

Graduate Tracer Study for BSIT Program (2011-2018)

Mirafe Prospero

ABSTRACT

One good tool to determine the quality and the extent of functionality of the services schools delivered to their graduates is the outcome of a graduate tracer study that appropriately evaluates the employability of their alumni. Data were collected through a survey of BS Information Technology graduates of Lyceum of the Philippines–Laguna from school years 2011-2018. The survey used a 7-question instrument. Based on the result of the study, it has been evident that Lyceum of the Philippines–Laguna provides quality education in terms of its program and learning in the Information Technology field by achieving 92 percent employability.

Keywords: *Graduates, tracer study, assessment, learning, Information Technology*

INTRODUCTION

Academic institutions always aim to provide world class and best education to produce competitive graduates in the job market. One good tool to determine the quality and the extent of functionality of the services schools delivered to their graduates is the outcome of a graduate tracer study (GTS) that appropriately evaluates the employability of their alumni. These outcomes can provide a sound basis for improvement on the contents of curricula to courses' execution on teaching and learning (Tanhueco-Tumapon, 2016).

This graduate tracer study was conducted by the College of Engineering and Computer Studies for its Bachelor of Science in Information Technology program as initiated and highly recommended by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) in the assessment of the program offerings of higher education institutions. The proponent made use of technology using an online survey that covers wider area and accessibility of the platform. These surveys are given to graduates online by creating the Uniform Resource Locator (URL) of the document through online communication such as electronic mails, blogs, articles, and other electronic means. It is performed online in order to attain smoother data gathering instead of conducting surveys personally (Badiru & Wahome, 2016).

The graduate tracer study of the College of Engineering and Computer Studies for its Bachelor of Science in Information Technology program was conducted from 2011-2018 that aimed to measure the status of employment of their graduates during this eight-year duration. The results of this paper look at the tracer study as a means of maintaining curriculum relevance and providing targeted benefits to graduates to enhance the marketability of the program. It is also a measure of the viability of the institution's vision to produce graduates who are well-equipped with necessary skills, knowledge, and attitudes.

Objectives of the study

The study aimed to trace graduates to help assess the employability of the school's alumni. To further understand and analyze the problem, the following objectives were established: 1) To determine the profile of Lyceum of the Philippines–Laguna, Information Technology graduates based on graduation year from 2011-2018; 2) To determine the current status of employment and position of the graduates; and 3) To determine the average rate of time (months) of getting a job after graduation.

Design framework

The function of a framework model is to help researchers assess and refine their goals, develop realistic and relevant research questions, select appropriate methods, and identify potential validity threats to the study (Hale & Napier, 2018). It shows how the program and learning acquired from the institution as factors affecting employment, position, and how soon a graduate can find a job that fits after graduation.

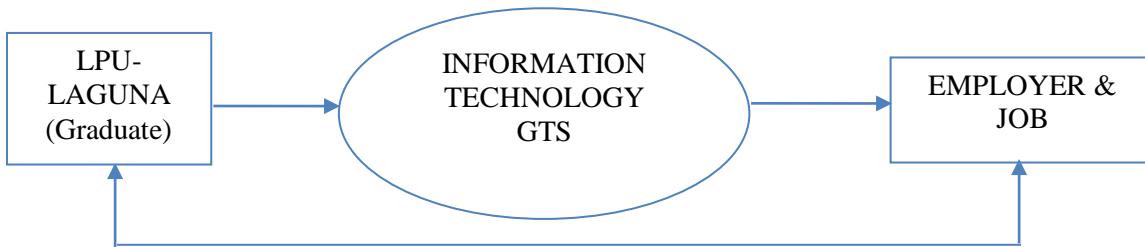


Figure 1. Tracer flow

Figure 1 shows the design flow of the study that connects the graduates of LPU-Laguna to the GTS to the employability of the alumni that also links the inputs (graduates) and the outputs (employment details) that can significantly contribute to the decision making on the improvement of the Information Technology program in LPU-Laguna.

METHODS

The researcher used descriptive research in the study because it involved collection of quantitative information that can be tabulated in numerical form (Pamaran & Pamaran, 2013). This method was utilized to gather information on the present condition of Information Technology graduates for school years 2011-2018. Results are shown through tabular, graphical, and textual form to further understand the given information.

The respondents of the study consist of 245 Information Technology graduates from batch 2011 to 2018 with a total of 75 respondents that summarizes the number after closing the survey. The researchers only used as data the survey answers that ran from the survey period provided by the researcher which was from May 27, 2018, up to May 17, 2019. This was due to slow retrieval of survey answers from respondents. The study covered a 30.61 percent response rate.

