Employability of Bachelor of Science in Fisheries Graduates at Marinduque State College-Department of Fisheries - Banuyo, Gasan, Marinduque

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Abstract: Employability of every Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) graduates is a measure of the competencies, skills and knowledge provided by a particular State University or College. This serve as the outcomes of how the graduates were being prepared and ready for the real job. Hence, it is a great responsibility of the Institutions to ensure their graduates meet market demands. This study primarily focus on the employability of Bachelor of Science in Fisheries graduates of Marinduque State College (MSC) – School of Fisheries and the extent of the contributory factors of the course that helped the graduates to be employed. A total of 205 graduates, with 162 or 79% were the respondents of the study. Modified Graduate Tracer Study (GTS) Questionnaire adapted from MSC and CHEd was utilized following the descriptive method of research. Results revealed that 70.20% of the respondents were employed on various types of occupations and 76.67% of which were related on the course. The results further proved that MSC produces marketable and appropriately trained graduates with majority landing in course-related jobs within a short period after graduation. In terms of their academic-acquired skills and competencies, graduates believe that these are relevant which helped them to be more competent on their workplace and agreed that the course has conveyed positive impacts. However, expansion of tie-ups with other state universities and private entities is recommended to at least maintain the high employability level of the graduates.

Keywords: fisheries, graduates, employability, skills, competencies

I. INTRODUCTION

Education in the Philippines is of great importance because it is considered as the primary avenue for upward social and economic mobility (Pontillas, 2018). This fact has mandated the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) to the government’s commitment to transform education as the central strategy in reducing poverty, and building national competitiveness that shall promote, among others, relevant and quality education which is accessible to all (CHED, official site).

Marinduque State College-Gasan Campus situated at Banuyo, Gasan, Marinduque offers a sole program, Bachelor of Science in Fisheries since 1996. It was first offered in ladderize system and became full bachelor’ in the year 2000. The program has its Certificate of Program Compliance (COPC) from CHED and is currently on the Level II Re-Accredited status awarded by the Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines (AACCUP, Inc.).

Employability generally, is a critical issue for both government and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) (Saunders and Zuzel, 2010). However, in this particular study, employability’s definition was adapted from (Tran, 2015) ‘a set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes – to make graduates more likely to be employed related on their field of specialization. Presently, the labor markets in the country and abroad becomes more competitive. Hence, the parents sometimes dictates their children to which among the Universities and the course they should be enrolled in to seek better jobs afterwards. According to Albina et al (2020), employability, thus, becomes a matter of crucial consideration when schools implements stricter policies on admission and retention.
On the other hand, HEIs are challenged in balancing the development of higher education and professional relevance of academic teachings as this is measured through the employability type of graduates’ employment. Likewise, it is considered as the pride and honour of every academic institution to produce globally competent employed graduates. Government agencies have been encouraging educational institutions and employers to work together to address employability issues. Institutions have to keep track of the performance of their graduates to determine whether or not the program have contributed to the graduates’ holistic development in terms of skills, knowledge and attitude as among the factors that influences the employability of graduates (Deblois, 2021).

With these foregoing circumstances, employability of graduates, therefore, has become a vital concern of the government especially by the policymakers and private companies. Studies like this becomes the guiding mechanisms of every Institution to determine the areas of strengths and weaknesses as perceived by its graduates and to accommodate changes in the society especially the demands of the actual and potential employers, through evaluation and constant review of their curricula” (Balingbing, 2014). Thus, ultimate goal of this research was to establish the employment profile of graduates in terms of (a) employment status; (b) type of employment; (c) relatedness of work to vis-a-vis their employment characteristics; and (d) reason for unemployment.

**CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

If the environment in which students are trained is a replica of the environment in which they will work later, students in general will learn more effectively. According to studies, any professional school is concerned not only with the degree to which its graduates find lucrative employment, but also with the setting or scenario within the firm/agency where they will eventually work.

Another employment hypothesis is Hyun H. Son’s The Role of Labor Market in Explaining Growth and Inequality. It claims that employment growth in the Philippines has been unable to keep up with the rate of unemployment and underemployment due to rapid population growth and high labor force participation. The increase in productivity has been gradual and irregular. Between 1988 and 2000, the Philippines’ worker productivity improved by less than 7%, compared to 30-50 percent gains in other Asian countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and South Korea. As a result, the Philippines has lost its competitive advantage as a developing country with a bright future in the area, and it now faces the prospect of becoming a very successful, high-growth economy. Sluggish job growth is also seen to have had a role in the economy’s poor performance. Along with slow growth, the Philippines has a long history of wide income disparities.

