

Assessing Program Satisfaction and Employment Outcomes Among Bachelor of Science in Information Technology Graduates of Notre Dame of Jolo College

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Abstract

The study assessed BSIT graduates' program satisfaction, employment outcomes, and the usefulness of their academic program for employment. It also examined factors influencing school and program selection, institutional values, and employment aspects such as status, sector, salary, wait time, and position. Program satisfaction was measured across teaching, learning, study conditions, guidance, competency attainment, and employment readiness. It further explored whether employment readiness, institutional values, and employment status predict program satisfaction. A sample of 58 respondents participated in a survey, selected through stratified sampling from a population of 111. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and multiple regression. Results showed that holistic education influenced school selection, while program choice was shaped by resources and qualified faculty. The employment rate was 66%, with 61% working in the government sector. Among the employed, 50% found jobs within six months, 63% held non-permanent roles, 39% earned below the median salary, and 87% held rank-and-file positions. Graduates reported the highest satisfaction in teamwork-based teaching, respectful interaction, modern learning tools, and hands-on training. They found problem analysis skills useful for employment and identified God-fearing and respect as core institutional values. Regression

analysis indicated that employment readiness and being employed significantly predicted program satisfaction. Graduates confirmed the program's relevance to their employment and growth. Those who were work-ready and employed reported greater satisfaction. While values like being God-fearing and respectful were appreciated, they had minimal impact on program satisfaction. The study recommended integrating hands-on training, job-readiness modules, and career guidance into the BSIT curriculum, and aligning program content with industry needs through regular stakeholder input.

Keywords: Tracer study, graduate employability, higher education assessment, skills development, labor market alignment

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 build strong industry partnerships. As a result, assessing graduates' program satisfaction and employment outcomes is a high priority on the HEIs' agenda. They need to understand how graduates' educational skills relate to the job market so they know if their programs are relevant, graduates are satisfied, and what the institution values. Tracer studies often help generate these insights.

Recognizing 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) asserts that well-executed tracer studies help institutions identify strengths and areas for improvement in graduates' educational satisfaction 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 the tasks even more challenging. To address this, many higher education institutions employ social media for enrollment marketing, facilitating direct engagement with prospective students. Recent research indicates that social media significantly influences student engagement and enrollment decision-making processes (Pawar, 2024). Since social media is widely used by students (Dennen et al., 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. Concerns about graduates' employment prospects in a volatile global market persist despite HEIs' growing use of social media to draw students (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 et al., 2019). Studies suggest that the number of graduates may exceed job opportunities, worsening unemployment in some regions (Jiang & Ayo, 2024). In Europe, labor market trends also show rising underemployment among graduates, reflecting a global issue (Green & Henseke, 2021). 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. However, despite these strategies, there remains limited research on how institutional values and employment readiness together influence program satisfaction, particularly among IT graduates in rural or underserved areas. This study seeks to address that gap.

To examine the gap between academic skills and labor market needs, this tracer study explores the program satisfaction and employment outcomes of Bachelor of Science in Information Technology (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. While national tracer studies, such as The 4th Philippine Graduate Tracer Study by Orbeta, Tutor, and Miraflor (2021), provide a general overview of graduate employability across the country, this study focuses on a specific institution in a less urbanized setting. It offers localized insights that can help refine educational programs and guide focused interventions to better prepare graduates for their careers.

Against this backdrop, the primary aim of this tracer study is to assess the program satisfaction 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 usefulness to employment, and the institutional values developed during their

studies. In addition, the study examined whether employment readiness, institutional values, and employment status significantly predict the level of program satisfaction among BSIT graduates. To achieve these objectives, the study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the key factors influencing college and program choices among graduates?
2. What are the BSIT graduates' employment outcomes in terms of employment status, waiting time, duration, sector, salary, and position?
3. What is the level of satisfaction among BSIT graduates with their program in terms of teaching and learning techniques, study conditions and provisions, advice/guidance, readiness for employment, and competency attainment?
4. To what extent do graduates perceive the study program as useful for employment?
5. To what extent do BSIT graduates develop institutional values during their studies?
6. Do employment readiness, institutional values, and employment status significantly predict the level of program satisfaction among BSIT graduates?

