

Assessing the Motivations of Nursing Students Graduated from Non-STEM SHS Strands to Pursue BSN

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Abstract

Introduction: Previous studies on nursing career choice commonly emphasize interest in healthcare, job security, and social influence; however, limited literature explores why non-STEM Senior High School graduates pursue the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN), particularly in the Philippine context. **Objective:** This study aims to contribute to the knowledge base of the nursing profession and catalyze or help develop positive changes and improvements in different sectors. **Methods:** This quantitative descriptive-correlational study examined the factors influencing BSN students who did not graduate from STEM strands in Senior High School to pursue a nursing career, guided by the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). Using purposive non-random sampling, 105 participants completed a survey assessing career opportunities and job safety, interest in healthcare, family and peer influence, perceived prestige, institutional characteristics, and selected demographic variables. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, one-way analysis of variance, and multiple regression analysis. **Results:** Career opportunities and job safety ($M = 3.36$) and perceived prestige and societal expectations ($M = 3.26$) were strongly influential in career choice. Interest in healthcare ($M = 2.98$) and institutional characteristics ($M = 2.94$) were influential, whereas family and peer influence ($M = 2.42$) was not. TPB assessment showed a very positive attitude toward BSN ($M = 3.55$), moderate parental influence ($M = 2.97$), and moderate perceived behavioral control ($M = 2.95$). Demographic variables were not significantly associated with any factor. Among TPB constructs, attitude, parental subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control significantly influenced career choice. **Conclusion:** The study concludes that non-STEM students' motivation to pursue BSN is driven primarily by career-related considerations rather than social influence or prior academic alignment.

Keywords:

Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Career Choice, Motivations, Students, Theory of Planned Behavior



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INTRODUCTION

Literature on the career choice of nursing students taking their college degree usually highlights several factors behind their decision including interest in being in the healthcare field, anticipated job security, prior exposure to healthcare scenarios, familial influences, social pressure, and high salary (Liaw et al., 2017). A common response of students about their motivation to the decision of pursuing nursing is their desire to be of help or service to others (McKenna et al., 2023).

In the Philippines, before heading to the tertiary level, one must finish Senior High School, where there are several tracks to choose from, by which the Academic Track – STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) Strand is the most in line to nursing. There is little literature that focuses on the factors that affect the decisions of non-STEM students to take BSN, particularly within Cavite, Philippines. Understanding why non-STEM graduates decide to pursue nursing despite having studied a different discipline is helpful to Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) to individualize and tailor admission recruitment strategies, student support programs, and curriculum and subject matter development; and also, to align the expectations of the students with the realities of the nursing career.

For this study, the following questions will guide the researcher:

1. What is the demographic profile of the non-STEM students enrolled in the BSN program in terms of:
 - a. Age;
 - b. Sex;
 - c. SHS track/strand;
 - d. Combined parental income;
 - e. Family members in nursing?
2. To what extent do the following factors influence their decision to pursue BSN?
 - a. Career Opportunities and Job Safety;
 - b. Interest and Passion for Healthcare;
 - c. Family and Peer Influence;
 - d. Perceived Prestige and Societal Expectations; and
 - e. Desired Higher Education Institution.
3. What is the level of influence of the constructs of the Theory of Planned Behavior (i.e., attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control) to the students' decision to pursue BSN?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' demographic profiles and the degree of influence of the above factors in their decision to pursue BSN?
5. To what extent do the constructs of the Theory of Planned Behavior (i.e., attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control) influence the relationship between the identified influencing factors and the students' decision to pursue BSN?

Further, the following null hypotheses are presented:

- There is no significant relationship between the demographic profile and the factors influencing the decision to pursue BSN.
- The constructs of the Theory of Planned Behavior (attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control) do not significantly mediate the relationship between the identified influencing factors and the students' decision to pursue BSN.

This study aims to contribute to the knowledge base of the nursing profession and catalyze or help develop positive changes and improvements in different sectors.

This study enhances the self-awareness of students on the factors that are shaping their decisions, helping students to confirm their motivations for taking BSN. To influential figures in guiding students towards wise choices such as teachers and guidance counselors, this study provides data on non-STEM students' motivations to enable more responsive career guidance and education. This study also gives an insight into the influential role of parents and families in the career choices of students, thus enabling them to align familial expectations with student aspirations and provide support when needed. To the Philippine education agencies concerned namely the Department of Education and Commission on Higher Education, this study contributes on providing data regarding the bridging of SHS students to tertiary education, specifically BSN, giving policymakers data that will guide them in preparation of curriculum, resources, and standards and policies. Lastly, this study aims to support nursing colleges and nursing educators by illuminating the influences of non-STEM students in taking BSN which can be taken into consideration in instruction and academic preparation, fostering better compliance to program outcomes, enhancing retention of learning, boosting academic performance, completion of the BSN program, passing of the licensure exam, and deployment as registered nurses in different sectors.

