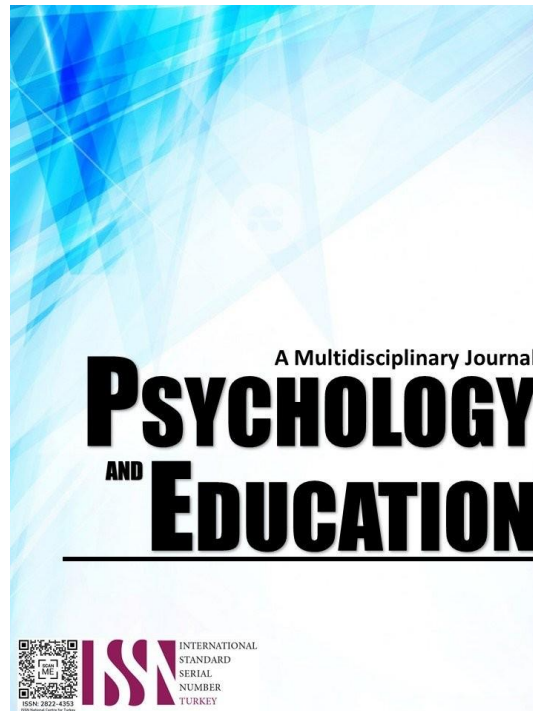


# **HUMSS GRADUATES LANDING STATION: A PHENOMENOLOGY**



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## HUMSS Graduates Landing Station: A Phenomenology

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### Abstract

One of the academic strands offered by the Philippine Education in the Senior High School department is the Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) which encapsulates branches of knowledge in science. This is in line with Republic Act stipulated in the Philippines laws numbered 10533. Anchored on Deped Order 51, s 2015, students who intend to study humanities and social sciences in higher education should enroll in the Humanities and social sciences. This study aims to examine the landing station of HUMSS graduates of the Division of Bais City. The lack of empirical studies that especially concentrate on the lived experiences of HUMSS graduates may be one potential research gap in this area. The study is enlightened by the theory of descriptive phenomenology by the philosopher Edmund Husserl. The Husserlian descriptive phenomenology design was used for this qualitative study. The researchers separately performed one-on-one interviews in the study of the lived experience of HUMSS graduates, which helped to get a holistic sense and consciousness relating to the full experiences of the participants. Participants must have completed their studies in the humanities and social sciences (HUMSS) strand at the School Division of Bais City. The study came up with four emergent themes: Theme 1: The All-in-one package, Theme 2: Academic Alignment; Theme 3: First-come-first-serve and Theme 4: Curriculum re-touch. These themes provided a clear result of how the HUMSS graduates lived experiences in landing better opportunities.

**Keywords:** *Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) Strand, Lived Experiences, Husserlian Descriptive Phenomenology*

### Introduction

One of the academic strands offered by the Philippine Education in the Senior High School department is the Humanities and social sciences (HUMSS) which encapsulated branches of knowledge in science. This is in line with Republic Act stipulated in the Philippines laws numbered 10533. Anchored on Deped Order 51, s 2015, students who intend to study humanities and social sciences in higher education should enroll in the Humanities and social sciences (HUMSS Strand). Competencies under the HUMSS curriculum include but are not limited to creative skills in reading and writing, religions, community engagement, entrepreneurship, politics and governance, and social sciences disciplines (Llego, 2022). The purpose of the SHS curriculum is to get students ready to attend a university or college, work in the sector, or start an enterprise (Sarmiento & Orale, 2016). Such, in this study, aims to examine the landing station of HUMSS graduates of the Division of Bais City.

According to Padios et al. (2021), HUMSS strands are among the SHS academic tracks that are more likely to be pursued higher. Some studies revealed that SHS graduates are not very confident that they will get a job after graduating from SHS (Gelaidan & Abdullateef, 2017). Moreover, SHS graduates are more likely to perceive cognitive (Korthals et al., 2021), practical, and emotional abilities (Prentice et al., 2019) that are key indicators of employment (Carada et al., 2021). Professional teachers and criminologists were the two preferred careers/occupations among HUMSS graduates in 2022. The least favored occupations/careers were agriculturist, musician, and computer programmer (Santiago, 2022). Due to financial constraints, some high school graduates decide to pursue employment rather than continue their education (Philippas & Avdoulas, 2020; McCloud & Bann, 2019).

