TRACER STUDY FOR THE BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (BSIT) GRADUATES AT NORTHERN ILOILO STATE UNIVERSITY BATAD CAMPUS FROM 2019-2023

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ABSTRACT

This tracer study measures the BSIT graduates' employment outcomes and professional experiences from Northern Iloilo State University (NISU) Batad Campus from 2019 to 2023. This shows a negative trend in the employment level that significantly decreased from 100% in 2020 to 65.38% in 2023-a telling possibility of some problems inside the job market or competition. Mostly, graduates are in contract or temporary employment, although the 2023 report indicates a minimal increase in permanent employment. Generally, the two factors influencing employment choice are those closest to home and pay. In 2023, graduates thought that more importance should be given to pay. The following are highly relevant to the graduates' current work: communication, human relations, IT skills, and critical thinking. Improved labor market conditions and better preparation among graduates can be different time lags in finding the first job for the graduates, more so in the latest cohorts. Enhanced findings will raise the nexus between education and labor market outcomes; hence, the curricula should be changed constantly according to the requirements of the industries. Future research should involve long-term career trajectories and barriers that face unemployed graduates.

Keywords: Tracer Study, BSIT Graduates, Employability, Labor Market, Skills Relevance.

I.   INTRODUCTION

The rapid evolution of Information Technology (IT) has positioned it as a cornerstone of the modern economy, driving the demand for skilled professionals across various sectors. IT graduates must possess various technical and analytical skills to address the future needs of businesses, government agencies, and entrepreneurial ventures [1]. The Bachelor of Science in Information Technology (BSIT) program at Northern Iloilo State University (NISU) Batad Campus aims to address these needs by equipping students with a solid theoretical and practical foundation. This study will assess the employment outcomes of BSIT graduates from NISU Batad, focusing on job relevance, industry sectors, and geographical work locations.

As higher education institutions strive to ensure they meet the demands of the labor market, the necessity for tracer studies has become increasingly apparent. These studies evaluate graduates' employability, the alignment of their skills with job opportunities, and the broader economic impact they have in the labor market [2]). By concentrating on NISU Batad's IT graduates, this research will provide essential data to evaluate the success of the BSIT program in terms of employability, job satisfaction, and career progression within the IT field.

The data collected from graduates between 2019 and 2023 will allow an analysis of employment trends that will help identify the extent to which the graduates' jobs align with their academic qualifications. This evaluation will not only enhance the competitiveness of the BSIT program globally but will also provide insights into the adaptability of its curriculum in response to the rapidly changing technological landscape. By bridging the gap between education and employment, this tracer study will serve as a vital resource for NISU Batad in refining its IT programs and aligning them with industry demands.

II.   METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed the descriptive research design to give a general overview of the current employment status of BSIT graduates from the NISU Batad Campus. Creswell [3] added that "descriptive research is important in outlining characteristics and results of a certain population". This design facilitates systematic documentation and analysis of the employment experiences of graduates between 2019 and 2023. This research also has a cross-sectional aspect: it takes the data at one point in time from different cohorts, enabling

the investigation of trends and patterns about the alignment of graduates with their respective fields of study, something very essential for the comprehension of how the factors that result from employment affect outcomes [4].

Data collection and analysis

Questionnaires will be distributed for the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data. The questionnaire will have a mix of closed-ended questions to ensure the data is quantifiable and open-ended questions to find out personal experiences and understanding regarding employment choices. Distribution channels will include email and online tools such as Google Forms. Major areas in the survey will be about the employment status, alignment of jobs with their degrees, sector, and location. Data will be analyzed using SPSS or Excel, where descriptive statistics will be used to summarize demographic and employment statistics and cross-tabulation in exploring trends across graduating years. The research will take ethical considerations such as informed consent, confidentiality, voluntary participation, and avoidance of harm to ensure that the study does not taint the results[3][4][5].

III.　RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Number of Respondents from 2019-2023

Batch	No. of Graduates	No. of Respondents	%
2019	48	43	89.58
2020	12	12	100.00
2021	26	26	100.00
2022	54	39	72.22
2023	52	34	65.38

The table shows the information regarding the response rate for the employability survey conducted among the BSIT graduates of NISU Batad Campus in five batches of graduates from 2019 to 2023. For the year 2019, out of 48 participants, 43 gave a good sample response rate of 89.58%. The two batches in 2020 and 2021 answered the employability survey in its entirety since all graduates answered that year: 12 students for 2020 and 26 for 2021. The response rate for the year 2022 decreased to 72.22%, with only 39 of the 54 graduates responding, thereby limiting the completeness of the employability assessment for that year. This response rate for the year 2023 is the lowest at 65.38%, where 34 out of the 52 graduates responded, leaving huge data gaps for this most recent group. Though there is a relatively stable outlook regarding the results of employability within the earlier years, it might eventually lead to inaccuracy over time concerning the general trend because of the continued decline of responses through 2022 and 2023.

