

Professional Outcomes of Bachelor of Science in Nursing Graduates from 2015 to 2024: A Tracer Study in a Higher Education Institution in Cebu City, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This tracer study was conducted to assess the professional outcomes of Bachelor of Science in Nursing graduates from a Higher Education Institution in Cebu City, Philippines covering the 2015 to 2024 cohorts. It aimed to verify if alumni embody the institution's mission, attain required professional competencies, and establish themselves as competitive practitioners in both local and global healthcare markets, while providing evidence to refine curricula, strengthen industry linkages, and sustain program quality.

Method: The study used a descriptive quantitative research design, with complete enumeration of all eligible BSN graduates as participants. Data were gathered using the standardized and validated Commission on Higher Education Graduate Tracer Survey, administered through a mixed-mode approach (online via Google Forms and printed face-to-face questionnaires). Descriptive statistical tools including frequency counts, percentages, and weighted mean were used for data analysis, with strict adherence to ethical and data privacy standards.

Results: A total of 140 alumni responded, with 64.3% female and 35.7% male participants; 63.6% were single, and all graduating cohorts were represented. Top reasons for pursuing undergraduate nursing were family influence (55.0%) and overseas employment opportunities (53.6%), while graduate studies were driven by career advancement (32.9%) and professional passion (30.5%). The overall employment rate was 85.0%, with 78.3% holding permanent positions, 82.0% securing jobs within six months, and 35.0% earning ₱25,000 or more in their first employment. 53.7% of working alumni were deployed abroad, primarily in the UK, US, Canada, and Gulf countries. 68.0% found their first job related to their degree, and 74.8% rated the curriculum relevant to practice; critical thinking, communication, problem-solving, and human relations were the most valued competencies.

Conclusion: The institution's BSN program consistently produces globally competitive, competent, and highly employable nursing professionals. Graduates demonstrate strong career progression, alignment of academic preparation with industry requirements, and readiness for both domestic and international healthcare settings. Key areas for improvement include strengthening institutional career placement services, integrating emerging nursing fields into the curriculum, and advocating for better local employment conditions to retain skilled workforce in the country.

Keywords: Tracer study, Bachelor of Science in Nursing, graduate employability, professional outcomes, nursing education

INTRODUCTION

Nursing is a dynamic and indispensable profession that forms the backbone of healthcare systems worldwide, with graduates serving as critical contributors to health service delivery, public welfare, and national development. In the Philippines, the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) remains one of the most sought-

after academic programs, driven by consistent local demand and extensive global deployment opportunities. However, as the healthcare landscape evolves and professional standards become more rigorous, higher education institutions bear the dual mandate of maintaining program quality and verifying how well their alumni perform in actual practice. A systematic review of graduate outcomes is therefore essential to confirm program effectiveness, ensure alignment with industry expectations, and sustain the institution's reputation for producing competent professionals.

Labor market trends highlight the relevance of such assessments: the Philippine Statistics Authority (2025) reported an unemployment rate of 4.7 percent as of July 2025, with college graduates comprising a notable share of the unemployed workforce—a trend that underscores intensifying competition for skilled employment. Earlier data from January 2019 placed the national unemployment rate at 5.2 percent, where 20.9 percent of unemployed individuals held college degrees; current figures indicate that degree holders continue to face challenges in matching educational preparation with industry needs. Consequently, employability has become a central consideration for students and parents in selecting higher education institutions, compelling providers to align curricula, admission policies, and student development initiatives with evolving professional requirements.

Higher education institutions bear the mandate to monitor graduate performance to uphold public trust, evaluate program impact, and strengthen national human resource development. The Commission on Higher Education (2020) institutionalized this through Memorandum Order No. 20, s. 2020, which designates graduate tracer studies as a core quality assurance mechanism for all academic programs. Empirically, tracer studies generate evidence-based insights that guide curriculum enhancement, policy formulation, and institutional planning; they enable the identification of program strengths and gaps, ensuring that education remains responsive to societal and industry demands (Hazaymeh & Dela Peña, 2017; Aquino & Calamlam, 2025).

The quality of nursing education is ultimately reflected in the professional readiness and workplace performance of its graduates. While BSN programs are designed to build clinical competence, ethical practice, and critical thinking, there is a continuing need to validate whether these competencies meet employer expectations and regulatory standards. Tracer studies provide a structured approach to evaluating graduate employment status, career progression, geographic distribution, and the alignment of academic training with actual practice (Woya, 2018; Malabanan & Pacer, 2025). Such data enriches the perspectives of faculty, administrators, and current students, informing decisions that strengthen program relevance and graduate marketability.

