



The Bachelor of Science in Office Administration (BSOA) Graduates of Camarines Sur Polytechnic Colleges (CSPC): A Tracer Study

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This research is primarily a tracer study of the Bachelor of Science in Office Administration Graduates of Camarines Sur Polytechnic Colleges, Nabua, Camarines Sur from 2009 to 2013. Specifically, it sought to determine the personal, professional and employment profile, and the attributes that contribute to employability. It also identified reasons with regards to staying in the job, accepting jobs not related to the course and unemployment. Likewise, the study looks at the expectations met by the program that contributed in meeting the demands of the job and the assessment of the employer on the job performance of the graduates. Furthermore, this research proposes recommendations to improve the employability of the BSOA graduates. Descriptive survey method was used in this study. The respondents were BSOA graduates and employers. The majority of the graduates are gainfully employed locally, in private organisations, with regular/permanent status, and holding clerical positions. Attributes such as socio-economic, academic and school factors contributed to their employability. Salaries and benefits play a big role in staying in the job and accepting jobs not related to course, while family concern is the main reason why people are not employed. The BSOA program has met the expectation of the graduates but needs to take necessary measures to address the issue of skills that was found out to be fairly met.

Keywords: *BSOA Graduates, Tracer Study, Employability.*



Introduction

Considering the quality policy of CSPC to provide quality education and services that satisfies its clients and stakeholders thereby producing world-class professionals through continual improvement of all its programs, it is imperative to know if the graduates better respond to the needs of the industry. That is why tracer studies particularly on the BSOA program have been continuously conducted. The present study is a continuance of the previous tracer study completed in 2008. Hence this study has been undertaken. Moreover, the proponent deemed it necessary to determine the whereabouts of the BSOA graduates to know if they are properly employed in their chosen field of specialisation or not, and to examine the academic adequacy provided by the college in terms of providing applicable knowledge to students.

Materials and Methods

The researcher made use of the descriptive method. The respondents of this study were the one hundred eighty-seven (187) graduates of Bachelor of Science in Office Administration Graduates of Camarines Sur Polytechnic Colleges, Nabua, Camarines Sur from 2009 to 2013, who were randomly selected using Slovincs formula as shown in Figure 1.

Table 1

Distribution of Respondents

Year Graduated	No. of Graduates	Frequency	Percentage
2009	60	32	17
2010	50	27	14
2011	79	42	22
2012	83	44	24
2013	79	42	23
Total	351	187	100

To attain the purpose of the study, the researcher adopts a survey questionnaire constructed by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) which was used in similar study. Statistical treatments were used to obtain data that are needed in acquiring reliable output.



Results and Discussion

Table 2 shows the respondents' personal profile that contains sex, age, civil status and location of residence. On the other hand, the respondents' professional profile contains highest educational attainment and professional examination passed.

Table 2

Personal Profile According to Sex, Age, Civil Status, and Location of Residence

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	16	8.56
Female	171	91.44
Total	187	100

Age	Frequency	Percentage
23-25	88	47.06
26-28	95	50.80
29-31	3	1.60
32-34	1	0.53
Total	187	100

Civil Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	154	82.35
Married	33	17.65
Total	187	100

Location of Residence	Frequency	Percentage
City	101	54.01
Municipality	86	45.99
Total	42	100

Sex. The figure reveals that the majority of the respondents are female. This implies that the BSOA program is a female dominated course due to the fact that females are more inclined to office work and routines. The underlying result is congruent to the survey of Ericta, 2013 which revealed that the most common field for females was Business Administration.

Age. From the foregoing data, the majority of the respondents belong to age bracket of 26-28 years old. This entails that respondents have just reached the age wherein professionals are more enthusiastic with their job and job hunting for greener pasture. Congruent to the literature of



Pagoso, 2006 which states that age does not matter when it comes to job offerings because in the field of working, to be fair to any person who is capable of working is a factor to be employed.

Civil Status. The data further reveals that most of the respondents are still single. This implies that graduates are prioritising career first rather than having their own family. This implication is seen from the greater number of young professionals who are currently holding a position in different fields of work.

