

Tracer Study on the Graduates of the BSBA Program: An Input to Curricular Development

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Abstract

The alumni are considered as the best evidence of a program's effectiveness in terms of employment and positions held. Moreover, they are a good source of feedback regarding the program's relevance in the current labor market.

This study was conducted to determine the employability of the graduates of the BSBA programs. The study further aimed to gather inputs about the BSBA program that could be used to improve its quality education.

The study used the descriptive research design. There respondents were BSBA graduates from 2002 – 2006 identified using the snowballing technique. A structured, non-disguised questionnaire was used to gather data. Data collected were subjected to basic descriptive statistical tools such as frequency, percentage, proportions, and mean.

Findings of the study indicate that 91% of the respondents are employed, with 20% holding supervisory positions and 4% holding managerial positions. Content or topics covered by the programs is found to be the main strength in the aspect of curriculum as

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supported by 45% of the respondents while lack of applications and exposures came out as the main weakness as indicated by 29% of the respondents. Correspondingly, the primary recommendation was to have more exposures and applications as expressed by 45% of the respondents.

Keywords: tracer study, employability, alumni, program evaluation, curriculum development, BSBA

Rationale

The accreditation of curricular programs in the Philippines, particularly for state universities and colleges, is the main function of the Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines, Inc. (AACCUP). Under its charter, one of the functions, if not the main purpose of AACCUP, is “to develop a mechanism of, and conduct the evaluation of programs and institutions” (AACCUP, 2008).

Programs that have passed the standards, and are awarded accreditation status primarily “lend prestige to member institutions justified by the possession of quality standards and unremitting efforts to maintain them at high level” (AACCUP, 2008).

The College of Business Administration and Accountancy (CBAA) has been granted the Level I candidacy status for the August 16, 2005 to August 15, 2007 period. One of the reportorial requirements of the AACCUP for their assessment of the BSBA Program in the area of curriculum and instruction is the information on program outcomes in terms of employment for the last five years. Hence, this study was conducted to address such requirement.

Moreover, the study would provide the much needed inputs to improve the curricula of the two programs of BSBA. In line with MSU-IIT’s mission of providing quality education, the various academic units of the Institute have initiated program revisions to incorporate CHED minimum requirements as well as industry requirements; and the BSBA program is among them.

With CBAA’s thrust to strengthen its linkage with its alumni, the study further provided an opportunity to establish an initial contact database of the BSBA graduates.

Review of Literature

In a tracer study of Rico, et. al. on BSBA Entrepreneurial Marketing and Economics alumni vis-à-vis potential membership to the CBA Alumni Association, it was determined that 60% of all the respondents were employed with an organization, 27% were self-employed, and 7% were unemployed (Rico, 2007).

In another tracer study of Hilot, et. al. on CBA Alumni from SY 2001-2002 to SY 2005-2006 vis-à-vis potential membership to the CBA Alumni Association, it was determined that 83% of all the respondents were single and 17% are married. It was further ascertained that 89% of all the respondents were employed with an organization and 5.5% were unemployed (Hilot, 2006).

Objectives of the Study

This study was aimed to determine the program outcomes in terms of employment of the graduates of CBBA's BSBA programs for the five year period, 2002 to 2006. The study further endeavored to establish a contact database of these alumni.

Specifically, the study sought to ascertain any further education undertaken by the alumni, their position/s held, estimated average gross monthly income, and average number of months employed.

Additionally, the study intends to gather respondents' inputs on the following: (a) perceived strengths of the BSBA Business Economics/ Entrepreneurial Marketing program; and (b) perceived weaknesses of the BSBA Business Economics/ Entrepreneurial Marketing program

Finally, the study also sought to gather inputs on how to enhance the Business Economics / Entrepreneurial Marketing program.

