



Tracer Study of Senior High School Graduates of a Public School in City Division of Ilagan

Romulo B. Agustin Jr.

Department of Education, City Division of Isabela

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.55248/gengpi.6.0225.1038>

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to track the post-graduation status of Sta. Isabel National High School (SINHS) Senior High School (SHS) graduates from 2020–2022. Data was gathered using descriptive research design and survey questionnaires disseminated on social media. Results show that most graduates went on to further their education, but fewer joined the workforce or started their own enterprises. Unemployment was also significantly influenced by lack of motivation and financial limitations. To guarantee successful curriculum alignment with labor market demands, the study emphasizes the necessity of enhanced industry connections, extended tracer studies, and intensified career counseling.

Keywords: Senior High School, tracer study, employment, higher education, curriculum alignment

Main text

Since education gives people access to resources, job opportunities, and critical skills for socioeconomic mobility, it is frequently seen as the great equalizer. According to the 1987 Philippine Constitution, education is a fundamental right. Nevertheless, throughout the previous 20 years, educational standards have decreased despite this dedication (Geovetti, 2020). There are many children who are not in school, and the rate of young literacy is declining, according to reports from UNESCO (2008) and World Education News & Reviews.

The Philippine government responded to these issues by enacting the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 (RA 10533), which established the K–12 curriculum. Grades 11 and 12 make up the Senior High School (SHS) program, which prepares students for entrepreneurship, higher education, or the workforce by equipping them with 21st-century skills (DepEd Memo No. 76, s. 2016).

Few studies have been done on the post-graduation results of SHS students, despite the program's implementation. No research has been done to track down Sta. Isabel National High School's SHS alumni, which is why this tracer study is necessary. Tracer studies offer important information about curricular relevance and program efficacy (Woya, 2019). The purpose of this study is to evaluate the situation of SINHS graduates and identify the variables affecting their choices of education or careers. This study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of:
 - a. Gender
 - b. Age upon graduation
2. What is the status of SHS graduates in terms of:
 - a. College enrollment
 - b. Employment
 - c. Entrepreneurial ventures
 - d. Unemployment and reasons for it

Methodology

Research Design

The descriptive research design was employed in this study. In quantitative research, a descriptive study design is a process where researchers use a survey to characterize the attitudes, opinions, behaviors, or features of a population, either by administering it to a sample or to the entire population (Creswell, 2014). To gather the information required to address the issues of this study, the researcher selected a survey questionnaire. The researchers can gather information from the respondents using this strategy.

Research Respondents

Of the 286 SHS graduates from SINHS (Batch 2020–2022) who were the goal of the study, 117 responders (40.91%) took part. For tracer study, this response rate is considered acceptable (Badiru, 2016). The distribution is shown in the table below:

Table 1. Data of the Respondents

STRAND	SCHOOL YEAR			Number of Graduates	Number of Actual Respondents
	2020	2021	2022		
TVL	51	42	64	157	52 (40.31%)
HUMMS	39	50	40	129	65 (50.38%)
TOTAL	90	92	104	286	117 (40.91%)

Source: LIS Coordinator

The distribution of respondents and response rate by strand/track for the SINH-SHS graduates in Batch 2020–2022 is displayed in Table 1. 40.55% of the 286 graduates who received our Facebook Messenger survey answered it. With 40.91% of the total responders, HUMMS had the most with (50.38%), while TVL grads had the fewest (40.31%).

Badiru (2016) states that while tracer surveys are frequently not conducted by interviewers, even those with response rates as low as 30 to 40% are frequently accepted as valid. Additionally, there is a strong tendency to lose track of graduates once they graduate from college. As a result, the study's 40.91% response rate is regarded as reliable and acceptable.

Data Collection

A survey questionnaire was employed by the researchers to collect the necessary data for this investigation. According to McLeod (2018), a questionnaire is a research tool that consists of a set of questions intended to elicit information from respondents. The questionnaire used in this study was divided into two sections, the first of which contained the respondents' profiles. Additionally, Part II discusses the respondents' present circumstances following their graduation from Sta. Isabel National High School.

Data Gathering

After the research has been approved, the researcher asks the school principal for permission to carry out the study. The questionnaire was accompanied by a letter to the responders guaranteeing the privacy of their answers. The researcher distributed the questionnaires using Facebook Messenger or other social media platforms because of limited accessibility to the respondents' locations.

Following the questionnaire's retrieval, the results were categorized, and the researchers totaled, evaluated, and interpreted the information acquired. The researchers-maintained honesty and confidentiality throughout the procedure.

