



(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



GRADUATION, THEN WHAT? IMMEDIATE PLANS AND PREFERRED WORK LOCATIONS AMONG FILIPINO GRADUATING STUDENTS

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World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews, 2026, 32(01), 1734–1744

Publication history: Received on 25 August 2026; revised on 24 October 2026; accepted on 26 October 2026

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30574/wjarr.2026.32.1.2739>

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ABSTRACT

This research provides data on the immediate post-graduation plans and preferred place of work in a voluntary exit survey conducted in Philippine universities and colleges. A secondary quantitative descriptive analysis used the year-based eligibility criterion and latest matching full name to keep 2,136 cases out of 2,172 responses submitted. Each variable was tabulated through counts and percentages while 2,134 valid pairs were cross-tabulated. Reviewing for exams is the most prevalent post-graduation plan (1,115; 52.2%) followed by immediate job searching (506; 23.7%) and taking time off before starting work (327; 15.3%). Another town or city is the most popular location response (706; 33.1%) followed by abroad (675; 31.6%), Home Base (494; 23.1%), and another province (175; 8.2%). Abroad was the choice of 34.1% of the reviewing for exams group and 23.7% of the immediate job searching group while another town or city was chosen by 28.3% and 42.3%, respectively. The researcher's verification of the supplemental records yielded combinations, sequencing, and alternatives that extended the one-choice categories. "Home Base" was undefined, and there were two cases in which field alignment was unresolved. These matched description sets are a point of departure for career counseling. Self-selection, broad representation, single-item measurement, and the lack of follow-up preclude any conclusions about work or migration after college.

Keywords: Graduating Students; Postgraduation Plans; Work-Location Preferences; Career Guidance; Exit Survey; Philippines

1 INTRODUCTION

Immediate postgraduation plans and preferred work locations describe different aspects of transition from college. A student may prioritize a licensure examination while preferring eventual work abroad, or intend an immediate job search while considering several locations. Examining the responses together can help career services clarify the next activity and preferred setting. This study describes stated priorities and preferences, without observing implementation.

Labour statistics recently released offer only background information and not statistical estimates for graduating students. The estimated worldwide unemployment rate of people aged between 15 to 24 years is 12.4% and that which is not engaged in employment, education, or training activities is 20.0% as per the International Labour Organization [1] for the year 2025. For the Philippines, the unemployment rate of the labour force age of 15 years and above is 4.2% in 2025 and 3.8% in 2024 [2].

African research illustrates varied transition pathways. Juan et al. [3] described combinations of livelihood activities among scholarship-supported graduates. A South African review identified variation across institutional, disciplinary, and socioeconomic contexts [4]. These studies call for multi-pathway consideration, yet their settings do not allow comparisons with Philippine exit survey responses.

Tutor et al. [5] studied the employment, degree-job match, citizenship status, and life satisfaction levels of Philippine graduates for academic years 2008–2009 up to 2010–2011. The above historical tracer study looks into college outcomes; an exit survey captures future plans and preferences without necessarily proving job success.

Saldivar et al. [6] explored aspirations including teaching, continued education, licensure, overseas employment, and career shift of 19 first to third year science education majors of a Philippine state university. The above-named narrative study offers a limited qualitative comparison to the presently used graduating student data. Such accounts as well as an exemplary exit survey response fail to cover aspirations of all students.

Migration aspirations and intentions were distinguished in a study of university students from seven non-Philippine countries [7], along with perceived international transferability of education. While this distinction aids in understanding the current set of fields, a work location field is different from both forms of migration. Choosing abroad does not imply a schedule for migration, preparedness, or overseas employment opportunities.

Economic barriers, marginality, and psychosocial factors influencing perceived employability and quality of future employment was studied in senior university students from Türkiye [8]. The current fields do not include these factors of explanation. An intention to prepare for an exam, rest, or work cannot by itself reveal the surrounding barriers and possibilities.

The information gap in the current database would be the joint distribution of the two selected responses. Marginal frequencies will not indicate whether having the preference for working abroad is associated with preparation for examinations, job search, or a temporary hiatus. The available research employs various measures and samples. This study discusses the relationship between the two responses among pooled Filipino data and applies additional wordings and tests to facilitate interpretation. It does not define causes or implementation.

