Where Senior High School Graduates Went:

A Tracer Study of One Division's SY 2023–2024 Completers

A Basic Research

[Copy for blind review: the researchers' names, positions, and schools division are removed. The final copy lists them here.]

Conducted June 2025 to May 2026

Abstract

This basic research traced the 2,148 Grade 12 completers of School Year (SY) 2023–2024 of one division's six public senior high schools: what they were doing about 15 months after graduation, how their pathways matched their strands, and which school records predict the pathway. The school records (strand, Grade 12 general average, sex, 4Ps membership, and the exit named in the exit survey) formed the frame. Graduates were asked about the week of September 1 to 7, 2025, through a personal link sent by text message, two reminders, and phone calls; a random third of those still not answering was then followed up intensively. Response Rate 2 was 58.3% when the first phase closed and 83.5% when weighted for the follow-up subsample. Of the first-phase respondents, 68.5% were in higher education; weighting them to the frame gave 63.1%, and the two-phase estimate with the follow-up 59.0%, 95% CI [55.4, 62.5]. Employment was 19.7%, entrepreneurship 1.6%, and middle-level skills development 5.2%; 14.6% were in none of the four. Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) graduates were in higher education less often than academic-strand graduates (42.4% against 70.2%) and in work more often (30.4% against 15.1%). Of the college students from strands that prepare for a field, 61.3% studied in a field their strand prepares for. In a multinomial logistic regression, the general average, strand, 4Ps membership, and intended exit each predicted the pathway; five points more in the general average went with 11.9 percentage points more in higher education. The exit named before graduation matched the pathway for 57.9% of graduates, κ = .27.

Keywords: tracer study, senior high school graduates, curriculum exits, nonresponse bias, survey weighting

Acknowledgment

The researchers thank the Schools Division Superintendent, who approved the study and the use of the division's records; the school heads of the six public senior high schools, who opened their records and their offices; the Grade 12 advisers of SY 2023–2024, who searched their class lists and group chats for their former learners; the career advocates and guidance designates who made the calls and the visits; the 1,433 graduates who answered; the research ethics committee that reviewed the protocol; and the members of the Schools Division Research Committee. The study was funded by the Basic Education Research Fund (BERF) for 2025.

Where Senior High School Graduates Went: A Tracer Study of One Division's SY 2023–2024 Completers

Introduction of the Research

The senior high school (SHS) program is meant to prepare its graduates for four exits. The Department of Education (DepEd) "envisions Filipinos who are ready for four possible exits: employment, entrepreneurship, middle level skills development, and higher education" (DepEd, 2019, para. 24). Its Career Guidance Program asks every school to give its graduating learners a curriculum exits tracking survey "at least two (2) weeks before the graduation ceremony" (Office of the Undersecretary for Operations [OUOPS], 2023, Sec. V.F), and the SHS tracer report is among the school forms of homeroom guidance that teachers still keep (DepEd, 2025a, Encl. No. 2). The exit survey records what learners intend. What they do afterwards is a different question.

The answers so far disagree. DepEd's tracer study of the first SHS graduates, of SY 2017–2018, found that "nearly 83% of the SHS graduates went on to pursue higher education while 1% engaged in entrepreneurship," with about 10% of the respondents employed (DepEd, 2023, item 5.a). National household surveys put college going lower: in the 2019 Annual Poverty Indicators Survey, 65.9% of the earliest SHS graduates were attending school, 59.3% of them in college, and 14.1% were neither attending school nor working (Abrigo & Orbeta, 2023, p. 2), and in the Labor Force Survey, "just over 20%" of SHS graduates entered the labor force while "over 70%" continued their education (Orbeta & Potestad, 2025, p. 85). The Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM II) found that the

curriculum "still functions more as a general preparatory stage for college than as a set of distinct and viable exits to work, skills certification, or entrepreneurship" (EDCOM II, 2026, p. 157), and recommended that DepEd, TESDA, and CHED "conduct comprehensive and regular graduate tracer studies" (p. 490).

The question has a date. DepEd piloted a strengthened SHS curriculum in Grade 11 in SY 2025–2026 (DepEd, 2025c) and directed all schools to implement it for incoming Grade 11 learners from SY 2026–2027 (DepEd, 2026b, item 4). The SY 2023–2024 completers were, in DepEd's words, "the first cohort of learners that engaged the full cycle of the K to 12 Curriculum since 2011" (DepEd, 2023, item 5), and they are among the last cohorts of the 2016 SHS curriculum. Where they went is the baseline against which the strengthened curriculum's graduates can be compared, and the division's schools hold records on every one of them: strand, grades, 4Ps membership, and the exit each named before graduation.

A tracer study has a known weakness. The graduates who answer first are not typical: in a national tracer study of higher education graduates, "only 43.3 percent of the sample graduates were traced" (Tutor et al., 2021, p. 8), and those who are easy to reach may differ from those who are not. This study therefore traced every SY 2023–2024 completer of the division's public senior high schools, followed up a random sample of those who did not answer, and compared the respondents with the frame on the school's own records. It addresses the Teaching and Learning theme of the Basic Education Research

Agenda, under Curriculum: "How is the curriculum responsive and relevant to learners?" (DepEd, 2016, p. 7).

Literature Review

The review follows the study's questions: what the SHS program prepared this cohort for, what earlier studies found about SHS graduates, and how a tracer study reaches its graduates and corrects for those it does not.

The Senior High School Program and Its Exits

The SY 2023–2024 completers took the 2016 SHS curriculum, in four tracks: Academic, Arts and Design, Sports, and Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) (DepEd, 2019, Annex 2, para. 38). The Academic track has four strands: Accountancy, Business and Management (ABM); Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM); Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS); and the General Academic Strand (GAS) (para. 41). Each strand points somewhere: ABM is "for those who plan to take up business-related courses in higher education or engage in business, entrepreneurship, and other business-related careers" (para. 42), HUMSS for learners "who want to pursue these fields of study at the university level" (para. 45), and GAS is "ideal for SHS students who have not yet decided on a particular specialization" (para. 46). The TVL strands (Agri-Fishery Arts, Home Economics, Industrial Arts, and Information and Communications Technology) offer specializations in their sectors' qualifications, some with a TESDA National Certificate equivalent (paras. 51–56). Work immersion, at least 80 hours (DepEd, 2017a, Table 1), was made "a requirement for

graduation from secondary education" in 2017 (Sec. 1); the 2019 guidelines give each specialization one 80-hour slot for work immersion, research, career advocacy, or a culminating activity, as the school can offer (DepEd, 2019, Annex 2, para. 57).

Since SY 2023–2024, the Career Guidance Program has asked each graduating learner to name a curriculum exit before graduation: College Education, Employment, Entrepreneurship / Business, Middle-Level Skills Development, or none (OUOPS, 2023, Encl. No. 2, item 4). The survey's results go to the division as counts by track and exit (Encl. No. 3). A tracer study asks the same graduates, months later, what they actually did.

What Earlier Studies Found

DepEd's own tracer study of the SY 2017–2018 graduates is known only from the shares a memorandum reported: about 10% employed, nearly 83% in higher education, and 1% in entrepreneurship (DepEd, 2023, item 5.a). The memorandum calls the 10% a share of "graduate respondents" and gives no response rate. Household surveys reach graduates who would not answer a school's survey. Analyzing eight Labor Force Survey rounds, Orbeta and Potestad (2025) found that 77% of Grade 12 graduates were "presumably enrolled in the next level of education" (p. 97); because no data tracked the actual cohort, they built a "synthetic" cohort of the ages at which SHS graduates were expected to be (p. 91). The Annual Poverty Indicators Survey of 2019 found 53.9% of the earliest SHS graduates attending school only, 20.1% working only, 12.0% doing both, and 14.1% doing neither: 65.9% were

in school, 59.3% in college (Abrigo & Orbeta, 2023, p. 2). Neither study reports its figures by strand, so neither can say how a strand's graduates fared.

