A Tracer Study of Bachelor of Technology (BOT) Graduates
of Eastern Samar State University Guiuan Campus

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Abstract

Aim: This study assessed the 2015-2020 graduates of the Eastern Samar State University Guiuan Campus – Bachelor of Technology program along their socio-demographic and employment profile, the relevance of their degree to employment and problems encountered in seeking employment.

Methodology: The researchers used the descriptive survey method of research and utilized a questionnaire supported with documentary evidence. *Facebook*, email, and cell phone calls were used to reach the respondents. Frequency, percentages and weighted mean were used as statistical tools.

Results: Results revealed that majority of the respondents are 26-29years old, males, single, and with salary range of P10,000-P14,999. Quality education and training were provided to the graduates as proved by the employment of most of them. They are self-employed practicing the skills in information technology and creativity as their most developed value. Having regular attendance at work was one of the very favorable attitudes they have developed towards their job. The great problem encountered by them was the lack of political influence in entering jobs.

Conclusion: In conclusion, the majority of the BOT graduates are successfully employed locally. However, only one is working internationally. Most of them are self-employed and have their jobs relevant to their field of expertise. Majority of them receive a gross monthly salary of ₱10,000 to ₱14,999 which is not really and practically enough, especially for those who have family dependents and other special responsibilities.

Keywords: Tracer Study, Bachelor of Technology, Graduates, State University

INTRODUCTION

The graduates are known as the strongest evidence of the success of a program in terms of employment and positions held. Moreover, they are strong sources of input about the importance of the program in the current labor market. The economy of a country is based on the knowledge and skills of its people. Skills need change as a result of outside funding, technical advancements, and globalization. People must learn skills to be effective and earn a living to keep up with changes, and all of this can be accomplished through education (Dizon & Sanchez, 2020; Egesah & Wahome, 2016; Sanchez, 2022; Tolbe, 2020).

Recognizing the realities of today's academic world, higher education institutions should play a role in not only imparting expertise but also in contributing to the maintenance of a competitive economy and, most significantly, in ensuring graduates' hopes of having employment and being socially accepted and successful in their fields of endeavor (Meñez, 2014). It is further argued that the employability of an academic institution's graduates is one factor that can assess its effectiveness, but the quality of graduates can also be determined by the quality of instruction and facilities that a higher education institution offers to its students (Maglaque & Calma, 2015). For that reason, a higher education's worth is determined by its ability to open doors for graduates pursuing potential jobs and creating a secure career path. A college student's experience in a higher education institution serves to not only hone and improve his or her abilities but also to train him or her to become a productive citizen and dignified member of society (Rojas & Rojas, 2016)

Education is the process of transmitting societal values, attitudes, behaviors, norms, and mores to individuals. It is also the social process of transmitting cognitive knowledge and technical skills required in society and by individuals to function effectively and live meaningful lives. The acquisition of these competencies has

significantly contributed to increased productivity and improved human interrelationships in the workplace, which ultimately contributes to the person's economic development and the stability of society (Pongyutthaphum & Tolbe, 2021).

Most people believe that an integral part of the school's responsibility is to equip their clients in order for them to make it in the social order and to facilitate entry into a job. Higher education institutions are expected to produce not only skilled labor, but also citizens with the skills, adaptability, and flexibility to respond to a rapidly changing technological, political, social, and economic environment (Salendab & Dapitan, 2021a; Sanchez, 2020a).

Universities nowadays all over the country offer many courses for students to serve as a training ground for them to enhance their skills, abilities and to gain more knowledge about the degree that they are taking up (Salendab & Dapitan, 2021b; Salendab, 2021; Sanchez, 2023a). Many courses may suit their specializations and skills as individuals so that they are able to become more confident with the course they are enrolled in.

