



(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



Project I-PASSED: An intervention program for Students-At-Risk of Dropping Out (SARDO)

Junjie Bueno Talatayod *

General Academic Strand – Humanities and Social Sciences (GAS – HumSS) Department, Muntinlupa National High School – Senior High School, Muntinlupa City, Metro Manila, Philippines.

World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews, 2024, 22(02), 370–379

Publication history: Received on 26 March 2024; revised on 02 May 2024; accepted on 04 May 2024

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30574/wjarr.2024.22.2.1381>

Abstract

Learners in developing countries like the Philippines have denied their right to education by dropping out for various reasons. This descriptive study was conducted to find out the common reasons why advisory students in the past three (3) years dropped out of school, and why students of GAS 1108 and GAS 1109 were categorized as Students-At-Risk of Dropping Out (SARDO) during the First Semester of School Year 2023-2024; to propose an intervention program based on findings; and to determine its effectiveness based on student-recipients' perceptions, and the number of learners categorized as SARDO who remained in school. Data were obtained from anecdotal records of dropped-out students for the past three school years, and from the three sets of researcher-made survey questionnaires which undergone thorough validation by experts in the field. These were administered to 17 identified SARDO who were officially enrolled at Muntinlupa National High School – Senior High School during the School Year 2023-2024. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were utilized in analyzing the data. Findings revealed that the three prevailing reasons why students dropped out of school for the past three school years, and why student-respondents were categorized as SARDO were financial problems (7, 41%), teenage pregnancy and/or parenting (6, 35%), and personal problems (2, 35%); Project I-PASSED (*“Incorporating Partnership and Active Synergy between School and Stakeholders for the Effective Delivery of Student Services”*) was proposed based on the findings; and Project I-PASSED's initiatives were “Very Effective” in terms of addressing students' financial problems ($\bar{x} = 3.88$, $sd = 0.20$), personal problems ($\bar{x} = 3.85$, $sd = 0.22$), and teenage pregnancy and/or parenting ($\bar{x} = 3.83$, $sd = 0.35$) which were all supported by the testimonies of the student-recipients. There were 14 out of 17 (82.35%) identified SARDO who remained in school at present, indicating that the main objective of the project was “Mostly Achieved”. Therefore, the initiatives of the project were helpful and beneficial in addressing the complex needs of students. Supporting and sustaining this project was highly recommended. The implications of this study are to empower students by bringing them back to school, and to contribute tangible solutions that may reshape the educational practices across the country.

Keywords: Financial Problems; Personal Problems; Project I-PASSED; SARDO; Teenage Pregnancy

1. Introduction

It is an incontestable truth that the nation's progress is heavily reliant on the education of its people. Education assumes an integral role in maximizing the individuals' full potential, gaining economic independence, and equipping them with necessary skills that enable them to play an active role in the nation-building. Likewise, education promotes employment, and it can be considered as an essential tool for poverty reduction. The World Bank (2022) asserted that education is a human right, a powerful driver of development, and one of the strongest instruments for reducing poverty. However, learners in developing countries like the Philippines have denied their right to education by dropping out for various reasons.

* Corresponding author: Junjie B. Talatayod

Student-At-Risk of Dropping Out commonly known as SARDO is a term coined by the Department of Education. It is defined as a student who is likely to become a candidate to drop out. The Philippine Statistics Office (2017) stated that almost ten percent of the estimated 39 million Filipinos 6 to 24 years old were out-of-school children and youth (OSCY), according to the results of the 2016 Annual Poverty Indicators Survey (APIS). In this report, OSCY refers to family members 6 to 14 years old who are not attending formal school; and family members 15 to 24 years old who are currently out of school, not gainfully employed, and have not finished college or post-secondary course. If not addressed appropriately, this will pose a dilemma to the Department of Education and ripple its effect to the whole country.

In Muntinlupa National High School – Senior High School, there is a decrease in the promotion rate of Grade 11 and 12 from School Year 2018 – 2021 according to the data stated in the MNHS Enhanced School Improvement Plan for 2022 – 2024. The continued decrease in the promotion rate is due to these three factors: (a) Financial Problems, (b) Personal Problems, and (c) Early Parenthood and Teenage Pregnancy. These data prompted the researcher to craft an intervention program to help decrease the number of students-at-risk of dropping out especially in the level of the researcher's advisory class.

