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Tracer Study of Education and Graduate Program Alumni (2016–2022) at Surigao Del Norte State University

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Abstract. Educational institutions strive to produce graduates who are competent and competitive both domestically and globally. This graduate tracer study investigated the employment outcomes of graduates from the College of Teacher Education (CTE) and Graduate School (GS) Programs from SY 2016-2022. Data collection methods included Google forms, surveys, and phone calls. Of the 2846 CTE graduates, 2491 (87.75%) were traced, and of the 659 GS graduates, 550 (83.45%) were traced. Findings revealed that CTE graduates were predominantly single females aged 24 or younger, who typically began working as permanent teachers at the Department of Education (DepEd) 2-3 years post-graduation, earning a base salary of P15,000–25,000. They generally served in these roles for 4-6 years. Conversely, GS alumni were primarily married men in their 30s, employed in permanent supervisory or managerial roles at DepEd, with monthly earnings between P25,000 and P50,000. Graduates reported that their university degrees were economically relevant and provided significant financial advantages. CTE graduates indicated that job satisfaction was more influenced by workplace interactions and environment than salary. The study suggests enhancing the use of social media to encourage graduate participation in tracer studies and recommends ongoing professional development for faculty to improve educational programs and prepare graduates with highly employable skills. Addressing job satisfaction disparities may require targeted interventions to improve educational programs, expand career development opportunities, and foster supportive work cultures tailored to each graduating class's needs.

Keywords: Graduate tracer study; Teacher education graduates; Employment outcomes.

1.0 Introduction.

Assessing the results and career paths of graduates is critical to determining the efficacy and applicability of academic programs in the dynamic world of higher education. Tracing the career paths, employment statuses, further education pursuits, and overall satisfaction of these graduates offer invaluable insights into the impact and outcomes of the educational offerings of the institution during this period. Through systematic data collection and analysis, this study aims to inform institutional decision-making, identify areas for program improvement, and contribute to the broader discourse on teacher education and graduate programs in higher education.

It is crucial to comprehend alumni's post-graduation trajectories to assess the value and efficacy of educational initiatives. This sets the stage for a tracer study focused on the graduates of the CTE and GS Programs at Surigao del Norte State University (SNSU) spanning the years 2016 to 2022. By examining the career paths, employment statuses, further education pursuits, and overall satisfaction of graduates, this study aims to provide insights into the impact and outcomes of the educational offerings at SNSU during this period. Through systematic data collection and analysis, the study seeks to inform institutional decision-making processes, contribute to program enhancement initiatives, and advance knowledge in the fields of teacher education and higher education.

One of the most important factors in adjusting to the changes brought about by the increasingly complex nature and problems of the twenty-first century is advanced higher education. For a considerable time, graduate education has been seen as a proactive and compassionate tool in the country's efforts to combat poverty and promote socioeconomic advancement. Instilling and fostering the relevant information, skills, attitudes, and values that each person needs to become a productive and valued member of society, as well as developing and cultivating the national development workforce, are its main goals (Daguplo et al., 2019). The investment in education will be viewed as "wasted" if graduates do not go on to play important social roles that allow them to financially support a government (de Ocampo et al., 2012).

The Philippine government is particularly concerned about underemployment and unemployment when compared to other Asian nations. The nation has been dealing with these same problems for many years. The ongoing labor force expansion and population boom constantly outpace the official generation of jobs. This issue has spread as more and more graduates from Philippine HEIs are graduating with degrees in business, engineering, health, science, agriculture, and many other fields; nevertheless, jobs are not produced at the same rate as the universities are awarding degrees (de Ocampo, Bagano, & Tan, 2012). Considering this disparity, educational establishments ought to collaborate with both the public and private sectors to ensure that recent graduates are placed in jobs that suit their qualifications. A successful transfer from school to the labor market will be achieved by emphasizing particular and well-targeted skills and effective coordination between universities and enterprises (Drine, 2017).

Academic instructors in the Philippines view graduate education as essential. A primary focus of the Department of Education (DepEd) is enhancing the quality of education by enabling teachers to retrain and upskill through professional development programs. In the meantime, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) has implemented updated policies, standards, and guidelines (PSG) for graduate programs to fulfill 21st-century expectations while also helping to improve the quality of graduate education in the Philippines. To run educational programs, provide student services, and continuously enhance teaching and learning, education professionals must enhance their skills and competencies, as highlighted by the new PSG for graduate studies. Knowledge and technical skills, communication, leadership, research, and information and communication technology skills are only a few of these abilities. Graduate students gain these abilities and are self-assured in their ability to make decisions in a challenging job setting. By gaining these abilities, individuals can assess, explain, and identify more effective ways to carry out their duties and obligations (CHED, 2019). In their study, Gentova et al., (2023) found that graduate studies contributed significantly, that the delivery was highly satisfactory, and the graduate attribute practice contributed significantly. Meanwhile, important discoveries were revealed by qualitative data. Their talents, knowledge, skills, and qualities are developed through graduate education experiences, opening them to more career opportunities. Additionally, their contentment fosters the qualities of humility, Christian values, integrity, love, and the pursuit of perfection, all of which create ideals fundamental to both professional practice and life in general. This study also confirmed that the graduate school may use tracer studies to help them meet the accreditation and quality assurance measure requirements for a quality management system. Additionally, graduates' satisfaction promotes ongoing efforts to include alumni in transparent, mutually beneficial ways and disseminate knowledge to empower others and constructively use their influence to benefit the nation, the world, and the community.

The study conducted by Cuadra et al., (2019) revealed that most of the graduates were in their early 20s and had just recently graduated from the university. Furthermore, they were able to find a job through someone they knew. Most of the graduates work in fields connected to their individual degree programs. One of the key advantages of the undergraduate curriculum was its applicability to professional requirements for the degree program. Extracurricular activities and other optional classes were noted by the report as areas that require development. The school must prioritize student mobility, credit transfers, quality assurance, and research clusters to align with the ASEAN higher education system and enhance the current degree programs.

Surigao del Norte State University (SNSU), a higher learning institution, offers various programs and is established as the only state university under Republic Act 10600. It is now envisioned as a thriving, caring university that transforms communities and lives. By providing high-quality instruction, innovations,

productivity initiatives, industry- and environment-friendly technologies, resource mobilization, and outreach programs and services that alter communities, SNSU works to realize this vision.

