

A Tracer Study for Graduates of Teacher Education Programs

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Abstract

Employability of graduates is one of the greatest challenges of an academic institution. This study aimed to determine the employability of the graduates of the Teacher Education programs of the JRMSU – Katipunan Campus from 2010 – 2014. A modified Graduate Tracer Study was utilized to gather quantitative data. Frequency counts, percentage, rank and Chi-square goodness of fit test were used to generate results from the acquired data. The findings revealed that majority of the graduates were employed with gross earnings above Php 15,000.00 per month. Moreover, there was a significant relationship between the graduates' field of specialization and their present occupation. The results further proved that the acquired competency and skills in their pre-service training were very highly useful, relevant and developed thus giving them the confidence and competence in the field of teaching.

Keywords: *Employability, Competence, BSED, BEED, JRMSU-Katipunan Campus.*

Introduction

The effectiveness of the curricular offering of an academic institution can be determined through the employability of its graduates. Graduates equipped with the knowledge, skills and values are a function of quality instruction and facilities. The Jose Rizal Memorial State University – Katipunan Campus through the Bachelor of Secondary Education and Bachelor of Elementary Education has provided training and aimed in producing well-rounded, competitive, useful and gainfully employed teachers. Graduates of teacher education are expected to acquire subject matter knowledge, study the learning process and learn approaches to planning, instruction and assessment (Casey and Childs 2007).

To ensure quality assurance of course programs, principles of tracer study can be applied to evaluate the results of the education and training provided by a given institution. Other issue concerned is job mismatch wherein graduates are forced to accept jobs even if it is not fitted to their field of specialization. Through the Executive Order No. 83, series of 2012, DepEd, CHED, TESDA, PRC and DOLE are mandated to review learning standards in basic education, technical skills development and higher education and in the alignment of licensure examinations. The Philippine President in his State of the Nation Address in 2011 mentioned that DOLE, CHED, TESDA and DepEd are working hand in hand to address the issue on job mismatch and assist students to choose the right course that meets the demand of the market. In July 2012,

the unemployment rate was reported at 7.00 percent. Even if the young people appear to be receiving more and better education, unemployment has increased steadily due to the fact that jobs are not really created as fast as the universities and colleges handing out the college diploma.

Faced with these challenges, the university has to strengthen its competitiveness in order to produce graduated worthy of employment. This could be possible with the introduction of the outcomes-based curriculum by the Commission on Higher Education. With this, learners at each level in college are provided with competencies.

The JRMSU – Katipunan Campus already produced graduates of teacher education who were able to pass the Licensure Examinations for Teachers and whose passing percentage was far higher than the national passing rate. These graduates were believed to land jobs and were excellent in their jobs too. There was an initial tracer performed but was limited only to the employment status of the graduates. To present a concrete data on the employability of these graduates, a graduate tracer studies was conducted.

This study determined the employability of the graduates of BSED and BEED programs of JRMSU – Katipunan Campus from 2010 – 2014. Specifically, it aimed to determine the job placement profile of the graduates. It identified the adequacy of training provided by the institution in the overall performance of their career life, the extent by which knowledge, skills and values have been developed. It also aimed to determine the relevance of the course to the current job function.

Methods

This study used the descriptive research design. The respondents of the study were 60 BSED and BEED graduates from 2010 to 2014. Questionnaire was the main instrument of the study. The questionnaire consists of two parts: part I was the profile of the graduates while part II was the employment data and the competencies learned by the graduates that were applied in their present work.

The researchers administered some of the questionnaires personally, some were sent through facebook or email of respondents. Phone interview was also done. Other processes for data gathering used were through the courtesy of graduates' friends and relatives.

The data collected were tabulated and analyzed. Frequency counts (F) was used to describe the distribution of samples among the concepts that are under investigation. Percentage (P) was used to analyze the profile of the respondents with respect to selected variables; weighted mean was used to determine the degree of perception of graduate respondents in the school factors related to their job placement and Rank was utilized to show the position of importance of the items used. Chi-Square was utilized to correlate the graduates' field of specialization, academic acquired skills and competencies towards the relevancy of their job.

