

Employment Outcomes of Office Administration Graduates of Bohol Island State University - Candijay Campus, Philippines

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Abstract. This tracer study aimed to assess the employability of Bachelor of Science in Office Administration graduates from Bohol Island State University - Candijay Campus (2021–2023) and evaluate how their competencies align with workforce demands. Employability is a key indicator of a university's success in preparing graduates for professional careers, directly influencing institutional reputation and graduate career outcomes. Using a modified Graduate Tracer Study (GTS) questionnaire, quantitative data were collected through online surveys targeting 245 graduates, yielding 143 responses. Statistical analysis revealed that most respondents were female, single, and employed as office or clerical staff. Many earned monthly salaries ranging from PHP 10,000 to PHP 20,000, with salary and benefits highlighted as critical factors in job satisfaction. Lack of work experience was identified as the primary barrier to employment, underscoring its importance in hiring. Furthermore, the alignment between graduates' fields of study and their current roles demonstrated the relevance of the program's curriculum to industry needs. Graduates identified communication skills as the most valuable competency acquired during their studies, reflecting the effectiveness of the university's curricular offerings in equipping students for professional success. This study contributes to understanding graduate employability by emphasizing the role of targeted skill development and work experience in enhancing career readiness.

Keywords: Employability; Graduate Tracer Study (GTS); Office Administration Graduates.

1.0 Introduction

Employment is critical in society, driving economic growth and national development. For academic institutions, the employability of their graduates is a vital indicator of success, reflecting how effectively they have prepared students to meet workforce demands. A high employability rate enhances the institution's reputation and improves the graduates' chances of securing meaningful employment. Employers often consider the alumni record of schools when making hiring decisions, emphasizing the importance of tracking graduate outcomes to boost institutional recognition and improve educational practices.

Tracer studies are widely used in higher education to evaluate the performance of graduates in the workforce. According to Cuadra, Aure, and Gonzaga (2019), tracer studies are powerful tools to assess the alignment between graduates' skills and industry needs while offering insights into their professional trajectories. As the International

Training Center (ITC) highlights, such studies provide essential data for shaping academic programs and career services.

Despite the value of quality education in enhancing employment prospects, college graduates often face challenges such as limited job opportunities, mismatches between academic training and industry demands, and reduced competitiveness caused by gaps in education quality. These issues underscore the need for targeted studies to assess and address graduate employability.

The College of Business Management, formerly known as the College of Technology and Allied Sciences at Bohol Island State University - Candijay Campus, recognizes the importance of understanding graduate outcomes. Building on previous studies, such as Catubig et al. (2023), which highlighted the importance of communication skills and the alignment between college coursework and employment, this study focuses on a specific group of graduates: Bachelor of Science in Office Administration, alumni from 2021 to 2023. These graduates have not been previously tracked, creating a research gap that this study aims to address. Tracer studies at BISU-Candijay have been conducted since 2017, but this study seeks to extend the scope by focusing on recent batches to explore their employment status and career paths. Tracking graduate employability in this context is particularly significant, as it provides valuable data to improve curricula, address skill mismatches, and refine institutional strategies for preparing students for the workforce.

This study aims to trace the employability of Bachelor of Science in Office Administration graduates from 2021 to 2023 at BISU Candijay Campus. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions: What are the demographic profiles of the respondents? What is their employment status? How relevant is their college course to their current job? What are their reasons for staying in their jobs or remaining unemployed? By addressing these questions, this study aims to benefit stakeholders—including universities, graduates, and policymakers—by identifying trends, refining educational strategies, and enhancing alignment between education and workforce demands.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

The researchers used a descriptive survey method to collect data, utilizing a Graduate Tracer Study (GTS) questionnaire initially designed by the CHED. The questionnaire was based on the same study completed by the Bachelor of Science in Office Administration program in June 2023. Information and records from the registrar's office were gathered to determine the lists of BSOA graduates from 2021 to 2023 of the BISU Candijay Campus. Therefore, this approach acts as a mechanism for gathering data and information, facilitating the achievement of this study's primary objective.

