



A TRACER STUDY ON GORDON COLLEGE GRADUATES OF BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN MIDWIFERY (BSM) PROGRAM

Claire I. Cruz¹, MPA

¹*College of Allied Health Studies*

ABSTRACT

The primary purpose of this tracer study is to analyze the whereabouts and the current state of employment of the graduates of the Bachelor of Science in Midwifery (BSM) of Gordon College, Olongapo City. With the help of an online Google survey form, 73 BSM graduates participated in the tracer study. The coverage of the tracer study was from 2018 to 2023 graduates. The proponent used descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage to analyze the gathered data. Based on the results, most of the graduates were female, more than half were still single, and most were graduates from batch 2022.

Regarding eligibility, an overwhelming majority passed the licensure examination for midwives and were employed in regular status. Most of the graduates also worked locally, in particular in the government. Most respondents also affirmatively answered that their employment aligns with and relates to their course, especially their training in Gordon College when they were still students. The proponent also suggested some essential recommendations for the curriculum to sustain its quality provisions.

Keywords: Employability, Bachelor of Science in Midwifery, Tracer Study, Gordon College

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INTRODUCTION

The world and profession of midwifery have never been more critical than ever before. Every day, thousands of new lives come into being because of the help of the midwives who diligently practice their craft. Now, to gauge the quality and professionalism of midwives, we have to go back to the basic understanding of how they started. One must trace their roots back to their origin. The researcher conducted this tracer study to acquire such vital information. According to Cerado and colleagues (2020), a graduate survey is an essential tool to track the employability of alumni in any academic program. Foreign literature has something to offer for the practice of the midwifery course based on their tracer studies. For instance, in the tracer study of Yulinda et al. (2019) on midwifery in an institution in Indonesia, they revealed some interesting findings regarding the curriculum and other essential aspects of the midwifery program. These



findings then became a basis for improved alumni quality. Kumakech et al. (2020) also conducted a tracer study of their midwifery program in Uganda. They showed an increase in the course enrollment trend. However, Telfer et al. (2021) disclosed that there needed to be a clear pathway for educational advancement for midwifery graduates in Uganda. The scope of practice could have been more realistic for new graduates, and it does not prepare them for the International Confederation of Midwives Standards. They also need more training and mentorship. Moreover, Khadijah and Suhartati (2019) also mentioned that the entrepreneurship of midwifery graduates is another avenue for students once they finish their courses. And then, Andayani et al. (2023) found in their tracer study that their participants showed some skills necessary for the 21st century, like leadership, digital literacy, communication, emotional intelligence, pedagogy, and global citizenship, to name a few.

In the local literature in the Philippines, some relevant tracer studies showed a certain degree of relevance in the practice field. For example, Llego and Banez (2017) stated in their tracer study that the midwifery curriculum in their university is job-related and responsive to societal changes. They also added that clinical skills were essential learning that had to be applied for their first job. In addition, Liao and Manalon (2015) identified issues regarding what the students should learn about essential newborn care practices of student-midwives in their practicum.

Gordon College is a local higher education institution in Olongapo City, Philippines. They founded the institution on February 24, 1999, by City Ordinance No. 9. One of the institution's program offerings is the Bachelor of Science in Midwifery (BSM). In the April 2022 Midwives Licensure Examination (MLE), a Gordon College graduate had the Top 6 spot, proving that the institution produces well-equipped midwives. Additionally, the institution had a 71.79% overall performance rate. In November 2022, MLE received a 69.23% overall performance rate. Recently, authorities recognized the institution as one of the Top 8 top-performing schools in the November 20223 MLE, per the Philippine Regulation Commission (PRC).

As per the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Memorandum Order No. 3, s. 2023, *Graduates of Bachelor of Science in Midwifery shall demonstrate requisite knowledge, skills, and values in providing high-quality antepartum, intrapartum, postpartum, referral of complicated conditions of mother and newborn, and primary health care services to individuals, families, and community.* That said, every higher education institution (HEI) is mandated to provide quality learning and training to aspiring midwives, from creating their school curriculum outcomes-based, hiring qualified faculty members, where they stipulated the requirements in the memorandum above, and keeping the lesson delivery updated.

