

Career Interest and Self-Efficacy Beliefs of the Senior High School Students and their Relationship with their Academic Performance

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between career interests, self-efficacy beliefs, and academic performance among 111 Grade 12 students from the pioneer Senior High School batch at Central Luzon College of Science and Technology during School Year 2017–2018. Anchored on Social Cognitive Career Theory and Holland's RIASEC framework, the study investigated whether career interests and self-efficacy beliefs significantly relate to students' grade point averages (GPA) within a Maritime-oriented educational context. The study utilized a descriptive-correlational research design employing total population sampling. Data were collected using the O*NET Interest Profiler and the General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE), while academic performance was measured through respondents' GPA obtained from official school records. Descriptive statistics and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) were used to analyze the data. Findings revealed that most respondents demonstrated low career interest across the six RIASEC dimensions but showed moderate levels of action, coping, and general self-efficacy beliefs. Academic performance across tracks was generally satisfactory to very satisfactory. Among the six career interest dimensions, only investigative interest showed a statistically significant but very weak positive relationship with GPA. Action, coping, and general self-efficacy beliefs were not significantly related to academic performance. The findings suggest that career interests and self-efficacy beliefs alone may have limited predictive value for academic intervention programs and emphasize the importance of integrating psychological, environmental, and academic support factors in student development initiatives. The study supports SDG 4 – Quality Education by contributing evidence for improved academic advising and career guidance programs. It also aligns with SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth and SDG 9 – Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure through its focus on career preparation and Maritime education. The study contributes to educational, socio-economic, and institutional sustainability by supporting evidence-based student guidance and academic intervention practices.

Keywords: Academic Performance, Career Interests, Coping Self-Efficacy, Grade Point Average, Maritime Education, RIASEC, Senior High School Students, Social Cognitive Career Theory, Vocational Guidance

1. Introduction

Career interests and self-efficacy beliefs are recognized as important psychological factors influencing students' academic engagement and performance. Previous studies indicate that career interests significantly shape students' educational choices and academic outcomes, although findings remain inconsistent across contexts (Downey, 2011). Studies conducted in Western settings revealed that students with strong career interests demonstrate higher academic engagement and achievement (Proyer, 2006; Kahn, 2002). Likewise, Nauta (2010) found that investigative career interest predicted college GPA among US students, while Tracey (2008) reported no significant relationship in diverse adolescent samples. In the Philippine educational context, the implementation of the K-12 Senior High School (SHS) curriculum introduced new career-track choices for students aged 16–17. Despite this educational reform, limited empirical studies have examined whether career interests and self-efficacy beliefs are associated with the academic performance of Filipino SHS students. Existing local studies explored career interests, self-efficacy, and academic performance separately but lacked integrated investigation (Magno and Pelayo, 2012). Furthermore, no published study has simultaneously examined career interests and self-efficacy beliefs as correlates of academic performance among pioneer SHS students in specialized Maritime institutions. This study addresses identified population, contextual, and variable gaps by examining the relationship between career interests, self-efficacy beliefs, and academic performance among SHS students in a Maritime-oriented institution. Specifically, the study investigates whether Holland's career interest dimensions and Bandura's self-efficacy constructs significantly relate to students' grade point averages (GPA), thereby contributing evidence for academic advising and career guidance during K-12 implementation.

1.1 Career Interests, Self-Efficacy Beliefs, and Academic Performance of Senior High School Students

Globally, students' career interests influence educational decisions and academic engagement. However, interest has often been treated as a one-dimensional construct despite its multidimensional nature (Downey, 2011). Prior research showed

that students with stronger career interests tend to demonstrate higher academic engagement and achievement (Proyer, 2006; Kahn, 2002). Nauta (2010) reported that investigative career interest predicted college GPA, whereas Tracey (2008) found weak or non-significant associations between career interests and grades. In the Philippines, the implementation of the K-12 SHS curriculum reshaped students' career decision-making processes. Studies by Magno and Pelayo (2012) explored career interests and self-efficacy among Filipino students but did not examine their relationship with academic performance. Gimarino (2024) found that SHS strands influence career aspirations and self-efficacy in goal setting, while Pascual (2014) emphasized the lack of assessment materials for Filipino students' career choices. Despite these findings, limited studies have focused on Maritime-oriented SHS students, particularly the pioneer K-12 cohorts. The present study investigates the relationship between career interests, self-efficacy beliefs, and academic performance among SHS students at Central Luzon College of Science and Technology College – San Fernando. Career interests include realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional dimensions, while self-efficacy beliefs are categorized into action and coping self-efficacy. Academic performance is represented through students' GPA.

