

**GRADUATE OUTCOMES AND EMPLOYABILITY: A TRACER STUDY
OF 2023 GRADUATES FROM SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, POKHARA
UNIVERSITY, NEPAL**

A Graduate Tracer Study Report

Submitted to

School of Business, Pokhara University

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Graduate Tracer Study Committee

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Tracer Study Research Committee

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The Graduate Tracer Study (GTS) conducted by the School of Business at Pokhara University investigates the post-graduation outcomes of the 2023 cohort of Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA), Bachelor of Business Administration in Banking and Insurance (BBA-BI), and Master of Business Administration (MBA) graduates. Grounded in human capital theory, the study aims to evaluate employment status, further educational pursuits, and the alignment of academic preparation with labor market demands. By analyzing graduates' career trajectories and perceptions of their education, the study seeks to inform curriculum development, enhance teaching methodologies, and strengthen institutional strategies to improve graduate employability.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive cross-sectional research design, targeting 259 graduates from the 2023 cohort, with data collected from 181 respondents (69.89% response rate) using stratified random sampling. Data collection employed a structured questionnaire, adapted from the University Grants Commission, Nepal, administered via Google Forms and physical surveys. The questionnaire captured demographic details, employment outcomes, job satisfaction, and perceptions of curriculum relevance. Descriptive statistics were analyzed using IBM SPSS-26, with ethical considerations including informed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality ensured throughout the process. The study was conducted from March to June 2025 under the supervision of the Graduate Tracer Study Committee (GTSC).

Findings

The findings regarding the employment and further study of graduates demonstrated that 59.1% of graduates were employed, 23.2% pursued further studies, and 17.6% were not engaged in either employment or further education. The data reveals that the most prevalent recruitment source is direct application to the company, accounting for 37.4% of cases, indicating a strong reliance on vacancy announcements. Personal network/referrals follow as the second most significant source, contributing 24.3%, while online job portals constitute 21.5% of recruitment instances. Social media accounts for a modest 10.3%, whereas job referrals from faculty and college career services/job fairs represent the least used sources, at 1.9% and 1.9%, respectively.

The data indicates that the majority of graduates, constituting 58.9% (n = 63), secured employment within less than 6 months. A substantial proportion, 23.4% (n = 25), achieved employment within the 6 to 12-month interval, while 17.8% (n = 19) required more than 12 months. The data indicates that 86.9% (n = 93) of graduates are employed in private sector organizations, while 13.1% (n = 14) are engaged in government or public sector roles. For the type of employment, the majority, 87.9% (n = 94), are employed in full-time positions, with the remaining 12.1% (n = 13) occupying part-time roles. The data indicates that the largest proportion of graduates, 44.9%, earn between 20,000 and 40,000, reflecting the most common income range. A significant segment, 30.8%, falls within the 40,001–60,000 bracket, while 13.1% earn above 80,000. Smaller proportions, 8.4% and 2.8%, are observed in the 60,001–80,000 and below 20,000 categories, respectively. The findings on graduates' satisfaction level with their jobs indicate that the largest proportion, 43% (n=46), report being satisfied to some extent, closely followed by 42.1% (n = 45) who are satisfied. A smaller segment, 10.3% (n = 11), are strongly satisfied, while the minority, 4.7% (n=5), express dissatisfaction.

Similarly, among 107 employed graduates, the perceptions regarding the appropriateness of their employment and work relative to their level of education, the findings reveal that 45.8% (n = 49) consider their work moderately appropriate, representing the largest proportion. A substantial segment, 22.4% (n = 24), rate it as slightly appropriate, while 20.6% (n = 22) deem it very appropriate. Smaller proportions include 7.5% (n = 8) who find it not at all appropriate and 3.7% (n = 4) who consider it completely appropriate. Regarding satisfaction with the alignment of employment and academic degree, the majority, 54.2% (n = 58), are satisfied, followed by 37.4% (n = 40) who are satisfied to some extent. Minor segments include 4.7% (n = 5) who are dissatisfied, and 1.9% (n = 2) each for strongly satisfied and strongly dissatisfied.

Likewise, the findings on employment of graduates by level of education indicate that among 109 individuals with a Master's degree, 75 (68.8%) are currently employed, while 34 (31.2%) are unemployed. In contrast, among the 72 individuals with a Bachelor's degree, 32 (44.4%) are employed, and 40 (55.6%) are unengaged. Among the 82 graduates from the MBA Full Time (FT) program, 53 (64.6%) are currently employed, while 29 (35.4%) are unemployed. Among 27 graduates from the MBA Job Holder (JH) program, 22 (81.5%) are employed, and 5 (18.5%) are not, indicating a notably high employment rate within this group. Among the 49 BBA graduates, 22 (44.9%) are employed, and 27 (55.1%) are not. Similarly, among the 23 BBA-BI graduates, 10 (43.5%) are employed, and 13 (56.5%) are unemployed.

Moreover, among 181 traced graduates, 108 graduates are pursuing or planning higher education, showing a strong preference for traditional academic degrees over professional certifications. Master's programs dominate at 71.3%, followed by PhDs at 13.0%, MPhil at 10.2%, and professional certifications at just 5.6%. Notably, 90.7% of these graduates are continuing in the same field as their previous degree, indicating a strong commitment to specialization and deepening expertise rather than shifting to a new discipline. Among the 107 graduates pursuing advanced studies, 66.7% experienced career advancement, though only 39.8% reported higher earnings, indicating that promotions are more common than salary increases. Despite 90.7% staying in their original field, only 36.1% felt their employability skills improved, suggesting limited practical skill gains from further education. Motivations also varied, while 40.7% pursued studies out of personal interest, 59.3% were likely driven by external factors like career growth. Additionally, social or family pressure played a minor role, with just 16.7% citing it as a motivator. Among all surveyed graduates 41.4% remained neutral about whether adequate advice was offered, while nearly 42.0% agreed and 10.5% disagreed with the statement. Strikingly, only 6% strongly agreed that the guidance was helpful.

Finally, among 107 employed graduates, graduates rated skills development highly (4.16), with favorable perceptions of their field of study (3.75) and practical experiences like internships (3.73). Foundational courses (3.51) and academic results (3.42) received moderate ratings. Key competencies included planning, organizing, and coordinating (3.96), cross-disciplinary knowledge (3.72), and understanding complex systems (3.70), though field-specific theoretical knowledge scored lower (3.38). Soft skills were strong, with teamwork (4.28), communication (4.23), and leadership (4.19) rated highly, while research (3.78) and computer skills (3.80) showed weaknesses. Personal competencies like responsibility (4.17), loyalty (4.13), and adaptability (4.04) were robust, but initiative (3.81) and tolerance (3.80) need improvement. Among 181 graduates, teacher-student relationships (3.81) and teaching quality (3.64) were strengths, but technical equipment (3.26), internships (3.31), and lab facilities (2.98) were deficient, indicating a need for enhanced practical training and infrastructure to align with labor market demands.

Conclusion

The study concluded the School of Business's success in fostering soft skills and interpersonal competencies, contributing to graduates' professional readiness. However, gaps in technical

and research skills, combined with moderate curriculum relevance, indicate a need for stronger alignment with industry demands. Higher employment rates among Master's graduates suggest the value of advanced education, but disparities by gender and ethnicity highlight systemic inequities. Institutional strengths in teaching quality and student-faculty relationships are offset by deficiencies in infrastructure and career support, limiting the full realization of graduate potential.

Recommendations

The study has outlined several recommendations based on major findings of the study. First, to enhance program effectiveness, the School of Business should revise curricula to integrate technical and research skills, expand internship opportunities through industry partnerships, and improve infrastructure, particularly lab facilities. Second, strengthening career services with robust counselling and networking events is critical. Third, regular stakeholder consultations and employment trend analyses should guide curriculum updates. Finally, further research is recommended to explore differential outcomes across programs and address disparities in employment access, ensuring graduates are better equipped for professional success.

Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iii
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	iv
LIST OF TABLES	x
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xi
CHAPTER 1	1
INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.2 Objectives of the Study	7
1.3 Institutional Arrangement to Conduct the Study	8
1.4 Graduate Batch Taken for the Study.....	9
1.5 Data Collection - Instruments and Approach	9
1.6 Scope and limitations of the Study	10
CHAPTER 2	12
DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS	12
2.1 Graduates' Characteristics	12
2.3 Source of Employment Recruitment	14
2.4 Employment Duration after Graduation.....	15
2.5 Type of Organization and Employment.....	16
2.6 Monthly Income of the Graduates.....	16
2.7 Current Job Satisfaction	17
2.8 Graduates' Perceptions of Employment Appropriateness Relative to Education Level and Satisfaction with Alignment to Academic Degree.....	18
2.9 Employment Status of Graduates by Level of Education.....	20
2.10 Employment Status of Graduates by Program	20
CHAPTER 3.....	27
MAJOR FINDINGS.....	27
3.1 Sociodemographic and Academic Profile of Graduates.....	27
3.2 Employment and Further Study Status of the Graduates	27
3.3 Issues Related to the Quality and Relevance of Programs	28
3.4 Programs' Contribution to Graduates' Professional and Personal Development.....	28
CHAPTER 4	30
IMPLICATIONS TO INSTITUTIONAL REFORM.....	30
4.1 Strengthening Academic Programs	30
4.2 Enhancing Student Support Services.....	31
4.3 Improve Career Services	31