The lack of empirical studies that especially concentrate on the lived experiences of HUMSS graduates in their first job after graduation (Baert et al., 2021) may be one potential research gap in this area. The employability of HUMSS graduates and their professional paths have been studied by Padios et al. (2021), but more study is needed to explore the subjective experiences of HUMSS graduates during this transitional phase, including their expectations, difficulties, and opportunities (Tondo & Detecio, 2021). By examining this gap, this paper may get significant insight into the difficulties of HUMSS graduates (Insorio, et al., 2021) to encounter and identify potential approaches for promoting a successful transition into the workplace. This will also lead to the revelations of the other experiences of HUMSS graduates such as shifting career goals (Akkermans & Kubasch, 2017). Other external factors such as economic, family status (Costaños, et al 2020), motivation, and financial constraints can be tackled.

The beneficiaries of the study are the HUMSS graduates, teachers and school administrators, parents, and various educational stakeholders of the Schools Division of Bais City. For the HUMSS graduates, the study offers an understanding of the challenges

(Narciso et al., 2020) and probabilities faced in their shift to post-secondary education (Finnie, 2012), locating work and managing their career path. For parents and other school stakeholders, this study aims to provide insightful information, support, and guidance for HUMSS learners. Collaboration possibilities and more exposure to educational programs are the expected outcomes of this study. Lastly, the study has the essential capacity to assess educators in updating the current HUMSS curriculum that is aligned with the demand of workforce requirements. School administrators also should strengthen student support and increase student engagement.

The lived experiences (Alase, 2017; Finlay, 2014) of HUMSS graduates in their first employment or chosen career path after graduation are not well studied. Even though research on career trajectories and employability has been conducted, additional research is needed to fully understand the challenges and opportunities that these HUMSS graduates encounter throughout this transition, including external factors like financial restrictions. Employers should provide HUMSS graduates with resources and assistance beyond technical support to help them overcome any personal obstacles that might interfere with their success on the job. Programs including career seminars, mentorship programs, and alumni networking should be implemented to help HUMSS graduates succeed in their careers. To ensure that these programs are successful in providing HUMSS graduates with the support, direction, and opportunities they need to succeed, a collaboration between educational institutions, businesses, and industry professionals is essential.

## Research Questions

The study explored the Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) graduates' experiences, obstacles, and opportunities. Additionally, this acknowledges their difficulties and provides the following clarifications:

1. What impact does the HUMSS strand have on participants' choice of careers?
2. How does the HUMSS strand impact participants' competence?
3. What challenges do participants face as HUMSS graduates?
4. What are the opportunities the participants encounter being a HUMSS graduate?
5. What are the possible participants' recommendations/suggestions to the educational institutions to improve the HUMSS strand curriculum?

## Literature Review

There is a scarcity of studies pertaining to the humanities and social sciences (HUMSS) graduates. However, in the context of employability (Carada et al, 2022) and job-related (Rothausen & Henderson, 2019) experiences of humanities and social sciences graduates have been established. A study conducted by O'Leary, S. (2017) explores the employability of social graduates' experiences after finishing higher education. Transitions of senior students from higher education to working life (Dahlgren et al, 2006) are also established. The goal of K-12 programs and other legal bases of Philippine education is to produce graduates with higher percentages of employability (Clarke, 2018) rates.

In the Philippines, most humanities, and social sciences (HUMSS) graduates are expected to seek further education (Blossfeld & Maurice, 2019) degrees. Among the senior high school strands, HUMSS graduates are considered to be human capital (Donald et al, 2017) in the labor sector. It is expected that all humanities graduates have a deep self-perception toward employability. Humanities and social sciences graduates are more likely to be prepared with the skills required for a specific career (Niate et al, 2021). Early career expectations (Surtherland, 2017) are also factors in the success of choosing a career or courses in higher education. Skills and competencies (Porton et al, 2020) of humanities and social sciences graduates are vital in landing a job and seeking employment.

