

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY: APPLIED BUSINESS AND EDUCATION RESEARCH

2023, Vol. 4, No. 4, 1129 – 1136

<http://dx.doi.org/10.11594/ijmaber.04.04.10>

Research Article

Employment and Employability Skills of Graduate School Graduates in Tagudin Campus

Jonathan L. Dela Cruz^{1*}, Tessie L. Dela Cruz²

¹Graduate School – Santa Maria Campus, Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College, Santa Maria, Ilocos Sur

²Graduate School - Tagudin Campus, Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College

Article history:

Submission February 2023

Revised April 2023

Accepted April 2023

*Corresponding author:

E-mail:

jldelacruz@ispsc.edu.ph

ABSTRACT

Graduates' employability is vital in assessing higher education institutions' performance. The results of tracer studies serve as a basis to identify graduates' needs to succeed in the workforce. This undertaking aimed to determine graduate school graduates' employment and employability characteristics in a state higher education institution in the Philippines. Specifically, it determined the profile of graduates, employment status, employability characteristics, the extent of contribution and applicability of the skills gained, assessed the graduate program offerings, and recommendations to improve the services of the Graduate School. The study used a descriptive research design. The study gathered data from graduates of the two program offerings of the Graduate School. The questionnaire was used to gather the necessary data and analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequency count and percentage and mean. Based on the results, the graduates have the necessary eligibilities, are employed in public schools, occupy permanent positions, and present employment relevant to the degree earned. In addition, there is high employability of graduates and a high application of the skills gained in graduate school. There is high satisfaction among graduates with the offering and services of the institution. With these conclusions, it is recommended that the existing curriculum shall be reviewed, the improvement of facilities and learning resources, and strong partnership with linkages may be strengthened to sustain the relevance and responsiveness of the existing graduate programs and curriculum.

Keywords: *Advanced Higher Education, Employability Skills, Employment, Tracer Study*

How to cite:

Dela Cruz, J. L. & Dela Cruz, T. L. (2023). Employment and Employability Skills of Graduate School Graduates in Tagudin Campus. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary: Applied Business and Education Research*. 4(4), 1129 – 1136. doi: 10.11594/ijmaber.04.04.10

Introduction

In this ever-changing education landscape, the employability of graduates is vital in curricular reforms. The success of an institution depends on the quality of its graduates. Nunez, Caelian, and Madrigal (Nunez et al., 2022) believed that the global demand for high-skilled professionals emphasized the role of higher education in career advancement.

University preparation has greatly aided the employment of graduates (Cornillez et al., 2021). Structuring curricular changes aim to develop higher education programs responsive and relevant to the need of the time. To produce graduates competently ready to go out to the real world and capable of rendering jobs in the workplace is one of higher education institutions mandates.

The Philippines underwent several reforms over the past decade with the implementation of the K to 12 Education in basic education, the adoption of Outcomes-Based Education as a teaching framework at all levels, the implementation of the General Education courses in higher education, and Universal Access to Higher Education. With these initiatives, the commission sees to it that academic programs in higher education institutions are aligned and consistent with the reforms being instituted in the entire Philippine Education System.

The Commission on Higher Education mandates academic institutions to regularly conduct tracer studies to trace their graduates and provide feedback mechanisms for the graduates. This ensures the quality of graduates in higher education institutions. Tracer studies are conducted to establish the connection between the quality of graduates of universities and colleges and the standards set by the Commission on Higher Education as contained in the Policies, Standards, and Guidelines of Graduate Education (Rojas & Rojas, 2016).

It is the responsibility of higher education institutions to keep track of the employability of their graduates to determine accountability and whether or not their degree programs are relevant to the needs of the industry, community, and to society or have impacted the person, the institution, or the country. The employment opportunities and the nature of employment of graduates spell the quality of the

programs and curricular offerings of academic institutions (Schomburg, 2012).

It has been observed that graduates find the difficulty of obtaining employment relevant to the field. Some graduates are not prepared properly for success when entering industries and the workforce. The skills acquired by the graduates do not match the needed competency requirement in the industry. These result in an increase in the number of unemployed graduates.

It is therefore imperative for higher education institutions to hold tracer studies in order to generate valuable data and information as a basis for evaluating the quality of training and education obtained by students in a particular learning institution. Malahay and Saing (Malahay & Saing, 2018) also emphasized the significance of tracer studies in nation-building. It can be utilized to raise the educational standards of the institution as the results are used to develop curricular reforms and enhancement of job training programs.