Reaching Graduates and Correcting for Those Not Reached

Tracer study guides recommend surveying graduates "one to two years after graduation" (Schomburg, 2016, p. 48) and contacting them "at least three times (two reminders)" (p. 30), and warn that "Very often low response rates of less than 30% are reported from tracer studies, though some achieve 50% or more" (p. 30). The American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR, 2023) defines the outcome rates of a survey and holds that "a statement that 'the response rate is X' is unacceptable. One must report exactly which rate was used" (p. 85).

A low response rate does not by itself mean a biased estimate. Nonresponse bias in a mean is approximately the covariance between the response propensity and the survey variable, divided by the mean propensity (Groves, 2006): it is large only when the people who answer differ, on what is measured, from those who do not. Across 59 methodological studies, "the nonresponse rate of a survey, by itself, is a poor predictor of the absolute relative nonresponse bias" (Groves & Peytcheva, 2008, p. 174). In a tracer study the risk is plain: a graduate in college may be easier to reach, and readier to answer a school, than one who is out of work.

Three checks are common. The first compares the respondents with the frame on what the frame records (Schomburg, 2016, p. 36). The second compares early with late respondents, on the assumption "that subjects who respond less readily are more like nonrespondents" (Armstrong & Overton,

1977, p. 397); but tests of this "continuum of resistance" have found it "a notion largely unsupported in empirical studies" (Groves & Peytcheva, 2008, p. 175; Lin & Schaeffer, 1995). The third, the strongest, follows up a random subsample of the nonrespondents intensively and weights them up to stand for all nonrespondents, as Hansen and Hurwitz (1946) proposed: "to follow up by enumerating a sample of those that do not respond" (p. 517).

Weighting adjusts the respondents to the frame. Cell weighting assumes "that the respondents within a cell represent the nonrespondents within that cell"; raking adjusts to several margins at once by iterative proportional fitting (Kalton & Flores-Cervantes, 2003, pp. 85–86). To reduce nonresponse bias, a weighting variable "needs to be related to the probability of response, and it needs to be related to the survey outcome" (Little & Vartivarian, 2005, abstract), and unequal weights cost precision, by a design effect of $1 + CV^2$ of the weights (Kish, 1992, p. 191). For a regression that already includes the variables behind the weights, weighting may add little but noise; reporting the weighted and unweighted estimates side by side tests the model (Solon et al., 2015).

Synthesis

The evidence points two ways. Household surveys put college going among recent SHS graduates near 59% (the Annual Poverty Indicators Survey) and the share continuing their education near 77% (the Labor Force Survey); a tracer study of respondents alone found 83%. The gap is what one would expect if graduates in college answer tracer surveys more readily. A division can trace its own graduates by strand, which no household survey

can, but only if it measures how far its respondents differ from its graduates and corrects for it. This study was designed to do both.

Research Questions

This study sought to answer the following questions:

1. In the week of September 1 to 7, 2025, how were the division's SY 2023–2024 Grade 12 completers distributed across higher education, employment, entrepreneurship, middle-level skills development, and none of these, overall and by strand?
2. How closely did their pathways match their strands: the field of their college program, the sector of their training, their own rating of how their work relates to their strand, and the exit they named before graduation?
3. Which school records (strand, Grade 12 general average, sex, 4Ps membership, intended exit, and school) predict a graduate's pathway?
4. How did the graduates who answered differ from those who did not, and how far did weighting and the follow-up of nonrespondents change the estimates?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at the .05 level of significance:

1. H01: Holding the other records constant, the pathway does not differ by strand group.
2. H02: The Grade 12 general average is not associated with the pathway.
3. H03: The exit named before graduation is not associated with the pathway.

4. H04: The pathway does not differ by the wave in which a graduate answered.

Scope and Limitation

The study covered every learner who completed Grade 12 in SY 2023–2024 in the division's six public senior high schools, and their main activity in one reference week, September 1 to 7, 2025. It did not cover private schools, Alternative Learning System completers, or other cohorts, and it did not follow graduates' activities over time.

The study has limits. First, the pathway is the graduate's own report, not a check of enrollment or employment records. Second, answers came by different modes, online and by phone or in person, and a graduate may report a status differently to a caller than to a form. Third, weighting assumes that, within the frame's records, those who answered are like those who did not; the follow-up tests that assumption but got answers from 62.8% of its subsample, and its estimates carry the same assumption for the rest. Fourth, graduates who declined were not pursued, so the follow-up could not show whether they differ. Fifth, the match between a strand and a college field rests on the study's own crosswalk from the strands' descriptions. Sixth, one week's activity misses changes before and after it: a graduate between semesters, or between jobs, is counted by what that week held.

Research Methodology

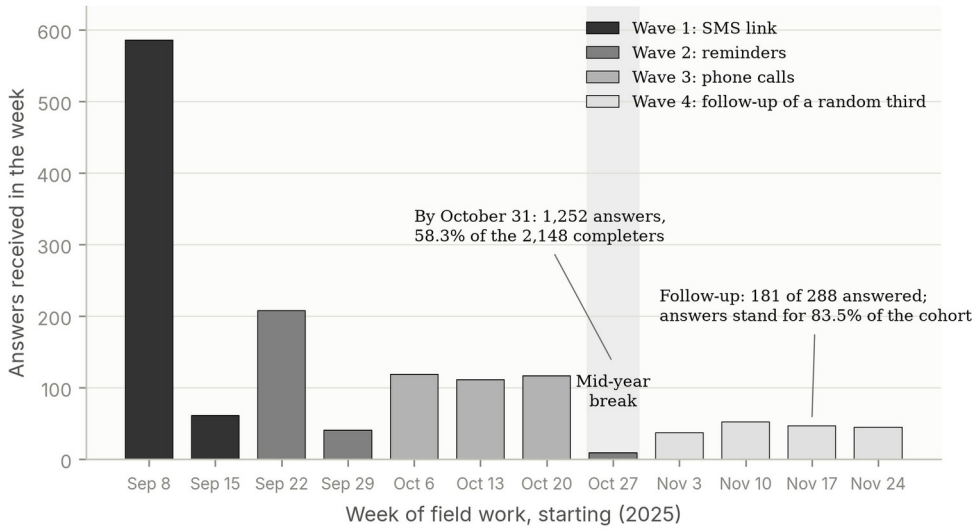
Research Design

The study was a tracer study, a cross-sectional survey of one cohort of graduates linked to their school records, with a two-phase design for

nonresponse. In the first phase (September 8 to October 31, 2025), every completer was asked to answer, in three waves: a personal link to an online form sent by text message (wave 1), two reminders (wave 2), and phone calls (wave 3, to October 24); the online form stayed open through the mid-year break. In the second phase (November 3 to 28, 2025), a random third of the graduates who had neither answered nor declined was followed up intensively (wave 4). All answers refer to the reference week, September 1 to 7, 2025, so early and late answers describe the same week (Figure 1).

Figure 1

The Field Work, Week by Week



Note. Answers received each week, by wave. The mid-year break, October 27 to 31, 2025 (DepEd, 2025b), had no calls; the online form stayed open.

The main variable was the graduate's pathway in the reference week, by a rule fixed before data collection: enrolled in a college or university program (higher education); otherwise, enrolled in a technical-vocational course or training (middle-level skills development); otherwise, working, or having a job or business to return to, in one's own business

(entrepreneurship) or for someone else, including unpaid work on a farm or in a business of one's household (employment); otherwise, none of the four. The questions on work follow the Labor Force Survey's concepts: an hour of work in the week, for pay or profit or without pay in a household's farm or business, counts as work.

A. Sampling

The study did not sample in its first phase. Its frame was every Grade 12 completer of SY 2023–2024 of the division's six public senior high schools, 2,148 graduates, built from each school's School Form 10 and its list of completers: 612, 468, 389, 301, 203, and 175 by school. By strand, they were 283 STEM, 245 ABM, 531 HUMSS, 221 GAS, 417 TVL–Home Economics, 199 TVL–ICT, 106 TVL–Industrial Arts, and 146 TVL–Agri-Fishery Arts graduates; no school offered the Sports or the Arts and Design track. All were eligible: the frame listed only completers, and none was found to have died before the field work.

