ESI Preprints **Not Peer-reviewed**

Assessing the Program Experiences and Employment Outcomes of Notre Dame of Jolo College BSIT Graduates

Edgar Jansol Acevedo, PhD
Marcilyn Lee Matriz
College of Accountancy, Management, & Computer Education
Notre Dame of Jolo College, Jolo, Sulu, Philippines

Doi: 10.19044/esipreprint.3.2025.p1

Approved: 05 March 2025
Posted: 08 March 2025

Cite As:
Acevedo E.J. & Matriz M.L. (2025). *Assessing the Program Experiences and Employment Outcomes of Notre Dame of Jolo College BSIT Graduates.* ESI Preprints.
https://doi.org/10.19044/esipreprint.3.2025.p1

Abstract

This tracer study investigated the program experiences and employment outcomes of the Bachelor of Science in Information Technology (BSIT) graduates from 2017 to 2019 to assess career readiness and identify areas for improvement. Using a descriptive survey method and convenience sampling, data were collected from 58 graduates and analyzed using descriptive statistics. Results indicated that most graduates preferred institutions offering holistic education and programs with adequate resources and qualified staff. Many secured non-permanent, rank-and-file positions in the government sector within six months and remained in these roles for over a year while earning below the median monthly salary. Graduates expressed satisfaction with teaching methods, study conditions, guidance, and competency attainment, crediting hands-on training for their employment readiness. They found their acquired competencies useful in their current jobs and were guided by the core institutional values of faith, respect, and commitment. The study concluded that graduates had a positive perception of their educational experiences and recognized the program's role in their employment opportunities. Nonetheless, areas such as written works, self-study activities, study habits, communication skills, problem analysis, and job orientation should be strengthened to enhance students' workforce readiness.

Keywords: Tracer study, program experience, employment outcomes, employment readiness, institutional values, graduate employability

Introduction

Higher education institutions (HEIs) offer diverse degree programs to develop learners' academic and professional growth. Beyond academics, HEIs have a major influence on the future workforce and enhance strong industry partnerships. As a result, assessing graduates' program experiences and employment outcomes is a high priority on the HEIs' agenda. They need to understand how graduates' educational skills relate to the job market in order to know if their programs are relevant, if graduates are satisfied, and what the institution values. Tracer studies often help generate these insights.

Acknowledging its importance, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) emphasizes tracer studies as an essential data collection method. Education accrediting bodies, such as the Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges, and Universities, also require their implementation (Abulencia et al., 2021). Recent research reinforces the value of tracer studies in evaluating program effectiveness and graduate employability. Schomburg (2016) states that well-executed tracer studies help institutions identify strengths and areas for improvement in graduates' educational experiences within specific programs.

A key concern for HEIs is understanding students' school and program preferences amid rising enrollments (Gaspar & Soares, 2021). Competition for students, especially between private and public institutions, makes this even more challenging. To address this, many HEIs use social media for enrollment marketing, enabling direct engagement with prospective students. Gettysburg College, for example, utilizes social media to connect with students, alumni, and donors, strengthening its online presence (Sprout Social, 2023). Since social media is widely used by students (Dennen, Choi, & Word, 2020), it provides easy access to important school information. Research by Sola and Zia (2021) shows that platforms like Facebook influence students' choice of HEIs, as the information shared by institutions positively impacts their program and school decisions.

As higher education evolves in the 21st century, challenges arise, particularly in graduate employability. While HEIs increasingly use social media to attract students, concerns remain about graduates' job prospects in a fluctuating global market (Tran, 2019). Many graduates struggle with employment, often facing underemployment or job mismatches. Each year, a large number of degree holders in fields like information technology and engineering find it difficult to secure jobs, mainly due to skill gaps (Cuadra, Aure, & Gonzaga, 2019). Studies suggest that the number of graduates may exceed job opportunities, worsening unemployment in some regions

(Employment Trends and Challenges for Economics and Management Graduates in Guangdong Province, 2018–2023). In Europe, labor market trends also show rising underemployment among graduates, reflecting a global issue (Europe's Evolving Graduate Labor Markets: Supply, Demand, Underemployment, and Wage Trends). Experts warn that if this pattern continues, the surplus of graduates may further outpace job creation, deepening the unemployment crisis.

To address these challenges, Clarke (2018) suggests improving graduates' employability by integrating skills-based learning and practical experience into their studies. This approach enhances job prospects by focusing on key factors like individual skills and values. Likewise, Drine (2017) emphasizes the need for HEIs to build strong connections with industries and labor markets. Both approaches stress the importance of aligning curricula with industry needs to ensure graduates gain relevant skills and transition smoothly into the workforce.