Likewise, this study seeks to find out the common reasons why advisory students in the past three (3) years dropped out of school, and why students of GAS 1108 and GAS 1109 were categorized as Students-At-Risk of Dropping Out (SARDO) during the First Semester of School Year 2023-2024; to propose an intervention program based on findings; and to determine its effectiveness based on student-recipients' perceptions, and the number of learners categorized as SARDO who remained in school.

By doing this study, the researcher intends not only to uncover the underlying reasons behind the trends of dropping out, but also seeks to develop a useful and functional intervention program that is designed to empower students by bringing them back to school, moreso, of contributing tangible solutions that may reshape educational practices in the Philippines.

2. Method

The research design utilized in this study was quantitative combined with qualitative responses. In quantitative design, descriptive research method was employed in describing the variables such as reasons why students dropped out of school for the past three school years; reasons why students are categorized as SARDO during the First Semester of S.Y. 2023-2024; the level of effectiveness of the initiatives of Project I-PASSED in terms of financial problems, personal problems, and teenage pregnancy and/or parenting; and the number of SARDO who remained in school at present. Likewise, qualitative responses on a question under each factor were also analyzed to support quantitative findings.

The respondents of this study are the identified SARDO from the advisory class students of GAS 1108 and GAS 1109. The identification and categorization of SARDO from these sections are according to factors such as: (1) financial factors; (2) personal factors, and (3) teenage pregnancy and/or parenting using anecdotal records as bases.

There were three sets of researcher-made survey questionnaires used in this study: (1) *Assessment on the Effectiveness of Project I-PASSED's Initiatives in addressing Financial Problems*; (2) *Assessment on the Effectiveness of Project I-PASSED's Initiatives in addressing Personal Problems*; and (3) *Assessment on the Effectiveness of Project I-PASSED's Initiatives in addressing Teenage Pregnancy and/or Parenting*. These questionnaires underwent a thorough validation by the three professionals or experts in the field of research, psychology, and statistics. These were administered to 17 learners identified as SARDO who were officially enrolled at Muntinlupa National High School – Senior High School during the School Year 2023-2024. The administration of the research questionnaires depends on the factors of SARDO, that is, if the student is categorized as SARDO because of financial problems, then, he/she will only take the survey on financial problems and so on. In this study, there were 7 respondents in the survey for financial problems, 4 for personal problems, and 6 for teenage pregnancy and/or parent.

The quantitative data gathered from the respondents were tabulated, analyzed, organized and interpreted using descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. On the other hand, qualitative responses were analyzed to see common patterns or themes that were used to back up quantitative findings.

Likewise, ethical considerations were strictly observed during the data collection by obtaining informed consent from all the participants, explaining them the purpose, benefits and confidentiality measures ensuring that their identities and responses are kept confidential.

3. Results and Discussions

The following were the results of the data gathered from the respondents. These were arranged according to specific objectives.

3.1. Common Reasons of Dropping Out from School for the Past Three (3) School Years

Various reasons can be noted as contributing factors why students become at risk of dropping out. By taking into account the factors why students dropped out of school for the past three years, may give the researcher the insights as to what appropriate intervention to consider (see table 1).

Table 1 Common Reasons why Advisory Students in the Past Three (3) Years Dropped-Out of School

Reasons	2020 - 2021		2021 - 2022		2022 - 2023	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Financial Problems	2	22.2	1	14.3	2	33.3
Family Problems	1	11.1	2	28.6	0	0
Lack of Engagement and Interest	0	0	1	14.3	1	16.7
Academic Challenges	1	11.1	0	0	0	0
Mental health Issues	1	11.1	0	0	0	0
Personal Problems	2	22.2	2	28.6	1	16.7
Teenage Pregnancy and/or Parenting	2	22.2	1	14.3	2	33.3
Total	9	100	7	100	6	100

As shown in the Table 1; financial problems, personal problems, and teenage pregnancy and/or parenting were the top three (3) prevailing factors why these students dropped out of school. These data are already enough for the class adviser to give action to, as it was also suggested by the LinkedIn (2024) that students with these problems may be able to overcome such if school will provide necessary guidance and support.

3.2. Reasons why Advisory Students were categorized as SARDO

The data below further supported, elaborated, and strengthened the need for school and/or adviser to craft a program aimed at preventing the SARDO from leaving school.

