

From Business Education to Employability: A Tracer Study of Financial Management Graduates at Ifugao State University

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Abstract. The Financial Management program major is offered in the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (BSBA) course to address the needs of learners by offering a degree that paves the way for various job opportunities. In pursuit of quality assurance and continuous program improvement, the university has cascaded responsibility to the college to monitor its graduates' employment statuses and to evaluate the extent to which business education has supported their professional roles. To support this initiative, a quantitative and qualitative approach was adopted, with a modified graduate tracer study descriptive-survey form being administered online to 145 BSBA graduates. Of these, 86 graduates majored in Financial Management from 2021 to 2023, but only 62 responded and completed the survey. The findings reveal a high employability rate (74.2%), with most graduates finding work soon after graduation. However, many initially entered contractual or clerical positions, reflecting the competitive nature of the job market. Based on the survey results, the most significant areas in alumni employability are curriculum content, mode of instruction, student services, facilities and career guidance. As a result, the researchers recommend enhancing the BSBA Financial Management program by increasing curriculum relevance, providing ongoing training and seminars for faculty, strengthening the support available to students, and enhancing administrative services. The findings highlight the importance of continuous program development in equipping graduates with the essential skills needed for long-term professional success, thereby contributing to both regional workforce development and economic growth. Additional recommendations include improving career advice, expanding internship opportunities, and integrating more entrepreneurial and digital skills into the curriculum.

Keywords: business education; curriculum relevance; financial management; graduate employability; tracer study

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1. Introduction

Education is a key driver of human capital accumulation, with significant implications for economic development and productivity growth (Sichone-Phiri & Zangewa, 2024). The hiring of graduates who have attained the level of Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (BSBA) is critical to this process because it promotes innovation, organizational efficiency, and sustainable business practices. In line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—specifically SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth)—the success of BSBA graduates in the workforce demonstrates the importance of equitable and inclusive education in preparing individuals for meaningful employment. Not only does employing BSBA graduates promote economic progress, but it also advances the broader mission of sustainable development (de Jesus et al., 2025).

As Boden and Nedeva (2010) highlighted, employability is an important indicator of an academic institution's success, demonstrating its ability to provide quality education while meeting industry demands. However, Alvarez and Cammayo (2023) noted that colleges and universities face challenges in matching graduates' abilities and qualities to industry needs. For example, Cai (2013) revealed that employers are increasingly prioritizing graduates with advanced analytical, quantitative, and strategic thinking skills, alongside leadership and management capabilities. Therefore, higher education institutions need to constantly review their curricula in order to respond to the relevant human resource needs and thereby ensure that their graduates can meet the needs of a dynamic workforce (Alvarez & Cammayo, 2023; Boden & Nedeva, 2010).

The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) mandates that all higher education institutions in the Philippines, including Ifugao State University, should conduct Graduate Tracer Studies as a means of evaluating the employability of graduates and the relevance of higher education programs in meeting industry needs (Cornillez Jr., 2021). In compliance with this directive, IFSU has implemented tracer studies to ensure that its academic program offerings, particularly Business Administration, which is the most populous program based on CHED rankings, are aligned with labor market demands. Indeed, its Business Administration program equips students for careers in human resources, marketing, finance, and operations (Dassun et al., 2025). As outlined in the CHED Memorandum Order No. 17 Series of 2017, the program aims to develop core competencies such as problem analysis, team management, and professional communication (Eizaguirre et al., 2019). This directive reflects CHED's commitment to quality assurance and emphasises the continuous improvement of programs to ensure that graduates are well-prepared with skill sets that align with industry needs (Velasco, 2016).

In view of this, the present study aimed to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the employability and career trajectories of BSBA Financial Management graduates from Ifugao State University, spanning from 2019 to 2021. The study aimed to provide practical insights that can guide curriculum development, resource allocation, and institutional strategies for enhancing graduate

employability, consistent with the observations of Nudzor and Ansah (2020). Additionally, the research findings contribute to IFSU's goal of academic excellence by providing useful information regarding the extent to which the business education curriculum supports graduates in fulfilling the demands of the global workforce (Apat & Sumague, 2019).

