



Sikolohistang Dangkal ng Bayan: Exploring Bs Psychology Graduates' Lived Career Experiences

Jhon Moises E Alcira ^{1*}, Khyla Denysse D Barrientos ², Cayla O Buendicho ³, Chejalis Hingcoy ⁴, Cristine Lae C Erasga ⁵
^{1, 2, 3, 4, 5} College of Arts and Sciences, City of Cabuyao, Laguna, Philippines

* Corresponding Author: **Cristine Lae C Erasga**

Article Info

ISSN (online): 2582-7138

Volume: 06

Issue: 03

May - June 2025

Received: 14-04-2025

Accepted: 15-05-2025

Page No: 1798-1803

Abstract

This study explores the phenomena of lived career experiences among Bachelor of Science in Psychology graduates from Pamantasan ng Cabuyao, focusing on how their academic background affects their professional development. The study uses a qualitative phenomenological method to investigate challenges, goals, and essential elements that influence career paths. Six purposively selected individuals gave in-depth interviews, providing critical insights into their career experiences.

Thematic analysis identified essential aspects of the phenomenon, including the practical application of psychological theories, the role of mentorship, and adaptability in diverse roles. Participants identified resilience, continual learning, and the foundational impact of their academic training as essential factors in career success.

The findings emphasize the need for real-world experience and mentoring in academic programs to better prepare graduates for work demands. This study provides insights for educators and institutions to enhance career readiness and long-term success for psychology graduates.

Keywords: Career Experiences, Psychology Graduates, Professional Development, Phenomenological Study.

1. Introduction

Psychology graduates in the Philippines play an important role in improving mental health and helping communities deal with emotional and psychological challenges. As mental health awareness grows, there is a greater need for trained professionals who can help people. The BS Psychology program in the Philippines aims to provide students with the knowledge and skills to understand human behavior and to work in areas like counseling, healthcare, and education. However, while their education prepares them academically, psychology graduates often face challenges when entering the professional world. This study, titled Sikolohistang Dangkal ng Bayan: Lived Experiences of BS Psychology Graduates, looked at how the experiences of these graduates influence their roles in society and their professional identities.

The term Sikolohistang Dangkal ng Bayan refers to the pride and honor that comes with being a psychologist in the Philippines. Professionals in psychology are not only responsible for assisting individuals but they are also viewed as significant contributors to the overall well-being of society. This study examined how BS Psychology graduates perceive their function as professionals and how their degree helps them in their careers. Many graduates experience obstacles such as finding work, navigating cultural attitudes regarding mental health, and adjusting to the responsibilities of their careers, according to Abad (2020) ^[1]. Despite these challenges, many people find rewarding employment in counseling, education, social work, and activism, according to Bautista (2021) ^[3].

Recent studies show that the career paths of psychology graduates are diverse. According to Dela Cruz and Garcia (2022) ^[6], more psychology graduates are entering fields related to mental health, where there is a growing demand for trained professionals. These challenges highlight the need to understand these graduates' lived experiences, as their professional development and identity are influenced by both their education and the realities of the career world, according to Alvarez (2023) ^[2]. In addition, Filipino culture plays an important role in the work of psychology graduates.

Filipino values, such as strong family ties and a respect for tradition, frequently impact how psychologists do their job. Bayao (2021)^[4] adds that understanding these cultural values is critical for psychology practitioners in the Philippines since they must tailor their approaches to the local context. This cultural sensitivity is important for psychologists who want to connect with clients and address their needs effectively. This study focused on the personal experiences of BS Psychology graduates, to determine how their academic background and employment challenges influence their professional identity. By studying their tales, the researchers want to shed light on how educational programs might better prepare students for the real-world challenges that await them as they begin their careers. The findings would be used to improve policies and practices in psychology education, benefiting both graduates and the communities they serve.

2. Methodology

A. Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative research design to explore the in-depth, lived experiences of BS Psychology graduates. Qualitative research is a research approach that delves into real-world issues to offer a deeper understanding. Unlike quantitative research, which focuses on numerical data and interventions, qualitative research aims to explore and generate hypotheses to examine quantitative data further. This method collects information on participants' experiences, perceptions, and behaviors, answering questions about the processes and reasons behind phenomena rather than focusing on the quantity or scale of occurrences, according to (Tenny *et al.*, 2022)^[7].

Phenomenology in qualitative research centers on understanding the essence of lived experiences from the individual's perspective. Rather than testing hypotheses or generalizing findings, it seeks to uncover subjective perceptions, challenge normative assumptions, and provide insights into motivations and actions.