Location of Residence. It is indicated that most of the respondents are residing in the City. It implies that majority of graduates are residing in the city because they have better chances of getting jobs and where they can easily enjoy more diverse cultural lives. Urban areas have more opportunities for employment, especially in competitive, progressive industries, such as computers, technology and high-level corporations. Cities often have a better quality of living, and though the cost of living is higher in most cities, the trade-off for a better quality of life is worth it for some people.

Professional Profile

Tables 3 exemplifies the professional profile of the respondents with regards to highest educational attainment, professional examination passed and trainings/seminars attended.

Highest Educational Attainment. The data shows that 22 or 41.51 percent of the respondents have pursued a Masters in Business Administration. 22 or 41.51 percent took up Methods of Teaching and 9 or 16.98 percent have earned units in a Masters in Business Administration. This implies that some of the graduates considered pursuing further studies to gain additional knowledge and skills to be more employable. And that is the key to connecting with employers around the globe who are clamouring for people with in-depth training and advanced skills that a bachelor's degree alone might not provide.



Table 3

Professional Profile with regards to Highest Educational Attainment, Professional Examination Passed and Trainings/Seminars Attended

Highest Educational Attainment	Frequency	Percentage
MBA	22	41.51
Methods of Teaching	22	41.51
MBA Units	9	16.98
Total	53	100
Professional Examination Passed		
CSC Professional	41	21.93
CSC Sub Professional	60	32.09
TESDA NC III	53	28.34
Bookkeeping		
LET	20	10.69
None	13	6.95
Total	187	100
Trainings Attended		
Training on Office Procedure	41	21.93
Training on Records Management	53	28.34
Training on Bookkeeping	20	10.69
Training on Office Information Technology	13	6.95
None	60	32.09
Total	187	100

Professional Examination Passed

It reveals that the majority of the respondents took Civil Service Professional and Sub-professional examination. From the data gathered it can be concluded that BSOA graduates took professional examinations to make them more competitive and it is a requirement in recruitment and admission to the government service. This is congruent to the study of Peñaredondo, et al (2004) which revealed that the Office Administration graduates must take and pass the Civil Service Examination either professional or sub-professional and other government examinations to make them more competitive. It can definitely give an edge in their career and ultimately give them a high chance of getting hired and/or promoted.



Trainings/Seminars Attended

From the foregoing data, apparently, the majority of the respondents were not able to attend trainings. Based on informal interviews conducted, one of the reasons is that some are required to shoulder the trainings/seminars expenses as the majority of them are employed in the private sector. Based on the findings, it is concluded that graduates should recognise the importance of attending trainings and seminars for professional development. This is in line with the point of view of Crous, who states that attending trainings and seminars help gain confidence in ability, and bring fresh ideas back to the business.

Employment Profile

Table 4 shows the employment profile of the respondents. The profile of the respondents is considered as one of the main variables of this study; this section presents the respondents', nature of employment, job position, type of organisation, place of work, employment status, annual salary, ways to find a job, and length of time to find a job.

Table 4
Employment Profile

Nature of employment	Frequency	Percentage
Employed	157	83.96
Not Employed	30	16.04
Total	187	100
Job related		
Directly related	132	84.08
Not related	25	15.92
Total	157	100
Job Position		
Clerical	61	38.86
Secretarial	53	33.76
Office Administrator	10	6.37
Managerial/Executive	7	4.45
Stenographer	1	0.64
Others	25	15.92
Total	157	100
Type of Organisation		
Private	97	61.78
Government	56	35.67
NGO	4	2.54
Total	157	100



Place of Work		
Local	148	94.26
Abroad	9	5.74
Total	157	100
Employment Status		
Regular/Permanent	70	44.58
Temporary	19	12.10
Casual	16	10.19
Contractual	52	33.11
Total	157	100
Annual Salary Range		
Up to 50,000	13	8.28
51,000-100,000	28	17.83
101,000-150,000	81	51.58
151,000-200,000	27	17.19
201,000-250,000	5	3.20
251,000-300,000	3	1.92
Total	157	100
Ways to find a Job		
Response to advertisement	89	56.68
Recommendation	46	29.29
Information from friends	19	12.11
Walk-in applicant	3	1.92
Total	157	100
Length of time to find a job		
Less than a month	38	24.20
1 to 6 months	49	31.20
7-11 months	53	33.76
1 year to less than 2 years	17	10.84
Total	157	100

