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Correlates of Employability among the Bachelor of Technical Teacher Education Graduates of a Philippine Public University

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Abstract. The global demand for work and skills has to be attuned to the emerging technologies ushered in by Industry 4.0. For a decade now, several teacher education institutions (TEIs) in the Philippines have implemented the Bachelor of Technical Teacher Education (BTTE) program and have produced many graduates. Hence, it is interesting to explore the whereabouts of these graduates to provide relevant baseline data on the BTTE program's success in general but specifically on its responsiveness to the needs of the learning institutions and to the industries for which it caters. Through descriptive-correlational design, the study generally examined the correlates of the employability of the 164 BTTE graduates from a public university for the academic years (AYs) 2015-2019. Results revealed that the graduates were employable within 18 months after graduation in teaching or non-teaching jobs. Moreover, some personal, family, and academic profile variables significantly correlated with their employability. Interestingly, their employability is also associated with their Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET) ratings. Higher ratings yielded a shorter waiting time for employment after graduation. Results are valuable inputs for policy and curricular enhancement for the BTTE program.

Keywords: Bachelor of Technical Teacher Education (BTTE), college general weighted average (GWA), employability, LET performance

1. Introduction

The global market in the present time requires a workforce that is capable of demonstrating competence essential in ensuring convenience, comfort, and safety in daily life (Sadiku, 2017). In the realization of this demand, graduates of higher education institutions (HEIs) are expected to acquire relevant soft and hard skills (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2018). Since HEIs worldwide have a significant role in producing quality human

resources, they have the responsibility to align their academic programs with the employment demands of world market as emphasized by Industry 4.0. In doing so, they become vital instruments in developing human skills needed for economic, social and technological transformations of the 21st century (Himmetoglu, 2020). Hence, the quality of their curricular programs manifests in the employability of their graduates. Simply put, employability is the realization of the intended graduate outcomes in response to the emerging global landscapes (Smith et al., 2018).

In the Philippines, several quality assurance measures use the employability of graduates as an essential parameter of appraising quality in areas such as curriculum and instruction and institutional outcomes (Tiongco & Conchada, 2015). Consequently, accrediting agencies for public and private HEIs have adopted employability as an essential area in their accreditation instruments. Furthermore, in the case of state universities and colleges (SUCs), employability of graduates is a significant criterion for the SUC leveling evaluation of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) as well as in the granting of the Performance-based Bonus (PBB), an incentive given to government agencies on realizing their targets and deliverables.

In the 21st century context, the Philippine teacher education institutions (TEIs) have focused on equipping future teachers with the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes in the emerging educational landscape and industries. Furthermore, these competencies are geared towards productivity, social responsibility, and nation-building (Rojas & Rojas, 2016). With these demands, several curricular programs were instituted to respond to the qualification requirements for teachers. Therefore the BTTE was conceived to provide adequate technical and teaching preparation of future teachers in the technical-vocational education and training (TVET) and prospective practitioners in various industries, i.e., food service management, electronics technology, and fashion design (Commission on Higher Education, 2007). Considering this framework, TEIs have offered BTTE as an alternative program for future teachers to boost their local and international employability.

Several TEIs in the Philippines have successfully implemented the BTTE program and have produced many graduates for a decade now. As such, exploring the whereabouts of these graduates may provide relevant baseline data on the program's success in general but specifically on its responsiveness to the needs of the learning institutions and to the industries for which they cater. Boholano (2012) confirmed the need for TEIs to have informed knowledge of the present industry innovations and practices as well as evidence-based awareness of the structures and functions of various workplaces among their graduates.

In the light of this requirement, previous researchers have examined employability skills (Cornillez et al., 2021; Posadas et al., 2021), characteristics of employment (Oboza, 2017; Ulanday, 2021), and employment status (Almejas et al., 2017; Rojas & Rojas, 2016). However, none of them has examined the correlates of employability, particularly among BTTE graduates. Boholano

(2012) noted that employability in teaching is complex and dependent on different factors such as educational qualification and academic performance, including communication, technological, and demonstration skills. In this regard, exploring the correlates of employability among graduates of TEIs is crucial, especially in identifying relevant and effective instructional interventions and curricular enhancements that may ensure graduates' gainful employment (Orbeta et al., 2016).