1.1 Objectives of the Study

In general, the graduate tracer aims to assess the employability of BSBA Financial Management graduates and gather feedback on the curriculum as well as the university's educational environment. The insights obtained will be used to identify areas for improvement and to ensure the enhancement of the program outcomes. Specifically, the study is designed to meet the following objectives:

- 1) Establish the profile of BSBA Financial Management graduates in terms of a) age, b) gender, c) year of graduation, and d) eligibility or certification.
- 2) Determine the employment status of the graduates by analyzing a) type of employment, b) job title, c) place of work, and d) reasons for unemployment (if any).
- 3) Analyze the employment data of graduates' first jobs by examining a) relatedness, b) tenure, c) time taken to find employment, and d) method of obtaining a job.
- 4) Assess the program relevance and productivity related to the current job by evaluating a) the relevance of the curriculum, and b) the competencies acquired and applied on the job.
- 5) Assess alumni feedback on the quality of education to identify key areas for improvement.

1.2 Conceptual Framework of the Study

Figure 1 depicts the conceptual framework of the study, based on the studies of Gines (2014) and Barrera et al. (2019). The research was structured around the input-process-output model, which guided the analysis and interpretation of the data.

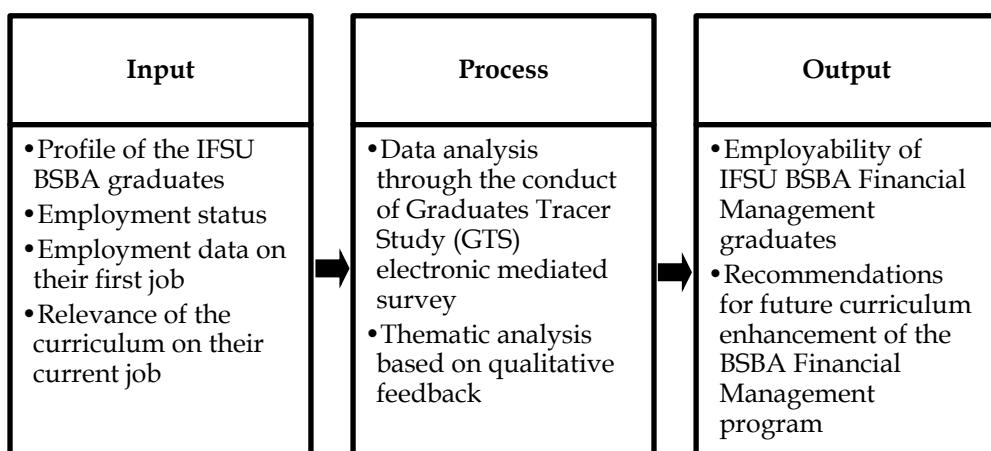


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study (Barrera et al., 2019; Gines, 2014)

In order to evaluate how the Business Administration (BSBA) curriculum aligns with industry standards and equips students with the skills competencies required for professional roles, the study utilized a modified graduate tracer study approach. As suggested by Abir et al. (2024), the GTS was employed to assess graduate outcomes and inform curriculum improvements, ensuring that academic programs remain relevant to the dynamic demands of the job market.

The input factors for the study included the profile of the Ifugao State University (Ifugao State University) BSBA graduates, employment data related to their first jobs, the perceived relevance of the curriculum to their current jobs, and the skills competencies acquired and used in their current jobs. Electronic surveys were used to analyze these factors and were complemented by thematic analysis of the qualitative feedback provided by the graduates. The output of the study focused on the employability of BSBA Financial Management graduates from Ifugao State University and provided recommendations for enhancing the future curriculum of the BSBA Financial Management program.

As suggested in the study by Velasco (2016), the way in which graduates' output is measured in terms of workplace relevance is extremely important. Feedback from graduates is critical in determining the program's impact and gives vital suggestions for curriculum refinement. This method guarantees that the university's programs remain in line with the changing demands of the employment market.

2. Methodology

This study adopted a mixed-methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative techniques, as outlined by Amaratunga (2002), to comprehensively assess the employability and curricular preparedness of BSBA Financial Management graduates of Ifugao State University. A descriptive research design was employed to explore the employment outcomes and the perceived effectiveness of the academic program, with a particular focus on analyzing alumni feedback to identify areas for improvement in a rural academic setting.

