

# Employability trends, challenges, and opportunities of CBSUA graduates in bachelor of elementary education (BEEd) SY 2018-2022

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## ***Abstract***

This study investigates the employability opportunities, trends, and challenges for curricular reforms among graduates from the College of Education at CBSUA-Calabanga. Amid a competitive labor market and concerns about unemployment rates, the study aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) #4 and #5, emphasizing inclusive education and gender equality. The objectives aim to unveil the general and professional profiles of respondents, employment patterns, and challenges faced by graduates in securing jobs. A total of 121 graduates participated, and descriptive methodology, including frequency counts and percentages, was employed for data analysis. Key findings reveal the dominance of female graduates, a preference for employment in the education sector, and challenges such as limited experience and job market competition. The study underscores the importance of aligning curricula with industry demands, emphasizing practical experiences, and enhancing soft skills to improve graduates' competitiveness. Recommendations include strengthening career counseling services, curriculum reviews, and fostering industry connections. These insights can guide CBSUA-Calabanga in refining its educational programs, addressing challenges faced by graduates, and contributing to the broader goals of inclusive and quality education.

***Keywords:*** employability, opportunities, trends, challenges, education

## **Employability trends, challenges, and opportunities of CBSUA graduates in bachelor of elementary education (BEEd) SY 2018-2022**

### **1. Introduction**

The unemployment rate in the Philippines in January 2019 was estimated at 5.2%. “Of the total unemployed, the age group 15–24 years comprised 43.7%, while the age group 25 to 34, 30.6%. By educational attainment, 20.9% of the unemployed were college graduates, 8.2% were college undergraduates, and 28.2% have completed junior high school. Graduates of junior high school include those high school graduates in the old curriculum” (PSA, 2019 as cited by Albina & Sumagaysay, 2020). The labor markets in the Philippines and abroad have become very competitive. When parents are confronted with the choice of Universities and Colleges where their children will attend and get a degree, the prospects for future employment carry much weight. Employability, thus, becomes a matter of crucial consideration when schools define their curriculum and their policies on recruitment, entrance, and retention. Moreover, a graduate tracer study is a subject appropriate in evaluating the results of education and training provided in the academic institution more specifically in the assessment of graduates’ employability status. Results of these program studies can provide sufficient information on the success of education and training in relation to the graduates and employers. Likewise, this will assist the university in keeping a track of their graduates’ whereabouts and employment status. HEIs will be able to determine the status of their degree program offerings, those that are in demand to the community and the otherwise; and decide for its possible restructuring or reform to be tailored-fit to the needs of the economy and society.

Tertiary Education Commission (2009) argued that in the challenges of 21st century education, higher education stands out as one of the major keys to cope with reforms through instruction, research, and extension. It has become a big challenge for all Philippine Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to cater these reforms. One way of addressing these concerns is by producing fully-equipped graduates who would use what they have learned in school and apply them in their respective work. In addition, Sustainable Development Goal No. 4 aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. This goal supports the reduction of disparities and inequities in education, both in terms of access and quality. It recognizes the need to provide quality education for all. When children and students are offered the tools to develop to their full potential, they become productive adults ready to give back to their communities and break the cycle of poverty. Education enables upward socioeconomic mobility. More so, the study also emphasizes the SDG # 5 which is achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. Gender discrimination is a widespread and persistent problem that affects women and girls across the country. In India, women often earn less than men for doing the same work, and they are also underrepresented in higher-paying jobs. According to the World Inequality Report 2022, men in India earn 82% of the labor income while the share of women’s earnings stands at a mere 18%. Thus, this tracer study is geared towards analysis of the CBSUA’s graduates’ access to employability opportunities across all gender.

