

Tracer Study of BSBA (Human Resource Management) Graduates of UM Tagum College

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Abstract. The main purpose of this study is to present the demographic profile, employment status, sector of employment, place of work, length of time in getting a first job, ways of finding a job, position held at current job, relatedness of training with the current work, competencies needed at work, and leadership and volunteerism profile of UM Tagum College, BSBA Human Resource Management graduates. Majority of the respondents are single within the age bracket of 20-25 years old; they have no competency examination passed. Likewise, many of the respondents are employed within Region XI and occupy in the staff positions in contractual status. Further, most of the respondents land a job in less than six months after graduation and choose to stay in their work due to proximity of the establishment to their home. Furthermore, communication skills and human relations skills are the competencies that help the respondent in the performance of their functions. Moreover, it is noted that most of the respondents are not members of any professional organization and are not engaged in any volunteer activities.

Keywords: Business Management, Human Resource, Tracer Study, University of Mindanao, Philippines

Introduction

Students are the end user of every schools service as they are also the reason behind the institution's existence. This existence is very important as it determines the success of every tertiary institution and as a gauge for their performance. Thus, to evaluate the school's performance aside from the internal assessment, competency exam and licensure exam; a tracer study will be conducted to provide empirical evidence to the higher educational institution regarding the professional relevance of their program of study. It also assess if the program of study matches with the requirement of the industry. This study also assess if the current job of the graduates has something to do with the competencies they acquired during their stay in the institution (de Graaf-Zijl, van de Berg & Heyma, 2011; Pavlin, 2013).

Moreover, tracer study is intended to assess the present employment status of the graduates and the relevance of curriculum, knowledge, skills, work values, and school related factors to their job placement. This will help to determine if the learning at school is very important and have helped them a lot when they seek employment after graduation.

In addition, graduate tracer studies constitute an important tool for educational planners as they can provide valuable information for evaluating the results of the training and skills provided to their learners (Jandaghi, Mokhles & Bahrami, 2011; Mitchelle, Holtom & Lee, 2001). This information can 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. It is an approach which widely used in most institution especially in the educational institution to track and to keep record of their students once they have graduated from the institution (Chandra, Ruhama & Sarjono, 2013).

Moreover, the effectiveness of the program of an educational institution is best determined and reflected in the success of its graduates in the real world of work, in the level of employability, and in the practice of their profession in general (Fallows & Stevent, 2000). It is in this notion therefore that the Commission on Higher Education requires higher educational institutions (HEIs) to equip their graduates with the necessary skills, values, and

competencies to meet challenges in the real world of job (Gattiker & Larwood, 1988; Hakim, 2006).

On this, the tracer study was conducted to obtain information on the whereabouts and performances of graduates to determine their competitiveness and employability.

The aim of this tracer study was to provide a detailed profile of the BSBA-HR Management graduates. Specifically, this tracer study:

- 1 Create a profile of the graduates such as:
 - 1.1 Age;
 - 1.2 Gender;
 - 1.3 Civil status;
 - 1.4 Year graduated; and
 - 1.5 Certification exam passed.
- 2 Construct employment information of the alumni such as:
 - 2.1 Industry/Sector of employment;
 - 2.2 Employment status;
 - 2.3 Place of work (within country/abroad);
 - 2.4 Length of time in landing first job;
 - 2.5 Ways of finding job; and
 - 2.6 Position at work.
- 3 Determine the educational training and work
 - 3.1 Relatedness of training with work;
 - 3.2 Competencies needed at work; and
 - 3.3 Relatedness of curriculum with work.
- 4 Determine the leadership/volunteerism profile
 - 4.1 Positions held in community/civic, political, religious organizations;
 - 4.2 Volunteer works; and
 - 4.3 Awards received.

Review of Related Literature

Tracer studies are common research tools for higher educational institution. The institutions use the results of tracer studies to improve education and training programs as well as enhance the learning experiences of their learners. This will address the fit between the education provided by the institution and the needs of the labor market (Hakim, 2006). This can help enhance the relevance and responsiveness of higher education institution to labor market needs on one hand, and the needs of the diverse students' population on the other (Aina & Moahi, 1999).

Tracing Out Knowledge

Similarly, through a tracer study, the institution can note out that the knowledge and academic acquired skills and competencies of the graduates as it may or may not contribute greatly in their job performance of their current work and position held. Tracer study also promotes a better understanding of the employment of the graduates who left the portal of their alma mater as they seek for their chosen careers. It will also provide information on employability and the conditions under which the graduates were employed (Laguador & Dotong, 2013).

