

Aspirations Report

MIDDLE SCHOOL (N=51)

EDSTAR ANALYTICS, INC

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Introduction

The survey conducted among middle school students aimed to gather insights into their career interests, educational aspirations, and personal preferences. The analysis provides a glimpse into the future aspirations and current interests of these young individuals, offering valuable insights for educators and policymakers.

Grade Level Distribution

The participants in the survey were primarily from 6th to 8th graders, with the majority being 8th graders. The distribution across grades is as follows:

- 8th Grade: 24 students
- 7th Grade: 15 students
- 6th Grade: 9 students
- Grade Unknown: 3 students

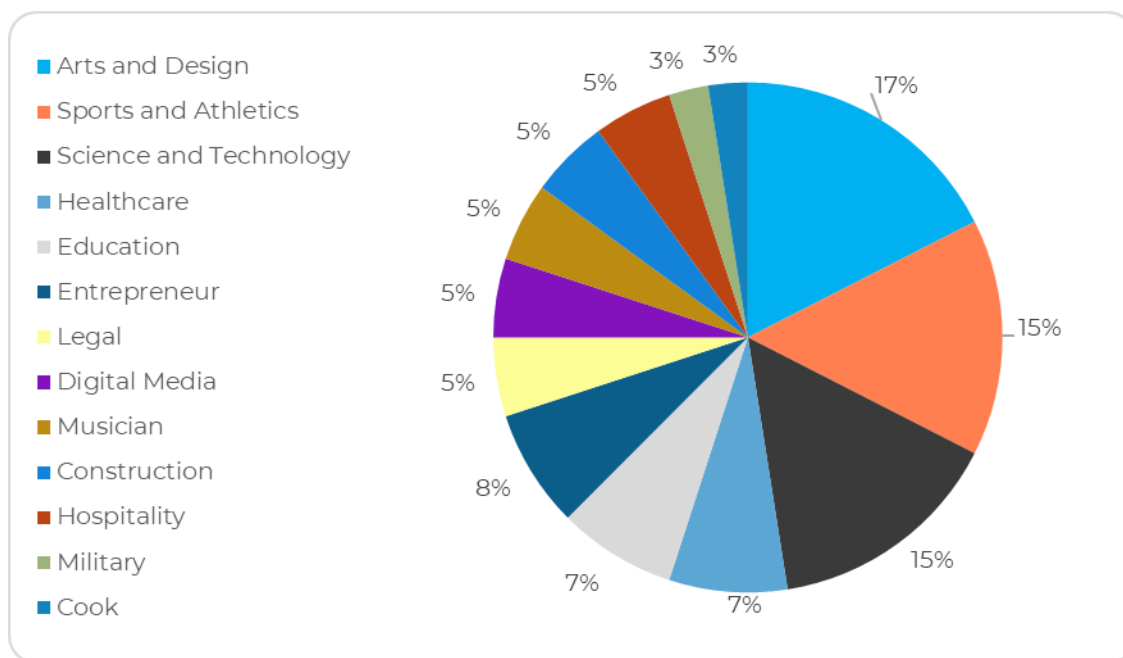
This distribution reflects a balanced representation of middle school students, providing a comprehensive understanding of their aspirations across different grade levels.

Career Interests

Middle school students often harbor career aspirations that reflect a blend of ambition, passion, and at times, a striking disconnect from the practical realities of the job market. This gap may stem from an insufficient awareness of the breadth of career possibilities or a lack of understanding of what it truly means to earn a living in fields perceived as glamorous or fulfilling, such as the arts.

- **Popular Career Choices:** Many students expressed interest in careers in the arts, sports, and digital media, which suggests a strong desire for creative and dynamic professions. For example, careers in sports and digital media are highly favored, despite their competitive nature.
- **Disparities in Career Knowledge:** There is a notable gap between dream careers and feasible vocational paths, indicating a need for better career education. Students may lack exposure to a wide array of career options and the realities of different job markets.

