

Employability of the Graduates of the School of Education, Arts and Sciences

Natalie Kate Ramirez
School of Education, Arts and Sciences
University of Saint Louis
Tuguegarao City, Philippines

Renz Marion Gavino
School of Education, Arts and Sciences
University of Saint Louis
Tuguegarao City, Philippines

Abstract— The aim of this study was to determine the employability of the graduates of the School of Education, Arts, and Sciences for the SY 2019-2020, SY 2020-2021, and SY 2021-2022. The study made use of quantitative research design to determine the employability of Teacher Education, Political Science, and Psychology graduates of the University of Saint Louis for the said School Years. Results reveal that across different disciplines, a remarkable consistency emerges as the number of traced graduates closely aligns with employment rates. The majority of programs report near-perfect employment outcomes, signifying the effectiveness of these programs in preparing graduates for the job market. In general, this research provides a holistic understanding of graduates' employability and their proficiency in 21st-century skills, character qualities, and institutional attributes. These findings reflect the effectiveness of educational programs in preparing graduates for the job market and equipping them with the skills and qualities required for success in a rapidly evolving world.

Keywords— *Employability, Graduates, Teacher Education, Political Science, Psychology*

I. INTRODUCTION

The use of technology to solve growing worries about resource depletion and sustainable development is a hallmark of the 21st-century century. Additionally, because of how quickly new technologies are developing and changing, educational programs must keep up with the information and abilities that companies are seeking. Policymakers have not thoroughly addressed the kinds of skills required and how institutions may support the development of these skills. Universities must ensure that their students have the knowledge, skills, and aptitudes necessary to be more competitive in a market for workers that is predicted to be contracting. Since education is considered as the bedrock to development and contributes to the growth of every nation by improving the skills and productive capacity of workers, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the Philippines continuously produce graduates in different fields since they play a vital role in the development of knowledge-based economy (Eurico et al., 2015). However, it is also a challenge for HEIs in the Philippines not only to produce graduates but, more importantly, to produce highly skilled graduates who can respond to the needs of the globalized world (Toquero, 2020).

With globalization and the challenge of HEIs in producing graduates, employability then is becoming one of the goals in the education systems, especially in developing countries such as the Philippines (Acosta & Acosta, 2016). Employability refers to the capability of graduates to obtain and maintain an employment that is fulfilling and also effectively utilizing their knowledge, skills, and attitudes within a particular context to self-sufficiently realize their potential by sustaining their own employment (Pacleb-Ulanday, 2021). Hence, it is very important that every graduate must see to it that adequate skills and competencies should be developed. However, a substantial number of studies have revealed that there is an increasingly wide gap between the skills and capabilities of graduates and the requirements and demands of the work environment (Antiojo, 2018). With this, graduates' skills and competencies should be given importance. Yudiono et al. (2021) stipulated that the employability of graduates also involves skills in both the hard (academic and technical) and soft (personality traits and habits) skills areas. In addition, graduates are faced with the challenge of acquiring employment right after graduation. It is paramount that they should have gained the best knowledge and skills in their field of specialization before plunging into any workplace of their choice. In like manner, a graduate who leaves the sanctuary of the academe desires to find the best employment out there in the job market. However, a job seeker's desire for the best job is hampered by a lack of basic skills relevant to the job, lack of experience, and poor communication and social skills, among others. Furthermore, the country's education system continues to turn out college graduates whose training and skills are not attuned to the needs of the labor market both at home and abroad.

Given how fiercely competitive the market is right now, it is not unexpected that HEIs prioritize teaching their students skills that will help them in the workplace. Institutions that train teachers and liberal arts enthusiasts are not immune from this. To promote the employability of their graduates, schools work to improve the standard of instruction and delivery. Additionally, because different Philippine schools and universities create thousands of graduates each year, students must strengthen their employability skills. Therefore, the employability of its graduates has become a crucial indicator of the performance of any institution providing quality education in accordance with the Philippine Constitution (Bihag-

boholano, 2012). Beyond the classroom, Cardona and Almejas et al. (2017) asserted that academic institutions in higher education have a duty to ensure that their graduates are ready to enter the workforce and meet its requirements. This emphasizes even more the necessity of tracer research on graduates' employability.

