

Tracer Study on the Employability of BSBA Financial Management Graduates, Kalinga State University (2021–2023)

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Date received: August 22, 2025
Date revised: September 11, 2025
Date accepted: September 22, 2025

Originality: 99%
Grammarly Score: 99%
Similarity: 1%

Recommended citation:

Aquino, R.A., Velasco, L., Labbutan, A., Tocyapao, M., & Domingo, D. (2025). Tracer study on the employability of BSBA Financial Management Graduates, Kalinga State University (2021–2023). *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 3(10), 449-470. <https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2025.640>

Abstract. This study investigated the employment outcomes and program relevance of Bachelor of Science in Business Administration major in Financial Management (BSBA-FM) graduates from Kalinga State University (KSU) for the years 2021 to 2023. Addressing the gap in localized tracer studies, it aimed to determine graduates' employment status, skill application, and the alignment of academic preparation with industry needs. Using a quantitative approach, data were collected through a survey of 69 graduates. Results showed that 80% were employed, with most securing their first jobs through walk-in applications (71%) and occupying entry-level or clerical positions. Monthly earnings were primarily between ₱5,000 and ₱10,000 (89%). Graduates expressed high job satisfaction and identified human relations, communication, and critical thinking as the most valuable competencies gained from their program. The BSBA-FM curriculum was perceived to have significantly enhanced teamwork and learning efficiency. However, a notable portion of respondents had not pursued further training or advanced studies. Findings indicate a strong alignment between the BSBA-FM program and immediate employability, particularly in cultivating soft skills essential for the workplace. To strengthen long-term career outcomes, the study recommends enhancing career services, upgrading facilities, and integrating more industry-relevant content.

Keywords: Employability; Financial management; Graduates' outcomes; Philippines; Tracer study.

1.0 Introduction

In today's competitive labor market, the alignment between higher education programs and industry demands has become a decisive factor in ensuring graduate success. Employers increasingly expect graduates to possess not only theoretical knowledge but also practical competencies that can be applied in dynamic and often unpredictable work environments (Setyaningsih et al., 2022). One of the most effective mechanisms for assessing this alignment is the tracer study, which systematically collects data from graduates to evaluate their employment outcomes, skill utilization, and satisfaction with academic preparation. Globally, tracer studies have been recognized for their role in informing educational policy, guiding curriculum reforms, and strengthening institutional accountability (Inicia & Emolyn M, 2020; Choi & Kim, 2021).

In the Philippine context, tracer studies are institutionalized as part of quality assurance measures mandated by

the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), serving as a critical indicator of educational effectiveness (Victoriano et al., 2022; Chima et al., 2023). Accrediting bodies such as the Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines (AACUP) emphasize their value in measuring graduate employability and aligning academic programs with labor market needs (Whitchurch et al., 2021). Previous studies across the country reveal consistent patterns, particularly among business program graduates, who often find employment in roles closely related to their field of study (Alvarez & Cammayo, 2023; Lopena & Madrigal, 2023). Feedback from these graduates provides actionable insights for improving curricula, developing employability skills, and ensuring that programs remain relevant (Odede et al., 2021).

Business education plays a pivotal role in sustaining national economic growth by producing a skilled workforce capable of driving innovation, improving organizational performance, and contributing to entrepreneurial ventures (Visco, 2022; Edralin & Pastrana, 2023). The Bachelor of Science in Business Administration major in Financial Management (BSBA-FM) program at Kalinga State University (KSU) is specifically designed to equip students with analytical, financial decision-making, and managerial competencies that are vital in the corporate and entrepreneurial sectors. However, the evolving economic landscape - shaped by technological advancements, post-pandemic labor shifts, and increasingly competitive global markets - requires continuous evaluation of academic offerings to ensure relevance and responsiveness to change (Barcelona et al., 2023; Mercado & Villenas, 2024).

Despite the value of previous tracer studies conducted at KSU, their findings are now outdated and may no longer reflect the realities faced by recent graduates. There is a notable absence of current, program-specific data on BSBA-FM graduates from the classes of 2021 to 2023 - a cohort that is unique not only because they entered the workforce during a period of profound economic transition and uncertainty, but also because they represent the first wave of graduates navigating hybrid workplaces, digital transformation in business processes, and heightened competition from both local and global labor markets.

Without updated information, the university faces limitations in making evidence-based decisions for curriculum enhancement, policy development, and career service improvements. Beyond its direct implications for KSU, this study also provides valuable insights for other stakeholders such as employers, policymakers, and accrediting agencies. Employers can utilize the findings better to understand the strengths and gaps in graduate competencies, while policymakers can leverage the results in crafting labor and education policies that promote employability. Accrediting agencies may find the outcomes helpful in reinforcing standards for quality assurance and continuous improvement.

The purpose of this study is to examine the employment outcomes, skill application, and professional development of BSBA-FM graduates from KSU for the years 2021 to 2023. By identifying strengths, gaps, and opportunities for improvement, the findings will provide a foundation for aligning the program more closely with regional and global labor market demands. This research is significant not only in guiding curriculum refinement but also in ensuring that graduates are prepared for immediate employment, long-term career advancement, and meaningful contributions to the economic growth of the Philippines.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a descriptive quantitative research design using a graduate tracer survey to gather information on the employment status, job relevance, and skills application of Bachelor of Science in Business Administration major in Financial Management (BSBA-FM) graduates. The design was chosen for its ability to capture factual, numerical data and summarize trends, thereby allowing for the assessment of program relevance to labor market demands. Open-ended responses were also collected and summarized narratively to provide additional context to the quantitative results. Since the qualitative component was limited, the study was treated as primarily quantitative rather than mixed-method.

2.2 Participants and Sampling Technique

The study population consisted of 100 BSBA-FM graduates from Kalinga State University (KSU), College of Business Administration and Accountancy, Classes of 2021, 2022, and 2023. Out of this population, 69 graduates

participated in the study, representing a 69% response rate. Although not all graduates were reached, this response rate is considered acceptable and representative of the population in social science research (Israel, 2013). Nevertheless, the perspectives of the 31 non-respondents are acknowledged as a limitation. Purposive sampling was used to include graduates who were reachable and willing to participate. Inclusion criteria required that participants be graduates of the BSBA-FM program within the specified years and currently residing or employed either in Kalinga or other provinces. Graduates who could not be contacted despite repeated efforts, or who declined participation, were excluded.

2.3 Research Instrument

The primary data-gathering tool was the standardized Graduate Tracer Survey (GTS) adapted from the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) guidelines. The instrument was modified to capture the specific context of the BSBA-FM program. While the instrument's validity is well-established by CHED, the study also acknowledges that validity and reliability tests (e.g., Cronbach's alpha) would have further strengthened the instrument's credibility and are recommended for future tracer studies.

2.4 Data Gathering Procedure

The survey was disseminated through multiple channels, including email, Facebook Messenger, Google Forms, and direct in-person distribution for graduates residing within Kalinga. To address the difficulty of reaching alumni, the researchers conducted multiple follow-ups and reminders through calls and messages. For graduates who were initially unreachable, classmates, relatives, and peers were contacted to extend the survey link and facilitate communication. These measures were undertaken to minimize non-response bias and increase participation. Data collection was conducted over two months. Completed responses were compiled, encoded, and checked for completeness before analysis.

2.5 Data Analysis Procedure

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency counts, percentages, weighted means, and ranking. Open-ended responses were summarized narratively to supplement the quantitative findings. This ensured consistency with the study's quantitative research design while still capturing valuable insights from participant feedback.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to established ethical standards in research. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained before answering the survey. Participants were assured of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without penalty. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained by removing identifying details and storing responses in password-protected digital files accessible only to the researchers. Hard copies were stored in a secure location. Data will be retained for a period of two years following the completion of the study, after which electronic files will be permanently deleted and paper-based documents will be shredded.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Personal Information

The strong local representation of respondents from Kalinga (Table 1) highlights Kalinga State University's deep-rooted community ties and role as the province's leading educational provider.