As stressed by Gines (2014), the Philippine Qualifications Framework requires agencies such as DepEd, CHED, TESDA, PRC, and DOLE to assess, analyze, and suggest learning standards for higher education, technical skills development, and elementary education as well as for the alignment of licensing exams. The Commission on Higher Education of the Philippine Higher Education states that all HEIs should set up a method to guarantee the socioeconomic status of every graduate.

According to Ramanick et al., (2015), the graduates' achievement and realization of their specific goals and plans are crucial for assessing and upgrading training programs. Tracking of graduates will assist Colleges and universities update the current subjective evidence—" because the graduates and their parents tell them they have succeeded"—with the "hard data" those external evaluators are increasingly seeking. To guard off intrusive state thrusts, all universities and colleges need to develop a system of acquiring "hard data" as evidence.

A suitable topic for assessing the outcomes of the training and education given in the academic setting is graduate tracer study. It provides basic details regarding the whereabouts and work status of the graduates. The findings of this kind of research can give enough insight into how well education and training work for both companies and graduates.

A tracer study is an essential instrument for gathering information about alumni from any curriculum plan at higher education institutions, including Surigao del Norte State University. It provides valuable information for evaluating college outcomes, which can be used as a starting point for continuous quality assurance and development programs at educational institutions (Tutor et al., 2021). According to Woya (2019), these studies are excellent tools for assessing and improving the outcomes of graduate education programs, as well as their marketability and sustainability. Graduate programs and services need to be updated often to satisfy the demands of the global economy. This is because graduates' employability and job advancement in the global market are becoming increasingly important (Abulencia et al., 2021; Burke et al., 2017; Rowe, 2017).

Information regarding graduates of academic programs at higher education institutions (HEIs) is crucial, and this is provided via tracer studies. The results of tracer studies can be used to clarify or redefine the mission and market niche of a higher education institution (HEI) and to demonstrate how courses and programs can be tailored to meet institutional objectives. The outcomes can also be used by stakeholders to determine where to get experts. Ultimately, the assessment will create a framework for developing new and creative procedures and substantive curricula to complement the ones that already exist. These factors make this study prominent. Further, this tracer study aims to describe the outcomes and experiences of graduates after completing their degree programs at SNSU based on insights from comprehensive data.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This investigation employed a cross-sectional research design, enabling broader conclusions and informing policies or interventions in academia. It is instrumental in understanding and guiding evidence-based decision-making across various disciplines within academic institutions.

2.2 Research Participants

The study targeted graduates from the College of Teacher Education and the Graduate School of Surigao del Norte State University, spanning academic years 2016–2022. Population distributions of the graduates are detailed in Tables 1 and 2. Data were collected using the Graduate Tracking Survey (GTS) questionnaire, developed by the researcher.

2.3 Research Instrument and Data Gathering Procedure

Data collection involved a researcher-developed questionnaire assessing demographics (age, sex, marital status, degree program, graduation year), economic and industry relevance of the degree, and job satisfaction. A random sample of 50% of graduates per program was drawn from the Registrar's Office list. Respondents received the

Google Form questionnaire link via email from the ICT Office. Some graduates were contacted directly by researchers to ensure questionnaire completion, with additional follow-ups conducted via phone calls.

2.4 Ethical Considerations

Participation in the study was entirely voluntary. Respondents were assured of confidentiality, with personal information protected and used solely for research purposes. No identifiable information was disclosed.

2.5 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using the following methods:
Frequency Count and Percentage.To describe the demographic profiles of respondents (age, sex, marital status, degree program, graduation year).
Mean and Standard Deviation. To assess respondents' job satisfaction.
Thematic Analysis. To evaluate the economic and industry relevance of the degree programs completed at SNSU.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Demographic Profile of Graduates

Figure 1 provides a demographic breakdown of CTE graduates across four degree programs (BSE, BEEd, BTVTEd, BPEd) according to age, sex, and civil status.

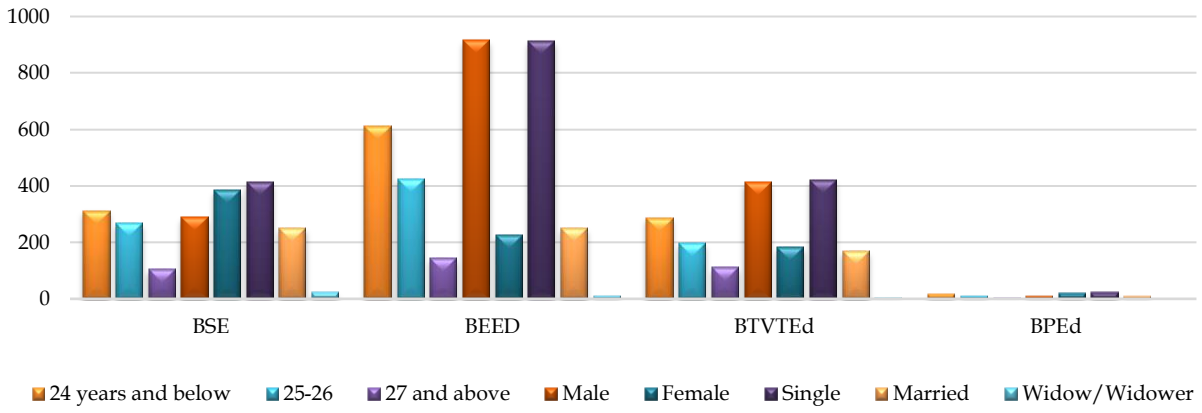

Figure 1. Demographic profile of CTE graduates according to sex, age, and civil status

As to age distribution, the majority of graduates across all programs are 24 years and below, with BEEd having the highest percentage (51.8%) in this age group. In the 25–26 age range, BPEd has the largest percentage of graduates (33.3%), although BTVTEd has a sizable percentage of graduates (26.5%) who are 27 years of age or older. As to sex, there is a notable gender disparity across the programs. BEEd and BTVTEd have a significantly higher percentage of male graduates (77.5% and 69.2%, respectively) compared to female graduates. In contrast, BSE and BPEd have a higher percentage of female graduates, with BSE having 57.7% females and BPEd having 66.7% female graduates. As to civil status, majority of graduates in all programs are single, with BEEd having the highest percentage of single graduates (77.2%). The percentage of married graduates is highest in BSE (36.5%), and the percentage of widows/widowers is notably low across all programs, with BTVTEd having the highest at 8.8%. This demographic profile highlights the diversity in age, gender, and civil status among CTE graduates across different degree programs, indicating varying demographic trends that could influence program enrollment and completion rates.

