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# Determinants of Students' Choice of Academic Programme at the Senior High School Level

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the determinants of students' choice of program at the Senior High School (SHS) level in the Gomoa East District of the Central Region of Ghana. It was a quantitative study underpinned by the positivist paradigm. The descriptive survey design was employed for the study. A self-developed questionnaire was used to collect data from a sample of 229 for the study.

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*Index terms*— determinants, program choice, senior high school, gomoa east.

## 1 Introduction

he choice of program students make when entering Senior High school (SHS) is very critical for their future achievements. The choice of career students aspire for and the choice of program they make when entering SHS is very crucial and related to each other. A poor choice of program directs all individual efforts and resources in the wrong direction, particularly when not aligned with expectations; would not only be frustrating but also draining of energy and waste of resources (Hagel & Shaw, 2010).

## 2 a) Determinants of students' choice of academic program

The specific academic programs students pursue are determined by several factors, some of which are beyond the students' control. The factors which impact the choice of academic program involve significant decisions which set the foundation for success or otherwise in life and career (Agrey & Lampadan, 2014). To some extent, the choice is significantly driven by some demographic characteristics of the students involved (Kinzie, et al., 2004). A review of studies on determinants of academic program choice revealed that some prevalent elements across nations such as parental preference, mass media, the influence of peers, and cost associated with pursuing a particular program drive the choice of the programs (Baharun et al., 2011).

Similarly, Kankam and Onivehu (2000), Taylor and Buku (2006) found that intellectual ability, aptitudes, school, family, personality, self-esteem, values, interest, and environmental influences as determinants of students' choice of career. Mankoe (2007) also added the following list as factors that influence students' choice of career and related programs; interests, abilities and personalities, life and work satisfaction, and employment variables. Students' low interest, content knowledge, and negative self-concept of ability as well as perceived lack of the subject's relevance in line with anticipated careers are identified are also reputed as possible driving forces affecting students' decision to either enroll and stay in a particular program or not (Fullarton & Ainley, 2000; Merzyn, 2011). In advancing knowledge on the individual and personal factors that determine students' choice of program, some researchers revealed that students select their major academic programs that match their personality types and interest. (Worthington & Higgs, 2004; Asantewaa, 2020).

One wonders whether families of students play a role in students' crucial decision of program choice. Shumba and Naong (2012) revealed that the family was a significant determinant that predicted the career and academic program choices of secondary school students. Similarly, in a follow-up study, Kazi and Akhlaq (2017) examined the factors which affect the choice of program and career among students in two public sector universities in Lahore city, confirmed parental influence as the most significant factor in the choice of program and career aspirations of students. Research revelations on the phenomenon of determinants driving students' choice of program in other parts of the world are not quite different from those found in Ghana and Africa. In Hong Kong

## 2 A) DETERMINANTS OF STUDENTS' CHOICE OF ACADEMIC PROGRAM

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45 for instance, Law and Yuen (2011), Bardick, Berns, Magnusson and Witko (2004) revealed that students value  
46 the opinions of their parents, which implies that parents could inculcate an interest of certain programs in their  
47 children from childhood. Bardick, Berns, Magnusson and Witko (2004) also found that Canadian adolescents  
48 tend to appreciate their parents' opinions more than any other source for answers to an academic program and  
49 career-related issues. Many parents are in the position to influence their children's career development because  
50 they observe their children's development, know their interests and strengths, and have developed a trusting  
51 relationship with them (Geiger & Ogilby, 2000). In Singapore, it was revealed that parental involvement had a  
52 significant influence on the selection of nursing careers (Ching & Keith, 2011).

