

TRACER STUDY OF THE GRADUATES OF BACHELOR OF ARTS MAJOR IN ENGLISH

Amseva M. Bentayao, LPT, Ph.D.* avesma70@yahoo.com

Dean, San Pedro College, Philippines

Janice B. Sawe, LPT, Ph.D.* janzbone0504@gmail.com

Faculty, San Pedro College, Philippines

Rosa Medel Libot, LPT, MEd-LT.* rosamedel_76@yahoo.com

Faculty, San Pedro College, Philippines

Lalaine G Villabrille. MAED,* lvillabrille@gmail.com

Faculty, San Pedro College, Philippines

Abstract: Graduate Tracer Study (GTS) on graduates provides valuable information for evaluating a specific institution's education and training. It collects information concerning graduates' employment profiles, their undergraduate experience, the first and current jobs, and the relevance of their educational background and skills required in their careers. This study aimed to investigate the program's contribution to graduates' personal and professional development and education quality. This GTS used a descriptive survey research design where structured survey questionnaires were used. The respondents identified using random sampling technique, and then analyzed utilizing percentage and mean. The findings of the study revealed that the majority of the graduates were employed. The curriculum across disciplines contributed very high to their professional and personal growth. It is manifested with SPC core values with very high satisfaction in teaching-learning elements offered by the institution. The majority of the graduates responded positively in terms of taking the course, and they were able to utilize the knowledge and skills aligned with their chosen job. Correspondingly, the recommendation was to have more exposure and applications as expressed by the respondents.

Keywords: *AB English, employability of graduates, tracer study, SPC*

Introduction

The Philippines economy progresses through the knowledge and skills of its people. The knowledge and skills evolve with investments, technological advancement & globalization. To keep pace with these changes, people need to equip themselves with skills to be productive and earn a living. This can be realized through education. Education is an essential mechanism for the empowerment of people in developing their socio-economic, political, and technological advancement (Hannum & Buchmann,2005). The higher educational institutions' learning environment (HEIs) must acknowledge these aspects in

structuring their course programs. HEIs can contribute meaningfully to quality assurance of course programs by applying a tracer study's principles to create a sustainable learning environment for the continuous development of past and future students. On the other hand, many HEIs that provide training to various clients soon forget them after they graduate and leave the institution with no means of getting in touch with them. However, this is not the situation with San Pedro College.

Employability upon graduation and over the long term is, understandably, the foremost priority for our students' vast majority. Over the past two decades or so, the Phil. HEIs have increasingly offered a broad spectrum of higher education courses that provide students with the necessary tools to develop their employability skills, heighten their awareness of these skills, and improve their ability to articulate them (Lee,2014) [5]. The possible outcomes are student quality, completion rate, and degree of competitiveness gleaned in graduate tracer studies. (Commission on Higher Education Horizontal Typology [2014] and CHED Memo. Order No. 46, Series of 2012).

This tracer study is a means which can provide valuable information for evaluating the results of education and training of the institution of the graduating students of the Bachelor of Arts major in English who need to be included in a tracer study. The results of which can serve as one of the bases for planning activities. Moreover, tracer studies are an essential source of information to know what happened to graduates of academic programs in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Defining/redefining HEIs mission and market niche shows how educational programs and course offerings can be adjusted to reflect the institutional goals (Gines,2014). Likewise, graduate Tracer Study (GTS) is also vital for policy and equity implication in higher education (Rogans& Reynold, 2016).

Methods

Research Design

This GTS employed a descriptive survey research design to determine the employment characteristics of San Pedro College graduates. Moreover, the survey is more encompassing. It examines the curricular effectiveness, relevance, and adequacy by determining the extent to which the graduates have achieved the AB English program's outcomes. Likewise, the survey determined the extent to which the academic programs manifest in the curriculum's attainment of the SPC core values as experienced by the graduates.

Respondents and Sampling Plan

This GTS was made to gather qualitative and quantitative data for SPC graduates of the 14 undergraduate programs. In this study, thirty-seven (37) graduates from the Bachelor of Arts major in English SY 2012-2013 & 2017-2018 were involved.