**Objective of the study** - This study aimed to assess the employability trends, challenges, and opportunities for future curricular reforms within the various programs offered by the College of Education at CBSUA-Calabanga. Specifically, the study sought to explore the general profile of the graduates, including their personal characteristics such as gender, civil status, age, and location of residence, as well as their professional background, including educational attainment, professional examinations taken, and any graduate studies pursued after college. Additionally, the study intended to investigate the employment patterns of these graduates. This included examining their employment status by assessing the relationship of their first job to their course, reasons for accepting the job, duration at the first job, methods used to find the job, time taken to secure it post-graduation, monthly earnings, job relevance to their degree, reasons for job changes, current occupation,

and the name of the employing organization. It also evaluated the skills and work-related values acquired during their college education. For those who were unemployed, the study identified the reasons behind their lack of employment. Furthermore, the research delved into the challenges faced by student-respondents in securing a job, aiming to identify the obstacles and difficulties encountered during their job search.

## 2. Methodology

Descriptive method of research was employed to describe the following: 1) general profile of the respondents in terms of a) personal and b) professional profile Personal profile includes gender, civil status, age, and location of residence. The professional profile which have been assessed were educational attainment, professional examination taken, and graduate studies attended after college. This method was also utilized to describe the graduates' employment pattern in terms of a) employed status and b) unemployed status. The data to be gathered under the employed status were; 1) first job in relation to their course, 2) reasons for accepting the job, 3) the time span stayed on the first job, 4) tools in finding the first job, 5) the interval of the time before landing on their first job after college, 6) the monthly earnings, 7) the relevant variable to the job, 8) reasons for changing the job, 9) present occupation, and 10) name of the company/school they were employed. While the reasons for not yet being employed yet were to be determined to support the information for unemployed status. Challenges encountered by the graduates in securing the job was also described using the descriptive method.

As presented in Table 1, the following were the distribution of the respondents of the study.

**Table 1**  
*Distribution of the respondents of the study*

Year Graduated	No. of Graduates	30% Of Total Population	No. Of Graduates Tracked
2018	70	21	22
2019	103	31	40
2020	24	7	12
2021	32	10	13
2022	72	22	34
TOTAL	301	91	121

To facilitate the analysis of data, Descriptive statistics which include the frequency count, percentage technique, mean and standard deviation were employed to determine and discuss the profile of the alumni, the employment status and challenges encountered in securing a job.

## 3. Results

**Response Rate of Graduates** - The questionnaire sampling frame was established as comprising all BEEd graduates from 2018 to 2022, spanning five years. A total of 121 responses were obtained reaching the 30% of the target from the questionnaires that were disseminated to graduates. Result is consistent with the response rate recommendation of 30 to 60 percent, as Schaub (2003) stated regarding the execution of graduate tracer studies.

**General Profile of Graduates in Terms of Personal Information** - Gender, age, relationship status, and location of residence were not deemed essential factors in selecting respondents for this research. However, this information about respondents provides a comprehensive overview of the research participants based on these characteristics. This information might illustrate a balanced sample across gender, age, civil status, and location of residence and showcase the demographics of elementary education teachers. Table 2 displays the distribution of responses according to gender. 77.69% of respondents were female, 20.66% were male, and 1.65% identified as LGBTQIA+. Females are more represented in the program than other genders, somehow influenced by students' interests and personal preferences.

Data illustrates that most respondents (81.1%) were aged between 22 and 25, with 13.2% falling in the 26-29 age range. Only 5.7% of graduates were above 30. This indicates that the program appeals to recent high school graduates who have obtained their senior high school diploma. Regarding civil status, as seen in Figure 3,

88.7% of the graduates were single, while 11.3% were married. None of the respondents were widows, widowers, separated, or solo parents. Economic reasons and social networks might impact the choice to remain unmarried after graduation. Furthermore, result reveals the distribution of graduates' residences as follows: 60.4% from Calabanga, 32.0% from Tinambac, 7.5% from Bombon, 5.7% from Canaman, 3.8% from Naga, and 1.2% each from Siruma and Magarao. This is reflected in the number of BEEd program graduates from Calabanga and adjacent municipalities.