It is with these premises that this study is conducted to assess the employability and employability skills of the Graduate School Graduates of Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College. The findings of the study shall be utilized to monitor and assess outcomes to address the needs of the graduates. Results enable the institution to identify the areas that need to be addressed to strengthen and improve the quality of its program offerings.

Review of Literature

In the real academic world, the task of higher education institutions is not confined to mere instruction but most importantly, to ensure the graduates' employability, recognition, and success in their respective disciplines, and likewise to be productive human resources in a competitive economy. On the other hand, the inability of graduates to meet the skills and competencies required by the industry is one of the major factors for underemployment and difficulty in finding jobs (Meñez, 2014).

In addressing the emergent and intricate nature and trials of the 21st century, higher education stands out as one of the primary keys to coping with reforms. Through its crucial triological functions on instruction, research, and

extension with the addition of another function which is production, higher education makes up a vital and strategic factor in development. Moreover, Executive Order # 83, series of 2012 (Executive Order, 1986) creates the Philippine Qualifications Framework (PQF), which mandates agencies like the Department of Education (DepEd), Commission on Higher Education (CHED), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) and Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) "responsibilities in reviewing learning standards in basic education, and higher education, technical skills development, and in the alignment of the licensure examination."

Several findings and literature were reviewed to determine the gaps addressed in the study.

Most graduates are promoted to higher management positions as a result of the degree earned, the graduate attributes in the workplace are to a very great extent and graduates are satisfied with the program delivery and implementation (Nunez et al., 2022).

Work-related values like perseverance and hard work have greatly contributed to the job placement of graduates (Laguador & Dotong, 2013). Similarly, Dotong et al (2016) and Maderazo (2016) stressed that hard work, professional integrity, perseverance, love for God efficiency, and supportiveness to their present job along with communication skills are considered the foremost competencies useful in job placement.

In Albina and Sumagaysay (2020) study, they declared that their program's curriculum is indeed relevant. Pontillas (2018) acknowledged the contribution of the program to the professional development of the graduates. Their ability to engage in life-long learning, critical thinking, problem-solving and communication skills was acquired in the program they enrolled.

Gines (2014) conducted a tracer study in one of the programs at the Philippine Normal University. The study looked into the skills and competencies of the different bachelors' degree programs in teacher education to determine whether existing programs were still effective, adequate, and relevant in responding to the

rapid and complex changes brought about by emerging developments such as the international standards in academic programs, the upcoming ASEAN 2015 integration, the Competency Framework of South East Asian (SEA) Teachers in the 21st Century, among others.

The study concluded that having provided very adequately the skills such as knowledge and technical, communication, human relations, leadership, research, problem-solving, and other competencies specific to the area of specialization were major factors on top of area of specialization and reputation of PNU considered for immediate job acquisition. The graduates' level of satisfaction with the University's services, learning environment, and facilities was generally high satisfaction, however, computer laboratories with moderate satisfaction are still very much desired especially with the rapid advancement of technology needed for learning and connecting with the world.

Objectives of the Study

This study aims to determine the employment and employability characteristics of the Graduate School graduates of one higher education institution from 2016-2020. Specifically, it sought to determine the employment profile and status of graduates, the extensiveness of application of the skill learned, and the satisfaction of the graduates with the services of the College.

Methods

Research Design

This scientific undertaking utilized the descriptive research design specifically the use of a survey. It covers the employment status and employability characteristics of the graduates. The study is an evaluation of the curricular offerings of the College to ascertain if the skills the graduates acquired in the College significantly contribute to the employment of the graduates.

Respondents of the Study

The researcher obtained the roster of graduates from the Office of the Registrar. A total of 135 graduates of the Master of Science in Education and 39 graduates of the Master of Arts in Education represent the population of the

study. However, only 98 graduates responded. The study used the non-probability sampling technique.

Research Instrument

The data-gathering tool used in the study was adapted from the Graduate Tracer Study of the Commission on Higher Education. However, modifications were made to suit the purpose of the present study. For validity and consistency of the data to be obtained from the study, the instrument was content and faced-validated by five experts. Data gathered were analysed with a computed value of 4.16; hence the questionnaire is valid.

The questionnaire was pilot-tested and administered to thirty (30) respondents. The items in the survey questionnaire were analysed to test their reliability. Using Cronbach alpha, it reported acceptable reliability of 0.78 on the contribution of the programs to the present employment of the graduates and 0.81 on the level of assessment of graduates with the services of the Graduate School.