B. Research Locale

The locale of this study was Pamantasan ng Cabuyao. Pamantasan ng Cabuyao was established in 2003. It is located in Barangay Banay-banay, City of Cabuyao, Laguna. Cabuyao is one of the towns in Laguna. Officially named the City of Cabuyao, it is categorized as a first-class city in the western part of Laguna, Philippines. As per the 2020 census, its population totals 355,330 individuals. Cabuyao is positioned several kilometers Southeast of Metro Manila, within the western region of Laguna. Some respondents reside in neighboring municipalities such as Sta. Rosa and Calamba are both located in Laguna.

C. Population and Sampling

The purposive sampling technique was used to identify and select participants. This approach ensured that the individuals included in the study: 1. Have direct experience and knowledge related to the research topics of employability, job search, licensure, and further education. 2. Are willing to participate and share their personal experiences. 3. Are accessible and available to participate in interviews or qualitative surveys. This sampling method allowed the study to focus on participants who will most likely provide valuable and relevant data, aligning with the research objectives and ensuring that the findings are grounded in authentic, lived experiences.

D. Research Participants

The study involved six (6) participants, purposefully selected to provide detailed, rich, and meaningful data. The smaller sample size aligns with qualitative research norms, prioritizing depth over breadth in data collection. Each participant represents each academic year between 2020–2023.

E. Research Instrumentation

The study utilized semi-structured interviews for data gathering collection. Semi-structured interviews served as the core data collection method. These interviews allowed participants to provide detailed accounts of their experiences while giving researchers the flexibility to probe and clarify responses as needed. Audio recordings of interviews were permitted and transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy in data analysis.

To draw a definitive conclusion from the research results, the research questions were designed to address the central and sub-questions outlined in the first chapter.

The researchers applied the following interview questions:

- How does your personal strengths or values influenced your career decisions?
- How confident do you feel in your ability to handle challenges and achieve your goals since graduating?
- What specific steps did you take to translate your career goals into actions after graduation?
- Describe a time when you encountered some major obstacle in your career?
- How have your family, friends, or peers supported your career development?
- Share an instance when a family, friends or peers significantly impeded your professional growth or career trajectory?
- What is the contribution of your career in your sustainable income in the future?

The interview questions were validated by three (3) significant individuals who are believed to have proficient expertise to ensure validity in the study. The validators comprised experts who verified the validity of each of the guide questions formulated by the researchers. The researchers refined the items according to the suggestions provided by the validators. Following that, the researchers submitted the revised guide questions to their adviser for final modifications.

F. Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers utilized a semi-structured interview to collect data from six (6) purposively selected BS Psychology graduates (2020–2023). The interview guide was validated by experts before use. Participants were recruited through email and social media, and informed consent was obtained before data collection.

Interviews were conducted via virtual platforms (Zoom, Google Meet, Messenger) lasting 30-60 minutes. With consent, interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim, ensuring anonymity through pseudonyms.

Thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework was used for data interpretation. The researchers ensured ethical compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (RA 10173), maintaining confidentiality and voluntary

participation. Data was securely stored and used solely for academic purposes.

G. Ethical Consideration

Due to the in-depth nature of the study, the researchers conducted this study with strict ethical considerations. Ethics is an essential part of every research study. This study considers the General Ethical Standards and Procedures-Standard III.J of the 2017 Code of Ethics by the Psychological Association of the Philippines (PAP).

- **RA No. 10173 or the Data Privacy Act of 2012:** In compliance with the DPA Act of 2012, as included: “Personal data” refers to all types of personal information. “Processing” is any operation/s performed upon personal data. These operations include, but are not limited to, the collection, recording, organization, storage, updating or modification, retrieval, consultation, use, consolidation, blocking erasure, or destruction of data; thereby, identifying information is coded and followed in strict confidentiality.
- **Informed Consent:** As stipulated in the said ethical code, participants should have read and understood the consent form and accepted the terms of the study before participating. All participants voluntarily agreed, and no one from any participants was forced to answer questions they did not want to. Each participant was also notified of their right to withdraw or to be included in the study. Further, no participant was harmed or experienced any distress during the test administration and interview.
- **Confidentiality:** The participants’ personal and identifying information and their answers to the questionnaire and interview were paramount. Ethical consideration was also applied when disclosing any identifying information. Hence, pseudonyms/pseudonyms were applied to decode. Because of the sensitivity of the research process and the need to create a semblance of anonymity, full disclosure of background information from the participants will not be presented. Though this may be seen as a limitation of the study, the need to protect the participants' identities through non-disclosure was primary. Names of participants and the specific centers have been withheld to maintain confidentiality.
- **Instrumentation:** The study employed established questionnaires to measure compassion satisfaction, secondary traumatic stress, and quality of life among participants, following the process of requesting permission and approval from the author or developer of the instrument to be used for this study. Moreover, the items were validated by experts in Research within the same specialized field.
- **Plagiarism:** The paper's content has undergone proper citation from the authors and writers whose work and paper have been used substantially to support the result and value of this paper. Grammar checking from an online checker was also used.
- **Response Credibility Form:** This process was also used to further validate the coding and result of the emerging themes from the responses and narratives of the participants by the actual participants.

