

Socioeconomic Conditions of the Bachelor of Secondary Education Graduates: A Tracer Study

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ABSTRACT

Graduates are the evidence of the worth of an academic program and the value of Higher Education Institutions. The study used Social Education Institutions. The study used Social System theory to assess the mandates of HEIs in delivering quality education. This assessment implemented a tracer study which examined the socio economic conditions of purposively sampled 92 graduates of the identified state university in Northern Negros from 2015-2020. The study used a cross-sectional method with CHED Graduate Tracer Study as the instrument. The data was collected through survey and was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The graduates have passed the Licensure Examination for Teachers and landed permanent jobs. The graduates' family income increased, and their alma mater contributed to their holistic development, contributing to the sustainability of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 and AmBisyon 2040. Tracer studies can be used to examine the socioeconomic conditions of graduates as a framework that goes beyond employability, competency, program, and curriculum development. It is suggested that this framework be replicated.

Background of the Study

The United Nations endorsed the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in September 2015, paving the way for a brighter future. This endorsement indicates a global commitment to addressing urgent issues and creating a more equal, sustainable, and prosperous world. Goal 4 is, at its heart, a beacon of transformative education, as defined by Marope (2016).

This purpose acts as the critical direction, ensuring that high-quality education spreads worldwide, nourishing minds from childhood to adulthood. Tatto's (2021) observations indicate that it extends from preschool through higher education, as well as adult literacy, numeracy, and job-ready abilities. Goal 4 represents an unrelenting commitment to empowering individuals across generations and cultures via education, promoting a brighter and more equal society.

SDG 4's inclusion shows a deliberate shift in strategy, emphasizing the importance of teaching and learning within policy and reform agendas. This change emphasizes that education quality is not a secondary priority but a foundational component that shapes the groundwork of a thriving society. Countries understand that prioritizing teaching and learning is critical for developing talented individuals and encouraging success. As articulated by Marope (2016) and Tatto (2021), this necessitates a concentrated effort in three key domains: *establishing secure educational environments and settings infused with cutting-edge learning technologies, providing consistent student support for unfettered access to learning opportunities, and ensuring an ample pool of capable and devoted educators*. SGD 4 is designated for Education Quality, the foundation for building a solid future. This goal is founded on inclusive education, which, when paired with technical resources, can contribute to the formulation of answers to a large percentage of potential problems. Furthermore, it addresses three elements contributing to poor educational quality: professional development, bad school environment, and the limited opportunities available to pupils, particularly those from rural areas (Tovar et al., 2019).

AmBisyonNatin 2040, the Philippines' national development blueprint, is aligned with UNESCO's SDG 4. This strategy emphasizes the educational system's critical role in developing human resources through innovative and continual learning activities. Recognizing the transformational power of education, the Philippines seeks to empower its inhabitants by fostering a dynamic society based on continual education and skill growth. According to Symaco and Bustos (2022), three governmental entities oversee the education landscape: the Department of Education (DepEd), the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority

(TESDA). Furthermore, the Philippines has implemented the Universal Tertiary Education Act of 2017, which mandates ICT integration, fosters stakeholder involvement, and requires constant global evaluation of public universities. As Chao Jr. (2022) mentioned, these measures have effectively removed some barriers to higher education in the Philippines.

While AmBisyonNatin 2040's alignment with United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)'s SDG 4 represents a commitment to education-driven development, the strategy's execution faces significant hurdles. The emphasis on lifelong learning and skill development is admirable, but issues remain regarding how this strategy addresses existing gaps in access to high-quality education. Multiple governmental agencies overseeing education may result in coordination challenges and scattered efforts. Furthermore, while the Universal Tertiary Education Act of 2017 seeks to democratize higher education, questions concerning the sustainability of the funding model and the potential consequences of excessive standardization as a result of worldwide evaluation regulations remain. Chao Jr.'s (2022) assertion about removing barriers to higher education demands a closer examination of whether marginalized communities benefit equally from these measures or if deeper-rooted structural challenges persist.

State-run institutions have played an important role in providing individuals with educational and career possibilities. These institutions are critical in providing diverse people with an accessible and high-quality education. Furthermore, they have played an important role in providing students with the required skills, information, and certifications for successful employment. State universities, through their educational programs and training, not only nurture intellectual growth but

also fuel economic prosperity by preparing a competent workforce to meet the needs of various businesses. This reciprocal link demonstrates how much state colleges and universities have contributed to the overall advancement of people and the larger community. State universities have also enhanced education and employment opportunities, bolstered microeconomic growth, and elevated public services across diverse Philippine regions (Cornillez Jr. et al., 2021).

Including Guihulngan City, Negros Oriental, among the Philippines' poorest cities and municipalities (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2021) raises serious concerns. Despite the educational opportunities provided by the presence of a State University, the region's high poverty rate calls into doubt the direct impact of education on poverty alleviation. This necessitates an examination of the efficacy of education as a stand-alone remedy. The university's role in poverty reduction depends on the quality and relevance of the education it provides. Education may not result in economic upliftment if graduates lack skills connected with local employment needs. Unequal access may endure as long as the State University exists. Certain elements of the population, particularly marginalized groups, may experience impediments that prohibit them from fully utilizing educational opportunities. The presence of a university does not always alleviate underlying economic issues. The continuance of poverty may be due to several interconnected causes other than schooling. A successful state university should go beyond education to actively connect with and address the needs of the local community. If poverty rates continue to rise, it may point to a gap in the university's community involvement.

