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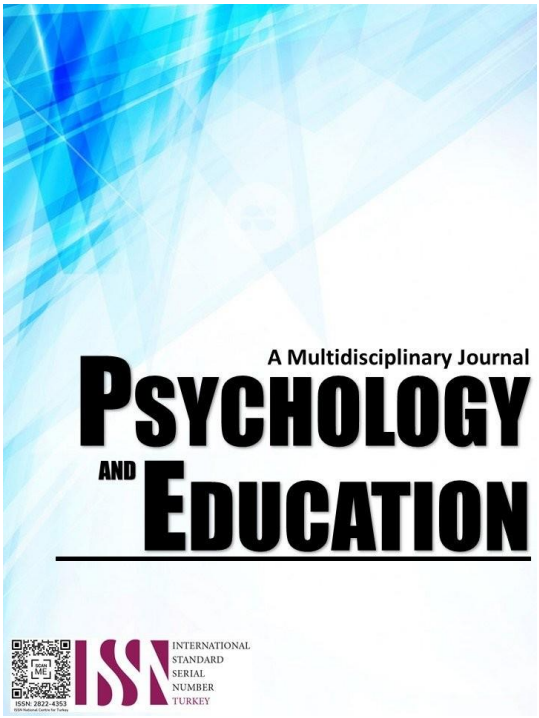

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Research Article

Alignment of Senior High School TVL Strand to Degree Programs Enrolled

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Abstract

The alignment between Senior High School (SHS) tracks and strands and the degree programs enrolled in college is crucial for ensuring learners' success in their chosen fields of study and future careers. Hence, this study assessed the degree program alignment of the SHS Technical-Vocational & Livelihood (TVL) graduates from 2021 to 2023 of Bilar National High School, Division of Bohol. The study used a descriptive-correlational research design and a self-constructed questionnaire to gather data from 296 TVL graduates. The respondents were selected using census or complete enumeration, and the data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings revealed that most respondents (85.6%) were enrolled in the BISU System, with BISU-Bilar having the highest percentage (79.6%) among its campuses. The most popular degree programs chosen by the respondents were Bachelor of Science in Computer Science (13.5%), Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management (9%), and Bachelor of Science in Agriculture (8.55%). However, the overall alignment between SHS-TVL strands and the chosen degree programs was relatively low, with the TVL-Information Communication Technology (Computer Systems Servicing) track consistently showing a higher number of students enrolled in non-aligned degree programs across all three years. There was a substantial difference in the alignment of the SHS Track-Strand and degree program enrolled across the three years. Recommendations were proposed to address the issues of misalignment.

Keywords: *Strand-Degree Program Alignment, TVL Track and Strands, K-12 Curriculum, curriculum exit, degree program choice*

Introduction

The transition from senior high school to college or any of the K-12 curriculum exits is a critical phase in a student's educational journey. This period is marked by significant decisions that can have long-lasting implications on one's career trajectory. Senior high school graduates are often at a crossroads, choosing between various curriculum exits and the myriad degree programs offered in colleges (Esseh, 2021). This decision is influenced by a range of factors, from personal interests and academic strengths to socio-economic backgrounds and market trends.

Career decision-making at the senior high school level is a complex process. It involves assessing one's abilities, interests, and values, and aligning them with potential career paths (Puebla, 2022; Amoako, 2020). Studies have shown that students who have a clear understanding of their career goals are more likely to choose degree programs that align with their aspirations. However, the level of career guidance and support available to students can vary significantly, impacting their decision-making process (Preston, 2019; Digamon, 2021).

The curriculum exits in senior high school are designed to prepare students for specific career paths (Awi et al., 2022). These exits typically include general education, vocational training, and specialized academic tracks (Cundangan, 2023). The effectiveness of these tracks in aligning with students' career aspirations is a subject of ongoing debate. Some studies suggest that there is a mismatch between the skills acquired in these tracks and the demands of the degree programs students eventually enroll in (Mordeno, 2022; Yuting, 2022).

The current career status of recent high school graduates reflects the alignment (or misalignment) of their curriculum exit choices and college degree programs. While some students find a seamless transition into degree programs that fit their career goals, others may struggle to find relevance in their chosen courses. This misalignment can lead to a range of issues, including academic disengagement, a shift in career goals, or even a change in degree programs (Bacaling, 2018).

Despite the wealth of studies on career decision-making and curriculum choices, there remains a gap in understanding the long-term impact of these decisions on students' career trajectories. Specifically, there is a need for more comprehensive research that tracks the alignment between the curriculum exits chosen by senior high school graduates, their degree program enrollments, and their eventual career outcomes.

In the light of these realities, this study aims to investigate the relationship between the academic track/strand and the curriculum exits chosen by senior high school graduates, their subsequent enrollment in college degree programs, and their current career status. This research aims to identify patterns and discrepancies in this alignment, providing insights into the effectiveness of curriculum exits in preparing students for their desired career paths. The findings of this study will be instrumental in informing educational policies, curriculum design, and career guidance practices, ultimately contributing to the enhancement of career decision-making processes for senior high school students.

Research Questions

This study aimed to assess the degree program alignment of the senior high school Technical-Vocational & Livelihood graduates from 2021 - 2023 of Bilar National High School, Division of Bohol. Specifically, it sought to answer the following sub-problems:

1. What is the profile of the Senior High School – Technical Vocational and Livelihood graduates pursuing higher education in terms of:
    1.1. current degree program; and
    1.2. number of students and the schools enrolled?
2. What is the percentage of course alignment of Senior High School strands (TVL-HE (Cookery), HE (Tourism), and ICT (CSS) for the following years 2021, 2022, and 2023?
3. What are the factors that contribute to the respondents' decision-making regarding their degree program?
4. Is there a significant difference in the percentage of degree program alignment for year 2021, 2022 and 2023?

