A TRACER STUDY OF THE GRADUATES OF BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN OFFICE ADMINISTRATION MAJOR IN OFFICE MANAGEMENT COVERING THE ACADEMIC YEARS 2018, 2019, 2022, & 2023 OF THE KAPALONG COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

Tracer studies are crucial for gauging the effectiveness and applicability of programs provided by higher education institutions and their alignment with the job market. Hence, the aim of this quantitative research is to track the career paths of graduates from Kapalong College of Agriculture, Sciences, and Technology (KCAST). Particularly, the study successfully contacted 97% of the graduates from the BSOA Department, with 299 out of 308 graduates participating covering the A.Y. 2018, 2019, 2022, and 2023. Among the total respondents, 34 (44.82%) graduated in 2023, while 85 (28.643%) graduated in 2022, 56 (18.73%) graduated in 2019, and 24 (8.03%) graduated in 2018. The majority of respondents were female, comprising 268 (89.63%) who were single. The most common age group among participants was 24 years old. Notably, 30 (10.03%) respondents acquired vocational education and/or TESDA National Competency certification, and 5 (2%) pursued higher education after completing their bachelor's degree. Regarding employment status, 211 individuals (70.57%) are presently employed, with the majority, 189 (89.70%), holding full-time positions. Notably, nearly 93 (43%) of the employed graduates earn monthly salaries ranging between 11,000.00 and 15,000.00, having secured their current positions within 1 to 3 months after graduation. Interestingly, the majority of respondents, totaling 259 (86%), expressed a neutral opinion when asked about the relevance of their degree to their current job. Furthermore, among the respondents, 51 work as office clerks and/or encoders, 48 hold administrative positions across various offices, 30 serves as accounting staff, and 24 are engaged in roles related to customer relations. The BSOA graduates consistently demonstrate a high level of attitude towards work, appreciation for the quality education provided by the institution, and the development of skills and abilities. This descriptive rating indicates that these attributes are consistently observed in BSOA graduates. Therefore, it is advised that the BSOA Department of KCAST continues to uphold and enhance the current programs and activities aimed at improving the employability skills of its students.

KEYWORDS: *BSOA Graduates, Philippines, quantitative descriptive method, tracer study*

INTRODUCTION

The main aim of tracing graduates is to develop a clear picture of the situation of graduates after completion of studies. Consequently, undertaking this study will be able to assist stakeholders in the decision-making process regarding the responsiveness of education, on the supply side, to the situation of labor market, on the demand side. Thus, education providers play an equally important role in training graduates for a wide range of skills that are needed for success in life in general, and in employment in particular. Furthermore, flexible pathways and modes of study in Further and Higher Education are important to allow students to enter, leave and re-enter education and to reconcile studies with other commitments they may have (Cassar, 2016).

Every academic institution's goal is to produce competent and highly qualified graduates that can eventually be competitive in a local and global arena. A graduate tracer study is a very powerful tool that can provide valuable information for evaluating the whereabouts and performance of the graduates in the workplace. To enrich the existing degree programs, the institution has to focus on student mobility, credit transfers, quality assurance and research clusters as the four main priorities to harmonize with the ASEAN higher education system (Cuadra et al., 2019).

Internationally, tracing graduates is essential for evaluating the quality and relevance of educational programs, fostering alumni engagement, and meeting accreditation requirements. For individuals, education promotes employment, earnings, health, and poverty reduction. Globally, there is a 9% increase in hourly earnings for every extra year of schooling. For societies, it drives long-term economic growth, spurs innovation, strengthens institutions, and fosters social cohesion. Making smart and effective investments in people's education is critical for developing the human capital that will end extreme poverty. At the core of this strategy is the need to tackle the learning crisis,

put an end to Learning Poverty, and help youth acquire the advanced cognitive, socioemotional, technical and digital skills they need to succeed in today's world (The World Bank, 2024).

In Camarines Sur, a tracer study of the Bachelor of Science in Office Administration (BSOA) Graduates of Camarines Sur Polytechnic Colleges from 2009 to 2013 was conducted. Specifically, it sought to determine the personal, professional and employment profile, and the attributes that contribute to employability. It also identified reasons with regards to staying in the job, accepting jobs not related to the course and unemployment. Likewise, the study looks at the expectations met by the program that contributed in meeting the demands of the job and the assessment of the employer on the job performance of the graduates. The majority of the graduates are gainfully employed locally, in private organizations, with regular/permanent status, and holding clerical positions. Attributes such as socio-economic, academic and school factors contributed to their employability. Salaries and benefits play a big role in staying in the job and accepting jobs not related to course, while family concern is the main reason why people are not employed. The BSOA program has met the expectation of the graduates but needs to take necessary measures to address the issue of skills that was found out to be fairly met (Jintalan, 2020).

The BSOA Department of Kapalong College of Agriculture, Sciences and Technology (KCAST) carried out research among 87 graduates covering the Academic Years 2018-2019. The researchers found out that majority of the course contents of their program are relevant to their career requirements. In terms of employability rate of the graduates, more than half of them got employed one (1) to three months after the graduation. 43.6% of the respondents are currently working as full-time in their job. With the data gathered, the researchers concluded that through their competent communication and interpersonal skills, graduates were more likely to land on the jobs connected to the degree they have studied. Therefore, the researchers recommend that the institution, particularly the department, should hold various job fairs and extensive seminars, as well as training and lectures for the graduating office administration students which are designed based on the specific needs of the industry (Lopez et.al.,2024).

Hence, this research determined the contribution of BSOA graduates to the development of various skills, the satisfaction with the delivery of the institution program and services, and the practice of graduate attributes of KCAST BSOA graduates covering the Academic Year 2018, 2019,2022, & 2023. Consequently, continuity in conducting graduate tracer studies in an Office Administration program fosters a culture of lifelong learning, excellence in teaching, and continuous improvement, all of which contribute to the program's success and the success of its students.

Likewise, it explored deeper insights on the quantitative data to generate a broader perspective on the graduates' experiences to the development of their skills. The findings may serve as baseline data in formulating a proposed strategic plan for the continuous improvement of the BSOA Department's delivery of the programs and services. As such, conducting graduate tracer studies enhances institutional accountability, supports program improvement efforts, informs career services, strengthens alumni relationships, and contributes to the institution's reputation and impact.

Objectives of the Study
This study aimed to conduct a comprehensive graduate tracer research to track the professional paths and current employment status of BSOA major in Office Management graduates covering the Academic Years 2018, 2019 – 2022, and 2023 from KCAST. By examining the post-graduation experiences of KCAST BSOA alumni, this research seeks to provide valuable insights into the relevance and impact of the college's educational programs.

To achieve this aim, the study has the following specific objectives:

1. What is the profile of the BSOA graduates in terms of the following:
    1.1. sex;
    1.2. civil status;
    1.3. age;
    1.4. year graduated;
    1.5. educational attainment and personal development; and
    1.6. relevance of the degree to their present job.

2. What is the employment profile of the BSOA graduates in terms of the following aspects:
    2.1. employment rate;
    2.2. present employment status;
    2.3. initial gross earning;
    2.4. time of employment after graduation;
    2.4. reasons for staying on the job; and
    2.5. relatedness of job to the course/program taken.