To examine the gap between academic skills and labor market needs, this tracer study explores the study programs and employment experiences of BSIT graduates. It is part of Notre Dame of Jolo College's (NDJC's) broader Institutional Development Plan to assess how education influences employment outcomes. Insights from this study can help improve educational programs and develop focused interventions to better prepare graduates for their careers.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

The primary aim of this tracer study was to assess the study experiences and employment outcomes of BSIT graduates from NDJC between 2017 and 2019. It explored factors influencing school and program selection, employment outcomes, satisfaction with the program, its relevance to employment, and the institutional values developed during their studies. This study was guided by the following questions:

1. What are the key factors influencing college and program choices among graduates?
2. How do BSIT graduates experience employment, including their employment status, waiting time, duration, sector, salary, and position?
3. What is the level of satisfaction among BSIT graduates with their program regarding teaching and learning techniques, study conditions and provisions, advice/guidance, readiness for employment, and competency attainment?
4. How do graduates view the usefulness of the study program for employment?
5. What institutional values are developed during the study?

1.2. Significance of the Study

The insights from this study help improve teaching methods and curriculum design in the BSIT program. Identifying areas for improvement allows educators to adjust course content and better prepare students for the fast-changing IT field. Examining factors like study conditions, job readiness, and institutional values also gives a clearer picture of the learning environment at NDJC. This helps administrators create better support systems to enhance student success. In addition, the study contributes to discussions on aligning IT programs with industry needs. Policymakers and educators can use these insights to refine course offerings and ensure graduates gain the skills needed for the job market. Strengthening the connection between education and industry will help produce a more skilled and competitive IT workforce.

2.0. Methods

For clarity, this section presents statistical results with descriptive narratives summarizing data trends. A detailed discussion of the results is provided in the discussion section.

2.1. Research Design

The study employed a quantitative cross-sectional survey design to analyze graduates' experiences and perceptions. It involved collecting one-time, quantifiable data on school and program selection, employment outcomes, program evaluation, and institutional values. This approach allowed for measuring and comparing graduates' experiences across two graduation batches.

2.2. Population and Sampling Method

The study targeted BSIT graduates from 2017 to 2019, with the registrar’s office providing the list. Initially, convenience sampling was used to include all graduates; however the final sample comprised 58 participants. Though smaller than expected, this sample provided valuable data-driven observations into their experiences and perspectives.

2.3. Data Gathering Instrument and Collection Techniques

The study used a pre-structured questionnaire adapted from Schomburg’s (2016) tracer survey guide and CHED’s tracer study questionnaire. Items were modified for context and validated with input from the program head and experts. A pilot study with 2021 graduates confirmed reliability, with all statistics exceeding the 0.70 threshold. Clear instructions and validation checks ensured data quality during collection.

The final questionnaire comprised five sections: (1) personal information, (2) factors influencing school and program choice, (3) employment experiences, (4) program evaluation, and (5) perspectives on institutional values developed during the study.

Data collection involved online and in-person surveys. A Google Form link was shared via Facebook and Messenger, with only the latest response counted in case of duplicates. In-person surveys were conducted in low-connectivity areas and during school Intramurals, facilitated by research assistants. This approach maximized participation and mitigated connectivity issues.

2.4. Data Analysis

Quantitative survey data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, mean scores, and standard deviations. Mean scores from the 5-point Likert scale were interpreted using a mean range index with corresponding verbal descriptions, as indicated in the table below.

Mean Range	Table 2	Tables 4 to 7	Table 8	Table 9	Table 10
4.20 – 5.00	Very important (VI)	Highly satisfied (HS)	Very strong influence (VSI)	Highly useful (HU)	Very high extent (VHE)
3.40 – 4.19	Important (I)	Satisfied (S)	Strong influence (SI)	Useful (U)	High extent (HE)
2.60 – 3.39	Moderately important (MI)	Moderately satisfied (MS)	Moderate influence (MI)	Moderately useful (MU)	Moderate extent (ME)
1.80 – 2.59	Slightly important (SI)	Less satisfied (LS)	Weak influence (WI)	Less useful (LU)	Low extent (LE)
1.00 – 1.79	Not at all important (NAI)	Not at all satisfied (NAS)	No influence (NI)	Not at all useful (NAU)	Very low extent (VLE)

2.5. Ethical Consideration

This study upheld ethical standards, ensuring participant well-being, privacy, and confidentiality. Informed consent was obtained, and responses were anonymized through coding. Participants could skip questions or withdraw without consequences. The data was securely stored with restricted access, and the findings were ethically presented in an aggregated and impartial manner.

3.0 Results

For clarity, this section presents statistical results with descriptive narratives summarizing data trends. A detailed discussion of the results is provided in the discussion section.