Literature Review

The career path alignment of senior high school graduates is a critical factor in shaping their prospects and overall well-being. It plays a pivotal role in determining whether graduates will find fulfillment and success in their chosen fields. When senior high school graduates embark on career paths that align with their skills, interests, and aspirations, they are more likely to excel in their chosen professions, contribute positively to the workforce, and experience higher job satisfaction. Society benefits from this alignment, as it promotes a more productive and resilient workforce, ultimately contributing to economic growth and stability. Therefore, it is imperative to prioritize career path alignment for senior high school graduates to ensure their individual success and the prosperity of the broader community.

The first theory that supports this study is the Career Theory by John Holland (1959) which is a widely recognized and researched theory that helps individuals identify career paths that align with their personality type. Holland categorized individuals into six personality types: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional (RIASEC). According to Holland, individuals experience higher satisfaction and success in careers that align with their personality type. People tend to seek out environments that match their personality preferences. Career choices are an ongoing process of exploration and adaptation as individuals gain experience and self-awareness. Holland's RIASEC framework can be used to assess the personality profiles of senior high school graduates and identify potential career paths that align with their inclinations. This information can aid in career counseling and guidance programs offered by schools. The RIASEC framework can also be used to identify the work environment that best suits an individual's personality type. For example, Realistic individuals prefer working in a practical and hands-on environment, while Investigative individuals prefer working in a scientific and analytical environment.

Artistic individuals prefer working in a creative and expressive environment, while Social individuals prefer working in a helping and supportive environment. Enterprising individuals prefer working in a competitive and persuasive environment, while Conventional individuals prefer working in a structured and organized environment. By identifying the work environment that best suits an individual's personality type, Holland's Career Theory can help individuals make informed career choices that lead to higher job satisfaction and success.

Super's Lifespan Theory, formulated by Donald Super in 1953, offers a significant contribution to the field of career development. This theory combines elements of stage development and social role theory, presenting a nuanced understanding of how individuals navigate their career paths over their lifetimes. It diverges from rigid age-based progression by introducing the concept of minicycling, allowing for flexibility in moving through the five identified stages: Growth, Exploration, Establishment, Maintenance, and Decline. This recognition of flexibility underscores the idea that career development is an ongoing and dynamic process, not confined to specific age brackets.

The key principles of Super's theory highlight its relevance and importance. Firstly, it emphasizes that career development is a lifelong journey, emphasizing that individuals continually evolve in their career aspirations and goals as they grow and encounter life events. Secondly, the five stages delineate various phases in this journey, each characterized by unique challenges and opportunities. Lastly, Super's theory acknowledges the interplay between personal factors, such as interests and abilities, and external factors like social influences and economic conditions, in shaping one's career trajectory (Kosine & Lewis, 2008).

In essence, Super's Theory has significant implications for career advocates and career counselors. By understanding the stages and dynamics of career development outlined in the theory, they can better guide and support individuals, including senior high school graduates, as they make important career decisions. Recognizing that career paths are not set in stone and that personal and external factors play crucial roles allows for more tailored and effective career education and guidance programs. Ultimately, Super's theory helps individuals navigate the complex and evolving landscape of career development throughout their lives.

Social Cognitive Career Theory, developed by Albert Bandura and Robert W. Krumboltz in 1969, is a prominent framework in the field of career development.

This theory posits that individuals shape their career choices and behaviors through a dynamic interplay of personal experiences, observational learning, and social reinforcement. At its core, the theory revolves around the concept of self-efficacy, which refers to an individual's belief in their ability to perform specific tasks and achieve desired goals in their chosen career path.

One key tenet of Social Cognitive Career Theory is that individuals develop their career self-efficacy by actively engaging in different experiences, such as internships or skill-building activities. Also, they can bolster their self-efficacy by observing others who have succeeded in similar careers or roles. Furthermore, the theory emphasizes the role of social reinforcement, where individuals receive feedback and encouragement from others, such as mentors, family, or peers, which can further shape their career aspirations and decisions.

Contextually, this theory highlights the importance of providing young individuals, especially high school graduates, with diverse opportunities to explore potential careers, interact with successful role models, and receive constructive feedback. By enhancing their self-efficacy beliefs and helping them overcome perceived barriers, career development interventions can play a pivotal role in guiding individuals towards fulfilling and successful career paths. This theory's emphasis on the interplay between personal experiences, observational learning, and social influences underscores its relevance in understanding how individuals make career decisions and pursue their professional aspirations.

In the dynamic landscape of modern workplaces, the intersection of careers and legal considerations has become increasingly intricate. Understanding the legal foundations that underpin career alignment is essential for both individuals and organizations striving to navigate the complexities of employment relationships. The framework within which careers are shaped, ensuring fair practices, protecting rights, and fostering a harmonious work environment are provided with legal bases.

This study on the career alignment of senior high school learners is firmly rooted in the context of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG), particularly Goal 4. Goal 4 of the SDGs specifically advocates for "inclusive and equitable quality education and promotion of lifelong learning opportunities for all." It is within this global framework that the study seeks to assess and contribute to the career development and educational opportunities of senior high school students in the Philippines.