3. What is the work attitude of BSOA graduates?
4. What is the perception of the BSOA graduates with the quality of education provision of the institution?
5. What are the competencies learned in college that are useful in the current job of the graduates?

Review of Related Literature
This section presents a foundation upon which the current research is built and contextualizes the study within the broader academic and research landscape. It helps to establish the context and background, identify gaps, provide a theoretical foundation, offer methodological insights, clarify concepts, enhance credibility, and support the analysis of findings relevant to graduate tracer study.

Graduates Tracer Study
A tracer study or graduate survey is a standardized survey of graduates from education institutions, which takes place sometime after graduation or the end of the training. The subjects of a tracer study can be diverse, but common topics include questions on study progress, the transition to work, work entrance, job career, use of learned competencies, current occupation and bonds to the education institution (International Training Center 2024).

Through tracer study, an institution is able to evaluate the quality of education given to their graduates by knowing the graduates' placements and positions in the society which later can be used as a benchmark in producing more qualified and competitive graduates. Hence, tracer surveys are studies that gather feedback from graduates of an educational institution to monitor their achievements and progress in their careers and give policy bodies vital information on key issues (Reyes, 2021).

Moreover, Graduate Tracer Studies (GTS) are tools that allow understanding better the connection between education and the world of work. The use of these studies has been expanding across countries mainly due to the increasing complexity of the relationship between education and work in times when the educational offer is diversifying, participation in education is growing, and economies and labor markets are rapidly changing (World Bank, 2019).

Consequently, every academic institution's goal is to produce competent and highly qualified graduates that can eventually be competitive in a local and global arena (Gonzaga, 2019). Thus, the development of tracer studies can be implemented in several stages, such as system design development, data design, and interface design. With the development of the tracer study system design, it is hoped that it can become the basis for developing an integrated tracer study information system with the institution (Hapsari, 2024).

Graduate Outcomes

In practice, Graduate Outcomes is a validation to understand whether a graduate is in employment, have continued with further study or are doing something else and to what extent his or her qualification played a part after graduation. The process of validation will focus on student experience from learning to potential employment perspective (Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2022).

Furthermore, a Graduate Outcomes Survey conducted by Higher Education Authority (HEA) is a national survey distributed to all graduates of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) which highlight the current opportunities and challenges for new graduates. Moreover, factors explored in the report include employment outcomes, source of employment, location of employment, graduate salaries, relevance of studies to employment, enrolment in further studies, among others (Higher Education Authority, 2024).

However, to make a claim about a graduate outcome is to offer a causal explanation of how some aspect of higher education tends to promote a particular graduate capability (e.g. social capital), which then in turn leads to a particular graduate functioning (e.g. high skilled employment). More than this, there is a need to understand how these causal processes vary for different students in different institutions. This complex assessment of graduate outcomes, will not only consider comparisons between Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), but eventually understands the accurate picture of the actual transformations promoted by higher education (Fryer, 2021).

Notably, there is a lack of focus on staff experiences regarding the process of preparing students for employment. The review also demonstrates the need for more research on career processes and outcomes in transnational higher education (Schueller, 2023).

Nonetheless, during the second State of the Nation Address (SONA), President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. noted how the administration, through the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), responded to improve the country's education to ensure global competency…CHED chairperson J. Prospero de Vera III, said the Philippine HEIs would produce more globally-ready graduates through partnerships spurring sharing and exchanges of curriculum, programs, and training between local and international universities in various fields of studies (Sevillano, 2023).

Employer Perspectives

Fresh graduates need to understand that their prospective employers are perceiving gaps in their expectations versus reality. Being cognizant of this gap and working for self-improvement is imperative not only for improving the probability of employment with the favorite employer but also to fuel their career growth. The employers would be aware of the gap and thus, design suitable bridge programs to adapt the new graduates to their and the industry needs (Sangeetha, 2022).

Furthermore, employers typically expect recent graduates to have a strong foundation in the theoretical and practical aspects of their field of study. This includes a good understanding of relevant concepts, skills, and industry trends. They also look for graduates who demonstrate strong communication, problem-solving, teamwork, and critical thinking skills. Additionally, employers often value candidates who show a willingness to learn, adapt, and take initiative in their professional development. Graduates who have gained practical experience through internships, co-op programs, or relevant part-time work may also have an advantage in the job market (Poe, 2023).

Nevertheless, research into employability issues is currently receiving considerable attention. In Morocco, a significant number of employers are satisfied with the skills of their newly hired employees. However, other employers express their dissatisfaction with the newly hired workers and believe that they lack some of the most basic skills needed for successful employment… It aims to research the gap between employers' requirements of graduates and their actual skills with particular focus on employers' perception (Tejan, 2019).

Moreover, U.S. employers have reported that many college graduates are underprepared in written communication when hired and that lack of preparedness hinders these graduates' employment success. Higher education institution (HEI) administrators need information regarding which writing skills should be taught across the curriculum to improve student outcomes…Improvements in these areas may contribute to positive social change by improving employment outcomes for college graduates, which is particularly important given the time and money that learners invest in education (Minnaugh, 2023).
Consequently, mismatch between the graduate's skills and attributes with the industry needs has been a challenge for colleges and universities. Thus, HEIs constantly review the curricula to respond to the relevant human resource needs. Conversely, the least preferred by the employers were found to be formal accounting qualification, technology skills and capacity for innovation. Whereas, leadership, communication and interpersonal skills are preferred by the employers (Briones, 2021).

Challenges on Tracer Study

Graduate tracer studies may be an appropriate research method for responding to various problems in the South African higher education context, including difficulties associated with higher education transformation and graduate employability. However, there is little context relevant literature on the implementation of the various methodologies that may be used, and no assessment of the relevance of these methods for the South African context (Senekal, 2019).

Notably, conducting a tracer study faces several challenges. One challenge is the limited response from alumni and stakeholders, which hinders the distribution and collection of questionnaires. Another challenge is the accessibility of software, photocopier and internet for administrative works, which affects the use of ICTs in school administration. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has imposed social limitations, making it necessary to shift to digital modes of tracer study implementation using IT-based applications like Google Forms, Facebook Groups, and WhatsApp Groups. Furthermore, monitoring alumni who are located outside the city poses a challenge, as the current data collection method is not effective in keeping track of them. These challenges highlight the need for improved strategies and tools to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of tracer studies (SciSpace, 2023).

As such, tracer study is a mandatory aspect of accreditation assessment in Indonesia as it is also needed by the university in evaluating the success of learning that has been applied to the curriculum (Abdulloh et.al., 2022).

Indeed, graduate tracer studies may be an appropriate research method for responding to various problems in the South African higher education context, including difficulties associated with higher education transformation and graduate employability. However, there is little context relevant literature on the implementation of the various methodologies that may be used, and no assessment of the relevance of these methods for the South African context (Munro et.al., 2019).

With this in mind, Graduate Tracer Study should be done regularly in order to know their whereabouts, evaluate existing programs, assess study provisions and conditions, and design improvements to strengthen them or to come up with new relevant programs in the future. Finally, to improve the content and construct of the graduate tracer study questionnaire, the study recommends the conduct of reliability index (Cuadra et.al., 2019).