The age, sex, and marital status of alumni from the GS five-degree programs, the PhEdD, MAEd, MIE, MA-Math Ed., and MIT are shown in Figure 2. As to age distribution, the majority of PhEdD and MA-Math Ed. graduates are 30 years and below, with PhEdD having the highest percentage (52.5%). MAEd and MIE programs have a significant portion of graduates aged 31-50, indicating a preference or suitability for mid-career professionals. Graduates aged 51 and above are least represented across all programs, with the highest percentage in PhEdD (17.5%).As to sex, there is a notable gender disparity in the MIT program, where 75% of graduates are males. The

MAEd program has a more balanced gender distribution but still leans towards male graduates (56.23%). The MIE program stands out with a higher percentage of female graduates (69.54%).

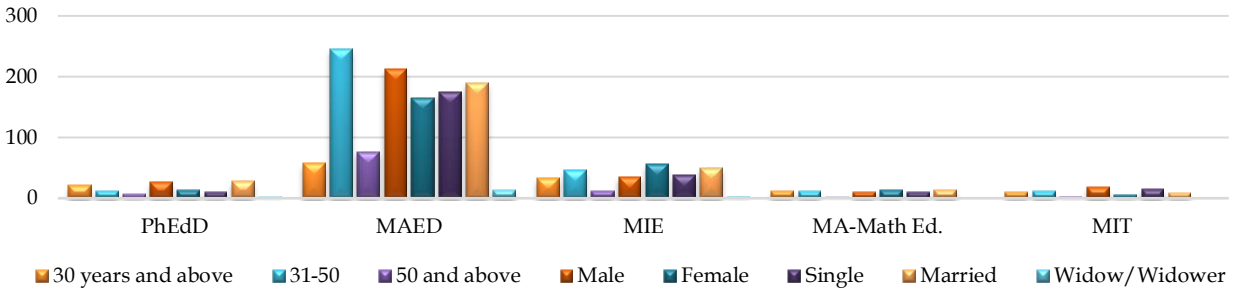

Figure 2. Demographic profile of the graduates in the graduate school according to sex, age, and civil status

In terms of civil status, a significant majority of graduates in most programs are married especially in the PhEdD program (70%). The MIT program has the highest percentage of single-graduates (62.5%) suggesting it might attract younger professionals. Widow/widower status is very low across all programs with no representation in some. The age, sex, and marital status variation among graduate students is highlighted in this demographic profile, which reflects a range of life phases and professional routes.

3.2 Distribution of Graduates Traced

Figure 3 presents the distribution of graduates and the graduates traced of the College of Teacher Education SY 2016-2017 to SY 2021-2022 along with the BSE, BEED, BTVTEd and BPEd programs using the Google from link of questionnaire, actual survey, and cellphone calls.

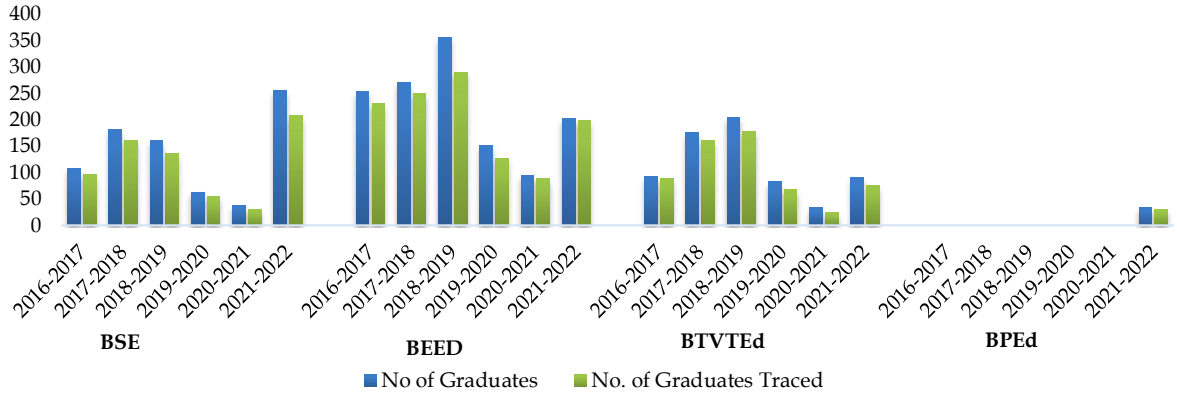

Figure 3. Distribution of graduates and the graduates traced of the college of teacher education SY 2016-2017 to SY 2021-2022

Figure 3 shows the number of graduates for each specialization for six academic years (SY 2016–2017 to SY 2021–2022): BSE (Bachelor of Science in Education), BEED (Bachelor of Elementary Education), BTVTEd (Bachelor of Technical-Vocational Teacher Education), and BPEd (Bachelor of Physical Education). There are fluctuations in the number of graduates across the years, reflecting potential variations in student enrollment or program popularity. For a period of six academic years (SY 2016–2017 to SY 2021–2022), the number of graduates for each specialization—BSE (Bachelor in Secondary Education), BEEd (Bachelor in Elementary Education), BTVTEd (Bachelor of Technical-Vocational Teacher Education), and BPEd (Bachelor of Physical Education)—is displayed in the Table. The number of graduates varies from year to year, which could be due to changes in program popularity or student enrollment.

There are fluctuations in the number of graduates traced over the years, but overall, the percentages of graduates traced remain relatively high. For example, in SY 2016-2017, there were 96 graduates traced out of 108 total

graduates, with a percentage of 88.9%. Similarly, in SY 2021-2022, there were 203 graduates traced out of 256 total graduates, with a percentage of 80.9%. Across specializations, the percentages of graduates traced slightly vary, but generally remain high throughout the years. BEEd consistently has high tracing percentages, indicating potentially stronger alumni engagement or tracking mechanisms within this specialization. The high percentages of graduates traced suggest that CTE has robust systems in place for maintaining contact with alumni. This data can be valuable for the college administration in assessing the effectiveness of their programs and support services. High tracing percentages also imply potential opportunities for alumni engagement, networking, and career support initiatives within the college.

Figure 4 shows the distribution of graduates and the graduates traced for the Graduate School Programs from SY 2016–2017 to SY 2021–2022.

