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**Students' Perceptions toward Health Science Career Choice: A Case
from Cambodia**



Students' Perceptions toward Health Science Career Choice: A Case from Cambodia

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to investigate the students' perception of choosing a health science major as a career choice for their higher education degree, to understand why and what motivates them, and to contextualize how these views would have an impact on their studies.

Methodology: This study was a mixed-methods study consisting of quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data were collected using an anonymous Google-form questionnaire, and FGD was used to collect qualitative data. Quantitative data were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24, while qualitative data were analyzed thematically.

Findings: The findings categorized the students' choice of a health science major based on their personal life experiences, role modules, family support, engagement, high school performance, and career viewpoints. Thus, results indicated that students' enrollment in a health science major as a career choice was due to their interests in future career perspectives, academic performance, and life experience, with the support and encouragement of their families.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: In conclusion, several factors motivate students to consider a health science major for future improvement and to maintain the quality of healthcare experts in Cambodia. Those factors, including life experience, role modules, career interest, academic performance, family direction, and accessibility of health science information, significantly impact students' decisions to pursue a HE degree. This study's findings are essential information that will help prepare students for health science majors and inform parents, health science universities, and governance to plan for providing support and inspiration to students since high school for this major of study.

Keywords: *Cambodia, Students' Perception, Health Science Career Choice, Factors Influencing, Undergraduate*

1. Introduction

University has a significant impact on student's life since it influences how much time and money they spend on their studies and instills values for their future careers (Garmadin et al., 2022). All areas of higher education (HE) are crucial for developing nations because this sector can provide skilled labor, social development, poverty reduction, and sustainable economic growth (Chet, 2009; Dahles, 2017). However, enrolling in the major we are interested in is a significant motivating factor that promotes learning, academic guidance, and professional routes, resulting in academic achievement (Harackiewicz et al., 2016).

Health science majors have been identified as having the most significant role in developing the country, as these majors provide healthcare knowledge and skills to health professionals to maintain quality public health services and the countries' well-being, as well as Cambodia (Wenham et al., 2021). Therefore, enrolling in a health science major, including a medical doctor, dentistry, pharmacy, nursing, midwifery, or medical laboratory technology major, requires a lot of time, money, and effort to fulfill this degree. Previous studies have reported that most of the enrollment is in business-related and social science majors rather than science and health science majors. Approximately 80% of the total enrollment in HE was in business-related, social science, foreign languages, and law majors, whereas only about 10% were enrolled in science and health science, respectively (Un et al., 2013; World Bank, 2012). However, there is little interest in the health science majors in HE, especially in the post-graduate program. In addition, a report by the MoEYS in 2021 showed that fewer students were enrolling in fundamental science (5%) and health sciences (5%) than in other social science disciplines (28%) and business-related fields (42%). There is only 1% enrollment in a post-graduate program in health science and 0% graduation with this degree yet (MoEYS, 2021). According to previous studies, students may encounter challenges while selecting a university major, such as a lack of knowledge, self-interest in the topic, ability in the field, and peer pressure (friends, parents, spouses, or role models) (Chea et al., 2022; Downey et al., 2011; Kao & Shimizu, 2020).

There is a mismatch between the number of healthcare professionals and GDP growth (6–8%) in Cambodia (Japan International Cooperation Agency [JICA], 2016). According to the Ministry of Health's Projection Plan 2012–2020, Cambodia is still in need of experts in health science fields, with estimates that it needs 35,000 engineers, 46,000 technicians (JICA, 2016), and more than 10,000 experts to maintain the percentage of GDP growth within the range of 6–8% between 2018 and 2020. This includes the need for nurses (primary nurse = 3508 and secondary nurse = 2791); midwives (primary midwife = 538 and secondary midwife = 2416); medical doctors (867); specialist doctors (129); physiotherapists (124); and X-ray technicians (212) to fill the required roles to maintain professional healthcare support in the country (World Health Organization [WHO], 2015).