Policy Implications
Improving the quality of graduate education is the HEI's main objective. One way of knowing the quality is determining the graduates' appropriateness and the graduates' work competencies in the workplace. It will help the higher education institutions to get feedback and to know their position in terms of efficiency in providing knowledge to students. It will be used for curriculum development and reform to determine the education curriculum appropriateness to enhance graduates' work performance (Guiamalon, 2021).

As such, conducting tracer studies regularly will identify areas of strength and progress, collect feedback on graduates' readiness for professional jobs, and provide improvements in the curriculum (Aranda et.al., 2024). Therefore, the government would acquire valuable cues to formulate suitable policies to achieve the nation's strategic goals. (Sangeetha, 2022).

Consequently, GTS allows us to illuminate the relationship between college experience and labor market outcomes, and to formulate course of actions for the higher education sector (Tutor et.al., 2020). With this in mind, It is anticipated that the findings will allow the University to make better and informed-decisions when developing policies dealing with academic issues (learning and teaching) and student welfare in order to better prepare graduates for the job market (Semos et.al., 2020).

Finally, there is an urgent need for all stakeholders to develop… a service-oriented architecture to assure the quality of higher education with mandatory elements, for example, student survey results, student ratings, university teachers' rating, educational programs, results of uniqueness verification for scientific research and qualifying papers, review of educational programs for higher education applicants etc. (Kobets et.al., 2021).

Theoretical Framework
Understanding the dynamics of sustainable academic practices requires a comprehensive theoretical approach. This study is grounded in several interrelated theories that provide a substantial framework for analyzing the various dimensions of a graduate tracer studies.

Firstly, the Stufflebeam's CIPP Model (Context, Input, Process, Product) developed by Daniel Stufflebeam, is a comprehensive framework for educational evaluation. It emphasizes systematic collection and analysis of information to make informed decisions and improve educational practices (Tunk, 2010).

Secondly, comprehensive frameworks for conducting tracer studies developed by Ulrich Teichler emphasize the importance of considering various factors such as socio-economic background, field of study, and labor market conditions. Teichler argues that the insights gained from these studies can help improve curriculum design, enhance employability skills training, and strengthen university-industry linkages. These comparative studies provide valuable insights into how different contexts influence graduate outcomes and help identify best practices that can be adapted across various settings. Thus, acquiring work experience is more important … also students from disadvantaged backgrounds are primarily motivated to seek employment by the prospect of short-term income. It is a significant finding that even if the students' jobs are not related to their studies, they still have the goal of gaining professional experience and increasing their capital, which implies that they consider many of these jobs to be an investment in human capital (Fenyes, 2021).

Thirdly, Yorke and Knight's employability theory, developed by Mantz Yorke and Peter Knight, is a well-regarded framework in the field of higher education that focuses on understanding and enhancing graduate employability. By focusing on a broad range of attributes—skills, self-efficacy, meta-cognition, and personal qualities—the theory emphasizes the importance of a holistic approach to education that prepares students not just for their first job, but for a sustainable and adaptable career. Institutions that integrate these concepts into their programs can better equip their graduates to thrive in the dynamic and often unpredictable job market. Accordingly, increase in students' psychological capital had a positive and direct effect on the increase in the level of competence shown in employability skills (Calvo et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the study incorporates the JD-R Model, developed by Arnold Bakker and Evangelia Demerouti, posits that job performance is influenced by the interaction between job demands and job resources. The model can be applied to a variety of work environments and is flexible enough to account for different types of jobs and industries and can integrate individual perspectives within occupational wellbeing (Boyd et.al., 2010).

By integrating these theoretical perspectives, the study aims to provide a multi-dimensional analysis of sustainable employability skills practices in KCAST. This theoretical framework not only guides the research design and methodology but also facilitates a deeper interpretation of the findings, ultimately contributing to the development of effective strategies for promoting sustainable academic programs.

METHODS
Research Design
This study employed the descriptive research method because it involved gathering quantitative data, which were organized numerically, aligning with the essence of descriptive studies. Additionally, this approach was utilized to detail the characteristics of the population or phenomenon under investigation. The primary objective of this research method is to depict the nature of a demographic segment without delving into the reasons behind the occurrence of specific phenomena. Thus, this type of research provides a detailed and accurate picture of the characteristics and behaviors of a particular population or subject. By observing and collecting data on a given topic, descriptive research helps researchers gain a deeper understanding of a specific issue and provides valuable insights that can inform future studies (Sirisilla, 2023). Also, this method ascertains prevailing conditions of facts in a group under study

that gives either qualitative or quantitative, or both, descriptions of the general characteristics of the group as results (Rillo, et.al., 2018).

In the context of the present study, a descriptive research method was employed to detail the demographic characteristics, employment profile, work attitude, quality education provisions, and skills and abilities development of BSOA graduates from KCAST.
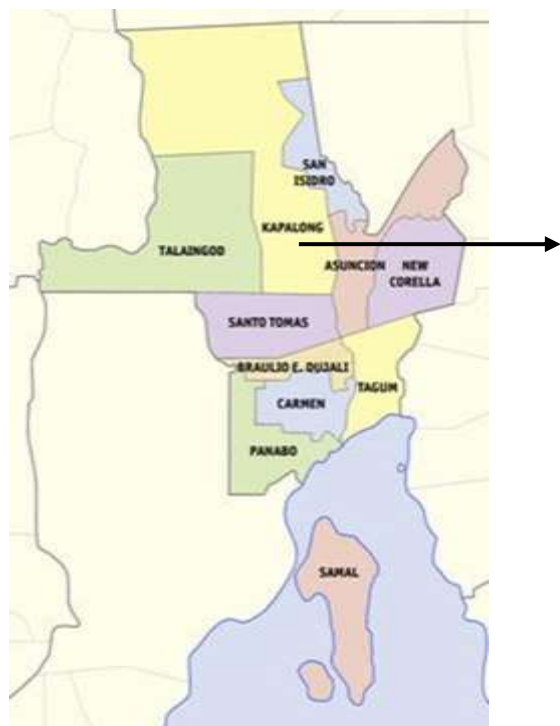
Research Locale
This tracer study was conducted in Kapalong College of Agriculture, Sciences and Technology (Figure 1), an educational institution situated in the Municipality of Kapalong province of Davao del Norte, which is part of the Davao Region in Mindanao. This area is known for its agricultural activities, making it an ideal setting for a college specializing in agricultural education. It is the first local

Figure 1. Geographical Location of the Research Locale

college in Region XI accredited Level 1 by the Association of Local Colleges and Universities –Commission on Accreditation (ALCUCOA). The institution started its operation in the year 2005. KCAST is a pivotal institution dedicated to advancing agricultural education and technology. It provides a comprehensive learning environment that integrates theoretical and practical knowledge, supports research and community service, and fosters industry partnerships.

Research Respondents

Table 1. Population and Sample of the Study

Bachelor of Science in Office Administration major in Office Management			
A.Y.	**Male**	**Female**	**Sub-total**
2018	7	17	24
2019	14	42	53
2022	22	63	85
2023	27	107	134
Total	**70**	**229**	**299**

*Data collected is sourced out from KCAST Registrar's Office

Essentially, the focus of this tracer study was on graduates from the BSOA Department at KCAST, spanning the Academic Years 2018, 2019, 2022, and 2023. Consequently, the study employed complete enumeration random sampling, given its objective to meticulously track and trace graduates regarding their employment profiles. In particular, in 2018, there were a total of 24 graduates, comprising 7 males and 17 females. In 2019, there were 56 graduates, with 14 males and 42 females. In 2022, the number rose to 85 graduates, including 22 males and 63 females. Lastly, in 2023, there were 134 graduates, consisting of 27 males and 107 females, resulting in a total of 299 BSOA graduates over the specified years.