4.4 Fostering a Conducive Learning Environment.....	31
4.5 Establishing a Framework for Continuous Improvement.....	32
CHAPTER 5	33
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION	33
REFERENCES	35
APPENDICES	40

	Page No
LIST OF TABLES	
Table 1: Graduates' Socio-demographic and Academic Profile	13
Table 2: Distribution of Graduates by Type of Organization and Employment Type	16
Table 3: Distribution of Graduates' Perceptions on Employment Appropriateness and Alignment with Academic Degree	18
Table 4: Distribution of Currently Employed Graduates by Gender	18
Table 5: Distribution of Currently Employed Graduates by Ethnicity	20
Table 6: Employment Status of Graduates by Level of Education	20
Table 7: Distribution of Employed Graduates by Program	20
Table 8: Graduate Preferences for Type and Field of Further Education	20
Table 9: Graduate Motivations and Outcomes of Further Studies	21
Table 10: Mean Score Analysis of the Perceived Outcome to the Employability of the Graduates	22
Table 11: Mean Score Analysis of Self-reported Competencies of Employed Graduates	23
Table 12: Mean Score Analysis of Professional and Soft Skills Developed During Academic Journey	23
Table 13: Mean Score Analysis of Personal and Interpersonal Competencies of Employed Graduates	25
Table 14: Mean Score Analysis of Academic Experience and Institutional Facilities	25

	Page No
LIST OF FIGURES	
Figure 1: Distribution of Employment Status among Graduates	14
Figure 2: Distribution of Employment Recruitment Sources among Graduates	15
Figure 3: Distribution of Time Duration Until Employment among Graduates	15
Figure 4: Distribution of Monthly Income earned by Graduates	16
Figure 5: Distribution of Current Job Satisfaction among Graduates	17
Figure 6: Academic advice offered	22

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In the contemporary global economy, higher education institutions (HEIs) are pivotal in equipping graduates with the skills necessary to navigate an increasingly competitive and dynamic labor market (Dai & Pham, 2024; Khalid et al., 2025; Sulistiawan, 2025). The rapid evolution of technology, globalization, and shifting economic paradigms has transformed employer expectations, placing emphasis not only on academic proficiency but also on employability skills such as critical thinking, adaptability, and collaboration (Tushar & Sooraksa, 2023).

Graduate employability has emerged as a critical concern for stakeholders, including students, HEIs, employers, policymakers, and scholars. Research highlights the challenges graduates face in securing employment, particularly as labor market demands evolve (Calvo & Garcia, 2021; Mainga et al., 2021; Mgaiwa, 2021; Uddin, 2021). Consequently, both emerging and developed economies have prioritized graduate employability as a policy objective (Calvo & Garcia, 2021; Mgaiwa, 2021). For instance, Nepal's higher education policy underscores the importance of equipping graduates with skills relevant to labor market needs (Bajracharya, 2020). Similarly, global recognition is growing for the need to develop broader competencies beyond academic credentials to enhance graduate employability (Berko et al., 2021). As a result, the employability of business graduates has become a focal point for governments, policymakers, HEIs, employers, and students (Romgens et al., 2020).

Despite the acknowledged importance of employability skills, research indicates that many undergraduates fail to develop these competencies during their university education (Jackson & Edgar, 2019; Amoroso & Burke, 2018). This shortfall often stems from the predominant focus of universities and business schools on discipline-specific knowledge, which overlooks the practical skills demanded by the workforce (Amoroso & Burke, 2018; Mello et al., 2021). This disconnect between academic curricula and workplace requirements poses significant challenges for students, employers, and the education system as a whole (Hossain et al., 2020). To bridge this gap, universities and business schools must adopt a more practical approach by

incorporating real-world management practices into their curricula. Providing students with opportunities to develop practical skills through internships, work placements, and experiential learning is critical (Thomas & Ambrosini, 2021). Such initiatives enable students to better understand the practical applications of their academic knowledge, making them more attractive to employers seeking work-ready graduates (Amoroso & Burke, 2018). The alignment between higher education outcomes and workforce requirements has thus become a critical area of inquiry for educators, policymakers, and employers (Jackson et al., 2024; Okolie et al., 2019; Tight, 2023). In this context, graduate tracer studies (GTS) have emerged as a robust methodological tool to evaluate this alignment. By tracking the post-graduation trajectories of alumni, GTS provide valuable insights into graduates' employment status, career progression, and the relevance of their education to professional demands (Bhatti et al., 2022; Cheng et al., 2022; Tight, 2023). These studies systematically collect data on employment outcomes, including employment rates, job types, income levels, and job satisfaction, as well as graduates' perceptions of the skills and knowledge acquired during their studies (Egesah & Wahome, 2017; Hossain et al., 2020). Through such analyses, GTS offer a comprehensive framework for assessing and improving the alignment between higher education and labor market needs.

Historically, graduate tracer studies have been employed in various contexts to address specific educational and labor market challenges. In Europe, for instance, the CHEERS (Careers after Higher Education – A European Research Study) project conducted in the late 1990s provided comprehensive data on graduate employment across multiple countries, influencing higher education reforms (Schomburg & Teichler, 2006). Similarly, in Africa and Asia, tracer studies have been used to assess the impact of vocational and technical education on employability, highlighting the need for curricula that balance theoretical knowledge with practical skills (Cuadra et al., 2019; Dzomeku et al., 2024). These studies also explore the transition from education to work, identifying barriers such as skill mismatches, economic constraints, or structural labor market challenges (Kassa, 2023). By analyzing these outcomes, HEIs can evaluate the effectiveness of their curricula, teaching methodologies, and support services in preparing students for professional success (Cheng et al., 2022; Goncalves et al., 2024; Herlinawati et al., 2024). Furthermore, tracer studies contribute to institutional accountability, enabling universities to demonstrate their impact on socioeconomic development and respond to stakeholder demands for transparency and quality assurance (Patulin et al., 2024).

A significant body of literature highlights the use of tracer studies globally as an essential component of quality assurance in higher education. For instance, Senekal and Munro (2019) emphasize that these studies serve as vital feedback mechanisms for institutions to assess educational outcomes and adapt to changing labor market requirements. Internationally, tracer studies have showcased their efficacy in gauging how well preparations, such as those in nursing and teacher education, align with professional expectations (Romadlon & Arifin, 2021). Findings from various studies highlight that many graduates are often underprepared for their respective roles in the workforce. Bautista et al. noted that a significant number of graduates from a Philippine university reported a disconnect between the skills they acquired and those required by employers, thereby emphasizing the need for regular updates to curricula (Bautista et al., 2023). Moreover, global studies show that while some graduates encounter seamless transitions into employment, others face significant delays, contingent on factors such as market saturation in specific sectors and the educational quality of the institutions attended (Egesah, 2019). Empirical evidence from Southeast Asian contexts showcases the need for universities to dynamically adjust their programs based on these observations, thereby enhancing their overall academic outputs (Austria, 2023). Regionally, the application of tracer studies exhibits significant variation depending on local educational and economic contexts. For example, a tracer study among teacher education graduates in the Philippines highlighted significant gaps in English proficiency and pedagogical skills, linking these deficiencies to the corresponding employment status of graduates (Abas et al., 2020). The study identified a direct correlation between well-trained educators and graduate success, suggesting that enhancing teacher training could bolster overall employability within this sector. Additionally, research from tourism and hospitality sectors throughout Southeast Asia demonstrates that graduates with competencies closely aligned to industry needs secure higher employment rates, emphasizing the importance of sector-specific training and its evaluation through tracer studies (Putra et al., 2022). The study also suggested that enhancing institutional collaboration with industry partners could foster job-readiness among graduates.

Similarly, graduate tracer studies in Nepal focus on tracking the career paths of alumni to assess the alignment between educational outputs and labor market demands. These studies are crucial for educational institutions to gather feedback on their curricula and understand graduates' experiences post-graduation. Shrestha (2021) emphasized the need for continuous improvement in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) programs, highlighting that tracer

studies provide valuable insights about graduates' transitions from education to employment. This feedback is integral in refining curricula to meet the ever-evolving needs of industries and ensuring that graduates are equipped with relevant skills. Similarly, Paudel et al. (2021) highlighted the socio-economic determinants that influence employment outcomes for university graduates in Nepal. The research provides evidence that graduates often encounter significant challenges in securing jobs, primarily due to a mismatch between the skills they acquire during their studies and those demanded by the labor market. Moreover, a qualitative study conducted by Gurung et al. (2023) explores the perceptions of undergraduate business program graduates regarding their employability. The study revealed that many graduates feel ill-prepared for the job market, influenced by factors such as inadequate training and a lack of emphasis on soft skills during their education. This underscores an urgent need for universities to integrate practical experiences and skill development into their curricula, ensuring that graduates can meet employer expectations. Additionally, a tracer study focusing on engineering graduates revealed that over 21% of graduates were unemployed due to a lack of practical skills and workforce readiness, raising concerns about the effectiveness of current engineering education frameworks (Sharma, 2023). Employers have pointed out the need for graduates to possess specific technical competencies relevant to their fields, such as software coding for IT graduates and hands-on experience for mechanical engineers.

