

Employability and Job Performance of Graduates of Occidental Mindoro State College Graduate School

Venessa S. Casanova, PhD¹ & Wenceslao M. Paguia, Jr., PhD¹

¹ Graduate School, OMSC Main Campus, Labangan Poblacion, San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, Philippines

Correspondence: Venessa S. Casanova, Graduate School, OMSC Main Campus, Labangan Poblacion, San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, Philippines. E-mail: venessacasanova@gmail.com

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Abstract

This descriptive study determined the employability and job performance of Occidental Mindoro State College (OMSC) Graduate School graduates. The study was conducted from January 2020 to August 2020 at OMSC Main Campus, San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, Philippines. A total of 40 respondents selected through simple random sampling participated in the study. A self-made questionnaire was the main instrument used in gathering data for the endeavor. Data were analyzed using frequency and percentage, weighted mean, and Pearson-r moment correlation. Most respondents are middle-aged females who took Master of Arts in Education and graduated in 2013. The majority of the respondents are regular employees designated as unit heads, recently promoted, attended a few seminars and training, and did not receive any award and recognition after obtaining their master's degree. On the other hand, the respondents perform their jobs very well, as shown in their work quality, work habits, human relations, and leadership skills. Furthermore, there is a relationship between gender, graduation year, academic program, promotion, and graduates' job performance. It was concluded that gender, graduation year, academic program, and promotion might affect the graduates' job performance.

Keywords: profile, employability, job performance, Graduate School students

1. Introduction

The prevalence of uncertain and complex technological changes worldwide has opened opportunities and challenges affecting education and employment (Mastura, Imam, & Osman, 2013). As a result, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) were pressured to produce graduates ready to enter national and international labor markets equipped with the necessary skills to perform graduate-level jobs (Paterson, 2019). Therefore, it becomes vital for HEIs to respond to the unpredictable labor market and make parallel adjustments to fulfill their mission (Abas & Imam, 2016). They also emphasize higher education programs that foster skills and qualities and ensure a sound understanding of the subject matter (Sannadan, Lang-ay, & Guidangen, 2016).

Graduate employability is an essential aspect of the higher education industry. It evaluates the success and ability of the particular institution in producing work-ready graduates and has been used as a performance indicator for higher education institutions. Employability could be defined as graduates demonstrating the attributes to obtain jobs. It also relates to the employment rates of university graduates (Sannadan, Lang-ay, & Guidangen, 2016).

In the context of higher education, employability is viewed as more than merely 'having a work.' Instead, it includes a set of achievements like specialization, understanding, and personal characteristics that give graduates have a better chance to find a job and be successful in their chosen fields and careers, which benefits themselves, the laborforce, the entire community, and the national economy (Abelha, Fernandes, Mesquita, Seabra, & Olivera, 2020). It is on this perspective that the current study is anchored. Furthermore, the employability of postgraduate students includes specialization-based dimensions. In other words, the focus is on identifying and developing knowledge, competencies, and attributes that foster students' development of effective performance in the labor market. Thus, it looked into the changes in their employment status, job level, promotion, monthly income, seminars, training attended, and awards and recognition received after obtaining a postgraduate degree.

On the other hand, employability is believed to influence job performance. Job performance is defined as the measurable activities, behavior, and outputs that workers engage in or bring about that are connected with and contribute to the agency's objectives. Work accomplishments are an essential indicator in the acquisition and

screening process. First, workers who perform better on the worksite are prioritized and are more likely to be chosen and hired. Next, training and assessment activities are conceptualized and designed to improve work accomplishments (Nonhebel, 2016).

The effectiveness of an educational program offered by an educational institution can be measured through the competencies of its graduates and the knowledge and skills the graduates acquired and can be applied in the work environment. Furthermore, the knowledge and skills that the graduates possess can be determined by employers' feedback on the graduates' performance in the work situation (Plantilla, 2017).