Objectives and research questions

The study aims to describe the two response fields and their combinations, inspect supplementary wording, and examine the sensitivity of selected summaries to record-handling rules. It addresses five questions: (1) What immediate postgraduation plans are recorded? (2) What preferred work locations are recorded? (3) How are work-location responses distributed within the most common immediate-plan groups? (4) What combinations, sequences, alternatives, and ambiguities are described in other responses and companion entries? (5) How much do selected marginal percentages change under the three reported matching-full-name handling rules? The last two questions concern supplementary descriptive checks. Implications for career consultation are proposed from these descriptions rather than evaluated as intervention effects.

2 LITERATURE SYNTHESIS

2.1 Plans and transition outcomes

For transition research, there needs to be an explicit definition of the object of observation. De Vos et al. [9] introduced the concept of sustainable careers through the person, context, and time interaction. Translating this conceptualization into the realm of school-to-work research, Blokker et al. [10] have systematized research findings concerning antecedents and consequences in terms of these categories. Mussagulova et al. [11] have analyzed definitions of career transitions in a broad sense and have concluded about fragmented success definitions and combinations of objective and subjective indicators of success. These meta-analyses provide a broader conceptual foundation than an employment status measurement, but they still fail to validate an exit survey response as a measure of success.

Longitudinal design accounts for change that cannot be explained by an exit questionnaire. According to Grosemans & De Cuyper [12], the development process of the career competences is analyzed at pre-market and post-market entry stages. Concerns and challenges experienced during the labour-market entry were studied by Tomlinson et al. [13] in

relation to recent UK graduates during the coronavirus period. Loe's [14] repeated interviews with US graduates likewise traced revisions to work and life pathways during that period. Repeated observation is a strength of these designs; their constructs, selected populations, and pandemic conditions limit direct comparison with a pooled Philippine survey in 2024. They support follow-up questions about changing plans, rather than an explanation of the present frequencies.

2.2 Career exploration and job search

Hirschi and Koen [15] describe career self-management as a dynamic process involving goals, information gathering, action, and feedback. Kleine et al. [16] found meta-analytic support for relationships between career exploration and the person-cognitive and contextual constructs in Lent and Brown's model [17]. Their evidence concerns measured exploration, which entails gathering information about oneself and career environments. Selecting an immediate activity does not reveal the extent of that exploration. Thus, the current response fields can identify topics for a conversation about preparation while providing no basis for ranking students' self-management or exploration.

Job-search research further separates an intended activity from its quality and results. Wanberg et al. [18] reviewed the process and experience of seeking work, including intensity, content, and persistence. In a quantitative review, van Hooft et al. [19] found that search intensity related to quantitative employment outcomes but did not predict employment quality overall; search quality and self-regulation were relevant to both types of outcome. These syntheses span different job-seeking populations and cannot supply expected outcomes for this cohort. Their distinction is nevertheless consequential: a selected immediate-job-search response measures neither application activity nor the suitability of a later job.

2.3 Resources and unequal opportunities

Resource-based accounts qualify an exclusively individual explanation of transition plans. While De Schepper et al. [20] highlighted socioeconomic disparities in access to appropriate work and employment quality, their second review on social networks characterized network structure, composition, and resources and noted inconsistencies in findings in different approaches [21]. Such reviews call for consideration of circumstances under which a plan can be realized, rather than assuming its feasibility simply by stating the plan. Given that the current measures do not cover socioeconomic status or networks, their appropriateness for the research is still questionable.

Studies that provide empirical background cannot offer a generalizable explanation. Jackson and Tomlinson [22], studying students in Australia and the UK, focused on career planning along with perceptions of employability, career control, and proactive behavior. Hooley et al. [23], based on a survey conducted on a UK jobs board, identified differences between transition attitudes and experiences in terms of gender, class, and ethnicity, with many individual differences being minor. Together with Ayvaz and Karacan-Özdemir's [8] study of resources and constraints in Türkiye, these studies show the value of measuring circumstances directly. Their observational designs and different sampling settings restrict causal interpretation and comparison of prevalence. An examination-review or rest response in the present study cannot be attributed to advantage or disadvantage from the label alone.

