

Master of Arts in Nursing Graduates' Career Status in the Healthcare Industry

Piluchi Victorina Villegas 
University of Cebu, Cebu City Philippines
piluchiv@gmail.com

Atty. Gavino S. Nuñez II 
University of Cebu College of Nursing
gabbynunez2rn@gmail.com

Helen C. Estrella 
University of Cebu, Cebu City, Philippines
helenc.estrella@gmail.com

Judy Ann O. Ferrater-Gimena 
University of Cebu, Cebu City, Philippines
judygimena@gmail.com

Yolanda C. Sayson 
University of Cebu, Cebu City, Philippines
uc.ycsayson@gmail.com

Publication Date: September 22, 2025

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.17243044

Abstract

A higher educational institution offering the Master of Arts in Nursing (MAN) program needs to trace its curriculum's relevance to the healthcare industry's requirements where its graduates are exercising their profession. This investigation aims to trace the graduates of the Master of Arts in Nursing (MAN) to devise the proposed MAN program intervention plan. This study utilized the descriptive survey research design with twenty-two (22) MAN graduates of the University of Cebu Graduate School. This study was conducted at healthcare institutions where the MAN graduates worked or were affiliated. The instrument used in this research is the CHED Graduate Tracer Study [GTS] survey questionnaire. The GTS survey tool was printed and administered to the MAN alumni. Simple percentages and ranks were used to analyze the data. The ethical principles of

beneficence, non-maleficence, justice, and autonomy were adhered to in this research.

The result shows that more graduate respondents were 20 to 35 years old and took 1 to six months to land a job through the walk-in application. At the same time, most were single females employed in public organizations as clinical instructors with permanent status. They assessed that the Master of Arts in Nursing (MAN) curriculum was relevant to their jobs. Half of them earned a gross monthly income of Php25,000.00 and above. Moreover, they all finished their master's degrees, passed the Philippine Nurse Licensure Examination [PNLE] after graduation, and were employed locally or in the Philippines. The primary reasons respondents taking the Master of Arts in Nursing (MAN) program at the University of Cebu Graduate School were a strong passion for the profession

(ranked first), the prospect for immediate employment (ranked second), and the status or prestige of the profession (ranked third). They also learned communication skills (ranked first), productivity and time management skills (ranked second), human relations skills (ranked third), problem-solving skills (ranked fourth), and leadership skills (ranked fifth). Further, the reasons for the respondents accepting their job

were the following: salaries and benefits (ranked first), peer influence (ranked second), and then career challenge (ranked third). Therefore, the graduates of the Master of Arts in Nursing (MAN) program of University of Cebu Graduate School were employable in academe and hospitals and received above minimum salary level.

Keywords: *Graduate education, Master of Arts in Nursing, tracer study, descriptive, Cebu City*

INTRODUCTION

One of education's primary functions is cultivating people to meet the needs of the labor market. Since the 1960s, many studies have been published that describe the relationships between education and employment, often with reference to the concept of human capital (Becker, 1964; Schultz, 1961). A nation's economy runs on the knowledge and skills of its people. This indicates that the country's workforce's personal and professional development is critical to nation-building (Ramirez et al., 2014). Moreover, education is a critical tool for empowerment in terms of socioeconomic, political, and technical growth (Van, 2020). Knowledge gained in higher education is frequently contextualized and recontextualized in the health sector (Billet et al., 2014). Every academic institution aims to produce competent and highly qualified graduates who can eventually compete locally or globally (Hipona et al., 2021).

It can then be said that higher education contributes significantly to graduates' personal and professional development. In the twenty-first century, aside from technical knowledge, well-developed personal and professional skills are essential traits to have in order to compete for and keep a job in the global industrial market (Ismail & Mohammed, 2015). Every year, colleges and universities all over the country turn to society, a graduate ready to enter the world. However, how are they prepared to face life? Is a diploma enough to guarantee that they will find a stable job? Every year, higher educational institutions produce fresh graduates ready for the job market (Almejas et al., 2017).

Universities should support their students' preparation for the workforce, with particular attention to the relevance of their education programs to the labor market's needs and the quality of the graduates. The skills to be developed while studying abroad typically include "a deeper understanding and respect for global issues", "more favorable attitudes toward other cultures", "stronger intercultural communication skills", "improved personal and professional self-image", "better foreign language skills", "self-confidence", "ability to handle ambiguity", "insight into their value systems" and "overall maturity" (Salisbury et al., 2009).

School leaders play a crucial role in developing a vision for a high-quality education for every student and implementing and supporting a learning environment developed and shared by key stakeholders (U.S. Department of Education [USDE], 2004). Every year, colleges and universities all over the country turn to society, a graduate ready to enter the world. However, how are they prepared to face life? Is a diploma

enough to guarantee that they will find a stable job? Every year, higher educational institutions produce fresh graduates ready for the job market (Almejas et al., 2017).

People with education who are significantly self-sufficient and independent with all the skills needed to practice different professions would become fully equipped with different world economic instability (Orejana & Resurrection, 2010). As indicated by the private learning mechanism, what eventually shapes employers' beliefs on educational output lies in a graduate's actual productivity and performance at his or her workplace (Salisbury et al., 2009).

Higher education in general, and nursing education in particular, have been called upon to facilitate deep knowing, moving beyond the accumulation of knowledge (Barnett, 2009; Benner et al., 2010).

One of the success indicators of higher educational institutions (HEIs) is the quality of its graduates, which is translated into employability. Although no formula will ensure success during graduates' transition into employment (Hinchliffe & Jolly, 2013), employability constantly measures their quality and value (Jayasingam et al., 2016). Undeniably, employability can be best measured by a program's alumni as they are considered the finest proof of the program's performance (Aquino et al., 2015).

Nowadays, finding employment is as challenging as finding a needle in a haystack. Moreover, many nursing graduates are noted to have work unrelated to their college course (Sanchez & Diamante, 2017). In the past, nurses' employability had been a national problem, as evidenced by the bulk of nursing graduates employed outside the jurisdiction of their profession. Recently, the scenario changed its course, as employers struggled their way into the portals of the academe as they tried to run after graduating students who would soon join the decreasing number of nurses in the workforce (Du, 2019).

Between 2001 and 2004, 43,897 nurses sought employment abroad, a number higher than the nurses who made their way into the workforce at the same time after obtaining their licenses. During this period, despite an oversupply of nurses, there needed to be a nurse-patient ratio due to the underfunding of the health system and the lack of health facilities. A report from a news agency even mentioned that around 200,000 nurses were unemployed in 2016 (Trines, 2018).

One of the problems the Philippines faces today is unemployment. The unemployment rate of the Philippines in 2012 was 7.20%, one of the highest among Asian countries in the last five years (Gonzales, 2013). Unemployed Filipino nurses are estimated to be 187,000 (Howard, 2010). The unemployment rate in the Philippines dropped to 5.50 percent in the second quarter of 2018 from 5.70 percent in the previous year, with an increase in the number of employed individuals from 625 thousand to 40.9 million. The Philippines' unemployment rate averaged 8.44 percent from 1994 until 2018, obtaining an all-time high of 13.90 percent in the first quarter of 2000 and a record low of 4.70 percent in the fourth quarter of 2016 (Trading Economics, 2019).

This situation challenges the traditionally dominating approach of possessional employability (Holmes, 2015). In this approach, employability is often defined as the possession of specific characteristics, skills, or capabilities (Holmes, 2015; Okay-Somerville & Scholarios, 2017), and the emphasis is often on the needs of the job market (Crisp et al., 2019) viewed from a cross-sectional instead of a longitudinal perspective (Fleuren et al., 2020).

Since then, universities and students have tended to become more responsive to the needs of the employment system in their educational provisions and learning activities, but the needs are often unclear

due to growing uncertainties in the labor market, considerable erosion of traditional occupations and employment conditions, and the rapid obsolescence of knowledge (Schomburg & Teichler, 2006).

The focus on assessing student learning outcomes is familiar in the nursing education literature and is a necessary component of nursing curricular development (Billings & Halstead; Iwasiw & Goldenberg, 2015; Keating, 2014). Graduate tracer studies are essential for understanding the relevance and quality of programs offered by universities and the labor market (Sanchez & Diamante, 2017).

In the Philippines, the Commission on Higher Education requires all Higher Education Institutions [HEIs] to conduct a tracer study. It is equally reflected as one of the required documents by any higher education accrediting body, such as the Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines (AACCUP), Inc. for government and the private sector Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities [PAASCU] (Hipona et al., 2021) and Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities [PAASCU].

The alumni are an excellent source of feedback regarding the program's relevance in the current labor market. Moreover, they are considered the best evidence of a program's effectiveness in employment and positions (Orejana & Resurrection, 2010).

Career growth is an integral aspect of personal and professional advancement for workers in any field of specialization. It is characterized by moving upward on the organizational chart, receiving additional aid and benefits, and increasing basic pay or salary. Achieving career growth requires hard work and a commitment to becoming more adept in one's specialization. For professionals such as teachers, accountants, and engineers, seeking jobs with better compensation, benefits, and career progression is crucial (San Juan, 2019). These goals become more attainable when professionals invest in continuing their studies in their respective fields. Many professionals view education as a lifelong process beyond earning a bachelor's degree, even after establishing a career. This perspective is supported by institutions offering graduate studies, where professionals can refine their skills, broaden their network, and become more adept at their jobs. Encouraging professionals to continue their studies is essential for acquiring advanced learning in their specialized discipline, satisfying various aspects of the 21st-century workplace (Bueno, 2017; Buenvinida & Yazon, 2017).