Null Hypothesis (H_{01}): Employment readiness, institutional values, and employment status do not significantly predict the level of program satisfaction among BSIT graduates.

The study's insights can inform enhancements to the BSIT program's teaching methods and curriculum by pinpointing areas needing improvement and aligning content with industry demands. Additionally, examining study conditions, job readiness, and institutional values offers a clearer understanding of the NDJC learning environment, aiding administrators in bolstering student support. Overall, these findings can assist educators and policymakers in better equipping graduates with essential workforce skills and strengthening the connection between education and industry.

Methods

For clarity, this section presents statistical results with descriptive summaries highlighting data trends. A detailed discussion of the results is provided in the Discussion Section.

Research Design

This quantitative study utilized both descriptive and predictive-correlational methods within a cross-sectional survey framework to assess program satisfaction and employment outcomes among BSIT graduates from

NDJC between 2017 and 2019. Descriptive analysis examined factors influencing school and program selection, employment outcomes, program satisfaction, perceived usefulness of the program for employment, and the development of institutional values during the graduates' studies. The predictive-correlational component assessed the extent to which employment readiness, institutional values, and employment status predict program satisfaction levels. This combined approach provided a comprehensive understanding of graduate experiences and outcomes across the two academic cohorts.

Population and Sampling

The population of this study consisted of 111 BSIT graduates from two academic cohorts. According to records from the registrar's office, this included 70 graduates from the 2017–2018 cohort and 41 graduates from the 2018–2019 cohort. Stratified sampling was employed to ensure proportional representation from both cohorts. Using Cochran's formula (1977) with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error, the required sample size was calculated to be 86 respondents. This resulted in a sampling fraction of approximately 77% (86/111), which was applied to allocate 54 respondents from the 2017–2018 cohort and 32 from the 2018–2019 cohort. Actual participation included 30 graduates from the 2017–2018 cohort (55.5% of the target) and 28 from the 2018–2019 cohort (87.5% of the target), totaling 58 respondents. This yielded an overall response rate of 67.4%. Despite the lower turnout from the 2017–2018 cohort, the obtained sample size was sufficient to draw meaningful insights into graduates' program satisfaction and employment outcomes.

Instrument Design and Data Collection

This study utilized a structured questionnaire adapted from Schomburg's (2016) Tracer Study Guide and the CHED's Tracer Study Guidelines. Schomburg's framework informed the questionnaire's structure, focusing on program satisfaction and employment outcomes, while CHED's guidelines ensured alignment with national higher education standards.

To ensure content validity, the draft questionnaire underwent evaluation by three experts, the program head and two subject matter specialists, who assessed item clarity, relevance, and representativeness across three dimensions: program satisfaction, employment readiness, and institutional values. Their feedback led to minor revisions for improved clarity and alignment. Employment-related items were validated against national standards: salary ranges aligned with the National Wages and Productivity Commission (NWPC, 2024) wage statistics, and employment classifications followed the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA, 2024) labor force

framework. Benchmark timeframes for employment (six and twelve months) were based on recommendations from Schomburg (2016) and CHED's Graduate Tracer Studies framework.

A pilot test with 2021 BSIT graduates, excluded from the main study, assessed the questionnaire's internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha. All subscales exceeded the 0.70 reliability threshold. The final instrument comprised five sections: (1) factors influencing school and program choices; (2) employment outcomes; (3) program satisfaction; (4) program usefulness for employment; and (5) 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.

Data Analysis

Quantitative survey data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and mean scores, to address research questions 1 to 5. For Likert-scale items, mean scores were interpreted using a mean range index with corresponding verbal descriptions, as shown in the table below:

Mean Range	Table 1	Tables 3 to 6	Table 7	Table 8	Table 9
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)

To address research question 6, multiple linear regression analysis examined whether employment readiness, institutional values, and employment status significantly predict the level of program satisfaction, elucidating the extent to which these variables explain variations in graduates' satisfaction.

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. This research was reviewed and approved by the President's Cabinet of NDJC, which serves as the institutional body overseeing research ethics in the absence of a dedicated Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Results

This section presents the descriptive statistical results, with detailed interpretation provided in the subsequent Discussion section.

Factors Influencing Graduates' College and Program Choices

Table 1 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.