Procedure / Methodology

Scope and Subject of the Study

The study was undertaken with the BSBA graduates from 2002 to 2006 as respondents. The distribution of graduates per year and the actual turnout of respondents are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. *Number of Business Economics and Entrepreneurial Marketing Graduates per Year from 2002 – 2006 and Actual Turnout of Respondents from Each Year*

Year	BSBA – Business Economics			BSBA – Marketing/ Entrepreneurial Marketing		
	No. of Graduates	Actual No. of Respondents	%	No. of Graduates	Actual No. of Respondents	%
2002	27	2	7%	33	5	15%
2003	33	6	18%	35	8	23%
2004	17	4	24%	28	3	11%
2005	23	5	22%	35	11	31%
2006	19	8	42%	37	21	57%
Total	119	25	21%	168	48	29%

Research Design

A. Instrumentation

The study made use of a researcher-made structured undisguised survey questionnaire. The instrument primarily used open-ended questions to gather needed data.

B. Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers initially examined secondary data from the Planning, Evaluation, and Monitoring Office of MSU-IIT. However, there was some information needed in the study that was not available in the said office, hence, the researchers made use of the survey questionnaire prepared by the researcher. Personal, telephone, and electronic

communication was used in gathering the data. Furthermore, the snowballing technique was used in locating respondents.

C. Statistical Treatment

The data generated from the instruments was analyzed using the frequency distribution, proportions and percentages, and mean.

Results of the Study

A. Socio – demographic Profile

The tracer study was able to contact 48 graduates of Entrepreneurial Marketing and 27 graduates of Business Economics of the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration program of MSU-IIT's College of Business Administration and Accountancy. The researchers have determined their socio – demographic profile as described below.

Table 2 shows the gender distribution of the respondents. The Entrepreneurial Marketing graduates who responded to the tracer study were almost equally represented by males and females of 54% and 46%, respectively. On the other hand, the Business Economics graduates who responded to the tracer study is primarily composed of females at 93% while males only constituted 7% of the total Business Economics graduate respondents. For the whole BSBA program, females dominated the respondents group with 63% while males comprised only 37% of the total number of respondents. This distribution may be attributed to the female-dominant contacts of one of the data gatherers. This may also be indicative of the more responsive nature of females to social networks. Further, this distribution reinforced the strong relationship between gender and course that was established in the study indicating that more females are attracted to business courses.

Table 2. Gender Profile of Respondents

Gender	Entrepreneurial Marketing		Business Economics		Total	
	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age
Male	26	54%	2	7%	28	37%
Female	22	46%	25	93%	47	63%

The respondents' profile in terms of civil status as shown in Table 3 indicates that of the total number of respondents, there are more single respondents at 91% while married respondents only comprised 9%. Specifically, the single respondents from the Entrepreneurial Marketing and Business Economics programs were 90% and 93%, respectively. This trend is primarily attributed to the inclusive years of graduation from which the respondents were taken. The study only considered the years 2002 to 2006 hence, many of the respondents are still young with an average age of 24.8 and are not yet married.

It must be noted that among the married Entrepreneurial Marketing graduate respondents, the average family size is 3 while among the married Business Economics graduate respondents, the average family size is 4. This could indicate that they got married early or immediately after graduating.

Table 3. Civil Status Profile of Respondents

Civil Status	Entrepreneurial Marketing		Business Economics		Total	
	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age
Single	43	90%	25	93%	68	91%
Married	5	10%	2	7%	7	9%

The educational attainment profile of the respondents is shown in Table 4. Results of the study revealed that all the graduate respondents of Entrepreneurial Marketing and Business Economics did not pursue higher education after finishing their BSBA degree.

Table 4. *Highest Educational Attainment Profile of Respondents*

Educational Attainment	Entrepreneurial Marketing		Business Economics		Total	
	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age
College	48	100%	27	100%	75	100%
Masters <i>(with partial number of units taken)</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0
Others	2	4%	3	11%	5	7%

This may be due to the fact that the respondents have not pursued a teaching career in the academe, hence getting a Masters degree is not their priority. It must be noted however, that there are 5 or 7% of the respondents who took short-term courses such as Computer Technician, Hotel and Restaurant Management, and Caregiver courses.