3. Results and discussions

This chapter presented the analysis and 7 interpretation of the

data gathered in this study.

Table 1: Superordinate Themes and Constituents Subthemes.

SUPERORDINATE THEMES	SUBORDINATE
Career Empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to Pursue and Explore Career Opportunities • Creates Alignment in Building Connections and Career Pursuit • Provides a wide range of Career View
Resilient Leadership and Adaptive Competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate strength and composure to lead and handle adversity • Ability to deal with multiculturalism • Developing Self-Reliance and Adaptive Learning Strategies
Personal Reflection and Strategic Career Decision-Making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting Tangible Goals and Family as a sense of Purpose • Self-reflection toward Personal Development • Embracing uncertainty and risks • Prioritizing the HR field as a stable career
Navigating Workplace Challenges and Role Adaptation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjusting to the Realities and Demands of the Job Role • Job Mismatch • Facing Unexpected Role Assignment • Working with Vulnerable and Special Groups of Individual • Feelings of Wanting to Quit
Role of Social Support in Career Choices and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source of encouragement and motivation • Provide support in decision-making • Highlighting the pros and cons of the profession in real-life situations
Hindrances towards Professional Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of Parental Support • Prioritizing Family Needs over Career • Frustration from having high expectation • Feelings of stagnation

This study explored the career experiences of BS Psychology graduates, revealing several key themes related to empowerment, resilience, reflection, challenges, support, and strategic planning. The findings indicated that these graduates actively shaped their career paths by leveraging personal strengths, adapting to workplace realities, and strategically planning for long-term stability. A crucial element was the interplay between individual aspirations and external influences, including family dynamics, financial pressures, and social support.

The results demonstrated a strong sense of self-awareness among the participants. They recognized their strengths, particularly in interpersonal skills, and actively sought opportunities to utilize these strengths in their chosen fields. This proactive approach to career development was evident in their pursuit of further education, engagement in practical training like OJT, and willingness to adapt to new roles and challenges. The emphasis on resilience and adaptability suggested that these graduates were prepared to navigate the complexities of the modern workplace. They understood that career paths are not always linear and that setbacks and unexpected turns are part of the process. The recurring theme of family influence highlighted the significant role that family dynamics played in career decisions. While family could be a source of support and motivation, it could also present challenges in the form of differing expectations or financial pressures. This underscored the importance of open communication and understanding within families to facilitate healthy career development. Finally, the focus on long-term stability and strategic planning indicated that these graduates were thinking beyond immediate needs and

considering the long-term implications of their career choices.

These findings had several important implications. For educational institutions, the study highlighted the need for career counseling and support services that helped students identify their strengths, explore career options, and develop strategies for navigating workplace challenges. Specifically, programs that fostered self-awareness, resilience, and adaptability would be beneficial. The importance of practical experiences, such as internships and OJT, also underscored the need for stronger partnerships between educational institutions and businesses. For families, the study emphasized the need for open communication and understanding regarding career aspirations. Encouraging children to pursue their passions while also providing realistic guidance and support could lead to more fulfilling career paths. For individuals, the study reinforced the importance of self-reflection, goal setting, and proactive planning. Developing strong interpersonal skills, resilience, and adaptability are essential for success in today's dynamic job market. Understanding the potential influence of family dynamics and financial pressures could also help individuals make informed decisions and navigate challenges effectively. The findings also had implications for employers. Creating supportive work environments that offer opportunities for growth and development, as well as recognizing the importance of work-life balance, can contribute to employee satisfaction and retention. Furthermore, understanding the challenges faced by new graduates could help employers develop more effective onboarding and training programs. Future research could explore these themes in greater depth, perhaps focusing on specific career paths within psychology or examining the long-term career trajectories of these graduates. It would also be valuable to investigate the impact of cultural context on family dynamics and career decision-making.