In a local context, the Cagayan State University - Andrews Campus is one of the few SUCs offering BTTE in the Northern Philippines. As a public HEI, it must respond appropriately to regional and national market demands, including the issues of job mismatch, unemployment, and the like. However, nothing has been reported on BTTE graduates' employability. Hence, this study was conceived to provide baseline data for curriculum enhancement and programmatic actions of TEIs. Given the preceding contexts, this paper generally examined the correlates of employability among BTTE graduates for the academic years 2015-2019. Specifically, it investigated the following: (a) the personal, family, and academic profiles of the graduates at the time of graduation; (b) the licensure examination performance of the graduates; (c) the employability of the graduates after graduation; and (d) the correlation between the employability of graduates and their profile variables and licensure examination performance.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Tracer Studies of Teacher Education Graduates in the Philippines

Several graduate tracer studies have recently examined the employability of teacher education graduates, especially among SUCs. For instance, in Pangasinan State University, Navida (2017) it was found that most graduates were employed, and more than half were absorbed in private schools. Motivated mainly by salaries and benefits, most graduates landed their first jobs from one to six months after graduation. Similarly, Bansiong et al. (2020) revealed that most teacher education graduates of Benguet State University were employed as classroom teachers a year after graduation, mostly in private schools. Furthermore, Ulanday (2021) shared some interesting findings of the 108 Cavite State University teacher education graduates from 2013 to 2016. The majority of the graduates were first employed locally from two to five months after graduation. Most of them were successful in finding work in public schools. Of these a more significant proportion had more than one year of experience.

Other researchers have also focused on other aspects of employability. For example, in a local setting, Cornillez et al. (2021) considered the relevant skills that contributed to the employment of the 179 teacher education graduates of Eastern Visayas State University. Findings showed that effective communication, good human relations, and positive self-assurance are the workplace's most sought-after competencies and values. On the other hand, Boholano (2012) explored the top priorities in the workplace for teacher graduates of Cebu Normal University. The results indicated that work interest, high salary, and professional growth are the primary considerations of graduates in their search for employment.

2.2 Employability of Bachelor of Technical Teacher Education Graduates

Based on extant literature, only a few among the HEIs offering the BTTE program had investigated the employability of their graduates. However, in the context of the Mindoro State College of Agriculture and Technology in Calapan City Campus, 100 of the graduates from AY 2008 to 2013 were successfully traced regarding their present employment (Chavez & Abaca, 2016). The study showed that six out of ten graduates were employed as professional teachers while others were employed in technical work. As to the employment status, more than half of these graduates were permanent while the rest were contractual, probationary, or self-employed. Interestingly, most of them found their first job less than a year after graduation.

In another academic setting, Albanador et al. (2018) traced the 195 BTTE graduates of Bulacan State University who majored in Food Service Management (FSM) from AY 2015 to 2018. Most of the graduates were employed as classroom teachers. However, a few of them landed jobs as sales representatives, survey enumerators, food industry office administrators, and food service crew at strategic locations in Bulacan and Metro Manila. Notably, among the skills acquired, the graduates perceived problem-solving as the competency most relevant to their occupations. The study concluded that the BTTE graduates were competent relative to the CHED competencies for the BTTE program with a major in FSM.

2.3 Variables Influencing Employability

Previous studies have investigated the influence of personal profile on employability. For instance, women had a longer unemployment exit duration than men (Lim, 2019). However, Salas-Velasco (2007) revealed that males have a shorter waiting time to obtain their first employment than females. Also, Alzeer (2017) found that male respondents were three times more likely to have a job in education than in the health care industry. Although conflicting, these findings confirm that gender is a significant variable related to employability. In terms of age and birth order, older graduates are claimed to be employable at a shorter waiting time (Ali, 2016), while middle-born children are more fulfilled in their careers (Salmon & Schumann, 2011). In a Philippine setting, Posadas et al. (2021) have found that gender, civil status, year graduated, and eligibility significantly correlated to the employment of teacher education graduates. Graduates who were female and single with professional licenses were more employable than their counterparts.

