Accounting and Entrepreneurial Management Graduates: Employment Opportunities Profile

Janven A. Granfon, CPA[1]

Abstract: This study traced graduates in the three programs of the College of Business and Accountancy in the Main Campus of Jose Rizal Memorial State University. The programs whose graduates were surveyed include BS Entrepreneurial Management, BS Accounting Technology and BS Accountancy. Frequency and percentages were used to describe the profile of graduates. The National Economic Development Authority (2015) classifies service sectors in the Philippines into three. These are services that facilitates exchange, services that changes the physical and mental condition of the people and services that change the condition of the good or product. Two of these classifications are employment opportunities of the graduates surveyed. Results showed that 56% worked in services that facilitates exchange where most of the graduates worked in the financial and insurance companies and 44% worked within services that changes the physical and mental condition of people where most worked in administrative and support service sector. Common positions of the graduates were accounting clerk, office staff and secretary and associate. There were also those in the supervisory positions like department head in the academe, accountant and auditor or professional network marketer.

Keywords: Graduate Tracer Study, Profiling Graduates, NEDA's Job Classification, Accounting and Entrepreneurial Management Education, Employability.

1. INTRODUCTION

Tracer Studies constitute one form of empirical study for appropriately evaluating the output of the education and training system in relation to the labor market. They bring together certain basic types of information concerning the level of employment, unemployment and underemployment among graduates, the contemporary undergraduate experience and the correspondence between educational qualifications and required work skills, among others which put into perspective the contribution of the sector. They also provide indications of possible deficits in a given educational program, such that the latter can be more closely aligned with the needs of the economy. Education is the most important mechanism for the empowerment of people for their socio-economic, political and technological development (TEC, 2012).

In the Philippines, learning environment of higher education institutions must take cognizance of in structuring their course programs. For the purpose of quality assurance of course programs Philippine higher education institutions can contribute meaningfully by applying the principles of tracer study to create sustainable learning empowerment for the continuous professional development of graduates specially with their chosen fields. While many higher education institutions provide training to a variety of clients, however, fully releasing these graduates after earning their degrees, unmindful of the range of paths the recent graduates are taking and looking into the over-all quality of students who passed through the institution's hall of

1. Program Head, BS Accounting Technology and BS Accountancy, Jose Rizal Memorial State University, Main Campus

learning and training. In a context where the number of constructs in employability is increasing a fresh view point is needed that provides a simpler and clearer view without much complexity (Smith, et al., 2014; Hogan, et al., 2013). Tracer studies are considered an appropriate means of evaluating the results of the education and training provided at a given institution (Reyes, 2014). A tracer study as an impact assessment tool where the "impact on target groups is traced back to specific elements of a project or program so that effective and ineffective project components may be identified".

Clearly, a tracer study should enable tertiary institutions to get information from graduates and employers regarding the adequacy of educational programs. The information will also serve as a basis for future planning activities. In   a knowledge economy, one of the critical objectives of tertiary education and training is to prepare students for future employment. Many argue that tracer studies (surveys of graduates from institutions of higher education) are often seen as an important tool of institutional development especially when the world of work is changing rapidly. To know the whereabouts of the graduates, their working conditions and their retrospective assessment of their course of study might stimulate the curricular debate and could also be very interesting for the current or later students (Pannogan and Ocampo, 2016.) Therefore, higher education institutions can get a systematic feedback from their former students.

