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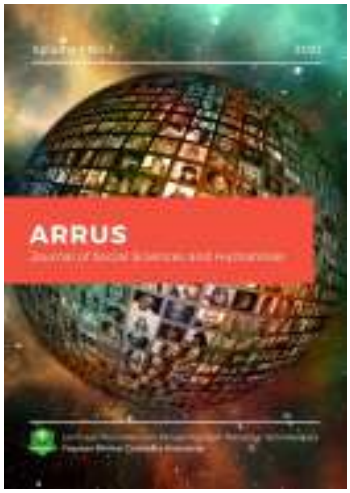

RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Four Exits of Senior High School: a Tracer Study

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Abstract: Understanding the chosen exit paths of graduates is essential for evaluating the effectiveness of the SHS program and guiding future curriculum development. This study aims to trace the exit paths of senior high school graduates from a higher education institution in Ozamiz City, Misamis Occidental, focusing on their progression into tertiary education, employment, entrepreneurship, and middle-level skills development. The study employed a quantitative approach using a descriptive research design. Data were collected from 371 randomly selected graduates using questionnaires. The responses were analyzed using statistical techniques such as the T-test, mean, percentage, standard deviation, and frequency. The results reveal that most of the respondents were female, primarily aged between 20-21 years old, with a significant number coming from families earning less than 10,000 currency units. A majority of graduates pursued higher education, while a smaller portion engaged in employment, entrepreneurship, or middle-level skills development. The study found that the senior high school program was perceived as effective in preparing students for higher education and employment and most effective in fostering entrepreneurship. However, while the program is rated as effective in middle-level skills development, it receives the lowest rating among the constructs evaluated. Notably, no significant differences were found in the perceived effectiveness of the program when grouped according to profile. The senior high school program is generally effective in achieving its educational goals.

Keywords: Employment, Entrepreneurship, Middle-Level Skills Development

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is portrayed as a fundamental tool for enhancing individual confidence and career prospects. It enables individuals to acquire knowledge, refine their skills, and pursue personal and professional growth. Additionally, education serves as a pathway to economic stability and social enrichment (Hübel et al., 2023). Education is commonly perceived as a cornerstone for a better life, empowering individuals to navigate life's challenges. Therefore, a key objective of the government is to provide relevant education aimed at equipping students to become more proficient and globally competitive learners (Quintos et al., 2020).

During the specified period, the Philippines was among the three remaining countries still adhering to a 10-year basic education system, alongside Djibouti and Angola in Africa. The elevated figures of youth unemployment and underemployment were thought to be caused in part by the widespread use of a "congested basic education curriculum." Thus, the implementation of the K-12 program intended to resolve the problem by lowering the quantity of "misfit" graduates and producing lifelong learners proficient in essential concepts

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and skills necessary for tertiary education, middle-level skills development, employment, and entrepreneurship (Palabrica & Ferolino, 2023). The educational landscape in the Philippines underwent a significant transformation, largely driven by Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, also referred to as Republic Act 10533. This legislative measure marked a crucial step toward holistic student readiness through the introduction of the Senior High School (SHS) Program. This two-year addition was a deliberate strategy to provide students with the necessary tools for pursuing higher education, securing employment, fostering middle-level skills development, and cultivating an entrepreneurial mindset (Colobong, 2023).

Under the leadership of former Secretary Armin Luistro, FSJ, the Department of Education (DepEd) introduced the K-to-12 program in 2011, making Kindergarten a prerequisite for basic education. In the academic year 2012–2013, the Philippines implemented the K–12 Basic Education Program, encompassing Kindergarten and 12 years of Basic Education (Dinampo, et al., 2024). This initiative aimed to enhance basic education by extending the program to cover 12 years, incorporating Kindergarten and two additional years of high school (Quintos, 2020). The introduction of the Senior High School (SHS) program was a pivotal stage in the Philippine education system.

SHS offers students various tracks designed to prepare them for their future careers, whether in academia, technical-vocational fields, or entrepreneurship (Dejino et al., 2023). These tracks include the Academic Track, comprising Accountancy, Business and Management (ABM), Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS), the STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) strand, and the Technical Vocational Livelihood Track, which encompasses the Home Economics (HE) Strand, specializing in areas like Local Guiding, Tourism Promotion Services, and Bread and Pastry. As a result, students must select one track from these options before entering senior high school (Balasbas, 2021). The decision to choose the appropriate SHS track is crucial for grade 10 students as it may have a major effect on their academic and career prospects in future endeavors (Dejino et al., 2023).