2.4 Work location and the timing of mobility

The Philippine studies give a closer context comparison through the use of different constructs. First, Remot et al. [24] tested an expanded theory of planned behaviour on the reported intention of engineering students to migrate using their attitudes, social influences, perceived control, and migration related construct. Second, Gotehus [25] studied the decisions of Filipino nurses on whether to stay in the Philippines or not and illustrated how these decisions may be affected by the circumstances within the family, career opportunities, and time. The first gives an explanation of the concept of intention whereas the second gives a deeper meaning and context on the decision to stay.

Kulka et al. [7] distinguished between migration aspirations and migration plans, emphasizing the necessity of maintaining the distinction between preference, preparation, and migration. The Philippine narratives and the historical tracers are concerned with different aspects of the transition process [5, 6]. African pathways and reviews provide broader context for the comparison without offering directly comparable rates [3, 4]. In this limited review, the contribution is the description of pairs in the existing data. The reasons, feasibility, timing, and outcomes require additional measurement. This review does not cover the entire body of the transition literature.

2.5 Conceptual framework and scope

Lent and Brown's [17] social cognitive model of career self-management provides an interpretive perspective on career preparation, job searching, and the management of work transitions. It directs attention to what people do to manage their careers rather than only to the occupations they select. The current study utilizes the above process perspective to differentiate between a stated next activity and a preferred work location; this two-field differentiation is an

analytical decision made for the current survey. The survey fields do not capture any enactment of self-management behaviors or any constructs in the model; the current analysis does not test the model.

Hirschi and Koen [15] focus on repeated self-regulation, whereas Kleine et al. [16] focus on measured career exploration. Sustainable-career theory considerations also involve context and time [9, 10]. These theories inform future research questions, but not the current descriptive analysis.

The theoretical framework encompasses two response fields found in each record entry: the immediate plan and the preferred working place. Causal priority is not attached to any of them. The three activities (exam preparation, job hunting, resting) do not represent stages of readiness but rather separate actions. Locations are categorical responses and not a mobility scale. It is through coupling the response fields that we can make a comparison of the distributions according to plan classes, but all other factors lie beyond the measurement context.

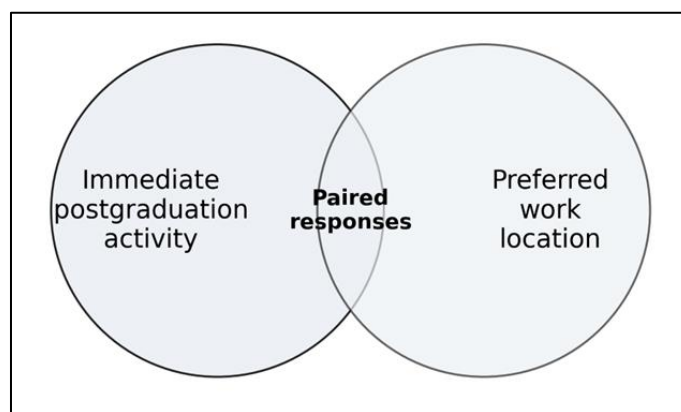


Figure 1: Immediate activity and preferred work location as intersecting response domains

The intersection represents paired responses within the same record. It does not represent a causal relationship, mediation, or a measured latent construct.

3 MATERIALS AND METHODS

3.1 Design and data source

The analytical perspective is in line with postpositivism because the number of responses can be replicated under clear handling procedures, but its interpretation is still restricted by measurement and selection. This approach does not mean that the original survey was testing any causal theory.

The study used a quantitative descriptive cross-sectional secondary analysis of exit interview for graduating students from different colleges and universities in the Philippines. Despite the source title, the data were survey responses rather than interview transcripts. The dataset exported had 2,172 timestamped entries and 48 variables obtained through voluntary participation via the Internet. An invitation denominator and probability sampling frame were unknown, hence no response rate or population weighting could be performed. Sample size was based on available data from the export; no prior sample size calculation was planned for the current secondary analysis study. Reporting is based on the relevant checklist from the STROBE cross-sectional study guidelines and CROSS guidelines for surveys [26, 27]. The existing data basis for sample size is explicitly stated and not presented as sample size calculation [28].