Furthermore, the family profile has a bearing on employability. Hundley's (2006) analysis showed that family background has an impact on one's propensity for self-employment. Individuals with self-employed fathers and higher parental incomes also tend to be self-employed. Using another lens, Berloff et al. (2017) affirmed that mothers' occupations have significant implications for their children's employment prospects in a European context. Considering mothers' employment leads to a better job for their children. Moreover, highly educated parents see their time spent with their children as an investment opportunity to develop human capital (Guryan et al., 2008). As a result, they tend to take an interest in their children's education, which is a crucial element in educational

successes (Cabrera et al., 2018) that include graduating from high school, pursuing higher education, and looking for lucrative employment (Clearing House for Military Family Readiness, 2020). In contrast, Lindstrom et al. (2007) stated that family structure is not directly linked to employment outcomes.

Remarkably, some academic profile variables have been associated with employability (El-Temtamy et al., 2016). In the study of Sulastri et al. (2015), graduates with a higher grade point average (GPA) showed higher levels of success in finding a psychology-based job. Cole et al. (2007) claimed that employers consider a higher GPA to predict applicants' future job performance, reflecting better cognitive abilities and personality traits. El-Temtamy et al. (2016) found that the GPA at the time of graduation was also expected to have a positive relationship with employability. Moreover, extra-curricular activities contributed to ensuring employability (Peng, 2019; Jackson & Bridgstock, 2021). Another study revealed that technical knowledge acquired from school is one of the essential factors affecting employability, as claimed by industry experts (Sehgal, 2018). However, De Guzman and De Castro (2008) asserted that an impressive employability profile is brought about not by the academic honors of the graduates but by the relevant knowledge, skills, and attitudes exhibited in the workplace.

Finally, a professional license is also associated with employability. For example, Tutor et al. (2021) revealed that graduates in courses without professional license requirements were employed five months after graduation, while those with professional license requirements landed jobs at least 11 months after graduation. This finding accounted for the mismatch of occupations obtained by graduates without professional license requirements such as contact centers, retail and sales, and other service works and jobs.

3. Conceptual Framework

Based on the variables elucidated in the preceding literature review, the study was guided by the following conceptual framework (Figure 1): First, the paradigm shows the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The independent variables include the profile (personal, family, and academic) and LET performance of the graduates. The personal profile constitutes the gender, age, civil status, birth order, and religion of the graduates. Moreover, the family profile is composed of the graduates' family structure, parents' marital status, educational attainment, occupation, and the family's monthly electricity bill as a proxy metric for economic status. The academic profile includes the graduates' field of specialization, the academic awards received, college GWA, and leadership positions in school organizations.

Furthermore, LET performance refers to the rate at which the graduates have mastered the knowledge, theories, and concepts in general education, professional education, and majorships. On the other hand, the dependent variable is graduates' employability, which is measured by the waiting time to land the first job after graduation.

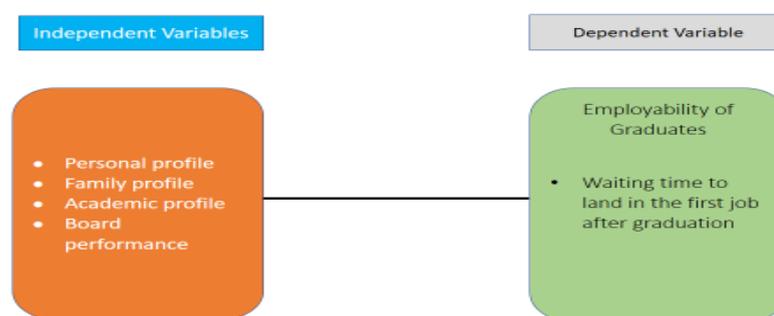


Figure 1: The paradigm of the study

4. Methodology

4.1 Research Type and Respondents

A descriptive-correlation design was employed in the study as it ascertained the correlates of graduates' employability after graduation. Utilizing this design allows the description of two or more variables and the examination of their relationship instead of their cause and effect (Williams, 2007). The respondents were the 164 BTTE graduates of Cagayan State University for AY 2015-2019 who were successfully traced in the study. The distribution of respondents is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of the respondents by school year graduated

Year of Graduation	Frequency	Percent (%)
2015	39	23.8
2016	26	15.9
2017	32	19.5
2018	23	14.0
2019	44	26.8
Total	164	100

4.2 Research Instrument

A questionnaire (in Google Form) was utilized in determining the respondents' personal, family, and academic profiles, including their self-reported employment. This tool was subjected to face and content validation by three experts prior to its utilization. The academic and LET performances were obtained from the respondents as they provided a picture or a scanned copy of their official transcript of records (OTR) and LET ratings.