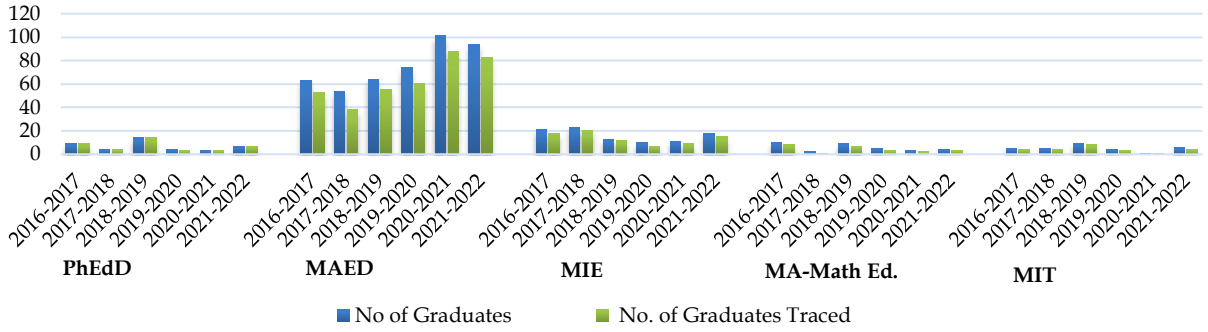

Figure 4. Distribution of Graduates and the Graduates Traced of the Graduate School Programs SY 2016-2017 to SY 2022-2022

Figure 4 presents data on the distribution of graduates and the graduates traced from Graduate School Programs for seven academic years, spanning from SY 2016-2017 to SY 2022-2023. The graduate programs listed include PhEdD (Doctor of Philosophy in Education), MAEd (Master of Arts in Education), MIE (Master of Industrial Education), MA-Math Ed (Master of Arts in Mathematics Education), and MIT (Master in Information Technology). As shown in Figure 4, the number of graduates varies across programs and years, indicating potential fluctuations in enrollment or program popularity. These fluctuations may be attributed to the number of graduates and the percentage of graduates traced over the years. For example, in SY 2016-2017, the PhEdD and MAEd programs had 100% of graduates traced, while other programs had slightly lower tracing percentages.

Tracing percentages vary across programs and years but generally show a high rate of graduates traced. Across programs, the percentages of graduates traced slightly vary but generally remain high throughout the years. Programs such as PhEdD and MAEd consistently show high tracing percentages, indicating potentially stronger alumni engagement or tracking mechanisms within these programs. The high percentages of graduates traced suggest that the Graduate School Programs have robust systems in place for maintaining contact with alumni. High tracing percentages also imply potential opportunities for alumni engagement, networking, and career support initiatives within the graduate school.

3.3 Employment Status

Figure 5 provides insights into the employment status of graduates from the CTE across different academic years. The employment status is categorized into four main categories: Employed, Underemployed, Self-employed, and Unemployed. The data is presented for four specific programs within CTE: BSE (Bachelor in Secondary Education), BEEd (Bachelor in Elementary Education), BTVTEd (Bachelor of Technical Vocational Teacher Education), and BPEd (Bachelor of Physical Education).

In the academic years from 2016-2017 to 2021-2022, the employment status of graduates from various curricular programs, namely Bachelor in Secondary Education (BSE), Bachelor in Elementary Education (BEEd), Bachelor of Technical-Vocational Teacher Education (BTVTEd), and Bachelor of Physical Education (BPEd), exhibited fluctuations. In the 2016-2017 academic year, BSE saw 96 graduates employed (53.1%), whereas BEEd had 230

graduates employed (82.2%), and BTVTEd had 89 graduates employed (51.7%). However, there were also underemployed, self-employed, and unemployed graduates across these programs. Over the years, there were variations in employment rates among the programs, with some experiencing an increase in employed graduates in certain years but also witnessing fluctuations in underemployment, self-employment, and unemployment rates. For instance, in the 2021-2022 academic year, while BSE had 100 graduates employed (48.3%), BEEd had 91 graduates employed (46.0%), BTVTEd had 23 graduates employed (30.7%), and BPEd had 15 graduates employed (50.0%). Despite these fluctuations, the data highlights the dynamic nature of employment outcomes among graduates across different education programs over the years.

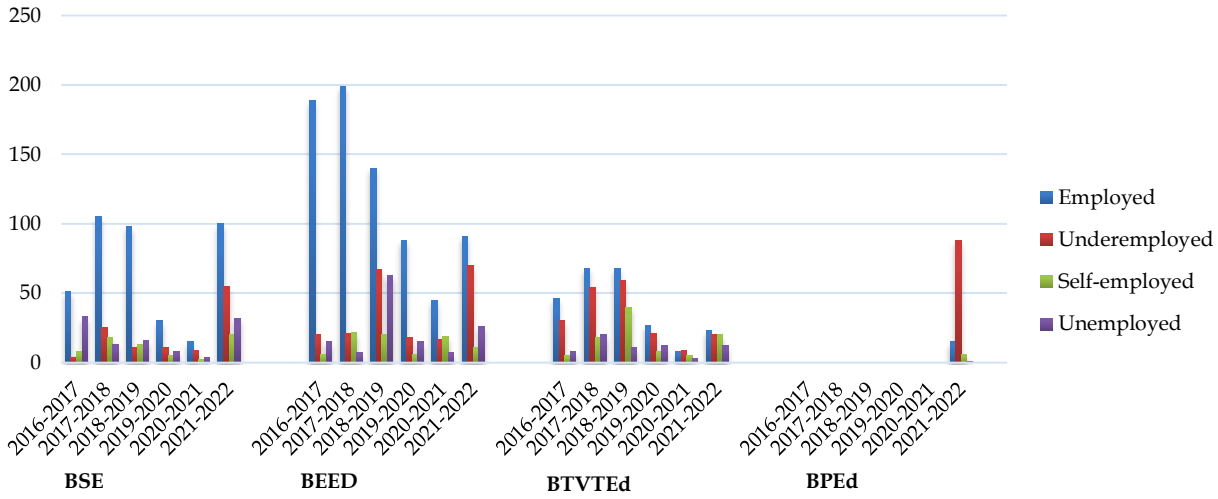

Figure 5. Distribution of CTE graduates employment status

In the academic years spanning from 2016 to 2022, the employment outcomes of graduates from various education programs were tracked. These programs included the BSE, BEEd, BTVTEd, and BPEd. Across the years, fluctuations in employment rates were observed. In the 2016-2017 academic year, significant percentages of BEEd and BTVTEd graduates were employed, while a notable portion of BSE graduates remained unemployed. However, by the 2017-2018 academic year, the employment rates for BSE graduates notably increased. In subsequent years, there were variations in employment, underemployment, self-employment, and unemployment rates among graduates of these programs. Notably, in the 2021-2022 academic year, BPEd graduates exhibited higher employment rates compared to previous years.