Furthermore, the government has outlined several objectives associated with the implementation of the K-12 curriculum as follows: (i) enhancing students' readiness for higher education, (ii) providing students with qualifications for admission to domestic and international higher educational institutions, and (iii) facilitating students' immediate employability upon completing their studies (Almerino et al.,2020). According to Abragan (2022), the primary aim of implementing the K-12 Basic Education Program is to establish a functional educational system that will produce competent and socially responsible citizens equipped with essential knowledge and skills for both learning and employment. This program aligns with President Aquino's agenda of prioritizing quality education as a sustainable solution to poverty. In response to the challenges faced in the educational landscape, the Philippine government has made significant investments in improving its educational sector through the implementation of the K-12 program (Asuncion, 2022).

The implementation of the Senior High School curriculum reflects the evolving landscape of education, providing an opportunity to enhance and cultivate skills in our graduates, empowering them to become experts in their respective fields and catalysts for societal change. Senior high school programs endeavor to equip students with vital knowledge and skills essential for their chosen path in higher education, employment, or entrepreneurship. The addition of two additional years, Grades 11 and 12, aims to better prepare students with the requisite skills, knowledge, and values necessary for a successful future in their chosen fields or courses (Nacorda et al., 2019). As part of efforts to break the cycle of poverty in the Philippines, the Enhanced K+12 Basic Education Program aims to produce highly employable graduates. Through the K-12 Program, the government anticipates that the country's education system could attain, if not surpass, international standards by producing globally competitive and adept lifelong learners (Guiamalon & Hariraya, 2021).

Worldwide transitions to the K to 12 program had various reasons beyond simply enhancing the overall quality of education. In the case of the Philippines, K-to-12 implementations

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aimed to ensure that students acquire 21st-century skills alongside improving educational standards. Meanwhile, other countries that adopted the K to 12 system recognized the potential contributions and anticipated benefits to both individual and societal development, thus justifying government commitment and financial investment in the program. Assessments of the program have indicated significant achievements, including higher-than-expected enrollment rates. Additionally, explanations for this success include a high continuation rate among Grade 10 graduates, the return of many out-of-school youth to education, and the possibility that graduates of the Alternative Learning System (ALS) may have pursued further studies (Brillantes et al., 2019). Students who emerged as the primary beneficiaries of this educational shift found themselves actively engaging in the learning process and acquiring practical skills that extend beyond mere memorization (Kilag et al., 2023).

Furthermore, the Philippine K to 12 curriculum is structured with four potential exits, ensuring that graduates have various pathways to consider upon completing senior high school. Graduates can choose to continue their education, middle-level manpower training, entrepreneurship, or employment, providing diverse avenues for growth and productivity within the country, as intended by the curriculum (Padios et al., 2021). The two additional specialized years are designed to equip students with advanced competencies and skills essential for their chosen exits from the curriculum. Senior high school graduates are expected to be proficient in information technology and media skills, innovation, effective communication, as well as life and career skills. These skills enable graduates to pursue higher education, enter middle-level manpower roles, seek employment, or embark on entrepreneurial ventures. Consequently, students have a wider array of options and opportunities upon completing senior high school (Lorraine, 2022).

The term "curriculum exit" refers to the range of opportunities available to high school graduates after finishing their education (Factura et al., 2024). Various factors, such as family financial status, the student's skills and interests, and influence from peers and family members, must be considered when choosing a curriculum exit after senior high school. Selecting the right path is akin to selecting the appropriate college course or career trajectory (Dinampo, 2024). Ultimately, the choice of curriculum exit for SHS graduates is theirs to make, underscoring the importance of schools and career guidance advocates in assisting them in making the right decisions (Cundangan, 2023).

