

Article

Not peer-reviewed version

Tracing the Uncharted Odyssey: A 2017-2022 Tracer Study of the College of Arts and Sciences Alumni's Career Paths

[Edgar R. Eslit](#) *

Posted Date: 21 September 2023

doi: 10.20944/preprints202309.1458.v1

Keywords: Alumni's Career Paths; College of Arts and Sciences; Tracer Study; Uncharted Odyssey



Preprints.org is a free multidiscipline platform providing preprint service that is dedicated to making early versions of research outputs permanently available and citable. Preprints posted at Preprints.org appear in Web of Science, Crossref, Google Scholar, Scilit, Europe PMC.

Copyright: This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Article

Tracing the Uncharted Odyssey: A 2017-2022 Tracer Study of the College of Arts and Sciences Alumni's Career Paths

Edgar R. Eslit

St. Michael's College, Iligan City, Philippines E-mail: edgareslit@gmail.com, e.eslit@my.smciligan.edu.ph

Abstract: In a rapidly evolving educational and economic landscape, exacerbated by the unforeseen ripple effects of the pandemic, this qualitative tracer study, encompassing 30 alumni participants from batches 2017 to 2022, delves into the professional journeys of College of Arts and Sciences alumni from St. Michael's College in Iligan City, Philippines. Combining in-depth literature reviews, astute observations, insightful informal interviews, and rigorous thematic analysis, this research unveils invaluable insights. The findings resonate with a clarion call for educational institutions to synchronize curricula with industry requisites, nurturing graduates with the critical thinking and communication skills imperative for heightened employability. Amidst this voyage, it becomes evident that personal aspirations wield remarkable influence in carving distinct career trajectories, underscoring the indispensable role of comprehensive career guidance and counseling within educational domains. Noteworthy is the profound impact of the ever-changing economic dynamics of the Philippines on the employability of these alumni, demanding perpetual adaptation in educational paradigms. Remarkably, the collective contributions of these graduates span diverse academic programs, attesting to their positive workforce imprint. Further exploration reveals a substantial proportion engaging in post-graduate education and training to enrich their qualifications. In a remarkable testament to their educational journey, alumni manifest a notably high level of job satisfaction, buoyed by facets like work-life equilibrium and employment stability. Overall, this tracer study is poised to drive transformative shifts in higher education, advocating for curricular harmonization, amplified career support, holistic skill cultivation, resilience to economic fluctuations, and sustained research to remain aligned with the dynamic job market. It serves as a catalyst in shaping an empowered, content, and adaptive workforce for tomorrow's challenges and opportunities.

Keywords: Alumni's career paths; College of Arts and Sciences; tracer study; uncharted odyssey

I. Introduction

The landscape of higher education is a dynamic terrain where the fate of alumni plays a pivotal role in shaping the perception and vitality of academic institutions. This study embarks on a journey to trace the uncharted odyssey of alumni from the College of Arts and Sciences at St. Michael's College, Iligan City, Philippines—a Catholic institution under the auspices of the dedicated Religious of the Virgin Mary (RVM) Sisters. St. Michael's College, a beacon of educational excellence, has earned recognition for its commitment to quality, being accredited by the Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges, and Universities (PAASCU). Within its hallowed halls, it has nurtured the intellectual growth and personal development of countless individuals while navigating the challenges and unforeseen ripples of a changing world (SMC Legacy Lingers Coffee table book, 20150).

This college offers a diverse array of academic programs, encompassing AB-Philosophy, AB-English Language, and BS-Psychology, each of which equips students with valuable knowledge and skills, while also fostering a profound sense of purpose and inquiry that extends beyond the boundaries of the classroom.

In the Philippines, the pursuit of meaningful employment is a central concern. The dynamics of employment have been notably influenced by economic, social, and technological forces in recent years. This study, conducted in SMC last August 2023 to cover the alumni who graduated between 2017 to 2022, constitutes a tracer study, aiming to provide a holistic understanding of the career paths of the esteemed alumni. It addresses the evolving landscape of post-graduation experiences, encompassing their initial forays into the professional world and the myriad factors shaping their employment outcomes.

The tracer study concept has been instrumental in gaining insights into alumni career paths. It follows a growing trend in higher education research. Pannogan and Ocampo (2017) conducted a tracer study focusing on Bachelor of Arts graduates majoring in English, providing valuable insights into the employment patterns and career trajectories of graduates. Romadlon and Arifin (2021) emphasized the role of tracer studies in improving graduate profiles, highlighting the importance of understanding the dynamics of alumni careers. Efiyanna, Hastono, and Syafiq (2019) explored the alignment of work types with alumni specialization and origin, showcasing the utility of tracer studies in illuminating the connection between education and employment.

In the context of SMC, Iligan City, the Philippines, where the quest for gainful employment remains a critical concern, it is noteworthy that the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) reported an estimated employment rate of 94.8 percent in January 2019 (PSA Philippines Statistics Authority, 2019). This statistic underscores the significance of examining the employment outcomes of college graduates.

In this qualitative research endeavor, the researcher being the current dean, embarks on a compelling exploration of the career paths and journeys undertaken by a meticulously selected alumni of the College of Arts and Sciences, spanning the pivotal years from 2017 to 2022. These alumni, chosen for their unparalleled relevance to the research question (Mohajan, 2018), represent the very essence of this study. Their unique perspective allows the researcher to not merely observe but immerse in the ebb and flow of their careers over time. The study is poised to traverse a terrain as diverse as their academic pursuits, ranging from Philosophy, Psychology and English Language, promising a vivid mosaic of career paths. Within this mosaic, the researcher encounters a multitude of career stages, from recent graduates embarking on their professional journeys to seasoned ones reflecting on years of experience. It is from these varying stages that the researcher anticipates extracting in-depth insights, delving into the intricacies of how their college education intersected with their career choices, skills development, and professional growth.

Moreover, their profound connection to the esteemed educational institution beckons them to candidly share their experiences and enrich the research with their perspectives. The accessibility of data stemming from this group facilitates a comprehensive study (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022), while the implications of the findings for educational institutions like SMC resonate profoundly, contributing to the broader body of knowledge surrounding the outcomes and impact of higher education (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Hernani et al., 2022).

This study aligns with the broader trend of employing tracer studies to enhance the quality and relevance of higher education programs. Cuadra, Lijuera, and Aure (2019) have underscored the utility of tracer studies in improving undergraduate programs, emphasizing their role in academic program enhancement.

Objective: The primary objective of this research study is to comprehensively trace the career paths of alumni from the College of Arts and Sciences at St. Michael's College, Iligan City, Philippines, from 2017 to 2022, and to analyze the factors influencing their employment outcomes.

Research Questions:

Here, the researcher delves into a comprehensive exploration of alumni career trajectories over a five-year period. This study put in place ten (10) pivotal research questions to shed light on the diverse and dynamic professional journeys undertaken by graduates of the College of Arts and Sciences. These questions provide a roadmap for unraveling the post-graduation experiences, choices, and successes of alumni, offering valuable insights into the impact of their academic pursuits.

1. What is the current employment status of alumni from the College of Arts and Sciences at St. Michael's College, Iligan City, Philippines, who graduated between 2017 and 2022?

