

Employment Outcomes of Bachelor of Science in Information Technology Graduates in a Technological State College

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Abstract

This study is a proof which documented the employment status of the graduates related to their present occupations. This is done to assist administrators and faculty in the enhancement of the Bachelor of Science in Information Technology program of Palompon Institute of Technology-Tabango Campus from school year 2011 to 2016. The study used the descriptive type of research method with 98 graduates who served as respondents. Results revealed that majority of the graduates were gainfully employed and were working with jobs that were related to the course where they gained training with. However, forty (40) percent of the total respondents were unemployed as revealed in the study. Most of those who were unemployed cited that lack of experience and no job opening as their reasons for being unemployed. Therefore it is strongly recommended that graduating students before graduation must be given ample time to experience pre-employment examination and interviews. Furthermore, the school concerned should find ways to establish more linkages with establishments which can cater with the employability of the graduates, so as to assist them with their employment after graduating in the course.

Keywords: Employment status, skills training, graduates, Technological State College, BS Information Technology program

Introduction

Tracer studies enhance curriculum and maintain the extent of relevance and provide benefits to the graduates and improve marketability of educational programs Balingbing (2014). Adequate knowledge and skills on employment outcomes of training could help in formulating

policy towards hostility, some of social problems such as unemployment. Students in any degree program, particularly graduates are required to earn a sense of competence in their chosen field and develop confidence to explore new possibilities and new employment specially that there is an increasing competition among rivals at work (Mathed, 2008). As graduates of higher educational institutions, they must prove the world that job-hunting is not a problem even if the competition in the business or corporate world is so unbending because of the increasing demand of the market still we can find a job relevant to the chosen field. Relatively, one, particularly a graduate of Information Technology, must possess competency among the three domains like knowledge, skills and attitudes required for the specific job. In addition, tracer study according to Garcia (2003) as cited by Gines (2004) pointed out that tracer studies is an important source of information to know what happened to graduates of academic programs in Higher Education Institution (HEI's).

The study made on the graduates of the graduate course in Urban and Regional Planning (Probes, 2008) states that the employability and relevance of their graduate trainings to their jobs and to the field. The survey, a first of its kind in the seven years of its program, sought information on the nature of tasks and function performed by the graduates in their respective jobs and requested some feedbacks on how useful and relevant were their degrees in the work they were engage in. Related to this, the graduates were requested to offer some suggestions on how graduates programs could be more relevant so as to make their contribution to national development efforts more substantial and meaningful.

Concorde, (2009) said that the study on the status and prospect of technical education in La Union Province and its implications to manpower development for industrial world. He revealed that the graduates of technical courses in the province found difficulty in seeking employment. However, they have to go through the process of retraining before they are hired as regular employees in local or national industries. He pointed out that outputs of graduates in technical education particularly in the manufacturing group employment projection or labor market indicate a great demand in the service group.

The study quotes the speech made by Y.B. Dato Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin (2009) in a seminar entitled "Enhancing Graduate Employability: Issues, Concerns and the Way Forward" states that the challenging economic situation means that it is no longer sufficient for a new graduate to have knowledge of an academic subject; increasingly it is necessary for students to gain skills which will enhance their prospects of employment. Thus, Higher Education Institutions must be responsive to these changes. Historically, academic institutions have tended to serve as institutions for moral and intellectual development as well as centers of civilization. With rapid economic development, they are now more effective with emphasis of professional training. Their prime task is to ensure that education and training are market driven and responsive to the changing needs of the various sectors of an economy.

According to Mercado (2009) the initiative of the Commission on Higher Education in the Philippines to spearhead the conduct of graduate tracer study among selected Higher Education Institutions in order to obtain data that would show if HEI's are offering courses or programs that produce graduates to meet the needs of industry and society.

In the study conducted by Lalican (2007) she emphasized that the acquisition of knowledge in the undergraduate specialization, skills and competencies will also promote productivity, efficiency and expertise in the graduates' present job. Prosser and Quigley (1963) pointed out that the training of students in technical education will be efficient if the environment in which the learner is trained is a mock-up of the environment in which he/she must subsequently work.

