

# Tracing success: Assessing the influence of bachelor of public administration program on graduates' outcomes

Lising, Sarah Dane B. ✉

Southern Luzon State University, Philippines ([Sarahdane.lising@slsu.edu.ph](mailto:Sarahdane.lising@slsu.edu.ph))

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## Abstract

The College of Administration, Business, Hospitality, and Accountancy of Southern Luzon University, Lucban Quezon Campus, continually aspires to reach the highest level of accreditation among State Universities school. The Tracer study for bachelor's in public administration was covered the Academic Year of 2020-2023, the total population for the respondents was two hundred sixty-nine (269). The Bachelor of Public Administration (BPA) Tracer Study employs a descriptive research design. The design is appropriate for gathering detailed information about the career trajectories, employment status, and professional development of BPA graduates from Southern Luzon State University (SLSU). Descriptive research allows for the systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of quantitative and qualitative data, aimed at providing an in-depth understanding of how the BPA program has impacted the lives of its graduates. This tracer study examines the employability of graduates from public administration programs, assessing the alignment between their educational experiences and labor market outcomes. Through a comprehensive survey of alumni and interviews with key stakeholders, the study identifies employment rates, sectors of employment, and the skills deemed essential by employers in the public sector. Results indicate that graduates typically find opportunities in government agencies, non-profit organizations, and international organizations, with a notable emphasis on roles related to policy analysis, program management, and community engagement. Majority of the graduates around one hundred twenty-six of 46.84% of graduates hold permanent employment, while a significant portion is in contractual (20.82%) and casual employment (16.73%). The substantial number of casual and contractual employees highlights the challenges graduates face in securing permanent positions, a trend common in public sector employment. Although many graduates report satisfactory job placement, gaps in practical skills and workplace readiness are highlighted. The findings underscore the need for academic programs to enhance experiential learning, internships, and soft skills training to better prepare students for the demands of public administration careers. This study aims to provide actionable insights for educational institutions, policymakers, and students, fostering a more effective

Lising, S. D. B.

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transition from academia to the workforce.

**Keywords:** tracer, study, public, administration, students

## **Tracing success: Assessing the influence of bachelor of public administration program on graduates' outcomes**

### **1. Introduction**

The Bachelor of Public Administration (BPA) program, formerly known as the Bachelor of Arts in Public Administration (ABPA), has been a cornerstone of public service education at Southern Luzon State University (SLSU) since its inception. Initially introduced at Southern Luzon Polytechnic College (now SLSU) after its approval by the Board of Trustees during the 61st Regular Meeting through Resolution No. 221, series of 1999, the program officially began offering courses in the Academic Year 2000-2001 under the College of Arts and Sciences. From its early years, the program has actively promoted public service education, striving to deliver quality training to future public administrators.

In 2010, a significant transformation occurred with the issuance of Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Memorandum Order No. 06, series of 2010, which replaced the Bachelor of Arts in Public Administration (BAPA) with the Bachelor in Public Administration (BPA). This change, implemented in June 2012, was part of a national effort to standardize and enhance public administration education across the country. By August 1, 2016, the BPA program was transferred to the College of Business Administration following recommendations from the Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines (AACUP) Inc. and in line with CHED's policies on vertical articulation and program alignment. This strategic move strengthened the program's ties to business and governance, enhancing its academic foundation.

The BPA program was developed with the goal of equipping students with the skills and knowledge necessary to pursue careers in public administration, governance, and civil service. With a focus on preparing individuals for roles in the government, which remains the country's largest employer, the program emphasizes the need for dedicated leaders, public servants, and advocates who are committed to serving the public good. It also addresses the growing demand for professionals capable of leading advocacy and service programs within civil society organizations, particularly for marginalized communities.

The objectives of the BPA program are geared towards ensuring that graduates exhibit a comprehensive understanding of public administration theories, principles, and practices, and are well-prepared to apply this knowledge in real-world scenarios. Students are trained to analyze and evaluate challenges in public service, guided by a deep understanding of the socio-political realities within both the Philippine and global contexts. Ethical leadership, accountability, and a commitment to nationalism and democratic principles are also emphasized throughout the curriculum, preparing students to act as responsible public servants. The program aims to develop graduates who:

- Exhibit comprehensive knowledge of Public Administration theories and apply these to governance challenges.
- Analyze key issues in public service within the Philippine socio-political landscape and beyond.
- Uphold ethical values, demonstrating accountability and responsiveness in their professional roles.
- Promote the public interest, focusing on equitable initiatives for marginalized communities.
- Utilize effective management skills in planning and implementing public programs.
- Engage in research and policy analysis, contributing to evidence-based decision-making in government and civil society.

As the BPA program continues to evolve, its contribution to the personal and professional growth of its graduates is crucial to evaluate. This Tracer Study of the Bachelor of Public Administration Graduates from Southern Luzon State University (2024) seeks to trace the career trajectories of its alumni, assess their employment status, and measure the relevance of the program to their professional and personal development. Through the analysis of employment data, occupational classifications, job relevance, and income levels, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how effectively the BPA program prepares graduates for careers in governance and public service. Moreover, the study evaluates graduates' perceptions of the program's contributions to their development of critical skills, such as leadership, problem-solving, communication, and community engagement. By doing so, it offers insights into how the BPA program has shaped their professional success and personal growth, providing valuable feedback for program improvement. As such, this tracer study not only reflects the achievements of the BPA program but also informs academic leaders and policymakers on how to further enhance public administration education to meet the evolving demands of public service.