53 Some studies investigating the extent to which children are likely to choose programs that are associated  
54 with their parents' backgrounds or occupations have been conducted in the last few years (Van de Werfhorst et  
55 al., 2001; Dryler, 1998). Van de Werfhorst et al. (2003) explored the implications of social class, economic and  
56 cultural standing on the choice of program at Senior High and some higher educational institutions in Britain  
57 and found that these factors immensely affect students' choice of programs. At the same time, Payne (2003) has  
58 acknowledged that family background affects the tendency of obtaining good grades in school. Gostein (2000)  
59 similarly revealed that parents influence their children's programs and career choices in several ways including  
60 acting as role models. He further mentioned that sometimes this influence comes in the form of order for the  
61 children to enroll in particular programs. The first category of influence identified by Gostein (2000) was direct  
62 inheritance. With this, he meant that the adolescent is brought up based on the ideologies such as the family  
63 business which is the ward's inheritance. This indirectly compels the ward to choose a business program to groom  
64 himself or herself well to fit the status. However, such a program may not necessarily be related to the ward's  
65 inherent capabilities and interests as emphasized by the factor and trait theory. Another influence from parents  
66 is the inculcation of interest in their wards from infancy to pursue certain career paths which eventually inform  
67 academic program choices (Berzin, 2010).

68 In a similar vein, Elacqua, Gobierno, and Ibanez (2005) revealed that parents across school types rated  
69 academic reasons as the most important factor in their wards' program choice. Likewise, Schneider and Buckley  
70 (2002) studied the search patterns of parents of schools on an educational website and found that, on average,  
71 parents looked at programs that performed better academically (higher reading and mathematics scores) as their  
72 search progressed. In other words, parents eliminated programs in which students were found to have poor  
73 academic performance. Myburgh (2005) also buttressed the foregoing findings with the revelation that relatives,  
74 the social environment, and governmental policies have a significant impact on individual students' academic  
75 program choices. Gregory (1998) has opined that in some instances, parents' choices for their wards are either  
76 in the same status category or above theirs. For instance, a parent who is a physician would encourage the ward  
77 to opt for the same career or one of the comparable pedigrees. In the same way, a skilled worker may encourage  
78 the child to emulate him or urge him to aim for a higher-level managerial position and this will influence the  
79 program choice of the child. In this context, Holland's (1997) vocational theory's position is that parents must  
80 offer their children the right information necessary to make suitable program choices. This will enable them to  
81 make their own future decisions in life at every stage of life when there is a need to make a choice. This style  
82 is not practiced in the Gomoa East District since it seems parents and wards are not very well educated. Thus,  
83 parents rather motivate their wards to blindly copy and become like their supposed role models without recourse  
84 to the ward's inherent traits.

85 In relation to peers and friends, research has shown that students make their choices of programs in school  
86 because of influence from friends or peers, the mass media, and the cost associated with the program (Baharun et  
87 al., 2011; Afili & Mylanakis, 2011). Ramirez and Dizon (2014) opined that some students erroneously believe  
88 that brilliant students offer the sciences and usually get influenced by this and choose those courses but only  
89 realized later that it was the wrong field for them. Given this, it is always important to let one's interest drive  
90 the choice of study rather than follow friends blindly.

91 In addition to the foregoing, Students' backgrounds and abilities are very critical in program choice. Their  
92 ability to understand the concepts in a particular subject area could have a great impact on their decision  
93 regarding which program they will enroll in and commit their efforts to learn (Christie, Munro & Fisher, 2004).  
94 In other words, if a person's ability does not match up with a particular program, he or she would naturally go  
95 for an alternative one that would fit his/her level of understanding and abilities. Auyeung and Sands (2006), in  
96 a follow-up comparative study between Ghana and Australian high school students, revealed that the choice of  
97 business studies career was attributed to the driving force of general academic background, motivational factors  
98 such as good long-term earnings prospects, and the nature of teaching the program may impact on career choice  
99 for Ghanaian students. Some studies have shown that parents' educational background, profession, and success of  
100 family relatives in the business environments do have a significant influence on the choice of business studies as a  
101 field of study among university students (Uyar & Ali, 2011). Algwai, Howe and Bornaby (2005) were also of the  
102 view that high earning potential is not the only factor influencing career choice in business studies (accounting).  
103 They maintained that factors such as career advancement opportunity, prestige, social status, job security, and  
104 variety of choices are among the chief factors that have a significant influence on the career choice of accounting.