Occidental Mindoro State College (OMSC), one of the HEIs in Occidental Mindoro, Philippines, is envisioned as a premier higher education institution that develops globally competitive, locally responsive, innovative professionals and lifelong professional learners. As shown in its vision, OMSC demonstrates a more significant commitment to developing the generalized expertise their graduates can transfer to whatever working environment they find themselves in after graduation. Therefore, in the 2019 Graduate School program evaluation performed by Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines (AACUP), it was recommended that research about graduate employability and job performance be conducted to measure the relevancy of the graduate programs being offered at OMSC. Thus, this study was conducted to identify the connection between employability and job performance of Graduate School students of OMSC. Understanding and identifying the connection of the variables mentioned above are vital for the institution and student's success. Thus, findings regarding employability and job performance of OMSC graduates can be used as one of the performance indicators of OMSC as a higher education institution.

Furthermore, identifying the employability factors that may influence job performance will give graduate students an awareness of the essential elements that could impart them due to advantages in their respective job environments. It will allow them to enhance and hone their personal and professional skills to optimize their ratio for success in the workplace. As stated by Cakinberk (2011), it is one of the responsibilities of the Graduate School to measure how it has contributed to the employment and well-being of its students and graduates. For the past several years, the OMSC Graduate School has been operating and has produced many graduates. But unfortunately, no research was conducted regarding their graduate students' employability and job performance.

Thus, based on the above premise, this study was conducted to determine the employability and job performance of the Graduate School students of Occidental Mindoro State College. Specifically, it determined the profile of the respondents, employability status, job performance, and the relationship between the respondents' profile, employability, and job performance.

2. Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on Human capital theory which posits that education and training represent an investment in future productivity and not just consumption of resources. In this perspective, firms and workers depend on investments in human capital to increase competitiveness, profits, and pay (Frese & Rauch, 2001).

Another theory used is the Investment Theory which presents higher education as a public and private investment decision for governments and people. Education leads to economic growth through increased productivity, social stability, and healthier lifestyles as a public investment. On the other hand, as a personal investment choice, investing in education increases lifetime earnings for those with more years of schooling, better-paying jobs, reduced time spent in the unemployment market, and speedier transitions to enhanced career prospects (Maringe, 2015).

The correlation between employability and work performance can be elaborated based on social exchange models which involve reciprocity. Investments from the other person return investments from one person. The social exchange model asserts that if a person provides something good for you, you think obligated to do something for others, balancing each other out. When the management spends on the employability of the workforce, this will influence the exchange relation between management and workers as the employee will strive to reciprocate this relation by providing something in exchange (Nonhebel, 2016).

3. Methods

The study employed the descriptive research design to determine the employability and job performance of the graduates of OMSC Graduate School. It was conducted at Occidental Mindoro State College, Labangan Campus in San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, Philippines, from January 2020 until August 2020. Forty (40) students enrolled in Master of Arts in Education (MAED) and Master in Public Administration (MPA) served as the study's respondents. They were chosen through simple random sampling. The sampling mentioned earlier removes any bias in the study's result since every element in the population has a chance to be selected as a

respondent or participant. It also provides empirical information with a limited chance of data errors.

A researcher-made questionnaire was the main instrument used in gathering data for the study. This type of instrument has the advantage of a contextualized study. However, it includes items that can elicit data close to realities. For content validity, the instrument was reviewed by research experts (three colleagues) and six Graduate Students from Master of Arts in Education (MAEd) and Master in Public Administration (MPA) programs for face and content validity. The first part is about the respondents' profile consisting of age, sex, year graduated, and academic program. The second part concerns employability, covering employment status, job level, promotion, monthly income, seminars and training, and awards and recognition as subscales. The third part of the instrument is about job performance as indicated by the quality of work, quantity of work, work habits, human relations, and leadership skills. The items on job performance have a general Cronbach Alpha value of .892, assuring the instrument's reliability.

Before collecting data, a permit to conduct the study was sought. After that, the letter and the survey instrument were sent to the respondents via google document. Google documents used for the data gathering can accommodate respondents from distant locations. Also, in this method, there is zero possibility for participants of infection from Covid-19.