Furthermore, tracer study is intended to assess the present employment status of the graduates and the relevance of curriculum, knowledge, skills, work values, and school related factors to their job placement. This will help to determine if the learning at school is very important and have helped them a lot when they seek employment after graduation. Employment is the capacity of an individual to showcase his talent and to use the trainings

gathered in course program. Thomas Powers on his book *Educating for Careers* stated that marketable skills provide today's crop of worker's employment opportunities. The statement of powers is relevant to present study because education is very important in having the marketability and general skills needed in finding an appropriate job. In this study, it helps to develop such skills among the college graduates for them to find or to get an appropriate job (Olney & Kennedy, 2002).

Notably, the quality of a person's work life should improve as more needed values are satisfied by that individual's job and career progression. This will suggest that the employee must improve the quality of work in determining the aspects of work situations of graduates. In order to achieve the fullest potential of individual in a holistic and integrated manner, one should achieve the fullest potential for all by giving quality education, provide high quality human resource and help their students discover their own talents and make the best of these talents and realize their full potential (Khaniya & Williams, 2004).

Relevance of Education with Industry

Evidently, findings of tracer study by Hassall, Ottewill, Arquero and Donoso (2000) revealed that majority of graduates landed a job to their course with a three-month waiting period, thus, it was recommended a strong program for enhance in communication skills of the graduates. Noko and Ngulube (2013) and Ramirez, Cruz and Alcantara (2014) argued that the tracer studies surveys of graduates from the institutions of higher education are often seen as an important tool of institutional development especially when the world of work is changing rapidly. Therefore, higher education institution can get a systematic feedback from their students. The working conditions and the retrospective assessment of the course of study might stimulate the curricular debate and could also be very interesting for the current or later students and to know the whereabouts of graduates.

In addition, literature indicated that the higher education policy can follow any of the three policy extremes. The first one relates to education system. The second policy is when higher education is wholly determined and shaped by the needs and demand of employment system. The third extreme is where the education system is proactive such that it moulds and influences the employment system (Macatangay, 2013).

Given the above background, Canizares (2015) categorized the relationship between higher education and work into three aspects. First one consist of aspect of higher education that is relevant to work notably studies that have considered types of institutions, field of study and types of qualification, curricula, approaches to teaching, learning assessment as well as on the job training among others. The second category looks at the aspect of work relevant to higher education in terms of employment, career, work task and requirements, profession, and quality of work and task requirements. Thirdly, they considered the linkage between higher education and work. The linkage can either be explained in terms of labor market, intermediary agencies and the transition process or in terms of the regulatory system as well as life-long education and work.

Tracer Study and Curriculum Improvement

Similarly tracer study aimed to present a feedback mechanism for the department and college to come up with a more productive, competitive, and effective for program students. Most of tracer study presents the possible reasons on why there are graduates who are unemployed and employed. The authors want to show the program used providing graduate's adequate skills to help them for professional careers, but the program must open to changes that would effectively lead graduates for a better employment.

Accordingly, Simpson (1998) revealed that employment opportunities dwindle and periods for searching for jobs are becoming longer whereas job seekers contact a number of

employees prior to securing jobs. This particular study focused on graduates. The critical issue is whether or not training at first degree level ought to be professionalized or should just provide graduate in general to prepare them for specific training acquisition of vocational skills. This specifies to the job market requirements. This concluded that the higher level of human resource with technical and managerial competencies is detached from majority of peasant farmers hence undermining their complementarities and mutual benefits.

Graduates Performance

As stated by Saltzstein, Teng and Saltzstein (2001) in the general for tracer studies, tracer studies can be used to track graduate performance and hence infer institutional performance. There is a need to assess labor market signals to assist in development of strategic plans for higher education. However, it is a recognized the fact that linking labor market surveys to higher education planning is rarely effective. It is vital to assess what kind of graduates are required in the near and midterm future as well.

Commonly, tracer studies is good in establishing starting up salary and relationship to those in similar positions with more or less education, appropriateness of the first job to educational background, employment sector both private and public, performance and job satisfaction expressed by graduates and employers, level of responsibility and appointment and subsequently, career prospects in terms of promotion and salary expectations by graduates and employers, comments on relevance of education with suggestions for improvement by graduates and employers. The study also sought to determine the overall employment rate in terms of discipline and Institutions.

In the Philippines Labor Code, an employer has a right to select his employees and decide when to engage them. He has a right under the law to full freedom in employing any person free to accept employment from him, and this, except as restricted by valid statute or valid contract, at the a wage and under conditions agreeable to them. This author wants to give insights about the rights between the employee and employer with regards to the employment that should be given to any person to be employed. This will distinguish the importance of being employed and the choice in choosing job that are desired to apply in.

