

Academic motivation, self-efficacy and emotional health among Students at Risk of Dropping Out (SARDO).: Basis for proposed guidance program.

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Abstract

Dropout is one of the major problems in education, and students at risk of dropping out (SARDO) are those who demonstrate academic, attendance, and behavioral issues that may lead them to leave school before completion. This study examined the academic motivation, self-efficacy, and emotional health of students at risk of dropping out (SARDO) at Luis Palad Integrated High School, Tayabas City, Quezon, using SARDO data from the 2024-2025 academic year. Along with demographic factors, most respondents were male and came from families earning ₱12,000 to ₱24,000 monthly. Grade 8 students made up the largest group, while Grade 9 had the fewest. In terms of academic motivation, respondents demonstrated moderate motivation, with intrinsic motivation slightly higher than extrinsic motivation. Academic self-efficacy was also moderately high, indicating students' confidence in handling school challenges despite dropout risks. Emotional health, measured using the PERMA model (Positive emotion, Engagement, Relationship, Meaning, and Accomplishment), showed Meaning as the strongest and Accomplishment as the weakest. Data showed that engagement varied significantly by sex and family income, while grade-level differences highlighted specific weaknesses across areas. However, no significant relationships were found between academic motivation and emotional health or between academic self-efficacy and emotional health, as the correlations were weak. Based on these results, a guidance program called "Ligtas Panagrap Program" is suggested to pinpoint the major problems in each grade level in terms of Emotional Health. This program aims to support at-risk learners in maintaining academic participation and emotional well-being.

Keywords: Academic motivation; Academic Self-Efficacy; Emotional Health

1. Introduction

School dropout remains one of the persistent challenges in the education system. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2023), the global number of out-of-school children rose by 6 million in 2021 and has now reached 250 million. According to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), as of 2016, 3.8 million Filipinos, or 1 in 10 individuals aged 6 to 24, were not enrolled in any educational institution. This aligns with data from Child Hope Philippines (2024), a nonprofit organization in the Philippines, which reports that approximately 2.13 million students drop out of

school annually (Staff and Staff, 2024). The Department of Education (DepEd) recognizes that enrollment rates have improved in recent years, but the persistent number of dropouts remains an internal challenge that needs to be addressed. DepEd formalized the term "Student at risk of dropping out" to identify students who are vulnerable to leaving school prematurely (Valisno, 2010). In response, DepEd implemented DepEd Order 74, series of 2010, The Guidelines on Mainstreaming the Dropout Reduction Program (DORP) in the Public Secondary Schools to reduce the dropout rate and achieve zero dropout rates using formal, non-formal, and informal approaches. The programs under DORP include: Open High School Program (OHSP) which use the distance learning system, Effective Alternative Secondary Education (EASE) uses modules as a learning mode, School Initiated Interventions (SII) the interventions developed by schools to address specific dropout problems Other Interventions (OI) Other interventions that support the regular class program.

For many students, academic motivation, academic self-efficacy, and emotional stability are key factors affecting their school performance, from attendance to active participation in school. UNESCO (2024) introduced the Social and Emotional Learning (SEL). SEL emphasizes the role of relationships and the emotional dynamics of learning, in addition to cognitive and behavioral aspects. SEL can not only strengthen the individual, relational, and systemic aspects of learning but also revitalize existing efforts within education for positive social transformation toward lasting peace and sustainable development. In the Philippines, the Basic Education Mental Health and Well-being Promotion Act (RA 12080 of 2024), in Sec. 4, School-Based Mental Health Program and School-Based Mental Health Services, mandates the Department of Education to create mental health and well-being programs in every school to focus on the mental health and well-being of all learners. The implementation of the existing mental health program of the DepEd shall be strengthened through the development of a School-Based Mental Health Program to promote and ensure the mental health and well-being of all learners in all public and private schools.

The researcher aims to investigate the relationship among academic motivation, academic self-efficacy, and emotional health among students identified as being at risk of dropping out. The study seeks to provide evidence-based recommendations for creating a guidance intervention program intended for students at risk of dropping out (SARDO). *Structure*

1.1. Background of the study

Students who drop out of school struggle not only with academics but also with their inner well-being. When motivation fades and learning become overwhelming, this often leads to stress, anxiety, and low self-worth. The loss of academic drive and the decline in emotional health reinforce each other, creating a cycle that pushes students further away from school. Luis Palad Integrated High School in Tayabas City, one of the largest public schools in Quezon Province with 6,146 enrollees across Junior High School and Senior High School, is not exempt from the continuous rate of students at risk of dropping out (SARDO). Luis Palad Integrated High School offers only the Open High School Program (OHSP) and School-Initiated Interventions (SII), such as guidance interviews, for students identified as SARDO to address the ongoing risk of dropping out. According to data from the Luis Palad Integrated High School Guidance and Counseling Office, the number of students at risk of dropping out (SARDO) over the last five years is as follows:

Table 1

LPIHS SARDO data for the last five years

Academic Year	No. of SARDO
2019-2020	51
2020-2021	9
2021-2022	7
2022-2023	53
2023-2024	56

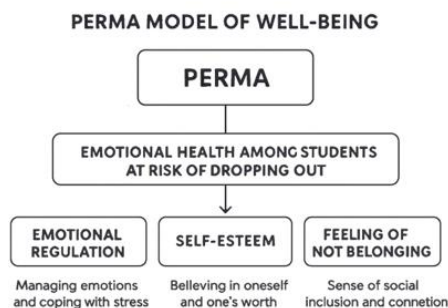
1.2. Theoretical Framework

Academic motivation, academic self-efficacy, and emotional health are major factors that influence students' persistence and success in their school life. Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory is one of the strongest frameworks for understanding academic motivation and emotional health in individuals. In his theory of Triadic Reciprocal Determinism, Bandura demonstrates that the factors influencing human action, motivation, and learning are these 3 factors: (1) personal factors, focusing on beliefs, expectations, personality traits, and self-efficacy; (2) behavior, the human actions that can reinforce personal beliefs and the environmental state; and (3) the environment, including the social circles in which individuals belong (Bandura, 1997).

Self-Determination Theory distinguishes between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and emphasizes that both types focus on autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Intrinsic motivation drives the quality of performance, while extrinsic motivation drives quantity and compliance (Ceraasoli et al., 2019). Intrinsic motivation pushes people to engage in certain actions or activities because they are personally interesting or rewarding. It is self-driven and characterized by feelings of enjoyment, interest, and satisfaction in the activity itself. By contrast, extrinsic motivation is externally driven and characterized by external factors such as grades, money, or praise that serve as incentives to engage in a behavior or activity. Extrinsic motivation can take many forms, such as rewards, like receiving a prize for completing a task, or punishment, such as being given a penalty for not completing a task (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

In Seligman's (2011) PERMA Model of Well-Being, which outlines five domains of emotional health, Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment serves as the foundation for this study. The model has been widely applied across educational contexts to explain students' well-being and resilience. The PERMA model offers multiple perspectives for understanding the emotional health elements that support resilience and academic engagement among Students at Risk of Dropping Out (SARDO).

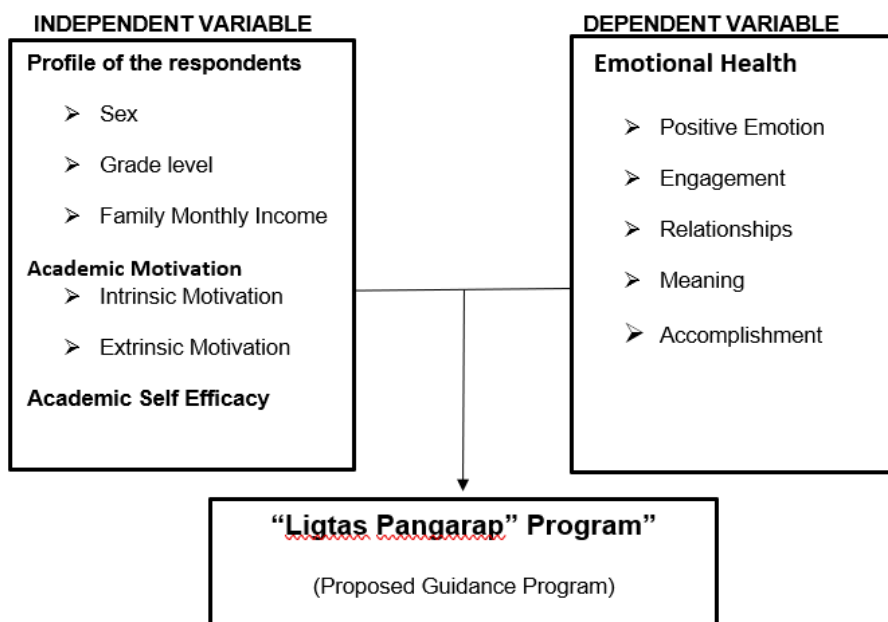
Figure 1

PERMA Model of Well-Being linked with SARDO emotional health.