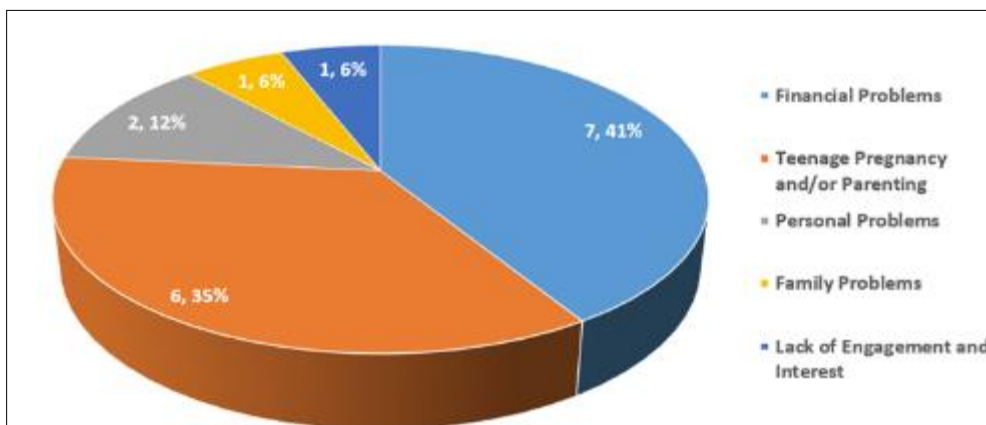


Figure 1 Reasons Why Students of GAS 1108 and GAS 1109 were categorized as SARDO during the First Semester of School Year 2023-2024

Figure 1 showed the frequency distribution of the reasons why students of GAS 1108 and GAS 1109 were categorized as Students-At-Risk of Dropping Out (SARDO) during the First Semester of the School Year 2023-2024. Based on the figure, financial problems ranked first (7/17, 41%). This is consistent to the study of University Professional and Continuing Education Association (2021) that money is the top reason why student leaves school, that is, about two in five dropouts have mentioned financial problems as reasons for leaving school. If the school wants these students to succeed in life by means of education, it must initiate a program that will help address this concern.

In addition to these reasons, teenage pregnancy and/or parenting ranked second (6/17, 35%). This is a significant number. If no programs intended for them, they would eventually leave school. Likewise, next in rank is personal problems (2/17,12%), followed by family problems (1/17,6%) and lack of engagement and interest (1/17,6%). It is understandable that students may leave school because of various reasons, yet these can be addressed through the crafting of an intervention program intended to help them continue schooling.

3.3. Proposed Intervention Program

The above findings served as the bases for the researcher to craft an intervention program with a main objective to retain at least 71 to 100 percent of number of learners identified as students-at-risk of dropping out (SARDO) by addressing the identified prevailing reasons of why students become at-risk of dropping out such as Financial Problems, Personal Problems, and Teenage Pregnancy and/or Parenting. This program is named as Project I-PASSED: *“Incorporating Partnership and Active Synergy between School and Stakeholders for the Effective Delivery of Student Services*. The idea of this program is to build a collaborative partnership with stakeholders who can help provide services to address students’ complex needs.

The following are the specific objectives in each identified factor:

3.3.1. Financial Problems

- To conduct financial literacy seminars among at least 90 – 95% of the total number of students from advisory class every school year.
- To build a collaborative partnership with at least 3 to 5 donors every semester.
- To generate income for class fund of at least 1,000 to 3,000 through PET bottle collection and/or clean-up drive activities per semester.

3.3.2. Personal Problems

- To conduct mental health seminar and workshop among at least 90 – 95% of the total number of students from advisory class per semester about developing effective coping skills and strategies in managing their personal problems.
- To support student’s well-being by making counseling services readily accessible and available to students when needed.
- To create an open, comfortable, and emphatic environment for student to discuss sensitive issues during the counseling sessions.
- To provide follow-up support to help students further address their personal problems beyond counseling sessions.
- To work collaboratively with students during counseling by helping them set goals and develop strategies in addressing their personal problems.
- *Note: Other factors such as Family Problems, and lack of engagement and interest are categorized under this area since these factors are addressed by the program implementer through counseling and psychological support.*

3.3.3. Teenage Pregnancy and/or Parenting

- To build a collaborative partnership with at least 1 to 2 medical institutions capable of providing free consultations/check-ups, discounted laboratories, medicines, vitamins, and supplements etc.
- To create a partnership with an institution that can provide free clinical consultation, clinical counseling, and psychotherapy to teenage pregnant and/or parent with mental health concerns.
- To organize seminars among at least 90 – 95 % of the total number of students from advisory class per semester about reproductive health and teenage pregnancy.
- To provide support to student’s pregnancy journey through home visitation as needed.
- To support pregnant students to continue their studies through modular approach and/or peer assisted tutoring.