The proposal planned the precision from a response rate of 50%, the middle of the range a national tracer study reports: "Globally, graduate tracer survey response rates range between 30 and 60 percent" (Tutor et al., 2021, p. 8). It assumed a design effect of 1.3 from weighting. With 1,074 respondents, a share near 50% would carry a margin of error of ±3.4 percentage points for the cohort, and of ±9.1 points for a strand of 300 completers.

In the second phase, the 863 graduates who had not answered by October 31, 2025, when the first phase closed, and had neither declined nor

been found unable to answer, were sorted by school and strand, and every third was drawn after a random start: 288 graduates. Each stood for 2.997 of the 863 (AAPOR, 2023, p. 90).

B. Data Collection

Recruitment of Participants

The Schools Division Superintendent approved the study and the use of the six schools' records in June 2025. Each school's registrar and Grade 12 advisers of SY 2023–2024 built the frame from the school's records, replaced each graduate's name and Learner Reference Number with a code, and kept the key linking codes to names in the school. The invitation went to the mobile number in the graduate's exit survey or enrollment record, by a text message with a personal link; advisers also posted a general notice in the class group chats they had kept. In wave 3, the six schools' career advocates and guidance designates called each number that had not answered, at most three times, after class hours. In wave 4, they traced the subsampled graduates through classmates and the parents' numbers in the enrollment records, and visited homes in the division. Family members and classmates were told only that the school wished to reach the graduate for a graduates' survey; no one answered for a graduate.

Data Collection Instruments

The questionnaire. The online form had nine parts (Appendix B): the privacy notice and consent (Part A); confirmation of the cohort (B); the graduate's activities in the reference week (C); college (D), training (E), work (F), or the reason for none (G), as the answers in Part C called for; a look back

at the strand and work immersion (H); and permission to contact the graduate again (I). The six questions of Part C, the core of the study, follow the Labor Force Survey's concepts of work, job attachment, job search, and availability. The work-relatedness question adapts the tracer study item on how far knowledge and skills acquired in study are used in the current job (Schomburg, 2016, p. 162). The short form used by phone and in person kept Parts A, C, D, and G and questions E1, F1, and F6.

School records. From each school: strand, sex, and age at graduation (School Form 10 and the enrollment record); the Grade 12 general average, the mean of the two semesters' general averages in School Form 10, each reported as a whole number (DepEd, 2015); 4Ps membership (the enrollment record); the National Certificate II of TVL graduates assessed in Grade 12; and the exit named in the exit survey (OUOPS, 2023, Encl. No. 2).

Coding. Two researchers coded each college program into one of 11 field groups and each training course into one of five sectors, separately, and settled each disagreement together. The study's crosswalk sets, for each strand, the fields it prepares for, starting from the strands' descriptions (DepEd, 2019, Annex 2, paras. 42–56) and adding the study's own judgment: STEM, the engineering, IT, health, and natural science fields; ABM, business and accountancy; HUMSS, education, the social sciences and humanities, and criminology; each TVL strand, its own sector's field; GAS, none, so its graduates were left out of the field match.

Validity and Reliability

Three reviewers (a registered guidance counselor, a supervisor in charge of the SHS program, and a statistician of the regional office) read the questionnaire against the research questions. Twelve graduates of SY 2022–2023, outside the frame, answered it aloud in a cognitive pretest on August 11 to 15, 2025; two questions changed. Question C1 gained "whether or not classes met that week," since some colleges were between semesters, and Question C3 named unpaid work on a family farm or in a family business, which several had not counted as work. To check reliability, 60 graduates who had answered online in waves 1 and 2 were asked Part C again two weeks later. Their answers agreed for 100% of Question C1 (κ = 1.00), 98.3% of C2 (κ = .66), and 93.3% of C3 (κ = .79), and the pathway was the same for all 60.

Data Collection Setting

The frame was built in each school's records room. The graduates answered where they were, online or by phone; the visits of wave 4 were to homes in the division.

Data Collection Timeline

Table 1

Data Collection Timeline

Activity	Dates
Approval of the study; review by the research ethics committee	June 2 to July 11, 2025
Building and coding the frame in the six schools	July 14 to August 8, 2025
Review and cognitive pretest of the questionnaire	July 21 to August 15, 2025
Reference week	September 1 to 7, 2025
Wave 1: personal links by text message	September 8 to 19, 2025
Wave 2: two reminders	September 22 to October 3, 2025
Wave 3: phone calls	October 6 to 24, 2025
Re-ask of Part C (60 graduates)	September 22 to October 17, 2025
Wave 4: follow-up of the random third	November 3 to 28, 2025

Activity	Dates
Coding of programs and courses; weighting	December 1, 2025 to January 16, 2026
Data analysis	January 19 to March 13, 2026

Note. The SY 2023–2024 completers graduated at rites held on May 29 to 31, 2024 (DepEd, 2024, item 3), so the reference week fell about 15 months after graduation. No calls were made during the mid-year break, October 27 to 31, 2025 (DepEd, 2025b).

Data Recording and Storage

Answers went to a form in the division's DepEd account and carried each graduate's code, not a name. The keys stayed in the schools. The data were kept on an encrypted drive and will be destroyed three years after the study ends.

C. Ethical Issues

The study followed DepEd's Research Management Guidelines, which ask researchers to ensure "confidentiality in handling data of respondents and providing consent forms where necessary" (DepEd, 2017b, Sec. VI.C), and the Data Privacy Act of 2012. Every graduate was 18 years old or older by the reference week. The form opened with a privacy notice: who would process the answers and records and why, how long they would be kept, the graduate's rights, and whom to contact, the concise information that consent requires (National Privacy Commission [NPC], 2023, Sec. 3[A]); only a graduate who chose "Yes, I agree" could go on. Consent given in an online form through a web link is a method the research ethics committee must approve (Philippine Health Research Ethics Board [PHREB], 2022, p. 128); by phone and in person, the caller read the notice and recorded the graduate's answer, a consent "evidenced by written, electronic, or recorded means" (NPC, 2023, Sec. 11). Answering was voluntary, could stop at any question, and

changed nothing in a graduate's records. The records of graduates who did not answer were used only in counts and comparisons that name no one, research "where the end results will be anonymized and will only disclose the general demographic of the research subjects" (NPC, 2023, Sec. 16[C][2]). No result names a graduate. The researchers declared their use of an artificial intelligence (AI) tool in Appendix D (DepEd, 2026a).

D. Plan for Data Analysis

The analysis used Python with statsmodels (Seabold & Perktold, 2010) and Excel. The first step was the response: each case's final disposition by AAPOR's codes (AAPOR, 2023), Response Rates 1 and 2, the cooperation, refusal, and contact rates when the first phase closed, and the final rates weighted for the follow-up subsample, in which each subsampled case counts 2.997 times and each unsampled nonrespondent zero (AAPOR, 2023, p. 90). Because every completer was eligible, there was no case of unknown eligibility, so Response Rate 3 equals Response Rate 1 and Response Rate 4 equals Response Rate 2.

The fourth question was answered first. The respondents by October 31 were compared with the frame on every record, and a logistic regression of answering on the records showed which records predicted it. The pathways of the four waves were compared with a chi-square test (H04), and the share in higher education across waves 1 to 3 with a logistic regression on the wave number. Three sets of weights followed: cell weights, the completers over the respondents in each strand group and band of the general average (below 85, 85 to 89.5, and 90 and above), with a cell of fewer than 20 respondents, the

study's own threshold, merged with its neighbor, since small cells make the adjustments unstable (Kalton & Flores-Cervantes, 2003, p. 86); raked weights, adjusted by iterative proportional fitting to six margins of the frame (school, strand, sex, band of the general average, 4Ps membership, and the intended exit); and two-phase weights, in which each first-phase respondent weighs 1 and each follow-up respondent stands for the first-phase nonrespondents of their cell (two groups of the general average within three strand groups). Each set's design effect was Kish's (1992), $n \Sigma w^2 / (\Sigma w)^2$.

