

Employability of the Bachelor of Secondary Education Graduates of Pangasinan State University Alaminos City Campus

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Abstract – The study assessed the employability of the Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSEd) graduates from 2014 to 2017 of Pangasinan State University Alaminos City Campus. The descriptive research design was employed with 22.31% of the total graduates participated in the study as respondents. Data were gathered using the CHED Graduate Tracer Study Questionnaire. Findings of the study disclosed that majority (89.65%) of the graduates were employed in which, 51.72% of them are contractual teachers in private schools. Most of the graduates (53.6%) landed their first jobs 1-6 months after graduation. In accepting their first jobs, 25.71% of the graduates are motivated by the salaries and benefits. However, 50% of the total graduates wanted a challenge in their careers which made them change their first jobs. Human relations, communication, and critical thinking skills are the competencies that are useful for the jobs of most of the graduates. On the other hand, the common reasons of the graduates for not yet being employed or never having been employed are family concerns, health reasons, no job opportunities, and due to Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) review.

Keywords – *Employability, Graduates, Tracer Study, Competencies, Curriculum*

INTRODUCTION

Education today must produce calibre professionals who will play a vital role in the society as responsible and productive citizens. It must focus on providing knowledge, skills, and values which will drastically help to guarantee that graduates can contribute to economic growth, which in the long run will also help generate more funds for educational development. Hence, it is the responsibility of the academic institutions in higher education to ensure that their graduates are prepared to penetrate and meet the demands of the labor market.

One of the factors in determining the effectiveness of an academic institution is through the employability of its graduates. The quality of graduates produced by an academic institution is very much dependent on the quality of instruction and facilities which ensure that graduates are equipped with necessary knowledge, skills, values and competencies, which can be manifested to their workplace.

Several tracer studies were conducted along graduate employability. Dotong and Laguador (2006)^[1] found out that English and Mathematics are relevant as perceived by the respondents to their job placement. Aquino, et al. (2015)^[2], in his tracer study of Teacher Education graduates concluded that a considerably high percentage of respondents are Licensure Examination for Teachers

(LET) passers, employed in public schools. Their present job, was also their first job, and relevant to their degree. It took a short period of time for most graduates to land a job. Most stay in their job for an economic reason, and communication skills and human relation skills as part of their teacher education preparation are very relevant to their jobs.

Cardona and Andres (2014)^[3], also conducted a tracer study of Bachelor of Secondary Education major In Mathematics (BSED Mathematics) graduates of Philippine Normal University (PNU) from 2008-2013. The study found out that mathematics graduates are employable and that they possessed employability skills necessary in the workplace. Also, their LET rating implies approaching to proficiency and majority landed in teaching stint after short span of time.

Also, the tracer study on the employment status of the Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSEd) graduates of Polytechnic University of the Philippines – Taguig (PUP-Taguig) from 2011-2015 (Vicente et al., 2017)^[4] showed that BSED graduates, has a high employment rate. Also, his findings disclosed that the relevance of the curriculum has an influence in career decisions.

Furthermore, studies have shown that there has been a serious gap in the education system that arises from having curricula that are unsuitable in providing

graduates opportunities for employment (Celis et. al., 2013)^[5]. It is also pointed out that of the one million graduates annually, only five to ten percent are employed to jobs relevant to their courses and only 30 to 40 percent will find any employment. Thus, "a vast majority of graduates will remain unemployed" (Milan, Leandro 2010)^[6].

Obtaining necessary information on the employability of graduates will help the College of Teacher Education specifically the Bachelor of Secondary Education program and the entire Pangasinan State University Alaminos City Campus, in showing its efforts and success in pursuing academic excellence and its educational efforts pertaining to the labor market. Also, the institution can identify areas for growth and development especially in the context of quality assurance and relevance the curriculum. All possible discrepancies in the content, delivery and relevance of the curriculum will be improved.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study aims to assess the BSED graduates from 2014 to 2017 of PSU Alaminos City Campus regarding their employability. Specifically, the study seeks to (a) determine the profile of the BSED graduates in terms of age, sex, civil status, degree specialization, and professional examinations taken; (b) know the employment situation of respondents in terms of current employment status, present occupation and reasons for not yet or never having been employed; (c) determine the first jobs of the graduates in terms of the relation of their first jobs in their course, job level position in their first job, tools in finding their first jobs and the interval of time landing in their first jobs after college; (d) identify the motivational factors that influenced the employment situations of the respondents as to reasons for accepting the first job, and (e) determine the competencies learned in college which are useful to the first/present jobs of the respondents.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

A descriptive survey research design was used in this study. This method described the employment status, present and first jobs, motivational factors and competencies learned by the BSEd graduates.

