

Bachelor of Secondary Education Graduate Tracer Study from 2018-2022 in a State University in Batangas, Philippines

Michael John V. Francisco & Dr. Anania B. Aquino

ARASOF-Nasugbu Campus, College of Teacher Education, Batangas State University the National Engineering University

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ABSTRACT

Teacher Education Institutions prepare their graduates to be globally competitive and adaptive in the changing world. This will lead to better job opportunities and a higher chance of employment. Thus, it is necessary to provide quality academic preparation. With a graduate tracer study, the status of the graduates can be assessed, and valuable information for evaluating the results of the education and training of a specific institution can be determined. The main objective of this study was to examine the career trajectories of the BSEd graduates major in Biological Sciences, Sciences, and Mathematics. The descriptive survey method of research was applied to this research, with a survey questionnaire as the main data gathering instrument. It analyzed data from 177 respondents, characterized by a preponderance of females (131 or 74%) over males (46 or 26%), as well as unmarried or single graduates (159 or 90%) as opposed to those who were married (18 or 10%). The study found that there were more respondents who finished Bachelor of Secondary Education major in Biological Science (92 or 51.98%) as compared to Sciences and Mathematics. They had chosen this degree because they have a strong passion for the teaching profession. Most of the respondents are Licensure Examination for Professional Teachers (LEPT) passers (144 or 81.36%) and were employed locally at the time of the study. Also, their present job was relevant to their college degree. The majority of them view assessment (with a weighted mean of 3.91) as the most useful part of the teacher education curriculum in their job.

Keywords: Bachelor of Secondary Education graduates, graduate tracer, employment status, professional Examination

INTRODUCTION

Universities are often seen as pathways to employment and financial stability, with many individuals pursuing college degrees with this aim in mind. Teacher education institutions, in particular, are dedicated to producing skilled and qualified graduates who are sought after both locally and internationally. Achieving this objective requires a multifaceted approach. The approach encompasses continuous curriculum refinement, recruitment and retention of capable faculty members, enhancement of instructional facilities, establishing robust student support systems, and cultivating a culture centered on quality and excellence. Through these concerted efforts, the institution can aspire to deliver high-caliber teacher education programs that equip graduates with enhanced employment prospects.

The College of Teacher Education at Batangas State University (Bat State U) The National Engineering University ARASOF – Nasugbu Campus, Batangas, Philippines is pivotal in fulfilling this mission by providing top-notch training to its students. As one of the few teacher education institutions in Western Batangas, it serves as a springboard for individuals aspiring to join the teaching profession. The college routinely conducts graduate tracer studies to gauge its effectiveness and the currency of its curriculum.

Graduate tracer studies serve as a valuable empirical tool for evaluating the outcomes of education and training provided by specific higher education institutions. They offer insights into graduates' employment profiles, their undergraduate experiences, their initial and current positions, and the alignment of their educational backgrounds

and skills with job requirements. Additionally, these studies assess graduates' satisfaction with their academic preparation and the relevance of the curriculum (Aquino, et al., 2015).

Graduate tracer studies can provide the College of Teacher Education insights on how it can improve its Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSEd) program offerings. Further, leveraging these insights can help the institution demonstrate the efficacy of its educational endeavors in terms of graduate outcomes, labor market trends, and employer satisfaction. Armed with this information, the institution can strategically identify areas for improvement and development, thereby enhancing quality assurance and relevant preparation and training. Graduate tracer can also help to identify and address deficiencies in program administration, content, delivery, and program relevance to ensure continuous enhancement and alignment with industry needs (Aquino, et al., 2015).

Objectives of the Study

The primary aim of this study was to examine the career trajectories of the BSEd graduates. Specifically, it sought to ascertain their employment status and transition period from graduation to employment. Additionally, the study investigated the professional examinations undertaken by the graduates and the alignment of their present job roles with their college education degrees. Furthermore, it aimed to evaluate graduates' perceptions regarding the university's role in enhancing their skill development, and the effectiveness, adequacy, and relevance of their pre-service teacher education training.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to the study of Cornillez (2021), the study findings reveal that a significant proportion of respondents secured permanent or regular employment within the local region. Their initial and current employment roles predominantly fell under professional, technical, or supervisory positions, typically obtained within 1 to 6 months post-graduation. Factors influencing career shifts among graduates primarily centered around salary and benefits considerations. Furthermore, graduates perceived the curriculum offered by the university as highly relevant, with particular emphasis placed on general education and teaching practicum learning areas. These aspects were identified as significant contributors to their employability. Notably, communication, human relations, and self-assurance skills emerged as the most valued workplace competencies and values among respondents. The study highlights the instrumental role of university preparation in facilitating graduates' employment prospects. It underscores the importance of aligning curriculum content with industry demands to enhance graduates' readiness for the workforce.