Beyond institutional improvement, tracer studies support broader policy efforts to address labor market mismatches and enhance workforce competitiveness. For graduates, evidence of program outcomes reinforces professional confidence and equips them to navigate dynamic career pathways amid rising global competition (Bingbing, 2014). Education systems must likewise remain flexible and adaptive to shifting social and economic conditions, ensuring that curricula respond to both present and future societal needs while optimizing available resources (Schomburg, 2003, 2016).

In the Philippine nursing education landscape, recent investigations affirm the value of alumni tracking: studies by Malabanan and Pacer (2025) and De Guzman and Ancheta (2025) demonstrate how tracer data reveal critical insights on licensure performance, employment transitions, and competency alignment, directly informing instructional improvements and industry partnerships. These inquiries confirm that systematic graduate monitoring is indispensable for sustaining program quality and ensuring that nursing education continues to produce globally competitive professionals.

This inquiry is further anchored on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) and SDG 4 (Quality Education), alongside SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). A competent, well-deployed nursing workforce directly advances universal health coverage and equitable health services, while quality higher education ensures that learners acquire relevant knowledge and competencies for sustainable employment. Tracking

graduate outcomes strengthens institutional accountability, fosters stronger linkages between academe and industry, and ensures that educational investments translate into meaningful contributions to national and global development (United Nations, 2025; Commission on Higher Education, 2020).

The institution has long been committed to delivering quality instruction that fosters competent, ethical, and globally competitive graduates. Over nearly two decades, its Bachelor of Science in Nursing program has produced successive cohorts of alumni serving across diverse healthcare settings locally and internationally. Despite this milestone, no comprehensive tracer study has yet been conducted to systematically document the professional outcomes of BSN graduates from 2015 to 2024. This research is therefore undertaken to address this gap, with the primary objective of determining whether alumni have embodied the institution's vision and mission, attained the core competencies required for nursing practice, and established themselves as competitive professionals in both domestic and global health labor markets. Findings from this study will serve as empirical basis for refining curricular offerings, strengthening industry linkages, and sustaining the program's excellence in nursing education.

METHOD

Participants

The respondents comprised all Bachelor of Science in Nursing graduates in a Higher Education Institution in Cebu City, Philippines from 2015 to 2024. The study employed complete enumeration of the target population to ensure comprehensive representation of the specified cohorts. All eligible alumni provided explicit informed consent prior to participation, affirming voluntary involvement. Rigorous safeguards for anonymity and confidentiality were enforced by separating consent documentation from survey responses; only fully consented submissions were included in the final analysis.

Research Design and Setting

This study utilized a descriptive quantitative research design, appropriate for systematically documenting and characterizing graduate outcomes without manipulating variables. The inquiry focused on profiling alumni demographics, academic and professional development, employment trajectories, curriculum-job alignment, and the practical utility of acquired competencies. The research was conducted under the administrative and academic oversight of the Higher Education Institution.

Instrument

Data were gathered using the standardized Graduate Tracer Survey (GTS), formally adopted and validated from the Commission on Higher Education. This instrument adheres to national quality assurance frameworks, capturing core indicators of graduate employability, professional progression, and program relevance required for institutional assessment.

Data Collection Procedure

Ethical and logistical protocols were strictly observed throughout the process. Formal transmittal letters requesting institutional endorsement and alumni cooperation were issued prior to deployment. The study's objectives, scope, anticipated contributions, and participant rights were clearly communicated to all prospective respondents.

To maximize reach and accommodate varied respondent preferences, a mixed-mode data collection approach was implemented:

- The survey was primarily administered online via Google Forms, distributed through official university channels, alumni databases, and authorized professional networks.

- For alumni with limited digital access or who preferred in-person engagement, identical printed questionnaires were administered through face-to-face sessions, conducted in compliance with appropriate health and safety standards.

A reasonable response period was granted to ensure adequate participation. Upon completion of data gathering, all entries: both digital and physical, were consolidated, verified for completeness, and systematically tallied prior to statistical processing.

Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted in full compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 and international ethical research guidelines. All personal and professional data were treated with strict confidentiality, and participants were assured of no exposure to physical, psychological, social, or legal risk arising from their involvement. Research integrity and transparency were maintained at all stages of the inquiry.

Risk–Benefit Assessment

- Risk: The primary potential risk was inadvertent disclosure of confidential personal or employment details. This was mitigated by assigning unique alphanumeric codes to all responses in place of identifying information; all raw records—digital and printed—were permanently deleted or shredded immediately after encoding and analysis.
- Benefit: The findings yielded evidence-based insights to strengthen the BSN curriculum, enhance instructional delivery, and align program outcomes with evolving healthcare industry standards. Results also provided stakeholders—including faculty, administrators, current students, and future enrollees—with reliable data for informed decision-making and policy formulation.

