

Tracking the Alumni of the Graduate School in a Philippine Higher Education Institution

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Asia Pacific Journal of Multidisciplinary Research

Vol. 7 No.3, 65-71

August 2019

P-ISSN 2350-7756

E-ISSN 2350-8442

www.apjmr.com

CHED Recognized Journal

ASEAN Citation Index

Date Received: October 4, 2018; Date Revised: July 21, 2019

Abstract - *This study traced the general and employment data of graduate school alumni. It also assessed skills that the alumni acquired in their Master's Degree that are most useful in their jobs, the status of the graduate school program delivery & implementation and correlation aspect of selected variables. It was conducted using the descriptive research design. A structured questionnaire was used to obtain relative data. Majority of the Graduate School Alumni are married, female, resides in Region I, Philippines, they are holders of BSEd, BEED & BSAEd in their undergraduate degrees and possessed professional license having passed the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) and Licensure Examination for Agriculturist (LEA). Their top most reason for pursuing their Master's Degree is for professional development. In terms of employment they are permanent in their jobs. They are faculty and office personnel's, who are occupying good positions in the organizational hierarchy and have experienced being promoted after finishing their Master's Degree. Majority of the skills that are acquired by the Alumni were "Very Much Useful" to their present jobs. The status of program delivery and implementation is "Excellent" along the areas: VMGO, Faculty, Curriculum & Instructions, Administration while the other areas are "Very Good". The skills acquired by the alumni on Master's Degree are significantly related with their present jobs. The skills acquired by the alumni in their Master's Degree are significantly related with program delivery and implementation along VMGO, Faculty, Support to students, Extension and Physical Plant & Facilities. Results imply that the graduate school as an important component in the educational system shall plays a great role in providing quality advance higher education supportive to the emerging knowledge economy and global prosperity. Due to a growing emphasis on quality assurance in the educational system, there's a need to engage meaningfully in the delivery and implementation of programs to support the development of students' essential skills for various professions which they shall articulate in the work place.*

Keywords: *Tracking data, graduate school, alumni, skills, program delivery and implementation.*

INTRODUCTION

Graduate education is at the apex of the educational system. In the field of education, graduate studies are one of the more effective means of improving the capabilities of education professionals who aim to contribute the continued improvement of teaching and learning in the classrooms, delivery of student services, and management of educational programs. Graduate education is also one of the most effective means of developing capabilities related to doing research that will improve educational theory and practice in the many different aspects of the educational process [1].

Tracer research is an approach which is widely used in most organizations especially in educational institution to track and to keep record of students once they have graduated from the institution. It is a way of

understanding the relevance and quality of programs offered by universities as well as the labor market. It constitutes an important tool for educational planners, as they can provide valuable information for evaluating the results of the higher education and trainings institutions. This information may be used for minimizing any possible deficits in a given educational program in terms of content, delivery and relevance and for further development of the institution in the context of quality assurance Tracer study will benefit every institution because it will help them know what the status of their products. Through tracer study, an institution is able to evaluate the quality of education given to their graduates by knowing the graduate's placements and positions in the society after garnering

their master's degree which later can be used as a benchmark in producing more qualified and competitive graduates [2].

Tracer study results could help assess the usefulness of the programs as well as their effectiveness, and eventually success or failure. In fact, Tracer study are required in seeking accreditation of curricular programs from accrediting bodies like the Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines (AACUP) for State Universities and Colleges [3].

The ten (10) key areas to be evaluated for accreditation are considered in this study. Another salient objective of this research is to lay out the skills they have acquired from the Graduate School that are most useful in their position or jobs in particular.

Graduate school curricular offering considers various vital skills needed in most jobs. One of these is communication skill is one of the components of genuine skills that have been identified as focus at the universities. Previous research on communication skills among university students has been reported that a positive communication environment provides opportunities to students to learn how to communicate, and thus, have better communication skills [4].

The classroom is an essential positive communication environment where the three types of communication could be developed. These are interpersonal communication, management communication, and public communication. It is enhanced through topic presentation, interactive processes and writing activities taking place during the learning sessions in the graduate school where each one of the members of the class participates in the exchange of ideas and insights.

