



**វិទ្យាស្ថានជាតិអប់រំ**

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ករណីសិក្សានៅវិទ្យាល័យមួយក្នុងខេត្តកំពត**

**Exploring Factors Influencing the Decision-Making to Choose  
Social Science Subject among Upper Secondary School  
Students: A case study of an upper secondary school in  
Kampot province**

**A Mini-Thesis  
In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement  
for Master's Degree of Education Major in Mentoring**

**Phan Makara**

**December 2021**

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**Exploring Factors Influencing the Decision-Making to Choose  
Social Science Subject among Upper Secondary School Students:  
A case study of an upper secondary school in Kampot province**

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**December 2021**

## **មូលដ្ឋានសង្ខេប**

ចាប់តាំងពីឆ្នាំ 2010 មក ក្រសួងអប់រំ យុវជន និងកីឡាបានអនុវត្តប្រព័ន្ធអប់រំមួយ ។ ការអនុវត្តនេះ តម្រូវឱ្យចាប់ផ្តើមពីសិស្សថ្នាក់ទី 11 មានជម្រើសសម្រាប់ជ្រើសរើសយកថ្នាក់វិទ្យាសាស្ត្រ ឬថ្នាក់វិទ្យាសាស្ត្រសង្គម ។ ការចាប់ផ្តើមនៃការអនុវត្តនេះ សិស្សជិត 80% បានជ្រើសរើសសិក្សាយកថ្នាក់វិទ្យាសាស្ត្រ ហើយមានតែ 20% នៃសិស្សប៉ុណ្ណោះ ដែលបានជ្រើសរើសថ្នាក់វិទ្យាសាស្ត្រសង្គមក្នុងឆ្នាំសិក្សា 2017 ។ ក្នុងឆ្នាំសិក្សា 2018-2019 សិស្សដែលបានជ្រើសរើសផ្នែកវិទ្យាសាស្ត្រសង្គម បានកើនឡើងរហូតដល់ 51% និង 49% គឺជាការកើនឡើងនៃសិស្សដែលចូលចិត្តថ្នាក់វិទ្យាសាស្ត្រ ។ គោលបំណងសំខាន់នៃការសិក្សាស្រាវជ្រាវនេះគឺ ដើម្បីរកកត្តាដែលជះឥទ្ធិពលលើជម្រើសនៃវិទ្យាសាស្ត្រសង្គមរបស់សិស្សនៅកម្រិតវិទ្យាល័យ ។ ដើម្បីសម្រេចបាននូវគោលបំណងនៃការសិក្សានេះ អ្នកស្រាវជ្រាវបានប្រើប្រាស់ទាំងវិធីសាស្ត្រស្រាវជ្រាវបែបបរិមាណវិស័យ និងបែបគុណវិស័យ ដែលប្រមូលទិន្នន័យតាមរយៈ កម្រងសំណួរ **Survey questionnaire** សម្រាប់វិធីសាស្ត្រស្រាវជ្រាវបែបបរិមាណវិស័យ និងការសម្ភាសន៍ដោយប្រើសំណួរ **Semi-structure interviews** សម្រាប់វិធីសាស្ត្រស្រាវជ្រាវបែបគុណវិស័យ ។ ទំហំសំណាកសរុបនៃការសិក្សានេះ គឺមានអ្នកចូលរួមចំនួន 171 នាក់ ដែលអ្នកឆ្លើយសំណួរចំនួន 160 នាក់ ជាមួយនឹងកម្រងសំណួរ **Survey questionnaire** និងអ្នកចូលរួម 11 នាក់ បានត្រូវធ្វើការសម្ភាសន៍ ។ អ្នកស្រាវជ្រាវបានសម្ភាសន៍សិស្សថ្នាក់ទី 11 នៃវិទ្យាសាស្ត្រសង្គមចំនួនប្រាំមួយនាក់ គ្រូបង្រៀនមុខវិជ្ជាវិទ្យាសាស្ត្រពីរនាក់ គ្រូបង្រៀនមុខវិជ្ជាវិទ្យាសាស្ត្រសង្គមពីរនាក់ និងនាយកសាលារៀនម្នាក់ ។ ទិន្នន័យតាមបែបបរិមាណវិស័យត្រូវបានវិភាគតាម **Descriptive statistics** ចំណែកឯទិន្នន័យដែលប្រមូលបានតាមបែបគុណវិស័យត្រូវបានវិភាគតាម **Content analysis** ។ ការរកឃើញនៃការសិក្សាស្រាវជ្រាវនេះ បានបញ្ជាក់ថា មានកត្តាមួយចំនួនដូចជា កត្តាគ្រួសារ លទ្ធផលសិក្សារបស់សិស្ស បទពិសោធន៍ការសិក្សា បានជះឥទ្ធិពលដល់ជម្រើសនៃការជ្រើសរើសថ្នាក់វិទ្យាសាស្ត្រសង្គមរបស់ពួកគេ ។ នៅក្នុងការសិក្សានេះដែរក៏បានបង្ហាញផងដែរថា កត្តាមិត្តភក្តិ និងកត្តាសាលារៀន មិនមានឥទ្ធិពលលើការសម្រេចចិត្តរបស់សិស្សក្នុងការជ្រើសរើសមុខវិជ្ជានៅកម្រិតវិទ្យាល័យនោះឡើយ ។ អ្នកស្រាវជ្រាវបានលើកឡើងពីដែនកំណត់មួយចំនួននៃការសិក្សាដូចជា

ទិន្នន័យដែលត្រូវបានប្រមូលបានតែវិទ្យាល័យមួយកន្លែងនៅក្នុងខេត្តកំពតតែប៉ុណ្ណោះ ហើយការសិក្សានេះ បានប្រមូលទិន្នន័យក្នុងអំឡុងពេលបិទសាលារៀនដែលពិបាកសម្រាប់អ្នកស្រាវជ្រាវក្នុងការប្រមូលទិន្នន័យ ទាំងបែបគុណវិស័យ និងបែបបរិមាណវិស័យ។ ការសិក្សានេះបានផ្តល់ជាយោបល់ថា សាលារៀនគួរតែ មានគ្រូប្រឹក្សាអាជីព ដែលជាអ្នកប្រឹក្សាជាមួយសិស្ស និងឪពុកម្តាយសិស្ស ឬអាណាព្យាបាលរបស់ពួកគេ មុននឹងធ្វើការសម្រេចចិត្តក្នុងការជ្រើសរើសមុខវិជ្ជាសិក្សានៅកម្រិតវិទ្យាល័យ។ ហើយវាក៏មានសារៈសំខាន់ ផងដែរ សម្រាប់អ្នកស្រាវជ្រាវបន្តបន្ទាប់ទៀតដែលចង់ពង្រីកនូវទំហំនៃការស្រាវជ្រាវ ដែលមានឥទ្ធិពលលើ សិស្សនូវកម្រិតវិទ្យាល័យនៅក្នុងប្រទេសកម្ពុជា។

