

**A TRACER STUDY FOR GRADUATES OF THAI NGUYEN
UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS
ADMINISTRATION (TUEBA) AND CENTRAL
PHILIPPINE UNIVERSITY (CPU) JOINT
DEGREE PROGRAMS AT THAI NGUYEN
CITY, VIETNAM**

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ABSTRACT

This tracer study assessed the employability of graduates of TUEBA and CPU joint degree programs at Thai Nguyen City, Vietnam for the year 2016. There were 113 graduates involved in this study who were chosen randomly from a population of 157 graduates of TUEBA and CPU joint degree programs at Thai Nguyen City, Vietnam. The results of the study showed that the graduates were predominantly male, married, with the age between 41-50 years old, and mostly MBA graduates; majority had regular or permanent employment status; a vast majority of graduates had managerial and supervisory positions and predominantly employed in the private sector; most graduates got their first job promotion after 6 months but not more than 1 year from the date of their graduation; communication skill was ranked as first among the professional skills deemed necessary for employment, and most had income of 5 million- 8 million vnd. Significant relationship existed between educational attainment and graduates' employability in terms of job position level, employment sector, employment status, and monthly salary/income. Also, there was significant relationship between age and graduates' employability in terms of job position level, professional skills, and monthly salary/income. There were few graduates who preferred to be under-employed because they had better opportunity to

earn higher monthly income. The respondents provided inputs for improvement of facilities, specifically in the maintenance of cleanliness of classrooms and rest rooms; improvement in the area of faculty and instruction by allowing the faculty-student interaction and student-student brainstorming activities, use the internet or relevant social media networks; improvement of the administrative support services by providing annual student orientation program to update students of school policies that affect them while studying at the University.

INTRODUCTION

Background and Rationale of the Study

The Thai Nguyen University of Economics and Business Administration (TUEBA) and Central Philippine University (CPU) entered into a Memorandum of Cooperation in 2009 to open the joint degree programs in Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (BSBA), Bachelor of Science in Accountancy (BSA), Bachelor of Science Master in Business Administration (MBA), and Master in Public Administration (MPA) at Thai Nguyen City, Vietnam pursuant to pertinent laws of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, regulating the establishment and operation of foreign educational and cultural bases in Vietnam.

The TUEBA-CPU joint degree programs have already produced 157 graduates consisting of 43 of Bachelor's degree in Business and Accountancy, 99 graduates of MBA, and 15 MPA graduates but the school obligation does not end by just turning out graduates. The school has to ensure that these graduates are employed by the industry (Andres, 1999).

In the light of the above-mentioned situations, the researchers composed of five faculty members from CPU College of Business and Accountancy, decided to conduct this study.

Objectives of the Study

This tracer study for graduates of TUEBA and CPU joint degree programs at Thai Nguyen City, Vietnam was conducted in 2016 to assess the employability of graduates.

Specifically, this study had the following objectives:

1. To describe the personal profile of respondents in terms sex, civil status, age and educational attainment;
2. To describe the employability of the respondents in terms of employment status, term of employment, job position level, professional skills, employment sector, employment waiting period, job promotion waiting period, and monthly salary/income level.
3. To determine if the respondents' profile in terms of sex, civil status, age, and educational attainment was significantly related to their employability in terms of employment status, term of employment, job position level, professional skills, employment sector, employment waiting period, job promotion waiting period, and monthly salary/income level.
4. To identify the respondents' reasons for being under-employed and/or /self –employed.
5. To provide inputs for improvement in terms of facilities, faculty and instruction, curriculum, and administrative support services.

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on the Theory of Human Capital originated in the works of Becker as cited by Melink & Pavlin (2011). According to this theory, one of the most important ideas in labor economics, is to think of the set of marketable skills of workers as a form of capital in which workers make a variety of investments. This perspective is important in understanding both investment incentives, and the structure of wages and earnings. Hence, this theory assumes that education and training are treated as an investment process which generates a future flow of income.

As applied in this study, students' investment in education is assumed to exert a positive impact on their

productivity and in turn in their income (wages). Apart from these benefits, investing in human capital also incurs costs. These costs take the form of expenses incurred by students while studying such as school fees, costs of text books and learning materials, costs of accommodation and travel as well as opportunity costs such as loss of potential income while studying in school. It is further assumed that these costs are compensated when the knowledge and competencies accumulated in education process (human capital) generate sufficiently high rate of return and the future flow of income to a level high enough to compensate for all costs incurred.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual model illustrated in the research paradigm provided the framework for the study. The dependent variable in this study was the employability of graduates in terms of employment status, term of employment, job position level, professional skills, employment sector, employment waiting period, job promotion waiting period, and monthly salary/income level. The independent variables are the personal profile of respondents in terms of sex, civil status, age, and educational attainment.