Schools implementing PERMA-based interventions resulted in improvements in student belonging and reductions in dropout (Norrish et al., 2015). The PERMA model is used in Positive Psychology to design and enhance interventions focused on emotional well-being, which buffer against stress and academic disengagement that contribute to dropout risk. Section headings

1.3. Research Paradigm

This section presents the variable to be used in the study



The research investigates how the independent variables, including respondents' profiles (sex, grade level, and family monthly income), academic motivation (intrinsic and extrinsic), and academic self-efficacy of SARDO, influence their emotional health across the five PERMA domains (positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment). It also seeks knowledge to develop effective guidance interventions or the "Ligtas Pangrap" Program, targeting the needs of Students at Risk of Dropping out in terms of academic motivation, to assess their academic self-efficacy and the state of their emotional health. The researcher is committed to ensuring that students understand the role of education in their lives, especially those exposed to academic risks.

1.4. Statement of the problem

This study aimed to determine the relationship between Academic Motivation, Academic Self-efficacy, and Emotional Health among Students at Risk of Dropping Out at Luis Palad Integrated High School. Specifically, it aimed to answer the following question:

1. What is the profile of the respondents as to:
 - 1.1 sex;
 - 1.2 grade level; and
 - 1.3 family Income?
2. What are the academic motivations received by the SARDO in terms of:
 - 2.1 intrinsic motivation; and
 - 2.2 extrinsic motivation?
3. What is the level of Academic Self-Efficacy perceived by the SARDO?
4. What is the level of Emotional health perceived by the SARDO in terms of:
 - 4.1 positive emotion;
 - 4.2 engagement;
 - 4.3 relationships;
 - 4.4 meaning; and
 - 4.5 accomplishment?
5. Is there a significant difference in emotional health among SARDO when grouped according to demographic profile?
6. Is there a significant relationship between academic motivation and the emotional health of the respondents?
7. Is there a significant relationship between academic self-efficacy and the emotional health of the respondents?
8. What guidance programs can be offered to address the findings of the study?

1.5. Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses was tested at 0.5 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in emotional health among SARDO when grouped according to demographic profile.
2. There is no significant relationship between academic motivation and respondents' emotional health.
3. There is no significant relationship between academic self-efficacy and emotional health of the respondents.

1.6. Significance of the study

This study addressed the needs of Students at Risk of Dropping Out (SARDO), particularly in the contexts of academic motivation, the level of their academic self-efficacy, and the state of emotional health among students who are at risk of dropping out.

Students at risk of dropping out (SARDO). This research identified how Students at risk of dropping out were affected by the level of academic motivation they received, their academic efficacy, and their emotional health, which together contributed to academic burden and near disinterest in attending school.

Teachers. This research identified how teachers could help our students at risk of dropping out become academically motivated, boost their academic self-efficacy, and provide sufficient emotional support to continue in school.

Guidance Counselor/Designate. This research identified the guidance programs that encourage students at risk of dropping out (SARDO) to pursue school.

Parents. This research informed the parents about how to provide the necessary motivation and emotional support that can strengthen their children's persistence in school.

School Heads. This research guided the school administrators to provide a research-based program that supports learners who are at risk of dropping out.

Future Researchers. This research contributed to the growing literature on academic motivation and emotional health, particularly for students at risk of dropping out.

1.7. Scope and limitation of the study

This study focused on exploring the academic motivation, academic self-efficacy, and emotional health of the Students at Risk of Dropping Out (SARDO) at Luis Palad Integrated High School. Specifically, it examined academic motivation in terms of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, measured the level of their academic self-efficacy, and assessed their emotional health using the PERMA model (Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationship, Meaning, and Accomplishment). The primary participants were the SARDO identified by the guidance and counseling office in academic year 2024-2025 based on their academic performance, attendance, and behavioral records. The findings served as the basis for designing a proposed guidance intervention program, “Ligtas Pangarap Program,” that addressed academic motivation, academic self-efficacy, and the emotional challenges of students at risk of dropping out.

The study is limited to SARDO within Luis Palad Integrated High School and does not include other schools in the division. Data collection relied on a self-report questionnaire, which may be influenced by students’ willingness to share information or by response biases. Moreover, the study focused only on academic motivation, academic self-efficacy, and emotional health. Other factors, such as early pregnancy and physical illnesses, are beyond the scope of this research but can also significantly affect dropout risk.