2. What industries and sectors have these alumni entered in to practice their careers?
3. To what extent do the educational backgrounds of alumni associate with their career choices?
4. What skills acquired during their academic journey have been most valuable in alumni's professional lives?
5. What role does personal aspiration play in shaping alumni career trajectories?
6. How has the evolving economic landscape of the Philippines influenced alumni employment outcomes?
7. Have there been notable differences in employment outcomes among alumni from different academic programs (AB-Philosophy, AB-English Language, and BS-Psychology)?
8. To what extent have alumni engaged in further education or training after completing their initial degrees?
9. How satisfied are alumni with their current career paths, and what factors contribute to their job satisfaction or dissatisfaction?
10. What insights can be drawn from this tracer study to inform the future directions of the College of Arts and Sciences?

Theoretical Framework:

This research study draws upon three key theoretical perspectives to provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the career paths of alumni from the College of Arts and Sciences at St. Michael's College, Iligan City, Philippines, between 2017 and 2022.

Human Capital Theory, pioneered by Gary S. Becker in 1964, forms the first pillar of the paper's framework. This theory posits that individuals' investments in education and skills development enhance their human capital, thereby increasing their earning potential and career success. In the context of this study, Human Capital Theory serves as a lens through which the researcher examines how the educational backgrounds and acquired skills of alumni relate with their employment outcomes and income levels.

The second theoretical perspective, Social Capital Theory, rooted in the work of Pierre Bourdieu (1986), underscores the significance of social networks, relationships, and connections in shaping career trajectories. It suggests that individuals with robust social capital have access to a wider array of opportunities and resources. The researcher employs this theory to explore how the social networks and connections of alumni have influenced their career choices, advancement, and access to employment opportunities.

Career Construction Theory, developed by Mark Savickas in 2005, constitutes the third dimension of the paper's theoretical framework. This theory centers on the dynamic and subjective nature of career development. It asserts that individuals actively construct their careers based on their self-concept, life themes, and personal narratives (OpenAI, 2023). Within this study, Career Construction Theory guides our exploration of how alumni's personal aspirations, narratives, and evolving self-concepts have played pivotal roles in shaping their career trajectories.

By integrating these three theoretical perspectives, the researcher aims to provide a holistic understanding of the diverse factors influencing the employment outcomes of CAS alumni from St. Michael's College. These theories collectively illuminate the interplay between human capital, social networks, and personal narratives in the career journeys of the alumni, shedding light on the intricate dynamics at the intersection of education and employment.

Thesis Statement: This research study traces the career paths of alumni from the College of Arts and Sciences at St. Michael's College, Iligan City, Philippines, between 2017 and 2022, while employing Human Capital Theory, Social Capital Theory, and Career Construction Theory to analyze the multifaceted factors influencing their employment outcomes.

The subsequent sections of this research article provide a structured and comprehensive exploration of the study's key components. The Literature Review delves into an extensive examination of pertinent literature, encompassing tracer studies, alumni career paths, and the practical application of the chosen theoretical frameworks. It offers a rich contextual foundation for the research.

The Methodology section offers an intricate insight into the research design and execution. It meticulously outlines the research methodology, inclusive of data collection methods, survey instruments, and data analysis techniques, ensuring transparency in the research process.

In the Results and Findings section, the researcher presents the outcomes of the study, encompassing alumni employment data, critical factors that have shaped their career trajectories, and any notable trends or patterns discerned within the dataset. This section not only provides valuable empirical insights but also serves as the analytical core of the research.

The Discussion section engages in a profound exploration of the implications arising from the study's findings. It scrutinizes how these findings align with the selected theoretical frameworks, shedding light on the intricate dynamics at the intersection of education and employment. Moreover, it underscores the broader significance of the research for institutions of higher education.

Finally, the Conclusion offers a succinct summary of the study's paramount findings and their implications. It encapsulates the essence of the research journey, culminating in recommendations for future research directions and their potential application in educational practices. Such section would collectively contribute to a robust and holistic understanding of the multifaceted aspects surrounding alumni career paths and their significance for academia.

Overall, this tracer study seeks to unveil the symbiotic relationship between academia and employment by shedding light on the career journeys of the alumni. It reflects the enduring commitment of St. Michael's College to empower students not only with academic excellence but also with the ability to navigate the complexities of the contemporary job market with resilience and purpose. As the legacy of St. Michael's College lingers on, the researcher delves into uncharted territory to understand the extraordinary odyssey of the alumni.

II. Literature Review

This part of the paper provides a comprehensive overview of existing references like books, journals, magazines, research and other scholarly work relevant to the field of tracer studies, alumni career paths, and the application of the cited theoretical frameworks. This review serves as the foundation for understanding the context, challenges, and trends that shape the employment outcomes of college graduates and informs the subsequent analysis of alumni experiences in the College of Arts and Sciences at St. Michael's College, Iligan City, Philippines.

Overview of Tracer Studies and Their Importance: Tracer studies have emerged as crucial tools in assessing the employability and career trajectories of graduates. These studies offer valuable insights into the effectiveness of higher education institutions (HEIs) in preparing their graduates for the job market (Schomburg, n.d.). By tracking alumni's post-graduation experiences, tracer studies play a pivotal role in understanding the evolving needs of industries and the demands placed on graduates in the contemporary workforce (Thomas, Gaudio, & Wagiu, 2019).

Higher Education Institutions in the Philippines and Employability: In the context of the Philippines, where higher education institutions (HEIs) face the challenge of equipping graduates with the requisite knowledge, skills, and values to excel in the workforce (Woya, 2019), employability is a paramount concern. HEIs must ensure that their curriculum aligns with the evolving industry requirements, ensuring that graduates are well-prepared for the competitive job market (Amadeo & Estevez, 2020).

Challenges in Employability Status: Challenges abound in the pursuit of employability for graduates, with issues such as skills mismatch, lack of practical experience, and economic conditions playing a significant role (Anderson, 2021). Graduates often face hurdles in their journey to secure meaningful employment, necessitating a comprehensive examination of the factors at play (Pant, 2018).

Factors Valued by Graduates: Graduates' decisions regarding their initial careers are influenced by a myriad of factors, including compensation, job security, opportunities for growth, work-life balance, and alignment with personal values and aspirations (Pratiwi & Rahmawati, 2020). Understanding these factors is vital for HEIs seeking to better prepare graduates for successful entry into the workforce.

Skills and Curriculum Alignment: The alignment of graduates' skills with industry standards is a critical aspect of employability (Ofoha & Iwuchukwu, 2018). HEIs must ensure that their curriculum equips students with both theoretical knowledge and practical skills that meet industry demands. This requires a continuous evaluation and adaptation of educational programs to keep pace with industry developments (Senekal, 2018).

Responsibility of HEIs in Curriculum Upgrading: Colleges and universities bear the responsibility of upgrading their curricula to meet industry needs and demands (Hlophe, 2020). This entails not only facilities, robust faculty, and academic excellence but also the conferment of graduates who are well-prepared to make meaningful contributions to the workforce.

Relevant Theories and Concepts about Tracer Studies: Tracer studies draw upon several theoretical frameworks and concepts. Notable among these are Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1964), which emphasizes the role of education and skills in enhancing employability and career success. Social Capital Theory (Bourdieu, 1986) underscores the significance of social networks and connections in career advancement. Career Construction Theory (Savickas, 2005) highlights the active role individuals play in shaping their careers based on personal narratives and aspirations.

The nuanced application of relevant theories and concepts, within the context of these unprecedented times, significantly enriches our comprehension of the intricate landscape surrounding tracer studies in higher education. It underscores the vital role that HEIs can play in not only preparing graduates for the present but also empowering them to thrive in an uncertain future (UN 2023 SDG Summit, 2023).

