

A TRACER STUDY ON LPU-LAGUNA CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANT BOARD PASSERS

Ma. Leonora V. Alusen
Assistant Professor

ABSTRACT

The objective of the Accountancy program is to produce highly qualified and competent graduates that are highly employable after graduation. Employability of graduates is one of the measures of Higher Education institutions to ensure that the quality of education they provide is suitable to the needs of the industry. This study determined the employment status of Bachelor of Science in Accountancy Board passers from period of 2011 to 2015. Descriptive type of research method was utilized in the study involving the total of thirty respondents. The findings revealed that the BSA board passers are highly employable with regular status and presently working in a supervisory position in auditing, public office and financial companies related to their college degrees who found their first job as walk-in applicants. Problem solving, critical thinking skills and communication skills are considered the foremost competency that found very useful to their job placement.

Keywords: Employability, Accountancy, Curriculum, BSA Program, Competency and Skills

INTRODUCTION

The objective of the Accountancy program is to produce highly qualified and competent graduates that are highly employable after graduation. The performance of the graduates in the CPA Licensure Examinations serves as a measure to the effectiveness of the program in providing the quality instruction. The accountancy profession is distinguished by certain characteristics, including mastery of particular intellectual skill acquired in training and education, adherence of its members into a common code of values and conduct including maintaining an attitude which is essentially objective established by its administrating body. The academe role is to develop character and nurture young minds to become responsible individuals and competent professionals. Graduates in accountancy program should possess skills which include analytic skills, financial reporting, mastery of different areas of the profession, good communication skills,

Information Communication Technology skills (ICT), problem-solving skills, critical thinking skills, human relations skills and research skills.

There is a need to make a follow-up study of the accountancy graduates not only to locate them but more importantly to find out the adequacy of the training provided by Lyceum of the Philippines University-Laguna in the overall performance of their career life, the extent by which the teaching and competency skills were developed, the employment status of the graduates as well as their achievements in the field. An alumni tracer study is an important vehicle to build strong bonds between the Alma Mater and the ever increasing graduates. This study is feasible because the alumni are the rich source of feedback for the improvements in the curriculum, teaching, research, extension and networking. This tracer study will also help to measure the extent of professional and academic careers pursued by the graduates after gaining knowledge and skill through an academic institution such as Lyceum of the Philippines University-Laguna.

This tracer study aimed to trace the Certified Public Accountants board passers from 2010-2015 and find out how they fared in the job market after graduation and passing the board examination. It further determines the profile of the College of Business and Accountancy BSA graduates in terms of their socio-demographic characteristics, employment status and professional success. It is designed to determine the relevance of College of Business and Accountancy academic programs, to provide feedback mechanisms on the relationship between academic program and industry needs and to contribute to the betterment of College of Business and Accountancy Bachelor of Science in Accountancy program and curriculum that is geared towards the needs of the students and the industry.

Objectives

The study aimed to assess the training, employability and accomplishments of BS Accountancy graduates of Lyceum of the Philippines-Laguna who successfully passed the CPA Board Examination. More specifically, it sought to present the profile of the respondents in terms of employment status, length of time to be employed after graduation, methods of recruitment in first job, nature of work, current position title held and current position work status. Moreover, this graduate tracer study wanted to determine the extent did LPU-L develop among the respondents with regard to the competency skills most applicable to present job, the assessment conducted among the respondents to the BSA program and the level of learning which is considered useful in meeting the demands of their work and lastly, to propose an action recommendations to help accountancy graduates meet the demands of the profession.

METHOD

This study used the descriptive research design through survey method administered to access the successful BSA board passers. It was conducted dated October 2015 to December 2016. There were a total of thirty successful CPA board passers who responded to the survey. The identification of the graduate was primarily based on a list of graduates provided by the Palaestra Office. The survey questionnaire used was composed of four parts. Part 1 dealt with the socio-demographic profile of the respondents, Part 2 involved the assessment of the BSA program and assessment of learning, Part 3 and 4 concerned the respondent's employment background and achievements respectively. The researchers also asked for the help and assistance of friends, relatives and currently enrolled students from the time of data gathering for the personal delivery of the questionnaire to the identified respondents.