1.8. Definition of terms

To ensure a better understanding of this research, the following terms used in this study were defined operationally;

- **Academic Motivation.** This refers to the internal and external factors that influences the students to keep engage and show willingness to move forward in school.
- **Academic Self-Efficacy.** This refers to students’ self confidence in handling academic challenges.
- **Accomplishment.** This refers to students pursuing their academic goal and success.
- **Emotional Health.** This refers to the feeling or state of being able to regulate emotions effectively such us coping with stress academically.
- **Engagement.** This refers to devoting oneself in school activity.
- **Extrinsic Motivation.** This refers to the external rewards given that create motivation for students.
- **Intrinsic Motivation.** This refers to the internal desire to pursue learning despite challenges.
- **Meaning.** This refers in person having a sense of purpose and belonging to something bigger than oneself.
- **Positive Emotion.** This refers to the student’s ability to handle stress and keep clear when they practice positive emotions.
- **Relationships.** This refers in peers, family, teachers and school community relationships as supportive connections for students.
- **Students at Risk of Dropping Out (SARDO).** This refers to students shows academic, attendance and behavior issues that might lead them leaving school before completion.

2. Research Methodology

2.1. Research Design

The research problem focused on the academic motivation, academic self-efficacy, and emotional health of students at risk of dropping out (SARDO) at Luis Palad Integrated High School in Tayabas City, Quezon. The researcher used the descriptive-developmental method, which, according to Mertens (2020), is often applied in educational and psychological contexts to capture both current states and progressions or developmental trends in human learning and behavior. It included the collection of data through a descriptive survey questionnaire that measured academic motivation, academic self-efficacy, and emotional health for students at risk of dropping out, and the data were used to formulate a guidance program intended for SARDO.

2.2. Respondents of the study

The respondents of the study were the 107 from Grade 8 to Grade 12 students at risk of dropping-out (SARDO) in Luis Palad Integrated High School (LPIHS), Tayabas City School Year 2024-2025.

Table 2
SARDO School Year 2024-2025

Grade level	Male	Female	Total No. of Participants
Grade 8	20	9	29
Grade 9	10	3	13
Grade 10	16	6	22
Grade 11	12	5	17
Grade 12	18	8	26
Total			107

The researcher chose Luis Palad Integrated High School as the school for her study because the school lacks programs to support SARDO despite the increasing rate of SARDO. Because the researcher works at the institution, it is easier to access respondents and gather data, and to provide a guidance program intended for SARDO focusing on academic motivation, academic self-efficacy, and emotional health.

2.3. Sampling Technique

The researcher used purposive sampling to select the respondents. Purposive sampling is a nonprobability technique that selects respondents based on their characteristics or relevance to the study. The participants of the study were selected from the SARDO list for academic year 2024-2025, provided by the guidance office, to ensure that the participants were the most relevant to the study.

2.4. Research Instrument

The primary research instrument used in this study is a self-constructed questionnaire designed to measure the academic motivation, academic self-efficacy, and emotional health of Students at Risk of Dropping Out (SARDO) at Luis Palad Integrated High School. The questionnaire underwent content validation by a panel of experts, including guidance counselors and research advisers, to ensure clarity, relevance, and alignment with the study's objectives. The instrument was developed based on the study's conceptual and theoretical

frameworks and related literature, and it is structured into three major parts: academic motivation with sub variables of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation; the level of respondents' academic self-efficacy; and emotional health using the 5 domains of the PERMA model (positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment).

The questionnaire used a four-point Likert scale, in which respondents indicated the extent of their agreement with each statement using the following scale, with 4 as Strongly Agree, 3 as Agree, 2 as Disagree, and 1 as Strongly Disagree.

Options	Scale	Verbal Interpretation
4	3.5-4.00	Very high
3	2.5-3.49	High
2	1.5-2.49	Low
1	1.0-1.49	Very low

2.5. Data gathering procedure

After the external and internal validators, including a panel of experts such as the research adviser, research panelist, and guidance counselors, validated and approved the research questionnaire, the researcher sought approval from the Department of Education division office in Tayabas, Quezon, for the research proposal. Once approval was granted, the researcher coordinated with the guidance office of Luis Palad Integrated High School to obtain SARDO data for academic year 2024-2025. The researcher then conducted data gathering by distributing the validated self-survey questionnaire to the identified SARDO.

For ethical reasons, the parents and pupils were provided with an informed consent letter that outlined the study's goal, the ability to withdraw from participation, the right to confidentiality, and the handling and storage of the data.