In the Philippines, the supply of qualified labor has increased dramatically. Nonetheless, the labor productivity results are in stark contrast to the fact that the labor market is swamped with highly educated (and, by extension, highly skilled) people. Furthermore, the Philippines’ poor development rate becomes even more confusing when we consider the educational effort that has been undertaken. In this regard, this is a major study. There are a couple of noteworthy findings to mention. First, the study discovered that higher education is a crucial factor of employment in the Philippine labor market. In terms of job opportunities, this shows that people with a higher education have driven those with a lower education out.
II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study utilized descriptive method using both quantitative and qualitative research designs. The respondents include all the graduates of the program from Academic Year 2002 to 2019. The data-gathering tool was the Graduate Tracer Study (GTS) Questionnaire adopted from the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). Total respondents were the 205 graduates from the said batches. In the data-gathering process, the researchers make use of all the possible means of communication with the graduates either through calls, texts messages, face-to-face communication, Facebook, messenger, email and through friends, acquaintances and students. Answered questionnaires were distributed through personal, email and messenger applications. All data gathered were tallied, treated statistically, analyze and interpreted.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

III.1 Graduates’ Profile

In terms of gender, Figure 1 shows that majority of the respondents are female with 64% while the other 36% are males. The result affirms with the article written by Quismundo (2012) of the Philippine Daily Inquirer, which stated that the number of women graduates seems to be more than of the opposite sex. Although it is to be expected that there should have more male enrollees as the course is perceived to be more of skills and competencies, or some may even think that it’s basically more of catching and culturing fish, women primarily enrolled due to available scholarships and proximity of the school to their residence. Some females with limited choices of course to take primarily due to financial reasons, also opted to enroll to earn a bachelor’s degree which is congruent with the observation of the National Statistics Coordination Board, (2012) which noted that for more than a decade, statistics shows that majority of the college graduates are female, with minimum consideration of the course type.

Figure 1. Frequency Distribution of the Respondents by Gender

Figure 2 shows a bigger proportion of the graduates being single with 50% followed by those married (33%) with some already has a born child and being separated. Majority of the enrolled students especially from Batches 2002-2015 were freshly graduates with age ranging from 16-19. Those already married and parents were those that only continued their studies after giving birth, had shifted to so many courses or had chosen to work first to help on their family needs. Since most graduates are females, the statement of Virola (2208) applies which can be associated with the increasing desire of women to delay marriage and focus on attaining higher education which will uplift their economic standing.
Figure 2. Frequency Distribution of the Respondents by Civil Status

Figure 3 shows that in terms of the graduates’ origin, 92% of them were from the province due to the fact that most of them only chose to study due to accessibility, with limited choice of course to be taken for financial reasons and scholarships. Other graduates outside the province were those who only finished a Diploma or Certificate in Fishery Technology and chose to continue to take board examination.

Figure 3. Frequency Distribution of the Respondents by Region of Origin/Province

III.2 Employment profile

Consolidated responses showed that the majority of the graduates at 70.20 were, or have been, employed (Figure 4). It is also interesting to note that most of the graduates’ employment was related to the course with 76.67% which proves that course is employable compared with other courses. Tracing the premier employment of the graduates revealed that mostly schools, private fish farms and related-government offices, were the first employers of newly graduates. The data signified that graduates have developed the required skills in the College that had prepared them that enabled them to be hired immediately. More so, the data indicated that graduates were employable in related and even in unrelated employment opportunities.

Figure 4. Graduates’ Employability
Although higher percentage of the graduates were employed, data also demonstrated the unemployment rate at 28.02% which may be attributed to factors like limited job vacancies, proximity to residence, physically impaired, lack of eligibility and inadequate experience to job being offered. Other attributing factors found by (Olfindo and Belgica, 2007) include interpersonal or technical skills. They added that both of these skills must possessed by the graduates because technical competence without the ability to relate with people will not be enough. However, factors mentioned was in contrary with the findings of Del Rosario (2019) which said that most of the reasons of unemployed graduates are due to contract termination, which was very evident both in the manufacturing and service industries affecting greatly the security of tenure of those employed.