3.1. Personal Characteristics of Graduates

The personal characteristics of graduates were assessed based on age, gender, and marital status. Table 1 presents data from 28 graduates in the 2017-2018 batch and 30 from the 2018-2019 batch, representing valid responses. Among the respondents, 91% were between 21 and 27 years old, with 45% from the 2017-2018 batch and 47% from the 2018-2019 batch. About 60% of the graduates were male, and 79% were single, while 14% did not indicate their marital status. Specifically, the 2017-2018 batch included 18 males and 10 females, while the 2018-2019 batch had 17 males and 13 females. Regarding marital status, 37.9% of graduates in the 2017-2018 batch were single, increasing to 41.38% in the 2018-2019 batch. A small percentage of graduates were married, with 5.17% in 2017-2018 and 1.72% in 2018-2019.

Table 1: Distribution of Graduates by Age, Gender, and Marital Status per Graduation Year

Variables	Batch				Total	
	2017-2018		2018-2019			
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Age						
21-27	26	44.8	27	46.55	53	91.4
28-34	2	3.45	3	5.17	5	8.62
Sex						
Male	18	31.03	17	29.31	35	60.3
Female	10	17.2	13	22.41	23	39.7
Marital Status						
Single	22	37.9	24	41.38	46	79.3
Married	3	5.17	1	1.72	4	6.90
Did not indicate					8	13.79

3.2. Factors Influencing Graduates' College and Program Choices

Table 2 presents the factors that influenced respondents' college and program choices. The overall weighted mean scores for college choice (3.81) and program choice (3.96) indicate that both were significant in their selection process. For college choice, all factors had weighted mean scores between 3.50 and 3.98, demonstrating their importance. Similarly, program choice factors scored between 3.84 and 4.02, further highlighting their influence.

A closer analysis revealed that holistic education (3.98) and realization of aspirations (3.94) were the top reasons for choosing a college. In program selection, the most influential factors were adequate learning materials and qualified teaching staff (both 4.02).

Table 2: level of Influence for College and Program Choices Mean Scores

College Choice Factors	WM	VI	Program Choice Factors	WM	VI
Holistic education (academic-physical-spiritual)	3.98	I	Adequate learning materials	4.02	I
Realization of aspiration	3.94	I	Qualified teaching staff	4.02	I
Reputation and prestige of NDJC	3.93	I	Graduates are in demand locally and abroad	3.98	I
Proximity to home	3.91	I	Hands-on-based program	3.84	I
Likelihood for immediate employment	3.90	I			
Affordable school fees	3.81	I			
Availability of extra-curricular activities	3.71	I			
Influence of parents or relatives	3.69	I			
Availability of scholarship	3.69	I			
Peer influence	3.50	I			
Overall Mean	3.81	I	Overall Mean	3.96	I

3.3. Graduates' Employment Experiences

The employment experiences of graduates were analyzed to illustrate their post-program journey. Various factors were considered, including employment status, time to secure the first job, nature and duration of employment, employment sector, monthly income, and position held. Table 3 summarizes the survey results.

Table 3: Employment Experiences of Graduates by Year Graduated

Variables	Year Graduated					
	2017-2018 (n=28)		2018-2019 (n=30)		Total (N=58)	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Status of Employment						
Employed	22	37.92	16	27.59	38	65.51
Not employed	2	3.45	5	8.62	7	12.07
Self-employed	4	6.90	9	15.52	13	22.42
Time to Secure 1st Job					(N=38)	
1 Mo. to < 6 Mos.	11	28.95	8	21.05	19	50.00
6 Mos. to < 12 Mos.	6	15.79	4	10.53	10	26.32
Over 1 Year	5	13.16	4	10.53	9	23.68
Nature of Employment						
Permanent	9	23.68	5	13.16	14	36.84
Non-permanent/probationary	13	34.21	11	28.95	24	63.16
Duration in 1st Employment						
1 Mo. to < 6 Mos.	6	15.79	1	2.63	7	18.42
6 Mos. to < 1 Year	1	2.632	4	10.53	5	13.16
Over 1 Year	15	39.47	11	28.95	26	68.42
Sector of Employment						
Government/Public	15	39.47	8	21.05	23	60.53
Private	5	13.16	7	18.42	12	31.58
NGO	2	5.263	1	2.63	3	7.89
Monthly Salary						
< 15K/Mo.	7	18.42	8	21.05	15	39.47

P15K to < P22K/Mo.	7	18.42	7	18.42	14	36.84
Over P 22K/Mo.	8	21.05	1	2.63	9	23.68
Current Position Held						
Managerial	5	13.16	0	0	5	13.16
Rank and File	17	44.74	16	42.11	33	86.84

3.3.1. Status of employment and time to secure the first job. The analysis revealed that 66% of respondents were employed, 12% were unemployed, and 22% pursued self-employment. Among the 38 employed graduates, 50% secured their first job within six months, 26% between six to twelve months, and 24% after more than a year. More graduates from the 2017-2018 batch (38%) were employed compared to the 2018-2019 batch (28%). However, unemployment (9%) and self-employment (16%) were higher among 2018-2019 graduates.

