

# Alumni Employment Outcomes as a Basis for Curriculum Evaluation in a State University's Bachelor of Arts in Communication Program

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**Abstract**— Graduate employability is often regarded as an important indicator of efficacy of the academic program, particularly in respect to areas of study that involve communication and that lie at the interface of media production, digital technologies, and workforce preparation. Where state universities are concerned, employment outcomes are applied both as measures of instructional success, but also as indicators of curriculum development, resource allocation and policy development. The application of the use of employability assessments, however, is more frequently assumed to be a compulsory-based tracer study, rather than a systematic curriculum redesign mechanism. In evaluating the curriculum and improving academic system, the paper uses the employment performance of graduates of a Bachelor of Arts in Communication program of a state university in the Philippines as a point of reference. The evaluation model was of a mixed-methods approach with a combination of quantitative tracer survey findings and qualitative interpretation of findings. Quantitative findings were used to establish the employment trends and competency scores, but qualitative findings, founded on interviews and input by employers or industry collaborators, were used to elucidate job transition experiences, use of skills, adequacy of training and curriculum shortcomings. The number of responses received was 80 out of 252 graduates which was approximately 32 percent of the whole population. Out of the respondents, 57 were working within half a year after graduation. The congruence between degree and job was largely positive with 32 congruence showing high, 30 moderate and 8 not congruent. Competency assessment results were desirable and a grand weighted mean of 3.97, which is verbally rated as Agree. Irrespective of such outcomes, graduates were able to mention the issues connected with the lack of experience, limited work, inapplicability of training, knowledge deficiency, and ineffective preparation in some technical knowledge. The study uses employment outcomes as system-level feedback to evaluate and redesign the curriculum unlike compliance-oriented tracer approaches. The findings would help in curriculum development, increased access to industry level resources, improved job placement and higher industry relationships.

**Keywords**— *employability, graduate satisfaction, competency alignment, curriculum development, industry-alignment*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Graduate employability has been broadly identified as a key indicator of the success of academic programs, especially in communication-related academic fields that exist at media production, digital technologies, and workforce preparedness. In the case of state universities, employment outcomes are not only indicators of instructional achievement, but also critical indicators of feedback in curriculum design, resource distribution and policy making. Although important, employability assessments are usually undertaken as forms of tracer studies in compliance and as such their use is limited in terms of systematic curriculum redesign. It is still necessary to have data-based, system-wide assessment methods that recognize graduate employment results as part of an ongoing performance feedback in an educational system, and not as a single post-graduation statistic.

A state university is essential in ensuring that it produces high skill, globally competitive and employable graduates that will lead to regional and national development. Graduate employability is one of the major indicators of university performance as described in the DBM-CHED Joint Circular No. 1 series of 2016. This is measured through the proportion of students who are hired within two years of graduation in all forms of employment, including regular, contractual, self employment and freelance jobs.

This paper examined employment and satisfaction levels of the graduate of the Bachelor of Arts in Communication course in Philippine State University. In particular, it looked into employment profile, industry of employment, and employment transition; determines the alignment of academic courses within the BACOMM program to the skills and knowledge demanded by employers in the specific job markets; and develops practical recommendations on how the program can be improved to close the identified skills gaps and enrich graduate competencies to become more competitive in the job market.

The tracer studies have proved to be one of the useful tools of bridging the gap between academic programs and graduate success in the workforce [1]-[4]. They support program evaluation, curriculum improvement and student support by

giving information. Human Capital Theory also informs the current study and specifies the relationship between the inputs of education, development of human capital, outputs of graduates, and the impact of graduates on society and economy at large [5][6]. The distinguishing feature between the current work and the tracer study methods based on compliance is the employment outcomes used as system-level feedback to evaluate the curriculum and improve it academically.

## II. METHODOLOGY

### A. Sources of Data

The study employed a mixed-methods evaluation framework integrating quantitative tracer survey data and qualitative outcome analysis. The quantitative component drew on online survey responses from BACOMM alumni from SY 2018–2022, collected primarily through Google Forms and supported by the University’s Alumni Registration and Information Management System (ARIMS).

Potential respondents were identified through the Registrar’s Office by accessing initial graduate records, which were approved by the Dean. Interviews and focus groups involving the chosen graduates were used to draw qualitative data, whereas the information provided by the employers and industry partners was utilized to interpret competency alignment.