Informed Consent

Participation was entirely voluntary. A duly approved informed consent instrument was presented and explained to all participants—electronically for online respondents and in person for those completing printed forms. Submission of the survey or signed consent constituted full acknowledgment and acceptance of participation terms.

Confidentiality Protocols

To secure participant privacy, the following measures were consistently applied:

1. Use of coded identifiers in lieu of names or personal details in all datasets and documents;
2. Restricted access to data, limited exclusively to the researchers and their faculty adviser;
3. Secure storage of digital files in password-protected repositories and physical forms in locked cabinets;
4. Permanent disposal of all identifying information upon finalization of the study.

Debriefing and Support

Following survey completion, participants were oriented to the broader implications of the study and its expected contributions to nursing education. They were afforded the opportunity to raise clarifications or concerns at any time. Mechanisms for referral to appropriate support services were established should any unforeseen issues emerge.

Compensation and Conflict of Interest

No monetary remuneration was provided; however, a token of appreciation was extended as a gesture of gratitude for their time and contribution. The study was undertaken as an academic requirement with no

external funding. All associated costs were borne solely by the researchers, who declare no competing interests that could compromise the objectivity or integrity of the findings.

Recruitment and Voluntary Participation

No coercion, undue influence, or discriminatory practice was employed in identifying or engaging respondents. Participants retained the unconditional right to decline participation or withdraw from the study at any stage, without penalty or prejudice to their standing with the institution.

Vulnerability and Authorship

All respondents were licensed or practicing professionals and did not belong to groups requiring special protection. This research is an original academic output undertaken in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Science in Nursing. Any dissemination or publication of results shall require mutual written consent among all members of the research team, with all contributors and the faculty adviser duly recognized as co-authors.

Data Analysis

Consolidated data were systematically organized, encoded, and analyzed using descriptive statistical tools. Frequency counts and percentages were computed to characterize the demographic and professional profile of respondents. Weighted mean was calculated to determine the extent of curriculum relevance, the perceived usefulness of learned competencies, and the overall status of professional outcomes among the alumni cohort.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Demographic and Graduation Profile

This section presents separately the findings on sex, civil status, and year of graduation, each with its own presentation of results, analysis, and implications.

Sex of Respondents

A total of 140 graduates responded to the survey. As shown in Table 1, female respondents outnumbered male respondents.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents by Sex at Birth

Sex at Birth	Frequency	Percentage
Female	90	64.3
Male	50	35.7
Total	140	100.0

The distribution reflects the well-documented predominance of women in the nursing profession in the Philippines and globally. However, the proportion of male graduates at 35.7% is notably higher than the estimated national average of 15–25% for male enrollees in BSN programs (Commission on Higher Education [CHED], 2022). This suggests that the institution attracts and retains a relatively larger share of male students compared to typical national trends.

The relatively balanced representation signals that the program has successfully fostered an inclusive learning environment that does not deter male participation in the profession. Nonetheless, the continued gender gap indicates that persistent social perceptions of nursing as a “female profession” remain a factor. The institution may strengthen outreach and career guidance activities in secondary schools to further promote nursing as an inclusive career option for all genders, ensuring a diverse workforce that meets varied healthcare needs.

Civil Status of Respondents

Of the 140 respondents, the majority were single, as detailed in Table 2.

Table 2. Distribution of Respondents by Civil Status

Civil Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	89	63.6
Married	48	34.3
Separated/Divorced/Widowed	3	2.1
Total	140	100.0

The high proportion of single respondents aligns with the age profile of nursing graduates, who typically complete their degree in their early to mid-20s. The 34.3% who are married represent graduates from earlier cohorts (2015–2020), reflecting progression through life stages alongside their professional careers. Only a small fraction reported being separated, divorced, or widowed, which is consistent with general demographic patterns for this age group.

The distribution suggests that most graduates are in a life stage that allows flexibility for career advancement, further studies, or overseas deployment. For program and career guidance, this highlights the need to provide information on balancing professional demands—such as rotating shifts and overseas assignments—with personal and family responsibilities. For married graduates, institutional support for continuing education and flexible work arrangements may be valuable for retention and professional growth.

Distribution by Year Graduated

Respondents represented all graduating cohorts from 2015 to 2024, with representation varying across years as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Distribution of Respondents by Year Graduated

Year Graduated	Frequency	Percentage
2015	21	15.0
2016	16	11.4
2017	10	7.1
2018	16	11.4
2019	17	12.1
2020	12	8.6
2021	18	12.9
2022	10	7.1
2023	11	7.9
2024	9	6.4
Total	140	100.0

The largest share of respondents came from the 2015 cohort (15.0%), while the smallest were from the most recent 2024 cohort (6.4%). This is expected, as recent graduates have had less time to establish contact networks or respond to alumni surveys. Representation across the decade is generally even, with slight fluctuations that likely reflect variations in graduating class sizes or survey response rates. Importantly, the sample includes cohorts that graduated before, during, and after the COVID-19 pandemic, allowing comparison of career outcomes across different labor market and health system contexts.

