

REVIEW ARTICLE

GRADUATE TRACER STUDY FOR MASTER OF ARTS IN NURSING CURRENT STATUS AND SIGNIFICANCE OF CURRICULUM TO THEIR RESPECTIVE CAREER

Cornelia R. Catalla

San Pablo Colleges, San Pablo City, Philippines
*Corresponding Author Email: corneliacatalla1@gmail.com

This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License CC BY 4.0, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

ARTICLE DETAILS

Article History:

Received 06 January 2025
Revised 13 January 2025
Accepted 17 February 2025
Available online 7 March 2025

ABSTRACT

The principal aim of tracer study is to examine the process of transition from graduate to higher studies, to highlight the graduate course based on employment and works, such as job position, income, security, and type of work. To evaluate their views based on their experiences and views of the graduate course' curriculum, including resources and facilities. The participants of the study were fifty-eight registered nurses graduated with a degree of Master of Arts in Nursing. A descriptive quantitative research design was used while percentage and frequency were applied in analyzing the data. Findings reveal high rating for the contribution of graduate program for their professional growth in terms of academic professions, research capability, communication skills, meeting present and future professional needs, exposure to local and international community within field of specialization, critical thinking, salary improvement and personality development. In terms of how much the study matters to their vocation, out-of-class exercises, high importance accorded to research, multidisciplinary studying, pedagogy, academic environment, qualitative resources, know-how of the professor, field of study, and size of class received highly high ratings only except for lab and library rated as poor.

KEYWORDS

Nurses, Graduate program, Tracer study, Higher education

1. INTRODUCTION

The ultimate aspiration of all academic institutions is to develop capable and well-educated graduates that will one day be competitive at a local and international level. Tracer study is a method that allows institutions of higher learning to gain information regarding potential weaknesses in the learning and the teaching process and the education process and can serve as the foundation for planning for the improvement in the future.

A tracer study is a survey of graduate that tries to track activities of the graduates or past students of a school. It makes it possible to centralize San Pablo Colleges (SPC) graduate program graduates via a dynamic and reliable system for ascertaining their life trajectory or movement. It also measures outcomes of education and training by HEIs, labor market opportunities, graduate prospects, occupation, jobs, type of employment, incomes levels which may be identified with tracer study.

The study as quoted by the research study of also observed that the University Graduate Tracer Studies (GTS) are becoming a practice recognizable globally (Badiru and Wahome, 2016; Calma, 2018). At the end of the 20th Century, European Universities embraced the utilization of tracer studies for various purposes: to accredit their study programs; to identify the relationship between study programs and the employment markets; to demonstrate individual college/university uniqueness and positioning; and also to allow universities and institution governing higher education in their respective nations make informed and evidence-based decisions regarding improvements and quality education services in higher education (Schomburg and Ulrich, 2011).

The main objective of tracer study is to investigate the transition process from higher education to graduate studies, to shed light in the course of employment and work, analyze the relationship between the graduate

studies and work, including the job position, income, job security, types of works, and acquired qualifications. To evaluate their views on their experiences and their views of graduates' course pertaining to curriculum, resources and facilities. This enables them to meet the demands of changing educational, socio-economic, industrial, and technological spheres of the new century.

This research is conducted to investigate the status of MAN graduate after finishing the degree and may serve as motivation for them to pursue and finished their graduate degree program. Results can be a basis for initiating and implementing improvement in the curriculum, to upgrade the standards of teaching and be competitive in their areas of specialization.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Individual level analysis becomes a crucial means for translating feedback from the study courses into changes to the study surroundings and content. Nevertheless, details regarding job hunting, employment context and application of skills in working environments are collected as well. Tracer studies are also available for analyzing the mismatches on national level and to enhance policies regarding education/trainings and occupations even when decentralized.

There are three basic steps in performing a tracer study: conceptualization, data gathering and analysis. Phase 1 is instrument and concept development, planning of data gathering at an early stage the principal objectives, the target population (all students/a sample of student) the questionnaire must be prepared and pilot-tested. Phase 2 is data gathering. In this the survey instrument must be ready for application. An online questionnaire will reach graduates effectively and is likely to be less expensive. Phase 3 is data analysis and sharing (Polit and Beck, 2022).

Quick Response Code



Access this article online

Website:
www.matrixscmedica.com

DOI:
10.26480/msm.01.2025.20.22

The advantages of tracer study are relatively low cost, easy execution, ability to provide useful information for improving planning and programming, ability to combine objective and subjective data, the flexibility to cover the topic relevant for individual education, training institutes, and ability to secure systematic information input by standardization and representative determination of the output having to rely on the construction of a permanent information system (Schomburg, 2003)

SPC continues to enhance its academic standards to generate graduates who are highly skilled, effective, and competitive in the job market. Attempts have been made to offer students quality education. SPC Graduate program specifically MAN on its 23 years of operation and produces graduates up to this time. No tracer study is undertaken since then. The researcher undertakes the study to determine whether the graduates have achieved the goal of enhancing their management skills and be locally and globally competitive in their professional career.

