format that makes it possible to combine work and study, the provided tools that enable the exercise of good leadership, a high employability rate, and the tools offered which facilitate entrepreneurship. Moreover, in various literature, variables that influenced choice of a career include parents’ or family influence (Santos & Abad, 2025; Quiño, 2022; Tukiran, et al, 2021; Abe & Chikoko, 2020; Humayon, et al., 2018; Kazi & Achlaq, 2017; Norhidayah, 2017), peer influence (Quiño, 2022; Kazi & Achlaq, 2017), gender (Kazi & Achlaq, 2017), print media (Kazi & Achlaq, 2017), financial reasons (Quiño, 2022; Abe & Chikoko, 2020; Kazi & Achlaq, 2017; Humayon, et al., 2018), personal interest (Santos & Abad, 2025; Quiño, 2022; Sadjail, et al., 2022; Tukiran, et al, 2021; Abe & Chikoko, 2020; Humayon, et al., 2018; Kazi & Achlaq, 2017), job opportunities (Quiño, 2022, Abe & Chikoko, 2020; Felicen & Borbon, 2017); altruistic reasons and prior learning experiences (Ekin, et al., 2021), self-efficacy (Abe & Chikoko, 2020), and industry growth (Santos & Abad, 2025).

Every year, higher education institutions are admitting thousands of first year students. These students undergo rigorous admission requirements set by the institution. However, it has been observed that some students are admitted in courses which they do not like. Some are forced to be in courses because of limited quota of number of students. There are still others who graduate with their respective courses who turn out to work in fields other than the specialization they finished.

The University of Eastern Philippines Laoang Campus, one of the two external campuses of the University of Eastern Philippines, the only state university in the province of Northern Samar, Philippines, offers a four-year degree course named Bachelor of Science in Industrial Technology (BSIT) which offers field of specialization along Electrical Technology, Electronics Technology, Food Technology, Cosmetology Technology, Garments Technology, and Automotive Technology. In the past two years, the enrolment of the program had a very significant increase. However, it had been noted that many students who were not admitted in other courses comprised the enrolment of the program. Admitting students who do not like the course at the very start may influence the interest of these students towards finishing the program.

Hence, it is imperative that higher education institutions be aware of the reasons why students enroll in a certain program. Knowing the factors underlying a career choice allows an institution to focus the search for prospective students efficiently and optimize the utilization of resources to attain new enrollments, develop transversal strategies for all the university programs and customize them based on specific factors relevant to each career (Leal & Zavala, 2022). Consequently, there is a need to study the factors that prompt students to choose their respective courses so that guidance units could help in coming up with intervention activities to improve the delivery of career guidance in schools. However, there are only a few studies on exploring factors on the choice of careers among students of Bachelor of Science in Industrial Technology. Compared to other academic disciplines which are also technology-related, the study on the choice of Bachelor of Science in Industrial Technology has not been well-explored.

To answer this need, the study was done. The study aimed to determine the factors considered by freshmen BS Industrial Technology students in choosing the course. The study also came up with inputs to the improvement of career guidance in the University of Eastern Philippines Laoang Campus, the research locale.

The study is anchored on the three-dimensional framework by Carpenter and Foster (1977). The three factors are: (1) intrinsic (interest in the job, personally satisfying work); (2) extrinsic (availability of jobs, well-paying occupations); and (3) interpersonal (influence of parents and significant others). It also takes support from Parson (1909) who suggested that vocational choices should be based on three broad factors: a clear understanding of yourself, your aptitude, abilities, interests, ambitions, resources, limitations, and knowledge of their causes; knowledge of the requirements, conditions, success, advantages and disadvantaged, compensation, opportunities, and prospects in different lines of work; and the true reasoning on the relations of these two groups of facts.

2. methodology

The study was conducted in the University of Eastern Philippines Laoang Campus, one of the two external campuses of the University of Eastern Philippines, the only state university in the province of Northern Samar, Philippines. The focus of the study are the students of the Department of Industrial Technology.

The study utilized the descriptive research design since the study aims to describe the factors considered by the first year BS Industrial Technology in choosing their present course. A complete enumeration of the two hundred eight (208) first year students was done. Of this number, majority (58.17%) are males. The students are enrolled in various specializations of the program, like Electrical Technology, Electronics Technology, Food Technology, Cosmetology Technology, Garments Technology, and Automotive Technology.