Table 1. *Geographic Background/Hometown*

Province	Frequency	Percentage
Kalinga	61	88.41
Mt. Province	2	2.90
Ifugao	1	1.45
Apayao	1	1.45
Cagayan Valley	1	1.45
Benguet	1	1.45
Batangas	1	1.45
Isabela	1	1.45
Total	69	100.00

Proximity fosters accessibility, familiarity, and institutional loyalty, consistent with studies linking community engagement in higher education to mutually beneficial partnerships that address regional needs (Zhou et al., 2021; Muwanguzi et al., 2023). Inferentially, this geographic concentration suggests that students' choice of KSU is powerfully shaped by location and accessibility, which implies that the university's student population will likely remain predominantly Kalinga-based unless deliberate efforts - such as scholarship grants, cross-border partnerships, and targeted promotional campaigns - are implemented to attract a more diverse student base (Por et al., 2024).

Meanwhile, the 12% of respondents from neighboring provinces such as Mt. Province and Isabela reflect emerging regional recognition and untapped potential for broader influence. This limited but significant external representation also points to possible barriers such as travel costs, cultural affinity, and institutional reputation that may constrain wider regional enrollment. Expanding this reach through strategic marketing, outreach, and support for socio-economically disadvantaged students could diversify the student body, enrich learning experiences, and strengthen the university's position as both a regional hub and a community pillar. Notably, the presence of respondents from as far as Batangas (1.45%) hints at unique individual circumstances or program-specific attractions, which could be strategically leveraged to expand visibility beyond the Cordillera and Cagayan Valley regions.

3.2 Educational Background

Data on Civil Service examination participation reveal persistently low engagement among respondents, consistent with research linking this trend to graduates' preference for private sector or entrepreneurial careers due to perceived higher rewards and satisfaction (Moreira & Pérez, 2024; Waqar & Kuuire, 2024). The perceived difficulty of the exams further deters candidates, especially those who feel underprepared (Nastiti et al., 2023; Upadhaya & Kwon, 2023). Among examinees, the Professional level is preferred over the Sub-Professional level, reflecting aspirations for roles with greater responsibilities, qualifications, and advancement potential.

Table 2. *Examination Passed (n = 69)*

Title of Examination	Frequency	Percentage
Civil Service -Professional	2	3.00
Civil Service -Sub-Professional	1	1.00

Inferentially, this limited participation suggests that unless deliberate interventions are introduced, the proportion of graduates pursuing civil service eligibility will likely remain minimal. Such a trend may affect the government's long-term capacity to attract young professionals into public institutions, as graduates increasingly gravitate toward sectors that offer faster career progression and financial rewards. This also indicates a possible structural imbalance in the labor market, where the supply of qualified professionals in the civil service could lag behind demand. These patterns suggest that both personal ambitions and societal perceptions of public institutions shape career choices (Sanabria-Pulido & Bello-Gómez, 2021; Bertram et al., 2024). Low participation also underscores a gap in institutional support, as career guidance and preparatory programs have been shown to increase interest in public sector roles (Ballantine et al., 2022; da Silva Oliveira et al., 2022; Park & Luo, 2023). Strengthening such frameworks could position the civil service as a more attractive and attainable career pathway.

Data in Table 3 indicate that course affordability and availability are the primary factors influencing students' program choices, reflecting the substantial impact of socioeconomic status on educational decisions.

Table 3. *Reasons for Taking the Course*

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
Affordable for the family	67	33.00
Availability of course offerings in the chosen institution	47	23.00
Prospect for immediate employment	28	14.00
Strong passion for the profession	18	9.00
Inspired by a role model	12	6.00
No particular choice or no better idea	8	4.00
High grades in the course subject	7	3.00
Good grades in high school	6	2.00
Influence of parents or relatives	3	1.00
Prospect of career advancement	3	1.00
The prospect of attractive compensation	3	1.00

Opportunity for employment abroad	3	1.00
Status or prestige of the profession	1	1.00

*Multiple Responses

Rising education costs compel students to prioritize financial practicality over long-term aspirations (Scott et al., 2023; Yahya Umar Magaji et al., 2023). Parental influence also plays a decisive role, often outweighing personal interest (Owusu et al., 2021). Inferentially, this pattern suggests that students' educational trajectories are shaped less by intrinsic passion or long-term career goals and more by immediate financial realities and accessibility. If generalized, this implies that higher education institutions serving resource-constrained communities may consistently attract students whose choices are guided by affordability and proximity rather than by program fit. Such a dynamic, while ensuring access, may inadvertently contribute to misalignment between students' abilities, interests, and eventual career opportunities. Less common motivations - such as prestige, family tradition, or financial rewards - suggest gaps in career guidance and limited opportunities for students to explore long-term goals. Effective career development requires support systems that extend beyond immediate economic constraints and early engagement in career-related activities to foster alignment between aspirations and educational pathways (Summera & Yasmin, 2022).

3.3 Training and Advanced Studies after College

Table 4 shows that most respondents did not pursue training or advanced studies after college, with only a few enrolling in professional education, master's programs, or TESDA skills training. This trend reflects factors such as financial constraints, limited awareness of continuing education's value, and insufficient career guidance.

Table 4. *Training and Advanced Studies Attended after College*

Advanced Studies	Frequency	Percentage
None	65	95.00
Earning Units in Professional Education	2	3.00
Masters	1	1.00
Skills Training in TESDA	1	1.00
Total	69	100.00

Inferentially, the overwhelming proportion of graduates who did not engage in further studies (95%) suggests that post-college learning is not yet a cultural or institutional norm among alumni. If generalized, this indicates that without targeted interventions, graduates may face a competitive disadvantage in industries where advanced credentials and specialized training are increasingly valued. The data also imply that socioeconomic barriers continue to shape post-graduate trajectories, reinforcing inequality between those who can afford further education and those who cannot. Career education has been shown to influence post-college learning decisions, with positive perceptions linked to stronger career development competencies (Kim & Lee, 2023; Nwakanma, 2024). Socioeconomic status also plays a role, though targeted school-based career programs can help bridge disparities (Qiang et al., 2022). Limited engagement in further education may hinder professional growth and competitiveness, as higher educational attainment is associated with greater training participation and improved labor market outcomes (Smoliarchuk et al., 2024).

Table 5 shows that promotion and professional development were the primary motivations for pursuing advanced studies and training, reflecting a strong career-oriented mindset among the few graduates who continued their education. Literature supports this trend, with studies linking further education to career readiness, employability, and advancement (Kim & Lee, 2023; Nwakanma, 2024). Career-focused motivations often outweigh personal interests (Berger et al., 2019). The minimal "Others" responses suggest limited pursuit of education for personal enrichment.

Table 5. *Reasons for Pursuing Advanced Studies and Training*

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
For Promotion	4	44.00
For professional development	4	44.00
Enhance qualification	1	12.00

Inferentially, these findings imply that decisions to pursue advanced studies are primarily instrumental, driven by tangible labor market incentives rather than intrinsic motivations for lifelong learning. If generalized, this

suggests that unless higher education institutions and employers highlight clear career benefits, most graduates will not view advanced studies as necessary. This also signals a reactive rather than proactive orientation toward professional growth, as graduates tend to pursue further studies only when advancement opportunities or workplace demands arise.

This underscores the need for institutions to emphasize both career and personal growth benefits when promoting further studies. Embedding a culture of continuous learning - through alumni engagement, awareness campaigns, or industry linkages - could help shift motivations beyond immediate promotion needs toward broader professional and personal development.

3.4 Employment Data

Table 6 indicates a predominantly positive employment trajectory for graduates, suggesting their education effectively equipped them with market-relevant skills. However, a notable minority remain unemployed, reflecting barriers such as skills mismatches, limited job availability, and socioeconomic constraints. While high employment rates are commendable, ongoing support through career guidance, skills development, and stronger industry-education linkages is essential to improve job quality, sustainability, and long-term career outcomes (Muja et al., 2019).

