

Marc Patrich R. Sanchez^{1*}, Vivian Aimee M. Diamante²

¹Clinical Instructor, University of Cebu- Lapulapu and Mandaue, Philippines

²Nursing Chairperson, University of Cebu- Lapulapu and Mandaue, Philippines

Corresponding Author Email: marcpatrich02@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

Finding employability nowadays, is as hard as finding needle in a haystack. Many nursing graduates nowadays are noted to have work that is not related to their course in college (Obando & Shisanya, 2013). An Employment Summit of the Commission of Higher Education observed that higher education institutions were producing “graduates who do not match the labor demand” (Philippine Daily Inquirer, 2010).

The present study determined the employability of University of Cebu Lapu-lapu and Mandaue (UCLM) graduates from 2007 to 2013. The relevance of this tracer study plays an important part in the UC-LM College of Nursing programme, to take up action plans for the betterment of the curriculum.

The data utilized for this tracer study were gathered through the Graduate Tracer Instrument patterned from the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). The information from the graduates was gathered through wide dissemination using electronic means during their study at UCLM as requested for records and other pertinent data. There are 69 respondents in the tracer study that was conducted from the graduates of 2007-2013.

Majority of the respondents were permanently employed and the reasons for unemployment is because of pursuing advance or future studies. Some just did not look for a job. Most of their employer's line of business is in the health and social work sector. Fifty percent of the respondents had jobs related to the course they took up in college and most of them are locally employed. Sixty seven percent of the graduates claimed that they were able to land a job relevant to the curriculum in college. The competencies that the graduates find useful in their first job are as follows: they believe that communication skills are an important aspect, as well as human relations skills, and critical thinking skills. The graduates claim that they are satisfied and happy with their current employment. The researchers recommend the following: The alumni office and the placement office of UCLM shall conduct campus job fairs and pre hiring announcements through bulletin boards and websites. The guidance services must provide the graduates with career opportunities orientation that will help the graduate nurses to secure jobs in health sector and also in other related fields. The university should improve the development of students' skill set necessary for the industry.

Keywords: *Tracer study, employability, nursing graduates, CHED*

INTRODUCTION

In the 2008 Employment Summit, Commission of Higher Education observed that higher education institutions were producing “graduates who do not match the labor demand” (Philippine Daily Inquirer, 2010). The Bachelor of Science of Nursing program intends to produce a professional nurse who demonstrates the following behaviors: caring, behavior (e.g. compassionate, competent, and committed); ability to practice legal, ethico-moral, social responsibilities/accountabilities; with critical and creative thinking skills; and skill in practicing S-K-A (Standard Nursing Plan Catalog) and values for the

promotion of health, prevention of illness, restoration of health, alleviation of suffering; assisting clients to face death with dignity and in peace (Venzon, 2005).

In a press release of the Philippine Nurses Association on 1st July, 2008, many licensed nurses are now underemployed or unemployed as a result of changes of policy in destination countries. The current situation of oversupply, and quality problems among nurses is a major problem in the present situation (Philippine Nurses Association, 2008). Health authorities in Central Visayas are more concerned about the employment of nurses in Cebu rather than the absence of Cebu nursing students in the top 10 of last

year's board exams (Cebu Daily News, February, 2010).

A company, which must meet competition and maintain its leadership in the field, cannot leave the hiring and selection of its workers to chance. It needs people who can contribute to the company's business—people with ideas for new products, services or methods (Sison, 2005). Employees with the right qualifications for a job are more economical for the company in the long run because they learn faster and are less costly to train. They also require less supervision, give better performance, get along better with fellow employees, and are happier in their jobs than those who lack these qualifications (Sison, 2005).

Fresh graduates or nurses who have not practiced after graduation may have a limited idea of job opportunities. Their choice of a first job may be strongly influenced by their education, achievement level, geographical preference, salary, mate's occupation and peer pressure. They are likely to take several jobs before settling down. The dissatisfied employees may not actively seek other employment but are likely to be receptive to news openings or job offers (Tomey, 2005).

Although nurses have the opportunity to get a good position, some may fail in their jobs. Causes of failure maybe due to any of the following: incompetence or the lack of the required ability and knowledge for the particular job; poor interpersonal relationships; lack of cooperation with co-workers; dishonesty; boastfulness and inability to get along with people; personality defects such as imprudence in choosing friends; insincerity; conceit; sarcasm; lack of tact; envy; discourtesy; being too argumentative; apathy towards work or being too sensitive; inadequate knowledge in social conduct; too little time for relaxation and recreation; unwholesome or unwise choice of recreation; indifference to need for professional growth; always finding reasons for not attending professional meetings or joining the professional organization (Venzon, 2005).

