

## A graduate's employability study of bachelor of science in entrepreneurship of Isabela State University, Philippines

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### ABSTRACT

The bachelor of science in entrepreneurship (BSE) program is offered to address the needs of learners who want to obtain a degree adapted to their talents and abilities to contribute to the industrialization of the country. To assess transparency, the college has the responsibility to keep track of the success of its graduates and whether their curriculum has affected the person, the society, or the country. The graduate tracer analysis will aid in evaluating the employability of the graduate and define the multiple variables that will act as a framework for optimizing students' college instruction and facilities. In this tracer study, 69 alumni who graduated from 2013 to 2017 were surveyed using a modified graduate tracer study (GTS) instrument, administered using social media and other digital platforms. The contribution to alumni employability of factors: curriculum, student services, facilities, faculty competence, methods of instruction, and career guidance were quantified and ranked. Based on the results, the most significant factors contributing to alumni employability were course content/curriculum, student services (training, seminars), and facilities. As such, the researchers recommend strengthening the BSE curriculum, conducting employee training and seminars, and streamlining administrative facilities.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The path to success is education. This is one of the ways to relieve hunger. Linking college degrees and employability is one of the core challenges of academicians today. The researchers build on numerous hypotheses about education's effects on graduate employability to help explain these ideas. Most of these ideas are the philosophy of human capital, which suggests that schooling provides people with productive abilities. This hypothesis implies that education delivers information and expertise that significantly affects employee efficiency in education. In educating learners, academic institutions play a critical role in a wide variety of abilities necessary for life in general and in jobs in particular. Universities and colleges are mandated to deliver an adequately qualified workforce in today's dynamic work environment, necessary to ensure consistency in the country's growth as observed [1]. However, it appears that a college education is missing. There is a substantial supply of careers [2]. A tracer analysis is a primary method intended to assess the importance of vocational schooling, program, training, and curriculum learned. It is an essential instrument for instructional planners [3]. It is used as a management mechanism for training schedule

preparation and tracking, which new program to offer, modify or enhance. They have information and analysis of teaching curricula for pragmatic modifications. They also help track instruction execution (wiki.answers.com), reduce perceived inadequacies in given course content, teaching strategies, and usefulness, and complement the curriculum in light of the desired level of quality (www.tec/tracer.study). This can also be used as a promotional tool (wiki.answer.com). Isabela State University (ISU) is required to provide the requisite human capital in the arts as well as in the technical and professional fields with appropriate education and training through its four-dimensional functions: teaching, research, extension, and development (university code).

The educational programs of the ISU are far from elitist. These are typically job-oriented and alternative courses that allow graduates to pursue jobs or become self-employed entrepreneurs and service providers. It is in line with the determination and goal of the University to improve the quality of Filipino socioeconomic life through education. Bachelor of Science in entrepreneurship (BSE) was offered as one of its critical programs by the college to address the rising needs of the population to motivate individuals and not only focus on vying for a position in a company or business sector. This tracer intends to track its graduates' whereabouts to check whether the program's goals are fulfilled. The knowledge obtained from the survey will be useful to ISU and for the enhancement and reform of the program. Examples of questions that can be answered in tracer studies are provided by analyzing the graduates from the BSE course, specialization, degree of education, or a mixture for comparative analysis [4] and presenting examples of issues addressed in tracer studies. Enhanced curriculum planning and development emphasize multiple and practical skills acquisition or applied research to be in keeping with the needs of the times [5].

To keep up with the technical and socio-cultural shifts, improve curriculum preparation and growth focus on various functional skills acquisition or practice-oriented learning. In addition, this report stressed the importance of curriculum preparation and growth in responding to the market's needs. Details on wages, work title, nature of jobs, and employment status can be provided by biographical data on where our graduates are now". The importance of the role of education providers in the sector is further stressed in this report. They have the opportunity to play a significant role in educating students through work fairs, career guidance, or workshops on job search techniques to search for jobs. This also has political ramifications concerning designing an appropriate curriculum to develop a suitable labor force for the supply and demand of labor.

