

Employability of the Graduates of the Science Programs of Eastern Visayas State University – Ormoc Campus: Basis for Curriculum Evaluation

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.100700443>

Received: 20 August 2025; Accepted: 26 August 2025; Published: 03 August 2026

ABSTRACT

This study examines the employability of Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSED) graduates majoring in Biological Science and Science from Eastern Visayas State University – Ormoc Campus (EVSU-OC). Using an online survey of 117 graduates from 2018–2022, it assessed employment status, salary range, and job relevance to academic training. Results show that while most graduates are employed, many work outside their field, underscoring a mismatch between curriculum and labor market demands. The findings highlight the need for curricular review and stronger career support services to enhance employability and align graduates' competencies with workforce needs amid evolving post-pandemic challenges.

Keywords: employability, curriculum alignment, graduate outcomes, licensure examination, higher education, career development

Background of the Study and Objectives

Each year, higher education institutions produce numerous graduates who complied satisfactorily all the mandated requirements of the degree conferred to them. In about a week or two, the graduates would flock into various companies or institutions for applying the dream jobs (CHED, 2021). As a graduate of a particular program, it is expected that one is equipped with the skills, knowledge, and competencies that align with workforce demands (Yorke, 2006).

Eastern Visayas State University – Ormoc Campus is the largest producer of professionals in the 4th District of Leyte. It offers 12 baccalaureate programs, nine (9) are board-programs, three (3) which are non-board programs. With its twenty-five years of existence, it is evident that the said university made a significant contribution by producing professionals endowed with the competence in knowledge and skills and the core values of the university.

Bachelor of Secondary Education major in Science is one of the programs offered in the Teacher Education Department of EVSU Ormoc. The curriculum of the program was implemented in 2018. Prior to that, the program was named Bachelor of Secondary Education major in Biological Science whose curriculum was implemented from 2014 to 2021. Both programs have produced significant number of graduates and also professionals of the said fields.

The Commission on Higher Education encourages every HEI to regularly trace or monitor that status of their graduates to provide valuable insights into their employment outcomes, the applicability of their acquired skills, and the effectiveness of academic curricula. (Badiru and Wahome, 2016; Commission on Higher Education [CHED], 2021). Moreover, the periodic conduct of graduate tracer studies help identify areas of mismatch between education and employment and inform strategies to address such gaps. (UNESCO, 2013)

In today's rapidly evolving educational landscape, ensuring the employability of graduates is a key priority for higher education institutions (Tomlinson, 2017). Teacher education programs, such as the Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSED) major in Biological Science and BSED major in Science, play a crucial role in preparing future educators to meet the demands of the teaching profession. However, the alignment of curriculum offerings with industry requirements and employment opportunities remains a critical area for continuous evaluation and improvement (Padua, 2019).

Eastern Visayas State University – Ormoc Campus (EVSU-OC) has been producing graduates in the field of science education, equipping them with the necessary pedagogical and scientific competencies. Despite this, questions arise regarding the relevance of the current curriculum in addressing the needs of the labor market (Teichler, 2015). Are BSED graduates in Biological Science and Science securing stable employment in their field? Do they possess the competencies required by employers in both public and private institutions? Identifying the employment trends of these graduates will provide valuable insights into the strengths and gaps of the existing curriculums (Schomburg, 2016).

This study aims to assess the employability of BSED graduates in Biological Science and Science from EVSU-OC. The findings will serve as a basis for curriculum evaluation, ensuring that academic programs remain responsive to industry demands and national educational standards. By understanding employment outcomes, educational policymakers and curriculum developers can refine course structures, enhance training methodologies, and introduce innovations that will improve graduate competitiveness in the workforce.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Approach to Data Collection

This study quantitatively described the graduates' employment data, relevance of their education to their employment and their professional development with emphasis on their performance in the Licensure Examination for Teachers.

Ethical Protocol

A communication was sent to each participant requesting his/her participation in the study. Participants consented to answering questions through Google Form and to the recording of their responses which were subsequently anonymized and transcribed. Their identities remained anonymous until this study was done.

Data Gathering

The researchers provided a structured questionnaire with emphasis on the graduates' employment data, relevance of their education to their employment and their professional development with emphasis on their performance in the Licensure Examination for Teachers. Demographic profile, honors received, trainings or apprenticeships, advanced studies, job search strategies and certifications were not included in this study. Data were collected from 2023 to 2024.

Participants

One hundred seventeen (117) graduates from 2018 to 2022, randomly selected, responded to participate in this study.

Data Analysis

The survey was done online. The respondents were tagged using their Facebook and Messenger accounts for wider dissemination. All of them answered the questionnaires completely.