Nature of Employment

The data shows the nature of employment of the respondents which revealed that the majority of the graduates are employed. This entails that office professionals nowadays are in-demand in the job market. This is congruent to the study of Durson where in his study on employment he reveals



that mostly fresh graduates are employed at the present time because of technological changes and the use of modern machinery. These findings are also relevant to the study of Vong, which reveals that 86.4 percent of the graduates of the Royal University of Phnom Pehn, Cambodia have found gainful employment after they have left the university for twelve months and the remainder are either in graduate school or still looking for acceptable work.

Job Related. It revealed that the majority of the jobs are directly related to the course taken in college. This implies that in today's times when technology has greatly revolutionised getting office related jobs, it is now more possible and it is easy to look for a job that is directly related to the BS Office Administration.

Job Position. Generally, the data revealed that the majority of the respondents are occupying clerical positions which means that the BSOA graduates are gainfully employed in line with their field of specialisation.

Type of Organisation. It revealed that the majority are employed in private agencies. This implies that it is easy to be employed in private agencies because some do not require eligibilities, did not require so many requirements and considering the fact that it offers maximum number of career opportunities. This finding is relative to the study of Balingbing which reveals that there were few IT graduates who worked in the government since few were civil service eligible, most of the graduates worked in private sector.

Place of Work. From the foregoing data, apparently, the greatest numbers of respondents are working locally. Based on the informal interviews conducted, they cited family, working environment and culture, and work-life balance as the main reasons for opting for local jobs.

Employment Status. Most of the respondents are in regular/permanent roles which implies that BSOA graduates are competent and eligible for regular/ permanent roles in their position. Based on the informal interviews conducted, some of the respondents said that working as a temporary employee gives them the opportunity to be on the inside and ultimately gives them an advantage over external candidates for permanent positions.

Annual Salary Range. From the foregoing data, the greatest number of respondents are receiving salaries that are within the minimum wage. This implies that employers are following the policies on minimum wage rates set forth by the law. Supporters of the minimum wage said that salaries increases the standard of living of workers, reduces poverty, reduces inequality, boosts morale and forces businesses to be more efficient. The findings was found to be congruent with the study of



Alcomendas and Espares which reveals that the AB English Honor graduates of Bicol University are gainfully employed and have sufficient annual income.

Ways to find a Job. It can be gleaned that majority of the respondents found their job through response to advertisements. This is relatively common and becoming a more popular way to find a job. It is quicker and cheaper to access recruitment pages through advertisement in print and in media. According to Watt, locating potential job openings is an important step in becoming employed. It is also important to the client to present themselves to employers in a positive manner so that they will be hired.

Length of time to find a job. It can be deduced that most of the respondents found their job in seven to eleven months. This implies that making a decision to search for a job is not easy but the graduates should have a point of embracing patience to be able to be a step closer to a better career because in today's competitive job market, it takes considerably more time and energy to find employment than it did a decade ago. Landing a job these days, whether fresh out of college or with decades of experience, can take a lot of time and effort.

Attributes that Contribute to the Employability of the Graduates

Table 5 shows the attributes that contribute to the employability of the respondents in terms of socio-economic, academic, school related and personal.

Socio-Economic. The data shows the responses of the respondents on the attributes that contribute to the employability relating to socio-economic factors.



Table 5
Attributes that Contribute to the Employability of the Graduates

Socio-Economic	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Salary	3.56	Very Much Useful
Benefits	3.53	Very Much Useful
Health	3.50	Very Much Useful
Working environment	3.39	Very Useful
Social Support	2.96	Very Useful
Average Weighted Mean	3.39	Very Useful
Academic		
Highest Educational Attainment	3.64	Very Much Useful
Academic Achievement	3.56	Very Much Useful
English language competency	3.35	Very Useful
Computer Literacy	2.64	Very Useful
Logical Skills	2.34	Useful
Average Weighted Mean	3.11	Very Useful
School Related		
Supportive learning environment	3.89	Very Much Useful
Physical Facilities	3.76	Very Much Useful
High level of family and community involvement	2.86	Very Useful
Reputation of the school	2.28	Useful
Effective school leadership	2.19	Useful
Average Weighted Mean	3.00	Very Useful
Personal		
Attitude	3.61	Very Much Useful
Intelligence	3.59	Very Much Useful
Self-concept	3.32	Very Useful
Physical Appearance	3.25	Very Useful
Age	3.19	Very Useful
Average Weighted Mean	3.39	Very Useful