Human Relation Skills and communication is a basic material to be developed in educational leadership. Human Relation skill is observed through a wholesome relationship with people to build great teams and work well with others. These are based on four (4) key values; respect, fairness, empathy and understanding [5].

Interpersonal Skills are used every day and in every area of students' lives. Good interpersonal skills are usually perceived as optimistic, calm, confident and charismatic [6].

Entrepreneurial Skills are developed among students through specific task like involvement on income generating projects of the school and integration of entrepreneurship in related courses. It does not necessarily involve starting one's business.

The key observable qualities: creativity, resiliency and social skills or human relation skills [7].

Problem Solving Skills has been recognized as essential for all citizens in the 21st century. And one recommended way to acquire this skill is through active learning and it is defined as instructional method that engages students in the learning process. Students who received an education through active learning had developed problem solving skills as well as their critical thinking ability [8].

Critical Thinking Skills is a skill needed to function well in the 21st century. Studies mentioned that critical thinking replicates the well-known scientific investigation: a question is identified a hypothesis formulated, relevant data sought and gathered the hypothesis is logically tested and evaluated and conclusions are drawn from the results [9].

And these are considered in the teaching learning process in the graduate school for the development of the said skills.

Managerial and Administrative Skills. Many studies confirmed the importance of a number of personal skills and managerial skills and administrative creativity for manager. In this study consideration is limited to the core processes of management which are integrated in instruction [10].

Technical Skills represent knowledge required to accomplish specific task, often relate to mathematical, scientific, technology within the curricular offerings [11]. It is in these contexts that this study was conceptualized to establish a tracking data of the graduate school or advance higher education which will serve as basis for further improvements and developments.

OBJECTIVES

This study aimed to generate data of the Graduate School and its alumni specifically; it sought answer to the following sub-objectives: trace out data of Graduate School Alumni from academic 2011–2012 to 2015–2016 in terms of civil status, sex, regional residence of alumni; Baccalaureate Degree, Professional Examination(s) Passed and Reason(s) for taking the course; to determine the employment data in terms of employment status, occupation, position, promotion after finishing Master's Degree; assess the skills acquired by the respondents in their Master's Degree that are most useful in their present job as evaluated by themselves, their peers and supervisor to wit: communication skills, human relations skills, interpersonal skills, entrepreneurial skills, problem

solving skills, critical thinking skills, managerial administrative skills, technical skills; assess the status of the Graduate School in its program delivery and implementation as perceived by alumni along the following areas: VMGO, Faculty, Curriculum and Instruction, Support to Students, Research, Extension, Library, Laboratories, Physical Facilities, Administration; determine the relationship between the acquired by the Graduate School Alumni with their present position. determine the relationship between the skills acquired by Graduate School Alumni in the Master's Degree with program delivery and implementation along the ten (10) areas mentioned as perceived by alumni.

METHODS

This study made use of the descriptive research design. The historical part examined the segments of events to arrive to an account of what has happened in the past. It laid the background of the existence of the Graduate School, delivery and implementation of its programs as well as its operation, management and administration. The descriptive method was employed to describe the personal and employment data that have been drawn from the alumni-respondents. The evaluative method was employed to draw out judgments on the level of skills of alumni acquired in their Master's Degree that are most useful in their present job likewise with the status of Graduate program delivery and implementation.

A survey questionnaire was used to obtain relative data, component of the research. The survey questionnaire was divided into 4 parts: Personal Data, Employment data, Program delivery and implementation, Skills acquired by Alumni that are most useful on their present job.

The survey questionnaire was lifted partly from the Graduate Tracer Questionnaire of the CHED. These was simplified or modified to suit the purpose of the study.

To enhance responsive rate, the Graduate School Alumni Directory and commencement program were used to avail contact information of the respondents which was supplemented with the use of Facebook and also "inquiry approach" to colleagues and to those who are currently enrolled graduate students who have knowledge of the whereabouts and backgrounds of alumni from academic year 2010-2011 to 2015-2016 of whom data of this research was generated.