With this premise, this study is conducted to determine the employability of Teacher Education, Arts, and Sciences graduates of the University of Saint Louis to give a truthful assessment of the quality of its graduates. Further, this study also serves as an evaluation on the basis of the experience and views of graduates to thoroughly assess the different programs offered in the university in relation to their hard and soft skills acquired during their stay in the university with the competencies needed in their respective industry. Members of the academe must have thorough knowledge of current industrial practices and an understanding of how various workplaces are constructed and operated in order for employability skills to be developed in teacher education institutions. Faculty members must use a variety of teaching techniques and advanced lecture styles in addition to their understanding of the subject matter. Faculty members can build specific skills through the teaching methods they employ in addition to teaching "about" them. Universities are progressively promoting the use of various teaching approaches to help students gain graduate-level skills, even if some courses, like physics or information technology, have long had a strong practical component in both teaching and evaluation. Looking into the employability of graduates from Teacher Education, Arts, and Sciences programs is essential for ensuring the relevance and effectiveness of education, attracting students, improving program quality, and contributing to economic development. It is a multifaceted approach that benefits both educational institutions and the broader community.

II. METHODS

The study used quantitative research design to determine the employability of Teacher Education, Political Science, and Psychology graduates of the University of Saint Louis for the past Three School Years. The respondents included graduates from the aforementioned programs during the same timeframe.

A questionnaire with two parts was used in the study. The first part of the questionnaire assessed the status of SEAS graduates in terms of their employability. The second part assessed their 21st Century Skills and Competencies, which was lifted from European Skills, Competencies, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO, 2015) and Partnership for 21st Century Skills. The tool is divided into three dimensions: Foundational Skills, Competencies, and Character Qualities. The third part of the tool looked into the attainment of institutional graduate attributes of graduates in which items were developed by the USL – Continuous Quality Improvement Office. The responses to these questions are

scaled as follows: 5- strongly agree, 4-agree, 3- neutral, 2-disagree, 1-strongly disagree.

The following are the data analysis tools that were employed:

Frequency and Percentage were used to describe the status of SEAS graduates in terms of their employability.

Weighted mean was used to describe the attainment of graduates on the 21st-century skills and competencies and institutional graduate attributes using the following ranges and qualitative descriptions:

Mean Range	Qualitative Description
4.50 – 5.00	Fully Attained
3.50 – 4.49	Attained
2.50 – 3.49	Moderately Attained
1.50 – 2.49	Less Attained
1.00 – 1.49	Not Attained

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Employability of Graduates for the Past Three School Years

Programs	SY 2019-2020			SY 2020-2021			SY 2021-2022		
	No. of Graduates	No. of Traced Graduates	No. of Employed Graduates	No. of Graduates	No. of Traced Graduates	No. of Employed Graduates	No. of Graduates	No. of Traced Graduates	No. of Employed Graduates
Bachelor of Secondary Education major in English	2	2	2	1	1	1	10	10	10
Bachelor of Secondary Education major in Mathematics	1	1	1	NA	NA	NA	4	4	4
Bachelor of Secondary Education major in Filipino	7	6	6	1	1	1	NA	NA	NA
Bachelor of Secondary Education major in General Science	3	3	3	NA	NA	NA	1	1	1
Bachelor of Secondary Education major in Social Studies	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	3	3	3

Bachelor in Physical Education	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	6	5	5
Bachelor in Elementary Education	3	3	3	NA	NA	NA	9	9	9
Bachelor of Arts in Political Science	3	2	2	NA	NA	NA	20	20	20
Bachelor of Science in Psychology	5	5	5	NA	NA	NA	13	13	13