Participants of the Study

The participants of this study were the Bachelor of Secondary Education Major in English and Mathematics graduates at the Pangasinan State University Alaminos City Campus from 2014-2017 with 130 graduates. However, there were only 29 questionnaires retrieved representing 22.31% of the total graduates .

Data Gathering Instrument and Procedures

To obtain the needed information, the researchers adapted the Graduate Tracer Survey Questionnaire from the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). Most of the graduates were traced using phone interviews and social networking sites. Since most of the graduates have facebook and e-mail accounts, the softcopy of the questionnaire was uploaded and sent for the graduates to answer. Also, some of the responses came from the graduates who visited the campus and answered the tracer study questionnaire.

Statistical Treatment of Data

The data collected were coded for analysis using Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Frequency counts and percentages were used to analyze the data gathered in response to the objectives of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows the profile of the BSEd graduates. Regarding age, most of the graduates are within 23-25 years old with 10 or 34.48% of the total respondents and only one is above 26 years old. There is a higher number of female respondents with 22 or 75.9% of the total respondents than the male with 7 or 24.1%. A great majority of the graduates are single with 28 or 96.6% of the total respondents. Also, Mathematics and English specializations have almost the same number of respondents.

Table 1. Profile of the Graduates

N = 29

2

| Profile | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Age 20-22 | 10 34.48 | 18 62.01 |
| 23-25 | 3.45 | |
| 26 & above | 7 24.1 | 22 75.9 |
| Sex Male | 28 96.6 | 1 3.4 |
| Female | | |
| Civil Status Single | 15 51.72 | 14 48.28 |
| Married | 23 79.3 | 1 3.4 5 17.2 |
| Degree BSED Mathematics | | |
| Specialization BSED English | | |
| Professional LET | | |
| Exam Taken Prof. Civil Service | | |
| None | | |

Lastly, Table 1 reveals that a huge majority of the respondents are LET passers with 23 or 79.3% of the total respondents, and only one of the respondents passed the professional civil service examination. This result is similar to the study conducted by Aquino et al. (2015) which concluded that a considerably high percentage of

respondents are LET passers. The high percentage of passing rate in the board Dexam contributes to the commendable overall performance of PSU Alaminos City Campus that is always above the national passing rate year in and year out.

Table 2. Employment Status of the Graduates

| Employment Status | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Employed Regular | 7 24.14 | |
| Temporary | 3 10.34 | |
| Casual | 1 | 3.45 |
| Contractual | 15 51.72 | |
| Total | 26 89.65 | |
| Unemployed Never employed | 1 | 3.45 |
| Not employed but employed then | 2 | 6.9 |
| Total | 3 10.35 | |

It is disclosed in Table 2 that the majority of the graduates were employed with 26 or 89% of the total respondents. Most of the employed respondents were contractual with 15 or 51.72% of the total employed respondents, and few were under temporary status with 3 or 10.34%, and casual with only 1 or 3.45%. The graduates of the BSEd program in PSU ACC are employable and that they possess the skills necessary in the workplace. Findings supported the study conducted by Cardona and Andres (2014) which concluded that BSEd mathematics graduates are employable because of its high employability rate.

Table 3. Present Occupation of Graduates

| Current Occupation | f | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Elementary school teacher | 4 | 15.4 |
| Junior high school teacher | 10 | 38.8 |
| Senior high school teacher | 3 | 11.5 |
| College Instructor | 3 | 11.5 |
| Tutor | 2 | 7.7 |
| Customer Service Consultant | 1 | 3.85 |
| Customer Service Associate | 1 | 3.85 |
| Accounting Officer | 1 | 3.85 |
| Product Specialist | 1 | 3.85 |
| Total | 26 | 100 |

Most of the respondents are junior high school teachers with 10 or 38.5% of the total employed respondents, to be followed by senior high school teachers and college instructors with 3 or 11.5%. Also, there are few respondents whose occupations are not related to teaching. These occupations are customer service consultant, customer service associate, accounting officer, and product specialist. Likewise, the majority of the graduates were working in the field of education which is related to their degree in college (Table 3).