Table 1: Mean Scores of Factors Influencing College and Program Choices

College Choice Factors	W M	VI	Program Choice Factors	W M	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

For college choice, all factors had weighted mean scores between 3.50 and 3.98, indicating their importance. Similarly, program choice factors scored between 3.84 and 4.02, 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).

Graduates' Employment Outcomes

The employment outcomes of graduates were analyzed to portray their post-program journey. Various employment indicators were considered,

including employment status, time to secure the first job, nature and duration of employment, sector of employment, monthly income, and position held. Table 2 summarizes the survey results.

Table 2: Employment Outcomes of Graduates by Year Graduated

Variables	Year Graduated				Total (N=58)	
	2017-2018 (n=28)		2018-2019 (n=30)			
	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 1 st 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

Status of employment and time to secure the first job. As shown in Table 2, 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.

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.

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.

Satisfaction of Graduates with their Program

The retrospective evaluation covered multiple dimensions, with respondents assessing their satisfaction levels in areas such as teaching and learning methods, study conditions, academic advice and guidance, competency attainment, and job readiness. Mean scores were used to identify trends and illustrate satisfaction levels for each dimension. Tables 3 to 6 summarize the statistical findings.

Table 3: 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

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.

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 score 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 4: 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

Advice and Guidance

Advice and guidance referred to the support and direction provided to students in navigating their academic journey. As shown in Table 5, respondents reported slightly varied satisfaction 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 5: Mean Score of Advice and 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

Attainment of Program-Required Competencies

The attainment of program competencies served as a key indicator of the successful fulfillment of program objectives (Table 6). The statistical data for program competencies are presented in Table 6. 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 6: 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

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 (Table 7). 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 7: 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

Usefulness of the Program to Employment

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 8). 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 8: Mean Scores on 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

Institutional Values Developed Throughout Their Studies

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 9, 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 9: Mean Scores for the Extent of Institutional Values Developed

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

Predictors of Program Satisfaction among BSIT Graduates

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine whether employment readiness, institutional values, and employment status predicted graduates' program satisfaction. Prior to the analysis, key assumptions were tested and met. The Durbin–Watson statistic (1.496) indicated no issues with autocorrelation, and all Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values were below 5, suggesting the absence of multicollinearity.

The regression model was statistically significant, $F(3, 54) = 95.49$, $p < .001$, explaining 84.1% of the variance in program satisfaction. Employment readiness ($B = 0.751$, $p < .001$) and employment status ($B = 0.185$, $p = .031$) were significant predictors, while institutional values ($p = .244$) were not. These findings support the rejection of the null hypothesis (H_{01}), which stated

that employment readiness, institutional values, and employment status do not significantly predict the level of program satisfaction among BSIT graduates.

Table 10: Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Program Satisfaction

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p	VIF
Employment Readiness	0.751	0.071	.827	10.607	.001	2.071
Institutional Values	0.105	0.089	.092	1.177	.244	2.070
Employment Status (<i>1</i> <i>=Employed, 0=Not</i> <i>employed</i>)	0.185	0.083	.121	2.219	.031	1.015
Constant	0.367	0.283	—	1.300	.199	

Note. $N = 58$. $p < .05$. $p < .001$, $R^2 = .841$, $Adjusted R^2 = .833$.

Discussion

The primary aim of this tracer study was to assess BSIT graduates' program satisfaction and employment outcomes. It also explored factors influencing their choice of school and program, as well as the institutional values developed during their studies. The study further examined whether employment readiness, institutional values, and employment status significantly predicted graduates' satisfaction with the program.

Findings revealed that information technology students at NDJC were primarily drawn to the institution's holistic approach, which supports intellectual, physical, and spiritual growth—affirming NDJC's distinct educational brand. Within the institution, practical factors such as access to learning resources and qualified faculty also influenced program selection. These preferences suggest that students consider both personal development and practical career benefits when choosing their academic path. This observation aligns with Mendoza et al. (2022), who found that career performance assessments, employability prospects, and financial capacity are key factors in program selection. Sarkodie, Asare, and Asare (2020) further supported this by emphasizing institutional reputation, academic environment, parental guidance, and career potential as significant influences in tertiary education choices.