Poverty alleviation necessitates a multifaceted strategy. Without comprehensive initiatives addressing healthcare, infrastructure, and economic

possibilities, education alone may not be sufficient to break the cycle of poverty (Salindo, 2021). The long-term viability of poverty-reduction measures is critical. If the university's effect is predominantly short-term or does not contribute to the long-term growth of the region, it may not result in significant change. Overall, the combination of a State University and continuing poverty necessitates a thorough investigation of the complex mechanisms at work. To establish effective methods that have a long-term positive influence in the region, the role of education in poverty reduction must be considered in the context of broader economic, social, and structural difficulties (Salindo, 2021).

Higher education institutions (HEIs) in the Philippines are accountable for ensuring that their graduates are competent and employable in local and global arenas (Aclan et al., 2018; Cuadra et al., 2019). This accountability extends beyond imparting theoretical knowledge to fostering practical competence relevant in diverse job markets. By ensuring graduates' employability and competency, HEIs play a pivotal role in shaping a workforce that can contribute effectively to local and global economies. To be considered a center of excellence and a center for the development of degree programs, higher education institutions (HEIs) in the Philippines must carry out tracer studies to generate a graduate profile, according to the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). The alumni record is also a documentation requirement for accredited educational institutions as prescribed by the Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines (AACCUP), Inc. Information from tracer research could be used to reevaluate the variables influencing and contributing to the job status of graduates. According to the available literature, most graduates found local employment, especially in the government sector (Cuadra et al., 2019).

As a particular viewpoint progresses through this research context, two different yet interconnected themes emerge: Tracer Studies on Graduate Employability and Socioeconomic Conditions. These interwoven strands give light on the complex relationship between higher education results and the larger socioeconomic milieu. Exploring these subjects broadens our understanding of how educational paths meet with labor market realities and societal dynamics.

On Tracer Studies on Employability of Graduates

Graduate employability and competency are a broad set of skills, understandings, and personal attributes that increase graduates' chances of finding work and succeeding in their chosen fields (Holmes, 2017). This demonstrates that graduates with these attributes not only contribute to their own success, but also have a positive impact on the economy, workforce, and greater community. In essence, graduate employability goes beyond academic knowledge to encompass the practical skills and characteristics that enable individuals to thrive professionally while making significant contributions to many areas of society. Additionally, it covers the faculty, curriculum, and pedagogy in university systems and the expectations of the employers who hire graduates (Sumanasiri et al., 2015). Several academic institutions have conducted tracer studies to measure their alumni's career chances. Aclan et al. (2018), Cuadra et al. (2019) and Laguador and Dotong (2013), for example, conducted employability assessments of graduates from a private university and a public university in the Philippines. These studies shed light on the effectiveness of education in preparing graduates for the profession, giving vital insights regarding curricula alignment with industry demands and educational program performance in establishing meaningful careers. Additionally, Meñez (2014) and

Nunez et al. (2022) explored concerns related to mismatch, underemployment, and career advancement among graduates of Masters of Business Administration (MBA), Master of Public Administration and Governance (MPAG) and Doctor of Philosophy in Development Management (PhD-DvM) programs. These researchers established an alumni profile database and evaluated the effectiveness of program implementation, providing insights into aligning these academic offerings with career outcomes and professional growth. Furthermore, Balingbing (2014), Dotong et al. (2016), Gines (2014), Kalaw (2019) and Macatangay (2013) conducted tracer studies to use data to improve or update curricula, assess program marketability, and assess the skills and competencies cultivated by various bachelor degree programs. These studies illustrated educational institutions' proactive commitment to aligning their programs with increasing business demands and ensuring graduates are well-prepared for the workforce. Finally, Rogan and Reynolds (2016) carried out tracer investigations using a similar paradigm on a global scale. These investigations focused on graduate employability, competence assessment, and program evaluation. The overarching goal was to improve instructional methods and graduation quality by leveraging information from tracer studies. This global viewpoint emphasizes the universal relevance of matching education with labor market demands and cultivating graduates with the skills and competencies required by various industries.

On Socioeconomic Conditions

The American Psychological Association's definition (2007) characterizes socioeconomic conditions as the social status or class that pertains to an individual or a group. This encompassing concept involves various economic and social factors that collectively shape an individual's position within society, reflecting their access to

resources, opportunities, and overall well-being. These conditions profoundly impact individuals' lives, influencing their access to education, healthcare, employment, and social mobility. Recognizing and understanding socioeconomic conditions is crucial for addressing disparities, designing equitable policies, and fostering inclusive development. It is frequently calculated as a composite of education, income, and occupation. Several international and local empirical studies used socioeconomic conditions to explain or address sociological phenomena. Dwivedi et al. (2019), Raju and Rao (2014), and Sadanandam (2016), used socioeconomic analysis to provide feasible solutions for weavers' difficulties in different areas of India. These studies intended to uncover actionable methods that could improve the weavers' conditions and livelihoods by diving into their situations' economic and social aspects. They have provided vital insights towards developing practical remedies for the betterment of weaving communities in these specific places. Comparably, Richardson et al. (2015) discovered strong links between socioeconomic situations and depression prevalence. This study highlighted the complex interplay of economic circumstances and mental health, emphasizing the possible impact of social and economic inequities on psychological well-being. Darin-Mattsson et al. (2017) concluded this series by investigating the relationship between older individuals' socioeconomic position and their overall health. This study investigates the complex interrelationship between economic position and well-being in the aging population, providing insights into how socioeconomic factors may influence senior health outcomes. On the local scale, Abalos (2018) used demographic and socioeconomic data to construct a thorough overview of elderly people in the Philippines. Goltiano et al. (2021) investigated participants' socioeconomic status in community-based projects, whereas Giani (2016) investigated the impact of socioeconomic disparities on

graduates' labor outcomes in connection to their academic achievements. These analyses, taken together, provide insights into the complex interplay between socioeconomic conditions and numerous aspects of people's lives. From aging populations to community initiatives and educational achievement, these studies help us understand how socioeconomic factors influence various aspects of the human experience.