The study targeted those graduates of the BSBA program who had completed their degrees in the academic years 2021, 2022, and 2023. A total of 145 graduates were identified, comprising 86 majors in Financial Management and 59 in Marketing Management. This tracer study focused on the 86 Financial Management graduates, of whom 62 responded and completed the survey.

The research instrument was a modified version of the CHED graduate tracer study questionnaire, reviewed for content and validity by a panel of experts. Reliability was confirmed through a test-retest method, yielding a high reliability coefficient of 0.95. Prior to its full deployment, a pilot test was conducted with selected graduates to ensure clarity and consistency. Survey forms were disseminated through various platforms, including Google Forms, chat applications, and email. A purposive sampling technique was used, with inclusion criteria covering all BSBA graduates from the College of Business and

Management within the specified academic years. Non-respondents were excluded from the analysis.

Quantitative data were processed using SPSS version 21 before being analyzed through descriptive statistics, including frequency distributions, percentages, as well as multiple response analysis, to identify trends in employment status, job relevance, and curriculum evaluation. Meanwhile, qualitative data collected from open-ended responses were transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis. Coding involved identifying recurring words and patterns, which were subsequently grouped into themes to provide deeper insights into graduate experiences and to complement the statistical findings.

Prior approval was obtained for the study from the University President and the Research Director, and strict adherence to ethical research standards was observed. Such adherence included: 1) obtaining informed consent from all participants; 2) ensuring the anonymity and confidentiality of responses; 3) using data exclusively for research purposes.

Although the limited response rate is acknowledged as a limitation of the study, the data gathered nevertheless provide meaningful insights into the employment outcomes and educational experiences of BSBA Financial Management graduates at Ifugao State University.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Profile of BSBA Financial Management Graduates

Table 1 displays the demographic profiles of the BSBA Financial Management graduates (N=62), including age, gender, year of graduation, and eligibility or certification.

Table 1: Frequency Distribution and Percentages of the Demographic Profiles of BSBA Financial Management Graduates

Variables	Total	Percent
Age		
22 to 24	29	46.8
25 to 27	23	37.1
28 to 30	8	12.9
31 to 33	2	3.2
Gender		
Female	56	90.3
Male	6	9.7
Year of Graduation		
2021	19	30.7
2022	18	29.0
2023	25	40.3
Eligibility or Certification		
Civil Service Commission Professional Eligible	3	4.8
Bookkeeping National Certificate III	3	4.8
Training Certification	56	90.4

3.1.1 *Age*

According to the data, the majority of BSBA Financial Management graduates (46.8%) in this study are between the ages of 22 and 24, indicating that most students complete their degree within the predicted time frame. However, a large proportion (37.1%) are between the ages of 25 and 27, which could include students who waited longer to complete their studies due to factors such as delayed enrollment, academic difficulty, or personal circumstances. Supporting the results of Sharma (2023), this distribution represents the typical age range for college graduates, with some differences in completion timelines.

3.1.2 *Gender*

Data reveal a considerable gender disparity, with 90.3% of graduates being female and only 9.7% being male. This disparity indicates that the program is mostly populated by women, which may reflect larger trends in higher education enrollment and job preferences in the business and financial sectors, as discussed by Alvarez and Cammayo (2023). Additionally, this study's finding that most of the responding graduates of the BSBA Financial Management program were female supports the findings of Dassun et al. (2025).

3.1.3 *Year of graduation*

The distribution of graduates by year shows a balanced representation over the last three years, with 40.3% graduating in 2023, 30.6% in 2021, and 29.0% in 2022. This trend indicates a consistent number of students graduating from the BSBA Financial Management program, with no noteworthy changes in graduation rates. Consistent graduation numbers may suggest stable enrollment patterns and program completion rates (Micabalo & Montanilla, 2020).

3.1.4 *Certification or eligibility*

The data reveals that Training Certification (90.4%) is the most frequent qualification among responders, while Civil Service Commission Professional Eligibility (4.8%) and Bookkeeping NC III (4.8%) are considerably underrepresented. This indicates that most graduates value training certifications over official eligibility or national certifications (Narciso, 2021). These results highlight the demographic characteristics and professional certifications of IFSU's BSBA Financial Management graduates, providing insights for possible improvements to the program.