4.3 Data Gathering Procedures

The questionnaire was administered after securing permission from the university authorities. Since the study was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Facebook Messenger Group Chat was useful in tracing the target respondents. The data gathering lasted six (6) months, from March 2021 to August 2021. The respondents' consent was obtained through the free and prior informed consent (FPIC) form attached to the questionnaire. The FPIC also

enabled the researchers to obtain a picture or a scanned copy of the graduates' OTR and LET ratings. The data gathered were tabulated, analyzed, and interpreted in relation to the research objectives.

4.4 Data Analysis

The personal, family, and academic profiles, including the respondents' LET performance and employability, were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency, percent, mean, median, and standard deviation). Furthermore, the mean was used to compute the waiting time to land a first job as a measure of employability. Pearson r and chi-square were employed in examining the correlates of the graduates' employability. All hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance.

5. Results

5.1 Personal Profile of BTTE Graduates

Table 2: Personal profile of the graduates at the time of graduation

Variables	Categories	Frequency (n= 164)	Percent
Gender	Male	62	37.8
	Female	102	62.2
Age	20 years	18	11.0
	21 years	26	15.9
	22 years	24	14.6
	23 years	44	26.8
	24 years	20	12.2
	25 years	14	8.5
	26 years & above	18	11.0
Mean= 22.9 years; S.D. = 2.0; Median= 23 years			
Civil status	Single	148	90.2
	Legally married	16	9.8
Birth order	First born	46	28.0
	Middle born	62	37.8
	Last born	56	34.1
Religion	Roman Catholic	120	73.2
	Non-Roman Catholic	44	26.8

Table 2 shows that the majority of the respondents are female (62.2%) and have a mean age of 23 years. Moreover, most of them are single (90.2%) and middle born (37.8%). Interestingly, a more significant proportion of the respondents belong to the Roman Catholic Church (73.2%).

5.2 Family Profile of BTTE Graduates

Table 3: Family profile of the graduates at the time of graduation

Variables	Categories	Frequency (n= 164)	Percent
Family structure	Nuclear	120	73.2
	Extended	30	18.3
	Single parent	14	8.5
Parents' marital status	Living together	120	73.2
	Widowed	12	7.3
	Separated	32	19.5
Father's educational attainment	None	10	6.1
	Primary education	54	32.9
	Secondary education	58	35.4
	Post-secondary non-tertiary education	8	4.9
	Bachelor level education or equivalent	34	20.7
Father's occupation	Retired, deceased, unemployed	18	11.0
	Armed forces occupation	2	1.2
	Professional	4	2.4
	Service and sales workers	8	4.9
	Skilled agricultural, forestry, and fishery workers	84	51.2
	Craft and related trades workers	18	11.0
	Plant and machine operators and assemblers	4	2.4
	Elementary occupations	4	2.4
	Not known	22	13.4
Mother's educational attainment	None	8	4.9
	Primary education	46	28.0
	Secondary education	60	36.6
	Post-secondary non-tertiary education	16	9.8
	Bachelor level education or equivalent	30	18.3
	Master level education or equivalent	4	2.4
Mother's occupation	Retired, deceased, unemployed	32	19.5
	Professional	6	3.7
	Technicians and associate professionals	2	1.2

	Clerical support workers	4	2.4
	Service and sales workers	26	15.9
	Skilled agricultural, forestry, and fishery workers	28	17.1
	Elementary occupations	6	3.7
	Housewife	60	36.6
Family's monthly electricity bill	Php 300 pesos and below	44	26.8
	Php 301 pesos to Php 600	50	30.5
	Php 601 pesos to Php 900	28	17.1
	Php 9001 pesos to Php 1,200	22	13.4
	Php 1201 pesos to Php 1,500	12	7.3
	Php 1,801 pesos to Php 2,100	4	2.4
	more than Php 2,100	4	2.4
Mean= Php 704.39; S.D. = Php 600.02; Median= Php 500			

Table 3 indicates that the majority of the graduates come from a nuclear family (73.2%) and with parents living together (73.2%). In addition, most of them have fathers who are high school graduates (35.4%) and employed as skilled agricultural, forestry, and fishery workers (51.2%). Nonetheless, a greater proportion of the graduates have unemployed mothers (48.8%). Finally, the majority of them had families who have a monthly electricity bill of Php. 704.39.