Table 5 presents the respondents' work-related profile in terms of highest position held. Results of the study indicate that a large number of the respondents or 67% occupy a rank and file position. Despite the more recent reckoning period of 2002 to 2006, it was found out that of the 75 respondents, 20% holds a supervisory position and 4% holds a managerial position. It is worthy to note that 67% of those who occupy managerial positions had undergone training with Medium and Small Scale Industries Coordinated Action Program (MASICAP). The MASICAP II Program is being implemented in partnership with cooperating LGUs in Mindanao since 2002, assisting micro and small enterprises in accessing financial assistance through the preparation of Project Feasibility Studies and other pertinent loan documents (MASICAP, 2008). This may be indicative of better chances to higher positions when our graduates have been exposed to actual fieldwork experience. Furthermore, despite their relatively young age, our graduates may be getting supervisory and managerial positions because of the industries' trend of hiring more idealistic, dynamic and more open to change workplace leaders that are embodied by younger individuals. The BSBA curriculum could also be a contributory factor in molding them to become executives.

Table 5. *Highest Position Held by Respondents*

Position	Entrepreneurial Marketing		Business Economics		Total	
	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age
Rank & File	32	67%	18	67%	50	67%
Supervisor	9	19%	6	22%	15	20%
Manager	1	2%	2	7%	3	4%
Not Employed	6	12%	1	4%	7	9%

The study also found out that 9% or 7 of the respondents are unemployed. This shows that our graduates are not exempt from the harsh realities of our highly competitive labor market.

Meanwhile, Table 6 shows the respondents profile in terms of other work-related factors such as average monthly income and average number of months employed.

Table 6. *Average Monthly Income and Average Number of Months Employed of Respondents*

Variable	Entrepreneurial Marketing	Business Economics	Total
Average Monthly Income	P 11,203	P 11,174	P 11,189
Average Number of Months Employed	14.4	14.29	14.345

The Entrepreneurial Marketing graduates registered an average gross monthly income of P11,203.00. The average gross monthly income of the Business Economics graduates is not far behind at P11,174.00. Across the BSBA program, it can be seen that the average gross monthly income is P11,189.00. It must be noted that these figures only pertain to the monthly salary of our respondents from employment. Despite the large number of graduates having a rank and file position, the average gross monthly income reflects a considerably high level because most of our graduate respondents are employed with call centers which are generally paying higher compensation packages to their employees. Moreover, our graduates holding supervisory and managerial positions also contributed to the high average gross monthly salary.

In terms of the length of work experience, it was found out that the average number of months the graduate respondents are employed is 14.4 months or 1 year and 2 months for Entrepreneurial Marketing graduates and 14.29 months or 1 year and 2 months for Business Economics graduates. This indicates that there are graduates who did not find work at once upon graduation.

B. Perceived Strengths of the BSBA Business Economics/ Entrepreneurial Marketing Programs

To gather inputs for the development of the BSBA curricula, the study sought the respondents' perceived strengths of the BSBA Business Economics and Entrepreneurial Marketing programs.

Table 7 shows the categorized strengths of the Business Economics program as commented by some of its graduates from 2002 to 2006.

According to the findings of the study, the strength of the two programs lies in its curriculum – particularly, on the content which comprised 79% of the total responses pertaining to curriculum. Among the assessments falling under the content category are: (1) topics are relevant and useful in their work; (2) topics provide the necessary knowledge of the respective fields of specialization; and (3) subjects provide the needed foundation of the respective fields.

It is also worthy to note that under the Entrepreneurial Marketing curriculum, our graduate respondents viewed the activity-based approaches to classroom learning as favorable and they believe that the program developed their confidence, improved their communication skills, and enhanced their creativity and critical thinking skills. Another 4% of the responses of the Entrepreneurial Marketing graduates revealed that the curriculum was able to incorporate values into the different subjects in the program.

On the other hand, 8% of the responses of the Business Economics respondents are related to the development of the entrepreneurial spirit as favorable since it equipped them with the needed knowledge and skills to pursue a career in entrepreneurship. Seventeen percent of the respondents claimed that there are many career options and opportunities for the graduates in Business Economics. This is evidenced by the very low 4% rate of unemployed among the Business Economics graduate respondents.