**ពាក្យគន្លឹះ:** កត្តា ការធ្វើការសម្រេចចិត្ត សិស្សវិទ្យាល័យ

## ABSTRACT

Since 2010, the Ministry of Education Youth and Sport has implemented the tracking education system. This implementation required starting from the 11th grade students had the options for choosing either science or social science track. The beginning of its implementation, nearly 80% of the students chose to study in the science track and only 20% of students had chosen social science track in the academic year 2017. In the academic year 2018-2019, the students who selected social science raised up to 51% and 49% was the percentage of students who preferred the science track. The main aim of this research study was to investigate the factors that influencing upper secondary school students' choice of the social science. To achieve this research aim, the researcher used both quantitative and qualitative research designs, which gathered data through survey questionnaire and semi-structured interviews for qualitative research. A total sample size of this study was 171 participants, which 160 respondents with survey questionnaire and 11 participants were conducted open-ended interviewing. The researcher has interviewed six social science students in upper secondary school, two science teachers, two social science teachers, the school principal. The quantitative data was analyzed by using descriptive statistics and the qualitative data was analysed by Content analysis. The findings of the study stated that the factors such as family factor, educational experience factor, and academic performance were affecting their choice of social science track. In this study also indicated that friends and schooling were not influenced the students' decisions to choose subjects in upper secondary level. The researcher had raised some limitations of the study such as; The data was collected only one research site and occurred during school closure that were difficult to the researcher in collecting data with both quantitative and qualitative. This study suggested that the schooling should have the career consultants to consult with students and their parents before making the decisions in choosing the

subject's choice in upper secondary school. This also was important for the further researchers who wanted to increase more research sites that influenced Cambodian upper secondary school students.

**Keywords:** Factors, decision-making, upper secondary school students

**SUPERVISOR’S RESEARCH SUPERVISION STATEMENT**

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Name of program: Master’s Degree of Education in Mentoring

Name of candidate: Phan Makara

Title of thesis: “Exploring Factors Influencing the Decision-Making to Choose Social Science Subjects among Upper Secondary School Students: A case study of an upper secondary school in Kampot province”

This is to certify that the research carried out for the above titled master’s thesis was completed by the above-named candidate under my direct supervision. I played the following part in the preparation of this thesis: guidance in research problem development, literature review, methodology, data analysis, and discussion findings.

Supervisor (Name): Dr. Sun Somara

Supervisor (Sign): .....

Date: .....

## CANDIDATE'S STATEMENT

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to certify that the thesis that I “**Phan Makara**” hereby present entitled “Exploring Factors Influencing the Decision-Making to Choose Social Science Subjects among Upper Secondary School Students: A case study of an upper secondary school in Kampot province”

for the degree of Master of Education major in mentoring at New Generation Pedagogical Research Center is entirely my own work and, furthermore, that it has not been used to fulfill the requirements of any other qualification in whole or in part, at this or any other University or equivalent institution.

Signed by (the candidate): .....

Date: .....

Countersigned by the Supervisor: .....

Date: .....



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Finally, I hope that this study will provide readers or other further researchers with a concept to find more factors related to this topic and could be a map to improve and support the Cambodian educational system.

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## **List of Abbreviations**

MoEYS	:	Ministry of Education Youth and Sports
MoE	:	Margin of Error
STEM	:	Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics
ACU	:	Anti-Corruption Unit

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Secondary school tracking is a system in which students are assigned to different academic courses based on their academic performance. Academically advanced tracks are usually offered to high-achieving students to prepare them for college entrance exams. Low-achieving students are unlikely to progress to colleges or universities, therefore they will acquire occupational knowledge and skills (Paik, & Shim, 2013).

Before reforming the educational tracking system, Cambodian students had no choice regarding subjects for their learning at upper secondary school level. This means that they had to study for and take exams for all the subjects that the MoEYS provided. Since 2010, the Ministry of Education Youth and Sport (2010) has implemented a tracking in Education system. The purpose of implementing this system was to encourage strong background competence in science and mathematics in upper secondary school. This implementation requires to all grade 11<sup>th</sup> students of upper secondary school to choose the science or social science track for their studies. According to Turan (2014), the process of selecting high school subjects is required to consider carefully and take an important role in student's achievements at school and university. It will impact to their future education and careers paths after schools or if the students' choice is involved with other factors.

In 2014 was the new minister Hang Chuon Naron's rapid reform of grade 12<sup>th</sup> national exams; the passing rate fell from 86% in 2013 to 25,7% in 2014 (Everett & Kaing, 2014; Sem & Hem, 2016). This was the effort of the MoEYS in the 2014 national exam, which merged the Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU) with stringent steps to avoid cheating during the test. This means that mobile phones, other documents, or calculators should not be carried into the rooms by students. Teachers had no time to give answers to the exam questions to students.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Statistically, since the beginning of its implementation, science track has caught more interests of students than social science track. This indicates that approximately 80% of students prefer to study science, whereas the percentage of students studying social science has just recently increased to around 20% in the past academic year (MoEYS, 2017). According to MoEYS (2019) statistics for the academic year 2018-2019, the number of Cambodian students preferring the science track has fallen considerably to just around 49%, while the percentage of students who prefer social science has risen to 51% than ever before.

## **1.3 Research Purposes**

The main purpose of the present study is to identify the factors that influence upper secondary school students' choice of the social science track.

## **1.4 Research Objectives**

To achieve this purpose, the researcher has set the following two main objectives:

1. To identify the reasons why upper secondary school students choose social science.
2. To determine the factors that influence upper secondary school students' decision-making in choosing the social science track.

## **1.5 Research Questions**

The following research questions can be answered on the basis of the objectives of this study:

1. Why do students choose social science as an upper secondary school subject?
2. What factors are influencing the decision-making of upper secondary school students to choose the social science track?



## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

This study served as a reading that enabled the school principal to work with teachers in supporting students to choose the career path which they are about to take. In addition, the information gathered discloses the possibilities that the teachers were able to give appropriate recommendations regarding the students' abilities, and high school teachers or counselors could provide insights into the application process for colleges. These also helped them in conducting workshops and seminars in alignment with these decisions. The findings were also expected to inspire subject teachers to explore the relationship between their subjects and career opportunities in order for students to inspire upper secondary school students to make wise and informed decisions when choosing optional subjects. This study informed all parents who served as a key influence on their children's job growth and career decision-making. Also, would enable high-school students to make the right decisions regarding choice of subjects, acceptable degrees for them, and supported them to improve their decision-making capabilities. The findings of this research study could be a concept for the next researchers who wanted to increase more sample sizes to see what factors influencing Cambodian upper secondary school students. The findings could provide a map to improve and support the educational system in Cambodia.

## **1.7 Operational Definition of Key Terms**

**Factors** refer to conditions, events, people, or circumstances that affect individuals in the process of students' decision-making to choose social science as an upper secondary school major.