The researchers used electronic mail or e-mail in sending the questionnaires. It was the most convenient and fastest way of sending notes, letters and messages through Internet. Most of the graduate respondents were using computers in their offices or companies which meant that it was easier to communicate with them in asking their participation as respondents of the study.

The researcher selected all the board passers graduates of Accountancy of Batch 2011-2015 as the respondents of the study. The study only used the survey answers that ran from the survey provided by the researcher. This was due to the limited time availability of the researcher and the unexpected slow retrieval of survey answers coming from the respondents. Percent retrieval of data is described as the ratio of actual number of respondents who answered from the given survey period (October 2015 to December 2016) and the total number of respondents for the study. The collected data were classified, tabulated and coded for analysis. The data collected were classified, tabulated and coded for analysis. The following statistical tools were employed in interpreting the data obtained from the survey: Percentage was used to analyze the profile of the respondents with respect to the selected variables. Weighted Mean was used to determine the assessment of program and assessment of learning, Ranking showed the position of importance of the items used. To arrive at a verbal description of each item, for the assessment of learning, the given scale was used: Very Much 4.5 – 5.00: Much 3.5 – 4.49: Moderate 2.5 – 3.49: Little 1.5 – 2.49: Very Little 1.0 – 1.49. To arrive at a verbal interpretation of each item for the assessment of the program, the given scale was used: Strongly Agree 4.5 – 5.00: Moderately Agree 3.5 – 4.49:

Agree 2.5 – 3.49: Disagree 1.5 – 2.49: Strongly Disagree 1.0 – 1.49

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There was a total of 30 respondents with 8 males and 22 females. Data on table 1 shows that 100% of the respondents are gainfully employed during the survey, the result is remarkable and proves that the College flagship program yields higher demands in labor market thus, offered massive opportunity for the graduates to be employed. It further indicates that even though they do not have yet work experience after passing the board exam they were able to hit the ground and employers trust their strong skills and competencies for the job.

Table 1: Employment status

Percent	Frequency	
Employed	30	100
Not Employed Now		
Never Employed		
Total	30	

In terms of the period they spent finding for the first job, eight or 27% of them landed in the job in less than a month, 15 or 50% got a job within 1 to 6 months followed by seven or 23% got a job within 7 to 11 months. This signifies that the BSA board passers can find a work in a very short period of time. It further implies that the graduates are highly employable after graduation.

Table 2: Length of time to get a job after graduation

Percent	Frequency
Less than a Month	8
27	
1 to 6 months	15
50	
7 to 11 months	7
23	
1 year to less than 2 years	
Total	30
100	

As to the methods of recruitment, majority of the graduates (57%) obtained their first job as walk-in applicants. Others found job upon responding to media and newspaper advertisement (33%), and by someone's recommendation (10%). This indicates that most of the fresh graduates found job using their own effort. The institution has a big role in helping graduates to locate new and better jobs aligned to their competency skills through job fairs and recommendations in a private or public organization.

Table 3: Methods of Recruitment on First Job

	Frequency	Percent
As walk-in applicant	17	57
Information from friends Job Fair		
Recommended by Someone	3	10
Response to media and Newspaper advertisement	10	33
Vacancy Notice		
Total	30	
100		

After the completion of the program and passing the CPA licensure examination, graduates can pursue a career in accountancy and related professions. As shown in table 4, the nature of work of graduates varies widely among the fields of manufacturing, academe, financial, auditing, service, public office. Specifically, data show that majority of the graduates' enter into auditing companies (40%), public office (23%) and Financial (20%). A few got interested to have their first job in manufacturing, academe and services.

Table 4: Nature of Business Operation in present company

	Frequency	Percent
Manufacturing	2	6
Academe	2	6
Financial	6	20
Auditing	12	40
Service	1	3

Public Office	7	23
Total	30	
100		

As to the graduates' current position held, data on table 5 show that 22 respondents or 73% appeared to be in supervisory position while eight of the respondents or 27% belonged to the rank and file positions. This indicates that graduates were able to obtain work right after graduation and subsequently after taking their board examinations and their current position in various labor markets were related to their course in college. They are capable of working effectively as entry level professional accountants. Also, it is notable that in a short span of time, there are graduates who are holding a middle level positions. It is an indication that graduates of BSA are competitive and their acquired knowledge and skills in accounting and related fields facilitated their growth to positions of increased responsibility.