The given scale was used to interpret the result of the data gathered: 4.21 – 5.00: Very Much Useful

(VMU); 3.41 – 4.20: Much Useful (MU); 2.61 – 3.40: Moderately Useful (MoU); 1.81 – 2.60: Slightly Useful (SU); 1.00 – 1.80: Not Useful (NU)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Personal Data of Alumni

Most of the alumni are married at the time of the study. This may imply that married ones are more concern with their professional growth in spite of bearing more family responsibilities than the single ones.

As regards to sex, alumni are female dominated. It could be deduced from the explained findings that women tend to be more diligent or patient to go back to school and take graduate studies.

Most of the alumni of ISPSC Graduate School reside in Region I, Philippines. Results also showed that majority of the alumni are holders of Bachelor in Secondary Education (BSEd). Second is Bachelor in Elementary Education (BEED) and followed by Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Education (BSAEd). This implies that majority of the alumni undergraduate degrees are aligned to the Graduate programs which the Graduate School of ISPSC offers such as: Master of Science in Education (MSE), Master of Arts in Education (MAEd) and Master of Science in Agriculture (MSA).

The Bachelor in Elementary Education and Bachelor of Secondary Education graduates had the most number of Examination passers. The top two reasons of the alumni for pursuing advanced education is for professional development. This therefore manifests their deep concerned on continuous educational growth & advancement.

Employment Data of the Alumni

Majority of the alumni are already regular or permanent on their jobs. This implies that most of the graduate school alumni are already stable in their respective jobs with security of tenure. Most of the alumni are teacher/faculty and Office personnel. However, there are also those who have occupied other higher positions like Supervisors, Master Teacher I, Head Teacher I, II & III and Principal I. It could be deduced from the findings that the graduate school alumni are in good positions or jobs in the organizational hierarchy where they belong. Furthermore, majority of them were promoted. This is an indication that most of the alumni have benefited from their Master Degrees in terms of their promotion.

They were able to increase their positions with the knowledge and skills they have developed and enhanced while pursuing their respective degrees. Meñez [12] noted that there is avenue of promotion when earning MBA degree.

Table 1. Skills acquired by alumni that are most useful in their present jobs

Skills	Over all	DR
Communication skills	4.54	VMU
Human Relations skills	4.63	VMU
Interpersonal skills	4.59	VMU
Entrepreneurial skills	4.09	MU
Problem-solving skills	4.67	VMU
Critical Thinking skills	4.38	VMU
Managerial and administrative skills	4.21	VMU
Technical skills	4.37	VMU
Overall Mean	4.46	VMU

The alumni with their peers and supervisors perceived that the different skills they acquired are very much useful in their present jobs. It is further noted that problem solving skills is the top most useful among all the other skills they have acquired because most of the time they are exposed to problem solving and decision-making situations.

Findings on Laguador and Dotong [13] mentioned that almost 50% of the respondents considered problem-solving skills to be one of the useful competencies learned in college as well as critical thinking skills. The study further stimulates that it is always necessary to develop their skills to boost their confidence and resourcefulness that would make them successful in dealing and giving answer to company problems. Glaringly, it is only entrepreneurial skills which were rated as “much useful” for the reason that they are not into business and most of their professions are along instruction and office work.

Results further imply that the college is doing its part in providing the quality education that the students essentially need in the exercise of their profession and in the conduct of their present job or occupation.

Interestingly seen from the results presented in Table 2, the status of the graduate school in the program delivery and implementation along the ten (10) above-mentioned key areas is generally very impressive. Data shows that the graduate school has an excellent status in the program delivery and implementation along the areas; VMGO, Faculty, Curriculum and Instructions and Administration. This glaringly manifest that these areas were successfully delivered and implemented. This shows that the graduate school Vision, Mission,

Goals and Objectives (VMGO) are well achieved through the existence of qualified, competent and strong teaching force who delivers properly planned and crafted relevant curricular programs for advance higher education with the support of a strong administration.

Table 2. Status of the graduate school in its program delivery and implementation along the different areas.

