

Tracing Success of Graduates: A Case Study of Koteswor Multiple Campus

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Abstract

Tracer studies provide timely, vital information regarding graduate outcomes. This article examines the post-graduation experiences of Koteswor Multiple Campus alumni from 2020–2022. It looks at how students employ the skills they acquired in their careers, how they enter the workforce, and how they continue to interact with the institution. It seeks to monitor recent graduates and pinpoint the elements influencing their professional decisions. The results, which offer insights to improve academic programs and industrial ties, are critical to KMC's institutional growth. By encouraging industrial relationships and entrepreneurship, the report also enhances career counseling and KMC's job placement cell. Finally, this analysis backs mentoring and curriculum modifications to better prepare graduates for the workforce.

Keywords: tracer studies, post-graduation experiences, KMC alumni, recent graduates, entrepreneurship, career counseling

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Introduction

Tracer studies systematically monitor and evaluate the academic and professional paths of graduates. In order to assess program efficacy, make well-informed decisions regarding curriculum creation and budget allocation, and make sure that their programs meet industry demands, higher education institutions and policymakers

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can benefit greatly from the data these studies give. Information on the career paths, employment status, and job satisfaction of graduates is collected so that educational institutions can improve their programs as needed.

The practice of tracer studies is earning international recognition. They are motivated by the need to comprehend the experiences of recent graduates as they enter the workforce and during their academic careers. These studies are essential for preserving accreditation and proving the value and caliber of an institution's education because many accrediting and quality assurance organizations now include them in their evaluation procedures.

Academic institutions often conduct research works to gather feedback from graduates and their employers. For tracking and assessing alumni achievement in their particular professions, these insights are essential (Camuyong et al., 2023). Universities can make well-informed decisions to improve their programs and better prepare next students for the workforce by examining this feedback. Direct feedback from graduates is especially valuable and reliable for assessing the overall quality of education provided by a higher education institution (Camuyong et al., 2023).

Other researchers note that a Graduate Tracer Study (GTS) is designed to track graduates' backgrounds (Pentang et al., 2024). The focus of a graduate tracer study is to gather background data on former students so that educational institutions can better comprehend the varied traits and experiences of their graduates. Similarly, Schomburg (2016) defines tracer studies as a standardized survey (written or oral) of graduates from an educational institution, conducted sometime after graduation. The topics vary but often include questions about:

- The study of progress
- Making the shift to work
- Entry to the job
- Paths for careers
- The application of acquired skills
- Present employment
- The relationship with the educational establishment

Schomburg explains tracer studies as surveys conducted after graduation to gather information from graduates about their experiences. These surveys can be written or oral, cover topics like study progress, career paths, skill utilization, and the graduates' connection to the institution. A graduation survey is also known as a tracer study. It is an organized method for collecting information from college graduates after

their studies are complete. These surveys monitor various aspects of graduates' post-school experiences, including academic progress, entry into the workforce, career development, and the application of skills learned. The survey also frequently investigates the graduates' job situation and their ongoing connection to the university. By collecting this data, tracer studies offer important insights into the relevance of the curriculum, the effectiveness of educational programs, and the overall impact on graduates' career paths.

An important information gap in Nepal's higher education system is intended to be filled by this particular tracer study, which focuses on KMC graduates. Although it is acknowledged that KMC functions within the parameters of the TU curriculum and is not directly in charge of creating jobs, the study attempts to comprehend the real-world results for its graduates. It aims to fill in the knowledge gaps about the employment status, job happiness, and career progression of graduates in the current employment ecosystem.

The report analyzes the skills graduates are applying in their employment and critically assesses how effectively KMC's education prepared them for the sector. It identifies the difficulties experienced by graduates and takes into account employer viewpoints. In order to address the lack of knowledge regarding graduate outcomes and the difficulties in evaluating the quality of education offered by the institution, the study's ultimate objective is to provide useful recommendations for raising educational quality and improving graduate employability within KMC's operational realities.

The main objective of tracer studies, according to Schomburg's 2003 book, *Handbook for Graduate Tracer Studies*, is to pinpoint educational program flaws and provide guidance for future institutional development. In order to accomplish this, surveys gather data on graduates' professional success, including their salary, status, and career, as well as how well their knowledge and abilities are applied in the actual world. They could additionally suggest that graduates assess the materials and learning environment they previously used. However, the majority of employer surveys concentrate on future demands, graduate competencies, and hiring processes.