3.3.2. Nature of employment and duration of first job. Among employed graduates, 63% held non-permanent positions, while 37% secured permanent employment. Regarding job tenure, 68% remained in their first job for over a year. In the 2017-2018 batch, 39% stayed for over a year, compared to 29% in the 2018-2019 batch.

3.3.3. Sector of employment, salary, and position held. Nearly 61% of employed graduates secured positions in the government sector, 32% in the private sector, and 8% in NGOs. Regarding salary distribution, 39% earned less than Php 15,000, 37% earned between Php 15,000 and Php 22,000, and 24% earned over Php 22,000 per month. Additionally, 87% of graduates held rank-and-file positions, while only 13% occupied managerial roles.

3.4. Satisfaction of Graduates with Their Study Program

The retrospective evaluation covered multiple dimensions, with respondents assessing their satisfaction levels in areas such as teaching and learning methods, study conditions, academic guidance, competency attainment, and job readiness. Mean scores were used to identify trends and illustrate satisfaction levels for each dimension. Tables 4 to 8 summarize the statistical findings.

3.4.1. Teaching and Learning Techniques

Graduates expressed general satisfaction with the teaching and learning techniques used in their program, with mean scores ranging from 3.79 to 4.16. They reported the highest satisfaction with teamwork or group work (4.16) and activity-based teaching (4.14), both rated as satisfactory. However, written works, including reports, assignments, and research papers, received the lowest satisfaction rating, with a mean score of 3.79.

Graduates were highly satisfied with polite teacher-student communication, which received the highest mean score of 4.33. Other learning techniques had satisfaction ratings ranging from 3.71 to 4.05, resulting in an overall mean of 4.01, indicating a satisfactory level. Notably, self-study activities received the lowest rating among learning techniques, with a mean score of 3.71.

Table 4: Satisfaction Mean Score of Teaching and Learning Techniques

Teaching			Learning		
Indicators	M	VI	Indicators	M	VI
Teamwork or group work	4.16	S	Polite teacher-student communication	4.33	HS
Activity-based teaching	4.14	S	Motivation for learning	4.05	S
Relate lessons to life situations	4.09	S	Classroom participation	4.03	S
Lecture/instruction delivery	4.03	S	Content comprehension	3.95	S
Written works	3.79	S	Self-study activities	3.71	S
Overall Mean	4.04	S	Overall Mean	4.01	S

3.4.2. Study Conditions and Provisions

In this study, "conditions" refer to the overall environment and circumstances affecting the teaching and learning experience, while "provisions" denote the specific resources and services provided by the program to support education.

Graduates expressed high satisfaction with classroom learning quality, giving it a mean rating of 4.22. Four other indicators received ratings between 3.86 and 4.14, with student recreational facilities scoring the lowest at 3.86. This resulted in an overall mean of 4.05, indicating a satisfactory level.

For study provisions, all six indicators were rated satisfactorily (above 3.85), with student involvement in policy-making receiving the lowest rating at 3.86. The overall mean of 4.02 remained at a satisfactory level.

Table 5: Satisfaction Mean Scores of Study Conditions and Provisions

Conditions			Provisions		
Indicators	M	VI	Indicators	M	VI
Quality of learning in classroom	4.22	HS	Teacher consultation opportunities	4.17	S
Instruction/lecture delivery	4.14	S	On-the-job-training program	4.12	S
Learning facilities	4.03	S	Teaching aids and materials supply	4.10	S
Grading system	4.00	S	Quality of laboratories	4.10	S
Student's recreational facilities	3.86	S	Book acquisition plan	3.93	S
			Student involvement in policies	3.86	S
Overall Mean	4.05	S	Overall Mean	4.02	S

3.4.5. Advice and Guidance

Advice and guidance referred to the support and direction provided to students in navigating their academic journey. As shown in Table 6, respondents reported slightly varied experiences regarding the advice and guidance they received in their program.

Among the focus areas, graduates expressed high satisfaction with job-related advice, which received the highest mean score of 4.22. The remaining areas were rated satisfactory, with mean scores ranging from 4.02 to 4.17. Study habits received the lowest rating, with a mean score of 4.02.