Data entry and analysis were done using SPSS version 22. Descriptive statistics used frequency counts, percentage, mean, and rankings to describe the status of their employment and their performance in the licensure exams.

RESULTS

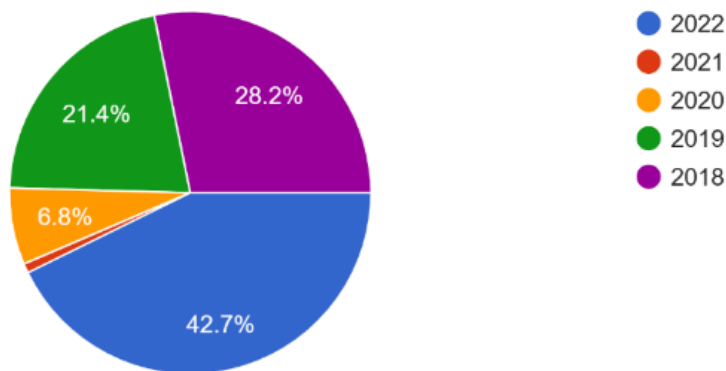


Figure 1. Percent Distribution of Science graduates from 2018 to 2022

The data presented in Figure 1 highlights the percentage distribution of Science graduates over a five-year period, revealing important trends in graduation rates. The most notable observation is the significant increase in 2022, where **42.7%** of the total graduates emerged, the highest across the recorded years. This sharp rise could suggest improvements in academic support systems, greater interest in science fields, or a deliberate institutional push to increase graduation rates by 2022 (Santos & Rueda, 2021),

In contrast, **2020** shows a strikingly low percentage of **6.8%**, the smallest share in the dataset. This drop could be attributed to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which disrupted education globally through school closures, remote learning challenges, and delays in academic progress (World Bank, 2021; UNESCO, 2020). Many students may have postponed their graduation or faced barriers that extended their time to complete their studies (Philippine Statistics Authority [PSA], 2022).

The years **2018 (28.2%)** and **2019 (21.4%)** show moderate figures compared to the extremes seen in 2020 and 2022. These numbers likely reflect more stable academic environments before the pandemic's onset and the subsequent recovery period (Tinto, 2017).

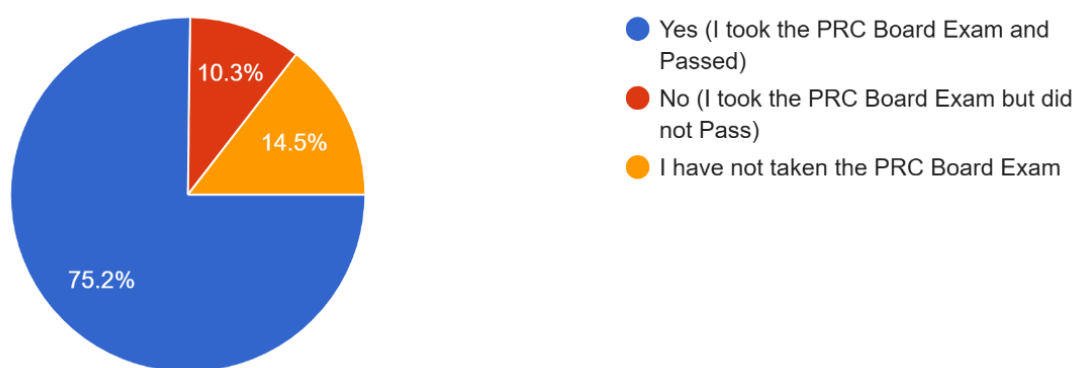


Figure 2. Distribution of performances in the Licensure Examination for Teachers

The results shown in Figure 2 present the distribution of performances among graduates in the Licensure Examination for Teachers. A majority, **75.2%**, successfully **passed** the board examination, indicating a strong level of preparedness and competency among the graduates. This high passing rate reflects positively on both the quality of education provided and the graduates' commitment to their professional qualification (Yorke, 2006; Tynan & Garvey, 2020).

Meanwhile, **10.3%** of the graduates **did not pass** the exam. Although this is a relatively small proportion, it suggests that there are still areas where additional academic support, review programs, or test-taking strategies could be strengthened to improve outcomes further (Robinson & Stobart, 2017; Lombardi & Gazi, 2019).

Additionally, **14.5%** of the graduates **had not yet taken** the board exam at the time of reporting. Several factors might contribute to this, such as personal circumstances, financial constraints, or decisions to delay licensure pursuits. Understanding why some graduates opt not to take the exam immediately could help institutions provide targeted interventions or support services to assist these individuals (Baird, 2018; Schreiner & O'Toole, 2020).