METHODS

1. Design

The study uses a descriptive and correlational quantitative survey-based research design to describe and assess the factors influencing the decisions of BSN students who did not take STEM during their senior high school studies.

2. Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The research locale is a private HEI in General Trias City, Cavite, Philippines. The population from which the respondents were sampled is the student body of the College of Nursing of the university. The sampling technique to be employed is a purposive non-probability sampling.

A total of 105 students who have the following qualities were qualified and sampled to be participants in the study:

1. Enrolled in the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program;
2. Enrolled in the 2nd semester of A.Y. 2024-2025; and
3. Studied one among the following non-STEM SHS tracks/strands: AT-ABM, AT-GAS, AT-HumSS, TVL Track, ADT, or Sports Track.

3. Instruments

A modified research questionnaire was used. The instrument is composed of three parts: Part A is for the demographic profile, Part B is the degree of influence of the factors affecting the decision to pursue BSN, and Part C consists of questions pertaining to the constructs of the Theory of Planned Behavior.

Part A consists of the questions regarding their personal profile. The following questions and options were given to the respondents:

1. Age:
 - a. 16-19 years old
 - b. 20-22 years old
 - c. 23-25 years old
 - d. 26-28 years old
 - e. >29 years old
2. Sex:
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
3. SHS track/strand:
 - a. Academic Track – ABM
 - b. Academic Track – GAS
 - c. Academic Track – HumSS
 - d. Arts and Design Track
 - e. Sports Track
 - f. Technical-Vocational-Livelihood Track
4. Combined monthly parental income (Based on socio-economic classifications of Philippine Institute for Development Studies):
 - a. < ₱10,957 (Poor)
 - b. ₱10,957 to ₱21,194 (Low income)
 - c. ₱21,194 to ₱43,828 (Lower middle class)
 - d. ₱43,828 to ₱76,669 (Middle class)
 - e. ₱76,669 to ₱131,484 (Upper middle class)
 - f. ₱131,484 to ₱219,140 (High income)
 - g. ₱219,140 and up (Rich)
5. Family members in nursing:
 - a. With, nuclear family
 - b. With, extended family
 - c. Without

Part B consists of questions assessing the degree to which specified factors affected their decision to pursue a Bachelor of Science in Nursing despite not graduating from a STEM program in senior high school. The items are answerable by a 4-point Likert scale where 1 stands for 'strongly disagree', 2 for 'disagree', 3 for 'agree', and 4 means 'strongly agree'. Part B is comprised of five factors with five questions each for a total of 25 questions adapted from the instrument of the study of Macayana (2025). The factors are as follows:

1. Career Opportunities and Job Safety
2. Interest and Passion for Healthcare

3. Family and Peer Influence
4. Perceived Prestige and Societal Expectations
5. Desired Higher Education Institution.

Akin to Part B, Part C is answerable by a 4-point Likert scale with the same values. Part C consists of 28 questions that gauge the mediation of the Theory of Planned Behavior constructs in the study. Questions are adapted and modified from the instrument of Moses et al. (2020).

The research instrument used in Part B is adapted and modified from the study of Macayana (2025) titled *From Senior High to Science Education: Factors Influencing NonSTEM Senior High School Graduates in Choosing BSE Science as their Degree Program*. The research instrument used in Part C is adapted and modified from the study of Moses et al. (2020) titled *Development of the Theory of Planned Behaviour Questionnaire: Students' Career Choices in STEM* which was presented at the 28th International Conference on Computers in Education.

To request the use of the research instrument for this study, an electronic mail with a formal letter of request attached was sent to the authors. The author gave subsequent approval via email; thus, their questionnaires were used for this study. Furthermore, all studies are published in accordance with Creative Commons CC-BY-NC 3.0 which states that researchers are free to adapt, remix, transform, and build upon the material from where the questionnaire has been adapted from given that proper credit is given, an indication that changes were made, and the study's product will not be of any commercial purpose.

To ensure the validity of the questionnaire and its suitability for the intended study population, a pilot test was conducted prior to the commencement of actual data collection. The pilot group consisted of 15 respondents who met the same inclusion criteria as the target participants and were drawn from the same locale. These respondents completed the research questionnaire under conditions similar to those of the main study. Following the collection of responses, the data were subjected to reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha. The instrument yielded a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.957, indicating excellent internal consistency and confirming that the questionnaire was highly reliable for use in the study.