An open-ended survey instrument was used in the study. The first part of the instrument asked for the specialization of the respondent. Part II of the instrument comprised of two questions, the first of which is if the course was their first choice while the second is on the top three reasons why they choose to take BS Industrial Technology as their course. The qualitative responses were coded. Responses were grouped into similar categories to come up with themes. The themes represented the factors of choosing the course.

3. results and discussion

Result of the preliminary question asked to the respondents was on their preference of the course. Data revealed that only 69 (33.17%) stated that the course was their first choice. It means majority (66.83%) did not like BSIT as their first course.

Out of the responses of the 208 first year Bachelor of Science in Industrial Technology students, six categories of factors were considered as reasons why the students took the course: lack of opportunities to enroll in other courses, need to develop skills, interest for the course, opportunities for future work, prior learning experience, and influence of other people.

**Factors in choosing BSIT as a course**

**3.1 Lack of opportunities to enroll in other courses**

An overwhelming reason why the students took BS Industrial Technology is that they had no opportunity to be admitted in other courses which were their first or second choice. In the locale of the study, other degree programs limit their enrolment to few sections as these programs are prepared towards board examinations. The BS Industrial Technology, on the other hand, offers many slots for enrolment for freshmen as the program is a priority course of the Commission on Higher Education. As a result, after the closure of slots in the other programs, the BS Industrial Technology has more opportunities to accommodate students who were not yet accommodated in the other programs. Most of the courses preferred by the respondents were Criminology or Teacher Education programs. Some also failed in the grade requirement of other courses.

Sample responses from respondents were:

*“Because my grades are not enough to enroll in other courses” (ET32)*

*“This is the only course that is available during my enrolment” (ET11)*

*“Because my first choice is officially closed when I enrolled” (ET8)*

*“I didn’t pass in the course I wanted” (CT9)*

*“I had no other choice” (FT15)*

**3.2 Need to develop skills**

Another reason of taking BS Industrial Technology is that the respondents need to develop their skills along the different majors of the BSIT program. The BSIT program aims to develop and enhance skills of students along the areas of specialization.

Sample responses from respondents were:

*“I want to enhance my skills in electrical”’ (ET17)*

*“You can take a National Certificate (NCII)” (CT8)*

*“This course will help me build my skills” (ET27)*

*“To enhance my skills, not only in academics” (FT1)*

*“I want to improve my cooking skills” (FT60)*

**3.3 Interest for the course**

One of the reasons of taking BSIT according to the respondents is their interest for the course. Others call it the passion or even the love for the course. The finding confirmed the studies of Santos & Abad (2025), Quiño (2022), Sadjail, et al. (2022), Tukiran, et al. (2021), Abe & Chikoko (2020), Humayon, et al., (2018), and Kazi & Achlaq (2017).

Sample responses from respondents were:

*“I like to experiment on new dishes.” (FT 56)*

*“I want to try new ways of preparing food” (FT24)*

*“It is my hobby to cook” (FT12)*

*“I am confident in operating gadgets” (ELT14)*

*“I love nail art” (CT7)*

*“My passion is in here” (ET85)*

**3.4 Opportunities for future work**

The respondents have foreseen the opportunities that are offered once they graduate in the BS Industrial Technology program. Since the nature of the course is skills-based, graduates are bound to be hired in industries. Graduates of these skills-based courses are also among the usual ones hired abroad. The finding confirmed that job opportunities are considered by graduates as stated in the studies of Quiño (2022), Abe & Chikoko (2020), Prenda & Dotong (2017), and Felicen & Borbon (2017).

Sample responses from respondents were:

*“To achieve my dream of becoming a chef” (FT2)*

*“Dahil dito madaling makahanap ng trabaho” (Because of this course, it is easy to look for a job) (ET79)*

*“To become a registered master electrician” (ET59)*

*“The course is in demand” (CT5)*

*“To know more on how to manage business in the future” (FT4)*

*“So I can have my own restaurant’” (FT3)*

*“I can go abroad” (CT6)*

*“There are many job opportunities in other countries looking for skilled workers” (ET1)*

**3.5 Prior learning experience**

Some respondents have experiences related to the major areas of BS Industrial Technology before their enrolment in the course. Some of these students have Senior High School tracks along Technology Vocational Livelihood education, which are precursors of the BS Industrial Technology course. Hence, they carry the entry knowledge which could give them the edge over other students. This finding lends support to Ekin, et al., (2021) which suggested prior learning experiences as determinant of the choice of a course.