Graduates	Batch	%
2018	6	16.22
2017	7	18.92
2016	5	13.51
2015	9	24.42
2014	5	13.51
2013	1	2.70
2012	4	10.81
TOTAL	37	100

Instruments and Data Gathering Procedure

The GTS questionnaire developed by CHED served as the basis for crafting the SPC-GTS questionnaire. All the deans and academic program coordinators were invited to evaluate the CHED tool and select the tool elements relevant to answer the objectives of this study. The research group came to a consensus on what to include in the questionnaire to which the core values were attained and embodied by the graduates in their respective academic programs. The final questionnaire underwent content validation. The questionnaire has three parts; the biographic formation, the contribution of their program to the graduate's personal and professional growth, including the attainment of the SPC Core Values and the quality of the degree program the graduate finished at SPC based on these indicators: range of courses, importance to research, interdisciplinary learning, teaching and learning environment, quality of instruction, library resources, laboratory resources, professor's expertise, and the teacher-student relationship to acquire learning.

Results and Discussion

Table 1. *Demographic characteristics of the GTS respondents (SPC Bachelor of Arts in English graduates' batch 2012 – 2018, n = 37)*

Academic Programs	Gender				Current Place of Work					
	Male (f)	%	Female (f)	%	Local (f)	%	Abroad (f)	%	Others (f)	%
AB English	9	30	21	70	14	47%	3	10	13	43

Table 1 shows the GTS respondents' employment characteristics in terms of gender and current place of work. Of the thirty respondents of the Bachelor of Arts major in San Pedro College's English covering SY 2012- 2013 TO 2017-2018, there are 70% females and 30% males. In gender and language, males chose to do structured work, but females preferred to be more intuitive and select the liberal arts. Moreover, females like to engage in all types of language learning. This is why the AB in English program offered by the college is more enticing to females than males. Meanwhile, it is shown that 47% of the respondents are employed locally, 10% are working abroad, and 43% answered others.

Table 2. *Reasons for pursuing the baccalaureate degree for the AB in English*

Reasons for taking the course in SPC	f	%
1. High Grades in the course or subject area (s) related to the course	0	
2. Good grades in high school	0	
3. Influence of parents or relatives	1	3.3%
4. Peer Influence	2	6.7%
5. Inspired by a role model	0	
6. Strong passion for the profession	4	13.3%
7. Prospect for immediate employment	2	6.7%
8. Status or prestige of the profession	0	
9. Availability of course offering in the chosen institution	0	
10. Prospect of career advancement	0	
11. Affordable for the family	0	
12. Prospect of attractive compensation	0	
13. Opportunity for employment abroad	0	
14. No particular choice or no better idea	2	6.7%

Table 2 summarizes the different reasons from the respondents who graduated from the AB in English program. The intense passion for the profession ranks first. The graduates enrolled in the course have a strong inclination that finishing their chosen field of interest may bring success to their future careers. The influence from their peers ranks second. This implies that the program offered has an impact on the excellent performance of the graduates. The prospect for immediate employment ranked third. This denotes that the graduates of this program found relevant to the global market. Hence, parents or relatives' influence ranks fourth, which means that the graduates' parents showed their support to enroll in the program.

Table 3. *Employability of the Graduates for AB in English programs*

Year	Employability Rate	Employment Rate
2011	NA	NA
2012	66.7%	66.7%
2013	100.0%	100.0%
2014	100%	75.0%
2015	25.0%	60.0%
2016	40.0%	85.7%
2017	66.7%	25.0%
2018	100%	33.3%

Table 3 recapitulates the employability and employment rates of the AB in English graduates in San Pedro College. In 2011, the rate of employability and employment is not applicable since there were no graduates during that year. Moreover, it is shown in the table that the majority of the graduates are hired from different agencies and industries that are relevant to their chosen course. The results denote that the program graduates are holistically molded and equipped with competencies that are intended for employment. Therefore, the program of AB in English offered in the institution matched the needs of the society after they acquired the knowledge and skills (Hansen,& Hansen, 2019)

Table 4. The extent to which the various academic programs contributed to the personal and professional growth of the graduates across all programs

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Academic Profession	3.37	.81	Very High
Research Capability	3.23	.63	High
Learning Efficiency	3.53	.63	Very High
Communication Skills	3.50	.68	Very High
People Skills	3.53	.57	Very High
Problem-solving Skills	3.14	.69	High
Information Technology Skills	3.00	.83	High
Meeting Present and Future Professional Needs	3.27	.74	Very High
Critical Thinking Skills	3.40	.67	Very High
Salary Improvement and Promotion	3.03	.72	High
Opportunities Abroad	3.03	.89	High
Leadership Skills	3.27	.74	Very High
SPC Core Values - Truth and Wisdom	3.57	.57	Very High
SPC Core Values - Excellence and Quality	3.62	.56	Very High
SPC Core Values - Family Spirit and Sense of Caring	3.63	.61	Very High
SPC Core Values - Respect for the Uniqueness of Persons	3.57	.68	Very High
SPC Core Values - Social Responsibility	3.60	.62	Very High

Table 4 shows the extent to which the various programs contributed to the graduates' personal and professional growth across all programs. The majority of the indicators contribute very highly to the graduates' personal and professional development. Further, this implies that the institution can hone the students' competencies to achieve their personal and professional growth and glaring symbols and icons of integrity, leadership, and nationalism with enormous faith and service for God and the country.