**Decision-Making** is a cognitive process of the fundamental human behavior that selects a preferred choice or course of activity from a range of alternatives based on specific criteria such as social science and science track.

**Upper Secondary School Students** refer to the students who study from grade 10<sup>th</sup> to grade 12th in Cambodia.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Definition of Key Terms**

#### **2.1.1 Factors**

Factors refer to events, behaviors, individuals, or conditions that affect people's decision-making (Luthuli, 2017). Safarmamad (2019) showed that factors refer to personal variables affecting choice by students in Tajikistan in order to enroll in the IVET lyceum and select a particular IVET program. Factor includes any aspect, power, condition or circumstance that affects the cause or can contribute to students' attitudes towards technology (Kalanda, 2005).

#### **2.1.2 Decision-Making**

Decision-Making is one of the cognitive mechanisms of human activity, which chooses a desired choice or course of action from a collection of alternative approaches based on particular requirements (Wang & Ruhe, 2007; Islam & Shoron, 2020). Decision-Making is an improved brain cognitive process at the upper cognitive level from which the choice or course of action is selected from a collection of alternatives that use some knowledge (Wang et al., 2003).

### **2.2 Academic Performance influence**

According to Kinyota (2013), students' exam performance was influencing the students' subject's choice. Students picked the social science stream because they performed better in social science than in science, they were more interested in social science subjects, or they believed social science scores were simpler to improve in a short period of time than science subjects (He, Zhou, Salinitri, & Xu, 2020). Li and Kuan (2018) stated that students' academic performance was mostly influenced to their track choice. Palmer, Burke, and Aubusson (2017) found that the previous performance of students and

other their expectations of ‘getting a high mark’ were all significant factors in selecting and rejecting subjects.

### **2.3 Parents influence**

Guatam (2015) indicated that family and schooling were the most important entities in shaping their subject selections. Similarly, the family was the most important entities in shaping their subject’s choice (Guatam, 2015; Hegna & Smette, 2017; Kazi & Akhlaq, 2017; Yarnefi, Kartikowati, & Gimin, 2019). Parents had a strongly impact on any children who choose to pursue a goal, particularly education. According to Kewalramani and Phillipson (2019), parents’ educational beliefs and ideals, as well as their own previous educational and job expectations, including perceived acculturation challenges, influenced their children’s subject decisions. Moreover, Kewalramani, and Phillipson (2019) revealed that parental expectations had the impact of their children’s social science choices. Hegna and Smette (2017) stated that while minority adolescents reported their parents being significantly more outspoken about their educational choices, and more commonly agreed that their parents had affected their choices, this did not result in a more difficult decision for them than their majority classmates. The study indicated that family was influencing the students’ decision-making process while choosing on a major (Mishra, Ismail, & Al Hadabi, 2017). Parents had a virtually little influence over their children’s choice of option subjects (Huruma, 2015). In contrast, parents were totally not affecting to their children in the subjects’ choice or career paths (Naugah, Reiss, & Watts, 2020). They continued those parents believed that they were not in a strong position to offer any advice to their children and it was the responsibility for them to make the choice. The students’ course choices did not include a family influence. The procedure was not well understood by the family. As a result, they were not fully engaged in the process (Ursavas & Kesimal, 2020).

## **2.4 Peer influence**

According to Kazi and Akhlaq (2017), the students felt more comfortable and confident while making decisions to be with their classmates. They responded by saying that it was easier to study with friends in which one felt comfortable. It was also possible to seek for their support. Palmer et al. (2017) indicated that the advices from others and friends were regarded as substantially less relevant in subject selections.

## **2.5 Teacher Factors**

According to Gathaiga (2012), teachers were not only influenced students on what subjects to study, but they also influenced them to choose subjects that they taught. Teaching was an important component in students' satisfaction and interest in school courses (Hattie, 2003). Ndalichako (2014) found that teachers had a significant influence on students' tendency to enjoy or dislike a particular subject. The students disliked particular subjects because they were unsatisfied with their teachers' methods of instruction. Palmer et al. (2017) stated that teachers were substantially less influential in subject choice, not just through their guidance, but also respected to their likeability.

## **2.6 School Factor**

Schools played an important role for assigning students to the different classes' ability levels based on their academic performance (Kuan, 2016). According to Othman, Mohamad, and Barom (2019), the most significant aspect for students to consider when choosing subjects was schooling and teachers. Schools' academic ethos had a significant impact on students' post-16 choices and decisions (Foskett, Dyke, & Maringe, 2008).

## **2.7 Students' interest**

Turan (2014) have discovered that the students have not picked science since it was difficult and even though, they did not enjoy it. The subject matter interests and educational desire were significant predictors of students' choice (Paik & Shim, 2013). Students who

preferred mathematics and science, they preferred to choose STEM subjects. In contrast, students who were interested in language, arts, and social studies were less likely to pursue STEM subjects. The most crucial impacts on a student's decision to select or reject a subject were their expectations of finding a subject interesting and enjoyable (James, 2007; Palmer, 2015; Palmer et al., 2017; Kazi & Akhlaq, 2017).

## **2.8 Future Career**

There was a connection between students' choice of optional subjects in school and their desired future jobs (Adeyemi, 2009; Palmer, 2015). Students selected subjects that could prepare them for their desired careers (Gathaiga, 2012). Holmegaard, Madsen, and Ulriksen (2014) showed that the subject's choice of students was not only provide a prospect of interesting studies, but also for interesting careers. Students' subject selection was significantly influenced by university course and career requirements (James, 2007). Mishra et al. (2017) discovered that perception of the job market was an important influence in subjects' choice. Palmer (2020) determined that natural science was devalued and perceived to be harder than other subjects, particularly in a narrow jobs market.

## **2.9 Summary of the Chapter**

This chapter has reviewed the key terms of the study which the previous researchers revealed and how various factors influencing the upper secondary school's students in their subjects' choices. These factors included academic performance factor, parents influence, peer influence, teacher factors, school factors, students' interest, and future career. In this chapter showed that most of the students' decision-making processes did not only consider by their own site, other factors also were affected with their choices. The next chapter focused on the methodology which the researcher used for gaining data from the participants and how to analyzed these data.

## CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Research Design

This study employed both quantitative research design and qualitative research design. The quantitative research design focused on the survey research designs, and this would be used to determine the factors that influencing the upper secondary school students' choice of the social science track. Survey research designs were procedures in quantitative research in which investigators administer a survey to a sample or to the entire population of people to describe the attitudes, opinions, behaviors, or characteristics of the population (Creswell, 2012, p. 376).