Table 6. Number of Graduates Presently Employed

Answers	Frequency	Percentage
YES	55	80.00
NO	14	20.00
Total	69	100.00

Inferentially, the 80% employment rate suggests that most graduates can transition into the labor market within a reasonable time frame, signaling the relevance of the university's academic programs. Yet, the 20% unemployment figure implies that structural challenges persist, and if left unaddressed, a consistent portion of future graduates may face underemployment or prolonged job search periods. This pattern highlights not only the importance of employability training but also the need for labor market alignment, as mismatches between graduate skills and industry demands could be contributing to persistent unemployment. Furthermore, the data suggests that while the university successfully facilitates employability for the majority, it must extend its role beyond graduation by fostering stronger alumni networks, internship pipelines, and partnerships with industries. Such efforts could reduce the likelihood of recurring unemployment trends and ensure that employment outcomes translate into stable and meaningful careers rather than temporary or precarious jobs.

Table 7 shows that many unemployed graduates have not actively sought work, often due to personal choices such as family commitments, plans for further study, or a lack of urgency. Health-related barriers are minimal, while more pressing challenges include limited experience, scarce job opportunities, and skills mismatches (Abelha et al., 2020; Bautista Jr et al., 2023). Internships and work placements are crucial in addressing these gaps (Odlin et al., 2022).

Table 7. Reasons Why Not Yet Employed

Reasons for Not Being Employed	Frequency	Percentage
Did not look for a job	5	36.00
Lack of work experience	3	21.00
No job opportunity	3	21.00
Terminated from the current job	2	15.00
Health-related reasons	1	7.00

Inferentially, the high proportion of graduates who did not look for work (36%) suggests that unemployment is not always a direct consequence of labor market failure, but may also reflect voluntary withdrawal or delayed entry into the workforce. This indicates that headline unemployment figures may mask diverse realities, as some graduates may be in transition phases rather than chronically unemployed. However, the 21% citing lack of work experience and another 21% citing lack of job opportunities imply structural issues that, if generalized, could point to recurring employability challenges for future cohorts. The presence of those terminated from previous jobs (15%) also suggests vulnerability to job instability, possibly linked to inadequate preparation for workplace

demands or misalignment between expectations and job realities. Together, these findings infer that graduate unemployment is a multifaceted issue shaped by both personal choice and systemic barriers. Addressing it requires a dual strategy: strengthening institutional support for career readiness and creating wider opportunities through industry linkages, while also encouraging proactive job-seeking behaviors among graduates.

Table 8 shows that most employed graduates hold permanent positions, indicating job stability, better benefits, and security - factors linked to higher job satisfaction for recent graduates (Goldan et al., 2023). Temporary employment is least common, reflecting its lower desirability and its role as a transitional phase toward stable work. However, some graduates remain in non-permanent roles, highlighting the need for targeted support to facilitate their shift to permanent positions. Career counseling, industry partnerships, and professional development programs can strengthen employability and adaptability, ultimately enhancing long-term job satisfaction (Báo, 2021; Fan et al., 2023).

Table 8. *Current Employment Status*

Employment Status	Frequency	Percentage
Permanent	33	60.00
Contractual	15	27.00
Casual	3	5.00
Self-employed	3	5.00
Temporary	1	2.00

Inferentially, the high proportion of permanent employment (60%) suggests that the majority of graduates have successfully transitioned into secure labor market positions, implying that the university's programs effectively equip students with skills valued by employers. Conversely, the 40% in non-permanent roles - including contractual, casual, temporary, and self-employed positions - indicates a substantial segment of graduates who may still face employment precarity or limited access to benefits. If generalized, this pattern suggests that while educational preparation supports employability, structural or market-related constraints may prevent all graduates from attaining fully stable employment. Furthermore, the distribution of employment types infers the potential need for continuous professional development and career support post-graduation, particularly for those in contractual or casual roles. Targeted interventions such as skill enhancement workshops, mentorship programs, and facilitated industry connections could help these graduates transition into permanent employment, ultimately improving long-term career outcomes and satisfaction.

Table 9 reveals that many graduates work in clerical, service, and trade-related roles, suggesting underemployment and a mismatch between their educational qualifications and job placements. This trend aligns with Suna et al. (2020) those who note that limited labor market capacity - rather than educational quality alone - drives graduates into out-of-field employment. The low proportion of technicians and professionals reflects the scarcity or misalignment of specialized job opportunities, a situation linked to lower income and stalled career progression (Veselinović et al., 2020).

Table 9. *Present Occupations (Based on PSOC Classification)*

Current Employment	Frequency	Percentage
Clerk	15	27.00
Service workers and Shop and Market Sales Workers	14	25.00
Trade and Related Workers	13	24.00
Officials of the Government and Special Interest Organizations,	7	12.00
Corporate Executives, Managers, Managing Proprietors and Supervisors		
Labourers and Unskilled Workers	2	4.00
Professionals	1	2.00
Technicians and Associate Professionals	1	2.00
Farmers, Forestry Workers and Fishermen	1	2.00
Police/Military Service	1	2.00

Inferentially, the data suggest that despite high overall employment rates, a significant portion of graduates may be underemployed, occupying positions that do not fully utilize their skills or training. If generalized, this pattern indicates systemic gaps in labor market absorption, where educational attainment does not necessarily guarantee employment in one's field of study. This may lead to long-term implications for career growth, income potential, and job satisfaction. Moreover, the concentration of graduates in lower-skilled roles implies a potential need for

interventions such as skills upgrading, career mapping, and stronger university–industry collaboration to ensure graduates are competitive for professional or specialized positions. By aligning curricula with market demands and facilitating targeted training opportunities, the university could reduce skill-job mismatches, enhance employability, and improve long-term occupational outcomes for its graduates.

Table 10 shows that most employed graduates work in the private sector, with fewer in public or government agencies, underscoring the private sector’s dominant role in graduate employment. Private firms often offer more flexible and faster hiring processes compared to the competitive, vacancy-limited, and bureaucratic nature of public sector recruitment (Januariyansah et al., 2022; Mekonnen Yimer et al., 2024; Drishti, 2025). Transversal competencies - valued in private industry - further enable graduates to adapt and succeed in such roles (Belchior-Rocha et al., 2022).

Table 10. *Type of Agency for Employed Individuals (Excluding Self-employed)*

Type of Agency	Frequency	Percentage
Private	34	65.00
Public	18	35.00
Total	52	100.00

Inferentially, the predominance of private-sector employment suggests that graduates are more responsive to immediate employment opportunities rather than sectoral preference, highlighting the private sector’s absorptive capacity and flexibility. This pattern implies that unless structural barriers in public sector recruitment - such as lengthy application procedures and skill misalignment - are addressed, a continued skew toward private employment may persist. Graduates may therefore limit their long-term career options, particularly in public service, which could affect the supply of skilled professionals in government and community-oriented roles. The data also suggest that universities play a critical role in preparing graduates for diverse employment contexts. Strengthening adaptability and market-relevant skills for private industry, while providing targeted guidance for navigating public sector hiring, could diversify employment outcomes and enhance labor market resilience (Veselinović et al., 2020 Dahal et al., 2024). Balancing placements across sectors may also increase graduates’ exposure to varied career pathways, supporting sustained professional growth and long-term job stability.

Table 11 reveals that within the private sector, graduates most frequently find employment in trading/distributorship/retailing and service industries. These sectors, characterized by relatively low barriers to entry, are often attractive to fresh graduates but may offer roles that do not fully engage their academic training, potentially affecting job satisfaction and long-term career development (Omar et al., 2022). Tan et al. (2023) note that such limitations in job scope can lower graduates’ confidence and expectations about their career trajectories. Inferentially, the concentration of graduates in retail and service roles suggests persistent skills–job mismatch, where educational preparation does not always translate into sector-specific or technical employment. This pattern suggests that graduates may experience underemployment, which limits their opportunities to apply specialized knowledge and develop advanced competencies. If generalized, this trend suggests that without targeted interventions, such as skills development, stronger industry-academia linkages, and guidance toward high-skill sectors, many graduates may remain in underutilized positions, potentially impacting long-term career growth and earning capacity.