However, having these skills does not always guarantee the graduates' success in the labor market, and universities have often neglected this. In particular, when the graduate-producing institutions and the labor market are in different countries, the employers must believe in the quality of the graduates (Wiers-Jenssen, 2008). Many higher education studies dealing with employers' beliefs (as well as demands and satisfactions) of graduates have tried to come up with suggestions on how universities could meet employers' needs. At the same time, little appears to have been written about how to change employers' beliefs. According to the conceptual framework constructed in this study, some purposeful actions can influence the employers' beliefs, both in shaping the initial signals and facilitating the public learning process. For each end, universities must interact closely with employers and get involved in various employers' networks.

Also, finding employment is very tough, and many nursing graduates are noted to have work unrelated to their course in college. In the 2008 Employment Summit, the Commission of Higher Education [CHED] observed that higher education institutions were producing "graduates who do not match the labor demand (Philippine et al., 2010).

Recent graduates or nurses who have not practiced after graduation may have a limited idea of job opportunities. Their choice of the first job may be strongly influenced by their education, achievement level, geographical preference, salary, mate's occupation, and peer pressure. They are likely to take several jobs before settling down. Dissatisfied employees often do not actively seek other employment but are likely receptive to new openings or job offers (Tomey-Marriner, 2005).

Graduate tracer studies are essential to understanding the relevance and quality of university programs and the labor market. There is a demand for empirical evidence regarding the professional relevance of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) study programs using graduate tracer studies. HEIs require graduate tracer studies to be accredited for study programs. HEIs must be interested in feedback from their graduates on the quality of education (Obando & Shisanya, 2013).

Most often, Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) and registered nurses (RN) graduates usually undertake graduate studies for career advancement. However, some gaps remain unaddressed in this quest to achieve a higher career in the healthcare industry. Hence, this investigation aims to assess the graduates of the Master of Arts in Nursing (MAN) of the University of Cebu Graduate School, with the end goal of preparing a program intervention plan.

Framework

The human capital theory (Schultz, 1961; Becker, 1964) argues that education increases individuals' productivity, consequently enhancing job performance. As such, education provides marketable skills and abilities relevant to job performance, and thus, the more highly educated people are, the more successful they will be in labor markets in terms of income and work opportunities. Human capital theory offers numerous valuable insights and testable hypotheses about human behavior.

More generally, human capital theory assumes that individuals take actions that will likely increase their future earnings and overall well-being. Such investments are costly: they might involve direct costs such as tuition and fees for school and indirect costs such as foregone earnings during the period spent in school. These investments result in some expected future benefits. The benefits might include a higher wage, but can also be anything that the individual values, for example, better working conditions or a longer life. Human capital theory typically models investment decisions such as those resulting from an optimization process: an individual will invest in such activities to maximize well-being over a lifetime. Observed outcomes in the marketplace will result from an equilibrium process where the demand for specific skills and abilities is balanced with its supply (Eide & Showalter, 2010).

While the human capital theory has become a popular explanatory tool for the relationship between education attainment and labor market outcomes, it has received criticism, too. The human capital hypothesis is based on perfect foresight, meaning employers can objectively and rationally evaluate the employees' or job-seekers abilities. However, the situations in labor markets are often associated with uncertainties, including imperfect knowledge of individual characteristics, uncertainty of the quality of schooling, and imperfect knowledge of future demand and supply conditions (Levhari & Weiss, 1974).

Self-efficacy affects every area of human endeavor (Luszczynska & Schwarzer, 2005). Self-efficacy theory has significantly contributed to studying and understanding human motivation (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2021). By determining the beliefs a person holds regarding their power to affect situations, self-efficacy strongly influences the power a person has to face challenges competently and the choices a person is most likely to make (Luszczynska & Schwarzer, 2005). Self-efficacy refers to perceived capabilities to learn or perform actions at designated levels. Self-efficacy is an essential motivational construct affecting choices, effort, persistence, and achievement. Self-efficacy is a personal construct that affects and is influenced by behaviors and social/environmental variables (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2021).

Self-efficacy depends on four main factors: personal performance accomplishments, vicarious learning, social persuasion, and physiological and affective states (Bandura, 1997). High self-efficacy has numerous benefits to daily life, such as resilience to adversity and stress, healthy lifestyle habits, improved employee performance, and educational achievement (Lopez-Garrido, 2023).

Likewise, one's sense of self-efficacy can provide the foundation for motivation, well-being, and personal accomplishment. People's beliefs in their efficacy are developed by four primary sources of influence, including (i) mastery experiences, (ii) vicarious experiences, (iii) social persuasion, and (iv) emotional states (Lopez-Garrido, 2023).

The extension of self-efficacy motivation research to education was significant for several reasons. Whereas early clinical research involved the motivational role of self-efficacy for performing tasks that people knew how to do, educational contexts typically involved learning. A key question was whether the motivational effects of self-efficacy could impact learning. Second, the model of reciprocal interactions predicts that environmental variables can affect personal variables (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2021).

Considering the role of individual cognitive variables (self-efficacy and outcome expectations), learning experiences, and personal interests in career development, social cognitive career theory (SCCT) focuses on environmental and individual factors that influence one's career decision-making. The contextual variables influence individuals' career interests and choices by shaping learning experiences in SCCT. The contextual variables of SCCT include the background contextual affordance and contextual influences proximal to choice behavior that affect career choice behavior. Among them, background contextual affordance helps individuals form interests and self-perceptions, while contextual influences play a role in career decisions (Lent et al., 1994).

Students may believe that their effort leads to low performance for many reasons. First, they may not have the skills, knowledge, or abilities to perform successfully. Supporting students in acquiring the necessary skills and knowledge can help raise expectancy. Second, low expectancy levels may be because students feel that something other than effort predicts performance, such as fairness or favoritism. Expectancy will also suffer if students believe that the learning environment is not conducive to performing well (resources are lacking or teacher's expectations are unclear). Therefore, clearing the path to performance and creating an environment where students are not restricted will be helpful. Finally, some students may perceive little connection between their effort and performance level because they have an external locus of control, low self-esteem, or other personality traits that condition them to believe their effort will not make a difference. In such cases, providing positive feedback and encouragement may help motivate them (Hoose, 2020).

The social cognitive career theory (SCCT) posits that individuals are products of their surroundings, and their surroundings are the products of their interactions. The different elements within an individual's context influence each other bi-directionally (Lent et al., 1994; Lent, 2013).

The SCCT applies to school career education guidance and provides a comprehensive framework for explaining and predicting career development (Lent & Brown, 2019). SCCT proposes that environmental factors impact individual career development and directly influence the formation of learning experiences. It extends to particular groups and offers possibilities and strategies for career counseling for particular groups. Much related research has focused on special groups, such as individuals with serious second group counseling for some students, which meets the developmental needs to prevent problems and cope with the confusion of students' growth. The third is the intervention for individual students to address their unique mental health problems (Fang et al., 2014; Sulkowski & Michael, 2014).

SCCT has developed into a comprehensive career theory that argues that an individual's career path results from the interaction between multiple career elements since it was proposed by Lent et al. (1994). The SCCT framework provides a theoretical foundation for career coaching. Compared to other career theories, SCCT offers a new perspective on guiding adolescents' interest formation, professional (career) choice, and performance, with the potential for cross-cultural research (Lent et al., 2013).

All Higher Education Institution's (HEIs) objectives are to create proficient and highly trained graduates who can eventually set out in life no matter the situation or the economic stability of the country they are in (Torres & Schugurensky, 2002). Thus, the education and training every graduate can get would ensure better opportunities for all individuals to develop their skills in the lifelong learning perspective, enabling them to adapt to rapidly changing labor market requirements and different conditions (Leberman & McDonald, 2016; Taylor & Hamdy, 2013).

Bell (2010) explains that quality graduates become excellent in their field of expertise, which will be evident in workplace performances in the future. Hence, colleges, schools, and universities must provide education and training to meet the standards of different industry employers set for their specific workforce. Other industries must set different standards, but they always have characteristics they expect their applicants to possess that would boost institutional objectives (Abbot & Snidal, 2021).

Graduate education distinguishes itself by advanced systematic study and in-depth experience—a depth in understanding, knowledge, scholarly competence, inquiry, and discovery. Graduates are equipped to contribute to their disciplines, teach and transmit knowledge within their disciplines, conduct research and produce creative works, apply their learning in the everyday world, and ultimately extend service to their disciplines and humanity (BYU Graduate Studies, n.d.).

Graduate education facilitates mastery over the content and skills of the discipline at a level appropriate to the degree sought. It develops and refines critical thinking skills, including a thorough knowledge of the discipline's assumptions and an understanding of viable alternative assumptions. It also provides an understanding of the theoretical bases of the field of study. It grounds application and performance in theory. Further, graduate education develops proficiencies that advance the knowledge and activities of the discipline. These proficiencies include good writing skills and the ability to present original insights and creative expressions. It facilitates the growth of integrity and wisdom and integrates faith into the pursuit of knowledge within the discipline. It instills a responsibility to return the unique benefits of graduate training to the larger community. Graduate education presents an intellectually and culturally rich encounter with the discipline. Study and inquiry are context-sensitive to ethnic and cultural diversity (BYU Graduate Studies, n.d.).

