

EMPLOYABILITY AND PRODUCTIVITY OF AGRICULTURE GRADUATES OF STATE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES IN CENTRAL LUZON PHILIPPINES

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to investigate the employability and productivity of agriculture graduates of State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in Central Luzon, Philippines. The agricultural state colleges and universities include Central Luzon State University in Nueva Ecija, Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology in Nueva Ecija, Pampanga Agricultural College in Pampanga, Bulacan Agricultural State College in Bulacan, Bataan Peninsula State University in Bataan and Ramon Magsaysay Technological University in Zambales

This research study made use of descriptive design which examines information without introducing changes in the study variables. Additionally, it is quantitative in nature aimed at determining the relationship between the study variables in the study. A questionnaire was used as the main instrument in gathering data. A total of four hundred seventeen (417) respondents were selected from the graduates of selected SUCs in Region III.

The study revealed that more than three-fourth of the respondents (76.26) secured an employment after graduation. Employment status revealed that only 38.00 percent carries a regular status while 33.20 percent have a temporary or casual status and 28.80 percent have contractual status. A great number of the respondents are found to have been working in private companies.

With regard to the monthly gross income of the respondents, 44.65% of the respondents are receiving a monthly income of P5, 000 to P 9,999 while 29.25% divulged to have been receiving more than P10, 000 and above and 26.10% are earning P4, 999 and below.

The findings of the study revealed that among the respondents, 44.80% are reported to have received promotions. These agriculture graduates were deemed responsible and highly productive. On the other hand, more than half of the respondents (55.20%) revealed that they have not yet experienced receiving any promotions.

The data showed statistically positive results in the perceived job performance of the respondents. It can be inferred based on the findings of the study that the respondents have a positive perception of their performance at work that 40.25% rated themselves as very satisfactory, 32.70% considered themselves to be outstanding at work, and 27.50 believed to have rendered satisfactory job performance. Out of the three hundred eighteen (318) employed respondents, one hundred seventeen (117) or 36.79% had one year work experience; one hundred three (103) or 32.39% had two (2) years of work tenure; and ninety-eight (98) or 30.82% had been employed for three (3) years.

KEYWORDS: Employability, Productivity, Agriculture Graduates, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

Employability is an issue that has gained a great deal of prominence partly because employers have been more vocal about the complexities of graduate recruitment. Concerns about graduate employability are neither new nor confined to a particular country.

With the rapid increase of the number of graduates in early 1990's, it sparked numerous debates about the skills developed by the graduates since 1980's considering the fact that there have been various employability-related initiatives. The Dearing Report of 1997, for instance, cited the significance of the need to hone key skills, expand work-based learning opportunities, and strengthen collaborations between higher education and employers (Knight, n.d.).

To ensure success, it is argued that the future workforce needs to be flexible and innovative, empowered and enabled rather than managed and controlled. This implies that the graduates should have more initiative, be reflective, analytical, critical, and cooperative, with high emotional intelligence and can communicate effectively. Students' skills and knowledge should be bolstered by employing various educational methods to ascertain a greater possibility of pursuing the kind of career they want. Eventually, it is expected that the skills they developed will contribute to the improvement of the graduates' quality of life.

The United Nations Report (2003) claimed that this day, too many men and women lack the necessary education and relevant trainings for competent jobs. There are various jobs that are less competitive and offer poor compensation package. In other countries, training remains largely unrelated to labor market needs. School dropouts are relatively high among disadvantaged youth.

Young men and women also need a set of competencies "core work skills" such as communication, problem solving, and teamwork skills to strengthen their chances for employability and prepare them for work in the knowledge and skills-based society.

One determinant of a successful university is when the majority of its graduates is offered competent jobs. As to whether or not the alumni are enjoying the fruits of their hard work through lucrative employments is the main objective of this research undertaking.