This study is anchored on employability model of de Guzman and de Castro, (2008) which state that being employed means having a job and being employable means having the qualities needed to maintain a job and progress at the work place. It draws a line between employment and employability. The model builds on that educational systems shape the matching of people to jobs. To match people to job, they should have acquired knowledge and skills that are required by employers. Employability can be affected by labor market institution, skills, and knowledge enhanced by education and training (Psacharopoulos at el 2004). It traces what competencies graduates use most in their workforce so it can provide information for evaluation of higher education (curriculum improvement, for instance). It traces in what field the graduates work -match/mismatch, studies reveal that university graduates employment have worsened due to insufficient academic preparation in a higher education(Dabalen, Oni & Adekola, 2001) but others contend that it is more of low skill utilization of the graduates by the employer (Redpath, 1994) as a result of job mismatch (Madamba & De Jong, 1997). It is of good notice that mismatch can be ascribed as a form of unemployment, and that taking on the reverse, graduates who have access to employment have shorter unemployment spells (Rogers, 1997), and even mismatch incidence. Obviously, the learning institution has a role to play in creating employment access to graduates; the reputation of the institution is a huge factor in choosing employee among applicants (Cosser, 2003,). Foremost to this is the design of the curriculum with respect to the industry's needs (Lutwama & Kigongo-Bukenya, 2004) which ultimately cater potentials of graduates in preparation for the industry. The study also explored the relevance of the training of graduates to employment demand. In the study conducted by Mayanja et al, (2001), employment opportunities dwindle and periods for searching for jobs are becoming longer whereas job seekers contact a number of employees prior to securing jobs. The reforms and curriculum initiatives of the institution can be best measured on the employment rate of the graduates of a higher institution, and if they landed a job, how do they fare in their careers (Zembere & Chinyama, 2013). To do this, universities develop graduate tracer system to determine the career pattern of graduates and also to develop feedback on the programs offered and eventually improve employment prospects of any type of graduate (Blasko et al., 2002).

2. METHODOLOGY

Tracer study methodological approaches and appropriate designs and themes such as comparative tracer study, descriptive survey design and University graduate tracer studies initiative (UNITRACE) often yield desirable and utilizable results that we can use to improve study needs, Ulrich Teichler (1999) and Sanyal (1987). Argued by Flotcher (2010), Herrmann (2010) and Dillman (2008), tracer studies have their unique but ubiquitous and rigorous methodologies. The College of Business and Accountancy of Jose Rizal Memorial State University- Main campus conducted a tracer survey towards its graduates and used a descriptive survey design. The study consisted a questionnaire which was sent to the respondents via e-mail. The questionnaire is composed of two parts, part I is their personal data- name, course, year graduated, contact number, and e-mail address. Part II is their employment data- employment status, name of company/employer, job title/job description, and work locally (within and outside the province) and abroad.

JRMSU should be the sole beneficiary of the results of its own tracer survey especially in terms of utilizing the outcomes from graduates to address felt weaknesses in study programs and services. Proliferation of knowledge, skills and experiences gained by graduates as they transit from the University to the job world was highly regarded in this study and this fact is in line with observations from a study by Enders and Ulrich (1997) in a comparative tracer study of academics in Europe. In fact, Ulrich Teichler (1999) and Egesah et al., (2014) indicate that research approaches, themes and results in graduate tracer studies and the world of work have been highly linked in the recent past decades. The same researchers and others also argue that study of the transition face of graduates as they move from graduation to employment is increasingly becoming an important area of interest (Schomburg 2007, Teichler 1998, Egesah, Wahome, Langat and Wishitemi 2014).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Female graduates more than male graduates responded to the tracer study of the degree programs surveyed conducted by the departments (Table 1). There were 15 BS Entrepreneurial Management graduates who responded from a total of 24 graduates in the University. A total of 62 graduates responded from BS Accounting Technology and BS Accountancy combined.

Table 1 Distribution of graduates based on Gender

Degree Program	Male		Female		Total
	Freq	%	Freq	%	
BS Entrepreneurial Management	4	27	11	73	15
BS Accounting Technology	3	11	25	89	28
BS Accountancy	16	47	18	53	34

The BSEM degree program was first offered in 1999 as the first management degree program under the College of Arts and Sciences. In 2006, a college for business and management was created that offered degree programs in BS Commerce with two majors, Management Accounting and Business Administration. The Management Accounting majors were included in this study while Business Administration Major and presently in separate department. (JRMSC Board Resolution No. 26-2009).

Table 2 Distribution of Graduates based on Year Graduated

Year Graduated	BSEM		BSAT		BSA	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
2004	4	27				
2005	7	47				
2009			1	4		
2011			4	14		
2012			5	18		
2013			5	18	5	15
2014	4	27	13	46	21	62
2015					8	24
Total	15	100	28	100	34	100

The 68% of the total BSA graduates interviewed were employed outside the province. A sum of 73% of the total 15 BSEM graduates worked in Zamboanga del Norte or as Overseas Filipino Worker (Table 3). The 68% of the total 28 BSAT graduates interviewed remained in the province to work at the time of the interview. These results imply the location of job opportunities available among graduates of BSEM, BSA and BSAT graduates.