1.2 Related Literature on Career Interests, Self-Efficacy Beliefs, and Academic Performance Among SHS Students

Related literature highlights the importance of career interests and self-efficacy beliefs in shaping academic outcomes. Career interest is viewed as an individual's preference for a vocation and serves as a guide in career decision-making. Guevara et al. (2016) found that Grade 11 students showed moderate interest in conventional, artistic, and enterprising careers but lower preference for realistic, social, and investigative careers. Quesada (2011) further identified vocational interest, achievement motivation, and personal-social adjustment as predictors of academic performance. Studies also reveal gender-based differences in career interests and self-beliefs. Shin et al. (2016) found that girls demonstrated lower self-belief and reduced interest in science careers compared with boys. Wang (2013) reported that STEM major selection is influenced by academic achievement and educational experiences, while Alpacion et al. (2014) emphasized that positive attitudes toward subjects improve student performance. Research on self-efficacy likewise demonstrates mixed findings. Bandura (2014) argued that self-efficacy directly influences effort, persistence, and academic performance. Santos (2019) found a significant relationship between self-efficacy and GPA among SHS students in Manila, whereas Reyes (2021) found weak correlations in Pampanga. Pavani et al. (2013) associated high self-efficacy with stronger academic achievement, although Lewis et al. (2011) reported no significant relationship between self-efficacy and academic progression. Additional studies emphasized that self-efficacy affects students' self-regulation, motivation, and persistence in learning tasks (Komarraju et al., 2013). Achana and Chamundeswari (2013) found positive associations between self-concept and academic performance, while Kahraman (2014) identified self-determined motivation as a strong predictor of students' intention to remain in school.

1.3 Local, National, and Global Context of Career Interests and Self-Efficacy Beliefs Among Senior High School Students

Globally, Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) has been widely used to explain how self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and learning experiences influence career interests and academic outcomes (Patton et al., 2014). Studies in Western contexts demonstrated that mastery experiences strengthen self-efficacy and career persistence (Paivandy, 2011). Conkel & Ziebell (2011) further explained that learning experiences shape vocational interests, abilities, and performance expectations. At the national level, the Philippine K-12 reform created new educational transitions that required SHS students to select career tracks earlier in their academic journey. However, empirical studies examining the relationship between career interests, self-efficacy beliefs, and GPA among Filipino SHS students remain limited. Magno and Pelayo (2012) validated the RIASEC structure among Filipino students but did not investigate its relationship with academic performance. Locally, Maritime-oriented schools represent a specialized educational setting where students experience unique academic demands. Limited research has examined whether career interests and self-efficacy beliefs predict academic performance among students pursuing Maritime-related tracks, particularly among pioneer K-12 cohorts.

1.4 Theoretical and Conceptual Basis of Career Interests, Self-Efficacy Beliefs, and Academic Performance

This study is anchored on the Social Cognitive Career Theory developed by Robert W. Lent, Steven D. Brown, and Gail Hackett (Patton et al., 2014). SCCT originated from Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, which posits that self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations, and personal goals influence career choices and performance (Bandura, 1986, 2014). The study also integrates Holland's RIASEC framework, which classifies career interests into realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional dimensions. These constructs are examined alongside self-efficacy beliefs to determine their relationship with academic performance. The conceptual framework of the study identifies career interests and self-efficacy beliefs as independent variables, while academic performance, represented through GPA, serves as the dependent variable. Self-efficacy beliefs are further categorized into action self-efficacy and coping self-efficacy.

1.5 Research Gaps and Rationale on Career Interests, Self-Efficacy Beliefs, and Academic Performance in Maritime SHS Education

The reviewed literature revealed several research gaps. First, a population gap exists because limited studies have examined pioneer SHS students transitioning from the former 10-year curriculum to the K-12 system. Second, a contextual gap remains due to the lack of studies conducted in Maritime-oriented institutions where students encounter specialized academic demands. Third, a variable gap exists because few Philippine studies have simultaneously examined career interests and self-efficacy beliefs in relation to SHS academic performance. Conflicting findings also justify the need for the study. While Nauta (2010) found positive associations between investigative interests and GPA, Tracey (2008) reported weak correlations between RIASEC interests and grades. Similarly, Santos (2019) identified significant relationships between self-efficacy and GPA, whereas Reyes (2021) reported minimal associations. These inconsistencies suggest that cultural and institutional contexts influence academic outcomes. The present study addresses these gaps by examining the joint relationship of career interests and self-efficacy beliefs with academic performance among SHS students in a Maritime school context.