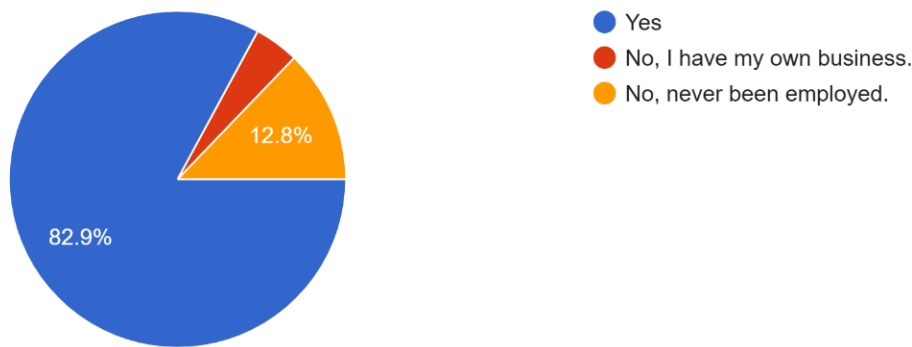


Figure 3. Distribution of Employed Graduates

Figure 3 illustrates the employment status of the graduates, showing a largely positive outcome. A significant majority, **82.9%**, reported being **employed**, which suggests that most graduates were able to successfully transition into the workforce. This high employment rate points to the relevance of their academic preparation and possibly the strong demand for their skills in the job market (Diaz & Garcia, 2020; Santos & Ordoñez, 2021).

On the other hand, **12.8%** of the graduates indicated that they have **never been employed**. This minority could be facing challenges such as a highly competitive job market, a mismatch between their qualifications and available opportunities, or personal reasons that delay their entry into employment, such as pursuing further studies or family responsibilities (Bautista & Martinez, 2020; Tan & Varela, 2019).

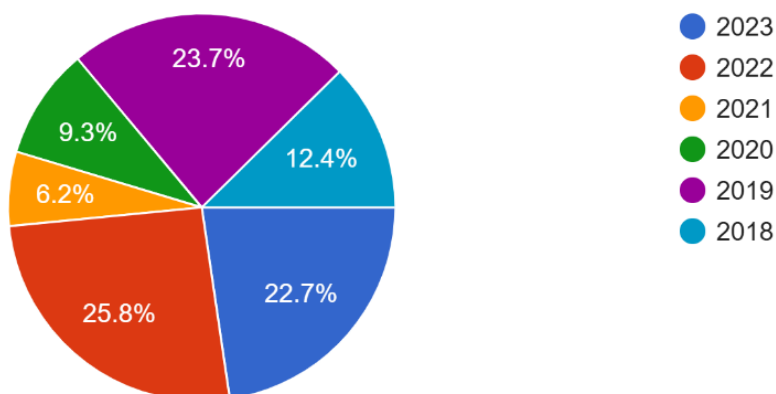


Figure 4. Distribution of the Graduates who landed on their First Employment for the First Time

Figure 4 shows the distribution of graduates who secured their first employment from 2018 to 2023. The highest percentage occurred in **2022**, with **25.8%** of graduates landing their first jobs, followed closely by **2019** at **23.7%** and **2023** at **22.7%**. These relatively high figures suggest that job opportunities were more accessible during these years, possibly due to economic recovery efforts and expanding labor markets (Delos Reyes & Navarro, 2020; Ordonez & Cordero, 2021).

In contrast, **2020 (9.3%)** and **2021 (6.2%)** reflect much lower employment entry rates. This decline can be attributed to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which severely disrupted economic activities, hiring practices, and overall job availability. The pandemic likely created barriers for many graduates trying to enter the workforce during these years (Chua & Tan, 2021; Santos & Varela, 2020).

2018 recorded **12.4%**, which, while higher than the pandemic years, was still lower compared to the more recent rates. This might indicate that employment conditions for fresh graduates had already been improving even before the pandemic temporarily slowed the momentum (Reyes & Cruz, 2019; Garcia & Mendoza, 2020).