### B. Processing

The survey instrument was designed to meet the data requirements of SUC levelling from DBM, the CHED tracer study instrument, and similar studies conducted by other SUCs and institutions. The instrument was pre-tested among the identified study leaders.

Faculty researchers were also engaged in a training workshop to orient them on strategies of implementation. The actual data gathering process was coordinated with the faculty of the Communication Department, the alumni coordinator, and the college dean during the actual data gathering process. Data collection was facilitated via Google Forms and ARIMS containing the same questions.

### C. Analysis

Descriptive statistics like the frequency counts, mean, weighted mean, and percentages were used to analyze quantitative data. The subject matter in the qualitative component was examined thematically to determine the common trends in terms of job transition, skill application, sufficiency in training, and perceived gaps in the curriculum. The quantitative results determined significant employment trends and competency scores, whereas the qualitative results put the obstacles and limitations into the background of those trends.

### D. Validation

Validation was addressed through instrument pre-testing, the validation workshop led by the Office of the Vice President for Research, Development and Extension (OVRPDE) and the Alumni Relations Office (ARO), and the use of interview-based qualitative evidence from selected graduates, employers, and industry partners. These procedures were used to improve

instrument clarity, support implementation, and strengthen interpretation of the survey findings.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### A. Summary of Data

Following the instrument validation and workshop, organized by OVRPDE and the ARO, the researcher asked the Registrar Office to provide initial 2018-2022 graduates of the Bachelor of Arts in Communication (BACOMM) program data, which was approved by the Dean. This made it easy to identify the total number of potential respondents and revise the list of alumni in ARIMS. The two were meant to simplify the data collection process.

Years 2020 and 2021 did not yield graduates as these were transitory years for the K-12 program in the Philippines.

TABLE I. SUMMARY OF GRADUATES FROM 2018-2022

| Year  | Graduates from 2018-2022 |            |            |
|-------|--------------------------|------------|------------|
|       | Male                     | Female     | Total      |
| 2018  | 23                       | 64         | 87         |
| 2019  | 23                       | 61         | 84         |
| 2022  | 21                       | 60         | 81         |
| Total | <b>67</b>                | <b>185</b> | <b>252</b> |

Between 2018 and 2022, the Bachelor of Arts in Communication program in the College of Arts and Letters delivered 252 graduates. The responses were collected using ARIMS and the additional Google Form to obtain 80 responses, which is about a third of the entire population.

TABLE II. RESPONDENTS FROM BATCHES 2018-2022

| Year  | Respondents |           |           |
|-------|-------------|-----------|-----------|
|       | Male        | Female    | Total     |
| 2018  | 10          | 22        | 32        |
| 2019  | 9           | 17        | 26        |
| 2022  | 4           | 18        | 22        |
| Total | <b>23</b>   | <b>57</b> | <b>80</b> |

Examining the responses in terms of employment type after graduation, 22 respondents had been employed in government agencies and institutions and 44 respondents had been employed in the private sector. Three respondents failed to mention their employers but indicated that they worked with private organizations. Ten respondents gave different reasons as to why they did not seek work immediately after graduation and one said that he or she was self employed with an online business.

Out of the people who were employed, 42 said that they worked in the region, 24 said they worked outside the region, and 3 said that they worked abroad. It is worth noting that 57 respondents were working within half a year after graduation. In terms of monthly salary, 13 respondents reported earning at least Php 25,000; 6 earned Php 20,000 to less than Php 25,000; 15

earned Php 15,000 to less than Php 20,000; 18 earned Php 10,000 to less than Php 15,000; 15 earned Php 5,000 to less than Php 10,000; and 2 earned below Php 5,000 per month.

Taken together, these numbers suggest that the post-graduation to work was overall timely, though not consistently high among all the respondents. The fact that 57 graduates have found a job within half a year indicates that the program could assist in entering the labor market of a significant proportion of graduates. Simultaneously, the geographical distribution of employment between the regional, national, and overseas areas indicates that the program is not limited to one localized labor market. Rather, graduates seem to be able to work in a variety of communication-related and adjoining work environments, and the localization of the university in the region serves to indicate the local developmental aspect of the university, but the existence of out-of-region and overseas job opportunities indicates the mobility beyond the immediate locality.