Table 11. *Major Line of Business of the Company Presently Employed In (Private)*

Major Line of Business	Frequency	Percentage
Trading/Distributorship/Retailing	10	29.00
Service	10	29.00
Financial Intermediation	3	9.00
Construction	2	6.00
Real Estate, Renting and Business Activities	2	6.00
Education	2	6.00
Manufacturing	1	3.00
Electricity, Gas and Water Supply	1	3.00
Hotels and Restaurants	1	3.00
Transport Storage and Communication	1	3.00
Health and Social Work	1	3.00

By contrast, the low representation of graduates in specialized fields such as manufacturing, healthcare, and

hospitality may stem from stringent entry qualifications and the need for highly specialized skills (Chen et al., 2024; Tushabe et al., 2024). These findings suggest that structural and skill-based barriers persistently restrict access to technical and professional roles, underscoring the need to align curricula and practical training with labor market demands.

Overall, the trends highlight the need for higher education institutions to strengthen industry alignment through curriculum redesign, targeted skills training, and expanded sector partnerships. Active collaboration between academia and employers can broaden graduates' employment horizons, better equipping them for both entry-level and specialized positions, thereby mitigating persistent gaps between graduate skills and labor market requirements (Tuononen et al., 2019, O'Regan et al., 2022). The data indicate that most employed graduates are securing jobs within the local market, with limited evidence of overseas employment. This suggests that the domestic labor market is capable of absorbing a substantial portion of the graduate workforce, reflecting generally favorable local job availability (Bauto et al., 2024). Many graduates appear to prioritize immediate employment and practical experience over competing in the more constrained and competitive international job market (Waterworth et al., 2022).

Table 12. *Place of Work/Business*

Place of Work	Frequency	Percentage
Local	55	100.00

Inferentially, the absence of overseas placements implies that graduates may face limitations in global employability readiness. This includes factors such as lack of internationally recognized qualifications, certifications, language skills, or specialized training, which could otherwise enable them to compete in international labor markets (Bikar et al., 2023; Maguatcher Jeremie et al., 2024). If generalized, this trend suggests that without interventions to develop global competencies, graduates will likely remain predominantly tied to local employment, potentially limiting long-term career growth and global mobility.

The data further suggest that higher education institutions play a crucial role in expanding graduates' employment horizons. Integrating global readiness into curricula - through language training, internationally recognized certifications, exchange programs, internships, or global industry partnerships - can enhance competitiveness abroad and broaden career pathways. Initiatives such as digital portfolios and targeted job training can also help graduates demonstrate their skills to a broader range of employers, improving both local and international employability (Aljumah, 2023; Andini et al., 2024). Overall, while local employment pathways are currently strong, strategic institutional support is essential to prepare graduates for the global labor market and maximize their professional potential.

Data from Table 13 indicate that most employed graduates remain in their first job, suggesting they are at the initial stages of their professional trajectories. This early career phase underscores the importance of foundational competencies, particularly soft skills, in shaping initial employment outcomes (Hossain et al., 2020). The high proportion of graduates who have not changed employers may reflect job satisfaction, limited mobility, or restricted advancement opportunities. Relevant work-related training has been shown to enhance satisfaction during this stage, highlighting the need for adequate preparation and support in early employment (Hur et al., 2019).

Table 13. *First Job or Not*

Response	Frequency	Percentage
YES	48	92.00
NO	4	8.00
Total	52	100.00

Inferentially, the predominance of first-job retention (92%) suggests that graduates are either content with their current employment conditions or encounter barriers to exploring new opportunities, such as limited professional networks, insufficient experience, or risk aversion. If generalized, this trend may indicate that early-career mobility is low, which could delay skill diversification, career progression, and long-term professional growth. The low incidence of graduates transitioning beyond their first role also signals potential challenges in career advancement or a preference for stability. Transition difficulties, such as the "transition shock" observed in newly

graduated professionals, can reduce job satisfaction and deter early job changes (Kim & Yeo, 2021). Similarly, job security concerns and subjective assessments of status and autonomy may influence willingness to seek alternative opportunities (Sam, 2020).

These patterns suggest that institutional and workplace interventions, such as mentorship programs, structured career development, and experiential learning that integrates both technical and soft skills, are crucial for fostering adaptability, resilience, and proactive career management. Strengthening these supports can enhance early-career trajectories, ensuring that graduates are prepared not only to succeed in their first role but also to navigate future transitions effectively (McGunagle & Zizka, 2020).

Data from Table 14 shows that graduates prioritize job relevance to their academic programs and alignment with personal skills when accepting employment, reflecting a preference for roles that match their education and competencies. This alignment suggests a deliberate pursuit of meaningful work and supports earlier findings that graduates often seek positions closely related to their fields of study.

Table 14. Reasons for Accepting the Job

Reasons for Accepting the Job	Frequency	Percentage
Related to the program of study	32	26.00
Related to special skill	30	25.00
Salaries and benefits	24	20.00
Career challenge	21	17.00
Proximity to residence	7	6.00
Want to develop skills	3	3.00
Parents' choice	2	2.00
Job offer	1	1.00

*Multiple Responses

Inferentially, the emphasis on program- and skill-related job relevance indicates that graduates are making intentional, strategic choices in entering the workforce, which may enhance early-career satisfaction and reduce turnover. If generalized, this pattern suggests that graduates who align their first jobs with their academic background are more likely to experience smoother transitions into professional roles and to develop competencies that build long-term career trajectories. Conversely, factors such as accepting any offer, following parental choice, or seeking skill development ranked lowest, indicating a more selective and proactive job market approach. The low emphasis on skill development at the entry level may reflect missed opportunities for continuous learning. In this area, targeted work-related training could enhance job satisfaction and long-term employability (Hur et al., 2019). Overall, these trends suggest that while career alignment enhances early role satisfaction and performance, integrating skill growth into early employment and institutional support programs is crucial for sustained professional development. By fostering both immediate relevance and ongoing skill enhancement, graduates can achieve greater adaptability, resilience, and long-term employability.

Table 15 shows that most graduates view their first job as relevant to their academic program, indicating strong alignment between educational preparation and labor market needs. This supports earlier findings that curricula, particularly in teacher education, effectively equip graduates for vocational roles (Caingcoy & Barroso, 2020). Such alignment reflects positively on institutional training and highlights the value of curriculum–industry collaboration in shaping employability and self-efficacy (Ehiobuche et al., 2022).

Table 15. Relevance of First Job to the Course Taken Up in College

Relevance of First Job to Course	Frequency	Percentage
YES	49	94.00
NO	3	6.00
Total	52	100.00

Inferentially, the high proportion of graduates perceiving their first job as relevant (94%) suggests that the university's programs successfully prepare students for immediate entry into their respective fields. If generalized, this implies that graduates are more likely to experience early career satisfaction, higher productivity, and smoother transitions into professional roles. Moreover, this alignment may reduce the incidence of underemployment and skill–job mismatch, enhancing both individual career outcomes and workforce efficiency.

The minority reporting mismatches (6%) typically face urgent economic needs or limited opportunities in their field, reflecting structural constraints in the labor market (Y. Fan et al., 2023). These cases suggest that, despite high curriculum relevance, labor market factors beyond institutional control, such as job availability and economic pressures, continue to impact employment outcomes.

Overall, these trends underscore the importance of sustaining curriculum relevance through continuous adaptation of course content, integration of practical training, and strengthened partnerships with industry. Such measures ensure that graduates remain equipped to meet evolving workforce demands and maximize their professional potential (Engstrom, 2019 Ehiobuche et al., 2022).

Table 16 indicates that graduates primarily remain in their jobs due to the relevance of their roles to their educational backgrounds and personal competencies. This reflects findings that alignment between academic preparation and job functions enhances professional fulfillment and strengthens career identity (Fantinelli et al., 2024). Practical experiences integrated with theoretical knowledge further boost employability, supporting sustained employment.