Some major reasons are perceived as the root causes of why not many students are interested in a

health-related major. These reasons include inadequate information regarding the majors, high tuition fees, lengthy completion periods, and unknown career pathways (Downey et al., 2011; Zhang, 2007). Considering these issues, the MoH and health science institutions have a lot of work to do to encourage more enrollment in healthcare majors. This study, therefore, would like to look into the students' perceptions when deciding on a health science major. The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of health science students about what and why they chose these health science majors for their HE degree and to contextualize how these views would impact their studies.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research design

This study is a mixed-methods study: a qualitative and quantitative study to explore students' perceptions of enrolling in a health science major for their higher education degree program. By using these methods, we will be able to get in-depth information regarding the students' perceptions and encourage them to enroll in a health science major.

2.2 Research setting and participants

The study was conducted at six health science universities, including University of Puthisastra, University of Health Science, Chenla University, International University, Norton University, and Health Science Institute of RCAF, located in Phnom Penh city, Cambodia. Table 1 shows the participants' demographic information.

2.3 Research instruments

The questionnaires used in this study contained two sections. The first section was about the respondents' demographic information, such as gender, group age, students' background, and academic major. The second section aimed to find out students' perceptions of factors encouraging them to enroll in health science majors. The scale used in each item was a Likert scale containing five options, including (1) Not important at all/ Strongly Disagree, (2) Not important/ Disagree, (3) Neutral/ Neutral, (4) Important/ Agree, and (5) Very Important/ Strongly Agree. The study was adapted from the quantitative survey conducted by Spearman et al. (2016). The questionnaire was developed with 16 questions for the final version. A qualitative study of Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was used to get more in-depth information about the student's perceptions. The FGD Protocol covers 12 discussion questions in total. It took around 15 minutes to complete the questionnaires through an online link to an anonymous online Google-form (blocked IP address).

All participants were invited to join a focus group discussion (FGD). Participants from the questionnaire who agreed to be contacted for the FGD were separated into sub-groups of 3–6 participants per group for 45–60 minutes, and direct transcriptions were taken during the discussions. An audio recording (by phone) is also taken for further reference if needed. The

discussion was conducted both online and physically, depending on the participant's convenience.

2.4 Data collection and analysis

Before the process of data collection was conducted, the authors sent the proposal to the University of Puthisastra Research Committee (UPRC) for approval (IR013). After the research proposal was approved, the questionnaire was sent to the targeted students at those five universities. The online questionnaire consisted of information about the aims of the study. The obtained data were collected using a purposive sampling technique to meet the objectives of the study. This study was conducted in two stages: the first was a quantitative survey, and the second was a qualitative study by FGD. Quantitative data were analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24. The qualitative data were analysed thematically.

2.5 Ethical considerations

Participants were invited to participate via email and social media, and informed consent was obtained. Participation in this study is completely voluntary; the participants can skip any questions that they feel uncomfortable with, and the participants in the FGD can leave the study at any time until data analysis. Confidentiality was maintained within the FGD, with ground rules established at the beginning of the discussion. Participants in the FGD will have the opportunity to review the FGD notes and remove any comments they do not wish to be used in the analysis. The author also told the participants that their data must be kept confidential and utilized solely for the study, and their names were not needed. Moreover, their responses would be destroyed five years after the study was completed, and it was made sure that the participants could withdraw themselves from the study if they felt uncomfortable, especially if they had privacy concerns with the study. In short, the ethical issues in this study followed the four standards of ethics that consist of (1) avoiding harm to participants, (2) ensuring that participants' consent is provided, (3) respecting participants' privacy, and (4) avoiding disappointment (Goldblatt et al., 2011).

3. Results

The following section presents key findings about students' perceptions of enrolling in a health science major as a career choice for their HE degree. The survey was sent to Cambodian health science university students through an online Google-form platform. Overall, 129 students participated in the survey. After data cleaning, the final sample consisted of 121 undergraduate and graduate students from different health science universities in Cambodia.

3.1 Students' demographic data

As shown in Table 1, out of 121 participants, 75 (61.98%) were male, 43 (35.54%) were female, and 3 (2.48%) were not preferred to say. The result shows that the majority of respondents were 116 (95.87%) young adults between the ages of 17–25, followed by 3 (2.48%) respondents between the ages of 31–40, and only 2 (1.67%) of the respondents between the ages of 26–30, and

no respondents between ages 36–40 and above 40. However, the results also indicate that 21 (17.36%) of the respondents were working students, and 100 (82.64%) of the respondents were not working anymore. This result may be because most of the students are fresh graduates from upper secondary school and continue for an HE degree directly.