The broad representation across years strengthens the reliability of the tracer study findings, as outcomes reflect long-term rather than short-term trends. The inclusion of pandemic-era graduates (2020–2022) enables the institution to assess how the crisis affected employment, migration, and career progression—information

that can inform curriculum updates and student support services. To improve future response rates, particularly for recent graduates, the institution may enhance alumni tracking systems and establish more regular communication channels immediately after graduation.

Reasons for Pursuing Nursing Education

Respondents were asked to indicate their reasons for choosing the BSN program, with multiple responses allowed. For those who pursued graduate studies, separate reasons were collected. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Reasons for Pursuing Undergraduate and Graduate Nursing Programs

Reason	Undergraduate (n=140)		Graduate (n=82)	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Influence of parents or relatives	77	55.0	14	17.1
Opportunity for employment abroad	75	53.6	20	24.4
Strong passion for the profession	53	37.9	25	30.5
Prospect of career advancement	30	21.4	27	32.9
Prospect for immediate employment	27	19.3	13	15.9
Prospect of attractive compensation	25	17.9	22	26.8
Inspired by a role model	24	17.1	11	13.4
Status or prestige of the profession	20	14.3	13	15.9
Peer influence	19	13.6	5	6.1
Availability of course offering	13	9.3	2	2.4
Good grades in high school	11	7.9	3	3.7
High grades in the course/ related subjects	7	5.0	2	2.4
Affordable for the family	5	3.6	1	1.2
No particular choice or no better option	5	3.6	16	19.5
Others	5	3.6	4	4.9

Family influence and overseas employment opportunities were the top drivers for pursuing the undergraduate nursing degree, cited by 55.0% and 53.6% of respondents respectively. This reflects the well-documented context of Philippine nursing education as a key pathway for international labor migration, with family members often viewing nursing as a reliable means of economic mobility (Paz & Mendez, 2021). Intrinsic motivation, represented by passion for the profession, ranked third at 37.9%, indicating that while instrumental factors are primary, personal calling remains a significant consideration for many entrants.

For graduate studies, the top motivations shifted to career advancement (32.9%), professional passion (30.5%), and better compensation (26.8%). This change in priority suggests that as graduates progress in their careers, their focus moves from initial employment and migration to professional growth, specialization, and improved remuneration. Notably, nearly one-fifth (19.5%) of graduate respondents indicated "no particular choice or no better option," which may reflect limited career progression pathways in clinical practice without advanced credentials, or perceived lack of alternative professional opportunities for nurses in the local setting.

These findings imply that recruitment and retention strategies for nursing education should balance information on career opportunities with efforts to strengthen intrinsic professional values. For graduate programs, highlighting specialized career tracks and clear advancement pathways may help address the segment of respondents who pursue further studies without a defined goal.

Employment Status and Characteristics

Of the 140 respondents, 119 (85.0%) were currently employed, 22 (15.7%) were unemployed, and 3 (2.1%) had never been employed. Table 5 presents the employment status of respondents, while Table 6 shows the distribution of unemployed respondents by reason for joblessness.

Table 5. Current Employment Status of Respondents

Status	Frequency	Percentage
Employed	119	85.0
Unemployed	22	15.7
Never employed	3	2.1
Total	140	100.0

The overall employment rate of 85.0% is comparable to the national employment rate of 87.0% for BSN graduates reported by the Commission on Higher Education (2023). This close alignment confirms the strong employability of the institution's graduates, and indicates that the program effectively prepares learners for the workforce. Notably, no respondents cited lack of work experience or health-related concerns as causes of non-employment, suggesting that skill gaps or personal health status are not substantial barriers to securing work for this cohort.

The high employment rate validates the program's adherence to current industry standards and effectiveness of instructional and practicum delivery. The absence of skill- or health-related barriers implies that non-employment stems largely from personal or situational factors rather than gaps in preparation. The institution may continue benchmarking against national outcomes, and focus support interventions on modifiable circumstances such as licensure readiness and career guidance.

Table 6. Reasons for Unemployment or Never Being Employed (n=24)

Reason	Frequency	Percentage
Advance or further study	10	41.7
Other reasons	11	45.8
Family concerns	2	8.3
Did not look for a job	2	8.3
No job opportunity	1	4.2
Health-related reasons	0	0.0
Lack of work experience	0	0.0

The primary drivers of non-employment are pursuit of further studies (41.7%) and other unspecified reasons (45.8%). Based on alumni feedback, the latter category most commonly includes waiting for overseas deployment, processing of professional licenses or credentials, and personal decisions to delay entry into the workforce. Only one respondent reported lack of available local positions, indicating that job opportunities are generally accessible within the region.

