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A TRACER STUDY AND EMPLOYERS' FEEDBACK ON THE EMPLOYABILITY AND WORKPLACE COMPETENCIES OF BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION GRADUATES MAJOR IN SERVICE MANAGEMENT IN BUSINESS PROCESS OUTSOURCING OF NUEVA ECIJA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the employment outcomes and workplace competencies of Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (BSBA) graduates majoring in Service Management in Business Process Outsourcing (BPO). Specifically, it determines graduates' employment status, assesses the relevance of their current employment to their degree, and evaluates their workplace competencies based on employers' feedback. The study employs a descriptive quantitative research design involving 118 graduates from 2023 to 2025 and 25 employers or immediate supervisors. Data are analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, and weighted means. Based on the supplied figures, 87 of the 118 graduates are employed, representing an overall employment rate of 73.73%. Employment rates are 75.00% for the 2023 graduating batch, 76.92% for 2024, and 65.00% for 2025. Among employed graduates, 27.59% work in positions directly related to Service Management or BPO, 44.83% hold positions related to business or other fields, and 27.59% occupy positions unrelated to their degree. Employers' competency ratings yield a grand mean of 3.46, interpreted as Highly Competent under the study's rating scale. Customer service and client relations, together with professionalism and ethical conduct, receive the highest mean ratings of 3.56, whereas technical and computer skills receive the lowest mean of 3.32. The findings provide a basis for evaluating graduate employment outcomes, assessing the relationship between academic preparation and employment, and identifying opportunities to strengthen industry-oriented learning and workplace competency development.

Keywords: Tracer Study, Graduate Employability, Employers' Feedback, Workplace Competencies, Service Management, Business Process Outsourcing

1 INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutions are expected to prepare graduates with the knowledge, skills, and professional competencies required in the workplace. Graduate employment is an important indicator of educational outcomes, while the relevance of employment to a graduate's degree provides additional information about the relationship between academic preparation and occupational opportunities. Tracer studies are useful for examining graduates' employment status, the applicability of acquired skills, and the relevance of academic programs to employment (Dela Cruz & Dela Cruz, 2022; Sarsale et al., 2024). Furthermore, the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2019) explains that skills mismatch may involve differences between workers' qualifications, fields of study, and the skills required by their jobs. These considerations highlight the importance of evaluating graduate outcomes beyond employment status alone.

Domingo et al. (2024a) examined the employment status and attainment of program educational objectives among BSBA Marketing Management graduates of Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology from 2018 to 2023. Their research provides a relevant reference for tracking graduate employment outcomes and examining the attainment of program educational objectives. Similarly, Dela Cruz and Dela Cruz (2022) conducted a tracer study of graduates of a Philippine state higher education institution, demonstrating the relevance of examining employment status, employability characteristics, and the applicability of skills acquired through graduate education. Together, these studies provide a basis for using graduate tracer information to assess educational outcomes and identify areas for program improvement.

Employer feedback provides another important perspective on graduate preparation. Domingo et al. (2024b) investigated employers' feedback regarding the competencies and performance of BSBA Marketing Management graduates. Their study considered workplace competencies, including communication, problem-solving, technical knowledge, teamwork, adaptability, and ethical professionalism. Similarly, research on employer perceptions of graduate employability has identified professional maturity, interpersonal skills, problem-solving, continuous learning, and academic achievement as relevant considerations in employers' evaluations of graduates (Jackson & Chapman, 2012). Employer assessments therefore complement graduate tracer studies by providing information about how graduates' competencies correspond to workplace expectations.

These approaches are relevant to the BSBA major in Service Management in Business Process Outsourcing. The BPO sector requires employees to communicate effectively, provide customer service, solve problems, use digital tools, collaborate with colleagues, adapt to changing work requirements, and demonstrate professional conduct. The Philippine Department of Science and Technology has also identified critical thinking, effective communication, collaboration, information analysis, and adaptability as important skills for BPO and call-center work (Department of Science and Technology [DOST], 2013). In addition, the ILO and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2018) discuss how digital transformation and changing occupational requirements influence skills demand, reinforcing the need for education and training to respond to evolving workplace needs.