Additional education is almost always beneficial. The more a person knows, the more they can do. The more they learn, the better prepared they are in life and their careers. In addition, a bachelor's degree is becoming the norm and no longer differentiates from others in the resume pool and job market. This reason alone is often enough, but there are at least five other reasons to pursue graduate studies that they should consider. Additional education is almost always beneficial. The more they know, the more they can do. The more a person learns, the better they are at life and, in turn, their career. In addition, a bachelor's degree is becoming the norm and no longer differentiates them from others in the resume pool and job market. This reason alone is often enough, but they should consider at least five other reasons to pursue graduate studies (Higher Grad, Inc., 2024).

As a nurse, one's life is probably busy enough already. Adding a graduate nursing program to the crowded schedule might seem more trouble than it is worth. While going back to school is a big commitment, earning a master's degree in nursing is crucial to moving forward in the career. Perhaps the most apparent reason for earning a master's in nursing is the potential to boost earning power. Many of the highest-paying nursing positions require a Master of Science in Nursing. Therefore, the financial benefits of pursuing an advanced degree are clear (Stevenson University, n.d.).

Career growth is essential to an employee's personal and professional life. It is distinguished when there is upward mobility in occupational positions, the addition of benefits, and an increase in salary (Cruz, 2024). According to Weng (2018), career growth includes promotion, additional benefits, and a salary increase. However, Weng and Zhu (2020) suggested that it is also characterized by the progression of careers within or across organizations, leading to a higher position with better compensation. Similarly, Kopchenko et al. (2020) proposed that one of the components of career growth is upward mobility in a structural hierarchy or moving up the career ladder.

The notion of employability has risen to prominence over the past 20 years, gaining remarkable traction in policy-making, organizational life, and society. The term has become popular as an antipode to the policy goal of 'full employment' (Finn, 2000) and the conceptual lynchpin of a new career covenant that claims to supplant long-term organizational career bargains (Kanter, 1989). In this manner, employability appears as an agenda for activating employment expenditures by promoting training programs, services, more or less targeted subsidies that favor hiring or maintenance in the job, and through a varied gamut of incentive or authoritarian measures to put the unemployed back to work. The process is meant to be individualized and preventive, mirrored in the slogan about shifting from job protection to security through employability (Weiner et al., 2017).

Employability is practiced in different circumstances; the first is through learning agility. Learning agility reflects the wholesomeness of an individual to impose the skills on the current job one is facing. This is the fundamental ability to learn, adapt, unlearn, and relearn in varied life conditions and scenarios (Mitchinson & Morris, 2014). In the 21st century, employability is the most required skill besides technical, practical, and analytical skills to compete for employment and sustain jobs in the global industrial market (Ismail & Mohammed, 2015).

The central concept for an employability model is the capability, or the necessary part of specialist expertise is knowing their specialism; they also have the confidence to apply their knowledge and skill within the varied and changing situation to continue developing their knowledge and skills (Sumanasiri, 2011). The personal driving force of individuals to do the job they love is their economic development. This also relates to the past learning and skills acquired through education and being taught in school and the addition of experiences through the practice of the profession after graduation (Schleicher, 2012). Focusing on employability is an attempt to influence the supply side of the labor market, i.e., the workplace and the productive capacities and performance. In contrast, the demand side comprises the company's requirements, which depend on the growth dynamic (Weiner et al., 2017).

Moreover, according to Dumlao (2006), employability is the capacity to meet the minimum requirement for a particular work or employment position. The occupational opportunities and the nature of the job obtained after graduation speak of the employability of graduates. The effectiveness can be judged according to the graduates' success or failure to use their acquired skills and training in economic progress. Likewise, Brown and Hesketh (2004) defined employability as the relative chances of getting and maintaining different kinds of employment.

Employability is primarily conceived as a measurable economic outcome for graduates and institutions. This points out both the importance of graduates as critical contributors to economic development and the role of higher education in facilitating the development of graduates for the labor market. At the same time, the seeming consensus regarding employability as an outcome concerning employment or employment rates belies the complexity surrounding the concept in the broader literature. Early on, we want to point out that, related to this complexity, we acknowledge that higher education institutions' educational, research, and service aims are not limited to developing graduate employability (Agasisti et al., 2011; McCowan, 2015).

Knibbs et al. (2015) opined that employability challenges whether academic and support staff involved in employability and enterprise-related learning, teaching, and support services (e.g., careers and placement offices; incubator, accelerator, and start-up hubs) are fulfilling the needs of all higher education stakeholders.

The ability of higher education to contribute to employability is, however, an old debate outside the scope of this particular issue. Despite this, the tendency to regard the purpose of education as more than for its own sake puts employability at the center of debates on the social and economic responsibility of higher education (Fakunle & Hingson, 2021).

People decide to attend graduate school for various reasons, which can differ based on individual goals and aspirations. Many individuals pursue graduate studies to gain specialized knowledge and skills that can help them advance in their chosen careers. Some professions, such as academia, research, and

specific specialized fields, require an advanced degree for career progression. Graduate school offers the opportunity to delve deeper into a specific field of study. It allows individuals to acquire expertise and specialized knowledge beyond what undergraduate programs cover. This can appeal to those with a particular interest or passion for a specific subject area. Certain professions, such as psychology, counseling, law, and medicine, often require advanced degrees for licensure. Graduate school provides the necessary education and training to meet the requirements for these regulated professions. Many graduate programs emphasize research and offer opportunities to collaborate on cutting-edge projects with faculty or industry partners. This can be attractive to individuals passionate about advancing knowledge in their field or aspiring to become researchers or scholars. Graduate school provides opportunities to connect with professors, researchers, and professionals in the field. These connections can be valuable for future collaborations, job opportunities, and mentorship. Graduate education is intellectually challenging and offers a chance for personal growth. It allows individuals to develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and analytical skills, which can be applied to various aspects of life. Some individuals pursue graduate studies to switch careers or explore new fields. A graduate degree can provide the necessary knowledge and qualifications to transition into a different profession or industry. For some, the decision to graduate school is driven by a personal desire for self-improvement, intellectual curiosity, and a love for learning. They see it as an opportunity to engage in advanced study and pursue their academic interests (University of Southern California, 2024).

In the Philippines, professionals seek career growth for better compensation and benefits to cope with the increasing living costs, alongside the challenge of underemployment in some industries. However, private and public sector professionals face a dilemma between expenses and investments. Continuing their studies helps them refine their skills, excel at their jobs, and obtain career growth. However, a lack of advancement opportunities poses a hindrance with inadequate prospects for upward mobility and evident vertical articulation issues in their careers (Papa, 2020).

San Buenaventura (2019) reported on education equality assessment, that there was a significant increase in graduates in both Master's and doctorate programs. The number of graduates surged from 31,787 during the academic year 2016 to 2017 to 241,501 by the end of 2018. This increase was notable as professionals sought to distinguish themselves from other job applicants or co-workers, viewing a graduate degree as a requisite for career progression (Dedicatoria, 2017). However, local research spanning from 2016 to 2018 reveals that despite holding a master's or doctorate, some teachers and business administration professionals still struggle to advance in their careers due to steep competition and a lack of permanent positions and opportunities (Bentor, 2016; Cruz & Ramirez, 2016; Segismundo & Zacarias, 2017; Cepni et al., 2018). Similarly, this study is aware of professional teachers who face challenges competing for promotions due to a lack of a master's degree or earned units. Conversely, certain professionals not confined to teaching have experienced enhanced compensation and benefits after graduating from graduate school, either through promotions to high positions or gaining part-time and sideline opportunities. Given these diverse scenarios, this study was conducted to comprehensively describe and analyze the career growth experiences of professionals with graduate degrees.

Alongside problems related to promotion practices, professionals who pursue graduate studies education for career growth also experience challenges and barriers regarding finances, perception towards professional advancement, and finding the right balance between work, family, and studies (Cruz, 2024). This affirms the study of Gordon (2016) that graduate students identified that job responsibilities and family obligations hinder their studies. Also, they faced problems related to time management in finishing their academic requirements on time. In addition, they encountered financial problems as they needed access to scholarships, graduate assistance, or tuition benefits from their employers. On the other hand, master's degree holders expressed their problems related to social pressure. They were pressured by the views of society and their family, which greatly affected their motivation (Cepni et al., 2018). However, in Cruz and Ramirez's (2016) study, graduate students struggle to balance their time between employee and student. They find it challenging to manage their time working and studying as they have too many school

requirements and additional work. Also, according to Gino et al. (2015), more negative outcomes occur when promotion comes along the way of female participants than men. For female participants, goal conflicts, stress, anxiety, sacrifice, and the burden of responsibility will prevail as they seek career growth. Hence, they would be less likely to seek promotion than men. On the other hand, their level of perception towards positive outcomes on promotion is statistically equivalent. Despite their perception towards promotion, it is notable that there is no significant difference between gender and the current position they hold in the organization.

Despite the difficulties and challenges professionals encounter, they show excellence and satisfaction in their job performances. In the study of Hashmi et al. (2019), respondents revealed that they improved in carrying out their work efficiently, conveying their message accurately using their written communication skills, and working closely and diligently to keep their job-related knowledge and skills up-to-date, which are critical factors in working. Also, they always show resilience as they can recover quickly from challenging situations and deal skillfully with challenging circumstances. Furthermore, they show a willingness to take on extra responsibilities. This study also discovered that the difference in respondents' job performance was not statistically significant based on sex, age, and workplace. However, a small margin exists in context and adaptive performance when grouped according to sex, where male respondents have a better adaptive performance than females. Also, it is evident that the quality of task performance of respondents increases from the age group 25 – 30 years till 36 – 40 years, then it decreases up to age above 50 years. Furthermore, the respondents' peak of context and adaptive performance is in the age group of 41 – 45 years, and it decreases to the age above 50 years.