1.6 Alignment of Career Interests and Self-Efficacy Research with Relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

This study aligns with SDG 4 – Quality Education by supporting evidence-based academic advising, career guidance, and student development programs that improve educational outcomes. By examining factors influencing academic performance and career decision-making, the study contributes to more responsive and inclusive educational practices. The study also supports SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth through its focus on career interests and vocational preparation. Understanding students' career preferences and self-efficacy beliefs may help institutions guide learners toward suitable career pathways and workforce readiness. Additionally, the study relates to SDG 9 – Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure because Maritime education contributes to workforce specialization and institutional development in technical and professional education sectors.

1.7 Importance of Career Interests and Self-Efficacy Research to Multidisciplinary Sustainability

The study contributes to educational sustainability by supporting the development of effective guidance and academic intervention programs for SHS students. Findings may assist school administrators, teachers, and guidance counselors in designing evidence-based strategies that align students' career interests and self-efficacy beliefs with academic success. The research also contributes to socio-economic sustainability by helping students make informed career choices that may improve employability, persistence, and long-term professional development. Parents and educators may use the findings to provide appropriate academic and motivational support for students. Furthermore, the study contributes to institutional sustainability by providing empirical evidence relevant to K-12 implementation and career guidance practices in specialized educational settings. Future researchers may also use the findings to expand studies in vocational psychology, developmental psychology, and educational research.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

The study utilized a descriptive-correlational research design to determine the relationship between respondents' career interests and academic performance, as well as self-efficacy beliefs and academic performance.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted at Central Luzon College of Science and Technology during School Year 2017–2018. The institution served as the setting for examining the pioneer batch of Senior High School students under the K–12 curriculum.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The respondents consisted of 111 Grade 12 students enrolled at Central Luzon College of Science and Technology during SY 2017–2018. These students belonged to the pioneer batch of Senior High School graduates under the K–12 curriculum. Participants were aged 17–19 years during data collection. Students were included if they were officially enrolled as Grade 12 students, aged 17–19 years, and had accomplished written parental or guardian consent during enrollment. No respondents were excluded from the study, resulting in a 100% response rate. Because participants were considered minors and part of a vulnerable group, ethical safeguards were implemented. Written parental or guardian consent was obtained during enrollment procedures. Verbal and written assent were also secured after orientation regarding the study's purpose, voluntary participation, confidentiality, anonymity, and withdrawal rights. Institutional approval for the conduct of the study was granted by the OIC Principal/Academic Coordinator.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The study employed total population or universal sampling. All Grade 12 students were included to establish comprehensive institutional data regarding the pioneer SHS students. Since the population size was manageable, complete population sampling was utilized to minimize sampling bias and ensure comprehensive profiling of respondents.

2.5 Research Instrument

Data were gathered using the validated Interest Profiler and the General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE). Career interests were assessed using the O*NET Interest Profiler, a 180-item career guidance instrument developed by the United States Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. The researchers secured permission through electronic mail to administer the instrument. The Interest Profiler is one of the ONET Career Exploration tools designed to identify work-related interests and assist career exploration. The instrument measures six career interest domains derived from Holland's RIASEC model: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional (ONET Career Exploration tools, 2000). The instrument uses dichotomous responses of Like or Dislike. Reliability estimates for the instrument ranged from .93 to .96. Content validity was established through evaluation by three registered guidance counselors from the Division of Pampanga who confirmed the relevance and cultural appropriateness of the items for Filipino SHS students. Self-efficacy beliefs were measured using the General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE) developed by Schwarzer and Jerusalem (2013). The GSE is a 10-item self-report questionnaire available in multiple languages and free for administration with proper acknowledgment. Scholz et al. (2002) reported internal consistency ranging from 0.75 to 0.91. The instrument measures an individual's belief in managing difficult situations and overcoming setbacks using a 4-point Likert scale ranging from completely disagree to completely agree. The GSE measures two dimensions of self-efficacy: action self-efficacy and coping self-efficacy. Schwarzer and Renner (2000) explained that action self-efficacy reflects confidence in initiating goals, while coping self-efficacy reflects confidence in sustaining effort and recovering from failure. Action self-efficacy was analyzed using items 2, 3, 4, 5, and 10, whereas coping self-efficacy was analyzed using items 1, 6, 7, 8, and 9 (Zhou et al., 2015). In the local pilot test involving 30 respondents, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were .83 for Action Self-Efficacy, .79 for Coping Self-Efficacy, and .85 for the overall GSE, indicating high internal consistency. Academic performance was measured through respondents' grade point averages (GPAs), which were obtained from the registrar's office using DepEd official Form 137-A.