According to Cartas (2023), the decision-making process regarding career choices is among the most significant steps a senior high school student must take in their life, as it greatly influences their future. As the fifth batch of the K to 12 Curriculum program prepares to graduate, many senior high school students are still uncertain and anxious about their prospects, whether they will secure employment, start their own business, pursue higher education, or enroll in vocational courses, given the numerous challenges they face. In a study conducted by Padios (2021) on the curriculum exits chosen by SHS graduates at Aurora State College of Technology (ASCOT), it was found that 90.82% pursued college education, 4.02% secured employment, 1.15% ventured into entrepreneurship, and 4.02% remained undecided or inactive. Similarly, Zhang (2019) found that among Chinese high school graduates, 78% pursued higher education, 10% began working, 5% enrolled in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) programs, and 7% did neither.

Despite these studies, there is a need for more substantial study on students' chosen exit path after they graduate senior high school and whether the competencies, objectives, and program outcomes of the senior high school are truly helpful and have been successfully attained by the students at one of the universities in Ozamiz City. To bridge this knowledge gap, the researchers would like to examine the effectiveness of the senior high school program on the students' chosen exit path.

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2. Research Method and Materials

2.1. Research Design

The research utilized a quantitative approach, employing a descriptive research design (Fischer et al., 2014; Nassaji, 2015) to explore both the demographic profile of the respondents and their curriculum exits. This approach also facilitated the examination of potential significant relationships between these variables. Thus, a quantitative approach utilizing a descriptive survey research design was adopted by the researchers, considering its suitability for tracking the respondents' profiles regarding age, sex, and family income, as well as their chosen paths post-graduation, encompassing employment, higher education, entrepreneurship, and middle-level skills development.

2.2. Research Setting

The study was conducted at one of the higher education institutions in Ozamiz City, Misamis Occidental. The institution, with its broad student population, offers various school programs catering to different interests and aspirations. This institution's Basic Education Department encompasses Preschool, Primary, and Secondary education programs, thereby adhering to the K-12 educational system. Consequently, the Secondary education segment includes both Junior High School and Senior High School programs. Moreover, the Senior High School program in this institution offers a variety of strands designed to cater to the diverse interests and future aspirations of students. It features a specialized curriculum tailored to various academic and vocational tracks. Students, therefore, can choose from these strands such as ABM (Accountancy, Business, and Management), STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), HUMSS (Humanities and Social Sciences), GAS (General Education Strand), and PRE-BACC (Pre-Baccalaureate Course). In addition, within the institution's campus lies an active environment where students explore their academic pursuits, socialize, and prepare for their future endeavors. The campus provides an ideal learning environment, complete with modern facilities, classrooms, laboratories, and recreational areas. The research was set in the context of this higher education institution in Ozamiz City, Misamis Occidental, which has a flexible economic landscape. Its diverse industries, organizations, and educational opportunities provide a wide range of options for graduates as they transition from senior high school to their chosen paths.

2.3. Respondents of the Study

After data saturation, the research respondents were the 371 Senior High School graduates from the academic years 2020-2021, 2021-2022, and 2022-2023. The respondents were chosen through purposive random sampling using the following criteria: (1) respondents who completed their senior year of high school from academic years 2020-2021, 2021-2022, and 2022-2023; and (2) respondents who would willingly and fully consent to engage in the study. The researchers made sure that all requirements were adhered to before beginning the study in order to ensure that it would be conducted ethically and that the participant's rights and privacy would be respected.

2.4. Instruments

This study utilized the following instrument:

(a). Profile of the Respondents Questionnaire. It serves as a foundational component in gathering comprehensive demographic data prior to delving into subsequent survey constructs. It is initiated by soliciting essential information from respondents, including age, sex, estimated monthly family income, and planned career paths after graduating from senior high school. The instrument helps researchers to contextualize findings within the larger socio-economic and educational landscape by methodically gathering demographic data. This allows for deeper interpretations and useful policy recommendations.