Training therefore in the school must replicate the environment or imitate the situation within the company where the graduates will subsequently work.

Hence, getting employment in industry or being self-employed is not the end in itself but the beginning of a new life, new environment, new faces and new adjustment. Of course not all of these graduates find fulfillment of what they are expected to be. Some continue their schooling just after graduation and some have to hang their diploma instead of working. According to Wrenn (1951) any professional school is not only concerned with the degree with which its graduates find gainful employment. In fact, Wrenn further explained that the service extended to the students in securing jobs upon graduation is one of the more recently recognized responsibilities of the school.

Just like any other Higher Education Institution (HEIs), PIT-TC would also like to improve its services to the students. It continues to look for ways in which things are made easier to ensure the effectiveness of training of the school. Thus, this study was conducted to trace the employment status of the BS Information Technology graduates to ascertain and institute within the necessary technical knowledge and skills as well as job morale so that they will be aware of their rightful function after graduation and that they would be able to be self-employed or land a job which will lead them to be satisfied and feel fulfilled.

Statement of the Problem

This study determined the employment status of Bachelor of Science in Information Technology Graduates for the academic year 2011 and 2016. Specifically, this study aimed to find out the activities engaged in by the graduates; the reasons for unemployment for those who are unemployed; and to formulate recommendations out of the results to further enhance the program.

Research Design of the Study

The descriptive survey method was employed in this study with the questionnaire as the main tool in gathering the needed data. The method ascertains the employment status of the BS Information Technology graduates to their present activities. Personal interviews regarding the activities of the respondents were also done in order to strengthen the information gathered.

Significance of the Study

This study has national and international significance to curriculum planners and educational practitioners regarding the value of the chosen field of the students were the researchers seek to lay the basis for the improvement of the program in the area covered by the study. The lesson learned in the classroom by the graduates in relation to their present activities will be the basis for the enrichment of Bachelor of Science in Information Technology program.

It is hoped that the findings of this study will be valuable to the policy makers, school administrators, faculty, curriculum planners, and students in the following manner:

School Administrators. The employment status of the graduates would offer insights to the administrators in identifying the aspects of the program that need redirection and restructuring so that better quality of instruction could be provided and needs of industry would be satisfied.

Faculty. The result of this study will encourage the faculty to upgrade their teaching skills for an effective learning process. It would also lead them to prepare and design instructional materials relevant to the demands of the industry.

Curriculum Planners. This will help them choose the right direction on the trade skills that should be added to the present curriculum and what is to be improved, particularly in the information technology program.

Students. On the other hand, the students would be assured of a quality instruction, hence better job placement in the future that all parents aspire. They will be trained according to what the actual field of work needs, therefore would make their work assignment easier to accomplish.

Industry. Various establishments that are possible work areas of the graduates will be assured of highly skilled graduates, who would contribute largely to high production at low costs.

Method of Procedure

In the conduct of this study, the descriptive research was considered appropriate thereby making adequate and accurate interpretations about the gathered data with or without the aid of a statistical method. This type of research method was designed to assist administrators and instructors in the enhancement of the Bachelor of Science in Information Technology program of Palompon Institute of Technology-Tabango Campus. Specifically, this study aimed to find out the activities engaged in by graduates; the reasons for unemployment for those who are unemployed, and to formulate recommendations out of the results to further enhance the program.

Collection of Data

The gathering of data was done according to the following scheme:

Preliminary preparation. The researchers made a formal letter of request to the administrator of the school to conduct the study.

Administration and collection of field instruments. After given the approval to conduct the research study, the refined instruments were distributed to the respondents and collected immediately for consolidation and analysis.

Treatment of Data

In order to obtain the necessary information from the graduates, the researcher sought permission from the Registrar's Office to examine the records on file available in order to get the names and complete addresses of the respondents. The Instructor's of BS Information Technology were also sources of information.