Overall, BEEd consistently has the highest number of employed graduates, followed by BSE and BTVTEd. Underemployed graduates show increasing trends for BEEd and fluctuating trends for BSE and BTVTEd. The number of self-employed graduates varies with no clear trend. There are fluctuations in the number of unemployed graduates across all programs, with BPEd showing the lowest numbers in SY 2021-2022. The dynamic character of employment outcomes for graduates in the education industry across the years under examination is demonstrated by these figures. These results corroborated the findings of the study of Baking et al. (2015).

Figure 6 presents the distribution of graduates' employment statuses across different years and specific educational programs: Doctor of Philosophy in Education (PhEdD), Master of Arts in Education (MAEd), Master of Industrial Education (MIE), Master of Arts in Mathematics Education (MA-Math Ed.), and Master of Information Technology (MIT). Each row represents a school year (SY), while each column denotes an employment status category such as Employed, Underemployed, Self-employed, and Unemployed.

As seen in Figure 6, in the academic year 2016-2017, the PhEdD program achieved a perfect employment rate, with all 9 traced graduates securing employment, reflecting 100%. Meanwhile, in the MAED program, out of 84 traced graduates, 80 were employed, indicating a robust employment rate of 95.3%. This suggests a high level of success

in job placement for graduates in these programs during that academic year. However, across the other programs, there were variations in employment percentages, indicating disparities in employment outcomes among different educational programs.

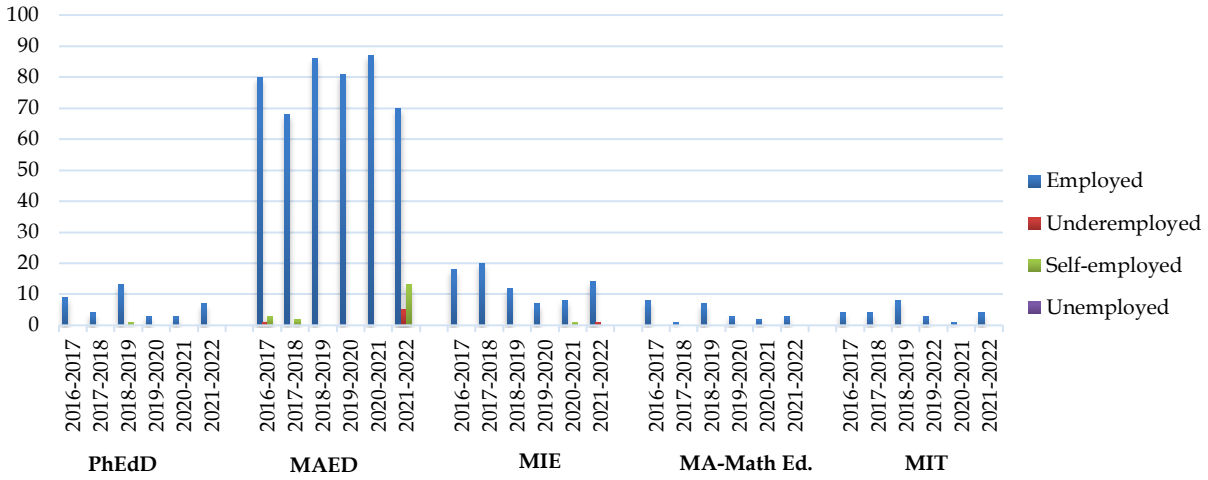

Figure 6. Distribution of graduates' employment status

As the subsequent years progressed, the employment patterns fluctuated. While some programs consistently maintained high employment rates, others experienced fluctuations. For instance, in SY 2021-2022, the PhEdD program continued to maintain a perfect employment rate, with 100% of traced graduates securing employment. However, the MAEd program experienced a slight decline in employment rate, with 79.5% of traced graduates employed. This indicates a shift in employment trends over the years, with some programs sustaining their success in job placement while others faced challenges. Additionally, the data also highlights instances of underemployment and self-employment observed in certain years and programs. These factors further contribute to the nuanced understanding of employment outcomes among graduates of different educational programs. Overall, the table provides a detailed breakdown of employment outcomes, showcasing the complexities and variations in job placement rates among graduates across several academic years and programs.

Figure 7 provides a detailed analysis of graduates in CTE who are employed, categorized by their degree programs (BSE, BEEd, BTVTEd, and BPEd) and various factors such as employer, position/job title, job status, year hired, length of employment, and monthly salary.

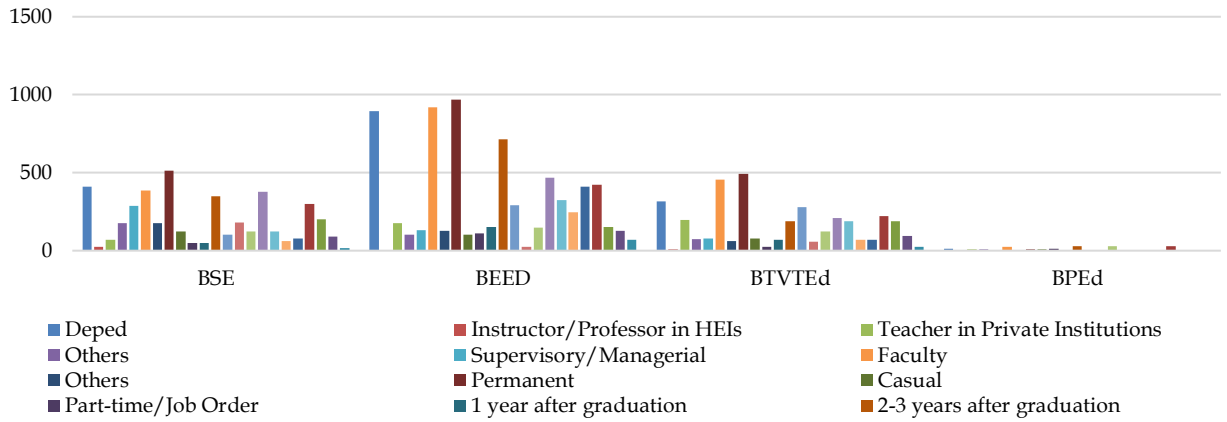

Figure 7. Profile of employed CTE graduates

As to employer distribution, the majority of graduates across all degree programs are employed by the Department of Education (DepEd). While BEEd graduates have the highest percentage of employment in DepEd (75.8%), BPEd graduates have the lowest (40%). Additionally, a significant proportion of graduates in all programs are employed as teachers in private institutions, with BTVTEd graduates having the highest percentage (33.3%).