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(b). Four Exits of Senior High School Questionnaire. It serves as a crucial research instrument in tracing the four exits of senior high school. Respondents are asked to provide personal demographic information in the first construct, including name (optional), age, sex, expected family income, and respondents' chosen exit path after completing their senior high school program. The following construct asks respondents to assess how beneficial the senior high school curriculum is in connection to their current career path. This construct focuses on employment-related inquiries. Respondents are asked to consider how their senior high school experience decision affects their chances of succeeding in the framework for higher education. The entrepreneurship construct is being used to study the expected benefits of the senior-year high school program in promoting entrepreneurial endeavors. In the middle-level abilities construct, the last question asks participants to rank how successfully the senior high school curriculum prepares them for their chosen occupational courses. In interpreting the level of effectiveness of the senior high school program, the following scales were used:

Table 1. Scale of Questionnaire

Responses	Continuum	Interpretation
5 – Strongly Agree (SA)	4.20-5.00	Very Effective (VE)
4 – Agree (A)	3.40-4.19	Effective (E)
3 – Neutral (N)	2.60-3.39	Somewhat Effective (SE)
2 – Disagree (D)	1.80-2.59	Least Effective (LE)
1 – Strongly Disagree (SD)	1.00-1.79	Strongly Disagree (SD)

2.5. Data Collection

In gathering the data, the researchers obtained permission from the Principal of Basic Education to conduct the study. Following the granting of this authority, the researchers requested permission from the senior high school office secretary to access the list of senior high school graduates from the 2020-2021, 2021-2022, and 2022-2023 academic years. After receiving approval to obtain the list, prior to the full-scale distribution, a pilot test was conducted with a small group of graduates to ensure the clarity and effectiveness of the survey instrument. The feedback from the pilot test was used to make necessary adjustments to the survey. The validity of the questionnaire was ensured by having it thoroughly reviewed and refined by the researchers' instructor, who has significant expertise in the field. The instructor's feedback helped improve the clarity, relevance, and alignment of the questions with the research objectives. A preliminary test was carried out using small sample from the target population to further assess the questionnaire's reliability.

Additionally, the researchers carefully designed clear and consistent questions to ensure that all respondents understood the questions in the same way, thereby providing reliable answers. After the pilot testing, informed consents were sent to potential respondents. Once the informed consents were obtained, the researchers distributed the final survey link to the respondents via messenger to ensure convenience. Google Forms automatically collected and organized the responses into a spreadsheet, providing a structured and efficient way to handle the data. The researchers then reviewed each response to ensure completeness and accuracy, making necessary adjustments to correct any inconsistencies.

2.6. Ethical Considerations

The researchers adhered to ethical standards by following the 1979 Belmont Report criteria for research involving human participants. The study placed a strong emphasis on the concept of respect for persons, which highlights the value of acknowledging each person's autonomy and treating them with dignity. Prior to data collection, all respondents received thorough explanations about the study's objectives, procedures, and significance and were given the assurance that their involvement was completely voluntary. Every participant gave their informed consent, guaranteeing they were aware of their right to withdraw at any time without consequence. In addition, the provisions of Republic Act No. 10173 were considered to ensure the privacy and security of respondents' data. To protect respondents' privacy and data integrity, all collected data were securely kept. The study's respondents were reassured

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that their participation would not jeopardize their well-being and that any information supplied would be handled with the highest confidentiality.

2.7. Data Analysis

The study made use of the following statistical instruments:

Percentage and Frequency were used to determine the age, sex, family income, and their chosen exit path.

Mean and Standard Deviation were used to determine the level of effectiveness of the senior high school program in terms of employment, higher education, entrepreneurship, and middle-level skills development.

A T-test and ANOVA were used to test whether there was a significant difference in the level of effectiveness of the senior high school program when grouped according to profile.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Profile of the Respondents

Table 1 details the profile of respondents concerning age, sex, family income, and chosen exit paths. Among the respondents, 60.11% (P=60.11) are female, and 39.89% (P=39.89) are male. Age distribution shows a majority in the 20 to 21 age range, with 30.19% (P=30.19) and 43.13% (P=43.13) individuals, respectively. Other age groups include 5.39% (P=5.39) aged 18, 14.29% (P=14.29) aged 19, 6.74% (P=6.74) aged 22, and 0.27% (P=0.27) aged 23, highlighting the varied age range within the group. Regarding family income, 46.36% (P=46.36) of respondents have less than 10,000 units of currency, 26.95% (P=26.95) have between 11,000-25,000, 18.60% (P=18.60) have between 26,000-50,000, and 8.09% (P=8.09) have above 51,000. When it comes to exit paths, 86.25% (P=86.25) of respondents prefer higher education, 7.55% (P=7.55) choose employment, 3.23% (P=3.23) opt for entrepreneurship, and 2.96% (P=2.96) select middle-level skills training.