Table 16. Reasons for Staying in the Job

Reasons for Staying in the Job	Frequency	Percentage
Related to the program of study	32	28.00
Related to special skill	30	26.00
Salaries and benefits	24	21.00
Career challenge	21	19.00
Proximity to residence	7	6.00

*Multiple Responses

Inferentially, the high importance of skill and program relevance as retention factors suggests that graduates are motivated by intrinsic career alignment rather than extrinsic conveniences, such as proximity to residence. If generalized, this pattern implies that graduates are more likely to remain in positions where they can apply their academic training effectively, potentially increasing productivity, job satisfaction, and long-term career stability. It also indicates that graduates who experience a mismatch between skills and job functions may be at higher risk of turnover or disengagement. The low ranking of geographic convenience supports the notion that meaningful engagement and skill utilization drive employment decisions more than logistical or practical considerations (Pommarang & Kenaphoom, 2024). These findings underscore the role of higher education institutions in continuously aligning curricula with labor market demands. Strategic industry-academic partnerships, data-driven curriculum development, and practical training integration are essential to ensure graduates' skills remain relevant and adaptable to evolving workforce needs (Calloway & Langford, 2024; Januzaj et al., 2024). Overall, the trends infer that fostering skill- and program-aligned roles enhances retention, satisfaction, and professional growth, benefiting both graduates and employers while reinforcing the value of continuous collaboration between academia and industry.

Table 17 shows that a substantial share of graduates change jobs due to termination rather than voluntary moves, reflecting labor market realities such as downsizing, restructuring, and contract expiration. These involuntary transitions underscore limited job security for early-career professionals (McLachlan, 2022).

Table 17. Reasons for Changing the Job

Reasons for Changing the Job	Frequency	Percentage
Terminated	2	32.00
Salaries and benefits	1	17.00
Career challenge	1	17.00
Related to special skill	1	17.00
Related to the program of study	1	17.00

*Multiple Responses

Inferentially, the predominance of termination as a reason for job change suggests that graduates face structural vulnerabilities in the labor market, particularly during the early stages of their careers. This may indicate gaps between graduate competencies and employer expectations, or systemic reliance on short-term contracts in specific industries. Such conditions reduce stability and constrain opportunities for long-term career development. Voluntary job changes - motivated by higher salaries, new challenges, or better job-field alignment - were less

common, suggesting that many graduates prioritize job retention over career advancement. This trend points to gaps in graduates' readiness for proactive career transitions and their ability to leverage skills in competitive markets (Ahmad et al., 2023). These findings highlight the need for educational institutions to prepare graduates not only for labor market entry but also for resilience, adaptability, and career planning (Alam et al., 2020). Integrating workplace readiness programs, mentoring, and curricula that balance technical and soft skills can enhance adaptability and empower graduates to navigate transitions proactively. On the organizational side, supportive policies during staffing changes - such as retraining, redeployment, or structured offboarding - are equally critical in fostering both individual and institutional resilience.

Table 18 shows that most graduates stayed in their first jobs for only one to six months, reflecting short job tenures and broader labor market instability. Only a minority achieved medium- to long-term stability, indicating that few initial roles align with graduates' skills and aspirations.

Table 18. Length of Time in the First Job

Length of Time in the First Job	Frequency	Percentage
1 to 6 months	7	64.00
Less than a month	2	18.00
7 to 11 months	1	9.00
1 year to less than 2 years	1	9.00

Inferentially, the predominance of short-term tenure suggests that many graduates experience early attrition either due to unmet expectations, inadequate preparation for workplace demands, or structural factors such as contractual employment. This pattern may also indicate that the first job is often perceived as a stepping stone rather than a long-term commitment, especially when it fails to provide career growth or meaningful skill utilization. Early workforce instability is linked to job-education mismatches, adaptation challenges, and limited career guidance (Farooq, 2011). When graduates lack sufficient support in the transition from school to work, they are more prone to exit roles prematurely. Conversely, evidence shows that strengthening onboarding processes, mentorship programs, and career alignment strategies can extend tenure and improve satisfaction (Mohd Salahuddin et al., 2023). If generalized, these findings suggest that without targeted institutional and employer interventions, graduates may struggle to establish stable career pathways. Addressing these issues through enhanced career readiness training, closer industry-academia collaboration, and workplace support mechanisms can reduce early attrition and foster a more resilient and adaptable graduate workforce.

Table 19 shows that most graduates secured their first jobs through walk-in applications, reflecting both proactive engagement and possible limited access to modern job search platforms. Least-used channels - such as radio ads, online platforms, and professor referrals - suggest gaps in digital job-search skills. While online tools can significantly improve job-finding rates, their potential remains underutilized (Marinescu & Wolthoff, 2020).

Table 19. Source of Information for Finding the First Job

Source of Information	Frequency	Percentage
Walk-in applicant	37	71.00
Recommended by someone	5	10.00
Information from friends	5	10.00
Through a job fair	2	3.00
Advertised on the radio	1	2.00
Through the internet	1	2.00
Information from professors	1	2.00
Total	52	100.00

Inferentially, the heavy reliance on walk-in applications implies that many graduates depend on traditional, low-cost, and immediate-access job-seeking methods, which may limit exposure to a broader range of opportunities. This reliance may also suggest weaker institutional linkages with industry and insufficient training in leveraging professional networks or digital tools. By contrast, the low utilization of internet-based searches indicates that graduates may not be fully maximizing platforms such as online job portals, social media networks, or professional sites, which have been shown to increase employability and match quality. These findings highlight

the need for institutions to strengthen career services through digital literacy workshops, resume and networking training, and stronger industry linkages. If unaddressed, graduates may continue to experience narrow employment options and slower labor market integration. However, with enhanced career support and technology-driven strategies, institutions can help students develop more competitive job-search behaviors, ultimately improving job match and long-term career outcomes.

Table 20 shows that most graduates secure jobs within one to six months after graduation, indicating a favorable job market and effective workforce preparation by educational institutions. Practical experiences, such as internships, play a key role in accelerating this transition.

Table 20. *Length of Time Before Landing in the First Job*

Length of Time Before Landing a Job	Frequency	Percentage
1 to 6 months	45	86.00
7 to 11 months	4	8.00
Less than a month	3	6.00
Total	52	100.00

Inferentially, this pattern suggests that while the majority of graduates demonstrate employability within a relatively short period, the extended search time for a minority signals disparities in adaptability and competitiveness. Graduates who secured jobs within a month may have benefited from strong social networks, pre-graduation job offers, or immediate labor demand in their field. At the same time, those who waited longer likely faced challenges related to market saturation, limited job openings in specialized areas, or weaker employment connections (Arthur et al., 2022). The dominance of the 1–6-month period also indicates that graduates are neither fully absorbed instantly into the labor market nor systematically delayed, but instead navigate a transitional phase shaped by both institutional preparation and personal strategies. This highlights the importance of aligning curricula with market demands and providing continuous career readiness support even after graduation. Targeted strategies - such as networking, tailored applications, and enhanced career counseling - can help shorten job searches and ensure more graduates transition smoothly into employment. Strengthening industry linkages and job placement services could further reduce waiting times and promote equitable access to opportunities across diverse fields.

Table 21 shows that most graduates begin in entry-level or clerical positions (90%), reflecting the common transition from academia to foundational workplace roles where essential skills are developed. Only a small share moved directly into managerial or executive roles (8%), while professional, technical, or supervisory positions were least represented (2%).

Table 21. *Job Level Position*

Job Level Position	Frequency	Percentage
Rank or Clerical	47	90.00
Managerial or Executive	4	8.00
Professional, Technical or Supervisory	1	2.00
Total	52	100.00

Inferentially, this distribution suggests that while the degree equips graduates with employability, the majority are not immediately absorbed into roles that fully utilize their specialized knowledge. Instead, they often undergo a “workplace socialization” stage, where basic competencies, professional behavior, and organizational skills are refined (Kenayathulla et al., 2019). The tiny proportion attaining higher-level positions may be explained by prior work exposure, substantial social capital, or exceptional performance during internships. This trend also highlights systemic factors: labor markets typically reserve managerial and supervisory roles for experienced professionals, placing fresh graduates at a structural disadvantage. The mismatch between academic preparation and employer expectations - particularly in leadership, communication, and problem-solving - limits direct entry into advanced positions (Kenayathulla et al., 2019). The implication is twofold: first, entry-level placements serve as stepping stones for skill development and career mobility; second, institutions must strengthen pathways that fast-track high-performing graduates into specialized or supervisory roles. This can be achieved through leadership training, industry immersion, mentorship programs, and curricula that integrate both technical expertise and soft skills. Doing so will better position graduates for upward mobility and long-term career

advancement (Kenayathulla et al., 2019).