Table 6: Mean Score of Advice/Guidance Provided During Study

Indicators	M	SD	Verbal Interpretation
Job-related advice	4.22	0.84	Highly Satisfied
Self-growth and development	4.17	0.84	Satisfied
Learning assessment	4.17	0.84	Satisfied
Adherence to school policies	4.07	0.92	Satisfied
Study habits	4.02	0.93	Satisfied
Overall Mean	4.13		Satisfied

3.4.6. Attainment of Program-Required Competencies

The attainment of program competencies served as a key indicator of the successful fulfillment of program objectives. The statistical data for program competencies are presented in Table 7.

The overall mean score of 4.05 indicates that graduates were generally satisfied with their attainment of program competencies. Only one indicator received a high satisfaction rating (4.26 for modern learning tools usage), while the rest were rated satisfactory (≤4.17), with problem analysis receiving the lowest rating (3.83).

When asked to rate their overall satisfaction with the program, graduates gave a satisfactory rating of 4.12, aligning with their satisfaction level for program competency attainment.

Table 7: Mean Scores of Attainment of Program Competencies

Indicators	M	SD	Verbal Interpretation
Modern learning tools usage	4.26	0.87	Highly Satisfied
Individual and team productivity	4.17	0.92	Satisfied
Professional ethics adherence	4.10	0.87	Satisfied
Solution design and development	4.05	0.89	Satisfied
Lifelong learning ability	4.03	1.03	Satisfied
Knowledge mastery	3.98	1.00	Satisfied
Communication skills	3.95	1.03	Satisfied
Problem analysis	3.83	0.88	Satisfied
Overall Mean	4.05		Satisfied
Overall satisfaction of the program of the study.	4.12		Satisfied

3.4.7. Readiness for Employment

Readiness for employment referred to a graduate's level of preparation for entering the workforce. It encompassed both knowledge and practical experiences provided by teachers to equip students for professional work.

Respondents rated various program aspects that influenced their readiness for employment. Among the seven indicators, hands-on-oriented training was the most influential, with a rating of 4.22. The remaining indicators were rated strong, with scores ranging from 4.05 to 4.17. Job orientation received the lowest mean score (4.05), resulting in a group mean of 4.13.

Table 8: Factors Influencing Readiness for Employment Mean Scores

Indicators	M	SD	Verbal Interpretation
Hands-on-oriented training	4.22	0.86	Very Strong Influence
Teacher industry experience	4.17	0.90	Strong Influence
On-the-job-training	4.16	0.89	Strong Influence
Course-work alignment	4.14	0.85	Strong Influence
Mastery of key competencies	4.09	0.94	Strong Influence
Theory-practice relationship	4.09	0.88	Strong Influence
Job orientation	4.05	0.94	Strong Influence
Overall Mean	4.13		Strong Influence

3.5. Usefulness of the Program of Study

Graduates generally rated the competencies acquired from their program as useful in their employment, with mean scores ranging from 3.90 to 4.16 (Table 9). Among these, problem analysis (4.16) and individual and team productivity (4.10) received the highest ratings, while knowledge mastery had the lowest mean score (3.90). The overall mean score of 4.05 indicates a useful level of competency.

Table 9: Mean Scores for the Usefulness of Program-Acquired Competencies in Employment

Indicators	M	SD	Verbal Interpretation
Problem analysis	4.16	0.89	Useful
Individual and team productivity	4.10	0.91	Useful
Communication skills	4.09	0.94	Useful
Lifelong learning ability	4.07	0.92	Useful
Solution design and development	4.05	0.94	Useful
Professional ethics	4.05	1.03	Useful
Modern learning tools usage	4.02	1.03	Useful
Knowledge mastery	3.90	1.17	Useful
Overall Mean	4.05		Useful

3.6. Institutional Values Developed During their Study

The institutional core values of NDJC served as guiding principles in forming the character of individuals within the academic community. These

values included being God-fearing, respect, integrity, commitment, and competence, which collectively defined the institution's identity.

As shown in Table 10, NDJC's core values were developed to a very high extent during students' studies, with ratings ranging from 4.41 to 4.59 and an average mean score of 4.52. Specifically, the values of being God-fearing, respect, and commitment received the highest ratings, ranging from 4.55 to 4.59.

Table 10: Extent of Institutional Values Developed Mean Scores

Values	M	SD	Verbal Interpretation
God-fearing	4.59	0.68	Very High Extent
Respect	4.57	0.65	Very High Extent
Commitment	4.55	0.65	Very High Extent
Integrity	4.47	0.78	Very High Extent
Competence	4.41	0.82	Very High Extent
Group Mean	4.52		Very High Extent

Discussion of Results

The primary aim of this tracer study was to assess and describe graduates' experiences in the BSIT program and their employment outcomes. Moreover, the study examined the factors that influenced graduates' choice of school and program, as well as the institutional values developed during their studies.