Recognizing the realities of today's academic world, higher education institutions should play a role in not only imparting expertise but also in contributing to the maintenance of a competitive economy and, most significantly, in ensuring graduates' hopes of having employment and being socially accepted and successful in their fields of endeavor (Muńoz & Sanchez, 2023; Sanchez, 2020b; Salendab & Dapitan, 2020; Meñez, 2014). It is further argued that the employability of an academic institution's graduates is one factor that can assess its effectiveness, but the quality of graduates can also be determined by the quality of instruction and facilities that a higher education institution offers to its students (Salendab, 2023; Maglaque & Calma, 2015). For that reason, a higher education's worth is determined by its ability to open doors for graduates pursuing potential jobs and creating a secure career path. A college student's experience in a higher education institution serves to not only hone and improve his or her abilities but also to train him or her to become a productive citizen and dignified member of society (Rojas & Rojas, 2016). As cited by Aquino, et al. (2015), people attend universities and complete college degrees with the aim of finding a job and earning a living. Furthermore, in terms of jobs and positions held, graduates are thought to be the greatest proof of a program's efficacy (Salendab & Cogo, 2022). They are also an excellent source of input on the program's importance in today's labor market (Orejana & Resurreccion, 2010). According to Misra and Khurana (2017), the employability of graduates has been a problem in the global economy that cannot be ignored. Getting the right set of employability skills is a must (Sanchez & Sarmiento, 2020; Sanchez, et al., 2022).

The Eastern Samar State University (ESSU), Guiuan-Campus is guided by its mission and goal in the delivery of its service as a learning institution. Its mission specifically states, "The University shall primarily provide advanced education, higher technological, professional instruction and training in the fields of industry, computer and information technology, forestry and engineering, education, law, arts and science, and other related fields of study." It will promote research and extension services, as well as provide aggressive leadership in its field of expertise." Similarly, the university's mission is to "improve the socioeconomic condition of the people in the Province of Eastern Samar in particular and the nation in general through relevant and effective academic, research, extension, and production programs" (ESSU Academic Affairs Manual 2011).

Tracer study, on the other hand, is one of the reasonable and significant modes of evaluating a curriculum, according to the Mapua Institute of Technology (2012). It can improve the school's curriculum offerings by making recommendations based on a series of analyses or data or information gathered from alumni. Similarly, improvements in instructional methods may be influenced by the study's findings.

Objective

The purpose of this research is to trace the Bachelor of Technology (BOT) Graduates of ESSU Guiuan-Campus. It specifically sought answers to the following questions:
1. What is the socio- demographic characteristic of the BOT graduates in terms of;
   1.1.   Age;
   1.2.   Gender;
   1.3.   Civil status
   1.4.   Monthly income?
2. What are the employment profiles of the BOT graduates in terms of:
   2.1 Current employment status;
   2.2 Length of time the first job was acquired;
   2.3 Type employment status; and
   2.4 Place of work?

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3. What are the perceptions of the graduates on the degree on the relevance of their course to their employment/ occupation in terms of:
    3.1 Perception towards competencies and skills acquired;
    3.2 Perceived values developed; and
    3.3 Attitude towards their job?
4. What are the problems encountered by the BOT graduates in seeking employment?

Conceptual Framework of the Study

The study aimed to trace the BOT graduates of ESSU-Guiuan Campus. Figure 1 presents the framework for which the study focused.

The variable of the study includes the socio-demographic characteristics in terms of age, gender, civil status and monthly income; the employment profile which include the sector of employment status number of years employed and the present position or designation. Similarly, it would identify BOT graduates' perceptions of the relevance of their course work to the demand of their employment or occupation, as indicated by the relevance of their course to employment and their attitude toward their jobs.