In this study, the null hypothesis was advanced and tested to determine if the respondents' personal profile in terms of sex, civil status, age, and educational attainment are significantly related to their employability in terms of employment status, term of employment, job position level, professional skills, employment sector, employment waiting period, job promotion waiting period, and monthly salary/income level.

This conceptual framework is graphically illustrated in Figure 1.

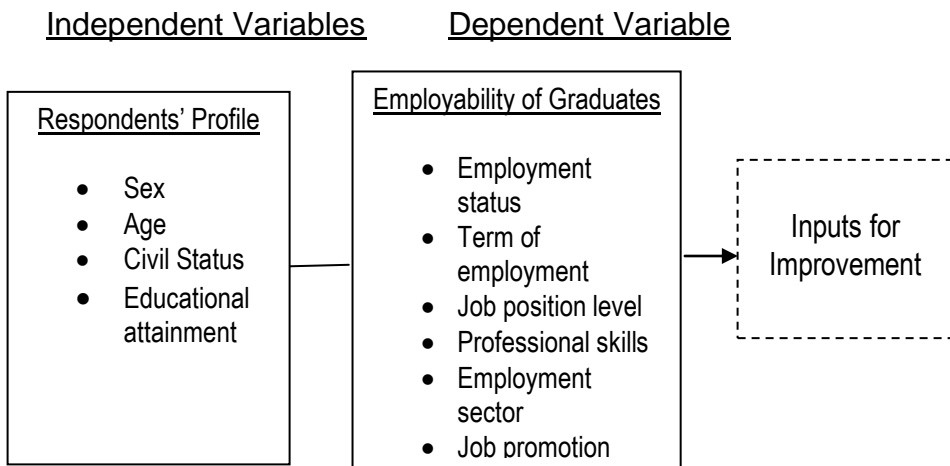


Figure 1. Research paradigm showing the hypothesized relationship between selected variables

Scope and Limitations of the Study

This tracer study, conducted in 2016 at Thai Nguyen City, Vietnam, assessed the employability for 113 graduates of TUEBA and CPU joint degree programs in terms of employment status, term of employment, job position level, professional skills, job promotion waiting period, and monthly salary/income level.

METHODOLOGY

The descriptive-correlational research design was used in this study. The data were gathered using a researcher-made questionnaire which was validated by three experts. The duly validated questionnaire was administered for trial-testing to 30 graduates of TUEBA and CPU joint programs in Vietnam which showed a reliability coefficient of 0.82. This was considered reliable because according Fraenkel and Wallen (2010), if the questionnaire has a reliability coefficient between 0.70 to 1.0, it is considered reliable.

The data obtained from the questionnaires were tabulated, computed, and analyzed statistically. The frequency count and the percentage were used to describe the distribution of the respondents when grouped according to their personal profile and to determine the number of responses to each item in the questionnaire that described the employability of graduates. The *Chi-Square* was used to determine if the respondents' personal characteristics are significantly related to their employability. All inferential statistics were set at .05 level of significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following findings were revealed in this investigation:

Generally, majority of the graduates were male (nearly 63%), married (97%), had average age between 31-40 years old (47%), and MBA graduates (68%). Most graduates had direct full-time employment in their respective area of discipline (62%), had regular or permanent

employment status (73%), while a good number of graduates held supervisory (40%) and managerial (35%) positions, respectively.

The private industry was the most dominant employment sector (63%); most graduates of bachelor's degree got their first employment after one year from their graduation, and a good number of graduates (44%) were promoted within 6 months to 1 year from their graduation, majority (63%) earned 5-8 million vnd per month, and claimed that communication skill was the most needed for employment (21%).

Table 1 shows a significant relationship between educational attainment and graduates' employability in terms of job position level which revealed that most MBA graduates held supervisory position while most of the MPA graduates held managerial position. The Chi-square computations indicated that there was a significant relationship between graduates' educational attainment and their employment status, ($\chi^2 = 96.711$, $p = .000$). A significant relationship between graduates' educational attainment and their job position level means rejection of the null hypothesis. The computed Cramer's V coefficient of .925 indicated a perfect relationship between the graduates' educational attainment and their job position level. This implies that the graduates' higher position is significantly related to the higher degree.

Table 1. Relationship between Educational Attainment and Job Position Level.