This particular inquiry aims to delve deeper into the employability and productivity of agriculture graduates of State Universities and Colleges (SUC) in Region III. This study assessed the relevance of education and training acquired by the students from the higher education institutions. The results would also serve as a basis in seeking alternative ways to improve the quality of graduates, armed with core skills, to be more employable and well-prepared to meet the challenges of life. Hopefully, this endeavor would contribute to the vision of making agricultural technology a potent factor in harnessing the productive capacity of human resources towards global competitiveness.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The descriptive method of research was used in this study with the questionnaire-checklist as the main instrument in gathering the needed information. Moreover, the informal interview was conducted whenever the need arises to clarify some vague information.

The study was conducted in the six (6) SUCs in Region III offering Agriculture courses. These are the Bataan State College (BSC) at Abucay, Bataan; Bulacan Agricultural State College (BASC) at San Ildefonso, Bulacan; Central

Luzon State University (CLSU) at Muñoz, Neva, Ecija; Pampanga Agricultural College (PAC) at Magalang, Pampanga; Ramon Magsaysay Technological University (RMTU) at Botolan, Zambales; and the Tarlac College of Agriculture (TCA) at Camiling, Tarlac. A code also assigned to each SUC; BASC-A, BSC-B; CLSU-C; PAC-D; RMTU-E; TCA-F.

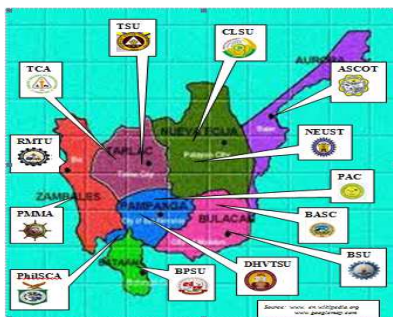


Figure 1. Map of Region III (Central Luzon) Showing the Location of the State Universities and Colleges

Throughout Region III, there were 1,460 agriculture graduate-respondents for the past three years. The respondents of the study were the agriculture graduates of SUCs in Region III during the School Years 2010-2011 to 2012-2013. Thirty (30) percent of the graduates were taken as respondents. The questionnaire was used to cover the perceptual evaluation/assessments of information on employability and productivity of agriculture graduates. Stratified method of sampling was followed. Data were analyzed using the frequency distribution and percentages and chi-square.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

A total of four hundred seventeen (417) respondents were selected from the graduates of selected SUCs in Region III. There were two hundred forty four (242) or 58.03 percent were males and one hundred seventy five (175) or 41.97 percent were females. This data shows that there are generally more male students in an agricultural University or college which can be attributed to the notion that Filipinos still view agriculture as a male dominated industry. Add to that the reality that many Filipino women still prefer to work in other related fields although there are those who pursue a career in the agriculture sector.

The majority of the respondents has ages ranging from 25 and below which implies that the majority of the respondents finished their course before reaching 25 years of age and are considered relatively young. There were two hundred eighty nine (289) or 69.3 percent who were 25 years old and below by the time this study was conducted while there were one hundred twenty eight (128) or 30.70 percent who were 26 years old and above. This data exhibit that as a practice Filipino students prefer to finish their education in time. Parents also prefer that their children finish their education on time and without delay because prolonging it entailed additional expenses for education. In the same vein, a Filipino student prefers to finish their education the earliest time allowed to be able to extend help and improve their living conditions and earn money to be independent and spend for what they choose to acquire for themselves.

There were two hundred seventy seven (277) or 66.43 percent single respondents and one hundred forty (140) or 33.57 married respondents. This data also shed light on the belief that graduates prefer to gain employment and establish their economic capability before they get married.

Out of the four hundred seventeen (417) respondents, there were two hundred four (204) or 48.92 percent with eligibilities. Student-respondents take civil service examinations because they highly consider its significance in their

career and their entry to the government service. Eligibilities help them profess the qualifications and requirements to meet the qualification standards. One hundred three (103) or 50.49 percent passed the Licensure Exam for Agriculturists (LEA) in which CLSU has the most number of licensed agriculturists as respondents. Other exams they took included Career Service Sub-Professional Exam.