Figure 1. Middle School Students' Career Aspirations



Educational and Career Preparation

A significant portion of students expressed a keen interest in receiving guidance and detailed information regarding potential career paths and the appropriate high school coursework necessary to set themselves on a successful trajectory. This desire underscores the importance of providing students with early and comprehensive career counseling.

- **Guidance Needs:** Many students are eager for guidance on aligning their academic choices with career goals. They expressed interest in understanding which high school courses and extracurricular activities would best prepare them for their desired careers.
- **Role of Mentors:** Mentors and educators can play a pivotal role in helping students make informed decisions by offering tailored advice that broadens their understanding of available career options.

Interests and Preferences

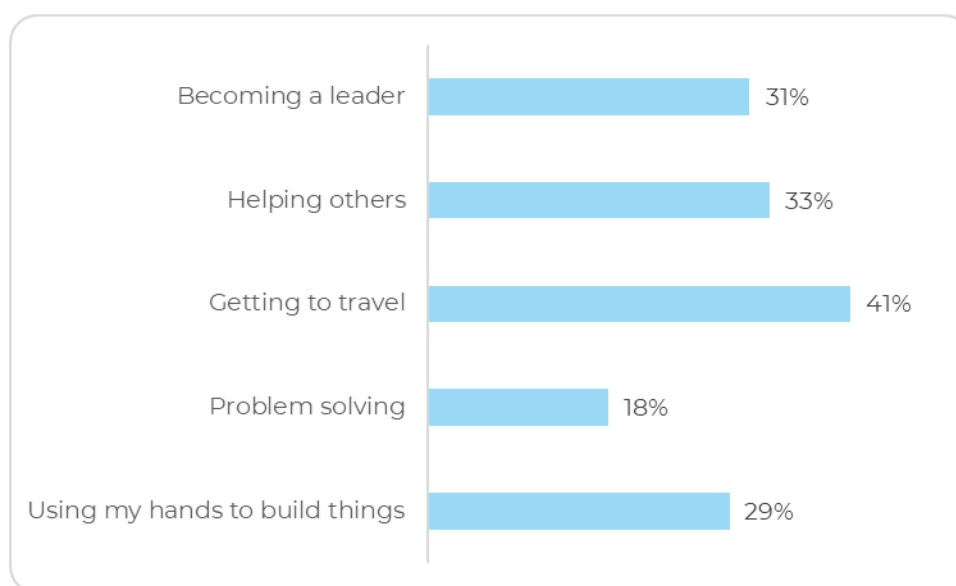
The survey also revealed students' interests and preferences beyond career aspirations. Students shared insights into the attributes they consider important in a career, shedding light on their values and priorities when envisioning their future professional lives.

Key Interests: The top priorities identified by students were getting to travel, helping others, becoming a leader, and working with their hands. These

priorities reflect a desire for careers that offer personal fulfillment, social impact, leadership opportunities, and hands-on work.

- **Getting to Travel:** Many students expressed a strong interest in careers that involve travel, indicating a desire for adventure and exposure to different cultures and environments.
- **Helping Others:** A significant number of students prioritized helping others, suggesting that altruism and making a positive impact on society are important considerations for their future professions.
- **Becoming a Leader:** Leadership was a key attribute for students, reflecting aspirations for roles where they can guide and influence others.
- **Working with My Hands:** The preference for hands-on work highlights an interest in careers that involve creativity and practical engagement, such as crafting, building, or designing.

Figure 2. Students' Interests in Career Choices



These interests highlight a blend of creativity, altruism, and leadership aspirations among the participants, suggesting areas where educational programs could further engage and support students' development.