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers first secured institutional approval from the OIC Principal/Academic Coordinator at least two weeks before the conduct of the study. The approval authorized the administration of standardized questionnaires and access to academic records from the Registrar's Office. Written parental consent was obtained through the Parent/Guardian Consent form included in the enrollment process. Participant assent was secured through orientation sessions conducted during homeroom periods. The orientation explained the purpose of the study, voluntary participation, confidentiality of responses, and students' right to decline participation or skip questions without penalty. Questionnaires were personally distributed by the researchers during students' vacant periods to minimize classroom disruption. The researchers clarified that the activity was intended for institutional research and program development. Class advisers were present only for classroom management and were not allowed access to students' responses. Several confidentiality measures were implemented during data collection. Students were seated with adequate spacing, questionnaires used code numbers instead of names, and respondents were instructed to answer independently without peer discussion. Completed questionnaires were directly submitted to the researchers and securely stored in the Guidance Office. GPA data were also requested using code numbers to maintain confidentiality. Research data were securely stored and retained according to institutional policy for academic verification purposes.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

Descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, were utilized to describe respondents' career interests, self-efficacy beliefs, and academic performance. The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) was used to determine the significant relationship between career interests, self-efficacy beliefs, and academic performance. Pearson's r was selected because the variables were continuous and normally distributed. Statistical significance was tested at the .05 level.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Career Interests, Self-Efficacy Beliefs, and Academic Performance of Senior High School Students

3.1.1 Distribution of Respondents According to Senior High School Track

The study involved 111 Grade 12 respondents from different Senior High School tracks. Most respondents came from the Pre-Baccalaureate Maritime Specialization track, followed by the General Academic Strand, Technical Vocational and Livelihood, Humanities and Social Sciences, and Accountancy, Business and Management. The Maritime and GAS tracks had the largest student populations during SY 2017–2018. The distribution reflects the institutional enrollment pattern of Central Luzon College of Science and Technology, where Maritime and GAS programs attracted the highest number of SHS students. This also indicates the strong preference for Maritime-related specialization within the institution.

3.1.2 Career Interests of the Respondents

The findings revealed that most respondents demonstrated low career interest across the six RIASEC dimensions. The highest percentage of students expressed low interest in conventional careers, while more than half also reported low interest in realistic, investigative, artistic, social, and enterprising careers. However, nearly half of the respondents showed

moderate interest in social activities. Only a small percentage expressed high interest in investigative, conventional, artistic, and social careers. The moderate preference for social career interests suggests that many students value interpersonal interaction and helping-oriented occupations. These respondents preferred cooperative environments involving teaching, assisting, coaching, and serving others (McKay, 2017). The generally low career interest levels indicate that many respondents remained undecided regarding future career choices. This finding highlights the importance of career guidance programs and increased exposure to career information to strengthen students' career awareness and decision-making.

3.1.3 Self-Efficacy Beliefs of the Respondents

Most respondents reported moderate levels of action, coping, and general self-efficacy beliefs. The majority demonstrated moderate confidence in initiating and maintaining effort toward accomplishing tasks. Almost all respondents exhibited moderate general self-efficacy beliefs, while a smaller percentage reported low action and coping self-efficacy. Only one respondent demonstrated a high level of coping self-efficacy. The findings indicate that respondents moderately believed in their ability to perform tasks and achieve goals. Moderate self-efficacy suggests that students possessed some degree of confidence in accomplishing responsibilities despite challenges. However, respondents with low action and coping self-efficacy tended to focus on failures, exert less effort, and easily give up on tasks. These results support the view that self-efficacy influences motivation, learning, and performance. Lunenburg (2011) emphasized that individuals tend to engage only in tasks they believe they can successfully accomplish.

3.1.4 Academic Performance of the Respondents

Most respondents across all Senior High School tracks obtained satisfactory to very satisfactory grade point averages. Students from the Accountancy, Business, and Management track recorded the highest percentage of very satisfactory GPAs, followed by students from the General Academic Strand and Pre-Baccalaureate Maritime Specialization track. Respondents from the Humanities and Social Sciences and Technical Vocational and Livelihood tracks also demonstrated satisfactory to very satisfactory academic performance. Only two students obtained failing remarks. The results indicate generally positive academic performance among respondents despite variations across tracks. The findings suggest that most students were academically capable of meeting institutional performance standards regardless of specialization.