Examining employment outcomes alongside employer assessments provides a broader basis for evaluating graduates' transition into the workforce and their workplace competencies. Sarsale et al. (2024) used graduate tracer data to examine dimensions of program relevance associated with employment outcomes, illustrating the value of considering graduates' experiences when evaluating academic programs. In the present study, employment status and job relevance provide information about graduates' employment outcomes, while employer feedback offers a complementary assessment of their competencies in the workplace.

In this context, the present study examines the employment status and job relevance of BSBA graduates majoring in Service Management in BPO from 2023 to 2025 and assesses their workplace competencies based on employers' feedback. By integrating graduate tracer information with employer assessments, the study seeks to identify areas for curriculum development, practical training, and industry engagement. The results can contribute to program evaluation by providing information on graduates' employment outcomes and the workplace competencies assessed by their employers.

Research Objectives

This study aims to determine the employability and workplace competencies of Bachelor of Science in Business Administration graduates majoring in Service Management in Business Process Outsourcing.

Specifically, the study seeks to:

- Determine the employment status of BSBA graduates majoring in Service Management in BPO from 2023 to 2025.

- Determine the relevance of graduates' current employment to their degree program.
- Assess graduates' workplace competencies based on feedback from employers or immediate supervisors.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

The study uses a descriptive quantitative research design to examine the employment outcomes of BSBA graduates majoring in Service Management in BPO and assess their workplace competencies based on employers' feedback. The descriptive approach is appropriate for summarizing employment status, job relevance, and employer ratings using numerical data.

The study draws on two complementary assessment approaches: a graduate tracer study and an employers' feedback survey. The tracer study describes graduates' employment outcomes, while the employers' survey provides ratings of workplace competencies. Similar approaches to graduate employment assessment and employer competency evaluation were used by Domingo et al. (2024a, 2024b).

2.2 Respondents of the Study

The graduate tracer component covers 118 BSBA graduates majoring in Service Management in BPO from three graduating cohorts: 72 graduates from 2023, 26 from 2024, and 20 from 2025. The study also includes 25 employers or immediate supervisors who have direct experience supervising or working with graduates of the program.

The graduate respondents provide information on employment status and the relevance of their current jobs to their degree. The employer respondents assess graduates' workplace competencies based on their professional observations and experiences.

2.3 Research Instruments

The graduate tracer questionnaire gathers information about respondents' graduating year, employment status, and the relevance of their current jobs to their degree. Additional items on the time required to obtain their first job may be included when those data are collected and analyzed.

The employers' feedback questionnaire assesses seven workplace competency dimensions: communication skills; customer service and client relations; problem-solving and critical thinking; technical and computer skills; teamwork and collaboration; adaptability and flexibility; and professionalism and ethical conduct. Responses are measured using a four-point Likert scale, with higher scores indicating stronger assessed competency.

2.4 Data-Gathering Procedure

The researchers secure the necessary institutional approvals before distributing the questionnaires to eligible graduates and employers. Respondents receive information about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and the confidentiality of their responses.

Completed questionnaires are reviewed for completeness, encoded, and organized for statistical analysis. Graduate responses are classified according to employment status and job relevance, while employer responses are organized according to the seven competency dimensions. Data are checked for missing entries, duplicate records, and inconsistencies before the computation of summary statistics.

2.5 Statistical Treatment of Data

The data gathered in this study were analyzed using appropriate descriptive statistical tools to address the research objectives. Frequency counts and percentages were used to determine the employment status of graduates and the relevance of their current jobs to their degree. Weighted means were used to assess graduates' workplace competencies based on employers' feedback across the seven competency dimensions. The results were presented in tables and interpreted according to the study's objectives and the established scale for competency ratings.

The following interpretation was used for employers' competency ratings:

Table 1: Mean range and interpretation

Mean range	Interpretation
3.25–4.00	Highly Competent
2.50–3.24	Competent
1.75–2.49	Less Competent
1.00–1.74	Not Competent

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Employment Status of Graduates

Table 2 presents the employment status of graduates according to their graduating year.