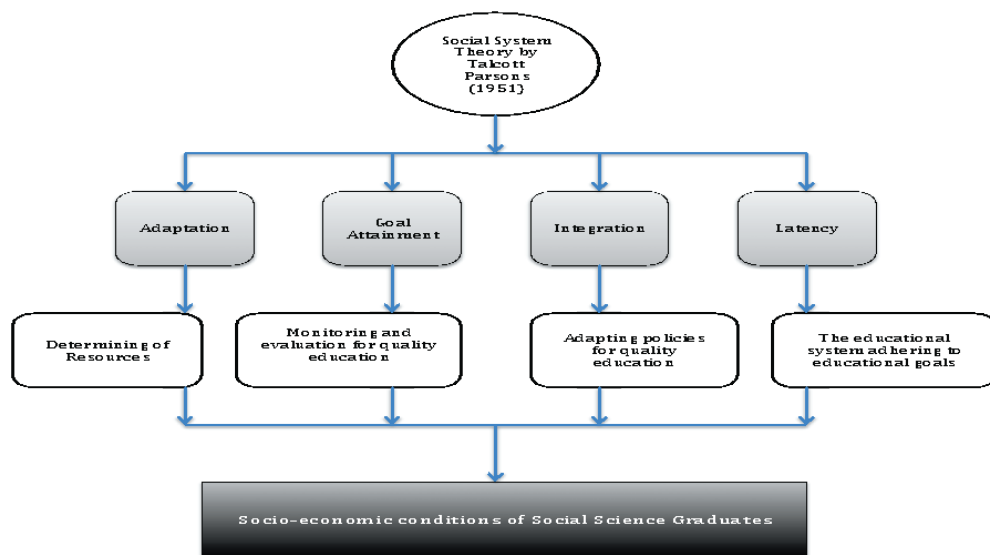
The studies mentioned above concerned graduate employability, program advancement, and curriculum refining. They lacked emphasis, however, on policies, extensive research, and best practices that address graduates' changing socioeconomic conditions and their impact on families and communities. Furthermore, these studies linked socioeconomic conditions to various characteristics while ignoring the unique results of graduating from higher education institutions (HEIs). This research aims to fill these gaps by studying the significance of HEIs' commitment to providing quality education that improves both individual lives and communities. Doing so affirms education's critical role in achieving UNESCO's Agenda 2030 and the Philippines' AmBisyonNatin 2040.

Framework of the Study

The Social System Theory by Talcott Parsons (1951) is the guiding framework for quality education (Salindo, 2020). It denotes the reality of educational systems and their elements affecting quality. The researchers ask how educational systems attain quality. Why is there sustainability in the quality of education? The answer to these questions lies in the four functional imperatives (Parson, 1951). The first is adaptation, which involves obtaining adequate assets from the ecosystem and allocating them among the systems. The second concept is goal attainment, which refers to establishing priorities among system goals and mobilizing system resources to achieve them. The

Figure 1

Guiding Framework for Quality Education



third concept is integration, which refers to coordinating and maintaining potential interrelationships among system units. The final one is Latency, which encompasses two related issues. This concern relates to how kinship systems, morals and standards, and ideologies and convictions affect the continued existence and maintenance of control within social units of a social system (Salindo, 2020). The mentioned theory has found diverse applications in various fields. Tittenbrun's (2014) use of the aforementioned theory in the field of economic sociology illustrates its usefulness in uncovering complex phenomena. Economic sociology investigates the interaction of economic systems and social structures, and its application is to have contributed to a better understanding of how social factors influence economic behaviors and outcomes. This application highlighted the theory's ability to provide insights into complicated economic interactions within a broader sociological context, thereby improving knowledge of the multiple dynamics that affect economic operations. The usage of the aforementioned theory by Ahmad et al. (2021) to study the COVID-19 healthcare

adaption model demonstrates its flexibility and applicability in tackling contemporary difficulties. The study highlighted how the theory's framework offers insights into the intricate dynamics of adapting systems to extraordinary shocks by applying the theory to assess how healthcare systems changed due to the pandemic. This application demonstrates the theory's ability to provide an organized strategy for comprehending complex real-world circumstances and their consequences. Lastly, Salindo's (2020) application of the aforementioned theory to the evolution of an academic institution demonstrates its adaptability in studying organizational development. Using the theory in this situation allowed for a better understanding of how numerous social, economic, and cultural aspects influence the institution's evolution over time. This demonstrates the theory's efficacy in offering a framework for analyzing complicated processes like organizational change within a broader socioeconomic context. These studies highlighted the versatility of the theory in explaining, studying, and understanding a range of phenomena across different contexts.

Similar to this, in an educational system, different levels of the system—national, tertiary, school, and preschool—and together with their key stakeholders, determine the resources needed –adaptation (i.e., budgetary, assets, intended curriculum, human capital, purpose and objectives, organization structure, democratic governance, and collaboration) to achieve systemic educational goals, which is the provision of quality education. This idea entails creating pertinent monitoring and evaluation tools to assess educational quality, which should be a collaborative effort between all education stakeholders – goal attainment (Garira, 2020). Developing and adapting policies for quality education from the UNESCO Agenda 2030 to AmBisyon 2040 and all levels of the country’s educational systems demonstrates the importance of the existing systems’ interdependence - and integration. Finally, the educational institution’s quality of education and ability to sustain human progress is determined by how faithfully the educational system adheres to the established educational goals.