Additionally, the study of Sokhanvar (2021) underscores the significant role of authentic assessment in enhancing the overall learning experience of higher education students. By fostering active engagement in learning activities that mirror professional contexts, authentic assessment contributes to increased student satisfaction and motivation. Moreover, it positively influences students' efforts to achieve educational goals by providing meaningful learning experiences that align with their career aspirations. Furthermore, authentic assessment serves as a powerful tool for equipping students with the essential skills needed for success in their future professional endeavors. Through authentic tasks and performance-based assessments, students develop the ability to communicate effectively, collaborate with others, think critically, solve complex problems, and cultivate a deeper understanding of themselves and their capabilities. Thus, authentic assessment not only enhances academic outcomes but also prepares students to thrive in diverse professional settings.

In the study of Canizares (2015), the public sector emerged as the primary source of employment for graduates, particularly evident in the preference for teaching positions in public schools. This preference is attributed to the higher salaries and better benefits offered by public schools compared to most private institutions. It's worth noting that the financial sustainability of private schools relies heavily on tuition and other fees, potentially impacting teacher salaries due to fluctuations in enrollment, particularly among less affluent families. Unemployment among teacher education graduates stands at 9%, with various reasons cited for this status. Eight individuals disclosed that they were pursuing or enrolled in post-graduate studies and were not actively seeking employment. Three graduates cited family concerns as a reason for not pursuing employment, while another three indicated a lack of experience hindering their job search.

Moreover, the study conducted by Perez (2022) highlighted the profound dedication graduates exhibit towards the teaching profession upon completion of their teacher education program. Notably, research findings underscore the impressive achievements of graduates, including the receipt of honors and awards, successful passage of licensure examinations for teachers, active pursuit of advanced studies for professional growth, and a commendable track record of securing employment opportunities. These accomplishments reflect the strong commitment and preparedness of graduates to embark on their teaching careers. Furthermore, graduates perceive their college education as pivotal in preparing them for their current roles within the education sector. Their academic training is recognized as directly relevant to the demands and challenges encountered in their professional endeavors, underscoring the efficacy of the teacher education program in equipping graduates with essential skills and knowledge. However, the research also sheds light on the various challenges and obstacles encountered by graduates as they navigate their teaching careers. These challenges range from classroom management issues to curriculum implementation concerns, highlighting areas for improvement within the teacher education program.

METHOD

The study applied the descriptive survey method of research to attain its objectives. The survey questionnaire was based on a graduate tracer from a state university, which was slightly modified to suit the objectives of the study. A list of graduates was requested from the Registration Office to determine the respondents.

The data-gathering process started in the last quarter of 2023. Google Forms, Messenger, and email were used for the distribution and retrieval of the questionnaire. The Bachelor of Secondary Education major in Mathematics and Sciences' faculty members and teaching interns (batch 2023-2024) were given the link to the questionnaire to reach the target respondents. After six months, 177 respondents answered the questionnaire, of which 44 came from batch 2018, 59 from 2019, 33 from 2020, 4 from 2021, and 37 from 2022.

The 177 respondents who voluntarily participated in the study were dominated by females which is 131 or 74% while there are only 46 or 26% males. Further, a higher degree of response was turned in by unmarried or single graduates (159 or 90%) as opposed to those who were married (18 or 10%).

The data gathered were tallied, analyzed, and interpreted. Frequency, ranking, and weighted mean were used to describe the typicality of the responses of the graduates.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Educational Background of the Graduates

Level	Frequency	Percentage
BSEd major in Biological Science	92	51.98
BSEd major in Sciences	21	11.86
BSEd major in Mathematics	64	36.16
Overall	177	100

A significantly higher level of engagement was observed among graduates of Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSED) major in Biological Science, with 92 individuals representing 51.98% of the total respondents. In comparison, participation rates were lower for graduates with majors in Mathematics (64 or 36.16%) and Sciences (21 or 11.86%). A closer examination of the data reveals that the College of Teacher Education conferred more BSED degrees in Biological Science during the study period in recent years, compared to BSED degrees in Sciences and Mathematics. The reasons behind graduates' choice of these programs varied, as detailed in Table 2.

Table 2. The Respondents’ Reasons for Taking the BSED Course

Reason	Frequency
Strong passion for the teaching profession	104
Influence of parents/guardian	75
Affordability for the family	36
Availability of program offering in the chosen institution	55
Prospect of attractive compensation	12
Prospect for immediate employment	29

*Multiple – responses Item

Most of the graduates (104) have a strong passion for teaching profession that is why they chose to enroll in the programs. According to them, they prefer the program because they wanted to become a teacher. The influence of parents/ guardian is also a factor that contributed to their decision in taking the program. Fifty-five graduates replied that their chosen educational institution offers the programs. Even though the graduates have different reasons, they were enough to motivate them to take the program and finish it at the prescribed time of four years. Similar to this finding is the study of Perez which indicated that graduates exhibit a strong passion and commitment to the teaching profession upon completion of the teacher education program. Evidence suggests that a notable proportion of graduates receive honors and awards, successfully pass licensure examinations for teachers, pursue advanced studies for professional development, and demonstrate high employability rates. Additionally, graduates perceive their college preparation as directly relevant to their current employment.