**Objective of the Study** - The study aims to assess the career outcomes and professional development of Bachelor of Public Administration (BPA) graduates from Southern Luzon State University (SLSU). Specifically, it investigates the graduates' employment status by examining various factors, including educational background, organization type, employment type, employment status, occupational classification, length of employment, income levels, and geographic distribution. Additionally, it explores whether their current jobs align directly with their BPA degree and identifies reasons for any unemployment or career transitions. Furthermore, the study assesses the degree to which the BPA program has contributed to graduates' personal and professional growth. This aspect is analyzed through various metrics such as academic profession, research capability, learning efficiency, communication skills, interpersonal skills, problem-solving skills, information technology skills, and preparedness for present and future professional needs. The program's impact is also measured in terms of exposure to local and international communities within the field of specialization, critical thinking skills, salary improvement, promotion, overseas opportunities, personality development, and values formation.

Finally, the study gauges the overall satisfaction of BPA graduates with the program, evaluating their perspectives on the range of courses offered, the relevance of the curriculum to their profession, extracurricular opportunities, emphasis on research, interdisciplinary learning, and the teaching and learning environment. It also examines graduates' satisfaction with the quality of education, teacher-student relationships, library and laboratory resources, class sizes, and the expertise and knowledge of professors. Through these aspects, the study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the BPA program's effectiveness in shaping the professional trajectories and competencies of its graduates.

## 2. Related Literature

The review of related literature highlights key findings on the career trajectories and skill development of Public Administration graduates, providing insights into employment outcomes, job relevance, program effectiveness, and graduate satisfaction. Several studies have shown that graduates with degrees in Public Administration often secure employment in sectors such as government, non-profit organizations, and, increasingly, private corporations that value administrative and governance skills. Graduates are predominantly employed in public service roles where their knowledge of administration and governance frameworks proves beneficial (Smith & Wilson, 2020). Furthermore, studies on occupational alignment reveal a strong correlation between the curriculum of Public Administration programs and career relevance, indicating that most graduates find work directly related to their field of study (Jones et al., 2021). However, some graduates experience career transitions, attributed to factors like personal interest changes, higher salary expectations, or the competitive nature of public sector roles (Martinez & Alvarado, 2022).

Research on program efficacy highlights the role of academic training in developing core competencies such as analytical and critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, and interpersonal skills. Educational

interventions within Public Administration curricula that include field exposure, project-based learning, and IT integration significantly enhance graduates' job readiness and adaptability to sectoral demands (Garcia, 2019). Additionally, exposure to both local and international community service projects has been shown to strengthen graduates' leadership and organizational skills, broadening their scope for employment domestically and abroad (Tan & Cruz, 2021). Furthermore, studies underscore the importance of values formation, ethics training, and professionalism, which contribute to the personality development of graduates, fostering qualities necessary for public service integrity and efficacy (Ramirez, 2018).

Graduate satisfaction studies frequently indicate high approval ratings in areas such as the range and relevance of courses, quality of education, and professor expertise. Graduates often express appreciation for the inclusion of interdisciplinary subjects and extracurricular activities, as these elements enrich their learning experience and improve adaptability to diverse professional roles (c & Thompson, 2020). However, findings also suggest that while library resources are often rated favorably, some graduates perceive gaps in laboratory facilities and research funding, which could enhance their technical proficiency and research engagement (Chavez & Lim, 2019). Ultimately, literature suggests that Public Administration programs that prioritize comprehensive academic training, skill development, and values integration prepare graduates effectively for a range of professional challenges, thereby enhancing both their employment outcomes and satisfaction.

This synthesis provides a foundation for assessing the career and developmental outcomes of Bachelor of Public Administration graduates and for evaluating program improvements aligned with industry demands and graduate expectations.

### 3. Methodology

**Research Design and Participants** - The Bachelor of Public Administration (BPA) Tracer Study employs a descriptive research design. This design is appropriate for gathering detailed information about the career trajectories, employment status, and professional development of BPA graduates from Southern Luzon State University (SLSU). Descriptive research allows for the systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of quantitative and qualitative data, aimed at providing an in-depth understanding of how the BPA program has impacted the lives of its graduates.

**Data Gathering Instrument** - The survey instrument for the Bachelor of Public Administration Tracer Study was a modified structured questionnaire adapted from the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Tracer Study instrument.

**Data Gathering Procedure** - To facilitate easy access and encourage participation, the questionnaire was converted into Google Forms, allowing alumni to conveniently respond online. The forms were disseminated through two key channels: individually to each graduate via direct communication and publicly on the Facebook pages of both the alumni group and the Public Administration League of Students, where many alumni are active members. The data collection process commenced in the last quarter of 2023 and was concluded in August 2024, ensuring sufficient time for respondents to complete the survey, and maximizing the reach and inclusivity of alumni responses. This method ensured that the survey was accessible and widely available to the target respondents.

**Statistical Treatment of Data** - The raw data collected from the survey was carefully cleaned and encoded into Excel to ensure accuracy and consistency. Following this, the data was analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), which enabled the application of advanced statistical techniques for a more thorough and reliable analysis. This process ensured that the data was accurately prepared and effectively analyzed to generate meaningful insights from the study.