Conversely, the paper adds to the research literature, offering in this complex job setting a better image of the basic skills of the employability of graduates. The ultimate purpose of the analysis is to determine the position of the BSE graduates from the university, to gain input on the institution's feedback on the enabling environment provided by the university; and to use the knowledge to determine areas of development, in particular: i) Decide the profile of BSE graduates in terms of their: employment status, type of career, position, eligibility, and earnings; ii) Ascertain the variables that are attributed to their employment and their difficulty landing their jobs after college; iii) Ascertain the perceived consistency and importance of the education by the graduate. The research uses the client-required-assessment methodology to adopt Stufflebeam's content-input-process-product model. The production level is reflected by the graduates' employability, the relevance of the program, and productivity. The consistency, methods, and importance of the content/input and mechanism are determined by the assessment of the effectiveness of their college preparation by graduates, assistance from student programs, extension programs and general acceptance to their current employment, and the perceived determinants of the quality of university education by alumni, including support facilities and their exposure to actual business during college.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

These tracer studies covered all BSE graduates practicing or employed in different industries, or even working abroad, in public or profit-oriented sectors. About 69 graduates out of 115 total population were involved as respondents under the BSE from 2013 to 2017 using a stratified sampling technique. In addition, a modified graduate tracer study (GTS) instrument was structured and utilized, and was administered using the social media platform to obtain first-hand information from the respondents. Since the location of the respondents is unknown, the acceptable response rate can be up to 30% [6].

The researchers used the descriptive, inferential type of study design in the conduct of the research, in which they explain the data and features of what is being studied. In this report, Fluid Surveys, testing goals are expressly set out. Frequency, percentage, proportions, average, and rating were used for the data collected.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1. Statistics of the bachelor of science in entrepreneurship alumni

##### 3.1.1. Status of employment

Employment status is the standing of a worker in a company based on the contract of work or duration for work done. The survey result reveals that 25 (36.25%) are employed, and 19 (27.50%) are overseas Filipino workers. In comparison, 16 (23.20%) were self-employed, and nine (13.05%) were newly terminated, which causes their unemployed status.

This result indicates that our BSE graduates have tended to search for jobs rather than invest in their businesses, as defined in the survey outcome. Any of them now work as overseas foreign worker (OFWs) workers. As Henrekson and Sanandaji claimed, they were using cross-country data in his research to chart the connection between the occurrence of freelance individuals and individuals who have become wealthy by starting up their own companies (as listed in Forbes Magazine) is indirect and important [7]. Related research where the association between the occurrence of self-employed employees and net business formation is always favorable in their analysis, and the regression coefficients show a strong correlation with t-statistics in the region of 3.5-4 for both self-employment proxies [8].

##### 3.1.2. Type of employment

The job status represents the tenure protection that our graduates demand their success as employed. Siraye *et al.* reported work status is a key factor influencing socioeconomic status, which is in turn related to health outcomes [9]. Table 1 indicates that 23 or (33.33%) of respondents are regularly, 21 or (30.45%) are on a contractual/casual basis, while 16 or (23.20%) handle their own company and nine or (13.05%) are on a work order.

The results show that most of our graduates are permanent while the others occupy a contractual position, especially OFWs. Those who manage their business show potential. At the same time, there are still graduates on a Job Order (JO) basis and those whose companies cannot afford to give them permanent positions and later terminated them. Based on the study of Wandera [10], the increasing the number of entities is turning to short-term labor supply and demand to be able to compete in the global market. However, those firms differ widely in their approaches to human resource management.

##### 3.1.3. Job title of graduates

The positions held by the graduates manifest the effectiveness and efficiency of the education they obtained from the university in the matter of their ability to get employment immediately after graduation. For example, Table 1 shows that 19 (27.50%) of the graduates are employed as overseas Filipino worker (OFWs) though (they did not disclose what their job titles are), 18 (26.0%) as Business process outsourcing (BPO), and managers of their own business with 16 or (23.20%), as a worker in local government unit (LGU) eight or (12.0) while six or (8.70%) as store supervisor and/and two or (12.0%) as store manager. Many of the graduates have been working as OFWs, as noted in the outcome, perhaps the cause is that they see overseas employees as an easier way to get paid higher salaries and can save their own company for later purposes. And next arrives as the agent of the BPO/call center, tempting them with big salaries, rights, and advantages it provides. Many that operate their enterprises, such as small-scale firms, followed. According to Burton, Sørensen, and Dobrev [11], the opportunity for future studies based on entrepreneurship as a career option was outlined in their latest research. Research show there is a lack of study on the quality of employment created by enterprising companies, and a deeper understanding of the type and quality of the jobs generated by enterprising companies should be of great importance to policymakers who want to promote job growth by encouraging venture capital [3], [4], [12]