In qualitative research design, a case study approach was used in this investigation of the factors that influence upper secondary school students' choice of social science track for the qualitative research design. The research was conducted as a case study of one upper secondary school in the Kampot province. According to Dawson (2007), the qualitative research examined perceptions, behavior, and experiences through approaches such as interviews or focus groups. It was trying to get an in-depth view from the participants. "The case study method "explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in- depth data collection involving multiple sources of information...and reports a case description and case themes" (Creswell, 2013, p. 97). The case study was a qualitative method in which the researcher investigates a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, by comprehensive, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information, and reports a case description and case-based themes (Creswell, 2007). In addition, Gay and Mills (2016) claimed that the case study is a qualitative research methodology that was based on a study unit known as a bounded system (e.g., individual teachers, a classroom, or a school).

## 3.2 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

### 3.2.1. Quantitative

A total sample size of the quantitative research design in this study was 160 students who were calculated by the Taro formula: (Yamane, Taro. 1967)

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

- $n$  = corrected sample size
- $N$  = population size, and
- $e$  = Margin of error (MoE),  $e = 5\%$  or  $0.05$  based on the research condition.

So, the total sample size  $n = \frac{267}{1+267(0,1)^2} = 160$  students.

For this sample size, simple random sampling was used to select the participants for completing the survey questionnaire. In simple random sampling, the researcher selects participants for the sample so that any individual has an equal probability of being selected from the population (Creswell, 2012, p. 143).

### 3.2.2. Qualitative

The sampling technique used in the present study was purposive sampling. The process of choosing a sample that was considered to be representative of a given population was purposive sampling (Gay & Mills, 2016). In other words, Gay and Mills (2016) continue that the researcher selected the sample using his experience and knowledge of the group to be sampled. Purposive sampling was a process by which researchers choose a sample that they feel will give the data they needed based on prior information (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012). Qualitative sampling was the method of choosing a small number of people for a study to help researchers understand the phenomenon under investigation (Gay & Mills, 2016). In this study, the researcher has selected six high school students who have been enrolled in the social science track in grade 11th at one upper secondary school. This was because according to the MoEYS (2010) starting from 11th to 12th graders in



Cambodian upper secondary schools must choose either science or social science track by the end of grade 10th. In addition, the school principal, two science teachers, and two social science teachers were also chosen for this study. Furthermore, the open-ended questions were asked the six high school students (S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, and S6), two science teachers, two social science teachers, and the school principal at the upper secondary school in academic year 2020-2021.

*Table 1: Sample size of the study*

<b>S/N</b>	<b>Study Population</b>	<b>Methods</b>	<b>Total</b>
1	A school principal	Interview	1
2	The science teachers	Interviews	2
3	The social science teachers	Interviews	2
4	The students in social science track in grade 11th	Interviews	6
5	The students in social science track in grade 11th	Survey questionnaire	160
<b>Total sample size of the study</b>			<b>171</b>

### **3.3 Research Instrument**

To achieve the research objectives, the researcher used a survey questionnaire for collecting data. The quantitative data was collected from students through completing the questionnaire, which used a five-point Likert Scale in each questionnaire. The researcher used a 5-point Likert scale starting from strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. This choice comes because previous research has found that a five-point scale is readily comprehensible to respondents and enables them to express their views as mentioned by Marton-Williams (1986).

*Table 2: Representation of the ranges of means*

Score	Range	Representation	Qualitative Statement
5	4.20 – 5.00	Strongly Agree	Very Influencing
4	3.40 - 4.19	Agree	Influencing
3	2.60 – 3.39	Neutral	Moderately Influencing
2	1.80 – 2.59	Disagree	Less Influencing
1	1.00 - 1.79	Strongly Disagree	Not Influencing

*This Table is adopted from Alharbi and Sayed (2017)*

The researcher adapted the survey questionnaire from the study of Kinyota (2013) was revised and used to gather the primary information and to attain the objectives of the study and investigated the factors that influence students results in choosing social science. Data was collected using a standardized questionnaire on a 5-point Likert scale. Very Influencing – 5, Influencing – 4, Moderately Influencing – 3, Less Influencing – 2, and Not Influencing – 1 were the five points of the Likert scale used to quantify how much impact each of the identified elements had on upper secondary students' option decisions. The students were asked to find the reasons what factors that influence the decision-making in choosing a social science track. The responses were analyzed by using SPSS software.

In this research study, the researcher also used semi-structured one-on-one interviews comprised of open-ended questions, so that the participants best expressed their perception without restriction from any researcher's perspective or previous study findings (Creswell, 2012). Furthermore, the open-ended questions were asked to the six students, two science teachers, two social science teachers, and the school principal at an upper secondary school.

### **3.4 Data Collection Procedure**

The survey questionnaires were used to collect data for the quantitative research design. During the school closure, the researcher could not give the papers of the questionnaire to students for completing in class. So, in that case, the researcher prepared the survey questionnaires in Google form. The researcher used a rehearsed introduction and instructions to explain to students the purpose of the survey and how to complete the questionnaire, which used a five-point Likert Scale. Students indicated the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with each of the items on a five-point Likert Scale (1 = “Strongly Disagree”, 2 = “Disagree”, 3 = “Neutral”, 4 = “Agree”, and 5 = “Strongly Agree”). Within the five-point Likert Scale, the students could choose only one choice to respond to each factor of the questionnaire. The survey consisted of five factors in multiple-choice questions and concluded with 22 questions using a five-point Likert Scale response. The aim was to conduct the survey with 73 students in 11th graders in social science track. The participants were given six minutes to fill in the survey anonymously. Moreover, the students who did not have phones or other devices to complete the survey questionnaire, the researcher approached them and interviewed by one-on-one interview.

The data was collected through semi-structured interviews and this was reviewed by the supervisor. The researcher requested consent letters forms from the director of New Generation Pedagogical Research Center (NGPRC) before starting the data collection process at the single upper secondary school. Before interviewing, the researcher informed the participants and asked for permission to use an audio recorder and noted taking during the interview process. In addition, an interview protocol was used in this study. The interviews were conducted in Khmer language to ensure deeper understanding and easier communication with the respondents. Each interview took around 25 to 30 minutes. An audio recorder used to record all interviews. The researcher also took note to record the

information the audio recorder could not capture, such as body gestures and facial expressions and the researcher's quick reflection and insights during the interview process. The interview recordings were transcribed into text. The transcriptions were sent to the participants within a week of the interview for the purpose of member-checking. All the respondents participated in one-on-one interviews. Based on Creswell (2012), one-on-one interviews, individual interviewing were the most time-consuming and costly approach. Creswell (2012) claimed that the one-on-one interviews were a popular approach in education research, a process in which the researcher asked and recorded answers from only one participant in the study at one time.

### **3.5 Data Analysis**

#### **3.5.1. Quantitative Data**

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze data of the factors influencing the decision-making to choose social science subjects among upper secondary school students. The data was analyzed by using SPSS software to perform the statistical analysis. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. As part of the data analysis, collected data was described using tables. For convenience of analysis, the five response options of Very Influencing, Influencing, Moderately Influencing, Less Influencing, and Not Influencing were used.