The respondents belonged to various schools within the country of the Philippines. Names and labels of the school affiliates are censored due to ethics clearance. The "College" variable was considered as affiliation information; the name only was not considered for identifying institution type or participating institutions. Findings are aggregated without any institutional or disciplinary comparisons. The affiliations provided were insufficient to create an institutional sampling frame or an institutional distribution. The dates provided refer to the observed entries rather than survey start and end dates. The year of graduation is self-reported and the time of response in relation to the graduation ceremony is unknown.

3.2 Eligibility and repeat submissions

The source preparation entailed having a recorded graduation year of 2024 and a submission timestamp within the calendar year of 2024. This led to the retention of 2,151 submissions and the exclusion of 21. In preparing the de-identified dataset for the secondary analysis, the data custodian standardized family, given, and middle names for

surrounding and repeated white spaces and letter case to detect any repeat submissions. In cases of matching full-name keys, the latest timestamp was kept, and source row order in case of a tie. Excluding 15 earlier matching-name submissions resulted in 2,136 analytical records. Equal numbers of students with different full names were not collapsed. The data custodian stripped off the participant identifiers before providing the dataset through the formal Data Use Agreement. This operational rule is intended to detect possible repeat records, but not verify 2,136 unique individuals.

3.3 Measures and response handling

Immediate plan means the chosen postgraduation activity without a specified start date or time interval. The question for the work-location item was “Where do you prefer to work?” The labels used in substantive responses were kept as recorded following removal of surrounding whitespace. Exact matches for nine principal plan labels and four principal location labels were counted separately. All other nonblank primary-field responses were classified as Other recorded response, which is a residual category that was not considered a shared substantive preference. Two records with blank primary fields and apparent misalignment of fields were classified as Unresolved field alignment. Their primary responses could not be reconstructed.

Home Base was kept as recorded. It was not coded as hometown employment, local employment, remote work, or reluctance to relocate since its intended meaning was not known. Companion responses were reviewed for clarification without changing the chosen primary response. Also, another town or city and another province were not combined into an ordered distance measure.

Supplementary inspection included 32 other primary plan entries, 84 other primary location entries, and the non-empty companion entries related to the two survey questions. Companion text was inspected separate from the chosen primary label. Entries that consisted of n/a, na, none, no, a period, double periods, or a hyphen were identified as placeholder tokens following trimming of the whitespaces and ignoring the letter case. Other strings were kept for descriptive inspection regardless of their meaning. The assistance of artificial intelligence was used for preliminary screening, while the main researchers checked, verified, and accepted the descriptive classification and treatment. The accepted inspection provided the basis for the description of response wording without reclassification of primary categories or thematically frequency calculations.

3.4 Measurement quality

There was no information about original pilot testing or test-retest analysis available for this analysis. Substantive fields are single nominal items; consequently, internal consistency reliability is not relevant. Label handling reproducibility, count matching, and record handling sensitivity tests enhance transparency without providing evidence of psychometric validity. Single choice prevents detection of multiple tasks performed simultaneously, and the definition of Home Base is still unclear. Interpretation is restricted to response, not readiness, adaptability, or migration intention, because construct measurement alignment is essential [29].

3.5 Analysis

Counts and percentages are used to define every single primary field with the use of all the 2,136 retained cases as the denominator, which includes the 2 unclear cases. Percentage is equal to the ratio of the number in the category to 2,136 and multiplying it by 100. In case of paired tables, there are 2,134 records used with usable figures in each of the primary fields, while excluding the unclear alignment cases. The within-plan percentage uses the number of paired records in that particular plan group as the denominator. These three biggest plan categories are listed separately. The rest are simply grouped for concise cross-tabulation purposes but are not treated as a uniform class.

Analyses used Python and openpyxl to produce aggregate counts and cross-tabulations. Checks reconciled category totals, paired denominators, and location margins. A record-handling sensitivity analysis compared the principal latest-full-name rule with retaining all eligible submissions and excluding every submission in repeated-full-name groups. Supplementary entry counts were reconciled with the other-response totals. No inferential tests were conducted because the research questions concern distributions within the retained voluntary-response records. Self-selection and an unavailability of the number of invitations in the denominator further restrict population inference, as explained for online surveys by Andrade [30]. The analysis does not provide estimates of the population prevalence, causality, or the probability of implementation of a particular strategy.