The prevalence of further education as a reason for non-employment highlights strong interest in career advancement, which the institution may support through accessible graduate programs or continuing education pathways. The "other reasons" category should be explored further in follow-up studies to identify specific needs such as assistance with international credentialing or recruitment linkages. Since very few cited lack of

opportunities, efforts may be directed toward enhancing career guidance and information dissemination to help graduates make informed employment decisions.

Employment Details of Working Graduates

For the 120 employed respondents, Table 7 presents their employment status, Table 8 shows their industry of employment, and Table 9 illustrates their place of work.

Table 7. Current Employment Status (n=120)

Status	Frequency	Percentage
Regular/Permanent	94	78.3

Contractual	19	15.8
Self-employed	4	3.3
Temporary	2	1.7
Casual	1	0.8

The vast majority (78.3%) of employed alumni hold regular or permanent positions, demonstrating high job stability and strong confidence of employers in the competence and reliability of the institution's graduates. About 15.8% are on contractual arrangements, while only a small proportion are in temporary, casual, or self-employed statuses. This distribution reflects the strong market demand for nursing professionals and the quality of preparation received by graduates.

The high rate of permanent employment validates that the program equips graduates with the qualifications needed to secure stable career positions. The institution may continue strengthening industry partnerships to create more pathways toward regular employment, and provide guidance on navigating various employment arrangements for new graduates.

Table 8. Major Industry of Employment (n=120)

Industry	Frequency	Percentage
Health and Social Work	78	65.0
Education	10	8.3
Hotels and Restaurants	5	4.2
Wholesale and Retail Trade	4	3.3
Real Estate and Business Services	4	3.3
Other community/social services	3	2.5
Others	16	13.3

Consistent with the goal of the degree, the largest share of graduates (65.0%) remains employed within the health and social work sector. A notable proportion works in education, primarily as clinical instructors or faculty members, reflecting strong preparedness for academic roles. Placements in other industries also indicate that competencies acquired in the program—such as communication, problem-solving, and leadership—are transferable to diverse work environments.

The findings confirm strong alignment between the program's intended outcomes and actual graduate career paths. The curriculum should continue prioritizing core nursing competencies, while also integrating content on alternative and emerging career pathways to expand graduates' professional options.

Table 9. Distribution of Work Location (n=67)

Work Location	Frequency	Percentage	Specific Areas / Countries with Highest Representation
Local (Philippines)	31	46.3%	Primarily Cebu City and surrounding areas
Abroad	36	53.7%	United Kingdom, United States, Canada, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Qatar
Total	67	100.0%	

More than half (53.7%) of the alumni are working overseas, mainly in nations with established international nurse recruitment programs. The remaining 46.3% practice within the Philippines, concentrated in Cebu and nearby localities. This split shows that the program produces graduates competitive in both domestic and global health systems.

The institution should continue benchmarking against international standards and regulatory requirements to sustain global competitiveness. It is also vital to maintain strong ties with local health facilities and

government agencies to support graduates who opt to serve within the country.

Career Progression and Job Characteristics

Table 10 presents job level in first and current employment, while Table 11 shows initial monthly earnings. Table 12 and 13 summarize time to secure first employment and duration of stay in first job, respectively.

Table 10. Job Level in First and Current Employment

Job Level	First Job (n=115)		Current Job (n=113)	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Professional/Technical/Supervisory	63	54.8	81	71.7
Rank and Clerical	45	39.1	15	13.3
Managerial/Executive	2	1.7	13	11.5
Self-employed	8	7.0	7	6.2

Clear upward career progression is observed across all categories. The proportion of alumni holding professional, technical, or supervisory roles rose substantially from 54.8% to 71.7%, while representation in rank-and-file or clerical positions dropped markedly from 39.1% to 13.3%. Those occupying managerial or executive positions increased nearly seven-fold, from 1.7% to 11.5%. The share of self-employed graduates remained relatively stable. These trends demonstrate that as alumni gain experience, they acquire the competence, confidence, and credentials to assume positions of greater responsibility and authority.

This strong evidence of career advancement affirms that the program builds a solid foundation for long-term professional growth. The institution may incorporate content on career planning, leadership development, and career pathway mapping into the curriculum and alumni support programs. Recognizing and documenting these progression milestones can also strengthen the program's standing and appeal to prospective students.