With the help of a statistician, the researcher totaled and analyzed the data after the researcher-made instrument was completed. After being organized, the collected data will be condensed.

2.6. Statistical treatment of data

For the analysis and interpretation of the collected data, the study employed the following:

Mean. This was used to measure the responses of the students in the given questions/indicators in the instrument.

Frequency/Percentage. The frequency/percentage were used to describe the profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, and family income.

F-Test/ ANOVA. The F-Test/ANOVA was used to determine the significant difference on emotional health when grouped according to age, sex and family income.

Pearson Product Moment of Correlation. The pearson product moment of correlation was used to determine the significant relationship between the academic motivation, academic self-efficacy and emotional health.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Summary of findings

The study was conducted to determine the relationship among academic motivation, academic self-efficacy, and emotional health among Students at Risk of Dropping Out (SARDO) at Luis Palad Integrated High School. It also aimed to describe the respondents' profile, determine the levels of academic motivation, academic self-efficacy, and emotional health, test for significant differences and relationships among the variables, and use the findings as a basis for a proposed guidance program.

The study used a descriptive-correlational research design. The respondents were 107 students at risk of dropping out at Luis Palad Integrated High School during School Year 2024–2025. They were selected through stratified purposive sampling from the list provided by the Guidance and Counseling Office.

The data were collected using a self-constructed questionnaire that underwent content validation by experts. The instrument assessed academic motivation, including intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, academic self-efficacy, and emotional health, including positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment.

Frequency and percentage were used to describe the respondents' profile. Mean and standard deviation were used to determine the levels of academic motivation, academic self-efficacy, and emotional health. The t-test and one-way analysis of variance were used to determine significant differences in emotional health across demographic groups, while Pearson product-moment correlation was used to test significant relationships between academic motivation and emotional health and between academic self-efficacy and emotional health. The results served as the basis for the proposed guidance program for SARDO.

3.2. Findings

The following are the significant findings of the study:

Profile of the respondents

Most respondents were male, comprising 76 or 71.00 percent, while 31 or 29.00 percent were female. As to grade level, Grade 8 had the highest frequency with 29 or 27.10 percent, followed by Grade 12 with 26 or 24.30 percent, while Grade 9 had the lowest frequency with 13 or 12.10 percent. In terms of family monthly income, most respondents belonged to families earning Php 12,000–24,000 monthly, with 70 or 65.40 percent.

Academic motivation of the respondents

The respondents agreed on both dimensions of academic motivation. Intrinsic motivation had an overall mean of 3.41, while extrinsic motivation had an overall mean of 3.33. This showed that the respondents still possessed both internal and external sources of motivation for school participation, with intrinsic motivation slightly higher.

Academic self-efficacy of the respondents

The respondents agreed on the indicators of academic self-efficacy, with an overall mean of 3.31. This indicated that they generally believed they could manage academic tasks and school demands, despite being identified as students at risk of dropping out.

Emotional health of the respondents

The respondents agreed across all domains of emotional health. Positive emotion had an overall mean of 3.22, engagement 3.17, relationships 3.27, meaning 3.33, and accomplishment 3.15. Among the five domains, meaning had the highest mean, while accomplishment had the lowest mean.

Test of significant difference in emotional health when grouped according to demographic profile

When grouped by sex, only engagement showed a significant difference, while positive emotion, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment did not. Males had a higher mean in engagement than females, while females were slightly higher than males in meaning. In terms of grade level, Grade 11 registered the highest score in meaning, while Grade 8 scored highest in accomplishment. When grouped by family monthly income, only engagement showed a significant difference, while the other domains did not. Families earning below 12,000 monthly obtained the highest score in engagement.

Test of significant relationship between academic motivation and emotional health

No significant relationship was found between academic motivation and the respondents' emotional health. None of the correlation coefficients between intrinsic motivation and the five domains of emotional health reached significance. Likewise, none of the correlation coefficients between extrinsic motivation and emotional health reached significance.

Test of the significant relationship between academic self-efficacy and emotional health

No significant relationship was found between academic self-efficacy and respondents' emotional health. Although the correlation coefficients were positive, all values remained weak and did not reach statistical significance.

Proposed guidance program

Based on the findings, a proposed guidance program may be offered to respondents. The program focuses on strengthening academic motivation, enhancing academic self-efficacy, supporting positive emotions and coping, improving engagement, developing meaning and accomplishment, and strengthening the home-school partnership.

