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### Tracer Study of the Graduates of the School of Business and Accountancy, Pilgrim Christian College Cagayan De Oro City, Philippines



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ABSTRACT: A tracer study stands as an indispensable tool for assessing the efficacy and success of the programs or courses offered by a school. This comprehensive analysis documents various aspects such as the employment status, challenges faced, and the practical application of skills among graduates in their current employment. By tracking the trajectories of alumni, tracer studies provide valuable insights into the real-world impact of the education provided by the institution. The Tracer Study tracked the SBA graduates of Pilgrim Christian College on what activities they followed after graduation and recognized the results of their achievements. The study used a descriptive method of research and used surveys to gather the primary data. Findings revealed that SBA graduates are predominantly females and in their early twenties; more were single, majority BSA graduates; and that they enrolled at PCC because of affordable tuition fees and the personal prestige attached to the name for better employment and career advancement. More of them were working at private institutions, the majority were serving full-time, more of them were working in business institutions, few were unemployed due to advancement for further studies, and more of them were permanent employees. The study concluded that a great number of them were employed immediately after graduation by application and not by political connections. Having provided very adequately the skills such as knowledge, communication, human relations, leadership, research, problem solving, and other competencies specific to the area of specialization were major factors on top of the area of specialization and reputation of SBA considered for immediate job acquisition.

KEYWORDS: Marketing, strategies, products, services, innovation, Corporate Social Responsibility, Philippines. Tracer study,

#### I. INTRODUCTION

Tracer study is unquestionably one of the most important elements to determine the success of the programs or courses the school offers. It documents the status, characteristics of employment, struggles, and extent of applicability of skills in the current employment of the graduates (De Castro, 2017). In addition, adequate knowledge and skills on employment outcomes of training could help in formulating policy towards hostility, some of social problems such as unemployment (Centillas et al., 2017). Moreover, tracer studies enhance curriculum and maintain the extent of relevance and provide benefits to the graduates and improve marketability of educational programs (Balingbing, 2014) and tracer study is also 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 (Laguador & Dotong, 2013).

On the other hand, students in any degree program, particularly graduates are required to earn a sense of competence in their chosen field and develop confidence to explore new possibilities and new employment specially that there is an increasing competition among rivals at work (Mathed, 2008). According to Mercado (2009) the initiative of the Commission on Higher Education in the Philippines to spearhead the conduct of graduate tracer study among selected Higher Education Institutions in order to obtain data that would show if HEI's are offering courses or programs that produce graduates to meet the needs of industry and society (Centillas et al., 2017).

In Mindanao, specifically the colleges and universities were also conducting a tracer study to have a proof which documented the employment status of the graduates related to their present occupations. Pilgrim Christian College is one of the educational institutions tried to have a yearly tracer study. This school is located in the intersection of Capistrano and Akut Streets in Cagayan de Oro City and was founded with the vision of giving quality education centered on the development of Christian character in the students. Inspired by the motto Soli Deo Gloria (Only to God Be the Glory), the institution endures in its

commitment to provide the students a holistic education, not only through its curricular but in co-curricular/extra-curricular programs as well.

The School of Business and Accountancy (SBA) of Pilgrim Christian College has now earned ACSCU Level II Accreditation for Business Administration Programs. It is nationally recognized as one of the performing schools in the CPA Licensure Examinations, and has made a mark in regional business and finance student competitions.

The formation of students in the School of Business and Accountancy is mainly centered towards forming world-class, socially responsible business leaders, managers, and accountants who live God's will. It is committed to empowering graduates to possess the knowledge, skills, and attitudes being entrepreneurs and leaders with Christian virtues of Faith, Integrity, Responsibilities, Excellence, and Service (FIRES). In addition, entrepreneurship is seen as a more viable solution that will both boost the economy and decrease unemployment indices in the Philippines (Velasco, 2016). Furthermore, the level of the employability skills of the graduates as determined by job role and mapped to the employability skills, which correspond to the requirement of employers, will have significant impact on the graduates' job performance (Rahmat et al., 2015).

Moreover, the School of Business and Accountancy (SBA) envisions in equipping the students with academic and practical background on entrepreneurship thereby enabling them to become successful business owners and accountants whether in small, medium, and large-scale enterprises. It is therefore essential for the institution specifically the School of Business and Accountancy to keep up with the trends of the outside world, since the school is one of the major sources of human resources.

