



# Tracer Study of BSAF Graduates of the Kalinga State University – Rizal Campus from 2012– 2018

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**Abstract**— This study entitled “ Tracer Study of BSAF Graduates of the Kalinga State University- Rizal Campus from 2012- 2018” aimed to assess the factors associated with the job placement of the graduates of Bachelor of Science in Agroforestry (BSAF) Program from 2012 to 2018 specifically to, (1) determine the respondent’s profile; (2) determine the nature and current employment status of the BSAF graduates; and, (3) identify the competencies/skills developed by Kalinga State University – Rizal Campus considered by the respondents useful in meeting the demands of their present work. The study was conducted at Rizal, Kalinga from June- December 2019 with the BSAF graduates from 2012-2018 as the respondents of the study. There were a total of 90 graduates and 61 or 67.78% only were traced. Survey questionnaires were floated to the graduates and Frequency, percentage, and ranking were used to treat the data gathered. The results of this study revealed that; out of 61 traced graduates, there were 43 or 70.49% who were employed and 18 or 29.51% were not yet

employed; majority were engaged in Professional/Technical/ Supervisory works with 29 or 67.44 % and; majority were contractual employees with 23 or 53.49%. Furthermore, more than  $\frac{3}{4}$  or 75.93% of the respondents regarded Communication Skills as the main competency that helps them a lot in finding a job. The employment status of the BSAF graduates is high. However, enhancing linkage with the different agencies in the immediate vicinity and nearby towns as well is highly recommended. This may improve graduates chances of finding employment and at least maintain the high employability level of the graduates.

**Keywords**— tracer study, BSAF graduates, Kalinga State University, Rizal Campus.

## I. INTRODUCTION

### Background of the Study

The Kalinga State University – Rizal Campus now named College of Agroforestry and Environment Studies (CAFES) was founded last June 2007. The college started from 24 students in the Bachelor of Science in Agroforestry.

The college now offers two programs such as Bachelor of Science in Agroforestry (BSAF) and Bachelor of Science in Environmental Studies (BSES).

It is the main task of the college to develop a curriculum aligned with the national, regional and local thrust and caters the needs of the country by providing graduates who are globally competitive.

One of the objectives of any educational institution is to determine the employability status of its graduates. The administration also aims to provide the country with graduates well-equipped with the knowledge and skills with positive attitude. Agroforestry graduates contribute to agroforestry activities that conform to the observance of the requirements of good agroforestry environmental protection/pollution, conservation, health risks and cleaner production practices affecting the natural resources and the ecosystem (CMO 6, 2006).

Tracer study is unquestionably one of the most important elements to determine the success of the programs or courses the school offers. It documents the status, characteristics of employment, struggles, and extent of

applicability of skills in the current employment of the graduates.

The result of the tracer study will identify the strength and weaknesses of the program being measured, improve education and training programs as well as enhance the learning experiences of future learners.

### Conceptual Framework

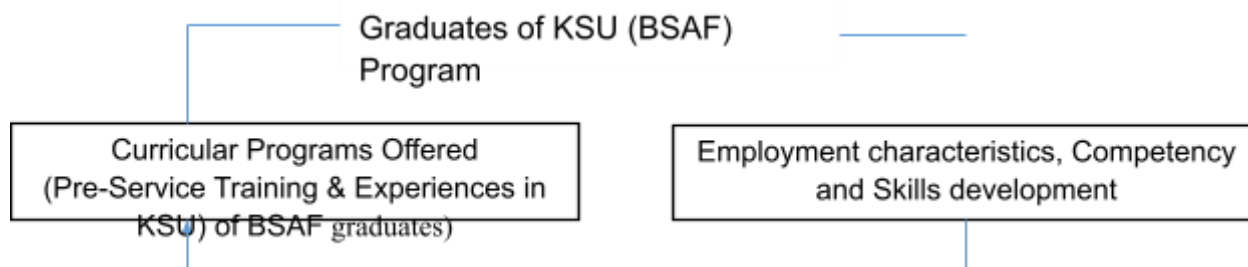


Fig.1: Conceptual Framework of the Study

Figure 1 refers to the conceptual framework of the study. The curricular programs refer to the pre-service training and experiences of the BSAF graduates of KSU-Rizal Campus. The framework suggests that services, learning environment, facilities and the graduates competencies (knowledge, skill and attitude) in their specializations and other competencies such as communication skills, human relations skills, leadership skills and research skills are reflected in the assessment of employment characteristics, adequacy and relevance of graduate competence and other skills, as acquired at KSU and needed in the workplace. Such feedbacks are necessary to determine the impact of the curricular programs, which could provide information needed, to reform the existing programs and bring about appropriate fit between requirements of the

world of work and the offerings of course.

### Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to assess the factors associated with the job placement of the graduates of BSAF from 2012 to 2018.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the respondent's profile?
2. What is the nature and current employment status of the graduates?
3. What are the competencies/skills developed by Kalinga State University – Rizal Campus considered by the respondents useful in finding a job?

The quality of graduates is a reflection of quality instruction and facilities because these will help ensure that graduates are equipped with the knowledge, skills and values that will enable them to work in their respective field.

### Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to assess the factors associated with the job placement of the graduates of BSAF from 2012 to 2018.

Specifically, the study was guided by the following objectives:

1. To determine the respondent's profile;
2. To determine the nature and current employment status of the graduates; and,
3. To identify the competencies/skills developed by Kalinga State University – Rizal Campus considered by the respondents useful in finding a job.

### Significance of the Study

The results of this study are beneficial to the following recipients:

**Rizal Campus Administrator.** The results of this study may provide guidance to the Rizal Campus Administrator with the end view of coming up with evidence-based recommendations to be undertaken to improve the employability and eventually, improve the BSAF program.

**Program Chairperson.** The results of the investigation will serve as the basis for curriculum review and re-engineering of the subject content to meet the global competitiveness.

**Faculty Members.** The findings of the study will guide the teachers to plan appropriate activities, to stay up-to-date and to improve in order to meet the demands in the field and consequently assisting in its long term sustainability.

**Students.** The results of the investigation will serve as eye opener to the students taking the course to triple their effort

in preparation for future employment and for them to be qualified to practice their profession.

**Alumni Officers.** It will help the office of the alumni to keep in touch with and foster relationship and partnership with its former graduates.

**Future Researchers.** This study will be of help to other researchers undergoing tracer study. They may be guided on what other variables to consider examining the changes in the career pattern of the graduates in order to provide a basis of evaluation of the current program.

### Scope and Delimitation of the Study

Since this is the first tracer study conducted, the study focused itself on the graduates of Bachelor of Science in Agroforestry (BSAF) of Kalinga State University – Rizal Campus from 2012 to 2018.

## II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The effectiveness of any organization is of central importance in the theory and practice of educational administration. The Strategic Constituencies Approach on organizational effectiveness includes satisfying the demands of those constituencies in the environment from which the organization requires support for its continued existence (Love & Skitmore, 1996). It can therefore be said that success is “the ability to placate those individuals, groups, and institutions upon which the organization depends for its continuous operation.” The College of Agroforestry and Environmental Studies, therefore, would be said to be a successful or effective institution if its constituencies, especially the

industry, are satisfied with its graduates.

According to Schomburg (2003), graduate and employer surveys constitute one form of empirical study which can provide valuable information for evaluating the results of the education and training of a specific institution of higher education. This information may be used for further development of the institution in the context of quality assurance. In addition, Schomburg (2003) cited that a tracer study sometimes called as “alumni survey” or “follow-up survey” should enable the institution of higher education to get information to indicate possible deficits in a given educational programme and to serve as a basis for future planning activities. Information on the professional success (career, status, income) of the graduates are needed as well as information on the relevance of knowledge and skills (relationship between knowledge and skills and work requirements, area of employment, professional position). More so, consequences of university expansion can be determined with respect to the relationship between higher education and work through tracer studies (Teichler, 1981).

Patton (1986) said that program evaluation is the systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics, and outcomes of programs for use by specific people to reduce uncertainties, improve effectiveness, and make decisions with regard to what those programs are doing and affecting. Weiss, as quoted by Alkin (1990) cited that evaluation is a type of policy research, designed to help people make wise choices about future programming. Evaluation does not aim to replace decision makers’ experience and judgment. Evaluation strives for impartiality and fairness. At its best, it strives to represent the range of perspectives of those who have a stake in the program.

Tracer studies according to Garcia (2003) as cited by Gines (2004) pointed out that tracer studies is an important source of information to know what happened to graduates of academic programs in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Further findings of tracer studies can be used to define/redefine HEIs mission and market niche and show how academic programs and course offering can be adjusted to reflect institutional goals. Findings can also be used by stakeholders in deciding where to look for skills.

Daepet et al. (2007) conducted a performance audit of Bicol University’s AB English graduates from 1996 to 2005. Results revealed that said graduates are highly employable, and are said to perform well in their respective jobs. However, while the skills they acquired from the institution did land them decent jobs, they were found to be wanting of specific skills that would allow them higher-paying jobs.