#### 4. Results and discussion

The educational background of public administration professionals significantly influences their competencies, career trajectories, and effectiveness in the field. Research indicates that individuals with formal education in public administration or related fields are better equipped to navigate the complexities of governance, policy-making, and public service. Programs that emphasize a blend of theoretical knowledge and practical skills are particularly effective in preparing graduates for real-world challenges.

**Table 1**

*Frequency and Mean Distribution of BPA Graduates as to Educational Background*

| Educational background                 | Frequency  | Percentage    |
|--|------------|---------------|
| undergraduate degree/bachelor's degree | 206        | 76.57         |
| with masteral units                    | 11         | 4.09          |
| with masteral degree                   | 7          | 2.60          |
| with doctoral units                    | 1          | 0.37          |
| with doctoral degree                   | 2          | 0.74          |
| juris doctor                           | 2          | 0.74          |
| other                                  | 3          | 1.14          |
| no response                            | 37         | 13.75         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                           | <b>269</b> | <b>100.00</b> |

Majority of the BPA graduates did not pursue further education as represented by two hundred six (206) responses or 76.57% of the surveyed population. It noteworthy that eleven (11) are still pursuing their master's degree while seven (7) already are with master's degree. One (1) alumnus are pursuing Doctor's degree while two (2) alumni are already doctoral degree holder.

Mwangeka (2020) states that the purpose of this write-up and presentation is to provide inquisitive learners with a comprehensive understanding of organizational theories, along with the skills to develop appropriate organizational designs and decision-making models. This is particularly important given the changing nature of the business environment, highlighting the need for managers to adapt to achieve organizational efficiency and effectiveness. The presentation is based on available literature, and further study and research on the underlying issues are highly recommended.

**Table 2**

*Frequency and Mean Distribution of BPA Graduates as to Organization Type*

| Organization type | Frequency  | Percentage    |
|-------------------|------------|---------------|
| private           | 54         | 20.07         |
| public            | 154        | 57.25         |
| NGO               | 0          | -             |
| non-profit        | 0          | -             |
| other             | 24         | 8.92          |
| no response       | 37         | 13.76         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>      | <b>269</b> | <b>100.00</b> |

Public sector employment dominates, with one hundred fifty-four (154) or 57.25% of respondents working in government institutions, whereas fifty-four (54) or 20.07% work in the private sector. The remainder work in other organizations (8.92%) or did not respond (13.76%). The absence of responses related to NGO or non-profit sectors is notable, as it indicates that BPA graduates largely gravitate towards traditional sectors like government or private business. The findings of this study highlight the significance of fostering a supportive organizational culture, particularly clan and adhocracy types, to enhance individual readiness for change. The unexpected positive effects of market and hierarchy cultures suggest that these organizational types may also contribute to a conducive environment for change, challenging the traditional view of their impact. This research underscores the need for organizations in collectivist societies like Indonesia to consider the diverse influences of various culture types when implementing change initiatives, and it opens avenues for further exploration into how cultural dimensions affect organizational dynamics.

Hwang (2018) provides valuable insights into the factors affecting nurses' happiness in long-term care hospitals, highlighting the critical roles of organizational culture, job satisfaction, and job stress. The study reveals that despite generally low levels of happiness among LTC nurses, certain positive factors—such as healthier subjective health status, a hierarchy-oriented culture, high job satisfaction related to autonomy, and a lower number of task requests—significantly contribute to their overall happiness. Notably, job satisfaction regarding autonomy emerged as the most influential factor, underscoring the importance of empowering nurses in their roles.

**Table 3**

*Frequency and Mean Distribution of BPA Graduates as to employment type*

| <b>Employment type</b>                           | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|--|------------------|-------------------|
| working fulltime                                 | 209              | 77.69             |
| working part-time                                | 3                | 1.12              |
| working part-time but seeking full-time work     | 3                | 1.12              |
| working part-time but not seeking full-time work | 1                | 0.37              |
| other  | 16               | 5.95              |
| no response                                      | 37               | 13.75             |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                     | 269              | 100.00            |

Full-time employment is prevalent, with two hundred nine (209) or 77.69% of respondents working full-time. Very few works part-time, either seeking full-time employment or not (around 1% each). Only 5.95% of respondents are classified as other, indicating alternative employment statuses (freelancing, temporary contracts, etc.). The large number of full-time employees highlights the stability of BPA graduates in securing stable employment.

Kim and Cho (2020) examine how managerial roles influence job stress and satisfaction, particularly in the context of increasing numbers of irregular employees worldwide. The study analyzes job stress (specifically job autonomy and job demand), job satisfaction, and the effects of managerial roles based on employment type, using data from 33,420 cases from the fifth Korean Working Condition Survey.

Findings indicate that regular employees experience higher job autonomy and satisfaction, with lower job demands compared to irregular employees. For both groups, job autonomy positively affects satisfaction, while job demand has a negative impact. Interestingly, the interaction between job autonomy and managerial roles decreases the positive effect of autonomy on job satisfaction. In the case of job demand, managerial roles had different effects based on employment type: positive for regular employees but negative for irregular employees. This suggests that the moderating effect of managerial roles on the relationship between job stress and satisfaction varies by employment type. Therefore, managerial approaches should be tailored accordingly. Ensuring job autonomy with minimal managerial interference boosts satisfaction for all employees. However, regular employees benefit from appropriate managerial intervention to reduce stress, while irregular employees respond better to clear job expectations and limited managerial oversight.