3.2 Employment Status

As can be seen in Table 2, the BSBA program has a favorable employability rate, since the vast majority (74.2%) of graduates are employed. A lower proportion (12.9%) are self-employed, showing that graduates are pursuing entrepreneurial enterprises. Another 12.9% are unemployed or underemployed, indicating a group that may experience difficulties entering the labor market or finding jobs that fit their abilities. This is consistent with the findings of Natividad et al. (2024), who revealed that the significant employment level of graduates majoring in Business Administration in Financial Management indicates that the program's

outcomes align with the current demand and needs of the industry, particularly in the fields of human resources, marketing, accounting, and finance.

Despite these positive indicators, broader labor market data provide important context. For example, the Philippine Statistic Authority (2024) reported an unemployment rate of 3.6% in November 2023, which is the lowest on record. However, underemployment stood at 11.7%, indicating that many workers, including BSBA graduates, take on roles that do not fully utilize their skills or offer adequate compensation. Thus, this underscores the need for curriculum enhancement, improved job placement support, and stronger collaboration between industry and academia to help graduates secure roles that are more commensurate with their qualifications and career goals.

3.2.1 Type of employment

For employed BSBA graduates, the most common type of employment is contract employment (35.5%), followed by regular employment (22.6%), self-employment (12.9%), temporary-permanent positions (11.3%), and job order roles (3.2%). The predominance of contractual positions indicates that many graduates initially find less steady employment, which could reflect industry trends or entry-level prospects in the local labor market (Natividad et al., 2024).

A critical analysis suggests that the high rate of contractual employment may be due to gaps between academic preparation and workplace expectations. Many graduates lack essential employability skills and relevant experience, making them less competitive for permanent roles (Alera, 2023; Chan et al., 2018). Additionally, the Contractualization Act allows companies to reduce labor costs by outsourcing work and avoiding employee regularization, further limiting opportunities for stable employment (Dassun et al., 2025). Challenges such as these highlight the need for stronger collaboration between industry and academia, improved internship opportunities, and curriculum improvements that focus on developing job preparedness and adaptability (Bancoro, 2024).

3.2.2 Job title

In terms of job titles (PSOC 1992 Classification), clerks comprise the highest proportion of employed graduates (33.9%), followed by professionals (12.9%) and officials/executives/managers (9.7%). Other job categories among the participants in this study include service workers (9.7%), special occupations (4.8%), labor/unskilled workers (3.2%), and technicians (1.6%). This distribution shows that, while many graduates are able to obtain entry-level administrative jobs, a smaller fraction rise to professional or leadership positions. According to the findings of Wickam et al. (2020), the highlighted skills explicitly stated in job descriptions are valuable for companies seeking candidates with an entrepreneurial spirit; furthermore, the skills most preferred by employers are leadership, communication, and interpersonal skills.

3.2.3 Place of work

Analysis revealed that 74.2% of the graduates work locally, with only 1.6% working overseas, indicating that foreign employment opportunities may be restricted. This could be influenced by work preferences, qualifications, or local economic situations. A corroborating study reveals that most people prefer not to travel far to work, reinforcing the trend of local employment domination (Mahinay & Litob, 2024).

3.2.4 Reasons for unemployment

Among the unemployed and/or underemployed BSBA graduates in this study, the most common reason for unemployment (6.4%) is that people are not actively looking for work, followed by a lack of work experience (3.2%), a lack of job opportunities (1.6%), and others who are still looking for work. Challenging factors such as work experience and job availability are key constraints preventing some graduates from securing employment (Gannaban, 2019).

Table 2: Frequency Distribution and Percentages of the Employment Status of BSBA Financial Management Graduates (n=36)

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Present Employment Status		
Employed	46	74.2
Self-employed	8	12.9
Unemployed/Underemployed	8	12.9
Type of Employment		
Contractual	22	35.5
Regular	14	22.6
Self-employed	8	12.9
Temporary-permanent	7	11.3
Job order	2	3.2
Job Title (PSOC 1992 classification)		
Clerk	21	33.9
Professionals	8	12.9
Officials of government and special-interest organizations, corporate executives, managers, managing proprietors and supervisors	6	9.7
Service workers and shop and market sales workers	6	9.7
Special occupation	3	4.8
Labor and unskilled workers	2	3.2
Technicians and associate professionals	1	1.6
Farmers, forestry workers and fishermen	1	1.6
Place of Work		
Local	46	74.2
Abroad	1	1.6
Reason for not being employed		
Did not look for a job	4	6.4
Lack of work experience	2	3.2
No job opportunity	1	1.6
Job searching/hunting	1	1.6

3.3 Employment Data on Their First Job

Statistics on numerous aspects of BSBA graduates' first employment after graduating from their BSBA course are displayed in Table 3, including their job tenure, the time taken to secure employment, and the methods used to obtain their first job. The key findings include the following items.