As cited in the study of graduates and employer surveys constitute one term of empirical study which can provide valuable information for evaluating the results of the education and training of specific institution of higher education (Hazaymeh and Dela Pena, 2016; Schamburg, 2003). Moreover, quoted that a tracer study referred to sometimes as "alumni survey" or follow-up survey" should be the higher education institution to obtain information to reveal potential shortages in a specific education program and to provide a foundation for future and to provide a foundation for future planning activities (Schomburg, 2003).

Research by introduced that Graduate Tracer Study has been a successful tool in obtaining accurate and timely inputs for the purpose of ensuring the human capital yielded by higher education are always up to date and capable of satisfying the ever-evolving demand of the job market (Francis et al., 2023).

It is essential its method of comprehending the quality and relevance of programs provided by the college and the labor market. It is a valuable tool for educational planners since they can offer useful information for assessing the outcomes of higher education and training institution. This can be utilized in the reduction of any potential deficits in every educational program regarding content, delivery, and relevance and further development of the institution in the realm of quality assurance (Badiru and Wahome 2016).

Tracer study will accrue benefit to all the institutions most particularly the graduate schools as it will make them know the status of their product upon graduating from the institution. Tracer study significance is to determine the relevance of the program and the documents possessed by the graduates and its role towards professional development. Collecting and recording alumni feedback can assist in enhancing the program, revise, reinforce, intervention, shows result and helps to enhance

confidence of the program (Schomburg 2003).

Using the tracer study, an institution which can assess the quality of the education provided the fellow student upon the graduation posts and positions within the society and determining which can be utilized later as a gauge in generating more qualified and competitive graduates. Tracer study, an institution that can assess the quality of education provided to their graduate by being aware of graduates' placements and positions in the society which subsequently can be used as a benchmark in graduating mor qualified and competitive graduates.

The chief benefits of the tracer's study are that it yields comprehensive up-to-date information on such as: the condition of employment of the graduates of the MAN program. Repeated tracer studies using various groups can result in finding trends or program effectiveness within an institution. While apart from benefits, it also has disadvantaged: low rate of response to questionnaires, respondents attrition and enormous cost of information collection. Low response rate means that analysis of employment status may not be reflective of the actual situation. Tracer study was viewed as useful to improve the learning process and building alumni network. It is wonderful that we can improve the curriculum based on graduates' and stakeholders' feedback. Alumni database includes the availability and quality. It is always wonderful to know where the graduates are and work.

The Commission on Higher Education likewise conducted a rigorous study that makes all HEIs individually undertake tracer studies of their respective graduates (Adelaida 2014). The research result will become an instrument in pursuant to the planned upgrading of the country's educational system. As quoted from Exploring the Tracer Study in Career Centre website in Indonesia (2013), tracer study is applied by universities to measure the success of the learning process that has been carried out towards their student. Graduate Tracer Studies are a significant tool for planners of education, because it can give useful information for the assessment of the outcomes of the higher education and training institutions. This information can be utilized for reducing any potential deficiencies in every educational program in content, delivery, and appropriateness and for future development of the institution in the content of quality assurance. The tracer study further sought to evaluate the role of the university training in the personal development of graduates and the quality of the programs of study in content, delivery, and applicability to the workplace. The researchers argues that graduate tracer studies yield valuable information that will assist institutions of learning in evaluating the achievement of their vision, mission and objectives (Shaw, 2010). Tracer study is projected by Commission on Higher Education to conduct institutional analysis of determinants of employability, the skills/competencies that should be enhanced, areas of recruitment of graduates from different programs and identification of most responsive or in demand course considering the job waiting time of graduates.

Framework/ Tracing Process Of The Study

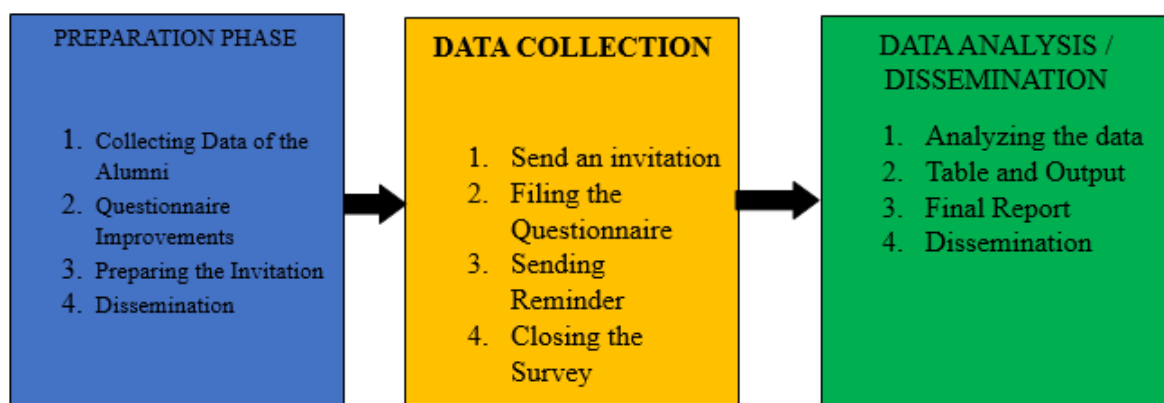


Figure 1: Framework for Tracer Study

3. METHODS

It is quantitative research, which was broken down into three stages, namely. Phase 1: development of concept and instrument, advance preparation of data collection the major goals, the population to be targeted (all students/a sample of student) the questionnaire must be prepared and piloted. Phase 2: data collection. Here the survey instrument should be available for use. An online survey can be effective in reaching graduates and tends to be less expensive. Phase 3: data analysis and sharing. This study is a quantitative model where the process is data

collection and assessing outcomes of data collection using the proposed method (Polit and Beck 2022).