2.2 Research Locale

The locale of the study is Bohol Island State University-Candijay Campus, located in Barangay Cogtong, Municipality of Candijay Bohol. The target respondents of the study were the Bachelor of Science in Office Administration students from two consecutive batches spanning from 2021 until 2023. The batch of 2021-2022 has 17 males and 102 females, while the next batch of 2022-2023 has 21 males and 105 females. In total, the study aimed to involve 245 graduates. The total enumeration method thoroughly examines all possibilities and provides a complete understanding of the research problem.

2.3 Research Respondents

The study aimed to involve 245 graduates in total. The total enumeration method ensures a comprehensive examination of all possibilities and provides a complete understanding of the research problem.

2.4 Research Instrument

The research employed a descriptive design, utilizing a modified questionnaire as the primary data collection tool. The questionnaire was adapted from the Commission on Higher Education's Graduate Tracer Study (GTS), widely recognized for its reliability in collecting graduate employment data. To ensure the reliability of the modified questionnaire, it was reviewed and validated by experts in the field, and a pilot test was conducted with a sample of graduates to assess its consistency and clarity. The questionnaire was divided into two parts: the first section gathered the demographic profiles of the respondents, while the second section focused on their employment

data. This rigorous process ensured that the instrument effectively captured relevant and accurate information for the study.

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

Before the study was initiated, the researcher asked permission to acquire from the Campus Director, Dr. Luzminda G. Machete, through a formal letter of request with the support of the Dean of the College of Business Management of Bohol Island State University, Candijay Campus, to conduct a survey. After being granted permission, the researchers requested a list of all Bachelor of Science and Office Administration graduates from the school year 2021- 2023 from the campus registrar. Subsequently, the total number of graduates was determined. The researchers gathered information on the participants and emailed graduates working in various fields and locations. The idea for this study was developed through analyzing and identifying issues concerning graduate students. Following this, the questionnaires were distributed via email, messenger, or another online mode, using a Google form with a letter informing the graduates of the purpose of the study. Moreover, requesting their participation during their availability and followed up by the researchers. The questionnaires were retrieved, followed by the data tabulation, analysis, and interpretation. All entries were double-checked to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the results.

2.6 Statistical Treatment

All the data collected was thoroughly inspected, evaluated, and interpreted to ensure the research's reliability. To summarize the distribution of the respondents, they were categorized based on their characteristics, and to ascertain the number of answers to each questionnaire item that described the employability of graduates, the researchers combined the data using frequency counts and percentages. A frequency count was used to tally the respondents' answers to their general information and employment data. Percentage distribution was used to determine the quantitative relation of individual response to the whole response.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Demographic Profile

This section shows the respondents' demographic profile, which includes their age, sex, civil status, location of residence, and region of origin. The demographic profile is vital in understanding and analyzing various aspects that helped our research study. The data is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. *Profile of the respondents (n=143)*

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age		
20-24	95	66.4
25-29	42	29.3
30 years above	6	4.20
Sex		
Male	28	19.5
Female	115	80.4
Civil Status		
Single	129	90.2
Married	10	6.99
Single Parent	1	0.70
Born with a child but not married	3	2.10
Location of Residence		
City	16	11.1
Municipality	127	88.8
Region of Origin		
Region 4	1	0.70
Region 7	137	95.8
Region 8	5	3.5

Table 1 summarizes the frequency and percentage distribution of Bachelor of Science in Office Administration graduates of 2021-2023. Out of one hundred forty-three (143), ninety-five (95) participants are aged 20-24, which comprises 66.43 percent of the total number, and forty-two (42) participants are aged 25-29 years old, with a percentage of 29.37 percent featured as young adulthood, and 4.20 percent under 30 and above. The results show

that the graduates find jobs at their younger adulthood stage, which was considered the age of the experiment. This emphasizes that the respondents are eager to look for a job. EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal (2024) shows that the predominant age of respondents is 24 years, with 78 individuals (26.09%), since most of them completed their education in their twenties.