Collaboration and partnership are vital in the realization of the set objectives anchored on the DepEd mission to protect and promote the right of every Filipino to quality, equitable, culture-based, and complete basic education where family, community, and other stakeholders are actively engaged and share responsibility for developing life-long learners.

3.4. The Effectiveness of Project I-PASSED's Initiatives

The following data are gathered from the survey on the effectiveness of Project I-PASSED in addressing three prevailing factors on why students are at-risk of dropping out such as Financial Problems, Personal Problems, and Teenage Pregnancy and/or Parenting.

Table 2 Project I-PASSED's Initiatives in Addressing Financial Problems

Initiatives	Mean	SD	Rank	VI
Promoting responsible money management among students through financial literacy seminars.	4.00	0.00	2	VE
Looking for donors who can provide financial assistance to its beneficiaries.	4.00	0.00	2	VE
Encouraging students to participate in income generating activities such as clean up drive or PET bottle collection.	3.75	0.46	4	VE
Improving students' understanding of basic financial concepts such as budgeting, saving, and investing.	4.00	0.00	2	VE
Contributing to students' overall academic success by addressing financial concerns.	3.53	0.52	5	VE
Overall	3.88	0.20		VE

Legend: 3.50 - 4.00 = Very Effective (VE); 2.50 - 3.49 = Effective (E); 1.50 - 2.49 = Ineffective (I); 1.00 - 1.49 = Very Ineffective (VI)

As shown in Table 2, the respondents described the Project I-PASSED's initiatives in addressing their financial problems as "Very Effective" based on the overall computed mean score of 3.88 with a standard deviation of 0.20. Among these initiatives, item number 5 ranked last having a computed mean of 3.53. Though interpreted as Very Effective, it is still at the lowest rank probably because the capacity of the project cannot entirely sustain the beneficiary's overall financial needs. Nonetheless, as shown in the results, the project still has a very good impact towards helping the students respond to their financial concerns which can be further construed that the project's partnership with stakeholders is also effective. This result is consistent to the idea of Blair (n.d.) that school's collaborative partnership with community stakeholders can help access fund resources to support educational programs and initiatives while maximizing student's academic achievement.

Moreover, favorable results were supported by the following beneficiaries' statements on the ways how Project I-PASSED's initiatives assisted them with their studies in relation to their financial situations:

Participant 1: *"Nabigyan po ako ng kaunting tulong para sa pamasahe ko. Nagdadala din po ako ng bote para po ibenta namin para sa class fund pang xerox."* (I received a little help for my transportation fare. I also bring a bottle to sell for our class fund for photocopying expenses.)

Participant 2: *"Bukod sa kaunting pinansyal nakatulong po ang seminar at mga reminders ng adviser ko na dapat po matutong magtipid at wag gumastos ng di naman po kailangan. Sa seminar po natutunan ko paano magbudget ng aking allowance mula sa scholarship."* (Aside from the little financial assistance, the seminar and reminders from my adviser were also helpful in learning how to budget and avoid unnecessary expenses. In the seminar, I learned how to budget my scholarship allowance.)

Participant 3: *"Nagpasalamat po ako sa pagbigay po sakin ng kaunting tulong na pera. Nakita ko po ang pagreach out po sakin nagkaroon po ako ng gana na magpatuloy po kahit mahirap po."* (I am thankful for the little financial assistance given to me. Seeing how they reached out to me motivated me to continue even if it is hard.)

Participant 4: *"May mga bagsak po ako kasi po di po ako minsan nakakapasok gawa ng kulang po ang pamasahe ko. Sa tulong po ng adviser ko di po ako natanggal sa scholar at 4Ps, malaking tulong po yun sa pag aaral ko."* (I had failing grades because sometimes I could not attend classes due to lack of transportation fare. With the help of my adviser, I was not removed from my scholarship and 4Ps (Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program), which was a big help in my studies.)