According to Schomburg, these surveys are crucial for comprehending how education and work are related, but there are issues with their potential overemphasis on job results, low response rates, and their usefulness in enhancing education. Another issue, given Schomburg's findings, is that a limited emphasis on short-term employment indicators may not adequately account for the intangible long-term effects of education, like critical thinking or flexibility.

This study examines the status of KMC graduates from 2020 to 2022 of KMC's higher education, evaluating programs' impact on personal development, and addressing educational inequalities. Main objectives of this article are as follows:

- To monitor the progress of KMC graduates from 2020 to 2022
- To discuss some factors that influence their career choices

Significance

Tracer studies are a vital instrument for assessing education, according to a number of international organizations. UNESCO has offered assistance for these studies, particularly in poor nations, through the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP). Similar to this, the World Bank has employed tracer studies to evaluate the effect of educational investments on employment and income, and the International Labor Organization (ILO) has used them to study the transition from education to employment. Tracer studies' status as a crucial evaluation tool has been solidified by this focus on labor market outcomes.

Recent graduates have difficulty finding work, frequently because they lack experience, according to the findings of several studies, including one from the University of Pangasinan (Rocaberte, 2016). This is in line with the more general problem of labor mismatch, which Verona (2011) contends needs to be addressed by the government in order to keep productive workers from disappearing. In the meantime, tracer studies have become a standard practice at many universities, especially in the US and Europe, and research groups have been instrumental in improving the techniques employed.

The tracer study is essential to provide Koteswor Multiple Campus (KMC) a comprehensive picture of the academic and professional achievements of its graduates. With the help of this knowledge, the university can assess how well its academic offerings and student services meet the needs of the labor market. In order to improve the quality of education it provides, KMC uses the study's findings to influence data-driven decisions about curriculum, instructional methods, and student support systems.

This tracer study is a useful tool for KMC's marketing and outreach initiatives in addition to internal enhancements. The university can draw in new students and improve its reputation as a respectable academic provider by highlighting the accomplishments of its alumni. Additionally, the research facilitates the development of closer relationships with businesses and other stakeholders in education.

Establishing that KMC gives students the necessary information and skills promotes cooperation and trust with businesses looking for qualified graduates.

The analysis gives the graduates themselves important information about the labor market today and new skill requirements. They can use this knowledge to better prepare for professional development and make well-informed career decisions. The results can also guide the creation of focused career counselling and support programs to help recent graduates overcome obstacles at work. The study also increases KMC alumni's exposure and demand among employers by drawing attention to their accomplishments and skills.

Research Methodology

In the article "Tracer Studies," Nigel Simister explains why these studies are essential for monitoring individual changes after a particular intervention, like professional training (2017). They seek to ascertain the participants' usage of their training and the course of their life. However, more general units of analysis, such as homes, communities, organizations, or policies, can also be the subject of tracer research.

On the other hand, Schiefelbein and Farrell claim that tracer studies are a useful study technique that follows a group of people throughout time, gathering information at various stages of their life to see how they evolve and change. They are therefore an effective instrument for evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of an organization and putting reforms into place. By investigating changes in graduates' competencies and looking at their job development outcomes, tracer studies can assess how effective educational programs are. In order to detect gaping knowledge and compare findings, the researchers performed a literature review by looking at previous research on related populations and fields using databases like JSTOR, libraries, and pertinent papers. The study itself used a mixed-approaches strategy, integrating both qualitative and quantitative techniques to fully comprehend the academic and professional outcomes of KMC graduates between 2020 and 2022. Structured survey questionnaires were used to gather quantitative data from a basic random sample of fifty respondents.

With regard to time, resource, and graduate availability constraints, this sample size was selected. In-depth interviews with chosen alumni were used to collect qualitative data in order to learn more about their perspectives on their education and experiences. To find recurrent themes and patterns, thematic analysis was used to examine this qualitative data. The study also examined the graduates' practical application of their education using a job satisfaction questionnaire.

