Research Article

A Tracer Study on the Employability and Curriculum Relevance among BatStateU Graduates 2014-2018

[1]Joel B. Bacay, MAEd and [2]Realiza M. Mame, Ph.D.

[1&2]Batangas State University, Philippines
[1]Email: joel.bacay@g.batstate-u.edu.ph; [2]Email: realiza.mame@g.batstate-u.edu.ph

Abstract: Batangas State University (BatStateU) Tracer study aimed to determine whether the graduates from 2014 to 2018 are employable, the academic curriculum and the competencies are relevant to them, and investigate satisfaction in their present job. The adapted questionnaire from the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) tracer study was the main instrument used. The 4,805 graduates participated in the study, comprising 14.18% of the total graduates with a 1 percent margin of error at a 95% confidence level. The results indicated that graduates of BatStateU are employable as the majority of them landed their first job within a year after graduation. Most of the graduates are working as permanent status in local companies with income less than 20,000. Almost all respondents claimed their course/degree and the curriculum they had in college were both relevant to the first job.

The acquired skills by the graduates in the university on communication, critical thinking, and problem-solving are found useful-competencies in their first job. Most of them have one to two jobs after graduation, affiliated with local non-government institutions of at least 150 employees. Around half of the graduates do not intend to stay in their present jobs considering their salaries and career growth.

Keywords: Graduate Tracer, Curriculum Relevance, Competencies, Employability.

Introduction

One of the critical responsibilities of universities is to prepare young people for entering the labor market. The universities' relevance of program and employability of graduates are posing an increasing challenge, particularly given two sets of statistics: enrollment and youth unemployment rates (UNESCO, 2012). Every year the educational institutions are producing graduates who are unemployed or underemployed. This is a strong indication that education cannot produce sufficient quantity and the right quality of human resources needed for national development. It also appears that there is a very marked disparity between what the school systems are tuning out and what the economy can use at the moment and what it will use for future growth.

The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) as one of the objectives in the Strategic Plan for 2011 to 2016 lay the foundation for a more efficient and effective system in delivering quality public higher education services and for a more flexible regulatory framework for private higher education provision. This will help produce highly competent and competitive graduates. Hence, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are encouraged by CHED to offer programs that are in demand and responsive to the needs of industry both local and international.

Meanwhile, the unprecedented change for Philippine education is shaped by aggressive reform measures from within, with the full implementation of the new K to 12 system in 2016, and rapidly

advancing movements from without, as the ASEAN Economic Community in 2015. The five-year period between 2016 and 2021, often referred to as the K to 12 transition, presents significant challenges not just to the basic education sector, but causes a ripple effect on other sectors as well. It is also a once-in-a-generation window of opportunity for the reform of country's entire education landscape (CHED, 2021).

In January 2019, the unemployment rate in the Philippines was estimated at 5.2%. The Philippine Statistics Authority (2019) revealed that the total unemployed for age group ranging from 15 to 24 years comprised of 43.7%, while the age group of 25 to 34, 30.6%. Considering the educational attainment, 20.9% of the unemployed were college graduates, 8.2% were college undergraduates, and 28.2% have completed junior high school. Graduates of junior high school include those high school graduates in the old curriculum.

One of the project components of aligning HEI programs with national development goals is the Job-skills Matching Program. Included in the project is the periodic conduct of graduate tracer studies. The Commission will utilize the results to put up an Annual Higher Education Advisory for parents and students. This will contain information such as the most demanded jobs, highest hiring (starting rate) and the types of schools most desired by employers. This will also provide information about state colleges and universities as the basis for budgetary priorities where normative funding is applied. With this research, CHED would be able to formulate package assistance programs to develop and/or enhance higher education programs that would promote the country's global competitiveness.

Batangas State University (BatStateU) is the only state university located in Batangas, it plays a very important role in the upliftment of employment, and thus helps the government. BatStateU, like all other universities, aspires for the effective performance of its students. It is true to its vision of being a center of higher learning committed to the promotion of wisdom, excellence, human dignity, and national pride in the Filipino (Abrea, 2004).

BatStateU has spelled out its mission: The University plays an increasingly significant role in educating the youth to become professionals imbued with ideals of a true Filipino who stands prominently in the community of nations. It commits to develop productive citizens by providing the highest standard of instruction, research, extension service and production through value-laden learning experiences, community partnerships and internationalization initiatives. Toward this end, the University intensifies its educative process through instruction, research, extension, and production in the context of service excellence and virtue (Abrea, 2004).