Table 2: Employment status of graduates

Graduating year	Total graduates	Employed	Unemployed	Employment rate
2023	72	54	18	75.00%
2024	26	20	6	76.92%
2025	20	13	7	65.00%
Total	118	87	31	73.73%

The results show that 87 of the 118 graduates are employed, corresponding to an overall employment rate of 73.73%. The 2024 graduating batch recorded the highest employment rate at 76.92%, followed by the 2023 batch at 75.00%, while the 2025 batch had the lowest rate at 65.00%. These findings provide an overview of graduates' employment outcomes across the three graduating cohorts.

The differences in employment rates across cohorts highlight the importance of monitoring graduate employment by graduating year. Graduate tracer studies provide institutions with information about graduates' employment status and the extent to which educational programs support their transition into the labor market (Dela Cruz, 2022; Domingo et al., 2024a). However, the figures alone do not establish the reasons for the observed differences. Factors such as the length of time since graduation, individual job-search experiences, and labor market conditions would require separate data to be assessed.

This approach is consistent with the graduate employment assessment conducted by Domingo et al. (2024a), which examined the employment status of BSBA Marketing Management graduates. Analyzing employment outcomes by cohort can support program monitoring, help institutions assess graduates' transitions into employment, and identify areas that warrant further investigation. Thus, the present findings provide a basis for continued tracking of graduates' employment outcomes and for evaluating the relevance of the program to labor market needs.

3.2 Relevance of Employment to the Degree

Table 3: Assessment on the relevance of employment to the degree among graduates

Job-relevance category	Frequency	Percentage
Directly related to Service Management/BPO	24	27.59%
Related to business or other fields	39	44.82%
Not related to the degree	24	27.59%
Total employed graduates	87	100.00%

The largest category consists of graduates employed in business-related or other fields, accounting for 44.83% of employed graduates. Those working directly in Service Management or Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) represent 27.59%, while another 27.59% are employed in positions classified as unrelated to their degree. These findings indicate that although the majority of employed graduates have secured jobs, their occupational alignment with the program varies.

This distinction between employment attainment and degree-related employment is important in evaluating graduate outcomes. Domingo et al. (2024a) examined the employment status of BSBA Marketing Management graduates, demonstrating the relevance of tracking graduates' employment outcomes. However, employment status alone does not fully describe the relationship between academic preparation and professional practice. Job relevance provides an additional perspective by showing whether graduates' current occupational roles correspond to their academic specialization. Similarly, research on graduate employability emphasizes the importance of examining the relationship between educational preparation and employment outcomes (Sarsale et al., 2024).

The findings provide a basis for examining graduates' occupational pathways and the relationship between program preparation and employment. The proportion of graduates working in business-related or other fields suggests that employment outcomes extend beyond positions directly associated with Service Management or BPO. Nevertheless, the available figures do not establish the reasons graduates entered particular occupational fields or the extent to which their jobs use competencies developed through the program. A more detailed classification of job titles, industries, and work responsibilities would help clarify how graduates apply their academic competencies in their current positions and inform future curriculum and career-preparation initiatives.

3.3 Employers' Assessment of Workplace Competencies

Table 4: Employers' assessment of workplace competencies of BSBA major in Service Management in BPO

Competency	Weighted mean	Interpretation
Communication skills	3.48	Highly Competent
Customer service and client relations	3.56	Highly Competent
Problem-solving and critical thinking	3.36	Highly Competent
Technical and computer skills	3.32	Highly Competent
Teamwork and collaboration	3.40	Highly Competent
Adaptability and flexibility	3.52	Highly Competent
Professionalism and ethical conduct	3.56	Highly Competent
Grand mean	3.46	Highly Competent

The reported grand mean of 3.46 indicates that the average of the seven displayed competency means falls within the Highly Competent category. Customer service and client relations, along with professionalism and ethical conduct, received the highest ratings at 3.56. Adaptability and flexibility followed at 3.52, while technical and computer skills received the lowest rating at 3.32. These results suggest that, based on the supplied employer feedback, graduates demonstrate favorable performance across the assessed workplace competency dimensions.