3.2 Relationship Between Career Interests and Academic Performance

3.2.1 Career Interest and Grade Point Average

Among the six career interest dimensions, only investigative interest demonstrated a statistically significant but very weak positive correlation with GPA ($r = .187$, $p = .049$). The remaining career interests, namely realistic, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional, showed no significant relationship with academic performance. The findings suggest that students interested in scientific and analytical fields tended to achieve slightly higher academic performance. Ramirez (2017) stated that students maintain their academic and career performance through various contextual and motivational factors. The weak relationship also implies that career guidance programs should align students' interests with academic support interventions. However, career interest alone may not strongly determine academic success. The results further indicate that students enrolled in practical and mechanical courses, such as maritime and technology-related programs, may pursue these fields regardless of personal interests or abilities. Mylonakis (2011) explained that students' career decisions are often influenced by parents and family support. Similarly, Laguador (2014) noted that students consider the preferences of individuals who financially support their education. Aguado et al. (2015) also concluded that pursuing maritime courses in the Philippines is commonly a personal and family-supported decision.

3.3 Relationship Between Self-Efficacy Beliefs and Academic Performance

3.3.1 Self-Efficacy Beliefs and Grade Point Average

The findings revealed that action self-efficacy, coping self-efficacy, and general self-efficacy beliefs were not significantly correlated with GPA. The results showed that students' self-reported efficacy beliefs did not significantly influence their actual academic performance. Some respondents demonstrated high self-efficacy despite low academic performance. The findings suggest that self-efficacy beliefs alone may not directly predict academic achievement among the respondents. McLean et al. (2015) stated that strong self-efficacy beliefs involve confidence in one's ability to perform and improve academically. However, Basilia (2016) argued that motivation alone does not determine academic performance, as the learning environment and teacher-related factors also influence achievement. The results also indicate that students' willingness to initiate tasks was unrelated to academic performance. Respondents with moderate action self-efficacy still demonstrated low academic performance in some cases. These findings imply that increasing students' confidence and monitoring their holistic development may help improve both academic achievement and psychological readiness. Stakeholders are therefore encouraged to monitor students' academic progress, career interests, and self-efficacy beliefs to support their overall development.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The study determined the relationship between career interests, self-efficacy beliefs, and academic performance among

111 Grade 12 students from the pioneer Senior High School batch. Findings revealed that only Investigative career interest showed a significant but very weak positive relationship with GPA, while Realistic, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional interests were not significantly related to academic performance. Similarly, Action, Coping, and General Self-Efficacy beliefs showed no significant relationship with GPA. Although respondents demonstrated higher preferences for Social and Investigative interests and moderately high coping self-efficacy, these psychological factors were not strongly associated with academic achievement. The findings suggest that career interest profiling and self-efficacy beliefs alone may have limited predictive value for academic intervention programs within the institutional context, emphasizing the importance of integrating psychological, environmental, and academic support factors in student development programs.

Educational institutions are encouraged to strengthen career exposure and academic support programs for Grade 12 students, particularly in Science and Technology-related fields through work immersion activities and career talks with professionals from agencies such as DOST, TESDA, and DICT. Guidance counselors should enhance counseling services, career guidance activities, and self-improvement programs to help students align their interests with academic pathways. Teachers are also encouraged to implement Parent-Teacher-Counselor case conferences and integrate career-coaching activities into classroom instruction to support students with low academic performance. Future researchers are recommended to conduct broader and longitudinal studies incorporating variables such as study habits, academic motivation, burnout, and external circumstances to further examine factors affecting academic performance.

The study was limited to 111 Grade 12 students from the pioneer Senior High School batch of one institution during the implementation of the K–12 curriculum. The findings focused only on career interests and self-efficacy beliefs in relation to academic performance, which explained less than five percent of GPA variance. The adjustment period associated with the new curriculum may also have influenced the weak relationship between self-efficacy and academic performance. Additionally, the study did not include other possible factors such as study habits, academic motivation, burnout, and environmental influences that may affect students' academic achievement.

Compliance with ethical standards

The study complied with institutional ethical requirements for research involving Senior High School students. Ethical safeguards were implemented because the participants were considered minors and part of a vulnerable group. Institutional approval for the conduct of the study was granted by the OIC Principal/Academic Coordinator. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained through the use of code numbers instead of names, restricted access to responses, secure storage of completed questionnaires in the Guidance Office, and coded retrieval of academic records from the Registrar's Office. Participation was voluntary, and students were informed of their right to decline participation or skip questions without penalty.

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