

Bridging Horizon: A Tracer Study on Career Trajectories and Professional Development of Maritime Transportation Graduates Batch 2020–2023

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Abstract

This study examined the employment status, career trajectories, and professional development of Bachelor of Science in Marine Transportation (BSMT) graduates from the Asian Institute of Maritime Studies (AIMS), covering batches from 2020 to 2023. The findings can serve as a basis for evaluating the effectiveness of the academic program and assessing the outcomes of the institution's educational efforts. A descriptive survey design was employed using a structured tracer study questionnaire administered to 103 alumni. Data were analyzed using frequency, percentage, and weighted mean. Results revealed that a substantial majority of respondents are employed in maritime-related fields, primarily as active seafarers, showing strong alignment between AIMS' academic preparation and industry requirements. Respondents reported high levels of satisfaction regarding career advancement opportunities, promotion, empowerment, and work-life balance, with an overall weighted mean of 4.32, interpreted as strongly agree. Furthermore, 41.7% of the graduates secured their first seafaring employment within six to eight months after graduation, while 42.7% attributed their employment opportunities to personal and professional networks. In terms of career engagement, 45.6% were employed in maritime-related positions, and 37.9% participated in professional training programs to enhance their competencies. Additionally, 97.1% of the respondents took the Officer-in-Charge of a Navigational Watch (OIC-NW) Licensure Examination, while 2.9% pursued the Management Level Licensure Examination. Overall, the study affirms that AIMS effectively equips its graduates with the necessary competencies and values for successful maritime careers. It further recommends continued curriculum enhancement and stronger industry partnerships to sustain and improve graduate employability and career advancement.

Keywords: *tracer study, maritime education, employability, career development, seafarers*

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INTRODUCTION

The Philippines has long been recognized as one of the world's leading suppliers of maritime labor, providing a significant share of the global seafaring workforce. Filipino seafarers serve in both deck and engine departments on board international vessels, contributing substantially to the operations of the global shipping industry. According to the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, approximately 229,000 Filipino seafarers are deployed worldwide, making the Philippines one of the largest providers of maritime professionals in the international labor market **(DataSpring Editors, 2022)**.

Seafaring continues to be a profession that offers stable employment opportunities and competitive compensation, making it an attractive career path for many Filipinos. Consequently, maritime education plays a vital role in preparing students for employment in the highly competitive global maritime industry. Through comprehensive academic instruction and professional training, Maritime Education and Training (MET) institutions equip graduates with the knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary to meet international standards and industry requirements. While employability is influenced by personal attributes and labor market conditions, educational institutions remain instrumental in preparing graduates for successful careers and long-term professional growth.

In line with these goals, the Asian Institute of Maritime Studies (AIMS) seeks to develop competent maritime professionals equipped with the skills, values, and work ethics necessary for meaningful employment and career advancement in the maritime sector. This institutional objective, alongside the overarching purpose of this tracer study, is deeply anchored in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Specifically, this research aligns with SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). By evaluating the relevance of the academic program to industry requirements, this study directly addresses SDG Target 4.4, which aims to substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs, and entrepreneurship **(United Nations, n.d.-a)**. Furthermore, by assessing the graduates' employment status, compensation, and career trajectories, the study supports SDG Target 8.5, which seeks to achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including young people, by 2030 **(United Nations, n.d.-b)**.

The maritime sector significantly contributes to both global trade and the Philippine economy. As key stakeholders in maritime operations, seafarers play a critical role in maintaining efficient and safe shipping services. Their education and training are essential in ensuring competence, operational efficiency, maritime safety, and compliance with international standards. Consequently, the effectiveness of maritime education programs can be assessed through the employment outcomes and career progression of their graduates.