Results and Discussion

Profile of the Respondents

The collected parameters to show the respondent's profile were classified into field of specialization, gender, marital status and highest educational attainment and current address. It could be gleaned from figure 1 that 63% of the respondents were BEED graduates and only 37% were BSED graduates. It was found out that 88.3% were females and only 11.67% were male (Fig. 2). Based on the data, it can be inferred that there were more females taking up education courses. This finding is supported with the results of research conducted by the Nottingham Trent and Bedfordshire universities that teaching is viewed as a woman's profession since females are believed to be more nurturing than males.

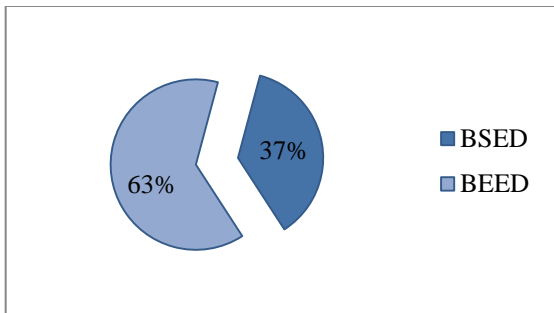


Fig. 1 Field of Specialization

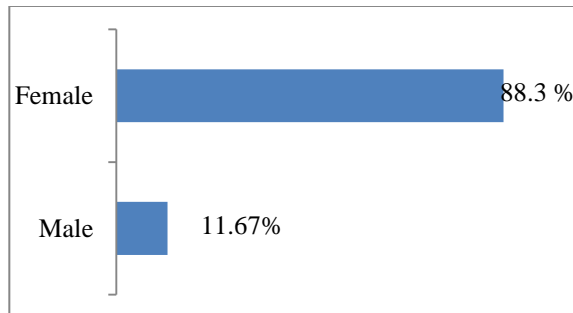


Fig. 2 Gender

Figure 3 revealed that most of the respondents were still single 78.33%, 20% were married and 1.67% single parents. When ask for reasons why they were still single, most of them indicated that they were not yet financially stable to start a family of their own. The highest educational attainment of the graduates was the BS degree with 88% while only 12% had master’s units (Fig. 4). Financial constraint was their main reason why most of them did not pursue graduate studies. Others mentioned their difficulty in writing their thesis or their inability to do research. However, when asked if they wanted to pursue graduate education, respondents gave very positive answers. As shown in figure 5, only 10% of the graduates of JRMSU – Katipunan Campus from 2010 to 2014 were living or employed outside the province while 90% were still living within. This would mean that job opportunities for the teacher education graduates were just within the cities and municipalities of province of Zamboanga del Norte.

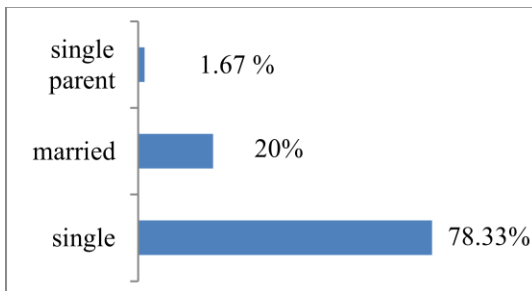


Fig. 3 Marital Status

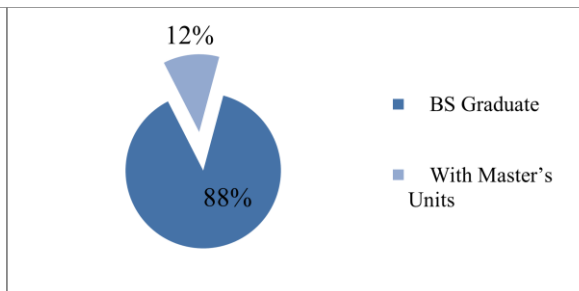


Fig. 4 Highest Educational Attainment

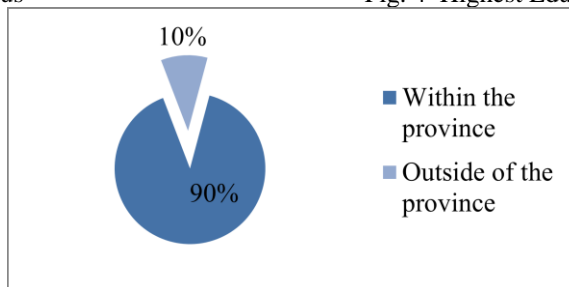


Fig. 5 Location of Respondents

Employment Conditions

Figure 6 revealed that majority of the respondents (72%) were employed compared to those graduates who were unemployed (23%) and did not respond to their employment status (5%). The reasons given for unemployment were family concerns, personal decisions and health concerns. Employed graduates were likewise asked what their job level position was on their first job. More than 37% occupied the regular permanent position while 20% were work as casual/temporary employees. The tracer study delved into