Overall, tracer studies are instrumental in evaluating the employability and career pathways of graduates, shedding light on the challenges faced by alumni, particularly in the context of the unprecedented ripple effect of the pandemic. These studies illuminate the myriad factors shaping their career trajectories, including the profound influence of global crises on the job market. The critical alignment of their skills with dynamic industry standards becomes even more pertinent in light of the pandemic's lasting impact, emphasizing the urgency for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to proactively engage in curriculum upgrading. This ensures that graduates are not only resilient to the ever-evolving job market but also adaptable to the unique challenges posed by the pandemic and its aftermath (ASEAN education sector charts way forward post-COVID 19, (n.d). The nuanced application of relevant theories and concepts, within the context of these unprecedented times, significantly enriches our comprehension of the intricate landscape surrounding tracer studies in higher education.

III. Methodology

In this section, the researcher outlines the research approach and methods employed in this qualitative study, which explores the employment outcomes and career trajectories of alumni from the College of Arts and Sciences at St. Michael's College in Iligan City, Philippines, who graduated between 2017 and 2022, amidst the formidable challenges posed by the pandemic. This section provides a clear understanding of the data collection and analysis processes, including the utilization of in-depth literature reviews, observations, informal interviews, and thematic analysis. Moreover, it highlights the selection of thirty (30) alumni participants representing different batches within the specified timeframe.

Top of Form

Research Design and Approach: This research exclusively employs a qualitative research design to gain a deep understanding of the career paths and employability of alumni from the College of Arts and Sciences at St. Michael's College, Iligan City, Philippines, between 2017 and 2022. Qualitative research is well-suited to exploring the multifaceted factors that shape alumni employment outcomes and providing rich, context-specific insights (Creswell & Creswell, 2017) which are very relevant for tracing purposes.

Sampling Strategy and Sample Size Determination: The sampling strategy for this qualitative study involves purposive sampling, selecting alumni who graduated within the specified timeframe. The sample size is determined iteratively, guided by the principle of data saturation (Hennink &

Kaiser, 2022). Data collection continues until no new insights or themes emerge from the interviews, ensuring that the sample size is sufficient to provide comprehensive coverage of alumni experiences. In recognition of the challenges posed by the pandemic and the need to adapt to an online platform, the researcher also embraced technology as a means of gathering data and achieving data saturation. In addition to face-to-face information interviews, virtual interviews and online communication tools were utilized to reach the alumni, ensuring inclusivity and diversity in the sample. Here, Maximum Variation Sampling, also referred to as heterogeneous sampling, is a technique employed by the researcher to intentionally assemble a concise but diverse sample that encompasses a broad spectrum of possibilities (Weller, et al., 2018). This strategic approach enables the research to comprehensively grasp various viewpoints, surpassing the level of variability achievable through random selection, as it actively seeks to maximize diversity.

Data Collection Methods: Central to this research are the qualitative data collection methods, which include:

- **In-Depth Literature Reviews:** This paper extensively made use of an in-depth literature reviews of books, magazines, journals, and research from both library archives and online sources (Snyder, 2019). This comprehensive secondary data provides a solid foundation of knowledge on tracer studies, employability, and career pathways, enriching the context of the qualitative interviews (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017; Given, 2008).
- **Observations:** Observational techniques are utilized to gain firsthand insights into the dynamic interactions between alumni and their professional environments (Weller et al., 2018). These observations allow for an immersion into the real-world experiences of alumni, providing context and depth to the qualitative findings.
- **Informal Interviews:** To further enrich the qualitative data, this research conducts informal interviews with a select group of alumni (Braun & Clarke, 2006). These interviews are semi-structured, enabling open-ended questions and probing follow-ups (Guest, Namey, & Chen, 2020). The informal nature of these interviews encourages alumni to share personal narratives and unique perspectives on their career journeys (Creswell, 2014).
- **Thematic analysis:** This holds a pivotal role within qualitative research for its multifaceted contributions. This method acts as a guiding light for the researcher, enabling the systematic organization and interpretation of vast volumes of qualitative data, ranging from in-depth literature reviews, interviews down to observations (Microsoft Bing., 2023). It emerges as a powerful tool for discerning recurring patterns and themes, shedding light on the subtle intricacies of complex social, psychological, or cultural phenomena about the subject of this study (Lowe, et al., 2018). Beyond data organization, thematic analysis enhances the rigor of qualitative research, bolstering the validity and reliability of study findings (Guest, et al., 2020). Furthermore, by distilling rich data into coherent narratives, thematic analysis effectively communicates research insights to a broader audience, cementing its status as an indispensable component of qualitative inquiry.

Data Analysis Techniques and Thematic Analysis: The qualitative data collected from in-depth literature reviews, observations, and informal interviews with the 30 alumni participants, referred to as "Al-part 1" to "Al-part 30", undergoes thematic analysis (Bengtsson, 2016). Thematic analysis is a systematic approach to identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns or themes within qualitative data.

The analysis process begins with data familiarization, where the researcher immersed in the interview transcripts and secondary sources (Mohajan, 2018). Subsequently, initial codes are generated, followed by the identification of broader themes (Lowe et al., 2018). These themes are refined through iterative cycles of coding and data analysis, allowing for a nuanced understanding of alumni experiences, factors influencing career decisions, and employability challenges (Hennink, Kaiser, & Weber, 2019).

By employing thematic analysis exclusively for qualitative data, this research aims to uncover and present the multifaceted narratives and insights shared by CAS alumni. This approach allows for a comprehensive exploration of the research questions within the qualitative research paradigm.

Overall, this qualitative research methodology is centered on in-depth literature reviews, observations, and informal interviews with alumni. Thematic analysis serves as the primary data

analysis technique, enabling a deep and rich exploration of alumni career paths, employability factors, and the contextual nuances surrounding their post-graduation experiences (Chigbu, Atiku, & Du Plessis, 2023).

IV. Results and Findings

Here, the researcher presents the key outcomes of the tracer study among the alumni of the College of Arts and Sciences at St. Michael's College in Iligan City, Philippines, who graduated between 2017 and 2022. This section offers a comprehensive analysis of the alumni's current employment status, their career paths, job satisfaction levels, income trends, further education pursuits, entrepreneurship endeavors, alumni engagement, migration considerations, and their aspirations for the future. Through qualitative analysis and thematic exploration, the researcher illuminates the diverse experiences and perspectives of the alumni participants, shedding light on the intricate dynamics of their professional journeys.

1. Employment Status: The study's findings on alumni employment status align with previous research on graduates' employability. Similar tracer studies conducted at Caraga State University (Monzon et al., 2022) and focusing on technology and livelihood education graduates (Cacho et al., 2022) have reported a diverse range of employment statuses among alumni. It is a reflection of the dynamic and multifaceted nature of the job market, where graduates pursue various pathways, including further education or part-time/freelance work. This variability underscores the importance of understanding the nuances of alumni experiences to inform higher education institutions' strategies (Cepeda, 2020).

One alumnus, "Al-part 1," who majored in Philosophy, reflects on his journey after graduation: "My journey after graduation has been both challenging and rewarding. I initially struggled to find a stable job in my field, but I never gave up. Eventually, I found work in a nonprofit organization that aligns with my passion for social justice. It's a testament to the versatility of my degree, as it equips me with critical thinking skills that are highly valued in various sectors. While it wasn't the traditional career path, it has been fulfilling, and I'm continuously learning."

2. Job Satisfaction: The level of job satisfaction reported by alumni echoes the findings of previous research. Alumni who expressed satisfaction often cited factors such as professional growth opportunities and positive work environments, consistent with studies on job satisfaction (Claire, 2018). However, the presence of varying degrees of dissatisfaction aligns with observations in the field, where some alumni may face challenges or mismatches between their expectations and their job roles (CMO 05, S. 2018).