Phase 1 is the initial stage of tracer study which includes the process of collecting graduate contacts from the registrar office and then the contact data was messaged through group chat from messenger. Furthermore, a questionnaire was adopted from the UST Tracer Study for Graduate school with minor revision according to the needs of the student and the college. The questionnaire was sent to the Director of the graduate school for approval and will be utilized by the other department in conducting their

own departmental tracer study. This stage prepares list of contact from the College Registrar, group chat in messenger was developed to extend invitation to join in the survey. After sending the invitation and notification.

Phase 2, The questionnaire was sent via SMS, the second is completing the questionnaire by the graduates. In the process of completing the questionnaire progress monitoring was done, i.e., monitoring the graduates who completed the questionnaire and to those unable to complete it. There will be a follow up until the end of November for at least 93 graduates, then the survey will be closed.

Phase 3 is the data analysis and dissemination which involves data processing in which data cleansing is performed if there are several data found. Then the data analysis is performed quantitatively by transforming it in the form of numbers or tables or graphs to gain an overview of the tracer study indicators explained in the instrument. The findings are concluded and final report preparation on the outcome of the tracer study and will be available for dissemination.

4. THE DATA ANALYSIS

The main goal of the present tracer study is to determine the status of MAN graduate after finishing the program and how it helps in terms of their professional career as nurse managers. The researcher used 58 respondents graduated from year 2015 to 2022. Most of the respondents are female, married and working full time while finishing the degrees. High score was awarded on the contribution of the program to the professional development of the graduated nurse in the areas of: academic professions, research competence, communication, problem solving skills, information technology skills, fulfillment of current and future professional needs, exposure to local and global community in the area of specialization, critical thinking, salary enhancement and personality growth and also for the chance to work abroad. Majority of the respondents who rated these factors high are female and married. Very high rating was given to relevance of their graduate studies to their profession, extra-curricular activities, premium given to research, interdisciplinary learning, teaching, and learning environment. Likewise, quality resources, professors' knowledge, subject matter and class size got a very high score, while library and laboratory got a poor rating. To the question of if they want to pursue another degree? San Pablo Colleges is still the number one choice with a 44.4%. On why they will pursue higher education the most significant answer was: "It helps me to expose to the latest trends and knowledge in my field of interest and it also contributes to my sense of self-worth".

5. CONCLUSION

The results shows that the tracer study can determine the significance of

the graduate program of San Pablo Colleges particularly Master of Arts in Nursing specifically on the achievement of their current status and on how the program help them in their personal and professional career. Majority of the graduates are employed both locally and international, occupying highest position in their respective organization, as Director of Nursing, Dean, Chief Nurse Nurse Manager and Supervisor. The competencies that the graduates learned find it very useful after finishing the course thus strengthen their skills in research, interdisciplinary learning, communications, critical thinking, decision making and their respective personality.

REFERENCES

- Adelaida, C., Gines, 2014. Study of PNU Graduates Tracer, American International Journal of Contemporary Research 4(3), Pp. 81-98
- Badiru, E. O., Wahome, M., 2016. Conducting Tracer Studies for Quality Assurance in last African Universities: A Focus on Graduates Students Voices on Quality Culture, Journal of Education and Practice, 7(6), Pp. 174-181
- Calma, R. R., 2018. A Tracer Study of the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration Graduates of Baliuag University From 2013 to 2015. Harvest, 14(1).
- Francis, A., Patrick, S., Patrício, L., 2023. Mapping higher education policymaking in Ghana with a quadruple helix framework. Policy Reviews in Higher Education 7:2, Pp.169-187.
- Hazaymeh, E.M., and Dela Pena, M.K., 2016. A Tracer Study of La Salle University College of Engineering Graduates; Retrieve from <https://www.lsu.edu.ph/application/files/1114/7193/856>
- Polit, D. F., and Beck, C. T., 2010. Esseentials of Nursing Research Appraising Evidence for Nursing Practrice 19th edition Copyright Wolters Kluwit Health Inc.
- Schomburg, H., and Ulrich, T., 2011. Employability and Mobility of Bachelor Graduates in Europe: Key Result of the Bologna Process Netherlands, Sense Publishers
- Scomburg H., 2003. Handbook for Graduate Tracer Studies Centre for Research on Higher Education and Work, retrieve from www.qtafi.de/handbook
- Shaw, M., 2010. The Ateneo De Davao University graduate tracer: An online tool for graduate tracerstudies. <https://www.inettutor.com/sourcecode/graduate-tracer-study-application-review-of-relatedliterature/>