Ethical Considerations

The participation of the respondents in the study is voluntary. The responses and

information provided by the graduates were confidential and utilized for this purpose only. The respondents were assured that their names and any information or sensitive details that could identify them were not disclosed.

Statistical Treatment

The statistical tools used in the study were the percentile technique and weighted mean. The percentile technique was utilized to determine the proportion of the variable in qualitative relation to the whole; the weighted mean was used to determine the extensiveness of the application of skills learned and the satisfaction of the graduates with the services of the College.

Results and Discussion

Employment Status and Employment Skills of Graduates

This section presents the eligibilities employment status of the graduates while studying, present job status like the type of organization, job status, present monthly income, work location, and relatedness of the skills learned to the present job.

Table 1. Graduate's Professional Registration

Professional Registration	f	%
Licensed Teacher	98	100.00
Civil Service Professional	45	45.92
Civil Service Sub-Professional	10	9.80

Table 2. Work status while studying

Status	f	%
Working	78	79.59
Not Working	20	20.41
Total	98	100.00

Table 3. Work Status After Finishing Their Degree

Status	f	%
Working	98	100.00
Not Working	0	0.00
Total	98	100.00

Table 4. Type of Organization

Status	f	%
Private	4	4.08
Public	94	95.92
Total	98	100.00

Table 5. Job Status

Status	F	%
Permanent	90	91.84
Temporary	8	8.16
Total	98	100

Table 6. Present Monthly Income

Status	f	%
Below P21,000.00	4	4.44
P21,000.00 – 30,000.00	90	91.84
P31,000.00 – 40,000.00	3	3.06
P41,000.00 - 50,000.00	1	1.02
Total	98	100.00

Table 7. Work location

Location	f	%
Abroad	0	0.00
Local	98	100.00
Total	98	100

Table 8. Relatedness of Skills Learned to the Present Job

Response	f	%
Yes	98	100.00
No	0	0.00
Total	98	100.00

Table 1 shows that all of the respondents are licensed, professional teachers. Almost half of them have taken the civil service professional examination. Only 10 have sub-professional civil service eligibility. This is an indication that all the graduates have the necessary qualification as set by the Professional Regulation Commission.

Table 2 presents the work status of the respondents while studying. It is notable from the findings a significant number of respondents who are already employed when they enrolled in Graduate School. However, there are 20 or 20.41% of the respondents were not employed prior to their enrolment in graduate studies as evidenced in Table 3.

It is significant to note that most of the graduates are employed in the public sector and 91.84% of the graduates are given permanent positions as reflected in Table 4 and Table 5. This implies that the degree they earned has significantly contributed to their employment.

Table 6 shows that the majority of the graduates receive a monthly salary of Php21,000.00-30,000.00. In the same manner, all the graduates are locally employed as seen in Table 7. This means that all of them prefer to work in the country. They chose to stay and share their expertise, skills, and competencies with their fellow countrymen. Similar findings were found in the study of Cuadra, Aure, and Gonzaga (2019). A large fraction of the

graduates prefers to impart their knowledge in the country rather than working abroad.

It is also interesting to note that the skills they learned in the academe are related to their present job as presented in Table 8. One hundred percent of the respondent agreed that they have acquired skills and competencies relevant and responsive to the call of their profession. Similarly, Albina and Sumagaysay (2020) pointed out that the degree they earned is related to their present job. The development of the necessary competencies ensures graduates' employment in the industry. This manifests a high application of the skills they learned in their schooling. Woya (2019) and Abas and Imam (2016) affirmed that higher education institutions should reinforce graduate attributes to contribute to the goal of career development.

Among the items cited, ethical skills obtained the highest mean of 4.26 described as very high. This implies that the graduates have high regard for ethics in the practice of their present profession. The graduates preserve a high dedication in relation to the present job. They highly value their professional life and success and oblige to do whatever it takes to get the work well done.

In addition, the respondents also said that they highly apply people skills in their present job as supported by the computed mean of

4.25. This means that they have the ability and competency to communicate with other people in a friendly and positive way and deal with their colleagues effectively. The ability to listen, relate and communicate with others on a personal or professional level is an important skill that an employee must establish in the workplace (Singh et al., 2022). The need for effective interactions with people from different cultures has become a fundamental management skill in any organization (Efrat, 2022).