graduates waiting time before landing their first job, almost 50% affirmed that it took 1 to 2 years before they get their first job as regular permanent employee (Fig. 7) and the 28% waited for 6 month to 1 year. These numbers indicate that most graduates had to wait for more than a year before landing first job since teacher education graduates still have to take licensure examinations before they have to submit for a job interview. In an unstructured interview with school principals and district supervisors, they said that respondents' confidence, competence and commitment in their work paved the way towards their employment.

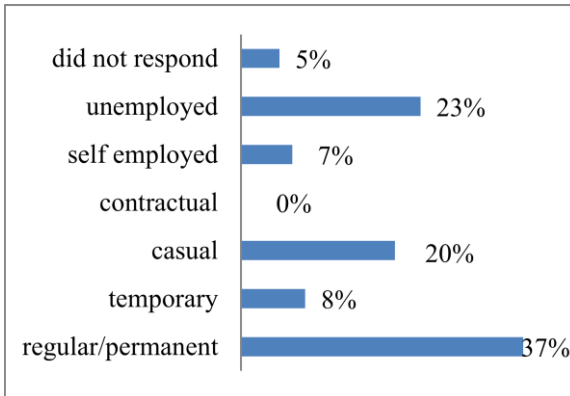


Fig. 6 Employment Status of Graduates

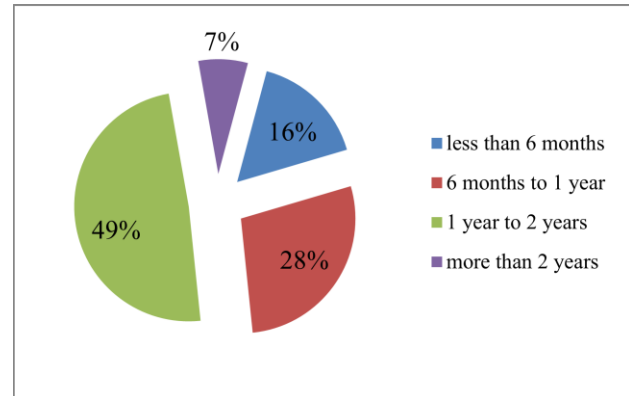


Fig. 7 Length of Time for Job Search

Figure 8 revealed the distribution of employed graduate by nature of occupations. The findings showed that most of the graduates' occupations are in the academe with 63% followed by the trade and industry with 12% and 9% of the graduates were employed in services and telecommunications. Earnings are awaited by the new graduates as anybody else. Forty-seven percent of the graduates of teacher education received more than Php15,000 on their first salary as an educator (Fig. 9), this was followed by below 12,000 as the initial gross monthly earnings. Those graduates receiving less than 10,000 were those working in non-education related occupations.

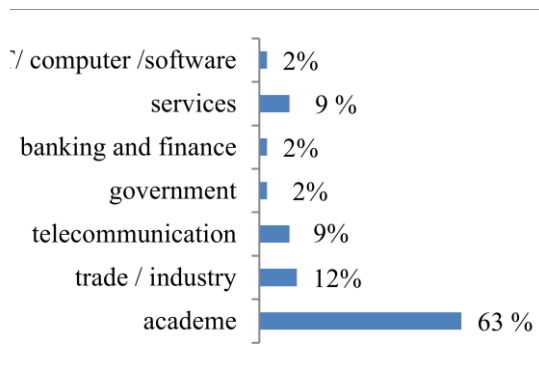


Fig. 8 Distribution of Employed Graduates by Nature of Occupation

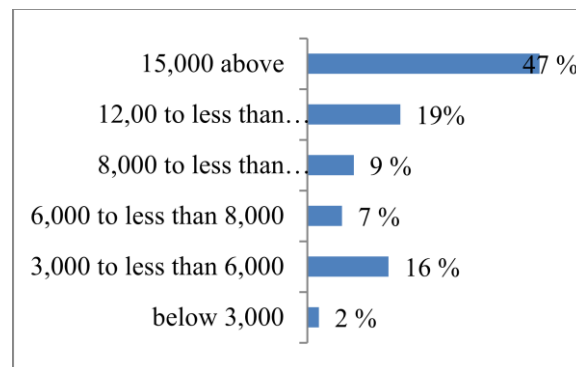


Fig. 9 Distribution of Graduates by Initial Gross Monthly Earnings on their First Job