Table 1. Gender, ages group, and working status of students' enrollment in health science majors (N=121)

Gender and age group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	75	61.98
Female	43	35.54
Prefered not to say	3	2.48
<i>Age group</i>		
17–25	116	95.87
26–30	2	1.67
31–35	3	2.48
36–40	0	0
>40	0	0
<i>Working status</i>		
Working	21	17.36
Non-working	100	82.64

The result shows that the majority of the respondents identified themselves as being from Phnom Penh city, mainly consisting of 23 (19.01%), followed by Kampong Cham 15 (12.40%), Siem Reap 10 (8.26%), Takeo 9 (7.44%), and Kandal 9 (7.44%), Kampong Speu 8 (6.61%), Svay Rieng 5 (4.13%), Battambang 5 (4.13%), Pursat 5 (4.13%), Kampot 5 (4.13%), Kampong Thom 5 (4.13%), Thoug Khmum 4 (3.31%), and Banteay Meanchey 4 (3.31%), Prey Veng 3 (2.48%), Kampong Chhnang 2 (1.65%), and Sihanoukville 2 (1.65%), and the remaining 7 (5.79%) from the other provinces (Table 2).

Table 2. Students' enrollment from each different province of Cambodia (N=121)

Province/City	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Phnom Penh	23	19.01
Kampong Cham	15	12.40
Siem Reap	10	8.26
Kandal	9	7.44
Takeo	9	7.44
Kampong Speu	8	6.61
Svay Rieng	5	4.13
Battambang	5	4.13
Pursat	5	4.13
Kampot	5	4.13
Kampong Thom	5	4.13
Tboung Khmum	4	3.31
Banteay Meanchey	4	3.31
Prey Veng	3	2.48
Kampong Chhnang	2	1.65
Sihanoukville	2	1.65
Other (each province has 1 student)	7	5.79

As shown in Table 3, the results indicate that most of the respondents are from University of Puthisastra 45 (78.51%), followed by University of Health Science 13 (10.74%), International University 6 (4.96%), Chenla University 4 (3.31%), Norton University 2 (1.65%), and Health Science Institute of RCAF 1 (0.83%), respectively. However, the findings of this study indicate that from the total of 121 respondents in this study, there were 42 (34.71%) enrolled in medical doctors, 40 (33.06%) in pharmacy majors, followed by 18 (14.88%) in dentistry, and 18 (14.88%) in nursing majors, while only 2 (1.65%) in medical laboratory technology and 1 (0.83%) in midwifery majors, respectively.

Table 3. Students' enrollment in each health science university of Cambodia (N=121)

Health science university and major of study	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<i>Students' enrollment in each health science university</i>		
University of Puthisastra	95	78.51
University of Health Science	13	10.74
International University	6	4.96
Chenla University	4	3.31
Norton University	2	1.65
Health Science Institute of RCAF	1	0.83
<i>Students' enrollment in each health science major</i>		
Medical doctor	42	34.71
Pharmacy	40	33.06
Dentistry	18	14.88
Nursing	18	14.88
Medical Laboratory Technology	2	1.65
Midwifery	1	0.83

3.2 Students' perceptions of being enrolled in health science majors

3.2.1 Factors motivating students enrolled in a health science major

This study's results show that students first find out about their current health science university in Table 4. However, the findings show that the students learned about their current university from a variety of different sources, such as their family/ friends 79 (65.29%), the university's social media promotion 76 (62.81%), a recommendation from their place of employment 16 (13.22%), school presentations/ fairs 11 (9.09%), marketing campaigns/ activities 3 (2.48%), and the students themselves (2.48%). This outcome shows that social media and family/ friends play the most significant roles for students to know about and consider enrolling in the health science major. The engagement of teachers/ lecturers, and university marketing and promotion initiatives, as well as health science majors, does occur in small amounts.