Information Technology students at NDJC were generally influenced by its holistic approach to education, which fostered intellectual, physical, and spiritual growth. This finding is significant as it affirms NDJC's educational brand. Within the school, students preferred programs that offered practical benefits, such as learning resources and quality teaching staff. The balance between personal aspirations and practical considerations highlights the complexity of college and program selection. This suggests that students carefully evaluate their options to align with their academic and career goals. These findings align with Mendoza et al. (2022), who identified career assessment performance, employability prospects, and financial capability as key factors in students' college program choices. Similarly, Agrey and Lampadan (2014) identified learning environment, institutional reputation, and employment prospects as key factors influencing students' selection of higher education institutions.

Transitioning from education to the workforce is a critical phase for graduates, shaping their early career journey. The findings indicate that most BSIT graduates experience a smooth transition, with a significant number securing employment within a short timeframe, suggesting that employment availability, rather than strong demand for BSIT graduates, may have contributed to this outcome. However, many initially enter non-permanent positions, while a notable proportion remain in their first job for over a year,

suggesting stability despite temporary employment trends. Graduates are predominantly employed in the government sector, with many earning salaries below the median and holding rank-and-file positions. This data suggests that despite the challenges posed by temporary employment, graduates demonstrate resilience in securing stable positions. The prevalence of government sector employment and lower-than-median salaries highlights the need for strategies to improve local job market access and enhance career progression opportunities for graduates, ultimately contributing to their long-term success in the workforce. These findings align with Macadangdang's (2019) BSIT tracer study, which reported that many graduates had low incomes and were underemployed. Similarly, Cofino et al. (2024) observed that most BSIT graduates from Central Philippines State University secured jobs within six months, primarily in private companies, though some faced delays exceeding a year. Their study emphasized the need to improve infrastructure and industry collaborations to enhance employability. This trend is reflected globally, as the International Labour Organization (2018) reported that over 258 million workers are over-educated for their jobs, highlighting a mismatch between education and employment. This reinforces the need for stronger industry-academia linkages to address underemployment and income disparities.

Graduates expressed high satisfaction with polite teacher-student communication and teamwork-based teaching methods. This finding suggests that respectful communication creates a positive learning environment by promoting open dialogue and mutual respect, while collaborative teaching enhances student engagement and knowledge retention. Research supports this, demonstrating that strong teacher-student relationships contribute to a supportive learning environment, improving both academic and social outcomes (Greater Good in Education, 2023). Likewise, the Australian Education Research Organization (2023) highlights that collaborative learning strategies significantly boost engagement and knowledge retention, ultimately leading to higher academic performance.

Graduates reported high satisfaction with classroom learning, describing it as enriching and supportive of their learning objectives. However, their satisfaction with consultation opportunities, while positive, was slightly lower. Strengthening the availability and quality of faculty consultations could further enhance student learning and academic support. Research suggests that effective teacher-student consultations improve learning outcomes and student satisfaction (Kuh, 2021). Gutierrez et al. (2022) further emphasize that frequent faculty consultations boost academic performance and learning confidence, reinforcing the need to enhance consultation programs.

The program's job-related advice and guidance received high satisfaction ratings from graduates, emphasizing its role in career development. This suggests that the program effectively prepares students for the transition from education to the workforce by providing relevant guidance. The positive feedback underscores the importance of integrating career development resources and support services to better equip students for employment after graduation. Research indicates that career guidance and counseling are essential for improving students' readiness for the job market and enhancing employment outcomes (Gore et al., 2015). In the same vein, a study by NACE (2022) found that career services have a measurable impact on students' transition into the workforce.

Graduates reported high confidence in their proficiency with modern learning tools, indicating strong satisfaction with their competency in this area. This positive response likely stems from the BSIT curriculum's emphasis on technology integration in teaching and learning, reflecting the growing demand for digital literacy in today's workforce. However, certain areas may require greater attention, particularly in strengthening students' problem analysis and communication skills. These findings highlight opportunities to refine the curriculum and instructional methods to better develop these essential competencies. Research underscores the importance of technology integration in education, emphasizing its role in enhancing learning outcomes and workforce readiness (Johnson et al., 2016).

Hands-on-oriented training was identified as the most influential factor in graduates' readiness for employment, underscoring the value of practical, skill-based approaches in preparing students for real-world job demands. This finding aligns with the core objectives of the BSIT program, which emphasize practical competencies for roles in computer-based application management (CHED CMO 29 s. 2018). By integrating experiential learning, the program equips graduates with the skills and expertise needed to succeed in various professional settings, effectively meeting industry demands and expectations.

Graduates view the program as highly beneficial for both professional development and personal growth, indicating its effectiveness in preparing students for their careers while enhancing their interpersonal skills. This aligns with research showing that well-structured educational programs play a crucial role in fostering professional readiness and personal development. For example, a 2023 study by the Mary Christie Institute found that 39% of recent graduates felt unprepared to handle the emotional challenges of transitioning to the workplace, underscoring the need for programs that integrate both technical training and personal development support.