105 Maudline, Crain, and Mounce (2000) also discovered that the role of educators and the faculty was significant  
106 in the career and program choice of prospective accountants. The study identified lifestyle, financial security and  
107 motivation, nature of work, and work roles as indicators of career choice in accounting. To this end, Asuquo

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108 (2011), indicated that the interest of the individuals, peer influence, prestige as well as lucrative prospects often  
109 affect the decision on program choice in business studies. Kim and Markham (2002) in a similar vein, conducted  
110 a study on business majors at the tertiary level (accounting, finance, general business, management, marketing,  
111 management information system, and double major). They discovered that the top five reasons for choosing  
112 programs were: interest in a career, good job prospects of the course, a desire to run a business someday,  
113 and projected earnings in the related careers pertaining to the course. The last selected reasons for choosing  
114 a major course were the reputation of the major at the university, the perceived quality of instruction, the  
115 amount and type of promotional information, and the influence of friends. Kaur and Leen (2007) contributing  
116 to the discourse, established earlier that students' choices of major courses are influenced by factors such as  
117 gender, race, quantitative skills, interest in the subject, expected marketability, performance in major classes, the  
118 approachability and teaching reputation of faculty members. Meanwhile, Kusumwati et al. (2010) have found  
119 that the reputation of the institution involved is the most significant factor in a student's decision for further  
120 study and program to read in a particular school. In addition to all these external influences, the trait and factor  
121 theory highlighted the need to acknowledge the inherent traits of the person involved (student or pupils) for the  
122 right choice to be made (Taylor & Buku, 2006).

123 It has been observed that the socio-economic background of students also contributes significantly to their  
124 choice of programs of study at the SHS level since the fees paid for some programs are higher than that of  
125 other programs (Kusumwati et al., 2010). In light of the foregoing, Abubakar (2017) earlier revealed that the  
126 socioeconomic standing or income of students' families constitutes an essential aspect of what program a student  
127 would pursue. In the same vein, society views some programs as expensive. For example, a parent who is not  
128 economically sound will make it known to the ward why he or she should not choose Science-related programs  
129 such as elective Science and Home Economics. These subjects are practical-oriented and demand the purchase  
130 of several materials and apparatus. If parents of such wards are not economically sound, they will not be able  
131 to provide the needed financial assistance and support for the wards to pursue such courses. On socio-economic  
132 standing, an associated factor is the distance from one's home to the preferred institution hosting the program.  
133 Gibbons and Vignoles (2009) revealed that students originating from lower socio-economic backgrounds exhibited  
134 a lower attendance rate at high-quality institutions. Despite this, Holland's (1997) vocational theory cautions  
135 that there is a need for the person involved to possess enormous self-knowledge, self-awareness, and information  
136 required for choice or decision-making. In a modest form, however, this pathway is two-dimensional, consisting of  
137 monetary and non-monetary traits. A typical example of monetary characteristics is the direct costs associated  
138 with a particular program (i.e. tuition and books) and the revenue stream envisaged as a result of choosing a  
139 particular programme. On the other hand, social influences, tradition, and the aesthetic content of the program  
140 constitute the non-monetary aspect (Addadey, 2020).

141 Furthermore, high or low salaries associated with some occupations also determine what program students  
142 will choose to pursue (Taylor & Buku, 2006). These variations in salaries influence students to opt for particular  
143 programs instead of others (Hagel & Shaw, 2010). Odia (2014) earlier revealed that in Nigeria, job prospects,  
144 gender, and environmental factors significantly influence students' choice of Social Studies program, whilst  
145 socioeconomic standing, teacherrelated, and parental factors did not influence students' choice of Social Studies.

146 Furthermore, Demi, Coleman-Jensen and Synder (2010) have found that other determinants of the choice of  
147 programs comprise tuition and financial assistance policies concerning the program. Generally, high economic  
148 standing poses positive effects on students' choice of career as students and their parents usually tend to take  
149 into consideration the associated cost of education before pursuing a particular program of study. More often  
150 than not, higher levels of parental economic standing are strongly aligned with postsecondary school attainment  
151 (Demi, Coleman-Jensen & Synder, 2010). Although these are external influences, the Trait-And-Factor theory  
152 stresses the need to acknowledge one's inherent traits amid all these externalities (Parson, 1909). The theory  
153 believes that it is only when the internal traits are in congruence with environmental factors that someone can  
154 progress. It would thus be proper if pupils in the Gomoa East District have ample exposure to such information  
155 to guide them in determining their choice of academic programs at the SHS.