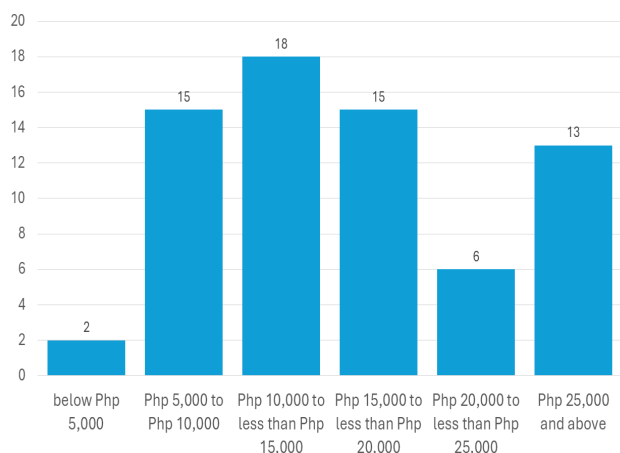


Fig. 1. Reported Monthly Salary

A majority of the respondents said that they have remained at their first job at least six months. Nineteen were one-year-less-than-two-year stayers and 24 were two-years-or-more stayers. Other respondents described their job status as contractual or job order and others as casual or temporary. Concerning career, permanent jobs were usually favored over contractual or temporary jobs due to superior benefits and job security.

The retention and salary trends also give a more detailed view of employability compared to the placement. Although there is an indication of early employment, the monthly earnings distribution indicates that most graduates get hired in the lower to middle-end of the pay scale, which is typical of entry-level communication jobs but still indicates the potential of higher upward mobility. Similarly, the fact that many of the respondents stay in their initial jobs at least several months points to the initial job security, but the fact that the contractual, job order, casual, and temporary jobs are still present indicates that the stable career formation is still a slow process. Curriculum-wise, this implies that employability must not be perceived as merely getting a job, but as the acquisition of the competencies and professional preparedness to transition to higher quality and safer employment in the long run.

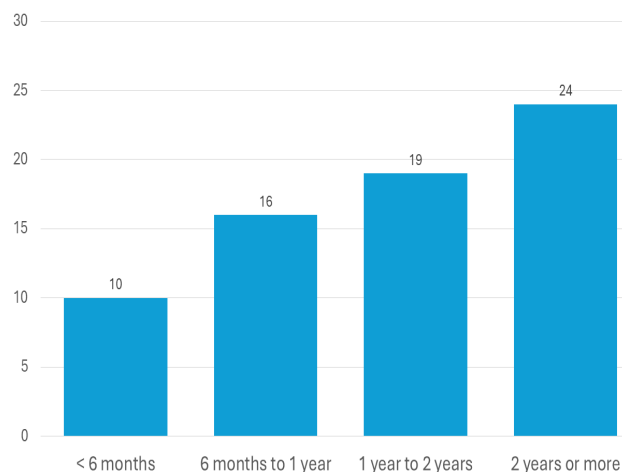


Fig. 2. Job Retention for First Employment

### B. Relevant Findings

Regarding the alignment of degree or field of specialization with employment industry, 32 respondents claimed that they were highly aligned, 30 claimed that they were moderately aligned, and 8 claimed that they were not aligned. The reporters of high alignment mentioned employers in national, regional and local networks, media and production based businesses, including government agencies.

Those indicating moderate alignment cited a mix of employers not primarily centered on communication, media, or production-based sectors. Those who reported lack of alignment similarly cited employers outside the core communication-related industries.

The outcomes of the degree-to-job alignment are especially significant to curriculum evaluation since they indicate that the program is not generating graduates to work in an entirely generic labor market. Most of the respondents (a huge percentage) indicated high or moderate alignment, which means that the competencies acquired during the program are applicable in real working environments.

High alignment indicates that there is a strong preparation of communication-based jobs whereas moderate alignment implies that the program also provides graduates with transferable skills which can be utilized in other related industries beyond the traditional media and production fields. This two-fold pattern is useful since it represents specialization and flexibility, which are essential in a labor market where graduates can start in related jobs and then transition to jobs that are more closely aligned.

In terms of difficulties encountered when searching a job, the most common problem was the absence of experience, which was mentioned 37 times. This was succeeded by few job vacancies with 32 responses. Other challenges were mismatch of training (12), lack of knowledge (9), inability to meet paper requirements (4), failure to pass the employment examination (2), and lack of the required training (1).