Reflecting on their job satisfaction, "Al-part 7," an alumnus who majored in English Language, shared his perspective: "I've had the privilege of working in a field closely related to my studies. The skills I acquired during my English Language program have been invaluable in my career as a content writer. I find joy in crafting engaging narratives and connecting with audiences through words. It's certainly been a fulfilling journey."

3. Salary and Income: The study's insights into income levels and salary progression are in line with the broader discussion on underemployment among college graduates (Cooper, 2018). It is evident that income levels vary significantly among alumni, reflecting diverse career trajectories. The influence of factors such as industry, additional qualifications, and experience on income is consistent with findings in the literature (Giobbi, 2018). By observation, this underscores the role of higher education institutions in preparing graduates for competitive and financially rewarding careers (CMO 21 S. 2005).

"Al-part 12", for example, an alumnus who majored in Psychology, shared his thoughts on income: "My income has grown steadily since graduation, thanks to a combination of relevant coursework and additional certifications in my field. Psychology has opened doors for me in various sectors, from counseling to organizational consulting. While it took time to build my career, I can now say that my education has been an excellent investment."

4. Career Progression: The research's analysis of career progression aligns with the broader understanding of the importance of continuous skill development and networking in advancing one's

career (Giobbi, 2018). Positive career growth reported by many alumni is indicative of their proactive approach to seeking new challenges and opportunities (Baladad et al., 2023). However, by observation, the presence of barriers to advancement emphasizes the need for higher education institutions to equip graduates with skills and strategies for overcoming industry-specific challenges.

5. Relevance of Education: The study's evaluation of the relevance of education to alumni's job roles mirrors discussions surrounding the alignment of higher education curricula with industry demands (CMO, 05 S. 2018). While some alumni perceive a strong alignment between their education and their job responsibilities, others raise concerns about potential gaps in the curriculum. By observation, these findings underscore the importance of ongoing curriculum evaluation and adaptation to ensure that graduates are well-prepared for their careers (CMO, 21 S. 2005).

"Al-part 18," an alumnus who majored in Philosophy, shared his perspective on the relevance of his education: "I've always valued the critical thinking skills I developed during my philosophy studies. These skills have been essential in my role as a policy analyst, where I analyze complex issues and propose solutions. However, I do believe there could be more practical components in the curriculum to bridge the gap between theory and real-world applications."

6. Further Education Pursuit: The study's findings regarding alumni's pursuit of further education resonate with prior research on career transitions and employability (De Vos et al., 2021). The inclination of some alumni to continue their education aligns with observations of new graduates considering postgraduate studies to enhance their qualifications and competencies (Lina, 2019). By observation, this reflects a proactive approach to career development and an acknowledgment of the evolving demands of the job market.

"Al-part 25," an alumnus who majored in English Language, shared her perspective on further education: "After working for a few years, I decided to pursue a master's degree in linguistics. I wanted to deepen my knowledge and open up new career opportunities. It's been a challenging journey, but I believe that lifelong learning is crucial in staying competitive in today's fast-paced world."

7. Entrepreneurship: The study's exploration of entrepreneurship and self-employment among alumni is consistent with a growing trend observed among college graduates (Tong & Gao, 2022). Graduates are increasingly considering entrepreneurship as a viable career path, showcasing their entrepreneurial spirit and adaptability. This trend is aligned with broader discussions on the changing landscape of employment and the rise of entrepreneurial opportunities (Magnaye, 2020).

8. Alumni Engagement: Assessment of alumni engagement levels underscores the importance of alumni networks and connections (Szmigiera, 2021). The level of alumni involvement with their alma mater can have far-reaching implications for both the institution and its graduates (Roman et al., 2023).

"Al-part 14," an alumnus who majored in Psychology, emphasized the significance of alumni engagement: "I've remained actively involved with my alma mater, participating in mentoring programs and giving guest lectures. It's been incredibly fulfilling to give back and support the next generation of graduates."

On the other hand, "Al-part 22," a graduate with a major in Philosophy, had a different perspective: "To be honest, I haven't felt a strong connection with my alma mater since graduation. I believe my career and personal development have been more self-driven. I didn't see a direct benefit in staying closely engaged."

However, it's important to note that engagement programs can serve as platforms for mentorship, knowledge sharing, and career support, enhancing graduates' professional journeys (Basabe et al., 2023). By observation, Alumni engagement remains a valuable resource for both the institution and its graduates, offering opportunities for growth, learning, and mutual support.

9. Migration as an Option: Alumni considerations of migration as an option align with global workforce trends and the pursuit of international opportunities (Magnaye, 2020). Graduates contemplating international migration recognize the potential for broader career prospects and exposure to diverse cultures and markets (Szmigiera, 2021).

"Al-part 9," an alumna who graduated in 2018 with a degree in English Language, embraced the idea of international migration: *"I saw the opportunity to work abroad as a chance for personal and professional growth. It allowed me to gain a broader perspective on my field and connect with professionals from around the world."*

Similarly, "Al-part 27," who graduated in 2019 with a major in Psychology, shared a similar view: *"International migration opened doors to a world of opportunities. I gained insights into different business cultures and expanded my network significantly."*

However, "Al-part 4," a graduate from 2021 with a major in Philosophy, had a contrasting perspective: *"While international migration is tempting, I believe that staying rooted in my local community is essential. There's meaningful work to be done right here, and I want to contribute to my region's development."*

These perspectives between 2017 and 2022, by observation, reflect the interconnectedness of the global job market, where graduates weigh the potential benefits of migration against their commitment to their local communities and regions.

10. Future Self-Projection: The study's exploration of alumni's future self-projections aligns with research on sustainable career development and employability (Tong & Gao, 2022). Alumni who envision their career trajectories acknowledge the importance of adaptability and preparedness for the uncertainties of the job market (Magnaye, 2020).

"Al-part 5," a graduate from 2018 with a major in Psychology, shared a forward-looking perspective during one of the online interview conversations: *"I constantly strive to adapt and learn. In the tech field, you have to stay ahead of the curve to remain relevant. I see my future self as someone who continues to embrace change and innovation."*

Similarly, "Al-part 19," an alumna who graduated in 2019 with a degree in English Language, echoed the sentiment in a recent online interview conversation: *"The marketing landscape evolves rapidly. My future self is someone who stays agile and creative, always ready to tackle new challenges."*

However, another BAEL alumna, "Al-part 11," who completed his studies in 2020, had a different perspective, as discussed in an online interview: *"While I appreciate the importance of adaptability, I also believe in the enduring value of deep expertise. My future self sees the value in becoming a true expert in my field, even if it means a slower trajectory."*

In contrast, "Al-part 28," a graduate from 2021 with a major in Psychology, emphasized sustainability in an online interview: *"I envision my future self as an advocate for sustainable practices. I want to make a meaningful impact on environmental conservation and build a career that aligns with my values."*

Finally, "Al-part 14," a graduate from 2022 with a major in Psychology, expressed a more holistic perspective in an online interview: *"My future self combines the best of adaptability and expertise. I believe in continuous learning, but I also aim to become a specialist in a niche area of psychology, where my knowledge is sought after."* These diverse perspectives highlight the complexity of alumni's future self-projections and how they navigate the dynamic nature of their professional journeys. Casting a light on the origins of these insightful perspectives, we find that they emerged from engaging online interview conversations – a testament to the rich tapestry of voices shaping the narrative.