The researcher used the online questionnaire from Google Docs, an online survey application. The questionnaire was obtained from the Research Office. The online questionnaire was sent to the graduates through social media account/s or email that are indicated in the list of graduates provided by the Palaestra Consortio Office. The survey was composed of only seven questions. The survey questionnaire covers the name of the graduate, program of studies, year graduated, waiting period to the first job, company's name, position, and employment status.

The gathered data were presented in graphs and tabulated using percent-frequency tables. Frequency tables and their equivalent graphs were used to show the frequency counts and percentages of the demographic profile of the respondents that composed the survey questionnaire.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following results were drawn from the data gathered that were tabulated and graphed using percent-frequency method that served as the basis for the conclusions and recommendations of the study.

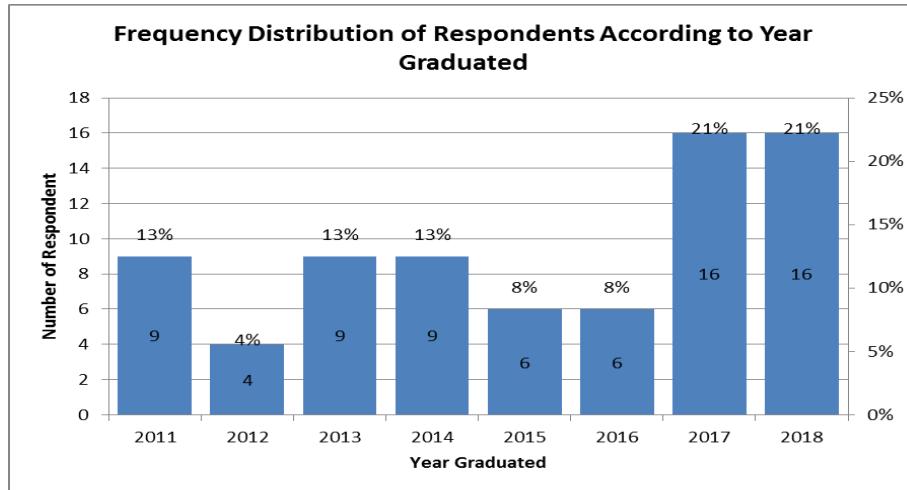


Figure 2. Frequency distribution according to year graduated

Figure 2 displays the turnout of respondents per year of graduation (2011-2018) and according to the distribution, the recent two years after graduation have the greatest number of respondents.



Figure 3. Frequency distribution on waiting period before the first job

Figure 3 presents the frequency distribution of respondents according to the waiting period after graduation. It is noticeable from the graph that the percentage of those who were able to get a job before graduation is also as high as those who landed a job three months after graduation which is 33percent.

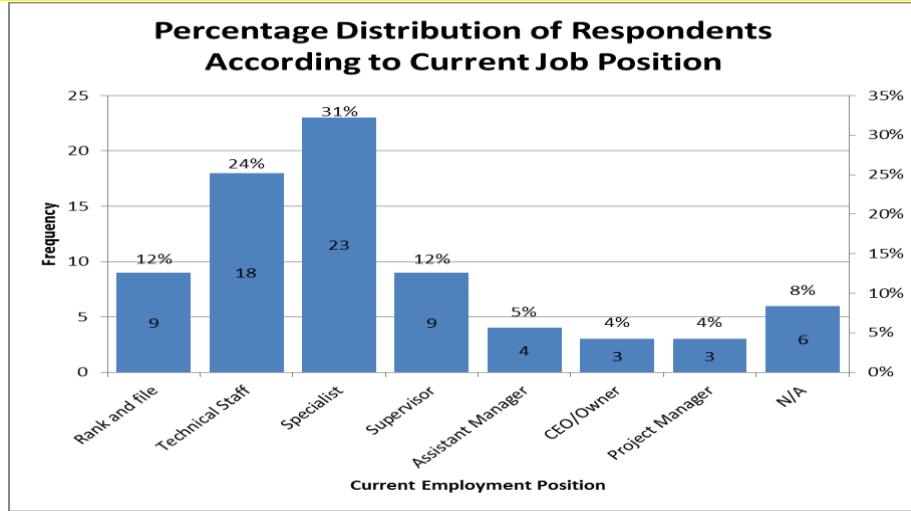


Figure 4. Percentage distribution according to current job position

Figure 4 is the graph of percentage distribution of respondents according to the current job position that shows that the specialist position has the highest percentage and the lowest are CEO/owner and project manager positions.