Research Instrument
This study employed a custom-made tracer survey questionnaire adapted from the work of Escandallo (2024), validated by a panel of experts and examiners. The validation process ensured that the survey's constructs and contents accurately measured the study's intended outcomes, assessing both content validity and reliability. Experts evaluated the clarity of instructions and items, the organization and presentation of the items, their suitability and adequacy in each category, the achievement of the survey's purpose, the objectivity, and the rating system's scale evaluation.

Additionally, the primary objective of the tracer survey questionnaire was to track the employment history and current status of the graduates, monitor their educational achievements and progress, gauge their attitude towards their work, assess their perception of the quality of education provided by the institution, and determine the extent to which the institution contributed to the development and enhancement of their diverse skills and abilities during their time at KCAST.

At the same time, graduate surveys have the advantage of securing a systematic information input by standardization and representative determination of the output without having to rely on the construction of a permanent information system (Schomburg, 2003). To ensure clear comprehension and interpretation of the results and data collected in this tracer study, specific parameter limits were employed. The limits below were utilized to interpret the degree of attitude towards work, assess the quality of education provided, and evaluate the skills and abilities of the BSOA major in Office Management graduates from KCAST:

Range of Percentage	Descriptive Equivalent	Description
4.20-5.00	Very High	If the measure described in the item or construct is always manifested.
3.40-4.19	High	If the measure described in the item or construct is always manifested.
3.00-3.39	Average	If the measure described in the item or construct is always manifested.
1.80-2.99	Low	If the measure described in the item or construct is always manifested.
1.00-1.79	Very Low	If the measure described in the item or construct is always manifested.

Furthermore, the specified parameter limit below was employed to interpret the quality of education provision for BSOA graduates from KCAST:

Range of Percentage	Descriptive Equivalent	Description
4.20-5.00	Very High	If the measure described in the item or construct is always manifested.
3.40-4.19	High	If the measure described in the item or construct is always manifested.
3.00-3.39	Average	If the measure described in the item or construct is always manifested.
1.80-2.99	Low	If the measure described in the item or construct is always manifested.
1.00-1.79	Very Low	If the measure described in the item or construct is always manifested.

Finally, the predetermined parameter limit below served as a guiding framework for evaluating the standard of education offered to BSOA graduates from KCAST:

Range of Percentage	Descriptive Equivalent	Description
4.20-5.00	Very High	If the measure described in the item or construct is always manifested.
3.40-4.19	High	If the measure described in the item or construct is always manifested.
3.00-3.39	Average	If the measure described in the item or construct is always manifested.
1.80-2.99	Low	If the measure described in the item or construct is always manifested.
1.00-1.79	Very Low	If the measure described in the item or construct is always manifested.

Data Gathering Procedure
One of the main stages in a research study is data collection that enables the researcher to find answers to research questions. Data collection is the process of collecting data aiming to gain insights regarding the research topic (Taherdoost,2022). Therefore, the subsequent key measures were conscientiously implemented to collect the requisite data for the study:

Initially, as the study's population and sample encompassed BSOA graduates from KCAST, the researchers obtained precise data on the total number of graduates from the Academic Years 2018, 2019, 2022, and 2023 from the college registrar to ensure the inclusion of exact and reliable data.

Next, subsequent to acquiring the total count of graduates, the researchers devised and formulated the survey tracer questionnaire. This questionnaire was designed to assess various aspects including the demographic characteristics, employment profile, work attitude, quality education provisions, and skills and abilities development of the respondents.

Subsequently, after the creation of the survey questionnaire, the researchers commenced the process of tracing the graduates regarding their employment profile, educational achievements and progress, work attitude, quality of education provision, and the development of skills and abilities. This tracing process was facilitated using Google Forms.

As such, once the respondent had fully answered to the questionnaire, the researchers collected the completed surveys and began tallying the responses in readiness for data analysis.

Finally, the data underwent analysis and interpretation by the institution's designated statistician. They prepared the retrieved data for presentation in tables and graphs, enhancing the clarity and comprehension of the results.

Statistical Tool
Mean was utilized to calculate the average score, assessing the level of attitude towards work, evaluating the quality of education provision, and measuring the development of various skills and abilities among BSOA Office Management graduates.

Percentage was employed to determine the total proportion of BSOA Office Management graduates' demographic characteristics and employment profiles.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Demographic Characteristics of the BSOA Graduates
One primary goal of this tracer study is to outline the demographic attributes of the BSOA graduates, encompassing gender, marital status, age, year of graduation, and educational attainment and development.

Figure 2 shows the gender profile of the respondents. Among the 299 respondents of the study, 229 (76.59%) were female and 70 (23.41%) were male. On the other hand, the respondents who answered to the tracer study is primarily composed of females at 76.59% while males only constituted 23.41% of the total BSOA graduates. This distribution may be attributed to the higher willingness of females to participate in research due to factors such as social norms, cultural expectations, or personal motivations. This may also be indicative that women have been underrepresented in research, leading to a concerted effort in recent years to include more women in studies to address biases and ensure that research findings are applicable to both genders.
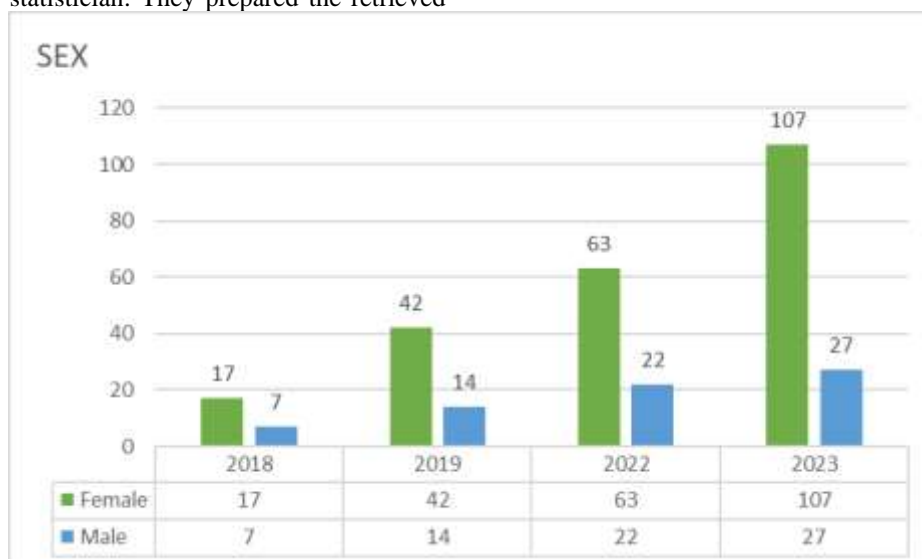

Figure 2 *Gender Profile of Respondents*

The respondents' profile in terms of civil status as shown in Figure 3 indicates that among the 299 respondents of the study, 268 (89.63%) were single and 31 (10.37%) were married. Specifically, the single respondents from the BSOA is 89.63%. This trend is primarily attributed in prioritizing and establishing the graduates' careers before committing to a serious relationship.