Dipolog City and Dapitan City have thriving economic activities with Dapitan City dominant on entrepreneurial activities for women in the accommodation industry while Dipolog City has more diverse commercial activities for both gender (Icao and Sy, 2012).

Table 3 Distribution of Graduates by Employment Location

Employment Location	BSEM		BSAT		BSA	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Within Zamboanga del Norte Province	6	40	19	68	9	26
Outside Zamboanga del Norte Province	4	27	9	32	23	68
Abroad	5	33	0	0	2	6
Total	15	100	28	100	34	100

The National Economic Development Authority (2015) classifies service sectors in the Philippines into three. These are services that facilitates exchange, services that changes the physical and mental condition of the people and services that change the condition of the good or product. Two of these classifications are employment opportunities of the graduates surveyed.

About 43 of the 77 graduates surveyed or 56% worked in services that facilitates exchange where 47% of the graduates worked in financial and insurance companies. On the other hand, 34 of the 77 graduates or 44% worked within services that changes the physical and mental condition of people in which 22% worked in offices that involved administrative and support service activities.

Graduates employability is an aspect of quality education (Storen & Aamodt, 2010; Edvardsson & Gaio, 2010). The university attended by graduates makes impact on their employability (Moreau & Leathwood, 2006).

Table 4 Distribution of Graduates Based on Classification of Service Sector

Service Sector Graduates Employ	BSEM		BSAT		BSA		Total	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Services that…								
Facilitates Exchange	**8**	**19**	**14**	**33**	**21**	**49**	**43**	**56**
Wholesale and Retail	6	40	0	0	0	0	6	8
Information & Communication	1	7	0	0	0	0	1	1
Financial and Insurance	1	7	14	50	21	62	36	47
Real Estate Activities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Changes the Physical & Mental Condition of People	**7**	**21**	**14**	**41**	**13**	**38**	**34**	**44**
Accommodation & Food Service Activities	1	7	4	12	0	0	5	6
Administrative and Support Service Activities	2	13	10	36	5	15	17	22
Public Administrative and Defense	1	7	0	0	3	9	4	5
Education	1	7	0	0	5	15	6	8
Human Health & Social Work Activities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Activities of Households as Employers	2	13	0	0	0	0	2	3
Total	**15**	**100**	**28**	**100**	**34**	**100**	**77**	**100**

Common positions of the graduates were accounting clerk, office staff and secretary and associate. There were also those in the supervisory positions like department head in the academe, accountant and auditor or professional network marketer.

4. FINDINGS

A total of 77 graduates responded to the survey wherein 15 are BS Entrepreneurial Management 28 from BS Accounting Technology and 34 from BS Accountancy. Basic information were gathered to include the year graduated, job position in the company or government they are connected, address and name of the company and contact details. Feedback of employers from those who replied in the electronic mails were also obtained though not included in this study. Of the graduates surveyed, 68% of the total BSA graduates interviewed were employed outside the province, a sum of 73% of the total 15 BSEM graduates worked in Zamboanga del Norte or as Overseas Filipino Worker, 68% of the total 28 BSAT graduates interviewed remained in the province to work. These results imply the location of job opportunities available among graduates of BSEM, BSA and BSAT graduates. The National Economic Development Authority classifies service sectors in the Philippines into three. These are services that facilitates exchange, services that changes the physical and mental condition and services that change the condition of the good or product. Two of these classifications are employment opportunities of the graduates surveyed. About 43 of the 77 graduates surveyed or 56% worked in services that facilitates exchange where 47% of the graduates worked in financial and insurance companies. On the other hand, 34

of the 77 graduates or 44% worked within services that changes the physical and mental condition of people in which 22% worked in offices that involved administrative and support service activities.

5. CONCLUSION

Study shows that female graduates responded more than the male graduates. Respondents represented each year that there were graduates in the College of Business and Accountancy for the programs studied. Interviews revealed that program heads have constant communication with most of the respondents through social media. Moreover, other graduates in their specific programs graduated created a group chat.

In terms of service sectors employed, many of the respondent-graduates worked in the private sector while there are those in the University and their place of residence, their municipalities. More of the BSEM and BSA respondents totaled landed with jobs outside the province of Zamboanga del Norte. They work mostly in the financial and insurance companies. There are also those who are in the administrative and support service sector. Study also implies that there are graduates pursuing further studies and those finding application of their business skills in the police service. However, the need of developing generic and special skills of the students during learning period is still fundamental.

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