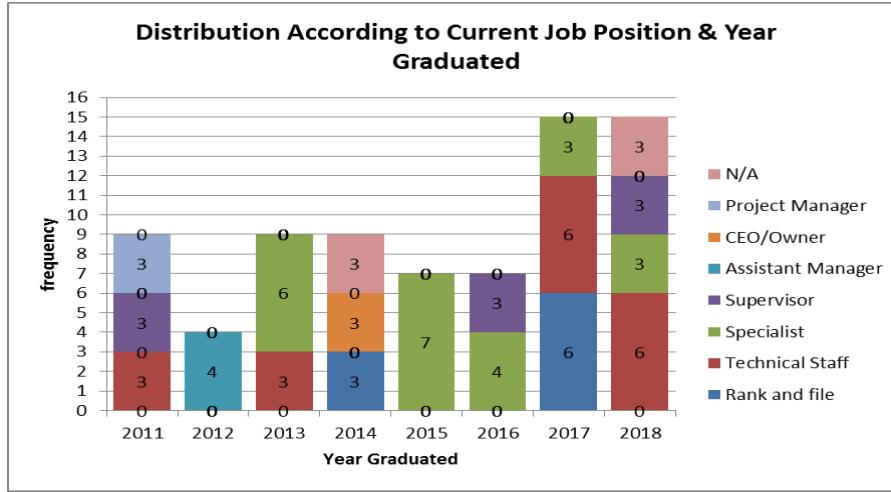


Figure 5. Frequency distribution according to current job position and year graduated

Figure 5 is about the frequency distribution of respondents according to the current job position and year graduated. It can be noted from the graph that although 2018 is the recent year of graduation, it is also the year that has no record of rank and file position which also has the highest number of respondents which is the same as that of 2017.

Table 1 reflects the percentage frequency distribution of employment status according to year graduated. The years 2017 and 2018 are with the highest number of respondents and also with the highest number of employed status. It can also be noted that the year 2014 has the greatest number of unemployed graduates and became owners or ventured into businesses. A 92-percent employability rating was obtained.

Table 1. Distribution of employment status according to year graduated and overall rating based on total respondents

Year Graduated	Further Studies	Employed	Unemployed	Self-Employed	Respondents
2011	0	9	0	0	9
2012	0	4	0	0	4
2013	0	9	0	0	9
2014	0	4	3	2	9
2015	0	6	0	0	6
2016	0	6	0	0	6
2017	0	16	0	0	16
2018	2	14	0	0	16
Total	2	68	3	2	75
(%)	2.666667	91.666667	4	2.666667	0.306122449

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The following conclusions can be drawn from the results shown in the graphs and table:

1. Majority of the respondents are from the recent years of graduation (2017 and 2018), according to Schomburg (2017), in his book: *Carrying out tracer studies: Guide to anticipating and matching skills and jobs*, the high response rate is mostly influenced by recently graduated (not too long ago), currency of the transition phase, and early career and work experience.

2. It can be noted that a high rating of 90.66 percent of employability was obtained due to the fact that from the last five years, it is found that the top five emerging jobs are related to information technology (Cabuenas, 2019).

3. Among the respondents, the highest percentage of waiting period before landing on the first job is actually the zero (0) waiting period because these alumni were already hired even before graduation while they were on their on-the-job training during the last semester of their schooling.

4. The data also shows that graduates can even land as supervisor as their entry level in the company for their first job.

The researcher would like to recommend the following:

For the Lyceum of the Philippines–Laguna. To continuously improve and further evaluate the program description, objectives, and delivery to capture the types of duties a graduate can expect to perform in the work environment. This will further align the graduates to the needs of the workplace, increase the potential of alumni to acquire a higher position, and increase the employability rating of the graduates.

Students should be well trained and exposed more in extra-curricular activities since this would help them improve their abilities to work as a team, make decisions or judgments, and develop confidence, initiative, and creativity to innovate things. This will help students and graduates to be more adaptive in the working environment.

Furthermore, to continuously support the endeavors of the Palaestra Consortio Office for it became one of the pillars of the school in attaining its objectives for the realization of its vision and mission.

For Information Technology students. To assess their own skills and learning based on the results of the study if it will be enough to prepare them for employment. This will help them strengthen their skills and broaden their knowledge to be adaptive to the needs of the working environment.

For future researchers. To continually investigate the status of their graduates for further enhancement of the program to become aware of the needs of the industry for long term employment and the success of each graduate.

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