They may want to concentrate on building their professional lives and achieving financial stability first. Likewise, individuals have different priorities and timelines for starting relationships and settling down. Some may prioritize personal growth, travel, or other experiences before committing to a serious relationship.
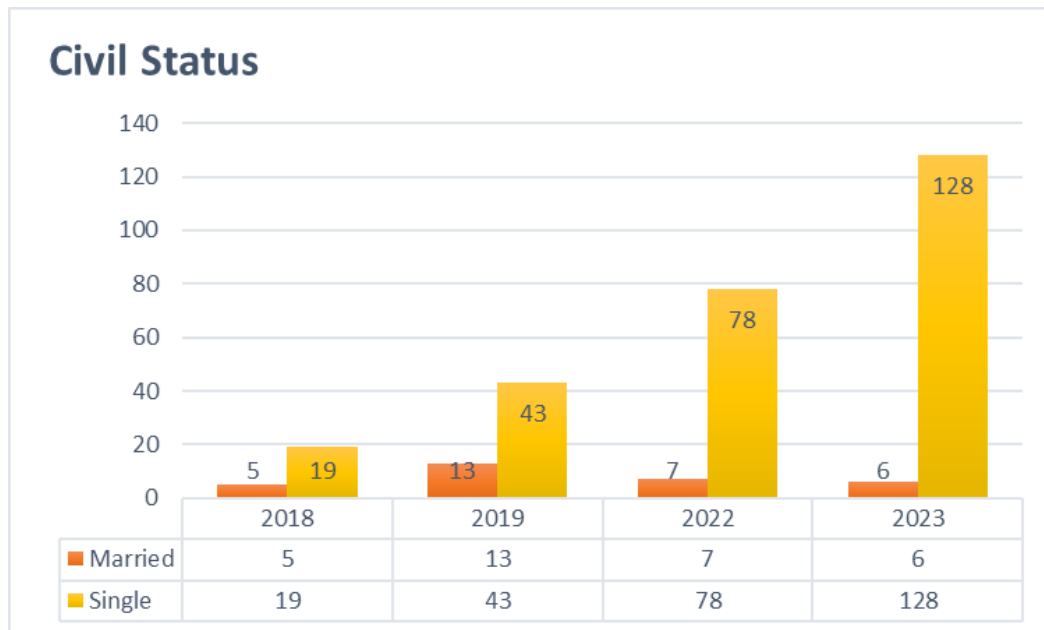
Figure 3 *Civil Status Profile of Respondents*

Figure 4 presents the age of the respondents where 78 (26.09%) of the respondents are 24 years old, 67 (22.41%) are 23 years old, 48 (16.05%) are 25 years old, 33 (11.04%) are 26 years old, 28 (9.37%) are 27 years old, 12 (4.01%) are 28 years old, 9 (3.01%) are 29 years old, 4 (1.04%) are 30 years old, 3 (1%) are 33 years old, 2 (0.67%) are 31 and 34 years old, and lastly, 1 (0.33%) is a 32 years old. The majority of respondents fall within this age range since most of them completed their education in their twenties.
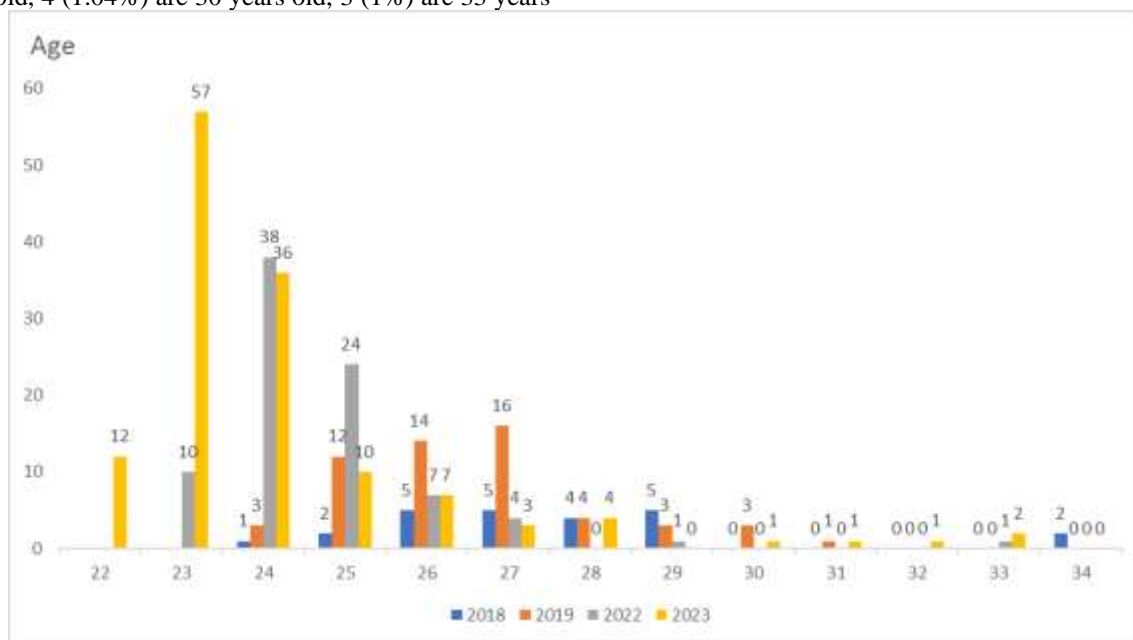
Figure 4 *Age of Profile of Respondents*

Figure 5 depicts the respondents year graduated, there was a total of 299 respondents where 134 (44.82%) graduated on 2023 while 85 (28.643%) graduated on 2022, 56 (18.73%) graduated on 2019, and finally, 24 (8.03%) graduated on 2018.
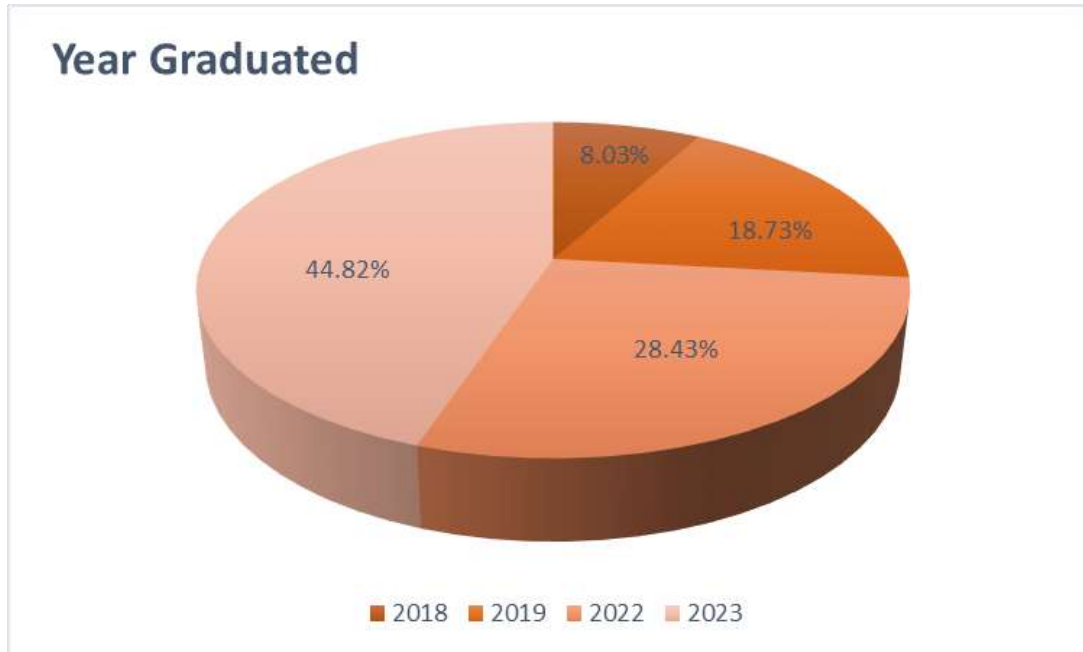
Figure 5 *Profile of Respondents According to Year of Graduation*