The first question was answered by each pathway's share under the unweighted, cell, raked, and two-phase estimates. The standard error of each weighted share was the linearization estimate, the square root of $n / (n - 1) \cdot \Sigma\, w^2(y - p)^2 / (\Sigma\, w)^2$; the 95% interval was Wilson's (Brown et al., 2001), computed at the effective sample size, $p(1 - p)$ divided by the variance. The two-phase estimate was the study's main estimate, overall and by strand. The second question was answered by the two-phase shares of the college students in a field their strand prepares for, of the TVL graduates in training in their strand's sector, and of the working graduates who rated their work 4 or 5 on its relation to their strand, and by the agreement between the intended exit and the pathway, with Cohen's kappa (H03).

The third question was answered by a multinomial logistic regression of the pathway (higher education as the reference; middle-level skills development; employment or entrepreneurship, joined because entrepreneurs were few; and none of the four) on the strand group (TVL as the reference), the general average (per 5 points), sex, 4Ps membership, the intended exit,

and the school, fitted to all 1,433 respondents without weights, with robust (HC0) standard errors. Results are relative risk ratios with 95% intervals, likelihood-ratio tests of each set of records (H01, H02, H03), and average marginal effects, the average change in each pathway's probability with each record, with delta-method intervals. The same model was fitted with the two-phase weights as a check (Solon et al., 2015).

Discussion of Results and Recommendations

Who Answered

By October 31, 2025, when the first phase closed, 1,252 of the 2,148 completers had answered (9 of them online during the mid-year break, after the calls ended on October 24): 1,209 completely and 43 in part, having answered Part C and stopped before Part H. Response Rate 1 was 56.3% and Response Rate 2 was 58.3%; 29 graduates declined (Refusal Rate 1, 1.4%) and 4 could not answer for reasons of health (Table 2). Of the graduates reached, 94.1% completed the form (Cooperation Rate 1). The follow-up drew 288 of the 863 graduates not yet reached; 181 answered (62.8%), 8 declined, and 99 could not be reached. Weighted for the subsample, the final Response Rate 2 was 83.5%. Of the 674 graduates never reached, 419 received the text or calls and gave no answer, 180 had a number that was not in service or not the graduate's, and 75 had no number on file (33 of them in a class group chat that carried the notice).

Table 2

Final Dispositions and AAPOR Outcome Rates

Disposition or rate	When the first phase closed (October 31)	Final, unweighted	Final, weighted for the subsample
Complete (I)	1,209	1,390	1,751.4
Partial (P)	43	43	43.0
Refusal and break-off (R)	29	37	53.0
Non-contact (NC)	863	674	296.7
Other (O)	4	4	4.0
Response Rate 1	56.3%	64.7%	81.5%
Response Rate 2	58.3%	66.7%	83.5%
Cooperation Rate 1	94.1%	94.3%	94.6%
Refusal Rate 1	1.4%	1.7%	2.5%
Contact Rate 1	59.8%	68.6%	86.2%

Note. All 2,148 completers were eligible, so there was no case of unknown eligibility. Weighted: each of the 288 cases drawn for the follow-up counts 2.997 times (863 / 288), and the 575 non-contacts not drawn count zero (AAPOR, 2023, p. 90).

The respondents were not a miniature of the frame. By October 31, 76.3% of STEM graduates had answered but 41.8% of TVL–Agri-Fishery Arts graduates; 71.0% of those with a general average of 90 or more but 39.0% of those below 85; and 65.7% of those who had named college in the exit survey but 41.0% of those who had not answered it. TVL graduates were 40.4% of the frame and 33.4% of the respondents; 4Ps members, 23.9% and 19.2%. In the logistic regression of answering, each 5 points of general average multiplied the odds of answering by 1.66, 95% CI [1.46, 1.89]; a number on file, by 3.17 [2.18, 4.61]; 4Ps membership, by 0.70 [0.56, 0.87]; and a STEM strand, against TVL, by 1.91 [1.35, 2.70].

The waves differed in what they found (Table 3). Of the graduates who answered the first link, 77.7% were in higher education; of those reached by the phone calls, 48.4%, and of those reached in the follow-up, 48.6%. The

share in none of the four rose from 7.7% in wave 1 to 22.5% in wave 3, $x^2(12) = 124.16$, $p < .001$, $V = .17$. Across waves 1 to 3, each later wave cut the odds of being in higher education by about half, OR = 0.52, 95% CI [0.45, 0.60]. The fourth null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 3

Pathway by Wave of Answer

Wave	Answered	Higher education	Middle-level skills	Employment	Entrepreneurship	None of the four
1. Personal link by text message	647	77.7%	3.9%	9.6%	1.1%	7.7%
2. Two reminders	258	72.1%	2.7%	12.8%	1.6%	10.9%
3. Phone calls	347	48.4%	5.8%	21.3%	2.0%	22.5%
4. Follow-up of a random third	181	48.6%	6.1%	26.0%	1.7%	17.7%

Note. Unweighted shares of each wave's respondents.

Where the Graduates Were

Weighting moved the estimates the same way the late answers did (Figure 2). Of the first-phase respondents, 68.5% were in higher education. Cell weights, with 13 cells and weights from 1.24 to 2.72, lowered the share to 64.0%; raking to six margins of the frame, with weights from 1.09 to 3.87, to 63.1%. The two-phase estimate, which adds the follow-up's answers weighted for the first-phase nonrespondents they stand for, put it at 59.0%, 95% CI [55.4, 62.5] (Table 4). The design effects of the three sets of weights were 1.07, 1.09, and 1.82.

Table 4

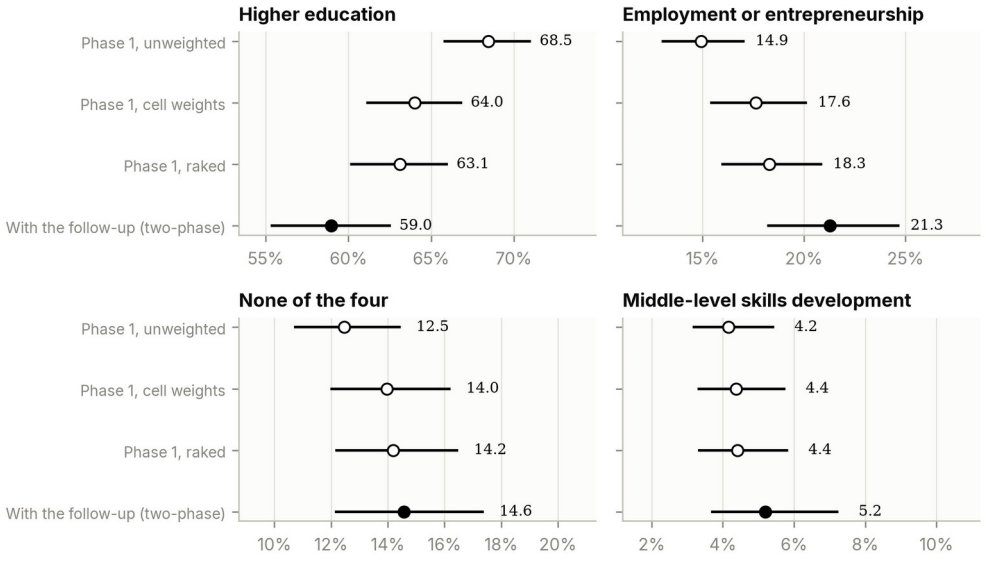
Each Pathway's Share Under Four Estimates

Pathway	Phase 1, unweighted	Phase 1, cell weights	Phase 1, raked	Two-phase (main estimate)
Higher education	68.5% [65.8, 71.0]	64.0% [61.1, 66.8]	63.1% [60.2, 65.9]	59.0% [55.4, 62.5]
Middle-level skills development	4.2% [3.2, 5.4]	4.4% [3.3, 5.7]	4.4% [3.3, 5.8]	5.2% [3.7, 7.2]
Employment	13.5% [11.7, 15.5]	16.2% [14.0, 18.6]	16.9% [14.6, 19.4]	19.7% [16.7, 23.0]
Entrepreneurship	1.4% [0.9, 2.3]	1.5% [0.9, 2.4]	1.4% [0.9, 2.3]	1.6% [0.9, 2.9]
None of the four	12.5% [10.7, 14.4]	14.0% [12.0, 16.2]	14.2% [12.2, 16.4]	14.6% [12.2, 17.3]

Note. 95% Wilson intervals at the effective sample size. Phase 1: the 1,252 graduates who answered by October 31, 2025. Two-phase: those and the 181 follow-up respondents, weighted to the 2,148 completers.