Table 22 reveals that a large majority of graduates (89%) earn between ₱5,000 and ₱10,000, with very few surpassing the ₱15,000 mark. This intense concentration in the lower salary bracket reflects not only the realities of entry-level employment but also broader structural issues in the Philippine labor market, where wages often fail to keep pace with the cost of living (Hojda et al., 2022; Lee, 2019). Inferentially, this salary distribution suggests that many graduates experience underemployment - earning below what is expected for their educational attainment. The presence of only a small percentage (9%) in higher salary ranges points to unequal access to better-paying opportunities, often limited to those in managerial or specialized technical positions (Gesing et al., 2023). This pattern mirrors wage stratification, where graduates without strong networks, in-demand skills, or industry exposure are clustered in low-paying roles, while a select few capitalize on high-value niches.

Table 22. *Gross Monthly Earnings*

Monthly Gross Earnings	Frequency	Percentage
5,000 to less than 10,000	46	89.00
10,000 less than 15,000	2	3.00
Below 5,000	1	2.00
15,000 less than 20,000	1	2.00
20,000 less than 25,000	1	2.00
25,000 and above	1	2.00
Total	52	100.00

The implications extend beyond immediate earnings. Persistent low wages can hinder career satisfaction, delay financial independence, and reduce motivation for professional advancement (Chowdhury & Islam, 2022). Furthermore, early career income levels strongly influence long-term economic mobility, as modest beginnings can limit opportunities for savings, investments, and skill upgrades. For institutions, these findings highlight the need to integrate labor market intelligence into program design, ensuring that curricula are closely aligned with high-demand, better-paying sectors. Expanding access to internships, industry certifications, and career mentoring can improve graduates' competitiveness, helping them negotiate higher entry salaries. For policymakers and industries, promoting fair wage practices and fostering inclusive growth are critical to reducing income disparities and ensuring graduates achieve sustainable career development.

Table 23 shows that the few graduates who pursued self-employment are equally spread across trading/retailing/distribution (33%), services (33%), and food processing (33%). This even distribution suggests that there is no dominant entrepreneurial sector for graduates, and instead, choices are shaped by individual interests, available resources, and perceived opportunities. Such diversification reflects flexibility and adaptability, key traits in navigating uncertain markets (Fearon et al., 2020).

Table 23. *Type of Business (For Self-employed Only)*

Type of Business	Frequency	Percentage
Trading/Retailing/Distribution	1	33.00
Service	1	33.00
Food Processing	1	33.00
Total	3	100.00

Inferentially, the data imply that while graduates demonstrate an entrepreneurial mindset, self-employment remains a marginal path compared to wage employment. This low participation (only three graduates) indicates the presence of structural and personal barriers to entrepreneurship, including a lack of capital, limited business networks, and insufficient confidence or exposure to entrepreneurial practices. The findings align with research showing that many graduates hesitate to venture into business due to high risks and inadequate institutional support (Boldureanu et al., 2020). Moreover, the types of businesses reflect low-capital, necessity-driven entrepreneurship rather than high-growth ventures. Trading, basic services, and food processing are accessible sectors requiring modest investment but offering limited scalability. This pattern may signal that entrepreneurship is less about innovation and more about livelihood security among graduates. From an institutional perspective, the findings emphasize the need to strengthen entrepreneurship education and support systems. Embedding practical business incubation programs, providing mentorship from industry practitioners, and linking graduates to financing options (e.g., microfinance, government grants) could increase both the number and success of

student entrepreneurs. If adequately supported, these entrepreneurial ventures can evolve into sustainable enterprises that contribute to local economic growth and employment generation.

Table 24 reveals that two-thirds (67%) of self-employed graduates earn between ₱50,000 and ₱100,000 annually, while the remaining one-third (33%) fall within the ₱100,000 and ₱150,000 range. None reported earnings beyond ₱150,000. This distribution underscores the concentration of graduate entrepreneurs in the lower income brackets, suggesting that while self-employment offers independence, it does not immediately translate to substantial financial returns.

Table 24. Annual Income Range (For Self-employed Only)

Annual Income Range	Frequency	Percentage
50,000-100,000	2	67.00
100,000-150,000	1	33.00
Total	3	100.00

Inferentially, the results highlight the early-stage and small-scale nature of graduate-led businesses, which tend to prioritize survival over profitability. Limited capital investment, restricted market access, and relatively new entrepreneurial experience likely constrain revenue generation (Keha Kuko & Msuya, 2024). In effect, these self-employed graduates may be operating in necessity-based entrepreneurship, where business ownership is pursued due to limited job opportunities rather than growth-oriented innovation. The findings also align with broader evidence that income volatility is a common feature of small enterprises, particularly in their formative years (Conen & Schippers, 2019). Such instability can hinder wealth accumulation and long-term financial security, making entrepreneurship a riskier career path compared to wage employment. At the same time, the presence of even a small portion of graduates earning above ₱100,000 suggests potential scalability if appropriate supports are in place.

From a policy and institutional standpoint, these results point to the importance of structured entrepreneurial ecosystems. Access to mentorship, incubation programs, and financing opportunities could help transform modest, subsistence-level businesses into sustainable ventures. Moreover, developing competencies in strategic management, digital marketing, and financial literacy (Kamuzora, 2024) can enhance income potential and allow graduates to compete in broader markets. Ultimately, the evidence suggests that while graduate self-employment contributes to livelihood and local economic activity, without targeted support, most will remain confined to low-income levels. Strengthening institutional and policy frameworks could therefore bridge this gap, enabling graduates to transition from survivalist businesses to more growth-oriented enterprises with higher income trajectories.

Table 25 shows that the majority of graduates report being either “very much” satisfied (44%) or “much” satisfied (46%), indicating a substantial prevalence of positive job experiences among respondents. This suggests that most graduates feel a degree of alignment between their academic preparation and current employment, supporting theories that job satisfaction increases when work roles meet personal expectations and skill sets (Serhan & Tsangari, 2022). Such outcomes may also imply that higher education institutions are equipping students with competencies that translate effectively into workplace settings.

Table 25. Level of Satisfaction with Current Job

Level of Satisfaction	Frequency	Percentage
Much	24	46.00
Very Much	23	44.00
Little	3	6.00
Not	2	4.00
Total	52	100.00

Inferentially, the data suggest that job satisfaction is not solely determined by salary or job level but also by non-monetary factors such as professional growth opportunities, supportive workplace culture, and the sense of purpose derived from one’s role (Espinoza et al., 2024). The high rates of satisfaction may also reflect graduates’ adaptive expectations, where individuals initially value job stability and experience even in entry-level positions,

especially during the early years of employment. Nevertheless, the presence of 10% of respondents expressing only “little” or “no” satisfaction highlights disparities within the group. This minority may represent graduates facing job mismatch, underemployment, or dissatisfaction with compensation and working conditions. Inferentially, these lower satisfaction levels could correlate with graduates employed outside their field of study or in roles offering limited advancement, consistent with findings that job mismatch significantly reduces employee morale and retention (Chikazhe et al., 2023). The findings underscore the need for continuous institutional and policy interventions. Universities can strengthen graduate satisfaction by integrating career guidance, skills alignment programs, and industry linkages to reduce mismatches. Employers, on the other hand, can enhance satisfaction by fostering supportive work environments and offering clear pathways for career progression.

Overall, the data suggest that while most graduates are satisfied with their jobs, sustaining and improving these levels requires synergistic efforts from educational institutions, employers, and policymakers to ensure that employment not only meets immediate needs but also supports long-term career fulfillment.