Employability	Educational attainment							
	BS		MBA		MPA		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Job position level								
Managerial	0	0	32	42	8	67	40	35
Supervisory	0	0	42	54	3	25	45	40
Rank & file	24	100	3	4	1	8	28	25
Total	24	100	77	100	12	100	113	100

Chi-square = 96.711 df = 4 p = .000 Significant
 Cramer's V = .925 p = .000 Significant

Also, Table 2 shows a significant relationship between age and graduates' employability in terms of job position level which revealed that most young graduates (70%) are rank and file employees, mostly in the middle-age group (68%) held supervisory position and a great majority of the oldest group (90%) had managerial positions. This implies that the higher the graduates' age bracket, the higher their job positions. The Chi-square computations shown in Table 3 reveal a significant relationship between graduates' age and their job position level, ($\chi^2 = 13.306$, $p = .010$). The computed Cramer's V coefficient of .730 also revealed a strong relationship between the graduates' age and their job position level.

Table 2. Relationship between Age and Job Position Level.

Variables	Age						Total	
	30 yrs and below		31-40 years old		41-50 years old			
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Job position level								
Managerial	1	3	13	28	26	90	40	35
Supervisory	10	27	32	68	3	10	45	40
Rank & file	26	70	2	4	0	0	28	25
Total	37	100	47	100	29	100	113	100

Chi-square = 13.306 df = 4 p = .010 Significant
 Cramer's V = .730 p = .010 Significant

Table 3 reveals a significant relationship between educational attainment and monthly salary income level. The Chi-square computations showed a significant relationship between graduates' educational attainment and their monthly salary or income level, ($\chi^2 = 69.565, p = .000$). The computed Cramer's V coefficient of .785 revealed a strong association between the graduates' educational attainment and their monthly salary or income level.

Table 3. Relationship between Educational Attainment and Monthly Salary Income Level.

Employability	Educational attainment							
	BS		MBA		MPA		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Monthly salary/income level								
Below 5 million	21	87.5	10	13.0	1	8.3	32	28.3 2
5 million – 8 million	3	12.5	62	80.5	6	50.0	71	63.8 3
Over 8 million	0	0.0	5	6.5	5	41.7	10	8.85
Total	24	100.0	77	100.0	12	100.0	113	100. 0

Chi-square = 69.565 df = 6 p = .00 Significant
 Cramer's V = .785 p = .000 Significant

The respondents provided inputs for improvement of facilities, specifically in the maintenance of cleanliness of classrooms and rest rooms; in the area of faculty and instruction by allowing the faculty-student interaction and student-student brainstorming activities to use the internet or relevant social media networks; and in the administrative support services by providing annual student orientation program to update students of the university vision and mission statements and school policies that affect students enrolled in the University.

Conclusions and Recommendations

In view of the foregoing findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The respondents are predominantly MBA graduates, male, married, and with average age between 31 to 40 years old.
2. Most graduates are directly employed with regular or permanent employment status, predominantly held

supervisory and managerial positions, work in a private sector, with short waiting period for employment and promotion, earning monthly salary/income of 5 million- 8 million vnd and have good communication skills as the most dominant professional skill.

3. There is significant relationship between educational attainment and graduates' employability in terms of job position level, professional skills, employment sector, and monthly income level.

Likewise, a significant relationship exists between age and graduates' employability in terms of employment status, and job promotion waiting period.

In view of the aforementioned findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are advanced:

1. The administration of both TUEBA and CPU should cooperatively revisit, review, and revise the curriculum every three to five years to make the curricular programs more relevant to the needs of times and to comply with the updated policies, standards and guidelines of relevant government agencies such as the Socialist Republic of Vietnam as well as the Philippine Commission on Higher Education.
2. To ensure proper solicitation of feedbacks from various sectors of the University with view of improving the quality and employability of graduates, the faculty, students, alumni, and employers or industry partners should be involved in the regular review and revision of curricular programs.
3. The University should ensure efficient and effective delivery of instruction by providing the faculty and students with updated and upgraded library books and other references for use in class instruction.

4. There should be regular supervision and monitoring of faculty and instruction to ensure constant improvement in class instruction.
5. Encourage the faculty to make judicious use of the internet or other social media networks to allow the faculty-student interaction and student-student brainstorming activities with the purpose of improving the quality of teaching-learning activities.
6. The Administration should develop a comprehensive faculty development program with adequate budget for teachers' training and attendance in seminars to keep themselves abreast with new trends and development in education and in their profession.
7. There should be regular and proper maintenance of the ventilation and cleanliness of classrooms, laboratory rooms and other facilities to make them more conducive to learning.
8. The school should provide opportunity for regular dialogue between the school administration and students through annual orientation program aimed at informing students about school policies, plans, programs that affect their lives while in school.
9. The University should establish linkages with the private industry and government sectors to ensure possible placement of graduates after graduation.
10. The results of this study should be provided to administration of both CPU and TUEBA as valuable inputs in formulating school policies, strategic plans and programs with the intention of improving the quality of graduates and enhancing their employability.
11. It is also recommended for other researchers to conduct an in-depth study and other similar or related studies in the future.

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