This Tracer Study will not only track the SBA graduates of Pilgrim Christian College on what activities they followed after graduation, but attempts to recognize the issues that can be dependent from the findings of the research. It will also check whether it has succeeded in emerging the entrepreneurial skills and the employability of its students and determine the effectiveness of the teaching design used by the faculty in providing the students with the needed knowledge and skills to compete effectively in the fast-paced world of work. The graduates should possess the skills and competencies necessary to succeed in this competitive world (Ramirez, Cruz, & Alcantara, 2014).

These concerns, together with the graduates' learning experiences, can then be used as take-off points in evaluating and assessing the kind of education that the school provides, as well as the necessary improvements to be done by school administration and the SBA professors in ensuring the continuous accountability of the quality of educational products. Such endeavors will be helpful in updating and improving the current curricula and in enhancing the faculty members' delivery of courses. The program will focus on academic development, employment opportunity and enhancing leadership capability of students as well as faculty members (Macatangay, 2013).

#### II. METHODOLOGY

In the conduct of this study, the descriptive research will be considered appropriate thereby making adequate and accurate interpretations about the gathered data with or without the aid of a statistical method. This type of research method was designed to assist administrators and instructors or faculty in the enhancement of the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and Accountancy programs offered by Pilgrim Christian College, Cagayan de Oro City. Specifically, this study aimed to find out the activities engaged in by graduates; the reasons for unemployment for those who are unemployed, and to formulate recommendations out of the results to further enhance the program.

#### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

What is the demographic profile of the SBA graduate- respondents?

Table 1. Distribution of the School of Business and Accountancy respondent graduates (2015 and 2016) by course with number of retrieved questionnaire

Year/Course	Male	Female	Number of	Percentage of
			Questionnaire	Questionnaire
			Retrieved	Retrieved
2015				
BSA	8	35	21	44
BSBA	2	5	4	8

Sub-Total			25	
2016				
BSA	10	22	16	33
BSBA	8	7	7	15
Sub-Total			23	
Total	28	69	48	100

Table 41 shows the distribution of respondents by course and year graduated. Data revealed that majority of the graduates were female with a significant number of 69 or 71 percent while the remaining 28 or 29 percent were males. The total number of questionnaire retrieved was 48 (49.48%) or 50 percent.

Table 2. Profile of the School of Business and Accountancy graduates (2015 and 2016) in terms of the demographic characteristics

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	16	33.33
	Female	32	66.67
Civil status	Single	28	58.33
	Married	18	37.50
	Separated	2	4.17
	Widow	None	-
Ago	20-24	14	29.17
Age			
	25-29	22	45.83
	30-34	8	16.67
	35-39	4	8.33
	40-above	-	
Course graduated	BSA	30	62.50
	BSBA	18	37.50

Table 2 depicts the profile of the graduate-respondents (2015 and 2016) in terms of the demographic characteristics. Data revealed that 33.33 percent were males and 66.67 percent were females. Majority of the graduate respondents were females and this result was also happen in a tracer study conducted by Cervantes (2015) wherein 79 percent were females. In terms of civil status, single category had 58.33 percent, married category had 37.50 percent, separated had 4.17 percent. It can be said that more

of the graduate-respondents were single and again this result was proven by the study of Cervantes (2015) which mentioned that 90 percent of the graduates were single.

In addition, a huge percentage of graduate-respondents belong to 25 to 29 brackets (45.83%) while 29.17 percent belongs to 20 to 24 age bracket.

#### What is the employment profile of the respondents?

Table 3. Distribution of the School of Business and Accountancy graduate respondents (2015 and 2016) based on the type of organization

Organization/Institution	BSA	BSA		BSBA		Total	
	f	%	f	%	F	%	
Private	15	50	10	55.56	25	52.08	
Public	10	33.33	5	27.78	15	31.25	
Non-profit	5	16.67	3	16.67	8	16.67	
Total	30	100	18	100	48	100	

Table 3 shows the distribution of the graduate respondents based on the type of organization. Data revealed that 52.08 percent of the graduate respondents who are working in the private institutions followed by 31.25 percent with public departments and the remaining 16.67 percent are serving for non-profit institutions. Employees favour to work in private institutions because according to the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) in 2009, "probationary employees shall be deemed to be regular where the employee has been engaged to perform activities which are usually necessary or desirable in the usual business or trade of the employer". Most employees desire to work with private institutions for tenure-ship unlike with government agencies and organizations wherein civil service eligibility and other relevant requirements are needed for regularization.