5.3 Academic Profile of the BTTE Graduates

Table 4: Academic profile of the graduates at the time of graduation

Variables	Categories	Frequency (n= 164)	Percent
Field of specialization	Food service management	80	48.8
	Electronics	30	18.3
	Garments	54	32.9
Academic award	Did not receive academic awards	118	72.0
	Received an academic award	34	20.7
	Received more than 1 academic awards	12	7.3
Leadership in school organization	More than 1	30	18.3
	Only 1	40	24.4
	None	94	57.3
College general weighted average (GWA)	Good	36	22.0
	Very good	116	70.7
	Excellent	12	7.3
	Mean = 87.4; S.D. = 2.3; Median = 87.6		

Table 4 reveals that most of the respondents specialized in FSM (48.8%). It also indicates that about three in four graduates (72.0%) did not receive academic awards. In terms of leadership in school organizations, more than half of the respondents (57.3%) did not hold a leadership position. Moreover, the table shows that the respondents have a mean GWA of 87.4%, of which a more significant proportion (70.7%) obtained a *very good* academic performance. This finding signifies that they have obtained the essential competencies required in their enrolled specializations.

5.4 LET Performance of the BTTE Graduates

Table 5: LET performance of the graduates

LET Performance	Categories	Frequency (n= 164)	Percent	Mean	SD.	Median
Overall	Failed	18	11.0	72.30	0.37	72
	Passed	146	89.0	79.42	0.21	79.6
General education	Failed	4	2.4	33.2	12.7	23.2
	Passed	160	97.6	85.38	0.39	86
Professional education	Failed	18	11.0	63.96	3.33	69
	Passed	146	89.0	79.5	0.21	79.5
Majorship	Failed	48	29.3	66.98	1.45	70
	Passed	116	70.7	77.72	0.24	77

Table 5 shows that the majority of the graduates passed (89.0%) in their first take of the LET. Based on the LET passing rate, which is 75%, the graduates' mean rating is 79.42%. Their highest rating is for general education ($\bar{x} = 85.38\%$), and their lowest rating is on majorship ($\bar{x} = 77.72\%$).

Among the 164 respondents, 18 or 11% failed in their first attempt in the LET. Notably, there were four, 18, and 48 who failed in general education, professional education, and majorship, respectively. This finding implies that the respondents experienced difficulty passing their majorship compared to other subcomponents of the LET. This may be attributed to the fact that there is no available examination for BTTE majorship in the Philippines. Hence, the BTTE graduates have no recourse but to take the Technology and Livelihood Education (TLE) test, a majorship in Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSEd).

5.5. Employability of BTTE Graduates

Table 6: Employability of the graduates after graduation

Variables	Categories	Frequency (n= 164)	Percent
Nature of first job	Teaching	70	42.7
	Non-teaching	74	45.1
	Unemployed	20	12.2
Number of months before landing first job	Five months or less	46	28.0
	Six months to 11 months	44	26.8
	12 months to 17 months	14	8.5

18 months to 23 months	6	3.7
24 months to 29 months	14	8.5
30 months to 35 months	6	3.7
36 months to 41 months	18	11.0
48 months or more	16	9.8
Mean = 18.1 months; S.D. = 18.1; Median = 10 months		

Table 6 shows that the majority of the respondents (87.80%) were employed in teaching (42.7%) and non-teaching jobs (45.1%) within 18 months after graduation. Remarkably, most of them (28.00%) waited less than five months to land their first job after graduation. This finding implies that the respondents were qualified and prepared for work after graduation.

In addition, those employed in non-teaching jobs gained employment in bakeries, hotels, electronic shops, dress shops, entrepreneurship, the Philippine National Police, the Bureau of Fire Protection, and the armed forces of the Philippines, among others. Those in teaching positions were employed by private schools.