These results suggest a significant gender skew towards female respondents and a focus on young adults, primarily aged 20-21. The prevalence of lower-income backgrounds among nearly half of the respondents highlights potential socio-economic challenges. The strong preference for higher education underscores its perceived importance for career advancement, reflecting a belief in further qualifications to enhance job prospects. The lower inclination towards immediate employment, entrepreneurship, and middle-level skills training indicates a potential perception of these paths as less favorable or accessible in the current socio-economic climate.

Research focusing on young adults, particularly those aged 19-21, reveals that a significant majority of survey respondents in this demographic are female, often due to higher engagement and responsiveness among young women (Padios et al., 2021). Additionally, studies have indicated that individuals aged 20-21 frequently make up a notable portion of survey participants, as this age group is often targeted because they are in a transitional life stage, facing significant educational and early career decisions (Klingenberg et al., 2022). Moreover, individuals from lower-income families are well-represented in survey research, with a notable portion of respondents in educational settings coming from families with incomes below 10,000 pesos, highlighting the importance of this demographic in understanding the impact of economic hardship on educational outcomes and resource access (Padios et al., 2021).

Furthermore, a study of Grade 12 senior high school students demonstrated that a strong aspiration for higher education significantly predicts their readiness to pursue a college degree, indicating that many students see higher education as vital for achieving their long-term goals (Seisa&Galabo, 2023). In addition, research conducted at the University of Northern Philippines found that many senior high school graduates opted to continue their education in college rather than entering the workforce or pursuing vocational training,

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underscoring a preference for higher education over immediate employment or vocational paths (Rin & Domondon, 2021).

The demographic and exit path preferences in Table 1 reveal important research implications for the impact and effectiveness of the Senior High School Program. With most of the respondents being female, it suggests higher female engagement, necessitating exploration of factors like motivation, societal expectations, or access to education to design interventions supporting male students. Most respondents are aged 20-21, indicating a need to investigate reasons behind this age concentration, such as socio-economic factors or education gaps, to improve program accessibility and timely completion rates. Additionally, most of the respondents come from families with incomes under 10,000 units of currency, highlighting socio-economic challenges. Research should assess the impact of financial constraints on education and the effectiveness of financial aid and support services.

The strong preference for higher education underscores its career importance, necessitating exploration of driving factors and examination of students' preparedness and transition to higher education to enhance support structures. Conversely, lower preferences for employment, entrepreneurship, and middle-level skills training suggest these paths are less favored; understanding if this is due to lack of information, societal stigma, or perceived lack of opportunities can help promote these paths. These insights should guide policy and curriculum development to make the Senior High School Program more inclusive and effective, preparing students for their preferred exit paths regardless of gender, age, or socio-economic background.

Table 2. Profile of the Respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Sex		
Male	148	39.89
Female	223	60.11
Age		
18	20	5.39
19	53	14.29
20	112	30.19
21	160	43.13
22	25	6.74
23	1	0.27
Family Income		
Less than 10,000	172	46.36
11,000-25,000	100	26.95
26,000-50,000	69	18.60
51,000 and above	30	8.09
Exit Path		
Employment	28	7.55
Higher Education	320	86.25
Entrepreneurship	12	3.23
Middle Level Skills	11	2.96

3.2. Level of Effectiveness of the Senior High School Program

Table 2 presents the level of effectiveness of the Senior High School Program in terms of Employment, Higher Education, Entrepreneurship, and Middle-Level Skills Development. Entrepreneurship receives the highest effectiveness rating (M = 4.13, SD = 0.70), indicating a strong perception of the program's ability to prepare students for entrepreneurial activities. Employment is rated effective (M = 3.59, SD = 0.84). Higher education also falls under the effective category (M = 3.89, SD = 0.98). Meanwhile, Middle-Level Skills Development is rated effective (M = 3.40, SD = 1.06). The overall level of effectiveness of the Senior High School Program is rated as effective (M = 3.86, SD = 0.97.