Nepal's higher education system has undergone significant transformation in recent times. As of the current data, Nepal is home to a total of 16 universities, comprising 12 central universities and 4 provincial universities. In addition to these, there are 7 medical academies operating across the country. In the year 2023/024, there are altogether 1,432 higher education campuses, among them 164 constituent (11.4 percent) campuses, 545 community (38.06 percent) campuses, and 723 private (50.49 percent). In the year 2023/024, total 633,053 students are enrolled in Higher Education. Tribhuvan University (TU) accounts for the largest share of student enrollment, with 491,299 students, representing 77.61% of the total enrolled population, highlighting its dominant position in higher education. The second-largest shares are Purbanchal University (PU) and Pokhara University (PoKU), enrolling 39,780 (6.28%) and 35,200 (5.56%) students, respectively. Kathmandu University (KU) follows with 21,053 students (3.33%), and Far-Western University (FWU) enrolls 19,356 students (3.06%). Similarly, Tribhuvan University (TU) dominates with 74,149 graduates, accounting for 76% of the total graduates, reflecting its position as the largest and most influential university in Nepal.

Other universities, such as Pokhara University (7.84%) and Purbanchal University (8.05%), contribute moderately to the total graduate pool, with 7,651 and 7,856 graduates, respectively. Kathmandu University (KU) also plays a notable role with 3,077 graduates (3.15%) (UGC, 2024). Despite this growth, Nepal faces significant challenges in aligning educational outcomes with labor market needs. The country's economy is characterized by a large informal sector, limited formal employment opportunities, and significant outmigration of graduates seeking work abroad (Rana et al., 2023; Sharma, 2024). According to the International Labour Organization, youth unemployment in Nepal remains a concern, with many graduates either underemployed or engaged in jobs unrelated to their field of study (ILO, 2015). These challenges underscore the need for empirical data to evaluate the employability of graduates and the relevance of academic programs. Further, in the context of Nepal, where youth unemployment and underemployment remain significant challenges, tracer studies offer a mechanism to assess whether HEIs are fulfilling their mandate to prepare graduates for meaningful careers.

Pokhara University, established in 1997 under the Pokhara University Act, is a prominent autonomous institution in Nepal dedicated to delivering high-quality education aligned with national development goals. The university offers diverse programs across science, engineering, management, and humanities, enrolling over 39,710 students in 68 programs through four constituent schools and 65 affiliated institutions. The university fosters academic excellence, research, and innovation through partnerships with 66 international institutions, promoting student and faculty exchanges and collaborative research to produce market-oriented, globally competent graduates. The School of Business, established in 1999 under the faculty of management studies, is a cornerstone of this mission, offering programs such as MBA, BBA, BBA-BI, and BBA-Finance. It emphasizes innovative pedagogies and practical relevance to prepare students for dynamic business environments, fostering creativity, critical thinking, and managerial expertise. The school of business at Pokhara University, committed to producing globally competent and market-ready graduates, plays a pivotal role in advancing Nepal's socio-economic development through its innovative business and management programs. Conducting a graduate tracer study (GTS) is essential to evaluate the effectiveness of its academic offerings and ensure alignment with the evolving demands of the labor market. The rationale for such a study is multifaceted. Firstly, a GTS provides critical insights into graduates' employment outcomes, including employment rates, job types, income levels, and job

satisfaction, thereby assessing the relevance of the school's curriculum to professional demands (Bhatti et al., 2022; Cheng et al., 2022). Secondly, it identifies gaps between the skills acquired by graduates and those required by employers, enabling the school to refine its teaching methodologies and integrate practical competencies such as critical thinking, adaptability, and collaboration (Hossain et al., 2020; Jackson & Edgar, 2019). Thirdly, feedback from alumni, as key stakeholders, offers valuable perspectives on the strengths and weaknesses of the school's programs, facilitating evidence-based improvements in curriculum design and pedagogy. Finally, by tracking alumni career progression, the GTS strengthens the school's ability to foster partnerships with industry, enhance graduate employability, and contribute to national development goals, ensuring its programs remain responsive to both domestic and global business landscapes (Tight, 2023).

The present study is underpinned by the theoretical assumption that higher education contributes significantly to enhancing the collective stock of knowledge, skills, and competency of graduating students and enriches their employability skills that ultimately lead to graduate employability, a widely accepted assumption of the human capital theory (Becker, 1962). Similarly, the capacity of a graduate to obtain work is heavily influenced by their human capital, as noted by Fugate et al. (2004) in their model of graduate employability. These factors include a person's age as well as their education and work experience), job performance, and the organization in which they work. They contend that education and experience—two of the numerous components of human capital—are the best indicators of future professional success. Therefore, the study employed the framework of human capital theory on which the discussion of employability has been built. The human capital theory proposed by Becker (1962) explains the relationship between education and the labour market. Investment in education and training is evaluated, like any other investment, concerning its rate of return. The theory proposes a sequence of causal relationships linking (1) investment in education and training, (2) skill development, (3) increased productivity, and (4) increased employability, higher earnings and economic growth (Souto-Otero 2007, 2010). Human capital refers to individual attributes, such as knowledge, skills, experience, training, abilities, talent, intelligence, and judgment. Human Capital Theory (HCT) is predicated on the idea that money spent on education and training is well spent since it increases individual productivity. Therefore, working harder will benefit me financially and help me find more employment opportunities. Further, it has been suggested that having access to high-quality higher education (i.e., training) improves one's chances of finding and succeeding in a job. According to this theory, a person's employability measures

how well they have made themselves more marketable in the professional world (Becker, 1962). Human capital analysis as a theoretical framework, regular university curriculum reviews, competence development through university-industry partnerships, strengthened quality assurance systems, and alignment of university education with the country's development plans are all crucial to shaping and improving a person's employability. Therefore, this study used HCT as its theoretical lens to study recent graduates' employability.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The Graduate Tracer Study (GTS) conducted at the School of Business, Pokhara University, focuses on the 2023 cohort of bachelor's and master's level graduates, aiming to evaluate their employment status, sectors of engagement, job roles, and the alignment of their academic learning with workplace expectations. By systematically gathering feedback from alumni, this study seeks to provide evidence-based insights to inform curriculum development, teaching methodologies, career support services, and institutional policies. The School of Business has established itself as a leading institution in Nepal, delivering business education that integrates theoretical rigor with practical application. By tracing the career paths, entrepreneurial endeavors, and further educational pursuits of its graduates, this study aims to identify strengths and areas for improvement within the school's academic offerings, fostering partnerships with industry stakeholders and refining pedagogical approaches.

The specific objectives of this graduate tracer study are as follows:

1. To investigate the current employment status and further educational pursuits of graduates from the MBA, BBA, and BBA-BI programs.
2. To evaluate the quality of education provided by the School of Business and its impact on graduates' personal and professional development.
3. To analyze variations in personal development and employment outcomes among graduates based on gender, ethnicity, program type, and other socio-demographic characteristics.
4. To identify critical factors essential for enhancing the academic quality of the School of Business.

1.3 Institutional Arrangement to Conduct the Study

To ensure the successful execution of the graduate tracer study for the School of Business at Pokhara University, a structured institutional framework was prepared. This framework outlined the organizational structure, roles, responsibilities, and coordination mechanisms required to conduct the study efficiently and achieve its objectives. The institutional arrangements were designed to facilitate data collection, analysis, and reporting while ensuring compliance with ethical standards and institutional policies. The study was conducted by Graduate Tracer Study Committee (GTSC). The committee comprised of seven members including 6 faculty with one GTSC coordinator and 1 administrative personnel. The committee worked under the guidance of school director. The GTSC coordinator was responsible for managing day to day operations, coordinate activities among team members, develop timelines, and ensure methodological rigor. The committee also assigned faculty members and administrative staff of the school to engage in data collection with the graduates of 2023. This data collection team were responsible for administering survey instrument, manage alumni contact databases and ensure data accuracy. Similarly, the GTSC also assigned two faculty from the committee itself for the task of analyzing the data who had proficiency in statistical analysis. Their responsibilities were to process and analyze quantitative data, and interpret findings. The GTSC also had one administrative officer from the School of Business to handle logistical arrangements, manage communication with stakeholders, and maintain records of correspondence, manage graduate contact databases including contact number and email, and financial transactions.

The GTSC held regular committee meetings to monitor progress, address challenges, and make strategic decisions. Minutes of these meetings were also documented for transparency. The committee also maintained regular communication with the director of the school regarding the updates and progress of the work. The administration section of the school assisted the committee in updating information and facilitating outreach to MBA, BBA, and BBA-BI graduates through emails, social media platforms, and alumni networks.

The School of Business allocated budget to support the graduate tracer study, covering personnel costs, such as data collection expenses, including report writing and printing. The study employed online survey platforms, such as Google Forms for quantitative data collection with those graduates who were not available in Pokhara during the time of study and physical

survey instrument were filled by graduates who were available in Pokhara during the time of study. The study was conducted over a three months period of time starting from March, 2025 to June, 2025. The data collection extended over these 3 months.

1.4 Graduate Batch Taken for the Study

The graduate tracer study conducted by the School of Business (SOB) at Pokhara University focuses exclusively on graduates from the Master of Business Administration (MBA), Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA), and Bachelor of Business Administration in Banking and Insurance (BBA-BI) programs from the academic batch of 2023. This targeted selection aligns with the study's objectives to assess the employment outcomes and further educational pursuits of these specific cohorts. A total of 259 students successfully completed their respective programs during the specified academic years. However, the study was able to trace and collect the data from only 181 graduates, which form the basis of the dataset. The scope of the study is limited to analyzing the employment status and educational trajectories of these graduates, ensuring a focused examination of their post-graduation experiences. By concentrating on this batch, the study aims to provide precise and relevant insights into the alignment of the school's academic programs with labor market demands, thereby informing future curriculum enhancements and institutional strategies.