In terms of position/job title, BSE graduates have a high percentage of employment in faculty positions (56.3%), while BEEd and BTVTEd graduates have a significant proportion employed as faculty as well (11.2% and 76.8%, respectively). BPEd graduates have the highest percentage (86.7%) of employment as faculty. As to job status, most graduates across all programs are employed in permanent positions. Remarkably, the highest percentage of permanent employment (81.8%) is held by BEEd graduates. Graduates with a BPEd degree have the lowest percentage of permanent employment (26.7%), with a large share working in job order, casual, and part-time professions.

As to year hired, a significant proportion of graduates across all programs are hired within 2-3 years after graduation, with BPEd graduates having the highest percentage (93.3%). BSE graduates have the highest percentage (51.2%) of graduates hired within this timeframe. In terms of length of employment, graduates across all programs have a significant proportion employed for 4-6 years. Notably, BTVTEd graduates have the highest percentage (35.5%) employed for this duration. As to monthly salary, there is variability in the distribution of monthly salaries across programs. BSE graduates have a higher percentage earning salaries between 15,001-25,000.00, while BEEd graduates have a higher percentage earning salaries between 25,001-50,000.00.

Figure 8 presents a comprehensive overview of graduates from the Graduate School who are currently employed, segmented by their degree programs: PhEdD, MAEd, MIE, MA-Math Ed., and MIT.

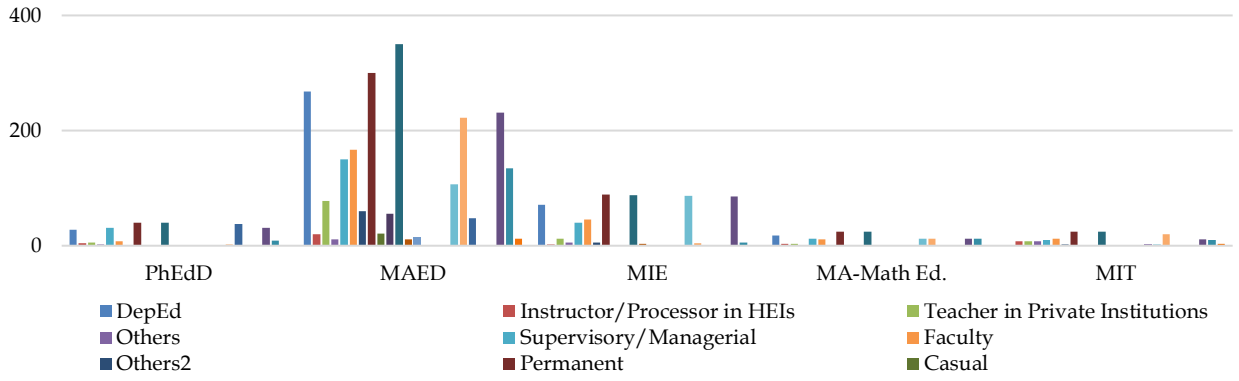

Figure 8. Profile of employed graduates from graduate school

In terms of employer distribution, the majority of graduates across all degree programs are employed by the Department of Education (DepEd). DepEd employs the highest percentage of PhEdD graduates (70%), MAEd graduates (71.9%), and MIT graduates (75%). Graduates are also employed as instructors/professors in higher education institutions (HEIs) and teachers in private institutions. Notably, MA-Math Ed. and MIT graduates have a significant percentage employed in these roles (33.3%). A smaller percentage of graduates are employed in other sectors.

As to position/job title, a considerable proportion of graduates across all programs hold supervisory/managerial positions. This is particularly prominent among PhEdD graduates (77.5%) and MIT graduates (41.7%). Many graduates also work as faculty members, with MAEd graduates having the highest percentage (44.3%). Some graduates are employed in other roles such as researchers or administrative positions. As to job status, the majority of graduates across all programs have permanent employment, with 100% of PhEdD, MAEd, MIE, MA-Math Ed., and MIT graduates having permanent positions. A small percentage of graduates are employed on a casual or part-time/job order basis.

In terms of year hired, the majority of graduates across all programs were already hired at the time of graduation. Notably, all PhEdD, MAEd, MIE, MA-Math Ed., and MIT graduates were already employed upon graduation. A small percentage of graduates were hired within 1-3 years after graduation. As to length of employment, graduates across all programs have varying lengths of employment. While some are in the early stages of their careers (1-3 years), others have been employed for longer periods (7-9 years and 10 years and above). As to monthly salary, a significant percentage of graduates earn monthly salaries between 25,001 and 50,000.00, with PhEdD, MAEd, and MIT graduates having the highest.

3.4 Level of Economic Relevance

The economic relevance of a degree obtained from CTE and GS Programs can be substantial and multifaceted. Table 1 presents the varying level of economic relevance of the degrees earned between the graduates from CTE and GS Programs.

Table 1. Level of economic relevance of the degree earned in the college of teacher education and graduate school program

Statement		CTE			Graduate School		
		Mean	SD	Interp.	Mean	SD	Interp.
1.	My current income is well within my expectations upon graduation.	2.34	0.32	Relevant	3.51	0.53	Very Relevant
2.	My earning potential increased after obtaining the degree.	2.46	0.45	Relevant	3.61	0.35	Very Relevant
3.	I was quickly employed/promoted after graduating from the degree I earned from SNSU.	3.01	0.34	Relevant	3.55	0.52	Very Relevant
4.	My employment status has become stable since I obtained the degree.	3.24	0.43	Relevant	3.60	0.34	Very Relevant
5.	My financial investment (tuition fees, time spent studying) in obtaining this degree has been worthwhile based on my current economic situation.	3.35	0.61	Relevant	3.65	0.51	Very Relevant
Average Mean		**2.90**	**0.43**	**Relevant**	**3.58**	**0.45**	**Very Relevant**

Education graduates have an overall rating of *Relevant* (x=2.90, SD=0.43) while graduates of graduate school have an overall rating of *Very Relevant* (x=3.58, SD=0.45). However, despite the differences in the overall rating, both have the same indicators which ranked the first '*My financial investment (tuition fees, time spent studying) in obtaining this degree has been worthwhile based on my current economic situation*' (x=3.35, 3.65; Sd=0.61, 0.51) and the last '*My current income is well within my expectations upon graduation*' (x=2.34, 3.51; SD=0.32, 0.53) respectively. This result implies that graduates of the CTE & GS programs from SNSU have similar perceptions on the economic benefits and relevance of the degree they earned from the university. Further, this result also indicates that SNSU graduates do not only provide opportunities for career advancement and employment, but also support the wider socioeconomic development of society by producing a workforce that is knowledgeable and skilled and is vital to innovation, productivity, and prosperity. Valero and Reenen (2019) posited that more innovation and a larger supply of human capital intensifies the impact of universities on growth.