Table 2. Respondents Employment Status

Batch	Employed	%	Not Employed	%
2019	43	89.58	5	10.42
2020	12	100.00	0	0.00
2021	22	84.62	4	15.38
2022	39	72.22	15	27.78
2023	34	65.38	18	34.62

The table indicates the employability status of BSIT graduates from NISU Batad Campus across five batches from 2019 to 2023. In 2019, 43 out of the 48 graduates were employed, while only five remained unemployed, which means that the rate of employability was relatively high. In the 2020 batch, all 12 graduates had full employability. For 2021, 22 were employed out of the 26 graduates, 84.62%, and four are still unemployed at 15.38%. For 2022, the employment percentage reduced to 39 out of the 54 graduates employed, 72.22%, and 15 are not employed or unemployed at 27.78%. The lowest was in 2023, when the employability was lowest. Here, 34 graduates out of the 52 employed make up 65.38%, while the rest,18, remained unemployed at

34.62%. The data shows a declining trend in employability over the years, with a marked increase in the unemployment rate, especially in the latest batch. This trend may indicate problems in the job market or other external factors affecting recent graduates' employment opportunities.

Table 3. Employment Types of Graduates

Batch	Regular		Temporary		Casual		Contractual		Self-Employed	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
2019	6	13.95	15	34.88	6	13.95	15	34.88	1	2.33
2020	2	16.67	8	66.67	0	0.00	2	16.67	0	0.00
2021	2	4.65	5	11.63	2	4.65	13	30.23	0	0.00
2022	3	6.98	10	23.26	11	25.58	15	34.88	0	0.00
2023	11	25.58	9	20.93	8	18.60	6	13.95	0	0.00

The table shows that BSIT graduates from NISU Batad Campus fall into five batches from 2019 to 2023. Different types of employment have been observed, and such differences have been observed, including regular, temporary, casual, contractual, and self-employed. From last year's comparison, in 2019, the graduates were relatively even both in terms of having a temporary or contractual offer, at 34.88%. The rest had regular and casual jobs, at 13.95%. The lowest number fell under self-employment status, only at 2.33%. A high concentration of graduates in 2020 for temporary jobs was seen, with only 16.67% each for regular and contractual jobs and none under self-employment. For 2021, the highest was for contractual job placement at 30.23%, while for the others: regular, temporary, and casual at only 4.65 to 11.63 percent; none was self-employed. By 2022, contractual employment still occupied a very high share of 34.88%, with an increase in casual positions at 25.58%, while graduates under regular were now reduced to 6.98%, and those in temporary posts stood at 23.26%. In 2023, the most prominent increases were under regular employment, at 25.58%, the reduction of temporary to 20.93%, casual at 18.60%, and that of the share under contractual at 13.95%, while none of them were self-employed. There seems to be fluctuation regarding dependency on temporary and contract employees across the years, with this lot being the highest among those employed.

Table 4. Relevance of University-Acquired Skills and Competencies to Respondents' Current Jobs

Batch	Communications Skills		Human Relations Skills		Entrepreneurial Skills		IT Skills		Problem-solving Skills		Critical Thinking Skills		Other Skills	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
2019	31	72.09	31	72.09	5	11.63	7	16.28	15	34.88	19	44.19	2	4.65
2020	12	100	9	75	7	58.33	2	16.67	4	33.33	4	33.33	1	8.33
2021	21	95.45	16	72.73	2	9.09	6	27.27	8	36.36	8	36.36	2	9.09
2022	35	89.74	28	71.79	10	25.64	15	38.46	19	48.72	19	48.72	2	5.13
2023	27	79.41	27	79.41	14	41.18	13	38.24	21	61.76	21	61.76	1	2.94

The table represents the percentage of the application of skills and competencies acquired in university to respondents' current jobs by batches (2019-2023). Communication Skills and Human Relations Skills stand out as the most applied skills, with high percentages from respondents, such as 100% for the 2020 batch in Communication Skills. This means that graduates feel adequately prepared in these foundational areas. Entrepreneurial Skills show a much lower applicability, especially among the early batches, at 11.63% in 2019 and peaking at 41.18% in 2023. IT Skills, Problem-Solving Skills, and Critical Thinking Skills have increasing relevance, with over 60% of respondents finding them useful in their roles in 2023. While skills making up

foundations remain strong, increased recognitions of specific competencies, especially problem-solving and critical thinking capabilities are noted to be needed upon graduates once they enter the complexities of working lives.