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158 The choice of an academic program is also influenced by factors such as gender, socio-economic status, better  
159 academic performance, parents' occupation and education level, and parental expectations (Adragna, 2009; Berzin,  
160 2010; Domenico & Jones, 2006). These factors influence the norms against which adolescents compare themselves  
161 and the context within which goals are pursued. Several studies show that students all over the world are usually  
162 faced with a dilemma in making a career choice decision in their lives (Bandura et (Issa & Nwalo, 2008).

163 Several studies have been conducted in places with differences in social settings and geographical location.  
164 For instance, a study among Optometry students by Kobia-Acquah, Owusu, Akuffo, Koomson and Pascal (2020)  
165 found that females were twice more likely to practice optometry and pursue an interest in pediatric optometry  
166 than males. A similar study in Sultanate of Oman by Al-Bahrani, Allawati, Shindi and Bakkar (2020) also  
167 revealed that females have higher scores on career aspiration than males. Similarly, in Hong Kong, Tsui, Lee,  
168 Hui, Chun and Chan (2019) also established that the academic and career aspirations of adolescents and their  
169 destinations are shaped by parental influences and outcomes of public examination results.

170 Shumba and Naong (2012) also found that the ability of the learner and teachers were significant factors that  
171 influence the career choice and aspirations of students in South Africa. Willcoxson and Wynder (2010) are of  
172 the view that predetermined career plans are good predictors of higher school achievement because they help  
173 students demonstrate greater interest in their coursework. Adeokun and Opoko (2015) also affirm that students  
174 with greater clarity about why they choose their course and whether the chosen course has a direct pathway to  
175 their preferred career have better outcomes in terms of academic performance.

176 On institutional link determinants of program choice, Quansah, Ankoma-Sey and Dankyi (2020) explored the  
177 factors influencing SHS female students' selection of STEM (Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics)  
178 related programs in tertiary institutions in Ghana. It was discovered that schoollinked indicators like elective  
179 mathematics status, course of study, and interest in science and mathematics, affected the choice of STEM-  
180 related programs by female students. Home-related factors (e.g., socioeconomic status, parents' educational  
181 level) and personal factors (e.g., locus of control, career indecision, self-confidence) also played a significant role  
182 in the choice of STEM-related programs by female SHS students. Agbo et al. (2015) hold the view that career  
183 aspiration is the professional path one wishes to follow and maintain; it is a lifelong process that requires accurate  
184 perceptions of ability, strength, potential, and achievement. The role of parents can neither be overemphasized nor  
185 underestimated in pupils' choices, especially in the area of choosing a program for Senior High School education  
186 since they have a portion to sign on the form of the choice of program (GES, 2019). Therefore, Sarkodie, Asare  
187 and Asare (2020) recommended that parents should always take time to discuss academic issues with their wards  
188 rather than imposing their opinions on them. This is achieved through the play materials they offer to the  
189 children, the encouragement or discouragement of interests, the activities they motivate their wards to partake  
190 in, and the experiences they offer in the family (Gostein, 2000;Tucci, 2005). For example, a medical doctor  
191 encourages the ward to read science at the Senior High level. In the U.S. for instance, an estimated 44 percent  
192 of physicians' sons prefer to read medicine whilst 28 percent of lawyers' wards choose law (Yao, 1999). Again,  
193 role model constitutes another type of parental control. Gostein (2003) has reported that this situation works  
194 well when the ward identifies closely with the parent. Mortimer (2005) also reported having realized a validation  
195 for this when he reported that a combination of prestigious paternal role models together with a close father-  
196 son or mother-daughter interaction facilitated a very efficient parental transfer of career values and influence on  
197 children's choices. Such children adhere to their parents' choices in order not to offend them (Gostein, 2000).  
198 The conceptual framework in Figure 1 depicts the determinants of students' choice of program at the Senior High  
199 School. Academic strength, parental factors, career aspiration, peers, and teacher influence are the independent or  
200 predictor variables whilst the choice of program (General Arts, Business, General Science, and Home Economics)  
201 is the dependent variable.