##### 3.1.4. Eligibilities

The results show the excellence of alumni in the matter of their ability to hurdle government assessments. However, Table 1 depicts that 52 or (69.24%) of the graduates have not taken any eligibility examinations. In comparison, 13 (19.43%) of the graduates have passed the examinations that qualify them for first-level positions in the government such as clerical and administrative work. The rest of the respondents, four or (11.33%), have passed the examinations that qualify them for both first-level and second-level positions in the government such as technical positions.

The graduate of the BSE does not need to take career eligibilities since their pathway leads to managing their own business. However, these eligibilities can be considered a plus factor if one passed them. The passers of the professional career examination (C.S. Prof/C.S. Non-Prof) typically land a job in the industry. However, as reflected in the research undertaken [13], job experience is described as the most significant consideration in hiring. As a recruitment factor, market and employability capabilities have grown in value.

### 3.1.5. Income

The income accrued to the respondents reflects their position in their workplace. Table 1 depicts the income earned by the respondents. About 20 of the employed alumni or 38.8% receive salaries ranging from PHP 25,000-29,990/monthly salary. There were 17 or (24.60%) who earn at least PHP 30,000 per month. The results also show that 16, and 8 or (23.20%) and (11.60%) received salary between PHP 20,000-24,999 and PHP 10,000-19,999 respectively.

Most of those who are overseas Filipino worker (OFWs) and those working with business process outsourcings (BPOs) receive more than PHP 30,000. On the other hand, those self-employed are in the salary bracket of PHP 20,000 and the rest in the bracket of PHP 10,000-14,999. Therefore, the computed mean monthly income is PHP 22,173.90.

Table 1. Statistics of the BS in entrepreneurship alumni

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Employment status		
Employed	25	36.25
Self-employed	16	23.2
OFWs	19	27.5
Unemployed/terminated	9	13.05
Type of employment		
Permanent	23	30.33
Casual/contractual	21	30.45
Job order	9	13.05
Self-employed	16	23.2
Job title		
Manager (own business)	16	23.2
BPO	18	26.1
Supervisor	6	8.7
Store manager	2	2.9
OFW	19	27.5
LGU	8	11.6
Eligibility		
CSE non-professional	13	19.43
CSE professional	4	11.33
Not applicable	53	69.24
Salary range per month (P)		
10,000-14,999	8	11.6
15,000-19,999	8	11.6
20,000-24,999	16	23.2
25,000-29,999	20	29
30,000 and above	17	24.6

### 3.2. Data on their first job

Table 2 shows the period spent searching for their job. As shown in Table 2, there were 60 (86.95%) of the respondents had their first employment on the year of their graduation, while eight (11.60%) got their first jobs beyond a year but less than 2 years after graduation, and one or (1.45%) 2-3 years after graduation. The graduates of the college, in general, have a vast opportunity for possible employment in the business sector. However, for the BSE graduates, since their program requires them to practice their field of interest, it is observed that landing possible any related job is not a hindrance. This is reflected in the result gathered in the survey. Furthermore, the readiness of the BSE alumni to vie for jobs against their contemporaries from other institutions shows their excellence as contributed by the education and training they received from the school.

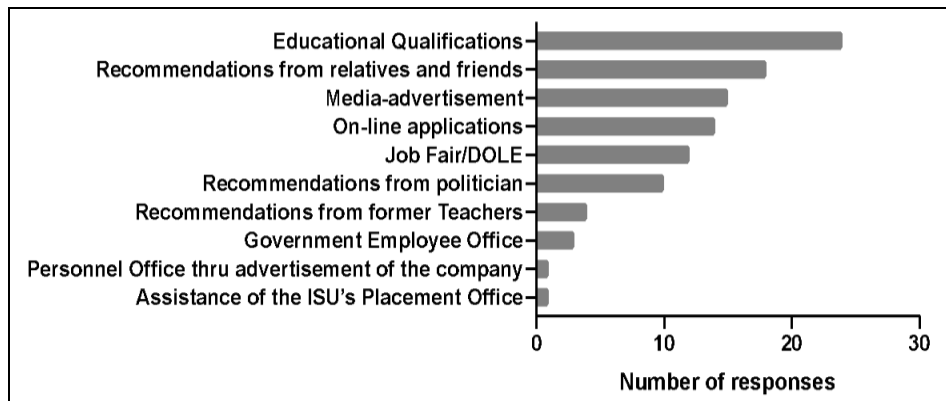
Table 2. Duration of job hunting (years)