Sample responses from respondents were:

*“Naranasan ko na ring mag-wiring” (I have already experienced to do wiring) (ET62)*

*“Connected to my strand in Senior High School which is Cookery” (FT50)*

*“I want to continue what I learned from my course before” (ET30)*

*“Dahil may kaunting kaalaman na ako sa electrical” (I have a little background on electrical concepts” (ET49)*

**3.6 Influence of other people**

Enrolment in the BS Industrial Technology program has been influenced by other people, particularly the parents. Others have been influenced by their role models. Mzobe (2014) confirmed that the role played by family in the career decision of students was more significant than monetary influences. Other studies which were confirmed by this findings are those of Santos & Abad (2025), Quiño (2022), Tukiran, et al. (2021), Abe & Chikoko (2020), Humayon, et al. (2018), Kazi & Achlaq (2017), and Norhidayah (2017).

Sample responses from respondents were:

*“Because my parents told me to enhance my talent in cooking” (FT58)*

*“Dahil nandito ang mga kaibigan ko” (My friends are also enrolled in this course) (ET55)*

*“My mother told me to have this course” (FT17)*

*“My uncle who is a chef is my inspiration for the course” (FT47)*

**3.2 Inputs to career guidance**

The findings of the study pose scenario for improvement in the career development of the learners. By improving career development activities, the course BS Industrial Technology could be more viable.

Guiding the inputs forwarded by this study is the career-related learning concept of Hutchinson (2013) which includes three components: career information, advice and guidance; career education (including self-development, exploration and management); and work-related learning (about types of work, developing skills for, and through work).

Table 1. Proposed activities/strategies for career development

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| **Component of career development** | **Activities/Strategies** |
| Information, advice and guidance | * Intensive career campaign to senior high school students, especially in Technical Vocational Livelihood tracks |
| Career education | * Intensive skills development provided by faculty members, particularly in laboratory classes * Constant follow-through with their studies to ensure their chances of finishing the program |
| Work-related learning | * Facilitating the assessment of students for National Certificates aligned with their specializations * Holistic development provided by the on-the-job training experience |

4. Conclusion

The study explored the reasons why first year Bachelor of Science in Industrial Technology students took up the said course.

While the program boasts of a big population of enrollees in the freshmen level, the course Bachelor of Science in Industrial Technology was not the primary intended course for the respondents, which could affect their learning, or which could lead to shifting to other courses after a semester or two. Other reasons revealed in the study focused on development of skills and career prospects which suggest that the students know the nature of the course as a skill subject and the employment prospects that they could engage after graduation. Reasons of taking the course also revealed the interests and prior knowledge which show that the previous education of the students can be carried on to the present course to support their innate interest on the program’s content. Other people’s influence, like parents and role models, is still a reason, which suggests the old Filipino tradition of considering elders’ advices in career choice.

The study affirmed the three-dimensional framework by Carpenter and Foster (1977). The freshmen Bachelor of Science in Industrial Technology students’ reasons in choosing the course are along the three factors of the framework: interest for the course, an intrinsic factor, opportunities for future work, an extrinsic factor; and influence of other people, an interpersonal factor.

There is a need for the Industrial Technology Department of the UEP Laoang Campus to conduct intensive career campaigns to senior high schools to enhance the awareness of the probable career opportunities for graduates of the program, particularly to senior high schools with Technology Vocational Livelihood tracks as these students possess the requisite knowledge on the course. For the students presently enrolled, there should also be an orientation on the job prospects of the program to motivate the students to continue pursuing the said course. The faculty members should provide the best learning experience to students so their skills are fully developed and their interests are enhanced towards finishing the program. The inputs drawn from the study need to be considered for implementation by the campus to enhance career development of the BS Industrial Technology students. As the reasons drawn out from the study were analyzed from responses from a survey instrument, the study is limited only to written responses. Future studies could deal with a more rigorous data gathering tool such as interviews and focus group discussions.

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ETHICAL APPROVAL:

The study underwent the assessment of the Institutional Ethics Review Committee of the University.

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