**Table 2**  
*General Profile of Graduate in Terms of Personal Information.*

Profile	Number	Percentage
Gender		
Male	94	77.69
Female	25	20.66
LGBTQIA	2	1.50
Total	121	100.00
Age		
22-25	43	81.10
26-29	7	13.20
30 and above	3	5.70
Total	53	100.00
Civil Status		
Single	47	88.70
Married	6	11.30
Total	53	100.00
Location of Residence		
Calabanga	32	58.33
Tinambac	17	28.33
Bombon	4	6.66
Canaman	3	5.00
Naga	2	3.33
Magarao	1	1.66
Siruma	1	1.66
Total	60	100.00

**General Profile of Graduates in Terms of Professional Information** - Regarding the levels of education completed, results in Table 3 show that 1.9% have completed master's degrees, while 15.1% are now working towards their master's degrees. Additionally, these recent graduates were from cohorts in 2018 and 2019, whereas recent graduates were still preparing to take the LET exam.

**Table 3**  
*General Profile of Graduate in Terms of Professional Information*

Profile	Number	Percentage
Educational Attainment (Post-graduate studies)		
Masters w/units	8	15.00
Masters degree	1	1.90
Not enrolled	43	82.69
Total	52	100.00
Professional Examination taken		
LET	39	73.60
Civil Service	3	5.70
None Prof Exam passer	11	21.00
Total	53	100.00
Graduate Studies attended after college		
Educational Management	5	55.60
Early Childhood Education	1	11.10
Special Education	1	11.10
Public Administration	2	22.20
Total	9	100.00

Employability becomes a significant concern; attending graduate and post-graduate school can contribute to one's development and advancement to ace employment. Data reveals the sheer number of professional exam takers. 73.6% of those who took the exam passed the LET, while 5.7% took and passed the CSC test. The

program generates passers each LET season, surpassing the national passing rate. Most responses are from 2022 graduates who are now preparing for the LET. Moreover, data reveals that the highest percentage of graduates specialize in Educational Management at 55.6%, followed by 22.2% in Public Administration and 11.1% respectively in ECE and SPED. BEEd graduates have shown a keen willingness to gain knowledge and competence in educational management. The program curriculum covers topics such as education finance, school legislation, the function of instructional managers, community relations, and supervision of school personnel.

**Table 4**  
*Graduates employment pattern for SY 2018-2022*

Graduates employment pattern	Number	Percentage
<b>a. Employment status</b>		
Employed	32	60.40
Currently, unemployed	13	24.50
Never been employed	8	15.10
Total	53	100.00
<b>1. Employment status by Sector</b>		
Education	14	43.75
BPO	4	12.50
Clerical/Secretariat, Human Resource, and Office Mgt	12	37.50
Commercial	2	3.12
Public Administration	2	3.12
Total	34	100.00
<b>2. Relevance of present employment to the degree</b>		
Yes	14	43.75
No	1	56.25
Total	15	100.00
<b>3. Sector of Employment</b>		
Public	17	53.12
Private	13	40.62
Self-employed	2	6.25
Total	32	100.00
<b>4. Reasons for Accepting the Job</b>		
Salaries and benefits	14	24.50
Career challenge	14	24.50
Related to special skills	12	21.10
Proximity to residence	4	7.00
No other employment opportunities	11	19.30
Others	3	3.60
Total	58	100.00
<b>5. Methods in finding the first job</b>		
Response to an advertisement	3	9.40
As walk-in applicant	15	46.90
Information fro friends	10	31.30
Job fair for Public Employment Service Office (PESO)	1	3.10
Arranged by school	2	6.30
Family business	1	3.10
Total	32	100.00

**Employment Status** - The graduates were prompted to specify their current employment status as employed, unemployed, or never employed. data displays the overall job status of graduates. Figure 8 illustrates that 60.4% of respondents were employed, 24.5% were now jobless, and 15.1% had never been employed. The findings indicate that new graduates tend to experience elevated levels of unemployment. These results align with earlier tracer studies where recent graduates had challenges getting employment.