Regarding Sex, the data shows that 80.42 percent of the respondents are female, and 19.58 percent are male. Thus, female graduates are usually higher than male graduates in BISU—Candijay. According to CHED (www.ched.gov.ph), more women finished college than men in the Philippines.

According to Zippia (2022), 80.3% of office administrators in the United States are female. This is 2.2 percentage points higher than last year. Additionally, the percentage of female office administrators has increased by 0.4 percentage points since 2010. That means there are 769,705 female office administrators in the U.S. and 188,832 male office administrators in the United States.

Regarding the civil status of the respondents, the majority are single, with a total of 90.21 percent, while the single parent has the lowest rank, which is 0.70 percent. This implies that most respondents prioritize their careers over their own families. It indicates that they emphasize earning money and focus on their profession. Among the 299 respondents of the study by EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR) - Peer Reviewed Journal (2024), 268 (89.63%) were single, and 31 (10.37%) were married. Specifically, the single respondents from the BSOA are 89.63%. This trend is primarily attributed to prioritizing and establishing graduates' careers before committing to a serious relationship. They may want to concentrate on building their professional lives and achieving financial stability first. Likewise, individuals have different priorities and timelines for starting relationships and settling down. Some may prioritize personal growth, travel, or other experiences before committing to a serious relationship.

Concerning residence location, the highest proportion of the respondents are from the municipalities, with 88.81 percent living in the municipalities and 11.19 percent living in the city.

Regarding the region of origin, 95.80 percent of the respondents are still living within region VII, while Region IV has the lowest rank, comprising 1 or 0.70 percent.

3.2 Employment Status

Table 2 shows the frequency distribution of respondents according to their employment status. The majority, or 84.62 percent, of the graduates are presently employed, while 15.38 percent are unemployed. The data showed that BISU-Candijay Bachelor of Science in Office Administration graduates have a high degree of employability within the last 3 years. This high percentage of respondents employed implies that a significant majority of the graduates have successfully transitioned from education to the workforce, indicating positive job prospects for the majority. The study of Escandallo J. et al. (2024) shows the employment rate of the respondents. Most of them, 75 (86.2%), were employed, while 12 (13.8%) were not. The result of this study regarding the employability percentage is almost the same as in the study of Ojeda-Jintalan (2020), which is 83.96%. This implies that the graduates can contribute to the growth of the national and local economy, as depicted by their employability.

Table 2. *Frequency distribution of respondents according to their employment status* (n=143)

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage
Employment Status		
Employed	121	84.6
Unemployed	22	15.3

According to their job position level, office staff or clerical got the highest percentage of 72.72. At the same time, HRM, Brokerage, Enumerator, Pharmacy Assistant, Data Analyst, QA Specialist, and Product Supervisor had the lowest with 1 or 0.83 percent. This indicates that most graduates are working in jobs related to their field of study, suggesting a strong alignment between their education and their job roles. This finding was also relevant to the study of Ojeda (2020), which reveals that most respondents occupied a clerical position, meaning that the BSOA graduates were gainfully employed in line with their field specialization.

Regarding the monthly salary of employed graduates, the majority got 44.63 percent, ranging from 10,000 to less than 20,000 pesos, while the employed graduates who earned 30,000 and above got the lowest rank. It denotes that the respondents received sufficient salaries for their daily expenses. The data shows that while most graduates earn a sufficient salary to meet their everyday expenses, a smaller proportion achieves higher earnings. This scenario is typical in many job markets, where entry-level positions or roles in specific sectors may offer lower starting salaries, which can gradually increase with experience and career progression. According to the ASEAN Briefing, the average minimum wage in the Philippines is P 8,061.06, and graduates are overwhelmingly earning above the minimum wage, ranging from 10,000 to 20,000.