Most of the respondents participated in trainings after graduation. There were two hundred eighty eight (288) or 69.06 percent of the respondents with trainings attended while one hundred twenty nine (129) or 30.94 percent did not have any training. Of the two hundred eighty eight (288) respondents with trainings, there were one hundred twenty (120) of 41.67 respondents who attended trainings related to agriculture while the one hundred sixty eight (168) or 58.33 percent attended trainings which are not related to agriculture. This shows that the majority of the graduates participates in trainings which are not related to agriculture.

The majority or 69.06 percent of the graduate-respondents falls in the average grade range of 2.5 and below. Hence, they only had an average academic performance while they were in the college.

Responses on Employment Opportunity

Table 1: Shows the Frequency and Percentage of Responses on Employment Opportunity

| SUC (Code) | Responses on Employment Opportunity | | | | Total | |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|-----------|--------------|------------|---------------|
| | Yes | | No | | Frequency | Percentage |
| | Frequency | Percentage | Frequency | Percentage | | |
| A | 75 | 86.21 | 12 | 13.79 | 87 | 100.00 |
| B | 18 | 72.00 | 7 | 28.00 | 25 | 100.00 |
| C | 86 | 72.88 | 32 | 27.12 | 118 | 100.00 |
| D | 56 | 72.73 | 21 | 27.27 | 77 | 100.00 |
| E | 39 | 73.58 | 14 | 26.42 | 53 | 100.00 |
| F | 44 | 77.19 | 13 | 22.81 | 57 | 100.00 |
| Total | 318 | | 99 | | 417 | |
| Percentage | | 76.26 | | 23.74 | | 100.00 |

A great employment opportunity for agriculture graduates in Region III is depicted by the data as three hundred eighteen (318) or 76.26 percent of the respondents were employed after graduation. Ninety nine (99) or 23.74 percent of them were not able to find a job or have not created a job. Data revealed that the knowledge and skills of the graduates were in demand by the agriculture industry. Since SUC C produced the most number of graduates, consequently, they also have the most number of responses as to employment opportunity. However, the highest percentage of being employed is experienced by graduates of SUC A.

Number of Times in Applying for a Job

Table 2 Presents the Distribution of Responses on the Number of Times in Applying For a Job

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents on the Number of Times in Applying For a Job

| SUC (Code) | Responses on Employment Opportunity | | | | | | Total | |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|------------|---------------|
| | Once | | Twice | | Thrice & above | | | |
| | Frequency | % | Frequency | % | Frequency | % | Frequency | % |
| A | 37 | 42.53 | 27 | 31.03 | 23 | 26.44 | 87 | 100.00 |
| B | 13 | 52.00 | 8.00 | 32.00 | 4 | 16.00 | 25 | 100.00 |
| C | 48 | 40.68 | 39 | 33.05 | 31 | 26.27 | 118 | 100.00 |
| D | 33 | 42.86 | 27 | 35.06 | 17 | 22.08 | 77 | 100.00 |
| E | 21 | 39.62 | 18 | 33.96 | 14 | 26.42 | 53 | 100.00 |
| F | 25 | 43.86 | 19 | 33.33 | 13 | 22.81 | 57 | 100.00 |
| Total | 177 | | 138 | | 102 | | 417 | |
| Percentage | | 42.45 | | 33.09 | | 24.46 | | 100.00 |

There were one hundred seventy seven (177) or 42.45 percent who applied once and got employed; one hundred thirty eight (138) or 33.09 percent applied twice; and one hundred two (102) or 24.46 percent applied three times or even more before they landed a job. For most of the agriculture graduates, filing of an application once is sufficient to get employed, but the number of respondents who applied twice before getting employed is also sizeable.