Table 7. *Perceived Strengths of the BSBA Business Economics/ Entrepreneurial Marketing Programs*

Strengths	Entrepreneurial Marketing		Business Economics		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Curriculum						
Content	24	44%	27	46%	51	45%
Personality Development	9	16%	7	12%	16	14%
Career Options/ Opportunities	1	2%	10	17%	11	10%
Values-based	2	4%	3	5%	5	4%
Activity-based Approach	2	4%			2	2%
Entrepreneur-Ship Development			5	8%	5	4%
Sub-total	38	69%	52	88%	90	79%
Facilities						
Building	1	2%			1	1%
Rooms			1	2%	1	1%
Sub-total	1	2%	1	2%	2	2%
Faculty						
Competence	11	20%	6	10%	17	15%
Interpersonal Skills	5	9%			5	4%
Sub-total	16	29%	6	10%	22	19%
Grand Total	55	100%	59	100%	114	100%

Next to the curriculum, the faculty is perceived to be the second strength of both programs, garnering a total of 29% of the responses from the Entrepreneurial Marketing group and 10% of the responses from the Business Economics group. Particularly, the perceived strength of the faculty members of both programs lie in their competence and expertise, being Masters and Doctorate degree holders and updated experiences, trainings, and seminars.

A total of 2% of the responses from both groups appreciated the new building and the existing rooms of the college.

C. Perceived Weaknesses of the BSBA Business Economics/ Entrepreneurial Marketing Programs

Areas for the improvement of the BSBA curricula were identified from the respondents' perceived weaknesses of the BSBA Business Economics and Entrepreneurial Marketing programs.

Table 8 presents the perceived weaknesses of the BSBA Business Economics/Entrepreneurial Marketing Programs.

Despite its perceived strengths presented earlier, Table 8 reveals that the curriculum of both programs also has its downside as divulged by the aggregate 66.5% of the responses pertaining to the perceived weaknesses of both curricula. Both programs were evaluated as lacking in exposures as represented by 29% of the total responses – specifically in terms of hands-on applications and practice, field trips, and field work.

Moreover, 5% and 13% of the responses from the respondents of the Entrepreneurial Marketing and Business Economics groups, respectively, disclose that both programs lack enhancement seminars and trainings that would reinforce and/or augment classroom instruction. It appears that graduates see these activities as a venue for more updated inputs regarding industry trends and current practices.

Table 8. *Perceived Weaknesses of the BSBA Business Economics/Entrepreneurial Marketing Programs*

Weaknesses	Entrepreneurial Marketing		Business Economics		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Curriculum						
Lack of Applications/ Exposures	15	38%	3	13%	18	29%
Lack of enhancement Activities	2	5%	3	13%	5	8%
Lack of time given for Projects	3	8%	1	4%	4	6%
Content – Insufficient/ Inappropriate topic coverage			6	26%	6	10%
Lack of extra-curricular Involvement			2	9%	2	3%
Weak linkage with GOs/ NGOs and Industries			2	9%	2	3%
Image of course			2	9%	2	3%
Lack of Promotion Of Course			1	4%	1	1.5%
Reused Exams			1	4%	1	1.5%
Outdated	1	2%			1	1.5%
Sub-total	21	53%	21	91%	42	66.5%
Facilities						
Outdated books	4	10%	2	9%	6	10%
Lack of classroom/lab Equipment	8	20%			8	13%
Lack of laboratory	2	5%			2	3%
Old building	1	2%			1	1.5%
Outdated Computers	2	5%			2	3%
Lack of seats	1	2%			1	1.5%
Sub-total	18	45%	2	9%	20	32%
Faculty						
Limited number	1	2%			1	1.5%
Sub-total	1	2%			1	1.5%
Grand Total	40	100%	23	100%	63	100%

Another common weakness revealed by the composite 6% of the responses from both groups is the little time given for the completion of

projects – particularly for thesis, market research projects, and business plans.