The program is anchored in the descriptive and inferential findings, specifically the data from the inferential question on significant differences in emotional health among SARDO students when grouped by grade level. Each grade level has distinct areas of weakness in emotional health. The "Ligtas Pangarap Program" addresses these vulnerable areas and formulates activities anchored in them. The "Ligtas Pangarap" Program is an intervention program designed for SARDO students in each grade level. It targets the areas of weakness or needs for intervention across the five domains of emotional health for each grade level. The program includes the key findings, focus area, major activities, objective, persons involved, time frame, expected outcome, and evaluation tool.

Proposed Guidance Program “Ligtas Pangrap Program” Based on the Findings of the Study

Key Findings	Focus Area	Major Activities	Objective	Persons Involved	Time Frame	Expected Outcome	Evaluation Tool
The data shown that among the 5 emotional health domains, grade 8 got the lowest mean in terms of relationship	Adjustment to new environment and building positive peer connections of Identified Grade 8 SARDO students.	Peer Buddy System, Create a welcome circles and Club Orientation.	Helping the grade 8 students to adjust to the new school environment and help them to find peers that can positively support them.	Identified Grade 8 SARDO students, Guidance counselor/designate , advisers, parents	Entire School Year	Will develop supportive peer networks and reducing adjustment stress.	Student Self-Assessment Survey (quarterly) Adviser observation checklist
Grade 9 had the lowest mean in terms of meaning and accomplishment across the five emotional health areas.	Boosting Identified Grade 9 SARDO learners in terms of their emotional health specifically focus on meaning and accomplishment.	Activities that lessons connect to real life applications or community issues, Goal Setting Session, Mentorship programs.	Guide Identify Grade 9 SARDO learners in regulate emotions and respond constructively to school stress.	Identified Grade 9 SARDO learners, Guidance counselor/designate , advisers, parents	Entire School Year	Better emotional regulation and healthier responses to academic pressure	Student Self-Assessment Survey (quarterly) Adviser observation checklist
According to the findings, grade 10 had the lowest mean in engagement across the five emotional health areas.	Enhancing identified Grade 10 SARDO learning flow and active participation to keep the academically engage.	Integration of gamified activities, case-based projects and mindful for focus.	Increase the identified Grade 10 SARDO their engagement in academic activities and foster “flow” experiences in learning task.	Identified Grade 10 SARDO learners, Guidance counselor/designate , advisers, parents	Entire School Year	Learners experience higher engagement, improved focus and better academic performance.	Student Self-Assessment Survey (quarterly) Adviser observation checklist
According to the findings, grades 11 and 12 had the lowest mean accomplishment across the five emotional health domains.	Identifying goals and transition readiness for future success of identified SARDO of Senior High School Students (Grade 11 & 12)	SMART goal workshops, Progress Journals, Career Mapping activities	Strengthen the sense of progress towards academic goals and reinforce accomplishment through mastery and future oriented planning.	Identified Senior high school SARDO learners, Guidance counselor/designate , advisers, parents	Entire School Year	Learners feel prepared for post-secondary life, recognize their progress, and sustain motivation to achieve goals.	Student Self-Assessment Survey (quarterly) Adviser observation checklist

3.3. Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The hypothesis that there is no significant difference in emotional health among SARDO when grouped by demographic profile is partially supported, as significant differences were found in engagement, meaning, and accomplishment, while the other domains showed no significant differences.
2. The hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between academic motivation and the respondents' emotional health is supported.
3. The hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between academic self-efficacy and the respondents' emotional health is supported.

3.4. Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are formulated:

1. The proposed guidance program “Ligtas Pangrap” may be used for students at risk of dropping out (SARDO) to help them target areas of their emotional health that may be burdensome to them.
2. Teachers may provide classroom practices aligned with the “ligtas pangarap” program in identified SARDO and partner with the guidance office to implement the program.
3. The Guidance Counselor or Guidance Designate may implement the proposed Ligtas Pangarap Program to strengthen the emotional health of Students at Risk of Dropping Out.
4. Parents may be encouraged to work closely with the school to monitor attendance, support school-related responsibilities, and provide emotional encouragement to learners at risk of dropping out.
5. School heads and guidance personnel may design interventions that are responsive to sex, grade level, and family circumstances, particularly in areas where significant differences were found. The school may strengthen home-school partnerships, case monitoring, and follow-up support so that students identified as SARDO receive timely and continuous intervention.
6. Future researchers may conduct similar studies in other schools or include other variables that may influence dropout risk, such as family functioning, peer influence, school climate, or mental health concerns.

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