Time spent	Frequency (n=69)	Percent (%)
<1 year	60	86.95
1 year to 2 years	8	11.60
2 years to 3 years	1	1.45

### 3.3. Variables that facilitated job hunting

To confirm the data on how the graduates were able to find employment, they were asked to indicate the factor/s that influenced them to find their present job. Figure 1 identifies the important variables that aided them to land a job. These are: i) Educational qualifications and degrees sought by 24 alumni;

ii) Recommendations from relatives and friends rank second with 18 alumni; iii) Media advertisement with 15; iv) Through online application with 14; and v) Career expo with 12; vi) Endorsements from politicians with 10; vii) Followed by endorsements from former teachers/professors with 4; viii) Through referrals by government employee/office with 3; ix) Personnel office through advertisement of the company; and x) Assistance of the ISU placement office with one respondent respectively. Educational qualifications lead along with the different factors that could help the graduates land a job as opined in the study [14]. Often social polls provide a calculation of years of completed full-time schooling, leading to nomenclatures of the highest qualifications in education [15].

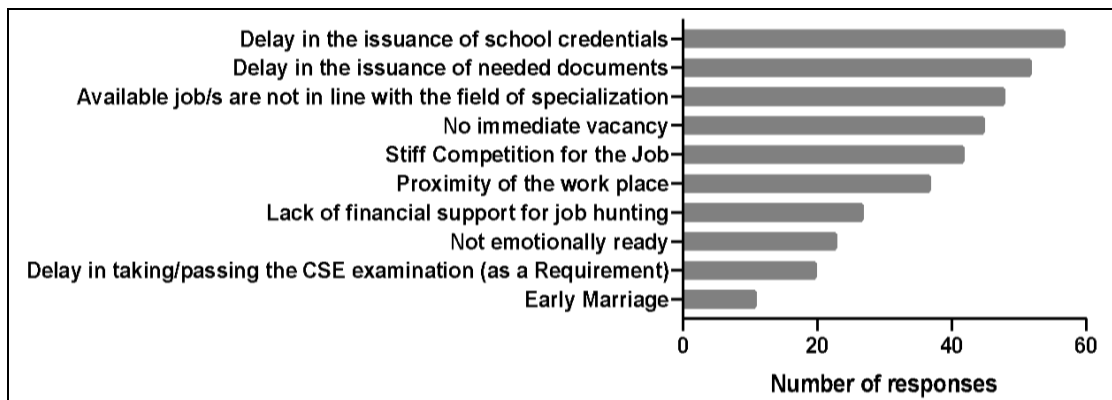


Note: multiple responses were allowed

Figure 1. Variables that facilitated job hunting

### 3.4. Reasons for delay in employment

Based on the data, the top reasons causing the delay in their employment is within the control of the university. This is the postponement of the release of school credentials with 57 alumni and other needed documents such as clearance and the like. In addition, mismatch of skills and job vacancies ranked 3 with 48 respondents; no immediate vacancy ranked 4 with 45 responded, stiff competition for the job with 42 respondents ranked 5, while the proximity of the workplace ranked 6 with 37 responded. In contrast, insufficient financial resources for job hunting, immaturity, not being able to pass the civil services examination (CSE) (as a requirement), and early marriage ranked 7, 8, 9, and 10 with 27, 23, 20, and 11 responded, respectively. Most of the reasons are beyond the control of the students, and the school must consider these findings to improve its services and address the needs of the graduates. Nevertheless, the graduates' credentials are a fundamental requirement for employment, even securing additional documents to support the placement of the graduates. Figure 2 is showing reasons for the delay in deployment of the BSE graduate ranked from most important to least important.