For the respondents who could easily be contacted, the researcher personally gave the questionnaire and conducted incidental personal interview to enrich the information needed. For those respondents who could hardly be reached the questionnaires was sent by mail with self-addressed stamped envelope to facilitate the return of the answered questionnaire.

Findings

The descriptive survey method was utilized to determine the employment status of the BS Information Technology graduates of Palompon Institute of Technology-Tabango Campus during the academic year 2011- 2016 in terms of the graduates' employment status of their present occupations.

As indicated in figure I, it was revealed that there were ten (10) students who graduated in 2011, fourteen (14) in 2012, twenty six (26) in 2013, nineteen (19) in 2014, seven (7) in 2015, and

Twenty two (22) in 2016. However, it was noticed that in the graph in 2013. As reflected in the graph, during the academic year 2013 there was increase of graduates from 2011 to 2013 and from 2013 to 2015 graduates' in this year decreases. This is attributed to the fact that most of the students prefer to enroll other program offered in this college.

Figure I. Distribution of Graduates by Academic Year

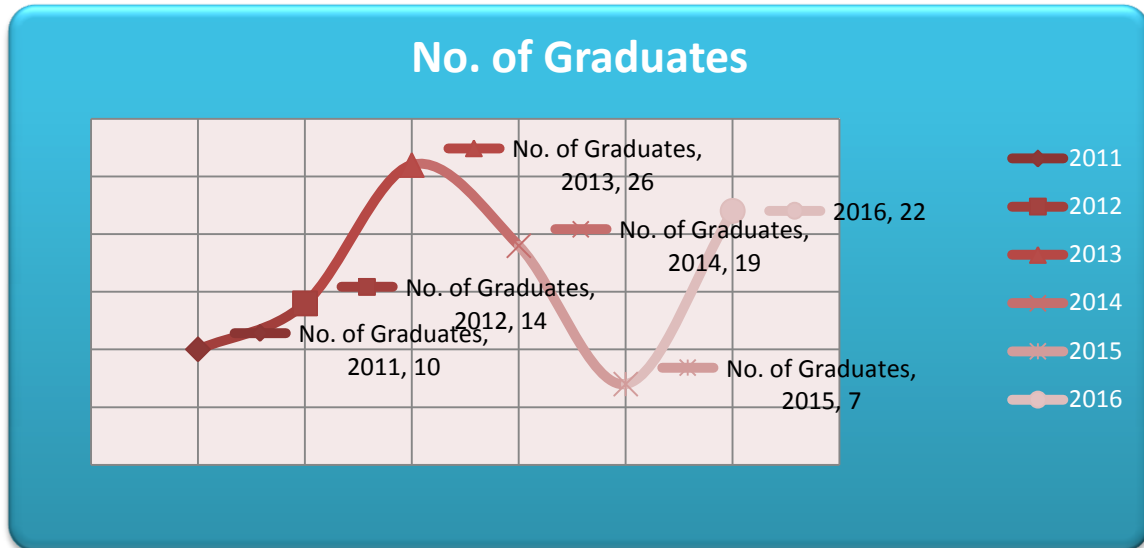


Figure 2 describe the summary of graduate’s status of employment. As indicated in the graph, from 2011-2016, nineteen per cent of the total number of employed graduates holding a regular or permanent status; nine per cent were temporary, thirty per cent were contractual and two per cent were self-employed.

There were graduates who were unemployed with a total of forty per cent which could be attributed that lack of experience and no job opening as their main reasons for being unemployed. This means that even if they have acquired adequate knowledge and skills in their stay in school, they could not utilize these because of lack of job opportunities in the community they were in.