The primary goal of this paper was to investigate the socioeconomic conditions of Bachelor of Secondary Education major in Social Science students using a tracer study. HEI tracer studies can improve graduates’ skill sets, curriculum development, and program improvement. However, it should not be limited to future employment and graduate quality; it can also be a powerful tool for determining whether the HEI’s policies, integrative research, and best practices made a significant contribution to the graduates’ lives, families, communities, and countries answering the objectives of UNESCO’s Agenda 2030 and AmBisyon 2040 of the Philippines. This paper contends that by using the socioeconomic conditions of their graduates as a novel framework for tracer studies, the evaluation of graduates in HEIs can be strengthened. In this context, this study addressed the following questions: What was the profile of the

Bachelor of Secondary Education major in Social Science graduates from the State University? What were the changes in the income profile of the Bachelor of Secondary Education major in Social Science graduates before and after graduation? And what is the current socio-economic condition of the graduates? This study goes beyond the standard framework of tracer studies and discusses more into the contribution of quality education on the socioeconomic conditions of graduates, and not on their employability, competencies, and for the improvement of the academic programs.

Methodology

Research Design

The cross-sectional survey method was used in this study to understand the relationships between the mandate of quality education among HEIs and the socioeconomic conditions of graduates. This study was carried out at the State University in the province of Negros Oriental, Philippines. The State University is the province’s only state-owned university, with campuses throughout the province. Guihulngan Campus is one of its campuses. According to the 2021 Philippines Statistics Authority report, seven of the country’s top ten poorest cities and municipalities, with a poverty incidence index of 50 or higher in 2015, are located in northern Negros Oriental. These are the Municipalities of Ayungon, Bindoy, Jimalalud, La Libertad, Tayasan, Vallehermoso, and Guihulngan City (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2021). This notion is a cause for concern, as poverty persists despite an HEI in the area.

The Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines (AACUP) has granted Level II accreditation to the Bachelor of Secondary Education major in Social Science offered by the College of Teacher Education until July 2022.

This is to answer the framework of quality education in the Philippines and UNESCO's Agenda 2030 by creating graduates who will make a difference in their lives, families, communities, and country. Since its inception in 2011, the Bachelor of Science in Social Science program at State University has graduated 119 students, demonstrating its significance. Since 1974, the university has sponsored secondary education programs, assisting in training countless teachers with various degrees. The institution's appeal extends to students from one of the nation's most economically disadvantaged provinces, a trend that continues to date (Salindo, 2020).

Participants

The respondents were identified through age, gender, and marital status and were selected through purposive sampling. One hundred nineteen (119) respondents were identified, but only 92 answered the survey. The 27 respondents did not answer the questionnaire for personal reasons. The respondents are broken down by batch, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Research Respondents

Batch	Number of Respondents	Identified Number of Respondents	Number of Graduates
2015	16	20	20
2016	13	22	22
2017	10	13	13
2018	13	14	15
2019	30	34	34
2020	10	16	16
Total	92	119	120

As shown in Table 2, most HEI graduates are still young, with 87 percent being 30 or younger. Only 12% are in their 30s, and only 1% are in their 40s. This result

implies that the graduates of the Social Science program are relatively young but have already contributed to the workforce in public and private academic institutions and other industries. The majority were females, indicating that women dominate the Education program, and 62 percent of the graduates are still single, implying that they choose to be single because they must support other family members or have not yet found their life partner.

Table 2

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Respondents	Frequency N = 92	Percentage
Age		
≤ 30	80	87
31- 40	11	12
≥ 41	1	1
Total	92	100
Gender		
Male	25	27
Female	66	72
LGBTQA	1	1
Total	92	100
Marital Status		
Married	34	37
Single	57	62
Single Parent	1	1
Total	92	100

Instruments

The researchers adapted and modified the Graduate Tracer Survey Questionnaire (GTSQ) of the Philippines' Commission on Higher Education (CHED). There are five sections to this questionnaire: general information, educational history, post-college studies, employment data, and income data. It was subjected to content validation and expert assessment by five professionals. The survey data was evaluated, yielding a computed value of 4.15, validating the questionnaire's validity.

The questionnaire underwent a pilot test with thirty (30) respondents to ensure its efficacy. The items in the survey were examined to determine their reliability. The results of using Cronbach's alpha revealed an acceptable reliability score of 0.79 for the graduates' education, employment, and income profiles. Furthermore, the reliability score for current socio-economic conditions of the Bachelor of Secondary Education majors majoring in Social Science was calculated to be 0.80.

Data Collection

A communication letter was written and sent to the appropriate authorities in accordance with the established protocol. The survey tool was digitized and linked to Google Forms before being distributed to participants using Facebook Messenger and personal email correspondence. During the survey administration phase, the researcher worked hard to provide comprehensive explanations for each questionnaire item, increasing respondent comprehension and assuring the accuracy of the collected data. The procedure also enacted strong safeguards to ensure the confidentiality of participants' responses.

Following the completion of the survey, the obtained data was subjected to automated tallying and tabulation procedures. The resulting dataset was subjected to rigorous statistical analysis to use appropriate approaches that effectively addressed the highlighted problem in the research. This methodical methodology aided in the creation of meaningful findings, which contributed to the overall research aims.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were crucial during the data analysis phase. This included gathering quantitative data, analyzing its frequency, turning it into percentages, and lastly,

evaluating the results. These stages resulted in a thorough grasp of the data's patterns and trends, allowing for the extraction of useful insights from the data.

Ethical Considerations

The survey was administered through Google Forms and informed consent was attached to the instrument to address the ethical issues in the study. The researchers ensured that the participants read the informed consent form, proving their participation was voluntary. Similarly, the researchers ensured that no individual or organization suffered any harm during the study. Furthermore, the researchers safeguarded the respondents' identity by providing the findings in aggregate rather than disclosing particular responses that could lead to their identification. Finally, the researchers honored the respondents' decision to withdraw their involvement despite reading the informed consent form throughout the study, particularly during data collection.

