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A Tracer Study of Eastern Visayas State University-Ormoc Campus Graduates

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ABSTRACT

Tracing graduates offers empirical data about the graduates' employment and competencies. The study aimed to assess relevance of the program's curriculum and seeks to provide empirical data on the employment and competencies of the graduates of Eastern Visayas State University- Ormoc City Campus in 2005-2017 since this is the first time to conduct a tracer study. Using a descriptive survey, 241 graduates responded to a CHED standardized tracer study questionnaire. Frequency counts, percentage, mean, and ranking were used. Results revealed that the most of the graduates who responded were female, single professionals and working in the government with regular or permanent status. Most of the respondents are BS Mechanical and Civil Engineering and mostly Board Examination passers. Some of the respondents landed on their first job within the span of six months with gross monthly salary is within Php 5,000 to Php 15,000. Most of the respondents have stayed with their job for salaries and benefits and have claimed that their job is relevant to the program they took up in the university and they find their learned communication skills to be very useful at work. Graduates should be prepared with the skills and knowledge required to contribute to the success of the licensure examination leading to stable and secure employment.

Keywords: tracer study; college students; employment; competencies

INTRODUCTION

Background

The effectiveness of a county's educational system and various training institutions greatly affects its pool of quality and industry-ready workforce which would lead to more favorable economic progress. The higher the person succeeds on the ladder of formal education, the more knowledge he/she is expected to gain more job opportunities.

Generally knowledge is gained through education. The researchers believe that schools are the main sources of knowledge, and majority would also agree that learning can be obtained within and outside of a school. Thus, the higher a person achieves in school, the wider his perception of a better future.

The most important decision the average student takes is to choose a career. Many college-age people tend to be confused about which path to choose. They can find loads of advice along the way. Some fortunate people have chosen the area where after finishing it, they were able to land a better job. Trying to stay prepared and the ability to constantly adapt to changes over the years would allow them to take advantage of the opportunities that will come along the way.

The capability of an institution to collate statistical information from its graduates would reflect its commitment to provide quality education and prepare the future workforce with globally competitive skills and knowledge. As each statistical data may be used to enhance further, the development of an institution in its drive to deliver up-to-date and industry-ready skills and knowledge to its students and to constantly narrow the gap between the educational system and the industry's needs. Through this study, the institution would be able to identify different aspects of its educational program that requires further assessment and come up with a series of developmental activities to rectify its flaws.

Not only that this study identifies the possible weak points of an educational system but also to assess the professional success of individuals through its career, employment status, income, and other attributes to draw out the relevance of knowledge and skills that were delivered by the institution to answer to the needs of the industry. Additionally, collecting substantial information on job-related experiences in contrast to the training conditions delivered by the institution would indicate the effectiveness of the program in preparing the emotional aspects of a graduate in dealing with work-related stress and challenges.

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The Eastern Visayas State University, Ormoc City Campus (EVSU-OCC) as it is popularly known today, comes from a humble beginning of just being a small trade school with a few students. It was then called the Ormoc City School of Arts and Trades (OCSAT) that started in 1999. In July 1997, Republic Act 8379 was created converting Ormoc City National High School (OCNHS) to OCSAT allowing to offer courses in Industrial Arts and Industrial Education. It was then merged to the Leyte Institute of Technology (LIT) in Tacloban and called it the Leyte Institute of Technology-Ormoc City Campus. It was later called Eastern Visayas State University – Ormoc City Campus as one of the satellites of EVSU- Main in Tacloban City. It started its full swing as a university in Ormoc City Campus in the year 2000.

Objectives

Assessing the relevance of the program's curriculum is the primary aim of this study. It seeks to provide empirical data on the employment and competencies of the graduates of Eastern Visayas State University-Ormoc City Campus Batch 2005 - 2017. Specifically, it offers the overall profile of the EVSU-OCC graduates; ascertains the respondents' work profile; illustrates the importance of the course, and recognizes college competencies that are very useful on the first job.