The Senior High School tracer studies are also conducted by (Padios et al., 2021) for senior high school exits. They found out that most senior high school graduates pursue higher education. Some tend to work to earn a living but the possibility of job mismatch (Pajares et al, 2018) will occur. According to (Rashid, 2019) the main causes of the unemployment rate discovered were recruitment corruption, giving general education a higher priority than technical education, an insufficient job market, a large number of graduates, a lack of job specialization, and outdated curricula in some areas. The Department of Education (DepEd) is constantly assessing and evaluating student academic performance in Senior High School (Ocampo et al., 2020), particularly for graduates in the humanities and social sciences. This is in line with the mandate of the government of producing graduates that are enablers of change.

Graduates in humanities and social sciences are then expected to be job-ready (Ramos, 2019). A huge allocation of HUMSS graduates pursues teaching (Orefice & Diez, 2018), research, and program development. HUMSS graduates also dedicated their lives to serving as local government workers such as social workers (Nilan, 2013), administrative officers, and public services. Graduates can find employment with non-profit groups like foundations, NGOs, and charities, where they can use their analytical thinking and problem-solving abilities (Santos, 2019) to address social concerns. They may work in fields like program management, advocacy, fundraising,

lawmakers, media, and journalism.

Humanities and social science graduates may experience a variety of challenges in today's world. For instance, One of the primary issues that graduates in the humanities and social sciences encounter is the shortage of work opportunities (Ofreneo, 2013). Many of these positions are very competitive and need advanced degrees or specialized training, making it difficult for graduates to find work. Several occupations in the humanities and social sciences are frequently associated with lesser earnings than employment in engineering or business. Technological advancements are transforming the way work is done, especially in sectors that rely significantly on human relationships and communication, such as the humanities and social sciences. To remain competitive, HUMSS graduates must adapt to new technologies and keep up with the current trends.

There has been an increase in skepticism about the value of humanities and social sciences graduates' employability (Ashton et al., 2013) in recent years, with some wondering whether these areas give relevant skills or prepare graduates for the labor market. Graduates in the humanities and social sciences may face resistance or rejection while discussing subjects such as diversity, inclusiveness, and social justice in many nations due to the current social and political biases. Despite all of this, graduates of the humanities and social sciences continue to play a significant part in society, offering valuable ideas, critical thinking abilities, and an extensive understanding of human behavior in a range of areas and sectors.

## Methodology

The Husserlian descriptive phenomenology design was used for this qualitative study. The researchers separately performed one-on-one interviews in the study of the lived experience of humanities and social sciences (HUMSS) graduates, which helped to get a holistic sense and consciousness relating to the full experiences of the participants. Further, it identifies the challenges, opportunities, as well as recommendations to the educational institutions pertaining to the implementation of the humanities and social sciences (HUMSS) strand.

### Sampling Technique and Inclusion Criteria

#### *Sampling Technique*

Purposive sampling was used in the study to select participants, who were then asked to provide greater detail on their experiences, challenges, and opportunities as graduates of the humanities and social sciences (HUMSS) strand. To choose the best key informants for the study, an inclusion criterion was also developed. In total, 10 people were involved in the study.

#### *Inclusion Criteria*

Participants must have completed their studies in humanities and social sciences (HUMSS) strand at the School Division of Bais City.

1. Participants can be enrolled in any course in higher education institutions.
2. Participants can be at any year level in higher education institutions.
3. Participants can be employed after graduating as humanities and social sciences (HUMSS) graduates of the School Division of Bais City.
4. Participants can be unemployed after graduating as humanities and social sciences (HUMSS) graduates of the School Division of Bais City.
5. Participants can become entrepreneurs after graduating as humanities and social sciences (HUMSS) graduates of the School Division of Bais City.

### Data Collection

Participants are randomly and carefully selected as HUMSS graduates within the inclusion criteria of the study. They are informed about the conduct and manner of the interview. It is perennial to obtain participants' consent and approval before the interview commences (Creswell 2013 as cited by Alasi 2017). After receiving the participants' consent, they are scheduled for an interview through a face-to-face, video, or voice-type of interview. The researchers scheduled and conducted the interview using a Facebook chat program, which all participants had access to. The researcher designed a questionnaire for data collection, which the experts utilized, approved, and validated (Cabello & Bonotan, 2021).