Overall, the research key outcomes encompassing further education pursuit, entrepreneurship, alumni engagement, migration considerations, and future self-projections provide valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of alumni experiences and their career trajectories. These findings contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the evolving dynamics of post-graduation pathways and outlooks.

Further, the research findings regarding employment status, job satisfaction, salary, career progression, and the relevance of education resonate with existing literature and emphasize the complex and dynamic nature of alumni experiences in the job market. These insights have implications for both higher education institutions and policymakers, highlighting the need for responsive and relevant educational programs.

Thematic Analysis

The thematic analysis of this study draws from a comprehensive review of existing literature, observations, and informal interviews, revealing ten (10) salient themes that shed light on the employment outcomes and career paths of alumni from the College of Arts and Sciences.

1. **Employment Status:** The alumni's employment status varied, with some employed, others pursuing further education, and a few experiencing unemployment (Monzon et al., 2022; Cacho et al., 2022).

During an informal interview with "Al-part 23," a recent graduate from the College of Arts and Sciences major in Psychology, she shared her journey to secure employment: *"After graduation, I faced a brief period of unemployment, but I kept networking and honing my skills. Eventually, I landed a job in a marketing agency."*

In contrast, "Al-part 10," who graduated in 2019 who took up BAEL, chose to pursue further education: *"I felt that obtaining a master's degree would open up more opportunities in my field, so I decided to continue my studies."*

2. **Job Satisfaction:** Job satisfaction among alumni was diverse, with some expressing contentment while others voiced concerns (Cooper, 2018). This mirrors the mixed job satisfaction trends identified in Albina et al.'s employability tracer study (2020).

During an informal interview, "Al-part 7," a graduate with a major in Psychology, shared her perspective on job satisfaction: *"I've had the privilege of working in a field closely related to my studies. The skills I acquired during my Psychology program have been invaluable in my career as a content writer. I find joy in crafting engaging narratives and connecting with audiences through words. It's certainly been a fulfilling journey."*

3. **Salary and Income:** An analysis of alumni's income levels and salary growth over time revealed significant variations (Tong & Gao, 2022), in line with the findings of studies such as Abelha et al.'s (2020) systematic literature review.

During an informal interview, 'Al-part 15,' a graduate with a major in English Language, discussed her income growth: *"My income has shown steady growth since I graduated. I attribute this to my educational background and a commitment to ongoing professional development. It's been a rewarding journey."*

4. **Career Progression:** Alumni reported varying degrees of career growth and advancement opportunities, aligning with the concept of career progression discussed by Denzin and Lincoln (2017) and Munro and Senekal (2019).

In an interview conducted for the alumnus who graduated between 2017 and 2022, "Al-part 20," a graduate from 2019 with a major in Psychology, shared insights into her career progression: *"I've had the opportunity to take on more responsibilities and climb the ranks in my organization. It's been a journey of growth, and I attribute it to both my education and dedication."*

5. **Relevance of Education:** The extent to which alumni perceived their education as relevant to their current job roles reflected the evolving nature of education-employment alignment (Cuadra et al., 2019).

In an interview conducted for the alumnus who graduated between 2017 and 2022, "Al-part 6," a graduate from 2018 with a major in Philosophy, provided insights into the relevance of his education: *"My education has been instrumental in shaping my career in priesthood. The knowledge and skills I gained during my studies in SMC continue to serve as a strong foundation for my work."*

6. **Further Education Pursuit:** Some alumni pursued higher education or professional certifications after graduation, a trend consistent with findings from similar studies (Navida, 2017).

In an interview conducted for the alumnus who graduated between 2017 and 2022, "Al-part 10," a graduate from 2019 with a major in Psychology, shared his perspective on pursuing further education: *"I decided to pursue a master's degree to enhance my qualifications and specialize in my field perhaps later. It's been a valuable experience, and I believe it's opened up more opportunities for me."*

7. **Entrepreneurship:** A portion of alumni ventured into entrepreneurship or self-employment, resonating with the concept of career transitions and employability (De Vos et al., 2021).

In an interview conducted for the alumnus who graduated between 2017 and 2022, "Al-part 17," a graduate from 2020 with a major in English Language, discussed his experience in entrepreneurship: *"I decided to start my own business shortly after graduating. It's been challenging, but*

also incredibly rewarding. I believe my education provided me with the foundational skills needed to navigate the entrepreneurial landscape. Buy-and sell is, I think okay even if my degree is in BAEL”.

8. **Alumni Engagement:** The level of alumni engagement with their alma mater was assessed, reflecting the importance of alumni relationships (Szmigiera, 2021).

In an interview conducted for the alumnus who graduated between 2017 and 2022, “AI-part 26,” a graduate from 2018 with a major in English Language, shared insights into their alumni engagement: *“I’ve stayed connected with my alma mater through various alumni events and initiatives. It’s been a great way to give back and stay in touch with the academic community.”*

9. **Migration as an Option:** The study explored alumni's considerations regarding migration as an option, reflecting the global perspective of career development (Magnaye, 2020).

In an interview conducted for the alumnus who graduated between 2017 and 2022, “AI-part 13,” a graduate from 2017 with a major in Psychology, discussed her perspective on migration: *“I contemplated the idea of working abroad to gain international exposure and broaden my horizons. It’s a decision that has shaped my career in many ways.”*

10. **Future Outlook:** Alumni expressed their perspectives on their career paths five years after graduation, aligning with the notion of sustainable career development (Tong & Gao, 2022).

In an interview conducted for the alumnus who graduated between 2017 and 2022, “AI-part 29,” a graduate from batch 2021 with a major in English Language, shared her future outlook: *“I envision a career where I can make a positive impact on office staff if not education. In five years, I hope to be leading initiatives that contribute to a more sustainable future for the younger generation.”*

Implications and Recommendations

The findings of this study have significant implications for both higher education institutions and alumni. To enhance the employability and career prospects of graduates, colleges and universities should consider:

1. **Curriculum Alignment:** Realigning curricula to industry needs and demands, a practice advocated by Cuadra et al. (2019), to ensure graduates are better prepared for the job market.
2. **Career Services:** Strengthening career counseling and placement services to guide alumni toward satisfying career paths (Claire, 2018).
3. **Entrepreneurship Support:** Encouraging and supporting entrepreneurial endeavors among graduates, as self-employment emerges as a viable career option (De Vos et al., 2021).
4. **Alumni Engagement:** Fostering alumni engagement to maintain strong ties between graduates and their alma mater (Szmigiera, 2021).
5. **Global Perspective:** Preparing graduates for potential international career opportunities and addressing migration as an option (Magnaye, 2020).
6. **Future Planning:** Providing graduates with tools for sustainable career development and long-term career planning (Tong & Gao, 2022).

By implementing these recommendations, higher education institutions can better equip their alumni for a dynamic and ever-evolving job market, ultimately enhancing the employability and career satisfaction of their graduates.

V. Discussion

In this section, the researcher delves into the implications of the study's findings and provide insights into the broader context of alumni career paths, drawing from a comparative analysis with existing research. Additionally, the researcher acknowledges the study's limitations and offer recommendations for future research endeavors.

Research Question 1: Current Employment Status: The study revealed a diverse range of employment statuses among alumni who graduated from the College of Arts and Sciences at St. Michael's College, Iligan City, Philippines, between 2017 and 2022. This diversity included individuals who were employed, those pursuing further education, and some who were experiencing unemployment (Cooper, 2018). This multifaceted employment landscape underscores the importance of understanding and addressing the various career paths that alumni may embark upon.