Educational Attainment and Development

Revealed in Figure 6 the 30 (10.03%) of the respondents obtained a vocational education and or TESDA National Competency certification of which majority of them is in the field of Computer Systems and Servicing during their Senior High School years.
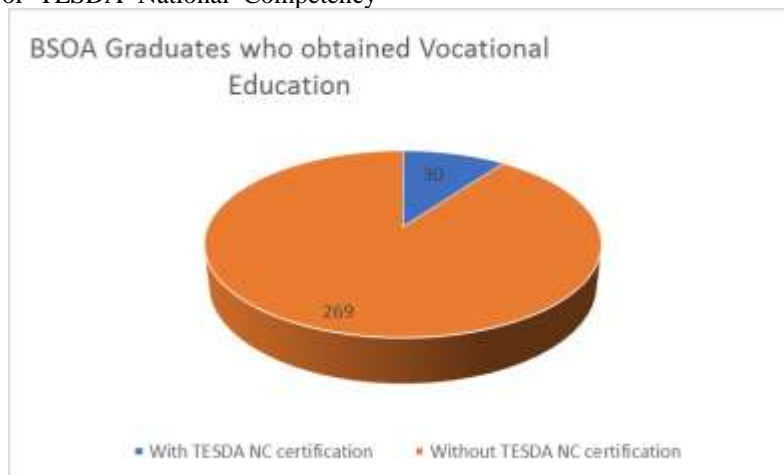

Figure 6 *Profile of Respondents who Obtained Vocational Education*

Figure 7 revealed that only 5 (2%) of the respondents only pursued higher education after finishing their baccalaureate degree. This may be due to the fact that majority of the respondents have not pursued a Master's degree because some graduates may prioritize entering the workforce immediately to gain practical experience and start earning income rather than pursuing further education or simply not have a strong interest in further academic study and prefer to focus on other aspects of their lives, such as personal hobbies, travel, or social activities.
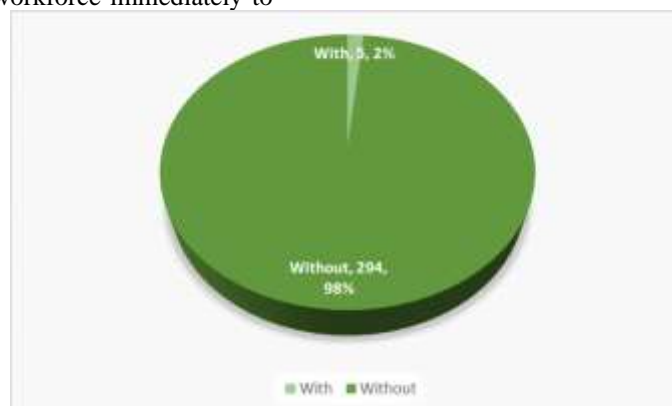

Figure 7 *Educational Attainments and Development*

Employment Profile and Features of BSOA Graduates

The second aim of this tracer study is to ascertain the employment profile of the BSOA graduates, covering aspects such as employment rate, employment status, income level, duration of job searches post-graduation, alignment of college degree with current employment, and job mismatch.

In Figure 8, the employment rate of the participants is depicted, with a significant portion, 211 (70.57%), reported as employed, while 88 (29.43%) indicated being unemployed. This suggests that the graduates are making meaningful contributions to both the national and local economies.
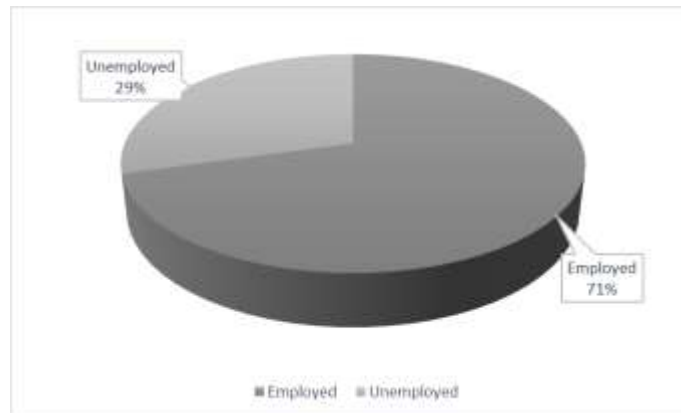
Employment Rate

Figure 8 *Employment Rate*

Figure 9 illustrates the distribution of employment statuses among the respondents. The data reveals that a majority, 189 (89.70%), are employed full-time. Additionally, 19 (8.72%) are working part-time but actively seeking full-time employment, while a smaller portion, 10 (4.59%), are working part-time and not actively seeking full-time work.

Employment Status

Figure 9 *Respondents Current Employment Status*

Figure 10 displays the monthly salary distribution of respondents in their initial job. Nearly 93 (43%) of employed graduates earn between 11,000.00 and 15,000.00 a month, with 53 (24%) receiving 6,000.00 to 10,000.00. Conversely, the smallest cohort of graduates, totaling 20 (9%), earn 21,000.00 and above.
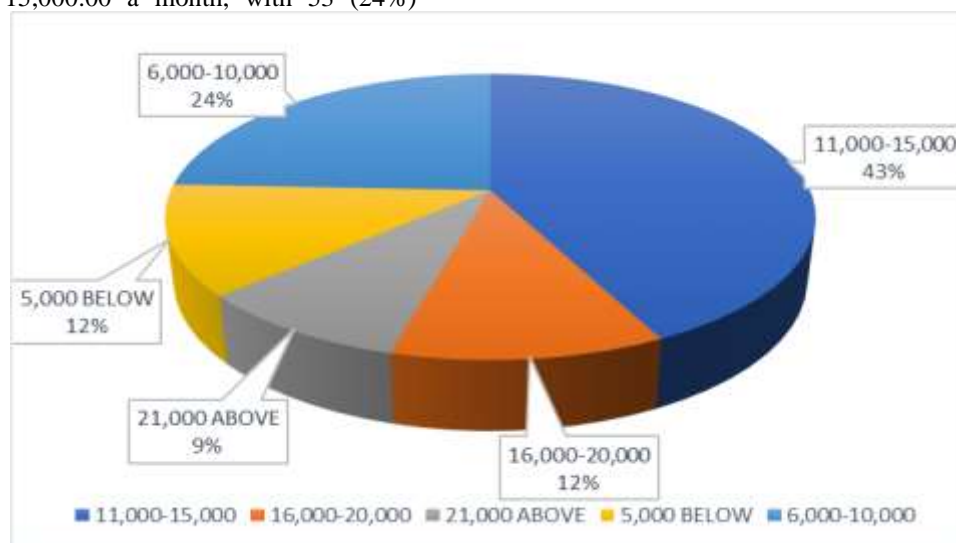