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203 Webster's International Dictionary (1998) defines choice as the voluntary act of selecting or separating from two  
204 or more things that which is preferred; and the determination of the mind in preferring one thing to another.  
205 The definition incorporates two components: First is the availability of alternatives, which presents an objective  
206 reality, and the second one, is the act of preference, which involves a subjective process. If a reference to career  
207 choice is made, the availability of career choices and the dynamics of choosing a career should be examined.  
208 Hence, in order for career choice to take place, there should be alternative career routes available and there  
209 should be an individual preference between these career options. A choice is a decision that most human beings  
210 make at some time in their lives; it is a decision that should be given careful consideration since it can affect the  
211 rest of a person's life and determines one's future career (Som, 2016).

212 The educational system in Ghana has three main transitional stages. It includes the basic level (Primary  
213 and Junior High Education). The second stage is a 3-year Senior High School Education, and the final stage is  
214 a 3 or 4-year tertiary education which comprises several different programs and courses offered in Universities,  
215 Technical Universities, Colleges of Education, and other tertiary institutions. Final-year students in Junior High  
216 Schools are required to select their preferred academic programs for SHSs. These programs determine to a large  
217 extent, which courses he/she can pursue at the University or other higher institutions of learning as well as where  
218 one's future career destination will be. Table 1 shows the programs offered at the SHS and their prospective  
219 careers. These choices have many implications for success in life and in the same vein pupils too are confronted  
220 with choice-making regarding specific programs to read at the Senior High School level. There is a centralized  
221 application system in which admission to Senior High School is premised and referred to as the Computerized  
222 School Selection and Placement System (CSSPS) application to Senior High School (Ajayi, 2011).

## 223 5 Choice of Programme

224 Parental

225 With this, gaining admission into SHS for a program is solely based on students' ranking of their preferred  
226 programs of interest together with their performance at the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE)  
227 which is a nationally administered examination meant to select qualified candidates into SHS. This implies that  
228 program choice is determined by students' performance in BECE. For example, if a student decides to do science  
229 at a particular Senior High School and does not attain the required grade point, she/he would not be permitted

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230 unless she decides to do a different program. Since the program of choice influences the choice of school, more often  
231 than not, pupils' choice of program emerges from the outcome of discussions between students and significant  
232 people in their lives such as parents, teachers, or friends. This choice goes in line with the position of Holland's  
233 Vocational theory because it acknowledges the need for counselors to educate parents on the need to study  
234 and identify the personality type of their wards to guide them to make better course choices that suit their  
235 personalities.

## 236 **6 c) Problem Statement**

237 It is evident that many students make wrong choices in relation to their program of study at the secondary  
238 school level because of ignorance, inexperience, peer pressure, advice from friends, parents, and teachers, or tags  
239 attached to certain programs without adequate knowledge (Salami, 1999). The SHS students including those in  
240 the Gomoa East district are challenged with several of these life issues of making choices in their education as  
241 well as their everyday endeavors.

242 Students find themselves in a dilemma as to what kind of program will commensurate with their future career  
243 aspirations, and some end up selecting programs that do not match their backgrounds or academic strengths  
244 (Takyi 2011). Research on students' choice of programme was done by different scholars and nearly all agreed  
245 that students' selection of programmes is affected by their career aspirations, careful planning, and influence  
246 from parents, teachers, peers, and siblings (Adinkrah & Ayarkwa 2020; Takyi 2011; Mankoe 2007; Baharun et  
247 al., 2011; Taylor et al., 2006). The researchers further revealed that students' selection of programmes was driven  
248 by the outcome of public examination results, students' personalities, and environmental factors.

249 Unfortunately, it appears that there is no available scientific study on this phenomenon the Gomoa East  
250 District to assess the determinants of students' choice of program at the SHS level. The current study was  
251 designed to fill this research gap.