In the Philippines, the government has made substantial strides in advancing the cause of inclusive education, as enshrined in the 1987 Constitution and various laws and policies. The 1987 Constitution guarantees the right of every Filipino to education, emphasizing that it should be "free from discrimination on any ground, including social origin, religion, sex, physical condition, or political belief." This constitutional provision serves as a sturdy pillar supporting the principles of inclusive education in the country.

One significant milestone in the Philippines' pursuit of inclusive education is Republic Act No. 10533, also known as the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013. This landmark legislation restructured the basic education system, extending the cycle from 10 to 12 years, which includes the addition of two years of senior high school. The law also introduced a more flexible and inclusive curriculum designed to accommodate the diverse needs of learners, promoting an educational environment where all students can thrive.

Another crucial piece of legislation supporting inclusive education is RA 11206, also known as the Secondary Career Guidance and Counseling Act of 2019. This law mandates the provision of comprehensive career guidance and counseling services to all secondary school students. These services aim to help students identify their strengths, interests, and abilities, enabling them to make informed decisions about their future education and careers, thereby fostering inclusivity and equity in career development.

To operationalize the principles of career guidance, the Department of Education (DepEd) issued DepEd Order 41, s. 2015, also known as the Senior High School Career Guidance Program and Early Registration. This DepEd order provides essential guidelines for implementing career guidance and counseling programs in senior high schools. It underscores the importance of inclusive education and encourages the development of programs that cater to the diverse needs of learners, aligning with the overarching goals of both national and international educational frameworks.

This study on career alignment among senior high school learners in the Philippines is firmly grounded in the global context of UNSDG Goal 4 while recognizing and building upon the nation's commitment to inclusive education as enshrined in the 1987 Constitution and supported by essential legislation such as RA 10533 and RA 11206. DepEd Order 41, s. 2015, further amplifies this commitment by providing specific guidance for inclusive career guidance programs within the senior high school system, creating a comprehensive framework to address the diverse educational and career needs of all Filipino students.

The K-12 curriculum in the Philippines, as implemented by the Department of Education (DepEd), includes four tracks and at least ten strands, with the intention of preparing students for college, industry, or entrepreneurship (Danilo, 2016). However, the curriculum is still in its early stages, and its implementation has been associated with various challenges, including the need for more resources and qualified teachers (Trance, 2019; Barceló, 2019). The curriculum also includes a mandatory kindergarten program, which has been compared to that of Malaysia (Aquino, 2017). Despite these challenges, the K-12 curriculum is a significant step towards improving the quality of education in the Philippines.

The Senior High School (SHS) program in the Philippines is a crucial phase of education that allows students to specialize in their areas of interest and aptitude. The program offers three main tracks to cater to the diverse aspirations of students (Velasquez, 2019). The Academic track, with its specialized strands, prepares students for higher education, while the Technical-Vocational-Livelihood

(TVL) track equips them with practical skills for immediate employment (Teleron, 2015). The Academic track is tailored for those aiming to pursue higher education in colleges or universities. It provides a well-rounded education and offers three specialized strands, namely the General Academic Strand (GAS), Humanities, Education, Social Sciences Strand (HUMSS), and Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics Strand (STEM), which allow students to explore various academic disciplines and prepare for specific career paths.

On the other hand, the Technical-Vocational-Livelihood (TVL) track is designed to equip students with practical skills for immediate employment upon graduation. With four unique strands – Agri-Fishery Arts, Home Economics (HE), Information and Communication Technology (ICT), and Industrial Arts – this track offers specialized training that aligns with the demands of the job market, making it a great choice for students who want to enter the workforce right after high school.

The Sports and Arts track is dedicated to nurturing the talents of athletes and artists. With two distinct strands – Sports and Arts and Design – this track allows students to hone their skills in their chosen field, be it athletics, music, visual arts, or theater arts. It provides a platform for students to showcase their talents and potentially pursue careers in their respective disciplines (Abarro, 2016).

Remarkably, the career alignment of senior high school learners has been a topic of increasing interest in educational research. Several studies have delved into the misalignment of senior high school tracks and strands with the K-12 curriculum exit and degree programs enrolled in higher education institutions. This literature review aims to synthesize relevant studies and provide insights into the reasons for misalignment.

In the Philippines, the choice of track and strand in senior high school significantly influences students' career paths in higher education. Malaga and Oducado (2021) emphasized the impact of senior high school strands on academic self-regulated learning and performance, particularly in the context of nursing students. This underscores the importance of aligning the senior high school strand with the desired college degree program to optimize academic success and career readiness.

The curriculum exits in senior high school in the Philippines, as part of the K to 12 program, are designed to cater to diverse career pathways for students: employment, higher education, entrepreneurship, and middle skills development. Employment focuses on preparing students to enter the workforce directly after graduation. Higher education (college education) aims to equip students with the necessary knowledge and skills to pursue further studies in college or university. Entrepreneurship encourages students to develop skills for starting and managing their businesses. Lastly, middle skills development is about equipping students with vocational and technical skills that are vital in various industries, especially those that do not require a college degree but are beyond the skill level of an untrained high school graduate (Bacaling, 2019; Santos, 2018).

Employment and Higher Education. A significant proportion of students in the Philippines' senior high schools intend to pursue higher education. A study by Bacaling (2019) found that 57.4% of students planned to enroll in college or university, while 34.9% aimed to find a job. This reflects the K to 12 curriculum's emphasis on preparing students for both academic and vocational paths. The TVL (Technical Vocational Livelihood) strand, for example, has been reported by Manugas et al. (2022) to significantly impact students' college performance, indicating the curriculum's effectiveness in preparing students for higher education.