Figure 10 *Respondents Present Monthly Salary*

Figure 11 illustrates the timeline for securing their first job, with the majority of respondents, totaling 161 (54%), obtaining their current position within 1 to 3 months after graduation. This is followed by 85 (29%) who found employment within 4 to 8 months. A smaller proportion, 22 (7%), took 9 months to 1 year, while 31 (10%) required 1 year or more to secure their initial job.
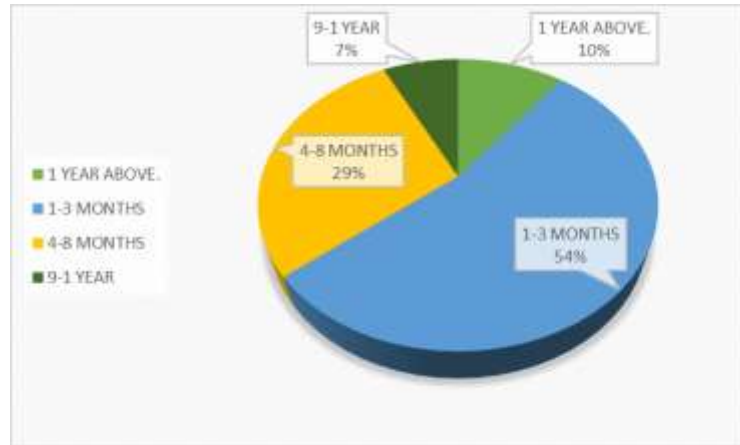
Figure 11 *Length of Search for the Present Job*

Figure 12 displays the correlation between the respondents' degree and their current job. The majority, comprising 259 (86%), expressed a neutral stance, while 29 (10%) considered their degree to be highly relevant. Conversely, the smallest subset of graduates, totaling 3 (1%), indicated that their degree had no relevance to their current job.
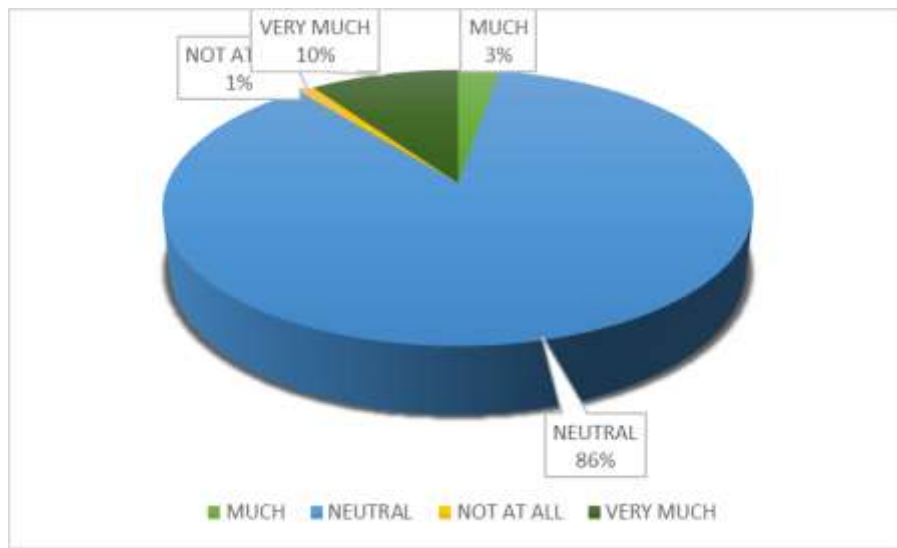

Figure 12 Relevance of the Degree to their present job

Reflected in Figure 13 is the nature of present job of the respondents. Results of the survey showed that 51 of the respondents work as office clerk and or encoder, 48 are administrative staff from different offices, another 30 are accounting staff and 24 of them are aligned with customer relations-related works, 20 are cashiers, , 15 business proprietors, 10 are Content Moderators, 9 Office Supervisors and or Managers, 6 College Instructors, 4 Virtual Assistants, the remaining 1 is a caregiver.
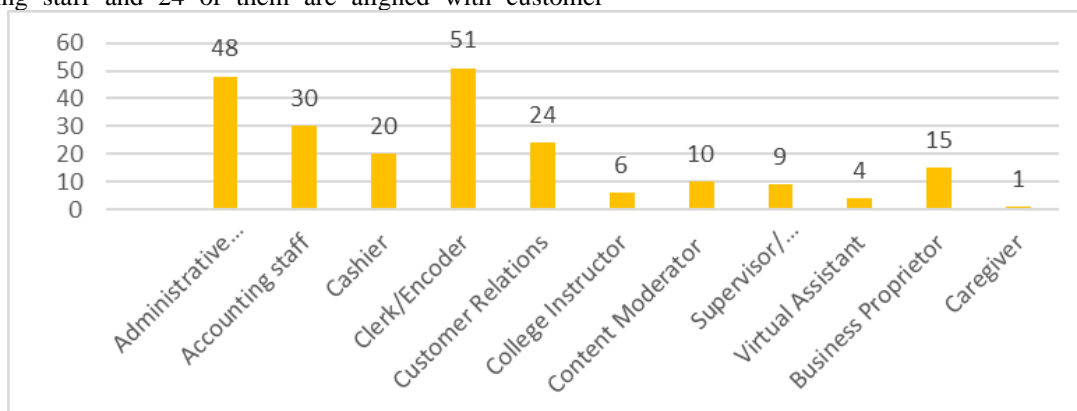

Figure 13 *Respondents Nature of Present Job*

Figure 14 illustrates the issue of job mismatching or job fit. The results indicate that among the employed respondents, 158 (73%) are working in a field related to their profession, 51 (23%) are in unrelated professions, and 9 (4%) are employed in academic positions.
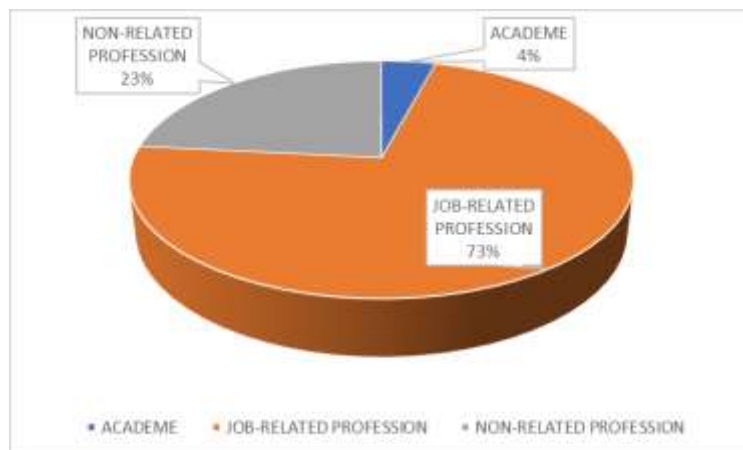
Figure 14 *Job Mismatching*

Level of the BSOA Graduates' self-rated evaluation in terms of Attitude to Work

The results presented in Table 2 were the mean scores of the respondents' response on the level of the respondents self-rated evaluation in terms of Attitude to Work. The data revealed that the highest mean score was obtained by Item No. 4, *I arrived on time to prepare my work and extend working hours if necessary*.

with a mean of 4.44 and had the descriptive equivalent of Very High. This means that the item was always manifested. On the other hand, Item No. 6, *I participated in all activities and events inside my workplace*, got the lowest mean of 4.32 and had the descriptive equivalent of Very High. This means that the item was always manifested.