Table 4. Distribution of the School of Business and Accountancy graduate respondents (2015 and 2016) based on the type of employment

Type of Employment	BSA	BSA		BSBA		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Full-time	24	80	13	72.22	37	77.08	
Part-time	4	13.33	3	16.67	7	14.58	
Unemployed	2	6.67	2	11.11	4	8.33	
Total	30	100	18	100	48	100	

Table 4 illustrates the frequency and percentage distribution of the graduate respondents based on the type of employment. There are 77.08 percent of SBA graduates who are working as full-time employees followed by 14.58 percent who are working as part-time. According to the article written by del Puerto, (2015), part-time workers are classified as those who are working in a four hour work per day and weekend work, or two full days per week while full time employees are working forty (40) hours a week. However, in the Philippines there are an increasing number of part-time workers and a decline in full-time workers, Jaymalin (2012).

Table 5. Distribution of the School of Business and Accountancy graduate respondents (2015 and 2016) based on the field of work

Field of Work	BSA	BSBA	Total

	f	%	F	%	F	%
Agriculture	3	10	2	11.11	5	10.42
Business	14	46.67	8	44.44	22	45.83
Education	7	23.33	5	27.78	12	25
Government services	6	20	3	16.67	9	18.75
Total	30	100	18	100	48	100

Table 5 depicts that more of the SBA graduates are working in the business sector with 45.83 percent, 25 percent are in education sector, 18.75 percent are working in government services. Those who are working in the business sectors are assigned in banking institution, business process outsourcing, customers' service, hospital/medical services, entertainment and music services. This finding can be associated with the article posted online by GMA Network in 2015 that "The first thing Filipinos consider when looking for a job is the fit between the available opportunity to their field of study, skills, and interests". It has been a continuing predicament for job hunters to accept unfilled jobs in organizations than look for employment that would fit their skills and educational qualifications.

Table 6. Distribution of the School of Business and Accountancy graduate respondents (2015 and 2016) based on the reasons for unemployment

Reason for Unemployment	BSA	BSA		BSBA		Total	
	f	%	F	%	f	%	
Did not look for job							
Family concerns			1	100	1	25	
Health-related reasons							
No job opportunity							
Lack of work experience							
Advance for further studies	2	100	1		3	75	
Total	2	100		100	4	100	

Table 6 shows the distribution of the SBA graduate respondents based on the reasons for unemployment. First in the rank is advance for further studies with 75 percent followed by family concerns with 25 percent of the respondents. Majority of the graduate respondents who are unemployed are presently pursuing further studies and none of the graduate respondents have other reasons like did not look for job, health related reasons, no job opportunity, and lack of work experience. However, Salvosa in 2015 emphasized that unemployment has been an unrelenting concern of the Philippine government for decades now despite its efforts to improve the quality of jobs available. The Philippine government has been continuously increasing its employment rate by creating jobs and business dealings with the business sector.

Table 7. Distribution of the School of Business and Accountancy graduate respondents (2015 and 2016) based on the relevance of current job to the undergraduate course

Reason for Unemployment	BSA		BSBA		Total	
	f	%	F	%	f	%
Yes	24	80	14	77.78	38	79.17

No	6	20	4	22.22	10	20.83
Total	30	100	18	100	48	100

Table 7 illustrates the frequency and percentage distribution of the School of Business and Accountancy graduate respondents based on the relevance of current job to the undergraduate course. Data revealed that 79.17 percent stated that their current work is related with the undergraduate course while 20.83 percent affirmed that their current assignment is not related. It can be said that SBA graduates matches that of the needs and requirements of the industry. Strong collaboration between the academe institution and industry is necessary to address their needs and vice versa. Job mismatch is only common among other programs like automotive, hospitality and electronic sectors (Magkilat, 2016)

Table 8. Distribution of the School of Business and Accountancy graduate respondents (2015 and 2016) based on employment status

	BSA	BSA		BSBA		Total	
	f	%	f	%	F	%	
Permanent	18	60	8	44.44	26	54.17	
Contractual	6	20	4	22.22	10	20.83	
Casual	2	6.67	2	11.11	4	8.33	
Employee by job order	4	13.33	4	22.22	8	16.67	
Total	30	100	18	100	48	100	

Table 8 describes the frequency and percentage distribution of the School of Business and Accountancy graduate respondents based on employment status. Results showed that 54.17 percent are working as permanent, 20.83 percent are contractual, 16.67 percent are working by job order, and 8.33 percent are casual employees. It can be observed that most of the graduates are working as permanent employees since this is the common practice in the country. The continuous improvement of the economy will truly boost the employment in the country (Jaymalin, 2012).