Entrepreneurship. The K to 12 curriculum also aims to foster entrepreneurial skills. Santos (2018) assessed the entrepreneurial intentions of Accountancy, Business, and Management (ABM) students, finding that many preferred starting their own business over traditional employment. This entrepreneurial inclination is fostered by family influence and personal motivations like creativity and risk-taking.

Middle Skills Development. For middle skills development, the curriculum offers strands like TVL. Asis (2020) noted that the K to 12 program, particularly the TECHVOC track, prepares students for employability, providing skills needed in technical and vocational fields. This is supported by the study of Ramos (2021), which found high levels of satisfaction among students in TVL tracks, indicating the effectiveness of the curriculum in equipping students with practical skills.

At present, Bilar National High School offers various tracks and strands under the Technical Vocational Livelihood (TVL) pathway, each designed to provide specific skills and knowledge for different career paths.

The Home Economics – Cookery & Bread and Pastry NCII strand in senior high school, part of the Technical-Vocational Livelihood (TVL) track, aims to develop practical culinary skills and competencies. Research, such as Rodil and Briones (2022), shows it integrates technical training in culinary arts, like bread and pastry production, with soft skills in analytical, conceptual, communication, and leadership areas. Mananita (2021) highlights the role of proper tools and equipment in student success in these areas. This track, therefore, offers a holistic education, combining technical and soft skills essential for culinary careers (Rodil & Briones, 2022; Mananita, 2021).

Home Economics – Front Office & Local Tour Guiding Services NCII. This strand prepares students for careers in the hospitality industry, specifically in front office operations and tour guiding. It equips students with skills in customer service, hotel operations, and local tour management. The integration of information and communication technologies (ICT) in this education stream is vital to meet the current challenges in these fields, enhancing the quality and relevance of vocational education (Hassan et al., 2021).

Information and Communications Technology (ICT) – Computer Systems Servicing. This track is designed to provide students with skills in computer systems servicing and ICT. It includes training in hardware and software troubleshooting, network configuration, and ICT support services. The role of ICT in TVET pedagogy is crucial to produce a digitally equipped skilled workforce, meeting the demands of rapidly changing economies and industries (Bello, 2013).

A study by Duhaylungsod (2021) explored the alignment between the skills taught in the ICT strand's Senior High School Curriculum and the skills required by various industries in Zamboanga City for employability. The research indicated that the curriculum, including Computer Systems Servicing NC II, matches the industry needs, providing students with relevant skills for entry-level roles in the IT Department. This finding underscores the significance of the ICT curriculum in equipping students with the practical skills and competencies required in the modern workforce, particularly in computer systems servicing and related areas.

Rafanan et al. (2020) provided insights into the perspectives of senior high school students pursuing STEM careers, highlighting the significance of alignment to the preferred course in college as the primary reason for enrolling in STEM tracks. This indicates that students' career aspirations are closely linked to their choice of senior high school tracks and strands, emphasizing the need for alignment to facilitate a smooth transition to higher education and future careers.

The study by Darwin et al. (2020) on career guidance and counseling services for senior high school students is particularly relevant, as it sheds light on the essential support needed to ensure that students make informed decisions regarding their career paths. Effective career guidance and counseling services can play a pivotal role in aligning students' senior high school tracks and strands with their college and career aspirations, ultimately contributing to better decision-making and preparedness for higher education.

Moreover, Acosta and Acosta (2016) explored teachers' perceptions of senior high school readiness in higher education institutions in the Philippines, providing valuable insights into the perspectives of educators regarding the alignment of senior high school education with college preparedness. Understanding teachers' perceptions is crucial in addressing potential gaps and ensuring that senior high school programs effectively prepare students for their chosen career paths in college.

Another study of Garcia and Yazon (2020) explored the work immersion performance, alignment, and employability of senior high school graduates. The study aimed to describe the status of the Work Immersion Program and its relevance to the employability of senior high school graduates. This study provides pertinent data on the effectiveness of the program and proposes enhancements for successful implementation.

In the study of Barroso (2022) highlighted that the K-12 curricula prepare students for their careers in college and industry. However, it pointed out that students may pursue college degrees that are not aligned with the strands taken in senior high school. This emphasizes the potential disconnect between the senior high school tracks/strands and the degree programs pursued in higher education.

In addition, Manugas et al. (2022) conducted a correlational study on the senior high school track as a determinant for college GPA. The findings revealed that the senior high school career track and learning strand can predict academic performance in college. This underscores the significance of aligning senior high school tracks with college degree programs to optimize academic success. Another related study from Malaga and Oducado (2021) investigated the impact of senior high school strands on nursing students' academic self-regulated learning and performance. The study found differences in academic self-regulated learning and performance between STEM and non-STEM senior high school graduates among nursing students. This suggests that the choice of senior high school strand may influence academic outcomes in specific degree programs.

These studies collectively emphasize the importance of aligning senior high school tracks and strands with college degree programs to enhance employability, academic performance, and overall career alignment for students. The misalignment between senior high school tracks/strands and higher education programs can lead to challenges in transitioning from high school to college and may impact students' career trajectories.

Reasons for misalignment can be multifaceted and may include inadequate career guidance for students in choosing their senior high school tracks/strands (Cabuquin, 2022). Additionally, the lack of comprehensive activities during career week in senior high schools Rafanan et al. (2020) may contribute to students' limited exposure to potential career paths, leading to misalignment with their chosen tracks/strands (Rafanan et al., 2020). Furthermore, the study by Nazareno et al. (2019) utilized artificial neural networks to predict career strands based on students' grades, indicating the potential role of academic performance in influencing track/strand selection.