3.3.1 Relatedness of the first job

A substantial majority (69.3%) stated that their first employment was related to their BSBA course, suggesting that the curriculum had equipped many graduates with abilities applicable to their first jobs. However, 4.8% stated that their first job was unrelated to their degree, while 17.7% did not respond, suggesting that they had encountered challenges in finding a course-aligned position (Khalid et al., 2019).

3.3.2 Tenure in the first job

The majority of graduates had remained in their initial jobs for only one to six months (29.0%) or between one and two years (22.6%), indicating very short tenures, which could be attributable to contractual terms or the desire for better opportunities (Dassun et al., 2025). A smaller proportion reported even shorter tenures of less than a month (4.8%) or two to three years (4.8%), showing varying levels of job satisfaction and stability (Ramos et al., 2018).

3.3.3 Time taken to obtain the first job

Most graduates found their first job within one to six months (32.3%) or in less than a month (30.6%), showing a rather speedy entry into the labor market for most. However, a smaller proportion required seven to 11 months (8.1%) or one to two years (8.1%), which could indicate challenges related to skill-matching or market competition. Additionally, it is possible that the 19.4% who did not respond may be self-employed or undecided regarding their next move in their careers (Gannaban, 2019; Ramos et al., 2018).

3.3.4 Method of obtaining the first job

According to participants' responses, the most popular means of getting a job were as a walk-in (32.2%) or through referrals (29.0%). This suggests that personal initiative and networking play an important role in job-seeking. School-arranged placements were infrequent (1.6%), emphasizing the need for stronger institutional job placement services. Other techniques included receiving job-related information from friends (11.3%) and responding to advertisements (9.7%). Previous studies have similarly confirmed that walk-in applications, referrals, and information from friends are common ways for people to obtain their first job (Ramos et al., 2018).

On the other hand, the findings revealed several key challenges faced by graduates in securing employment; these challenges include skill mismatches, high levels of competition in the job market, and short job tenures, often linked to dissatisfaction or contractual work. Interestingly, a small proportion of graduates preferred self-employment, suggesting entrepreneurial aspirations or dissatisfaction with traditional job options.

Table 3: Frequency Distribution and Percentages of the Employment Data of BSBA Financial Management Graduates in their First Job (n=36)

Is this your first job related to the course?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	43	69.3
No	8	4.8
Did not answer	11	17.7
How long did you stay in your first job?		
Less than a month	3	4.8
1 to 6 months	18	29.0
7 to 11 months	10	16.1
1 to 2 years	14	22.6
2 to 3 years	3	4.8
How long did it take you to obtain your first job?		
Less than a month	19	30.6
1 to 6 months	20	32.3
7 to 11 months	5	8.1
1 to 2 years	5	8.1
2 to 3 years	1	1.6
Did not answer	12	19.4
How did you find your first job?		
Arranged by the school's job placement officer	1	1.6
As a walk-in applicant	20	32.2
Information from friends	7	11.3
Recommended by someone	18	29.0
Response to an advertisement	6	9.7
Did not answer	10	16.1

3.4 BSBA Graduates' Perceptions of the Relevance of the Program and Productivity in the Workplace

As can be seen in Table 4, this study reveals the relevance of the BSBA Financial Management program in equipping graduates with the skills, knowledge, and competencies needed to meet job requirements and thereby increase their productivity at work.

3.4.1 Relevance of the curriculum provided by the university to graduates' current jobs
 Based on the findings, the majority of graduates (66.1%) considered their degree to be moderately useful to their work, while 16.1% thought it was extremely significant. Therefore, this demonstrates that the curriculum generally trains graduates appropriately to meet industry standards, although there is room for improvement to make it more instantly useful. A smaller proportion (6.5%) regarded their degree as having been somewhat useful, while 11.3% found it not useful at all, indicating potential gaps in program alignment with specific professional obligations or industry expectations (Alvarez & Cammayo, 2023).