At present nursing graduates of University of Cebu – Lapulapu and Mandaue (UC-LM) are doing volunteer work while waiting for employment. With fewer nurses being hired both in private and government hospitals, some nurses end up in industries not related to their practice such as call centers and

teaching English as a second language in education centers. For some hospitals, they require 78% board exam rating which makes most of the graduates ineligible to apply and other hospitals prefer to hire their own graduates.

According to Dr. Susana Madarieta, the bigger concern lies in the employment of nurses since private and government hospitals appear to be fully staffed. Nurses employed in private hospitals stand to earn P6,000 to P7,000 a month. If one nurse resigns, there is a list of nurses waiting to be employed. Government hospitals pay better salaries. But in the Vicente Sotto Memorial Medical Center at least 400 to 600 nurses are in the waiting list (Cebu Daily News, 2010). On the other hand nurses have left hospital nursing to work for management post in some healthcare organizations, insurance companies, pharmaceutical firms, health care technology vendors, medical device vendors, consulting firms, and so on (Tomey, 2005).

Only three out of ten college graduates (30%) looking for work may be able to find jobs if the government remains unable to create sufficient jobs, according to a non-government research agency. The figure provided by IBON also does not include graduates who do find jobs but will probably take whatever work is available even if these are not related to their college degrees. The government's labor department however said unemployment is caused not by the lack of jobs but by the perceived mismatch between skills possessed by applicants and the demands of employers (GMA NEWS ONLINE, 2010).

The study determined the employability of University of Cebu Lapu-lapu and Mandaue (UCLM) graduates from 2007 to 2013 with the following objectives:

- a. Checking the employment status of the graduates
- b. Determining if the employment is related to the course in college
- c. Reviewing usefulness of the competencies learned in college for employment purpose

Specifically, it will answer the following variables:

- a. Profile of the respondents in terms of: Age, Gender, Civil Status, Location of Residence, Highest Educational Attainment, Professional Examinations passed

- b. Employment Status of the respondents
- c. Job relevance to the curriculum in college taken
- d. Competencies learned in college that is useful in their employment

The relevance of this tracer study plays an important part of the UC-LM College of Nursing program and the University itself, to do action plans for the betterment of the curriculum and set recommendations for the welfare of its graduates.

METHODS

The study utilized the descriptive research design to determine the employment status of the nursing graduates of University of Cebu Lapu-Lapu and Mandaue from 2007 to 2013. The findings were used as bases for a report to portray the status of nurse graduates. The respondents of the study were nursing graduates of University of Cebu-Lapulapu and Mandaue batch 2007 – 2013. Originally, all the graduates from that particular batch are supposed to participate in the study, but there are the following limitations: (1) Lack of Compliance; (2) Time Constraints; (3) Graduates answer the tool with a hurried pace, which makes some data unreliable; (4) The questionnaire is of a lengthy nature and the arrangement is confusing and (5) Lack of responsiveness of some subjects, leading to fewer number of respondents in some batches. Hence, the researchers make use of the data that is available. The number of respondents per batch are as follows: (A) 8 from Batch 2007, (B) 9 from Batch 2008, (C) 11 from Batch 2009, (D) 11 from Batch 2010, (E) 12 from Batch 2011, (F) 8 from Batch 2012, (G) 10 from Batch 2013. The total number of respondents was 69 nurses.

The researchers utilized the University of Cebu Lapulapu and Mandaue Graduate Tracer Study Tool patterned from the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). The tool is standardized and is duly approved and accepted by the Department of Education (DepEd). The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) is a governing body in the Philippines' Educational System and the mandate of which is for the Filipino Universities to do a Tracer Study for their graduates. Part one is about general information. Part two is regarding the respondent's educational background. Part three is concerned about the training(s) and advanced studies they have attended after college.

Finally, part four is about their employment data. These components were used to determine the graduate's current status.

The researchers acquired permission from the dean's office to conduct the study. Next, they requested from the Registrar's Office the lists of names, addresses, and contact numbers of the graduates. The administration of the questionnaire was done in three manners, namely: (1) the alumna was suggested to visit the college and answer the questionnaire, (2) the questionnaire was distributed through electronic mail and social media e.g. Facebook and Twitter and (3) Google forms were used to distribute the questionnaires directly via the internet. Simple Percentage was used to analyze and present the information coming from the respondents.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of the graduates

Table 1: Profile of the graduates (n=69)

Civil Status	Frequency	%
Single	64	92.75%
Married	4	5.8%
Consensual Union	1	1.45%
Gender	Frequency	%
Male	18	26%
Female	51	74%

As shown on Table 1, most of the respondents were females (74%) and only 26% are males, 92.75% were single. According a more recent stream of literature in the gender and work, it is reviewed that gender is embedded within work structures and organizations (Wharton, 2013).