![Figure 5. Employment Status](image)

In terms of the graduates’ employment status, Figure 5 shows that majority were on regular/permanent basis (42%), though it falls mostly in rank or clerical job level position with 41.30% (Figure 3). Results have also shown that graduates venturing on self-employment were through engaging on their own or family business at 3.78%. del Puerto (2015) explained the difference between part-time workers as those who are working in a four hour work per day or two full days per week while full time employees are working forty (40) hours a week. However, Jaymalin (2012) observed that there are an increasing number of part-time workers and a decline in full-time workers in the country due to inability of both the private and public companies to pay for full time salaries while some agencies intentionally cut their service to avoid paying for their bonuses or 13th month pays.

![Figure 6. Job Level Position](image)

Nonetheless, results only shows that the graduates has better opportunity to be employed into permanent/regular status. Thus, this may manifest employability among graduates which able them to impart in the national and local economy as they were employed mostly in the country with 93% while only a small portion of the graduates works abroad with 7% (Figure 7). The workplace data only shows that most of the graduates still opted to work locally than abroad.
Figure 7. Place of work

Figure 8 shows that graduates were employed in variety of occupations, with highest percentage of 24.53% as skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers followed by professionals of 16.04% and technicians and associate professionals of 15.09%. These occupations were generally and specifically related on the course. However, those works unrelated could imply that the nature of occupations vary on the availability and willingness to be employed on a particular job. However, some of the graduates said that what is more important on them is to be employed even on those unrelated jobs rather than to wait longer and unsure to related jobs. They added that what matters most is that they have a source of income especially those graduates with families. This findings can further be associated with the article posted online by that “The first thing Filipinos consider when looking for a job is the fit between the available opportunity to their field of study, skills, and interests” (GMA Network article posted online, 2015).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skilled Agricultural, Forestry and Fishery</td>
<td>24.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant and machine operators and assemblers</td>
<td>7.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armied forces occupation</td>
<td>1.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managerial and supervisory</td>
<td>1.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craft and related trades workers</td>
<td>2.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary occupations</td>
<td>0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technicians and associate professionals</td>
<td>15.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service and sales workers</td>
<td>16.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical support workers</td>
<td>13.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals</td>
<td>16.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 8. Distribution of employed graduates by nature of occupation
In terms of the type of agency/organization the graduates were employed in, about 69% of the respondents are currently working with public agencies/organizations while 31% works in the private (Figure 9). It can be noted earlier that majority of the graduates works in relation to the course, which include State Universities and Colleges (SUCs), other related agencies and institutions. The results does not conform with the observation of Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) in 2009, wherein employees prefer to work in private organizations because “probationary employees shall be deemed to be regular where the employee has been engaged to perform activities which are usually necessary or desirable in the usual business or trade of the employer”. Others opted to work in private organizations or entities due to lack of eligibilities and their fitness to work including higher income offer.

The trend of employment status against the respondents per batch is produced is shown in Figure 10. From the results, it was observe that there is both an . However, employment trend was decreasing steadily with corresponding increase in unemployment from batch 2004 to 2008 and continued from batch 2016 to 2019.
Some of the respondent’s response from these batches said that they have just resigned on the time of the study for maternal considerations while some resigned to focus on the licensure exam review. Others said that they have been burned out and had a rest for a while then would eventually look for better job opportunity outside the province. Results may look alarming but during the focus group discussion, some had not declared on their questionnaire they had just started to establish their own business.

Table 1. Ways of finding the job

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How long did it take you to land on your first job?</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt; a month</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>45.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 6 months</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>35.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 to 11 months</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 year to less than 2 years</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 years to less than 3 years</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 years to less than 4 years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>others</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 showed the frequency distribution of the respondents’ ways or means of the graduates on finding their jobs. From the total respondents, 50% of them revealed that majority had their jobs through recommendations from someone or referred by others while some of the graduates had approached employers directly (20.65%). Other found their jobs through advertisement that is posted by the School on the social media platforms (15.22%). Other respondents had other reasons (6.53%) besides the methods or ways given. During job vacancies, referral that is mostly through their classmates, batch mates and even Faculty and Staff of the College seems to be an easier means to find a job since they had a continuous contact with each other. Social media platforms becomes more necessary during job hunts since it can easily be posted online or directly to the job hunters.