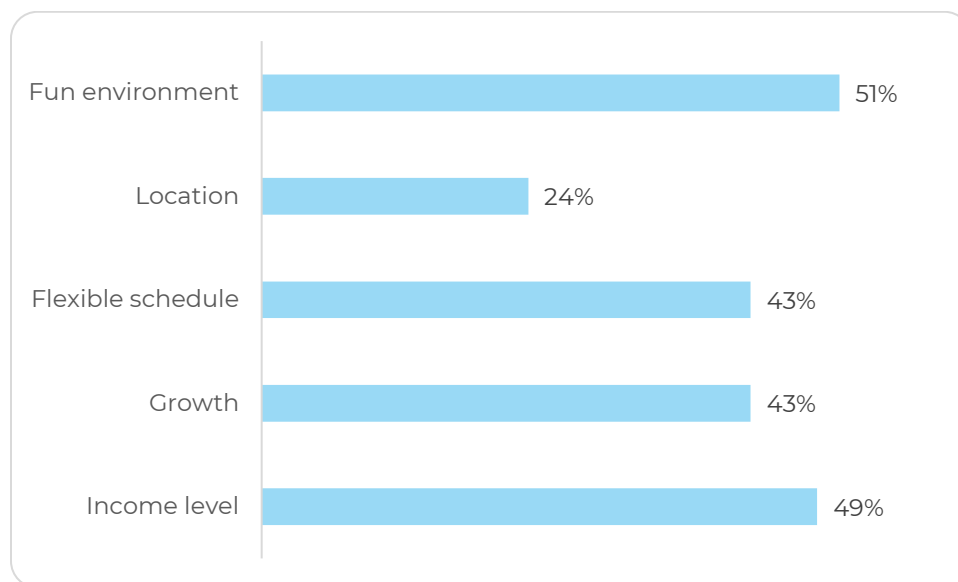
Figure 3 shows middle school students' desired career attributes, which paints a telling picture of their priorities for future employment. Income level stands out as a key factor, highlighting a pragmatic approach to career planning. The opportunity for growth is also a central concern, suggesting that students are looking ahead to careers that offer advancement and skill

development. A flexible schedule is an important aspect for many, indicating a value placed on autonomy and work-life balance. Location appears to be less of a priority, perhaps reflecting a willingness to be adaptable geographically. Finally, a significant number seek a fun environment, pointing to a desire for engaging and enjoyable work settings. This information is crucial for mentors aiming to align career discussions with the values and aspirations of young students.

Key Priorities: Income level, opportunity for growth, and a flexible schedule were identified as top priorities, indicating a pragmatic approach to career planning. Students value work-life balance and the potential for advancement in their careers.

Motivations: Understanding these motivations can help mentors tailor their guidance, ensuring that career advice aligns with students' aspirations and concerns.

Figure 3. Key Priorities



Conclusion

The survey data from middle school students provides valuable insights into their aspirations, interests, and educational needs. The variety in career interests underscores the importance of providing diverse opportunities and resources to help students explore and prepare for their futures. Moreover, the expressed need for guidance in career planning highlights an area where educators and programs can make a significant impact.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are suggested to better support middle school students in their career exploration and preparation:

1. **Enhance Career Education:** Introduce comprehensive career education programs that expose students to a wide range of career options and the realities of different professions.
2. **Develop Mentorship Programs:** Establish mentorship programs that connect students with professionals in their fields of interest, providing real-world insights and guidance.
3. **Incorporate Practical Learning Opportunities:** Offer practical learning experiences, such as job shadowing and internships, to help students gain firsthand experience in various careers.
4. **Focus on Skill Development:** Encourage the development of essential skills such as communication, problem-solving, and adaptability, which are valuable across all career paths.

Appendix

Middle School Career Interest Classifications

Sports and Athletics:

- NBA, Football, Basketball, Professional baseball player, Sports, Football and basketball

Arts and Design:

- Graphic designer, Art teacher, Art, Makeup artist, Custom clothes, Being an artist, Building things/hand made things, Building

Science and Technology:

- Computer Science, Being a science tech, Coding, Game developing, Engineer, Engineer

Healthcare:

- Nurse, Doctor, Veterinarian

Education:

- Get a degree for school, Art teacher, English teacher

Legal:

- Lawyer, Lawyer

Entrepreneur:

- Business, Being an entrepreneur, Real estate agent

Digital Media:

- Being a YouTuber, YouTube gaming

Musician:

- Music artist, Ra

Military:

- Army

Construction:

- Home maintenance and building, Building

Cook:

- Cooking

Hospitality:

- Traveling and helping people, Working with kids