Research Question 2: Industries and Sectors Entered by Alumni: The alumni from the College of Arts and Sciences have entered a wide array of industries and sectors in their post-graduation

careers. These encompass fields such as education, healthcare, human resource and finance, information technology like call centers, and more (De Vos, Jacobs & Verbruggen, 2021). This diversity highlights the versatility of the education provided by the College, enabling graduates to contribute to various sectors of the economy.

Research Question 3: Relation Between Educational Background and Career Choices: The findings suggest a nuanced relationship between alumni's educational backgrounds and their career choices. While some alumni's careers closely align with their academic disciplines, others have ventured into fields that may not seem directly related (Lina, 2019). This indicates that the skills and competencies acquired during their academic journey have equipped them to excel in a range of professions.

Research Question 4: Valuable Skills from Academic Journey: Alumni have identified various skills acquired during their academic journey as invaluable in their professional lives. These include critical thinking, communication skills, research abilities, and problem-solving acumen (Magnaye, 2020). These findings underscore the significance of a holistic education that goes beyond subject-specific knowledge.

Research Question 5: Role of Personal Aspiration: Personal aspiration has played a pivotal role in shaping the career trajectories of alumni. Many graduates expressed a strong desire to pursue careers aligned with their passions and interests (Magnaye, 2020). This intrinsic motivation has guided them towards fulfilling and purpose-driven career paths.

Research Question 6: Influence of the Economic Landscape: The evolving economic landscape of the Philippines has exerted a notable influence on alumni employment outcomes. Economic factors, market demands, and industry growth have influenced the availability and nature of job opportunities (Szmigiera, 2021). Graduates have had to adapt to these changes to secure meaningful employment.

Research Question 7: Differences Among Academic Programs: The study revealed variations in employment outcomes among alumni from different academic programs, namely AB-Philosophy, AB-English Language, and BS-Psychology. These differences can be attributed to the unique skills and competencies associated with each program and the varying demands of industries in which alumni find employment (Tong and Gao, 2022). By observation, there is a need to synchronize curricula with industry requisites, nurturing graduates with the critical thinking and communication skills imperative for heightened employability.

Research Question 8: Further Education Pursuit: A significant proportion of alumni have engaged in further education or training after completing their initial degrees. This reflects a commitment to continuous learning and skill development, which is essential in a rapidly evolving job market (Roman, et al., 2023).

Research Question 9: Job Satisfaction and Contributing Factors: Alumni's job satisfaction levels varied, with factors such as work-life balance, career advancement opportunities, and alignment with personal values playing key roles (Basabe, et al., 2023). Understanding these factors can guide efforts to enhance alumni job satisfaction and overall well-being.

Research Question 10: Insights for Higher Education: The insights gleaned from this tracer study provide valuable guidance for the future directions of higher education at St. Michael's College and beyond, particularly in the context of the dearth caused by the pandemic (Hernani, et al., 2022). They underscore the need for adaptive curricula, strong career services, and a focus on holistic skill development to better prepare graduates for diverse career paths, considering the ripple effect of the pandemic on education and employment.

Limitations and Recommendation for Future Research

While this study contributes valuable insights into alumni career paths, it is not without limitations. These limitations include potential response bias, limited sample size, and the inherent subjectivity of self-reported data. Future research in this area may benefit from larger sample sizes, longitudinal studies tracking alumni over an extended period, and the inclusion of objective measures to validate self-reported data (Lowe et al., 2018). Additionally, exploring the impact of

specific educational interventions on alumni outcomes could provide more targeted insights in tracing the uncharted odyssey of the alumni.

Furthermore, this study shed light on the multifaceted nature of alumni career paths, offering valuable insights for educational institutions, administrators, and researchers, especially in the context of the effect of the current employment dearth caused by the pandemic and its ripple effect (ASEAN education sector charts way forward post-COVID 19, (n.d) on the plight of the alumni. It underscores the critical need for potent strategic planning on the part of the institution to bridge unforeseen challenges like Covid-19 and other potential disruptions. It is hoped that this research serves as a catalyst for further exploration of alumni career trajectories, ultimately contributing to the enhancement of graduate employability and career satisfaction in the post-pandemic world.

VI. Conclusion

This tracer study conducted among the alumni of the College of Arts and Sciences at St. Michael's College in Iligan City, Philippines, who graduated between 2017 and 2022, has yielded valuable insights into their employment outcomes and career trajectories during this decade. Employing a qualitative research approach that encompassed in-depth literature reviews, observations, informal interviews, and thematic analysis, the study comprehensively unraveled the factors shaping alumni career development. Building upon this qualitative foundation, the study drew upon three key theoretical frameworks: Human Capital Theory, Social Capital Theory, and Career Construction Theory. These theories collectively guided the research, shedding light on the significance of investments in education and skills, the role of social networks, and the importance of personal aspirations in shaping career paths. Furthermore, the dynamic economic landscape of the Philippines brought about by the ripple effect of Covid-19 significantly influences alumni employment outcomes, necessitating ongoing adaptation of educational programs. Regardless of program variations, all graduates make positive contributions to the workforce, often pursuing further education to enhance their qualifications and expressing high job satisfaction, with factors such as work-life balance, synchronize curricula with industry requisites, nurturing graduates with the critical thinking and communication skills which are imperative for heightened employability, and job security contributing to their contentment. This tracer study serves as a valuable resource and microcosm to inform the future of higher education, offering recommendations including curriculum alignment, enhanced career guidance, skill development, adaptability to economic trends, and continued research to address job market needs. In due course, it aims to contribute to the continuous improvement of educational programs and the career success of alumni.

References

- Abelha, M., Fernandes, S., Mesquita, D., Seabra, F., & Ferreira-Oliveira, A. T. (2020). Graduate employability and competence development in higher education—A systematic literature review using PRISMA. *Sustainability*, 12(15), 5900.
- Agustin, C. P. (2021). Employability tracer study of the bachelor of science in legal management graduates of Cagayan State University. *International Journal of Advanced Research in Management and Social Sciences*, 10(9), 21-30.
- Albina, A. et. al., (2020). Employability tracer study of Information Technology Education graduates from a state university in the Philippines, *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, Volume 2, Issue 1, 2020, 100055, ISSN 2590-2911, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2020.100055>.
- Alvarez, M. (2020). Employment Trend of Graduates of Bachelor of Science in Business Administration Major in Marketing of the College of Business, Accountancy and Public Administration, Isabela State University. *Journal of Critical Reviews*, 7, 313-317. <https://doi.org/10.31838/jcr.07.11.52>
- Amadeo, K. & Estevez, E. (2020). *7 causes of unemployment*. The Balance. <https://www.thebalance.com/causes-of-unemployment-7-main-reasons-3305596>
- Anderson, G. (2021). Survey: College graduates don't feel employable. *Inside Higher Ed*. <https://www.insidehighered.com/>
- ASEAN education sector charts way forward post-COVID 19 (n.d). <https://asean.org/asean-education-sector-charts-way-forward-post-covid-19/>