The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage for the profile and employability. This technique will determine the central tendency of the data and identify the largest group of respondents for a particular variable. In addition, a weighted mean was used to determine graduates' employability and level of job performance. This analysis enables the researchers to identify the criteria for which the subjects did well and/or lacked. Finally, Pearson-r moment correlation was used in determining the relationship between profile, employability, and job performance. This analysis is applicable to make inferences based on probability measures.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Profile of the Respondents

As participation in graduate program rises, it is critical to ask who is enrolling, which programs they are choosing, whether they complete their degrees, and how their investment in education beyond the bachelor's degree pay off (Baum & Steele, 2017).

Table 1 shows that more female graduate students responded to the study (70%), mostly took Master of Arts in Education (70%), graduated in 2013, and the respondents have an average age of 43.78 years old. The study by Baum & Steele (2017) stated that as participation in graduate programs rises, 53% of Asian graduate students pursue master's degree programs. Race, ethnicity, and gender are not the only characteristics differentiating students who enroll in master's degree programs. Income, age, and institutional sectors are additional factors to consider when pursuing a master's degree.

Table 1. Profile of the graduates of OMSC Graduate School

Indicator	Grouping	Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	12	30
	Female	28	70
Academic Program	MAED	28	70.0
	MPA	12	30.0
Year Graduated	Mode: 2013; Range 1999-2020		
Age	Mean 43.78; Range 25-64		

4.2 Employability of Graduates of OMSC Graduate School

Employers define 'employability' as aspects of 'behavioral competence.' It pertains to the student's range of personal, performative, and organizational skills rather than the possession of traditional academic, theoretical knowledge and skills (Stiwne & Alves, 2010). In this study, employability is measured in terms of employment status, job level, income, promotion, number of seminars and training, and the awards and recognition received after their master's degree.

Table 2 shows that after obtaining their master's degree, the majority (95%) of the respondents are regular employees designated as unit heads (50%) in their respective agencies. Furthermore, they were mostly promoted in 2019, have attended below six seminars and training (45%), and have not received any awards and recognition (72.5%). This implies changing their employment status, job level, income, and promotion. On the other hand,

despite the advanced degree, they have few attendances to training and seminars and did not receive any awards and recognition after obtaining their master's degree. The human capital theory states that higher education is an investment that yields social and private returns (Stiwne & Alves, 2010). Society and individuals benefit from this investment and base their participation on rational choices. In this perspective, firms and workers depend on investments in human capital to increase competitiveness, profits, and pay (Frese & Rauch, 2001).

Table 2. Employability of graduates of OMSC Graduate School

Indicator	Grouping	Frequency	Percentage
Employment status	Casual	2	5.0
	Regular	38	95.0
Job Level	Admin	6	15.0
	Unit Head	20	50.0
	Middle Manager	2	5.0
Income	11,000-20,000	11	27.5
	21,000-30,000	7	17.5
	31,000-40,000	3	7.5
	41,000-50,000	6	15.0
	51,000 and above	13	32.5
Promotion	Mode: 2019; Range 2000-2020		
Seminars and Training	None	11	27.5
	Below 6	18	45.0
	6-10	4	10.0
	11-15	5	12.5
Awards and Recognition	None	29	72.5
	Below 5	8	20.0
	6-10	2	5.0
	11-15	1	2.5

4.3 Level of Job Performance of Graduates of OMSC Graduate School

Work performance in the organization is synonymous with finishing an assigned task. It is a way to achieve a specific objective or set of objectives within a job, assignment, or agency, but not the actual results of the tasks accomplished within a specific job. It is not a single action but a "variety and complex set of actions." Achievement at work is different from the results of a specific job related to desired success and productivity (Jacobs, Hellman, Wuest, & Markowitz, 2013). In this study, job performance is measured using quality of work, the quantity of work, work habits, human relations, and leadership skills.