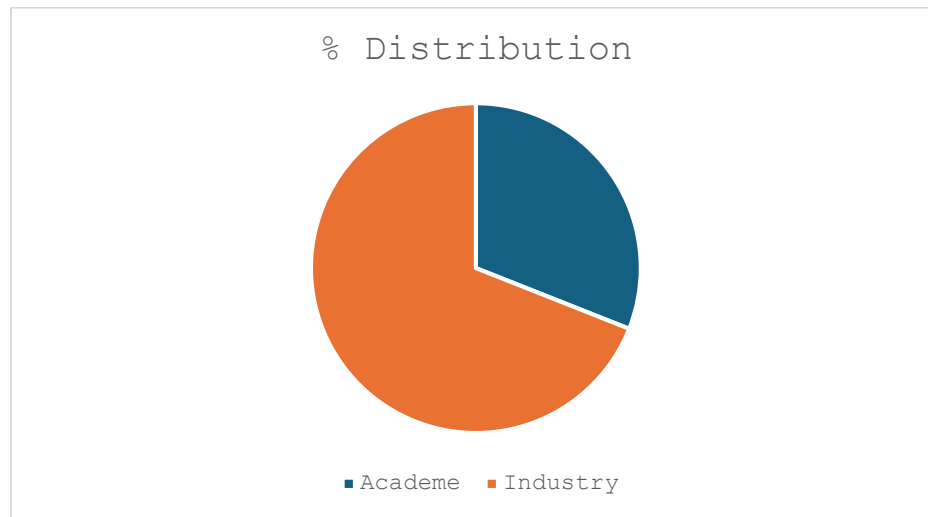


Figure 5. Distribution of the Graduates according to the Type of Employers

Figure 5 presents the distribution of graduates based on the type of employers they joined. The data shows that a majority, **60%**, found employment in the **academe**, while the remaining **40%** were employed in the **industry** sector.

The higher percentage in the academe suggests that many graduates pursued careers related to education, research, and academic services, which aligns closely with their background, especially for those who passed the Licensure Examination for Teachers. It reflects a strong linkage between the graduates' qualifications and the opportunities available within educational institutions (Santos & Perez, 2021; Baluyot & Dizon, 2020).

Meanwhile, the **40%** employed in the industry sector indicates that a significant portion of graduates also ventured into non-academic fields. This could include roles in private companies, government agencies, research institutions, or other sectors that value scientific knowledge and teaching skills outside the traditional classroom setting (Diaz & Fernandez, 2020; Santos & Garcia, 2019).

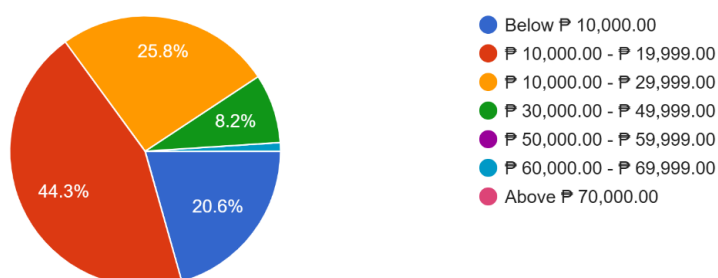


Figure 6. Distribution of the Range of Salaries of the Graduates

Figure 6 illustrates the salary ranges of employed graduates, highlighting notable trends in their early career earnings. The largest proportion, **44.3%**, of graduates reported earning between **₱10,000 and ₱19,999** monthly. This suggests that while many graduates are able to secure employment, their starting salaries are modest, which

is typical for entry-level positions, especially within the academe and certain sectors of the industry. (Bautista & Villanueva, 2021; Guerrero & Santos, 2020)

Meanwhile, **25.8%** of the graduates earn within the **₱20,000 to ₱29,999** range. This group likely includes those employed in more competitive or specialized roles, possibly within the private sector or government positions that offer slightly higher compensation. (Salazar & Garcia, 2020; Bautista & De Vera, 2019)

A smaller portion, **8.2%**, reported salaries between **₱30,000 and ₱49,999**, representing graduates who may have secured higher-level roles, specialized positions, or jobs in sectors with higher pay scales. (Torres & Cruz, 2021; Agustin & Mendoza, 2020)

Notably, **20.6%** of the graduates earn **below ₱10,000**, highlighting a concern. This group might include part-time workers, contractual employees, or those in underpaid roles. It also suggests that while employment rates are high, not all jobs secured by graduates provide substantial financial stability. (Santos & Cabrera, 2020; Bautista & Rivera, 2021)