Note: multiple responses were allowed

Figure 2. Reasons for delay in deployment of the BSE graduate

### 3.5. Relevance of training provided by the university to their present job

Table 3 reflects the overall perception of the BSE graduates as to the usefulness of the training they receive in the college while enrolled. Table 3 reveals that 38 respondents (55.0%) believe that their college training was fairly relevant to their current work. The 21 respondents (30.50%) answered training was relevant. In contrast, only 10 of the respondents (14.5%) believe the relevance of their training obtained in college was helpful/ useful to their current work situation. The result shows that our graduates feel that while they have formal experience in the real business world, the preparation offered by the college directly during their on-the-job training (OJT) is not as strong as their standards. A graduate must be prepared with much of the employer's desired skills and the potential to engage and contribute to the information economy by applying what they have gained in tertiary education and enhancing their social status and the economy of the country to obtain employment [16].

Table 3. Relevance of training provided by the university

Relevance	Frequency (n=69)	Percentage (%)
Very relevant	10	14.50
Relevant	21	30.50
Fairly relevant	38	55.00
Numerical rating score	82.3	
Descriptive	Fairly relevant	

### 3.6. Competencies/skills

The table for the BSE competencies is based on the identified graduate competencies of the program. Table 4 shows a very high bearing of the BSE alumni about the relevance of competencies the moment they land jobs. The grand mean of 4.6 suggests that the alumni "strongly agree" to consider competencies standards needed to grow actively in their profession in various types of industry. Among these criteria the highest score was attributed were: i) Human relations; ii) Personality development; and iii) Entrepreneurial skills among others received 4.7 scores with a qualitative description of "very important" along with critical thinking skills and core values formation with 4.6 means. The information technology skills, problem-solving and research and extension skills and oral and written communication skills which all received a score of 4.5 with a (critical interpretation), and information technology (IT) skills with 4.4 (important interpretation).

Table 4. The perceived significance of the competencies for the BSE alumni

Competencies/skills	Mean	Verbal interpretation
Critical thinking skills	4.6	Very significant
Human relations/interpersonal skills	4.7	Very significant
Personality development	4.7	Very significant
Entrepreneurial skills	4.7	Very significant
Information technology skills	4.4	Significant
Problem-solving skill	4.5	Significant
Core values formation	4.6	Very significant
Research and extension skills	4.5	Significant
Communication skills	4.5	Very significant
Grand mean	4.6	Very significant

The employer finds core competencies relevant to tertiary education because they represent how graduate skills fulfill the work market requirements. In general, it can be gleaned from the findings that most graduates attribute primary value to abilities that demonstrate their capacity to use business skills, ability to connect to others through human relationships, or in good cooperation with others. If wide opportunities are given to learners to exercise these attributes inside learning practices and elsewhere, the student's core competencies will be strongly encouraged [17]. The debate continues with a summary of the core curriculum competencies for the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (BSBA) and BSE, accompanied by existing and recent references. Students are required to have the potential to apply and grow their skills after graduation to enhance society's quality of life [17].

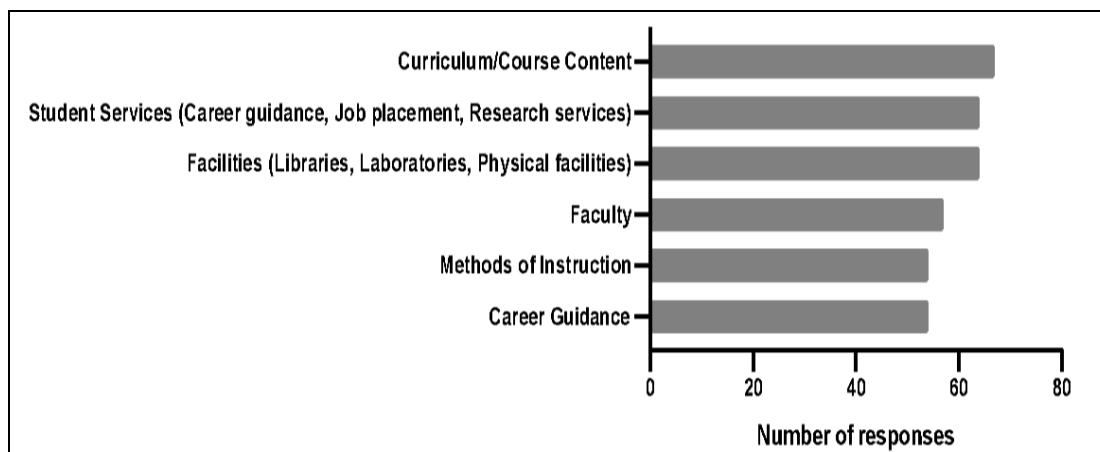
In several studies, it is also observed that skills such as critical thinking, decision-making abilities, preparation and ability to use time productively, teamwork abilities, leadership skills, initiative/creativity skills, organizational skills, and IT skills are all important as a graduate of any degree course. Among these, common employability skills are the most sought-after by the workforce in the place of work [18]. This means that the university has been profoundly affected by the expected qualities of these young adults in the