Previous tracer studies in maritime education have emphasized the importance of aligning academic programs with industry requirements. A tracer study conducted at the Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific (MAAP) revealed that a majority of graduates from 2015 to 2019 were successfully employed as seafarers, with many occupying junior officer positions. The study concluded that the curriculum was generally relevant to graduates' professional responsibilities and recommended continuous curriculum enhancement and stronger alumni-industry linkages to improve employability and career competitiveness **(Melitante, 2022)**. Similarly, a graduate tracer study conducted at Dr. Carlos S. Lanting College found that a considerable proportion of maritime graduates secured employment in maritime-related sectors. However, the study also identified gaps between academic preparation and industry

expectations, leading to recommendations for enhanced practical training and stronger collaboration with maritime stakeholders (Cerbito & Manuel, 2024).

Employment challenges continue to affect maritime graduates, particularly within the Philippine context. One of the most persistent concerns is the "*backer system*," a hiring practice in which employment opportunities are influenced by personal connections and referrals. While professional networks may facilitate access to employment, excessive reliance on such systems may disadvantage qualified applicants and result in unequal access to career opportunities. Studies have shown that this practice can contribute to prolonged job searches, underemployment, and reduced motivation among graduates seeking entry into the maritime profession (Maido, 2021; Lisondra et al., 2023). The COVID-19 pandemic further intensified employment challenges faced by maritime graduates. Global disruptions in shipping operations, travel restrictions, crew-change difficulties, and deployment delays affected employment opportunities for newly qualified seafarers. As a result, many graduates experienced extended waiting periods before securing shipboard employment, highlighting the vulnerability of maritime labor markets to external disruptions (Gasque et al., 2024).

Despite these challenges, the Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW) Convention continues to provide the framework for ensuring the competence and professionalism of maritime graduates. Compliance with international standards remains essential in preparing graduates for employment and career advancement in the global maritime industry (Bartuseviciene, 2024). Given the importance of graduate employability as an indicator of educational effectiveness, tracer studies provide valuable information regarding the relevance of academic programs, employment patterns, professional development, and career progression among graduates. Such studies enable educational institutions to evaluate the extent to which their programs meet industry needs and prepare graduates for successful maritime careers.

This tracer study examined the employment status, career trajectories, and professional development of Bachelor of Science in Marine Transportation (BSMT) graduates from the Asian Institute of Maritime Studies (AIMS) who graduated between 2020 and 2023. Specifically, it assessed graduates' employment outcomes, career advancement, professional qualifications, and industry engagement. The findings serve as a basis for evaluating the effectiveness of the BSMT program and for identifying opportunities to strengthen curriculum design, industry partnerships, and graduate support initiatives. Ultimately, the study aims to contribute to the continuous improvement of maritime education and to the development of competent maritime professionals capable of meeting the demands of the global shipping industry.

Objectives

This study aims to examine the career trajectories and professional development of Bachelor of Science in Marine Transportation (BSMT) graduates from the Asian Institute of Maritime Studies (AIMS), covering Batch 2020–2023. Specifically, it seeks to evaluate how the institution has contributed to the professional growth and career outcomes of its graduates, as well as to assess their employment status, professional engagement, and career progression in the maritime industry. Furthermore, the study explores graduates' perceptions of regimental training as part of their holistic development. In particular, this study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of respondents in terms of Year, Age, Gender, Civil status, Initial Salary after Graduation, Current Salary, Employment, Employment Status and Rank?

2. What is the level of contribution of AIMS to the career of AIMS graduates?
3. What is the level of career engagement of the career of AIMS graduates?
4. What are the professional engagement of graduate in terms of engagement to graduate studies?
5. What is the initial professional engagement of graduates in AIMS right after graduation?
6. What is the current professional standing of graduates (licensure exam)?
7. How long did it take the graduate secure their first job?
8. How did the graduates land their first job?

METHODS

Research Design

This study utilized a descriptive survey research design to analyze graduates' employment outcomes and career experiences.

The respondents consisted of 103 BSMT graduates out from AIMS Batch 2020–2023 selected through purposive and snowball sampling. Names of respondents were initially taken from the office of the Alumni, and those who responded via messenger or social media also shared the link to their batchmates. Data were collected using a structured tracer study questionnaire that included sections on demographic profile, employment status, skill relevance, career engagement, and professional development. The primary instrument was the structured questionnaire developed by the Center for Research and Institutional Development (CRID) of AIMS. The instrument demonstrated excellent reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.966.