The mean analysis in Table 3 shows that Occidental Mindoro State College Graduate School graduates have excellent job performance (4.60). The graduates are best in human relations skills (4.71) and leadership skills (4.65). On the other hand, the graduates are least in the quantity of work (4.49). The findings imply that they are proficient in their tasks and can contribute to organizational productivity. According to Abas and Imam (2016), one critical measure of success in workplaces is an employee's ability to use competently the knowledge, skills, and values that match the needs of his job, satisfy the demands of his employer, and contribute to the overall achievement of institutional goals.

Table 3. Level of the job performance of graduates of OMSC Graduate School

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
Quality of Work	4.56	Excellent
Quantity of Work	4.49	Very Satisfactory
Work Habits	4.60	Excellent
Human Relations	4.71	Excellent
Leadership Skills	4.65	Excellent
Overall Mean	4.60	Excellent

Scale: 1.00-1.50 Very Poor; 1.51-2.50 Poor; 2.51-3.5 Satisfactory; 3.51-4.50 Very Satisfactory; 4.51-5.00 Excellent

4.4 Relationship between Profile, Employability, and Job Performance of the Graduates of OMSC Graduate School

Social exchange theories can explain the relationship between employability and job performance. Investments from the other party return investments from one individual. It specifies the exchange of a sequence of associations between management and worker; the officer strives to spend on employability. The worker thinks obligated to impart something in return by providing a rewarding achievement and accomplishment (Nonhebel, 2016).

The correlation analysis in Table 4 indicates that the sex of the graduates relates to their job performance. Female graduates have better job performance than male graduates. The year of graduation of graduates has some relation with their job performance. Graduates who graduated earlier have better job performance than those who graduated later, as indicated by the negative correlation. Furthermore, the academic program of graduates relates to their job performance. Graduates with a Master of Arts in Education have better job performance than those who graduated Master in Public Administration. Lastly, the promotion has some relation with job performance. Graduates who are promoted have better job performance than those who were not promoted.

Table 4. Relationship between profile, employment status, and job performance of graduates of OMSC Graduate School

Variables	Correlation Coefficient	Interpretation
Age	.025	Negligible
Sex	.127	Weak
Year Graduated	-.009	Weak
Academic program	-.246	Weak
Employment status	.093	Negligible
Promotion	.146	Weak
Job Level	.118	Negligible
Income	-.094	Negligible
Training	-.019	Negligible
Awards	-.045	Negligible

Scale: 0.000-0.125 Negligible; 0.126-0.375 Weak; 0.376-0.625 Moderate; 0.626-0.875 Strong; 0.876-1.000 Perfect

Sa ádatu (2013) stated a significant relationship between demographic factors and job performance. For example, teacher educators within 45 years and above, those with higher degrees, and staff who had spent many years have a higher level of satisfaction with their jobs, leading to higher work achievements. This connotes that graduates' competence in performance skills could give them better due advantage in their specific job assignments. Thus, appropriate actions to cultivate desired competence in work skills by employers, managers, employees, higher academic institutions, graduates, labor agencies, and policymakers may facilitate solving work performance concerns (Abas & Imam, 2016).

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

This study was conducted to determine the employability and job performance of Occidental Mindoro State College Graduate School graduates. Further, it looked into the respondent's profile, employability status, level of job performance, and the relationship between their profile, employability, and job performance. Based on the previous findings, it was concluded that most of the respondents are middle-aged females who pursued a Master of Arts in Education and finished their degree a few years ago. Most respondents are regular employees designated as unit heads, recently promoted, attended a few seminars and training, and did not receive awards and recognition after obtaining their master's degree. Nevertheless, they perform their jobs very well, as shown in their quality, work habits, human relations, and leadership skills. Profiles such as sex, year of graduation, academic program, and promotion influence the graduates' job performance.

The following are recommended to increase employability and improve the respondent's job performance relative to the study findings. First, OMSC may develop graduate students' employability and job performance by continuously upgrading teachers, curriculum, and facilities. Second, employers may give adequate attention to upgrading the employability status of their workers, specifically on a job promotion, to fulfill the contextual dimension of job performance. Third, employers may create relevant intervention activities such as attending seminars and training to continuously enhance the graduates' acquired knowledge, competencies, and skills

needed to stay and progress in their jobs.

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