Consequently, the average weighted means of socio-economic factors is 3.39, interpreted as very useful. This implies that socio-economic factors, particularly salary, is essential for reducing poverty and in reality, most people work for money.

Academic. As a result, the average weighted mean of academic factors is 3.11, interpreted as very useful. This entails that academic factors are a useful measure of a graduate applying for a job and a candidate with the highest educational attainment would be advantageous as it is an essential requirement in applying for a job.

School Related. Based on the data gathered, the average weighted mean of school related factors is 3.00, interpreted as very useful which implies that the services provided to students is of quality, thereby graduates are globally competitive.

Personal. As a result the average weighted mean of personal factors is 3.39 interpreted, as very useful. This implies that personal attributes and behaviours can be very influential in determining success or failure in the employability of the graduates.

Reasons with Regards to Staying in the job, Accepting jobs not related to the course and Unemployment

Staying in the Job. It can be said that the majority of the respondent's reasons for in staying in the job is because of salaries and benefits received. This implies that salaries and benefits are important factors as to why the respondents are staying in their job. With changing scenarios and current requirements, money has become an important aspect. And it is generally thought that without a good salary, survival is not possible. People look for jobs with a good salary and not where they get satisfaction.

Table 6

Respondents' Reasons with regards to Staying in the job, accepting jobs not related to the course and Unemployment

Staying on the Job	Frequency	Percentage
Salaries and benefits	157	24.38
Related to course	148	22.98
Career Challenge	116	18.01
Related to special skills	112	17.39
Proximity to residence	72	11.18
Peer Influence	24	3.73
Family Influence	15	2.33
Total	644	100
Accepting Job not related to course		
Salaries and benefits	25	28.74
Job Security	25	28.74
Career Challenge	15	17.24
Related to special skills	10	11.49
Proximity to residence	7	8.05
Peer Influence	5	5.75
Total	87	100
Unemployment		
Family concern	27	45.76
Health related reasons	16	27.12
Did not look for a job	9	15.25
Lack of work experience	6	10.17
Advance or further study	1	1.69
Total	59	100

Accepting jobs not related to the course. The majority of the respondent's reasons for accepting a job not related to the course were salaries, benefits and job security. This implies that the respondents get a job that pays the bills. The odds of a person finding a job that meets their specific major is not that common. On the other hand, taking a job outside of the field enhances skills and help prepares a person for other job options. Job security was also considered by the respondents, which implies that they have the assurance and confidence that they can keep their current job.



Unemployment. The findings show that majority of the respondents assessed family concern as the main reason why they are not employed. This implies that family needs to be the top priority. Jobs come and go, but family lasts a lifetime.

Expectations That Have Been Met by the Program

Table 7 shows the expectations that have been met by the program of the study that contributed to the graduates including knowledge, skills, attitude.

Knowledge. The data shows the responses of the respondents on the expectations that have been met by the program relating to knowledge.

Table 7 Expectations That Have Been Met by the Program

Knowledge	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Knowledge of modern flexible office environment	3.59	Fully Met
Word Processing	3.54	Fully Met
Basic Accounting	3.53	Fully Met
Business Management	3.50	Fully Met
Office Administration	3.49	Fairly Met
Average Weighted Mean	3.53	Fully Met
Skills		
Computer	3.69	Fully Met
Human Relation	3.53	Fully Met
Decision Making	3.50	Fully Met
Stress Management	3.39	Fairly Met
Communication Skills	3.21	Fairly Met
Average Weighted Mean	3.46	Fairly Met
Attitudes		
Team Spirit	3.56	Fully Met
Sound work ethics	3.54	Fully Met
Self-confidence	3.50	Fully Met
Initiative	3.49	Fairly Met
Cultural awareness	3.47	Fairly Met
Average Weighted Mean	3.51	Fully Met

This implies that the BSOA Program has equipped the graduates with the necessary knowledge needed for employment. The underlying results are found to be congruent with the principles



espoused by Schomborg which emphasised that information on the status of the graduates is needed as well as information on the relevance of knowledge and skills to indicate any possible deficit in the program and to serve as a basis in future planning activities.