This data reveals that agricultural graduates are highly qualified that they become employed in their first attempt to look for a job. Skills and knowledge in agriculture are very important in looking for a job. Based on printed classified advertisement, countries like Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea to name a few are in need of foreign workers who possess knowledge, skill and training in agriculture and agriculture related work.

This demand allows greater chances for the agriculture graduates to be employed.

Nature of Employment

Table 3 shows the nature of employment of the graduate-respondents. There were 250 graduates who were employed in either government or private agencies. One hundred two (102) or 32.08 percent worked in the government or private agencies. One hundred two (102) or government agencies, one hundred forty eight (148) or 46.54 worked in private agencies and sixty eight (68) or 21.38 percent created their own job.

Table 3: Employment of Respondents as to Sector

| SUC (Code) | Nature of Employment of Respondents | | | | | | Total | |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|------------|---------------|
| | Government Agencies | | Private Agencies | | Self-Employed | | | |
| | Frequency | % | Frequency | % | Frequency | % | Frequency | % |
| A | 19 | 25.33 | 42 | 56 | 14 | 18.67 | 75 | 100.00 |
| B | 6 | 33.33 | 7.00 | 38.89 | 5 | 27.78 | 18 | 100.00 |
| C | 31 | 36.05 | 39 | 45.35 | 16 | 18.60 | 86 | 100.00 |
| D | 19 | 33.93 | 27 | 48.21 | 10 | 17.86 | 56 | 100.00 |
| E | 12 | 30.77 | 16 | 41.03 | 11 | 28.20 | 39 | 100.00 |
| F | 15 | 34.09 | 17 | 38.64 | 12 | 27.27 | 44 | 100.00 |
| Total | 102 | | 148 | | 68 | | 318 | |
| Percentage | | 32.08 | | 46.54 | | 21.38 | | 100.00 |

The data reveal that private agencies absorbed most of the agriculture graduates in Region III. A considerable number has also hired by government agencies. Out of the four hundred seventeen (417) respondents, three hundred eighteen (318) had the opportunity to be employed, but only two hundred fifty (250) was employed during the gathering of data while the remaining sixty eight (68) were jobless.

Employment Status of Respondents

Table 4 presents the employment status of the respondents. Out of the respondents employed in government and private agencies, only ninety five (95) or 38 percent carry permanent status, eighty three (83) or 33.20 percent have temporary or casual status and seventy two (72) or 28.80 percent have contractual status.

Table 4: Employment Status of Respondents who Graduated from the Selected SUCs in Region III

| SUC (Code) | Employment Status of Respondents | | | | | | Total | |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|-----------|------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|------------|---------------|
| | Regular | | Temporary/Casual | | Contractual | | Frequency | % |
| | Frequency | % | Frequency | % | Frequency | % | | |
| A | 26 | 42.62 | 17 | 27.87 | 18 | 29.51 | 61 | 100.00 |
| B | 5 | 38.46 | 5 | 38.46 | 3 | 23.08 | 13 | 100.00 |
| C | 22 | 31.43 | 25 | 35.71 | 23 | 32.86 | 70 | 100.00 |
| D | 21 | 45.65 | 12 | 26.09 | 13 | 28.26 | 46 | 100.00 |
| E | 10 | 35.71 | 11 | 39.29 | 7 | 25.00 | 28 | 100.00 |
| F | 11 | 34.37 | 13 | 40.63 | 8 | 25.00 | 32 | 100.00 |
| Total | 95 | | 83 | | 72 | | 250 | |
| Percentage | | 38 | | 33.20 | | 28.80 | | 100.00 |

Based on the data, the permanent status is outnumbered by the temporary, casual and contractual status. This can be attributed to the strict policies of the hiring sector in the selection and recruitment procedures. The graduate-respondents are expected to prove their worth to get permanent status.

Length of Waiting Time

Table 5: shows the length of waiting time for the first job as experienced by respondents.