Data Collection and Analysis.

Data were gathered online through email and social media platforms. Descriptive statistical tools such as frequency, percentage, and weighted mean were used to analyze the data.

Research Instrument

The primary instrument used in this study was a structured questionnaire developed by the Center for Research and Institutional Development (CRID) to gather comprehensive data from AIMS alumni from Batches 2020–2023. This instrument supported the institution's Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) initiatives and was designed to capture graduates' demographic profiles, employment status, and perceptions regarding the relevance and effectiveness of their academic training.

Data Analysis

The data gathered from the survey were analyzed using descriptive statistical tools, specifically frequency distribution, percentage, and weighted mean. Frequency distribution and percentage were used to address the respondents' profile in terms of year of graduation, age, gender, civil status, initial salary after graduation, current salary, employment type, employment status, and rank by summarizing the number and proportion of respondents in each category. These tools were also applied to determine the graduates' professional engagements, including their participation in graduate studies, previous professional engagements in AIMS after graduation, current professional

standing in terms of licensure examination, the length of time it took to secure their first job, and the means by which they obtained their first employment.

On the other hand, the weighted mean was used to determine the level of contribution of AIMS to the career development of its graduates as well as their level of career engagement. Each response was assigned a numerical weight based on a Likert scale, and the average weighted score was computed. The computed weighted means were interpreted using the scale of 4.21–5.00 as Very High or Strongly Agree, 3.41–4.20 as High or Agree, 2.61–3.40 as Moderate or Neutral, 1.81–2.60 as Low or Disagree, and 1.00–1.80 as Very Low or Strongly Disagree, ensuring a clear and consistent interpretation of the data collected.

Cronbach's alpha was used in this study to test the reliability of the research instrument. It measured the internal consistency of the questionnaire items and determined the extent to which the items were closely related as a group. The instrument was pilot-tested with ten respondents prior to its full administration, and the computed Cronbach's alpha coefficient indicated that the questionnaire had acceptable reliability, confirming that it was suitable for gathering consistent and dependable data for the study.

The reliability analysis of the research instrument showed excellent internal consistency. The questionnaire consisted of 48 items, with a total item variance of 14.41 and a variance of the total score of 267.29. The computed Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.966, which was interpreted as excellent reliability. This result indicated that the items in the questionnaire were highly consistent and reliable in measuring the variables of the study. Consequently, the instrument passed the reliability test and was deemed suitable for use in the full data collection.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

The findings revealed that the majority of respondents were male and within the age range of 28–30 years, indicating early to mid-career professionals. Most graduates were actively employed as seafarers, confirming strong employment alignment with their field of study. In the study of **Cerbito and Manuel (2024)**, a recent graduate tracer study on maritime education outcomes has found that the majority of maritime graduates are employed in on-board (seagoing) positions, indicating that maritime programs effectively prepare students for careers at sea.

Figure 1.

Distribution of Respondents According to Their Present Occupation

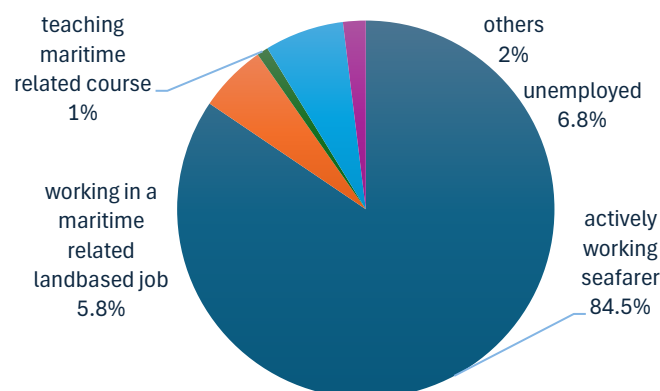


Figure 1 presents the current occupation of the respondents. The results indicate that the majority of the respondents, comprising 84.5%, are actively working as seafarers. A smaller proportion are employed in maritime-related land-based jobs, accounting for 5.8% of the respondents. Meanwhile, 6.8% reported being unemployed at the time of the survey. Only 1% of the respondents are engaged in teaching maritime-related courses, while 2% fall under other forms of occupation. Overall, the findings suggest that most AIMS alumni remain actively engaged in seafaring professions, reflecting strong alignment between their academic training and current employment.