AREAS	Overall Mean	DR
VMGO	4.35	E
Faculty	4.26	E
Curriculum and Instruction	4.21	E
Support to students	4.19	VG
Research	3.97	VG
Extension	3.86	VG
Library	4.02	VG
Laboratories	3.62	VG
Physical Facilities	3.66	VG
Administration	4.32	E

Data further show that the areas along Support to Students, Research, Extension, Library, Physical Plant and facilities and Laboratory were only given a “Very Good” status.

It can be deduced from the findings, that since graduate school students are already professional, self-management and independent learning is applied in the teacher-learning process, meaning lesser support provided compared to the undergraduate students. The implementation and program delivery on research, extension, library physical plant and facilities and laboratories may have been affected with availability of resources to support the implementation and program delivery because these are the key areas of concern that needs bigger budget allocation.

The result above is in consonance with the findings in a study that the problems encountered by the college of teacher education students in Cebu includes the lack of laboratory facilities and materials for experiment, lack of instructional facilities and materials and too many written academic requirements [14].

The importance of facilities and laboratories in any educational institution is very important in the delivery of a quality education. Thus, result of this study will serve as an eye opener to the planning and budget officer/administrator to allot appropriate budget for improving these infrastructures of the college.

Data shown in Table 3 reveals that there is a significant relationship between the skills acquired by alumni with their present position specifically along

communication, human relations, problem solving, managerial and administrative skills and technical skills.

Table 3. Correlation between the Skills acquired and the present jobs of the Alumni

SKILLS	r
Communication skills	0.245*
Human Relations skills	0.257*
Interpersonal skills	0.154
Entrepreneurial skills	0.200
Problem-solving skills	0.238*
Critical Thinking skills	0.180
Managerial and administrative skills	0.309*
Technical skills	0.286*

As cited in Laguador and Dotong [13], communication skills are very useful in the dynamic business world today, communication skills can make the difference between business success and business failure. Today's global marketplace is a market of many cultures, languages, customs and traditions. Businesses both large and small are conducting massive numbers of sales with economic powerhouses on the Internet as well as the sales office every day. The importance of good customer service and good communication skills will continue to be the hallmark of companies that succeed instead of fail.

In addition, it is indeed worth mentioning that managerial/administrative skills and technical skills are equally significant with the positions of the alumni because in the exercise of any profession, there are always specific concerns to manage and administer which also calls for respective technical expertise of each employee. Application of management and administrative skills, does not necessarily mean that

one must occupy a position of manager or an administrator.

It could be gleaned in Table 4A that all the eight skills acquired by the alumni in their Master's Degree are significantly related along the areas of VMGO and Faculty. This manifest that the VMGO set for the graduate school to achieve are aligned to the development of the students' skills. Moreover, the role of the faculty is a great factor in the teaching/learning process which provides the eight (8) vital skills that were acquired by the students. This manifest that faculty of the graduate school are able to adequately taught the eight (8) essential skills.

Curriculum and Instruction

Curriculum and Instruction is significantly related to entrepreneurial skills. This finding may be attributed to the Alumni's exposures to the entrepreneurial activities in the curriculum, likewise with their involvement in extension programs and their experiences in teams and organizational activities which are integral part of curriculum and instruction.

Curriculum and Instruction is likewise significantly related to critical thinking skills. This justifies the students' participation in the classroom as they pursue their Master's Degree where critical thinking is indeed required.

Support to students reflects significant relationship along entrepreneurial skills and critical thinking skills. It can be drawn from the findings that entrepreneurial skills of students are more developed if they are properly backed up in their exposures to hands on activities, laboratory works, experiments and researches which likewise require critical thinking skills.

Table 4A. Correlation Between the Skills with Program Delivery and Implementation along VMGO, Faculty, Curriculum and Instruction, Support to Students, and Research

Skills	VMGO	Faculty	Curriculum and Instruction	Support to Students	Research
Communication skills	0.39**	0.65**	0.06	0.18	0.10
Human Relation Skills	0.65**	0.59**	0.32	0.01**	0.05
Interpersonal Skills	0.44**	0.53**	0.25	0.13	0.28
Entrepreneur Skills	0.51**	0.71**	0.09*	0.25*	0.21
Problem solving skills	0.51**	0.53**	0.06	0.09	0.04
Critical thinking skills	0.70**	0.55**	0.24*	0.01	0.03
Managerial & administrative skills	0.44**	0.40**	0.19	0.15	0.13
Technical skills	0.72**	0.54**	0.22	0.00	0.02