3.5 Course/Program Assessment

Table 26 indicates that the most frequently reported competencies acquired in college are human relations skills (25%), communication skills (24%), and critical thinking skills (23%). This pattern underscores the strong orientation of higher education programs toward cultivating soft skills and higher-order thinking abilities, which are highly transferable across industries and professions. Inferentially, this suggests that colleges are succeeding in aligning their outcomes with labor market demands, as numerous studies highlight the centrality of interpersonal and cognitive skills in employability and workplace performance (Dolce et al., 2020 Abdullah et al., 2022). The relative balance between communication, human relations, and critical thinking also implies that institutions foster both interactional competencies (teamwork, collaboration) and analytical capacities (decision-making, reasoning).

Table 26. Competencies Learned in College

Competencies	Frequency	Percentage
Human Relations skills	67	25.00
Communication skills	65	24.00
Critical Thinking skills	64	23.00
Problem-solving skills	58	21.00
Leadership skills	15	6.00
Entrepreneurial skills	3	1.00

*Multiple Responses

From an inferential standpoint, the low representation of entrepreneurial skills (1%) raises concerns about graduates’ readiness for self-employment, innovation, and entrepreneurial ventures. This is particularly significant given the rising global trend toward entrepreneurship as a response to limited wage employment opportunities. The gap suggests that while colleges prepare students to thrive as employees, they may be less effective in equipping them to generate jobs or lead businesses. This aligns with Pitan & Muller (2023) the argument that the absence of entrepreneurial training can hinder adaptability, creativity, and long-term competitiveness. Another key inference is the relatively modest presence of leadership skills (6%), which, though less emphasized in traditional curricula, is critical for career progression into supervisory and managerial roles. The lack of strong leadership development may inadvertently slow graduates’ transition into higher positions, reinforcing patterns of underemployment or stagnation in entry-level roles.

Taken together, these findings highlight the dual strengths and gaps of the current educational approach: while interpersonal and critical thinking skills are well-nurtured, entrepreneurship and leadership remain underdeveloped. Addressing this requires curriculum reforms and experiential learning opportunities such as business incubation programs, leadership workshops, and project-based initiatives that simulate real-world challenges. By diversifying skill development, institutions can better prepare graduates not only to secure employment but also to create opportunities, innovate, and lead in a dynamic labor market.

Table 27 demonstrates that the program’s strongest contributions are in fostering team spirit (WAM = 4.75, VMC, Rank 1), learning efficiency (WAM = 4.61, VMC, Rank 2), and academic knowledge (WAM = 4.48, VMC, Rank 3).

Overall, graduates perceived the BSBA-FM program to have made a decisive contribution to their knowledge, skills, and attitudes, as reflected in the Total Weighted Average Mean of 4.33 (Very Much Contributed). These high ratings highlight the program's effectiveness in strengthening collaboration, adaptability, and academic foundations. Similarly, strong scores for communication (4.42) and problem-solving skills (4.39) underscore its success in cultivating essential soft skills for employability. This pattern suggests that the program creates collaborative, adaptive, and knowledge-based learning environments, consistent with Mokhets'engoane et al. (2024) the emphasis on teamwork and peer-supported learning, which is pivotal in strengthening both personal development and academic mastery. The consistently high means also imply that graduates recognize the program as instrumental in shaping positive attitudes and transferable skills critical for career entry and sustained employability.

Table 27. *Contribution of the Program to Graduates' Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes*

Contribution of the Program	5	4	3	2	1	Wtd. Ave.	DE	Rank
Enhanced team spirit	4.13	0.46	0.13	0.03	0.00	4.75	VMC	1
Improved learning efficiency	3.91	0.29	0.35	0.06	0.00	4.61	VMC	2
Improved communication skills	3.55	0.41	0.30	0.14	0.01	4.42	VMC	4
Enhanced academic knowledge	3.26	0.87	0.26	0.09	0.00	4.48	VMC	3
Improved information technology skills	2.75	0.75	0.52	0.14	0.01	4.19	MC	6
Improved problem-solving skills	2.68	1.39	0.26	0.06	0.00	4.39	VMC	5
Improved managerial skills	1.09	2.78	0.13	0.06	0.01	4.07	MC	7
Improved research skills	0.87	2.09	0.65	0.09	0.04	3.74	MC	8
Total Weighted Average Mean						4.33	VMC	

At the same time, research skills (WAM = 3.74, MC, Rank 8), managerial skills (WAM = 4.07, MC, Rank 7), and information technology skills (WAM = 4.19, MC, Rank 6) received comparatively lower ratings. This indicates that while the program is highly effective in developing soft skills and general learning, it is less successful in strengthening technical and specialized competencies. Such gaps reflect a common challenge in higher education curricula where theoretical and interpersonal development often outweigh applied research, leadership preparation, and digital literacy—skills increasingly critical in knowledge-driven and technology-intensive workplaces (Monteiro et al., 2021). The contrast between strong interpersonal outcomes and weaker technical skills highlights the dual nature of program impact: on one hand, it prepares graduates to thrive in entry-level and collaborative roles; on the other, it may constrain upward mobility, innovation, and adaptability in digitally transforming industries.

From an inferential perspective, these findings suggest that integrating experiential research opportunities, leadership development programs, and advanced digital training modules could balance the curriculum. Doing so would not only reinforce the program's existing strengths in collaboration and adaptability but also address the identified technical gaps. In effect, this could better position graduates for both immediate employment success and long-term professional advancement, responding to employer demands for well-rounded individuals who combine strong soft skills with technical expertise.

The analysis of Table 27, therefore, underscores the significant impact of the BSBA-FM program, with its overall contribution rated at 4.33 (Very Much Contributed). The consistently high ratings in soft skills - particularly teamwork, learning adaptability, and communication - corroborate prior research showing that firm foundations in these areas accelerate job acquisition and enhance early career success (Koh et al., 2022 Akkermans et al., 2024). Conversely, the lower means for research, managerial, and IT skills reflect persistent challenges in preparing graduates for supervisory or specialized roles, as also observed by (Daniel et al., 2023). This dichotomy reveals that while the program excels in equipping graduates with employability skills for quick workforce integration, it must evolve to bridge technical proficiency with soft skill development. Addressing this balance would ensure not only immediate job readiness but also long-term career growth aligned with the demands of a competitive and technology-driven labor market (Fan & Wang, 2022).

Table 28 illustrates that the program's most significant contributions to graduates' current employment are in learning efficiency (WAM = 4.64, VMC, Rank 1), academic knowledge (WAM = 4.58, VMC, Rank 2), and communication skills (WAM = 4.52, VMC, Rank 3). Graduates perceived the BSBA-FM program as highly relevant to their present jobs and business operations, as reflected in the Total Weighted Average Mean of 4.32 (Very Much

Contributed). The most substantial contributions indicate that the program effectively prepared graduates with adaptive learning strategies, theoretical foundations, and workplace communication competencies necessary for job performance. Research skills (4.45) and team spirit (4.33) were also rated very positively, suggesting that the curriculum supported evidence-based thinking and collaborative work attitudes. This alignment demonstrates that graduates perceive strong connections between their educational preparation and workplace demands, particularly in areas requiring adaptability, knowledge application, and effective interaction with colleagues and clients. Inferentially, these results indicate that the program equips graduates with foundational competencies that facilitate early career success and enhance employability (Marsafawy et al., 2022 Attaullah & Khan, 2023).