Respondents reported embracing all institutional values to a very high extent during their studies, which can be attributed to the effective freshman orientation program conducted during the first week of classes. This highlights NDJC's success in instilling and promoting core values among its students. Research suggests that orientation programs are essential to introducing new students to campus culture and institutional values, which builds a sense of belonging and supporting personal and academic development (Rahayu & Suhartono, 2023).

Conclusions and Recommendations

The findings provide valuable perspectives on graduates' experiences and perceptions of their program. They emphasize the importance of aligning personal aspirations with practical considerations when selecting colleges and programs. Graduates demonstrated resilience in transitioning from education to the workforce despite temporary employment challenges. Effective communication and teamwork-based learning approaches contributed to a supportive learning environment.

The study identifies key areas for improvement. Expanding consultation opportunities can enhance faculty-student engagement. Career guidance and technology integration are vital for preparing graduates for workforce demands. Moreover, developing interpersonal skills alongside technical competencies remains essential. The institution was recognized for successfully instilling core values and promoting holistic student development.

To enhance program appeal, the school should align its offerings with student priorities. Strengthening industry partnerships and institutionalizing career guidance services will improve career readiness. Expanding experiential learning opportunities and faculty development programs will facilitate a smoother transition to the workforce. Enhancing teaching methods, assessment strategies, and institutional values will also contribute to student growth. These strategies will enrich education and better equip graduates for career success.

Acknowledgment

This study would not have been possible without the critical perspectives shared by colleagues, which really enriched this tracer study. The same gratitude is extended to the College President, Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Vice President for Finance for their unwavering support in facilitating funding. Additionally, the researchers acknowledge the Research, Development, and Publication Office for its leadership and guidance throughout the study.

Conflict of Interest: The authors reported no conflict of interest.

Data Availability: All data are included in the content of the paper.

Funding Statement: The authors did not obtain any funding for this research.

References:

1. Abulencia, A. S., Marasigan, A. C., Raymundo, M. C. Y., Gomez, M. A. C., Aggarao, M. L. B., Bailon, J. V., Villanueva, V. M., & Sabate, R. (2021). Philippine Normal University alumni tracer study. IOER International Multidisciplinary Research Journal, 3(4), 55–64. https://ioer-imrj.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Philippine-Normal-University-Alumni-Tracer-Study.pdf
2. Agrey, L., & Lampadan, N. (2014). Determinant factors contributing to student choice in selecting a university. *Journal of Education and Human Development, 3*(2), 391–404. https://doi.org/10.15640/jehd.v3n2a22.
3. Australian Education Research Organization (AERO). (2023). How students learn best: An overview of the evidence. Retrieved from https://www.edresearch.edu.au/summaries-explainers/explainers/positive-teacher-student-relationships-their-role-classroom-management
4. Clarke, M. (2018). Rethinking graduate employability: the role of capital, individual attributes and context, Studies in Higher Education, 43:11, 1923-1937, DOI: 10.1080/03075079.2017.1294152.
5. Cofino, C. L., Tee, S. M. R., Enquilino, D. L. B., Alegre, G. E., Alpas, C. G., Lacson, L. K. C., Chu, C. M. L., & Abarillo, A. A. (2024). *Engaging BSIT graduates: A study on employability of the Bachelor of Science in Information Technology (BSIT) of Central Philippines State University-Main Campus. Library Progress International*, 44(3), 10046–10055. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/385000330_Engaging_BSIT_Graduates_A_Study_on_Employability_of_the_Bachelor_of_Science_in_Information_Technology_BSIT_of_Central_Philippines_State_University-Main_Campus.
6. Commission on Higher Education (CHED) (2018). CHED Memorandum Order (CMO) No. 29, Series of 2018: Policies, Standards and Guidelines for the Bachelor of Science in Information Technology.