This study revealed the complex interaction of personal strengths, environmental factors, and societal influences in shaping career decisions and post-graduation challenges. Key findings emphasized the importance of developing adaptability, problem-solving skills, and resilience, alongside practical training and support from family and peers. The study concluded that improved academic preparation, emotional resilience training, and structured career counseling, especially for post-graduation planning, are crucial for successful career transitions.

4. Discussion

Summary of Findings

This chapter presented the summary of findings, conclusions, and recommendations derived from the shared narratives of the participants of the study.

The first superordinate theme, Career Empowerment, highlights how BS Psychology graduates actively shape their career trajectories by leveraging personal strengths and values. Under this theme, the subordinate theme Creates Alignment in Building Connections and Career Pursuit reveals that participants use interpersonal skills like communication and empathy to build meaningful relationships in fields like human resources and psychology. They recognize that their ability to connect with and support others is central to their professional success. Furthermore, the subordinate theme Provides Wide Range of Career View illustrates how exposure to diverse experiences, such as

pursuing further education abroad or engaging in OJT, broadens their perspective on career opportunities. Participants acknowledged that hands-on experiences and adaptability were vital in expanding their career options. These findings underscore how personal strengths and external influences empower individuals to make informed, strategic career decisions aligned with their values and evolving goals.

The second superordinate theme, Resilient Leadership and Adaptive Competence highlights how BS Psychology graduates build resilience, leadership abilities, and adaptability by overcoming real-life challenges. They exhibited composure and strength when facing difficult situations, attributing their confidence in handling pressure and solving problems to their leadership roles and responsibilities during college. These formative experiences helped them develop essential coping strategies, enabling them to approach future challenges with determination and self-assurance. Moreover, they underscored the value of self-reliance and adaptability in their early careers, particularly in roles where independent learning was crucial due to the absence of structured training. Their capacity to adapt quickly, stay flexible, and independently acquire new skills illustrates a proactive mindset toward personal development and professional advancement. This supports the concept that self-efficacy grows through hands-on experiences, goal-setting, and continuous self-improvement, allowing individuals to manage professional complexities confidently. The third superordinate theme, Personal Reflection and Strategic Career Decision-Making underscores the vital role of self-awareness, purposeful goal setting, and proactive planning in turning career aspirations into reality. The participants emphasized that self-reflection was crucial in assessing their current status and defining long-term goals. This introspective process enabled them to identify priorities and make deliberate, well-informed career choices. Additionally, setting tangible goals was closely tied to their sense of responsibility toward family, particularly as eldest children, which was a powerful source of motivation. By aligning their ambitions with the desire to provide for their families, they were able to set realistic and achievable objectives. These elements illustrate how introspection, responsibility, and strategic planning drive purposeful career development, empowering individuals to navigate uncertainty while remaining committed to personal and professional growth.

The fourth superordinate theme, Navigating Workplace Challenges and Role Adaptation, highlights individuals' common obstacles when stepping into the workforce. Transitioning into a professional role requires meeting job expectations and dealing with emotional challenges, such as handling critical feedback and adapting to new work environments. These difficulties emphasize the necessity of flexibility and resilience in successfully integrating into the workplace. Furthermore, the theme sheds light on job mismatches, where individuals end up in positions unrelated to their academic background or intended career path. This disconnect can result in frustration and a lack of fulfillment, underscoring that career growth is often non-linear. However, these difficulties present valuable learning experiences, enabling individuals to acquire new skills, widen their career perspectives, and strengthen their adaptability. To ease this transition, fostering stronger partnerships between schools and industries, alongside enhancing practical training and

support, can help bridge the gap between education and employment, ultimately supporting individuals in aligning their capabilities with the demands of their chosen careers.

The fifth superordinate theme, the Role of Social Support in Career Choices and Development emphasizes the critical influence of family, friends, and peers in shaping career paths. Social support provides encouragement, emotional strength, and guidance, enabling individuals to pursue their aspirations confidently. Families that offer freedom and trust empower individuals to make decisions that align with their personal goals, fostering a sense of self-reliance and direction. Likewise, friends who provide specific encouragement toward achieving goals contribute to motivation and perseverance, helping individuals overcome challenges. This network of support strengthens decision-making and helps manage societal pressures, keeping individuals focused on their career objectives. The findings align with research highlighting how social networks can facilitate career growth while also assisting individuals to navigate obstacles such as societal and gender expectations. As family structures and gender roles evolve, further research is needed to understand their impact on career development across various contexts.