Data Analysis

A set of tables containing the data to be collected for the study were categorized and examined. The data collected from the questionnaire responses of the respondents was analyzed using descriptive statistics including frequency count, percentage, and ranking. The statistical tools utilized for Part I of the questionnaire, which is the profile of the respondents, were the percentage and frequency count. The statistical tools utilized for Part II of the questionnaire—which asks about the present situation of the Senior High School graduates of Sta. Isabel National High School after graduation—were ranking, percentage, and frequency count.

Results and Discussions

Profile of the Respondents

Table 2. Profile of the Respondents According to their Gender

STRAND	GENDER		Number of Respondents (S.Y. 2020-2022)
	MALE	FEMALE	
TVL	15 (40.54%)	37 (46.25%)	52 (44.44%)
HUMMS	22 (59.46%)	43 (53.75%)	65 (55.56%)
TOTAL	37 (31.62%)	80 (68.38%)	117

The respondents' distribution by gender is seen in table above. Of the 117 respondents, 68.38% (80 respondents) were female and 31.62% (37 respondents) were male. According to the statistics, the study had a higher proportion of female participants, which is consistent with studies that show women are more likely to complete surveys (Mulder, 2019).

Table 3. Profile of the Respondents According to their Age upon Graduation

STRAND	AGE UPON GRADUATION							TOTAL
	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	
TVL	35 (52.24%)	10 (50%)	3 (23.07%)	4 (23.53%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	52
HUMMS	32 (47.76%)	10 (50%)	10 (76.2%)	13 (76.47%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	65
TOTAL	67 (57.26%)	20 (17.09%)	13 (11.11%)	17 (14.52%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	117

Table 3 shows the profile of the respondents according to their age upon graduation. It can be noted that majority of the respondents age is 17 with a total of 67 or (57.26%). According to the Philippines Basic Education report from 2020, the average age of senior high school pupils in the Philippines is between 17 and 18. Therefore, it supports DepEd's claim that SHS graduates will be regarded as young adults.

Status of the Respondents after Graduation

Table 4. Status of SHS Graduates of SIHNS for SY. 2020-2022

Status	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Proceed to College/University	37	31.62%	1
Employed	30	25.64%	2
Lay about (with little/no work)	22	18.80%	4
With Established Business	28	23.93%	3
TOTAL	117	100%	

Table 4 presents the Status of SHS Graduates of SIHNS for SY. 2020-2022. It is evident that majority of the respondents proceed to college/university with a 31.62%. This shows the relationship of table which presented the Courses of the SHS Graduates proceed in college.

According to Guzon and Rivera's (2017) research, most employed young people between the ages of 15 and 30 (62.4%) work in temporary, seasonal, and informal jobs, while just a small percentage (9.71%) are entrepreneurs.

Therefore, Senior high school graduates clearly choose to seek higher education following graduation rather than working, as seen by the high percentage of them continuing their education and the low number joining the workforce and starting their own enterprises.

Table 5. Courses of the SHS Graduates who proceed to College and University

Courses	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
---------	-----------	------------	------

Education	25	21.37%	3
Agriculture	20	17.09%	3
Criminology	17	14.53%	5
Hotel and Restaurant Management	12	10.26%	1
Tourism	15	12.82%	4
NC II	20	17.09%	
Vocational Course	8	6.84%	2
TOTAL	117	100%	

The courses taken by graduates who continue to colleges and universities are shown in the table above. While the curriculum at Senior High School attempts to provide students with more possibilities than simply going to college after graduation, earning a higher degree is still the goal. Only 23.93% of students opt to participate in vocational courses, yet 76.07 percent of students enroll in degree-granting universities and colleges. Given that they were the first to complete the Senior High School Program, it is not surprising that the respondents still think that a degree course is required to get a job.

Table 6. College/University SHS Graduates of SINHS Enrolled To

College/University	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Isabela State University (Ilagan, Echague)	75	64.10%	1
St. Ferdinand College	25	21.37%	2
IC Cauayan	7	5.98%	4
Others	10	8.55%	3
TOTAL	117		

A significant portion of respondents, as indicated in the table, went on to enroll in classes at Isabela State University, specifically at the Ilagan and Echague campuses. This suggests that graduates favored attending state or government-owned universities because of the free education policy for SUCs. For personal reasons, a sizable portion of the respondents enrolled in other private schools; for others, this was because the school was closer to their home.