The questionnaire will be considered reliable if the Cronbach's alpha value is 0.70 and above. According to Pourhaji et al. (2024), if the Cronbach's alpha value is above 0.7, the research instrument is considered suitable and has an indication that there is a strong internal consistency among the questions.

4. Data Collection Process

Prior to data collection, the research proposal was completed by the researcher and approved by the institution. Permission to conduct the survey was then acquired from the research locale and dissemination of the online survey questionnaire was done for the pilot group consisting of 15 respondents with the same qualifications from the same locale. After the data was gathered, analyzed, and confirmed

reliable by a Chronbac's alpha of 0.70 or higher, the same research instrument was disseminated to the sampled participants for the actual data gathering. Microsoft Forms (MS Forms) was used for online surveying, for convenience and to ensure the safety of data.

After collecting data, the responses will be tabulated, organized, and sent to the certified statistician for statistical analysis. The results and discussion are as discussed in the latter section of the study.

5. Data Analysis

SOP #1, #2, and #3. Descriptive statistics are used to report the demographic profile of the respondents and the factors' influence in the decision to choose BSN played a role in their pursuance of the nursing profession.

SOP #4. The Shapiro-Wilk test was used for testing normality and to test the hypothesis that the data are normally distributed. If the p-value obtained from the Shapiro-Wilk test is greater than 0.05, the data can be considered normally distributed; otherwise, it is classified as non-normal (Schober & Vetter, 2020). The Shapiro-Wilk p-value was compared to a significance level of 0.05. If the result indicates normality, parametric tests can be applied.

For normally distributed data involving comparisons across three or more groups, one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was done to assess whether the demographic profile is associated to the affecting factors. One-way ANOVA test assesses whether there are statistically significant differences among the means of three or more independent groups. It assumes both normal distribution and homogeneity of variances. When these assumptions are met, one-way ANOVA is an efficient and powerful tool for group comparisons (Derban et al., 2021). In contrast, if the Shapiro-Wilk test indicates that the data is not normally distributed, other measures will be employed. For comparisons between only two demographic profile groups (i.e. age and sex), the Mann-Whitney U-test is used. This test does not assume normality and evaluates whether one group tends to have higher values than the other and is especially useful for ordinal data or non-normal interval data (Shatz, 2023).

When comparing more than two groups with non-normal data such as SHS track/strand, combined parental income, and presence of family members in nursing; the Kruskal-Wallis H-test served as an alternative to one-way ANOVA. It assesses whether there are statistically significant differences in the distributions of the groups, based on ranked data and is particularly advantageous when the data violate the assumptions of ANOVA, such as non-normality or heterogeneity of (Sherwani et al., 2021).

SOP #5. To determine the extent to which the constructs of the Theory of Planned Behavior (i.e. attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control) influence the students' decision to pursue BSN, Multiple Regression Analysis (MRA) was employed. Multiple Regression Analysis allows researchers to assess the relative strength and direction of each predictor variable while controlling for the effects of the others (Shaikh et al., 2020). In this study, it helps identify which TPB constructs significantly predict or influence the different factors which affected the decision-making process of students who chose to enroll in the BSN program.

6. Research Ethics

Prior to actual data collection, necessary approval from the appropriate offices (i.e. Center for Research and Development, Quality Assurance Office, Data Privacy Office, and Academic Affairs Office) were secured through accomplishment of proper forms and requests to ensure ethical collection of data.

The respondents were asked for their informed consent after full disclosure and information is provided regarding their participation in the study. No participant will be forced to take part in the study against their will. The researchers also ensure that the data being collected will be held confidential and only for the use of the study.

In observance of the Data Privacy Act of 2012, the participants' names and any other sensitive information were not asked in the survey.

Should at any moment of the study, the participants wish to withdraw, they had the freedom and right to do so. After data gathering and completion of the study, all responses will be disposed of in accordance with institutional research protocols. Data were only stored in a high-security password protected cloud storage via Microsoft OneDrive.

RESULTS

Demographic Profile of the Participants

The majority of respondents were aged 20 to 22 years old (49.5%), followed closely by those aged 17 to 19 (47.6%), and most were female (70.5%). In terms of SHS background, the largest groups came from the Humanities and Social Sciences (35.2%) and Accountancy, Business and Management (33.3%) strands. Regarding socioeconomic status, most respondents were from upper middle-class families (25.7%), with many also from middle and lower middle-class households (22.9% each). Lastly, in terms of family connections to nursing, the largest proportion had no family members in the profession (43.8%).