Table 1 provides data on the employability of graduates across different disciplines for the past three years. First, for the Bachelor of Secondary Education major in English, there were originally two graduates. All were traced and found to be employed in the first year. In the second year, there was one graduate who was traced and found to be employed. In the third year, there were ten graduates, all of whom were traced and fully employed. The trend was different for the Bachelor of Secondary Education major in Mathematics. In the first year, one graduate was successfully traced and employed. Data for the second year was unavailable, while in the third year, there were four graduates, all traced and employed. For the Filipino major, seven students graduated in the first year. Six were traced, and all of them were employed. There was one graduate in the second year that was traced and employed. No data was available for the third year. For the General Science major, there were three graduates in the first year, all traced and employed. No data was available for the second year, while the third year featured one traced and employed graduate. The Social Studies major and Bachelor in Physical Education program saw no available data in the first two years and in the third year, three and six graduates, respectively, with all traced and most found to be employed. The Elementary Education program saw three traced and employed graduates in the first year and nine in the third, with no data available for the second year. Political Science graduates were three in the first year, with two traced and employed. While no data was available for the second year, 20 graduates were traced and employed in the third year. Finally, the Psychology program had five traced and employed graduates in the first year and thirteen in the third, with no data available for the second year.

The high correspondence between the number of traced and employed graduates in each program indicates a strong employment rate for these individuals. For most programs, nearly all or all traced graduates were employed, signaling successful employability outcomes for those specific programs. The results highlight the employability status of graduates across different education programs, showing a generally high employment rate among the traced graduates. It may indicate the effectiveness of these programs in preparing students for the employment market or the availability of jobs in the respective fields.

Table 2a. Assessment of Teacher Education, Political Science, and Psychology Graduates on the Attainment of 21st Century Skills along Foundational Literacies

Foundational Literacies	Mean	Qualitative Description
Ability to understand and use written and oral language	4.58	Fully Attained
Ability to use numbers and other symbols to understand and express quantitative relationships	4.62	Fully Attained
Ability to use and create technology-based content	4.45	Attained
Ability to find and share factual information	4.65	Fully Attained
Ability to answer questions and interact with others ethically	4.52	Fully Attained
Ability to use information technology	4.35	Attained
Ability to test hypothesis using scientific knowledge and principles	4.40	Attained
Ability to understand and apply conceptual and numerical aspects of finance	4.45	Fully Attained
Ability to understand, analyze, and apply knowledge of humanities	4.50	Fully Attained
Mean	4.50	Fully Attained

The assessment of Teacher Education, Political Science, and Psychology graduates on the attainment of 21st Century skills along Foundational Literacies is given in Table 2a. The results show that graduates exhibit a high level of competency across all measured skills. They have 'Fully Attained' proficiency in their understanding of written and oral language, usage of numbers and symbols for quantitative relationships, the ability to find and share factual information, ethical interaction, their understanding of the conceptual and numerical aspects of finance, and their understanding, analysis, and application of humanities knowledge. These areas have mean scores ranging from 4.50 to 4.65, indicating a high level of skill attainment. On the other hand, three skills, including the ability to use and create technology-based content, the capacity to use information technology, and testing a hypothesis using scientific knowledge and principles, have been described as 'Attained'. This suggests that while the graduates demonstrate competency in these areas, their command may not be as strong as in the other areas. The mean scores for these skills range from 4.35 to 4.45.

Overall, with an average mean score of 4.50, the graduates are labeled as having 'Fully Attained' the 21st Century Skills on Foundational Literacies. The results

demonstrate that these graduates are equipped with a broad range of skills that are pivotal for thriving in this century, promising strong potential for successful engagement in their chosen careers and societal roles.

Table 2b. Assessment of Teacher Education, Political Science, and Psychology Graduates on the Attainment of 21st Century Skills along Competencies

Competencies	Mean	Qualitative Description
Ability to propose solutions to an identified problem	4.65	Fully Attained
Ability to evaluate situations as a basis in formulating sound response	4.58	Fully Attained
Ability to imagine and devise new or innovative ways of addressing problems	4.52	Fully Attained
Ability to express meaning of a knowledge through application, synthesis, or repurposing	4.70	Fully Attained
Ability to listen and understand information conveyed verbally, nonverbally, visually and other means	4.58	Fully Attained
Ability to contextualize and convey information through verbal, nonverbal, visual, and written means	4.56	Fully Attained
Ability to work in a team towards a common goal	4.62	Fully Attained
Ability to prevent and manage conflict in a team	4.55	Fully Attained
Mean	4.60	Fully Attained