**Table 4**

*Frequency and Mean Distribution of BPA Graduates as to employment status*

| <b>Employment status</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|--------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| permanent                | 126              | 46.84             |
| contractual              | 56               | 20.82             |
| casual                   | 45               | 16.73             |
| other                    | 5                | 1.86              |
| no response              | 37               | 13.75             |
| <b>TOTAL</b>             | 269              | 100.00            |

Majority of the graduates around one hundred twenty-six of 46.84% of graduates hold permanent employment, while a significant portion is in contractual (20.82%) and casual employment (16.73%). The substantial number of casual and contractual employees highlights the challenges graduates face in securing permanent positions, a trend common in public sector employment.

Chiu et al. (2015) investigate the effect of employment status on service-oriented organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) among customer contact employees, specifically examining the mediating roles of internal mobility opportunities and job insecurity. Bufquin et al. (2021) explore the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the restaurant sector and its workforce. This empirical research focuses on how employees' work status (whether they were working, furloughed, or laid off), mental health (including psychological well-being and distress), substance use (such as drug and alcohol consumption), and intentions to change careers are interrelated during the pandemic.

The research highlights the importance of management recognizing the challenges faced by temporary employees and suggests strategies to enhance their service-oriented OCB, such as improving perceptions of job security. This study contributes to the OCB literature by linking employment status to service-oriented behavior and emphasizing the significance of mediating factors.

Employment status affects the type of skills and experiences that individuals can acquire. Those in full-time roles may have access to comprehensive training programs, mentorship opportunities, and projects that enhance their skills, whereas part-time or temporary workers might have limited exposure to such resources. Also, Employment status can influence networking opportunities. Full-time employees often engage more with colleagues, attend professional events, and participate in committees, thereby building relationships that can be advantageous for career growth.

**Table 5**

*Frequency and Mean Distribution of BPA Graduates as to occupational classification*

| <b>Occupational classification</b>                          | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|---|------------------|-------------------|
| official of government and special - interest organizations | 56               | 20.82             |
| corporate executive or manager                              | 43               | 16.00             |
| managing proprietor or supervisor                           | 37               | 13.75             |
| technician or associate professional                        | 33               | 12.27             |
| clerk   | 53               | 19.70             |
| service worker or shop and market sales worker              | 7                | 2.60              |
| farmer or forestry worker or fisherman                      | 0                | -                 |
| trader or related worker                                    | 0                | -                 |
| plant and machine operator and assembler                    | 1                | .37               |
| laborer or unskilled worker                                 | 2                | .74               |
| special occupation  | 0                | -                 |
| others  | 0                | -                 |
| no response   | 37               | 13.75             |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>269</b>       | <b>100.00</b>     |

Clerks constitute 19.70% of graduates, reflecting the administrative roles BPA graduates typically enter. Government officials and executives make up 20.82% of the respondents, which is a significant portion, showing that BPA graduates are often involved in leadership and governance roles. A considerable number of graduates work as corporate executives or managers (16%) and proprietors/supervisors (13.75%), which suggests that BPA graduates also transition into management positions. Interestingly, 12.27% work as technicians or associate professionals, showing the breadth of fields that BPA graduates enter.

Research by Levenson (2018) emphasizes the importance of accurate occupational classification for aligning educational programs with labor market needs. By identifying the skills and qualifications required for different roles in public administration, educators can better prepare students for the workforce. Studies show that effective classification systems can enhance recruitment processes, support career development, and inform workforce planning initiatives (Cohen & Becker, 2020). Moreover, the literature highlights the role of occupational classification in promoting diversity and inclusion within the public sector. By analyzing occupational data, policymakers can identify disparities and develop strategies to address underrepresentation in specific fields (Jenkins et al., 2019). However, challenges persist, including the dynamic nature of job roles in public administration and the need for continuous updates to classification systems to reflect emerging trends and skills.



In summary, the literature underscores the significance of occupational classification in public administration, advocating for its use as a tool for enhancing educational alignment, workforce planning, and promoting diversity within the public sector. Continued research and refinement of classification systems are essential to meet the evolving demands of the field.

**Table 6**

*Frequency and Mean Distribution of BPA Graduates as to Length employment*

| <b>Length of employment</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|-----------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 1-5 yrs                     | 134              | 49.81             |
| 6-10 yrs                    | 54               | 20.07             |
| 11-15 yrs                   | 17               | 6.32              |
| 16-20 yrs                   | 3                | 1.12              |
| 21-25 yrs                   | 0                | -                 |
| more than 25                | 1                | 0.37              |
| others                      | 42               | 15.62             |
| no response                 | 18               | 6.69              |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                | <b>269</b>       | <b>100.00</b>     |

Most respondents represented by one hundred thirty-four (134) or 49.81% have been employed with their current organization for 1-5 years, while 20.07% have been with their companies for 6-10 years. This distribution highlights that BPA graduates tend to establish career stability within a few years after graduation. A small percentage (6.32%) has been employed for more than a decade, while 15.62% indicated “other,” possibly indicating self-employment or intermittent work histories.