Table 1.

Distribution of Average length of service per onboard (in months)

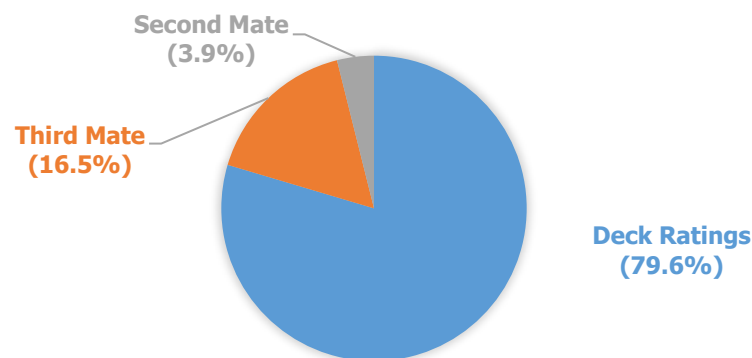
Months	Frequency	Percentage
5 - 6	28	27.2%
7 - 8	28	27.2%
9 – 10	43	41.7%
11 - 12	4	3.9%
TOTAL	103	100%

Table 1 presents the average length of service per onboard assignment of the respondents measured in months. The results show that the majority of the respondents served onboard for 9–10 months, accounting for 43 respondents or 41.7% of the total sample. This was followed by those who served for 5–6 months and 7–8 months, with both categories having 28 respondents, representing 27.2% and 27.1%, respectively. Only a small proportion of the respondents served for 11–12 months, comprising 3.9% of the total. Overall, the findings indicate that most AIMS alumni typically complete onboard service contracts ranging from five to ten months, which is consistent with standard maritime employment arrangements.

The Maritime Labour Convention 2006 in human rights stated that “*seafarers’* employment agreements commonly specify contract duration ranging from several months up to one year, with typical onboard service periods falling between five and ten months depending on vessel type and company policy. (Chang & Khan, 2023). Lewis (2003) concluded that Maritime industry guidelines and previous studies confirm that standard onboard contracts for seafarers generally range from 9 to 10 months. This duration is considered optimal for maintaining crew performance and safety, while also meeting the operational needs of shipping companies. The International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF) and various maritime labor conventions also recommend contract lengths within this range to prevent fatigue and ensure compliance with international labor standards. In terms of salary, most respondents reported entry-level earnings upon employment, with gradual improvement over time. The majority remained in rating positions, although some had progressed to officer ranks, indicating steady career advancement.

Figure 2.

Distribution of Respondents According to their Current Ranks.



The contribution of AIMS to graduates' professional development was rated as very high, particularly in management, leadership, and interpersonal skills. Similarly, career engagement levels were also very high, as graduates actively pursued continuous learning, training, and professional growth opportunities.

Table 2.

Professional Development of Graduates in Terms of Leadership Position and Career Advancement (Quadrant 1).

Quadrant 1	M	SD	Interpretation
I am holding a leadership position (e.g. Captain, OIC, Manager, Supervisor, etc.) at my present work.	4.39	0.75	Strongly agree
I received successive promotions (eg. 3rd Officer, 2nd Officer, OIC, etc.) prior to my present leadership position.	4.35	0.67	Strongly agree
I have led various areas in my workplace (e.g. departments, offices, sections, etc.) in the course of my work.	4.29	0.70	Strongly agree
I am presently receiving a good amount of salary compensation which is commensurate to my present work.	4.33	0.64	Strongly agree
AVERAGE MEAN	4.34		Strongly agree