Table 28. *Contribution of the Program to the Graduates' Present Job/ Business Operations*

Program Relevance	5	4	3	2	1	Wtd. Ave.	DE	Rank
Improved learning efficiency	3.70	0.70	0.22	0.03	0.00	4.64	VMC	1
Enhanced academic knowledge	3.41	0.93	0.22	0.03	0.00	4.58	VMC	2
Improved communication skills	3.33	0.93	0.17	0.09	0.00	4.52	VMC	3
Improved research skills	2.83	1.45	0.13	0.03	0.01	4.45	VMC	4
Enhanced team spirit	2.83	1.04	0.35	0.12	0.00	4.33	VMC	5
Improved problem-solving skills	2.46	1.33	0.43	0.06	0.00	4.29	VMC	6
Improved information technology skills	1.74	1.22	0.96	0.06	0.00	3.97	MC	7
Improved managerial skills	0.72	2.20	0.83	0.03	0.01	3.80	MC	8
Total Weighted Average Mean						4.32	VMC	

The findings further suggest that the BSBA-FM program has a notable impact on graduates' employment and operational success, as evidenced by a Total Weighted Average Mean of 4.32, categorizing it in the "Very Much Contributed" range. Competencies such as learning efficiency, academic knowledge, and communication skills are strongly linked to the essential skills required for entry-level clerical positions, which are prevalent in the employment landscape of the graduates (Nanos & ., 2024). These observations are consistent with research that emphasizes the importance of foundational skills in enhancing job satisfaction among graduates, underscoring their critical role in daily professional interactions and the practical application of theoretical knowledge (Albalushi & Naqshbandi, 2022; Ng'ora et al., 2022). Additionally, the high ratings for research skills and team spirit affirm the program's effectiveness in nurturing collaborative and analytical competencies essential for routine business functions (Murtianingsih et al., 2023; Mueller, 2024).

On the other hand, information technology skills (WAM = 3.97, MC, Rank 7) and managerial skills (WAM = 3.80, MC, Rank 8) received comparatively lower ratings, though still favorable. These results imply that while the program has been successful in strengthening general academic, communication, and interpersonal competencies, it has been less effective in cultivating advanced technical and managerial skills. This observation aligns with previous findings highlighting the necessity of enhancing IT and leadership training to better equip graduates for career advancement in increasingly digital and complex business environments (Saefullah & Rohaeni, 2022 Cheng et al., 2024).

The differential impact observed across competencies highlights that the program strongly fosters adaptive and collaborative skills, supporting performance in operational or team-based roles, but does not fully address advanced technical and managerial capabilities. This has implications for graduates' career mobility: without strengthened managerial and IT proficiency, they may experience slower advancement or encounter limitations in taking on complex, strategic responsibilities. From an inferential perspective, the data emphasize the importance of curricular enhancements that integrate leadership training, technology-focused modules, and experiential learning opportunities such as simulations, project-based work, or internships in managerial contexts. By doing so, institutions can ensure that graduates not only perform effectively in their current roles but also develop the competencies necessary to progress into supervisory, specialized, or entrepreneurial positions. Ultimately, such improvements would support both workforce adaptability and long-term career growth, bridging the gap between foundational education and the demands of an evolving, technologically driven labor market (Indriawan & Maria, 2024).

Table 29 indicates that graduates perceive the curriculum's relevance to professional requirements (WAM = 4.64, Rank 1) as its greatest strength. The curriculum under the College of Business Administration and Accountancy was generally rated positively, as reflected in the Total Weighted Average Mean of 4.15, which indicates that

graduates found it satisfactory to very satisfactory overall. This suggests that the program effectively aligns academic content with labor market needs, enhancing employability, career readiness, and graduates' motivation to pursue work in their field (Heriyadi et al., 2023). Strong teacher-student relationships (WAM = 4.49, Rank 2) and a variety of extracurricular activities (WAM = 4.45, Rank 3) further reinforce holistic learning, fostering both social-emotional development and professional competencies. Inferentially, these factors suggest that supportive learning environments and structured academic programs contribute positively to graduate satisfaction and preparedness, enhancing long-term career outcomes.

Table 29. *Responses on the Strengths and Weaknesses of the Curriculum under the College of Business Administration and Accountancy*

Particulars	5	4	3	2	1	Wtd. Ave.	Rank
Relevance of the program to your professional requirements	3.62	0.81	0.17	0.03	0.00	4.64	1
Extracurricular activities	3.33	0.58	0.48	0.06	0.00	4.45	3
Inter-disciplinary learning	3.19	0.75	0.39	0.09	0.00	4.42	4
Teacher-Student Relationship	2.90	1.39	0.17	0.03	0.00	4.49	2
Quality of delivery	2.46	1.28	0.48	0.06	0.00	4.28	5
Work placement/attachment	2.17	1.39	0.52	0.09	0.00	4.17	7
Teaching/Learning Environment	2.03	1.68	0.43	0.06	0.00	4.20	6
Problem Solving	1.67	1.28	0.87	0.12	0.00	3.93	10
Number of optional subjects	1.16	2.03	0.74	0.03	0.00	3.96	9
Range of Courses Offered	1.09	2.90	0.13	0.03	0.00	4.14	8
Library/Lab. Etc.	0.14	0.46	2.13	0.20	0.04	2.99	11
Total Weighted Average Mean						4.15	

On the other hand, areas that received comparatively lower ratings include problem-solving (WAM = 3.93, Rank 10), number of optional subjects (WAM = 3.96, Rank 9), and especially library and laboratory facilities (WAM = 2.99, Rank 11), which was identified as the weakest area. These results imply that while the program effectively meets professional and academic needs, it needs further development in terms of problem-solving training, curriculum flexibility, and improved access to learning resources and facilities. Inferentially, resource limitations may hinder experiential learning and practical application of theoretical concepts, reducing graduates' readiness for complex, real-world challenges and potentially creating a disconnect between curricular intentions and tangible learning opportunities (Roach O'Keefe et al., 2019). Similarly, modest scores for problem-solving suggest that students may have had fewer chances to engage in critical and applied decision-making tasks, competencies vital for effective workforce integration (Mafazi, 2023).

These findings suggest a curriculum that is strong in aligning content with professional expectations but could benefit from enhanced resource provision, hands-on learning, and elective diversification. Strengthening these weaker components would help balance the curriculum, ensuring that graduates are not only well-prepared academically but also equipped with critical problem-solving skills and adequate resources for applied learning. The inferential takeaway is that continuous curriculum refinement, informed by graduate feedback and industry trends, is essential for sustaining program relevance and maximizing educational impact.

4.0 Conclusion

This study contributes to understanding the employability landscape of BSBA-FM graduates by revealing both strengths and areas for growth in aligning academic preparation with labor market demands. On the whole, the program was rated positively, with a Total Weighted Average Mean of 4.33–4.32 across program contributions and job relevance, and 4.15 for curriculum evaluation, reflecting that graduates generally perceived the program as very much contributory and satisfactory to their professional development. The program effectively nurtures soft skills - such as communication, problem-solving, and teamwork - that are highly valued by employers, facilitating graduates' quick entry into the workforce. These findings underscore the program's relevance to practice and its role in fostering workforce readiness.

However, the observed underemployment, coupled with skill gaps in research, managerial, IT, and entrepreneurial competencies, suggests a need for targeted curriculum enrichment. Strengthening industry partnerships, enhancing institutional placement services, and upgrading learning facilities could bridge these gaps and enable graduates to transition into more specialized and leadership-oriented roles.

From a policy and educational standpoint, the results call for integrating advanced technical training, expanding internship opportunities, and embedding continuing education pathways into the program to support lifelong learning. For practice, stronger collaboration between the university and industries can ensure that training remains responsive to evolving business needs. Future research may explore longitudinal tracking of graduate career progression, the impact of professional certifications, and the role of entrepreneurial skills in expanding career opportunities. By addressing these areas, higher education institutions can move beyond producing employable graduates to cultivating adaptive, future-ready professionals capable of thriving in a dynamic economic landscape.

5.0 Contribution of Authors

Author 1: conceptualization, encoding, data analysis
 Author 2: conceptualization, data gathering
 Author 3: data gathering
 Author 4: data gathering
 Author 5: data gathering

6.0 Funding

No research grant was received for the completion of this research.

7.0 Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in the publication of the paper.

8.0 Acknowledgment

The researchers extend heartfelt thanks to the Kalinga State University BSBA-FM graduates from 2021 to 2023 for their generous participation in this tracer study. Your thoughtful responses and willingness to share information about your employment journey have been crucial to the success of this study. Your cooperation provides valuable insights into the career paths and professional growth of graduates, and we sincerely appreciate your contribution to this research.

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