matter of advancing not just their academic and analytical abilities, but also their way of coping with people and circumstances. However, this might promise the university and the graduates themselves a manifestation of achievement in fulfilling the institution's mission and goals. Additionally, Barrie [19] suggests that personal characteristics specifically contribute to the employability of graduates.

### 3.7. Quality of education as perceived by the BSE alumni

Education through improved self-efficacy can enable more people to follow their entrepreneurial intent [20]. Thus, facilitating this type of experience to allow student entrepreneurs to choose in a supportive environment should be a critical part of any entrepreneurship curriculum. Figure 3 shows the indicators of the BSE strengths and flaws as perceived by the alumni. Results show that the program of the study had been considerably strong with a 97.10% rate, followed by property, plant, and equipment (PPE) and student services, both academic and related services such as job placement with 92.75% each while learning facilitators with 82.60%, teaching strategies and career guidance with 79.30% each.

The learners enjoy the program and the quality of their degree, so it suits what the market wants for a BSE graduate. The program is the heart of the educational scheme of the college. To ensure that program priorities and results satisfy the needs of its students and community, any university of excellence needs to re-examine itself regularly. According to Easton and Sommers [21], the core curriculum would have certain knowledge and real obvious work for the students. The university's buildings, such as libraries, classrooms, and physical facilities, reflect the university's readiness to provide its students with a quality mode of education. As for the contribution of the faculty, their skill and competition might be due to the exposure of the faculty to teaching, study, extension, and history. The faculty is responsible for evaluating the core curriculum's fundamentals in terms of its structure, instruction, and material that will capacitate students to enable them to meet the challenges of the 21st century. The programs of the student reflect the help it can offer in terms of academic advising, placement, and housing/dormitories to the graduates. In addition, the intellectual, and physical preparedness of the learners leads to the consistency of the methods of instruction.



Note: multiple responses were allowed

Figure 3. Quality of education as perceived by the BSE alumni

The economic growth in today's global economy is strongly dependent on an established human resource with critical skills and expertise. These skills and expertise need to develop with shifts in the social climate, developments in technology, and globalization [22]. Tertiary education institutions play a crucial role in providing instruction, study, and outreach services with highly educated human resources [18]. However, several restrictions threaten the massive growth of tertiary education institutions and the resulting rise in enlistments. Problems relating to finance, personnel productivity and quantity, educational activities, research and extension service, quality improvement, and gender equality are among the challenges encountered by the tertiary education sector at present [23]. There is also a disparity between the employer/stakeholder criteria and the program. Employers have continuously emphasized the need for graduates to show self-assurance, dynamism, curiosity, imagination, and other qualities that will enable them to carry out their assignments [24].

There have been issues and questions raised to dates such as the material, importance, consistency, and performance of the program's curriculum and the different skills to meet the needs of the time. As reported in the study results [23], [24], there was a lack of a direct connection between the educational institution and the employability of Ethiopian graduates. However, employability shows possessing the awareness, comprehension, expertise, exposure to the real world of work, and personal characteristics to explore the job market and realize one's potential through bearable and satisfying job experiences.