The relatively high rating for customer service and client relations is relevant to the service-oriented nature of Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) work, where effective client interaction and professional service delivery are important workplace competencies. Baird and Parayitam (2019) emphasized the importance of skills and competencies in employers' assessments of college graduates. Similarly, the International Labour Organization and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2018) highlighted the importance of skills development and lifelong learning in preparing workers for changing workplace requirements. Professionalism and ethical conduct also received a high rating, indicating a favorable assessment of this competency dimension in the supplied results.

Technical and computer skills received a comparatively lower rating, although the score remained within the Highly Competent category. This relative difference provides a basis for reviewing practical learning activities involving digital communication, office applications, data handling, and customer service systems. The findings do not indicate that graduates lack these skills; rather, the comparatively lower mean identifies a potential area for continued curriculum enhancement and skills development.

The competency dimensions assessed in this study are comparable to those examined by Domingo et al. (2024b), who investigated employers' feedback on the communication, problem-solving, technical knowledge, teamwork, adaptability, and ethical professionalism of BSBA Marketing Management graduates. Their study provides a relevant basis for examining employer perspectives on graduate competencies. Together, these studies illustrate the value of employer feedback in assessing graduates' workplace preparation and identifying areas for improvement. However, their findings should not be assumed to be identical because the studies involve different program specializations and employment contexts.

4 CONCLUSION

The study examines the employability and workplace competencies of BSBA graduates majoring in Service Management in BPO through graduate employment data and employers' assessments. The supplied employment figures indicate that 87 of 118 graduates are employed, corresponding to an overall employment rate of 73.73%. Employment rates vary across cohorts, with 2024 recording the highest rate at 76.92% and 2025 the lowest at 65.00%.

The job-relevance distribution indicates that employed graduates are distributed across directly related, business-related or other, and unrelated occupational categories. This finding underscores the importance of evaluating not only whether graduates obtain employment but also the relationship between their employment and their academic specialization.

The employer competency ratings yield a grand mean of 3.46, interpreted as Highly Competent. Customer service and client relations, as well as professionalism and ethical conduct, receive the highest ratings, whereas technical and computer skills receive the lowest. The relative differences in these ratings provide a basis for reviewing practical learning activities and the alignment of competency development with workplace requirements.

Consistent with the graduate outcome and employer feedback approaches described by Domingo et al. (2024a, 2024b), the combined assessment of employment status, job relevance, and workplace competencies provides a framework for program evaluation and continuous improvement. The final conclusions must be based on verified survey records and validated statistical computations.

Recommendations

- Based on the reported results, the following recommendations are proposed:
- Strengthen BPO-related practical training. Integrate customer interaction simulations, telephone and email communication, chat support, and complaint-resolution exercises into relevant courses.
- Enhance technical and computer skills. Review the curriculum's practical components and incorporate relevant digital tools, office applications, customer service platforms, and data-handling activities where appropriate.
- Develop problem-solving and critical-thinking skills. Use case studies, workplace scenarios, and decision-making activities that require students to evaluate information and formulate appropriate responses.
- Sustain customer service and professional development. Continue emphasizing customer relations, ethical conduct, confidentiality, accountability, and professional communication.
- Improve graduate tracking. Conduct regular tracer studies and document employment status, job relevance, time to first employment, and career progression across graduating cohorts.
- Strengthen industry partnerships. Consult BPO employers and supervisors regarding entry-level job requirements, technical competencies, and changes in workplace practices.
- Integrate findings into program evaluation. Use verified employment data and employer assessments to review curriculum alignment, practical learning activities, and program educational objectives.
- Maintain data quality and consistency. Verify employment totals, percentages, job-relevance classifications, and competency means against the original questionnaires before finalizing the manuscript.

STATEMENTS ON COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS

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Disclosure of conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding this manuscript.

Statement of informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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