**Employment Status by Sector** - Result reveals the distribution of respondents based on their field of work. It illustrates that most graduates, 43.75%, were engaged in the education sector. This was followed by 37.5% who worked in the Clerical/Secretariat, Human Resource, and Office Management sectors, then the BPO sector (12.5%), commercial sector (6.25%), and public administration (3.125%). The education sector had the greatest percentage of employed graduates, indicating that education graduates found jobs related to their degree. Figure

10 illustrates an imbalance in the alignment between workers' qualifications and their job. Specifically, 43.75% of employees are working in roles that match their degree, while 56.25% are engaged in sectors unrelated to their degree. Table 4 demonstrated that the public sector had the highest percentage of employment at 53.125%, compared to 40.625% in the private sector and 6.25% among the self-employed.

**Reasons for Accepting the Job** - The graduates were asked why they were confident in accepting their current job. Based on the findings, it is shown that the reason that 24.5% of the graduates accepted the position was because of the income and perks that were given. This was followed because it was connected to their social skills, which received a response from 21.1% of the graduates. 19.3% of the employees could not secure employment because job opportunities were unavailable. 7.0% of the employees chose their job because it was close to their residence. 3.6% of the graduates chose to take the job because of its reputation and constructive working environment.

**Methods in Finding the First Job** - When it comes to linking elementary education to accessible employment, the strategies that one employs for recruiting and seeking work might be one of the most critical factors. The responses that graduates gave to advertisements, the walk-in applications that they submitted, and the assistance that they received from their families were some of the ways that they sought jobs. Most common approaches to securing employment were applying as walk-in applicants (46.9%), making connections through friends (31.3%), responding to advertising (9.4%), and applying through a job fair and the family business accounted for 3.1% of the total.

**Time Lag between Graduation and Securing First Employment** - In addition, the length of time that transpires between graduation and employment may provide valuable insight into the ease or difficulty that graduates have while trying to find work once they have completed their college studies. Following graduation, graduates were questioned about the length of time they had spent hunting for work after they had their degrees. As presented in Table 5, there are 37.5% of the graduates were able to get their first work in a period of no more than one month, while 31.25% secured their first job in a period of between one and six months, and 18.8% secured their first job in a period of seven to eleven months. Eighty-seven point five percent of graduates were able to get their first employment within a year after graduation. Further evidence that this is the case is shown by the fact that just 12.6% of graduates who took more than a year to complete their education cited the amount of time it takes to find employment as the primary challenge. This might be an indication that the amount of time that passes between graduation and work could be no more than one year in areas where there are jobs available.

**Initial Gross Monthly Income on First Job** - There is a possibility that the attractiveness of a job might be determined by the revenue that it provides. The income distribution of those who have completed primary school training. While 21.9% of graduates earned less than P5000 per month, the majority of graduates (37.5%) gained more than P5000 and not less than P10000 per month. Additionally, 15.6% of graduates earned P10000 to less than P20,000 per month, and 9.4% of graduates made more than the national average pay. According to Estrellado (2024), the average monthly wages for all workers in the country are as follows: P18,423.

**Reasons for Changing Job** - Another metric that was used to evaluate graduate mobility was the degree to which they switched employment. There are many different motivations for things to change jobs. However, the most common ones are those that are tied to career challenge (31.8%), followed by those that are related to improved income and benefits (27.3%), and then those that are sought after for those related to special skills (22.8%).

**Usefulness and Relevance of Skills and Competencies to Job Placement** - In addition, the usefulness and relevance of the competences and job-related variables that were established, as well as the efficiency and sufficiency of the training that was offered by the University to fulfill the requirements of their current employment, were all taken into consideration. The 66.03% of the graduates said that communication skills were the most valuable skills they had received during their time in university. Then came abilities in information technology and critical thinking, which obtained the same mean grade of 58.49%. On the other hand, abilities in

human relations and problem-solving were among the most valuable, with 52.83% and 41.50% of respondents indicating they were helpful. Entrepreneurship abilities were assessed to be the least relevant among the other talents, with 26.41% of graduates indicating they were the least relevant. Additionally, 1.88% of graduates cited leadership skills as valuable skills.