At a local policy level, this will help track down tertiary graduates who can help the HEIs like BatStateU to be more strategic in developing their curricula as well as on deciding on program offerings, staffing patterns, and faculty development. It may also be used to measure the effectiveness and responsiveness of identifying a cluster of courses/subjects that the graduates found most useful in their workplaces. Therefore, the Research Department of this university aims to institutionalize the conduct of this research on Graduate Tracer.

BatStateU is a multi-campus system composed of eleven campuses strategically located at prime cities in Batangas province. The province is one of the developing areas in Calamba, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, and Quezon (CALABARZON) region which caters to a great number of industrial parks or zones. BatStateU is well recognized in the region in terms of producing high caliber, high-quality graduates in the areas of science, engineering, technology, business, education, tourism, health services, and communication arts. Each year from 2014 to 2018, an average of 6,777 graduates in different campuses of the whole system. The current administration had seen the rise of graduates from 2014 to 2018 by an average of 5%.

The employability of graduates is an important gauge of the effectiveness of the institutional systems and policies. Likewise, it can be used to evaluate the relevance of academic inputs to the study programs such as curriculum, course design, learning facilities, student skills and behavior, and graduate attributes from the points of view of both the alumni themselves and their employers. Alumni studies can be used to close the gap and create active synergies between the educational providers and the industries (employers) or the labor market. Most importantly, empirical evidence can be utilized for a continuous program and institutional improvements. Schomburg (2003) cited that a tracer study sometimes called as "alumni survey" or "follow-up survey" should enable the institution of higher education to get information to indicate possible deficits in a given educational program and to serve as basis for future planning activities.

According to Ismail and Mohammed (2015) "In the 21st century, employability skill is the most required skill besides technical knowledge in an attempt to compete for employment and sustain job at the industrial global market". The schools have to provide the training that meets the standards employers set for their workforce. Industries may have different standards, but they always have a set of characteristics they expect for their applicants to possess that would boost institutional objectives. Whether employers seek graduates whose skills are, either, related or not aligned to their field of specialization, they will always look for their standards.

Statement of the Problems/Objectives
This study aims to determine the status of Batangas State University's graduates concerning their employment.
1) To determine the profile of the graduates;
2) To identify the graduates' reasons for taking the course and pursuing other tertiary level qualification or advanced studies;
3) To assess the employability of the graduates;
4) To identify the graduates' source of information about their first job;
5) To determine the relevance of the graduate's course, curriculum, and competencies acquired from the University; and
6) To assess the graduates' satisfaction in their present job.

Conceptual Framework
The phenomena of employment and unemployment are taken into consideration to determine the employability of graduates from Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs). Some of the factors in the assessment of college education include a type of college education, age, sex, civil status, spouse's education, employment and income, parent's education, and own early education. The recruitment method and the waiting period are the phenomena of employment being considered. There are factors that can affect graduates' decisions to accept in the work sector such as type of occupation, income, satisfaction, and relevance of training.

On the other hand, the phenomena of unemployment include some of the reasons such as no job openings, college and type of education, personal connections, and unsatisfactory offers. In assessing these factors, a direct focus may be given in the aspect which can lessen the gap between the pursuit of higher education and the employment opportunities that this can offer. Also, a mismatch between the degree obtained and the prestige of the institution to job requirements. Academic offerings and proper training to prepare graduates in the world of employment can be assessed.

The main objective of colleges and universities is to facilitate students' transition from the academe to the world of work. This shows how effective school programs are for no reason why students may be delayed in looking for employment after graduation.

The labor market and the government policies on employment can be assessed upon meeting the needs of both employers and employees (Commission of Higher Education). If sufficient data are

presented and included, then all possible factors that may affect employment and/or unemployment, rates of college graduates of not being able to find a job may be reduced. Incentives and assistance may be given to those who belong to the lower-income, employment, and education groups. Students may also be given proper guidance on how to find the jobs that may best suit their degree and capability. Focusing on each factor that may affect these phenomena can help increase the productivity in which the country can benefit in the end. Hence, the framework attempts to exhaust all possible areas that can affect the employability of the graduates (Angeles, 2009).