Table 2. Length of time the first job is acquired

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ways of finding the job</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responded to advertisement</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approached employer directly</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommended by someone</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information from friends</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arranged by school's job placement officer</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family business</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered in public employment agency</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 shows the frequency distribution of the respondents’ length of time the first job is acquired. Results revealed 42 or 45.65% of the respondents landed on their jobs in less than a month while 33 or 35.87% took between 1 to 6 months. 7 or 7.60% of the respondents landed on their jobs between 7 to 11 month while the remaining percentages took 1 year to several years for their pursuit of being employed. These findings were in agreement with the findings of (16) which found out that it took less than one month for most of the respondents and to the study of Del Rosario (2019), which 42% of their respondents were able to find jobs in 2-5 months after graduation. On the other hand, it is in contrary to the article written by (14) of CNN Philippines, which stated that newly graduates job seekers have difficulty to be hired immediately after graduation since most employers prefer to hire applicants with work experience. However, for those graduates who had been employed for almost a year said that some of their reasons for not looking jobs firsthand include, (a) review for the licensure exam; (b) vacation with the family; (c) undecided to type of work; and (d) personal factors.
Table 3. Initial gross monthly earnings on their first job

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monthly earnings</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below P 5,000.00</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P 5,000 to less than P 10,000.00</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>49.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P 10,000 to less that P 15,000.00</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15,000 to less than P 20,000.00</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20,000 to less than P 25,000.00</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P 25,000.00 and above</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Newly graduates often are very much excited on their first earnings as anybody else, which make many of them look for a job immediately after graduation. Table 3 showed the frequency distribution of the respondents’ initial monthly gross of their first jobs after College which range from less that P5,000 to more than P25,000. From the total employed respondents, 52 or 49.06% of them earned an amount between P 5,000.00 to P10,000.00. Meanwhile, 22 or 20.76% of them grossed below P5,000.00. On the other hand, 16 or 15.09% of them earned an amount between P15,000.00 to less than P20,000.00 and 10 or 9.43% earned between P10,000.00 to less than P15,000.00. Only 2 or 1.89% and 4 or 3.78% of them earned an amount between P20,000.00 to less than P25,000.00 and higher than P25,000.00, respectively. The data demonstrated though most of the graduates were hired immediately after graduation and in job related works, it does not necessarily mean that they would be paid higher especially if they were just got hired which would usually start in contractual or job order basis. In case of those already employed longer, monthly income distribution showed that probably they have not been promoted yet to a higher rank thus receiving salaries equivalent to those job order or contractual basis also. This could also implied that the graduates would still need to continue further advancements to be given opportunities to get to a higher position in their current employment situation.

Table 4. Duration of stay in first job

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How long did you stay in your first job?</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt; a month</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 6 months</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>27.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 to 11 months</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 year to less than 2 years</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 years to less than 3 years</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 years to less than 4 years</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 shows the frequency distribution of the respondents’ duration of stay in their first jobs after college. Out of the total respondents, 25 or 27.17% stayed mostly from between 1 month to 6 months, followed by 16 or 17.39% of the respondents stayed for less than a month. Staying on their job for about 1 year to less than 2 years and 2 years less than 3 years both gave 13.04%. On the other hand, One (1) respondent had a different response than the choices provided. From this result, it could be noted that the graduates seemed to be not fully satisfied with their monthly income as showed in Table 4. Hence, majority of them has only stayed for a month until six months for some indicated reasons that they cannot work longer without their families with them; lower salaries and no extra benefits and employer issues for some working in private employers.

Table 5. Reasons for staying in the job

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason(s) for staying on the job</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salaries and benefits</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>23.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career growth, learning and development</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>26.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career challenge</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Related to special skill</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>related to course or program of study</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>proximity to residence</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer influence</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Influence</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5 shows the frequency distribution of the respondents’ reason(s) for staying on their first job. Results revealed that 16 or 26.67% chose to stay on their job for their career growth, learning and development while 14 or 23.33% was because of the salaries and benefits. Other reasons include related to special skill (8 or 13.33%); career challenge, related to course or program of study, and proximity of residence all gave the same percentages of 8.33%. Small percentages of their reasons include peer (5.00%) and family influence (1.67%) and other reasons (5.00%). Since some had establish been employed longer and master their works, they thought of staying on their jobs permanently to enhance their career growth and to think that they were also compensated well. Though salaries and benefits only comes next to career growth, some respondents’ emphasized that it is actually their extreme driving force to stay in the jo and may opt to resign once they are not fully satisfied regardless if they had establish their career and stayed for several years.