**Table 5**  
*Graduates employment pattern for SY 2018-2022*

Graduates employment pattern	Number	Percentage
<b>6. First job time interval</b>		
Less than a month	12	37.50
1 to 6 months	10	31.25
7 to 11 months	6	18.80
1 year to less than 2 years	2	6.30
3 years to less than 4 years	2	6.30
Total	32	100.00
<b>7. Initial gross monthly income on first job</b>		
Below 5,000	7	21.90
P5,000.00 to less than 10,000.00	2	37.50
P10,000.00 to less than 15,000.00	5	15.60
P15,000.00 to less than 20,000.00	5	15.60
P20,000.00 to less than 25,000.00	3	9.40
Total	22	100.00
<b>8. Reasons for changing job</b>		
Salaries and benefits	12	27.30
Career challenge	14	31.80
Related to special skills	10	22.80
Proximity to residence	2	4.50
Employment opportunities	4	9.10
Others	2	4.50
Total	44	100.00
<b>9. Usefulness and relevance of skills and competencies to job placement</b>		
Communication skills	35	66.03
Critical thinking skills	31	58.49
Information technology skills	31	58.49
Human relation skills	28	52.83
Problem-solving skills	22	41.50
Entrepreneurial skills	14	26.41
Others	1	1.88
<b>10. Usefulness and relevance of work-related values to job placement</b>		
Open-mindedness	30	56.60
Love of God	28	52.83
Professional integrity	27	50.94
Perseverance and hard work	25	47.16
Efficiency	25	47.16
Self-reliance	24	45.28
Leadership	23	43.39
Self-discipline	23	43.39
Punctuality	22	41.50
Fairness and justice	22	41.50
Honesty and love for truth	22	41.50
Tolerance	20	37.73
Unity	14	26.41
Courageousness and creativity	8	33.96

**Usefulness and Relevance of Work-related Values to Job Placement** - Among the list of work-related principles that the university has established and instilled in its students the graduates have universally agreed upon open-mindedness as the most beneficial and essential virtue. This percentage is 56.60%. Love for God and love for coworkers and others came in second place, with 52.83% of respondents, while professional integrity came in third place, with 50.94%. The respondents also expressed that honesty and a love for the truth (49.05%), perseverance and hard work (47.16%), and efficiency (47.16%) were the most useful work-related values. Self-reliance (45.28%), leadership (43.39%), self-discipline (43.39%), punctuality (41.50%), fairness and justice (41.50%), and tolerance (37.73%) were also considered to be among the most useful work-related values.

Additionally, the least significant qualities in terms of job placement were unity (26.41%), courageousness and creativity (33.96%), and unity.

The career trajectory of the graduates showed that 24.5% of them are now without jobs, while 15.1% had never held a job during their lives. Furthermore, the reasons why graduates are not working showed in Table 6 are as follows: 33.33 percent of graduates do not have any employment opportunities, and 28.50% percent of graduates have made the decision not to look for work because they are concerned about their families. 29.1% of graduates have never had a job and are now seeking for work. The 9.53 percent of graduates have a cause that is connected to their health, are having financial difficulties, or have other priorities.

**Table 6**  
*Graduates' reasons for not being employed yet*

Reasons	Number	Percentage
Family concern and decided not to find a job	6	28.50
No job opportunity	7	33.33
Health-related reasons	2	9.53
Never been employed	4	19.04
Others	2	9.53
Total	21	100.00

Moreover, it was examined in relation to the challenges encountered while looking for work (Table 7). Majority of respondents, 35.3%, reported limited prospects due to a lack of experience. Additionally, 29.4% of graduates cannot get work due to the intense competition in the job market. Furthermore, 11.8% of respondents needed help making decisions and were unsure how to begin seeking a job after graduation. 8.8% of graduates said they did not have any contacts in the sector, and some also mentioned additional reasons, such as financial difficulties and geographic location. Five percent of graduates who cannot find work have stated that they are qualified for the position they have applied for; this is the lowest percentage on the list.