Researchers used primary and secondary sources to gather data. They conducted in-depth interviews with graduates and distributed questionnaires using basic random sampling in order to gather primary data. Secondary data was collected from publicly accessible sources, including job reports, institutional publications, and graduation records. Because it was easy for respondents to use and effectively saved time and money, this sample technique was selected. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used in the processing and analysis of the gathered data.

Using MS-Excel, quantitative analysis was carried out on background data, including manual computations and tabulations. The results were displayed as tables, charts, and graphs. The goal of the study is to give a thorough grasp of the career choices, job satisfaction, and employment status of KMC graduates. In addition to providing policymakers with information on how to enhance education and graduate employability in Nepal, the findings are meant to assist the institution in evaluating how well it prepares students for careers. Employers' opinions of KMC graduates, the proportion of employed graduates, the talents they employ, and the suitability of their education for the industry are all specifically the focus of the study.

Data Presentation and Analysis

In the data presentation and analysis section, the researchers have employed a range of tables, charts, and graphs to effectively show the data they collected from the 396 KMC graduates in 2020, 2021, and 2022. This allows trends to be clearly compared and understood across time. The information is organized and displayed separately for every year. This approach provides a thorough analysis of the job histories, displaying the percentage of graduates who are currently seeking employment, those who are continuing their education, and those who have obtained employment in their fields. The graphic representations, which include tables make it simple to understand how job outcomes and other significant criteria were distributed throughout the three groups. The following paragraphs give the various data from the three years 2020, 2021, and 2022.

In 2020, total 167 students received their graduation. Among them, 64 belonged to the bachelor's degree's humanities faculty, 69 to the management faculty, and 34 to the education faculty. Their composition is indicated in the following table:

Table 1. The Structure of 2020 KMC Graduates

Level	Number of Graduates	Male	Female
MBS	0	0	0
BBS	69	29	40
BA	64	27	37
B. Ed	34	10	24
Total	167	66	101

(Source: Survey 2024)

According to the provided table, there are more female graduates than male graduates across all faculties. With more female graduates than male graduates, more than two to one, the B.Ed. program has the largest gender difference.

Table 2. Employment Data of 2020 KMC Graduates

Level	Number of Graduates	Employed	Self-Employed	Unemployed
MBS	0	0	0	0
BBS	69	26	2	41
BA	64	18	0	46
B. Ed	34	7	0	27
Total	167	51	2	114

(Source: Survey 2024)

The table reveals significant new information regarding the professional performance of graduates from different academic fields. Of the 69 BBS graduates, 41 were unemployed, 2 were working on their own, and 26 had found employment. Of the 64 BA graduates, 18 found employment, but none decided to work for themselves, leaving 46 jobless. Of the thirty-four B. Ed. graduates, twenty-seven were unemployed, seven were employed, and none were self-employed. Out of the 167 graduates from all programs, 51 were employed, 2 worked for themselves, and 114 were unemployed. The research shows that despite a lesser percentage of KMC graduates work or work for themselves, a sizable portion are unemployed. Both corporate and public sector employment are available to KMC graduates.

Table 3. The Structure of 2021 KMC Graduates

Level	Number of Graduates	Male	Female
MBS	1	0	1
BBS	50	17	33
BA	60	28	32
B. Ed	28	4	24
Total	139	49	90

(Source: Survey 2024)

Similarly, the above table of 2021 further shows that there are more female graduates than male graduates across all faculties. In the B.B.S. and B. Ed. programs, where female graduates far outnumber their male counterparts, this trend is especially noticeable. In 2021, there were 90 female graduates overall from all programs at KMC, compared to 49 male graduates.

Table 4. Employment Data of 2021KMC Graduates

Level	Number of Graduates	Employed	Self-Employed	Unemployed
MBS	1	1	0	0
BBS	50	15	4	31
BA	60	10	11	39
B. Ed	28	6	2	20
Total	139	32	17	90

(Source: Survey 2024)

According to the provided employment table, the MBS level has the best results among graduates from various academic programs, with all graduates finding jobs and none without. Out of the BBS graduates, a considerable number are still unemployed, while a reasonable percentage are employed, including some who work for themselves. In a similar vein, the employment rate for BA program graduates is low, with a notable percentage working for themselves but the majority remaining jobless. Few B.Ed. graduates are employed or self-employed, and their unemployment rate is likewise high. Even if some graduates have secured jobs or started their own businesses, the vast majority of graduates at all levels still struggle with unemployment.