Transitioning from education to the workforce is a critical phase for graduates, shaping their early career journey. The results indicate that the majority (66%) of BSIT graduates were employed, with most of them (61%) working in the government sector. This suggests that job availability, rather than strong demand for BSIT graduates, may have contributed to the employment outcomes. Many initially entered non-permanent roles, though a notable proportion remained in their first job for over a year, indicating some degree of stability despite temporary contracts. Most graduates earned below the median salary and held rank-and-file positions. These findings reflect resilience among graduates in facing early career challenges. The trend also

underscores the need for better access to local job markets and opportunities for career advancement.

These results align with Macadangdang's (2019) tracer study, which showed underemployment and low incomes among BSIT graduates. Similarly, Cofino et al. (2024) reported that most graduates from Central Philippines State University secured employment within six months, primarily in private companies, although some experienced delays exceeding a year. They recommended improving infrastructure and fostering stronger industry partnerships to enhance employability. This trend is also observed globally. For instance, the International Labour Organization (2022) reported that over 258 million workers worldwide are overeducated for their jobs, highlighting the persistent mismatch between education and employment. Strengthening industry-academia linkages remains essential in addressing these issues.

In terms of instructional quality, graduates reported satisfaction with teacher-student communication, particularly when characterized by politeness, and with teaching methods that incorporated teamwork. This suggests that communication grounded in mutual respect may foster an environment where open dialogue is encouraged. Collaborative teaching approaches were also noted to enhance student participation and information retention. Previous studies have observed similar outcomes. Efthymiou and Sidiropoulos (2023) found that teacher-student relationships based on respectful communication are linked to supportive learning environments and are associated with both academic and social development. Likewise, Peddie et al. (2024) reported that collaborative learning strategies contribute to increased student engagement and improved knowledge retention, which may positively influence academic outcomes.

Complementing these experiences, classroom learning was described as enriching and aligned with students' learning goals. In contrast, while consultation opportunities were viewed positively, they received slightly lower ratings. Increasing the availability and quality of faculty consultations may provide additional support for student learning. Studies show that teacher-student consultations are linked to improved academic outcomes and student satisfaction (Kuh, 2021). Gutierrez et al. (2022) also found that regular faculty consultations are associated with stronger academic performance and greater learning confidence, suggesting the value of enhancing consultation programs.

In addition to teaching and consultation, graduates also reported satisfaction with the job-related advice and guidance they received through the program. This support was seen as helpful in preparing for employment after graduation. Providing relevant career guidance may contribute to a smoother transition from education to the workforce. Gore et al. (2015) observed that career counseling plays a key role in improving job readiness and employment

outcomes. Similarly, the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE, 2022) found that access to career services has a measurable effect on students' transition into the job market.

Alongside institutional support, graduates valued their exposure to modern tools and technologies. Among the required program competencies, the use of modern tools received the highest satisfaction rating from graduates. This likely reflects the BSIT program's integration of technology in teaching and learning, which supports growing workforce demands for digital proficiency. However, lower ratings in areas such as problem analysis and communication skills highlight opportunities for targeted improvement. Johnson et al. (2016) emphasized that technology integration enhances student engagement and job readiness, while Tomaro (2018) noted that ongoing curriculum adaptation and faculty training are essential for meaningful ICT integration in Philippine higher education.

Hands-on training was a key factor in preparing graduates for employment, showing the importance of practical skills in meeting job demands. This supports the BSIT program's focus on real-world applications, as outlined in CHED CMO 29, s. 2018. A tracer study by Albina and Sumagaysay (2020) in a Philippine state university found that nearly 70% of IT graduates mentioned their curriculum was relevant to their first job, highlighting the value of experiential learning in improving employability.

Graduates viewed the program as useful for both work and personal development, which suggests its effectiveness in helping them build career-related and interpersonal skills. They rated all program-acquired competencies as relevant to their jobs, with problem analysis receiving the highest score. A tracer study by Basabe et al. (2023) found that BSIT graduates often credited their programming and systems-related courses as valuable in their current roles. In addition, a report by the Mary Christie Institute (2023) revealed that 39% of recent graduates felt unprepared for the emotional demands of the workplace. This highlights the need for academic programs to combine technical training with personal development support.