Figure 2

Each Pathway's Share Under Four Estimates



Note. Points and 95% intervals. Filled circles: the two-phase estimate; open circles: the first-phase estimates.

In the reference week, then, about three in five of the division's SY 2023–2024 completers were in college, one in five was working, one in twenty was

in technical-vocational training, and about one in seven was in none of these. Of the college students, 10.7% also worked; 60.1% attended a state or local university or college, and 83.5% were in their second year. Of the graduates in none of the four, 42.0% had looked for work in the four weeks and could have started, close to the Labor Force Survey's unemployed (which counts a search in the reference week). Asked for their main reason, 37.1% said they were looking for work, 21.3% waiting to enroll, 17.5% family or household duties, 17.3% financial reasons, 5.3% no particular reason, and 1.6% health.

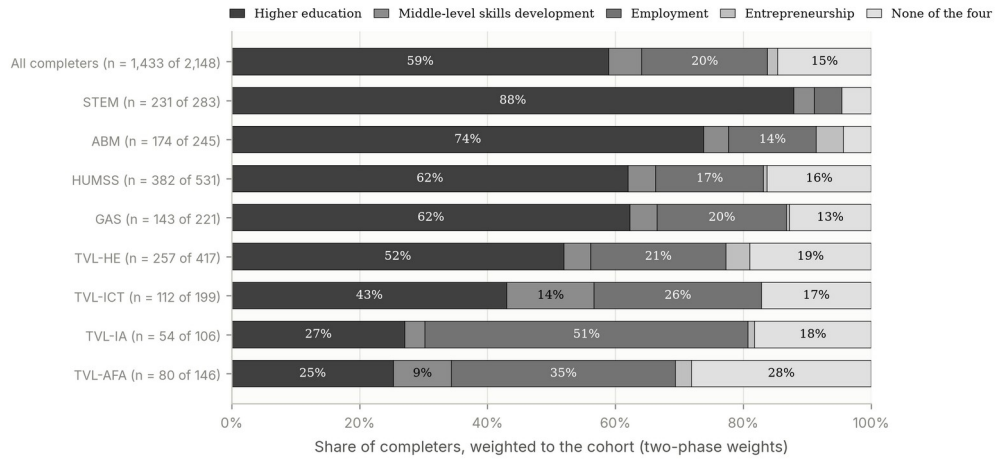
Of the working graduates, 51.2% worked for a private establishment, 22.1% without pay on a family farm or in a family business, 11.9% for a private household, 7.1% for the government, and 7.6% in their own business. Of the wage employees who answered the full form, 20.5% held regular or permanent jobs, 49.4% contractual or project-based ones, and 30.1% casual or daily work. The median working graduate who answered the full form found a first job or started a business three months after graduation, most often through relatives or friends (41.3%) or an online posting (30.2%); 9.5% found it through their work immersion partner.

The strands' graduates went different ways (Figure 3; Table 5). Of STEM graduates, 87.9% were in college; of ABM graduates, 73.8%; of HUMSS and GAS graduates, 62.0% and 62.3%. The TVL strands sent fewer to college, from 51.9% of Home Economics graduates to 25.3% of Agri-Fishery Arts graduates. Half of the Industrial Arts graduates (50.5%) were employed. The share in none of the four ranged from 4.3% of ABM and 4.6% of STEM graduates to 28.1% of Agri-Fishery Arts graduates. Across the TVL strands, 42.4% were in

college, 30.4% working, 7.0% in training, and 20.2% in none of the four; across the academic strands, 70.2%, 15.1%, 4.0%, and 10.8%.

Figure 3

Where Each Strand's Graduates Were in the Week of September 1 to 7, 2025



Note. Two-phase weighted shares. n: respondents of the strand's completers.

Table 5

Pathways by Strand: Two-Phase Estimates

Strand	Respondents of completers	Higher education	Middle-level skills	Employment	Entrepreneurship	None of the four
STEM	231 of 283	87.9%	3.2%	4.3%	0.0%	4.6%
ABM	174 of 245	73.8%	3.9%	13.7%	4.2%	4.3%
HUMSS	382 of 531	62.0%	4.3%	16.9%	0.6%	16.2%
GAS	143 of 221	62.3%	4.3%	20.2%	0.4%	12.8%
TVL–Home Economics	257 of 417	51.9%	4.2%	21.2%	3.7%	19.0%
TVL–ICT	112 of 199	43.0%	13.6%	26.2%	0.0%	17.1%
TVL–Industrial Arts	54 of 106	27.1%	3.1%	50.5%	1.0%	18.2%
TVL–Agri-Fishery Arts	80 of 146	25.3%	9.1%	35.0%	2.5%	28.1%
All completers	1,433 of 2,148	59.0%	5.2%	19.7%	1.6%	14.6%

Note. The workbook gives each share's 95% interval; for the smaller strands they are wide (TVL–Industrial Arts, higher education: 15.3% to 43.4%).

How Closely the Pathways Matched the Strands

Of the college students from strands with a field of their own, 61.3%, 95% CI [56.9, 65.5], studied in a field their strand prepares for: 77.1% of STEM graduates, 68.4% of HUMSS, 64.6% of ABM, 47.6% of TVL–Home Economics, 40.6% of TVL–ICT, 34.6% of TVL–Industrial Arts, and 21.0% of TVL–Agri-Fishery Arts graduates. The college students from GAS, which prepares for no one field, went most often into education (31.7%), business and accountancy (18.0%), and criminology (17.7%). Of the 32 TVL graduates in technical-vocational training, 73.5% trained in their own strand's sector. Of the working graduates, 42.4% of those from TVL rated their work 4 or 5 on how closely it relates to their strand (mean 3.40), against 14.5% of those from the academic strands (mean 2.37).

Taking higher education as the main path of the academic strands, and employment, entrepreneurship, or middle-level skills development as the TVL strands', 70.2% of academic-strand graduates and 37.4% of TVL graduates were on their strand's main path; 42.4% of TVL graduates were in college, and 42.3% of those studied in their strand's field.

The exit named before graduation matched the pathway for 57.9% of the 1,360 respondents who had answered the exit survey, $\kappa = .27$ (Table 6), better than chance but far from a forecast. The third null hypothesis is rejected. Of those who had named college, 72.3% were in college; of those who had named employment, 44.6% were employed and 33.7% in college; of those who had named middle-level skills development, 22.0% were in training and

43.0% in college. Of those who had named no exit, 35.1% were in none of the four.

Table 6

Pathway by the Exit Named Before Graduation (Row Percentages, Two-Phase Weights)

Exit named in the exit survey	Higher education	Middle-level skills	Employment	Entrepreneurship	None of the four
College Education	72.3%	3.0%	12.6%	1.3%	10.9%
Middle-Level Skills Development	43.0%	22.0%	14.0%	4.2%	16.7%
Employment	33.7%	3.2%	44.6%	0.3%	18.2%
Entrepreneurship / Business	56.6%	1.3%	30.2%	11.8%	0.0%
None chosen	34.3%	2.7%	27.3%	0.7%	35.1%

Note. The 1,360 respondents who answered the exit survey. Agreement 57.9%, $\kappa = .27$.