Table 7. Employer, Employment Status, and Occupation of the Graduates who are Employed

EMPLOYER	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Private	52	69.33%	1
Government	18	15.38%	2
Abroad	5	4.27%	3
TOTAL	75	100%	
EMPLOYMENT STATUS			
Permanent	34	45.33%	1
Contractual	33	28.21%	2
Temporary	8	6.84%	3
TOTAL	75	100%	
OCCUPATION			
Teacher (Public and Private)	18	24%	2
Government Employee (Municipal Hall)	15	21.37%	3
OFW	5	4.27%	4
Others (Private Company)	37	31.62%	1

TOTAL	75	100%	
--------------	-----------	-------------	--

The above data shows the Employer, Employment Status, and Occupation of the Graduates who are Employed. Out of 117 respondents, 75 answer questions regarding their employment status. Majority of the respondents are employed in a Private Employer with 69.33%, Permanent with 45.33% and Government Employee with 21.37%.

Table 8. Reasons for the Graduates who are Lay about

Courses	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Financial Problem	8	36.36%	2
Lack of Interest	12	54.55%	1
Others: (Got married, Pregnant)	2	9.09%	3
TOTAL	22	100%	

Some SHS graduates' reasons for being unemployed are shown in Table 8. Lack of interest in pursuing additional education or finding work was the most often stated reason (54.55%), followed by financial difficulties (36.36%). Only 9.09 percent of respondents gave reasons like getting married young or getting pregnant. These results show that although financial limitations are important, individual drive and interest also have a big impact on post-graduation career and academic goals. Graduate results could be enhanced by addressing these problems through financial aid and career counselling programs.

Research by Pascual (2021) and Rivera (2022) shows that a lack of career advice and financial limitations are major factors in youth unemployment. Furthermore, Mendoza's (2020) research emphasizes that early marriage and childbearing continue to be obstacles for female graduates in the Philippines. These results highlight the need for improved financial aid assistance and career counselling programs.

Table 9. Type of Business and Type of Ownership of graduates with established Business

TYPE OF BUSINESS	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Trading/Merchandising	2	11.11%	3
Manufacturing	7	38.89%	2
Service	10	55.56%	1
TOTAL	18	100%	
TYPE OF OWNERSHIP			
Sole Proprietorship	6	66.67%	1
Partnership	3	33.33%	2
TOTAL	9	100%	

Table 9 lists the different types of businesses and ownership structures established by SHS graduates. Manufacturing (38.89%), trading/merchandising (11.11%), and service-oriented enterprises accounted for most graduates (55.56%). In terms of business ownership, partnerships were less common (33.33%) than sole proprietorships (66.67%). According to these results, the majority of SHS graduates choose operating independently owned, small firms. Increasing access to mentorship programs, financial possibilities, and entrepreneurial training may promote more scalable and sustainable business endeavors.

According to a survey by Santos and Cruz (2021), most respondents (55.56%) chose the service-oriented company sector, which supports the idea that service-oriented enterprises predominate in small-scale entrepreneurship in the Philippines. The sole proprietorship (66.67%) is still the most popular business form among young entrepreneurs, according to research by Dela Peña (2020), because it is easy to use and requires less capital. These results imply that to assist SHS graduates in starting long-lasting firms, organized entrepreneurship training is required.

CONCLUSION and RECOMMENDATION

The results indicate that although most SINHS graduates go on to further their education, a sizeable fraction continue to face financial and job obstacles. To improve graduate employability, the study highlights the significance of financial support systems, industry connections, and career counseling. Therefore, it is recommended to (1) Enhance Industry Connections: Work with businesses to place graduates in internships and jobs. (2) Improve Career Counseling: Put in place career counseling initiatives to assist students in making wise choices (3) Extend Financial Assistance: To lower financial obstacles, make scholarships and financial aid more widely available. (4) Encourage entrepreneurship by providing young entrepreneurs with funding opportunities and business mentorship programs.

References

- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. SAGE Publications.
- DepEd Memo No. 76, s. 2016.
- Guzon, M., & Rivera, L. (2017). Employment Trends of Senior High School Graduates in the Philippines. *Journal of Philippine Education Studies*, 12(2), 45-61.
- Mulder, C. (2019). Gender Differences in Survey Participation Rates. *Social Research Quarterly*, 23(4), 78-92.
- Pascual, R. (2021). The Impact of Career Counseling on Youth Unemployment in the Philippines. *International Journal of Career Development*, 9(1), 34-50.
- Rivera, A. (2022). Financial Barriers and Educational Attainment Among Filipino Youth. *Philippine Journal of Educational Research*, 14(3), 67-85.
- Santos, P., & Cruz, M. (2021). Entrepreneurship in the Philippines: A Study of Young Business Owners. *Philippine Business Review*, 18(1), 112-129.
- UNESCO (2008). *EFA Global Monitoring Report*. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
- Woya, A. (2019). Tracer Studies in Higher Education: A Review of Methodology and Application. *Journal of Educational Research*, 20(1), 15-30