For Quadrant 1 (Leadership Position and Career Advancement), the respondents strongly agreed that they were holding leadership positions in their present work ($M = 4.39$, $SD = 0.75$) and had received successive promotions prior to attaining their current roles ($M = 4.35$, $SD = 0.67$). They also strongly agreed that they had led various areas in their workplace ($M = 4.29$, $SD = 0.70$) and were receiving salary compensation commensurate with their responsibilities ($M = 4.33$, $SD = 0.64$). These findings indicate positive career progression and leadership involvement among the graduates ($M=4.34$, Strongly agree).

Kitole and Mwita (2025) found that transparent, merit-based promotion policies enhance employee job satisfaction, showing that when employees perceive career advancement opportunities as fair and attainable, their job satisfaction and engagement improve.

Table 3.

Professional Development of Graduates in Terms of Career Motivation and Promotion Satisfaction (Quadrant 2)

Quadrant 2	M	SD	Interpretation
I was able to hold a leadership position due to my dedication, perseverance, and love of my work.	4.47	0.60	Strongly agree
I received successive promotions (eg. 3rd Officer, 2nd Officer, OIC, etc.) prior to my present leadership position.	4.29	0.69	Strongly agree
I was tasked to lead various areas in my workplace due to my ability to adapt in a new workplace and perform the given tasks.	4.30	0.69	Strongly agree
I am fully satisfied with the amount of salary/compensation that I am receiving now based on my present work.	4.32	0.64	Strongly agree
Average Mean	4.35		Strongly agree

The results for Quadrant 2 indicate that AIMS graduates demonstrate a high level of motivation and satisfaction with their career progression. The highest-rated indicator, holding leadership positions due to dedication, perseverance, and love for work ($M = 4.47$, $SD = 0.60$), suggests that respondents perceive their career advancement as being merit-based and driven by their commitment and work performance. This finding reflects the importance of personal effort, professional competence, and positive work attitudes in attaining leadership responsibilities within the maritime profession. Similarly, the strong agreement regarding previous promotions ($M = 4.29$, $SD = 0.69$) and being entrusted with leadership roles because of adaptability and task performance ($M = 4.30$, $SD = 0.69$) indicates that respondents have experienced positive career mobility and recognition in their respective organizations. These findings imply that employers value employees who demonstrate competence, reliability, and the ability to adapt to dynamic workplace demands. In the maritime industry, where responsibility, discipline, and leadership are essential, such attributes are often rewarded through promotion and increased authority. Furthermore, respondents' satisfaction with their current salary and compensation package ($M = 4.32$, $SD = 0.64$) reflects favorable perceptions of the rewards associated with their profession. Adequate compensation is a recognized determinant of job satisfaction and employee retention, particularly among maritime professionals who operate in demanding work environments.

The findings are supported by **Widodo et al. (2023)**, who found that promotion has a significant positive effect on work motivation and job satisfaction, while career development opportunities contribute to employee satisfaction and organizational commitment. Likewise, opportunities for advancement and recognition have been identified as important factors influencing employee motivation, career engagement, and overall job satisfaction

Table 4.

Professional Development of Graduates in Terms of Recognition, Empowerment, and Workplace Impact (Quadrant 3)

Quadrant 3	M	SD	Interpretation
I have received recognitions, awards, and other honors during my past up to my present rank/position.	4.27	0.75	Strongly agree
I am empowered by the leadership positions I have held since the past up to the present rank/position I have.	4.22	0.60	Strongly agree

I made considerable influence and impact to my company and staffs given the leadership position I have held in the course of my work.	4.32	0.62	Strongly agree
Average Mean	4.27		Strongly agree

For Quadrant 3 (Recognition, Empowerment, and Workplace Impact), the respondents strongly agreed that they had received recognitions and awards throughout their careers ($M = 4.27$, $SD = 0.75$). They also agreed that they felt empowered by the leadership positions they had held ($M = 4.22$, $SD = 0.60$) and had made a considerable impact on their company and staff through their leadership roles ($M = 4.32$, $SD = 0.62$). This suggests that leadership experience contributed to both personal empowerment and organizational impact ($M=4.27$, Strongly agree).