Skills. Generally, the assessment of the respondents relating to skills is fairly met. This implies that the BSOA program did not meet the expectation of the graduates when it comes to skills possessed and should take necessary measures to address the issue. These findings were congruent to the study of Saluna and Borromeo, which reveals that graduating students really have the need to improve, develop, and utilise the different knowledge and skills, attitude and habits so as to be more qualified, efficient, and effective workers. Thus, they ought to be competitive in facing challenges that come with work. The students must improve their skills so that they will be effective workers who keep abreast with the latest technology. According to Flippo, skills and abilities cannot be acquired by just listening and observing or by reading about them. They must be acquired through actual practice and experience where people have opportunities to perform under pressure and learn by mistakes.

Attitudes. Generally, attitude was rated fully met. This implies that the BSOA program helped develop a positive attitude of the graduates. A positive attitude is the guide to leading a positive life.

PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS TO ENHANCE THE EMPLOYABILITY OF THE BSOA GRADUATES

1. The graduates should continue to pursue advanced studies for professional development. On the other hand, the school must require the students to take and pass the Civil Service Examinations whether professional or sub-professional as well as other government examinations such as Stenographers' examinations and TESDA examinations to make them more competitive.
2. A short-course training program on work skills before the undergraduates leave the College would give the graduates a head start in the job market or it would give them more relevant skills and capacities for the market.
3. The graduates should acquire various skills, trainings and seminars that might help them get employed, and further update their knowledge; likewise, they must have enough knowledge in computer education and even other newly introduced office machinery or equipment.



4. A large-scale curriculum review needs to be undertaken which is focused on the needs and current labour market demands.
5. Additional number of hours for on-the-job training of the students to gain more experience and knowledge.
6. Computer skills should be enhanced in order for the future graduates to be abreast with the current technological trends.
7. Exposure of the BSOA students to the International Office Environment Setting.
8. Quality educational facilities/laboratories/textbooks that will enhance and equip the students.
9. Increased knowledge of specialised areas of office procedures and techniques.
10. Students before graduation must be given ample time to experience pre-employment examinations and interviews.
11. Require faculty members to attend or participate in training, seminars, congress, and other related activities for the BSOA program for enhancement of their knowledge, skills and attitudes.
12. It is recommended that the CME department may continuously benchmark with other universities to ensure the competitiveness of its curriculum.

Summary and Conclusions

The primary focus of this study was to trace the graduates of the Bachelor of Science in Office Administration (BSOA) from 2009 to 2013 as a basis in the formulation of measures that can be recommended to improve the employability of the BSOA graduates. Based on the summary of findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The respondents were female, single, aged 26-28 at the time of study and living in the city.
2. The respondents have finished a Bachelor of Science in Office Administration, however, only very few have pursued a master's degree, others took up Methods of



Teaching. The majority have passed the CSC Sub-Professional examination. To enhance the knowledge and skills, the graduates attended several trainings/seminars related to the field of office administration.

3. A great percentage of the respondents have found to be gainfully employed and their jobs are directly related to their course. Most of the graduates were occupying clerical position in private organisations. The majority work locally with regular/permanent status. The majority of the graduates are receiving a salary within the minimum wage. The graduates were able to find jobs through responding to advertisements and were able to find a job in less than a year.
4. Socio-economic, academic and schools related attributes were found to be very useful in contributing to the employability of the graduates.
5. Salaries, benefits and job security were the graduates' reasons for staying in the job and accepting a job that is not related to course. However, for those who are not employed, they cited family concerns as the main reasons.
6. The BSOA program have met the expectations of the graduates of knowledge acquired and attitude developed, but necessary measures need to be taken to address the issue with regards to the skills that were found out to be fairly met.



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