What the School Records Predict

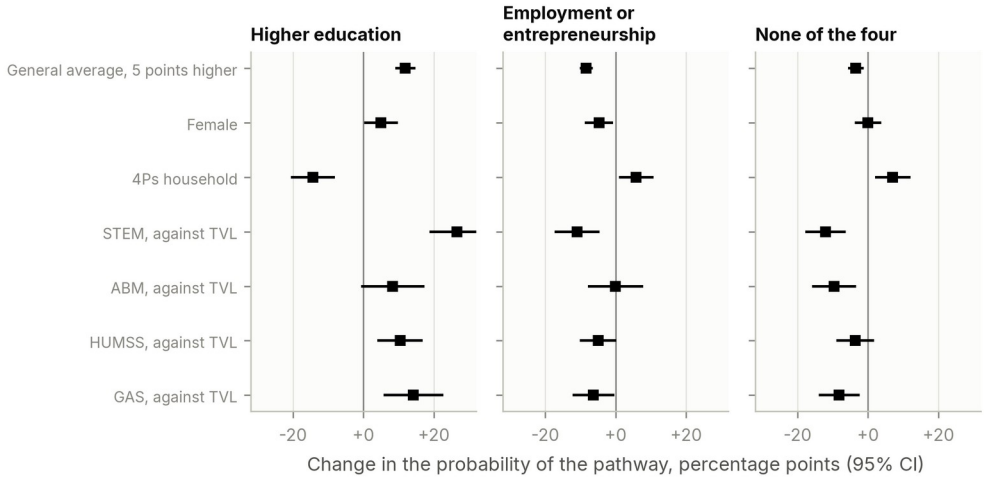
The multinomial logistic regression ($n = 1{,}433$, McFadden pseudo-$R^2 = .17$) found that the strand group, $x^2(12) = 55.94$, $p < .001$; the general average, $x^2(3) = 98.04$, $p < .001$; 4Ps membership, $x^2(3) = 26.74$, $p < .001$; the intended exit, $x^2(12) = 91.51$, $p < .001$; and the school, $x^2(15) = 26.75$, $p = .031$, each predicted the pathway, the others held constant. Sex did not reach significance, $x^2(3) = 7.54$, $p = .056$. The first and second null hypotheses are rejected.

Average marginal effects give the size in percentage points (Figure 4; Table 7). Five points more in the general average went with 11.9 points more in college, 95% CI [9.5, 14.4], 8.4 points less in work, and 3.4 points less in none of the four. A 4Ps household went with −14.3 points in college, 95% CI [−20.2, −8.5], and 5.8 points more in work and 7.0 more in none of the four. Against TVL, with the other records the same, a STEM strand went with 26.6

points more in college [19.1, 34.0] and 12.0 points less in none of the four; HUMSS with 10.4 points more in college and GAS with 14.2; for ABM the difference, 8.3 points, was not significant. Naming no exit before graduation went with 17.4 points more in none of the four [8.6, 26.2]; naming employment or business, with 15.7 points more in work; naming middle-level skills development, with 13.1 points more in training. Set to each strand group in turn, with everyone's other records as they were, the model put the share in college at 83.9% for STEM, 71.5% for GAS, 67.7% for HUMSS, 65.6% for ABM, and 57.3% for TVL.

Figure 4

What the School Records Predict: Average Marginal Effects



Note. Squares and 95% intervals, in percentage points of each pathway's probability, from the multinomial logistic regression (n = 1,433).

Table 7

Multinomial Logistic Regression: Relative Risk Ratios Against Higher Education

Record	Middle-level skills, RRR [95% CI]	Employment or entrepreneurship, RRR [95% CI]	None of the four, RRR [95% CI]
General average, per 5 points	0.75 [0.52, 1.08]	0.33 [0.26, 0.41]	0.53 [0.41, 0.68]
Female	0.85 [0.49, 1.45]	0.63 [0.45, 0.88]	0.87 [0.62, 1.22]
4Ps household	1.91 [1.02, 3.56]	2.13 [1.46, 3.10]	2.39 [1.61, 3.54]
STEM (against TVL)	0.20 [0.05, 0.73]	0.22 [0.10, 0.46]	0.17 [0.07, 0.39]
ABM (against TVL)	1.07 [0.45, 2.56]	0.80 [0.45, 1.45]	0.36 [0.17, 0.75]
HUMSS (against TVL)	0.52 [0.25, 1.08]	0.56 [0.37, 0.85]	0.62 [0.40, 0.94]
GAS (against TVL)	0.80 [0.32, 2.01]	0.46 [0.26, 0.79]	0.37 [0.20, 0.70]
Exit named: employment or business	1.14 [0.48, 2.71]	3.10 [2.06, 4.67]	1.02 [0.60, 1.72]
Exit named: middle-level skills	6.18 [2.96, 12.92]	0.96 [0.50, 1.83]	1.19 [0.63, 2.24]
Exit named: none	1.84 [0.62, 5.42]	1.59 [0.84, 3.00]	3.89 [2.23, 6.79]
Exit survey not answered	2.09 [0.78, 5.62]	0.86 [0.40, 1.84]	1.01 [0.49, 2.10]

Note. n = 1,433. The model also held five school indicators (the workbook's Model sheet). Reference groups: TVL; College Education named in the exit survey. HC0 standard errors.

Fitted with the two-phase weights, the model's average marginal effects moved by at most 5.5 percentage points, for the graduates who had not answered the exit survey, a group of 73 respondents; the general average's effect on college moved from 11.9 to 12.6 points.

Discussion

About 59% of this division's SY 2023–2024 completers were in college some 15 months after graduation, and about 21% were working. The share in college is close to the 59.3% of the earliest SHS graduates whom the Annual Poverty Indicators Survey found in college (Abrigo & Orbeta, 2023, p. 2), sits below the 77% that the Labor Force Survey suggested for Grade 12 graduates

(Orbeta & Potestad, 2025, p. 97), and well below the 83% of DepEd's tracer study of SY 2017–2018 respondents (DepEd, 2023, item 5.a). The share in none of the four, 14.6%, is near the 14.1% that the household survey found neither in school nor working (Abrigo & Orbeta, 2023, p. 2).

The study's own first answers came close to that 83%. Of the graduates who answered the first link, 77.7% were in college; of all who answered in the first phase, 68.5%. The follow-up shows why: the graduates who answered only after phone calls, or only when sought out, were in college less than half the time. A tracer study that had stopped after its reminders would have reported a college share about 17 points too high, and one that had stopped after its calls, about 9.5 points too high, if the two-phase estimate is right.

Weighting corrected part of that, and the follow-up shows how much. Raking the first-phase respondents to six records of the frame lowered the share in college from 68.5% to 63.1%, about 5.4 of the 9.5 points that separate the unweighted from the two-phase estimate. The rest was a difference the records did not show: within each strand group and band of the general average, the follow-up respondents were in college less often than the first-phase respondents (among TVL graduates, 36.5% against 51.0%; among those with an average below 85, 23.5% against 42.5%). Weighting assumes that within a cell, the respondents represent the nonrespondents (Kalton & Flores-Cervantes, 2003, p. 85); this cohort's late answers show the assumption failing, as the continuum of resistance often does (Groves & Peytcheva, 2008, p. 175). The two-phase estimate rests on the same

assumption for the 37.2% of the follow-up sample who did not answer, so it may still overstate college going a little.

The strands' pathways differed even with grades and household held constant, and TVL graduates were the group least often on their strand's own path: four in ten were in college, and of those, 42.3% studied in a field their strand prepares for. This is the pattern EDCOM II describes, a curriculum that works "as a general preparatory stage for college" (EDCOM II, 2026, p. 157). The exit survey's answers, given before graduation, were a weak guide to the pathway, $\kappa = .27$: of those who named middle-level skills development, more were in college 15 months later than in training. The general average and 4Ps membership predicted the pathway as strongly as the strand did, a reminder that a graduate's options depend on more than the strand chosen in Grade 10.

Recommendations

1. **Trace every cohort, and report the response.** Schools already keep the exit survey's records and the SHS tracer report (OUOPS, 2023; DepEd, 2025a). A tracer study should report its Response Rate 2 as AAPOR (2023) defines it and compare its respondents with its graduates on the school's records, so that readers can see how far the respondents differ.
2. **Do not stop at the first answers.** In this study, phone calls and the follow-up lowered the estimate of college going by about 17 points. A division should budget for calls and for an intensive follow-up of a

random sample of those who do not answer, as this study did with a third.