Results and Discussion

Profile of the Bachelor of Secondary Education major in Social Science graduate

Table 3
Education Profile of Respondents 2015-2020

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
N = 92		
Teachers' Board Examination		
LET Passer	80	87
Non-LET Passer	1	1
To take LET	11	12
Total	92	100
Advance Education		
With Masters Degree	6	7
With Masters Units	39	42
Without Graduate school	47	51
Total	92	100

Table 3 presents an overview of the educational status of the respondents. It includes information about their performance in the Teachers' Board Examination (LET), their pursuit of advanced education, and their levels of graduate school involvement. The data reflects the distribution of respondents across various categories and offers insights into the educational achievements and aspirations within the context of teaching.

According to the data, a sizable proportion of the responders have passed the LET, confirming their qualification in the field of teaching. Furthermore, a sizable proportion of responders have made efforts toward postgraduate education, with a significant number having completed Masters units. This indicates that the respondents are committed to furthering their education. However, the majority of respondents have not pursued graduate school education, signaling future professional development chances in terms of higher degrees.

This data can help a teacher-researcher comprehend the current environment of educators in terms of licensure status and pursuit of advanced education. It shows both positives, such as a high LET pass rate, and opportunities for improvement, such as boosting the number of instructors obtaining higher degrees. This data can be used to inform discussions about professional development opportunities, tactics for assisting educators on their educational journeys, and approaches to improve the general quality of teaching in the educational system.

Similarly, the study conducted by Smith and Brown (2019) complemented these insights by delving into the importance of recognizing teachers' professional development needs and the role of data analysis in elevating educational standards. This research unveiled how data could serve as a catalyst for deliberations about

alternative avenues for professional growth and methods for guiding educators in their educational pursuits. Furthermore, Darling-Hammond (2017) reinforced the notion of tailoring teacher education methodologies to the distinct cultural, socioeconomic, and educational contexts of each nation, as discussed in her study. The emphasis on steering clear of a one-size-fits-all approach and advocating for contextually appropriate solutions resonated with the need to address the unique requirements and conditions of individual countries' education systems.

The data provided holds several implications regarding the qualifications and educational pursuits of the respondents, offering insights into the potential impact on the teaching profession and the broader educational landscape. The high proportion of LET passers (87%) among respondents indicates a robust foundation of qualified teachers. This has a favorable impact on the teaching profession since it indicates that a large number of people are well-prepared and equipped to contribute effectively in the classroom. As Cuadra et al. (2019) show, this performance has translated into numerous employment prospects across several sectors, with a notable presence in the public sector. The high proportion of respondents having Masters units (42%), demonstrates a dedication to lifelong study and professional development. This represents a group of educators who are actively pursuing advanced education to expand their knowledge and contribute to educational leadership roles.

Table 4 shows the respondents' employment profiles from 2015 to 2020. The table offers information about the respondents' employment status, employment tenure, occupation, and work type. The data shows the number of employed and unemployed respondents, as well as their employment status, occupation distribution, and tenure in their respective jobs. This data provides a thorough summary

of the respondents' job circumstances and patterns across the selected time period.

Table 4

Employment Profile of the Respondents 2015-2020

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
N = 92		
Employment		
Employed	86	93
Not employed	6	7
Total	92	100
Employment Status		
Regular or Permanent	65	71
Temporary	3	3
Casual	5	5
Self-employed	4	4
Contractual	15	16
Total	92	100
Occupation		
Public Teacher	62	67
Private Teacher	4	4
Call Center Agent	4	4
Data Encoder	2	2
Government Employee	4	4
Other jobs	16	17
Total	92	100
Employment Tenure		
Less than a month	3	3
1 to 6 months years	9	10
7 to 11 months	3	3
1 year to less than 2 years	22	24
2 years to less than 3	12	13
3 years to less than 4 years	16	17
4 years to less than 5 years	12	13
More than 5 years	15	16
Total	92	100

The results show a positive trend with high levels of employment, dominated primarily by those in regular or permanent positions. This pattern indicates a stable work market with a sizable share of respondents having secure employment. The respondents' professional backgrounds are diversified and multifaceted, as seen by the wide diversity of jobs and work tenures. This variety reflects the breadth of experience and competence among those polled, contributing to a dynamic and varied professional landscape.

As a teacher-researcher, these findings are encouraging. The prevalence of stable employment, particularly in regular or permanent roles, suggests a strong and reliable job market for educators. This bodes well for their job security and overall well-being. The diverse range of job roles and tenures reflects the rich experiences and expertise that educators bring to the field. This diversity is an asset, enhancing the overall quality of education through a dynamic mix of skills and backgrounds. It reinforces the importance of recognizing and valuing the unique strengths that each educator contributes to the profession.

Similarly, the study conducted by Smith and Johnson (2018) further illuminates these encouraging trends. Delving into the relationship between job security and teacher satisfaction within K-12 education, their research aimed to comprehend how job security impacted vital factors like enthusiasm, commitment, and the overall quality of education. Shifting the focus to elementary educators, Brown and Davis (2020) concentrated on pinpointing the factors contributing to stable employment. This endeavor encompassed an exploration of growth opportunities, tenure policies, working conditions, and the implications of job stability on teaching methods. Simultaneously, the work of Johnson and Thompson (2019) meticulously examined trends within the teacher job market. Their

comprehensive analysis provided valuable insights into shortages, hiring patterns, subject demand, and the dynamic changes in teacher education programs. This research served as a guiding compass for adapting teacher preparation to adeptly meet the evolving demands of the field, ensuring that educator skills remained aligned with the shifting landscape of the profession.