METHODS

A descriptive survey design was conducted among 241 graduates of the university. They were graduates from three degree programs, namely, Education, Engineering, and Technology. The respondents were selected using a convenience sampling method which is performed for over six month starting from October 2019.

The standardized questionnaire released by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) is the main instrument used in this research. The tool consists of socio-demographic data, educational background, post-college training, and advanced studies, career data, and first job-related skills.

The online survey using the CHED questionnaire was created using Google forms to meet prospective respondents who are active on-line. Also, the respondents are tagged using their Facebook accounts for wider dissemination. Graduates were asked to complete the questionnaires, too.

Data entry and analysis were done using SPSS version 22. Descriptive statistics used frequency counts, percentage, mean, and rankings to describe the status of employment and performance in licensure of the graduates.

RESULTS

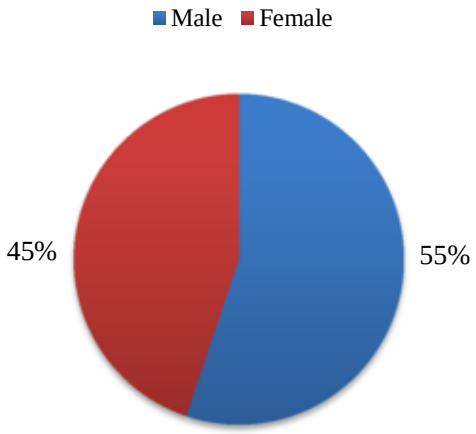

Figure 1. Sex of graduates

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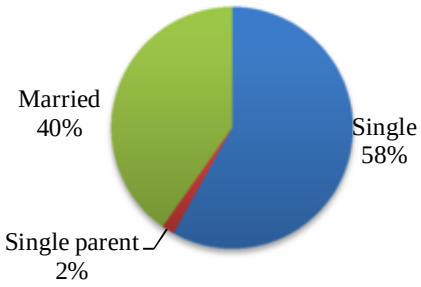

Figure 2. Civil status

Table 1. Research respondents

Program	Frequency	Percentage
Engineering		
Bachelor of science in civil engineering	45	18.67
Bachelor of science in electrical engineering	37	15.35
Bachelor of science in mechanical engineering	59	24.48
Bachelor of science in information technology	9	3.73
Education		
Bachelor of secondary education - major in science	34	14.11
Bachelor of secondary education - major in mathematics	29	12.03
Bachelor of secondary education - maphe	3	1.24
Bachelor of teaching home economics and livelihood	15	6.22
Technology		
Bachelor of industrial technology - major in electronics technology	1	0.41
Bachelor of industrial technology - major in food technology	1	0.41
Bachelor of science in hotel and restaurant technology	8	3.32

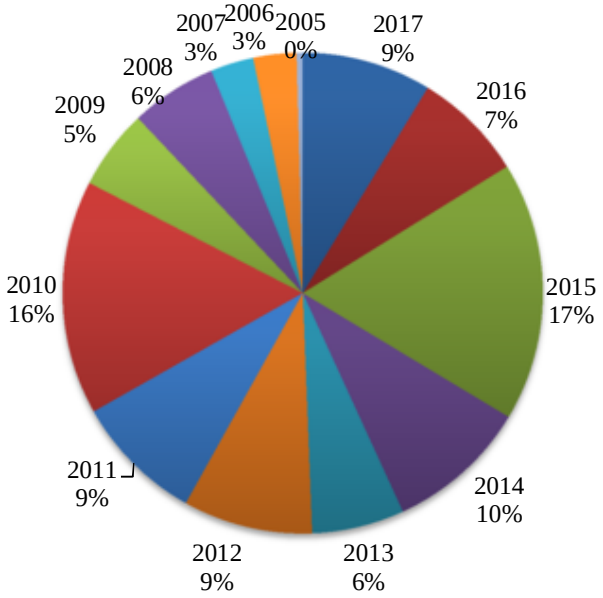

Figure 3. Distribution of respondents per year

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Table 2. Distribution of respondents who passed the board examination