Table 5. Reasons for Job Selection Among Graduates

Batch	Salaries & Benefits		Career Challenge		Related to special skills		Proximity to residence		Others reasons	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
2019	11	25.58	9	20.93	7	16.28	43	100.00	1	2.33
2020	6	50.00	2	16.67	4	33.33	12	100.00	2	16.67
2021	5	22.73	2	9.09	12	54.55	22	100.00	2	9.09
2022	9	23.08	4	10.26	15	38.46	39	100.00	1	2.56
2023	13	38.24	4	11.76	13	38.24	34	100.00	3	8.82

The table summarizes why respondents from different graduation batches (2019-2023) selected their first jobs, categorized into Salaries & Benefits, Career Challenges Related to Special Skills, Proximity to Residence, and Other Reasons. Proximity to Residence consistently ranked very high at 100 percent across all years, suggesting that graduates select jobs close to where they live. This concern related to the Salaries & Benefits feature showed the importance rising by almost 50 percent in the year 2020, but then the succeeding years dipped down at lower percentages, including 25.58 for 2019 and again to 22.73 percent in the year 2021, while there was 38.24 percent accounted in 2023 on the increasing consciousness of workers on monetary returns for labor. The Career Challenge factor was relatively low for years, peaking at 20.93% in 2019, which means that although graduates look for challenging careers, it is not one of the primary reasons to join. Related to Special Skills, on the other hand, fluctuated greatly, as it peaked at 54.55% in 2021, meaning that several graduates felt their education was quite relevant to the job at that time, while it remained steady at 38.24% in 2023. The "Other Reasons" was always the least indicated, with as much as 16.67% in 2020 and down to 2.33% in 2019, which means alternative factors would have a minimal influence rather than the primary categories. The data shows that although salary considerations are gaining priority, the need for proximity to the workplace remains of constant interest for graduates as they enter the job market.

Table 6. Time Taken to Secure First Job Among Graduates

Batch	Less Than a Month		1 to 6 Months		7 to 11 Months		1 year to less than 2 years		2 years to less than 3 years		3 years to less than 4 years		Others	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
2019	5	11.63	2	4.65	6	13.95	9	20.93	17	39.53	4	9.30	1	2.33
2020	2	16.67	2	16.67	0	0.00	4	33.33	2	16.67	2	16.67	0	0
2021	4	18.18	6	27.27	4	18.18	2	9.09	3	13.64	2	9.09	1	4.55
2022	2	5.13	4	10.26	5	12.82	12	30.77	10	25.64	4	10.26	2	5.13
2023	4	11.76	3	8.82	15	44.12	9	26.47	3	8.82	0	0	0	0

The table indicates the recruitment time for new graduates from 2019-2023, measured in intervals from "Less Than a Month" to "3 Years to Less Than 4 Years." In 2019, the major share of employment was recorded at 2 to 3 years as the period, which translates into a much longer waiting time. A more agreeable job market could be seen in the case of new graduates in 2020. In 2020, one-third, or 33.33%, became employed within 1 to 2 years. The 2021 batch was a heterogeneous cohort in terms of timelines: 27.27% reported getting placed in 1 to 6 months, which is again differential across the batches of students. In 2022, 30.77% reported getting placed in 1 to 2 years, which again captures a partial return to the longer search times. Notably, in 2023, 44.12% of graduates had jobs for 7 to 11 months, and no respondents from the 3 to 4-year timeframe. Meaning that recent

graduates are looking for employment faster. Most recent graduates take shorter periods to look for jobs, a reflection of changes in the market. This is possibly a result of better preparations for the workforce by the university.

IV. CONCLUSION

This study examines employment trends and professional experiences of BSIT graduates from NISU Batad Campus between 2019-2023, revealing a decline in employment rates, from 100% in 2020 to 65.38% in 2023. This drop may point to external factors like increased job market competition or economic shifts, meriting further investigation into how these influences affect job availability. Most employed respondents have temporary or contract jobs, although 2023 data reveals more regular employment, which could indicate a trend toward improving job stability. Reasons for employment choice were largely nearness to residence and salary, with salary as the primary reason for employment choice in 2023.

According to the graduates, application, communication, and human relations skills are most critical in their current job roles. IT and critical thinking skills are also highly valued today, meaning that graduates require problem-solving with technical skills. In this regard, while the majority of the college-acquired skills were deemed useful-mostly those relevant to specific job functions, transitions from entry-level to advanced roles may imply some level of career advancement in these graduates. At the same time, individual changes in income need further study. The overall findings have shown an important relationship between education preparation and job market success. This is why institutions must adapt curricula in line with changing market requirements. Future research should track the long-term career paths of graduates and explore the difficulties that unemployed graduates face.

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