Table 5. The Structure of 2022 KMC Graduates

Level	Number of Graduates	Male	Female
MBS	5	3	2
BBS	47	18	29
BA	17	6	11
B. Ed	21	2	19
Total	90	29	61

(Source: Survey 2024)

On the other hand, with more women than men graduating from most majors, the makeup of the 2022 KMC graduates is startling. Out of the five MBS program graduates, two were women and three were men. There was a notable female presence among the BBS program's graduates, with 18 of the 47 grads being male. Similarly, out of the seventeen BA program graduates, eleven were women and six were men. Only two of the twenty-one B. Ed. degree graduates were male, while the remaining nineteen were female. There were sixty-one women and twenty-nine men among the total of ninety graduates. This suggests a definite tendency toward a higher percentage of female graduates in the 2022 class at KMC.

Table 6. Employment Data of 2022 KMC Graduates

Level	Number of Graduates	Employed	Self-Employed	Unemployed
MBS	5	4	0	1
BBS	47	12	5	30
BA	17	6	0	11
B. Ed	21	5	0	16
Total	90	32	0	58

(Source: Survey 2024)

A significant difference in career outcomes amongst academic programs is revealed by an analysis of employment data for 90 KMC graduates from 2022. Of all the graduates, fifty-eight are unemployed, and thirty-two are working, including five who work for themselves. With four out of five (80%) obtaining employment, MBS graduates have the highest employment rate. BBS graduates, on the other hand, have a mediocre success record; 17 out of 47 are employed, with five of them working for themselves. The employment market is more challenging for graduates with a BA and a B.Ed., since only six out of seventeen and five out of twenty-one, respectively, are employed. According to the research, graduates of business-oriented and professional

programs, such as MBS, are more likely to find work than those from education and the humanity.

Likewise, only five of the twenty-one B.Ed. graduates have found employment, leaving a significant sixteen unemployed. The fact that thirty-two of the ninety graduates are employed, five are self-employed, and fifty-eight are unemployed demonstrates the disparities in employment amongst programs. Graduates who work for themselves are also considered employed and are denoted with brackets.

When the researchers compared the data of 2020 to 2022, it revealed significant trends in graduating numbers and employment rates. Over these three years, the overall number of graduates decreased steadily, falling from 167 in 2020 to 90 in 2022. With 51 employed and 2 self-employed graduates, employment was comparatively low in 2020, while 114 people were still unemployed. With 28 employed graduates, the BBS program dominated the field, followed by the BA and B.Ed. degrees with 18 and 7, respectively. That year, there were no reported MBS graduates. During this time, the BBS program remained the most popular, and there was a continuous drop in the total number of graduates, with a consistent female majority across all programs.

Employment trends had changed by 2021, with a significant rise in self-employment (17 graduates) and employed graduates (32 graduates). Ninety graduates were still unemployed. With 15 hired and 4 self-employed alumni, the BBS program maintained its leadership position. The first MBS graduate joined the workforce, while the BA and B.Ed. programs made a little contribution to employment.

With 32 employed and 5 self-employed graduates, employment numbers leveled down in 2022. Four out of five graduates of the MBS program found employment, demonstrating the program's exceptional success. However, the BA and B.Ed. programs saw a sharp drop in both employment rates and graduate enrollment. With 58 graduates remaining unemployed, unemployment was a recurring problem overall, indicating a change in KMC graduation trends toward improved results in professional programs like MBS.

Table 7 A Combine table on Employment Data of 2020, 2021 and 2022 KMC Graduates

Year	No. of Graduates	No. of Employed	Employment Percentage
2020	167	53	31.74
2021	139	49	35.25
2022	90	32	35.55

(Source: Survey 2024)

According to the given table, KMC graduates' employment rose dramatically between 2020 and 2022. While the number of graduates fluctuated, falling from 167 in 2020 to 90 in 2022, the employment percentages increased annually. Employment rates for KMC alumni improved over the course of these three years, as seen by the rise in the percentage of employed graduates from 31.74% in 2020 to 35.25% in 2021 and then to 35.55% in 2022.

