

Abstract 9:

Perceived influences and satisfaction with A/L stream selection among grade 12 students in Nallur Educational Division

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Background and objective: Selecting an A/L stream is a critical decision that shapes students' career paths. Various factors influence this decision, and whether students are satisfied with their decisions remains unclear. This study aimed to describe perceived influences on stream selection, student satisfaction with their selected stream, and determine the association between selected sociodemographic, personal and academic factors and stream selection among Grade 12 students in the Nallur Educational Division.

Methods: An institution-based descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among 394 Grade 12 students selected through proportionate stratified random sampling. Data were collected via a self-administered questionnaire and analysed using SPSS. Influence and satisfaction levels were categorized using a five-point Likert scale, with scores grouped into low (1–3) and high (4–5). Chi-square test and t-test were used for analysis.

Results: Among 394 respondents (response rate 100%), 58.9% were female, 80.5% were from Jaffna, 67.5% had parents who studied up to A/L or higher, and 75.4% reported a monthly family income >Rs.50,000. Half (50%) of the sample had received career guidance. The majority (89.6%) selected their stream based on career aspirations. Parents (71.6%), siblings (86%), teachers (90.6%), and peers (88.8%) had a low influence on stream selection, while the availability of career opportunities had high influence (57.4%). Over half (54.3%) were less satisfied with their selected stream. Significant associations were found between stream selection and gender ($p<0.001$), hometown($p=0.002$), monthly income($p=0.004$), parental education ($p=0.014$), O/L results($p<0.001$), career guidance($p=0.035$), teachers' influence($p<0.001$), extracurricular activities($p<0.001$), self-efficacy($p<0.001$), and career opportunities($p=0.002$).

Conclusions and recommendations: A large proportion of students selected their stream based on career opportunities but are less satisfied with their selected stream. Career guidance programmes providing comprehensive information about streams, job opportunities, and potential career paths must be introduced to improve stream selection. A supportive environment that minimizes academic pressure and encourages students to explore their interests and strengths needs to be created.

Keywords: Advanced Level, Stream selection, Perceptions, Satisfaction, Jaffna