The data reveals that a significant number of graduates have achieved employment within the public sector, particularly as public secondary school teachers across various regions of Negros. This finding aligns with the conclusions drawn by Cuadra et al. (2019), who emphasized the significance of tracer studies conducted by higher education institutions (HEIs) to evaluate graduates' employability and quality (Aclan et al., 2018; Cuadra et al., 2019; Laguador & Dotong, 2013). These studies aimed to bridge gaps between graduates and current job requirements, rectify mismatches (Meñez, 2014), and enhance the curricula of academic institutions (Balingbing, 2014; Dotong et al., 2016; Gines, 2014; Kalaw, 2019; Macatangay, 2013). As a result of these initiatives, graduates have encountered improved prospects for employment and success in their chosen fields. This positive outcome holds broader advantages, contributing not only to the individuals themselves but also to the economy, workforce, and local communities (Holmes, 2017). The alignment between these findings suggests a clear pathway through which HEIs can contribute to both the personal and societal growth of graduates.

Table 5 examines the Income Profile of Respondents Before Graduation. This table presents the frequency distribution and corresponding percentages of respondents' initial gross monthly family income prior to their graduation. The data reflects a comprehensive view of the income levels within the surveyed group, offering insights

into the financial backgrounds of the participants.

Table 5
Income Profile of Respondents Before Graduation

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
N = 92		
Initial gross monthly of the family before graduation		
Below P5,000.00P	23	25
P5,000.00 to less than P10,000.00	33	36
P10,000.00 to less than P15,000.00	17	18
P15,000.00 to less than P20,000.00	6	7
20,000.00 to less than P25,000.00	4	4
P 25,000.00 and above	9	10
Total	92	100

The data shows a pattern in which a sizable proportion of respondents came from low to moderate-income households. The majority of respondents have an income of less than P10,000.00, with the highest frequency falling within the "P5,000.00 to less than P10,000.00" bracket. The number of respondents gradually declines as income levels grow, however, there is still representation from upper-income categories. This distribution sheds light on the economic diversity of the individuals polled as well as their families' financial circumstances prior to graduation.

Analyzing as a teacher-researcher, this data provides insights into surveyed individuals' economic diversity before graduation. Many students come from low-to middle-income families, which is reflected in the higher frequency of these categories. This emphasizes the significance of taking socioeconomic variables into account in

educational approaches and support systems. The data suggests that students may face financial difficulties, causing them to rethink their academic performance and well-being. Flexible payment options and additional resources, as well as tailored support for lower-income students, are crucial. This helps to create a welcoming learning environment. Incorporating this data into research can help to improve knowledge of the confluence of economic diversity with academic experiences and professional choices, providing insights for policy suggestions that promote fair education.

In parallel to these insights, the study conducted by Aina et al. (2022) delved into the complex relationship between family income, parental education, and students' persistence in higher education. This research illuminated how these factors intersected with academic readiness and support networks, enhancing the understanding of obstacles certain students faced in completing their university degrees. Similarly, Roksa and Kinsley's (2019) investigation focused on family support's impact on academic accomplishments, particularly for low-income students. This analysis covered emotional, financial, and academic assistance. The combined examination of these studies highlighted the significant role of socioeconomic variables in shaping educational outcomes and underscored the importance of holistic support systems in promoting diverse students' success.

The findings emphasize economic variety before graduation, with higher percentages in lower-income groups indicating a significant prevalence of low-income backgrounds. This shows that many students have financial difficulties, limiting their access to resources, engagement in extracurricular activities, and academic focus. As a result, while creating support systems, institutions should take these issues into account, consistent with the broader

awareness that economic differences affect educational attainment. Recognizing this variability allows for specialized approaches such as flexible payments and individualized support, resulting in an inclusive atmosphere that supports fair experiences for all students (Aina et al., 2022; Roksa & Kinsley, 2019).

Table 6 provides a snapshot of the respondents' income distribution and family roles after graduation. This table outlines their families' initial gross monthly earnings in their current jobs following college. It offers a breakdown of income ranges, along with corresponding frequencies and percentages. The table also delves into whether respondents were considered the primary financial contributors ("breadwinners") of their families during their current employment. This information contributes to understanding the financial outcomes and responsibilities of the surveyed individuals post-graduation.

Table 6
Income Profile of the Respondents after Graduation

Respondents	Frequency N = 92	Percentage
Initial gross monthly earnings of the family in your current job after college		
Below P5,000.00P	5	5
P5,000.00 to less than P10,000.00	9	10
P10,000.00 to less than P15,000.00	26	28
P15,000.00 to less than P20,000.00	10	11
20,000.00 to less than P25,000.00	14	15
P 25,000.00 and above	28	30
Total	92	100
Considered a "breadwinner" of the family when you were employed in your current job?		
Yes	56	61
No	36	39
Total	92	100

The data reveals a significant distribution in initial family wages after graduation, particularly in the middle-income group, implying significant moderate income. This suggests a shift to middle-income ranges, probably reflecting progressive employment transitions affected by higher education's beneficial economic impact. Education-acquired abilities can steer graduates to employment with modest pay, coinciding with education's earnings-boosting prowess, indicating improved income prospects and upward mobility. Furthermore, many respondents were breadwinners, implying significant financial responsibility that shapes career pathways and financial decisions, emphasizing the tangled link between personal and domestic economics. In short, the middle-income concentration indicates good educational outcomes for improved family finances, as breadwinners emphasize their critical family support, effectively demonstrating the broader societal and economic significance of their achievements.