According to Loveless (2024), obtaining a degree is all about creating chances in life, such as better employment prospects, higher-paying jobs, and improved skill sets. Additionally, Radcliffe (2023) posited that to compete for a greater salary and promotion, workers desire to acquire advanced techniques, new abilities, or higher education. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2023) highlighted that better levels of education generally translate into higher salaries.

3.5 Level of Industry Relevance

The degrees earned from the CTE and GS Programs hold a significant level of industry relevance, given the foundational role of education in society. Table 2 presents the level of industry relevance of graduates from the College of Teacher Education and Graduate School programs of SNSU. Graduates from these programs rated all the indicators as *Very Relevant* and have the same overall qualitative rating of *Very Relevant* (x=3.54, SD=0.57; x=3.71, SD=0.58). This result reveals that the skills and expertise gained by the graduates from these programs are pertinent to the current jobs they are in. This relevance can then be translated into a wide range of career opportunities and potential for professional growth and advancement further underscoring that SNSU is moving forward to producing graduates of high–quality human capital. According to Stoffberg et al. (2023), higher levels

of educational qualifications may result in higher-performing teams and are more likely to exceed the minimum requirements of their jobs.

Table 2. Level of industry relevance of the degree earned in the college of teacher education and graduate school program

Statement	CTE			Graduate School		
	Mean	SD	Interp.	Mean	SD	Interp.
1. The skills and knowledge gained from this degree have directly contributed to my job.	3.66	0.67	Very Relevant	3.65	0.75	Very Relevant
2. The skills and knowledge acquired from my degree program directly are applied to my job responsibilities.	3.56	0.66	Very Relevant	3.60	0.44	Very Relevant
3. I have been involved in innovative projects or initiatives in my field that can be attributed to my degree.	3.42	0.43	Relevant	3.67	0.56	Very Relevant
4. My employers recognized and valued the skills and expertise I gained from my degree program.	3.51	0.46	Very Relevant	3.79	0.54	Very Relevant
5. My degree program prepared me to adapt to technological advancements and innovations within my industry.	3.55	0.56	Very Relevant	3.87	0.61	Very Relevant
Average Mean	**3.54**	**0.57**	**Very Relevant**	**3.71**	**0.58**	**Very Relevant**

Further, this result means that SNSU as a higher learning institution demonstrated vertical articulation of its mandate by being able to produce graduates of quality competence and relevance in their respective workplace. This result is consistent with Licuanan's (2016) assertion that HEIs should be able to meet and exceed the minimum standards set by CHED and that the way these institutions function as higher education establishments and, ultimately, the graduates they produce who can compete on a global scale, should serve as indicators of the quality of education.

3.6 Level of Satisfaction

Table 3 shows the level of satisfaction of graduates in the CTE and GS. There are eight indicators used and were rated on a scale of 1-4. The scale of one (1) is the lowest and qualitatively described as Not Satisfied while the scale of four (4) is considered the highest and described as Very Satisfied.

Table 3. Level of satisfaction of graduates in the college of teacher education and graduate school

Statement	CTE			Graduate School		
	Mean	SD	Interp.	Mean	SD	Interp.
1 Satisfaction with the present position/work.	3.55	0.34	Very Satisfied	3.67	0.44	Very Satisfied
2 Pride of the present responsible position/work.	3.76	0.45	Very Satisfied	3.54	0.47	Very Satisfied
3 Satisfaction with the relationship with the immediate supervisor.	3.44	0.43	Satisfied	3.56	0.86	Very Satisfied
4 Satisfaction with the relationship with fellow workers.	3.54	0.76	Very satisfied	3.60	0.67	Very Satisfied
5 Satisfaction with engagement in additional activities/works aside from the main.	3.21	0.65	Satisfied	3.56	0.40	Very Satisfied
6 Satisfaction with the present remuneration.	3.47	0.32	Satisfied	3.69	0.52	Very Satisfied
7 Satisfaction with the learning environment.	3.34	0.36	Satisfied	3.54	0.76	Very Satisfied
8 Satisfaction in dealing with the learners.	3.41	0.51	Satisfied	3.51	0.44	Very Satisfied
Average Mean	**3.47**	**0.48**	**Satisfied**	**3.58**	**0.57**	**Very Satisfied**

As shown in Table 3, of the eight (8) indicators used, only three (3) were rated as '*Very Satisfied'* by the College of Teacher Education graduates. These high satisfaction ratings come from the *sense of pride in the present responsible position/work, satisfaction with the present position/ work, and the relationship to the immediate supervisor* with mean ratings of 3.76 (SD=0.45),3.55 (SD=0.34) and 3.54(0.76), respectively. Considering the guidelines, recruitment, and selection of personnel stipulated in DepEd Order No.27 s. 2023, securing an item has been tough and challenging. Hence, having a job in the very first place makes graduates feel a sense of pride and achievement. It is a constructive step toward fulfilling their needs and attaining their goals, and giving them a sense of validation,

self-worth, and accomplishment. Daminar et al. (2022) confirmed that having a job is a beneficial development for graduates' careers as it relates to achieving a secure tenure with an income that allows them to live reasonably.

Additionally, the sense of pride in their current position indicates that the knowledge and abilities they acquired while at the university are relevant and in conformity with the demands of their field of work. This means that the degrees they obtained from the university have a bearing on their current positions, allowing them to effectively demonstrate and use the abilities they learned at work. This result corroborated the findings of Albina & Sumagaysay (2020) and Dela Cruz & Dela Cruz (2023) which suggested that graduate qualities should be emphasized by higher education institutions to support career growth.

Moreover, the relationships among coworkers in the current role/job add to the sense of fulfillment in the workplace. This indicates that SNSU's CTE graduates exhibit prosocial skills allowing them to interact with others more effectively and embrace inclusivity and diversity among their colleagues. This result conforms with the study of Naparan et al. (2024) and Abing et al. (2023). Cornillez et al. (2021) posited that human relations and communication skills are two of the most valuable competencies in the workplace. When individuals enjoy working with their colleagues, they are more likely to collaborate effectively, communicate openly, and support one another, thereby boosting their morale and motivation.