The reproduction test of the source data was conducted using Python 3.12.14 and openpyxl 3.1.5, which reproduced all categories' counts and percentages in Tables 1–3, the sensitivity of the record handling result as reported, and the counts of the supplementary fields as reported in the original export. The masked review workbook had 393 records of the researcher review pertaining to the expected supplementary review set.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Immediate plans after graduation

Board examination preparation was the most common strategy (1,115; 52.2%), then job search (506; 23.7%), followed by rest plus work (327; 15.3%). Together, these strategies totaled 1,948 out of 2,136 records (91.2%). Seventy individuals stated that they were already employed. Other minor strategies were study, business, other degree, and retooling. Thirty-two individuals indicated some other field of action, while two individuals had an unsolved field problem (Table 1).

Table 1: Recorded immediate plans after graduation

Response label	n	%
Review and take Board Exam	1,115	52.2
Immediately look for a job	506	23.7
Rest for a while then work	327	15.3
Work (I am already employed)	70	3.3
Take advance studies (Masters/Law)	27	1.3
Establish a business	24	1.1
Manage family business	14	0.7
Get another course (degree)	10	0.5
Take course units for re-tooling	9	0.4
Other recorded response	32	1.5
Unresolved field alignment	2	0.1
Total	2,136	100.0

Note. Denominator is all 2,136 retained records. Principal response labels are reproduced as recorded. Other recorded response is a residual data category. Rounded percentages sum to 100.1%.

4.2 Preferred work locations

Another town/city was coded in 706 instances (33.1%) and elsewhere outside Canada in 675 (31.6%). "Home base" was identified in 494 instances (23.1%), and a second province in 175 (8.2%). Of the total 2,164 responses, 2,050 instances (96.0%) included one of the four most common labels; 84 responses included a different label, and 2 included incomplete field alignment (Table 2). These percentages refer to preference and not relocation/migration/employment status.

Table 2: Recorded preferred work locations

Response label	n	%
In another town/city	706	33.1
Abroad	675	31.6
Home Base	494	23.1
In another province	175	8.2
Other recorded response	84	3.9
Unresolved field alignment	2	0.1
Total	2,136	100.0

Note. Denominator: all 2,136 retained records. Home Base remains undefined geographically and in terms of work arrangement.

4.3 Plans and work locations within the same records

Abroad was chosen by 380 out of 1,115 examination-review records (34.1%), and 120 out of 506 immediate job search records (23.7%), resulting in a difference of 10.4 percentage points. Another town or city was chosen by 315 examination-review records (28.3%) and 214 immediate-job search records (42.3%), giving a difference of 14.0 percentage points. In the rest-then-work group, 122 out of 327 chose another town or city (37.3%), and 112 chose another country (34.3%). Table 3 shows these unadjusted comparisons.

Table 3: Work-location responses within immediate-plan groups

Immediate plan group	Another town/city	Abroad	Home Base	Another province	Other response
Exam review (n = 1,115)	315 (28.3%)	380 (34.1%)	278 (24.9%)	97 (8.7%)	45 (4.0%)
Job search (n = 506)	214 (42.3%)	120 (23.7%)	106 (20.9%)	45 (8.9%)	21 (4.2%)
Rest then work (n = 327)	122 (37.3%)	112 (34.3%)	62 (19.0%)	20 (6.1%)	11 (3.4%)
Remaining plans (n = 186)	55 (29.6%)	63 (33.9%)	48 (25.8%)	13 (7.0%)	7 (3.8%)
Total (n = 2,134)	706	675	494	175	84

Note. Cells show n (row %); totals show counts. N = 2,134 usable primary pairs. The remaining-plans group comprises six smaller named plan categories (154 records) and 32 other recorded responses. Location headings abbreviate the original labels in Table 2. Two field-alignment cases are excluded. Row percentages may differ from 100% because of rounding.

4.4 Other responses and companion entries

The additional entries consisted of 32 additional plan responses and 84 additional location responses, in line with Tables 1 and 2. Out of 177 non-empty plan companion entries, 136 followed the placeholder-token rule; location figures were 171 and 114. Such figures represent entries in fields and cannot be summed up as the number of respondents. Non-placeholder text included both explanations and unclear phrases.