These results suggest that the Senior High School Program is largely successful in achieving its goals, particularly in fostering higher education and entrepreneurship. The high rating for entrepreneurship implies that the program effectively equips students with the necessary skills

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and mindset for entrepreneurial ventures. The effective rating for employment and higher education indicates that the program adequately prepares students for the workforce and further studies. Although Middle-Level Skills Development has the lowest mean score among the constructs, it is still rated as effective, pointing to satisfactory performance in this area. This suggests that while the program performs well overall, there is potential for further improvement in developing middle-level skills to better support students who choose this pathway. The generally effective overall rating underscores the program's positive impact, reflecting its success in preparing students for various post-secondary opportunities.

The implementation of the K-12 Senior High School program enhances the global competitiveness of Filipino students. Additionally, the curriculum equips students with essential work skills (Guiamalon & Hariraya, 2021). The two extra years are designed to provide ample time for students to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for future employment (Rafanan et al., 2020). On an individual level, comprehensive education helps people realize their potential, identify their strengths, and become productive members of society (Osei-Owusu & Menka, 2021). Enhanced higher education may encourage rural children to pursue senior high school education (Lu & Zhang, 2019).

For higher education institutions in these countries, prioritizing the training of workers to meet institutional demands is crucial, as there is a shortage of experts with new skills despite a growing digital market (Akour & Alenezi, 2022). Educators must ensure that their students acquire the necessary skills to adapt to the modern world (Lin & Thanh, 2022). Therefore, schools must focus on providing education that delivers relevant skills for the labor market and fosters entrepreneurial growth (Abun et al., 2021). The SHS curriculum strives to develop well-rounded students with 21st-century skills prepared for higher education, middle-level skills attainment, employment, or entrepreneurship (Brillantes et al., 2019).

The findings from the evaluation of the Senior High School Program underscore several key implications for educational policy and curriculum development. The program's effectiveness in fostering higher education, entrepreneurship, and employment highlights its success in equipping students with essential skills and knowledge necessary for various pathways post-graduation. This effectiveness suggests that the program aligns well with the demands of tertiary education and the needs of the job market, thereby potentially contributing to economic growth by preparing future business leaders and a competent workforce. However, while the program is rated as effective in middle-level skills development, it receives the lowest rating among the constructs evaluated. This indicates that although the program is successful overall, there is a notable area for improvement in enhancing middle-level skills.

Middle-level skills are critical for technical and vocational fields, which are essential components of a well-functioning economy. To address this gap, it may be beneficial to incorporate more practical training, industry collaborations, and specialized courses tailored to specific vocational paths. This enhancement could better prepare students for these career sectors and ensure a more comprehensive development of the workforce. Moreover, the overall effective rating suggests a solid foundation upon which to build further improvements. Policymakers and educators should focus on bolstering the program's effectiveness in middle-level skills development while maintaining and enhancing its strengths in higher education, entrepreneurship, and employment readiness. By doing so, the Senior High School Program can continue to evolve and positively impact both individual student outcomes and broader societal development goals.

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Table 3. Level of Effectiveness of the Senior High School Program

Constructs	M	SD	Remarks
Employment	3.59	0.84	Effective
Higher Education	3.89	0.98	Effective
Entrepreneurship	4.13	0.70	Effective
Middle Level Skills Development	3.40	1.06	Effective
Overall Level of Effectiveness	3.86	0.97	Effective

Scale: 4.20-5.00 (Very Effective); 3.40-4.19 (Effective); 2.60-3.39 (Somewhat Effective); 1.80-2.59 (Least Effective); 1.00-1.79 (Not Effective)

3.3. Difference Between the Level of Effectiveness of Senior High School Program When Grouped According to Profile

Table 3 presents an analysis of the significant difference between the level of effectiveness of the Senior High School Program when grouped according to different profiles: age, sex, family income, and chosen exit path. The statistical tests conducted reveal no significant differences in program effectiveness across these variables. Specifically, the tests show that age ($f = 1.25$, $p = 0.28$), sex ($t = -0.96$, $p = 0.34$), family income ($f = 0.80$, $p = 0.50$), and exit path ($f = 1.97$, $p = 0.12$) do not significantly influence the perceived effectiveness of the program. These results suggest that regardless of demographic characteristics such as age and sex, socio-economic background indicated by family income, or the specific path chosen after completing the program (employment, higher education, entrepreneurship, or middle-level skills development), students perceive the Senior High School Program as consistently effective in achieving its educational objectives.