Courses with board examination	Passers
Engineering	
Bachelor of science in civil engineering	27
Bachelor of science in electrical engineering	30
Bachelor of science in mechanical engineering	48
Education	
Bachelor of secondary education - major in science	28
Bachelor of secondary education - major in mathematics	24
Bachelor of secondary education - maphe	3
Bachelor of teaching home economics and livelihood	13

Table 3. Reasons for choosing their course

Reasons	Frequency	Rank
Influence of parents or relatives	62	1
Affordable for the family	56	2
Strong passion for the profession	49	3
Availability of course offering in chosen institution	42	4
Good grades in high school	40	5
Prospect of career advancement	33	6
Inspired by a role model	32	7
Prospect for immediate employment	32	7
High grades in the course or subject area(s) related to the course	31	9
Opportunity for employment abroad	23	10
Prospect of attractive compensation	15	11
No particular choice or no better idea	14	12
Peer Influence	12	13
Status or prestige of the profession	11	14
No choice	1	15
Personal choice	1	15
Just want to enter college	1	15
Want to know more about mathematics	1	15

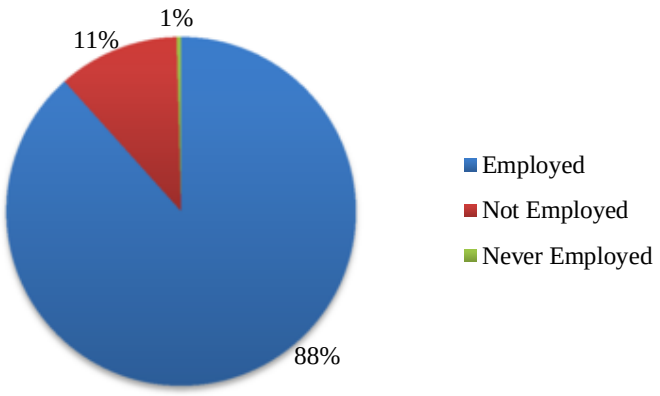

Figure 4: Distribution of graduates in terms of current employment status

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Table 4. Reasons for unemployment

Reason for unemployment	Frequency	Rank
Family concern and decided not to find a job	11	1
No job opportunity	9	2
Lack of work experience	7	3
Self employed	3	4
Job Searching	2	5
Advance or further study	1	6
Did not look for a job	1	6
Health-related reason(s)	1	6
Resigned from last job	1	6

Table 5. Type employment status

Present employment status	Frequency	Percentage
Casual	3	1.24
Contractual	63	26.14
Regular or permanent	134	55.60
Self-employed	8	3.32
Temporary	14	5.81
Unemployed	19	7.88

Table 6. Occupational classification

Present Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Assistant	1	0.46
Automobile parts & accessories countermen	2	0.93
Clerks	8	3.70
Customer service representative	3	1.39
Electrical specialist	1	0.46
Engineering	2	0.93
Government employee	3	1.39
Instructor / teacher	2	0.93
Loan officer	3	1.39
Measuring technician	1	0.46
Officials of government and special-interest organizations	38	17.59
OFW	3	1.39
Online work	2	0.93
Owner/operations manager	1	0.46
PASAR refinery plant	1	0.46
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	12	5.56
Power plant planning supervisor	1	0.46
Professionals	107	49.54
Project engineer	1	0.46
Quantity surveyor	1	0.46
Service workers and shop and market sales workers	3	1.39
Shipyard	1	0.46
Special occupation	1	0.46
Technicians and associate professional	16	7.41
Trades and related workers	2	0.93