Table 1. Demographic Profile

Demographic	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	17-19 years old	50	47.6%
	20-22 years old	52	49.5%
	23-25 years old	2	1.9%
	29 years old or older	1	1.0%
Sex	Female	74	70.5%
	Male	31	29.5%
SHS Track/Strand	Academic Track – ABM	35	33.3%
	Academic Track – GAS	17	16.2%
	Academic Track – HumSS	37	35.2%
	Arts and Design Track	2	1.9%
	Sports Track	2	1.9%
	Technical Vocational Livelihood Track	12	11.4%
Combined Monthly Parental Income	₱10,957 or less (Poor)	8	7.6%
	₱10,957 to ₱21,194 (Low income)	6	5.7%
	₱21,194 to ₱43,828 (Lower middle class)	24	22.9%
	₱43,828 to ₱76,669 (Middle class)	24	22.9%
	₱76,669 to ₱131,484 (Upper middle class)	27	25.7%
	₱131,484 to ₱219,140 (High income)	6	5.7%
Family Members in Nursing	₱219,140 and up (Rich)	10	9.5%
	No known family members in nursing	46	43.8%
	With extended family members in nursing	43	41.0%
	With nuclear family members in nursing	16	15.2%

Factors Affecting Decision to Pursue BSN

As presented in Table 2, Career Opportunities and Job Safety emerged as the most influential factor with a mean score of 3.36, statistically interpreted as “Strongly Influential.” This was followed by Perceived Prestige and Societal Expectations, which ranked second with a mean score of 3.26, also interpreted as “Strongly Influential.” Interest and Passion for Healthcare ranked third with a mean score of 2.98, classified as “Influential,” while Desired Higher

Education Institution placed fourth with a mean score of 2.94, likewise interpreted as “Influential.”

The least influential category was Family and Peer Influence, which ranked fifth with a mean score of 2.42, statistically interpreted as “Not Influential.” These results indicate a descending order of influence, with pragmatic and prestige-related factors exerting the strongest impact, followed by personal interest and institutional considerations, and finally social influence exerting the least effect on the respondents’ decision to pursue the BSN program.

Table 2. Factors Affecting Decision to Pursue BSN

Affecting Factor	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
Career Opportunities and Job Safety	3.36	Strongly Influential	1
Interest and Passion for Healthcare	2.98	Influential	3
Family and Peer Influence	2.42	Not Influential	5
Perceived Prestige and Societal Expectations	3.26	Strongly Influential	2
Desired Higher Education Institution	2.94	Influential	4

Scale: 1.00–1.75 (Deterrent), 1.76–2.50 (Not Influential), 2.51–3.25 (Influential), 3.26–4.00 (Strongly Influential)

Theory of Planned Behavior Constructs

The results show that among the constructs influencing students’ decision to pursue BSN as a career path, Attitude had the highest mean score of 3.55, interpreted as “Very Positive.” Subjective Norms from Parents followed with a mean of 2.97, interpreted as “Regarded,” showing that parental influence was considered in their decision-making.

In contrast, Subjective Norms from Teachers (mean = 2.47) and Friends (mean = 2.23) were both interpreted as “Disregarded,” indicating that these groups were given less weight in influencing the decision. Finally, Perceived Behavioral Control obtained a mean of 2.97, interpreted as “Moderate Control,” reflecting that students moderately recognized their capability and resources to pursue nursing as their chosen career path.

Table 3. Factors Affecting Decision to Pursue BSN

Construct	Mean	Interpretation
Attitude	3.55	Very Positive
Subjective Norms (Parents)	2.97	Regarded
Subjective Norms (Teachers)	2.47	Disregarded
Subjective Norms (Friends)	2.23	Disregarded
Perceived Behavioral Control	2.97	Moderate Control

Attitude Scale: 1.00–1.75 (Very Negative), 1.76–2.50 (Negative), 2.51–3.25 (Positive), 3.26–4.00 (Very Positive)

Subjective Norm Scale: 1.00–1.75 (Highly Disregarded), 1.76–2.50 (Disregarded), 2.51–3.25 (Regarded), 3.26–4.00 (Highly Regarded)

Perceived Behavioral Control Scale: 1.00–1.75 (No Control), 1.76–2.50 (Slight Control), 2.51–3.25 (Moderate Control), 3.26–4.00 (Complete Control)

Significance of Demographic Profiles to Affecting Factors

Table 4 shows that all demographic profiles tested against the five affecting factors yielded P-values greater than 0.05, indicating no statistically significant relationships. Specifically, the P-values for Age ranged from 0.264 to 0.861, for Sex from 0.326 to 0.921, for SHS Track/Strand from 0.208 to 0.936, for Combined Parental Income from 0.217 to 0.606, and for Presence of Family Members in Nursing from 0.189 to 0.939. All values are above the conventional

threshold of significance, confirming the absence of statistical association.