According to (Eurofound, 2019) an employee's length of service (or tenure<sup>1</sup>) with an employer is still a significant structural factor within the employment relationship. This finding suggests that longer tenure is often associated with increased job security, enhanced benefits, and overall employee satisfaction. Employees who remain with an organization for extended periods typically develop deeper connections to their roles and the company culture, which can foster loyalty and commitment.

Demographic variables are personal factors that include age, gender, educational level, tenure or working experience, job level and monthly salary. Two common demographic variables are employees' academic background and their tenure or years of service at their respective organizations. These demographic variables are essential for understanding employee dynamics, as they influence how individuals manage their responsibilities and interact with colleagues, providing valuable insights into workforce diversity, engagement, and overall organizational effectiveness in research contexts.

**Table 7**

*Frequency and Mean Distribution of BPA Graduates as to Income levels*

| <b>Income level</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|---------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Below 10,000        | 15               | 5.57              |
| 10,000 - 20,000     | 49               | 18.21             |
| 21,000 - 30,000     | 33               | 12.26             |
| 31,000 - 40,000     | 53               | 19.70             |
| 41,000 - 50,000     | 29               | 10.78             |
| 51,000 - 60,000     | 13               | 4.83              |
| 61,000 - 70,000     | 12               | 4.46              |
| 71,000 above        | 13               | 4.83              |
| Other               | 15               | 5.57              |
| No response         | 37               | 13.75             |
| <b>TOTAL</b>        | <b>269</b>       | <b>100.00</b>     |

A wide range of income levels was reported, with the largest percentage of respondents (19.70%) earning between ₱31,000 and ₱40,000 per month. A significant portion (18.21%) earns ₱10,000 to ₱20,000, reflecting entry-level wages. Only 4.83% of graduates earn over ₱71,000, indicating that higher income opportunities are limited. A notable 13.75% did not disclose their income, leaving some gaps in the income data.

**Table 8***Frequency and Mean Distribution of BPA Graduates as to Geographic distribution*

| <b>Geographic distribution</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|--------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Local                          | 223              | 82.90             |
| Abroad                         | 9                | 3.35              |
| No Response                    | 37               | 13.75             |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                   | <b>269</b>       | <b>100.00</b>     |

Most BPA graduates work locally, with 82.90% employed in the Philippines. Only 3.35% are employed abroad, which suggests that the BPA degree is largely suited to domestic employment opportunities in governance and public administration. A substantial portion (13.75%) did not respond regarding their location.

The impact of geographic distribution on public administration is also examined in relation to policy implementation. Research by Hill and Hupe (2021) demonstrates that local administrative capabilities vary significantly, affecting how policies are enacted and perceived by the public. This underscores the importance of aligning educational programs with regional needs to ensure that graduates are equipped to address specific local issues. Additionally, studies indicate that advancements in technology and remote work opportunities may alter traditional geographic distributions, potentially allowing for a more diverse range of locations where public administration professionals can thrive (Bennett et al., 2022).

In summary, the literature highlights the importance of understanding the geographic distribution of public administration professionals in relation to workforce planning, service delivery, and regional equity. Ongoing research is essential to address geographic disparities and to inform strategies that enhance the capacity of public administration across diverse contexts.

**Table 9***Frequency and Mean Distribution of BPA Graduates as to Job relevance to Bachelor of Public Administration*

| <b>Job relevance to bpa</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|-----------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Yes                         | 171              | 63.57             |
| NO                          | 61               | 22.68             |
| No Response                 | 37               | 13.75             |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                | <b>269</b>       | <b>100.00</b>     |

Majority of the respondents with one hundred seventy-one frequency or 63.57% reported that their current jobs are related to their BPA degree, while 22.68% indicated that their job is not related. The remaining 13.75% did not provide a response. The high percentage of job relevance to the degree shows the utility and applicability of the BPA program in the real-world job market.

Job relevance in public administration education is crucial for ensuring that curricula align with the skills and competencies required by the workforce. The literature emphasizes that educational programs must prepare graduates to meet the evolving demands of public service, fostering employability and effectiveness in various roles (Kettl, 2015). Job relevance is also associated with the inclusion of emerging topics in public administration curricula. Issue such as data analytics, digital governance, and social equity are increasingly important in the field, and programs that address these areas are more likely to equip students with the competencies needed for future careers (Newman, 2019). However, challenges remain in ensuring job relevance, including institutional inertia and resistance to curricular changes (McNair & Stuber, 2019). To address these challenges, ongoing assessment and adaptation of educational programs are essential to reflect the dynamic nature of public service.

In summary, the literature underscores the importance of job relevance in public administration education. By aligning curricula with workforce needs, fostering stakeholder engagement, and addressing emerging issues, academic institutions can better prepare students for successful careers in the public sector.

**Table 10***Reasons of unemployment or career transition*

| Reasons of unemployment                                | Frequency | Percentage    |
|--|-----------|---------------|
| Pursuing Law School                                    | 14        | 37.84         |
| Has own business                                       | 12        | 32.43         |
| Lack of job opportunities in the area                  | 0         | -             |
| Health issues or disabilities                          | 1         | 2.71          |
| Personal responsibilities (e.g., childcare, eldercare) | 5         | 13.51         |
| Career change or transition                            | 0         | -             |
| Temporary unemployment (e.g., layoffs, seasonal work)  | 0         | -             |
| Freelancing/ Gig work                                  | 5         | 13.51         |
| Other  | 0         | -             |
| No response  | 0         | -             |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>37</b> | <b>100.00</b> |

For those unemployed, 37.84% are pursuing law school, and 32.43% have their own business. This suggests that a portion of BPA graduates opt for further education or entrepreneurship rather than traditional employment. Other reasons for unemployment include health issues and personal responsibilities.