Table 11. Initial Gross Monthly Earnings in First Job (n=123)

Income Bracket (PHP)	Frequency	Percentage
25,000 and above	43	35.0
15,000 – below 20,000	22	17.9
10,000 – below 15,000	23	18.7
5,000 – below 10,000	19	15.4
20,000 – below 25,000	11	8.9
Below 5,000	6	4.9

More than one-third of graduates (35.0%) started with earnings of ₱25,000 or higher, exceeding typical entry-level compensation and the national minimum wage. Over 40% earned between ₱10,000 and ₱20,000, consistent with prevailing rates in many local healthcare facilities, while only a small minority began with salaries below ₱10,000. These figures reflect the generally competitive value placed on nursing qualifications.

The favorable initial earning capacity signals that the program equips graduates with competencies that command appropriate compensation. Variations in starting pay may reflect differences in work location, type of employer, and employment arrangement. The institution can provide students with current data on salary benchmarks across different settings to help set realistic expectations and make informed career choices.

Table 12. Time Taken to Secure First Job (n=128)

Duration	Frequency	Percentage
Less than one month	70	54.7%
1 to 6 months	35	27.3%
1 year to less than 2 years	14	10.9%

Longer periods or other arrangements	9	7.1%
Total	128	100.0%

The vast majority of graduates—82.0%—secured employment within six months of graduation, with more than half (54.7%) finding work within just one month. Only about one-tenth took one to two years, and a small fraction required even longer or followed non-standard pathways. This very short job-search period reflects the sustained high demand for nursing professionals and the strong employability of program graduates.

These results confirm that the program prepares graduates to transition quickly into the workforce. Continued strengthening of linkages with partner institutions, job placement assistance, and timely licensure guidance can help further shorten waiting periods, particularly for those who take longer to find suitable positions.

Table 13. Duration of Stay in First Job (n=126)

Length of Stay	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 1 month	13	10.3%
1 to 6 months	40	31.7%
7 to 11 months	14	11.1%
1 year to less than 2 years	31	24.6%
2 years to less than 3 years	13	10.3%
3 years to less than 4 years	1	<1.0%
4 years or more	22	17.5%
Total	126	100.0%

Over 50% of alumni remained in their first position for one year or longer, and 17.5% stayed for four years or more. At the same time, nearly 42% left within six months. Shorter tenures often reflect transitions toward better compensation, overseas deployment, or alignment with preferred practice areas, while longer stays typically indicate positive working conditions and opportunities for professional development.

Findings suggest that first employment often serves as a stepping stone to further career advancement. The institution may provide students with realistic expectations about initial job tenures and strategies for making informed decisions when changing employers. Engaging partner facilities to improve induction, mentorship, and working conditions can also contribute to better early-career retention.

Job Fit and Curriculum Relevance

Table 14 presents data on alignment between education and employment, while Table 15 shows competencies identified as most useful in the workplace.

Table 14. Alignment Between Academic Preparation and Employment

Indicator	Frequency	Percentage
First job related to degree (n=128)		
Yes	87	68.0
No	41	32.0
Curriculum relevant to first job (n=127)		
Yes	95	74.8
No	32	25.2

More than two-thirds (68.0%) of alumni entered a first job directly related to their nursing degree, and nearly three-quarters (74.8%) considered the curriculum highly relevant to the demands of their initial employment. These results demonstrate strong overall alignment between the program's design and the practical requirements of the profession. The 32.0% who took unrelated positions may reflect shifts in the labor market, personal career preferences, challenges in securing nursing roles, or transitions into related health or non-

health sectors where transferable skills remain applicable.

The findings validate that the curriculum effectively builds competencies suited for nursing practice. The program may continue regular reviews against industry standards and regulatory requirements to sustain this relevance. Further inquiry should be conducted to understand the specific reasons graduates take non-nursing roles, which can inform improvements in career guidance, industry partnerships, and integration of alternative career pathways into the curriculum.

Table 15. Competencies from College Found Useful in First Job (n=107)

Competency	Frequency	Percentage
Critical thinking skills	89	83.2
Communication skills	86	80.4
Problem-solving skills	69	64.5
Human relations skills	68	63.6
Entrepreneurial skills	17	15.9
Others	8	7.5

Cognitive and interpersonal competencies were cited as the most valuable by large majorities of respondents. Critical thinking and communication skills ranked highest, each endorsed by over 80% of participants, followed closely by problem-solving and human relations skills. Entrepreneurial skills were rated as useful by less than one-sixth of respondents, suggesting these may not be as central to the initial work experience of most graduates, or that they are less emphasized in current coursework. The "others" category typically included technical nursing skills, documentation proficiency, and clinical decision-making abilities.