**Table 7**  
*Challenges encountered by the student-respondents in securing a job*

Challenges	Number	Percentage
Lack of experience	12	35.30
Competition in the job market	10	29.40
Difficulty in job hunting because you do not know where to start	4	11.80
Lack of industry connections	3	8.80
Others	3	8.80
Overqualified for the available position	2	5.90
Total	34	100.00

#### 4. Conclusions and Recommendations

In conclusion, the research provides valuable insights into the post-graduation experiences of BEEd graduates from 2018 to 2022. The response rate of 30% aligns with recommended standards for tracer studies. The general profile of graduates indicates a predominant female representation, with the program appealing to recent high school graduates aged 22-25, primarily single, and residing in Calabanga. In terms of professional information, a significant number of graduates pursued further education, and a high percentage successfully passed professional exams, particularly the LET. The majority specialized in Educational Management, reflecting a keen interest in gaining knowledge in this area. The employment status reveals that a notable proportion of graduates are employed, although challenges, such as elevated levels of unemployment for recent graduates, persist. The education sector attracts the highest percentage of employed graduates, but an imbalance exists in the alignment between workers' qualifications and their jobs. Reasons for job acceptance vary, with income and perks being a significant factor. Graduates primarily secure jobs through walk-in applications and connections through friends. Most graduates find employment within a year of graduation. The initial gross monthly income distribution highlights a majority earning between P5000 and P10000, with a small percentage exceeding the national average pay. Reasons for changing jobs are often tied to career challenges and improved



income and benefits. Communication skills are deemed the most valuable, followed by information technology and critical thinking. Open-mindedness is considered the most beneficial work-related value. Graduates face challenges in finding employment due to limited experience and intense competition in the job market. In summary, the research underscores the multifaceted dynamics influencing the post-graduation experiences of BEEd graduates, shedding light on areas of success and challenges that warrant further exploration and consideration for program enhancement.

Based on the research results and conclusions, several recommendations can be considered: Enhance Career Counseling Services: Strengthen career counseling services to assist graduates in aligning their skills and aspirations with employment opportunities. Providing guidance on effective job-search strategies and networking can improve employment outcomes. Curriculum Review and Alignment: Evaluate the curriculum to ensure it remains aligned with industry demands, especially in the field of Education. Regular updates can enhance graduates' competitiveness in the job market. Internship and Practical Experience: Integrate more practical experiences, internships, or work-study programs into the curriculum. This can provide graduates with real-world exposure, addressing concerns about limited experience among job seekers. Expand Industry Connections: Foster stronger ties with industries related to education, clerical/secretariat, and other relevant sectors. This collaboration can facilitate job placements, bridging the gap between graduates and potential employers. Soft Skills Development: Emphasize the development of soft skills, particularly communication, information technology, critical thinking, and human relations. These skills are highly valued by employers and contribute to graduates' success in various job sectors. Continuous Monitoring of Employment Trends: Stay updated on employment trends and demands in the job market. This proactive approach can aid in tailoring the program to meet evolving industry needs, ensuring graduates remain competitive. Financial Literacy Programs: Recognize the economic factors influencing graduates' decisions to remain unmarried and offer financial literacy programs. This can empower graduates to make informed choices regarding their personal and professional lives. Address Unemployment Challenges: Implement targeted interventions to address the challenges faced by unemployed graduates. This may include additional support services, skill-building programs, or initiatives to enhance their employability. Diversify Job Search Strategies: Encourage graduates to diversify their job search strategies beyond walk-in applications and connections through friends. Utilizing online platforms, attending job fairs, and engaging with professional networks can broaden opportunities. Regular Tracer Studies: Conduct periodic tracer studies to continuously monitor and evaluate the career trajectories of graduates. This ongoing assessment can inform adjustments to the program, ensuring its effectiveness in preparing students for the ever-changing job landscape.

Some minor problems met while undergoing this study such as difficulty in tracking graduates, their willingness to provide time in responding the survey. Hence, google forms and hard copy of the questionnaire were distributed primarily to gather data, enforcing enough manpower in searching for the alumni, and giving enlightenment to the graduates as to the significance of conducting the tracer study were some of the solutions undertaken to ensure at least 30% response rate. Also, it is recommended that this activity be conducted giving sufficient time, material, and manpower support to successfully achieve the target.

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