According to the results, the BSBA program of IFSU generally prepares graduates adequately to find immediate work and equips them with the skills required for careers in their field. However, short job tenures, limited school-arranged placements, and perceived gaps in job relevance suggest that possibilities for development remain. Enhancing curriculum alignment with industry

expectations, providing greater job placement support, and providing graduates with soft skills for career growth can all contribute to better employment outcomes (Alvarez & Cammayo, 2023; Khalid et al., 2019; Ramos et al., 2018).

Table 4: Frequency Distribution and Percentages of Relevance of Curriculum Provided by the University to Graduates' Current Jobs

Extent	Frequency	Percent
Highly relevant	10	16.1
Moderately relevant	41	66.1
Slightly relevant	4	6.5
Not relevant	7	11.3

3.4.2 Competencies acquired and applied by BSBA graduates in their current jobs

Survey results show that the BSBA alumni value communication skills (25.7%), human relations skills (20.1%) and problem-solving/critical thinking skills (16.0%) as being the most important competencies in their current jobs. Furthermore, entrepreneurial skills (14.6%) were moderately acknowledged, while computer skills (7.0%) received the least emphasis. This suggests that graduates benefit most from strong soft skills in business-related roles (Alera, 2023; Apat & Sumague, 2019; Weerasinghe & Fernando, 2017).

However, the low ratings of entrepreneurial and digital competencies highlight gaps in the curriculum. These findings imply a need to strengthen digital literacy and entrepreneurial education without compromising the development of communication and interpersonal abilities. Graduates' feedback supports this, with one stating, *"All students should be computer literate and have strong communication skills,"* and another emphasizing, *"Encouraging entrepreneurial skills and financial literacy is a must for students."*

To address these gaps, the curriculum should include hands-on digital training and practical applications through simulations and software tools (Harris & Clayton, 2018; Harrast et al., 2014). Enhancing business management skills through updated, industry-relevant learning experiences will better prepare graduates for evolving workforce demands (Bancoro, 2024; Hingpit, 2024; Malinao & Ebi, 2022). Improvements of this kind will align academic preparation with professional expectations.

Table 5: Multiple Response Analysis on the Competencies Acquired and Applied by BSBA Financial Management Graduates

Competencies	N	Percent	Rank
Communication Skills	37	25.7	1
Human Relations Skills	29	20.1	2
Entrepreneurial Skills	21	14.6	4
Problem-Solving Skills	23	16.0	3
Critical Thinking Skills	23	16.0	3
Computer Skills	11	7.0	5
Multiple Responses	Total: 144		

3.5 Feedback from BSBA Alumni on the Quality of Education

Feedback from BSBA alumni offers valuable insights into both the strengths and areas for improvement in the program. Alumni responses were grouped into five key themes: curriculum content, student services, mode of instruction, facilities, and career guidance. Each area contributes significantly to the overall academic experience and the professional preparedness of graduates (Abir et. al, 2024; Sessoms, 2020).

3.5.1 Curriculum content

Curriculum content received the highest proportion of feedback (25.7%), highlighting its central role in developing workplace-ready competencies (Alvarez & Cam Mayo, 2023). Although alumni appreciated the foundational business knowledge provided, they also noted that certain courses did not align with current industry requirements (Chan et al., 2018). Many suggested integrating practical elements such as digital tools, financial literacy, and entrepreneurial skills. For instance, one participant emphasized the importance of improving computer literacy and communication, stating that "*nowadays, everything is computerized.*" Another recommended enhancing entrepreneurial modules, arguing that such skills are critical for small business ownership. Such perspectives align with calls in the literature to modernize business education by incorporating real-world applications (Dizon & Tamayo, 2022; Siraye et al., 2018).

3.5.2 Student services

The importance of student services was highlighted by 20.1% of alumni, particularly in terms of fostering soft skills and providing industry exposure. Participants reported that they had appreciated the existing seminars and training but called for further improvement in consistency and alignment with professional demands (Salem, 2024). One graduate urged the university to offer more field visits to business establishments, while another stressed the need for job interview training and placing students in course-relevant roles during on-the-job training. Collectively, these suggestions point to the need for a structured, career-oriented support system that includes mentorships, resume workshops, and targeted internships.