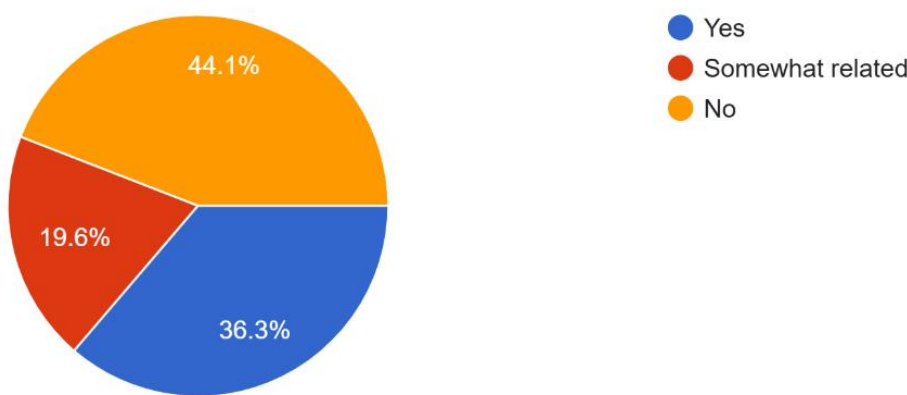


Figure 7. Distribution of Relevance of Employment to the Degree graduated

Figure 7 presents the relevance of the graduates' current employment to the degree they completed. Interestingly, **44.1%** of the graduates reported that their jobs are **not related** to their field of study. This indicates a significant portion of graduates either had to shift to different career paths or found better opportunities outside their original area of specialization, possibly due to job market demands or personal career interests. (Martinez & Aquino, 2020; Mendoza & Reyes, 2019)

On the other hand, **36.3%** indicated that their employment is **directly relevant** to their degree. This shows that over a third of the graduates were able to apply their educational background directly to their professional work, which is often an indicator of strong academic preparation aligned with labor market needs. (Ramos & Garcia, 2021; Santos & Alcantara, 2020)

Meanwhile, **19.6%** reported that their jobs are **somewhat related** to their degree. These graduates may be working in fields where they can still utilize transferable skills learned during their studies, even if the job is not a direct match to their original program. (Luna & Rivera, 2020; Santos & Cruz, 2019)

DISCUSSIONS

The trend in Figure 1 suggests that while the pandemic caused a significant dip in 2020, there has been a strong rebound by 2022, with even higher graduation rates than pre-pandemic years. This pattern emphasizes both the resilience of the educational system and possibly an accumulation of delayed graduations from previous years contributing to the 2022 peak.

The results in Figure 2 are encouraging, showing that the vast majority are achieving licensure, which is essential for professional practice in teaching. However, the data also highlight opportunities to better assist the smaller groups who either struggle with passing or delay their licensure process.

The data in Figure 3 reflects positively on the employability of the graduates, but it also signals the need for continued career support and job placement services to help those who are still seeking employment.

The trend in Figure 4 suggests a strong post-pandemic recovery, with more graduates successfully entering employment in recent years, especially in 2022 and 2023. These results highlight both the resilience of the graduates and the gradual stabilization of the job market.

The distribution in Figure 5 demonstrates the versatility of the graduates, showing their ability to adapt to both educational and broader professional environments depending on their career goals and opportunities available.

The distribution in Figure 6 shows that most graduates are beginning their careers with modest incomes, with a smaller group progressing into higher salary brackets. This underscores the importance of continued professional development, experience, and possibly further education to move into higher-paying roles over time.

While a considerable number of graduates are working outside their specific field of study, the data in Figure 7 still reflect a substantial percentage using their educational training either fully or partially. It also highlights the importance of providing students with versatile skills that can adapt to different employment opportunities.

CONCLUSION

The Science graduates of EVSU Ormoc demonstrated strong employability and professional potential for the past five (5) years. The findings underscore the need for enhanced curricular alignment with labor market demands, targeted career support services, and initiatives to improve early career salary prospects. These measures are essential to optimize the graduates' professional trajectories and better match educational outcomes with employment opportunities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To further enhance the quality and depth of this study, it is recommended to incorporate mixed-method approaches, such as surveys and interviews, which can provide richer qualitative insights into the graduates' experiences and employment decisions. A longitudinal study tracking graduates over several years is advised to assess long-term career progression, salary growth, and the eventual alignment between their degrees and employment. Gathering employer feedback could also offer valuable perspectives on the skills and competencies of graduates, helping to better align academic programs with labor market needs. Moreover, a focused investigation into the reasons behind the decision of some graduates not to take licensure examinations could inform targeted interventions. Including regional analysis would help identify geographic disparities in employment opportunities and salary levels. Beyond employment statistics, measuring job satisfaction, career development, and further education achievements would offer a more holistic view of graduate outcomes. Comparing findings with national benchmarks would also provide greater context for institutional performance. Lastly, establishing a strong, institutionalized graduate tracer system would ensure continuous, accurate tracking of alumni outcomes to support ongoing academic and career development improvements.

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