Moreover, the research identifies various challenges and issues encountered by graduates, alongside recommendations aimed at strengthening the teacher education program. These findings offer valuable insights that can serve as a foundation for curriculum review initiatives and provide guidance for future tracer studies. By building upon these findings, educational institutions can refine their programs to meet the evolving needs of aspiring educators and enhance their overall preparedness for the teaching profession.

Table 3. Professional Examination Passed by the Graduates

Professional Examination	Frequency	Percentage
Licensure Examination for Professional Teachers Passer	144	81.36
Civil Service Examination Passer	1	0.56
None	32	18.08

*Multiple – responses Item

The present study shows a higher percentage of graduates passing the Licensure Examination for Professional Teachers (144 or 81.36%) while only one (1) graduate passed the civil service examination (0.56%). It is important to point out that once a teacher education graduate passes the LEPT, he or she becomes eligible for Civil Service, hence there is no need to take the Civil Service Examination. In addition, the goal of CTE is to enable their graduates to take and pass the LEPT and not the Civil Service Examination because passing the LEPT will allow them to practice the teaching profession and enjoy all the privileges attached to the profession.

Table 4. Employment Status

Employment Status		Frequency	Percentage
Employed	Permanent	60	81.92
	Temporary	17	
	Contractual	70	
	Sub-Total	147	
Not Employed		30	18.08
Total		177	100

Overall, the survey indicates a higher proportion of employed graduates as compared to those who are unemployed. Specifically, 147 individuals, constituting 81.92% of the respondents, reported being employed at the time of the study, while 30 individuals, representing 18.08%, were not employed. This finding aligns with Gines' research on teacher education graduates from a Philippine normal university, which also reported a high employment rate. Similarly, Canizares' study focusing on teacher education graduates specializing in science and mathematics yielded comparable results.

Table 5. Nature of Employment

Institution	Private	97	65.99
	Public	50	34.01
	Total	147	100
Area	Local	143	97.28
	Abroad	4	2.72
	Total	147	100

A higher percentage of graduates are employed in private institutions than in public institutions, the data also shows that majority of the graduate are employed locally than abroad. The survey shows that 97 or 65.99% of the graduates were employed in private institutions while 50 or 34.01% of the graduates were employed in public institutions. The survey also shows that 143 or 97.28% of the graduates were employed locally at the time of the study and only 4 or 2.72% of the graduates were employed abroad.

Table 6. Relevance of the Respondents' Job to their Education Degree in College

Is your present job related to the teaching profession?	Tally	Percentage
Yes	100	68.03
No	47	31.97
	147	100

A certain degree of underutilization of skills is apparent among the participants of the study. Although a high

percentage of the employed (100 or 68.03%) graduates disclosed that their job was related to their college degree of BSED, some 47 or 31.97 percent admitted that it was not. This could be a consequence of their need to earn a living hence they accepted the job although it was not related to their college preparation. The same trend of having a certain degree of underutilization of skills among the graduates was also found by Torres. Although many graduates are employed as teachers, many respondents are also employed in non-teaching jobs. They divulged that they accepted the job, although not related to their BSED degree, for various reasons. These reasons included good salaries and benefits, career challenges, related to a special skill they possess, and the proximity of the workplace to their residence. There are graduates of CTE employed in call centers in Manila and other nearby provinces. These graduates, when interviewed, admitted being lured by the good salaries and benefits provided by the company hence they accepted the job. Aside from this, the graduates feel that this job is related to their English communication skills. Likewise, they claim that they are provided with the opportunity to improve this skill along with the other skills when they work in call centers.

Table 7. Part of the Curriculum Graduates Found Most Useful in their Job

Area	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
Foundations	3.82	Extremely useful	9
Research	3.85	Extremely useful	5.5
Subject Matter	3.88	Extremely useful	3
Learning and Development	3.90	Extremely useful	2
Reflective Skills	3.84	Extremely useful	7.5
Educational Technologies	3.84	Extremely useful	7.5
Pedagogical and Professional Skills	3.85	Extremely useful	5.5
Assessment	3.91	Extremely useful	1
Dispositions	3.79	Extremely useful	10.5
Diversity	3.79	Extremely useful	10.5
Collaboration and Initiative	3.87	Extremely useful	4

This study shows that majority of the respondents views assessment as the most useful part of the curriculum in their job with a weighted mean of 3.91. In line with this, the study of Sokhanvar states that authentic assessment has become increasingly popular in higher education as institutions recognize its potential to provide students with experiential learning opportunities mirroring real-world scenarios. This approach acknowledges assessment not just as a measure of knowledge acquisition but as a means to prepare students for the challenges they will face in their professional lives. The benefits of authentic assessment extend beyond academic achievement, encompassing the cultivation of essential skills vital for success in future careers, including effective communication, collaboration, critical thinking, problem-solving, self-awareness, and self-confidence.