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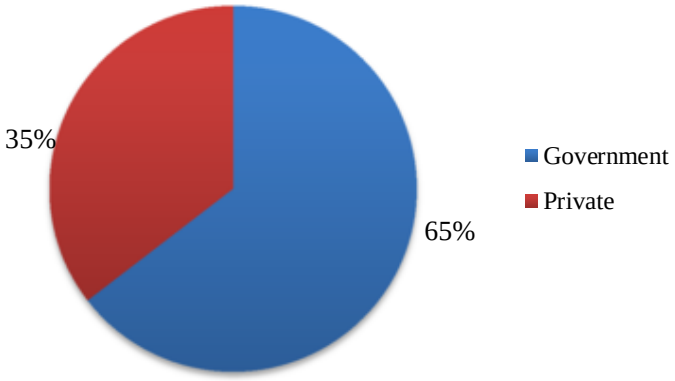

Figure 5. Employers of the graduates

Table 7. Place of work

Place of work	Frequency	Percentage
Abroad	19	8.5
Local	204	91.5

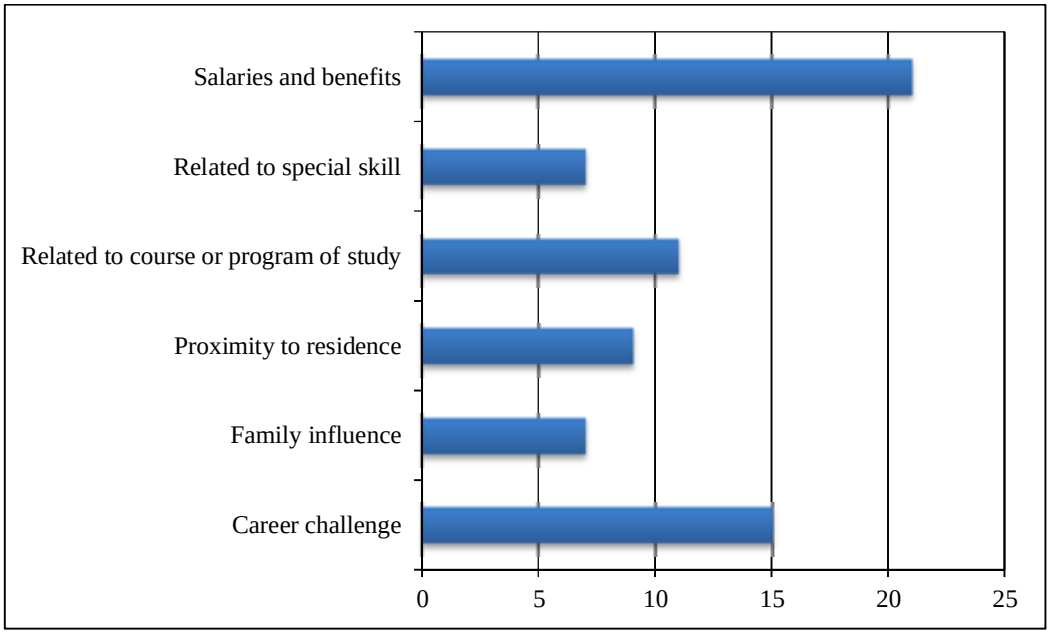

Figure 6. Reasons for staying with their first job

Table 8. Course relevance on their first job

Relevance	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	175	75.1
No	58	24.9

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Table 9. Reasons for changing jobs

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
Salaries and benefits	183	81.0
Career challenge	126	55.8
Related to special skills	87	38.5
Proximity to residence	47	20.8
Other reasons	11	4.9

Table 10. Reasons for changing jobs

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
Salaries and benefits	183	81.0
Career challenge	126	55.8
Related to special skills	87	38.5
Proximity to residence	47	20.8
Other reasons	11	4.9

Table 11. Length of stay in the first job

Length of stay	Frequency	Percentage
Less than a month	5	2.2
1-6 months	65	28.4
7 to 11 months	28	12.2
1 year to less than 2 years	60	26.2
2 years to less than 3 years	35	15.3
3 years to less than 4 years	19	8.3
Others	17	7.4