Furthermore, the study would concentrate on the level of satisfaction of BOT students with their degree attainment as influenced by the instructors' competence, the adequacy of laboratories and instructional facilities, and the program of study. Finally, the graduates' difficulties in finding work would be identified.
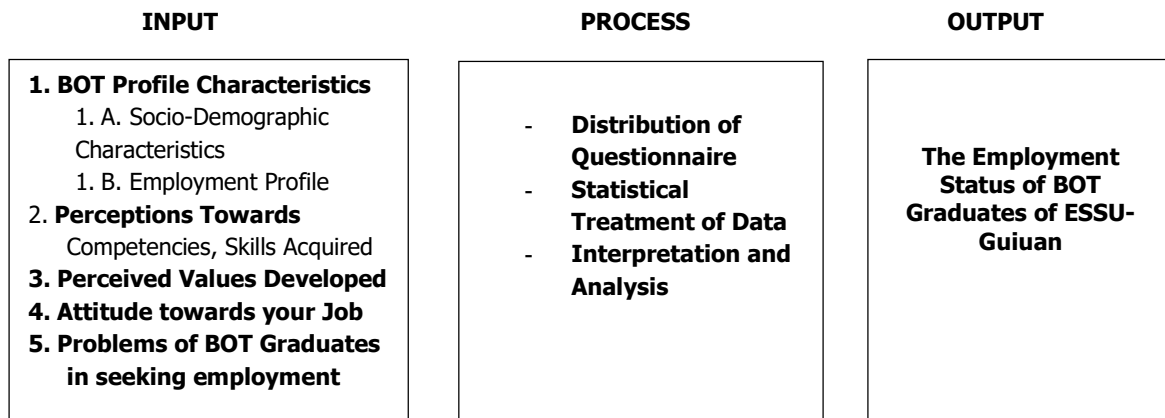
INPUT	PROCESS	OUTPUT
1. **BOT Profile Characteristics** 1. A. Socio-Demographic Characteristics 1. B. Employment Profile 2. **Perceptions Towards** Competencies, Skills Acquired 3. **Perceived Values Developed** 4. **Attitude towards your Job** 5. **Problems of BOT Graduates in seeking employment**	- **Distribution of Questionnaire** - **Statistical Treatment of Data** - **Interpretation and Analysis**	**The Employment Status of BOT Graduates of ESSU-Guiuan**

Figure 1. The paradigm of the Study

METHODS

Research Design
This study utilized the descriptive method of research. A survey questionnaire was employed to gather the needed data. It is descriptive research since it sought to describe and interpret what have been traced about the BOT graduates of ESSU – Guiuan. Further, it is concerned with the beliefs and processes that were found and the effects that were felt.

Research Locale
The study was conducted in the service area of ESSU-Guiuan where the graduates were residing. It included municipalities namely: Gen.Mac-Arthur, Lawaan, Balangiga, Giporlos, Quinapundan, Salcedo, Mercedes and Guiuan Eastern Samar, respectively.

Respondent of the Study
The respondent of the study were the graduates of the Bachelor of Technology (BOT) of Eastern Samar State University Guiuan-Campus.

Research Instrument

The instrument used in this study is modified from the instruments used by Odivilas and Odivilas (2012), a tracer study of MAEM Graduates School Years 2007-2012.

The questionnaire contained five parts as follows: **Part I** About the socio-demographic characteristic of the respondents, **Part II** Dealt about the employment profile of BOT graduates, **Part III** solicited the perception of the BOT graduates Towards Competencies, Values and Skills, Perceived Values Developed, **Part IV** Attitudes towards your Job, and **Part V** Described the problems encountered by graduates in seeking employment.

Treatment of Data

The gathering of data was done through the distribution of questionnaire to the respondents. Each respondent was either personally visited or by sending the questionnaire through Chat, Email and other mode of E-communication, and explained the details of the study. Data gathered were analysed through descriptive statistics with frequency counts, percentile and weighted mean.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

This presents the results of the survey, organized and presented on the order by which they address the stated objectives of the study: socio-demographic profile of the respondents, perceptions on the relevance of their course to their employment, and the problems encountered by respondents.

Socio-Demographic Characteristics

The socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents that were considered in this study included age, gender, civil status and monthly income.

Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents

Age Range	Frequency	Percentage
34-above	1	3.57%
30-33	3	10.71%
26-29	21	75%
22-25	3	10.71%
18-21	-	
	28	**100%**

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	26	93%
Female	2	7%
	28	**100%**

Civil Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	21	75%
Married	7	25%
Separated	-	-
Widow/er	-	-
	28	**100%**

Salary Range	Frequency	Percentage
Php 20,000.00 and above	1	3.57%
Php 15,000.00 - 19,999.00	6	21.42%
Php 10,000.00 – 14,999.00	11	39.28%
Php 5,000.00 – 9,999.00	7	25%
Php 4,999.00 and below	3	10.71

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	28	100%

It can be gleaned from Table 1 on the socio-demographic profile on **age**. There were 21 or 75% of the respondents were 26-29 years old, both the age range of 22-25 years old and 30-33 years old have 3 or 10.71% while 34 and above has 1 or 3.57%. As to **gender**, 26 are males and 2 are females; as to the **civil status** 21 or 75% were single with 7 or 25% were married. On **monthly income** earned by the respondents, 11 or 39.28% were earning P10,000.00 – P14,999.00 per month, 7 or 25% were earning P5,000.00 – 9,999,99 per month, 6 or 21.42% earns P15,000 – 19,999 monthly income, 3 or 10.71% on P4,999 and below while only 1 or 3.57% of the respondents are earning P20,000 and above from their employment.

Table 2. Current Employment Status of the Graduates

Current Employment Status	Frequency	Percent
Employed in the government	6	21.42 %
Employed in Private sector	10	35.71 %
Un-employed	-	-
Self-Employed	12	42.86%
Total	**28**	**100%**

Table 2 presents the employment statuses of the BOT graduates. It shows that 10 graduates (35.71%) out of 28 graduates are regularly employed in the private sector followed by 12 graduates (42.86%) who are self-employed, and 6 (21.42%) are employed in the government. This means that majority of the graduates are in the private companies.

Table 3. Length of Time the First Job was acquired by the BOT respondents

Length Of Time	Frequency	Percent
Less than a year	-	-
1year to1 years and 11 months	2	7.14 %
2 years to 2 years and 11 months	14	50 %
3 years to 3 years and 11 months	9	32.14 %
4 years or more	3	10.71 %
Total	**28**	**100 %**

Table 3 presents the length of time the graduates acquired their first job. It shows that majority 14 out of 28 graduates acquired their first 2 years after graduation. About 32% of the graduates waited for three years before they got hired, while 10.71% waited for 4 years to be employed, and only 7.14% were employed one year after graduation. This is a good indicator of waiting to be landed on the first job. Hence, it may be safe to say that BOT graduates will not have to wait for a longer period of time to be able to acquire his/her first job. This is because of the high demand of the present industries.

Table 4. Type Employment Status of BOT Graduates

Type Employment Status	Frequency	Valid Percent
Full time/Permanent/Regular	6	21.42 %
Temporary/Casual/ Job order	10	35.71 %
Part time	0	0 %
Others (please specify)	12	42.86%
Total	**28**	**100%**

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Table 4 presents the employment statuses of the BOT graduates. It shows that 12 graduates (42.86%) out of 28 graduates have not specified their employment status, followed by 10 graduates (35.71%) who are temporary/Casual/Job order, 6 (21.42%) are fulltime/Permanent/regular employees. This means that majority of the graduates are temporary/casual/job order in the company hey are employed with.

It is not easy to be a regular employee of a certain company, especially for the companies who are committed to a very high standard of service. Work experience, technical and management skills, knowledge or mastery of the field are just few qualities an employee should possess in order to obtain regular position in the world where the battle is about competitiveness (Sanchez, Sanchez & Sanchez, 2023). Hence, this finding can be a good indicator that the ESSU produces skillful and competitive graduates.

Table 5. Place of Work of BOT Graduates

BOT Graduates	Frequency	Percent
Abroad	1	3.57%
Local within the Philippines	27	96.43%
TOTAL	**28**	**100%**

As shown in Table 5, majority of the BOT graduates are employed locally . After obtaining their degree, they try to find a job their service area. Only 1 of the respondents tried his luck to be employed abroad.