Table 5: Current Positions

	Frequency	
Percent		
As walk-in applicant	17	57
Information from friends		
Job Fair		
Recommended by Someone	3	10
Response to media and	10	33
Newspaper advertisement		
Vacancy Notice		
Total	30	
100		

Furthermore, as reflected in table 6, 87% of the respondents were holding regular/permanent status, 10% were on a contractual status while 3% were on a probationary status. This implies that a BSA graduate or a licensed accountant has better opportunities to be regularized because of the proficiency and competence required by the job possessed by the respondents.

Table 6: Current Positions Work Status

	Frequency	
Percent		
Regular/Permanent	26	87
Temporary/Casual		

Contractual	3	10
Probationary	1	3
Total	30	
100		

When graduates were asked to identified their skills acquired in College most applicable to their present job, data in table 7 indicate that the top five acquired proficiency relevant to their job were the following: problem solving skills, critical thinking skills, communication skills, human relation skills and leadership skills. While mathematical skills, information technology skills and entrepreneurial skills had least significant to their first job. Their human relation skill made them capable to work in groups as well as being a team player. They were able to contribute to group effort and establish a good working relationship among colleagues and superiors. They could work well with men and women from diverse backgrounds and respond well to peer pressure. Likewise, their problem solving and critical thinking skills heightened their ability to review, interpret, and evaluate financial data and systems.

Table 7: Competencies learned in College, most useful in first job

Rank	Frequency	
Communication Skills	16	3
Problem Solving Skills	25	1
Human Relations Skills	13	4
Critical Thinking Skills	20	2
Entrepreneurial Skills	6	7
Leadership Skills	10	5
Mathematical Skills	8	6
Information Technology Skills	5	8

The graduates were asked to assess the BSA program. Table 8 reflects the distribution of the respondents' assessment of the program as indicated by their agreement on the statement cited. The data show that most respondents rated the BSA program from moderately agree to agree indicating that they were contented and satisfied with the foundation and preparation they had during their Bachelor's Degree which were applied throughout their professional lives having a grand mean of 4.34. Furthermore, among the situation cited, the mean of 4.50 where the objectives of the program were achieved is noteworthy. However, the mean score of 2.95 indicating that the job training/internship is enough to equip the

students with hands-on experiences related to the job should be taken into consideration having a low score means that a review of BSA students internship should be improved.

Table 8: Assessment of the Program

Mean	Interpretation	
The program components are relevant to the job	4.31	Moderately Agree
The objectives of the program had been achieved	4.50	Strongly Agree
The objectives of the program is similar to the objectives of the workplace.	3.70	Moderately Agree
The program length is sufficient to produce graduates with the required-entry level knowledge and or skill in the field/workplace.	4.09	Moderately Agree
The program description captures the types of duties a graduate can expect to perform in the work environment	3.95	Moderately Agree
The courses are relevant to the intended career	4.27	Moderately Agree
Quality of instruction is sufficient for the requirement of the workplace	3.81	Moderately Agree
Quality of Guidance services is sufficient for the requirement of the workplace	3.54	Moderately Agree
Interpersonal relationships had been developed in school	3.95	Moderately Agree
On the job training/internship is enough to equip the students with hands-on experiences related to the job	2.95	Agree
Grand Mean	4.34	Moderately Agree

Legend: Strongly Agree (SA) 4.50-5.00; Moderately Agree (MA) 3.5-4.49; Agree (A) 2.5-3.49; Disagree (DA) 1.5-2.49; Strongly Disagree (SDA) 1.0-1.49

Data on table 9 show that respondents rated their assessment of learning. The grand mean of 4.16 indicated that they rated their overall learning as moderately agree. Specifically, of all the assessment of learning cited, problem solving skills were rated very much acquired as indicated by the highest weighted mean of 4.45 followed by developing their initiative and stimulated enthusiasm in learning with a mean score of 4.40 respectively. In contrast, developing computer skills got the lowest mean scores of 3.40. BSA graduates were expected to be conversant not only with IT concepts for business system but acquired adequate knowledge on information production, system development, management and control. The mean score

of information technology skills was 3.40 meaning that there is still room for improvement. Graduates' information technology acquired skills may have helped them with their job but not as extensive compared to other skills. There is a need to strengthen the information technology skills of the BSA students since nowadays, firms and offices use systems that bring about book keeping, accounting, financial reporting, tax reporting, and auditing.