Table 5: Length of Waiting Time for the First Job as Experienced by Respondents

| SUC (Code) | Length of Waiting for the First Job | | | | Total | |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------|------------|---------------|
| | Within One Year | | More than One Year | | Frequency | % |
| | Frequency | % | Frequency | % | | |
| A | 33 | 54.1 | 28 | 45.90 | 61 | 100.00 |
| B | 7 | 53.85 | 6 | 46.15 | 13 | 100.00 |
| C | 43 | 61.43 | 27 | 38.57 | 70 | 100.00 |
| D | 27 | 52.70 | 19 | 41.30 | 46 | 100.00 |
| E | 15 | 53.57 | 13 | 43.75 | 28 | 100.00 |
| F | 18 | 56.25 | 14 | 40.63 | 32 | 100.00 |
| Total | 143 | | 107 | | 250 | |
| Percentage | | 57.20 | | 42.80 | | 100.00 |

There were one hundred forty three (143) or 57.20 percent who were able to get jobs within one year after graduation and one hundred seven or 42.80 percent obtained jobs after one year. They may have considered prioritizing acquiring eligibility before finding a job.

Monthly Gross Income

Table 6 presents the monthly gross income of respondents. From these data, eighty three (83) or 26.10 percent received only Php 4,999 and below, one hundred forty two (142) or 44.65 percent received between the range of Php 5000-9,000, and only ninety three (93) or 29.25 percent received more than Php 10,000 and above.

Table 6: Distribution of Monthly Income of Respondents

| SUC (Code) | Monthly Gross Income Ranges of Respondents | | | | | | Total | |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------|------------|---------------|
| | Php 4,999 & below | | Php 5000-9,999 | | Php 10,000 & above | | Frequency | % |
| | Frequency | % | Frequency | % | Frequency | % | | |
| A | 24 | 32.00 | 32 | 42.67 | 19 | 25.33 | 75 | 100.00 |
| B | 6 | 33.33 | 7 | 38.88 | 5 | 27.78 | 18 | 100.00 |
| C | 19 | 22.09 | 36 | 41.86 | 31 | 36.05 | 86 | 100.00 |
| D | 12 | 21.43 | 28 | 50 | 16 | 28.57 | 56 | 100.00 |
| E | 11 | 28.21 | 18 | 46.15 | 10 | 25.64 | 39 | 100.00 |
| F | 11 | 25.00 | 21 | 47.73 | 12 | 27.27 | 44 | 100.00 |
| Total | 83 | | 142 | | 93 | | 318 | |
| Percentage | | 26.10 | | 44.65 | | 29.25 | | 100.00 |

The data revealed that most of the graduate-respondents earn a monthly gross income of Php 5000-9,999. Additionally, almost 30 percent of the respondents earn an income of Php 10000 and above.

Job Promotion

Table 7 shows the responses on job promotion of respondents.

Table7: Job Promotion of Respondents

| SUC (Code) | Responses on Job Promotion of Respondents | | | | Total | |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------------|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|---------------|
| | Yes | | No | | Frequency | % |
| | Frequency | % | Frequency | % | | |
| A | 27 | 44.26 | 34 | 55.74 | 61 | 100.00 |
| B | 5 | 38.46 | 8 | 61.54 | 13 | 100.00 |
| C | 32 | 45.71 | 38 | 54.29 | 70 | 100.00 |
| D | 21 | 45.65 | 25 | 54.35 | 46 | 100.00 |
| E | 12 | 42.86 | 16 | 57.14 | 28 | 100.00 |
| F | 15 | 46.88 | 17 | 53.12 | 32 | 100.00 |
| Total | 112 | | 138 | | 250 | |
| Percentage | | 44.80 | | 55.20 | | 100.00 |

Of the two hundred fifty (250) respondents, 44.80 percent received promotions while 55.20 percent did not enjoy any professional movement in their work. This may be attributed to their employment status. This meant that the graduate-employees are expected to prove their worth in order to be promoted.