Figure 2. A graph showing the Graduates Employment Status from 2011-2016

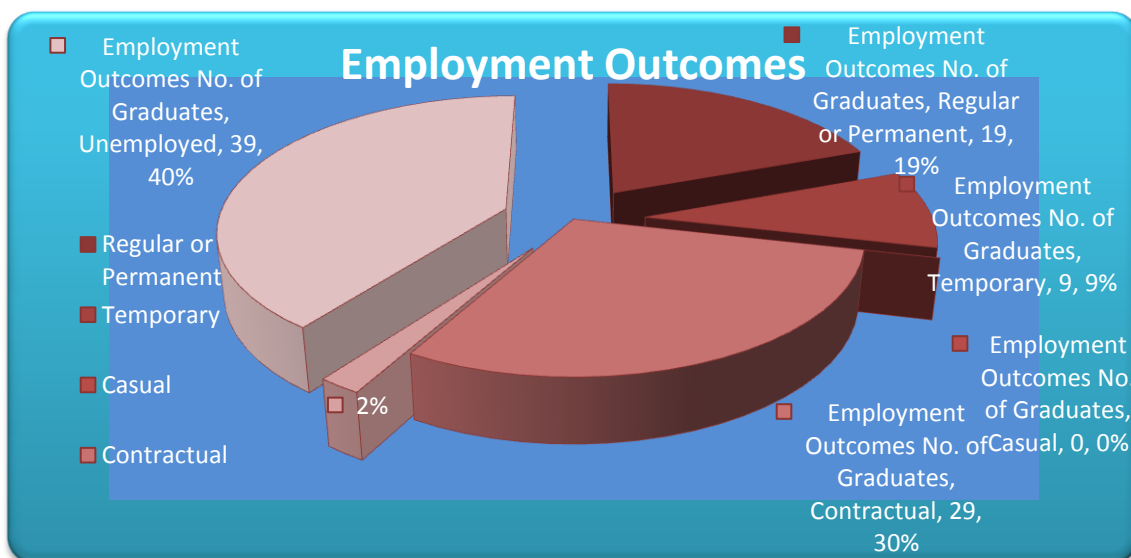
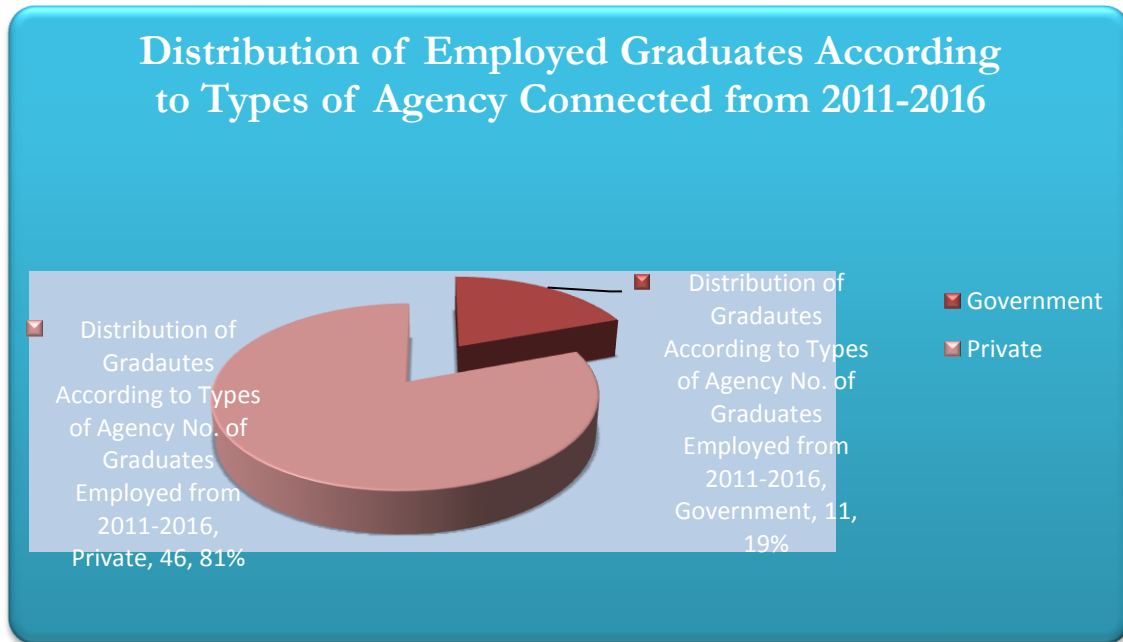


Figure 3 shows the distributions of employed graduates according to the type of agency were they are working. From 2011-2016, nineteen percent are connected in the government agencies while eighty one per cent of the employed graduates are connected in the private agencies. This implies that most of the establishments in Leyte are run by private agencies rather than in government owned entities.