### Ethical Considerations

In gathering the data, the ethical guidelines established for the study were strictly adhered to when acquiring the data Creswell 2013 as cited by Alasi 2017).

## Research Rigor

In qualitative research, the purpose of rigor is to ensure that the study design, approach, and findings are explicit, public, accurate, open to critique, and free of bias (Leung, 2015 as cited by Johnson et al., 2020). The researcher adheres to the qualitative phenomenological process by Lincoln and Guba (1985). The description of credible and reliable evidence must be established (Cypress, 2017). The researcher used Colaizzi's approaches in descriptive phenomenology to evaluate the data thematically (Gumarang et al., 2021).

## Data Analysis

This study used Descriptive Phenomenological Analysis (DPA), which is based on Colaizzi's Methods in Descriptive Phenomenology. The method of collecting data and accessing valid and factual information was a semi-structured in-depth interview (face-face or online). These finding statements from the participants must be recorded and stored electronically. Transcription of the participants' responses are grouped into themes such as: meanings that should be constructed from these important phrases.; the established meanings should be grouped, and clustered into themes; the study's findings should be integrated into a comprehensive description of the phenomenon under study; the fundamental structure of the phenomenon should be described; and finally, validation of the findings should be sought from research participants by comparing the researcher's descriptive results with their experiences.

## Results and Discussion

In the study of lived experience of the landing station on humanities and social sciences (HUMSS) graduates, the researcher conducted face to face and online interviews, which helped to the discovery pertaining to the entire experiences of the participants. The recorded video and audio conversations were replayed three to four times in order to comprehend the participants' experiences and feelings. (Colaizzi, 1978) proposed that the researchers review the conversations several times in order to fully comprehend the information at hand.

The study came up with four emergent themes: Theme 1: The All-in-one package, Theme 2: Academic Alignment; Theme 3: First-come-first-serve and Theme 4: Curriculum re-touch - After accumulating and summarizing data.

### Theme 1: All-in-one package

Primarily they choose HUMSS as their preferred strand in senior high school because of availability and accessibility reasons. The participants choose HUMSS as their preference strand because it is accessible near to their houses or residents. If students choose a different strand than HUMSS, they have to spend more on transportation costs for traveling to the central school where another strand is being offered.

Participant 1 said that,

"...Gipili naku ang HUMSS strand sir kay mao may dool diri sa among balay. Gasto na pod kaau adto sa Bais City High School. Daun sir, gipili pod kog HUMSS kay layhan ko mag Police puhon".

HUMSS strand is preparatory for students who want to pursue a Bachelor of Science in Criminology, teachers and other courses such as flight attendant.

Participant 3 said that,

"...nakatabang ang HUMSS in terms of communication skills. Introvert ko sir, then upon taking HUMSS dili naka kau ko ma shy and how to communicate with someone. HUMSS helps me to improve my communication skills. Then, discover naku naa diay koy ability in communication skills. Naka helps pod xa naku in terms of conducting our research subjects.

Additionally, HUMSS strand helps to increase their self-confidence, interaction skills, public speaking skills, critical thinking skills, and research capabilities, as well as makes them more aware of potential career opportunities. The greater influence on their training and the development of their communication, research, and critical thinking skills for their future careers are also one of the factors why HUMSS graduates strive to excel in their respective fields of studies.

### Theme 2: Academic Alignment

The participants are confident since some of the subjects in the HUMSS strand have already been taught to them or they have a basic understanding while still in senior high school. The learning in senior high school is being enhanced in college. There should be an alignment of SHS strands which correspond to college courses. For instance, criminology courses are aligned with HUMSS graduates. The benefits and advantages of graduating from HUMSS are that graduates will not need to take any more bridging subjects if their strand is aligned with their chosen course. For instance, graduates of the general academics strand (GAS) strand will take bridging subjects in order to continue with a criminology course or any other HUMSS-aligned courses. Some college and university core subjects



have now been integrated into SHS tracks, which means less repetition. If SHS graduates go to college, the subjects they take on will be more focused and more relevant to their chosen course.