Table 9. Distribution of the School of Business and Accountancy graduate respondents (2015 and 2016) based on level of management

	BSA		BSBA		Total	
	f	%	f	%	F	%
Rank & File	22	73.33	13	72.22	35	72.92
Middle	6	20	4	22.22	10	20.83
Top management	2	6.67	1	5.56	3	6.25
Total	30	100	18	100	48	100

Table 9 shows the frequency and percentage distribution of the School of Business and Accountancy graduate respondents based on level of management.

It can be detected that that almost 72.92 percent of the graduate respondents are working as rank and file employees, 20.83 percent are working as part of the middle management and very little percentage of the graduates are working as part of the top management. The lifeblood of an organization is the front liners or the rank and file employees (Mayhew, 2016). These employees are responsible for the day-to-day business undertaking. Fresh graduates sought entry level positions right after

graduation (Heathfield, 2016). Entry level positions enables a newly graduate to acquire experience and receive remuneration out of it.

Table 10. Distribution of the School of Business and Accountancy graduate respondents (2015 and 2016) based on gross monthly income

Monthly Income (in pesos)	BSA		BSBA		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Below 10,000	8	26.67	5	27.78	13	27.08
10,000 – 15,001	15	50	7	38.89	22	45.83
15,001 - 20,001	4	13.33	3	16.67	7	14.58
20,001 - 25,001	2	6.67	2	11.11	4	8.33
25,001 - 30,001	1	3.33	1	5.56	2	4.17
30,001 and above						
Total	30	100	18	100	48	100

Table 10 illustrates the frequency and percentage distribution of the School of Business and Accountancy graduate respondents based on gross monthly income. Findings revealed that 45.83 percent of the SBA graduates are compensated within the range of Php10,000 – Php15,001 followed by 27.08 percent of the respondents who received the salary within the bracket of below Php10,000. The data also demonstrate that 14.58 percent of them received about Php15,001-Php20,001 followed by 8.33 percent of the graduate respondents within the range of Php20,001-Php25,001.

More of the SBA graduates received a salary within the range of 10,000 - 15,001. It indicated that the college has produced graduates who were either not continuing further advancements in their chosen area or were not given chance to get to a higher position in their present employment condition.

Table 11. Distribution of the School of Business and Accountancy graduate respondents (2015 and 2016) based on job referrals

Criteria (through)	BSA		BSBA		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Friends	14	46.67	7	38.89	21	43.75
Relatives	4	13.33	4	22.22	8	16.67
Written inquires	5	16.67	2	11.11	7	14.58
Others	7	23.33	5	27.78	12	25
Total	30	100	18	100	48	100

Table 11 shows the frequency and percentage distribution of the School of Business and Accountancy graduate respondents based on job referrals. Data showed that 43.75 percent of the graduates chose their present employers through their friends followed by 25 percent of the graduate respondents selected their current employers through their relatives while some of them were guided by other factors (like jobstreet, through teachers and dean of the college, website job and posting sites job fair) and 14.58 percent were informed through written inquires.

What is the level of importance of the competency skills provided by the School of Business and Accountancy? Table 12. Level of importance of the competency skills provided by the School of Business and Accountancy (2015 and 2016 Graduates)

Criteria	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Critical thinking skills	4.6	Very important
Exposure to local community extension services	4	Fairly important
Human relation skills	4.7	Very important
Information technology skills	4	Fairly important
Oral and written communication skills	4.6	Very important
Problem solving skills	4.6	Very important
PCC core values (FIRES)	4.21	Very important
Personality development	4.6	Very important
Research capability	4	Fairly important
Grand Weighted Mean	4.41	Very important

Scoring guide: 4.21-5.00 Very important; 3.41-4.20 Fairly important; 2.61-3.40 Important

1.81-2.60 Slightly important 1.00-1.80 Not at all important

The data presented in Table 12 indicates that the SBA graduates considered and putting importance to competency skills by the time they are employed. The grand mean score of 4.4 indicated their strong agreement to consider a number of criteria needed for them to evolve in practicing their profession in various types of agencies and organizations, such as in public and private sectors. Among the criteria pertaining to competencies, their highest score was attributed to the following skills namely Critical thinking skills, Human relation skills, Oral and written communication skills, Problem solving skills, and PCC Core values formation which all received a score of 4.6.