3.3 Job Level

In regard to competencies learned, respondents identified communication skills as the most valuable competency in their employment (47.11 percent), while entrepreneurial skills received the lowest ranking (5.79 percent). Communication skills are essential for personal and professional success, enabling clear expression and understanding between individuals.

Table 3. *Frequency distribution of respondents according to their job level (n=143)*

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage
Job Level Position		
a. Office Staff or Clerical	88	72.7
Professional		
Accountant	2	1.65
HRM	1	0.83
Brokerage	1	0.83
Enumerator	1	0.83
Teacher	2	1.65
Pharmacy Assistant	1	0.83
b. Technical		
Network Administrator	10	8.26
Data Analyst	1	0.83
QA Specialist	1	0.83
c. Supervisory		
Department Supervisor	2	1.65
Product Supervisor	1	0.83
Customer Service Supervisor	5	4.13
Supervisor	2	1.65
d. Managerial or Executive	3	2.48
Self-employed		
Monthly Salary		
Below 10,000	48	39.6
10,000 to less than 20,000	54	44.6
20,000 to less than 30,000	14	11.5
30,000 and above	5	4.13
Competencies Learned		
Communication Skills	57	47.1
Human Relation Skills	30	24.8
Entrepreneurial Skills	7	5.79
Critical Thinking Skills	10	8.26
Technical Skills	17	14.0

Additionally, effective communication aids in persuasion and influence, helping to drive actions and decisions. Overall, mastering communication skills enhance emotional intelligence, helping individuals navigate social situations and achieve their goals more quickly. This result was congruent with the study of Albina (2020), in which most respondents considered communication skills as the forecast competency they learned in college that they found helpful in their jobs. Also, Valentina et al. (2021) claim that communication in the workplace is critical. Not only do you need to pay attention to what you say verbally, but it is also important to consider the messages you send to others through your body language. Entrepreneurial skills are often less utilized in office work because many office environments emphasize established procedures, routine tasks, and hierarchical structures over the innovative thinking and risk-taking entrepreneurs typically engage in.

3.4 Relatedness of the Job to their College Course

Table 4 shows promising results about the relation of course with their job. Eighty-five-point ninety-five (85.95) percent affirm that their job is related to the course they took. Since most of the employed graduates work in the office (Table 3), it is highly probable that their job matches or is related to their course. This high percentage indicates that most graduates can apply the knowledge and skills acquired during their studies in their professional roles. On the other hand, 14.05 percent of the respondents admitted that their job is unrelated to their course. This dilemma is inevitable in today's ever-demanding industry and may be experienced by some graduates. Most graduates find their jobs relevant to their course, but a significant minority experiencing a mismatch reflects a broader challenge. This situation underscores the need for ongoing support and adaptation in career services and educational programs to align graduate skills with industry demands better. According to Woya (2019), the result percentage is much higher than in his study, where 59.5 % of respondents perceived their work is directly aligned with their field of study.

Table 4. *Frequency distribution of respondents according to the relatedness of the job to their college course (n=143)*

Job-Related	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	104	85.9
No	17	14.0

3.5 Reason for Staying on the Job

Table 5 reveals that 33.88 percent of the respondents agreed that salaries and benefits are the primary reasons they opted to stay in the company. Related to the course, surprisingly, it came in second at 17.36 percent, followed by financial stability at 14.88 percent. Peer Influence had the lowest rank, with 1.65 percent. Salary is still an important factor throughout an employee's career, but it is not the sole motivator to attract and retain them. Salary may not be the most important benefit, but that does not mean it is not on the list. Companies that tend to underpay their employees will turn off top talent. Kudos (2019) stated that one cannot disregard commissions, bonuses, or allowances. This implies that a person's wage for many jobs is not only their annual take-home pay. A terrific benefits package, quarterly or annual bonuses, monthly wellness allowances, and other items can also be included.