Nursing has always been considered to be one of the noblest professions. It has always been regarded as pro-human, and nurses have been known for their selfless caring and tireless service regardless of someone's economic status (Guinid et al., 2019). Filipino nurses are in high demand globally because of the standardized and unified nursing curriculum for a Bachelor of Science. This globalized demand leads to the mushrooming of nursing schools, threatening Filipino nurses' image abroad. Furthermore, this also worsens the country's health services and nursing education (Crisostomo, 2013).

In previous years, nurses were in demand overseas, driving Filipinos away from the country (Tabbuac, 2010). This global demand for nurses has led to a sudden surge in nursing schools in the Philippines (Bengan, 2011). This has led to the mass migration of nurses, even prompting doctors to take up nursing. However, there currently needs to be more nurses to be employed here and abroad. Health institutions in the country do not offer new items for hiring nurses. On the other hand, getting their work abroad is complicated and requires many expenses from the nurse who wants to apply (Tabbuac, 2010).

However, institutions mostly need to measure the quality of education they provide. According to a study by Zimmerman (2012), the first two years of college provide almost half of the students with minor learning. Results showed that forty-five percent of the students had no gains in learning. Students were more focused on their social lives, while their mentors focused more on doing their research than teaching. The study also revealed that among the 3,000 respondents, socializing and sleeping comprise seventy-five percent of their time, while sixteen percent was spent studying.

Pool and Sewel (2007) posit that career development learning has yet to be strongly represented in Higher Education Institutions [HEI's] employability strategies (Johnes, 2006). Training and labor market policymakers decide on the configuration of education and training systems, employment policies, and investments (Ehrenberg et al., 2021).

There is a need to understand and appreciate discipline and how organizations work as skillful practices in academics, employment, and life (Jackson, 2015). Skills reflect professional practices with the implication that this hinges on awareness of and responsiveness to the context in contrast to the narrowly-conceived notions of skills such as appearing at the lower end of the 'essential skills. There is a need to understand the knowledge and skills needed for young professionals to be a more effective and efficient part of the industry (Gerwe, 2021).

It is, therefore, important that schools keep track of their graduates to determine the extent of progress they made in their adjustments to the world of work. Further, through follow-up of graduates, some information that suggests the need for improvement of the school program, data essential to continuous appraisal and modification of curriculum, and other services will be gathered (Tabbuac, 2010). The teaching content must be updated, and assessment processes must be streamlined to bring more practical professional knowledge to reduce students' struggles to move from higher education to employment (Mason & Watts, 2009).

Also, conducting tracer studies connects the Alma Mater and the graduates. The graduates could provide their evaluation of the curriculum, learning experiences, and employment status. This helps the institution assess its provision of quality education to produce competent and productive graduates. Tracer studies aim to determine the effectiveness and relevance of the curriculum, the student's learning experiences, and how it affects employment after graduation. This also assesses the employment status of the graduates and how far they have come after earning the knowledge and skills in college (Regmi, 2009).

Conducting graduate tracer studies will help recognize the graduates' needs for improvement and develop a better disposition for those still in the program. Quality and adequacy of staff and good graduate performance will reflect the quality of education (Kebedom, 2010).

Objectives of the Study

This study aims to determine the employment status of the Master of Arts in Nursing [MAN] graduates of the University of Cebu Graduate School to formulate a proposed program-level intervention plan. Specifically, this study aims to present the following: 1) profile of the respondents in terms of their gender and civil status; 2) reasons for taking the Bachelor Science in Nursing (BSN) course and professional examination results; 3) training and advanced studies attended and reasons for pursuing advanced studies; 4) employment data such as their employment status, the reason for unemployment, place of work, and present occupation; 5) length of time in finding the first job, strategies used to find the first job; 6) gross monthly income; and 7) relevance of the curriculum to the first job, competencies learned in college that are useful in the first job, relatedness of the job to college course and reasons for accepting the job.

METHODOLOGY

This section presents the discussions on the research design, research environment, research respondents, research procedures, treatment of data and ethical considerations.

Research Design

Descriptive survey research design applied utilized to trace the employment status of the Master of Arts in Nursing [MAN] graduates of the University of Cebu Graduate School.

A descriptive study is designed to describe the distribution of one or more variables without regard to any causal or other hypothesis (Aggarwal & Ranganathan, 2019). When a researcher wants answers to

the questions – why, what, how, where, when, etc. Descriptive research helps a researcher gain a deeper knowledge of the research problem. Descriptive survey research is an approach of descriptive research that blends quantitative and qualitative data to provide you with relevant and accurate information. A time-efficient research method, descriptive survey design engages the people at the center of the research objective (Voxco, n.d.).

Research Environment

This investigation was undertaken at the different healthcare facilities where the Master of Arts in Nursing (MAN) graduates of UC Graduate School worked at the time of the study. the survey.

Research Respondents

The respondents of this study were the twenty-six (26) Master of Arts in Nursing (MAN) graduates of the University of Cebu-Graduate School. A convenience sampling technique was used to identify and reach the target respondents.

Research Instrument

This study used the Commission of Higher Education [CHED] Graduate Tracer Study [GTS] survey questionnaire. This tool contains questions about the 1) profile of the respondents in terms of their gender, and civil status; 2) reasons in taking the course and professional examination results; 3) trainings and advanced studies attended and reasons for pursuing advanced studies; 4) employment data such as their employment status, the reason for unemployment, place of work, and present occupation; 5) length of time in finding the first job, strategies used to find the first job; 6) gross monthly income; and 7) relevance of the curriculum to the first job, competencies learned in college that are useful in the first job, relatedness of the job to college course, and reasons for accepting the job.

Research Procedure

The researchers sent a letter to the Dean of the Graduate School for approval to conduct the study. The Informed Consent Form [ICF] was sent to the Master of Arts in Nursing (MAN) graduates of the University of Cebu Graduate School before hand so that they will be able to grasp the purpose of this study. After that they will be asked if they would be willing to participate in this research. To those who gave their affirmative answer, they were requested to sign the ICF and to be sent back via email. Then they were asked to visit the Graduate School Office to accomplish or answer the printed copy of the Graduate Tracer Tool (GTS). Then retrieval was done thereafter.

Treatment of Data

A simple percentage was used to determine the profile of the respondents and employment data. Ranking was applied to determine the top utilized academic and nursing competencies learned in MAN.

Ethical Considerations

The researchers ensured that the ethical principles of beneficence, non-maleficence, justice and autonomy was adhered in the conduct of this investigation. First, orientation about the study was done so that each respondent understood their rights and the nature of the study before they will be asked to sign the Informed Consent Form (ICF). Also, this protocol was reviewed by the University of Cebu Research Ethics Committee (UCAREC) to obtain the Certificate of Protocol Approval. All the data were treated with privacy and utmost confidentiality.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents the profile of the respondents in terms of their gender, and civil status; 2) reasons in taking the Mastert of Arts in Nursing (MAN) program and professional examination results; 3) trainings and advanced studies attended and reasons for pursuing advanced studies; 4) employment data such as their employment status, the reason for unemployment, place of work, and present occupation; 5) length of time in finding the first job, strategies used to find the first job; 6) gross monthly income; and 7) relevance of the curriculum to the first job, competencies learned in college that are useful in the firt job, relatedness of the job to college course and reasons for accepting the job.

Table 1 and Figure 1 present the respondents' age.

Table 1. Age of the Respondents (n=26)

Age Range	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
51 years old and above	3	11.53
46-50 years old	2	7.69
41-45 years old	2	7.69
36-40 years old	7	26.92
30-35 years old	12	46.15

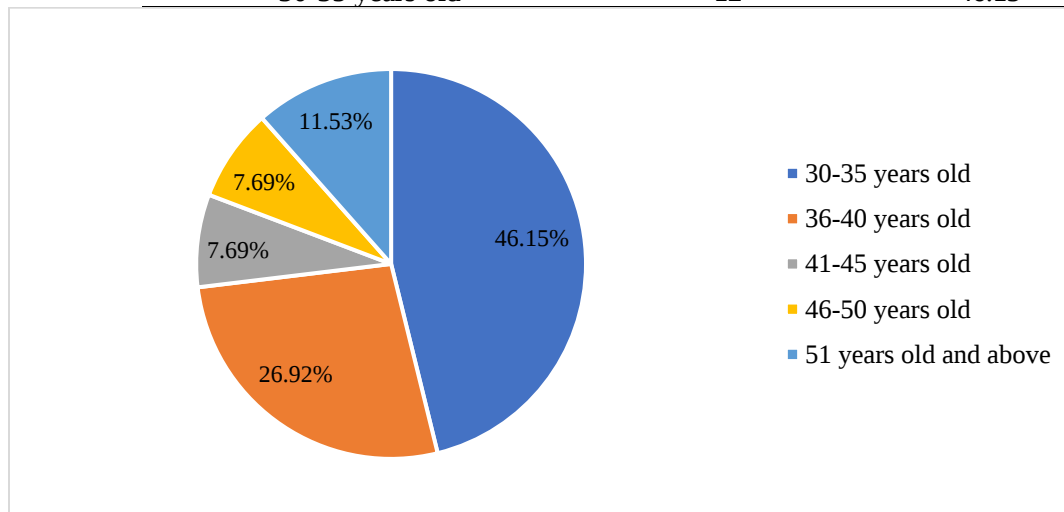


Figure 1. Age of the Respondents

Out of the total respondents, twelve (12), or 46.15%, belonged to the age bracket of 31 to-35, while two (2) or 7.69% belonged to the age bracket of 41 to 45 years old. Another two (2) or 7.69% of the respondents were aged 46 to 50 years old. These figures denote that more of the Master of Arts in Nursing (MAN) graduates of the University of Cebu Graduate School who responded to this survey were at the young adulthood stage, and they are still at the stage of furthering their carer status. Hence, they took the graduate studies.