Aquino et al. (2015) found out that majority of their graduates stated that communication skills is very much useful in their job. Only few found

entrepreneurial skills, information technology skills, problem – solving skills, and critical thinking skills useful in their first job. In contrast, Loquias (2015) noted that the skills the graduates found most useful to graduates’ first jobs include critical thinking and problem solving in addition to communication skills. This maybe so as her respondents were Electronics Engineering graduates as compared to the present study of teacher education graduates.

## III. METHODOLOGY

### Locale of the Study

The study was conducted at Rizal, Kalinga from June to December 2019.

## Research Design

The study employed descriptive research design since its purpose is to obtain and present facts regarding graduates demographics and investigate their perceptions regarding their competencies and values developed in them by the school.

Along with this, Calderon (1996) as cited by Laguador (2010) emphasized that descriptive research is a purposive process of gathering, analyzing, classifying and tabulating data about the prevailing conditions, practices, beliefs, process, trends and cause and effect relationship, thereby making adequate and accurate interpretations about such data with or without the aid of a statistical method.

## Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study are the graduates of Bachelor of Science in Agroforestry (BSAF) at Kalinga State University – Rizal Campus from 2012 to 2018. This study was initially designed to obtain both qualitative and quantitative data for the graduates of the BSAF program. The actual respondents included a sample for the seven batches of the University's curricular program for 2012-2018 with a total of 61 which is 67.78% from the total of 90 graduates. This, of the total population, however, falls more than within the expected response rate of 30 to 60 percentage recommended by Schomburg (2003) on the conduct of graduate tracer studies.

## Instrumentation

Survey questionnaire was the main instrument of the study. The questionnaire was consisted of three parts: General Information, Job Placement Profile, and Competencies/Skills developed by KSU-RC that is important in finding a job.

## Data Gathering Procedure

There was a total population of 90 graduates from 2012 to 2018 at the KSU-Rizal Campus. The identification

of the graduates was primarily done based on the roster of graduates from the Office of the Acting Registrar - Rizal campus, making available the names, addresses, e-mails and telephone numbers of the graduates. The researchers made a follow up on the contact addresses of all students to update their address details due to possible change of addresses and contacts.

The researcher administered the survey personally, through sending them e-mail, message in messenger, phone calls and personal visits to the graduates.

## Data Analysis

The data collected were classified, tabulated and coded for analysis. The following statistical tools were employed in interpreting the data that were obtained from the survey. Frequency and percentage was used to analyze the profile of the respondents with respect to the selected variables. Weighted Mean was used to determine the degree of perception of the graduate-respondents in the usefulness and relevance of their educational background to their employment status while Ranking was used to arrange data in a series of ascending and descending order of importance.

## IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents the results, interpretation and analysis of the data gathered. They are presented in textual and tabular form to give light to the problems of the study. The analyses cover the components namely: a) Profile of the respondents; b) Job placement; and c) Competencies/Skills.

### Profile of the Respondent

The total number of graduates from year 2012 to 2018 was shown in table 1. Also, total number of graduates traced and its percentage was reflected.

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Graduates

YEAR/BATCH	Total No.of Graduates	Total No. of Graduates Traced		TOTAL	PERCENTAGE (%)
		MALE	FEMALE		
2012	6	3	2	5	83.33
2013	1	0	1	1	100
2014	10	4	3	7	70
2015	16	4	6	10	62.50
2016	19	8	7	15	78.95
2017	6	4	2	6	100

2018	32	4	13	17	53.53
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>67.78%</b>

Table 1 revealed that out of 90 graduates, 61 or 67.78% was traced and among them, only graduates of batch 2013 and 2017 have 100% response rate. Batch 2012 who have 6 graduates have 5 or 83.33% response rate while batch 2016 graduates have 15 or 78.95% who responded. On the other hand, batches 2014, 2015 and 2018 have 7 or 70%, 10 or 62.50% and 17 or 53.53% who responded respectively.

**Current Employment Status**

In general, there is a higher percentage of employed graduates over the unemployed ones.

*Table 2. Status of BSAF Graduates*

Year/Batch	Employed		Unemployed	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
2012	5	100	0	0
2013	1	100	0	0
2014	5	71.43	2	28.57
2015	7	77.78	2	28.57
2016	12	70.59	5	29.41
2017	1	16.67	5	83.33
2018	12	75	4	25
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>70.49%</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>29.51%</b>

Table 2 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of employability of the graduates. It shows that out of 61 graduates traced, 70.49%

(*n=43*) or majority of the graduates were presently employed. Graduates from 2012 and 2013 had the highest employment rate with 100% while graduates of 2017 had the lowest with 16.67%.

On the other hand, 29.51% (*n=18*) of the traced graduates were unemployed. According to the unemployed graduates, they have their personal reasons of not looking for a job such as reviewing for LET exam, pursuing advanced studies and family concerns.