3.5.3 Mode of instruction

The mode of instruction received 16.0% of the feedback, with alumni advocating for more practical, hands-on learning. Despite the fact that they appreciated participatory strategies, several respondents noted the lack of real-world application in some courses. For instance, one participant admitted that she struggled with BIR transactions at work and suggested that taxation should be taught with greater emphasis on application. Others called for greater exposure to government and financial institutions. Consequently, the university should invest in faculty development and adopt student-centered approaches such as project-based learning, case studies, and simulations (Chan et al., 2018).

3.5.4 Facilities

Facilities accounted for 14.6% of alumni feedback. While some praised the university's competitive environment, others pointed to outdated or insufficient resources, especially in terms of technology. Graduates emphasized the importance of using modern classrooms and updated business tools to support digital learning (Harris & Clayton, 2018; Sessoms, 2020). In light of this, the university should prioritize upgrading laboratories, computers, and software access across business programs.

3.5.5 Career guidance

Despite being the least mentioned (7.0%), career guidance was noted as being essential. Many of the graduates had secured jobs through personal connections, indicating the need for more structured job placement services. One participant suggested that mock interviews and job application seminars would be helpful. To address this, the university should strengthen its industry linkages and develop an alumni network to support job referrals and mentoring (Hallsago & Taja-on, 2023; Abir et. al, 2024; Sessoms, 2020).

Table 6: Multiple Response Analysis on the Areas for Improvement Within the BSBA Financial Management Program

Areas for Improvement	N	Percent	Rank
Curriculum Content	39	25.7	1
Student Services	28	20.1	2
Facilities	24	14.6	4
Mode of Instruction	33	16.0	3
Career Guidance	22	7.0	5
Multiple Responses	Total: 146		

4. Conclusion

By providing a detailed assessment of the employability of BSBA Financial Management graduates from Ifugao State University, this graduate tracer study successfully achieved its objectives. It established that most graduates are young females with relevant certifications and training, and that 74.2% secured jobs shortly after graduation, indicating a high employability rate, primarily in roles related to their field but often in contractual positions. Furthermore, the study analyzed the graduates' first job experiences, revealing short job tenures and reliance on informal job search methods, thereby indicating the need for more structured career placement support. Graduates rated the relevance of the BSBA curriculum as being moderate (66.1%) to high (16.1%), highlighting strengths in soft skills but revealing gaps in entrepreneurial and digital competencies, which point to areas for curriculum enhancement. Alumni feedback further emphasized the need for continuous improvement in curriculum content, student services, and teaching methods, along with stronger industry linkages and career guidance to ensure smoother transitions into the workforce and long-term career success.

5. Implications

The implications of the graduate tracer study suggest that Ifugao State University can significantly enhance its graduate outcomes by addressing gaps in curriculum and support systems. Strengthening career placement services, incorporating entrepreneurial and digital skills into the curriculum, and building stronger industry linkages will better prepare graduates for the competitive job market. Thus, such actions will enhance the employability of BSBA Financial Management graduates, ensuring that they are industry ready and ultimately better able to contribute to the development of the regional and national workforce.

6. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this graduate tracer study, several key recommendations are proposed to enhance the relevance and effectiveness of the BSBA Financial Management program at Ifugao State University. First, the university should institutionalize regular curriculum reviews with industry stakeholders in collaboration with industry stakeholders to ensure the program remains aligned with labor market demands. Second, IFSU should strengthen its partnerships with local and national businesses to provide more meaningful internship opportunities, job placements, and mentorship programs. Third, continued investment in faculty development and modern teaching technologies is essential to promote innovative and skills-oriented instruction. Fourth, the establishment of a dedicated career services office would provide structured job search assistance, resume and interview preparation, and employer engagement. Finally, integrating practical learning components such as business simulations, ICT applications, and entrepreneurship development modules will better prepare students for real-world challenges and evolving industry expectations.

Despite its important findings, this study is limited by its reliance on self-reported data, which may be subject to subjectivity. Additionally, the study focused solely on BSBA Financial Management graduates, limiting the applicability of its findings to other programs. Future research in this area should include employers' perspectives, track graduate career progression over time, and conduct similar studies across different campuses or academic disciplines in order to acquire broader validation.