1.5 Data Collection - Instruments and Approach

This graduate tracer study (GTS) adopted a descriptive cross-sectional research design to comprehensively assess the post-graduation trajectories of alumni from the school of business, Pokhara University. The study focused on collecting quantitative data related to employment outcomes, such as employment rates, job types, income levels, job satisfaction, and graduates' perceptions of the relevance of their education and skills to professional demands using a questionnaire survey. The target population for the graduate tracer study consists of all graduates from the School of Business, Pokhara University, who completed their degrees in the 2023 academic cohort across the Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA), Bachelor of Business Administration in Banking and Insurance (BBA-BI), and Master of Business Administration (MBA) programs. According to official data from the school's administration, this cohort comprises 259 graduates who have issued their academic transcripts, serving as a reliable indicator of program completion. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure representation across program types. A sample size of 181 graduates

(69.89% of the population) was targeted, calculated using a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error, following Cochran's (1977) formula for finite populations and a non-response rate of 10%.

Data was collected through a structured online questionnaire using Google Forms and physical distribution of the survey questionnaire. The survey questionnaire was adapted from the University Grants Commission, Nepal, which included closed-ended questions to gather demographic details, employment status, job roles, income levels, and satisfaction with acquired skills, alongside Likert-scale items to assess the perceived relevance of the curriculum to workplace demands. The questionnaire was distributed via email and alumni networks, with reminders sent after two weeks to maximize response rates. A team, including faculty members and administrative staff of the school of business, assisted in the data collection process.

Quantitative data from the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Descriptive analysis summarized employment rates, job types, and satisfaction levels, graduates' perception of course alignment with the job and the strengths and weaknesses of the courses being taught. Statistical software IBM SPSS-26 version was used for data processing. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring they were aware of the study's purpose, their voluntary participation, and their right to withdraw at any time. Anonymity and confidentiality were maintained by assigning unique identifiers to participants.

1.6 Scope and limitations of the Study

The graduate tracer study (GTS) at the School of Business, Pokhara University, focused on evaluating the post-graduation trajectories of alumni from the 2023 cohort, encompassing graduates of the Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA), Bachelor of Business Administration in Banking and Insurance (BBA-BI), and Master of Business Administration (MBA) programs, totaling 181 respondents out of 259 graduates based on academic transcript records. The study aimed to assess employment outcomes, including employment rates, job types, income levels, and job satisfaction, as well as the relevance of acquired skills and knowledge to labor market demands. Using quantitative approach, the study collected quantitative data through structured survey questionnaire. The findings will inform curriculum development, enhance teaching methodologies, and strengthen alignment between academic programs and workforce requirements, contributing to the school's mission of producing

market-ready professionals. Additionally, the study will provide valuable data to support Pokhara University's strategic goals of improving graduate employability and fostering industry partnerships, thereby advancing Nepal's socio-economic development.

The study is subject to several limitations. First, the focus on the 2023 cohort (181 graduates) may limit the generalizability of findings to other cohorts or programs within Pokhara University, as employment outcomes and skill relevance may vary across years and disciplines. Second, a potential low response rate to the questionnaire could affect the representativeness of the sample, despite efforts to mitigate this through multiple contact methods (e.g., email, alumni networks). Third, the study's reliance on self-reported data may introduce subjectivity, particularly regarding income levels and job satisfaction.

CHAPTER 2

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

This chapter presents the findings derived from the tracer study questionnaire conducted among graduates of the School of Business, Pokhara University. The analysis encompasses key aspects, including the employment status of graduates, the quality and relevance of the academic programs, and the programs' contributions to graduates' professional and personal development. Additionally, the chapter evaluates the educational quality, the alignment of higher education with labor market needs, and challenges associated with teaching-learning processes and institutional facilities. The data provides critical insights to inform curriculum enhancements and improve the overall effectiveness of the school's academic offerings.

2.1 Graduates' Characteristics

The data presented in the table 1 below provides a comprehensive overview of the demographic and academic characteristics of 181 graduates from the School of Business, Pokhara University, who participated in the graduate tracer study. The analysis focuses on gender, ethnicity, parents' education level, area of specialization, grade point average (GPA), and academic programs completed, offering insights into the composition of the graduate cohort. The sample comprised 59.7% female graduates (n=108) and 40.3% male graduates (n=73). Similarly, the ethnic composition is predominantly Brahmin and Chhetri, constituting 75.7% of the sample (n=137). Janajati graduates account for 19.3% (n=35), while Madhesi and Dalit graduates represent 1.1% (n=2) and 2.8% (n=5), respectively. The "Others" category also constitutes 1.1% (n=2). Likewise, the educational attainment of graduates' parents varies widely. The largest group, 44.2% (n=80), completed secondary education (Class 9–12), followed by 27.6% (n=50) with tertiary education (Bachelor's and above). Additionally, 22.7% (n=41) attained basic education (Class 1–8), and 5.5% (n=10) were not formally educated. Moreover, the most common specialization was finance, pursued by 50.8% of graduates (n=92), followed by marketing at 21.5% (n=39). Banking and insurance accounts for 12.2% (n=22), general management 9.4% (n=17), and accounting 6.1% (n=11). Furthermore, the majority of graduates, 43.1% (n=78), achieved a GPA between 3.00 and 3.59, followed by 38.1% (n=69) with a GPA of 3.60 to 4.00, indicating strong academic performance among the cohort. A smaller proportion, 18.8% (n=34), scored between 2.00 and 2.99. This distribution suggests that most graduates performed

well academically, with over 80% achieving a GPA of 3.00 or higher, potentially correlating with competitive employability. Additionally, the Master of Business Administration Full-Time (MBA FT) program was the most common, completed by 45.3% of graduates (n=82), followed by the Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) at 27.1% (n=49). The MBA Job Holder (MBA JH) and Bachelor of Business Administration in Banking and Insurance (BBA-BI) programs were completed by 14.9% (n=27) and 12.7% (n=23), respectively.

Table 1: Graduates' Socio-demographic and Academic Profile

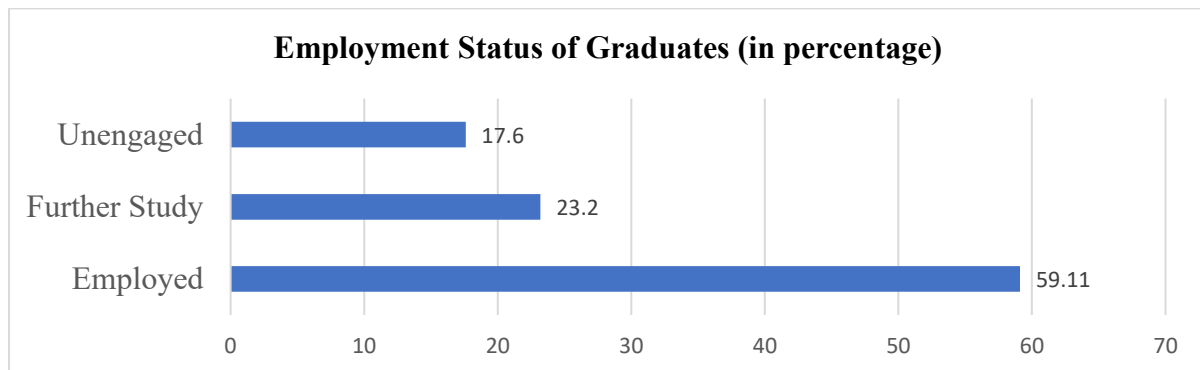
Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	73	40.3
Female	108	59.7
Ethnicity		
Brahmin & Chhetri	137	75.7
Janajati	35	19.3
Madhesi	2	1.1
Dalit	5	2.8
Others	2	1.1
Parents' education level		
Not formally educated	10	5.5
Basic education (Class 1-8)	41	22.7
Secondary education (Class 9-12)	80	44.2
Tertiary education (Bachelor's and above)	50	27.6
Accounting	11	6.1
Finance	92	50.8
General Management	17	9.4
Marketing	39	21.5
Banking and Insurance	22	12.2
Grade Point		
3.60 - 4.00	69	38.1
3.00 - 3.59	78	43.1
2.00 - 2.99	34	18.8
Academic program completed from the School of Business		
MBA FT (Full Time)	82	45.3
MBA JH (Job Holder)	27	14.9
BBA	49	27.1
BBA-BI	23	12.7
Total	181	100

2.2 Employment and Further Study Status of the Graduates

Figure 2 illustrates the employment status of graduates across three distinct categories: Unengaged, Further Study, and Employed. The data indicates that the majority of graduates,

constituting 59.11%, are employed. A notable proportion, 23.2%, are engaged in further study, while 17.6% remain unengaged. These figures suggest a significant trend towards employment among graduates, with few graduates pursuing further education, and a smaller segment remaining unengaged in either employment or further study.