Table 4. Student's first find out their current university (N=121)

No	Students' perceptions of how they know their current university	N	%
1	Was introduced by family or friends to my current university	79	65.29
2	I know my current university through university social media; e.g., Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, etc.	76	62.81
3	Was recommended by my workplace to my current university	16	13.22
4	I know my current university during national fairs/ conferences/ symposiums (school presentations/ fairs)	11	9.09
5	I know my current university during university marketing campaigns/activities; e.g., during the grade 12 national exam	3	2.48
6	I know my current university because of university promotions; e.g., free/discount on teeth treatment, cleaning, etc.	3	2.48
7	I know my current university by myself	2	1.65
8	I know my current university from my teachers/ lecturers	2	1.65

Table 5 indicates the percentages of student perceptions' of enrollment in health science majors. Comparatively, 38 (31.4%) of the students agree, and 46 (38%) strongly agree that tuition fees played a large role in my choice of selective university and major of study. Additionally, 47 (38.8%) of the students agree, and 46 (38%) strongly agree that the specialization courses offered by the university are the main reason for them to consider enrollment. 45 (37.2%) of the students agree, and 38 (31.4%) strongly agree that modern technology at the university is very important for them. 38 (31.4%) of the students agree, and 36 (29.8%) strongly agree that their family's choice played the most important role in helping them select the university and major of study. However, 36 (29.8%) of the students agree and strongly agree that the opportunity to gain a scholarship was also a factor for them to consider for this university and/or major of study. Also, 43 (35.5%) of the students agree, and 29 (24%) strongly agree that the university's location also played an important factor in choosing a university and/or major of study. Whereas, 52 (43%) and 45 (37.2%) of the students agree that the social status and social events and activities of the university are also important factors for them to gain experience and decide on their university and major of study. This result also indicates that friends are not an ideal factor for them to consider this health science major.

Table 5. Factors encouraging students enrolled in a health science major (N=121)

Description	N	%
<i>Strongly agree</i>		
Tuition fees played a large role in my choice of university	46	38
Specialization courses offered are a major reason why I chose my university	46	38
It is important for my university to have modern technology available to me	38	31.4
My family played a large role in my choice of university	36	29.8
The possibility of gaining a scholarship influenced my choice of university	36	29.8
The location of the university is an important factor for me	30	24.8
<i>Agree</i>		
The social status of my university means a lot to me	52	43
Specialization courses offered are a major reason why I chose my university	47	38.8
It is important for my university to have modern technology available to me	45	37.2
Social events/ activities are an important factor of my university experience	45	37.2
The location of the university is an important factor to me	43	35.5
My family played a large role in my choice of university	38	31.4
Tuition fees played a large role in my choice of university	38	31.4
The possibility of gaining a scholarship influenced my choice of university	36	29.8
<i>Neutral</i>		
Campus size and infrastructure are very important to me	31	25.6
The location of the university is an important factor for me	29	24
<i>Disagree</i>		
I chose my current university because I had friends who are attending	37	30.6
<i>Strongly disagree</i>		
I chose my current university because I had friends who are attending	51	42.1

3.2.2 Theme-based on students' perceptions of being enrolled in health science majors

The results from FGD show what the students' perceptions are about enrolling in this health science major. The theme-based results indicate that enrollment in those health science majors was related to several inspirational factors, including their life experience, role modules, family support, engagement, academic performance, and career perspective, respectively. According to the response from FGD discussions, students shared individual experiences as mentioned below.

a. Life's experience

The first respondent, a medical doctor student, said that *when she was young, she*

went to the hospital to treat her disease, and she felt like the doctor lacked the professional skills to treat her disease effectively. So, she wants to become a professional doctor to provide better healthcare to Cambodians with professional skills. (Female, G1P1)

The next student said, *I enrolled in this pharmacy major because I want to improve the pharmacy shop or store for more professionals in the future. As I experienced due to this fact, I observed that most of the pharmacy shops are just selling medicine like in the market, and the seller somehow didn't enroll in health science education anymore. Finally, he stated that he wants to become a professional pharmacist and provide Cambodians with a standard of healthcare or treatment. (Male, G1P3)*

Another respondent from nursing mentioned that *she went to the hospital in her province with her mom when she was in secondary school, and she observed that there was no professional nurse in that hospital to take care of the patients properly. So, she wants to be a professional nurse to take care of her family members and the Cambodian people after she graduates with a nursing degree. (Female, G1P5)*

Another medical doctor has a similar view as the first respondent. *I decided to choose a medical doctor major because I want to become a professional doctor in the future to help my family members and Cambodian people as I can. I think a medical doctor is a key person in helping patients with better health from diseases. As I experienced when I was young, I was often sick and went to the hospital in my province to treat my disease, and the doctor sometimes didn't provide her professional skills to treat her disease until she was transferred to the hospital in Phnom Penh city to continue treating her disease. (Female, G2P1)*