Specific for the Business Economics program, though its content was one of its perceived strengths, there are still aspects of it that appears to be needing improvement as exhibited by the 26% of the responses from the Business Economics group saying that there are topics that should not be included, that the subject is much too broad and complicated that only “a little of everything” is covered, and that there are subjects allegedly necessary in the course but are not included.

Furthermore, 9% of the responses from the Business Economics group pertain to the lack of involvement in extra-curricular activities like out-of-the-campus competitions. Another 9% of the responses pertain to the weak linkages with government offices and officers, as well as industries, for student exposures and on-the-job trainings.

It must be noted also that 9% of the responses from the Business Economics graduates disclosed apprehension over the unfavorable image of Economics as a course to take in college. This was further emphasized by the perceived lack of promotion of the course as indicated by 4% of the responses specific to this group. Even the re-usage of examination questionnaires did not go unnoticed by 1 respondent.

On the other hand, much of the perceived weaknesses by the Entrepreneurial Marketing respondents in terms of facilities pertain to lack of classroom and laboratory equipment such as LCD projectors and cooking tools and equipment. Meanwhile, a common weakness in facilities primarily involved the outdated books and references that are only available as represented by an aggregate 10% of the total responses.

D. Recommendations to Improve the BSBA Business Economics/ Entrepreneurial Marketing Programs

The study was able to register 86 recommendations from both groups concerning the curriculum, facilities, and faculty. There are comments that did not fall in any of these categories and was considered as general recommendations.

Table 9. *Recommendations to Improve the BSBA Business Economics/
Entrepreneurial Marketing Curricula*

Recommendations for the Curricula	Entrepreneurial Marketing		Business Economics		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
More exposures/ applications	19	45%	14	45%	33	45%
Add/Update subjects	10	24%	5	16%	15	21%
More enhancement activities	4	10%	4	13%	8	11%
More time for projects and OJT	3	7%	1	3%	4	5.4%
More extra- curricular involvement	1	2.3%	1	3%	2	3%
Benchmark other schools' programs	1	2.3%			1	1.2%
Deeper discussion on select topics	3	7%			3	4%
Use English in classroom instruction	1	2.3%			1	1.2%
Improve linkages with GOs/NGOs and industries			2	7%	2	3%
More promotion of the course			3	10%	3	4%
Provide manuals			1	3%	1	1.2%
Grand Total	42	100%	31	100%	73	100%

Table 9 presents the recommendations to improve the BSBA Business Economics/Entrepreneurial Marketing Curricula.

As can be gleaned from the table above, recommendations common to both programs include: (1) more exposures/applications; (2) add or update subjects; (3) more enhancement activities; (4) more time for projects and on-the-job trainings; and (5) more involvement in extra-curricular activities.

Specifically, 45% of the total 42 recommendations for the curriculum from the Entrepreneurial Marketing program respondents are related to more exposures. The group particularly suggested for more field trips, sales practice, and on-the-job training with business establishments. While 45% of the total 31 recommendations concerning the curriculum from the Business Economics program respondents particularly mentioned more applications through case studies, field trips, and community-enrichment programs.

A composite 21% of the total number of recommendations from both groups relate to the adding and updating the subjects being covered by each of the field of specialization. They suggested the inclusion of more recent and updated trends and practices that are deemed relevant in the current business and economic realities.

Respondents from the Entrepreneurial Marketing graduates suggested for more enhancement activities as divulged by 10% of the total number of recommendations for curriculum. Specifically, they recommended for trainings on public speaking and personality development. On the other hand, for the Business Economics respondents, more enhancement activities particularly refers to economic forums with other colleges, seminars and symposiums that would make the students appreciate the relevance and importance of their course more.

Another common recommendation for both programs is allowing more time for students to complete their thesis, market research projects, business plans, and on-the-job training requirements. This recommendation coincides with and addresses the weakness cited earlier on the lack of time for project and OJT completion.

The last common recommendation for both programs pertains to more involvement in extra-curricular activities, specifically inter-school competitions and regional and national conventions and conferences.