Thirties are often thought of as early adulthood (students who are in their mid to late 30s may love to hear that they are young adults). It is a time when a person is at the human physiological peak. It is a time of focusing on the future and putting a lot of energy into making choices that will help one earn the status

of a full adult in the eyes of others. Love and work are the primary concerns at this stage of life (Lumen Learning, n.d.).

Table 2 and Figure 2 present the gender of the respondents.

Table 2. Gender of the Respondents (n= 26)

Gender	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Female	14	53.85
Male	12	46.15

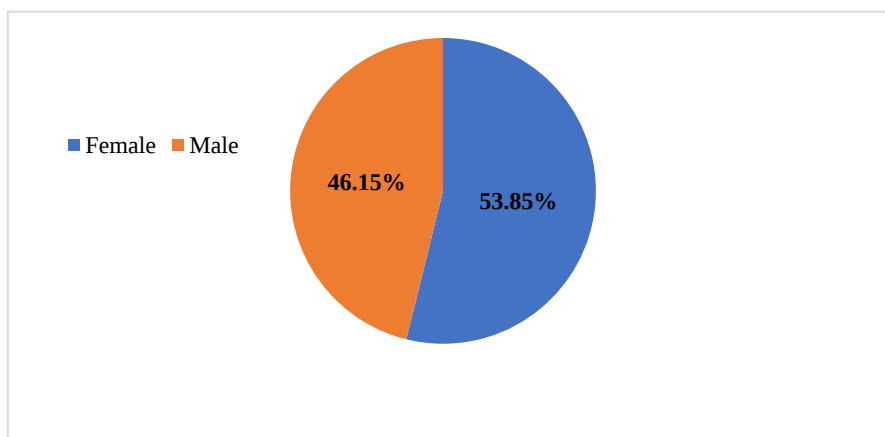


Figure 2. Gender of the Respondents

Out of the twenty-six (26) respondents, fourteen (14), or 53.85% of them, were females, while twelve (12), or 46.15%, were males. This data indicates that the graduates of Master of Arts in Nursing (MAN) program of the University of Cebu Graduate School were dominated by ladies since the nursing profession is usually subscribed by women who predominantly have the innate nature and the passion to care for others and the patients.

Table 3 and Figure 3 show the civil status of the respondents.

Table 3. Civil Status of the Respondents (n= 22)

Civil Status	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Single	16	61.54
Married	10	38.46

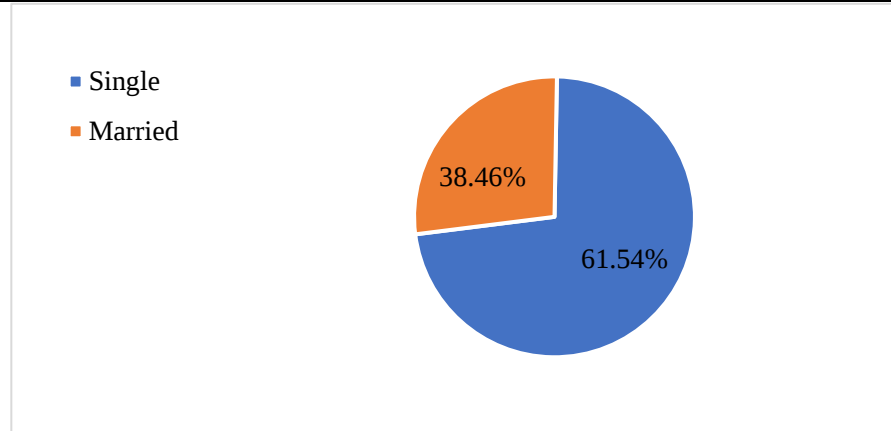


Figure 3. Civil Status of the Respondents

Sixteen (16), or 72.73% of the respondents were single at the time of the study, while only six (6), consisting of 7.12% were already married. This information indicates that the majority of the Master of Arts in Nursing (MAN) graduates of the University of Cebu Graduate School were still single since they are still on the verge of achieving high career status in the nursing profession within the healthcare industry. It can be deduced from this information that the MAN graduates were still in their early to middle thirties. At this age level, they are focusing on enhancing their educational portfolio in preparation for work opportunities abroad or outside the Philippines with better pay and life status.

Table 4 presents the data about highest educational attainment of the graduates from the University of Cebu Graduate School.

Table 4. Respondents' Highest Educational Attainment (n= 26)

Indicator	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Master's Degree	26	100

Twenty-six (26) or 100% of the respondents finished the master's degree. This information indicates that all of them had satisfactorily completed the Master of Arts in Nursing (MAN) graduates of the University of Cebu Graduate School.

Table 5 presents the data about the respondents' reasons for taking the Master of Arts in Nursing [MAN] course.

Table 5. Reasons for Taking the MAN Degree (n=26)

Indicators	Frequency (f)	Rank
High grades in the course or subject related to the course	3	10 th
Good grades in high school	5	9 th
Influence of parents and relatives	8	7 th
Peer influence	10	5 th
Inspired by a role model	13	4 th
Strong passion for the profession	23	1 st
Prospect for immediate employment	16	2 nd
Status or prestige of the profession	15	3 rd
Availability of course offering in chosen institution	2	11 th
Prospect of career advancement	9	6 th
Affordable for the family	6	8 th
Prospect of attractive compensation	3	10 th
Opportunity for employment abroad	5	9 th

The data shows that the primordial reasons of respondents in taking the Master of Arts in Nursing (MAN) program at the University of Cebu Graduate School were strong passion for the profession (ranked first), prospect for immediate employment (ranked second) and status or prestige of the profession (ranked third). This pieces of information mean that the respondents were motivated to take the MAN degree because they had the heart to provide care to the patients and that they knew that being professional nurses is a prestigious career with high level of income once they were able to work either in the Middle Eastern countries, Canada, United States of America, United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, and among others.

Table 6 shows the professional examination passed of the respondents.

Table 6. Respondents' Professional Examinations (PNLE) Performance (n= 26)

Indicators	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Passed	26	100
Failed	0	0

Twenty-six (26) respondents, comprising 100%, passed the professional examination. This information implies that most Master of Arts in Nursing (MAN) graduates of the University of Cebu Graduate School successfully passed the Philippine Nurse Licensure Examination [PNLE] after graduation. This indicates that the curriculum and the delivery of educational services provided to them enable them to hurdle the rigors of the licensure examinations for nurses. Also, taking the MAN course is their stepping stone to advance their career.

Table 7 shows present employment status of the graduates.

Table 7. Present Employment Status of the Graduates (n = 26)

Indicators	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Employed	26	100

Twenty-six (26), or 100% of the graduate-respondents were employed during the survey. This information implies that all of the Master of Arts in Nursing [MAN] graduates of the University of Cebu Graduate School were employed at healthcare establishments after they passed the Philippine Nurse Licensure Examination [PNLE] and obtained their licenses as professional nurses. Likewise, they simultaneously manage taking advanced studies while working, which is the common arrangement for graduate students in the Philippines

Table 8 presents the data about the type of organization where the respondents were employed.

Table 8. Type of Organization where the Respondents Work (n = 26)

Indicators	Frequency (f)	Percentage
Private	5	19.23
Public	21	80.77

Twenty-one (21), 80.77% respondents worked at the public organization, while only five (5), 19.23% respondents were employed in the private entity. This data implies that this group of MAN graduates practiced their nursing profession in the government healthcare facilities, like hospitals or nursing school since the salary level is higher compared to their pay in the private healthcare organizations.

With the increasing number of Filipino healthcare workers heading overseas for higher wages, Philippine nurses are calling for equal pay in public and private hospitals. According to the Philippine Nurses Association (PNA), the incoming administration should look into implementing the proposed Philippine Nursing Act which would equalize the pay of nurses in public and private hospitals. Nurses in public hospitals are estimated to earn P30,000 to P40,000 monthly and can earn as much as four times overseas, data from the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration [POEA] (Cabuenas, 2022).

Table 9 presents the information on place of work of the MAN graduates.

Table 9. Present Occupation of the Respondents (n=26)

Indicators	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
o Clinical Instructor	15	57.69
o Staff Nurse	11	42.30

Of the twenty-six (26) respondents, fifteen (15), or 57.69%, worked as clinical instructors. In contrast, eleven (11), or 42.30% of the respondents, was employed as a staff nurse. This data shows that most of the

Master of Arts in Nursing (MAN) graduates of the University of Cebu Graduate School were wither nurse educators or engaged in work that aligns with their discipline, as professional nurses in the hospitals.