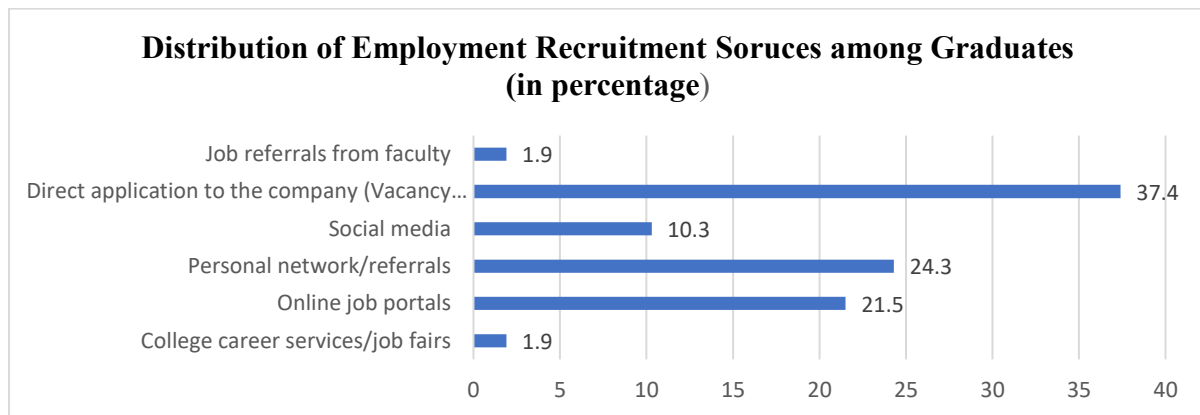
Figure 1: Distribution of Employment Status among Graduates



2.3 Source of Employment Recruitment

Figure 3 presents the distribution of employment recruitment sources among graduates. The data reveals that the most prevalent recruitment source is direct application to the company, accounting for 37.4% of cases, indicating a strong reliance on vacancy announcements. Personal network/referrals follow as the second most significant source, contributing 24.3%, while online job portals constitute 21.5% of recruitment instances. Social media accounts for a modest 10.3%, whereas job referrals from faculty and college career services/job fairs represent the least used sources, at 1.9% and 1.9%, respectively. Statistically, the distribution highlights a skewed preference towards direct applications and personal networks, with the mean percentage across all sources approximating 16.2% and a standard deviation of approximately 13.2%, underscoring the variability in recruitment source efficacy.

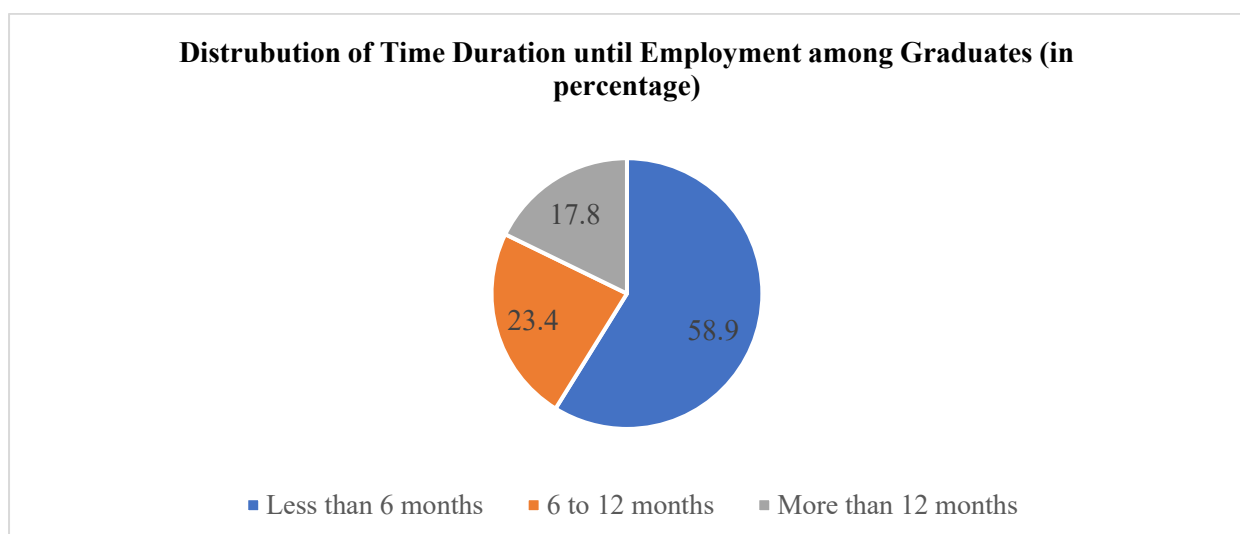
Figure 2: Distribution of Employment Recruitment Sources among Graduates



2.4 Employment Duration after Graduation

Figure 4 depicts the distribution of time duration until employment among a sample of 107 graduates. The data indicates that the majority of graduates, constituting 58.9% ($n = 63$), secured employment within less than 6 months. A substantial proportion, 23.4% ($n = 25$), achieved employment within the 6 to 12-month interval, while 17.8% ($n = 19$) required more than 12 months. This distribution suggests that the majority of graduates transition into employment relatively quickly, with a notable decline in frequency as the duration extends beyond 6 months.

Figure 3: Distribution of Time Duration Until Employment among Graduates



2.5 Type of Organization and Employment

Table 2 presents the distribution of 107 graduates across type of organization and type of employment. In type of organization, the data indicates that 86.9% (n = 93) of graduates are employed in private sector organizations, while 13.1% (n = 14) are engaged in government or public sector roles. For the type of employment, the majority, 87.9% (n = 94), are employed in full-time positions, with the remaining 12.1% (n = 13) occupying part-time roles.

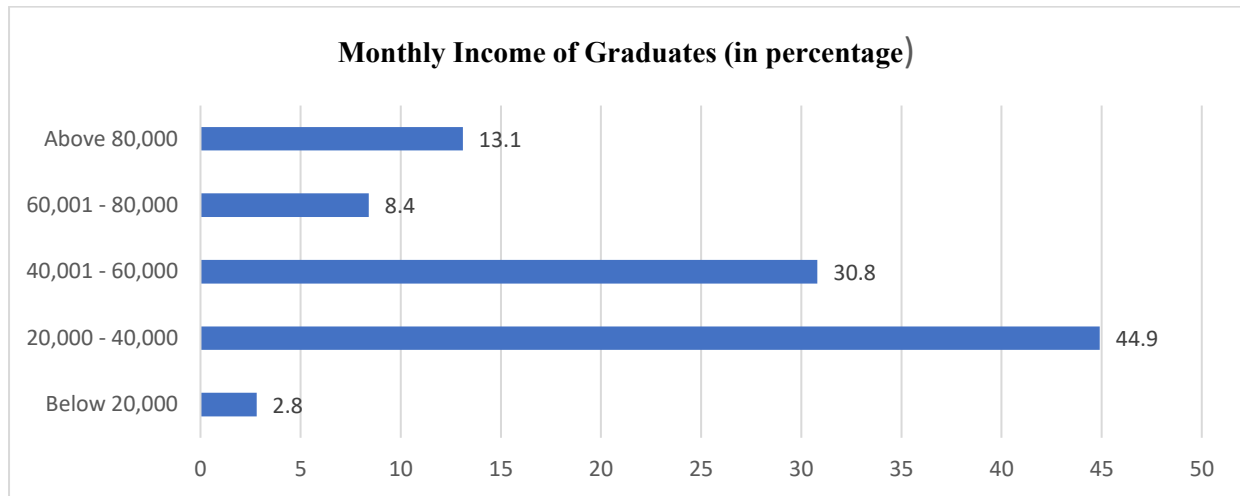
Table 2: Distribution of Graduates by Type of Organization and Employment Type

Categories	Frequency	Percent
Type of organization		
Government/Public	14	13.1
Private	93	86.9
Type of employment		
Full-time	94	87.9
Part-time	13	12.1
Total	107	100

2.6 Monthly Income of the Graduates

Figure 5 demonstrates the distribution of monthly income among graduates. The data indicates that the largest proportion of graduates, 44.9%, earn between 20,000 and 40,000, reflecting the most common income range. A significant segment, 30.8%, falls within the 40,001–60,000 bracket, while 13.1% earn above 80,000. Smaller proportions, 8.4% and 2.8%, are observed in the 60,001–80,000 and below 20,000 categories, respectively.

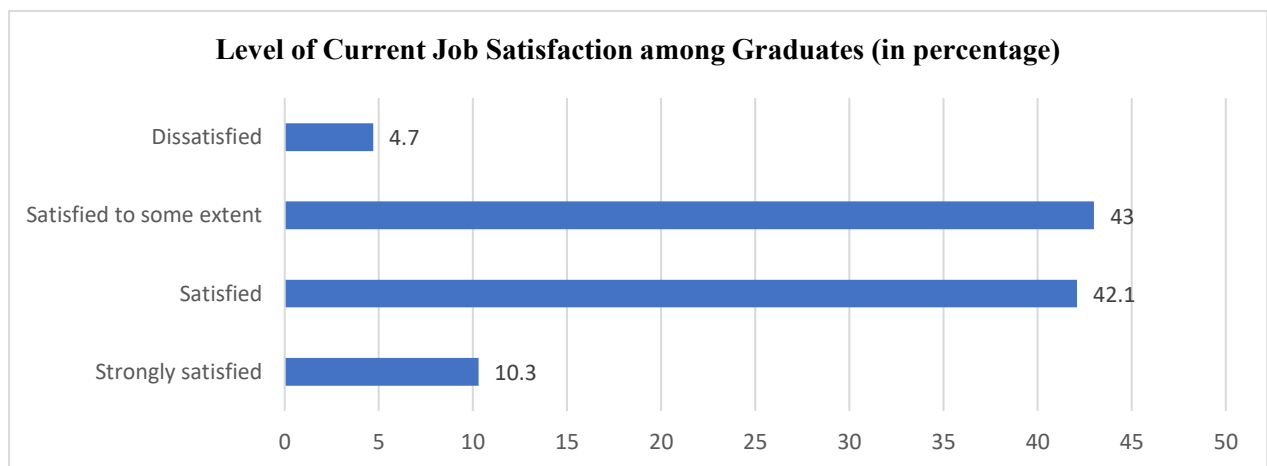
Figure 4: Distribution of Monthly Income earned by Graduates



2.7 Current Job Satisfaction

Figure 6 shows the distribution of current job satisfaction levels among graduates. The findings indicates that the largest proportion, 43% (n=46), report being satisfied to some extent, closely followed by 42.1% (n = 45) who are satisfied. A smaller segment, 10.3% (n = 11), are strongly satisfied, while the minority, 4.7% (n = 5), express dissatisfaction. The distribution suggests a predominantly positive to neutral job satisfaction trend among graduates, with a minimal proportion indicating dissatisfaction.