As revealed in Table 1, 60% of the respondents evaluate the programs based on acquired competency and skills in lesson planning, preparation of instructional materials, communications skills, problem-solving skills, critical thinking skills during their pre-service training in the university as very useful and relevant in their present jobs.

Table 1. Extent of Use and Relevancy of the Competencies and Skills in their Chosen Occupation

Extent of Use and Relevancy of Acquired Competencies and Skills	Frequency	Percentage
1. Very highly useful / relevant	26	60
2. Highly useful/relevant	9	21
3. Moderately useful/relevant	5	12
4. Fairly useful/relevant	1	2
5. Poorly useful/relevant	2	5

Moreover, table 2 showed the employed graduates' evaluation on the extent to which competencies and skills were developed while in college. The data showed that the respondents rated the development of competency as skills from highly develop to very highly develop thus enabling them to perform well in their jobs. These competencies include lesson planning, communications skills, problem-solving skills and critical thinking skills.

Table 2. Extent in Developing Competencies and Skills in their Chosen Occupation

Extent of Development of Acquired Competencies and Skills	Frequency	Percentage
1. Very highly developed	23	53
2. Highly developed	13	30
3. Moderately developed	4	9
4. Fairly developed	2	5
5. Poorly developed	1	2

Table 3 reveals the employed graduates' recommendations on the competencies and skills that could make the present curricular offering to maintain its relevancy and usefulness in their nature of occupation. Lesson Planning rank first, communication skills rank second while critical thinking skills rank third. Research skills, rank last, which may have helped that respondents but not very much compared to other skills. There is a need therefore to integrate research in subjects such as English, Professional Education courses and even major subjects.

Integration of research in other subjects will help the students in preparation for research work in the graduate programs. Research could also be a part of their responsibility as future educators to come up with classroom based researches, action researches in order to continue the search for new ways and techniques in the teaching and learning process.

Table 3. Graduates' Recommendations of Competencies and Skills for Curricular Offerings to be More Relevant to Current Job

Competencies and Skills for Curricular Offerings	Frequency	Rank
1. Communication Skills	40	2
2. Human Relations Skills	29	6
3. Information Technology Skills	30	5
4. Problem-Solving Skills	33	4
5. Critical Thinking Skills	36	3
6. Lesson Planning	42	1
7. Research Skills	28	7

Table 4 shows the relationship between the graduates' field of specialization and their present occupation. As shown in the table, there is a significant relationship between the two variables, the field of specialization and present occupation.

Table 4. Relationship Between the Graduates' Field of Specialization and Present Occupation

Variables	Chi-Square Values	Sig. Value	Verbal Interpretations
Fields of Specialization vs Present Occupation	81.76	0.000	The graduates' fields of specialization are related to their present job

$\alpha = .05$, $df = 3$, $CV > TV$, accept the alternative hypothesis

As revealed in Table 5, it signifies that there is a significant relationship between the two variables, that the graduates' field of specialization is related to their acquired competencies and skills which are relevant to their present job.

Table 5. Relationship Between the Graduates' Field of Specialization and Acquired Competencies and Skills

Variables	Chi-Square Values	Sig. Value	Verbal Interpretations
Field of Specialization vs Acquired Competencies and Skills	121.58	0.000	The graduates' field of specialization is related to their acquired competencies and skills which are relevant to their present job.

$\alpha=0.05$, $df=5$, $CV>TV$, accept alternative hypothesis

Conclusion

Majority of the teacher education graduates of JRMSU – Katipunan campus were employed and they assert that their pre-service training were extremely useful in their chosen career. The acquired competencies and skills during their college life were very highly useful, relevant and developed giving them the confidence and competence which made them employable in the field of teaching. The field of specialization was significantly related with their present job.

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