These results confirm that the program successfully fosters the core competencies essential for safe and effective practice across all healthcare settings. Instructional strategies that reinforce critical thinking, communication, and interpersonal skills should be maintained and further strengthened. Meanwhile, the relevance and delivery of entrepreneurial skills training may be reassessed, or reframed to highlight applications relevant to nursing such as independent practice, healthcare management, and health innovation.

Job Search and Retention Factors

Table 16 shows how respondents found their first job, while Table 17 presents reasons for staying in the first job and reasons for changing jobs.

Table 16. Sources of First Job Information (n=127)

Source	Frequency	Percentage
Recommended by someone	60	47.2
Walk-in application	40	31.5
Information from friends	35	27.6
Response to advertisements	18	14.2
Others	6	4.7
Job fairs / PESO	3	2.4
School placement office	1	0.8

Nearly half of the respondents (47.2%) obtained their first position through personal referrals, while a significant portion used proactive methods such as walk-in applications (31.5%) and information shared by friends (27.6%). Formal channels such as advertisements, job fairs, and government employment services were used less frequently. Notably, the school's job placement office was utilized by less than one percent of graduates, suggesting that this service is greatly underused or not fully known to students.

Findings show that professional and social networks remain the most effective pathways to employment, which highlights the importance of cultivating strong industry connections and mentorship relationships. The

institution should review, promote, and strengthen its placement services to make them more accessible and relevant. This could include closer coordination with partner facilities, regular dissemination of job openings, and active participation in job fairs to provide graduates with additional structured opportunities.

Table 17. Factors Influencing Job Retention and Mobility

Reason	Staying in First Job (n=48)		Changing Jobs (n=82)	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Salaries and benefits	33	68.8	63	76.8
Related to skills/course	20	41.7	19	23.2
Career challenge/growth	18	37.5	37	45.1
Proximity to residence	5	10.4	19	23.2
Peer/family influence	4	8.4	—	—

Compensation and benefits emerged as the primary factor for both remaining in an organization and seeking new employment, indicating that financial considerations are the dominant driver of career decisions. Alignment with professional skills and the desire for career advancement were also key considerations. Peer and family influence was cited only as a reason for staying, while proximity to residence carried similar weight in both retention and mobility choices. This shows that graduates weigh multiple practical and professional aspects when making employment decisions.

These insights should be integrated into career guidance programs to help students develop realistic expectations about compensation, negotiate employment terms, and identify opportunities for professional growth. The institution may also share these findings with partner employers to inform strategies for retaining nursing professionals. Additionally, graduates should be guided to evaluate opportunities holistically, balancing financial rewards with career development, workplace culture, and personal needs.

CONCLUSION

This tracer study assessed the professional outcomes of 140 Bachelor of Science in Nursing graduates in a Higher Education Institution in Cebu City, Philippines spanning the 2015–2024 cohorts, providing empirical evidence of program performance, graduate employability, and alignment with evolving healthcare industry standards. Anchored on the mandates of the Commission on Higher Education and aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals for good health, quality education, and decent work, the findings confirm that the BSN program consistently produces globally competitive, professionally competent, and highly employable nursing graduates.

The demographic profile reveals a notably higher representation of male graduates (35.7%) compared to national averages, signaling an inclusive learning environment that counters traditional gender stereotypes in the profession. Family influence and overseas employment opportunities emerged as the primary drivers for pursuing undergraduate nursing education, while career advancement, professional passion, and improved compensation became the dominant motivations for graduate studies—reflecting how graduates’ priorities shift from initial employment access to long-term professional growth as they progress in their careers.

With an overall employment rate of 85.0%, comparable to the national benchmark for nursing graduates, the study affirms the strong labor market value of the program. Over three-quarters of employed alumni hold permanent positions, 82.0% secured work within six months of graduation, and more than one-third earned initial monthly incomes of ₱25,000 or higher—exceeding prevailing entry-level compensation standards in the country. A clear trajectory of career advancement is evident: the share of graduates occupying professional, technical, or supervisory roles rose from 54.8% in their first job to 71.7% in current employment, while those in managerial or executive positions increased nearly seven-fold from 1.7% to 11.5%. While 46.3% of employed alumni remain in the Philippines—predominantly in Cebu and adjacent areas—53.7% practice overseas across high-demand destinations including the United Kingdom, United States, Canada, and Gulf Cooperation Council countries, underscoring the program’s capacity to prepare graduates for both domestic

and international healthcare settings.

The study further validates the strong alignment between academic preparation and professional practice: 68.0% of respondents entered jobs directly related to their degree, and 74.8% rated the curriculum as relevant to their work. The core competencies most frequently cited as essential in professional practice—critical thinking (83.2%), communication (80.4%), problem-solving (64.5%), and human relations skills (63.6%)—are consistent with national regulatory standards and international benchmarks for nursing excellence, confirming that the program effectively cultivates foundational professional capabilities. Notably, lack of work experience or health-related concerns were not cited as barriers to employment, indicating that gaps in technical proficiency or personal readiness do not limit graduates’ access to the labor market.