Figure 5: Distribution of Current Job Satisfaction among Graduates



2.8 Graduates' Perceptions of Employment Appropriateness Relative to Education Level and Satisfaction with Alignment to Academic Degree

Table 3 presents the distribution of 107 graduates' perceptions regarding the appropriateness of their employment and work relative to their level of education, as well as their satisfaction with the alignment between their area of employment and academic degree. For the appropriateness of employment, the data reveals that 45.8% (n = 49) consider their work moderately appropriate, representing the largest proportion. A substantial segment, 22.4% (n = 24), rate it as slightly appropriate, while 20.6% (n = 22) deem it very appropriate. Smaller proportions include 7.5% (n = 8) who find it not at all appropriate and 3.7% (n = 4) who consider it completely appropriate. Regarding satisfaction with the alignment of employment and academic degree, the majority, 54.2% (n = 58), are satisfied, followed by 37.4% (n = 40) who are satisfied to some extent. Minor segments include 4.7% (n = 5) who are dissatisfied, and 1.9% (n = 2) each for strongly satisfied and strongly dissatisfied. This distribution suggests a generally moderate to positive perception of employment appropriateness and a predominant satisfaction with the alignment between employment and academic preparation among graduates.

Table 3: Distribution of Graduates' Perceptions on Employment Appropriateness and Alignment with Academic Degree

To what extent is your employment and work appropriate to your level of education		
	Frequency	Percent
Not at all appropriate	8	7.5
Slightly appropriate	24	22.4
Moderately appropriate	49	45.8
Very appropriate	22	20.6
Completely appropriate	4	3.7
Total	107	100
Satisfied with the alignment of your area of employment and academic degree		
Strongly satisfied	2	1.9
Satisfied	58	54.2
Satisfied to some extent	40	37.4
Dissatisfied	5	4.7
Strongly dissatisfied	2	1.9
Total	107	100

2.8.1 Employed Graduates by Gender

Table 4 shows the employment status of graduates by gender. Among male graduates, 61.6% (45 out of 73) reported being currently employed, while 38.4% (28 graduates) were not employed. For female graduates, 57.4% (62 out of 108) were employed, and 42.6% (46 graduates) were not. This indicates a slightly higher employment rate among male graduates compared to female graduates. However, the difference is not very large, suggesting relatively comparable employment outcomes between genders, though females show a slightly higher proportion of unemployment. This may point to underlying gender related challenges or barriers in accessing job opportunities.

Table 4: Distribution of Currently Employed Graduates by Gender

Gender	Currently employed		Total
	Yes	No	
Male	45 (61.6%)	28 (38.4%)	73 (100%)
Female	62 (57.4%)	46 (42.6%)	108 (100%)

2.8.2 Employed Graduates by Ethnicity

Table 5 depicts the employment status of graduates based on their ethnicity. Among Brahmin and Chhetri graduates, 60.6% (83 out of 137) are currently employed, while 39.4% (54 graduates) are not. Janajati graduates have a similar employment rate, with 57.1% (20 out of 35) employed and 42.9% unemployed. All Madhesi graduates (2 in total) reported being unemployed, indicating a significant employment gap within this group. Among Dalit graduates, 60% (3 out of 5) are employed, and 40% are not. For the "Others" category, employment is evenly split at 50% (1 out of 2). Overall, the data suggest that Brahmin/Chhetri and Dalit graduates have relatively higher employment rates, while Janajati graduates follow closely behind. The complete lack of employment among Madhesi graduates, though based on a small sample, may indicate barriers or inequalities in access to job opportunities that warrant further attention.

Table 5: Distribution of Currently Employed Graduates by Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Currently employed		Total
	Yes	No	
Brahmin & Chhetri	83 (60.6%)	54 (39.4%)	137 (100%)
Janajati	20 (57.1%)	15 (42.9%)	35 (100%)
Madhesi	0 (0.0%)	2 (100.0%)	2 (100%)
Dalit	3 (60.0%)	2 (40.0%)	5 (100%)
Others	1 (50.0%)	1 (50.0%)	2 (100%)

2.9 Employment Status of Graduates by Level of Education

Table 6 demonstrates the distribution of employment status among graduates based on their educational level, specifically Master's and Bachelor's degrees, with corresponding frequencies and percentages. Among the 109 individuals with a Master's degree, 75 (68.8%) are currently employed, while 34 (31.2%) are not. In contrast, among the 72 individuals with a Bachelor's degree, 32 (44.4%) are employed, and 40 (55.6%) are not. This distribution indicates a higher employment rate among Master's degree holders compared to Bachelor's degree holders, suggesting a potential positive correlation between higher educational attainment and current employment status.

Table 6: Employment Status of Graduates by Level of Education

Level	Currently employed		Total
	Yes	No	
Masters	75 (68.8%)	34 (31.2%)	109 (100%)
Bachelors	32 (44.4%)	40 (55.6%)	72 (100%)
Total	107	74	181

2.10 Employment Status of Graduates by Program

Table 7 presents the distribution of current employment status among graduates across various academic programs. Among the 82 graduates from the MBA Full Time (FT) program, 53 (64.6%) are currently employed, while 29 (35.4%) are not. For the 27 graduates from the MBA Job Holder (JH) program, 22 (81.5%) are employed, and 5 (18.5%) are not, indicating a notably high employment rate within this group. Among the 49 BBA graduates, 22 (44.9%) are employed, and 27 (55.1%) are not. Similarly, among the 23 BBA-BI graduates, 10 (43.5%) are

employed, and 13 (56.5%) are not. The total sample reflects a varied employment landscape, with the MBA JH program exhibiting the highest employment rate (81.5%), followed by MBA FT (64.6%), while BBA and BBA-BI programs show lower rates (44.9% and 43.5%, respectively).

Table 7: Distribution of Employed Graduates by Program

Academic Program	Currently employed		Total
	Yes	No	
MBA FT (Full Time)	53 (64.6%)	29 (35.4%)	82 (100%)
MBA JH (Job Holder)	22 (81.5%)	5 (18.5%)	27 (100%)
BBA	22 (44.9%)	27 (55.1%)	49 (100%)
BBA-BI	10 (43.5%)	13 (56.5%)	23 (100%)

Table 8: Graduate Preferences for Type and Field of Further Education

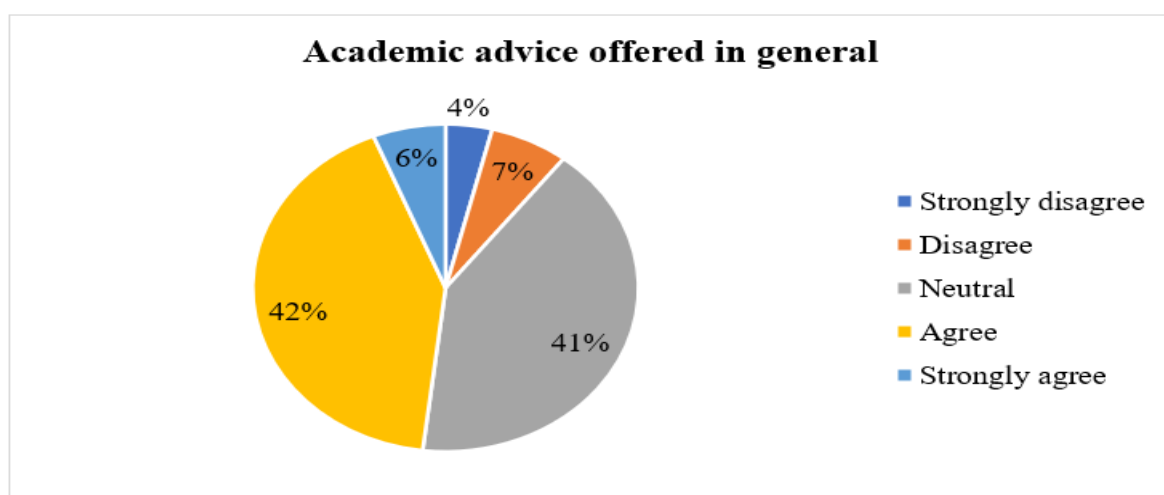
Particulars	Categories	Frequency	Percent
Type of higher studies program you enrolled in or are planning to pursue	Master's degree	77	71.3
	MPhil	11	10.2
	Doctoral degree (PhD)	13	13
	Professional certification	6	5.6
Area/field of study is your higher studies program	Same as previous degree	97	90.7
	Different	10	9.3

Table 8 presents data on 108 graduates pursuing or planning higher education, showing a strong preference for traditional academic degrees over professional certifications. Master's programs dominate at 71.3%, followed by PhDs at 13.0%, MPhil at 10.2%, and professional certifications at just 5.6%. Notably, 90.7% of these graduates are continuing in the same field as their previous degree, indicating a strong commitment to specialization and deepening expertise rather than shifting to a new discipline.