Meanwhile, indicators such as *satisfaction with the present remuneration* ($\bar{x}$=3.47, SD=0.32), with the *relationship to the immediate supervisor* ($\bar{x}$=3.44, SD=0.43), *dealing with the learners* ($\bar{x}$=3.41, SD=0.51), with the *learning environment* ($\bar{x}$=3.34, SD=0.36), and the *satisfaction with engagement in additional activities/ aside from the main* were all rated as '*Satisfied*' and the latter received the lowest mean of 3.21(SD=0.65). This implies that additional workload affects the level of job satisfaction among education graduates, and this does not only apply to academia but also to various kinds of jobs/industries. This result calls the attention of the university to better train the education students with the skills in managing work-life balance. While managing stress and accomplishing a task are inevitable in the teaching profession, these abilities are also regarded as employability skills (Naparan et al., 2024). Hence, to better prepare and adjust pre-service teachers for the real world of work, stress, and job management skills may be incorporated into their educational experiences. Dela Cruz & Dela Cruz (2023) postulated that institutions of higher learning are mandated to produce graduates who are holistically competent to enter the workforce and capable of executing tasks in the workplace.

However, workload, appropriate compensation, and a clear task plan are crucial elements affecting job satisfaction (Montouri et al., 2022). Studies have shown that when employees are unable to articulate the duties necessary to carry out a specific function, it is likely to negatively affect their job satisfaction (Naparan et al., 2024; Fernandez et al., 2022; Melaku & Hundii, 2020). Damoah et al. (2021) emphasized that due to the demands of teaching jobs, both aspiring and current teachers should be adaptable. Well-adjusted educators enhance their performance while advancing in their profession (Cheng et al., 2022; Daling, 2020).

As to the level of satisfaction among the graduates from the graduate school, all eight (8) indicators are rated '*Very Satisfied*' with contentment from present remuneration ranked first with a mean of 3.69 (SD=0.52) while fulfillment in dealing with the learners ranked last ($\bar{x}$=3.51, SD=0.44). This result indicates that graduates demonstrated high application of the skills gained from the Graduate School of SNSU and that they are highly satisfied with the offerings and services of the institution. This result implies that graduates embody proficiency in both personal and professional aspects of the graduate program they completed. Nunez et al. (2022) asserted that program delivery and implementation may influence graduates' qualities to be greatly satisfied in their respective workplaces.

Moreover, rating '*Very Satisfied*' on remuneration means that good compensation fosters a positive work environment where graduates feel valued and motivated to excel. This finding is akin to Walewangko et al. (2021) which revealed that compensation has favorably and significantly improve employee's performance. However, Idris et al. (2020) contended that it is not compensation but the work environment that positively and substantially affects career fulfillment and employee performance. Further, Maj (2023) confirmed that a diverse and inclusive workplace affects job contentment.

The disparity in the overall rating on the level of satisfaction between graduates in the CTE with an average mean of 3.47 (SD=0.48), qualitatively described as '*Satisfied*' and in the Graduate School with an average mean of 3.58 (SD=0.57) interpreted as '*Very Satisfied*', may signify several underlying factors related to their educational experiences, career expectations, and job opportunities. A notable factor contributing to the difference in satisfaction levels could be the gap in salary and benefits between careers in education and other fields. While teaching is a noble profession, it is often associated with lower salaries and fewer benefits compared to certain industries that may attract graduates from graduate school. Discrepancies in compensation packages could impact overall job satisfaction, especially for individuals with financial obligations such as loans or family expenses.

For SNSU to assess its program efficiency, promote its prestige, foster continuous improvement, and ensure learners are ready for their professional careers, finding out how satisfied former students are from the GS and CTE is vital. Determining the level of satisfaction of graduates in the programs they earned is one way of assessing the caliber of the university (Avramkova et al., 2021). Pentang et al. (2022) state that this method gives higher education institutions the ability to evaluate curricula and consider the importance of the instruction given to students. When evaluating the overall effectiveness of higher education institutions, graduates' employability must be taken into consideration (Dela Cruz & Dela Cruz, 2023).

Overall, the disparity in satisfaction levels between graduates in the CTE and GS of SNSU underscores the importance of understanding the unique factors shaping their career experiences and perceptions. Addressing these incongruencies may require targeted interventions, such as improving educational programs, enhancing career development opportunities, and promoting supportive environments for work-life balance tailored to the needs of each group of graduates.

4.0 Conclusion

The study's findings led to the conclusion that the use of Google link, survey questionnaires and cellphone calls were efficient since the response rates of the study in all programs in the College of Teacher Education and Graduate School were high having more than 75% of graduates were traced. The graduates of SNSU from CTE and GS have been gainfully employed in DepEd as permanent faculty while a majority in the graduate school is holding supervisory positions and perceive that they have economic advantages and applicability of the degrees they earned from the university as they have a high level of economic relevance. Moreover, the knowledge and competencies of CTE & GS graduates of SNSU are applied to their respective current positions as they have a high level of industry relevance although there is a disparity in their degree of satisfaction. Graduates of CTE programs felt that relationships among coworkers and the work environment had a greater impact on their level of satisfaction than their salary.

In light of the conclusions, it is recommended that the use of social media platforms be further enhanced in tracking more graduates to participate in the tracer study. The teaching staff of the College of Teacher Education and the Graduate School may keep up their professional development to transmit more knowledge and better prepare graduates with highly relevant skills and competencies that will highly increase their employability. The incongruencies in the level of job satisfaction may require targeted interventions such as improving more on quality educational programs, enhancing career development opportunities, and promoting supportive work-life balance environments tailored to the needs of each group of graduates. It is also recommended that a tracer study considering other programs from other colleges and campuses of SNSU be also conducted. SNSU, as a higher learning institution, shall continue to move forward with a commitment to continuous improvement of its educational programs and a spirit of openness to new opportunities fostering a dynamic and inclusive learning community that transcends borders and nurtures the leaders of tomorrow for nation's greater heights.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

This paper is a product of the concerted efforts of the authors. EPP conceptualized the paper, interpreted, and discussed figures, and prepared the intro; LSD interpreted and discussed tables, edited the results, discussions, and conclusion; EAB formulated the survey questionnaires and analyzed the data using the statistical tools; MCSV gathered the data, conducted interviews with some respondents to confirm their responses and did the tallying of the gathered data. The authors reviewed and approved the final work.

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The authors declare no conflicts of interest about the publication of this paper.

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