Table 5. *Frequency distribution of respondents according to the reasons for staying on the job (n=143)*

Reasons for Staying the Job	Frequency	Percentage
Salaries and Benefits	41	33.8
Career Challenge	3	2.48
Job Satisfaction	17	14.0
Financial Stability	18	14.8
Positive Work Environment	8	6.61
Related to Course	21	17.3
Proximity to residence	6	4.96
Peer Influence	2	1.65
Family Influence	5	4.13

Additionally, Leonard (2019) supported the study, saying that savvy employers understand that attracting and retaining outstanding workers entails offering a competitive salary and benefits package. Wages, salaries, bonuses, and commission plans all fall under the compensation category. Employers should not overlook the benefits component of employee compensation and benefits since these add value to employment contracts by addressing the needs of most workers. Aside from courteous treatment, 63 percent of U.S. employees are income and benefits in determining work satisfaction, according to the Society for Human Resource Management. Since they directly affect an employee's performance and motivation at work, compensation and benefits are significant factors in determining how satisfied an employee is with their employment. If this is done, employees will be assured that the firm values them and appreciates the job they perform. After all, a company's greatest asset is its people (Wooll, 2022).

3.6 Reason of Unemployment

Table 6 disclosed that out of the 22 respondents with no jobs or were never employed, 40.91 percent of the graduates chose a lack of work experience for not working. 18.18 percent of these incidents were caused by family concerns and the decision not to find a job. 13.67 percent is because they did not look for a job. 13.63 percent because of health-related reasons. 9.09 percent for educational pursuit. Lastly, caregiving responsibility with 4.55 percent. Due to competition in the workplace, graduates of today have realized the increasing need to upgrade

their credentials. Companies always tend to look for candidates who have more work experience. This is congruent with the study of Suppramaniam (2019), wherein he states that employers prefer skills and experience, capabilities, personal qualities, and skills beyond educational background and are in line with current labor market demands. These findings are also relevant to the study of Mulders (2019), in which he reveals that employers have some perceptions about unemployed graduates as some of them cannot be the best performers in their organization. They feared hiring them because of the issues that happened with fresh graduates. Employers have more rules to engage their employees.

Table 6. *Frequency distribution of respondents according to reason of unemployment (n=143)*

Reasons of Unemployment	Frequency	Percentage
Educational Pursuits	2	9.09
Family concerned and decided not to find a job	4	18.18
Health-related reasons	3	13.63
Lack of work experience	9	40.91
Caregiving Responsibility	1	4.55
Did not look for a job	3	13.64

4.0 Conclusion

Based on the result of the study, the majority are female, single, and prefer to work in their local area. Most graduates are employed, having secured jobs within one to two years after graduation. Most hold professional roles, often as office or clerical staff in the companies. Financial incentives, particularly salary and benefits, are the primary reason employed graduates remain in their initial positions. Conversely, lack of work experience is the main obstacle for unemployed people. The majority of employed graduates earn between 10,000 and 20,000 pesos monthly. Communication skills are considered the most valuable competency acquired during their studies, and language proficiency plays a crucial role in their work. The data strongly suggests that the degree programs offered at BISU-Candijay effectively equip students with the skills necessary for successful employment. This is evidenced by the high percentage of graduates who perceive their degrees as highly relevant to their current jobs.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

The authors' contributions are as follows: Ashley Zapanta served as the principal author and was responsible for the conceptualization, design, data collection, and overall analysis of the study. Jennilyn Lebita provided critical oversight as the Ethics Reviewer, ensuring the study adhered to ethical standards. Vicenta De la Peña contributed as the Data Analyst, focusing on the statistical analysis and interpretation of the results. Jaycel Suso served as the Editor, refining the manuscript for clarity and coherence. Dr. Deliarita O. Casundo and Dr. Jesszon B. Cano acted as the Content Reviewer, ensuring the accuracy and relevance of the study's content.

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7.0 Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interest regarding this study's conduct, the data analysis, or the publication of its findings.

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