Figure 1 illustrates the connection from input to output through the process. The variables written in the first box comprise the profile of the respondents. These variables include age, sex, civil status, year graduated, and other qualifications: industry trainings or apprenticeships and advanced studies. The second box contains the status of employment and curriculum relevance as the dependent variable. The arrow indicates that there is a strong relationship between and among the independent variables and the dependent variable. This conceptual framework provides the direction in the attainment of the objectives of the study and find out if data gathered held true to the graduates of BatStateU.
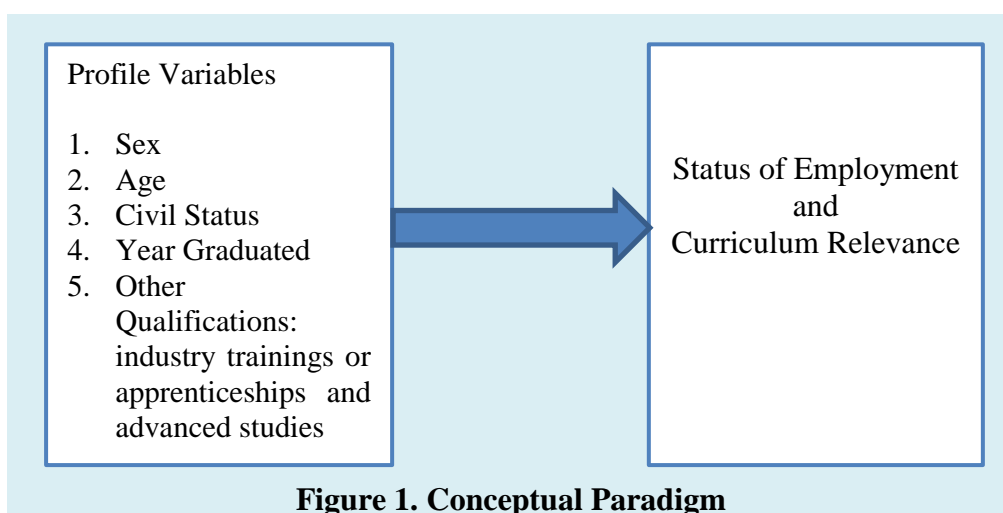
| Profile Variables

1. Sex
2. Age
3. Civil Status
4. Year Graduated
5. Other Qualifications: industry trainings or apprenticeships and advanced studies | → | Status of Employment and Curriculum Relevance |

Figure 1. Conceptual Paradigm

The employment status was acquired by the process of data analysis such as questionnaires, surveys, and interviews. The responses were delivered through electronic mails and personal interviews. After gathering the needed data using the processes the output was proposed which are to conduct a seminar that will promote participants among the students of Batangas State University. Several recommendations such as trainings, seminars, and orientations are cited to determine the effectiveness of the curriculum in the university.

Methodology
BatStateU 2014–2018 Graduate Tracer Study covers graduates who completed their studies from December 2014 to September 2018. The target respondents comprised graduates from bachelor's degree of any program which exclude those with certificate diploma, post-graduate diploma, professional, masters-degree and doctoral degree.

This study covered the graduate respondent assessment in the contribution of the acquired values and skills from the university to their present job. The responses gathered from the BatStateU graduates were sought whether the acquired skills and competencies catered to their present employment status.

A descriptive method of research was considered, utilizing quantitative approach to obtain the necessary information of the respondents and to quantify data to generalize results from a sample to the population of interest. The researchers used an online instrument where the contents are patterned

to the CHED tracer study questionnaire. A non-probability sampling was employed to generate the respondents of the study. The study was limited to the responses of the graduates from 2014 to 2018 only. The respondents were required to answer all the items included in the survey questionnaire.

The Graduate Tracer study may track down tertiary graduates who can help the Higher Education Institutions like Batangas State University to be more strategic in developing their curricula as well as in deciding the program offerings, the staffing patterns, and the faculty development. It may also be used to measure the effectiveness and/or responsiveness in identifying cluster of courses/subjects that the graduates found most useful in their workplaces.

The feedback from the graduates relative to the issues in teaching and learning will be vital for the decision-maker in the university's planning. The determining factors linked to student performance, curriculum design, and improvement in services provided by Batangas State University.

In the study, a descriptive research design was used. Calderon (2006) emphasized that descriptive research is a purposive process of gathering, analyzing, classifying and tabulating data about the prevailing conditions, practices, beliefs, process, trends, and cause and effect relationships, thereby making adequate and accurate interpretations about such data with or without the aid of a statistical method.