Moreover, the null hypothesis (Ho) stated in Table 3 posits that there is no significant difference in the level of effectiveness of the Senior High School Program based on the examined profiles. The non-rejection of Ho across all variables—age, sex, family income, and exit path—supports the notion that these factors do not influence the program's effectiveness in a statistically meaningful way. This finding is crucial as it indicates the program's robustness and consistency in achieving its educational objectives across diverse student demographics and circumstances. Educational policymakers can find assurance in these results, suggesting that efforts to enhance program effectiveness should focus broadly on improving overall program quality rather than targeting specific demographic or decision-making profiles. This approach could lead to more inclusive and equitable educational outcomes for all students enrolled in the Senior High School Program.

Senior high school programs are designed to prepare students for various future pathways, including employment, higher education, entrepreneurship, and middle-level skills development. Assessing the effectiveness of these programs for different student demographics is essential for informing educational policy and practice. One aspect of this assessment involves exploring the impact of age on program effectiveness. Smith (2020) notes that older students typically show higher engagement and academic performance due to increased maturity and goal orientation. In contrast, younger students may face challenges with social integration but benefit from structured support systems (Brown et al., 2019). Meanwhile, the influence of gender on the effectiveness of senior high school programs has also been examined. Johnson (2021) found that females generally achieve higher academic performance than males, especially in language and social sciences, while males tend to excel in mathematics and physical sciences (Jones, 2019). These results emphasize the need for instructional methods tailored to gender-specific strengths and challenges.

Family income is another critical factor affecting the effectiveness of senior high school programs. Garcia (2022) points out that students from lower-income families encounter more obstacles to academic success due to restricted availability of resources similar to tutoring and extracurricular activities. In contrast, students from higher-income families often benefit from enriched learning environments and parental support (Perez, 2020). Additionally, the effectiveness of senior high school programs is influenced by students' post-graduation plans. Lee (2023) suggests that students with well-defined career goals aligned with their educational

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track show higher motivation and performance. Conversely, students who are uncertain about their future paths may experience disengagement and lower academic achievement (Yang et al., 2021).

The findings detailed in Table 3 reveal a significant implication for educational policy and practice concerning the Senior High School Program's effectiveness across diverse demographic and decision-making profiles. The statistical analysis conducted demonstrates that variables such as age, sex, family income, and chosen exit path do not yield statistically significant differences in students' perceptions of the program's effectiveness. This implies a robust consistency in how the program is perceived to achieve its educational objectives, irrespective of students' demographic backgrounds or post-program trajectories. The non-rejection of the null hypothesis underscores the program's ability to deliver uniform educational outcomes across varied student profiles. This suggests that strategies aimed at enhancing program effectiveness should prioritize overarching improvements rather than targeting specific demographic segments or career paths post-graduation. By focusing on comprehensive program enhancements, educational policymakers can ensure more equitable educational outcomes for all participants in the Senior High School Program, thereby optimizing the program's impact on educational achievement and equity.

Table 4. Difference Between the Level of Effectiveness of Senior High School Program When Grouped According to Profile

Variables	Test Statistics	*p* value	Decision
Effectiveness and Age	F= 1.25	.28	Do not reject Ho
Effectiveness and Sex	T= -0.96	.34	Do not reject Ho
Effectiveness and Family Income	F= 0.80	.50	Do not reject Ho
Effectiveness and Exit Path	F = 1.97	.12	Do not reject Ho

Note: Probability Value Scale: **p<0.01 (Highly Significant); *p<0.05 (Significant); p>0.05 (Not significant)

4. Conclusion

The respondents are predominantly female, indicating a greater interest or availability among this demographic. Most respondents are young adults, aligning with the target age group for the Senior High School Program. A significant portion comes from low-income families, with a preference for pursuing higher education, reflecting aspirations for academic advancement and better job opportunities.

The program is highly effective in entrepreneurship, while employment and higher education also receive strong ratings. However, middle-level skills development shows a gap in effectiveness. Demographic factors like age, gender, and income do not significantly influence perceptions, suggesting consistent effectiveness across different groups.

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