Participant 4 said,

“...Ang advantage naku na nikuha kog HUMSS strand, usa ana kay ang uban na strand kinahanglan pa mo bridging sila kami dili ni kinahanglan mo bridge kay aligned na man xa sa among course na gikuha karon. Bridging meaning naa laing e take subject for those senior high school strands that are not aligned to their chosen course. For instance, GAS graduates will take bridging subjects if they want to pursue a Criminology course...”

Participant 5 said,

“...For me, one of the opportunities is, gawas na aligned and HUMSS sa akong karon na course na education major in social sciences, na prepared akong self sa akong course na gikuha karon. Na boost na akong confidence and dili na kaayo ko mahadlok mu-atubang sa akong mga klasmayt in terms of public speaking...”

Moreover, HUMSS graduates who are taking courses that do not align with the HUMSS strands, have additional bridge or enhancement subjects that increase the burden on students during their first year of college.

Participant 6 said,

“...The challenge that I face as a HUMSS graduate is not being confident, I was a HUMSS student, and there is more debate in the middle of a discussion and it really challenged me, since I am a shy type of person but I overcome my weakness since HUMSS opt me to develop my capacity as a student and as a first-year student taking Bachelor of Science in Business administration major in marketing management, The challenges that I encountered is the course that I take now is not aligned with the HUMSS strand. I have two enhancement subjects that put me under more pressure during my first year of college. There are several lessons that I don't know since my strand is not aligned with the course I am taking right now...”

Students entering senior high school should be more attentive of choosing senior high school strands and make sure that it is in line with the course they intend to study in college.

### **Theme 3: First come first serve basis**

As HUMSS graduates, the participants had some difficulties. Aspirants to attend college may encounter external factors like the availability of slots (quota) or the maximum requirements for college admission. Nowadays, pursuing higher education is free due to the implementation of R.A. 10931, which eliminates new college students from paying tuition. For this reason, public state colleges and universities implemented a first-come-first-serve scheme.

Participant # 2 said,

“...kay HUMSS man akong strand, akong gi-applayan available courses like business, law and BSIT, pero sa BSIT ko nakuha kay mao may daghan og slot during that time. Naa didto akong ngalan so mao tong BSIT akong course...”

### **Theme 4: Curriculum re-touch**

Participants propose expanding the HUMSS curriculum such that it can be applied to any preferred course that students want to take. A thorough, high-quality, and integrated learning in social and political competencies is needed. These are the topics that HUMSS graduates will find to be particularly useful when pursuing higher education degrees. Giving more emphasis on and guiding students in the development of various skills and capacities that are components of the HUMSS strand is one of the recommendations and suggestions.

The continuous curriculum should include updated and integrated practical skills. Giving HUMSS students training and revisiting the curriculum content according to current developments. Level up strategies and go deeper understanding of the different HUMSS subjects in terms of the teaching-learning process and for college preparation. Participants suggest that the HUMSS curriculum should incorporate a wide variety of elective courses that students will need to succeed in their chosen professional pathways.

## **Conclusion**

Humanities and social science (HUMSS) graduates' lived experiences in their respective landing places provide true evidence that our educational system has an impact on everyone's lives. The study provides an overview of the impact, advantages, challenges, and opportunities for HUMSS graduates as they go through the various stages of higher education. Factors such as availability and accessibility remain valid reasons for every Filipino student in quest of quality education. Furthermore, the government is striving to

provide an ALL-IN-ONE PACKAGE education curriculum suited to the student's variety of skills and abilities. HUMSS graduates should be vigilant enough in unleashing their potential to establish an ACADEMIC ALIGNMENT. Again, due to the large number of graduates and the limited number of teachers and educational facilities in state universities and colleges (SUCs), HUMSS graduates compete with one another for college admission. The majority of public state universities and colleges (SUCs) follow a FIRST-COME-FIRST-SERVED policy.

Based on the study's findings, participants advised and urged initiating CURRICULUM RE-TOUCH, which could result in competent and excellent HUMSS graduates. This will be made possible through updating and revalidating HUMSS competencies aligned to improve a variety of students' skills and abilities. Training and professional development for HUMSS teachers must also be put into consideration. With these initiatives and programs, HUMSS graduates are expected to unleash their potential and intended landing stations.

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