Participant 5: “*Bukod po sa kaunting pinansyal, sobrang nakatulong po sakin yung support at concern sakin na bumalik mag aral. Nagdialysis po tatay ko 3x a week kinakapos po ako ng baon. Kaya ko nmn po pumasok at maglakad malapit lng nmn. Nahihiya lang po ako marami na akong absent pero tinulungan po ako ng adviser ko kausapin mga teachers ko at naging maayos na po kalaunan.*” (Aside from the little financial assistance, the support and concern shown to me in returning to school have been extremely helpful. My father undergoes dialysis three times a week, which affects my allowance. I can manage to go to school and walk because it's nearby. I felt embarrassed because I had many absences, but my adviser helped me by talking to my subject teachers, and eventually everything has turned out well.)

Participant 6: “*Nahirapan po akong pumasok kasi po may anak na ako. Yung boyfriend ko po nag eextra lang sa canteen. Pero po malaking tulong po ung financial assistance na binigay po sakin pati na sponsor ng Generika sa libreng check-up at sponsor ng vitamins at gamot.*” (I had difficulty attending school because I already have a child. My boyfriend only earns extra money working in the canteen. But the financial assistance given to me, as well as the sponsorship from Generika for free check-ups, vitamins, and medications, have been a huge help.)

Participant 7: “*Natututo po akong magsave at maging responsable sa pera na kinikita ko po mula sa pagbabarker dahil po sa mga paalala ng adviser ko po at dahil po sa financial literacy natuto po akong wag gumastos pag di naman po kailangan.*” (I have learned to save and become responsible with the money I earned from working as a barker because of the reminders from my adviser and through financial literacy, I learned not to spend unnecessarily.)

The beneficiaries' statements above can be construed to have a holistic impact towards them. The project addressed not only the immediate financial needs (1,4) but also equipping them with essential budgeting and saving skills (2,7); providing them with motivation and emotional support (5,3) by being encouraged to persevere despite personal challenges. Moreso, in helping them access other additional resources such as healthcare support (6) alleviating financial burdens in relation to healthcare-related expenses. The interplay of financial assistance, financial education, and mentorship highlights the significance of the project I-PASSED in empowering and boosting their enthusiasm and determination to finish their studies.

Table 3 Project I-PASSED's Initiatives in Addressing Personal Problems

Initiatives	Mean	SD	Rank	VI
Supporting student's well-being by making counseling services readily accessible and available to them when needed.	4.00	0.00	2	VE
Creating an open, comfortable, and emphatic environment for student to discuss sensitive issues during the counseling sessions.	4.00	0.00	2	VE
Providing follow-up support to help students further address their personal problems beyond counseling sessions.	3.50	0.58	5	VE
Helping students develop effective coping skills and strategies to manage their personal challenges through mental health seminar and workshop	4.00	0.00	2	VE
Working collaboratively with students during counseling by helping them set goals and develop strategies in addressing their personal problems.	3.75	0.50	4	VE
Overall	3.85	0.22		VE

As shown in Table 3, the respondents described the Project I-PASSED's initiatives in addressing their personal problems as “*Very Effective*” based on the overall computed mean score of 3.85 with a standard deviation of 0.22. Among these initiatives, item number 3 ranked last having a computed mean of 3.50. Despite interpreted as Very Effective, it still ranked at the bottom having a computed mean of 3.50. This can be construed that the follow-up support provided to the students needs to be strengthened to further address the personal problems of the students beyond counseling sessions. Nevertheless, the results showed that the mental health seminars, counseling efforts, and psychological supports provided to students are favorable and effective in addressing student's personal problems. According to Pruitt (2023) counseling and mental health support are vital in schools in responding to student's personal struggles and promoting their overall well-being. This suggests that counseling services should be readily accessible and available to students in school when needed.

Furthermore, the above results were supported by the following beneficiaries' statements on the ways how the individual counseling, psychological support and mental health efforts assist them in dealing with their personal problems:

Participant 1: *"Nakatutulong yung mga program ng I-PASSED sa mga students na kagaya kong nahihiya mag open up sa family ko kaya naman nagpapacounseling ako sa adviser ko. Yung mga seminars about mental health is very effective and applicable sa aming mga students since yung iba samin di aware na nagsusuffer na pala sila sa mga Mental Health problems and doon natin makikita na yung project ng I-PASSED is maganda for everyone."* (The programs of I-PASSED are helpful to students like me who are hesitant to open up to my family, which is why I seek counseling from my adviser. The seminars about mental health are very effective and applicable to us students because some of us are not aware that we are already suffering from mental health problems. Through these seminars, we can see that the I-PASSED project is beneficial for everyone.)