Employability is referred to as a collection of talents, experience, and personal characteristics that increases the likelihood that an individual to be more secure and prosper for their gain, the workforce, the society, and the economy in their chosen occupation. Employability includes the ability of graduates to reach the market domestically or abroad. Kim [25] has argued that employability denotes a collection of accomplishments that include talents, understanding, and personal characteristics that boost the confidence and efficiency of employees in their chosen career path for the good of themselves, the manpower, the society, and the economy. Training should also have marketable skills and abilities related to work results, and as said, the more highly trained individuals are, the more competitive they would be in terms of income and job prospects [26]. Here it is imperative to believe that higher education institutions have a more outstanding obligation to provide learners with essential skills to transition seamlessly into the labor market. Vez-López and Jiménez-Velásquez [27] stated that in tandem with unique competencies gained by practice or formal schooling, managers need generic competencies such as leadership, organizational abilities, or problem-solving skills. Employability ratings are related by states, firms, and politicians to the level of expertise and competencies gained by higher education graduates [28].

Employers/stakeholders want graduates with appropriate expertise, experience, and understanding, but they are also involved in a small range of areas with well-developed generic skills [29]. Employability skills are those basic skills needed to get in, possess, and perform well in a job. These abilities include reading, doing simple mathematics, and other basic skills such as problem-solving, decision-making, and other higher-order reasoning abilities, reliability, a good mood, cooperativeness, and different effective skills and characteristics. The definition of planning in this study is described as efficiently handling tasks, setting targets and objectives, being able to handle varied tasks, and efficient allocation time [1]. Universities have to make their curricula embedded with these skills to be able to produce competitive graduates.

The existing BSE curriculum at Isabela State University should therefore be improved to match the skills represented in this study. On this ground, on-the-job training, educational tours, and project work related to the industry will give the students idea and learn more about the skills needed by the industry, especially improving hands-on job-related skills. Students would then have the ability to recognize the gaps in expertise. In addition, for students to have a deeper appreciation of these skills, the college must increase awareness among students about the industry's need for employability skills, enabling students to develop their skills by increasing their professional development and promoting complete industry visibility. Finally, to incorporate these employability skills into the course delivery system through work-based activities and coaching, teaching-learning processes, evaluation methods, and course material must be re-examined.

This is done either by employers attending the University as guest speakers or by students getting a chance to do apprentices in the company. Students may tend to understand the environment in a certain organization and how a professional act in the real world. The exposure of the students to different intellectual activities may improve their effective communication skills which may allow the organization to operate smoothly and be productive. They also competed "It pays off that managers and staff who are fluent in communication are generally the strong performers on the job". Companies hunt for workers who are successful communicators [1]. Communication skills, including listening skills, are prominently at the top of the list of qualifications managers seek for low-ranking jobs, including executive and blue-collar roles, as well as [30].

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the highlights of the findings, the following concluding statements are drawn. The employment opportunity for the BSE graduates, in general, show their competitiveness with an acceptable assumption that a graduate of BSE has no difficulty in searching for their jobs, though some are JOs and need to be terminated, however, if the basis for their employment is the objective of the BSE program, we can say that only 23.20% of the total graduates exercise their field of specialization. The time spent searching for their job is less than one year and only 13.04 % for more than a year. The BSE competencies show high bearing as to the industry need. Though it needs more upgrading as to the training or on the job of the BSE to keep abreast with the business trend, the facilitation of school release of credentials is crucial especially for the new graduate to facilitate their easier job placement.



Based on the respondents' suggestions and recommendations, the following are hereby recommended: i) The program of the BSE should re-examine its curriculum religiously, strengthening the program activities and learning by incorporating an outcome-based approach to keep abreast with the changes and trends in the industry; ii) Prepare rigorous training and seminars related to their field of specialization especially during their on-the-job training by enhancing their critical thinking and management/leadership knowledge and skills, helping the students to be familiar with the unprecedented activity for an entrepreneur graduate and developing their entrepreneurial skills to be more competitive and self-reliant; iii) The school through the Office of the Students Affairs may facilitate seminars in coordination with the DOST for their SETUP assistance (for their possible start-up capital) given only for the entrepreneur students with a very sound business proposal; iv) Facilitate fast issuance of school credentials and documents of the graduates which may help them in applying for their job; and v) Engage in future research on the interrelationship of the graduates' employability skills specifically in their professional careers.

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