The sixth superordinate theme, Hindrance Towards Professional Growth, reveals how external factors impede career development, particularly family expectations and financial pressures. The lack of parental support due to differing aspirations or generational differences often leads to discouragement and self-doubt. Additionally, prioritizing family needs over personal career goals, driven by financial constraints, forces individuals to set aside their passions for more practical, stable options. These challenges highlight the struggle of balancing personal aspirations with familial obligations, often resulting in frustration, stagnation, and delayed professional growth. The findings emphasize the need for a more supportive and understanding approach from families to help individuals pursue their career aspirations without sacrificing their personal goals.

Lastly, the superordinate theme that emerged in this study was Strategic Career Choices for Long-Term Stability. The theme emphasizes individuals' deliberate planning to secure a sustainable future through career decisions. By leveraging current roles for future opportunities, individuals position themselves in jobs that offer immediate financial security and long-term growth potential. This strategic approach often involves recognizing and utilizing company offerings, such as career development programs or benefits, to enhance prospects. Moreover, salary expectations play a crucial role in shaping career choices, with individuals anticipating pay increases to align with their evolving financial needs. In this context, career decisions are not solely about present satisfaction but also about achieving economic stability and growth, ensuring a fulfilling and secure future.

5. Conclusion

This study explores the intricate interplay of personal and environmental factors that shape career decisions and the challenges individuals face after graduation. Participants' journeys highlight the influence of intrinsic strengths like empathy, communication, and perseverance, alongside external factors such as family support, societal expectations, and available opportunities. These elements collectively contribute to professional growth and the ability to overcome obstacles. The research emphasizes the importance of developing behavioral traits like adaptability, problem-solving, and resilience, alongside job training and societal

influences, in shaping successful career trajectories.

The transition from academia to the workforce revealed challenges, highlighting the need for better preparation, including fostering emotional resilience, adaptability, and practical training in academic programs. Family and peer support emerged as recurring themes, with evolving dynamics as participants progressed in their careers. Career decisions were often influenced by self-assessment, available opportunities, and external pressures, with many participants seeking guidance from family and peers. The study suggests the importance of structured career counseling and long-term planning, particularly for students needing further development of career goals post-graduation.

6. Recommendations

Based on the above conclusion, the researchers recommend the following:

- 1. Incorporating Strengths-Based Career Counseling:** Career counseling services should adopt a strengths-based approach to help individuals better align their personal values, skills, and behavioral traits with their career choices. By focusing on these strengths, career decision-making self-efficacy (CDMSE) can be improved, leading to greater job satisfaction and professional fulfillment in the long term.
- 2. Enhancing Practical Career Preparation:** Higher education institutions should close the gap between academic knowledge and workplace demands by offering more hands-on training, internships, and practical learning opportunities. These experiences better equip students with the skills to navigate the transition from academic to professional environments.
- 3. Fostering Behavioral Adaptability and Resilience:** Given the importance of behavioral factors such as adaptability, emotional resilience, and proactive problem-solving in career success, educational programs should integrate training that helps students develop these skills. Encouraging resilience and offering coping strategies enable students to handle the challenges and uncertainties encountered during career transitions effectively.
- 4. Strengthening Family and Peer Support Systems:** Career development initiatives should recognize the influential role of family and peer support in shaping career decisions. By addressing the impact of these external relationships and offering guidance on managing family and societal expectations, individuals can be empowered to make more informed and independent career choices.
- 5. Providing Focused Support for Career Transitions:** Special attention should be given to those undergoing significant career transitions, such as moving from academic life into the workforce or changing professional fields. During this period, career counseling, mentorship, and peer support systems can provide crucial guidance, helping individuals adjust to new roles and navigate skill development and behavioral changes effectively.

7. References

1. Abad M. Challenges in transitioning from academic to professional practice for psychology graduates. *Philipp J Psychol.* 2020;33(2):45-60.
2. Alvarez J. Adapting psychology education to meet the

- evolving demands of mental health professions. *Int J Educ Psychol.* 2023;12(1):27-40.
3. Bautista F. Exploring the role of psychology graduates in mental health advocacy in the Philippines. *Philipp J Ment Health.* 2021;15(3):121-36.
 4. Bayao A. Cultural sensitivity in Filipino psychology: The challenges of balancing modern theory and traditional values. *Filip J Psychol.* 2021;9(1):88-101.
 5. Cabuyao City, Laguna Profile - PhilAtlas. 1990 May 1.
 6. Dela Cruz R, Garcia A. Career paths of psychology graduates: Trends and challenges in the Philippine mental health sector. *Philipp Career Rev.* 2022;25(2):112-30.
 7. Tenny S, Brannan JM, Brannan GD. Qualitative study. *StatPearls - NCBI Bookshelf.* 2022 Sep 18 [cited 2024 Jul 10]. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK470395/>