With regard to facilities, the study was able to gather a total of 10 recommendations from the respondents of both programs. These recommendations were also further classified since there were similar and/or related responses. Table 9 shows the summary of the recommendations to improve the BSBA Business Economics/Entrepreneurial Marketing Facilities.

Coinciding with the weakness on the existing outdated books and references cited earlier, an aggregate 40% of the total number of recommendations involving facilities mentioned that books should be updated.

The recommendation of adding additional facilities pertain to the augmentation of classroom and laboratory equipment and tools for the Entrepreneurial Marketing program such as LCD projectors much needed in audio-visual presentations and techno-transfer / business practicum equipment and tools.

A recommendation from the Business Economics respondents concern the updating of computer applications needed in some of their economics subjects.

Table 10. *Recommendations to Improve the BSBA Business Economics/ Entrepreneurial Marketing Facilities*

Recommendations for the Facilities	Entrepreneurial Marketing		Business Economics		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Update books	1		3		4	40%
Add facilities	4				4	40%
Provide business center cum business incubator	1				1	10%
Update/add computer applications			1		1	10%
Grand Total	6	100%	4	100%	10	100%

The respondents also had recommendations related to the BSBA faculty and is presented in Table 11.

Noticeably, under this category, there are only 3 recommendations all in all and there are no recommendations common to both programs.

Specific to the Entrepreneurial Marketing program respondents is the suggestion that the department should hire faculty members who have an experience in any business venture. Perhaps, the graduates felt that when the faculty teaching an entrepreneurship subject has had an experience with a business enterprise, he or she would be more effective in teaching related subject matters.

Coming from the Business Economics group was a recommendation for the faculty members to be more approachable to their students. A respondent further suggested that more faculty members should be hired.

Table 11. *Recommendations to Improve the BSBA Business Economics/ Entrepreneurial Marketing Faculty*

Recommendations for the Faculty	Entrepreneurial Marketing		Business Economics		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Hire business-experienced teachers	1				1	33.3%
Be more approachable			1		1	33.3%
Add teachers			1		1	33.3%
Grand Total	1	100%	2	100%	3	100%

A proposal from the Entrepreneurial Marketing group was classified as a general recommendation. This involved the wearing of business uniforms during classes of major subjects and is exhibited in Table 12.

Table 12. *General Recommendations to Improve the BSBA Business Economics/ Entrepreneurial Marketing Program*

General Recommendations	Entrepreneurial Marketing		Business Economics		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Students should wear business uniforms in their major subjects.	1				1	100%
Grand Total	1	100%	0	0%	1	100%

Summary of Findings

The study was able to obtain observations addressing the established objectives. There are more female respondents with 63% from both programs than males. Single respondents from both programs accounted for 91% compared to married respondents. The average family size is 4. No graduate from both programs have pursued graduate studies after finishing their college degree. However, 7% of the total 75 respondents have taken short-term courses not related to their respective courses. Majority of the respondents at 67% are holding rank and file positions; 20% are holding supervisory positions; and 4% are holding managerial positions. Nine percent of the 75 respondents are not employed. The average monthly income of the respondents is P11,189.00. On the average, the respondents are employed for 14.345 months.

Further, the study sought feedback from the respondents regarding both programs. It was found out that the curriculum is one of the major strengths of both programs. This is followed by the faculty as its 2nd ranking strength. The curriculum came out as one of the major weaknesses for both programs. This is followed by the facilities as the 2nd ranking weakness. The curriculum gathered the most number of recommendations with 84% of the total number of recommendations; recommendations for facilities comprised 12% of the responses; and recommendations for faculty constituted 3% of the responses.

Recommendations

In view of the results of the study, the researchers have the following recommendations:

- a. Further study should be done to include all programs of the CBAA
- b. The sample of the study should include graduates from years prior to 2002.
- c. Both programs should allow more time for work experience through their on-the-job training program.
- d. The respective department's curriculum committee should initiate revision of their existing curriculum, incorporating the suggestions of the respondents that it should include subjects about current trends and practices in their fields of specialization.

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