Jo and Shin (2025) state that recognition and supportive leadership practices have been shown to significantly increase employee engagement and positive perceptions of workplace empowerment and impact, which aligns with respondents' strong agreement on recognition and empowerment in their careers.

Table 5.

Professional Development of Graduates in Terms of Career Satisfaction, Recognition, and Work-Life Balance (Quadrant 4)

Quadrant 4	M	SD	Interpretation
I am fully satisfied with the recognitions, awards and other honors I received during my past up to my present rank/position.	4.31	0.72	Strongly agree
I am grateful with the power vested on my position to man an office and lead a group of staffs.	4.33	0.68	Strongly agree
I felt honored in the recognition I gained due to the influence and impact I made to my company and staffs.	4.33	0.61	Strongly agree
I am satisfied with the work-life balance I had due to my present position/rank at work.	4.33	0.68	Strongly agree
In general, I am fully satisfied with my present career engagement towards the industry that I have chosen.	4.29	0.76	Strongly agree
Average Mean	4.32		Strongly agree

Lastly, Quadrant 4 (Career Satisfaction, Recognition, and Work-Life Balance) shows that the respondents were highly satisfied with the recognition they received ($M = 4.31$, $SD = 0.72$), felt grateful for the authority entrusted to them ($M = 4.33$, $SD = 0.68$), and felt honored by the influence they made in their workplace ($M = 4.33$, $SD = 0.61$). Additionally, they expressed satisfaction with their work-life balance ($M = 4.33$, $SD = 0.68$) and overall career engagement in the industry they had chosen ($M = 4.29$, $SD = 0.76$). Thus, the average mean of Career Satisfaction, Recognition, and Work-Life Balance is 4.32, meaning that respondents strongly agree.

Greenhaus et al. (2012) state that Empirical studies indicate that stronger perceptions of work-life balance are significantly associated with higher job satisfaction and positive employee outcomes, supporting respondents' high mean scores for career satisfaction and work-life balance. This principle is universally observable across other demanding professions; for instance, **Mellijor (2023)** established that fair compensation, supportive leadership, and organizational respect for family time are critical factors that directly influence job satisfaction and employee morale.

Similarly, **Antazo et al. (2026)** demonstrated that when institutional policies effectively address both hygiene factors (such as salary and working conditions) and motivation factors (such as professional growth and recognition), employees experience significantly higher levels of professional fulfillment. Thus, the high career satisfaction reported by the maritime graduates indicates the robust presence of these essential motivational and organizational supports within their respective employments.

Tables 2, 3, 4, and 5 present the professional development of graduates in terms of leadership positions, career advancement, motivation, recognition, empowerment, and career satisfaction. The results show that all indicators across the four quadrants were rated at a very high level of agreement (strongly agree) with an average mean of 4.32, indicating a high level of professional development among the graduates as shown in the Table 6.

Table 6.

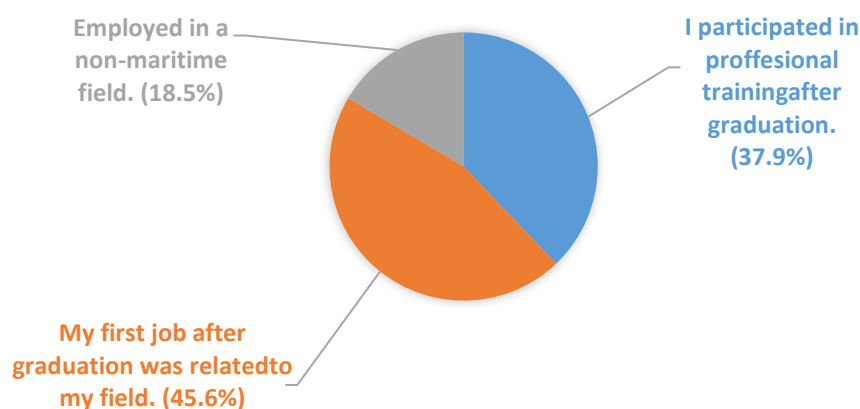
Frequency Distribution of the Over-all Average Mean of the 4 Quadrants