Mentorship also plays a vital role in supporting individuals during career transitions. Research by Schwartz et al. (2018) highlights that mentorship can enhance professional development, providing guidance on navigating the complexities of public administration roles. Mentors can assist with skill development, offer advice on career pathways, and help mentees build their professional networks. Moreover, adaptability and resilience are essential traits for navigating career transitions in public administration. A study by Kettl (2015) suggests that professionals must be prepared to respond to changing political climates, public expectations, and organizational structures. This adaptability often requires ongoing education and training to remain competitive in the field. However, challenges persist in facilitating effective career transitions. Institutional support, including career services and resources for skill development, can vary widely among organizations (McNair & Stuber, 2019). Addressing these disparities is crucial for fostering successful transitions and promoting workforce stability in public administration. In summary, the literature underscores the significance of career transition processes in public administration. By prioritizing experiential learning, networking, mentorship, and adaptability, educational institutions and organizations can better support professionals in navigating their careers and enhancing their contributions to public service.

**Table 11***Level of contribution of the BPA program to the graduates personal and professional growth*

| Graduates personal and professional growth                         | Mean        | Interpretation     |
|--|-------------|--------------------|
| Academic Profession  | 3.55        | Very highly        |
| Research Capability  | 3.59        | Very highly        |
| Learning Efficiency  | 3.67        | Very highly        |
| Communication Skills   | 3.72        | Very highly        |
| People Skills  | 3.74        | Very highly        |
| Problem Solving Skills   | 3.65        | Very highly        |
| Information Technology Skills                                      | 3.47        | Very highly        |
| Meeting Present and Future Professional Needs                      | 3.62        | Very highly        |
| Exposure to Local Community within Field of Specialization         | 3.44        | Very highly        |
| Exposure to International Community within Field of Specialization | 3.47        | Very highly        |
| Critical Thinking Skills   | 3.60        | Very highly        |
| Salary Improvement and Promotion                                   | 3.49        | Very highly        |
| Opportunities Abroad   | 3.30        | Very highly        |
| Personality Development  | 3.61        | Very highly        |
| Values Formation   | 3.65        | Very highly        |
| <b>MEAN</b>  | <b>3.57</b> | <b>Very highly</b> |

Legend: 4 – Very Highly (3.26-4.00); 3 – Highly (2.51-3.25); 2 – Fairly (1.76-2.50); 1 – Poorly (1.00-1.75)

The analysis of the competencies and attributes reveals a range of perceptions among respondents, with an overall mean score of 3.57, indicating a "Very Highly" developed sense of these qualities within the academic and professional context. Each attribute assessed provides insights into the strengths of the educational program,

as detailed below. Starting with the highest mean score, Communication Skills (mean = 3.72) stands out as a significant strength. Respondents express a "Very Highly" developed capability in communication, suggesting that the program effectively fosters the necessary skills for effective verbal and written interaction. This emphasis on communication is vital in both academic settings and professional environments, where clear and concise exchange of information is essential. Closely following is People Skills (mean = 3.74), which also received a "Very Highly" interpretation. This high score indicates that the respondents feel adept at interpersonal interactions and collaboration, essential attributes for building relationships and working effectively in teams. The emphasis on developing these skills within the educational framework likely contributes to students' success in various professional scenarios. Problem Solving Skills (mean = 3.65) also garnered a "Very Highly" rating. This suggests that respondents perceive themselves as well-equipped to identify and resolve challenges, reflecting a strong emphasis on critical thinking and analytical skills within the curriculum. The ability to navigate complex problems is increasingly important in today's dynamic work environment, making this competency particularly valuable. Following closely is Learning Efficiency (mean = 3.67), which indicates that respondents believe they learn effectively and efficiently within the program. This score suggests that the pedagogical approaches utilized in the curriculum are conducive to meaningful learning experiences, allowing students to retain and apply knowledge successfully.

Next, the attribute Critical Thinking Skills received a mean score of 3.60, interpreted as "Very Highly." This score reflects the program's effectiveness in promoting analytical reasoning and evaluative skills among students. The development of critical thinking is essential for academic success and plays a crucial role in decision-making processes within professional settings. The mean score for Research Capability stands at 3.59, also rated as "Very Highly." This indicates that respondents feel confident in their research skills, suggesting a well-structured approach to training students in academic inquiry and investigation. Strong research skills are vital for contributing to knowledge advancement in their respective fields. Personality Development follows with a mean score of 3.61, interpreted as "Very Highly." This score signifies that the educational experience positively impacts personal growth and self-awareness among students. Developing a well-rounded personality is crucial for success in both personal and professional relationships. The Values Formation attribute has a mean score of 3.65, indicating a "Very Highly" perception of ethical and moral development within the program. This suggests that the curriculum emphasizes instilling strong values and principles, which are essential for responsible citizenship and professional integrity.

Meeting Present and Future Professional Needs received a mean score of 3.62, also rated as "Very Highly." This reflects respondents' confidence that the educational program prepares them adequately for the current and evolving demands of their professions. Ensuring that graduates are equipped to meet changing workforce needs is crucial for their long-term success. The score for salary improvement and promotion stands at 3.49, interpreted as "very highly." This indicates a strong belief among respondents in their potential for salary growth and career advancement post-graduation. This perception is critical as it reflects the program's ability to prepare students for successful career trajectories.