On the other hand, the item research skills were rated the lowest with a computed mean of 2.98 described as moderate. This result means that graduates do not fully apply their research skills in their respective work. Oestra and Marzo (2022) pointed out that the level of competency of teachers in research determines the factors in utilizing research in the teaching profession. Research is a crucial component of teaching. Research skill has a necessary competency in the professional development of teachers and an essential tool for enhancing the teaching and learning process (De la Cruz, 2016).

Satisfaction of the Graduates with the Services of the Graduate School

Table 9 reflects the assessment of the respondents on the graduate programs.

Table 9. Respondents' Satisfaction with the Graduate Programs

Indicators	Mean	DR
Range of the subject matter	4.54	VH
Relevance of the Programs to professional requirements	4.69	VH
Extra-curricular activities	4.15	H
Problem-solving	4.36	VH
Premium given to research	4.23	VH
Interdisciplinary learning	4.38	VH
Teaching and learning environment	4.38	VH
Quality of Instruction	4.56	VH
Teacher-student relationship	4.56	VH
Library resources	3.56	H
Laboratory resources	3.59	H
Class size	4.18	H
Infrastructure and facilities	3.77	H
Professor's Knowledge of the major subjects	4.59	VH
Overall	4.25	VH

It can be noted from Table 8 that there is a very high satisfaction of the graduates with the services provided by the school as supported by the computed mean of 4.25. The graduates agree that they are very highly satisfied with the services offered by the Graduate School. The quality of service is important for attracting and retaining students that serve as the basis for achieving excellence. Higher education must have a proper combination of academic knowledge and practical skills development because of the adoption of strategies and work-based learning parallel with the curriculum through immersion of the students in the community in their outreach programs and research on community development and organization (Kahsay, 2012; Ambepitiya, 2016; Rufai & Rashid, 2015).

Among the cited indicated, the relevance of the programs to the professional requirement obtained the highest computed mean of 4.69. This means that the graduates are satisfied with the services of the Graduate School. It contributes significantly to the professional development of the students and is responsive to their needs. The Graduate School offers good graduate education and lived up to its vision and mission as an institution for total human development.

On the other hand, infrastructure and facilities obtained the lowest mean of 3.66 described as high. This finding implies the need to improve the library resources of the Graduate School. The procurement of additional and updated books, journals, and references shall be looked into by the institution.

Conclusion

The Graduate School was able to instill the required skills needed by the graduates to perform their duties, functions, and responsibilities in their respective jobs. These help them demonstrate the necessary attributes in the workplace.

Graduate School crafted a program that is responsive and relevant to the development of necessary and significant skills. People skills and ethical skills are highly applied by graduates in their present job. The development of these skills has helped graduates to look for employment and be qualified for the job.

The graduates are satisfied with most of the services of the Graduate School, especially along relevance of the program to the professional requirement and the professor's knowledge of the major subjects. However, the need to improve the library resources and the conduct of extra-curricular activities.

The graduate tracer study shall be conducted regularly with a wider scope to establish more updated data that will reflect the needs and career advancement of the graduates. The need to include more respondents such as industry partners (DepEd and private schools) to ascertain the competencies of the graduates in their respective job. In addition, industry expectations shall be included as additional variables in future studies.

Moreover, the updating of the curriculum like offering updated programs and syllabi shall be done periodically. Stakeholders and more industry partners shall be involved during the review and evaluation. Linkages shall be established through partnerships with other SUCs, NGOs, and other private institutions, locally and abroad for the improvement of library resources and other school facilities.

References

- Nunez, S. J. L., Caelian, M. V., & Madrigal, D. V. (2022). A Tracer Study of Public Administration and Governance and Development Management Graduate Programs of the University of Negros Occidental-Recoletos. *Philippine Social Science Journal*, 5(3), 106-117. <https://bit.ly/3E7ht2y>
- Cornillez Jr, E. E. C., Caminoc, S. R. T., Basas, B. R., Militante Jr, B. T., & Paler, R. R. (2021). Tracer study of teacher education graduates of the eastern Visayas state university-Tanauan campus, Philippines. *European Journal of Education and Pedagogy*, 2(3), 186-193. <https://bit.ly/3ToVpWS>
- Rojas, T. T., & Rojas, R. C. (2016). College of education graduate tracer study (GTS): Boon or bane? *European Scientific Journal*, 12(16). <https://bit.ly/3UDF1mL>
- Schomburg, H. (2012, September). Current Developments of Tracer Studies—the Case in Germany. In Plenary Presentation at 2nd DEHEMS International Conference (pp. 27-28).
- Malahay, R. S., & Saing, P. M. (2018). A tracer study of Bachelor of Science in computer science graduates of Negros oriental state university-Guihulngan city