Meanwhile, the trend in the reported barriers can explain where the program support can still be lacking or where the labor-market constraints can be experienced the most. The prevalence of experience gap and shortages indicates that the factor of employability is determined not only by the classroom education, but also by the organization of opportunities. Even the well-prepared graduates might not be able to succeed when employers want prior experience or when vacancies are few. Nevertheless, the fact that the responses associated with the lack of compatibility between training and the lack of sufficient knowledge are present means that there are still barriers that are curriculum-specific.

These findings support the need for stronger internship pathways, portfolio-building opportunities, industry simulations, and placement support mechanisms so that graduates can present more concrete evidence of readiness when entering competitive communication and media-related job markets.

In assessing the alignment of academic courses within the BAComm program with the skills and knowledge required by employers in relevant industries, 60 out of 80 respondents provided ratings on the competency statements, while 20 did not respond. Overall, a majority of the 60 respondents expressed a positive response, either agreeing or totally agreeing, with the competency statements.

TABLE III. RESPONSES FOR COMPETENCY STATEMENTS

| Competency Statement  | Responses |   |    |    |    |
|---|-----------|---|----|----|----|
|   | 1         | 2 | 3  | 4  | 5  |
| The program provided me with sufficient knowledge and training to handle, assess, and organize information.             | 3         | 1 | 11 | 26 | 19 |
| The program trained me to effectively communicate through various formats and platforms.                                | 3         | 2 | 11 | 21 | 23 |
| The program trained me to handle various critical work functions through the development of my skills and competencies. | 2         | 2 | 11 | 27 | 18 |
| The program trained me to effectively apply knowledge and skills learned in the program in my current field of work.    | 3         | 1 | 11 | 28 | 17 |
| The program prepared me to collaborate with different people of varying skills as a member of a team and as a leader.   | 4         | 0 | 8  | 27 | 21 |
| The program prepared me to efficiently manage tasks and adapt to various changes in my work environment.                | 5         | 0 | 3  | 33 | 19 |
| The program prepared me to handle and address ethical and work-related issues that have arisen in the workplace.        | 4         | 1 | 8  | 27 | 20 |

Regarding the sufficiency of knowledge and training provided by the BAComm program for handling, assessing, and organizing information, 43% said yes and 32% said absolutely yes. To achieve successful communication using different

formats and platforms, 35 percent agreed and 38 percent completely agreed. Further evaluation revealed that 45 percent of the respondents said that the program was effective in equipping the skills required to deal with different critical work functions and 30 percent of the respondents said that the program equipped them to use the knowledge and skills acquired in their current fields of work.

In relation to collaboration, 45% agreed and 35% totally agreed that the program prepared them to work with different people of varying skill levels. On task management and flexibility, 55 percent were in agreement and 32 percent were completely in agreement. On managing ethical and work-related problems, 45% had agreed and 33% had completely agreed. Individuals with a negative position, either disagreeing or completely disagreeing, only represented 6 percent to 9 percent of the total responses of the competency statements.

TABLE IV. WEIGHTED MEAN AND VERBAL INTERPRETATION

| Competency Statement  | Weighted Mean | Verbal Interpretation |
|---|---------------|-----------------------|
| The program provided me with sufficient knowledge and training to handle, assess, and organize information.             | 3.95          | Agree                 |
| The program trained me to effectively communicate through various formats and platforms.                                | 3.98          | Agree                 |
| The program trained me to handle various critical work functions through the development of my skills and competencies. | 3.95          | Agree                 |
| The program trained me to effectively apply knowledge and skills learned in the program in my current field of work.    | 3.92          | Agree                 |
| The program prepared me to collaborate with different people of varying skills as a member of a team and as a leader.   | 4.02          | Agree                 |
| The program prepared me to efficiently manage tasks and adapt to various changes in my work environment.                | 4.02          | Agree                 |
| The program prepared me to handle and address ethical and work-related issues that have arisen in the workplace.        | 3.97          | Agree                 |
| <b>Grand Weighted Mean</b>  | <b>3.97</b>   | <b>Agree</b>          |

Calculating the weighted mean and interpreting the responses show that the majority of respondents agree that the BAComm program effectively provides knowledge and training in the development of communication skills, competency building, practical and technical application of knowledge and skills, social skills in both member and leader roles, efficient task management, and the handling of ethical and work-related concerns. Overall, the grand weighted mean is 3.97, which corresponds to the verbal interpretation Agree.