Table 10 presents the data about the gross monthly income of the Master of Arts in Nursing (MAN) graduates of the University of Cebu Graduate School

Table 10. Gross Monthly Income of the Respondents (n= 26)

Indicators	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Php25,000.00 and above	13	50.00
Php20,000.00 - below Php25,000.00	3	11.54
Php15,000.00 - below Php20,000.00	3	11.54
Php10,000.00 - below Php15,000.00	4	15.38
Php5,000.00 - below Php10,000.00	3	11.54

Thirteen (13) or 50% of the respondent-graduates earned a gross monthly income of Php25,000.00 and above. At the same time, only three (3) or 11.54% earned Php 5,000.00 and below Php10,000.00. Also, there were another three (3) or 11.54% of graduate-respondents who earned a gross monthly income of Php15,000.00 to below Php 20,000.00. Moreover, another three (3;11.54%) of the same group of respondents who earned a gross monthly income of Php20,000.00 to below Php 25,000.00. These results imply that the Master of Arts in Nursing (MAN) graduates of the University of Cebu Graduate School earned a salary above the minimum wage. This level of income is considered an entry-level for nursing professionals, but a bit low compared to the amount of salary that they can earn if they work abroad.

Table 11 presents the data about the place of work of the respondents.

Table 11. Place of Work of the Respondents (n = 26)

Indicators	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Local	26	100
Abroad	0	0

Of the twenty-six (26) Master of Arts in Nursing (MAN) graduate of the University of Cebu Graduate School s, twenty-six (26), or 100%, worked here in the Philippines. Since the respondents graduated more than ten (10) years ago, they worked as faculty members of the nursing school or in the government hospital to gain hospital experience in the field of nursing while waiting for employment opportunities abroad like in Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Singapore, or United States of America (USA) United Kingdom (UK), Australia, New Zealand, or even to Canada to earn higher salaries compared to the amount they can earn if they work in Philippines. Most of the nurses in the Philippines have plans to migrate and work outside the country to have better life, including their family.

Table 12 presents the data about the respondents' status of employment.

Table 12. Respondents' Status of Employment (n = 26)

Indicators	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Permanent	16	61.54
Contractual	2	7.69
Casual	1	3.85
Self-employed	7	26.92

Sixteen (16), or 61.54% of the graduate-respondents, had a regular employment status, while one (1), or equivalent to 3.85%, had a casual job status. It can be noted in the data that seven (7, 26.92%) respondents were self-employed and there were two (2, 7.69%) were contractual employees. This information implies that most of the Master of Arts in Nursing graduates of the University of Cebu Graduate School were employed at various healthcare facilities in the country with regularly employment status. The demand for professional nurses is high in the various hospitals and nursing school in the Philippines. Hence, it is easy to gain regular employment inth country as a nurse.

Table 13 shows the data on the length of time the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) graduates of the University of Cebu-Banilad were able to find a job.

Table 13. Respondents' Length of Time in Finding the First Job (n=26)

Indicators	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Less than a month	3	11.53
1 to 6 months	10	38.46
7 to 11 months	4	15.38
1 year to less than 2 years	7	26.92
2 years to less than 3 years	2	7.69
3 years to less than 4 years	0	0

Ten (10), or 38.46% of the graduates, could find their first job after 1 to 6 months, while two (2), or 7.69% of the graduates, could find a job in 2 years to less than 3 years. This means that the Master of Arts in Nursing (MAN) graduates of the University of Cebu-Graduate School were highly employable in the healthcare industry and could exercise their nursing profession. Additionally, they can find employment that aligns with their field of discipline in less than a year due to the high demand for nurses in many healthcare establishments in the Philippines.

Table 14 presents the information of Master of Arts in Nursing (MAN) graduates in terms of how they find their first job.

Table 14. Respondents' Strategies Used to Find the First Job (n = 26)

Indicators	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Response to an advertisement	3	11.53
As walk-in applicant	9	34.61
Recommended by someone	6	23.07
Information from friends	4	15.38
Arranged by school's job placement officer	0	0
Job Fair	4	15.38

Nine (9), or 34.61%, of the graduates found their first job through walk-in application, while three (3), or 11.53%, found through advertisements. These survey results mean that Master of Arts in Nursing (MAN) graduates of the University of Cebu Graduate School can easily find employment in the various hospitals and academic institution in Cebu and neighboring provinces and did not have to depend on the university's job fair activities to enable them to find employment.

Table 15 presents the data about the respondents' assessments of the relevance of the curriculum to the first job..

Table 15. Respondents' Relevance of the Curriculum to the First Job (n = 58)

Indicators	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Yes	45	77.58
No	13	22.41

Forty-five (45), or 77.58% of the respondents, revealed that the Master of Arts in Nursing (MAN) curriculum that they took at the University of Cebu Graduate School was related to their job. Only thirteen (13), or 22.41%, said their current work is irrelevant to their college curriculum. Currently, nurses are in demand in most hospitals and nursing schools in the Philippines. Hence, it is easy for a nursing professional to land a job and be able to practice their profession since they had underwent rigorous trainings.

However there were respondents who worked in an industry unrelated to nursing discipline. Therefore, they cannot connect their learning in college in the performance of their first job.

Table 16 shows the competencies learned that are useful in the first job of the graduate-respondents.

Table 16. Respondents' Competencies Learned in that are Useful in the First Job

Indicators	Frequency (f)	Rank
Communication Skills	45	1 st
Human Relations Skills	33	3 rd
Entrepreneurial Skills	12	10 th
Information Technology Skills	15	8 th

Problem Solving Skills	30	4 th
Critical Thinking Skills	17	7 th
Personality Development	20	6 th
Research Skills	5	11 th
Leadership Skills	22	5 th
Community Building Skills	14	9 th
Productivity and Time Management Skills	40	2 nd

**Multiple Responses*

The Master of Arts in Nursing (MAN) graduates of the University of Cebu Graduate School learned communication skills (ranked first), productivity and time management skills (ranked second), human relations skills (ranked third), problem-solving skills (ranked fourth), and leaders skills (ranked fifth). This data implies that the Master of Arts in Nursing (MAN) curriculum at the University of Cebu Graduate School strengthens the students' hard skills and soft skills, which are very useful in advancing their career as nursing professionals. These responses also indicate that the MAN graduates viewed the educational services provided to them in the graduate school enhanced their nursing competencies, including their ability to communicate and relate to other people. Also, working effectively amid the pressure were also manifested by the respondents, while using their critical thinking abilities to manage complex situations in dealing with students and patients. Nevertheless, there is a need to strengthen their the leadership skills, which are vital in the real world of work and career advancement in the healthcare industry.

Table 17 shows the data concerning the respondents' assessments of the relatedness of the job to the college course.

Table 17. Respondents' Assessments Relatedness of the Job to the Degree (n= 26)

Indicators	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Yes	23	88.46
No	3	11.53

Twenty-three (23), or equivalent to 88.46% of the respondents, assessed that their master's degree was relevant to their current job. In contrast, only three (3) respondents, or 11.53%, divulged that their course was unrelated to their current job. These results mean that knowledge learned by the Master of Arts in Nursing (MAN) graduates in the different subjects they took while studying MAN at the University of Cebu Graduate School is applicable in the course of their performance in their job in the school or in the hospital.

Table 18 shows the respondents' reasons for accepting the job.

Table 18. Respondents' Reasons for Accepting the Job (n = 26)

Indicators	Frequency (f)	Rank
Salaries & benefits	26	1st
Career Challenge	15	3rd
Peer Influence	20	2nd
Family Influence	10	4th

**Multiple Responses*

The reasons of the respondents accepting the their job were the following: salaries and benefits (ranked first), peer influence (ranked second), and then career challenge (ranked third). Understandably, the primordial considerations for taking further or advanced studies was to improve one's career standing. In this case, the Master of Arts in Nursing (MAN) graduates looked for a job that is related to their nursing professions since they were primarily trained for various skills. Hence, they can effectively and efficiently perform the job of providing care to the patients or educating nursing students.

Conclusions

Therefore, the graduates of the Master of Arts in Nursing (MAN) program of University of Cebu Graduate School were employable in academe and hospitals with above minimum salary level. Moreover, they were able to apply their learnings in the graduate school in the healthcare industry establishments where they were employed, enabling them to practice their nursing profession. Likewise, they exhibited the competencies and graduate attributes as indicated in the MAN curriculum, the CHED Memorandum Order No. 15, series of 2019, and the University's vision, mission, institutions goals and core values. Thereby, the MAN curriculum of UC is in line with the established requirements by the governemnt regulations and the requirements of the healthcare industry in the Philippines.

Translational Research

About the significant findings of this investigation, a program-level intervention plan shall be devised to encompass regular review and revision of the Master of Arts in Nursing (MAN) curriculum of the University of Cebu Graduate School to ensure that it is compliant with the regulatory standards and addresses the current healthcare industry requirements. It shall integrate feasible programs and activities to ensure nursing education aligns with the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) requirements, hospital partners, the healthcare industry, and the general community where the MAN graduates will exercise their profession as nurse leaders.

REFERENCES

- Abbott, K., & Snidal, D. (2021). *The spectrum of international institutions: an interdisciplinary collaboration on global governance*. Routledge. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3DVzgLw>.
- Agasisti, T., Dal Bianco, A., Landoni, P., Sala, A., & Salerno, M. (2011). Evaluating the efficiency of research in academic departments: An empirical analysis in an Italian region. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 65(3), 267-289. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2273.2011.00489.x>.
- Aggarwal, R., & Ranganathan, P. (2019). Study designs: Part 2-Descriptive studies. *Perspecti. Clin. Res.* 10(1), 34-36. doi: [10.4103/picr.PICR_154_18](https://doi.org/10.4103/picr.PICR_154_18).
- Almejas, B.C., Marasigan, J.C., Morante, T.A. Lim, E.J.A., & Catuday, R.A. (2017). *Teacher education graduates: A tracer study*. Education and Corporate Social Responsibility, Cebu, Philippines. International Conference on Law, Business, Education and Corporate Responsibility (LBECSP-17), September 21-22, 2017, Cebu, Philippines.
- Aquino, A.B., Punongbayan, E.J., Macalaguim, L.P., Bauyon, S.M. Rodriguez Jr., R.A., & Quizon, G.R. (2015). Teacher education graduate tracer study from 2010 to 2014 in one state university in Batangas, Philippines. *Asia Pacific Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 3(5), pp. 45-50.
- Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Barnett, R. (2009). Knowing and becoming in the higher education curriculum. *Stud. High. Educ.*, 34(4), 429-440, 10.1080/03075070902771978.
- Bauman, Z. (2007). *Liquid times: Living in an age of uncertainty*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Becker, G. S. (1964). *Human capital: A theoretical and empirical analysis, with special reference to education*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Bell, S. (2010). Project-based learning for the 21st century: Skills for the future. *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies*, 83(2), 39-43. Doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00098650903505415>.