The last respondent, a student in dentistry, responded that *I decided to choose a dentistry major because I want to become a dentist. As my dream, I want to help people achieve better oral health. However, I often have a problem with my teeth, so I think in the future after I graduate with a dentistry major, I will use my skills to help people achieve better oral health. (Female, G2P5)*

b. Role models

The first interviewee claimed that *her grandmother is a nurse, and when she was young, she always went to the hospital with her grandmother. I saw my grandmother taking care of her patients, and this made me love a nurse's job like my grandmother's as a role model to help people. (Female, G1P2)*

The second interviewee said that *her uncle is a medical doctor, so she wants to become a healthcare professional like her uncle in the future. (Female, G2P1)*

The third and fourth respondents mentioned the same view as *my decision to enroll in a pharmacy major because I want to be like my mom in the future. My mom is a pharmacist; she works in a hospital in Phnom Penh and also has a pharmacy store. I want to help my mom and improve our business too.* (Female, G1P4; Male, G2P2)

The last interviewee, a student in dentistry, responded that *his choice of a dentistry major was due to his desire to replace his father's job as a dentist. His father was a traditional dentist, and he has wanted to become the next generation with full potential in scientific dentistry since he was young.* (Male, G2P4)

c. Career perspective

Most respondents mentioned that they enroll in this health science major because they want to have their own businesses, including pharmacy shops and stores, clinics, and hospitals, and also work with the governance sector to provide better healthcare services to the people.

The medical doctor students said *they enrolled in this major because they want to have their own clinic or hospital in the future to provide healthcare services to the people in their hometown. Also involved with the national hospital to improve healthcare services for the better health and well-being of the Cambodian people.* (Female, G1P1; Female, G2P1)

The pharmacy interviewees said *they enrolled in this pharmacy major because they want to have their own pharmacy store or shop to provide better quality services to their customers from a professional pharmacist. They also mentioned that they would like to become pharmacist specialists with the governance hospital in the future.* (Male, G1P3; Female, G1P4; Male, G2P4)

Another respondent from nursing mentioned that *she wanted to work with a national hospital to provide standard care to patients. She pointed out that she wants to provide equal services to all the people who are in need in the country. Every person should receive the same standard of care.* (Female, G1P2)

The last respondent, a student from dentistry, shared his view that *he decided to select a dentistry major because he wants to become a professional dentist and open his own dental clinic to provide oral health services and care to people for better oral health with a confident smile.* (Male, G2P4)

d. Academic performance

All respondents mentioned a similar view as this health science major, not just wanting to study and register for this major. They must pass the National Entrance Exam (NEE) for any of those major score ranges.

A student respondent mentioned that *I think I am good in science courses in upper*

secondary school, so I decided to take NEE with a dentistry major, and I passed this major. She also said that she wants to continue with a post-graduate degree in the future because she wants to become a specialist in the dentistry field, which not many Cambodians are interested in yet. (Female, G2P5)

Another respondent also mentioned, of course, that I think I like health science, and I also have a good record in science courses in upper secondary school. So, I decided to enroll in this major for my HE degree. At first, I wanted to enroll as a medical doctor, but I couldn't pass this major anymore, so I decided to enroll in a pharmacy major instead. (Male, G1P3)

In short, this health science major requires better academic achievement; even though you want to enroll in this major, if your academics are not good enough, you may not be able to enroll in these majors anymore.

e. Family engagement and support

All respondents shared the same view on this part; they mentioned that family engagement and support are very important for them to consider in these major health science fields.

For sure, I will not be able to enroll in this major if I do not get engagement and support from my family due to the school fees being expensive, plus daily expenses and very hard work that needs to pay off for this health science major, even though the above mentioned are the key factors in motivating them to enroll in a health science major. (All FGD respondents)

A medical doctor student mentioned that I got an engagement from my father to enroll in this medical doctor major. My father doesn't work in the health sciences field, but he pushed me so hard for this major of study. I got full engagement and support from him. (Female, G1P1)

Thus, the factors mentioned above are the motivational factors that influence the study of health science as a major.