This study was used a non-probability sampling to determine the respondents. In this sampling design, the researcher selects the respondents who were conveniently available. The respondents of the study were 4,805 out of 33,887 graduates from 2014 to 2018 with 1 percent margin of error at 95% confidence level. This comprised the retrieval rate of 14.18 percent of the total graduates.

A survey questionnaire was the main instrument of the study. This questionnaire consists of six parts such as general information, graduates' reason for taking the course and pursuing other tertiary level qualifications, employability information, graduates' source of information about their job, relevance of the curriculum and competencies acquired, and their satisfaction in their present job. Other information of the graduates which include names, addresses, and contact numbers were obtained from the University Registrar. The alumni coordinators, the faculty researchers, and the student researchers administered personally the questionnaire by sending emails to the graduate-respondents.

The data collected were classified, tabulated, and coded for analysis. The following statistical tools were employed in interpreting the data that were obtained from the survey. Percentage was used to analyze the profile and employability of the respondents.

On the other hand, mode was used to determine the degree of perception of the graduate respondents in the usefulness and relevance of their educational background to their employment status. Rank was used to arrange in a series of ascending or descending order of importance.

Results and Discussions
The tabular representations below discuss the results from the data collected through survey using the generally accepted statistical tools and principles. The study attempted to investigate the employment status of BatStateU graduates from 2014 to 2018.

1. Profile of the graduates AY 2014–2018
Table 1 shows that out of 4805 respondents, 65.02 percent are female while 34.98 percent are male. Furthermore, 47.45 percent of the respondents are 23 to 25 years old and 88.82 percent of them were single during the time of the study. The respondents are primarily composed of graduates of batch 2018 (26.99%), 2017 (22.98%) and 2016 (18.29%). Majority (95.47%) of the graduates have not pursued any advance studies.

Table 1. Profile of the Graduates AY 2014–2018

Profile variables	Frequency	Percentage
Sex		
Male	1681	34.98
Female	3124	65.02
Age		
20-22	1915	39.85
23-25	2280	47.45
26 and above	610	12.70
Civil status		
Single	4268	88.82
Married	478	9.95
Separated	38	0.79
Widowed	21	0.44
Year graduated		
2014	758	15.78
2015	767	15.96
2016	879	18.29
2017	1104	22.98
2018	1297	26.99
Other qualifications		
Industry trainings or apprenticeships	152	3.16
Advance studies:		
With Masters' unit	49	1.02
With Masters' degree	17	0.35
No advance studies	4587	95.47

Findings revealed that majority of the respondents have not pursued any advance studies since graduation. Considering that they are young adults, they are more oriented to forming intimate relationships with other people (McLeod, 2018) than investing in their careers.

2. Graduates' reasons for taking the course and pursuing other tertiary level qualification or advance studies

Table 2. Reasons of the Graduates for Taking the Course

Reasons for Taking the Course or Pursuing the Degree	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Good grades in the subject matter	619	12.88	8
Peer influence	1045	21.75	2
Strong passion for the profession	1125	23.41	1
Status or prestige of profession	762	15.86	6
Prospect of career advancement	954	19.85	3
Prospect of attractive compensation	458	9.53	12
Influence of parents	649	13.51	7
Inspired by role model	822	17.11	5
Prospect for immediate employment/relevance/adaptability	866	18.02	4
Availability of course offering in chosen institution	554	11.53	10
Affordability for family	612	12.74	9
No particular choice/no better idea	460	9.57	11

It can be gleaned in Table 2 that out of 4805 respondents, 23.41 percent have strong passion for the profession; 21.75 percent took up their program because of peer influence; 19.85 percent viewed pursuing their programs as an avenue for career advancement; 18.02% prospect for immediate employment/relevance/adaptability.

However, only 9.53 percent of the respondents claimed that they took their course because of prospect of attractive compensation.

Table 3. Reasons of the Graduates in Pursuing Advance Studies (n = 565)

Reasons in Pursuing the Advance Studies	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
For Promotion	203	35.93	3
For Professional development	362	64.07	1
No response	271	47.96	2

About 362 of the respondents have pursued advance studies for professional development. Table 3 reveals that 35.93 percent of them pursued advance studies for promotion. Many students engage in graduate studies as they have passion for learning and discovery while others are looking to change career paths or better place themselves for advancement opportunities (Universities Canada, 2019).