Beyond technical skills, graduates also reflected on the values they embraced during their studies. Many reported embracing institutional values to a very high extent. This may be attributed to the freshman orientation program conducted during the first week of classes. The result highlights NDJC's effort to promote its core values. Research supports the role of orientation programs in helping students understand campus culture and institutional values, contributing to a stronger sense of belonging and academic development (Rahayu & Suhartono, 2023; Murray, 2022).

The study further examined whether employment readiness, institutional values, and employment status significantly influenced the level of program satisfaction among BSIT graduates. The regression model was

statistically significant and explained a substantial portion of the variance in satisfaction, with employment readiness and employment status emerging as significant predictors. The strong link between employment readiness and program satisfaction supports the findings of Samarasinghe et al. (2022) and Faisal et al. (2021), who highlighted that well-prepared graduates tend to value their programs more. Employment status also influenced satisfaction levels, as Tavares et al. (2023) and Sato et al. (2021) emphasized how actual and perceived employability affect graduates' evaluations of academic programs. Along similar lines, a Philippine national tracer study by Orbeta, Abrigo, and Consulta (2019) found that employment outcomes, such as job alignment and employment status, strongly influence graduates' assessment of their academic experiences.

In contrast to these practical factors, institutional values did not significantly influence satisfaction, aligning with Vo Minh Thang and Wongsurawat (2016), who found that students often prioritize practical and job-related skills over institutional culture. These findings suggest a need for stronger integration of job-readiness training into the curriculum, such as internships, project-based learning, and industry-recognized certifications. Institutions may also consider policies that encourage regular engagement with industry partners to keep programs aligned with labor market demands, ultimately enhancing both graduate satisfaction and employability.

Conclusions

This study assessed BSIT graduates' program satisfaction, employment outcomes, and the usefulness of their academic program for employment. It also examined factors influencing school and program selection, institutional values developed during their studies, and whether employment readiness, institutional values, and employment status significantly influenced graduates' level of program satisfaction.

The findings reveal that Information Technology students at NDJC are attracted to the institution's holistic educational approach, which nurtures intellectual, physical, and spiritual development. They prioritize programs offering practical benefits, such as quality teaching staff and ample learning resources. This balance between personal aspirations and pragmatic considerations highlights the thoughtful process students undertake to align their academic and career goals.

Moreover, the findings also indicated that a significant proportion of graduates successfully gained employment, demonstrating resilience in transitioning from education to the workforce. Though many initially entered non-permanent positions with salaries below the median, most secured jobs within six months, with government employment being the most common sector.

Building upon these employment outcomes, graduates expressed overall satisfaction with the program, especially in areas such as job-related guidance, hands-on training, and the use of modern learning tools. Respectful teacher-student communication and teamwork-based instruction contributed to a positive learning environment. While classroom instruction was well-rated, opportunities for faculty consultation could be improved. Graduates appreciated the career guidance received and felt confident using technology but identified the need for more training in problem analysis and communication skills. Hands-on learning experiences were particularly helpful in preparing them for employment. Beyond job readiness, they also found the program beneficial for their personal development. Institutional values, particularly being God-fearing and respectful, were reinforced through programs like freshman orientation.

Furthermore, the regression analysis showed that both employment readiness and employment status significantly influenced graduates' satisfaction with the program. Those who felt more prepared for employment and were currently employed reported greater satisfaction with their academic experience. Institutional values, however, did not have a significant effect on satisfaction.

These findings highlight the value of practical learning, career guidance, and strong faculty–student engagement in enhancing graduate satisfaction and employment readiness. To improve long-term outcomes, institutions, particularly those in regions with limited access to labor market data, should prioritize competency-based training, expand faculty consultation hours, and develop stronger partnerships with industry. Strengthening internship programs and career placement services can further support graduates in transitioning into stable employment. These recommendations may be especially useful for similar institutions aiming to align academic programs with labor market needs and improve graduate outcomes.

While the study offers meaningful insights into the experiences of BSIT graduates, its small sample size limits the generalizability of the findings. Due to a low response rate in one cohort, the results should be interpreted with caution and may not fully represent the broader graduate population. Future research could adopt a larger, more representative sample and a longitudinal design to better capture graduates' long-term career development. Additionally, comparative studies across similar programs or policy-focused analyses may yield deeper insights to inform curriculum reform and institutional strategies in comparable educational settings.

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