Quadrant	Mean	Interpretation
1- Professional Development of Graduates in Terms of Leadership Position and Career Advancement	4.34	Strongly agree
2- Professional Development of Graduates in Terms of Career Motivation and Promotion Satisfaction	4.35	Strongly agree
3- Professional Development of Graduates in Terms of Recognition, Empowerment, and Workplace Impact	4.27	Strongly agree
4- Professional Development of Graduates in Terms of Career Satisfaction, Recognition, and Work–Life Balance	4.32	Strongly agree
Over-all Average Mean	4.32	Strongly agree

Overall, the findings indicate that the graduates demonstrated a very high level of professional development, characterized by leadership involvement, career advancement, motivation, recognition, empowerment, and overall career satisfaction.

Figure 3.

Distribution of Respondents According to Career Engagement after Graduation.

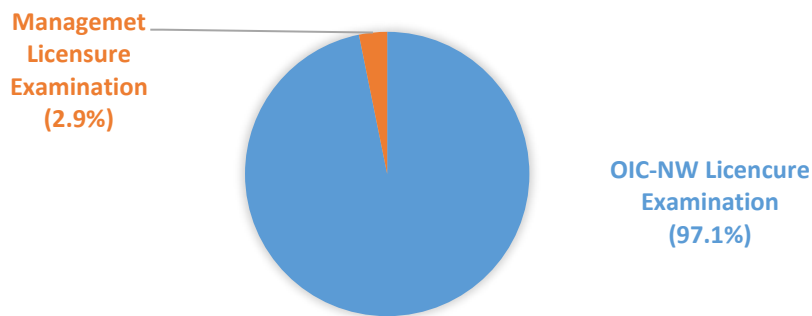


The figure illustrates the career engagement of the respondents after graduation. The results show that 45.6% of the respondents reported that their first job after graduation was related to their field of study. Meanwhile, 37.9% indicated that they participated in professional training after graduation. On the other hand, 18.5% of the respondents were employed in a non-maritime field. These findings suggest that a substantial proportion of AIMS alumni were able to engage in careers aligned with their academic training, while others pursued further skill development or temporarily entered non-maritime employment after graduation.

This study reported that most maritime graduates obtained employment aligned with their academic preparation, particularly in shipboard roles. However, it also noted that some graduates pursued professional training or worked in non-maritime fields immediately after graduation due to contract availability, licensing processes, or career exploration (Cerbito & Manuel, 2024).

Figure 4.

Licensure Examination Standing of AIMS Graduates.



This section represents the distribution of the respondents according to the licensure examinations taken. The results show that the majority of the respondents, comprising 97.1%, took the OIC–NW Licensure Examination, while only 2.9% took the Management Licensure Examination. This indicates that most AIMS graduates pursued licensure examinations aligned with operational and navigational roles, reflecting their career orientation toward shipboard and technical positions within the maritime industry.

Table 7.

Distribution on the Waiting Time on Getting the First-Sea-Based job (in months).

Months	Frequency	Percentage
3 -5	25	24.3%
6 - 8	43	41.7%
9 - 11	20	19.4%
12 - 16	10	9.7%
17 - 24	5	4.9%
TOTAL	103	100%

Table 7 presents the distribution of the respondents according to the number of months it took them to secure their first job after graduation. The results show that the majority of the respondents, comprising 41.7%, were able to

obtain their first employment within 6–8 months after graduation. This was followed by 24.3% of the respondents who secured their first job within 3–5 months. Meanwhile, 19.3% of the respondents obtained employment within 9–11 months. A smaller proportion of the respondents took 12–16 months (9.7%) to secure their first job, while only 4.9% required 17–24 months. Overall, the findings indicate that most AIMS graduates were able to secure their first job within the first year after graduation.