The results therefore indicate that demographic characteristics such as age, sex, SHS track or strand, combined parental income, and presence of family members in nursing do not significantly influence the identified factors affecting students' decision to pursue the BSN program. Across all categories tested, the lack of significance was consistent, with no demographic variable showing statistical influence on the decision-making factors.

Table 4. Significance of Demographic Profiles to Affecting Factors

TPB Construct	Test value	Affecting Factor				
		I	II	III	IV	V
Attitude	<i>F-value</i>	31.73	30.82	0.05	36.98	17.88
	<i>P-value</i>	0.000*	0.000*	0.827	0.000*	0.000*
	<i>Coefficient Influence</i>	0.5322	0.4077	0.024	0.5888	0.0473
		Positive	Positive	-	Positive	Positive
Subjective Norms (Parents)	<i>F-value</i>	1.56	0.05	45.17	2.10	9.66
	<i>P-value</i>	0.214	0.820	0.000*	0.150	0.002*
	<i>Coefficient Influence</i>	0.0737	0.0105	0.4488	0.0875	0.2165
		-	-	Positive	-	-
Subjective Norms (Teachers)	<i>F-value</i>	0.57	0.67	1.61	2.06	1.02
	<i>P-value</i>	0.452	0.416	0.208	0.155	0.315
	<i>Coefficient Influence</i>	0.0449	0.0378	0.0856	0.0875	0.0711
		-	-	-	-	-
Subjective Norms (Friends)	<i>F-value</i>	0.46	0.10	15.92	0.05	2.60
	<i>P-value</i>	0.497	0.754	0.000*	0.832	0.110
	<i>Coefficient Influence</i>	0.0439	0.0157	0.2911	0.0141	0.1228
		-	-	Positive	-	-
Perceived Behavioral Control	<i>F-value</i>	0.15	13.25	2.94	1.47	0.46
	<i>P-value</i>	0.703	0.000*	0.031*	0.228	0.022
	<i>Coefficient Influence</i>	0.0286	0.2117	0.1852	0.0931	0.0598
		-	Positive	Negative	-	Negative

Note: I - Career Opportunities and Job Security, II - Interest and Passion for Healthcare, III - Family and Peer Influence, IV - Perceived Prestige and Societal Expectations, V - Desired Higher Education Institution

Influence of TPB Constructs to Affecting Factors

Table 5 shows that Attitude demonstrated a highly significant positive influence on most affecting factors, with P-values of 0.000* across Career Opportunities and Job Security; Interest and Passion for Healthcare; Perceived Prestige and Societal Expectations; and Desired Higher Education Institution. However, Attitude showed no significant influence on Family and Peer Influence (P = 0.386). Subjective Norms from Parents recorded significant positive effects on Family and Peer Influence (P = 0.000*) and Desired Higher Education Institution (P =

0.002*). Subjective Norms from Friends also displayed significant positive influence exclusively on Family and Peer Influence (P = 0.000*). By contrast, Subjective Norms from Teachers had no significant influence on any factor, with all P-values exceeding 0.155.

Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC) presented mixed results. It showed a significant positive influence on Interest and Passion for Healthcare (P = 0.000*). At the same time, it exhibited significant negative effects on Family and Peer Influence (P = 0.031) and Desired Higher Education Institution (P =

0.022). No significant influence of PBC was found on Career Opportunities and Job Security (P = 0.124) or Perceived Prestige and Societal Expectations (P = 0.195). Overall, the table indicates that Attitude

consistently showed strong positive significance across multiple factors, while Subjective Norms and PBC demonstrated more selective patterns of influence.