3. Assessment on the employability of the graduates

Table 4. Graduates who are Currently Employed

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	4220	87.83
No	527	10.97
No Response	58	1.20
Total	4805	100.00

Table 4 shows that 87.83 percent of the respondents are currently employed while 10.97 percent are not engaged in any job. Majority of the respondents are currently employed and belong to around six percent of the total employed persons who are professionals in Region IV-A CALABARZON (Philippine Statistical Authority [PSA], 2018).

Moreover, the employment rate of 87.83 percent is comparable with that of the country in 2017, which is 94.3 percent (Bersales, 2018). This implies that the graduates are employable or have developed the capacity to obtain work.

Table 5. Reasons why graduates are currently unemployed

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Advanced or further studies	52	9.87	6
Lack of job experience	89	16.88	5
Did not look for a job	135	25.62	3
Family concerns	140	26.57	2
No job opportunity	100	18.98	4
Health Related Reasons	37	7.02	7
No Response	156	29.60	1

About 156 out of 527 respondents without response are currently not working. Table 5 reveals that the top two reasons of being not employed are family concerns (26.57%) and their decision not to find a job (25.62%). Though not employed, these individuals who leave the workforce for family concerns are not considered unemployed because they are no longer look for work (Amadeo, 2019).

3.1 Waiting time for the first job

Table 6. **Period it took to get the first job**

Duration	Frequency	Percentage
Less than one month	1475	30.70
2-5 months	1781	37.07
6-12 months	1025	21.33
More than one year	276	5.74
Never been employed	170	3.54
No Response	78	1.62
Total	4805	100.00

It can be gleaned from Table 6 that most of the respondents or 37.07 percent waited for 2 to 5 months after graduation for their first employment, 30.70 percent were employed less than one month and 21.33 percent for 6 to 12 months.

Many of the respondents got their first job in less than 6 months after graduation. This corresponds to the time that the graduates spend in reviewing for and taking the licensure examination in order to be registered allied health professionals.

3.2 Number of jobs since graduation

Table 7. **Number of Jobs since Graduation**

Number of Jobs	Frequency	Percentage
0	79	1.87
1	1826	43.27
2	1320	31.28
3	553	13.10
4	210	4.98
5	232	5.50
Total	4220	100.00

Table 7 shows that 43.27 percent of the 4220 respondents had only one job since graduation, 30.50 percent had two jobs, 13.10 percent were employed thrice, 4.98 percent had four jobs while another 1.87 percent had never been employed since graduation. Many of the graduates were employed twice after graduation. This suggests that they have changed their first job.

3.3 Graduates Employment Status
Table 8 depicts that out of 4220 respondents, 61.87 percent are working as permanent and 16.80 percent as contractual employees.

Table 8. **Graduates' Employment Status**

Profile Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Permanent	2611	61.87
Temporary	442	10.47
Self- employed	127	3.01
Casual	185	4.38
Contractual	709	16.80
Job order	143	3.39
No Response	3	0.07
Total	4220	100.00

3.4 Gross monthly income

Table 9. Graduates' Gross Monthly Income

Monthly Income	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 20,000	2323	55.05
20,000-29,999	1202	28.40
30,000-39,999	257	6.09
40,000-49,999	73	1.73
50,000 and above	75	1.78
No Response	290	6.87
Total	4220	100.00

Table 9 reveals that 55.05 percent of the employed respondents have a gross monthly income of less than Php20,000. According to Giron (2018), most jobs are done to make a living. The latest minimum wage rates in the Philippines as of October 2017 for employees in the National Capital Region (NCR) is ranging from Php293.00 to Php512.00 or having an average monthly income of Php12,337.50. Meanwhile, the minimum wage rates where employees received in Region IVA is ranging from Php293.00 to Php378.50 or having an average monthly income of Php8,393.75. More so, the Department of Labor and Employment (n.d.) revealed that the entry-level of other employees like registered nurses is ranging from Php8,000.00 to Php13,500.00 monthly while dietitians receive Php10,000.00 to Php16,000.00 per month.

3.5 Nature of work (Type of Work Organization)

Table 10. Graduates' Nature of Work

Nature of Work	Frequency	Percentage
Government	521	12.35
Non-government	3620	85.78
No Response	79	1.87
Total	4220	100.00

Table 10 depicts that out of 4220 employed respondents, 85.78 percent are currently working in non-government or private organizations while 12.35 percent are affiliated with government institutions. Majority of the respondents are employed in the private sector. This is parallel with what Bersales (2018) noted that half of the workers in the country are in private establishments.