Antiojo (2017) suggests a correlation between quality education and exam success; hence, the reflection of the overall performance ratings of Gordon College in the 2023 MLE may indicate that the institution is indeed offering quality tertiary education, especially to aspiring midwives. Gonzales et al. (2019) supported that the quality of education may influence exam success; thus, relating this finding to this paper suggests that Gordon College is providing quality education that may be deemed beneficial in achieving the MLE. Also, Penang et al. (2022) emphasized that HEIs must produce



locally and globally competitive graduates; hence, it is pivotal to all HEIs that institutions equip their students with the needed character, skills, and knowledge. One of the assurances that HEIs indeed produced such graduates is through conducting a tracer study. That aims to identify and describe different aspects of these graduates.

Thus, this paper aimed to identify the characteristics of the BSM graduates, including their demographic profile, employment, and lived experiences during their stay at Gordon College. In pursuing this study, the researcher sought to use the findings to improve the midwifery curriculum and create more programs that may benefit future student-midwives.

Hence, the paper examined the employment background of the BSM graduates of Gordon College and their perceptions of their program curriculum in terms of its alignment and applicability to their current employment status and sector.

Thus, it sought to answer the following questions:

- 1) How may the respondents be described in terms of:
 - a) civil status;
 - b) sex;
 - c) year graduated; and
 - d) eligibility?
- 2) How may the employment status of the respondents be described in terms of:
 - a) present employment status;
 - b) position and designation;
 - c) place of work; and
 - d) industry or sector of employment?
- 3) How practical is Gordon College's overall BSM training in terms of its applicability to the respondents' present jobs?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The researchers used the descriptive survey design to track the respondents' employment status. Asio (2021) and Sirisilla (2023) stated that descriptive research involves comprehensive and accurate observation of the population or a phenomenon. It may lead to describing relationships, patterns, and trends within the given data. As such, the researchers found this design appropriate to the research objectives. Aside from tracking the respondents' employment status, it also aimed to document patterns or trends that the respondents may offer that may be used to improve the BSM curriculum.

Research Respondents

A total of 73 respondents voluntarily participated in this study. These respondents are graduates of the BSM program from 2018 to 2023. The researchers used the convenience sampling method upon consideration of the availability of the target respondents at a given time. This sampling is the *easiest for the researcher to access*



(Nikolopoulou, 2023) because the researchers may only involve those target respondents willing to participate and may have the time to do so. As such, this is a fitting sampling technique for this paper, as the study aimed to observe if a trend or pattern is happening among the respondents.

Research Instrument

The researcher utilized the graduate tracer study questionnaire from the Commission of Higher Education (CHED) as the research instrument. Then, the researcher distributed the instrument online via Google Forms. There are two significant components in the said instrument; namely, Personal Information, which asks the respondents some of their identifying information such as name, permanent address, mobile phone number, civil status, sex, year of graduation, and eligibility; and Employment Data, which asked the respondents about their current employment status, nature of their work and workplace, the usefulness of values and competencies they had from college that they are using in their job and suggestions that they want to raise to improve their program curriculum.

Statistical Treatment of Data

Using Google Spreadsheets and Microsoft Excel 2019, the statistical data treatment is more descriptive. The researcher employed mean, frequency, and percentage to describe the data gathered to answer the research questions.

RESULTS

The main objective of this study is to examine the employment backgrounds of Gordon College's Bachelor of Science in Midwifery graduates. The following tables show the results of the tracer study.

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Respondents in terms of Sex

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Female	69	94.52
Male	4	5.48
TOTAL	73	100.0

Table 1 displays the frequency and percentage distribution of the student-midwives based on their sex. The table shows that most respondents were females, with a frequency of 69 (or 94.52%). On the other hand, only four individuals identified as male, representing approximately 5.48% of the total. The table represents the sex distribution within the given population. It shows a significant imbalance, with a much higher proportion of females than males.

Table 2. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Respondents in terms of Civil Status

Civil Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	40	54.80



Married	32	43.84
Divorced	1	1.37
TOTAL	73	100.0

Table 2 provides information on civil status, including the frequency and percentage of individuals in each category. According to the table, 73 individuals are included in the data set. Of these, 40 are single, representing approximately 54.80%. Thirty-two are classified as married, accounting for approximately 43.84%. Lastly, one individual is listed as divorced, making up approximately 1.37% of the total. The table presents a snapshot of the distribution of civil status within the given population. It provides insights into the proportions of single, married, and divorced individuals.