Participant 2: *"Sa bahay pakiramdam ko po mag isa lang ako. Wala po akong nakakausap kahit mga magulang ko po di po ako makakapag open ng personal ko pong problema kasi po lagi po silang galit. Naintindihan ko naman po kasi pagod sa trabaho. Sobrang nakatulong po sakín ang pagkakaroon ko po ng open communication sa adviser ko po. Sa kanya po ako nakakapaglabas ng sama ng loob at natulungan nya po ako sa mga dapat kong gagawin sa pamamagitan po ng pagcounseling nya sakín."* (At home, I feel like I'm alone. I have no one to talk to, not even my parents, because they are always angry. I understand that they are tired from work. Having open communication with my adviser has been a great help to me. I am able to share my burdens with him and he has helped me figure out what I need to do through his counseling.)

Participant 3: *"Sa mental health seminar and counseling ay natuto po ako how to deal with academic stress. Pati yung seminar na student po ang nagshare samin ng about po sa study habits and goal setting na small steps can make a big impact on personal development. Nagbigay po sakín yun ng inspiration to start improving myself in just a small steps."* (Through the mental health seminar and counseling, I learned how to deal with academic stress. The seminar where a student shared about study habits and goal setting taught me that small steps can have a big impact on personal development. This gave me inspiration to start improving myself through small steps.)

Participant 4: *"Nagkaroon po ako ng mga bagsak kasi po nawawalan po ako ng interest sa pagpasok ng school kasi po nahihirapan po ako sumabay sa classmates ko nahihiya po ako wala po ako masyadong kaibigan. Nagpasalamat po ako sa adviser ko nagpunta po ng bahay nag-encourage sakín na magpatuloy sa pag-aaral at lagi po akong kinakamusta at pinapayuhan. Katagalan po natuto na po akong magiging open at nagiging ok na po ako sa school may kaibigan na rin po ako."* (I had failing grades because I lost interest in going to school as I struggled to keep up with my classmates and felt embarrassed because I didn't have many friends. I am grateful to my adviser for visiting me at our home, encouraging me to continue my studies, always checking on me, and giving me advice. Over time, I learned to be more open, and I am now doing better in school. I also have friends now.)

Table 4 Project I-PASSED's Initiatives in Addressing Teenage Pregnancy and/or Parenting

Initiatives	Mean	SD	Rank	VI
Providing free consultations/check-ups, discounted laboratories, medicines, vitamins, and supplements etc. from medical partners.	4.00	0.00	1	VE
Helping students cope with the challenges of teenage pregnancy and parenting by providing them with emotional and psychological support.	3.83	0.41	3	VE
Giving guidance to students about reproductive health and teenage pregnancy through seminars and individual counseling.	3.83	0.41	3	VE
Providing support to student's pregnancy journey through home visitation.	3.67	0.52	5	VE
Supporting pregnant students to continue their studies through modular approach and/or peer assisted tutoring.	3.83	0.41	3	VE
Overall	3.83	0.35		VE

The common theme that we can derive across the responses of participants is the significance of having an open communication and emotional support (1,2) by providing them an opportunity to navigate their feelings and emotions

while learning to manage them. Also, allowing them to experience personal growth and development (3) by being inspired at starting even a small step towards improving oneself. And finally, attaining comfort and confidence in school environment through encouragement and mentorship by a counselor (4).

As shown in Table 4, the respondents described the Project I-PASSED's initiatives in addressing teenage pregnancy and/or parenting as *"Very Effective"* based on the overall computed mean score of 3.83 with a standard deviation of 0.35. Among the initiatives, item number 1 ranked first having a computed mean of 4.00 which suggests that the collaborative partnership of Project I-PASSED with medical stakeholders is extremely beneficial to the beneficiaries. On the other hand, item number 4 is at the lowest rank having a computed mean of 3.67. This indicates that despite interpreted as very effective, home visitation can still be further strengthened to provide more support to these students on their pregnancy journey.