3.6 Place of work

Table 11. Graduates' Place of Work

Place of Work	Frequency	Percentage
Local	3947	93.53
Abroad	195	4.62
No Response	78	1.85
Total	4220	100.00

It can be gleaned from Table 11 that 95.53 percent of the respondents are currently working in the Philippines while 4.62 percent are working abroad. Almost all of the respondents are employed locally. Previous findings revealed that most of the respondents graduated in 2016 and landed on their first job within a year. Working abroad usually requires two to three years of work experience; hence, the respondents may not have enough experience yet, may still be processing their application or they prefer to work in the country.

3.7 Number of employees in the present job

Table 12. Number of Employees in the Present Job

Number of Employees	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 50	1061	25.14
50–99	859	20.36
100–149	679	16.09
150 and above	1621	38.41
Total	4220	100.00

In Table 12 with 4220 respondents who are currently employed, 38.41 percent work in institutions with at least 150 employees; 25.14 percent work with less than 50 employees; 20.36 percent are employed in institutions with 50 to 99 employees; and 16.09 percent work in institutions with 100 to 149 employees. Majority of the respondents are working in institutions with at least 150 employees.

3.8 Length of service in each job

Table 13. Length of Service in Each Job

Duration	First Job	Second Job	Third Job	Fourth Job	Present Job
1-6 months	567	203	93	35	1063
7-12 months	381	493	65	19	724
13-18 months	204	112	104	11	601
19-24 months	207	49	48	23	372
25 months and above	306	90	34	16	634

Table 13 revealed that 567 stayed in their first job for one to six months. Likewise, 493 respondents remained in their second job for seven to twelve months. On the other hand, 104 respondents engaged in their third job for more than a year. Similarly, 35 of the respondents claimed of staying on their fourth job. During the time of the study, 1063 of the respondents are employed in their present job between one to six months.

Findings revealed that around five in ten respondents stayed in their first and second job for no more than six months and stay in their succeeding jobs for more than a year. This may be attributed to the fact that in the Philippines, an employment contract is valid for less than six months. After this period, the employee can stay, leave or be terminated. Results also show that the respondents stay in their succeeding jobs for more than a year, which can be related to the previous finding that many of the respondents are permanently employed at present.

3.9 Position/designation in each job
Table 14 depicts that 49 (89.1%) of the respondents are rank and file employees in their first job. At present, 77.6 percent of the employed respondents are rank and file. Majority of the respondents do not assume leadership positions in their respective institutions yet. It could be linked to the previous result that most of the respondents stayed in their first two jobs for no more than six months while 75.5 of the respondents are employed in their present job for less than two years.

Table 14. Position in Each Job

Position	First Job	Second Job	Third Job	Fourth Job	Present Job
Rank and File	1181	586	180	50	1942
Managerial	74	39	17	4	531
Supervisory	66	121	107	29	157
Others	253	118	49	15	222

This indicates that majority of the respondents are considered novice or advanced beginners in their workplaces for it takes about two to three years for an employee to be competent enough to carry out managerial or supervisory roles (Benner, 2001; Berman *et al.,* 2016).

4. Graduates' source of information about their first job

Table 15. Graduates' Source of Information about their First Job

Source of Information	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Response to an advertisement	278	6.59	7
Walk-in applicant	1319	31.26	1
Recommendation	560	13.27	3
Vacancy notice	435	10.31	5
Employment service	125	2.96	8
Internal promotion	93	2.20	9.5
Arranged by school placement	93	2.20	9.5
Family business	35	0.83	12
Information from friends	538	12.75	4
Internet	1117	26.47	2
Job fair	325	7.70	6
Others	87	2.06	11

It can be gleaned from Table 15 that the respondents got employed in their first job as walk-in applicants (31.26%), by recommendation (13.27%) and through information from friends (12.75%). Many respondents personally applied for their first job.

5. Relevance of the graduates' course, curriculum and competencies acquired from the university on their first job.
In Table 16, about 1456 from the total graduates of 1574 who were employed in less than a month and landed on their first job after graduation. It depicts that 92.50 percent claimed that on the relevance of the course/degree to their first job.