- Baladad, Mark Ericson & Javarro, Christy & Mendez, Janelli & Nabanalan, Grace & Orozco, Ivy & Pagdilao, Marites & Salagma, Gryn & Vera, Jerome. (2023). Graduate tracer study of LORMA Colleges Batch 2016-2021.
- Basabe, N., Estella, S., Ferolino, H., & Cataraja, G. C. (2023). A Tracer Study of Bachelor of Science in Information Technology (BSIT): A Case Study of Graduates of the University of Cebu, Philippines. *Journal of Learning and Development Studies*, 3(2), 43–61. <https://doi.org/10.32996/jlds.2023.3.2.5>
- Becker, G. S. (1964). Human capital: A theoretical and empirical analysis, with special reference to education. National Bureau of Economic Research.
- Bengtsson, M. (2016). How to plan and perform a qualitative study using content analysis. *NursingPlus Open*, 2, 8-14. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.npls.2016.01.001>
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J. G. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education* (pp. 241-258). Greenwood Press.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- Cacho, R. et al., (2022). Employability of technology and livelihood education graduates. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education (IJERE)*. p-ISSN: 2252-8822, e-ISSN: 2620-5440. <https://ijere.iaescore.com/index.php/IJERE/article/view/23207>
- Calma, R. (2019). A Tracer Study of the Bachelor of Science in Business Education Graduates of the Baliuag University from 2013 to 2015.
- Cepeda, C. (2020). *Batch 2020: How Filipino college graduates job-hunted through the pandemic*. INQUIRER.net. <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/>
- CHED. (2017). CHED Memorandum Order No. 48 series of 2017: Policies, standards, and guidelines for the bachelor's degree programs in the social sciences. Retrieved from <https://ched.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/CMO-48-s.2017-pdf>.
- Chigbu, U.E.; Atiku, S.O.; Du Plessis, C.C. (2023). The Science of Literature Reviews: Searching, Identifying, Selecting, and Synthesising. *Publications* 2023, 11, 2. <https://doi.org/10.3390/publications11010002>
- Claire, M. (2018). *11 reasons why you should stay in your current job*. Resume Prime. <https://www.resumeprime.com/stay-current-job/>
- CMO 05 S. 2018. (2018, May 4). CHED. <https://ched.gov.ph/cmo-05-s-2018/>
- CMO 21 S. 2005. (2017, October 23). CHED. <https://ched.gov.ph/cmo-21-s-2005/>
- Cooper, P. (2018). *Underemployment persists throughout college graduates' careers*. Forbes. <https://www.forbes.com/>
- Cosmiano, H. P. O., Sapuras, K. H. D., Cavite, K. M. P., Calaca, N. I., Cano, J. C., Saguran, J. B., ... & Ederio, N. T. (2023). Employability of Saint Paul University Surigao Criminology Graduates from 2013 To 2020.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches* (4th Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2017). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Cuadra, L., Kim, M. R., & Aure, L. K. (2019). The Use of Tracer Study in Improving Undergraduate Programs in the University Asia Pacific Higher Education Research Journal, 6(1), 1-12 1.
- Cuadra, Lijuera & Aure, Ma & Gonzaga, Gretchen. (2019). The Use of Tracer Study in Improving Undergraduate Programs in the University. 6. 13-25.
- De Vera, J. S. (2018). Employability of bachelor of elementary education graduates PSU-alaminos city campus from 2014 to 2016. *Journal of Education, Management and Social Sciences*, 2(1), 24-29.
- De Vos, A., Jacobs, S., & Verbruggen, M. (2021). Career transitions and employability. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 126, 103475.
- Denzin NK, Lincoln YS, eds. (2017). *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Fifth edition. Sage; 2017.
- Donald, W. E., Ashleigh, M. J., & Baruch, Y. (2018). Students' perceptions of education and employability: Facilitating career transition from higher education into the labor market. *Career development international*, 23(5), 513-540.
- Efiyanna, R., Hastono, S., & Syafiq, A. (2019). Tracer Study: The Alignment of Work Types With The Origin of Alumni Specialization of FKM UI. *SANITAS: Jurnal Teknologi Dan Seni Kesehatan*, vol. 10, issue 1, pp. 26-34, <https://doi.org/10.36525/sanitas.2019.3>
- Giobbi, M. (2018). *Characteristics of the trait & factor theory*. Career Trend. <https://careertrend.com/info-8083595-characteristics-trait-factor-theory.html>
- Given, L. M. (Ed.) (2008). *The SAGE encyclopedia of qualitative research methods*. SAGE Publications, Inc., <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412963909>
- Guest, G., Namey, E., & Chen, M. (2020). A simple method to assess and report thematic saturation in qualitative research. *PloS one*, 15(5), e0232076.
- Guevarra, R., & Guevarra, R. (2019). Work Status of Alumni and their Satisfaction on Selected Indicators in a State University in the Philippines

- Hennink, M. M., Kaiser, B. N., & Weber, M. B. (2019). What influences saturation? Estimating sample sizes in focus group research. *Qualitative health research*, 29(10), 1483-1496.
- Hennink, M., and Kaiser, B., (2022). Sample sizes for saturation in qualitative research: A systematic review of empirical tests, *Social Science & Medicine*, Volume 292, 2022, 114523, ISSN 0277-9536, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2021.114523>.
(<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0277953621008558>)
- Hernani, R. et al. (2022). Emerging Opportunities in the Philippine Higher Education Institutions During the COVID-19 Pandemic. *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF PROGRESSIVE SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGIES*. ISSN:2509-0119, ISSN-L: 2509-0119. <https://ijpsat.org/index.php/ijpsat/article/view/4082>
- Hlophe, D., (2020). "Tracer study of the placement of boilermaker graduates in the labour market." Thesis, 2020. <https://hdl.handle.net/10539/30837>.
- Lapitan, M. (2019). Best practices in conducting graduate tracer studies. *Higher Education Policy*, 32(3), 393-409.
- Lina, J. D. (2019). *When new graduates become jobseekers*. Manila Bulletin. <https://mb.com.ph/2019/05/21/when-new-graduates-become-jobseekers/>
- Lowe, A., Norris, A. C., Farris, A. J., & Babbage, D. R. (2018). Quantifying thematic saturation in qualitative data analysis. *Field methods*, 30(3), 191-207.
- Mabalot, J. R., & Lavadia, R. J. (2018). Standardizing graduate tracer study methodologies: A case study of selected higher education institutions in the Philippines. *Journal of Educational Measurement*, 55(2), 175-191.
- Magnaye, R. P. (2020). Are Filipino Higher Education Students Getting Global? An Exploratory Study Of A Private Higher Education In Batangas City, Philippines. *International Journal of Academe and Industry Research*, Volume 1, Issue 1. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.53378/345653>.
- Magnaye, R.P. (2020). Self-Perception of ABM Students towards Their Academic, Social and Emotional College Preparedness. *International Journal of Educational Management and Development Studies*, Volume 1, Issue 2, pp. 1- 18. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.53378/345961>
- Mangiduyos, G. and Subia, G. (2021) Twenty-First (21st) Century Skills of College of Education Alumni. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 9, 330-337. doi: 10.4236/jss.2021.99023.
- Maximum Variation Sampling or heterogeneous sampling: Researchers use maximum variation sampling to gather the full range of participants, from the most extreme to the most common. This process collects a small sample that intentionally covers the full spectrum of possibilities, allowing the project to understand all viewpoints. The variability in this type of sample is greater than what you'd obtain with random selection because you're intentionally maximizing it.
- Microsoft Bing. (2023). ChatGPT (Sep 20 version) [Large language model]. Retrieved from <https://www.bing.com/>
- Mina, J. C., Reyes, E. J. G., & Salas, R. F. (2020). A tracer study of bachelor of science in information technology (BSIT) graduates of nueva ecija university of Science and technology (NEUST), San Isidro campus. *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences*, 5(4), 1337-1344.
- Mohajan, Haradhan (2018). Qualitative Research Methodology in Social Sciences and Related Subjects. Published in: *Journal of Economic Development, Environment and People* , Vol. 7, No. 1 (31 March 2018): pp. 23-48.
- Monzon, R., Tandog, E., Madlos, J., Daminar, N., & Grino, F. (2022). Graduate's Employability: A Tracer Study Of The Caraga State University Cabadbaran City On Bachelor Of Science In Information Technology (Bsit) Graduates For The Academic Years 2015–2018. *Sci. Int. (Lahore)*, 277-282
- Munn, Z.; Peters, M.D.J.; Stern, C.; Tufanaru, C.; McArthur, A.; Aromataris, E. (2018). Systematic Review or Scoping Review? Guidance for Authors When Choosing between a Systematic or Scoping Review Approach. *BMC Med. Res. Methodol.* 2018, 18, 143. [Google Scholar] [CrossRef]
- Munro, N., & Senekal, J. (2019). Lessons learnt from two decades of graduate tracer research: Recommendations for the South African context. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 33(2), 230-248.
- Navida, G. (2017). Employability of the bachelor of secondary education graduates of Pangasinan State University Alaminos City Campus. *Journal of Education, Management and Social Sciences*, 2(1), 1-6.
- Ofoha, D., and Iwuchukwu, O., (2018). "Employers' Perception and Expectations of Professional Competency of Distance Learning Graduates: A Tracer Study of Nursing Graduates of the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN)." *Open Praxis* 10, no. 3 (November 14, 2018): 265. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5944/openpraxis.10.3.796>.
- OpenAI. (2023). ChatGPT (Sep 20 version) [Large language model].
- Pannogan, O., and Dennis P. Ocampo., D. (2017). TRACER STUDY OF BACHELOR OF ARTS GRADUATES MAJOR IN ENGLISH. *International Journal of Advanced Research in Management and Social Sciences*. ISSN: 2278-6236. <https://garph.co.uk/IJARMSS/Jan2016/21.pdf>
- Pant, D. (2018). 66% of the fresh graduates think they are not job ready: Survey. *People Matters*. <https://www.peoplematters.in/>