Table 6. Skills Acquired by BOT Graduates

A. Skills Acquired in	Mean	Interpretation
1. Communication skills.	2.76	Slightly Acquired
2. Human Relations skills.	3.48	Moderately Acquired
3. Problem solving	3.91	Moderately Acquired
4. Information technology.	4.10	Moderately Acquired
5. Critical thinking skills.	3.69	Moderately Acquired
6. Research.	3.02	Slightly Acquired
Overall Mean	**3.49**	**Moderately Acquired**

The school is a venue for skill education and development. It is enjoined by the state to assist each individual to attain his potentials as a human being (Lacaba & Lacaba, 2018). One of the most important skills that human needs to know or acquire is the reckoning skills. In fact, it is part of daily living as human being. Table 6 presents the extent of applicability of the skills in the current employment of the graduates with an overall mean of 3.49. It shows that all of the skills are applicable to some extent of their nature of work. This means that all skills (i.e. human relation skills, problem solving skills, information technology skills, critical thinking skills, research skills) are useful, helpful and relevant to their current employment. Unfortunately, there is a need to enhance their communication skills as it shows in the result that the graduates had slight acquired these skills. These skills play a pivotal role in the everyday task of the graduates. Thus, curriculum is a responsible factor to producing competitive graduates. It is imperative for the school to focus on the development of communication skills among the students (Sanchez, 2023b; Sanchez, 2020c).

Table 7. Perceived Values Developed by BOT graduates

B. Perceived Values Developed	Mean	Interpretation
1. Commitment	3.26	Slightly Developed
2. Confidence	4.10	Moderately Developed
3. Excellence	3.31	Slightly Developed
4. Diligence	4.11	Moderately Developed
5. Compassion	3.72	Moderately Developed
6. Accountability	4.21	Highly Developed
7. Leadership	3.32	Slightly Developed
8. Creativity	4.34	Highly Developed

9. Punctuality	3.51	Moderately Developed
Overall Mean	**3.76**	**Moderately Developed**

It can be gleaned from Table 7 the perceived values developed by the BOT graduates, with a grand mean of 3.76. BOT graduates have moderately developed the perceived skills. The perceived skill on accountability got the highest mean score of 4.34 interpreted as highly developed, while perceived leadership skill got the lowest mean score of 3.32 interpreted as slightly developed. It can be implied that most of the skills necessary for a student had been acquired by the BOT graduates. A person's personality and values are made up of a variety of distinct and long-lasting traits that influence how they react to environmental stimuli (Cabaguing, et. al, 2023). It is also an advantage to the students who are working and involve in an organization so that the values they learned from school will be applied

Table 8. Attitude towards your Jobs

Attitudes towards your Job	Mean	Interpretation
1. I understand and am interested in my job	4.33	Very Favorable
2. I agree and cooperate with my boss in relation to my job.	4.24	Very Favorable
3. I am satisfied in the field of work.	3.81	Favorable
4. I feel good in working with the different activities related to my job.	4.37	Very Favorable
5. I like my job since it enhances the development of my self - esteem and morale.	4.56	Very Favorable
6. I like the work assigned to me and consider it a noble work.	3.77	Favorable
7. I feel happy in my work since there is a sense of dignity and I learned respect with what I perform in the workplace.	3.92	Favorable
8. I feel happy in my job because there is a chance for personal growth and advancement.	4.51	Very Favorable
9. I tell other people about the positive side about my work.	3.16	Uncertain
10. I submit all reports required of my job.	3.21	Uncertain
11. I like my co-workers in my job.	4.13	Favorable
12. I try to be regular in my attendance.	4.67	Very Favorable
13. I got good impressions from my superior in doing my job.	4.11	Favorable
14. I complete the work assigned to me every day.	3.16	Uncertain
15. I show my works to my colleagues and superior.	4.81	Very Favorable
16. I keep my things in my workplace neat, beautiful and in order.	3.98	Favorable
17. I look forward to attend my job daily.	4.01	Favorable
18. I enjoy learning lessons about my job.	3.17	Uncertain
19. I join organizations related to my work.	3.34	Uncertain
20. I consider my work exciting, pleasurable, and time saving.	4.21	Very Favorable
Overall Mean	**3.97**	**Favorable**