Table 5. The extent to which the academic programs manifests in the curriculum, the SPC core values

Core Values	Mean	SD	Interpretation
SPC Core Values - Truth and Wisdom	3.57	.57	Very High
SPC Core Values - Excellence and Quality	3.62	.56	Very High
SPC Core Values - Family Spirit and Sense of Caring	3.63	.61	Very High

SPC Core Values - Respect for the Uniqueness of Persons	3.57	.68	Very High
SPC Core Values - Social Responsibility	3.60	.62	Very High

Table 5 shows how the academic programs manifest the core values in the curriculum among AB in English Graduates. The table clearly shows that the graduates display SPC core values since it is interpreted as very high. Therefore, the institution integrates importance in the program to give a specific application of skills required and desired attitude and behavior towards work. Honing the positive mental attitude of the students before they finished their study would significantly provide them the opportunity as they move on to another academic journey, and they will become responsible, mature, more confident, and independent individuals (Laguador, 2019)

Table 6. The quality of degree program as experienced by the graduates across all programs

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Range of courses (subjects)	3.20	.89	High
Importance to research	3.23	.68	High
Interdisciplinary Learning	3.43	.57	Very High
Teaching and Learning Environment	3.47	.63	Very High
Quality of Instruction	3.43	.63	Very High
Library Resources	3.30	.70	Very High
Laboratory Resources	3.20	.71	High
Professors Expertise and Knowledge of Subject Matter	3.40	.86	Very High
Teacher-Student Relationship	3.60	.56	Very High

Table 6 highlights the quality of the academic degree program offered by San Pedro College as experienced by the graduates. Results show that interdisciplinary learning, teaching and learning environment, quality of instruction, library resources, professor expertise and knowledge of the subject matter, and teacher-student relationship rated as very high. This signifies that the institution continually gives their best to provide question education to ensure that its graduates acquire the standard competencies to prepare them to meet the challenges in their chosen profession. Hence, the range of courses (subjects), importance to research, and laboratory resources rated very high. The institution is constantly updating its laboratory resources to make the laboratories similar to the workplace in the future and open international collaborative linkages to research for advancing knowledge and strengthening research capacity.

Summary of Findings and Initial Recommendations

This GTS is a collaborative work between the Research, Publication, and Innovation Center (RPIC) of SPC and the 14 undergraduate academic programs of San Pedro College. This study's findings are significant primarily to recognize SPC graduates' employability across all educational programs and address the existing curriculum's strengths and weaknesses, its adequacy, quality, and relevance of on-the-job training and internship programs concerning the competencies needed in the market both locally and internationally. Moreover, this study attempts to evaluate how well the core values of SPC are lived and spread by graduates in their respective workplaces.

As this is still an ongoing study, the initial summary of findings and recommendations are summarized below:

1. SPC graduates' batch 2011 – 2017 is mostly females, and they enroll in their respective programs as influenced by their parents or relatives and their passion for the profession. A significant number of them were employed after graduation or after passing the licensure examination. Many were hired by the agencies or institutions where they have had their internship or on-the-job training.
2. The graduates affirm that the SPC curriculum across all disciplines contributed very highly to their professional and personal growth, specifically on academic profession, research capability, learning efficiency, communication skills, problem-solving skills, people skills, meeting present and future professional needs, critical thinking skills, leadership skills, and opportunities to work abroad.
3. The graduates confirm that the curriculum manifests the SPC core values of truth and wisdom, excellence and quality, family spirit and sense of caring, respect for persons' uniqueness, and social responsibility.
4. The graduates rated a very high degree of satisfaction with the teaching-learning elements, including the range of courses, importance to research, interdisciplinary learning, teaching and learning environment, quality of instruction, library resources, expertise and competence of faculty, and teacher-student learning relationship. Meanwhile, laboratory resources are rated high.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that the graduates of the AB in English program are employable since 100% of the respondents landed a job months after graduation. The opportunity that is available to the graduates is an industry where they can showcase their competencies. Hence, the curriculum and the core values they have assimilated from the institution are influential to their employability. The degree program's relevance to professional requirements was a significant strength of the AB in the English undergraduate curriculum.

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