Table 9: Graduate Motivations and Outcomes of Further Studies

Particulars	Categories	Frequency	Percent
Career advancement/promotion	Yes	72	66.7
	No	35	33.3
Higher earning potential	Yes	43	39.8
	No	64	60.2
Personal interest in the subject	Yes	44	40.7
	No	63	59.3
Improving employability skills	Yes	39	36.1
	No	68	63.9
Social/family expectations	Yes	18	16.7
	No	89	83.3

Table 9 reveal that among the 107 graduates pursuing advanced studies, 66.7% experienced career advancement, though only 39.8% reported higher earnings, indicating that promotions are more common than salary increases. Despite 90.7% staying in their original field, only 36.1% felt their employability skills improved, suggesting limited practical skill gains from further education. Motivations also varied, while 40.7% pursued studies out of personal interest, 59.3% were likely driven by external factors like career growth. Additionally, social or family pressure played a minor role, with just 16.7% citing it as a motivator. Overall, the data show that while postgraduate education often supports career progression, its impact on income, skills, and motivations is mixed.

Figure 6: Academic advice offered

Among all surveyed graduates 41.4% remained neutral about whether adequate advice was offered, while nearly 42.0% agreed and 10.5% disagreed with the statement. Strikingly, only 6% strongly agreed that the guidance was helpful. This shows that many graduates were unsure

about the support they received, and very few felt strongly positive about it. The low level of strong approval suggests that academic advising is an area that needs improvement to better support students in planning their further studies.

Table 10: Mean Score Analysis of the Perceived Outcome to the Employability of the Graduates

Indicators	Mean	SD
Field of study	3.75	1.182
Foundational courses/specializations	3.51	1.152
Academic results	3.42	1.091
Practical /work experience (Internships)	3.73	1.293
Skills	4.16	1.074

Table 10 describes responses from 107 employed graduates on the perceived outcome to the employability of the graduates of School of Business at Pokhara University, prepared them for employment, using a 1 to 5 scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Graduates rated their field of study (3.75) and practical experience like internships (3.73) favorably. Foundational courses and specializations (3.51) and academic results (3.42) received moderate ratings. Skills development scored the highest (4.16), highlighting strong satisfaction in this area. While overall feedback is positive, varied responses suggest a need to strengthen academic and foundational components to enhance graduate readiness.

Table 11: Mean Score Analysis of Self-Reported Competencies of Employed Graduates

Indicators	Mean	SD
Enhanced academic knowledge	3.52	1.067
Cross-disciplinary knowledge	3.72	1.044
Field-specific theoretical knowledge	3.38	1.155
Understanding complex social, organizational and technical systems	3.70	1.039
Planning, organizing and coordinating	3.96	.999

Table 11 presents descriptive statistics summarizing the self-reported competencies of employed graduates from the School of Business, Pokhara University, Nepal. It is based on the five key indicators measuring learning outcomes and skill enhancement gained through their academic experience. Planning, organizing, and coordinating received the highest rating 3.96, indicating strong and consistent development in managerial skills. Cross-disciplinary knowledge 3.72 and understanding complex systems 3.70 were also rated favorably. Enhanced academic knowledge scored moderately at 3.52, while Field-specific theoretical knowledge received the lowest score 3.38, reflecting lower satisfaction and greater variation. Overall,

graduates valued managerial and interdisciplinary competencies, while field-specific theoretical instruction could be further strengthened.

Table 12: Mean Score Analysis of Professional and Soft Skills Developed During Academic Journey

Indicators	Mean	SD
Computer skills	3.8	1.24
Problem-solving ability	4.02	1.028
Learning abilities	4.18	0.909
Research skills	3.78	1.119
Communication skills	4.23	0.917
Information technology skills	3.82	1.089
Negotiating skills	3.82	1.044
Creativity	3.78	1.067
Working under pressure	4.08	1.001
Time management skills	4.19	0.892
Working independently	4.08	1.001
Working in teams	4.28	0.93
Leadership skills	4.19	0.982

Table 12 presents the self-assessment of 107 employed graduates from the School of Business, Pokhara University, Nepal, on a range of professional and soft skills developed during their academic journey. Each skill is measured on a 5-point scale, and the responses are summarized using mean scores and standard deviations.

Among the listed indicators, working in teams scored highest 4.28, followed by leadership and time management 4.19, and communication 4.23. Skills like learning abilities, working under pressure, and working independently also scored well around 4.08. Moderate ratings were given to problem-solving 4.02, information technology, negotiation 3.82, and computer skills 3.80, with computer skills showing the most variability 1.24. Lower scores appeared in research skills and creativity both 3.78. Overall, graduates feel confident in key soft skills but suggest the need to strengthen research, creativity, and technical skills in the curriculum.

Table 13: Mean Score Analysis of Personal and Interpersonal Competencies of Employed Graduates

Indicators	Mean	SD
Initiative	3.81	0.943
Adaptability	4.04	0.941
Assertiveness, decisiveness, and persistence	3.86	0.895
Taking responsibilities	4.17	0.874
Loyalty, integrity	4.13	0.912
Critical thinking	3.92	0.923
Getting personally involved	3.89	0.894
Tolerance, appreciation of different points of view	3.8	0.936

Table 13 presents descriptive statistics on personal and interpersonal competencies of employed graduates from the School of Business, Pokhara University. These indicators reflect behavioral and attitudinal attributes important for workplace effectiveness. Taking responsibility received the highest rating 4.17, followed by loyalty and integrity 4.13 and adaptability 4.04, showing strong confidence in ethical behavior, dependability, and flexibility. Skills like critical thinking 3.92, personal involvement 3.89, and assertiveness and decisiveness 3.86 were also rated positively, reflecting proactive engagement in the workplace. Slightly lower scores for initiative 3.81 and tolerance of different views 3.80 suggest areas for further development.

Table 14: Mean Score Analysis of Academic Experience and Institutional Facilities

Indicators	Mean	SD
Relevance of the program to your professional(job) requirements	3.43	0.92
Opportunity to choose courses and areas of specialization	3.6	0.988
Teaching and learning environment	3.61	0.891
Teaching quality/Delivery quality of teachers	3.64	0.925
Teacher-student relationship	3.81	0.914
Extracurricular activities/Sports facilities	3.07	1.183
Provision of work placements and internships	3.31	1.018
Lab facility	2.98	1.152
Problem-solving ability	3.39	0.904
Library facilities	3.59	1.005
Supply of teaching and learning materials	3.5	1.003
Other qualities of technical equipment (computer labs, multimedia, smartboard, videoconferencing, etc.)	3.26	1.082

Table 14 reveals the responses from 181 graduates of the School of Business, Pokhara University, assessing various aspects of their academic experience and institutional facilities regarding their professional development. Among all indicators, the teacher-student relationship received the highest rating 3.81, followed by teaching quality 3.64 and learning

environment 3.61, indicating strong satisfaction with faculty interaction and classroom experience. Course selection flexibility 3.60 and library facilities 3.59 were also rated positively. Moderate scores for program relevance 3.43, availability of learning materials 3.50, and support for problem-solving skills 3.39 indicate a need to strengthen the curriculum's alignment with job market demands. Lower ratings for technical equipment 3.26, internships 3.31, extracurricular activities 3.07, and lab facilities 2.98 point to weaknesses in practical exposure and co-curricular support. Overall, graduates appreciated teaching and academic support but noted gaps in experiential learning and infrastructure.

CHAPTER 3

MAJOR FINDINGS

This chapter synthesizes the major findings from the tracer study conducted among 181 graduates of the School of Business, Pokhara University, based on the data presented and analyzed in Chapter 2. The findings are organized under key thematic headings to provide a comprehensive overview of the graduates' profiles, employment outcomes, program quality, professional and personal development contributions, teaching-learning dynamics, and institutional facilities.

3.1 Sociodemographic and Academic Profile of Graduates

The socio-demographic profile of the graduates reveals several notable trends. Female students significantly outnumbered their male counterparts, comprising 59.7% of the cohort compared to 40.3%. Ethnically, Brahmin and Chhetri graduates dominated the sample at 75.7%, while marginalized groups such as Madhesi (1.1%) and Dalit (2.8%) were markedly underrepresented, highlighting potential disparities in access to higher education. Parental education levels varied, with 44.2% of parents having completed secondary education and 5.5% lacking formal education, suggesting diverse socioeconomic backgrounds among students. In terms of academic specialization, finance was the most popular choice (50.8%), followed by marketing (21.5%), indicating a strong preference for these fields. Academically, the majority of graduates performed well, with over 80% achieving a GPA of 3.0 or higher, including 38.1% who scored between 3.6 and 4.0, reflecting the cohort's strong academic capabilities.