5.6 Relationship between graduates' employability and their personal profiles

Table 7: Correlation between graduates' employability and their personal profiles

Variables	Correlation Coefficient	Probability Value
Gender	12.0	0.100
Age	130.5	0.000*
Civil status	22.5	0.002*
Birth order	33.8	0.002*
Religion	16.7	0.020*

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 7 shows that personal variables such as age ($\chi^2 = 130.5, p=0.00$), civil status ($\chi^2 = 22.5, p=0.002$), birth order ($\chi^2 = 33.8, p=0.002$), and religion ($\chi^2 = 16.7, p=0.020$) are correlates of graduates' employability. Older graduates tend to have less waiting time for employment than younger ones. Interestingly, graduates who are single are more likely to have a shorter waiting time when looking for a job than those who are married. Furthermore, the middle-born graduates have more likelihood of being employed than those who are first and last born. Finally, Roman Catholic graduates tend to be employed earlier than their counterparts.

5.7 Relationship between Graduates' Employability and their Family Profiles

Table 8: Correlation between graduates' employability and their family profiles

Variables	Correlation Coefficient	Probability Value
Family structure	30.1	0.007*
Parents' marital status	32.2	0.004*
Father's educational attainment	60.7	0.000*
Father's occupation	136.3	0.000*
Mother's educational attainment	85.7	0.000*
Mother's occupation	86.2	0.001*
Family's monthly electricity bill	57.4	0.057

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 8 shows that family variables such as family structure ($\chi^2 = 30.1, p=0.007$), parents' marital status ($\chi^2 = 32.2, p=0.004$), father's educational attainment ($\chi^2 = 60.7, p=0.000$), father's occupation ($\chi^2 = 136.3, p=0.000$), mother's educational attainment ($\chi^2 = 85.7, p=0.000$), and mother's occupation ($\chi^2 = 86.2, p=0.001$) are significant correlates of graduates' employability. The findings imply that graduates from a nuclear family and whose parents live together tend to be employed earlier than those from extended and separated families. Remarkably, graduates whose parents have high educational attainment and are employed as skilled agricultural, forestry, and fishery workers are more likely to have a shorter waiting time for employment.

5.8 Relationship between Graduates' Employability and their Academic Profiles

Table 9: Correlation between graduates' employability and their academic profiles

Variables	Correlation Coefficient	Probability Value
Field of specialization	29.27	0.010*
Academic award	24.49	0.040*
Leadership in school organization	28.69	0.012*
College GWA	-0.178	0.023*

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 9 reveals that the graduates' employability is correlated with their academic profiles, specifically with the field of specialization ($\chi^2=29.27, p=0.010$), academic awards ($\chi^2=24.49, p=0.040$), and leadership in school organizations ($\chi^2=28.69, p=0.012$). This finding denotes that graduates who majored in FSM, receiving academic awards and holding leadership positions in school organizations have a higher probability of finding a job within a shorter time after graduation.

Furthermore, the table shows a significant correlation between the college GWA and the employability of graduates ($r = -0.178, p=0.023$). This finding signifies that graduates with higher college GWA tend to have a shorter time landing a job than those with lower GWA. The GWA is a reflection of the graduates'

preparation in their field of specialization; a higher rating in this regard signals better preparation from the perspective of the employers.

5.9 Relationship between Graduates' Employability and LET Performance

Table 10: Correlation between graduates' employability and their LET performance

Variables	Correlation Coefficient	Probability Value
Overall LET rating	-0.241	0.002*
General education rating	-0.099	0.208
Professional education rating	0.002	0.977
Majorship rating	0.027	0.736

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 10 indicates that there is a significant correlation between graduates' employability and overall LET performance ($r = -0.241, p=0.002$) but not in general education ($r = -0.099, p=0.208$), professional education ($r = 0.002, p=0.977$), or majorship ($r = 0.027, p=0.736$). This finding implies that graduates with higher overall LET ratings are more likely to have a shorter waiting time before landing their first job. The result can be accounted for in that the LET rating is given an equivalent point in assessing teacher applicants for public and private institutions. Having a higher LET rating may indicate better competence of applicants as this may reflect advanced knowledge, skills, and attitude in pedagogy and content.

6. Discussion

The study is the first in the Philippines to examine the correlates of the BTTE graduates' employability using waiting time to land the first job after graduation as the main construct of employability. Significantly, the BTTE graduates are employable in either teaching or non-teaching jobs after graduation. This affirms the findings that BTTE graduates are employable as classroom teachers or industry technical workers on a permanent, contractual, or probationary basis, or they are self-employed (Chavez & Abaca, 2016; Albanador et al., 2018). Furthermore, as revealed in the present study, the average waiting time (18 months) is consistent with the finding by Bansiong et al. (2020) that teacher education graduates were employed within a year after graduation. However, it is contrary to previous studies which showed that teacher education graduates landed in their first jobs within one to six months (Navida, 2017) or two to five months (Ulanday, 2021) after graduation.