Table 8 on the attitude towards the job of the graduate respondents reveals that the respondents have favorable attitude towards the job as shown in the total mean score of 3.97 interpreted as "favorable". It is the statement "*I show my works to my colleagues and superior*" which has the highest mean score of 4.81 with an interpretation "*Very favorable*", while the statement on "*I tell other people about the positive side about my work*" and "*I complete the work assigned to me every day*" where both got the lowest mean score of 3.16 with an interpretation of "*Uncertain*". This means that the graduates are very open to their superiors about their job and accept suggestions for their improvement. On the other hand, there is a need to improve on the task of completing their job and informing others about their job as shown in the lowest mean result of the study. To enhance the attitude of graduates, faculty members need to develop a positive attitude towards technology in the teaching process by making a continuous effort to improve their technological skills (Cabaguing & Lacaba, 2022) and thereby impart their knowledge to the students.

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Table 9. Problems Encountered in Seeking Employment

Problems Encountered in Seeking Employment	Mean	Interpretation
1. No appropriation Board/Civil Service Eligibility.	3.81	Great problem
2. Educational preparation is not relevant to the nature of the job available.	3.19	Moderately problem
3. Lack of job offering in the region.	3.62	Great problem
4. No political influence to lean on.	4.78	Very great problem
5. The school where I graduated from has no placement program.	3.76	Great problem
6. There is close competition with other graduates.	4.07	Great problem
7. Job opportunities are far from home.	4.43	Very great problem
8. Bad records of previous graduates of the school who were employed in various agencies.	2.14	Slight problem
Overall Mean	**3.72**	**Great problem**

Table 9 presents the common struggles and difficulties encountered or experienced by the graduates in searching for a job. The statement "*No political influence to lean on*" got the highest mean score of 4.78 interpreted as "very great problem". This shows that graduates' problem is the political back up that they encounter when on looking for the job. In the study of Muna, et. al (2022), it revealed that political influence does impact recruitment and selection practices Even though, the respondents believe that recruitment process is based on Merit-Base System, the service delivered by Civil Servants deemed inefficient.

On the other hand, "*Bad records of previous graduates of the school who were employed in various agencies*" gained the lowest mean score of 2.14 interpreted as "*slight problem*". This means that there was none or less of the previous graduates have bad record in the agencies. The overall mean score of 3.72 with interpretation of Great Problem, summarized the problems encountered by the BOT graduates. It shows that seeking their employment is really their great challenge.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, majority of the BOT graduates are successfully employed locally. However, only one is working internationally. Most of them are self-employed and have their jobs relevant to their field of expertise. Majority of them receive a gross monthly salary of ₱10,000 to ₱14,999 which is not really and practically enough, especially for those who have family dependents and other special responsibilities.

Ironically, despite there is a high demand in the technology industry and the 2 years acquisition of jobs, the graduates still had a struggle or difficulty in finding a job because of few job vacancies or lack of position or item. This was probably encountered at their first application; or maybe during the application, the company has already hired other applicants.

Moreover, majority of the skills (i.e. human relations skills, problem solving skills, information technology skills, critical thinking skills) are believed to have been applicable to some extent in their current employment. Additionally, more values have been instilled in the minds of the graduates (i.e confidence, diligence, compassion, accountability, creativity, punctuality) was developed by the graduates. This means that all skills and values they have acquired in the school are useful, helpful and relevant to their current work. Thus, enhances their interpersonal skills and eventually improves not only their physical and social well-being but can also advance the development of his moral and spiritual life to the maximum level (Lacaba & Lacaba, 2018).

It is also recommended for the faculty to encourage and to help the students develop necessary skills in communication and research and sense of commitment, excellence and leadership to reach their maximum potential. Students should be exposed to various civil technology related activities, communicative activities and exchange of conversation that will make them ready to engage into the real-world scenario.

Since this study is limited only to a number of respondents and to the graduates of very recent years using the descriptive quantitative method, future researchers are encouraged to conduct similar study in a wider scope which may also include other variables. Descriptive quantitative and qualitative should be used in the future studies. The data and findings of this study can also be used for future investigation and studies.

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