Table 4B. Correlation Between the Skills with Program Delivery and Implementation along Extension, Library, Laboratory, Physical Facilities and Administration

Skills	Extension	Library	Laboratory	Physical Facilities	Administration
Communication skills	0.04	0.138	0.13	0.06	0.06
Human Relation Skills	0.26*	0.21	0.04	0.32*	0.03
Interpersonal Skills	0.18	0.00	0.00	0.25	0.02
Entrepreneur Skills	0.21	0.20	0.10	0.09	0.05
Problem solving skills	0.07	0.04	0.15	0.06	0.01
Critical thinking skills	0.12	0.10	0.02	0.24*	0.05
Managerial & administrative skills	0.25*	0.21	0.10	0.19	0.13
Technical skills	0.15	0.18	0.00	0.22	0.08

Research

Along the area on Research, it shows positive correlation between the eight (8) identified skills. The skills that are significantly related to extension are human relation skills and entrepreneurial skills.

In the graduate school, extension programs are being implemented to the communities. In so doing, managerial/administrative skill is imperative because extension activities require management processes like planning, directing, coordinating, monitoring and evaluating. And in dealing with the people in the communities, human relation skills are important to be able to gain the interest among extension beneficiaries. This is aligned to the findings on Manullang [5] citing that attribution of a leader's success in managing an organization depends on a sound human relations climate.

The relationship between program delivery and implementation along physical facilities and human relation skills is highly significant. The physical facilities of any institution are very vital in developing skills of students. This would mean that when students are provided with substantial and satisfying physical facilities, they will enjoy the learning environment and will create an atmosphere of pleasant human relationships.

Furthermore, Physical Facilities is significantly related to Critical Thinking skills. It could be drawn from the findings that students could think logically in a conducive learning environment with substantial facilities. Library laboratory and administration show positive correlation.

CONCLUSIONS

Married and female ones are more interested and have a greater diligence and patience to pursue Master's Degree. Majority of the alumni resides in Region I; Philippines they are holders of Bachelor's Degree that are vertically aligned with their Master's

Degree. Majority are LET and LEA passers. Their reason for pursuing Master's Degree is for professional growth. Majority of the graduate school alumni are stable in their jobs with security of tenure. They occupy good position in their respective organizational structure and have experienced being promoted after garnering their Master's Degree. Majority of the skills that the alumni have acquired in their Master's Degree are very much useful in their present positions or jobs. Three (4) of the ten (10) key areas of concern such as: VMGO, Faculty, Curriculum & Instruction, and Administration were rated "Excellent" by the respondents, therefore results are impressive. Majority of the skills acquired by the graduate school alumni are significantly related with their present positions.

The program delivery and implementation along VMGO and Faculty support the acquisition of the eight essential skills that the alumni acquired in their Master's Degree. Moreover, area along curriculum and instruction is contributory to the entrepreneurial and critical thinking skills acquired by the Alumni, likewise area along support to students influence the acquisition of human relations and Entrepreneurial skills. The program implementation along Extension affects the acquisition of human relation skills and managerial/administrative skills acquired by Alumni.

It is recommended that the graduate school may strategize a tool to promote the Master's Degree Program to invite enrollees especially the single and male ones. The graduate school shall sustain the impressive provision of the essential skills to the graduate students which they will articulate in the work place. The graduate school administration, faculty and staff may consider working harder to raise the bar of status of program delivery and implementation that where rated "very good" into "excellent" as follows: Support to students, Research, Extension, Library, Laboratories, and Physical Facilities through the provision of essential facilities for the aforementioned

areas of concern. The skills offered by the graduate school which were perceived by the Alumni to be very useful to their present positions of the alumni should be continuously improved. The graduate school will continue to sustain its program delivery and implementation along VMGO, Faculty, Curriculum and Instruction, Support to students, Extension, Physical Facilities and find innovative ways for further improve areas along Research, Library, Laboratory. A parallel study will be conducted to further trace the chronicles of history of the Graduate School and its Alumni.

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