#### **3.5.2. Qualitative Data**

The interview transcriptions were analyzed and interpreted through Content analysis. The researcher listened to the audio recorder for several times in advance and then transcribed all interviews into text information that were easy to analyze. After finishing the transcriptions, the researcher repeatedly read through all the details of the text information, word by word, organized the themes, developed the specific codes, went from codes to categories, and then identified categories.

### **3.6 Ethical Considerations**

Before conducting the interviews, the researcher informed the participants in advance about the investigation and asked for permission in order to avoid their responses being affected by stress as a result of not being adequately prepared. In meeting with the participants, the researcher introduced himself and explained the purpose of the study. The researcher informed consent to ask the participants to respond willingly without being forced. The researcher kept confidential all of the information collected from the participants and caused any harm to the respondents, as the anonymity of all participants were ensured. For example, the school's name was indicated using letters of the alphabet, the respondents' names were hidden and then the researcher changed the name by giving them codes and protect them for any harm or embarrassment from their superiors.

### **3.7 Summary of the Chapter**

To achieve the aims of the study, the researcher has conducted both qualitative and quantitative research designs. The quantitative research was collected using the survey questionnaire. The sampling technique used in this study was randomly selected the participants. The quantitative data was analysed using the descriptive statistics. The qualitative method was used a single case study. The sampling technique used in the present study was purposive sampling. the open-ended questions were used for interviewing the participants to share their perspective on what influenced the decision-making. The qualitative data was conducted a content analysis. The following chapter reported the results of the research and includes the overall results.

## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS/FINDINGS

### 4.1 Introduction

The results of the research were reported in this chapter. The data was gathered through qualitative and quantitative. For the qualitative data, the researcher focused on the perspective of the school principal, teachers, and students on what factors influencing on students' subjects' choice.

### 4.2 Background Information of the Participants

In this research study, the participants were the upper secondary school' students who selected social science in 11th grade. They have already finished grade 10th and they had a choice to choose either social science and science track before starting grade 11th. They were interviewed and completed the survey questionnaire and also six students in 11th graders who were interviewed of their views conducted with semi-structured interview questions. The science teachers who taught science subjects, social science teachers who taught social science subjects, and the school principal who were interviewed for their views of the students' choice of social science track in upper secondary school.

### 4.3 Quantitative Data

In the quantitative data, the researcher used table data analysis to describe the factors which influencing the students' decisions to choose social science track for their upper secondary school subjects.

#### 4.3.1 Family Factor

*Table 3: Family Factor*

Family Factor	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
My family encouraged me to choose social subjects.	160	3.66	1.01

Parents who were not well-educated will be a factor influencing my choice of social science.	160	4.16	0.46
Single parent will be a factor influencing my choice of social science.	160	3.75	0.82
I did not live with my parents can be the factor in choosing social science.	160	3.71	0.93
Average		3.82	0.54

The results in Table 3 showed that students who studied in upper secondary school were encouraged by family (M= 3.66; SD=1.01) had less influence on students' track choice of social science rather than parents who were not well-educated (M= 4.16; SD=0.46). Similarly, the mean score of students who had only father or mother (M=3.75; SD=0.82) also were a factor that influencing in their subject selection if it compared mean score with students who did not live with their parents (M=3.71; SD=0.93). This meant that they lived with their grandparents or guardians. In short, based on the average of the family factor (M= 3.82; SD=0.54) indicated that Family played a vital role that influenced on students' choice in choosing the social science track.

#### 4.3.2 Educational Expectation Factor

*Table 4: Educational Expectation Factor*

Educational Expectation Factor	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I chose social science track because I considered my future career	160	4.83	0.43
I chose social science because I am not good at math and science subjects	160	4.94	0.23
The social science subjects are easy to learn and understood	160	4.71	0.45
I chose social science because it is easy to pass the exam	160	4.51	0.50
I chose social science because it is easy to get into university entrance	160	4.04	0.22
I chose social science because it is easier to find a job	160	4.01	0.19

Average		4.51	0.17
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Table 4 stated that students who were not good at math and science subjects were highly preferred to catch the social science track (M=4.94; SD=0.23) if it was compared with other factors that followed by the students who considered about their future career related to their subjects' choice (M=4.83; SD=0.43) and students who were easy to learn or understand with social science subjects (M=4.71; SD=0.45). In the other words, the mean score of students who thought the social science subjects were easy to pass an exam (M=4.51; SD=0.50) was also a factor which influencing on student selection. It followed by the students who chose social science because it was not difficult to get into university entrance (M=4.04; SD=0.22) and easier than science track for finding a future job (M=4.01; SD=0.19). According to the results in this table, the Educational Expectation (M=4.51; SD=0.17) was the most factor influenced the upper secondary students' decisions to select the social science rather than science track.

### 4.3.3 Friends/Peer Factor

*Table 5: Friends/Peer Factor*

Friends/Peer Factor	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
My best friends chose social science, so I followed them	160	1.29	0.46
My best friends encouraged me to take a social science track	160	1.34	0.47
My friends can help me while I am studying with them	160	1.59	0.67
I do believe with them in the right decisions/path	160	1.56	0.67
Average		1.45	0.29



The results in Table 5 showed that students in upper secondary level rarely followed their friends in choosing subjects ( $M=1.29$ ;  $SD=0.46$ ) and most of them were not encouraged by their friends ( $M=1.34$ ;  $SD=0.47$ ). Moreover, the mean score of students who thought that friends could help them ( $M=1.59$ ;  $SD=0.67$ ) when they did not understand the lessons and they also believed in their friends for choosing it ( $M=1.56$ ;  $SD=0.67$ ) were not played the important role for affecting the students' choices. Based on the average of this factor ( $M=1.45$ ;  $SD=0.29$ ), most students did not follow their friends at all. Therefore, in the study stated that friends were not a factor that influencing to their choice in choosing social science track in upper secondary school.

#### 4.3.4 Academic Experience Factor

Table 6: Academic Experience Factor

Academic Experience Factor	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I chose social science track because of my preferences	160	4.92	0.34
My interest in a particular subject in social science is also a motivating factor in choosing it	160	4.26	0.44
Academic performance was a factor influencing my decision to choose social science	160	4.22	0.42
My performance in social science subjects drive my decision to choose it	160	4.19	0.39
Average		4.40	0.19

The results in Table 6 showed that students chose social science track based on their preferences ( $M=4.92$ ;  $SD=0.34$ ) and also their interest in a particular subject ( $M=4.26$ ;  $SD=0.44$ ). Most of students decided to choose social science because of their academic performance in the previous study especially social science learning which they were good at ( $M=4.22$ ;  $SD=0.42$ ). In addition, they got the high marks in social science subjects

(M=4.19; SD=0.39) which drove them in choosing it. Thus, the results in Table 6 indicated that Academic Experience was influencing the upper secondary school's students' decisions (M=4.40; SD=0.19).