The result of this study provides valuable information to the following; *School Administrators* as this study is helpful to the management, it provides feedback on how the graduates compete and employable in the industry. Further, this will help them to enhance and redirect the instruction to meet the needs of the industry. *Teachers* for this will them determine the effectiveness of instructions conducted in the classroom. Moreover, it provides them the feedback on the areas that needs an emphasis to the instructional activities. Lastly, the *students* because through this study they will be trained based on the current industry needs, and mold them to a better citizen imbued with knowledge, abilities, skills, and values.

Method

To determine the result of the study, several methods were employed such as: research design, research respondents, research instruments, and statistical tool.

This study used descriptive research design. Using this method enables the researchers to gather pertinent data through conducting research survey to determine the result of the study.

UM Tagum Records and Admission Center showed that there were a total of 522 BSBA-HR Management graduates who were traced and became the respondents of the study.

The research instrument used in the study was the standardized questionnaire for Alumni Tracer Study (ATS) from the University of Mindanao Research and Publication Center (UM-RPC). The questionnaire was designed to draw out information from the graduates such as profile, employment status, sector of employment, place of work, length of time in getting a first job after graduation, ways of finding a job, position held in current work, relatedness of

training to current work, competences needed at work, relatedness of program to work, and leadership and volunteerism profile.

The following were the steps in gathering data:

Permission to Conduct the Study. The researchers sent a letter of request to the office of the registrar of UM Tagum College requesting for the list of BSBA Human Resource Management graduates.

Administration of the Instruments. Questionnaires were distributed personally and through electronic means. *Collecting and Analyzing Data.* The questionnaires were retrieved and data were then collected and analyzed

The gathered data were tabulated and treated using the following tools.

Frequency Distribution. It was utilized to arrange the data showing frequency of occurrence of the different values of the variable and their ranges. *Percentage.* It was used to express how large one quantity is relative to another quantity, or fraction of the total aside from the tabular presentation of the result of the survey.

Results and Discussion

In determining the career mobility patterns as well as the challenges faced by the graduates in higher educational institution, tracer study is conducted (Usher & Marcucci, 2011). This will enable the school to know the status of their graduates in relation to the objective of the school (Lindberg, 2009). The Business Administration program major in Human Resource Management of UM Tagum College conducted a tracer study among its graduates.

The tracer study reveals the information pertaining to the respondents who are graduates of BSBA major in Human Resources Management. Most of the graduates are young and within the range of 20-25 years of age considering that they recently finish their studies of 65% and thirty five percent for those in the age of 26-30 year old.

Shown in Table 1 is the profile of the respondents. As presented female show a higher percentage of employability among graduates of BSBA HR Management program of 70% while 30% for the male. Unmarried graduate have posted also a high level of employability among the different civil status which indicated a 93%, and 7% for married graduates. The graduates did not take serious consideration of taking proficiency examination as indicated in the table only one point five percent (1.5%) among them had taken civil service exam- an illegibility exam for those applying in the government or public entity.

Table 1. Profile of respondents

Variable	f	Percentage
Age		
20-25	141	65
26-30	75	35
31-35	0	0
36-40	0	0
Total	216	100
Gender	f	%
Male	65	30
Female	151	70
Total	216	100
Civil Status	f	%
Single	200	93
Married	16	7

Separated	0	0
Widow/widower	0	0
Total	216	100
Certification Exam	f	%
Civil Service	3	1.5
National Competency	0	0
Others	1	0.5
None	212	98
Total	216	100

Table 2 presents the employment status of the graduates. As shown the employability of the Business Administration students major in Human Resource Management is high. This is due to the fact that these graduates are trained with the different aspects needed to performed office tasks and functions necessary for the attainment of the organizational goals. The result of the study conforms to the study of several authors; Moreau and Leathwood (2006), Jinyu and Guoxue (2005) and Lubis (2012) that student's formal training is necessary for landing a job after graduations as most employers look upon their credentials as an entry to the job. However, Wang and Zeng (2009) stated that it is difficult for a non-graduate to find and land for a job due to lack of competencies needed for the job.