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Appendix 1



CONSENT FORM

Background

The study titled **“From Business Education to Employability: A Tracer Study of Financial Management Graduates at Ifugao State University”** intends to survey and assess the relevance of the program in your employment and work productivity.

You have been chosen as a respondent of this survey. Ethical considerations regarding research on human subjects require that you or, if you are not of age, your parents or guardian sign the following consent form.

Consent

I understand that my participation as a respondent in this study is not compulsory and that I can withdraw my consent at any time without penalty and have the results of my participation, to the extent that it can be identified as mine (his/hers), removed from the records.

I agree to participate as a respondent in the survey I also agree to participate in follow-up surveys that may be undertaken in the future as well as in possible follow-up interview that may be undertaken.

I understand that the results of my participation in this survey as well as in other follow-up surveys or follow-up interviews will be held in the strictest confidence and will not be released to any government official or person other than the researcher in any individually identifiable form without my prior consent.



SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Part I. Profile

Name : _____

Age: [22 to 24 or 25 to 27 or 28 to 30 or 31 to 33]

Sex: [FEMALE or MALE]

Year Graduated: [2021 or 2022 or 2023]

Eligibility: [CSC Professional Eligible or Bookkeeping National Certificate or Training Certification]

Part II. Employment Data

(Employment here means any type of work performed or services rendered in exchanged for compensation under a contract of hire which create the employer and employee relations)

8. Are you presently employed? [YES or NO]

- Employed
- Self-employed
- Unemployed/Underemployed

If NO or NEVER BEEN EMPLOYED, proceed to Question 9. If YES, proceed to Questions 10.

9. Please choose from the possible reason(s) below why you are not yet employed. You may choose more than one answer.

- Did not look for a job
- Lack of work experience
- No job opportunity
- Job searching / hunting

For business owner proceed to Question 14 to, then 27 to 29.

10. Type of Employment

- Contractual
- Regular
- Self-employed
- Temporary-permanent
- Job order

11. What is your present occupation? Please choose from the standard occupation below. (Based on Phil. Standard Occupational Classification (PSOC), 1992 classification)

- Clerk

Professionals

Officials of government and special-interest organizations, corporate executives, managers, managing proprietors and supervisors.

Service workers and shop and market sales workers

Special occupation

Labor and unskilled workers

Technicians and associate professionals

Farmers, forestry workers and fishermen

12. Name of Company/Organization you are currently employed in including address

13. What major line of business of the company you are presently employed in? Please choose one only. (for employed respondents)

14. Type of Business (for business owners)

15. Years Business (for business owner)

16. What is your initial gross income from business? (for business owner)

17. Place of work

18. Is this your first job after college? If NO, proceed to Question 19

19. What are the reason (s) for staying on the job? You may choose more than one answer

20. Is your first job related to the course you took up in college? If NO, proceed to Question 22

21. What were your reasons for accepting the job? You may choose more than one answer.

22. What were your reason (s) for changing job? You may choose more than one answer

23. How long did you stay in your first job?

Less than a month

1 to 6 months

1 year to less than 2 years

7 to 11 months

1 year to less than 2 years

2 years to less than 3 years

24. How long did it take you to land your first job?

Less than a month

1 to 6 months

7 to 11 months

- 1 year to less than 2 years
- 2 years to less than 3 years
- Did not answer

25. How did you find your first job?

- Arranged by school the job placement officer
- As a walk-in applicant
- Information from friends
- Recommended by someone
- Response to an advertisement
- Did not answer

26. Job Level Position [Rank or Clerical]

26. Job Level Position [Professional, Technical or Supervisory]

26. Job Level Position [Managerial or Executive]

26. Job Level Position [Self-employed]

III. Productivity. (Productivity is the perceived readiness of the graduates on the requirements of their current job.)

28. To what extent is the relevance of BSBA to your job?

29. If YES, what competencies learned in college did you find very useful in your first job? You may choose more than one answer.

[Communication Skills, Human Relation Skills, Entrepreneurial Skills, Problem-Solving Skills, Critical Thinking Skills, Computer Skills]

33. Kindly list down suggestions to further improve your course curriculum.

25. Which of the following best represent major strengths and weaknesses of the institutional program that you attended?