Table 12. Mode of finding jobs

Mode of finding	Frequency	Percentage
Response to an advertisement	17	7.3
Walk-in applicant	73	31.5
Recommended by someone	93	40.1
Information from friends	40	17.2
Arranged by school's job placement officer	1	0.4
Family Business	1	0.4
Job fair or Public employment	4	1.7
Others	3	1.3

Table 13. Length of time the first was acquired

Duration	Frequency	Percentage
Less than a month	101	44.3
1-6 months	91	39.9
7 to 11 months	9	4.0
1 year to less than 2 years	17	7.5
2 years to less than 3 years	5	2.2
3 years to less than 4 years	3	1.3
Others	2	0.9

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Table 14. Job level position

Job level	1st Job		2nd Job	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Managerial or executive	7	3.1	6	2.7
Professional, technical or supervisory	118	52.2	178	80.5
Rank or clerical	94	41.6	28	12.7
Self-employed	7	3.1	9	4.1

Table 15. First job initial gross monthly income

Initial monthly gross earning in first job	Frequency	Percentage
Below ₱ 5,000.00	28	12.1
5,000.00 to less than ₱ 10,000.00	84	36.4
₱ 10,000.00 to less than ₱15,000.00	64	27.7
₱ 15,000.00 to less than ₱ 20,000.00	32	13.9
₱ 20,000.00 to less than ₱25,000.00	11	4.8
₱ 25,000.00 and above	12	5.2

Table 16. Relevance of the program to the job

Relevance	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	175	75.1
No	58	24.9

Table 17. Learned competencies very useful at work (n = 226)

Competencies	Frequency	Percentage
Communication skills	138	61.1
Human relations skills	102	45.1
Entrepreneurial skills	31	13.7
Problem-solving skills	126	55.8
Critical thinking skills	137	60.6
Other skills	75	33.2

DISCUSSION

The institution must track the graduates and know the whereabouts of each graduate. In the conduct of the study, 241 graduates responded. Most of them are females, still single, residing in Leyte, Ormoc City.

Most of the respondents are from the BS Mechanical and Civil Engineering programs and mostly from 2010 to 2015. Most respondents are board-passers. Respondents reported that because of the influence of their parents and relatives, affordability to the family, deep enthusiasm for the career, availability of course offerings in the chosen university, and good high school grades, they took up the program.

More than 80% of respondents were currently employed while 11.1% were not currently employed due to family problems and only 1 or 0.41% were never employed. One hundred thirty-four or 55.60% of the 241 respondents were working as regular or permanent employees.

There is 107 or 49.54 percent of respondents with professional occupations, mostly working in government and working within the country. Additionally, 175 or 75.1% of respondents reported that their degree was relevant to their first job and stayed there because of salaries and benefits (30%) and career challenges (21.43%). This results is consistent with the findings from other studies[1-3]. More than half stayed 1 month to < 2 years in their first job, find their job through someone's recommendation (40.1%) and most of them are walk-in applicants (31.5%). Also, it took the respondents less than 6 months to land their first job (84.2%), and most had a professional, technical or supervisory role with monthly gross earnings ranging from P5,000 to P15,000.

Finally, among the learned competencies at school, communication skills are top on the list to be very useful at work. The same result can also be seen in the study of PNU graduates[2] and the tracer study of the teacher education graduates[3]. That is accompanied respectively by human relationships, problem-solving, and critical

thinking skills. It is therefore clear that the skills gained at the university are very useful in performing their work.

The study has some limitations. First, the research is carried online and is limited only to those graduates with internet access preventing entire population from participating. Second, the university has limited database of their graduates.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, predominantly, the respondents are females, most are single, and from the BS Mechanical and Civil Engineering and graduates within 2010-2015. These graduates were equipped with the necessary skills needed by the industry as they were able to land their first job within six months after they graduated from college. Nonetheless, it has been observed that some revisions to the program's curricula needs to be updated, and extend further efforts to develop skills relative to the programs offered. Another aspect of the program that needs to be enhanced is the values formation to instill the necessary values associated with the graduate qualities the University dreams of.

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