Several areas for targeted improvement emerge from the findings. The heavy reliance on personal referrals and informal networks for job placement, coupled with minimal utilization of institutional career services, highlights the need to strengthen industry linkages, formal placement support, and alumni engagement mechanisms. High turnover in early employment, alongside compensation and career progression as the primary drivers of job mobility, points to the importance of advocating for improved working conditions and remuneration in local health facilities to sustain a skilled domestic workforce. Additionally, the limited perceived utility of entrepreneurial skills and the substantial share of graduates entering non-traditional employment pathways suggest that curricular updates should integrate modules on emerging nursing fields—including health informatics, research, education, and independent practice—to better prepare graduates for diverse career trajectories.

Ultimately, this study demonstrates that the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program has successfully fulfilled its mandate to produce competent, ethical, and globally competitive professionals whose contributions advance health service delivery and workforce development both locally and internationally. The insights generated provide an evidence-based foundation for refining curricular design, enhancing student support services, strengthening institutional partnerships, and sustaining the program’s commitment to quality nursing education responsive to the evolving needs of the healthcare system and the broader community.

Expected Outputs Or Deliverables

Based on the findings of the Tracer Study on the Professional Outcomes of BSN Graduates (2015–2024), the following actionable outputs and deliverables are proposed to strengthen the program, enhance graduate outcomes, and align with industry and institutional goals:

Curriculum Review and Improvement Plan

Deliverable	Specific Actions	Rationale from Study Findings
Updated Curriculum Framework	- Integrate modules on emerging nursing fields: health informatics, research, nursing education, entrepreneurship, and non-traditional career pathways - Strengthen instruction on core competencies: critical thinking, communication, problem-solving, and human relations skills - Include sessions on career planning, work-life balance, and local vs. global employment opportunities	32% of graduates work outside direct nursing practice; entrepreneurial skills were rated least useful - Core competencies cited as most valuable in practice - Graduates need guidance on balancing professional and personal responsibilities
Competency Alignment Matrix	- Map program learning outcomes against CHED, PRC, and international nursing standards - Cross-reference competencies with employer feedback and graduate work requirements	74.8% rated curriculum relevant; 68.0% had jobs related to their degree; ensures continued alignment with industry needs
Graduate Studies Pathway Guide	- Develop clear progression tracks for specialization (e.g., administration, education, advanced practice) - Highlight career advancement and compensation benefits of further education	32.9% pursue graduate studies for career growth; 19.5% enrolled without a defined career goal

Employability And Career Development Action Plan

Deliverable	Specific Actions	Rationale from Study Findings
Enhanced Career Placement and Alumni Engagement Program	- Establish formal partnerships with local and international healthcare institutions - Launch an active alumni database and regular networking events - Expand school placement services, job fairs, and industry linkages	Only 0.8% secured jobs through school placement; 47.2% relied on personal referrals; 53.7% work overseas
Employment Support Toolkit	- Provide resume writing, licensure guidance, overseas deployment requirements, and contract negotiation workshops - Conduct pre-employment orientation on compensation, benefits, and working conditions	Compensation is the top factor for job retention and mobility; 42.0% leave first jobs within six months
Inclusive Recruitment and Outreach Strategy	- Design career awareness campaigns targeting male students and diverse demographics - Promote nursing as an inclusive profession across secondary schools	Male graduates at 35.7% exceed national average but remain underrepresented overall

Policy And Institutional Enhancement Recommendations

Deliverable	Specific Actions	Rationale from Study Findings
Evidence-Based Policy Brief	- Present findings to administration and relevant bodies for policy adjustments - Advocate for improved local nursing compensation and working conditions to retain skilled workforce	High outflow of graduates abroad; financial incentives drive career decisions
Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation System	- Institutionalize regular tracer studies every 2–3 years - Establish a feedback loop between alumni, employers, and the department - Update survey tools to capture emerging trends	No prior comprehensive tracer study exists; long-term tracking is required to sustain quality
Student Support Services Framework	- Integrate career guidance from first year to graduation - Offer mentorship programs linking current students to alumni - Provide information on balancing further studies and employment	41.7% of unemployed graduates are pursuing advanced studies; early career guidance is needed

Dissemination And Utilization Of Findings

Deliverable	Specific Actions
Full Study Report and Executive Summary	Share with CHED, hospital partners, alumni, and university stakeholders
Presentation and Consultation Forums	Conduct sessions with faculty, students, administrators, and industry partners
Publication and Knowledge Sharing	Submit findings to academic journals and nursing education conferences

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