Table 2b presents the assessment of Teacher Education, Political Science, and Psychology graduates on the attainment of 21st Century skills along various competencies. These competencies include problem-solving, evaluating situations, creativity, understanding and application of knowledge, listening comprehension, communication skills, teamwork, and conflict management. It is observed that the graduates have "Fully Attained" all eight competency skills inspected, attesting their remarkable preparation in these essential 21st Century skills. The capacity to express knowledge through application, synthesis, or repurposing scored the highest, with a mean of 4.70 out of 5. This demonstrates that the graduates have a profound understanding of their knowledge, which they can use to apply, synthesize, or reuse effectively. The competence to propose solutions for an identified problem was rated second-highest at 4.65, followed closely by the ability to work collectively within a team towards a shared goal, with a mean of 4.62, displaying that graduates are also well-versed in problem-solving and team collaboration skills. The lowest mean score is 4.55 for the ability to prevent and manage

conflict within a team. Even though it is the lowest score, the competency is still categorized as "Fully Attained," indicating the graduates are fully competent in managing and preventing conflict, despite the relatively lower score compared to other competencies. The overall mean of 4.60 suggests that, overall, the graduates have "Fully Attained" these 21st Century skills in the competency area. Therefore, the graduates possess the crucial competencies required for today's diverse and evolving world, positioning them for success in their future careers and societal roles.

Table 2c. Assessment of Teacher Education, Political Science, and Psychology Graduates on the Attainment of 21st Century Skills along along Character Qualities

Character Qualities	Mean	Qualitative Description
Ability and desire to ask questions and to demonstrate open-mindedness and inquisitiveness	4.65	Fully Attained
Ability and desire to proactively undertake a new task or goal	4.52	Fully Attained
Ability to sustain interest and effort	4.45	Attained
Ability to persevere to accomplish a task or goal	4.52	Fully Attained
Ability to change plans, methods, opinions or goals in light of new information	4.65	Fully Attained
Ability to effectively direct, guide, and inspire others to accomplish a common goal	4.52	Fully Attained
Ability to interact with people in a socially, culturally, and ethically appropriate way	4.52	Fully Attained
Mean	4.55	Fully Attained

Table 2c assesses Teacher Education, Political Science, and Psychology graduates on the attainment of 21st Century skills in terms of various character qualities. These qualities include inquisitiveness, initiative, persistence, adaptability, leadership, and social interaction. The character qualities across the graduates are rated 'Fully Attained,' with the exception of one, exhibiting the learners' strong demonstration of these qualities. The ability and desire to ask questions and demonstrate open-mindedness and inquisitiveness, coupled with the ability to change plans, methods, opinions, or goals in light of new information, are both rated the highest with a mean of 4.65. This suggests that the graduates not only have a strong inclination towards curiosity and adaptability but also can adjust their plans when faced with new and unfamiliar conditions or information. On the other hand, the quality of the ability to sustain interest and effort is rated the lowest with a mean of 4.45, which is still under the category of 'Attained.' This indicates the graduates are capable with a degree of persistence, yet there is room for

enhancement compared to other character qualities. The other character qualities: ability and desire to proactively undertake a new task or goal, ability to persevere to accomplish a task or goal, ability to effectively direct, guide, and inspire others to accomplish a common goal, and ability to interact with people in a socially, culturally, and ethically appropriate way all have a 'Fully Attained' status and an identical mean score of 4.52. This demonstrates that the graduates have a commendable proficiency in initiative, perseverance, leadership, and cultural respect and understanding. As such, they are thoroughly equipped with the essential character qualities for the 21st Century, with a mean score of 4.55, thus acquiring a 'Fully Attained' status.

Table 2d. Assessment of Teacher Education, Political Science, and Psychology Graduates on the Attainment of Institutional Attributes