Table 2 shows that the reasons for taking the course or pursuing degree are the following: influence by parents or relatives (14%), opportunity for employment abroad (12%), prospect for immediate employment (10%). As stated in a study by Orsolini-Hain, registered nurses reported transformative experiences when returning for their baccalaureate degree in nursing, which included raising their potentials, changing their perspectives about nursing practice, and being able to finally “see the big picture.” Although RNs felt they returned to school as skilled, knowledgeable and professional practitioners, they reported growing beyond their expectations in areas of knowledge and professionalism, which they felt led them to become

more effective as change makers and patient advocates (Orsolini-Hain, 2010).

Furthermore, the table 2.1 presenting the reason for pursuing advance studies, 22 of 69 respondents (30%) pursued advance studies, mainly for professional development (95%).

Table 2: Reasons for taking the course or pursuing degree (n=69; multiple response)

Reasons for taking the course or pursuing degree.	
	Graduates
High grades in the course or subject related to the course	6
Good grades in high school	11
Influence by parents or relatives	23
Peer influence	10
Inspired by a role model	11
Strong passion for the profession	12
Prospect for immediate employment	16
Status or prestige of the profession	7
Availability of course offering in chosen institution	13
Prospect of career advancement	13
Affordable for the family	8
Prospect of attractive compensation	12
Opportunity for employment abroad	20
No particular choice or no better idea	7

Table 2.1: Reasons for pursuing Advance Studies

What made you pursue advance studies?	Frequency
For promotion	1
For professional development	21

Table 3 presents the employment data of the graduates. Majority of the respondents were employed (73%) and rest (25%) is not presently employed. In the Philippines, the First Global Summit of Filipino Nurses was held on January 15, 2014. Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) reveals that out of the 526,897 registered nurses nationwide in 2012, 177, 414 nurses are employed abroad. Meanwhile in the same year, the National Database of Human Resources for Health Information System reported that there are only 38,488 nurses employed in the country's government and private hospitals (DOH, 2014). According to the latest count, there are more than 200,000 nurses in the country who are out of job. And another 100,000 are employed in unrelated field to their profession. They either land as casino workers, waitresses on restaurants and hotels or call center

agents (Sangil, 2014).

In lieu with these findings, Nursing graduates are concerned that no experience will impact future employability. Some went so far as to express willingness to “work for free” to gain needed experience. The new graduates also are worried that without work experience, they are going to lose the skills they developed in nursing school or that those skills will be outdated very quickly. Moreover they are worried about the high cost of baccalaureate education when the graduate is faced with not being able to find a job (Lippincott's Nursing Center, 2012).

With regards to employment status, in the Philippines, Alvin Ng, an economist at the University of Santo Tomas, stated that labor mismatch impacts the economy in such a way that the time spent pursuing a particular course in college becomes a futile exercise for the student and brings about an oversupply of talents to a certain profession. A mismatch occurs because of the failure to generate the sufficient number of people needed according to the need.

Table 3: Employment Data of the Graduates (n=69)

EMPLOYMENT DATA	
	Frequency
Employed	41
Not Employed	16
Never employed	1

Table 3.1: Reasons for Unemployment

Reasons of unemployment	Frequency
Doing Advance or future studies	5
Family concern and decided not to find a job	3
Lack of work experience	1
Did not look for a job	4

Table 4 reveals the status of the employed graduates. This table shows that they are assuming a professional, technical, supervisory position in their first job (71%) and in the current /present jobs (82%). Their employment status is regular/ permanently employed (56%) and contractual (27%).

Most of their employer's line of business is the health and social work sector (46%). Some are in the Manufacturing Sector (16%) and Education Sector (16%). The initial gross of their monthly earning on the

first job is P 5,000 to less than P 10,000 (68%) and some have P 10,000 to less than P15,000 (21%).

Table 4: Status of the Employed Graduates

First job	Frequency
Rank or clerical	9
Professional, technical and supervisory	36
Managerial or executive	1
Self-employed	5
Current or present job	Frequency
Rank or clerical	5
Professional, technical and supervisory	41
Managerial or executive	3
Self-employed	1
Present employment status	Frequency
Regular or permanent	23
Temporary	4
Contractual	11
Self-employed	3
Present Occupation (based on the Philippine Standard Occupational Classification)	Frequency
Officials of Government and Special-interest Organizations, Corporate Executives, Managers, Managing Proprietors and Supervisors	5
Professionals	33
Technician and Associate Professionals	1
Clerks	1
Major line of business of the company you are presently employed in.	FREQUENCY
Manufacturing	6
Hotels and Restaurants	1
Transport storage and communication	2
Public administration and defense; compulsory and security	3
Education	6
Health and Social work	17
Private households with employed persons	1
Extra-territorial organizations and bodies	1
What is your initial gross monthly earning in your first job after college?	Frequency
Below P5,000.00	2
P5,000.00 to less than P10,000.00	39
P10,000.00 to less than P15,000.00	12
P15,000.00 to less than P20,000.00	1
P20,000.00 to less than P25,000.00	3