Table 2. Level of BSOA Graduates' Attitude to Work

Attitude to Work	Mean	Description
1. I am very interested, happy and satisfied with my work and it is very important for me.	4.38	Very High
2. I like the kind of job and work I am doing.	4.33	Very High
3. I accepted assignments and tasks given to me at work without complaints.	4.43	Very High
4. I arrived on time to prepare my work and extend working hours if necessary.	4.44	Very High
5. I can work better and functional under different working environment and situations.	4.36	Very High
6. I participated in all activities and events inside my workplace.	4.32	Very High
7. I have a good relationship with my colleagues and co-employees.	4.43	Very High
8. I submitted necessary documents and papers on time and beat deadlines.	4.38	Very High
9. I performed my task and job with excellence and outstanding quality.	4.35	Very High
10. I seek assistance and help from others whenever I have clarifications and queries.	4.43	Very High
Overall	4.38	**Very High**

Level of BSOA Graduates' self-rated evaluation in terms of Quality Education Provisions

The results presented in Table 3 were the mean scores of the respondents' response on the level of the respondents self-rated evaluation in terms of Quality Education Provisions. The data revealed that the highest mean score was obtained both by Item No. 9, *Different trainings, seminars and workshops that prepare students for employment*, and *Item No. 10, Varied learning*

assessments and instructions which assess students' progress and learning fairly and equally, with a mean of 4.56 respectively and had the descriptive equivalent of Very High. This means that the item was always manifested. However, item No. 1, *Availability of course materials and different learning resources needed for our studies*, got the lowest mean of 4.36 and had the descriptive equivalent of Very High. This means that the item was always manifested.

Table 3. Level of the respondents self-rated evaluation in terms of Quality of Education Provision

Quality Education Provision	Mean	Description
1. Availability of course materials and different learning resources needed for our studies.	4.36	Very High
2. Quality of course contents from courses offered as well as the teaching and learning process.	4.46	Very High
3. Conduciveness of the learning environment and atmosphere.	4.43	Very High
4. Provision of quality practicum guidelines and activities that develops more my skills and abilities from different industry partners and linkages.	4.51	Very High
5. Quality of learning facilities for first-hand and direct experiences like of different laboratories.	4.39	Very High

6.	Quality of different courses offered in the program that develops the total sum of the student skills.	4.41	Very High
7.	Level of optimum interaction and contact with my fellow students through different in-campus activities.	4.43	Very High
8.	Well-trained and self-renewing Faculty members and staffs.	4.48	Very High
9.	Different trainings, seminars and workshops that prepare students for employment.	4.56	Very High
10.	Varied learning assessments and instructions which assess students' progress and learning fairly and equally.	4.56	Very High
	Overall	4.46	**Very High**

Level of BSOA Graduates' self-rated evaluation in terms of Skills and Abilities Development

The results presented in Table 4 were the mean scores of the respondents' response on their skills and abilities. The data revealed that the highest mean score was from Item No. 3, *Ability to work independently as well as team work and team play,* garnering 4.54 and had the descriptive equivalent of Very High.

It means that the item was always manifested. Nevertheless, Item No. 14, *Expertise about multidisciplinary research that is essential for understanding students' needs and interests,* got the lowest mean score of 4.03 and had the equivalent of High. This implied that the item was often manifested**.**

Table 4. Level of the graduates-respondent self-rated evaluation in terms of Skills and Abilities Development

Skills and Abilities Development		Mean	Description
1.	Organizational and leadership skill.	4.46	Very High
2.	Problem solving and critical thinking skills.	4.38	Very High
3.	Ability to work independently as well as team work and team play.	4.54	Very High
4.	Creative thinking and creativity, initiative and taking a risk, if necessary.	4.49	Very High
5.	Time Management and decision-making skills.	4.53	Very High
6.	Writing competence and skills including technical writing.	4.35	Very High
7.	Communication and interpersonal skills.	4.46	Very High
8.	Computer and ICT Skills.	4.33	Very High
9.	Technical and Entrepreneurial Skills	4.32	Very High
10.	Ability to work under pressure.	4.49	Very High
11.	Ability to write the essentials and basics of effective lesson planning.	4.39	Very High
12.	Code of ethics applied to my teaching profession.	4.52	Very High
13.	Knowledge with the different teaching methodologies, techniques and approaches through seminars and workshops.	4.43	Very High
14.	Expertise about multidisciplinary research that is essential for understanding students' needs and interests.	4.34	Very High
15.	Trainings, seminars and workshops about the preparation and evaluation of different instructional materials.	4.49	Very High
	Overall	4.44	**Very High**

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the graduate tracer study result indicates that the graduates from the BSOA Department of KCAST have exhibited exceptional outcomes in terms of their employment status, educational attainment, and the relevance of their degrees to their current positions. The high mean score reflects the effectiveness of the program in preparing graduates for successful careers and highlights the strong alignment between the education provided and the demands of the job market.

Graduates considered most of the course content in their program to be pertinent to their career needs. This suggests that BSOA graduates are successfully integrating into the labor market, a crucial element of the economy. Additionally, the study concludes that BSOA graduates are eager to continue learning and are open to development opportunities that can enhance their professional careers and make them more valuable members of their organizations.

Recommendation

Based on the findings and discussions presented, the following recommendations are proposed:

a) Regarding job awareness and employment, the Career and Counseling Office, in collaboration with the institution's Job Placement Office, should continue organizing job fairs as well as comprehensive seminars, training sessions, and lectures for graduating BSOA students. It is also recommended to invite more companies to participate in these job fairs, as suggested by the graduates.

b) Follow-up studies should be undertaken to examine the workplace performance of BSOA graduates. Specifically, research involving the graduates' current employers can be conducted to evaluate the skills required by their employees. This can assist the institution in aligning the course design with the specific needs of the industry and further reinforce the findings of this research.

c) It is widely acknowledged that work placements and internships significantly enhance employability skills. Many higher education institutions have created graduate employability programs; however, these programs often rely too heavily on overburdened career service staff and receive insufficient support from academic staff. Therefore, it is recommended that the

government and the CHED seriously consider using future funding mechanisms as a tool to encourage increased investment in students' employability skills.

d) Given the employability rates of BSOA graduates, the academic institution should contemplate integrating instructional activities aimed at bolstering students' leadership and interpersonal skills. Diverse initiatives should be implemented to enhance students' communication abilities, encompassing both written and oral forms. Additionally, extracurricular activities like community service and team-building exercises should be prioritized. Ultimately, a systematic review of the program curriculum should incorporate study findings to develop and refine graduate attributes.

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