In capsule, these literature highlights the significance of aligning senior high school tracks and strands with college degree programs to optimize students' career alignment, employability, and academic success. The reasons for misalignment encompass factors such as inadequate career guidance, limited exposure to career options, and the potential influence of academic performance on track/strand selection.

Methodology

Research Design

This study used descriptive-comparative research design, which is deemed suitable for achieving the study's objectives. This design

enables the comprehensive assessment of course alignment among senior high school graduates from 2021 to 2023 at Bilar National High School, Bohol Division. It allowed for both the description of respondents' profiles and the examination of potential relationships between variables, such as their profiles and career choices. This design choice ensured that the research captures a holistic view of the variables under investigation.

Respondents

The respondents of the study were all TVL (Technical-Vocational-Livelihood) graduates from the specified school, totaling 296 graduates from the years 2021 to 2023. Census or complete enumeration was used to ensure that every individual within the defined population has an equal chance of being included in the study, allowing for a more accurate representation of the entire group.

Table 1. *Number of Respondents*

Batch	*Program*	*N*
2021	TVL-ICT (CSS)	52
	TVL-HE (Cookery)	31
	TVL-HE (Tourism)	16
	Sub-Total	99
2022	TVL-ICT (CSS)	50
	TVL-HE (Cookery)	39
	TVL-HE (Tourism)	18
	Sub-Total	107
2023	TVL-ICT (CSS)	50
	TVL-HE (Cookery)	28
	TVL-HE (Tourism)	12
	Sub-Total	90
	Total	296

In this study, the inclusion and exclusion criteria had been carefully established to define the specific target population eligible for participation. Inclusion criteria encompassed all senior high school TVL graduates within this specified timeframe. Second, the respondents willingly consented to participate survey. With regards to exclusion criterion, respondents who have transferred to other school before completing their senior high school education were excluded from the study.

Instrument

Data collection for this research was carried out through a survey method utilizing a self-constructed questionnaire. The survey-questionnaire is made up of two parts. The first part captures the respondents' profile in terms of TVL Track/Strand graduated, curriculum exit, degree program enrolled and the name of school enrolled. The second part asked the respondents to select the factors that influenced their decision-making process in choosing their college course. To analyze their responses, the researcher was the one to evaluate the respondents' present career whether his/her course aligned or misaligned to their senior high school TVL strand through tables. And the second part assessing the factors that contributed to the respondents' decision-making regarding their college courses. The listed factors covered a range of considerations, such as personal passion, ease of the subject, employment prospects, financial outcomes, self-image, parental influence, cost of education, gender, peer pressure, entrance exams, scholarships, prelaw considerations, and the unavailability of preferred courses (Tahil, 2021; Plaza, 2023; Nazareno, 2021; Digamon, 2021; Pesigan, 2020; Ciucan-Rusu, 2021; Royo & Lamela, 2021; Ouano, 2019; Plaza, 2023).

The questionnaire, developed for this study, underwent a meticulous validation process from experts and pre-testing. These steps were taken to ascertain the validity, reliability, and effectiveness of the instrument in capturing the necessary data. Validation ensured that the questionnaire measures what it intends to measure, while pre-testing helped identify and rectify any potential issues with clarity, wording, or response options.

Procedure

Before data gathering, the researcher asked formal permission from the superintendent, public schools district supervisor, and school principal of the chosen locale. Google forms were the primary method of data gathering. The researcher visited the respondents if they did not respond to the online survey. The researcher ensured their confidentiality to encourage respondents to give accurate and unbiased answers to each question. After the survey forms were retrieved, the data will be totaled, tabulated, and analyzed. The researcher issued codes to each survey instrument to protect the respondents' confidentiality and anonymity.

Data Analysis

The analysis of collected data was done using SPSS version 29, a widely recognized statistical analysis software. The initial step will involve conducting normality testing to assess the distribution of the data and determined the suitability of parametric statistical tests. Subsequently, descriptive statistics was employed to provide a comprehensive summary of respondents' profiles, including measures such as frequencies, means, and standard deviations. To answer the inferential question on the significant difference in the percentage of degree program alignment for year 2021, 2022 and 2023, the researcher need the test of difference using Chi-square test depending

on the normality of the data sets.

Results and Discussion

This section sequentially presents the results and findings on this study which assessed the degree program alignment of the SHS Technical-Vocational & Livelihood graduates from 2021 - 2023 of Bilar National High School, Division of Bohol with the end view of proposing an action plan.

Table 2.1 presents the distribution of respondents based on the degree programs they are enrolled in.

The data in the table showed a diverse range of degree programs chosen by the respondents, with Bachelor of Science in Computer Science (13.89%), Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management (9.26%), and Bachelor of Science in Agriculture (8.80%) being the most popular choices. Other notable degree programs include Bachelor of Science in Industrial Technology- Food Processing Service Management (8.33%), Bachelor of Science in Criminology (6.94%), and Bachelor of Science in Office Administration (6.94%).

The diverse range of degree programs chosen by the respondents suggests that SHS-TVL graduates have varying interests and career aspirations. The popularity of degree programs like Computer Science, Hospitality Management, and Agriculture indicates that these fields are perceived as promising career paths by the graduates. The data also showed a significant number of respondents choosing degree programs related to their SHS-TVL strands, such as Bachelor of Technology and Livelihood Education- Home Economics (5.56%) and Bachelor of Science in Industrial Technology- Automotive (6.48%).