Table 6. Reasons for Unemployment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for Unemployment</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Household or family duties</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>25.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awaiting results of previous job</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schooling or further study</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest or in-between plans</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No job opportunity</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiting for rehire/ job recall</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiting for board exam</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health-related reason</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent Disability</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of work experience</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not look for a job</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 illustrates the frequency distribution of the respondents’ reason(s) for their unemployment. The topmost reasons why they were not employed was due to family duties and concern especially those who just got married (25.68%) followed by rehiring/recall (17.57%) and for other reasons that was not included in the choices (16.22%). Meanwhile, 16.22% response corresponded other reasons, which include the following reasons: advance or further study, health-related reasons, lack of work experience, and awaiting for the capital for business. However, (17) emphasize that unemployment has been one of the problematic concern of the national government for decades now despite its efforts to improve the quality of jobs available though it has been continuously increasing its employment rate by creating different jobs and business dealings with both the private and public entities.

III.3 Graduates’ Acquired Competencies

Table 7. Competencies learned in College by the graduates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills and Competencies</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication Skills</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>47.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human relation skills</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>32.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurial skills</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem-solving Skills</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>23.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking Skills</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>25.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7 shows the frequency distribution of the competencies the respondents have learned in the program which they have found useful in their first job after college. Out of the total respondents, 50 or 47.17% perceived communication skills as useful. Meanwhile, 34 or 32.08% of them perceived human relation skills, 27 or 25.47% for critical thinking skills and 25 or 23.59% for problem-solving skills as very useful. Entrepreneurial skills and other skills not included in the choices both got 15.09%.
In general, the results implied that majority of the graduates put primary importance to communications skills through oral and written since they felt that the skill is really necessary at any type of job especially those working abroad. Some of the graduates also showed that human relations skills of relating to others in harmony is likewise needed. Aside from course’s ability to connect with people, they also place great importance to their problem solving skills and the contribution of the core values imparted by the College to their holistic formation. This implies that the expected attributes of these young professionals have been deeply influenced through trainings and seminars on value formation in terms of advancing not only their cognitive and intellectual skills but also their way of relating to people and situations. Hence, this could promise a manifestation of success on the part of the College and the graduates themselves in upholding the school’s vision-mission, goals and objectives.

Aside from these factors, (17) stated that some employers also look after the College’ reputation and GWA while other employers give most consideration on the work experience especially on jobs that requires technical skills. This denotes that employers have varied criteria in hiring their would-be employees. Some would give more points on the college reputation but others might give more points on the skills, attitude, and values of applicants. Nevertheless, graduates are required to earn a sense of competence in their chosen field and develop self-confidence to explore new possibilities and new employment especially that there is an increasing competition among rivals at work (7). In addition, (4) said that being graduates of higher education institutions, they must prove the world that job-hunting is not a problem even if the competition in the business or corporate world because they had to believe in themselves and to their skills and competence acquired during their College years.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

This study is a collaborative work of the faculty members of the MSC-School of Fisheries. The research’ output is significant primarily to recognize and address the existing program’s strengths and weaknesses, quality and relevance in relation to the competencies of the graduates to be employed immediately after graduation related to the course. Relative to the findings, the following conclusion are:

1. Most of the graduates are predominantly females and single, majority of whom are from the province of Marinduque. During interviews, most are enrolled because they had only had no choice, accessibility, those who failed several times in a particular course and for the hope of better employment and career advancement as delivered during Course Campaign.

2. MSC-SF produces employable graduates who prefer to work in the country than abroad. The rate of employment among them is very high at about 70%; self-employment rate is almost unnoticeable, while that of unemployment is very low. Most of the graduates are employed along their fields of specialization, while some are engaged in their own business.

3. A very small number of graduates pursue further studies primarily due to the need or requirement for their career and professional development and also be updated on the current trends and technology in the field.

4. The graduates noted that the program had provided relevant skills and competencies to their employment in both public and private agencies, institutions and organizations.

5. Skills and competencies are still needed to be strengthened to ensure the graduates’ readiness to the real job of their chosen specialization.

The researchers have arrived to the following recommendations:

1. Regular conduct of review and upgrading of curricular offering to ensure the provision of more skill/competency development programs not just in the field of fisheries but also develop skills on communication, critical thinking and attitude.

2. Expansion of tie-ups with both public and private related agencies, institutions and enterprises that can provide employment opportunities to the graduates be a continuing process to maintain the high employability level of the graduates.

3. Continuous conduct of external research and extension projects as way of employment to graduates.
4. Installation of alumni support system or SMS alert system to notify unemployed graduates for job opportunities be studied;

5. Institutionalize system-wide the conduct of regular tracer studies on the employment status if the BS-Fisheries graduates to include not only the graduates but also the employers as respondents; and determine what initiatives can be done further in the curriculum and manner of instruction for more productive and worthy graduates.

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REFERENCES