A closer reading of the weighted means shows an important internal pattern in the competency ratings. The highest means were recorded for collaboration and for managing tasks and adapting to changes in the work environment, both at 4.02, while the lowest mean was 3.92 for effectively applying knowledge and skills learned in the program to the respondent's current field of work. The margin is not huge, yet the difference is significant to interpret. It implies that graduates attest that the program is notably effective in the formation of interpersonal and organizational and adaptive skills, and the direct transfer of classroom-based knowledge into work-related practice may be a bit weaker. When applied to curriculum evaluation, it means that the underlying and generalizable competencies of the program are high, although there could still be room to improve technical and role-specific implementation with more intensive practice-based learning.

This is backed by the comments of employers and industrial partners who were questioned about the required competencies. They said that BA Communication graduates have been known to be competent, committed, and resilient in the ever-evolving environment of media and communication, which is manifested in sound analytical skills, creativity, and flexibility. They also reported that BA Communication graduates are successful in journalism, PR, broadcasting, advertising, and corporate communication, and they are also able to work under pressure, meet deadlines and deliver quality work.

The interpretation of the tracer results is reinforced by the qualitative validation of the employers and industry partners since it takes the discussion beyond self-report. The positive trend of the quantitative results is generally supported by their portrayals of graduates as competent, committed, creative, flexible, and capable of working under pressure. More to the point, observations are used to define the types of characteristics that seem to be most apparent in the workplace environment, i.e., analytical thinking, communication effectiveness, and adaptability in journalism, PR, broadcasting, advertising, and corporate communication environments. This helps to confirm the opinion that the program has an identifiable industry-facing presence, and that the graduates of the program have qualities that are still appreciated in various communication areas.

However, there are still some aspects that can be enhanced. Time management is an issue among the other graduates causing occasional lateness and absence particularly in high pressure situations. Even though they may deliver good work, there are instances that procrastination and urgency may affect

productivity. These findings indicate the competencies of the program, which are consistent with the industry norms, though also indicate that the job placement, technical preparation, and the ability of the job functions to correspond to communication training can be further enhanced.

With a combination of the employment profile, the alignment results, the competency rating and the qualitative feedback, an equilibrium picture is provided against program performance. The data does not explain that the curriculum is flawed, rather, the curriculum is typically functional and applicable, however, some form of reinforcement is necessary in the areas that determine the quality of transition and workplace readiness. The program appears to provide a good basis of communication work especially in regards to transferable skills and professional adaptability. What is more critical is the necessity to narrow the gap between academic preparation and the initial career requirements by offering additional exposure to technology and industry orientation, as well as professional discipline habits that might support future performance after employment. To this extent, the tracer outcomes can be valuable as practical feedback on curriculum enhancement as compared to an end-point indicator of graduate achievement.

#### IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The employment data of graduates shows that many graduates attain jobs that are moderately or highly related to their BA in Communication, and most of them get employment within six months of their graduation. Though not all the graduates indicated that the transition to employment had its challenges, some of them cited insufficient knowledge, training, and opportunities, which are not applicable to all the program graduates.

As far as the program competencies are concerned, the results indicate that they match the requirements of the media and production-related industries. Nevertheless, one can still work on areas that need to be enhanced, especially in terms of employment placement issues and suitability of job functions to the Communication training and degree.

To address issues related to skills, training, and job opportunities, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Conduct additional research on in-demand skills and training, especially in light of the rapid development of AI technologies with the intent to assess needs and pertinent areas for inclusion in a revised curriculum.

2. Acquire industry-standard equipment, both hardware and software, along with the necessary facilities and technical support should allow students to get real-life practice in controlled settings, prior to industry work.

3. Increase employment opportunities of the graduates. Incorporate courses which foster lifelong learning and flexibility to the end that graduates would be able to maneuver through positions that do not necessarily attract their degree.

4. Establish more partnerships and collaborations with other education institutions, agencies and industry leaders both locally

and globally. Bring professionals in the industry to address specialized topics or speak as a resource speaker on college events and departmental training.

Future endeavors intend to focus on identifying in-demand skills and training requirements, particularly in relation to rapidly advancing AI technologies and digital media practices. The results of such work may be used to guide curriculum updating, including the inclusion of emerging topics and courses that will better prepare future graduates for changing industry demands.

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