Number of Years in the Job of Respondents

Table 8: shows the number of years in the job

Table 8: Distribution of Respondents as to Length of Service

| SUC (Code) | Length of Service | | | | | | Total | |
|-------------------|-------------------|--------------|------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------|------------|---------------|
| | One Year | | Two Years | | Three Yrs. & above | | Frequency | % |
| | Frequency | % | Frequency | % | Frequency | % | | |
| A | 27 | 36.00 | 25 | 33.33 | 23 | 30.67 | 75 | 100.00 |
| B | 6 | 33.33 | 5 | 27.78 | 7 | 38.89 | 18 | 100.00 |
| C | 32 | 37.21 | 29 | 33.72 | 25 | 29.07 | 86 | 100.00 |
| D | 22 | 39.29 | 18 | 32.14 | 16 | 28.57 | 56 | 100.00 |
| E | 14 | 35.90 | 12 | 30.77 | 13 | 33.33 | 39 | 100.00 |
| F | 16 | 36.36 | 14 | 31.82 | 14 | 31.82 | 44 | 100.00 |
| Total | 117 | | 103 | | 98 | | 318 | |
| Percentage | | 36.79 | | 32.39 | | 30.82 | | 100.00 |

There were one hundred seventeen (117) or 36.79 percent who have one (1) year job experience; one hundred three (103) or 32.30 percent with two (2) years and; ninety eight (98) or 30.82 percent with three (3) years of experience in working.

Job Performance

Table 14 shows the perceptual evaluation of job performance of the respondents. The data show that 32.70 percent of the respondents rated themselves as outstanding; 40.25 percent, very satisfactory; and 27.50 percent, as satisfactory in job performance.

Table 9: Distribution of Respondents as to Performance Rating

| SUC (Code) | Perceptual Evaluation on Job Performance | | | | | | Total | |
|-------------------|------------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|---------------|
| | Outstanding | | Very Satisfactory | | Satisfactory | | | |
| | Frequency | % | Frequency | % | Frequency | % | Frequency | % |
| A | 21 | 28.00 | 29 | 38.67 | 25 | 33.33 | 75 | 100.00 |
| B | 6 | 33.33 | 7 | 38.89 | 5 | 27.78 | 18 | 100.00 |
| C | 32 | 37.21 | 35 | 40.70 | 19 | 22.09 | 86 | 100.00 |
| D | 20 | 35.71 | 24 | 42.86 | 12 | 21.43 | 56 | 100.00 |
| E | 10 | 25.64 | 15 | 38.46 | 14 | 35.90 | 39 | 100.00 |
| F | 15 | 34.09 | 18 | 40.91 | 11 | 25.00 | 44 | 100.00 |
| Total | 104 | | 128 | | 86 | | 318 | |
| Percentage | | 32.70 | | 40.25 | | 27.50 | | 100.00 |

Based on the data, the majority of the graduate-respondents believe that they are performing their jobs in a very satisfactory manner. It is also worthy to note that a considerable number of the respondents, amounting to 32.70 percent, believe that they excel in what they do and correspondingly rated their job performance with an outstanding mark.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

- A typical respondent is male, 25 years of age and below, single with special awards when graduated with civil service eligibility with agricultural training and with a GPA of 2.5.
- The students perceived that in terms of their education, their teachers perform their task very satisfactory and the school facilities and services such as the laboratory, library services, and the student services are all very satisfactory.
- The educational and training services and activities of the school are perceived by the students as very satisfactory.
- Graduate respondents were generally employed as regular employees by private institutions within one year after graduation.
- Graduate respondents received a monthly income ranging from 4,999 to 10,000 pesos and above, received promotions and have very satisfactory performance.
- There is no significant relationship of the identified factors related to employability and productivity of graduates.
- Profile variables are not significant factors in the employability of agricultural graduates.

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