7. Cuadra, L. J., Aure, M. R. K. L. and Gonzaga, G. L. (2019). The Use of Tracer Study in Improving Undergraduate Programs in the University. ASIA PACIFIC HIGHER EDUCATION RESEARCH JOURNAL, Volume 6, Issue No. 1. Retrieved from: https://www. research gate.net/ publication/ 335429907.
8. Dennen, V. P., Choi, H., & Word, K. (2020). Social media, teenagers, and the school context: A scoping review of research in education and related fields. *Educational Technology Research and Development, 68*(4), 1635–1658. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11423-020-09796-z. Retrieved from https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11423-020-09796-z.
9. Drine, I. (2017). Education and Entrepreneurship to Address Youth Unemployment in MENA Region. Expert Group Meeting on Strategies for Eradicating Poverty to Achieve Sustainable Development for All. United Nations, New York.
10. Employment Trends and Challenges for Economics and Management Graduates in Guangdong Province (2018–2023). (2024). World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews, 14(2), 245–256. Retrieved from https://wjarr.com/sites/default/files/WJARR-2024-3829.pdf.
11. Europe's Evolving Graduate Labour Markets: Supply, Demand, Underemployment, and Wage Trends. (2021). *Journal for Labour Market Research, 55*(1), 1–16. https://doi.org/10.1186/ s12651-021-00288-y.
12. Gaspar, A. M. C. S., & Soares, J. M. A. C. (2021). Factors influencing the choice of higher education institutions in Angola. International Journal of Educational Administration and Policy Studies, 13(1), 23-39.
13. Google. (2020). Google Forms: Free Online Surveys for Personal Use. Retrieved from https://www.google.com/forms/about/
14. Gore, J., Holmes, K., Smith, M., Southgate, E., & Albright, J. (2015). Socioeconomic Status and the Career Aspirations of Australian School Students: Testing Enduring Assumptions. Australian Educational Researcher, 42, 155-177. doi:10.1007/s13384-015-0172-5
15. Greater Good in Education (2023). Positive Teacher-Student Relationships. Greater Good in Education. Retrieved from https://ggie.berkeley.edu/student-well-being/positive-teacher-student-relationships/
16. Gutierrez, R. L., Santos, M. J., & Rivera, P. D. (2022). Assessment of student satisfaction with faculty consultation programs: Impacts on academic performance and learning confidence. International Journal

of Educational Research, 58, 112-124. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/ 361450 164_Assessment_of_the_Student_Satisfaction_on_the_Consultation_ Program.

17. International Labour Organization. (2018, May 25). *258 million workers in the world are over-educated for their jobs*. ILOSTAT Blog. https://ilostat.ilo.org/blog/258-million-workers-in-the-world-are-over-educated-for-their-jobs/
18. Johnson, L., Adams Becker, S., Cummins, M., Estrada, V., Freeman, A., & Hall, C. (2016). NMC Horizon Report: 2016 Higher Education Edition. Austin, Texas: The New Media Consortium. Retrieved June 1, 2024 from https://www.learntechlib.org/p/171478/.
19. Kuh, G. D. (2001). Assessing What Really Matters to Student Learning: Inside the National Survey of Student Engagement. Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning, 33(3), 10-17. doi:10.1080/00091380109601795
20. Macadangdang, M. D. B. (2019). Tracer Study of BSIT Graduates of the Cagayan State University Batch 2015-2016. International Journal of Advanced Research in Engineering, Vol. 8 | No. 4 |, ISSN: 2278-6244 IT. www.garph.co.uk.
21. Mary Christie Institute. (2023). *Socio-Emotional Readiness of College Students Is On the Decline*. Retrieved from https://www.insidehighered.com/news/student-success/health-wellness/2024/09/ 25/higher-eds-role-student-personal-development.
22. Mendoza, C. N., Lacerona, R. B., Jimenez, M. P., & Arevalo, J. (2022). *Factors considered among the University of the East-Manila students in their college program preference.* International Journal of Academic Multidisciplinary Research, 6(4), 1-5. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/ 375584760_Factors_considered_among_the_University_of_the_East-Manila_Students_in_their_ College_Program_Preference.
23. NACE. (2022). The Value of Career Services. National Association of Colleges and Employers. https://www.naceweb.org/career-development/organizational-structure/the-value-of-career-services/
24. Rahayu, D. P., & Suhartono, A. (2023). The role of university orientation programs in shaping student engagement and institutional values. Indonesian Journal of Educational Research, 12(3), 45-57. https://www.journal.ypidathu.or.id/index.php/ijen/article/download/763/515/8212.
25. Schomburg, H. (2016). Carrying out tracer studies: Guide to anticipating and matching skills and jobs. European Training Foundation/European Centre for the Development of Vocational

Training/International Labour Office. Retrieved from https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/ groups/ public/---ed_emp/---ifp_skills/documents/ publication/wcms_538135.pdf.

26. Sola, H. M. & Zia, T. (2021). Social Media and Students' Choice of Higher Education Institution. European Journal of Management and Marketing Studies. Vol. 6, Issue 4. DOI: 10.46827/ ejmms.v6i4.1160.
27. Sprout Social. (2023). Higher education social media strategy: How to engage students and alumni online. Retrieved from https://sproutsocial.com/insights/higher-education-social-media-strategy/.
28. Tran, T. T. (2019). Graduate Employability. Innovate Higher Education to Enhance Graduate Employability (pp.158-168). DOI:10.4324/9780429058899-14.