Plan entries included rest, preparation for examination, employment, and continuation of studies, as well as uncertainty regarding what would come next. Location entries involved one's own area, openness to opportunities available, choice between areas, household work prior to foreign work, and distance or blended work. Companion text sometimes supplemented a standard primary label with a sequence or a condition. The researcher-approved descriptions above illustrate possible wording used in the supplementary entries; prevalence figures for such patterns were not computed.

Of the 494 records in the Primary Home Base dataset, 24 contained non-empty entries for a companion dataset. Twenty-one matched the token placeholder pattern; three others provided context that was partially unclear, including one mentioning abroad. No common operational definition of Home Base was established through these. The two records which could not be aligned properly were included in the marginal datasets.

4.5 Record-handling sensitivity

Keeping all eligible submissions resulted in 2,151 entries, whereas eliminating all submissions from the repeat full names resulted in 2,121 entries. Among these options and the main criterion, examination review ranged from 52.2% to 52.3%, immediate job search from 23.6% to 23.8%, rest followed by work from 15.2% to 15.3%, and abroad preference from 31.5% to 31.7%. The four marginal summaries therefore changed little under the specified handling rules, although this does not independently confirm respondent identities.

5 INTERPRETATION AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Different priorities near graduation

The paired results distinguish an immediate priority from a preferred work location. Examination review accounted for just over half of the retained records, yet the examination-review group included several location preferences. The distribution also differed descriptively from that of immediate job search. These combinations supply information that the two marginal tables alone cannot provide: a location preference can be discussed in relation to the activity the student intends to undertake first.

Saldivar et al. [6] identified several career directions in science education students' accounts. The present analysis complements that work through paired categorical responses in a different, pooled sample. Issues surrounding managing career transitions that Lent and Brown [17] identify assist in posing the right questions about what activity the student is interested in pursuing next, and which type of work environment the student wants. The chosen labels do not tap into self-management skills and self-efficacy. Professional qualifications may apply to preparing for the examination, however, the importance of this factor in explaining the obtained distribution was not assessed.

The absence of contextual factors is significant. Ayvaz and Karacan-Özdemir [8] considered these resources and constraints explicitly. It will be important for a future study to explore them; for now, it is impossible to say whether or not similar constraints influenced the respondents' answers. The attribution of any of the three choices (exam, job, or rest) to any of those factors exceeds the scope of data obtained.

Possible future research could be conducted on career information, networks, money, and obstacles to the next level of development based on the resource and network literature [20, 21]. Possible future measurements of demographic situations could also explain inequality in opportunities [23]. Similar plans mean nothing about similar needs.

5.2 Work preferences and migration interpretation

Working abroad was one of the common location preferences, especially among the examination-review and rest-then-work groups. This is relevant in discussions about occupation, qualifications, timing, and information requirements. However, this does not determine a migration plan or its feasibility. Kulka et al. [7] have separated migration aspirations from current migration plans; the current item simply offers a preferred work-location classification. The descriptive differences between the plan groups thus require elaboration and further questioning instead of an explanation based on migration motivation.

Remot et al. [24] assessed overseas work intention and its suggested antecedents. The account of Gotehus [25] on nurses changing their decision to stay is relevant to the timing and options involved. These examples from the Philippines justify inquiring into when and under what circumstances students may work elsewhere.

However, the additional items did not clear up the meaning of Home Base. Retaining the original label prevents the interpretation of a standard meaning from just a few alternative definitions. Further surveys should distinguish geographical preference from either an on-site, remote, or hybrid approach and indicate the location point for another town or city and another province.

5.3 A planned pause and career consultation

The combination of rest and work was indicated in 327 primary answers. This choice indicates a process that doesn't have any timeframe or justification. There were several choices of places that belonged to this category, while some additional responses included a break and preparation for exam or another studying activity. Thus, the choice of a break can be considered as a stage in formation of a strategy. It shouldn't be considered as a symptom of being upset, unpreparedness or lack of direction without the explanation of the student.

A counselor can use this response as an opportunity to ask about the meaning of the rest, timeframe of its implementation, and the student's desire to receive assistance in the next step. Any discussion on the matter of wellbeing has to be conducted after the student's explanation and proper evaluation rather than be concluded from the box check. The survey provides an opportunity for the dialogue initiation; it doesn't diagnose a need or guarantee that counseling is efficient.