#### 4.3.5 School Factor

*Table 7: School Factor*

School Factor	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The social science teachers motivated me to choose a social science	160	1.46	0.50
My homeroom teacher could be a factor who encouraged me to choose social science	160	1.58	0.50
The school board directors can be a factor who drive my decision to choose social science	160	1.04	0.21
The schooling selected me in social science track	160	1.06	0.23
Average		1.28	0.25

Table 7 mentioned that the mean scores of social science teachers (M=1.46; SD=0.50) and homeroom teachers (M=1.58; SD=0.50) did not affect on students during making-decisions at the upper secondary level's students. Moreover, the school board directors (M=1.04; SD=0.21) and schooling (M=1.06; SD=0.23) were not influenced the students at all. Therefore, the schooling was not a factor that influencing the students' choice track (M=1.28; SD=0.25).

#### 4.4 Qualitative Data

To prove with the quantitative data, the researcher used qualitative research data that comprised the semi-structured interview questions to get in depth information from the participants' perspective of students' decision-making in choosing social science track. The following information of the participants' views were:

#### 4.4.1 Family Factor

##### 4.4.1.1 Socio-economic Status

The participants T3, S3, and S4 indicated that students who were in poor families were driven to select the social science. They also said that lower-income families might afford private instruction for their children. To understand the natural science, most students needed to take the private tutoring in order to gain more knowledge from those subjects in natural science track. Some science teachers taught less contents in class and deeply explained in the private lessons. By doing these, slow learners were really difficult to come up with math and science. Therefore, most students decided to learn extra classes and others rejected the natural science and caught up social science in upper secondary level in grade 11th. The participant S3 stated:

*“I came from a low-income family, they could not provide for me to study more, because the study should cost at least 5,000 riels per day for studying private lessons, so I decided to choose social science. The subjects that should be studied in private lessons are mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, and Khmer as well. In the proper study, I spent 1,000 riels per hour. Furthermore, for social sciences that I studied only one or two subjects, Khmer and Mathematics. Therefore, a day I spent only 1,000 riels or 2,000 riels”.*

Similarly, the school principal thought that some students from poor families did not have enough money to continue their studies at the university after graduating 12th grade. Therefore, their parents let their children finish only in grade 12th and did not continue their learning. Some parents worked away from their children and did not monitor their children's education closely. In addition, their children lived with their grandparents and had many

responsibilities in the family that why causing students selected social science and rejected science track.

#### **4.4.1.2 Educational background of parents**

According to participant S1, S3, S6, T3, and P, the parents did not well-educated could also be a factor influencing their children's choice of subjects. They added that the parents of low-educated did not care much about their children's education, they only cared about earning money to support their families and they had no ideas what to advice to their children. Additionally, the parents who were farmers did not frequently involve in school. They got less information about school and their children's education. Therefore, they did not know how to give an advice to their children. Furthermore, some parents lived away their children. They worked in another country and left children with grandparents or guardians. The participant S1 mentioned that:

*“My parents worked in another country and I lived with my grandmother at home. They did not know how to guide because they do not clearly understand the division in tracking of the MoEYS. The participant S<sub>1</sub> continued that my grandmother always followed me. She said “you can choose what you want or what you can do better””.*

#### **4.4.2 Educational Expectation Factor**

##### **4.4.2.1 Job Opportunity**

In choosing the social science or science track in grade 11th, students considered the possibilities and difficulties of getting a good job in the future. During the interviews, the participant S2 and S5 said *“Before choosing this social science track, they had clearly thought about their future careers. They added that they loved any job which related to social science subjects”*. The participant S2 continued that *“Before choosing the subject's choice, I always considered what I wanted to work in the future careers, especially the*

*subjects that related to my preferences' careers. I found which subject that was easy to find a job and which was not".* Moreover, the participant P thought that the future career opportunities did not have a lot for students who were studying natural science and getting high salaries.

#### **4.4.3 Friends Factor**

All students showed their views that in choosing the social science track was not because of their best friends. They did not follow their peer before making a choice at the end of grade 10th. They decided to select social science depended on their enjoyment or interest in each subject. These students indicated that some of their friends chose the science class. Therefore, they were not impact to my subject selection. They also mentioned that their friends have inspired to choose the social science subjects based on their experiences and expectation. The S3 raised that *"My best friend motivated me to choose social science subjects. He said that these subjects were easy to learn and had many opportunities for finding a job. But for me, I selected the social science track as an upper secondary school major because the difficulties of math and science subjects"*.

#### **4.4.4 Academic Experience Factor**

##### **4.4.3.1 Students' Interest**

During the interviews, participants S1, S2, S5, and S6 mentioned that they chose social science track because of their interests in social science subjects such as Khmer, Arts, English etc. Moreover, the social science subjects were easy to write and came up with some of their own ideas. Therefore, it felt like it might be easier to pass an exam as well as easy to the universities entrance examinations. The participant S5 mentioned:

*"I chose social science track as a high school subject because I love and enjoy it. Every time I study, I understand quickly when the teachers explain and is easy to gain knowledge after reading books and the social science*

*subjects are easy to write and get the scores. Moreover, during the monthly exams, I always do well and get high marks of test”.*

#### **4.4.3.2 Academic Experience**

All students who were interviewed also mentioned that learning science subjects were harder to learn than social sciences subjects and did not perform well in past science subjects learning. In addition, math and science subjects related with numbers and formulas that were difficult to understand for lower-level students. Therefore, the difficulties of math and science subjects were the most influential factors that led students to choose social science track. The participant S6 stated that:

*“When I studied in grade 10th, mathematics, physics, and chemistry seem difficult to me. I was not good at formulas and did not know how to calculate them. I had never got the high scores during the monthly test. Therefore, I decided to reject science and selected social science track in grade 11th. I did not choose science track because I was not good at numbers and formulas in math and science subjects. When I was in grade 10th, I had nothing in mathematics”.*

In the other words, the participant T1, T2, T3, T4, and P stated that the students chose the social science in the grade 11th, because they were studying in the lower grades, students did not pay attention to study or well-educated in foundation. Furthermore, this selection might come from students who found it was simpler to pass in the future exam. If students who chose the science track and they did not perform successfully in each subject, they did not receive or get less a score; nevertheless, when students who chose the social science and then wrote some contents, they received a higher score for these subjects. The participant T3 stated that:

*“It would be possible if the lower-level grade of mathematics and science teachers did not have good teaching methods to teach their students, which led to a large number of students dropping out of science track and took the social science instead in grade 11th”.*