Information Technology Skills scored 3.47, receiving a "Very Highly" interpretation but slightly lower than previous competencies. While respondents feel competent in their IT abilities, this score suggests a potential area for improvement, particularly in an increasingly digital world where proficiency in technology is paramount. In terms of Exposure to International Community within Field of Specialization, the mean score is 3.47, also rated as "Very Highly." This indicates a favorable perception of the program's efforts to prepare students for international engagement, although there may be room for enhanced opportunities for global networking and experience. The attribute Exposure to Local Community within Field of Specialization received the lowest mean score of 3.44, interpreted as "Very Highly." While this score reflects a positive view of local community engagement, it suggests that there may be opportunities for greater emphasis on practical experiences within local contexts. Lastly, Opportunities Abroad scored the lowest at 3.30, still within the "Very Highly" category but indicating the most significant gap compared to other competencies. While respondents acknowledge the availability of international opportunities, this score points to a perception of limited access or clarity regarding

these options. Addressing this could enhance the program's appeal and effectiveness in preparing students for a globalized workforce.

Employers and national governments have maintained that it is critical that all educational fields produce graduates who can think critically and independently. Commonly used phrases like "good thinking" and "thinking well" are associated with what the research literature refers to as "critical thinking." This research presents evidence, however, that suggests not all students are likely to be proficient in critical thinking, and that not all teachers seem to be teaching their students how to think well. Following a review of the relevant research literature, strategies, and pedagogical conceptions that both support and undermine critical thinking are described, along with the steps necessary to strengthen students' critical thinking abilities. Future directions for critical thinking instruction and help them explained and explored to help students develop their critical thinking skills.

Personal and career growth in public administration is a multifaceted concept that encompasses the development of skills, knowledge, and professional networks necessary for effective service in the public sector. The literature highlights several key areas that contribute to growth, including education, mentorship, continuous learning, and leadership development. Education is foundational for personal and career growth in public administration. Research indicates that advanced degrees, such as a Master of Public Administration (MPA), can enhance job prospects, increase earning potential, and provide critical skills for effective governance (Rainey, 2009). Programs that emphasize a combination of theoretical knowledge and practical application are particularly beneficial, as they prepare graduates to tackle real-world challenges (Kettl, 2015).

Mentorship plays a vital role in facilitating personal and career growth. Studies show that mentorship relationships can provide valuable guidance, support, and networking opportunities for emerging public administrators (Schwartz et al., 2018). Effective mentors can help mentees navigate the complexities of public service, offering insights into career pathways and professional development opportunities. Continuous learning is essential for adapting to the rapidly changing landscape of public administration. Research by Bessant et al. (2018) emphasizes the importance of lifelong learning through professional development programs, workshops, and training sessions. Engaging in ongoing education not only enhances individual competencies but also fosters innovation and adaptability within organizations.

**Table 12**

*Level of overall satisfaction of graduates to the Bachelor of Public Administration Program*

| <b>Overall satisfaction of BPA graduates</b> | <b>mean</b> | <b>interpretation</b> |
|--|-------------|-----------------------|
| range of courses                             | 3.55        | Very highly           |
| relevance to your profession                 | 3.53        | Very highly           |
| extracurricular activities                   | 3.54        | Very highly           |
| premium given to research                    | 3.53        | Very highly           |
| interdisciplinary learning                   | 3.58        | Very highly           |
| teaching and learning environment            | 3.61        | Very highly           |
| quality of education                         | 3.66        | Very highly           |
| teacher-student relationships                | 3.65        | Very highly           |
| library resources                            | 3.47        | Very highly           |
| laboratory resources                         | 3.39        | Very highly           |
| class size                                   | 3.52        | Very highly           |
| professor's pedagogical expertise            | 3.62        | Very highly           |
| professor's knowledge of subject matter      | 3.67        | Very highly           |
| <b>MEAN</b>                                  | <b>3.56</b> | <b>Very highly</b>    |

The evaluation of the degree program completed at Southern Luzon State University (SLSU) reveals an overall mean score of 3.56, indicating a "Very Highly" developed perception of various aspects of the academic experience. The analysis highlights strengths and areas for potential improvement within the program, as discussed below. Quality of Education received the highest mean score of 3.66, categorized as "Very Highly." This score reflects the respondents' strong belief in the effectiveness and rigor of the educational offerings at SLSU. A high perception of quality in education is essential, as it directly influences student learning outcomes and overall satisfaction with their academic experience.

Following closely, Professor's Knowledge of Subject Matter scored 3.67, also rated as "Very Highly." This suggests that respondents appreciate the depth of knowledge exhibited by faculty members, which is crucial for delivering effective instruction and facilitating student learning. Knowledgeable professors can inspire and engage students, further enhancing their academic experience. The attribute Teaching and Learning Environment received a mean score of 3.61, interpreted as "Very Highly." This indicates that respondents feel the learning environment is conducive to their educational pursuits, promoting engagement and collaboration among students and faculty. A supportive teaching and learning atmosphere fosters active participation and helps students thrive academically. Professor's Pedagogical Expertise followed closely with a mean score of 3.62, also categorized as "Very Highly." This score reflects the respondents' recognition of the effective teaching strategies employed by faculty members, which play a vital role in enhancing student learning and retention of knowledge. Interdisciplinary Learning achieved a mean score of 3.58, interpreted as "Very Highly." This suggests that the program successfully integrates knowledge and perspectives from various fields, enriching the educational experience and encouraging critical thinking. Interdisciplinary approaches can broaden students' understanding and application of concepts across different domains.