Loe [14] followed changing pathways through repeated interviews, and Tomlinson et al. [13] analyzed disruption in labour market entry. The US and UK pandemic context used in their research does not account for rest in this 2024 Philippine survey. Repeated interviews would reveal whether the rest was voluntary, forced by circumstances, or meant for other purposes.

5.4 Implications for career services

Career services could arrange voluntary follow-up based on students' preferences: examination schedule and future plans; targeted positions, application process, and locations for job searchers; intended length and requirements for taking a break. Students who were currently employed or thinking of pursuing business or education would need to be kept in mind. These suggested consultations needed to be evaluated; effectiveness of service provision was not assessed in this research.

For students choosing job search, consultation could identify targeted positions, sources of information, application activity, and acceptable work. This is in line with the separation of the search process and employment results described

by Wanberg et al. [18] and van Hooft et al. [19]. Issues of career control and opportunities could also be drawn from Jackson and Tomlinson [22]. These are suggested consultation topics; this research does not measure quality of search or benefit of this service provision.

Consultation needs to determine if a chosen plan represents a beginning step, is part of a composite plan, or represents a choice based on the situation. Location preference may also be considered in terms of a desired destination in the short term, long term, or willingness to consider various choices. A modified survey might include a main priority item and additional items on other intended activities, timing, geographic preference, and work arrangement issues.

Permissible follow-up might relate these plans to subsequent activities, modified preferences, and obstacles. Tutor et al. [5] exemplify the Philippine tracer approach to employment and degree-job congruence. Follow-up requires confidentiality assurances. The current exit survey is unable to assess institutional placement success.

The follow-up needs to differentiate revised plans from job entry, degree-job congruence, job quality, and graduate assessments of advancement [11]. Repeated assessments of competencies might involve a developmental approach [12]. These paired answers would establish a baseline for investigating consistency, modification, and implementation.

Limitations

The voluntary response sample comprised Filipino students enrolled in various universities and colleges within the Philippines, and did not include any invitation denominator, probability sampling frame or weighting to the national level. The results pertain to those data that were retained and should not be generalized to the entire population of Filipino graduating students. It remains possible that there is some difference in the institutional and program compositions that have an effect on pooled results, but such features were not compared or controlled for. A verifiable count and distribution of institutions was not determined from the institutional affiliation designation.

There was only one categorical item corresponding to each principal variable. Single-choice questionnaire does not allow detecting any overlapping activities; the location options may contain some ambiguous wording. Additional descriptions were checked and approved by the lead investigator and not included into thematic prevalence determination. There are two instances where field alignment is not solved yet, affecting complete data analysis. The analyzed variables do not show readiness, adaptability, wellbeing or migration intention.

The latest full name rule constitutes a replicable record handling decision and not an independent identification process. The restrictive sensitivity intervals cannot solve name clashes or variations. There was no test on any rationale behind divergent results for plan groupings and circumstances such as availability of resources, family obligations, professional needs, and future opportunities at destination were not assessed using these variables. No follow-up employment, licensing, migration or effectiveness results were noted.

6 CONCLUSION

In this pooled 2024 exit survey pooled data set, examination review plans were the most prevalent choice immediately after graduating, while preferred locations of work varied in each major category of plans. Location abroad occurred at relatively greater frequency among the examination review data records than among the immediate job search data records, while the other pattern was observed for location in another town or city. Further information recorded by way of additional fields referred to combinations, sequences, and alternatives beyond the chosen labels. Analysis of these two fields together will allow career guidance to pose specific follow-up questions.

STATEMENTS ON COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS

Disclosure of conflict of interest

The authors state that they do not have any conflict of interest.

Statement of ethical approval

Institutional permission was sought for the publication of de-identified results derived from the original dataset, with the consent of the data custodian.

Statement of informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

Data availability

Participant-level survey responses, narratives and identities mappings are confidential according to institutional restrictions and not available publicly.

Use of AI tools

AI-based technology helped to organize the data, initial response screening, coding of the candidates, similarities, quotation matching, and editing of language used. The primary author reviewed all the codes and quotes used in comparison with the wording of the original sources.

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