Furthermore, the result implies that the initiatives of Project I-PASSED particularly the psychological support and counseling efforts coupled with healthcare support from stakeholders can be construed as remarkably favorable and beneficial. du Preez, et al (2022) stresses the importance of collaborative partnership between the school and stakeholders in addressing complex needs of pregnant learners by promoting their well-being and facilitating their continued education upholding their rights for supportive and inclusive environment.

Likewise, favorable results in this regard were supported by the following beneficiaries' statements on the ways how the activities of Project I-PASSED assist them with their studies in relation to being a teenage pregnant and/or parent:

Participant 1: *"Sa totoo lang po pagkatapos ko pong manganak nagkaroon po ako ng problema sa pag-aadjust sa lahat ng bagay. Sa tulong po ng adviser ko sa project nya nagkaroon po ako ng chance na makausap ang psychologist na tumulong saakin na maintindihan ang pinagdaanan ko bilang nanay."* (To be honest, after giving birth, I had difficulty adjusting to everything. With the help of my adviser in his project, I had the opportunity to talk to a psychologist who helped me understand what I went through as a mother.)

Participant 2: *"Sobra sobra po ang pasasalamat ko po sa project na ito kasi po ramdam ko po ang care at concern ng adviser ko saakin. Sa mga naibigay pong tulong kagaya po ng mga damit mga diapers po sa anak ko. Pati po free check up sa Generika at mga vitamins ay malaki po ang tulong talaga"* (I am extremely grateful for this project because I feel the care and concern of my adviser towards me. The assistance provided, such as clothes and diapers for my child, as well as free check-ups at Generika and vitamins, have been a tremendous help.)

Participant 3: *"Di na po ako pumapasok kasi po nahahirapan na po ako lumalaki na po tiyan ko. Nagkaroon po ako ng mga bagsak pero po natulungan po ako ng adviser ko para kausapin mga teacher na magmodular po ako. Malaking bagay po na kahit sa bahay lang po ay patuloy po akong nag aaral at may classmate din naman tumulong rin po saakin na maipaliwanag ang modules."* (I no longer go to school because I find it difficult now that my belly is getting bigger. I had some failing grades, but my adviser helped me talk to my subject teachers so that I could switch to modular learning. It's a big thing that even at home, I continue studying and I have a classmate who also help me understand the modules.)

Participant 4: *"Maraming salamat po sa adviser ko nagkaron po ulit ako ng pag asa na magpatuloy sa pangarap ko. kala ko po kase mapag iiwanan nanaman ako. Salamat po talaga ng sobra."* (Thank you very much to my adviser for I have regained hope to continue pursuing my dreams. I thought I would be left behind again. Thank you so much.)

Participant 5: *"Yung nagustuhan ko po na sa tingin ko nakatulong po saakin is yung counseling po ng adviser ko saakin. Nagkaroon po ako ng malinaw na pang unawa sa lahat ng mga struggles ko bilang nanay."* (What I liked and found helpful was the counseling from my adviser. It gave me a clear understanding of all my struggles as a mother.)

Participant 6: *"Marami pong naibigay saakin na tulong. Nakatanggap po ako ng kaunting financial support pamasahang papuntang check-up. May nakuha po akong mga libreng gamot at mga vitamins sa generika tapos malaking tulong po yung free check-up ng Generika wala pong bayad ang consultation sa doctor through calls."* (I received a lot of help. I received some financial support for my fare going to my check-ups. I also got free medicine and vitamins from Generika, and the free check-ups from Generika were a big help as well, where I could consult with a doctor over the phone for free.)

The common theme that we can generate from the responses is Comprehensive Support and Care (2,6); Emotional and Psychological Support (1,5); and Academic Accommodations and Encouragement (3,4). It can be seen in their responses how beneficial are the initiatives of Project I-PASSED in responding to their needs as teenage pregnant and/or parent.

Furthermore, responding to their complex needs have positive correlates with better academic performance and retention rates (Chokomosi, et al., 2018).