These findings are consistent with previous maritime tracer studies. In the tracer study conducted by **Melitante and Staff (2022)** among graduates of the Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific, the highest frequency of respondents was also reported within the 6–12 month waiting period, where the majority of graduates secured their first shipboard employment within the first year after graduation (**Melitante, & Staff, 2022**). Similarly, **Gonzalez (2019)** reported in Table 5 that the largest frequency of maritime graduates obtained their first employment within 6–12 months, while only a small number of respondents waited beyond one year.

Figure 6.

Respondents Techniques in Getting Their First Job.

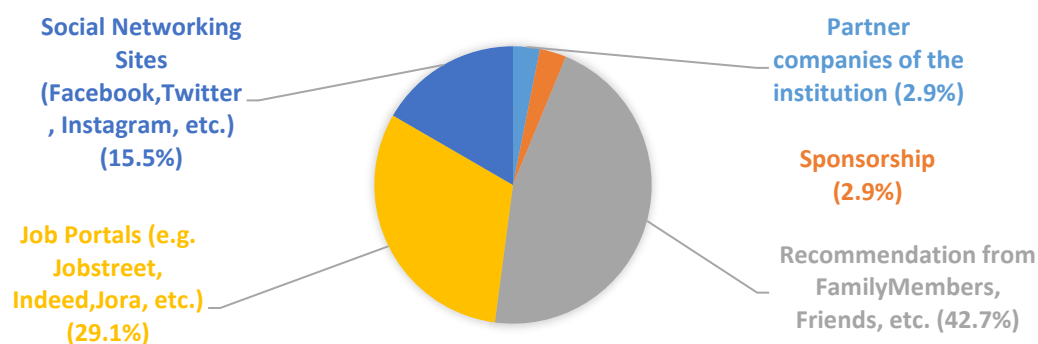


Figure 6 illustrates the techniques used by the respondents in securing their first job after graduation. The results show that the largest proportion of the respondents obtained their first job through recommendations from family members, friends, or relatives, accounting for 42.7% of the total. This was followed by job portals such as JobStreet, Indeed, or Jora, which accounted for 29.1% of the respondents. Meanwhile, social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) were used by 15.5% of the respondents in securing employment. Only a small proportion of the respondents obtained their first job through partner companies of the institution and sponsorships, each accounting for 2.9%. Overall, the findings indicate that personal networks and online job platforms played a significant role in helping AIMS graduates secure their first employment.

CONCLUSION

This tracer study examined the employment outcomes, career engagement, professional development, and career progression of Bachelor of Science in Marine Transportation (BSMT) graduates of the Asian Institute of Maritime Studies (AIMS) from Batch 2020 to 2023. The findings revealed that the majority of graduates were employed in maritime-related occupations, particularly in seafaring positions, demonstrating a strong alignment between the competencies developed through the program and the demands of the maritime industry. Graduates also exhibited

positive career progression, as reflected in their rank advancement, compensation growth, leadership opportunities, and professional accomplishments. It further established that AIMS has made a significant contribution to the professional success of its graduates by equipping them with the technical knowledge, practical skills, leadership abilities, communication competencies, and work values necessary for effective performance in the maritime sector. The high levels of career engagement, participation in professional development activities, and licensure examination attainment among graduates indicate their commitment to continuous learning and career advancement.

Overall, the findings affirm the effectiveness of the BSMT program in producing competent, employable, and industry-ready maritime professionals capable of meeting the requirements of the global shipping industry. The results provide valuable evidence for continuous curriculum enhancement, strengthened industry collaboration, and the development of institutional strategies that further support graduate employability and professional growth.

This study was limited to AIMS BSMT graduates from Academic Years 2020 to 2023. Future tracer studies may be conducted on subsequent graduating batches to monitor trends in graduate outcomes over time. Moreover, the findings may serve as a useful reference for other maritime higher education institutions seeking to evaluate the effectiveness of their academic programs and the employability of their graduates.

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