The number of KMC graduates in 2020, 2021, and 2022 was 167, 139, and 90, respectively. By 2022, there were just 90 graduates from KMC, down from 167 in 2020. External factors that contributed to the decline in student admissions during that period included the COVID-19 epidemic, students opting to study overseas and general dropout rates. Importantly, rather than indicating a decline in the caliber of education at KMC, this decreased yearly graduation percentage is a reflection of the more significant problems influencing student enrollment and retention.

Despite a decrease in student enrollment, KMC finds consolation in the consistent, although tiny, yearly increase in its alumni's employment rate. It is not the duty or responsibility of the KMC to provide jobs for its graduates. The government should ultimately be in charge of providing employment possibilities for recent graduates. The college does, however, take satisfaction in the steady rise in employment rates among its alumni, which is a reflection of their improved competency and readiness for the wider labor market.

The Factors Affecting Graduates' Career Choices

According to Florendo and Regacho (2023), several research papers examine the various ways in which graduate education influences societal advancement and

national development. Graduate education is important for societal advancement and country development, according to research from several academic domains. Despite a drop in graduation rates between 2020 and 2022 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, economic difficulties, and students deciding to explore opportunities elsewhere, Koteshwor Multiple Campus (KMC) has had a continuous but minor annual increase in its alumni employment rate. Tracer studies revealed this favorable trend, which reflects KMC alumni's improving proficiency and market preparedness.

To look into the characteristics that affect the career choices of KMC graduates between 2020 and 2022, researchers reviewed the responses provided by interviews in KMC's tracer studies, as well as subsequent data analysis. This study revealed a number of critical factors determining career paths. These influences include the graduates' educational background, the availability of relevant work opportunities, their parents' expectations, and the socioeconomic environment in which they grew up. The data also shows gender variation with a higher proportion of female graduates entering the workforce right away due to male students' tendency to postpone graduation or work part-time in order to prepare for chances abroad.

A prominent aspect discovered in the analysis is a desire for job security, since many graduates postpone entering the private sector or working for themselves in favor of training for Public Service Commission tests. Financial issues, which may lead to students pursuing temporary or unrelated employment, also have an impact on their workforce readiness, according to the responses. Furthermore, career opportunities vary by field; graduates in business, for example, may have greater access to work than those who are in education or the humanities. Overall, the study demonstrated that individual desires, economic realities, and the promise of long-term work security all impact KMC alumni's career decisions.

Discussion and Conclusion

The major goal of tracking KMC graduates from 2020 to 2022 demonstrated a favorable, consistent, although tiny annual improvement in alumni employment rates. This increased trend was noted despite a considerable decline in graduation rates, which was mostly caused by the COVID-19 epidemic, economic challenges, and students seeking other alternatives. Tracer studies show that KMC alumni's increased employability is a result of their improved competency and market preparedness, showing the efficacy and quality of the college's educational programs. While the government is ultimately responsible for creating jobs, the rising rate demonstrates that KMC is performing its basic objective of educating and preparing students for employment.

Additionally, the study has addressed the second purpose by identifying the traits and influences that influenced KMC alumni' employment choices throughout this time. The study found that graduates' educational background, the availability of related work, their parents' expectations, and the larger socioeconomic contexts influence the career choices of the graduates. A desire for long-term job stability was a major issue, prompting many graduates to postpone entry into the private sector in favor of studying for Public Service Commission tests. Gender differences were also noticeable, with a higher number of female graduates entering the local workforce immediately, as opposed to male graduates, who frequently postponed local work or graduation to pursue employment or further studies abroad as a means of economic growth.

In the end, academic preparedness, current market need, and societal influences all influence KMC alumni's employment paths. To improve these outcomes, the research recommends numerous proactive initiatives, including strengthening KMC's job placement unit, developing industry collaborations to support internships, and providing important work-readiness training, such as resume writing and interview tactics. Furthermore, experts encourage prioritizing professional training and updating the curriculum to include practical, real world features. These institutional activities are critical for closing the gap between college education and the dynamic demands of the labor market.

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