- Benner, P. Sutphen, M., Leonard, V., & Day, L. (2010). *Educating nurses: A call for radical transformation*. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.
- Bentor, M. A., Jr. (2016). Job Promotion Practices and its Associated Problems: The Case of Non-Teaching Staff in an Academic Environment. *International Journal of Sciences: Basic and Applied Research*, 28(3), pp. 107-117, ISSN 2307-4531.
- Billings, D.M., & Halstead, J.A. (2012). *Teaching in nursing: A guide for faculty* (4th ed). St. Louis, MO: Elsevier.
- Billett, S., Harteis, C., & Grube, H. (2014). *International handbook of research in professional and practice-based learning*. (vol. 1383). Springer.
- Bueno, D. C. (2017). Ascertaining the curriculum relevance of the graduate school through tracer study in a philippine private higher education institution. *JPAIR Multidisciplinary Research*, 28, 72 – 88. doi: 10.7719/jpair.v28i1.502.
- Buenvinida L. P. & Yazon, A. D. (2017). Assessment of Graduates of Master of Arts in Education in one State University in the Philippines. *Asia Pacific Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 5(2), pp. 77 – 86.
- BYU Graduate Studies. (n.d.). *Principles and characteristics of graduate education*. Retrieved from <https://shorturl.at/sxme4>.
- Cabuenas, J.V. D. (2022). Nurses group seeks evened-up public, private hospital salaries. *GMA News Online*. Retrieved from <https://shorturl.at/myxLR>.
- Cai, Y. (2012). Graduate employability: A conceptual framework for understanding employers' perceptions. *High. Educ. The International Journal of Higher Education Research*. DOI 10.1007/s10734-012-9556-x .

- Çepni, O., Kılınç, A. C., & Kılcan, B. (2018). Problems experienced in postgraduate education and solutions: a qualitative study on graduate students' views. *International Online Journal of Educational Sciences*. 10. 10.15345/iojes.2018.01.001.
- Cruz, (2024). Impact of graduate studies education on career growth of professionals. *A Multidisciplinary Journal: Psychology and Education*, 18(1), 20-28. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.10836349.
- Crisostomo, S. (2013, February 1). Group hits commercialization of nursing education. *The Philippine Star*. Retrieved from <https://shorturl.at/gGPR4>.
- Cruz, T.D., & Ramirez, E.J. (2016). Motivation, satisfaction and difficulty encountered by higher education institution in manila graduate students in pursuing graduate studies. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, 6.
- Dedicatoria, M. (2017, March 31). Why pursue a master's Ddegree? *The Philippine Star, Press Reader*. Retrieved January 1, 2020 from https://www.pressreader.com/philippines/the-philippine-star/20170331/28286225_5723665.
- Dewi, N.R., Listiaji, P., Taufiq, M., Savitri, E.N., Yanitama, A., & Herianti, A.P. (2021). Development of a tracer study system for graduates of the Integrated Science Department, Universitas Negeri Semarang. *Journal of Physics: Conference Series*, 1918 (4). Article 042010, 10.1088/1742-6596/1918/4/042010.
- Du, M.R. (2019). A tracer study among nursing graduates of LPU-St. Cabrini School of Health Sciences, Inc. SY 2011-2016. *LPU-Laguna Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 3(3). Retrieved from <https://shorturl.at/bnpFT>.
- Dumlao, L. A. (2006). Employability and earnings of graduates of degree and non-degree program and job relevance to their schooling. *The Search Journal*. Quezon City.
- Eide, E. R., & Showalter, M. H. (2010). Human capital. *International Encyclopedia of Educatin* (3rd. ed.). Retrieved from <https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/social-sciences/human-capital-theory>.
- Ehrenberg, R., Smith, R., & Hallock, K. (2021). *Modern labor economics: Theory and public policy*. Routledge.

- Fang, X. Y., Wei, H. U., Chen, H. D., Wu, M. X., Tang, Q., & Wang, F. (2014). Three-level developmental guidance program for high school students. *J. Beijing Normal Univ.* 1, 37–43.
- Fakunle, O., & Hingson, H. (2021). Interrogating theoretical and empirical approaches to employability in different global regions. *Higher Education Quarterly*. Wiley Online Library. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hequ.12345>.
- Finn, D. (2000). From full employment to employability: A new deal for Britain's unemployed? *International Journal of Manpower*, 21(5), 384-99.
- Fleuren, B.P.I., de Grip, A., Jansen, N.W.H., Kant, I., & Zijlstra, F.R.H. (2020). Unshrouding the sphere from the clouds: Towards a comprehensive conceptual framework for sustainable employability. *Sustainability*, 12, 6366.
- Gerwe, O. (2021). The Covid-19 pandemic and the accommodation sharing sector: Effects and prospects for recovery. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 167, 120733. Doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2021.120733>.
- Gino, F., Wilmoth, C. A., & Brooks, A. W. (2015). *Compared to men, women view professional advancement as equally attainable, but less desirable*.
- Gonzales, N. (2013). Graduate tracer study. *Knowledge Community*. Retrieved from http://knowledgecommunity.ph/?page_id=43.
- Gordon, S. S. (2016). *Graduate student retention: An examination of factors affecting persistence among master's program students at comprehensive public institution*. Dissertations Paper 111.
- Guinid, J. T., Anicas, M.P., Nero, F.D., Talindan, G.A., & Tabudlo, J.B. (2019). *Employment status of the bachelor of science in nursing graduates of the University of Northern Philippines Batch 2014-2016*. Surabaya International Health Conference, Novotel Samtor East Surabaya Hotel, July 13-14, 2010.
- Hashmi, F., Ameen, K. & Roroya, S. (2019). Does postgraduate degree make any difference in job performance of information professionals? *Library Management*. ahead-of-print. 10.1108/LM-07-2019-0042.

- Higher Grad, Inc. (2024). *5 persons to pursue graduate studies*. Retrieved from <https://shorturl.at/3wgsO>.
- Hinchliffe, G.W. & Jolly, A. (2013). Graduate identity and employability. *British Educational Research Journal*, August. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01411926.2010.482200>.
- Hipona, J.B., Cuevas, J.E.T., & Martin, J.A. (2021). A tracer study of the bachelor of science in nursing program of La Consolacion University Philippine graduates: A reflection on institutional goals. *An International Journal of Art & Higher Education: A Refereed Research Journal*, 10(1). doi:10.46360/cosmos.ahe.520211004.
- Hoose, N. A.-V. (2020). *Expectancy value and theory*. Educational psychology. Retrieved from <https://edpsych.pressbooks.sunycreate.cloud/chapter/expectancy-value-theory/>.
- Howard, C. (2010, July 9). The nursing profession under siege. *ABSCBNnews.com*. Retrieved from <http://www.abscbnnews.com/-depth/07/09/10/nursing-profession-under-siege>.
- Ismail, S., & Mohammed, D.S. (2015). Employability skills in TVET curriculum in Nigeria federal universities of technology. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 204, 73-80. 10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.08.111.
- Iwasiw, C.L., & Goldenberg, D. (2015). *Curriculum development in nursing education* (3rd ed.). Burlington, MA: Jones & Bartlett Learning.
- Jackson, D.. (2015). Employability skill development in work-integrated learning: Barriers and best practice. *Studies in Higher Education*, 40(2), 350-367. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2013.842221>.
- Jayasingam, S., FujiwaraY., & Thurasamy, R. (2016). I am competent so I can be choosy': Choosiness and its implication on graduate employability. *Studies in Higher Education*, 43(7). <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2016.1221918>.
- Johnes, J. (2006). Data envelopment analysis and its application to the measurement of efficiency in higher education. *Economics of Education Review*. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3R0NZrG>.