The findings of this study underscore the significant role of authentic assessment in enhancing the overall learning experience of higher education students. By fostering active engagement in learning activities that mirror professional contexts, authentic assessment contributes to increased student satisfaction and motivation. Moreover, it positively influences students' efforts to achieve educational goals by providing meaningful learning experiences that align with their career aspirations.

Furthermore, authentic assessment serves as a powerful tool for equipping students with the essential skills needed for success in their future professional endeavors. Through authentic tasks and performance-based assessments, students develop the ability to communicate effectively, collaborate with others, think critically,

solve complex problems, and cultivate a deeper understanding of themselves and their capabilities. Authentic assessments not only enhance academic outcomes but also prepare students to thrive in diverse professional settings.

Implications of the Study for the College of Teacher Education

The findings of the study have important implications for the College of Teacher Education and they are presented as follows:

1. **Strengthen Partnerships with Local and International Schools:** The College of Teacher Education (CTE) should enhance its collaboration with schools in the immediate vicinity and nearby towns to facilitate job placements for graduates. By fostering stronger linkages with local and international educational institutions, the CTE can increase graduates' opportunities for employment and career advancement.
2. **Continuously Enhance Curriculum Relevance:** It is imperative for the CTE to continually review and enhance its curriculum to ensure alignment with the evolving needs of stakeholders in the education sector. This includes updating course content, integrating new teaching methodologies, and incorporating feedback from employers and alumni to ensure graduates are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge for success in the workforce.
3. **Continuous Focus on Faculty Competence and Effective Teaching Strategies:** The CTE should prioritize the professional development of faculty members to enhance their competence and effectiveness in delivering quality education. Training opportunities, workshops, and seminars can be provided to empower faculty with innovative teaching strategies and pedagogical approaches that engage and inspire students.
4. **Improve the Availability of Instructional Materials:** Adequate instructional materials are essential for effective teaching and learning. The CTE should invest in the development and provision of relevant instructional materials to support faculty and enhance the learning experience for students.
5. **Enhance Student Support Services:** The CTE should further improve its student support services to address the diverse needs of students and enhance their overall academic experience. This may include academic advising, counseling services, career guidance, and mentorship programs to support students in their academic and professional journey.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the research findings shed light on several key aspects regarding the employment and career trajectories of Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSEd) graduates. The study revealed that a majority of respondents were BSEd graduates specializing in Biological Science, reflecting a notable preference for this field among aspiring educators.

Furthermore, the research underscores the strong passion exhibited by graduates for the teaching profession, as evidenced by their choice to pursue a BSED degree. This commitment to the teaching profession likely played a pivotal role in their career decision-making processes.

A high proportion of graduates succeed in passing the Licensure Examination for Professional Teachers (LEPT), positioning them for better employment opportunities within the education sector. The majority of respondents were employed in private schools within the local region at the time of the study, with their present jobs aligning closely with their academic qualifications and degree specialization.

Additionally, graduates perceived the assessments included in their teacher education curriculum as highly relevant to their jobs, underscoring the practical applicability of their academic training in real-world teaching contexts.

Overall, these findings provide valuable insights into the employment outcomes and experiences of BSED graduates. The research offers implications for educational institutions in terms of curriculum development and

career guidance initiatives, with focus on enhancing the relevance and effectiveness of teacher education programs in preparing graduates for successful and fulfilling teaching careers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of the study led the researchers to forward the following recommendations:

1. Consider the Implications of the Study on Curriculum Effectiveness: The implications of this study for the College of Teacher Education will help the college to direct its efforts and further improve its Bachelor of Secondary Education curriculum.
2. Consider Graduates' Feedback on Curriculum Effectiveness: The feedback provided by graduates regarding the usefulness of specific aspects of the curriculum in their first job should be carefully considered in curriculum development efforts. This feedback can inform decisions about curriculum content, delivery methods, and instructional approaches to ensure graduates are adequately prepared for the demands of the workplace.
3. Conduct Comprehensive Future Studies: Despite efforts to engage a diverse range of graduates, the limited participation in the study may affect the generalizability of findings. It is recommended that future studies target a larger sample size to enhance the robustness and generalizability of results.

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