Table 5 showed that 36% of the employed respondents got their jobs as recommended by someone, as a walk-in applicant (27%), or after acquiring information from friends (20%). For most of them, 45 out of 69 respondents (65%) waited less than a

Table 5: Finding the First Job

Ways in finding the first job	Frequency
Response to an advertisement	9
As a walk-in applicant	18
Recommended by someone	24
Information from friends	13
Family business	1
Job fair or PESO	1
Waiting time	Frequency
Less than a month	17
1 to 6 months	19
7 to 11 months	9
1 year to less than 2 years	10
Relevance of job to the course taken in college	Frequency
Relevant	19
Not Relevant	19
Place of Work	Frequency
Local	37
Abroad	1

Year to find the first employment. Fifty percent (50%) of the respondents had jobs related to the course they took up in college and 97% of the respondents are locally employed.

Table 6 shows the reason of the respondents for accepting and staying on the job they have chosen. They accepted the job because of: related special skill (35%), salaries and benefits (27%), career challenge (23%).

Additionally, they stayed on the job for the reason of: salaries and benefits (29%), related to course or program of study (21%)

Table 6: Reasons for Accepting and Staying on the Job

Reasons for accepting the job	Frequency
Salaries and benefits	16
Career challenge	14
Related special skill	21
Proximity to residence	9
Reasons for staying on the job	Frequency
Salaries and benefits	18
Career challenge	12
Related special skill	9
Related to course or program of study	13
Proximity to residence	3
Peer influence	3
Family influence	3

In relation to why they stay on the job appears to be salaries and benefits, career challenge topped the list. Reasons for accepting the job varied, with the top three reasons being salaries and benefits, career challenge and job being related to special skill.

Table 7: Number of Graduates with a Job Relevant to the Curriculum in College

Relevance of Curriculum to the first job	Frequency
Relevant	33
Not Relevant	16

Sixty seven percent (67%) of the graduates claimed that they were able to land a job relevant to the curriculum in college.

Table 8: Competencies learned in college that is useful in the first job

What competencies learned in college did you find useful in your first job?	Frequency
Communication skills	40
Human relations skills	39
Entrepreneurship skills	8
Information technology skills	12
Problem-solving skills	27
Critical thinking skills	32

The competencies that the graduates find useful in their first job are as follows: they believe that communication skills (25%) are an important aspect, as well as human relations skills (25%), and critical thinking skills (20%).

HIGHLIGHTS

1. Most of the respondents were females (74%) and only 26% are males. Ninety three percent (93%) were single.
2. The top reason for taking the course or pursuing degree was the influence by parents or relatives (14%). The reason for pursuing advance studies is mainly for professional development.
3. Majority of the respondents were employed (73%). Reasons for unemployment is because they were pursuing advance or future studies (39%), or some just did not look for a job (30%).
4. The employed graduates belonged to a professional, technical, supervisory position in their first job or current /present jobs. Their employment status is regular/ permanently employed (56%) or contractual (27%).

Most of their employer's line of business is in the health and social work sector (46%). Their monthly earning for the first job is P 5,000 to less than P 10,000 (68%).

5. The majority of the employed respondents got their jobs as recommended by someone. For most of them, 45 out of 69 respondents (65%) waited less than a year to find the first employment
Fifty percent (50%) of the respondents had jobs related to the course they took up in college and most of them are locally employed.
6. The top reason for accepting the job is because of related special skill (35%) and the reason for staying on the first job was the salaries and benefits (27%). Additionally, they stayed on the first job for the reason of salaries and benefits (29%).
7. Sixty seven percent (67%) of the graduates claimed that they were able to land a job relevant to the curriculum in college.
8. The competencies that the graduates find useful in their first job are as follows: they believe that communication skills (25%) are an important aspect, as well as human relations skills (25%), and critical thinking skills (20%) are essential.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The researchers recommend the following:

1. The alumni office and the placement office of UCLM shall conduct campus job fairs and post hiring announcements through bulletin boards and websites.
2. Most of the nursing graduates are employable, Sixty five (65%) waited less than a year to find the first employment. Most of their employer's line of business is the health and social work sector (46%), while the rest (54%) are employed in different sectors like manufacturing, education and public administration and defense sectors.
3. The guidance services must provide the graduates with career opportunities orientation, that beside the health sector, they can be employed into other line of business.
4. The university should improve the development of students' communication skills, human relations skill, and critical thinking skills.

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