Table 4. Graduates' reasons for being unemployed

| Reasons for not yet/never been employed | f | Percentage (%) |
|---|----------|----------------|
| Family concern and decided not to find a job | 1 | 25 |
| Health-related reasons | 1 | 25 |
| No job opportunity | 1 | 25 |
| Review for Licensure Examination for Teachers | 1 | 25 |
| Total | 4 | 100 |

Table 4 shows the reasons of the respondents for not yet being employed or never having been employed. A family concern, health reasons, no job opportunity, and review for LET are the common reasons why few BSEd graduates were not yet employed and never been employed.

Table 5. Relevance of Graduates' Course to First Job

| Is your first job related to your course? | f | Percentage (%) |
|---|-----------|----------------|
| Yes | 25 | 89.3 |
| No | 3 | 10.7 |
| Total | 28 | 100 |

As to the relation of the first job to the course taken by the graduates in college as shown in Table 5, the majority of the graduates answered yes with 25 or 89.3% of the total respondents and few answered no with three or 10.7%. This result is similar to the study of Aquino et al. (2015) which identified that the first jobs of the Teacher education are relevant to their degree.

Table 6. Graduates' First Job Level Position

| Job Level Position | f | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Rank and File (Clerical) | 3 | 10.7 |
| Professional, Technical, Supervisory | 25 | 89.3 |
| Total | 28 | 100 |

Table 6 shows that majority of the respondents are in the professional, technical or supervisory positions with 25 or 89.3% of the total respondents, while 3 or 10.7% of the respondents were in rank and file or clerical positions. This result is congruent to the study conducted by Vicente et al. (2017) which revealed that the majority of the BSEd graduates are professionals.

Table 7. Graduates' Tools in Finding First Jobs

| Tools in Finding First Job | f | Percentage (%) |
|--|-----------|----------------|
| Response to an advertisement | 1 | 3.6 |
| As walk-in applicant | 11 | 39.3 |
| Recommended by someone | 9 | 32.1 |
| Information from friends | 5 | 17.9 |
| Arranged by school's job placement officer | 1 | 3.6 |
| Job fair or public employment | 1 | 3.6 |
| Total | 28 | 100 |

As for the tools in finding for the first job, a large percentage of the respondents were walk-in applicants with 11 or 39.3% of the total respondents. Second among the ranking is through someone's recommendation with 9 or 32.1% of the total respondents. Also, few of the employed graduates found their first job through response to an advertisement, arrangement by the school's job placement officer, and job fairs.

Table 8. Graduates' Span of Time Finding First Job

| Time Span Finding First Job | f | Percentage (%) |
|------------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------|
| Less than a month | 6 | 21.4 |
| 1-6 months | 15 | 53.6 |
| 7-11 months | 2 | 7.1 |
| 1 year to less than two years | 5 | 17.9 |
| Total | 28 | 100 |

It can be gleaned from Table 8 that most of the graduates landed their first jobs 1-6 months after graduation with 15 or 53.6% of the total employed respondents, including one respondent who was employed then. Some obtained their first jobs in less than a month with 6 or 21.4%, 1 year to less than two years after graduation with 5 or 17.9%, and 7-11 months with 2 or 7.1%. It can be noted that most graduates wanted to gain work experience immediately after graduation. Others may have reviewed for LET first and waited for the result before applying for a job. Also, job fairs and pre-employment seminars may have helped the graduates to land their job in a short period.

Table 9. Graduates' Reason for Accepting First Job

| Reasons for Accepting First Job | f | Percentage (%) |
|--|-----------|-----------------------|
| Salaries and benefits | 18 | 25.71 |
| Career Challenge | 12 | 17.14 |
| Related to special skill | 13 | 18.75 |
| Related to Course | 17 | 24.29 |
| Proximity to residence | 6 | 8.57 |
| Family Influence | 4 | 5.71 |
| Total | 70 | 100 |

Most often, motivational factors are the things that opt one to accept a job. It is disclosed in Table 9 the reasons of the graduates for accepting their first job. The reason which obtained most of the responses was the salaries and benefits with 18 or 25.71% of the total

responses. Wages and benefits is a factor that motivates and drives an employee to perform well.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Graduates of BSEd at PSU ACC are employable and that they possess employability skills necessary in the workplace.
2. The curriculum of BSEd at PSU ACC is relevant to the demands of the workplace.
3. As one of the state universities in the Philippines, PSU ACC had created its brand of quality and well-trained graduates who are easily employed after graduation.

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