Table 2.1. *Respondents' Profile in terms of Current Degree Program Enrolled*

Degree Program Enrolled	*F*	*%*
Education	34	15.74
Bachelor of Technology and Livelihood Education- Home Economics	12	5.56
Bachelor in Secondary Education- Filipino	8	3.70
Bachelor of Technology and Livelihood Education- AFA	7	3.24
Bachelor in Secondary Education- Math	4	1.85
Bachelor in Secondary Education- English	2	0.93
Bachelor of Early Childhood Education	1	0.46
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishery, and Natural Sciences	38	17.59
Bachelor of Science in Agriculture	19	8.80
Bachelor of Science in Agriculture & Biosystems Engineering	7	3.24
Bachelor of Science in Forestry	7	3.24
Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science	5	2.31
Engineering and Technology	68	31.48
Bachelor of Science in Computer Science	30	13.89
Bachelor of Science in Industrial Technology- Food Processing SM	18	8.33
Bachelor of Science in Industrial Technology- Automotive	14	6.48
Bachelor of Science in Computer Engineering	2	0.93
Bachelor of Science in Informative System	1	0.46
Bachelor of Science in Information Technology	1	0.46
Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering	1	0.46
Bachelor of Science in Industrial Technology- Mechanical Technology	1	0.46
Hospitality and Tourism	21	9.72
Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management	20	9.26
Bachelor of Science in Tourism Management	1	0.46
Business, Office Systems Management, and Maritime Studies	32	14.80
Bachelor of Science in Office Administration	15	6.94
Bachelor of Science in Marine Transportation	9	4.16
Bachelor of Science in Business Administration	4	1.85
Bachelor of Science in Entrepreneurship	4	1.85
Social Science	16	7.40
Bachelor of Science in Criminology	15	6.94
Bachelor of Science in Psychology	1	0.46
Health Sciences:	7	3.24
Bachelor of Science in Nursing	5	2.31
Bachelor of Science in Medical Technology	1	0.46
Bachelor of Science in Radiologic Technology	1	0.46

The findings suggest that SHS-TVL graduates are exploring various career paths are not limited to degree programs directly related to their SHS strands. This highlights the importance of providing comprehensive career guidance and exposure to different fields to help students make informed decisions about their future education and career paths. The data also indicates that there is some alignment between SHS-TVL strands and the chosen degree programs, but there may be room for improvement in terms of strengthening this alignment to ensure that students are well-prepared for their chosen fields of study.

Interestingly, the diverse range of degree programs chosen by the respondents aligns with recent literature that highlights the importance of providing students with a broad spectrum of educational and career opportunities. A study by Duta et al. (2019) emphasizes the need for higher education institutions to offer a variety of degree programs that cater to the diverse interests and aptitudes of students, as this can lead to increased student satisfaction and better learning outcomes. Furthermore, research by Choi and Kim (2018) suggests that exposing students to different fields of study and career paths can help them make more informed decisions about their future and increase their employability prospects.

Table 2.2 presents the distribution of respondents based on the schools they are enrolled in for their higher education. The data showed that the majority of the respondents (85.6%) are enrolled in the BISU System, with BISU-Bilar having the highest percentage (79.6%) among its campuses. Other schools with notable enrollment include BITIC System (4.3%) and PMI College (3.2%).

The data presented in the table suggest that the BISU System, particularly BISU-Bilar, is the most popular choice for higher education among the SHS-TVL graduates in the study. This is due to factors such as proximity, affordability, and the quality of education offered by the institution. The low enrollment percentages in other schools may indicate that they are less preferred by the respondents or that they have more stringent admission requirements.

Table 2.2. *Respondents' Profile in terms of School Enrolled*

School	*Frequency*	*Percent*
Arellano University	1	0.5
BISU System	185	85.6
BISU- Balilihan	6	2.7
BISU- Bilar	172	79.6
BISU- Main Campus	7	3.2
BITIC System	9	4.2
BITIC- Carmen	1	0.5
BITIC- Tagbilaran	8	3.7
Carmen Municipal College	1	0.5
Cristal E-College	3	1.4
Holy Name University	3	1.4
Metro Dumaguete College Incorporated	1	0.5
Northern Mindanao Colleges Incorporated	1	0.5
PMI College	7	3.2
STI College	1	0.5
Tagbilaran City College (TCC)	1	0.5
Trinidad Municipal College	2	0.9
Visayas State University	1	0.5
Total	216	100%

Interestingly, the high concentration of respondents in the BISU System, especially in BISU-Bilar, highlights the importance of this institution in providing higher education opportunities for SHS-TVL graduates in the region. It may also suggest that there is a need to explore partnerships and collaborations between the SHS-TVL program and the BISU System to ensure a smooth transition for students and to promote alignment between the curricula.

The high concentration of respondents in the BISU System, particularly BISU-Bilar, is consistent with findings from recent literature. Cheung et al. (2019) found that students often prefer to enroll in higher education institutions that are geographically close to their homes, as proximity can reduce financial burdens and provide a sense of familiarity and comfort. Moreover, research by Kang and Jiang (2020) suggests that the quality of education and institutional reputation play a significant role in students' choice of higher education institution, which may explain the popularity of the BISU System among the respondents.

Table 3 presents the frequency and percentage of students who pursued aligned and non-aligned degree programs after graduating senior high school.