3. **Keep contact numbers current before graduation.** Graduates with a number on file had three times the odds of answering. The exit survey's contact number, updated before graduation with a second number of a parent or guardian, is the frame's most useful field.
4. **Use the findings in career guidance.** Graduates who named no exit, or who came from 4Ps households, were the most likely to be in none of the four. Career guidance in Grade 12 should reach them first, with information on scholarships, training allowances, and the Public Employment Service Office.
5. **Review TVL offerings and work immersion partners.** Fewer than half of the TVL graduates in college studied in their strand's field, and about one in ten of the working graduates found their job through work immersion. Schools should review which specializations lead to work in the division as the strengthened curriculum's tracks are introduced.
6. **Repeat the study for the strengthened curriculum's graduates.** This cohort's pathways are a baseline. The same frame, questions, and reference week, applied to the first graduates of the strengthened curriculum, would show whether the new tracks change where graduates go.

Dissemination and Advocacy Plans

The findings will be shared with those who can act on them, in the forms each can use (Table 8).

Table 8

Dissemination and Advocacy Plan

Audience	Purpose	Channel	Timeline
School heads and SHS coordinators	Plan strand offerings and the strengthened curriculum's tracks; keep contact numbers current	Division school heads' conference; a two-page policy brief	June 2026
Career advocates and guidance designates	Reach graduates who name no exit and 4Ps learners in Grade 12	Division orientation on the Career Guidance Program	July 2026
Grade 12 advisers	Update contact records before graduation; repeat the tracer study	Learning action cell sessions in each school	August to September 2026
Researchers in the region	Share the two-phase method and the findings	Regional research congress; the division's research journal	October 2026 to March 2027

Note. The policy brief was paid from the grant's dissemination line (Financial Report).

References

Abrigo, M. R. M., & Orbeta, A. C., Jr. (2023). *Senior high school: What do additional years of basic education schooling buy?* (PIDS Policy Notes No. 2023-15). Philippine Institute for Development Studies. https://doi.org/10.62986/pn2023.15

American Association for Public Opinion Research. (2023). *Standard definitions: Final dispositions of case codes and outcome rates for surveys* (10th ed.). https://aapor.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Standards-Definitions-10th-edition.pdf

Armstrong, J. S., & Overton, T. S. (1977). Estimating nonresponse bias in mail surveys. *Journal of Marketing Research, 14*(3), 396–402. https://doi.org/10.1177/002224377701400320

Brown, L. D., Cai, T. T., & DasGupta, A. (2001). Interval estimation for a binomial proportion. *Statistical Science, 16*(2), 101–133. https://doi.org/10.1214/ss/1009213286

Data Privacy Act of 2012, Republic Act No. 10173 (2012).

Department of Education. (2015). *Policy guidelines on classroom assessment for the K to 12 Basic Education Program* (DepEd Order No. 8, s. 2015).

Department of Education. (2016). *Adoption of the Basic Education Research Agenda* (DepEd Order No. 39, s. 2016).

Department of Education. (2017a). *Guidelines for work immersion* (DepEd Order No. 30, s. 2017).

Department of Education. (2017b). *Research management guidelines* (DepEd Order No. 16, s. 2017).

Department of Education. (2019). *Policy guidelines on the K to 12 Basic Education Program* (DepEd Order No. 021, s. 2019).

Department of Education. (2023). *Creation of the Senior High School National Task Force* (DepEd Memorandum No. 028, s. 2023).

Department of Education. (2024). *Conduct of the K to 12 Basic Education Program end-of-school-year rites for the school year 2023-2024* (DepEd Memorandum No. 023, s. 2024).

Department of Education. (2025a). *Guidelines on the streamlining of school forms and reports accomplished by teachers* (DepEd Order No. 006, s. 2025).

Department of Education. (2025b). *Multi-year implementing guidelines on the school calendar and activities* (DepEd Order No. 012, s. 2025).

Department of Education. (2025c). *Pilot implementation of the strengthened senior high school curriculum for Grade 11 in school year 2025-2026* (DepEd Memorandum No. 048, s. 2025).

Department of Education. (2026a). *Foundational guidelines on artificial intelligence in basic education* (DepEd Order No. 003, s. 2026).

Department of Education. (2026b). *Full implementation of the strengthened senior high school curriculum in school year 2026-2027* (DepEd Memorandum No. 012, s. 2026).

Groves, R. M. (2006). Nonresponse rates and nonresponse bias in household surveys. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 70*(5), 646–675. https://doi.org/10.1093/poq/nfl033

Groves, R. M., & Peytcheva, E. (2008). The impact of nonresponse rates on nonresponse bias: A meta-analysis. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 72*(2), 167–189. https://doi.org/10.1093/poq/nfn011

Hansen, M. H., & Hurwitz, W. N. (1946). The problem of non-response in sample surveys. *Journal of the American Statistical Association, 41*(236), 517–529. https://doi.org/10.1080/01621459.1946.10501894

Kalton, G., & Flores-Cervantes, I. (2003). Weighting methods. *Journal of Official Statistics, 19*(2), 81–97.

Kish, L. (1992). Weighting for unequal *P*i. *Journal of Official Statistics, 8*(2), 183–200.

Lin, I.-F., & Schaeffer, N. C. (1995). Using survey participants to estimate the impact of nonparticipation. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 59*(2), 236–258. https://doi.org/10.1086/269471

Little, R. J., & Vartivarian, S. (2005). Does weighting for nonresponse increase the variance of survey means? *Survey Methodology, 31*(2), 161–168.

National Privacy Commission. (2023). *Guidelines on consent* (NPC Circular No. 2023-04).

Office of the Undersecretary for Operations. (2023, September 4). *Guidelines on the supervision and implementation of the DepEd Career Guidance*

Program for school year 2023-2024 (Memorandum OUOPS No. 2023-03-8149). Department of Education.

Orbeta, A. C., Jr., & Potestad, M. V. (2025). On the employability of senior high school graduates in the Philippines: Evidence from the Labor Force Survey. *Philippine Journal of Development, 49*(1), 85–106. https://doi.org/10.62986/pjd2025.49.1d

Philippine Health Research Ethics Board. (2022). *National ethical guidelines for research involving human participants 2022*.

Schomburg, H. (2016). *Carrying out tracer studies* (Guide to anticipating and matching skills and jobs, Vol. 6). European Training Foundation, European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, and International Labour Office. https://doi.org/10.2816/938667

Seabold, S., & Perktold, J. (2010). Statsmodels: Econometric and statistical modeling with Python. In *Proceedings of the 9th Python in Science Conference* (pp. 92–96). https://doi.org/10.25080/Majora-92bf1922-011

Second Congressional Commission on Education. (2026). *Turning point: A decade of necessary reform (2026–2035)* [EDCOM II final report]. https://edcom2.gov.ph/media/2026/01/EDCOM-II-Y03-for-web-012626_final.pdf

Solon, G., Haider, S. J., & Wooldridge, J. M. (2015). What are we weighting for? *Journal of Human Resources, 50*(2), 301–316. https://doi.org/10.3368/jhr.50.2.301

Tutor, M. V., Orbeta, A. C., Jr., & Miraflor, J. M. B. (2021). *The 4th Philippine graduate tracer study: Examining higher education as a pathway to employment, citizenship, and life satisfaction from the learner's perspective* (PIDS Research Paper Series No. 2021-05). Philippine Institute for Development Studies. https://pidswebs.pids.gov.ph/CDN/PUBLICATIONS/pidsrp2105.pdf

Financial Report

The study received a division-level Basic Education Research Fund grant of PhP 30,000.00, released in tranches: 40% (PhP 12,000.00) on the submission of the work plan and the instruments and 40% (PhP 12,000.00) on the submission of the data collection and initial findings; the last 20% (PhP 6,000.00) is released on the acceptance of this report (DepEd, 2017b). Expenses totaled PhP 29,800.00, PhP 200.00 less than the grant. The form ran on the division's DepEd account, and the analysis used free software.