Figure 3. A graph showing the Employed Graduates According to Types of Agency Connected from 2011-2016



The table below discusses the results from the data collected regarding the nature of occupation of employed graduates. One (1) or five and eighty eight percent who was employed as encoder and three (3) or seventeen and sixty five percent of the graduates was employed as a computer technician. These results could imply that the nature of occupation of employed graduates vary on the availability of their willingness on a particular job.

Table I. Nature of Occupation of Employed Graduates from 2011-2016

Nature of Occupations	2011		2012		2013		2014		2015		2016		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Encoder	1	25	1	14.3	-	-	14	100	3	100	-	-	19	33.3
Computer Technician	-	-	2	28.6	5	33.3	-	-	-	-	2	14.3	9	15.8
Call Center Agent	3	75	4	57.1	10	66.7	-	-	-	-	12	85.7	29	50.9

It can be gleaned in Table II the results on the activity engaged in by the self-employed graduates from 2011-2016. With regards to their activities from in 2013 and 2015, there were only one (1) or one hundred per cent graduates were self-employed which means that they settled in a job by themselves without looking for better job opportunities in the industry. This

result attests that to be self-employed one needs a capital, courage, and management skills aside from their skills learned in school.

Table II. Activities Engaged in by Self-employed Graduates

Activity	2011		2012		2013		2014		2015		2016		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Encoder	-		-		-		-		-		-		-	
Computer Servicing	-		-		1	100	-		1	100	-		2	100
Programmer	-		-				-		-		-		-	

In Table III presents the data on the reasons given by the graduates for being unemployed. It shows that in 2011-2016, the main reason of the unemployed graduates were lack of work experience with fifty one per cent, followed by no job opportunities with seventeen per cent, then followed by did not look for a job with fifteen per cent. In 2016, there were two graduates who continue further studies because they believe that one of the requirements now a day the applicants in any establishment must be a graduate of masteral program before they settled in a job by themselves without looking for better job opportunities in the industry.

Table III. Reasons of the Graduates for Being Unemployed

Reasons	2011		2012		2013		2014		2015		2016		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Advanced or further study	-		-		-		-		-		2	25	2	5.13
Family concern and decided not find a job	-		2	28.6	1	10	-		-		1	12.5	4	10.26
Health related reasons	-		-		-		-		-		-			
Lack of work experience	3	50	5	71.4	4	40	2	40	2	67	4	50	20	51.3
No job opportunity	-		-		3	30	2	40	1	33	1	12.5	7	17.9
Did not look for a job	3	50	-		2	20	1	20	-		-		6	15.4

Conclusion and Implication of the Study

Most of the graduates are employed along their chosen field, that is, information technology. The fields of specialization and school acquired skills and competencies of the graduates are relevant to their chosen occupations and these greatly help them in the performance of their jobs. However, there still a need to strengthen the skills/competencies that could make curricular offering more relevant to current jobs specifically the skills in information technology and communication.

It is therefore implied that there would be continuous monitoring and evaluation on its implementation of the program to keep abreast of how its graduates are doing and what initiatives can be done further in the curriculum and manner of instruction for more productive and worthy graduates. There should be a conduct of follow-up study on the availability of

establishments which can cater with the employability of BS in Information Technology graduates. The school should find ways to establish more linkages with establishments which can cater with the employability of the graduates, so as to assist them with their employment after graduating in the course.

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