Data revealed that a significant proportion of students, particularly those from the TVL-ICT (Computer System Servicing) and TVL-Home Economics (Tourism) tracks/strands, are choosing to pursue degree programs that are not directly aligned with their Senior High School (SHS) specialization. Over the three years covered in the table, only 37% of students from the TVL-ICT track/strand and 36%

from the TVL-Home Economics (Tourism) track/strand pursued aligned degree programs, while the majority opted for non-aligned programs. This trend suggests that various factors, such as changes in personal interests, perceived job market demands, or a desire to explore different fields, may influence students' decisions when choosing their degree programs.

Table 3. *SHS Track/Strand-Degree Program Alignment Rate*

Year	*TVL-ICT (Computer System Servicing)*				*TVL- Home Economics (Cookery)*				*TVL- Home Economics (Tourism)*				*OVERALL*			
	A		*NA*		*A*		*NA*		*A*		*NA*		*A*		*NA*	
	f	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*
2021	13	10	29	22	4	7	14	24	2	8	8	32	19	8	51	24
2022	23	17	22	16	19	33	10	17	3	12	4	16	45	21	36	17
2023	13	10	33	25	6	11	5	9	4	16	4	16	23	11	42	19
Total	49	37	84	63	29	50	29	50	9	36	16	64	87	40	129	60

Legend: Aligned (A), Not Aligned (NA)

In contrast, the TVL-Home Economics (Cookery) track/strand shows a more balanced distribution, with 50% of students pursuing aligned degree programs and 50% choosing non-aligned programs. This relatively balanced distribution suggests that students in this field may have more clearly defined career paths or a stronger inclination to continue in the same field.

In general, the alignment rate across all three tracks/strands is 40%, indicating that a substantial proportion of students, regardless of their SHS specialization, are exploring different fields in their higher education. This highlights the importance of providing students with diverse educational options and support in exploring various career paths, regardless of their SHS specialization, to ensure that they can make informed decisions about their future academic and professional endeavors.

The findings suggest that there is a need to strengthen the alignment between SHS tracks and strands and the degree programs offered in higher education institutions. The low overall alignment, particularly in the TVL-Information Communication Technology (Computer Systems Servicing) track, indicates that students may not be receiving adequate guidance and support in choosing degree programs that align with their SHS specializations.

The findings from this study are consistent with recent literature that highlights the need for stronger alignment between SHS tracks and strands and higher education degree programs. A study by Okiror et al. (2021) found that misalignment between high school curricula and higher education programs can lead to challenges in student retention and success, emphasizing the importance of ensuring that SHS tracks provide students with the necessary knowledge and skills to succeed in their chosen degree programs.

Similarly, a study by Canlas and Fujii (2022) investigated the factors influencing the career decision-making of SHS students in the Philippines and found that the perceived alignment between SHS tracks and future career opportunities was a significant predictor of students' career choices. They suggest that providing comprehensive career guidance and support that considers the alignment between SHS tracks and higher education programs can help students make more informed decisions about their future careers.

Furthermore, these findings are further supported by a study by Perin and Lising (2019), which found that collaborative efforts between high schools and higher education institutions to align curricula and provide targeted support can improve student outcomes and success in postsecondary education.

Table 4 illustrates the factors contributing to the respondents' choice of degree program, categorized into four main indicators: Personality, Family and Relatives, Interests, and Job Opportunities. The overall composite mean of 3.064 suggests that the respondents generally agree that these factors influence their decision-making process.

Among the four indicators, Interests has the highest weighted mean score (WMS=3.37), with all items falling under the descriptive value of "Strongly Agree." The item with the highest rating is "I like doing things related to the degree program that I am specializing" (WMS=3.414). Job Opportunities also has a high weighted mean score (WMS=3.33), with all items falling under the descriptive value of "Strongly Agree."

On the other hand, Family and Relatives has the lowest weighted mean score (WMS=2.45), falling under the descriptive value of "Disagree." The two lowest-rated items are "My parents and/or relatives took the same degree program that I would pursue" (WMS=2.056) and "Preferences are made by a relative since they will provide for the expenses" (WMS=2.126), both falling under the descriptive value of "Disagree."

The data revealed that the respondents' personal interests and the perceived job opportunities associated with their chosen degree programs are the primary driving forces behind their decision-making process. This finding is consistent with the notion that individuals are more likely to pursue a career path that aligns with their interests and passions and offers favorable employment prospects.

The respondents also consider their personality traits and attributes when choosing a degree program, indicating that they seek a field of study that complements their strengths and abilities. This suggests that self-awareness and understanding one's own personality play a role in the decision-making process.

Table 4. *Factors Contributing to Degree Program Choice*

Indicators	*WMS*	*DV*
Personality	3.10	A
1. My personality fits best in my chosen degree program that I take	3.084	A
2. My traits and understanding of the degree will give me an advantage on landing to my pursued career.	3.153	A
3. I am more productive in the career that I will practice due to my traits.	3.065	A
4. My attributes should be ideal for the degree program that I would focus on.	3.098	A
Family and Relatives	2.45	D
1. My parents and/or relatives took the same degree program that I would pursue.	2.056	D
2. Preferences are made by a relative since they will provide for the expenses.	2.126	D
3. My family will give me support on the chosen degree program for me.	3.181	A
4. I believe that they are the one who are responsible to choose a degree program for me since they may know what is best for me.	2.456	D
Interests	3.37	SA
1. I am particularly interested in this degree program that I will pursue	3.386	SA
2. I like doing things related to the degree program that I am specializing.	3.414	SA
3. An experience stimulated my interest for this degree program.	3.321	SA
4. I see myself as competent at this degree program that I am pursuing or that I have pursued.	3.377	SA
Job Opportunities	3.33	SA
1. There are abundant opportunities I can avail from the degree program I am pursuing.	3.367	SA
2. The degree program that I chose will help me to find a suitable career easily.	3.353	SA
3. The degree program that I would pursue is timely in-demand.	3.251	SA
4. I am fully aware of the opportunities that surround the degree program that I chose.	3.34	SA
Overall Composite Mean	3.064	A