As a teacher-researcher, analyzing this data reveals diverse income levels among respondents post-graduation, with a notable proportion in the middle-income brackets. This hints at successful transitions into moderate-paying jobs after education. Many also identified as family breadwinners, indicating a significant financial role and highlighting the link between personal and family economics. This emphasizes how individual success influences family well-being and underscores the broader societal and economic impact. These insights stress the need to consider students' varied financial backgrounds and responsibilities, guiding educators to create more inclusive learning environments tailored to different economic situations.

The examination of income diversity among post-graduation respondents corresponds to research findings. The study by Chetty et al. (2014) focused on measuring

teacher effectiveness using value-added measures, emphasizing the significance of accounting for many factors influencing student accomplishment. Corak's (2013) investigation of economic inequality and opportunity linked inequalities to chances for success by highlighting the relevance of equity in intergenerational mobility. Meanwhile, Mani et al.'s (2013) study on the cognitive impacts of poverty highlighted how economic conditions influenced decision-making, contributing to a larger knowledge of how financial origins influenced cognitive function. Individual accomplishments, social mobility, and the complicated interplay between personal and society economy were all stressed by these ideas.

The data illustrates a varied distribution of initial family earnings after college graduation, with a notable concentration within the middle-income range of P10,000.00 to P25,000.00. This suggests a significant number of graduates securing moderate-income jobs, consistent with the notion that higher education often leads to improved economic prospects. This finding resonates with the study of Chetty et al. (2014) on teacher performance assessment, highlighting the intricacies of evaluating teacher effectiveness using quantitative measures and the importance of considering external factors. Similarly, the high percentage of respondents identifying as breadwinners (61%) underscores their substantial financial responsibility. This aligns with Mani et al.'s study (2013) on how financial obligations affect cognitive function. In summary, while the data echoes educational research by linking higher education to middle-income job attainment (Symaco & Bustos, 2022), it also underscores the broader complexities of economic mobility and emphasizes the intersection of financial responsibility and cognitive challenges, calling for comprehensive support systems.

Changes in Initial Income of Bachelor of Secondary Education, Major in Social Science graduates

The changes in initial income are depicted in Figure 2, where the initial income of graduates' families before and after graduation was examined. Furthermore, it indicates the graduates' position within their families when they land their respective jobs.

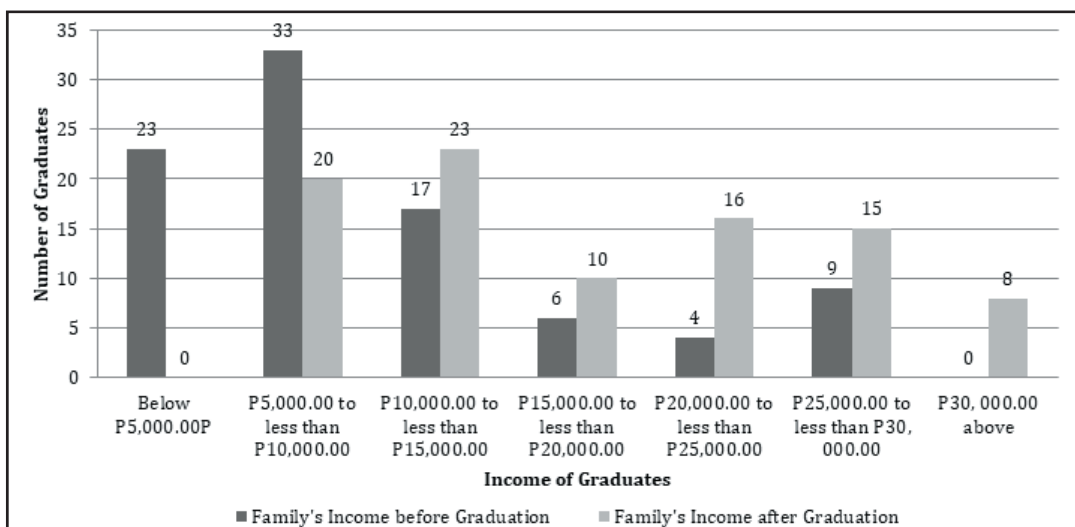
The data (Figure 2) shows a notable disparity between starting family income before they completed their schooling and their family income after they entered the labor force. This result implies that the family benefited significantly from the graduation of a student whose preparation is extremely valuable in the relevant industry. Furthermore, once an additional member began earning and contributing to the family income, the family's socioeconomic circumstances improved. This result suggests a positive shift in the graduates' socioeconomic level as they move from less favorable to ideal or enhanced conditions.

The data analysis has uncovered a substantial rise when comparing the

family income levels of graduates before and after completing their education. The initial family income data shows that graduate families lived below the poverty line. Specifically, 23 graduates had an initial monthly family income of less than P5,000, 33 had an initial monthly family income ranging from P5,000 to P10,000, and 17 had an initial monthly family income between P10,000 and P15,000. This cumulative figure accounts for 79% of all graduates. According to the Philippine Statistics Authority's 2021 figures, each family requires a minimum monthly income of P12,000 to fulfill the needs of all its members. The data also corroborates the PSA's 2015 report, which indicated that Negros Oriental holds the highest poverty incidence in the country (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2021). This data collectively underscores the challenging socioeconomic circumstances that a substantial portion of the graduates' families were facing before the graduates' education and subsequent employment.