Table 3. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Respondents in terms the Year of Graduation

Year of Graduation	Frequency	Percentage
2023	4	5.48
2022	34	46.58
2020	12	16.44
2019	5	6.85
2018	18	24.66
TOTAL	73	100.0

Table 3 displays the frequency and percentage distribution for the respondents' graduation year. The year with the highest number of graduates is 2022, with 34 students, accounting for 46.58% of the total. This result indicates that a significant portion of the group graduated that year. Following 2022, the next most common graduation year is 2018, with 18 students graduating, representing 24.66% of the total. This table also suggests a substantial number of graduates in that particular year.

The remaining years show lower frequencies and percentages. In 2020, 12 students graduated, making up 16.44% of the total. In 2019, 5 students graduated, accounting for 6.85% of the total. Lastly, in 2023, only four students graduated on that year, representing 5.48%.

Table 4. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Respondents in terms Eligibility

Professional Examinations	Frequency	Percentage
MLE	71	97.26
None	2	2.74
TOTAL	73	100.0

Table 4 reveals the frequency and percentage distribution for eligibility of the respondents. From the data, one can infer that most individuals in the group (97.26%) have taken the MLE. This result suggests that the group primarily comprises medical



professionals who have completed the licensing examination. On the other hand, a tiny proportion (2.74%) of the individuals still need to take professional examinations.

Table 5. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Respondents in terms of Employability

Employment Status	Frequency	Percentage
Employed	69	94.52
Not Employed	4	5.48
TOTAL	73	100.0

Table 5 presents the frequency and percentage distribution for the employability of the respondents. As the table shows, most individuals in the group (94.52%) are employed. This finding indicates that the group has a high rate of employment. On the other hand, a small portion (5.48%) of the individuals are not employed. The result implies that a good number of the BSM graduates were working, which is a good gauge of the employability of the course.

Table 6. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Respondents in terms of Present Employment Status

Status	Frequency	Percentage
Casual	8	10.96
Contractual	17	23.29
Plantilla	38	52.05
Temporary	2	2.74
Self-Employed	4	5.48
No Response	4	5.48
TOTAL	73	100.0

Table 6 depicts the result of the frequency and percentage distribution of the respondents in terms of employment status. We can observe that most individuals fall under the "Plantilla" category, representing 52.05% of the total. This finding suggests that most groups hold permanent positions or jobs with regular employment benefits. Other notable categories include "Contractual" at 23.29% and "Casual" at 10.96%, indicating that many individuals have temporary or part-time employment arrangements. The categories "Temporary," "Self-Employed," and "No Response" represent smaller proportions of the group, each accounting for 2.74% of the total.

Table 7. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Respondents in terms of Place of Work

Place of Work	Frequency	Percentage
Local	59	80.82
National	7	9.59
	16	



Abroad	3	4.11
No Response	4	5.48
TOTAL	73	100.0

For table 7, it reveals the frequency and percentage distribution for the respondents' place of work. One can observe that most individuals (80.82%) work locally. This result suggests that most individuals in the group are employed within their immediate geographical area. The category "National" represents 9.59% of the total, indicating that a smaller proportion of individuals work in other parts of the country. The category "Abroad" represents 4.11% of the total, suggesting that a few individuals work outside their home country. The category "No Response" represents 5.48% of the total, indicating that a small number of individuals did not provide information about their place of work.

Table 8. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Respondents in terms of Industry or Sector of Employment

Employment	Frequency	Percentage
Government	50	68.49
NGO	9	12.33
Foundation	1	1.37
Corporation	9	12.33
No Response	4	5.48
TOTAL	73	100.0

Table 8 represents the respondents' base employment frequency and percentage distribution. Among the respondents, the majority (50 individuals, or 68.49%) reported affiliation with the government. The table suggests that the government is significant in the surveyed population.

Nine respondents (12.33%) were affiliated with NGOs and corporations. This table indicates a relatively minor representation of these entities compared to the government. Additionally, one respondent (1.37%) reported affiliation with a foundation. Foundations appear to have the lowest representation among the listed entities, and only four respondents (5.48%) did not respond to their affiliation; thus, the researcher categorized it as having "No Response."