#### **4.4.5 School Factor**

In quantitative data, the researcher did not find that schooling was not impact to the students’ decision-making at all. Furthermore, in qualitative interview responses of the participants (T1, T3, and T4) indicated that students’ choice also involved with teachers’ teaching strategies. They also stated that although in the lower secondary school, some of the students were satisfied with their social science teachers, or those teachers had effective teaching techniques that made the students grasp quickly and desire to learn with them. In contrast, some science and mathematics teachers did not have good strategies for educating students, which caused students to misunderstand and did not want to study with them (Participants T3, P). Furthermore, the participant P stated that some teachers might not pay attention in teaching, limited their abilities or some teachers did not come to class on time, which caused students in losing their interests in learning. The participant P revealed that:

*“Some students decided to choose the high school subjects, they were interested in their social subject’s teachers and they wanted to learn with them for the upper grades. Moreover, it could be some science teachers were careless with their teaching. Therefore, these could be the reasons that motivated students to rejected science and chose social science instead”.*

#### **4.4.6 Summary of The Chapter**

After found the results of the study, the researcher stated that there were several factors that influencing an upper secondary school students in choosing the social science

track. Using the survey questionnaire in this study, the researcher revealed that factors such as family, educational expectation, and academic experience were found as the factors which influencing on student's subject selection in the upper secondary levels. Among these factors, an educational expectation was the most factor which affected the students' choice that followed by academic experience and other factors. Furthermore, the researcher indicated that friends and schooling were not factors influencing the student's decision in subjects' choices. To prove the quantitative data, this study used qualitative research design that comprised the semi-structure interview questions, the researcher found more information on the participants' perspective such as socio-economic status and educational background of parents to the family factor. Job opportunity to the educational expectation factor. Students' interest and academic experience to the academic experience factor and teaching strategies to the school factor that were the factors that affecting to the students' decision in choosing social science track.



## **CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION**

### **5.1 Introduction**

In this chapter concluded the findings of the researcher had found and discussed the findings with the results of previous studies that found in the literature review.

### **5.2 Family Factor**

This recent study found that family was played a vital role that influenced students' choice in choosing the social science track. This finding confirmed with previous studies such as Guatam (2015); Hegna and Smette (2017); Kazi and Akhlaq (2017); Yarnefi et al. (2019), who indicated that the family was the most important entities in shaping their subject's choice. Parents had a strongly impact on any children who choose to pursue a goal, particularly education. According to Kewalramani and Phillipson (2019), parents' educational beliefs and ideals, as well as their own previous educational and job expectations, including perceived acculturation challenges, influenced their children's subject decisions. Moreover, Kewalramani, and Phillipson (2019) revealed that parental expectations were influencing of their children's social science choices. In contrast, this finding was not confirmed with this previous study, Naugah et al. (2020) who found that parents were totally not affecting to their children in the subjects' choice or career paths. Parents believed that they were not in a strong position to offer any advice to their children and it was the responsibility for them to make the choices.

### **5.3 Educational Expectation Factor**

#### **5.3.1 Job opportunity**

From the students' views, they considered the possibilities and difficulties for getting a future career. Before choosing this social science track, they had clearly thoughts about their subjects' choice. They also mentioned that they loved any job which related to

social science subjects. These findings confirmed with some previous researchers such as; Adeyemi (2009) and Palmer (2015) who stated that there was a connection between students' choice of optional subjects in school and their desired future jobs. Students selected subjects that could prepare them for their desired careers (Gathaiga, 2012). Holmegaard et al. (2014) showed that the subject's choice of students did not only provide a prospect of interesting studies, but also for interesting careers. In addition, James (2007), the students' subject selection was significantly influenced by university course and career requirements. Mishra et al. (2017) discovered that perception of the job market was an important influence in subjects' choice.

#### **5.4 Friend Factor**

The result showed that friends were not a factor that influence the students of their tracking choice. This result was not confirmed with the previous studies that mentioned by Palmer et al. (2017). They stated that the advices from others and friends were regarded as substantially less relevant in subject selection. Similarly, Kazi and Akhlaq (2017) indicated that students felt more comfortable and confident while making decisions to be with their classmates.

#### **5.5 Educational Experience Factor**

##### **5.5.1 Student's Interest**

The study showed that students' interest in social science track was a factor that influenced students' decision-making. This finding was confirmed with Paik and Shim (2013) which stated that subject matter interests and educational desire were significant predictors of students' choice. Students who preferred mathematics and science, they preferred to choose STEM subjects. In contrast, students who were interested in language, arts, and social studies were less likely to pursue STEM subjects. This also supported with these researchers who found that the most crucial impacts on a student's decision to select

or reject a subject were their expectations of finding a subject interesting and enjoyable (James, 2007; Palmer, 2015; Palmer et al., 2017; Kazi & Akhlaq, 2017).

### **5.5.2 Academic Experience**

According to the results, learning science subjects were harder to learn than social science subjects for students and they did not perform well in past science learning. In addition, math and science subjects mostly connected with numbers and complex formulas that were difficult to understand for lower-level students. Therefore, the difficulty of math and science subjects were the most influential factors that lead students to choose social science. These results confirmed with Palmer (2020) who discovered that natural science was devalued and perceived to be harder than other subjects, particularly in a narrow jobs market. It was also consistent with a study conducted by Turan (2014) who found that students did not choose science since it was difficult and even though, they did not enjoy it. According to Li and Kuan (2018), the students' academic performance was mostly influence to their track choice. Similarly, Palmer, Burke, and Aubusson (2017) found that the previous performance of students and other their expectations of 'getting a high mark' were all significant factors in selecting and rejecting subjects.

### **5.6 School Factor**

In this study, the researcher found that schooling was not also a factor that influencing the student's subjects' choices. This finding was not confirmed with Kuan (2016) who stated that schooling had the main role for assigning students to the different class ability levels based on their academic performance. It also did not align with this previous researcher who found that schooling was the most important entities in shaping the students' decisions to choose subjects (Guatam, 2015).

On the other hand, this study indicated that teaching technique of teachers in particular subject had impact to the students' interest and enjoyment on subject. Teachers

who had good strategies teaching their students, the students were not difficult to learn with that subject. In contrast, students will lose their interest and be harder to understand when teachers do not apply the teaching strategies in effectively. These findings confirmed with the previous researchers who stated that teaching was an important component in students' satisfaction and interest in school courses (Hattie, 2003). Similarly, Ndalichako (2014) indicated that teachers had a significant influence on students' tendency to enjoy or dislike a particular subject. The students disliked particular subject because they were unsatisfied with their teachers' methods of instruction.

## **CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter summarized the main findings of the study and presented conclusions, limitations, and recommendations.

### **6.2 Conclusion**

In this research study, the researcher found that family, educational expectation, and academic experience were found as the factors which influencing on student's subject selection in the upper secondary school. Among these factors, an educational expectation was the most factor which affected the students' choice that followed by academic experience and other factors. In contrast, the researcher indicated that friends and schooling were not factors influencing the student's decision in subjects' choices in upper secondary school level. This study suggested that the schooling should have consultant in upper secondary school to consult with students and their parents before making the decisions in choosing the subject's choice in upper secondary school. This also was important for the further researchers who wanted to increase more research sites that influenced Cambodian upper secondary school students.