Furthermore, the BTTE graduates' employability may be explained by their personal, family, or academic profiles, as well as by their LET performance. As to personal profile, older single, middle-born, and Roman Catholic graduates are more likely to have a shorter waiting period before being employed. It affirms the findings that single graduates (Posadas et al., 2021) and older graduates (Ali, 2016) were more employable than their counterparts and that middle-born children are more fulfilled in their careers (Salmon & Schumann, 2011).

Relative to family profile, graduates living in nuclear and intact families tend to find earlier employment than their counterparts. This finding contradicts the claim that family structure is not directly linked to employment outcomes (Lindstrom et al., 2007). Remarkably, graduates whose parents have high educational attainment and are employed in skilled agricultural, forestry, and fishery positions are likely to secure employment within a shorter time. Previous researchers have noted that graduates whose parents are highly educated provide time and investment in the development of their children (Clearing House for Military Family Readiness, 2020; Guryan et al., 2008). Consequently, they influence their children's pursuit of education, leading to better employment opportunities (Cabrera et al., 2018).

Concerning academic profile, graduates who specialized in FSM and had received academic awards, with higher college GWA and leadership positions in school organizations, are more likely to have a shorter waiting time before being employed. These findings support the assertion that GPA is a predictor in successfully finding a job (Cole et al., 2007; El-Temtamy et al., 2016; Sulastri et al., 2015) and counter the claim that academic honors of the graduates do not influence their employability (De Guzman & De Castro, 2008).

Notably, graduates with high LET performance experienced a shorter waiting time for employment. This finding suggests that graduates should perform satisfactorily in all components of the LET in order to have better chances of immediate employment. In the Philippine context, LET rating is considered a primary criterion in ranking applicants for either teaching or non-teaching employment in both public and private institutions.

Finally, the paper contributes to the affirmation of the learning and employability framework (Sumanasiri et al., 2015), which offers a new perspective of employability focusing on the link between employability and learning process, environment, and outcomes. It also provides a theoretical lens and operational clarity in setting direction for the curriculum design and pedagogical approach to optimize graduates' employability among HEIs.

7. Limitations

In the light of these findings, it is held that the study is limited to BTTE graduates who were successfully traced as to their present employment. Since the study was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, the respondents were only reached through Facebook Messenger Group Chat and responses were obtained through Google Form. Also, employability focused only on the waiting time for landing the first job after graduation. Finally, its generalizability is only confined to the SUC under study.

8. Conclusion

The BTTE graduates are employable within 18 months after graduation, both in teaching and non-teaching jobs. The personal profile variables correlating to employment are age, civil status, birth order, and religion. Older graduates who are single, middle-born, and Roman Catholic tend to have a shorter waiting time for employment. On the other hand, family structure and parents' marital status,

educational attainment, and occupation are significantly associated with employability. In particular, graduates living in nuclear and intact families and whose parents have high levels of educational attainment and with engagement in skilled agricultural, forestry, and fishery positions tend to secure earlier employment than their counterparts. Interestingly, immediate employment is evident among those who specialize in FSM, are recipients of academic awards, leaders in school organizations, and those with meritorious academic performance. Lastly, a shorter waiting time for employment is experienced by graduates who obtained higher LET ratings.

9. Implications and Recommendations

1. The Professional Regulation Commission is encouraged to craft a separate LET for BTTE Majorship through the Teacher Education Council (TEC);
2. Philippine TEIs offering BTTE are encouraged to craft enhancement activities focused on the higher competencies tested in the LET and those not covered in the BTTE field of specialization. This may be done through intensified LET review classes;
3. The TEIs may provide instructional opportunities so that the BTTE students would develop higher academic aspirations by taking on leadership roles in school organizations and striving to obtain higher GWAs, LET ratings and academic awards as these are significant correlates of a shorter waiting time for employability; and
4. The same study may be conducted in other BTTE programs of SUCs for broader analysis and greater generalizability.

Conflict of Interest

As a funded research project by Cagayan State University (CSU), the authors declare no conflict of interest in the study, considering that ethical standards and relevant research protocols were strictly followed.

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