## 252 **7 d) Research Question**

253 What are the determinants that best predict first-year students' choice of program at the Senior High School  
254 level in the Gomoa East District of the Central Region? e) Methodology i. Design, Population and Sample  
255 The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This design enabled us to gather data in a way that  
256 provided information on the determinants of students' choice of program. The target population for this study  
257 comprised all Senior High School (SHS) students in the Gomoa East District of the Central Region. The district  
258 has four SHSs, two public schools, and two private schools, totaling 2,006 first-year senior high school students  
259 in the district made up of 1,024 females and 982 males. The accessible population comprised all 1,144 first-year  
260 public senior high school students in the Gomoa East District of the Central Region comprising 629 females and  
261 515 males.

262 A sample of 229 f was drawn from 1,144 students using Kumar's (2019) criteria for sample selection which  
263 posits that 20-50 percent of the population is suitable for a descriptive study.

264 Respondents for each school were calculated using the mathematical formula; Number of first-year students  
265 in a particular school divided by the accessible population of first-year students, multiplied by the sample size.  
266 Therefore, the sample size for Fettehman SHS was 91 first-year students. The sample for the malesfemale strata  
267 for Fettehman SHS was calculated and presented in Table 2 Based on prepared sampling frames from each school,  
268 the systematic sampling approach was used to select the sample size of 229.

## 269 **8 f) Data Collection Instrument**

270 The main data collection instrument was a selfconstructed questionnaire on the Students' Choice of Academic  
271 Program (SCAP). The instrument had two sections (A and B). the A section focused on determinants of students'  
272 choice of program and section B dealt with students' choice of academic programs. the items in the instrument  
273 were measured on a four-point unilinear Likert scale ranging from 1-4.

274 (1-Strongly Disagree (SD), 2-Disagree (D), 3-Agree (A) and 4-Strongly Agree (SA).

## 275 **9 g) Validity and Reliability**

276 To enhance the validity of the study, the questionnaire it was given to questionnaire item construction experts  
277 and some senior lecturers in Measurement and Evaluation at the Department of Education and Psychology for  
278 their expert assessment. With this, both face and content validity were ensured. Regarding reliability, the  
279 questionnaire was pre-tested at the Odorgonno SHS in the Ga South District in Accra. This school was used  
280 because it is also a public senior high school and had similar administrative structures, offers the same programs,  
281 and had similar physical and emotional characteristics as those of the selected SHSs for the main study. A  
282 reliability test was carried out on the pre-tested questionnaire and a reliability coefficient of 0.75 was obtained.

## 283 **10 h) Ethical Considerations**

284 The consent of all the respondents was sought before their involvement in the study. To ensure informed consent  
285 and participation in the study processes, the participants were debriefed about the purpose of the study. They

## 16 B) RECOMMENDATIONS

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286 were given a written consent form to read and freely decide to participate in the study by signing. Confidentiality  
287 and anonymity were strictly adhered to throughout the data collection process. For this reason, their names were  
288 not required on the questionnaire so that no traces could be made of them with respect to their responses.

## 289 11 II.

## 290 12 Results and Discussion

291 Research Question: What are the determinants that best predict first-year students' choice of program at the  
292 Senior High School level in the Gomoa East District of the Central Region?

293 This research question sought to examine the determinants that best predicted first-year students' choice  
294 of program at the SHS level in the Gomoa East District of the Central Region. The data were analyzed using  
295 multiple linear regression and presented in Table 3. The tolerance values in Table 3 were not less than 10 which is  
296 within an acceptable threshold (Pallant, 2016). Also, the VIF results met the acceptable standard which requires  
297 that VIF values must be less than 10. For this reason, there is no problem with multicollinearity since both  
298 the tolerance and variance inflation factor results met the acceptable cut-off points. Therefore, a multiple linear  
299 regression model was run to examine the determinants that best predict first-year students' choice of program.

300 The results from Table 3 show that teachers' advice ( $\beta = .009$ ,  $p = .924$ ), future prospects ( $\beta = .003$ ,  $p =$   
301  $.971$ ), parents' selection of program ( $\beta = .001$ ,  $p = .988$ ), colleagues' advice ( $\beta = .216$ ,  $p = .103$ ) and career  
302 aspiration of students ( $\beta = .006$ ,  $p = .946$ ) have no statistically significant influence on their choice of program  
303 ( $p > .05$ ). This result means that teachers' advice, future prospect, parents' selection of program, colleagues'  
304 advice and career aspiration are not best predictors of first-year students' choice of program. Conversely, Table 3  
305 shows that there is a statistically significant positive effect of first-year students' academic performance on their  
306 choice of program ( $\beta = .199$ ,  $p < .05$ ),  $F(6, 222) = 1.632$ ,  $p < .05$ , with an  $R^2$  of  $.042$ .