Table 5 Effectiveness of the Project I-PASSED's Initiatives based on the Number of learners categorized as SARDO who remained in school

Factors	# of SARDO During the 1 st Semester of S.Y. 2023-2024	Number of SARDO who Remained in School at present	Percentage (%)	Remarks as to the main objective of Project I-PASSED
Financial Problems	7	5	71.43	Partially Achieved
Personal Problems	4	4	100.00	Totally Achieved
Teenage Pregnancy and/or Parenting	6	5	83.33	Mostly Achieved
Total	17	14	82.35	Mostly Achieved

Legend: 91 - 100 = Totally Achieved; 81 - 90 = Mostly Achieved; 71 - 80 = Partially Achieved; 70 & below = Not Achieved

Table 5 shows that out of 17 learners identified as SARDO, 14 or 82.35% of them remained in school at present. This means that the main objective of Project I-PASSED of retaining at least 71 to 100 percent of learners identified as SARDO was "Mostly Achieved" which suggests that the project was helpful and beneficial. However, there is a need to further strengthen the initiatives in addressing financial problems particularly in collaboration and partnerships.

4. Conclusions

Based on the salient findings of this study, the researcher concluded that: (1) students dropped out of school belonged to financially challenged group of individuals, faced personal challenges, and assumed parental responsibilities at an early age; (2) students were at-risk of dropping out if their financial, personal, and teenage pregnancy and/or parenting problems are not addressed; (3) The development of Project I-PASSED as an intervention program was based on the prevailing factors why students become SARDO; and (4) The Project I-PASSED initiatives were highly appreciated by the student-recipients, and effective in preventing SARDO from leaving school.

Recommendations

Considering foregoing findings and conclusions, the researcher recommends for the: (1) Students to open up to class advisers whenever they experience financial and personal struggles, be mindful not to engage in any sexual relationships, and focus on their studies instead; (2) class adviser to immediately initiate activities that will address financial, personal, and teenage pregnancy and/or parenting problems after such are detected; (3) Project implementer to ensure strict implementation of all its initiatives; (4) School administrators, partner institutions and other stakeholders to continuously support all the initiatives of the project, and appropriate funding may be allotted for its sustainability; and (5) Future researchers may use this study as their reference in crafting their own programs relative to reducing the number of learners identified as SARDO.

References

- [1] Blair, S. C. (n.d.). *What are the benefits of school and community partnerships?* Old Dominion University. Retrieved April 5, 2024, from [https://socialsci.libretexts.org/Courses/Fresno_City_College/Education_30%3A_Introduction_to_Education_\(Perez\)/08%3A_Effective_Schools/8.04%3A_What_are_the_benefits_of_school_and_community_partnerships](https://socialsci.libretexts.org/Courses/Fresno_City_College/Education_30%3A_Introduction_to_Education_(Perez)/08%3A_Effective_Schools/8.04%3A_What_are_the_benefits_of_school_and_community_partnerships).
- [2] Chokomosi, T. M., Maemeko, E. L., & Nkengbeza, D. (2018). The Impact of Teenage Pregnancy on Academic Performance of Grade 7 Learners at a School in the Zambezi Region. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 6(9). <https://www.scirp.org/journal/paperinformation?paperid=87117>.
- [3] du Preez, A., Rabie, T., & Twala, P. P. (2022). Perceptions of secondary school management teams in managing pregnant learners in an urban context. *Health SA Gesondheid*. 27(0), a1945. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hsag.v27i0.1945>

- [4] LinkedIn. (2024). *What are the most common reasons students drop out of school?* Retrieved April 5, 2024, from <https://www.linkedin.com/advice/1/what-most-common-reasons-students-drop-out-school-xfxcx>.
- [5] Philippine Statistics Authority. (2017). *One in Every Ten Filipinos Aged 6 to 24 Years is an Out of School Child and Youth*. Retrieved from <https://psa.gov.ph/content/one-every-ten-filipinos-aged-6-24-years-out-school-child-and-youth> last October 28, 2022.
- [6] Pruitt, K. (2023). *Why Is Counseling Important in Schools?* Alliant International University. Retrieved April 5, 2024, from <https://www.alliant.edu/blog/why-counseling-important-schools>.
- [7] The World Bank. (2022). *Education At-A-Glance*. Retrieved from <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/education/overview> last October 28, 2022
- [8] University Professional and Continuing Education Association. (2021). *Why Do Students Leave and How Do We Get Them Back?* Retrieved April 5, 2024, from <https://upcea.edu/new-research-answers-question-every-college-wants-to-know-why-do-students-leave-and-how-do-we-get-them-back/>.