The mean score for Teacher-Student Relationships stands at 3.65, rated as "Very Highly." This score highlights the importance of positive interactions between students and faculty, which can significantly impact student motivation, engagement, and overall satisfaction with the academic experience. Range of Courses received a mean score of 3.55, also classified as "Very Highly." This suggests that respondents appreciate the variety of courses available within the program, allowing them to explore different subjects and tailor their academic journeys according to their interests and career aspirations. Extracurricular Activities scored 3.54, interpreted as "Very Highly." This indicates that respondents recognize the value of extracurricular involvement in complementing their academic learning. Engaging in extracurricular activities can enhance skills, foster relationships, and contribute to a well-rounded educational experience.

The mean score for Relevance to Your Profession is 3.53, also rated as "Very Highly." This score suggests that respondents feel the program's content is closely aligned with their career goals and professional needs, which is essential for ensuring that graduates are adequately prepared for the workforce. Class Size received a mean score of 3.52, interpreted as "Very Highly." This indicates that respondents perceive class sizes to be conducive to learning, likely facilitating more personalized attention from faculty and enhancing student engagement. Library Resources garnered a mean score of 3.47, rated as "Very Highly." While still positive, this score suggests there may be room for improvement in the availability and accessibility of library resources to support student research and learning. Lastly, Laboratory Resources received the lowest mean score of 3.39, also classified as "Very Highly." This score indicates that while respondents view laboratory resources positively, they perceive a need for enhancements in this area. Adequate laboratory facilities and resources are vital for programs that rely on practical, hands-on learning experiences.

## **5. Conclusion and recommendations**

The findings of this tracer study provide compelling evidence of the effectiveness and relevance of the Bachelor of Public Administration (BPA) program at Southern Luzon State University (SLSU). A significant majority of BPA graduates are successfully employed, primarily in the public sector, with a notable percentage holding positions related to their degree. This correlation underscores the program's ability to prepare graduates for meaningful careers in governance and public administration, demonstrating its utility in meeting the demands of the job market. The high percentage of graduates working in full-time positions, along with the substantial proportion holding permanent employment, indicates a strong ability of BPA graduates to secure stable employment. Furthermore, the diverse range of roles that graduates occupy—from administrative clerks to government executives and corporate managers—reflects the program's effectiveness in equipping students with versatile skills applicable across various sectors.

The survey results reveal a strong alignment between graduates' current employment and the competencies

developed during their education, particularly in communication, problem-solving, and research skills. These competencies are crucial for navigating the complexities of public administration and contribute to the high perception of the quality of education received at SLSU. However, the findings also highlight several areas for improvement. The low percentage of graduates pursuing further education, combined with a notable absence of involvement in Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), suggests that there may be gaps in the program's outreach and engagement with diverse career pathways. Additionally, while a significant number of graduates report satisfaction with their employment, the limited responses regarding laboratory resources and library availability indicate a need for enhanced support in these areas to further enrich the educational experience. Moreover, the findings related to income distribution reveal potential challenges in attaining higher salary levels, particularly for recent graduates. Addressing these disparities may require a focus on developing stronger partnerships with industry stakeholders and expanding opportunities for internships and practical experiences that can lead to more lucrative employment options.

In conclusion, this tracer study affirms the overall positive impact of the Bachelor of Public Administration program at Southern Luzon State University on its graduates, particularly in fostering competencies that are essential for success in public administration and governance. By actively addressing the identified areas for improvement—particularly in terms of enhancing Information Technology skills, broadening community engagement, and providing greater access to educational resources—SLSU can strengthen its educational framework and ensure that BPA graduates are not only well-prepared for their current roles but also equipped to navigate the evolving landscape of public service and administration. Such enhancements will ultimately contribute to the sustained success and satisfaction of future cohorts, reinforcing the program's standing as a leader in public administration education.

The institutions can effectively assess the impact of their public administration programs on graduates' careers, leading to continuous improvement in educational offerings and enhanced employability for future students.

- Promote Networking Opportunities: Use the findings to establish stronger connections between graduates and local government agencies or organizations. Networking opportunities can enhance career prospects and facilitate mentorship relationships.
- Disseminate Findings: Share the results of the tracer study with relevant stakeholders, including current students, faculty, and potential employers. Transparency about the outcomes can enhance the reputation of the program and inform prospective students.
- Incorporate Feedback Mechanisms: Create channels for graduates to provide ongoing feedback about their educational experience and its relevance to their careers. This feedback loop can help continuously improve the program.
- Use Findings for Continuous Improvement: Leverage the insights gained from the tracer study to inform program adjustments, curriculum enhancements, and strategic planning. Focus on ensuring that the educational experience remains aligned with the evolving demands of public administration.

In summary, public administration programs significantly impact graduates' careers by enhancing employability, developing essential skills, providing networking opportunities, and fostering professional growth. This impact not only benefits the individuals but also contributes to the effectiveness and efficiency of public service.

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