Table 2. Employment status

Variables	Number of Graduates	Percentage
Currently Employed	f	%
Yes	194	90
No	22	10
Total	216	100
Employment Status	f	%
Regular	67	35
Contractual	79	41
Probationary	16	8
Temporary	7	3
Casual	21	11
Self Employed	4	2
Total	194	100
Reason for unemployment	f	%
Further Study	3	14
Family Concern	6	27
Health Reason	1	5
Lack of Experience	1	5
No job Opportunity	4	18
Did not look for a job	2	18
No Eligibility	4	13
Total	22	100

Economic motivation prompted the graduates to seek for a job right after graduation as stated by Glover, Law and Youngman (2002) and Xiangquan (2009). Despite of the fact that business administration graduates are employable in the Philippines, in Bangladesh this is not true because most of the graduates in this degree remains jobless and is part of the unemployed sector of the country according to Chisty Uddin and Ghosh (2007).

Entry level of recent graduates occupies the contractual employment status as a support to the core employees. This is also a stepping stone for a permanent job as declares by de Graaf-Zijl, Van den Berg, and Heyma (2011), Khalid et al. (2013). Employers tend to hire employees on temporary basis to give them ample time to screen those employees qualify to permanent status based on the pronouncement of Engellandt and Riphahn (2005). However, there are also great numbers of respondents in the regular or permanent status. Companies have the tendency to regularized employees to hold and retain motivated, dedicated and excellent employees as stated by De Cuyper, Notelaers and De Witte (2009).

Table 3 presents the industry or sector of employment among the graduates. As shown applicants are more attracted to seek employment in the private corporations or organizations on the ground that private organizations are not very particular on standard eligibility. In the Philippine private organization contributes largely to the creation of employment and offers job opportunity as cited by Ayyagari, Demirgüç-Kunt and Maksimovic (2011) and Bowale and Ilesanmi (2014).

Table 3. Industry/Sector of employment

Variables	Number of Graduates	Percentage
Corporation	158	81
Government	27	14
NGO	8	4.5
Foundation	1	0.5
Total	194	100

However, despite that government organization offers a good salary scheme and job security, it is also attractive to the applicants but since government organization requires eligibility, takers of their job vacancy is limited based on the pronouncement of Blank (1985) and Simpson (1998). Aside from economic consideration, job security is also a factor of employment in the public sector according to Bellante and Link (1981). However since degree in the baccalaureate program is enough for the graduate to land for a job in private corporation thus most of the graduates are employed in this sector as concluded by Xiangquan (2009).

Presented in Table 4 is the place of work among the graduates. As shown local employment is still the best option among graduates in business administration program this is due to the fact also that most of the employment opportunities are found in the locality of the graduates. This result conforms to the study of Moy and Lee (2002) and Shearmur and Polèse (2007) that most local business organization caters huge amount of employees. The influx of more enterprises in the community near to the residences of the graduates also opens more employment opportunity for them as claim by Schwartz (1989).

Table 4. Place of work

Variables	Number of Graduates	Percentage
Local	180	93
National	10	6
Abroad	4	2
Total	194	100

Table 5 presents the length of time in first landing a job among the graduates. In one month or less than six months after the graduation, most of the graduates could already found a job. This result conforms with the study of Haltiwanger, Jarmin and Miranda (2013), Kong and Jiang (2013) that Boston University School of Management ranked in top ten by US news & world report for percentage of graduates employed three months after graduation. At this

time graduates had already get their credentials from the school to be used in looking for possible employer that would accept them based on skills they have as they acquire in their four year of stay in the institution as claimed by Ramirez, Cruz and Alcantara (2014).

Table 5. Length of time in first landing a job

Variables	Number of Graduates	Percentage
Less than a month	54	28
1 to less than 6 months	68	35
6 months to less than 1 years	48	25
1 year to less than 2 years	21	11
Others	3	1
Total	194	100

Shown in Table 6 is the way of finding job among the graduates. Most of the graduates land a job through recommendation by someone. This result conforms to the study of Purcell, Hogart and Simm (1999) when they stated that most employers accept applicant referred to them by somebody else as it provides confidence of hiring since their character and background are known already and also offers stable employment as well. Further, employee referral is also considered most efficient method of recruitment. In contrast, this is not always applicable as there are employers that consider walk in applicant since they tend to perform well one year after hiring due to difficulty of looking for a job as stated by Biggs and Swailes (2006) and Booth, Francesconi and Frank (2002).

Table 6. Ways of finding job

Variables	Number of Graduates	Percentage
Response to Advertisement	24	12
Walk in	55	28
Recommended by someone	65	34
Information from friends	25	13
Arranged by school	1	0.5
Family Business	10	5
Job fair	11	6
Others	3	1.5
Total	194	100

Table 7 presents the graduates position at work. Most of the new and fresh graduates occupies staff level employee. This level provides new employee the opportunity to prove to the organization their worth and capacity to handle managerial functions to advance in the management level as claimed by McDermott (2001). This capability of advancing to officer level can be attain through a period of training and exposure in the actual work setting as well as experience that will develop a person in a holistic manner. As mentioned by Dai, De Meuse and Gaeddert (2011) non-managerial position is a good training ground for an employee since this will provide the technical, human relation, and conceptual skills necessary for an employee to grow professionally and personally.