### **6.3 Limitations of the Study**

In this study, the researcher conducted a small sample size (only one research site), an upper secondary school in Kampot province. This could not represent to all Cambodian upper secondary school students.

The time of the data collection could also impact on the results. The data collection through the interviews and survey questionnaire conducted during the school closure because of COVID-19 in academic year 2020-2021. Therefore, the researcher collected via

online such as Zoom, Google Meet, Telegram, Messenger, and Google Form. In addition, the internet connection was also impact on the data collection. They were difficult to express their views during completing and interviews questions.

Furthermore, the students who did not have other devices were also a bit obstacle in collecting data. These needed to spend more times to approach them one by one.

#### **6.4 Recommendations**

For the brightness of the research findings, the study wishes to make the following recommendations.

The school principal should observe teachers during teaching students and collaborate with technical team leaders in each subject to work together with others teachers in order to improve teaching and learning.

Before choosing the subject track, schooling should consult with students and their parents or guardians. This means that the school principals and teachers should have the meeting with students and their parents to consult about subject's choice, university learning, and the job opportunities for students. There should be professionally trained career teacher counselor in upper secondary schools before selecting subject track. Since career counseling has been found to be effective in career guidance of students.

Teachers should improve more their content knowledge and teaching methods. These were the importance in order to get students' learning outcomes. The teachers should work hard to develop their subject's content knowledge and also find the best ways to teach students in gaining knowledge from their subjects.

There should be involved of parents in the education of their children. Based on the recent study, parents should be connected with schools regularly and followed and cared about their children's learning. To be consulted with the schooling if they did not know the

process of tracking system and also asked any information what they want to know in order to discuss with their children before selecting the subject choice.

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## APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE

Topic: “Exploring Factors Influencing the Decision-Making to Choose Social Science Subjects among Upper Secondary School Students: A case study of an upper secondary school in Kampot province”

General instruction: Read each item carefully and answer the following questions provided below. (Please be assured that all of the answers provided here in shall be kept confidential. Please indicate (✓) mark on the appropriate box.

Gender: .....

Age: .....

Please read each item carefully. Use the scale below to guide you in checking the appropriate column that best describes your factors greatest influence on choosing a degree.

Score	Limits	Qualitative Description	Qualitative Statement
5	4.20-5.00	Strongly agree	Very influencing
4	3.40-4.19	Agree	Influencing
3	2.60-3.39	Neutral	Moderately Influencing
2	1.80-2.59	Disagree	Less influencing
1	1.00-1.79	Strongly disagree	Not influencing

Family Factor

5 4 3 2 1

My family encouraged me to choose social subjects.					
Parents who were not well-educated will be a factor influencing my choice of social science.					
Single parent will be a factor influencing my choice of social science.					
I did not live with my parents can be the factor in choosing social science.					

Educational Expectation Factor

5 4 3 2 1

I chose social science track because I considered my future career					
I chose social science because I am not good at math and science subjects					
The social science subjects are easy to learn and understood					
I chose social science because it is easy to pass the exam					
I chose social science because it is easy to get into university entrance					
I chose social science because it is easier to find a job					

Friends/Peer Factor

5 4 3 2 1

My best friends chose social science, so I followed them					
My best friends encouraged me to take a social science track					
My friends can help me while I am studying with them					
I do believe with them in the right decisions/path					

Academic Experience Factor

5 4 3 2 1

I chose social science track because of my preferences					
My interest in a particular subject in social science is also a motivating factor in choosing it					
Academic performance was a factor influencing my decision to choose social science					
My performance in social science subjects drive my decision to choose it					

School Factor

5 4 3 2 1

The social science teachers motivated me to choose a social science					
My homeroom teacher could be a factor who encouraged me to choose social science					
The school board directors can be a factor who drive my decision to choose social science					
The schooling selected me in social science track					

## **APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS**

Research Topic: **“Exploring Factors Influencing the Decision-Making to Choose Social Science Subject among Upper Secondary School Students: A case of an Upper Secondary School in Kampot Province.”**

### **I. Introduction:**

- **Step 1** (Before recording): Good morning/afternoon. My name is Phan Makara. I am studying the Master of Education in Mentoring at New Generation Pedagogical Research Center (NGPRC). I am here to learn about exploring factors influencing the decision-making to choose social science subject among upper secondary school students. Thank you for your interview participation today. The purpose of this interview is to identify the factors influencing upper secondary school students’ choice of social science stream. There is no right or wrong answer, or desirable or undesirable answer. I would like you to feel comfortable with saying what you really think and how you really feel. It is very hard for me to take every detail during the interview. So, I would like to ask for recording in each interview. The record will be transcribed and sent to you for your validation. I assure you that the record and your comments will remain confidentially. Only my supervisor and I will have an access to the tape record and your personal information.

- **Step 2** (After the participants approve the Audio recorder, the record is on): My name is Phan Makara. Today is ..... (Date). Now I am conducting an interview with the participants ..... (Nick Name of the participant) for the research on the topic of exploring factors influencing the decision-making to choose social science subject among upper secondary school students: A case of an Upper Secondary School in Kampot province.

### **II. Students’ Interview Questions:** (Around 25-30 mins)

1. Why did you choose Social Science as the main subject in high school?
2. Why did you think you can do better in social science?
3. Who did you get this information that someday you will be required to make tracking choice?
4. Who did you discuss with before making a choice?
5. Who encouraged you to choose social science?
6. What factors are influencing your decision-making to choose social science?

## II. Teachers' Interview Questions: (Around 25-30 mins)

1. What did you do as a teacher generally to encourage more students' participation in subject choice?
2. Who did students discuss with before making a choice?
3. Who did students get the guidance and support before making choices?
4. From your perspective, what factors that influencing the students' decisions in choosing social science?

## II. The School Principal's Interview Questions: (Around 25-30 mins)

1. What did you know about the Ministry's policy on the division of social science and science track?
2. After knowing the policy of the Ministry, how did you help to show the students or explain them to take social science or science track?
3. When did you inform to teachers or homeroom teachers to provide the students?
4. When did you inform to students to make tracking choices?
5. What did the school do in general to encourage more students into tracking choices?
6. How long did students give back the decision-making?
7. From your point of views, why did students choose to study social science track?
8. What did you think about the teaching methods of teachers? Did it impact the students' decisions?
9. How did the school get the results after taking national exam?

## III. Ending the Interviews:

Thank you so much for coming this morning/afternoon. Your time is very much appreciated and your comments have been very helpful. I will contact you if I have further questions for clarification. Your participation in this study is anonymous, and your comments will be kept confidentially.

<b>Participant</b>
Date, _____
Signature, _____
Name, _____

<b>Researcher</b>
Date, _____
Signature, _____
Name, _____

# Empowering educators with ethical and evidence-based practices



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