Table 9. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Respondents in terms of Perception Related to Program-Job Alignment

Program-Job Alignment	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	66	90.41
No	3	4.11
No Response	4	5.48
TOTAL	73	100.0



Table 9 depicts the respondents' program-job alignment perception frequency and percentage distribution. The majority (66 individuals, or 90.41%) answered "Yes" to the question. The table indicates strong agreement or support for the presented statement or condition. On the other hand, three respondents (4.11%) answered "No," indicating disagreement or lack of support for the statement or condition.

Four respondents (5.48%) did not respond, and the researcher categorized it as "No Response." The reasons for not responding could vary, including a lack of opinion, refusal to answer, or any other factors that may have influenced their decision not to respond.

Table 10. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Respondents Based on Perception Regarding Applicability of Overall Training at Gordon College to Current Job

Applicability of Training	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	72	98.63
No	1	1.37
TOTAL	73	100.00

Table 10 shows the frequency and percentage distribution for the applicability of overall training of the respondents to their current job. The majority (72 individuals, or 98.63%) answered "Yes" to the question, indicating agreement or affirmation of the presented statement. On the other hand, only one respondent (1.37%) answered "No," indicating disagreement or negation of the statement.

DISCUSSION

The primary purpose of this tracer study is to assess the current whereabouts and other pertinent status of Gordon College's Bachelor of Science in Midwifery program graduates. The current study found exciting results that can help the institution improve its curriculum and instruction for the Midwifery course and profession.

Based on the results, most respondents were female, comprising more than 90 percent of the total respondents. More than half of the respondents were still single. There were also more graduates from the year 2022 as compared to other years. An overwhelming majority also took the Midwifery Licensure Exam (MLE) for their corresponding eligibility. In terms of employability, the majority of the respondents were employed, and more than half were already occupying plantilla (regular) positions. However, in a past study by Yulinda et al. (2019), they found that 95.1% have work working in private institutions (76%). Although the study was done in a different country, what is important here is that most midwives were employed. Most of them also work locally, primarily in government agencies. In contrast, the study by Kumakech et al. (2020) showed that 87.6% of their graduates were employed in maternal and newborn health facilities, and 12.4% were in their private practice.



Most respondents also responded affirmatively that their program is aligned with their job and that the applicability of their training in the institution is compatible with their current job. The current study affirmed the past paper of Khadijah and Suhartati (2019), stating that 77% of the midwifery alumni have jobs in their competency area.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings, the researchers conclude the following:

- 1) Forty (40) respondents are single, 32 are married, and one is divorced. There is a gender imbalance in the respondents that may affect the interpretation of results since the majority (69) of them are female and only four are male. Furthermore, there is also an imbalance of representation of respondents from the different graduate years the study attempts to cover. Thirty-one of the respondents are graduates of 2022, while the least are from 2023 graduates, with only 4. Lastly, 71 of the respondents had their licenses already, while only two still needed to possess eligibility.
- 2) Only sixty-nine (69) out of the 73 respondents are working already, wherein 59 work in the local sector, 7 are in the national industry, and three are abroad. Furthermore, of the total number of working respondents, 38 are in Plantilla status, 17 are Contractual, eight are Casual, four are Self-Employed, and two are Temporary status. The industry with the most significant number of working graduates is the government, with 50 out of the 69, followed by nine each for NGOs and Corporations, then 1 in the foundation.
- 3) Sixty-six respondents affirmed that their overall training at Gordon College under their degree program aligns with their current job, status, and industry, while 3 negate it. Lastly, 72 respondents agreed that their overall undergraduate training applies to their current job, and only one disagreed.

RECOMMENDATION

- 1) The college can also establish mechanisms for gathering feedback from alums and employers to ensure ongoing alignment between training and job requirements.
- 2) Investigating why the few respondents indicated a need for more alignment between their training and current jobs is essential.
- 3) Given that most respondents work in the local sector, the researchers would benefit from exploring the reasons behind this trend.
- 4) To address the gender imbalance, future studies should recruit a more balanced sample by actively reaching out to male respondents or implementing targeted recruitment strategies.



- 5) The researchers should also investigate the reasons behind the distribution of different employment statuses (Plantilla, Contractual, Casual, Self-Employed, Temporary) among the respondents.

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