## 307 13 III.

## 308 14 Discussion of Results

309 The research question sought to examine the determinants that best predicted first-year students' choice of  
310 program at the SHS level in the Gomoa East District of the Central Region. The results result mean that  
311 teachers' advice, future prospect, parents' selection of program, colleagues' advice, and career aspiration are not  
312 best predictors of first-year students' choice of program. The results suggest that first-year students' academic  
313 performance is the determinant that best predicts their choice of program. Also, it means that first-year students'  
314 academic performance positively influences their choice of program.

315 The findings of the study contradicted previous research on the fact that students' selection of academic  
316 programmes is determined by students' career aspirations, careful planning, and influence from parents, teachers,  
317 peers, and siblings (Adinkrah & Ayarkwa, 2020; Baharun, 2011; Takyi, 2011; Agel & Shaw, 2008; Mankoe,  
318 2007; Taylor et al., 2006). The study's finding implies that students' academic strength, academic success, or  
319 performance encourages them to know the required programme to choose at the SHS. For instance, when a  
320 student performs well, he/she is inspired to look at the programme that will be suitable for him or her based on  
321 his/her future and career aspirations.

322 The results of the study imply that advice from teachers, the future prospect of a program, parents' selection  
323 of program, colleagues' influence, and career aspiration are not determinants that predict students' choice of  
324 program. On the other hand, the result of the study revealed that students' general academic performance  
325 influences or best predicts students' choice of program.

## 326 15 a) Conclusions

327 The findings of the study revealed that the determinant that best predicts students' choice of program at the SHS  
328 level in the Gomoa East District of the Central Region was students' general academic performance followed by  
329 advice from peers of students. This revelation contradicts other findings as indicated earlier which reported that  
330 career aspiration, teacher, and parental factors as the best determinants of students' choice of program at the  
331 SHS level. The study, therefore, concludes that parents and management of SHSs should work hard on equipping  
332 teachers with all the necessary educational logistics that they need to teach well, and build students' self-efficacy  
333 in order to enhance their general academic strength and performance.

## 334 16 b) Recommendations

335 Based on the findings and conclusions drawn from the study, the following recommendations are made: 1.  
336 Educational guidance and counselling programs be regularly organized for students at Junior High Schools (JHSs)

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Figure 1:

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Program	Prospective Careers
General Art	Nursing, Teaching, Accountant, Communicator Editor
Business	Accountants, Financial Analysts, Bank Managers, Cashiers Business Advisors, Investment Managers, Auditors, Teachers
General Science	Doctor, Nurse, Teacher, Physician, Lab Technician
Visual Arts	Artist, Graphic Designer, Painter, Print Making, Film Making
Home Economics	Nutritionists, Caterers, Managers of Restaurants, Dietician and so on.

Figure 2: Table 1 :

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Accessible population		Sample size for Fetterman
M ? F	?	X
Where M ? F stand for accessible males or females.		
For example;	1,144 ×	91 ?
	515	X 41
This was replicated in selecting samples for the Ahmadiya SHS too.		

Figure 3: Table 2 :

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Variables	Constant	Teacher Advice	Future Prospect	Parents Selection	Colleagues Advice	Career Aspiration	Unstandardized Coefficients	B	Std. Error	5.575	.471	.009	.090	.003	.079
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Academic Performance .199 .072

R

R Square (R<sup>2</sup>)

Adjusted R Square

Source: Fieldwork (2021) F = 1.632; df = (6, 222); (N = 229); VIF = Variance Inflation Factor

Dependent Variable: Students' choice of Programme

Figure 4: Table 3 :

337 to enable them to make informed choices regarding the choice of their academic programs of study at the SHS  
 338 level. <sup>1 2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>© 2023 Global Journals Determinants of Students' Choice of Academic Programme at the Senior High School Level

<sup>2</sup>© 2023 Global Journals

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