In regards the other competencies needed on the job, the respondents posted an average of 4.6 to Personality development; while a score of 4 was distributed to those skills that relate to the following: Exposure to local community extension services, Information technology skills, Meeting present and future needs, and Research capability. In general, one can glean from the results that the majority of the graduates put primary importance to skills that reveal their ability to use critical/logical reasoning, ability to relate to others through oral and written communication skills; likewise, they also showed agreement towards the value of interpersonal skills, of relating to others in harmony. Aside of course from their ability to connect with people, they also place great importance to their problem solving skills and the contribution of PCC core values to their holistic formation. This implied that the expected attributes of these young professionals have been deeply influenced by the university in terms of advancing not only their cognitive and intellectual skills but also their way of handling people and situations. Hence, this could promise a manifestation of success on the part of the college and the graduates themselves in upholding the school's vision-mission and goals.

Table 13. Values (FIRES) developed by the School of Business and Accountancy (2015 and 2016) graduates

Values	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Faith	4.20	Moderately developed
Integrity	4.20	Moderately developed

Responsibility	4.22	Highly developed
Excellence	4.19	Moderately developed
Service	4.22	Highly developed
Grand Weighted Mean	4.20	Moderately developed

Scoring guide: 4.21-5.00 Highly developed; 3.41-4.20 Moderately developed; 2.61-3.40 Slightly developed

1.81-2.60 Fairly developed 1.00-1.80 Poorly developed

Table 13 specifies that almost all values enumerated are moderately developed in the School of Business and Accountancy graduates. Top three moderately developed values include service, responsibility, and excellence. Given with the core values embedded in the school's vision and mission, considering the areas of family, school, work, and community, it is so alarming that graduates did not consider God as the center of their life.

#### **CONCLUSIONS**

This tracer study is a collaborative work of the faculty researchers from the SBA academic programs. The project's output is significant primarily to recognize and address the existing curriculum's strengths and weaknesses, its adequacy, quality and relevance of pre-service training in relation to the competencies needed in the market both locally and internationally. Hence, the following are the summary of conclusions.

SBA graduates are predominantly females and in their early twenties; more were single, majority BSA graduates; and that they enrolled at PCC because of affordable tuition fee and the personal prestige attached to the name for better employment and career advancement.

More of them were working at the private institutions, majority were serving as full-time, more of them were working in business institutions, few were unemployed due to advancement for further studies, and more of them were permanent employees.

A great number of them were employed immediately after graduation by application and not by political connections. Having provided very adequately the skills such as knowledge, communication, human relations, leadership, research, problem solving, and other competencies specific to the area of specialization were major factors on top of area of specialization and reputation of SBA considered for immediate job acquisition.

In general, one can glean from the results that the majority of the SBA graduates put primary importance to skills that reveal their ability to use critical/logical reasoning, ability to relate to others through oral and written communication skills; likewise, they also showed agreement towards the value of interpersonal skills, of relating to others in harmony. Aside of course from their ability to connect with people, they also place great importance to their problem solving skills and the contribution of PCC core values (FIRES) to their holistic formation.

This implied that the expected attributes of these young professionals have been deeply influenced by the PCC in terms of advancing not only their cognitive and intellectual skills but also their way of handling people and situations. Hence, this could promise a manifestation of success on the part of the college and the graduates themselves in upholding the school's vision-mission and goals.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

Institutionalize system-wide the conduct of tracer studies every other school year to include not only the graduates but also the employers as respondents; Intensify and offer attractive incentives to graduating high school male students to enter the business and teaching profession; Re-evaluate the conduct of Experiential Learning Courses, especially BSA and BSBA courses; Develop innovative curricular programs that are pro-poor to alleviate poverty; and Develop other innovative curricular programs for undergraduate levels to catch up with the ASEAN integration.

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