Table 5. Influence of TPB Constructs to Affecting Factors

TPB Construct	Test value	Affecting Factor				
		I	II	III	IV	V
Attitude	<i>F-value</i>	31.73	30.82	0.05	36.98	17.88
	<i>P-value</i>	0.000*	0.000*	0.827	0.000*	0.000*
	<i>Coefficient</i>	0.5322	0.4077	0.024	0.5888	0.0473
	<i>Influence</i>	Positive	Positive	-	Positive	Positive
Subjective Norms (Parents)	<i>F-value</i>	1.56	0.05	45.17	2.10	9.66
	<i>P-value</i>	0.214	0.820	0.000*	0.150	0.002*
	<i>Coefficient</i>	0.0737	0.0105	0.4488	0.0875	0.2165
	<i>Influence</i>	-	-	Positive	-	-
Subjective Norms (Teachers)	<i>F-value</i>	0.57	0.67	1.61	2.06	1.02
	<i>P-value</i>	0.452	0.416	0.208	0.155	0.315
	<i>Coefficient</i>	0.0449	0.0378	0.0856	0.0875	0.0711
	<i>Influence</i>	-	-	-	-	-
Subjective Norms (Friends)	<i>F-value</i>	0.46	0.10	15.92	0.05	2.60
	<i>P-value</i>	0.497	0.754	0.000*	0.832	0.110
	<i>Coefficient</i>	0.0439	0.0157	0.2911	0.0141	0.1228
	<i>Influence</i>	-	-	Positive	-	-
Perceived Behavioral Control	<i>F-value</i>	0.15	13.25	2.94	1.47	0.46
	<i>P-value</i>	0.703	0.000*	0.031*	0.228	0.022
	<i>Coefficient</i>	0.0286	0.2117	0.1852	0.0931	0.0598
	<i>Influence</i>	-	Positive	Negative	-	Negative

Note: I - Career Opportunities and Job Security, II - Interest and Passion for Healthcare, III - Family and Peer Influence, IV - Perceived Prestige and Societal Expectations, V - Desired Higher Education Institution

DISCUSSION

Demographic Profile of the Participants

The demographic profile of the respondents highlights that most students pursuing BSN fall within the typical college-age range of 17 to 22 years old. This reflects a traditional and direct transition into tertiary education. The predominance of female respondents reinforces the continuing perception of nursing as a female-oriented profession, despite growing advocacy for gender diversity in the field. The concentration of enrollees from non-STEM academic strands such as HUMSS and ABM further suggests that the BSN program is increasingly attracting students outside the conventional science-based tracks, reflecting the broad accessibility of nursing education regardless of prior specialization.

In terms of socioeconomic status, the findings indicate that many students come from middle to upper middle-class households, implying that the program is accessible to families with moderate financial capacity. However, the presence of students from lower income brackets emphasizes the importance of financial aid and institutional support to ensure inclusivity. Moreover, the data on family connections in nursing shows that a considerable portion of students pursue BSN without having immediate relatives in the profession suggesting that

career choice is not solely dependent on family tradition but also influenced by personal aspirations and external motivators such as job opportunities, societal regard, and individual interest in healthcare.

Factors Affecting the Decision of Students to Pursue BSN

Career opportunities and job security emerged as a “Strongly Influential” factor with an overall mean of 3.36, highlighting that students view nursing as a pathway to stability and growth. The results affirm that BSN is associated with career advancement, stable employment, high demand, and financial security. These align with existing literature, where Kovner (2022) emphasized the rising global demand for nurses due to healthcare challenges, while Kallio et al. (2022) noted that career development options make the profession attractive.

Interest and passion for healthcare was reported as “Influential,” reflecting that many students pursue BSN because of personal curiosity and motivation to engage with the field. The desire to explore new knowledge and fascination with healthcare innovations were among the stronger influences. Čukljek et al. (2020) found that altruism and a desire to help others often drive students into nursing, and Ali et al. (2024) similarly reported that making a positive societal contribution motivates enrollees. Despite varying weight, intrinsic factors like

empathy and meaningful work remain strong motivators for entering BSN programs.

Family and peer influence was interpreted as “Not Influential,” indicating that while encouragement exists, most decisions to pursue BSN were independently made. These results are consistent with Teresa-Morales et al. (2023), who reported that most nursing students independently selected nursing as their first choice. Nonetheless, Regulacion (2022) emphasized that family and peers remain important in collectivist settings, where external input can still shape educational and career choices even if not dominant.

Perceived prestige and societal expectations emerged as a “Strongly Influential” factor, showing that students are motivated by the respect and recognition associated with the nursing profession. Items such as the high regard for nurses in society and nursing’s link to success reinforced the weight of social validation. These findings align with Fontanilla et al. (2023), who reported that societal perceptions strongly influence nursing students, and Neumbe et al. (2023), who emphasized the nobility of the profession. Collectively, the results highlight how external validation and public esteem strongly shape students’ decisions to pursue BSN.

The characteristics of higher education institutions registered an “Influential” overall mean of 2.94, showing that resources, accessibility, and program quality contribute significantly to the choice of BSN programs. Facilities, technology, and proximity were the strongest institutional motivators, while reputation and peer influence carried less weight. Literature supports this, with Tamimi et al. (2023) noting that institutional rankings influence career choices, while Ling et al. (2021) identified infrastructure and placement opportunities as key to student enrollment.