3.2 Employment and Further Study Status of the Graduates

Employment status data indicates that 59.11% of graduates are employed, 23.2% are engaged in further study, and 17.6% remain unengaged. Employment duration analysis of 107 graduates shows 58.9% (n=63) secured jobs within less than 6 months, 23.4%The employment outcomes of graduates demonstrate both positive trends and notable disparities. A majority (59.1%) secured employment, while 23.2% chose to pursue further studies, leaving 17.6% currently unengaged in either employment or education. Job acquisition was relatively swift, with 58.9% finding work within six months of graduation. The private sector emerged as the primary employer, absorbing 86.9% of working graduates, while full-time positions dominated at 87.9%. Income levels varied, with 44.9% earning between NPR 20,000–40,000 monthly and a smaller but significant 13.1% commanding salaries above NPR 80,000. However, disparities persist across demographic

groups: male graduates enjoyed slightly higher employment rates (61.6%) compared to females (57.4%), and Master's degree holders (68.8%) outperformed their Bachelor's counterparts (44.4%) in employability. Ethnicity also played a role, with Brahmin/Chhetri (60.6%) and Dalit (60%) graduates achieving higher employment rates, while Madhesi graduates faced complete exclusion from employment opportunities, underscoring systemic inequities in the job market. These findings highlight the need for targeted interventions to address gender, educational, and ethnic disparities in graduate employment outcomes.

3.3 Issues Related to the Quality and Relevance of Programs

The tracer study revealed that graduates generally held positive perceptions of their academic programs, with 58% reporting satisfaction and 26.5% being somewhat satisfied, while only 4.5% expressed dissatisfaction. However, the alignment of programs with job market needs received a moderate rating (mean: 3.43/5), indicating room for improvement in curriculum relevance. Graduates viewed their field of study (3.75) and practical experience (3.73) as strengths but rated foundational courses (3.51) and academic results (3.42) lower, suggesting gaps in core academic preparation. While soft skills like teamwork (4.28), communication (4.23), and leadership (4.19) were highly rated, technical and research skills (e.g., computer skills: 3.8, research: 3.78) scored lower, highlighting a need for enhanced practical training. Institutional support showed strong teacher-student relationships (3.81) and teaching quality (3.64), but poor lab facilities (2.98), limited internships (3.31), and weak academic advising (only 6% strongly agreed it was helpful) were noted as key weaknesses. Graduates appreciated course flexibility (3.6) but called for better problem-solving support (3.39) and modernized technical resources (3.26). Additionally, while 66.7% of graduates pursuing further studies reported career advancement, only 39.8% saw higher earnings, and 36.1% felt their employability skills improved, raising questions about the tangible benefits of advanced education. Overall, the findings suggest that while the programs are well-received, improvements in industry-aligned curriculum, practical skill development, infrastructure, and career guidance could further enhance graduate readiness and employability.

3.4 Programs' Contribution to Graduates' Professional and Personal Development

The study highlights that the academic programs at Pokhara University's School of Business have made significant contributions to graduates' professional and personal development. Graduates reported strong competency in essential soft skills like teamwork (4.28), communication (4.23), and leadership (4.19), as well as valuable workplace abilities

such as problem-solving (4.02) and adaptability (4.04). The programs also fostered important personal qualities including responsibility (4.17), integrity (4.13), and critical thinking (3.92). However, technical skills (computer skills: 3.8) and research capabilities (3.78) emerged as areas needing improvement. The data reveals a clear advantage for higher education, with Master's graduates (68.8% employed) faring significantly better than Bachelor's holders (44.4%), particularly those in work-integrated programs like MBA JH (81.5% employment rate). While 54.2% of employed graduates felt satisfied with their degree's alignment to their job, a notable portion (22.4%) found only limited relevance, suggesting some mismatch between academic preparation and workplace requirements. Practical components like internships (3.73) were viewed positively, yet the availability of placements (3.31) was rated poorly, indicating a need for stronger industry partnerships. These findings demonstrate the program's success in developing well-rounded professionals while pinpointing opportunities to enhance technical training, research skills, and career alignment through expanded experiential learning and industry collaboration.

CHAPTER 4

IMPLICATIONS TO INSTITUTIONAL REFORM

Based on the findings of the tracer study, this section delineates policy and practical recommendations to enhance the educational quality, student outcomes, and overall institutional effectiveness at the School of Business, Pokhara University. The recommendations address critical areas such as academic programs, student support services, career development, learning environment, and continuous evaluation to foster institutional reforms aimed at improving student learning, employability, and satisfaction.

4.1 Strengthening Academic Programs

To ensure academic programs are aligned with professional and industry demands, the following measures are proposed:

Curriculum Enhancement: The curriculum should be periodically revised to reflect current industry standards and market requirements. Collaboration with industry experts and alumni during curriculum design and review processes will ensure its relevance and practical applicability.

Skill Development Integration: Incorporate practical skills training, including soft skills, communication, and teamwork, into the curriculum to equip students with competencies essential for professional success.

Faculty Development: Implement continuous professional development programs to enhance faculty members' teaching methodologies and subject expertise. Faculty should be encouraged to engage in research and remain abreast of emerging industry trends to enrich their instructional practices.

Innovative Pedagogical Approaches: Adopt innovative teaching methodologies, such as flipped classrooms, case-based learning, and project-based assignments, to foster interactive and engaging learning experiences.

4.2 Enhancing Student Support Services

To improve the student experience, investments in physical infrastructure and extracurricular opportunities are recommended:

Infrastructure Upgrades: Enhance campus facilities, including the canteen and sports amenities, to provide a conducive environment for students. The canteen should offer diverse, healthy dining options, and sports facilities must be well-maintained and accessible.

Extracurricular Engagement: Promote the establishment of student-led clubs and societies focused on academic, cultural, and recreational interests. Provide adequate resources and institutional support to ensure these initiatives thrive and contribute to holistic student development.

4.3 Improve Career Services

To enhance graduate employability and entrepreneurial prospects, the following initiatives are recommended:

Career Counseling Services: Establish a dedicated career counseling center to provide comprehensive guidance on career planning, job search strategies, resume development, and interview preparation.

Industry Collaborations: Develop robust partnerships with industries to facilitate internship and job placement opportunities. Organize regular career fairs and networking events to connect students with prospective employers.

Entrepreneurship Initiatives: Launch incubation programs to support entrepreneurial ventures, offering resources such as seed funding, mentorship, and dedicated workspaces to encourage students to pursue innovative business ideas.

4.4 Fostering a Conducive Learning Environment

To cultivate a supportive academic ecosystem, the following measures are proposed:

Mentorship Programs: Introduce structured mentorship programs wherein faculty members provide academic and personal guidance to small groups of students, fostering stronger teacher-student relationships.

Feedback Mechanisms: Implement a transparent and systematic feedback system to collect student input on courses, teaching methods, and overall institutional experiences. This feedback should inform continuous improvements.

Technology Integration: Enhance the integration of technology in teaching and learning processes by providing training for faculty and students on the effective use of digital tools and platforms.

Learning Resources: Ensure that the library and other learning resources are well-equipped with up-to-date materials and accessible digital databases to support research and academic inquiry.

4.5 Establishing a Framework for Continuous Improvement

To sustain and evaluate institutional reforms, the following strategies are recommended:

Regular Assessments: Conduct periodic evaluations and surveys to assess the efficacy of implemented reforms. Employ data-driven methodologies to identify areas requiring further enhancement.

Stakeholder Engagement: Involve key stakeholders, including students, faculty, alumni, and industry partners, in the evaluation process to incorporate diverse perspectives and ensure comprehensive feedback.

By implementing these recommendations, the School of Business, Pokhara University, can significantly elevate the quality of its educational offerings, enhance graduate employability, and foster greater student satisfaction. Addressing identified shortcomings while leveraging institutional strengths will create a dynamic and supportive academic environment conducive to student success.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This tracer study examined the outcomes of graduates from Pokhara University's School of Business, focusing on their employment status, perceptions of academic programs, and skill development. Findings indicate varied satisfaction levels with academic experiences, with many graduates reporting positive development in soft skills but identifying gaps in technical and research-related competencies. Employment rates differed significantly by program type and degree level, with work-integrated programs showing particularly strong outcomes. The study highlighted concerns about the alignment between academic preparation and workplace requirements, as well as the need for improved practical training opportunities. Institutional strengths were noted in teaching quality and student-faculty relationships, while weaknesses emerged in infrastructure and career support services. The data also revealed mixed outcomes for graduates pursuing further education, with career advancement not consistently translating to increased earnings. These findings point to both the successes and limitations of current academic offerings in preparing students for professional life.

The study demonstrates that while the School of Business effectively cultivates certain professional competencies, particularly interpersonal and leadership skills, there remain significant opportunities for enhancing program relevance and graduate employability. The disparity between Bachelor's and Master's degree outcomes suggests the value of advanced education, but also indicates potential shortcomings in undergraduate preparation. The identified gaps in technical skill development and practical experience reveal a need for curriculum adjustments to better meet industry demands. Institutional challenges in facilities and career guidance appear to constrain the full realization of graduate potential. The mixed results regarding further education outcomes raise important questions about the return on investment in advanced degrees. Overall, the programs show success in foundational professional development but require strategic improvements to ensure graduates are fully equipped for evolving workplace challenges and opportunities.

To address the identified gaps and enhance program effectiveness, several strategic interventions are proposed. First, curriculum revisions should emphasize technical skill development through expanded coursework in digital tools, data analysis, and applied research methods. Second,

practical training opportunities should be strengthened through increased internship placements, industry partnerships, and experiential learning components. Third, infrastructure improvements are needed, particularly in lab facilities and technological resources, to support skill development. Fourth, career services should be enhanced through more robust advising, employer networking events, and job placement support. Fifth, program alignment with labor market needs could be improved through regular consultation with industry stakeholders and analysis of employment trends. Finally, additional research should be conducted to better understand the factors influencing differential outcomes between degree programs and identify best practices for optimizing graduate success. These measures would collectively work to strengthen the connection between academic preparation and professional requirements.

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APPENDICES

Questionnaire