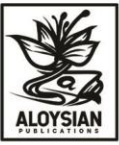
- Kakabadze, S. (2020). The east in the west: South caucasus between Russia and the European Union. *Polity*, 52(2), 273-287. doi/abs/10.1086/708183.
- Keating, S.B. (2014). *Curriculum development and evaluation in nursing* (3rd ed.). NY: Springer.
- Kebedom, N. (2010). *Sheba university graduates' tracer study*. Sheba University College. Retrieved from <http://www.suc.edu.et/TracerStudy.html>.
- Kanter, R. M. (1989) *When giants learn to dance: Mastering the challenges of strategy, management and careers in the 1990s*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Knibbs, K., Fletcher-Brown, J., & Middleton, K. Z. (2015). Introducing Employability— sharing ideas for engaging multiple stakeholders in the teaching, learning, employment journey. *British Academy of Management Conference*. University of Southampton Institutional Repository. Retrieved from <https://eprints.soton.ac.uk/427804/>
- Knight, P.T., & Yorke, M. (2004). *Learning, curriculum and employability in higher education*. London and New York: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Krishnan, P., & Krutikova, S. (2013). Non-cognitive skill formation in poor neighbourhoods of urban India. *Labour Economics*, 24, 68-85. Doi:10.1016/j.labeco.2013.06.004.
- Landeen, J., Carr, D., Culver, K., Martin, L., Matthew-Maich, N., Noesgard, C., & Beney-Gadsby, L. (2016). The impact of curricular changes on BSCN students' clinical learning outcomes. *Nurse Education in Practice*, 21, 51-58. Doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nepr.2016.09.010>.
- Leberman, S., & McDonald L. (2016). *The transfer of learning: Participants' perspectives of adult education and training*. CRC Press. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3YGYll2>.
- Lent, R. W., & Brown, S. D. (2013). Social cognitive model of career selfmanagement: toward a unifying view of adaptive career behavior across the life span. *J. Counsel. Psychol.* 60, 557–568. doi: 10.1037/a0033446.
- Lent, R. W., & Brown, S. D. (2019). Social cognitive career theory at 25: empirical status of the interest, choice, and performance models. *J. Vocat. Behav.* 115, 103316. doi: 10.1016/j.jvb.2019.06.004.

- Lent, R. W., Brown, S. D., and Hackett, G. (1994). Toward a unifying social cognitive theory of career and academic interest, choice, and performance. *J. Vocat. Behav.* 45, 79–122. doi: 10.1006/jvbe.1994.1027.
- Levhari, D., & Weiss, Y. (1974). The effect of risk on the investment in human capital. *The American Economic Review*, 64(6), 950–963.
- Lopez-Garrido, G. (2023). Bandura's self-efficacy theory of motivation in psychology. *Simply Psychology*. Retrieved from <https://shorturl.at/uuyYa>.
- Lumen Learning. (n.d.). *Periods of human development*. Retrieved from <https://shorturl.at/bLGvU>.
- Luszczynska, A. & Schwarzer, R. (2005). Social cognitive theory. In M. Conner & P. Norman (eds.). *Predicting health behavior* (2nd ed. rev. ed.) Buckingham, England: Open University Press.
- Mason, W., & Watts, D. J. (2009, June). *Financial incentives and th performance of crowds*. In Proceedings of the ACM SIGKDD Workshop On Human Computation. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3dFgRbh>.
- McCombes, A. (2022). Descriptive research: Definition, types, methods & examples. *Scribbr*. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2JzFwMG>.
- McCowan, T. (2015). Should universities promote employability? *Theory and Reserch in Education*, 13(3), 267-285. . <https://doi.org/10.1177/1477878515598060>.
- Mitchinson, A., & Morris, R. (2014). *Learning about learning agility*. White Paper. Center for Creative Leadership.
- Ofoha, D., & Iwuchukwu, O. (2018). Employers' perception and expectations of professional competency of distance learning graduates: A tracer study of nursing graduates of the national Open University of Nigeria (NOUN). *Open Praxis*, 10(3), 265-278. <https://search.informit.org/doi/abs/10.3316/informit.985565139301032>.
- Okay-Somerville, B., & Scholarios, D. (2017). Position, possession or process? Understanding objective and subjective employability during university-to-work transitions. *Stud. High. Educ.*, 42, 1275–1291.

- Oliver, B. (2015). Redefining graduate employability and work-integrated learning: Proposals for effective higher education in disrupted economies. *Journal of Teaching and Learning for Graduate Employability*, 6(1), 56-65.
- Orejana, A.J., & Resurrection, P.F. (2010). Tracer study on the graduates on the bsba program: An input to curricular development. *The Mindanao Forum*, 23(1). <https://ejournals.ph/article.php?id=7051>.
- Papa, A. G. (2020, February 12). Upgrading teacher's position classification and compensation: A solution to salary dilemma of public school teachers. *Business Mirror News*.
- Philippine Daily Inquirer, (2010). *New approach needed* . Posted on 3 December.
- Pool, L., & Sewell, P. (2007). The key to employability: developing a practical model of graduate employability. *Education+ Training*. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3DJTF6t>.
- Obando, J., & Shisanya, C. (2013). *Institutionalizing tracer studies in higher education Institutions in Africa: The experience of Kenyatta University*. Joint Unitrace-IUCEAConference
- Ramirez, T.L., Cruz, L.T., & Alcantara, N.V. (2014). Tracer study of RTU graduates: An analysis. *Researchers World*, 5(1), pp. 66-76.
- Regmi, P.P. (2009). *Tracer study of AIT graduates 2003-2008. Asian Institute of Technology(AIT) Klong Luang, Pathumthani, Thailand.* Retrieved from [http://www.docstoc.com/docs/162623073/TRACER-STUDY---](http://www.docstoc.com/docs/162623073/TRACER-STUDY---Asian-Institute-of-Technology) Asian-Institute-of-Technology.
- Salisbury, M., Umbach, P., Paulsen, M., & Pascarella, E. (2009). Going global: Understanding the choice process of the intent to study abroad. *Research in higher education*, 50(2), 119–143.
- San Buenaventura, P. A. R. (2019, January 30). *Education equality in the Philippines*. Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA).

- San Juan, R. (2019, November 26). Benefits, career growth beat salary as top job change motivations. *Philippine Star*.
- Sanchez, M.P.R., & Diamante, V.A.M. (2017). Graduate tracer study of the college of nursing. *The Malaysian Journal of Journal of Nursing*, 8(3), 41-47. Retrieved from <https://ejournal.lucp.net/index.php/mjn/article/view/47>.
- Schleicher, A. (2012). *Preparing teachers and developing school leaders for the 21st century: Lessons from around the world*. 2, rue Andre Pascal, F- 75775 Paris Cedex 16, France: OECD Publishing.
- Schultz, T. W. (1961). Investment in human capital. *The American Economic Review*, 51(1), 1–17.
- Schunk, D. H., & DiBenedetto, M. K. (2021). Chapter four - Self-efficacy and human motivation. *Advances in Motivation Science*, 8, 153-179. <https://doi.org/10.1016/bs.adms.2020.10.001>.
- Segismundo, M. C. D., & Zacarias, M. M. (2017). LCUP's Contribution to the Nations Human Capital: A Tracer Study of MAED, MBA and MABS Graduates, AY 2012 – 2013 to 2015 – 2016. *International Journal Education and Research*, 5(10), pp. 195 – 210.
- Stevenson University. (n.d.). *top 5 reasons to earn your master's in nursing*. Retrieved in <https://www.stevenson.edu/online/about-us/news/top-reasons-masters-nursing/#:~:text=Earning%20your%20master's%20degree%20in%20nursing%20will%20identify%20you%20a,s,position%20are%20far%20more%20limited>.
- Sulkowski, M. L., & Michael, K. (2014). Meeting the mental health needs of homeless students in schools: a multi-tiered system of support framework. *Child. Youth. Serv. Rev.* 44, 145–151. doi: 10.1016/j.childyouth.2014. 06.014.
- Sumanasiri, E. A. G. (2011). *Succeeding in the Indian market: Exploring the critical factors on market performance*. In Proceedings of International Conference on *Business Management*, 8.
- Tabbuac, P. M. (2010). *Follow-up study of the master of business administration and master in public administration graduates of the University of Northern Philippines*. (Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Northern Philippines, Vigan City).

- Taylor, D.C.M., & Hamdy, H. (2013). Adult learning theories: implications for learning and teaching in medical education. AMEE Guide No. 83. *Medical Teacher*, 35(11), e1561- e1572. <https://doi.org/10.3109/0142159X.2013.828153>.
- Tomey-Marriner, A. (2005). *Guide to nursing management and leadership*. (7th ed.). Singapore: Elsevier Pte Ltd.
- Torres, C. A. & Schugurensky, D. (2002). The political economy of higher education in the era of neoliberal globalization: Latin America in comparative perspective. *Higher Education*, 43(4), 429-455.
- Trading Economics. (2019). *Philippines' unemployment rate*. Retrieved from <https://tradingeconomics.com/Philippines/unemployment-rate>.
- Trines, S. (2018). Mobile nurses: Trends in international labor migration in the nursing field. *World Education News and Reviews*. Retrieved from <https://shorturl.at/hsvwy>.
- University of Southern Californis. (2024). Reasons to attend graduate school. *Dornsife Career Pathways*. Retrieved from <https://shorturl.at/wfCxr>.
- U.S. Department of Education [USDE]. (2009). *Accreditation in the United States: Overview of accreditation*. Retrieved from U.S. Department of Education Website: <http://www.ed.gov/admins/finaid/accred/accreditation.html#Overview>.
- Van, V. (2020). Social responsibility of students: The role and importance of education. *Journal of Natural Remedies*, 972-5547.
- Weiner, P., Baukens, M., Bollerot, P., Pineschi-Gapenne, M., & Walwei, U. (2017). *Empoyability: from theory and practice* (International Social Security Series volume 7). New York: Routledge.
- Weng, Q. D. (2018). *Manual of the organizational career growth scale*. 10.13140/RG.2.2.17831/85922.



Weng, Q. D. & Zhu, L. (2020). Individuals' career growth within and across organizations: a review and agenda for future research. *Journal of Career Development*. 47.239-248.10.1177/0894845320921951.

Voxco. (2021). *Decoding the charm of descriptive surveys*. Retrieved from <https://shorturl.at/ByAWd>.

Zimmerman, J. (2012, January 31). Are college students learning?. *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved from <https://shorturl.at/dHJW7>.