Institutional Attributes	Mean	Qualitative Description
Engages in works of mercy, volunteerism, and vocation promotion for the advancement of the CICM/church mission.	4.58	Fully Attained
Practices Christian values in both professional and personal endeavors in the service of Church and Country	4.47	Attained
Applies the latest developments in the specific field of practice to meet current and emerging needs of society	4.65	Fully Attained
Communicates effectively in oral and written English and Filipino and with a working knowledge and skills in at least one foreign language.	4.56	Fully Attained
Acts in accordance with professional, social, and ethical standards	4.58	Fully Attained
Works effectively in multidisciplinary and multi-cultural teams and situations	4.55	Fully Attained
Recognizes the need for on-going professional and development	4.58	Fully Attained
Performs service to the community through membership and participation in professional societies, educational institutions, civic organizations, and humanitarian endeavors	4.40	Attained
Nurtures relationship with others and the environment towards the promotion of Filipino identity and cultural heritage	4.65	Fully Attained
Participates in the new knowledge and development projects and programs towards nation and	4.66	Fully Attained

community building to meet the changing demands in the local and global arena		
Mean	4.57	Fully Attained

Table 2d assesses Teacher Education, Political Science, and Psychology graduates on the attainment of institutional attributes. These include engagement in works of mercy and volunteerism, practicing Christian values in service, application of field developments, effective communication, ethical professionalism, working in diverse teams, recognition of professional development needs, community service, nurturing relationships with others and the environment, and participating in knowledge and development projects. Most of the attributes are rated as 'Fully Attained,' indicating the graduates exhibited excellence in achieving them. Highest rated attributes are the application of latest developments in their field of practice to meet societal needs, nurturing relationships with others and environment for Filipino identity promotion, and participation in knowledge and development projects and programs for nation and community building. These all rated 4.65 or more. These scores show the respondents succeeding in the latest advancements within their fields, showing great respect for cultural identity and actively engaging in projects for community development. The areas of practicing Christian values in professional and personal endeavors in the service of the Church and Country, as well as performing community services through various memberships and active participation scored the lowest, but still with 'Attained' status, having means of 4.47 and 4.40, respectively. While these scores are a bit lower compared to others, they still reflect a good level of achievement. Overall, with a mean score of 4.57, the graduates have 'Fully Attained' the institutional attributes per the assessment, showing excellent adherence to the institutional objectives and mission. This indicates a well-rounded development in the graduates, encompassing both academic and institutional values.

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, the data presented demonstrates the strong employability of graduates across different disciplines and their exceptional proficiency in 21st Century skills, competencies, character qualities, and institutional attributes. The high correspondence between the number of traced and employed graduates in each program highlights the effectiveness of these educational programs in preparing students for the job market. Moreover, the graduates exhibit a high level of competency in foundational literacies, competencies, character qualities, and institutional attributes, positioning them well for success in their chosen careers and societal roles. These findings reflect the dedication of both the graduates and the educational institutions in fostering well-rounded individuals ready to contribute meaningfully to society.

REFERENCES

- Acosta, I. C., & Acosta, A. S. (2016). Teachers' Perceptions on Senior High School Readiness of Higher Education Institutions in the Philippines. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 4(10), 2447-2462.
- Almejas, B. C., Marasigan, J. C., Morante, T. A., Lim, E. J. A., & Catuday, R. A. (2017). Teacher education graduates: A tracer study. In *ternational Conference on Law, Business, Educa-tion and Corporate Social Responsibility, Cebu, Philippines*.
- Antiojo, L. P. (2018). Employability of Education Graduates of Cavite State University Naic. *Social Science and Humanities Journal*, 2(4), 423-431.
- Bihag-boholano, H. (2012). Employability of teacher education graduates of an Asian public university. *JPAIR Multidisciplinary Research Journal*, 9(1), 106-121.
- Eurico, S. T., Da Silva, J. A. M., & Do Valle, P. O. (2015). A model of graduates' satisfaction and loyalty in tourism higher education: The role of employability. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education*, 16, 30-42.
- Pacleb-Ulanday, M. L. (2021). Tracer study and employability skills acquisition of teacher education graduates. *Psychology and Education Journal*, 58(4), 1678-1683.
- Toquero, C. M. (2020). Challenges and opportunities for higher education amid the COVID-19 pandemic: The Philippine context. *Pedagogical Research*, 5(4).
- Yudiono, H., Budiman, F. A., Majid, M. N., & Permana, K. N. C. (2021). The Learning Strategy Based on Scientific Approach to Strengthen the Employability Skill of Teacher Candidates. *International Journal of Instruction*, 14(2), 551-570.

The author/s retain the copyright to this article, with IJAESSI granted first publication rights. This article is distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>), allowing for open access.