3.2.3 Students' perceptions of issues and challenges in enrolling for health science majors

a. Before enrolling in a health science major

As mentioned previously, all health science majors require students to pass the NEE before enrolling in any of these majors. The respondents shared the same view that they have to prepare a lot for NEE. More than this, especially the students from the provinces have mentioned that the issues and challenges are mainly related to the limited access to information and lack of inspiration from upper secondary school about these health science majors and university choices. The other issue is due to the student's interest, academic performance, and a limited seat at HE for these health science majors. Some respondents pointed out that it took fewer years to pass and enroll in

their recent major of study.

A respondent mentioned that, first, I want to enroll as a medical doctor, but my NEE score was reached only for a pharmacy major. I try my best to take the NEE test, again and again, to upgrade from pharmacy to medical doctor, but my score is still reached for a pharmacy major. So, I decided to continue to enroll in a pharmacy program, but my dream is to become a medical doctor. Now I told myself that pharmacists can also help people achieve better health and well-being. (Male, G1P3)

b. After enrolling in a health science major

Health science majors are complicated since the tests in every subject are difficult and require them to remember and prepare a lot to pass each assessment. They are also faced with a tight class schedule due to having classes and being trained at the hospital or clinic at the same time, which makes it difficult to focus on the class materials. However, the respondents also shared similar views, which somehow affected their academic performance.

4. Discussions

The findings indicate that several circumstances affected students' choices to major in health sciences at HEIs in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. The findings showed why the students chose to study health science majors, including their family's encouragement and support, the university's profile (qualifications and reputation), life experience, future career perspectives, and academic success. The findings agree with earlier research, which demonstrated that students' decisions to major in health science as their career choice were impacted by parental encouragement and support (Gameraddin et al., 2022; Mehmood et al., 2012; Wüst and Leko Šimić, 2017). This outcome is comparable to studies by Saudi Arabian researchers Al-Faris et al. (1997), Al-Omar (2004), and Nemri et al. (2015), where one of the factors they took into account before deciding where to attend school was the university's profile, which included university reputation, specialist courses, and location.

The current study examined various factors that affected college students' decisions to major in health science. This study found that the students decided to enroll in a health science major because they wanted to help their community and society by receiving quality healthcare services and support from a professional healthcare provider. Our findings are in line with those of Crossley and Mubarik (2002), Nemri et al. (2015), and Nyamwange (2016), who discovered that helping the community and other individuals improve their health and well-being was the primary factor in choosing a career in medicine (Crossley and Mubarik, 2002; Nyamwange, 2016). In a similar vein, our results supported those of previous studies, which reported that helping people was identified as a significant motivating factor for their study in these health science majors (Crossley and Mubarik, 2002; Gietzelt, 1997; Wüst and Leko

Šimić, 2017).

The finding also demonstrated that future career perspectives were identified as the most significant factor in motivating them to enroll in this health science major due to their views on future work and owning a business. This includes having a position in the governance sector as well as having pharmacy shops or stores, clinics, and hospitals to provide healthcare services to patients (Nyamwange, 2016; Wüst and Leko Šimić, 2017).

The availability of health science majors and universities, together with information on scholarships, was considered crucial for upper-secondary school students to prepare themselves and consider enrolling in this major of study (Chea et al., 2022; Kao & Shimizu, 2020; Sorn & Suon, 2022). In addition, since the health science major required a NEE test, which required good performance in the science courses to compete for the restricted chair in this health science major, the choice was based on their own personal interests and academic performance (Atitsogbe et al., 2018; Calkins & Welki, 2006; Sorn & Suon, 2022). The issues and challenges regarding the health science major choice at HE are due to the lack of information and inspiration at the upper secondary school level (Chea et al., 2022; Kao & Shimizu, 2020).

5. Conclusion

The study's conclusions led to the conclusion that there were several factors influencing students' decision to pursue a career in the health science field to preserve the caliber of healthcare professionals in Cambodia and improve future outcomes. The findings of this study suggested that life experience, role models, student interest in future career perspectives, academic performance, and family direction, as well as the accessibility of information on health science majors and universities, had a significant impact on students' decisions to major in health sciences when pursuing a HE degree. Last but not least, the findings of this study offer crucial information that will assist students be ready for health science majors by assisting parents, students, and other parties involved in the field of health, including all health science universities and governance, especially the Ministry of Health (MoH), to make plans for providing the most crucial information to the students while they are in upper-secondary school.

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