Table 9

Statement of Expenses

Date	Particulars	Receipt or document	Amount (PhP)	Category
2025-07-14 to 2025-08-08	Snacks for the frame-building days in the six schools (4 persons, 12 days)	OR 4410	2,400.00	Food
2025-09-08 to 2025-11-28	Prepaid mobile load for the text messages and calls (12 callers)	Receipts	12,000.00	Communication
2025-11-03 to 2025-11-28	Transportation for the follow-up home visits and tracing trips	Itinerary and receipts	9,600.00	Transportation
2025-11-03	Printing of the short forms and privacy notice cards for the visits	OR 1182	1,000.00	Reproduction
2025-12-01 to 2026-01-16	Snacks for the coding sessions (3 persons, 8 days)	OR 5027	1,200.00	Food
2025-07-14	Folders, envelopes, and an encrypted flash drive	OR 0938	1,200.00	Supplies
2026-05-25	Printing of the policy brief (80 copies)	OR 6631	2,400.00	Dissemination
	Total		29,800.00	

Note. Summary by category: communication, PhP 12,000.00; transportation, PhP 9,600.00; food, PhP 3,600.00; dissemination, PhP 2,400.00; supplies, PhP 1,200.00; reproduction, PhP 1,000.00.

Appendices

Appendix A. The Variables and Their Sources

Graduate code (assigned by the school); school, strand, sex, and age at graduation (School Form 10 and the enrollment record); the Grade 12 general average (the mean of the two semesters' general averages in School Form 10); 4Ps membership (the enrollment record); National Certificate II for TVL graduates assessed in Grade 12 (the school's record); the exit named in the exit survey and the contact number on file (the Career Guidance Program's exit survey). Field work: the wave and date of the answer, the mode, whether drawn for the follow-up, and the disposition on October 31, 2025, when the first phase closed, and at the end. Answers: Parts C to H of the questionnaire (Appendix B). Derived: the pathway (by the rule in the Research Design), the band of the general average, the weighting cells, the three sets of weights, the match between the college field and the strand, and the match between the training sector and the TVL strand.

Appendix B. The Questionnaire

The full online form, as each graduate saw it through a personal link. Answers refer to one week, September 1 to 7, 2025. A line in brackets tells the form where to go next; the graduate does not see it. The short form, used by phone and in person, keeps Part A (read aloud), Part C, Part D, Part G, and questions E1, F1, and F6.

Part A. Privacy notice and consent

Good day! Your senior high school and the Schools Division Office are tracing the graduates of SY 2023–2024 to learn what they are doing now. What you tell us will help the schools improve career guidance and decide which strands and courses to offer.

What we collect and why. Your answers to this form, and these records from your school: your strand, sex, age at graduation, Grade 12 general average, 4Ps membership, and the exit you named in the exit survey before graduation. Your answers and your records are joined by a code in your personal link. Your name is not in the answers. Whether or not you answer, your school's records are counted, without your name, in totals of who answered (for example, how many graduates of each strand).

Who sees it. Only the three researchers of the Schools Division Office. Results are reported only as counts and percentages of groups of graduates; no result names you or any graduate.

How long we keep it. The coded answers are kept on an encrypted drive until three years after the study ends, then deleted. The list that matches codes to names stays in your school.

Your rights. Answering is voluntary. You may skip any question, stop at any time, and ask us to delete your answers. You may ask to see or correct what we hold about you. Saying no changes nothing in your school records. These are your rights under the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173).

Questions? Contact the lead researcher, [name and DepEd email address], or the Schools Division Office's Data Protection Officer, [email address].

A1. Do you agree to answer this survey, and to the use of your school records as described above?

- ○ Yes, I agree
- ○ No, I do not agree [end the form]

Part B. About you

B1. You finished Grade 12 at [school] in School Year 2023–2024. Is this correct?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No [end the form and thank the graduate]

Part C. What you were doing in the week of September 1 to 7, 2025

C1. In that week, were you enrolled in a college or university program (a bachelor's or associate degree), whether or not classes met that week?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

C2. In that week, were you enrolled in a technical-vocational course or training (for example, a TESDA-registered program, or training given by a company or a local government)?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

C3. In that week, did you do any work for at least one hour, for pay or profit, or without pay on a farm or in a business run by your family?

- ○ Yes [go to C7]
- ○ No

C4. Did you have a job or business that you were away from that week (for example, on leave, sick, or waiting for the season)?

- ○ Yes [go to C7]
- ○ No

C5. In the four weeks up to September 7, 2025, did you look for work or try to start a business?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

C6. If work had been offered to you that week, could you have started?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

C7. [The form shows Part D if C1 is Yes, Part E if C2 is Yes, Part F if C3 or C4 is Yes, and Part G if all four are No.]

Part D. College

D1. Is your college or university a state or local university or college, or a private school?

- ○ State or local university or college
- ○ Private college or university

D2. What is the name of your program? (for example, BS Accountancy, Bachelor of Secondary Education major in Mathematics) _____

D3. What year level were you in?

- ○ First year
- ○ Second year
- ○ Third year

Part E. Technical-vocational training

E1. What course or qualification are you taking? (for example, Cookery NC II, Electrical Installation and Maintenance NC II) _____

E2. Who provides the training?

- ○ A TESDA training institution
- ○ A private technical-vocational institution
- ○ A local government or community program
- ○ A company

E3. Have you taken a National Certificate assessment for it?

- ○ Yes, and I passed
- ○ Yes, but I have not passed yet
- ○ Not yet

Part F. Work

F1. In your main job or business, you were:

- ○ Working for a private company, store, or other establishment
- ○ Working for a private household
- ○ Working for the government
- ○ Running your own business, with no paid employee
- ○ Running your own business, with one or more paid employees
- ○ Working without pay on your family's farm or in your family's business

F2. How many hours a week do you usually work? ____ hours

F3. [If working for an establishment, a household, or the government] Your work is:

- ○ Regular or permanent
- ○ Contractual or project-based
- ○ Casual or daily

F4. How many months after your graduation did you start your first job or business? ____ months (0 if you started before or right at graduation)

F5. How did you find this job or start this business?

- ○ Through relatives or friends
- ○ Through an online job posting
- ○ By applying in person (walk-in)
- ○ Through my work immersion partner
- ○ Through the Public Employment Service Office (PESO) or a job fair
- ○ Other: _____

F6. How related is your work to what you studied in your senior high school strand?

- ○ 1 Not at all related
- ○ 2
- ○ 3

- ○ 4
- ○ 5 Very closely related

Part G. If you were not studying, training, or working

G1. What is the main reason you were not studying, training, or working in that week?

- ○ Looking for work
- ○ Waiting to enroll in the next term or school year
- ○ Financial reasons
- ○ Family or household duties
- ○ Health
- ○ No particular reason
- ○ Other: _____

Part H. Looking back on senior high school

H1. If you could choose again, would you take the same strand?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Not sure

H2. If you had work immersion in Grade 12, how useful has it been for what you are doing now?

- ○ 1 Not useful at all
- ○ 2
- ○ 3
- ○ 4
- ○ 5 Very useful
- ○ I did not have work immersion

Part I. Keeping in touch

I1. May your school contact you again for a follow-up of this survey?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Thank you for answering! Your answers help the next batches of senior high school learners.

Appendix C. The Field Work and the School Calendar

The reference week, September 1 to 7, 2025, and the four waves fell in SY 2025–2026, whose classes ran from June 16, 2025 to March 31, 2026, with a mid-school year break in the last week of October and a year-end break from December 20 (DepEd, 2025b). Calls and visits were made on weekdays after class hours: wave 3 on the 15 weekdays from October 6 to 24, 2025, and wave 4 on the 20 weekdays from November 3 to 28, 2025. No calls were made

from October 27 to 31, the mid-year break; the online form stayed open, and 9 graduates answered during that week. A graduate who answered by phone or in person gave the short form; one reached by phone who preferred the online form received the link again.

Appendix D. Declaration of AI Use

We, the researchers, declare that we used [name of the AI tool] only to check the grammar of the English text of this report, for the purpose of finalizing the research study. The prompt used was: "Check the grammar of this paragraph. Do not change its meaning or add content." We have reviewed, edited, and understood all the content, and we take full accountability for it. No names, codes, answers, or other personal or sensitive information were entered into the AI tool (adapted from Annex A of DepEd Order No. 003, s. 2026).