Upon securing stable employment and completing their education, the graduates experienced a notable rise in their monthly family income. No graduates

Figure 2
Initial Income Changes



reported families earning less than P5,000 per month. Among the graduates, 20 out of 33 had an initial monthly family income ranging from P5,000 to P10,000; 17 out of 23 had an initial monthly family income between P10,000 and P15,000; 6 out of 6 had an initial monthly family income between P15,000 and P20,000; 4 out of 16 had an initial monthly family income between P20,000 and P25,000; 9 out of 15 had an initial monthly family income between P25,000 and P30,000; and 8 out of none had an initial monthly family income of P30,000 or more. According to the data, 53% of graduates experienced a significant augmentation in their family's monthly income. Conversely, 20% still strive for further improvements, and 23 individuals previously at or near the poverty line are poised to elevate their circumstances. Compared to the Philippine Statistics Authority's 2015 report on poverty incidence, this indicates an evident increase in income (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2021). This data showcases a noteworthy shift in the economic status of the graduates and their families, indicating positive progress toward alleviating poverty.

Current Socioeconomic conditions of the Graduates

Higher Education institutions' provision of high-quality education has resulted in the graduation of Licensed Professional Teachers concentrating in Social Sciences. This achievement, in turn, has prepared them to obtain stable and long-term employment and increase their starting salary levels. As a result, this upward trend has resulted in a substantial increase in the quality of life for both the graduates and their respective families and communities. The graduates' professional success, financial security, and the broader good impact they bring to their immediate surroundings demonstrate the symbiotic effect of outstanding education delivery.

Table 7 depicts the influence of the Higher Education Institution (HEI) in molding its alumni's socioeconomic and overall well-being. An overwhelming 92 percent of graduates stated that their present job had significantly improved their socioeconomic circumstances. Furthermore, a sizable proportion of graduates, namely 89, 82, 82, and 77 percent, felt that their alma mater, HEI, had positively benefited them, their families, their communities, and the nation as a whole. This collective emotion emphasizes the Secondary Education Program at the State University's enormous significance. The program has effectively generated professionals and individuals who share the institution's objective of advancing social change through education, benefiting not only themselves but also their immediate surroundings and the community at large.

Table 7
Socio-economic conditions of the graduates

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
N = 92		
Believed that their current job alleviated your Socioeconomic Condition?		
Yes	85	92
No	7	8
Total	92	100
Believed that their Alma Matter holistically contributed to the following		
You	82	89
Your Family	75	82
Your Community	75	82
Your Country	71	77

According to the statistics collected, 92% of graduates believe that their present employment has significantly improved their socioeconomic level. Similarly, a sizable proportion of graduates—89%, 82%, and 82%, respectively—said that State Universities had a good impact on their personal lives, families, communities, and the nation. This insight closely connects with the essence of UNESCO's 2030 Agenda, particularly SDG 4, which emphasizes quality

education as a critical driver of sustainable development (Marope, 2016; Tatto, 2021). This view is consistent with the Philippines' AmBisyon 2040 initiative (Symaco & Bustos, 2022) and the 2017 Universal Tertiary Education Act. This Act provides first-year students and other programs at public higher education institutions such as the State University in Negros Oriental with free tuition and other fees (Chao Jr, 2022). These elements combine to form a landscape in which graduates' improved socioeconomic conditions serve as tangible representations of the broader educational and developmental goals defined by international and national agendas.

Conclusion

The study's main objective was to examine the socioeconomic conditions of the State University's graduates using a tracer study. HEI tracer studies can improve graduates' skill sets, curriculum development, and program improvement. They can also be a powerful tool for determining whether policies, comprehensive research, and best practices of the HEIs significantly contribute to the graduates' lives, families, communities, and countries, answering the objectives of UNESCO's Agenda 2030 and Ambisyon 2040 of the Philippines.

The findings highlight the significant outcomes resulting from implementing good policies, extensive research efforts, and incorporating best practices inside a higher education institution (HEI). This collaborative effort delivered high-quality education through the Social Science Program, which enabled its graduates to pass the Licensure Examination for Teachers. This achievement has resulted in steady career prospects, primarily in the public sector, contributing to an increase in their families' initial monthly income. Furthermore, these positive initiatives have significantly improved the graduates'

overall socioeconomic status, including their education, income, and occupation. This advancement has benefited not just the graduates, but also their families and the larger community. These achievements demonstrate the transforming power of an institution's dedication to quality education and its role in promoting human growth, economic advancement, and communal well-being.

Through its four functional imperatives, this study supports Talcott Parsons' Social System Theory, which sheds light on the dynamics of educational systems and the elements that shape excellence. When educational systems examine the resources required to provide great education, the notion of adaptability comes into play. As international mandates percolate to the national level and impact the operations of the country's higher education institutions (HEIs), goal attainment becomes a reality. The goal is to align and standardize educational quality by encouraging collaboration and establishing policies. When these principles are implemented, integration takes shape, demonstrating the interdependence of many educational systems. Furthermore, the problem of latency emerges as educational institutions adhere to specified educational objectives to provide an excellent education. This adherence has contributed to and sustained human progress across various facets of life.

The primary constraint of this study lies in its narrow focus solely on the Bachelor of Secondary Education major in Social Science program. Consequently, the study's sample size remains limited. To address this limitation, it is recommended that the research expand its scope to encompass the entire population of graduates from all programs within the higher education institution (HEI), while maintaining the same timeline aligned with the adoption of the UNESCO Agenda 2030. By incorporating

a more comprehensive approach, the study can potentially yield a broader and more representative understanding of the agenda's impact across various programs within the HEI.

In conclusion, conducting a tracer study that investigates the impact of policies, comprehensive research, and best practices within higher education institutions (HEIs) on changing socioeconomic conditions is feasible and strongly recommended. This type of initiative has the potential to provide useful insights into the transformative effects of these interventions on the socioeconomic paths of graduates. Using a tracer study technique, this research could prove how HEIs' collaborative efforts influence graduates' professional success, economic position, and general community well-being. This approach not only coincides with current educational research trends but can also provide meaningful recommendations for improving HEIs' role in generating positive societal change.

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