Jacobs and Mohammad (2012) mentioned that most organization hire managerial employees internally due to the fact that internally hired employee will no longer experience culture shock and will not spent more time to adjust with the system of the organization. In this sense most of the graduates in this program are placed in the staff position in preparation for them in the next level for the hierarchy of the organization.

Table 7. Position at work

Variables	Number of Graduates	Percentage
Officer	19	10
Staff	175	90
Total	194	100

Table 8 presents the relatedness of training of graduates with their work. As presented the training they acquired during four year stay in school is the most important factor in their employment, this is due to specialization of job task in every organization. This result conforms to the pronouncement of Jiram et al. (2016) that training enables the graduates to compete in the labor market and a determinant for landing a job. Most of the potential employers consider the training of the applicant as presented in their curriculum vitae that they acquired in the tertiary education as stated by Dimalibot et al. (2014).

Table 8. Relatedness of training with work

Variables	Number of Graduates	Percentage
Very much useful	89	46
Much useful	27	14
A bit useful	73	38
Not at all	5	2
Total	194	100

Shown in Table 9 is the competencies needed at work among the graduates. As shown communication skills are considered most important skills in the working environment. This true since most in business entity skills in communication is very important. This result conforms to the study of Fallows and Steven (2000) that communication skills facilitates smooth operation within the organization as it provides understanding among them particularly on the flow of the work process and at the same time work will be easy to facilitate and assignment could be carried out spontaneously when everyone can articulate their opinion and idea as claimed by Azevedo, Apfelthaler and Hurst (2012).

Table 9. Competence needed at work

Variables	Number of Graduates	Percentage	Ranking
Communication Skills	55	28	1 st
Problem Solving	10	5	6 th
Critical Thinking	13	7	5 th
Instructional Skills	7	4	7 th
Public Relation Skills	14	7	5 th
Leadership Skills	21	11	3 rd
Technological Skills	10	5	6 th
Multi-tasking Skills	17	9	4 th
Human Relation Skills	47	24	2 nd
Others	0	0	
Total	194	100	

Table 10 presents the relatedness of program with work of the graduates. As presented graduates are assigned based on their specialization was followed in most organization. On one hand, this will allow the employees to put into actual practiced what they learned in school. This result conforms to the study of Adeyoyin et al. (2015) that assigning employees on their

field of expertise enable the organization to minimize the expenses for the training and development of employees for the reason that these employees are already equipped with the knowledge necessary to perform the task.

Table 10. Relatedness of program with work

Variables	Number of Graduates	Percentage
Yes	139	72
No	55	28
Total	194	100

On the other hand, there are instances that the training acquired from schooling were not being used in work due to the reasons that some will be assigned on the task far from their training as claimed by Levels, van der Velden and Allen (2014), Michelacci and Pijoan-Mas (2016), Khan (2016) and Leong, Rosenberg and Chong (2013).

Table 11 presents leadership and volunteerism profile of the graduates. As presented most graduates are not interested in joining organizations that will develop them personally and professionally. Membership in a professional organization is not a priority concerned of young graduates as claimed by Frank (2005). They are not also engage in any voluntary work. This conforms to the pronouncement of Altimus and Tersine (1973) and Wei, Donthu and Bernhardt (2012) that most of young people are not particular yet to self-actualization as they are still young and considerably focus more on economic side of employment.

Table 11. Leadership/Volunteerism profile

Variables	Number of Graduates	Percentage
Membership in Organization	f	%
With Membership	1	0.5
Without Membership	215	95.5
Total	216	100
Volunteer Work	f	%
With Voluntary Works	0	0
Without Voluntary Works	216	100
Total	216	100
Awards Received	f	%
With Awards Received	0	0
Without Awards Received	216	100
Total	216	100

Conclusion

Based on the result of this tracer study the profile of the graduates show that aged 20-25 has the highest percentage, female graduates is high compares to male, single individual has also high percentage. Graduates of the BSBA Human Resource Management Program are highly employable, in a contractual status, employed in corporation locally; most of them landed a job for a period of one to less than six month after graduation through recommendation by someone. Most of the graduates occupy staff position in a job where their training is very much useful. Communication skill, human relation skills and leadership skills are the skills that needed at their work. Most of the graduates have no membership in organization, no volunteer work and no awards received.

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