Table 9: Assessment of the Program

	Mean	Interpretation
Develop knowledge and skills applicable to a career	4.22	Moderately Agree
Develop my ability to work as a team	4.22	Moderately Agree
Motivated me to do my best work	4.31	Moderately Agree
Provided me with a broad overview of my course/major	4.27	Moderately Agree
Developed my time management skills	4.13	Moderately Agree
Develop my initiative	4.40	Moderately Agree
Sharpened my analytic skills	4.18	Moderately Agree
Develop my creativity	4.00	Moderately Agree
Develop my confidence to investigate new ideas	4.36	Moderately Agree
Develop my problem solving skills	4.45	Moderately Agree
Stimulated my enthusiasm for further learning	4.40	Moderately Agree
Improved my skills in written communication	4.04	Moderately Agree
Helped develop my ability to plan my own work	4.18	Moderately Agree
Helped me make informed judgment	3.90	Moderately Agree
Develop my computer skills	3.40	Agree
Total Mean	4.16	Moderately Agree

Legend: Strongly Agree (SA) 4.50-5.00; Moderately Agree (MA) 3.5-4.49; Agree (A) 2.5-3.49; Disagree (DA) 1.5-2.49; Strongly Disagree (SDA) 1.0-1.49

CONCLUSION

This graduate tracer study shows that the respondents are gainfully employed; it proves that the College flagship program yields higher demands in the labor market. They are highly employable since majority landed a job in less than six months. As to the methods of recruitment, majority of the graduates obtain their first job as walk-in applicant, this implies that most of the fresh graduates find job through their own effort. After completion of the program and passing the CPA licensure examination, graduates can pursue a career in accountancy and related professions. Majority work in an auditing firm and public office although there are a few who get interested to teach in

the academe. As to the graduates' current position held, majority appear to be in supervisory position. This indicates that graduates are able to obtain work right after graduation and subsequently after taking their board examinations and their current position in various labor markets are related to their course in college. They are capable of working effectively as entry level professional accountants. Also, it is worthy of note that in a short span of time, there are graduates who are holding a middle level positions. It is an indication that graduates of BSA are competitive and their acquired knowledge and skills in accounting and related fields facilitated their growth to positions of increased responsibility. The top five acquired proficiency relevant to their job are: problem solving skills, critical thinking skills, communication skills, human relation skills and leadership skills. The data show that most respondents rate the BSA program from moderately agree to agree indicating that they are contented and satisfied with the foundation and preparation they have during their Bachelor's Degree.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The administration and faculty of the College of Business and Accountancy should take the challenge of maintaining a very high degree of graduate satisfaction while keeping pace with changing professional requirements. It must continue to develop graduates' employability and enhance the attributes that make them employable. The graduating students must be encouraged to continue their professional development and lifelong learning. Seminars on the use of Information and Technology should be given. Accounting software packages in the classroom should be made available for our graduates. Job fairs and other employment or career opportunities should be introduced in school to help students in their career planning. Continuous upgrading and development of course curriculum and syllabi is recommended. The internship program and other relevant "hands-on" experiences like accounting software application (examples: SAP, ORACLE and Peachtree) and accounting system design and development should be introduced in the curriculum. Further, students should be encouraged to participate in activities outside school like quiz bowls, seminars and trainings, conventions and non-academic activities that contribute to holistic academic training for these will improve their interpersonal skills, competitiveness and communication skills. A similar follow-up study should be conducted to locate its graduates, to find out whether the training they received have helped them in their field of work and to find out what else can be done to prepare our graduates in their respective fields.