Table 16. Relevance of Course / Degree to Graduates' First Job

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	1456	92.50
No	118	7.50
Total	1574	100.00

Table 17 shows that 1456 out of 4220 respondents employed claimed that the curriculum in college is relevant to their first job. Employability of its graduates is important for higher education institutions as it reflects the quality of education received by the students, which can help the institution maintain its competitiveness in the global market (University of Edinburgh, 2016).

Table 17. Relevance of the Curriculum they had in College to Graduates' First Job

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	1456	92.50
No	118	7.50

Table 18 reveals that from the competencies acquired in the university, the most useful to the respondents' first were communication skills, critical thinking skills, and problem-solving skills. These skills were indeed crucial to carry out various roles in the job where the respondents are working.

Table 18. Competencies acquired from the University useful to their first job

Competencies Acquired	Modal Value
Communication Skills	1
Human Relation Skills	4
Entrepreneurial Skills	5
Information Technology Skills	6
Problem Solving Skills	3
Critical Thinking Skills	2

Table 18 reveals that from the competencies acquired in the university, the most useful to the respondents' first were communication skills, critical thinking skills, and problem-solving skills.

These skills were indeed crucial to carry out various roles in the job where the respondents are working.

6. Assessment on the graduates' satisfaction in the present job in terms of intention to stay, reasons for staying and reasons for changing their jobs

Table 19. Graduates Intent to Stay in the Present Job

Intentions and Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	3112	73.74
No	1086	25.74
No Response	22	0.52
Total	4220	100.00

As observed in Table 19, out of 4220 graduates who are currently employed, 25.74 percent do not intend to stay in their present job.

Table 20. Graduates' Reasons for Staying in the Present Job

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Salaries and wages	1898	44.98	1
Related to special skill	886	20.99	4
Proximity to residence	405	9.60	5
Family influences	272	6.45	6
Career challenge	955	22.63	3
Related to course of study	1052	24.93	2
Peer influence	201	4.76	7

Based on the previous table, Table 20 illuminates the respondents' reasons for staying in their present job. The respondents considered salaries and wages with 44.98 percent as the main reason for staying in their present job.

The respondents are satisfied and fulfilled with the salaries and wages they received during the conduct of survey. This is supported by Aziri (2011) that the financial compensation the employees received has a great impact on staying and satisfaction on their present job.

Likewise, Kaliski (2007) considered job satisfaction as the key ingredient leading to recognition, income, promotion, and achievement of other goals to a feeling of fulfillment.

Table 21. **Graduates' Reasons for Changing the Present Job**

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Salaries and wages	1038	24.60	1
Related to special skill	214	5.07	4
Proximity to residence	139	3.29	6
Family influences	153	3.63	5
Career challenge	572	13.55	2
Related to course of study	251	5.95	3
Peer influence	108	2.56	7

Table 21, on the other hand, shows that the respondents intend to change their present jobs primarily considering their salaries and wages. It was previously noted that majority of the respondents earn less than Php 20,000 per month. Adrian (2018) noted that employees like nurses in the country are faced with an extremely low salary with minimal benefits that push qualified candidates away.

Conclusions
Majority of the graduates are females, 23 to 25 years old, single and belonged to Batch 2018. Almost all of the graduates have not pursued any advance studies yet; for the few who did, it was mainly for professional development. Strong passion for the profession, peer influence and prospect of career advancement were the top three reasons why the respondents pursued their programs.

The graduates of Batangas State University are employable as majority of them landed on their first job within a year after graduation. The majority are working as permanent status with income that is less than 20,000 and working in local companies. As walk-in applicants, they got employed in rank-and-file positions in which they stayed for one to six months. Almost all respondents claimed that their course/degree and the curriculum they had in college were both relevant to their first job.

Furthermore, communication skills, critical thinking skills and problem-solving skills acquired from the university were found to be the most useful competencies in their first job. Most of them have one to two jobs after graduation. They are mostly affiliated with local non-government institutions with at least 150 employees. Around half of them do not intend to stay in their present job, considering their salaries and career growth.

Recommendations
Based on the findings of this study, it is hereby recommended the following recommendations.

1) The graduates should consider pursuing advanced studies for professional development and promotion in their workplace.
2) A career orientation may be conducted for the graduating students to help them get their first job in which they will intend to stay.
3) The university should continue developing the skills relevant to the graduates' job.
4) A study on job satisfaction and/or job performance of the graduates should be conducted.
5) Develop programs that will strengthen the competencies of the graduates to catch up with the ASEAN Integration.

Conflicts of interest
There is no conflict of interest of any kind.

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