Note: 3.25-4.00, Strongly Agree; 2.50-3.24, Agree; 1.75-2.49, Disagree; 1.00-1.74, Strongly Disagree

Interestingly, the influence of family members and relatives on the respondents' choice of degree program is relatively low. This may indicate a shift towards greater autonomy and independence among the respondents in making decisions about their education and career paths. The findings highlight the importance of fostering an educational environment that encourages students to explore their interests, passions, and strengths when choosing a degree program. Higher education institutions and career guidance services should focus on providing students with information and resources about the job market and employment opportunities associated with various fields of study. Moreover, the results suggest that while family support and guidance are essential, students should be empowered to make informed decisions about their education and career paths based on their own interests and aspirations.

The findings from this study are consistent with recent literature which emphasizes the importance of personal interests, job opportunities, and personality compatibility in students' decision-making regarding their degree programs. Lent et al. (2019) found that students' interests and self-efficacy beliefs were strong predictors of their intended choice of college major and career. The authors suggest that providing students with opportunities to explore their interests and develop their skills can help them make more informed decisions about their educational and career paths. Similarly, a study by Zhang and Wang (2021) found that college students' interests and values were significantly associated with their choice of major and career aspirations, highlighting the importance of aligning educational programs with students' interests.

Regarding job opportunities, a study by Wu and Wu (2020) found that college students' perceptions of the job market and future career prospects significantly influenced their choice of major. The authors suggest that providing students with accurate and up-to-date information about labor market trends and job opportunities can help them make more informed decisions about their degree programs. Similarly, a study by Chen and Chan (2022) found that students' perceptions of the relevance and employability of their chosen major were significant predictors of their academic engagement and career aspirations.

The relatively low influence of family and relatives on respondents' decision-making found in this study is consistent with recent literature that suggests a shift towards greater autonomy and self-determination among students in choosing their educational and career paths. A study by Kim et al. (2021) found that while family support was important for college students' well-being and academic success, it did not significantly influence their choice of major or career aspirations. Similarly, a study by Li et al. (2023) found that college students' personal interests and values were more influential than family expectations in shaping their career decision-making processes.

Table 5 presents the analysis of the significant difference in the number of students with aligned SHS Track-Strand and Degree Program Enrolled for the years 2021, 2022, and 2023.

The table reveals that in 2021, there were 19 students with aligned SHS Track-Strand and Degree Program, while 51 students were misaligned. In 2022, the number of aligned students increased to 45, while the misaligned students decreased to 36. However, in 2023, the trend reversed, with 23 students having aligned SHS Track-Strand and Degree Program and 42 students being misaligned.

Moreover, the chi-square test was performed to determine if there was a significant difference in the alignment across the three years. The results showed a chi-square value of 13.53 and a p-value of 0.001, which is significant at the 0.05 level of significance. The result

indicates that there is a significant difference in the alignment of SHS Track-Strand and Degree Program Enrolled across the three years.

Table 5. *Analysis of SHS Track-Degree Alignment*

Source of Variation	*SHS Track/Strand-Degree Alignment*		X2	p value	Result	Decision on H0
	Aligned	*Misaligned*				
2021	19	51	13.53	**0.001	Significant	Reject
2022	45	36				
2023	23	42				

**Significant at 0.05 level of significance*

The fluctuations in the number of aligned and misaligned students suggest that there may be inconsistencies in the career guidance and support provided to students during their transition from SHS to higher education. The significant increase in aligned students in 2022 compared to 2021 and 2023 may be attributed to specific interventions or programs implemented during that year. However, the decline in alignment in 2023 highlights the need for sustained efforts in providing comprehensive career guidance and support to ensure that students make informed decisions about their degree programs based on their SHS Track-Strand.

Interestingly, the findings of this study are consistent with recent literature that emphasizes the importance of alignment between SHS Track-Strand and Degree Program Enrolled. A study by Okiror et al. (2021) found that misalignment between high school curricula and higher education programs can lead to challenges in student retention and success. They suggested that providing targeted support and interventions to bridge the gap between high school and higher education can improve student outcomes.

Similarly, Canlas and Fujii (2022) highlighted the significance of career guidance and support in helping students make informed decisions about their degree programs based on their SHS Track-Strand. They recommend that schools implement comprehensive career guidance programs that consider students' interests, aptitudes, and future career aspirations. These findings reinforce the need for sustained efforts in providing career guidance and support to students to ensure successful transitions from SHS to higher education and improve alignment between SHS Track-Strand and Degree Program Enrolled.

Conclusions

In light of the findings, the following is hereby concluded:

The study highlighted a significant misalignment between the SHS tracks and the degree programs pursued by Bilar National High School graduates from 2021 to 2023, with personal interests, job opportunities, and personality traits being key factors in decision-making. This misalignment underscores the need for comprehensive career guidance to help students make informed educational and career choices. To address this, the school principal, in collaboration with SHS Focal Persons, Class Advisers, and the Guidance Designate, should strengthen partnerships with higher education institutions, develop targeted interventions, and provide career guidance that aligns with students' interests and future job prospects. Regular assessments of SHS-TVL strand alignment with degree programs should be conducted, and an educational environment that encourages exploration of students' passions and strengths should be fostered. Future research should also focus on the employability of graduates to further enhance alignment.

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