- campus, Philippines. *IJAR*, 4(12), 44-46. <https://bit.ly/3TEGloI>
- Meñez, N. L. (2014). Tracer study of the Masters in Business Administration (MBA) graduates from 2008-2012. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education, Arts and Sciences*, 1(1), 14-18. <https://bit.ly/3ti8VRi>
- Executive Order (1986). Institutionalization of the Philippine Qualifications Framework. Executive Order No. 83, s. 2012. <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/2012/10/01/executive-order-no-83-s-2012/>
- Laguador, J. M., & Dotong, C. I. (2013). Tracer study of BS computer engineering graduates of Lyceum of the Philippines University. *International Journal of Management, IT and Engineering*, 3(8), 387. <https://bit.ly/3fWgrOX>
- Dotong, C. I., Chavez, N. H., Camello, N. C., De Castro, E. L., Prenda, M. T. B., & Laguador, J. M. (2016). Tracer study of engineering graduates of one higher education institution in the philippines for academic year 2009-2012. *European Journal of Engineering and Technology* Vol, 4(4), 26-39. <https://bit.ly/3Tr6tTc>
- Maderazo, J. D. (2016). Tracer study of dentistry graduates of one higher education institution in the Philippines from 2008 to 2012. *Asia Pacific Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 4(3), 160-167. <https://bit.ly/3hxL79t>
- Albina, A. C., & Sumagaysay, L. P. (2020). Employability tracer study of Information Technology Education graduates from a state university in the Philippines. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, 2(1), 100055. <https://bit.ly/3DVzyAz>
- Pontillas, V. V. (2018). Tracer study on bachelor of science in electrical engineering graduates of a polytechnic college in the Philippines from 2007 to 2010. *Asia Pacific Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 6(2), 36-46. <https://bit.ly/3G78GjU>
- Gines, A. C. (2014). Tracer study of PNU graduates. *American International Journal of Contemporary Research*, 4(3), 81-98. <https://tinyurl.com/24vsedvk>
- Cuadra, L. J., Aure, M. R. K. L., & Gonzaga, G. L. (2019). The use of tracer study in improving undergraduate programs in the university. *Asia Pacific Higher Education Research Journal* (APHERJ), 6(1). <https://bit.ly/3A4i2cm>
- Woya, A. A. (2019). Employability among statistics graduates: Graduates' attributes, competence, and quality of education. *Education Research International*, 2019. <https://bit.ly/3Ad4Z8B>
- Abas, M. C., & Imam, O. A. (2016). Graduates' Competence on Employability Skills and Job Performance. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education*, 5(2), 119-125. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1108534>
- Singh, S., Bhandari, V., & Saket, A. S. (2022). A study on the underrated importance of soft skills and its effectiveness in the workplace. *Lex Scholasticus Journal of Law And Socio-Economic Issues*, 1(2). <https://bit.ly/3Q3xTOF>
- Efrat, A. (2022). Reviews Of Literature Regarding Interpersonal Skills And The Workplace Over The Years 2011-2021. *Network Intelligence Studies*, (19), 53-63. <https://bit.ly/3UrmBWd>
- Oestar, J., & Marzo, C. (2022). Teachers as Researchers: Skills and Challenges in Action Research Making. *International Journal of Theory and Application in Elementary and Secondary School Education*, 4(2), 95-104. <https://bit.ly/3A6Id27>
- De la Cruz, J. L. (2016). The research capability of locos Sur Polytechnic State College: A basis for a capability enhancement program. *International Journal of Management and Social Sciences Research*, 5(7), 39-45. <https://bit.ly/2yAErkU>
- Kahsay, M. N. (2012). Quality and quality assurance in Ethiopian higher education: Critical issues and practical implications. <https://bit.ly/3fVkwD0>
- Ambepitiya, K. R. (2016). Employability of graduates of public and private management education institutes: A case study of two institutes in Sri Lanka. <https://bit.ly/3G7Limf>
- Rufai, A. U., & Rashid, A. B. M. (2015). Developing a sustainable practical model of graduate employability for higher education. *International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies*, 3(1), 42-51. <https://bit.ly/3O69jMr>