Assessment of the factors influencing non-STEM SHS graduates’ decision to pursue BSN indicates that pragmatic considerations and societal prestige are the dominant drivers of choice. Career Opportunities and Job Safety emerged as the strongest factor, affirming the importance of employment stability and professional advancement in shaping students’ decisions. Perceived Prestige and Societal Expectations followed closely, underscoring the weight of societal respect and recognition associated with the nursing profession. Meanwhile, Interest and Passion for Healthcare, though still influential, were shown to be secondary to external motivations, suggesting that intrinsic interest plays a supportive rather than primary role. Similarly, Desired Higher Education Institution reflected moderate influence, highlighting that institutional facilities, accessibility, and academic reputation matter but are not decisive. Finally, Family and Peer Influence was found to be the least significant factor, suggesting that students’ decisions are largely self-directed and shaped more by practical career considerations than by external encouragement.

Theory of Planned Behavior Constructs

Attitude towards nursing as a career was rated “Very Positive,” showing that students strongly value the profession in terms of pride, respect, meaning, and emotional gratification. This reflects the central role of positive attitudes in the Theory of Planned Behavior, where a favorable outlook increases intention to pursue a given path. The results resonate with Choudhary (2024), who highlighted that students’ self-evaluative attitudes encourage them to take ownership of their learning and career development. Thus, students’ strong personal regard for nursing reflects a sense of meaning and fulfillment that motivates their choice of BSN.

Parental influence was interpreted as “Regarded,” suggesting that while parents are not the strongest determinants, their advice and encouragement are respected in career decision-making. This is consistent with Pujilestari et al. (2021), who found that parental guidance positively shapes students’ career decisions, and Owusu et al. (2021), who also emphasized the significant role of parental input in the development of career aspirations. The results therefore highlight that parents, while not exerting absolute control, still provide meaningful support that helps shape students’ inclination toward nursing.

Teachers’ influence was rated “Disregarded,” indicating that although they contribute to academic development, their role in career decision-making is minimal. The data reveal that instructional quality has a modest effect but does not significantly direct students toward nursing. This finding agrees with Owusu et al. (2021), who reported that teachers do not strongly influence students’ career choices.

Peer influence was also rated “Disregarded,” making it the least influential referent group in career decision-making. This indicates that friends’ advice, encouragement, or expectations do not strongly affect students’ choice of BSN, suggesting that respondents exercise autonomy in their career selection.

Perceived behavioral control (PBC) was rated “Moderate Control,” indicating that students generally feel capable of choosing nursing but still acknowledge some challenges in their decision-making. Students reported confidence in their autonomy and skills, but lower ratings for ease and self-confidence pointed to difficulties, possibly linked to their non-STEM background. Literature affirms that PBC plays a critical role in academic and career outcomes; Muñoz (2020) emphasized that self-efficacy fosters productive thoughts and actions that support success, while Etherton et al. (2020) stressed that control and coping abilities influence completion of academic work. This suggests that while students believe they have the ability to pursue BSN, their confidence is tempered by perceived barriers.

Significance of Demographic Profiles to Affecting Factors

The results show that demographic variables such as age, sex, strand, parental income, and the

presence of family in nursing did not significantly influence the factors affecting students' decision to pursue BSN. This outcome contrasts with prior studies that identified age and sex as relevant in shaping readiness for practice and overall student satisfaction in higher education (Lee et al., 2023). Similarly, other research has emphasized the role of gender and age in influencing student outcomes, suggesting that demographic characteristics can shape academic and professional orientations (Choi & Rajaguru, 2024).

The absence of significance in parental income and family influence also diverges from earlier findings. Family background and socioeconomic status have been reported as strong determinants of students' career choices in higher education (Hadiyati & Astuti, 2023). Socioeconomic factors were likewise found to play a key role in nursing career motivation in other contexts (Ali et al., 2024). In contrast, the present study suggests that the respondents may rely more on personal aspirations and immediate academic conditions rather than demographic backgrounds. Research has also shown that students' own personality traits and academic expectations strongly correlate with success in college, further emphasizing the role of individual rather than demographic factors (Wang et al., 2024).

Influence of TPB Constructs to Affecting Factors

The results highlight that attitude is the strongest factor influencing students' decision to pursue BSN, shaping their views on career opportunities, prestige, and interest in healthcare. This is consistent with the Theory of Planned Behavior, which identifies attitude as a primary driver of behavioral intention. Positive perceptions of nursing often reflect motivations such as altruism, societal contribution, and a passion for healthcare (McKenna et al., 2023).