**Nature and Employment Status of Graduates**

The nature and employment status of the respondents was reflected in table 3.

*Table 3. Nature and Employment Status*

NATURE	Frequency	Percentage
Rank or clerical	2	4.65
Professional/Technical or Supervisory	29	67.44
Managerial or Executive	0	0
Self-employed	2	4.65
Others: OFW	6	13.95
Collector	2	4.65 2.33
SK Chairman	1	2.33
Jollibee Crew	1	



<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>43</b>	
<b>STATUS</b>		
Regular/Permanent	4	9.30
Temporary	11	25.58
Casual	3	6.98
Contractual	23	53.49
Self-employed	2	4.65
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>43</b>	

As gleaned in Table 3, among the employed graduates of the BSAF program, majority were engaged in Technical works in terms of the nature of employment with 29 or 66.44%. There were 6 or 13.95% OFWs. Rank or Clerical, Self-employed and Collector had the same number of graduates with 2 or 4.65% while there was only 1 or 2.33% both for SK Chairman and Jollibee Crew among the graduates.

In terms of the employment status, majority were contractual employees with 23 or 53.49% followed by Temporary status, 11 or 25.58%. The rest were Regular/Permanent- 4 or 9.30%, Casual- 3 or 6.98 and Self-employed, 2 or

4.65%.

**Competencies/Skills Relevance of the Respondents’ seeking for a Job**

A certain degree of underutilization of skills was apparent among the participants of the study. Although a high percentage of the employed (31 or 57.41%) graduates disclosed that their first job was related to their college degree of BSAF, some 23 or 42.59 percent admitted that it was not. This could be a consequence of their need to earn a living hence they accepted the job although it was not related to their college preparation.

*Table 4. Part of the Curriculum Graduates Found Most Useful in finding a Job*

<b>Competencies/Skills</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Communication Skills	41	75.93	1
Human Relation Skills	9	16.67	2
Entrepreneurial Skills	1	1.85	4
Information Technology Skills	2	3.70	3
Problem Solving Skills	1	1.85	4
Critical Thinking Skills	0	0	5
	<b>54</b>		

When asked about the part of the curriculum they found most useful in finding a job, majority of the respondents replied that communication skills (41 or 75.93%) as reflected in Table 4. This is probably because Technicians/Professionals involves dealing with other people and communication skills are very important in

this aspect. Having good communication skills is essential in establishing a good interpersonal relationship, and this is a requisite in dealing with other people. Relevant to this, the respondents bared that human relation skills were also useful in their first job. Analogous findings on communication skills and human relation skills were also

obtained by Aquino and Punongbayan (2015), on the part of the curriculum BSAF graduates found most useful in finding a job. The importance of communication skills and human relation skills in the teaching job is also reported by Gines A. (2014) in her tracer study of graduates from a normal school in the Philippines. Only a few found information technology skills (3.70%), entrepreneurial skills (1.85%), problem – solving skills (1.85%), and nobody among the graduates identified critical thinking skills (0%) useful in their first job. In contrast, Loquias (2015) noted that the skills the graduates found most useful to graduates' first jobs include critical thinking, problem solving in addition to communication skills. This maybe so as her respondents were Electronics Engineering graduates as compared to the present study of BSAF graduates.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings from the discussions, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Majority of the respondents were from batch 2018 but in terms of the percentage of graduates traced, batch 2013 and 2018 has the highest response rate.
2. Most of the respondents were presently employed in Professional/Technical or supervisory work with a status of contractual.
3. Almost all of them believed that communication skills are a great help for them to locate jobs.

## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

In as much as the study revealed that there is percentage of graduates who are not yet employed and never been employed, albeit the fact that it is low, this information should be used by the CAFES to enhance their linkage with the different agencies in the immediate vicinity and nearby towns as well. This may improve graduates chances of finding employment.

The main goal of the program is to enhance further its curriculum to ensure its relevance and responsiveness to the needs of the stakeholders involved. The CAFES must continually aspire for graduates to be provided with relevant and effective competencies in carrying out the science, art and business

of dynamic agroforestry activities.

Faculty competence and their use of effective teaching strategies must be enhanced. Relevant instructional materials should be made available. Student support should be further improved. Attention must also be given to the Communication skills of the graduates which they found useful in their searching

for a job.

Although the researchers were persistent in their efforts of soliciting the involvement of many graduates, there were a limited number of graduates who participated in the study, which poses limitation to the study and may affect the generalizability of findings. In view of this limitation, a future study that is more comprehensive in scope targeting a higher number of respondents is recommended to enhance the generalizability of results. This study may also include an exploration of the employers' feedback of graduates in the workplace.

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