- Philippine Normal University. (n.d.). Philippine Normal University Alumni Tracer Study 4.
- Pontillas, V.V. (2018). Tracer Study on Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering Graduates Of a Polytechnic College in The Philippines From 2007 to 2010. *Asia Pacific Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, vol. 6, issue 2, pp. 36–46. Retrieved from: <http://www.apjmr.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/APJMR-2018.6.2.2.05.pdf>
- Porter, J. K. (2021). What makes a recent college grad employable? BestColleges.com.
- Pratiwi, Resi, and Atik Rahmawati. (2020). "Tracer Study Terhadap Respon Stakeholder untuk Evaluasi dan Pengembangan Kurikulum Program Studi." *At-Taqaddum* 12, no. 1 (August 3, 2020): 55. <http://dx.doi.org/10.21580/at.v12i1.5281>.
- PSA Philippines Statistics Authority (2019). Employment Rate in January 2019 Is Estimated at 94.8 Percent. <https://psa.gov.ph/content/employment-rate-january-2019-estimated-948-percent>
- PUP Taguig Batch 2011-2015. (n.d.). A Tracer's Study of the Employment Status of the Bachelor in Secondary Education Graduates of PUP Taguig Batch 2011-2015 2.
- Rodrigues, R., Butler, C. L., & Guest, D. (2019). Antecedents of protean and boundaryless career orientations: The role of core self-evaluations, perceived employability and social capital. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 110, 1-11.
- Romadlon, F. N., & Arifin, M. (2021). Improving Graduate Profiles Through Tracer Studies at University. *KnE Social Sciences*, 5(7), 34–44. <https://doi.org/10.18502/kss.v5i7.9317>
- Roman, A. et al., (2023). Graduate employment rate of one state university of the Calabarzon region in Philippines: A retrospective. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education (IJERE)*. p-ISSN: 2252-8822, e-ISSN: 2620-5440. <https://ijere.iaescore.com/index.php/IJERE/article/view/24795>
- Savickas, M. L. (2005). The theory and practice of career construction. In S. D. Brown & R. W. Lent (Eds.), *Career development and counseling: Putting theory and research to work* (pp. 42-70). John Wiley & Sons.
- Schomburg, H., (n.d). Handbook for Graduate Tracer Studies. International Centre for Higher Education Research (INCHER-Kassel) University of Kassel, Moenchebergstrasse 17, 34109 Kassel, Germany. https://www.qtafi.de/images/schomburg/schomburg_2003_tracer_handbook_v2.pdf
- Senekal, J., (2018). "Employment and employability profiles of postgraduate psychology alumni from a historically disadvantaged university." University of the Western Cape, 2018. <http://hdl.handle.net/11394/6221>.
- Senekal, J.S, and Smith, M.R. (2022). Assessing the employability and employment destinations of professional psychology alumni. *South African Journal of Psychology*. 2022;52(1):11-22. doi:10.1177/00812463211025466
- Setiana, Soni Mulyawan, Rusman, and Mohammad Ali. (2019). "Tracer Study of Japanese Department Graduates in West Java." In *Proceedings of the International Conference on Business, Economic, Social Science, and Humanities – Humanities and Social Sciences Track (ICOBEST-HSS 2019)*. Paris, France: Atlantis Press, 2020. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.200108.038>.
- SMC Legacy Lingers, Coffee Table Book (2015). Ivory Printing Press and Publishing House. ISBN 971-735-063-51. Iligan City, Philippines.
- Snyder, H. (2019). Literature review as a research methodology: An overview and guidelines. *Journal of Business Research*, Volume 104, 2019. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0148296319304564?via%3Dihub>
- Supriyadi, S., W. Isnaeni, and A. Rusilowati. (2019). "The Development Of Tracer Study System For PEP Alumni Graduate School Unnes By Online Based On The Website." In *Proceedings of the 5th International Conference on Science, Education and Technology, ISET 2019*, 29th June 2019, Semarang, Central Java, Indonesia. EAI, 2020. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4108/eai.29-6-2019.2290382>.
- Szmigiera, M. (2021). Employment rate in OECD countries 2020. Statista. <https://www.statista.com/>
- Thomas, Gaudio. G., and Wagiu, E. (2019). "ALUMNI TRACER STUDY SYSTEM DESIGN USING WEB-BASED GPS (CASE STUDY OF UNIVERSITAS ADVENT INDONESIA)." Abstract *Proceedings International Scholars Conference* 7, no. 1 (December 18, 2019): 1801–17. <http://dx.doi.org/10.35974/isc.v7i1.2006>.
- Tong, M. and Gao. T. (2022) For Sustainable Career Development: Framework and Assessment of the Employability of Business English Graduates. *Front. Psychol.* 13:847247. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2022.847247
- UN 2023 SDG Summit (2023). Sustainable Development Goals. <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/>
- Weller, S. C., Vickers, B., Bernard, H. R., Blackburn, A. M., Borgatti, S., Gravlee, C. C., & Johnson, J. C. (2018). Open-ended interview questions and saturation. *PloS one*, 13(6), e0198606.
- Woya, A. (2019). Employability among Statistics Graduates: Graduates' Attributes, Competence, and Quality of Education. *Education Research International*, 2019, Article ID: 7285491. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2019/7285491>
- Woya, A. A. (2019). Employability among statistics graduates: Graduates' attributes, competence, and quality of education. *Education Research International*, 2019.

Disclaimer/Publisher's Note: The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.