The influence of subjective norms also emerges, with parents playing a major role in shaping students' career choices (Owusu et al., 2021). Friends reinforce this through peer encouragement and shared perspectives on career pathways (Christensen et al., 2022). Teachers, however, were found to have little to no impact, supporting previous research that notes the limited role of educators in influencing career aspirations (Stoica et al., 2025). Meanwhile, perceived behavioral control (PBC) strengthens students' intrinsic interest when they feel capable of succeeding in nursing (Lin et al., 2025). At the same time, higher self-efficacy reduces susceptibility to external pressures, suggesting that confident students rely more on personal motivation than on family or institutional expectations (Qiu et al., 2025).

Limitations of the Study

This study focused on identifying the factors influencing the decision of nursing students to pursue a Bachelor of Science in Nursing despite not completing STEM strands in Senior High School.

Participants only included students enrolled in the BSN program at the local HEI for Academic Year 2024–2025 who previously completed non-STEM tracks, such as ABM, HumSS, GAS, Arts and Design, Technical-Vocational-Livelihood, or Sports. STEM-strand students were excluded, as the study specifically examined motivations of those without prior STEM-based preparation. The findings are limited to the sampled participants and do not generalize to the broader HEI system, the City of General Trias, or the Province of Cavite. Additionally, data collection was done through an online method which renders the inability of the researcher to gauge non-written communication from the respondents.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that the decision of non-STEM Senior High School graduates to pursue the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program is not merely a matter of interest or external pressure but reflects a deliberate and thoughtful process shaped by internal convictions and perceived opportunities. Students are actively navigating their options by evaluating the alignment between their aspirations and the broader advantages they associate with the nursing profession.

The findings suggest that students are influenced most strongly by their perception of the nursing career as one that offers long-term stability, clear advancement pathways, and social recognition. This indicates that their decisions are highly pragmatic, shaped by a future-oriented mindset where job security and professional status are critical considerations. The choice to enter nursing, therefore, may be seen less as a calling in the traditional sense and more as a strategic step toward upward mobility and life stability.

A deeper inference is that students are asserting autonomy over their career choices. The limited influence of parents, peers, and teachers points to a generation that is increasingly self-directed and confident in making independent decisions. This autonomy is further supported by the finding that students with higher perceived behavioral control tend to be less influenced by social and institutional pressures. In other words, the more capable and empowered a student feels, the more they rely on personal judgment rather than external validation.

The Theory of Planned Behavior helped clarify these dynamics. Attitude emerged as a strong predictor of students' motivations, showing that when individuals believe in the personal and societal value of a career, they are more likely to pursue it. This highlights the importance of how nursing is perceived in the public domain and within students' belief systems. On the other hand, subjective norms were only influential when coming from parents, and even then, the influence was modest. Teachers and peers were largely regarded as peripheral figures in the students' decision-making process. Perceived

behavioral control played a more complex role, acting both as a motivator when students felt capable and as a barrier when confidence or academic preparedness was lacking.

Perhaps the most surprising result is the lack of statistical association between demographic profiles and decision-making factors. This challenges the assumptions found in previous studies and suggests that motivations to pursue nursing are consistent across different socioeconomic and academic backgrounds. The accessibility and universal appeal of nursing as a career option seem to transcend traditional barriers, making it a desirable choice for a wide range of students.

Based on the study's findings, nursing education institutions and program developers are encouraged to strengthen career orientation programs for non-STEM students, highlighting diverse nursing career paths, job security, and advancement opportunities. Academic support services such as bridging programs, tutoring, and mentoring can enhance students' confidence and academic readiness, while reflective activities and values clarification workshops can foster intrinsic interest in healthcare. Additionally, showcasing program facilities and learning environments can align institutional resources with students' preferences, enhancing recruitment and retention.

Senior High School career counselors should provide accurate insights into the nursing profession, address common misconceptions, and prepare non-STEM students for the academic demands of the BSN program, while supporting autonomous career decision-making. Policymakers and workforce planners can further promote nursing as a strategic career by offering targeted scholarships, financial aid, and recognition of its critical role in healthcare systems. Future research should examine longitudinal motivational changes, barriers and facilitators for non-STEM students, and extend investigations to other regions or populations to inform nursing education strategies and policies.

In conclusion, the study shows that students choose BSN not simply because they are encouraged to do so, but because they see it as a viable and meaningful path toward a secure and respected future. Their decisions are grounded in both personal conviction and rational evaluation, shaped by confidence in their abilities and an appreciation of the professional and social benefits of the nursing field. These findings point to the need for educational institutions and policymakers to support this emerging generation of independent and purposeful students by providing resources, guidance, and opportunities that empower them to act on well-informed and self-determined career goals.

Conflict of Interest

There is no known and recognized conflict of interest in the conduct of this study.

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