

A Tracer Study Survey of Graduates from Balkumari College

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Abstract

This study traced the graduates of Balkumari College of 2017. Descriptive survey method was used to trace their status of employment, with the use of questionnaires. Data were analyzed of simple percentages for significance of relationship. Illuminating were extrapolated and numbered. It aimed to: ascertain the profile of graduates; determine a relationship between their present occupation and the course they finished; and identify the cooperating industries/institution that employed graduates. Balkumari graduates were proven to proficient and competent to be employable in the schools, banks, IT industries, business industries as revealed in the illuminating themes, thus resulted in boon opportunities. Balkumari mandate, as cascaded in its vision-mission, prepared graduates for the field of work, with personality that matters compared than other predetermined factors. Academic preparation and career performance exhibited signification of successful employment.

Keywords: Tracer study, employment status, academic preparation, curriculum standards

Introduction

Tracer studies are commonly becoming a recognizable practice worldwide. Graduate tracer studies involve identification and follow-up of graduates from higher education institutions worldwide spurred by the need to give careful consideration to how graduates view their experiences they underwent during their degree study and their transition to the job market. If universities are to improve their teaching and training of graduates the precedence should be to learn and garner improvements from graduates' nuanced experiences. Towards the end of the 20th Century, European Universities embraced the use of tracer studies for a plethora of reasons; especially to accredit their study programmes; to explain the link between study programmes and the job market; to show uniqueness and positioning of individual universities; and also to enable universities and institutions managing higher education in their respective countries make informed and evidence based decisions about improvements and quality education and services in higher education (Schomburg, 2011). In addition, importance of graduate tracer studies is to incorporate effective improvements into institutional programs of HEIs by collecting and analyzing information on graduate's study experiences, professional and personal careers. Such studies can be used to collect data on the employment situation of the most recent graduates in order to obtain indicators for their professional performance (Teichler, 1998). They can therefore, be used to contribute to causal explanations of the relevance and appropriateness of the study conditions, services and programmes provided by HEIs and the quality of the graduate product (Teichler 2011, Schomburg and Teichler 2011, Herrmann 2010). Such studies also emphasize programmatic issues, conditions, situations and contexts within which the graduates studied at the University; positing and interrogating the quality of these study provisions and conditions as this paper argues.

This paper proposes to domesticate these universal approaches to graduate tracer studies with a guide that will be most suitable and acceptable within Nepalese context. Paramount to graduate tracer surveys are the results and their utilization to improve quality of study programmes and services. Tracer survey results are used at complex dichotomous platforms aroused by university needs such as improvement of study conditions and programmes as fronted by universities and university grand commission. They can also be motivated by extrinsic expediencies of real life situations as prescribed by the job market.

First, this paper presents methodological steps experienced during a recent graduate tracer survey at BKC. Second, the paper presents select findings of the survey that we use in this paper to demonstrate how results obtained from

graduate trace studies (GTS) can be utilized for QA. Using selected results we argue that quality of education and services at BKC can improve through feedback obtaining from the immediate users of services (the graduate) about study facilities, conditions and programs. Last, the paper presents an outline of a graduate tracer study methodological guide being developed for adoption and use among universities in Nepal.

Objectives of the study

This study determined the employability and the status of employment of Balkumari College graduates programs, the academic years of 2017. It sought to answer these objectives to: ascertain the profile of the graduates in terms of their obtained degrees; the graduates' demographic background as regards to employment rate and status of graduates; categories of the occupational groups that they perform; ways on how graduates find their present job; factors that enabled them to get their first job; determine a relationship between their present occupation and the course they finished; and identify the cooperating industries/academic institutions that employed BKC graduates.

Institutional arrangements to conduct the study

This study work is planned and implemented by Tracer Study Research committee of BKC. The primary data was collected by PI of BKC. EMIS unit, Examination Committee and all of the concerned Departments. BKC has provided enough time to the staff who is assigned to prepare Tracer Study Report.

Graduate Batch taken for the study

BKC started to prepare Tracer Study Report only from 2015's pass graduates. Thus, It has been preparing regularly in 2016 and 2017 graduates who has pass Bachelor and Master level from BKC.

Data collection

The study utilized mix methods of descriptive survey using thematic analysis, which covered the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) and Bachelor of Science (B.Sc), Bachelor of Business Studies (B.B.S) and M. Ed degrees, from 2017 graduates of BKC. In ascertaining the status of this tracer study, the descriptive method of research was used. Illuminating themes were extrapolated and coded in order to flash the data.

Research Instrument

The gathering of data was conducted for three months, enough to encourage more respondent participation. A questionnaire was patterned from the University Grand Commission(UGC) standardized form and was approved for adoption for use by the Office of the College, after that this has been piloted. The questionnaire comprised the following itemized categories: (a) Personal Information; (b) Current Employment Status (c) Further Study and (e) Others

Data Gathering Procedure

A close supervision and guidance to selected ProgrammedIn charges who were assigned to gather and collect the obtained data. The questionnaire were given to those students who passed the bachelor and masters level in the year 2017. They filled the questionnaire and returned to the concerned departments.

Treatment of Data

The quantitative data gathered from the questionnaire were subjected to statistical analysis, with simple frequencies through the use of percentage in determining the significance of the relationship.

Scope and Delimitations of the Study

The total number of the graduates in 2017 from different streams of BKC was 102. The graduates from Faculty of Education were 27. The graduates from Faculty of Management were 40. The graduates from Faculty of Sciences were 20. The graduates of Masters level from the faculty of Education were 6. The graduates of Masters level from management were 9. Although the study population was 102, the institution could complete (reach out) only 21 out of total number of students which makes 20.59 percentage of the total population.

The study was made upon the graduates of 2017 BKC. It had following delimitations.

- This tracer study was conducted to the graduates of 2017 of BKC only.
- The study was conducted within a short period of time and limited budget.
- The graduates were who couldn't be reached \contacted had been left out in this study.
- Beside face to face interview, social media email and telephone contact\conversation were the key tools of data collection.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table: Best represent major strengths and weaknesses of the institutional program

(Give number from the range 0-5) Very high = 5 Does not apply = 0

Particulars	Respondents in %					
	0	1	2	3	4	5
Relevance of the program to your professional requirements	-	-	9.52	23.81	61.90	4.76
Extra-curricular activities	-	9.52	9.52	33.33	47.62	-
Problem solving ability	-	-	-	33.33	57.14	9.52
Work placement/ attachment/ internship	-	4.76	9.52	28.57	47.62	9.52
Teaching learning environment	-	-	4.76	9.52	52.38	33.33
Quality of education delivered	-	-	4.76	-	47.62	47.62
Teacher student relationship	-	4.76	-	-	38.10	57.14
Library facility	-	-	4.76	33.33	52.38	9.52
Lab facility	-	-	-	28.57	47.62	19.05
Sports facility	4.76	4.76	23.81	42.86	19.05	4.76
Canteen/ Urinals	-	4.76	33.33	52.38	9.52	-

More than 65% of respondent graduates reported that their jobs are related to the college courses they finished in BKC. Based on the respondent's assessment, it could be reliably noted that their employment in their jobs were guided by the degrees that they finished. Their current careers are still related to their degrees and realignments have taken place. Most of the respondents were totally agreed with the section problem solving ability as the strength of the institution. Among 21 respondents, the highest number were fully satisfied with teacher student relationship, library and lab etc. Further, the findings suggest the Sports facility and Canteen/ Urinals situation should be improved.

Major Findings

A less number of the respondents are currently employed while a more are unemployed. Based on the responses, majority of the graduates are employed in the country. The greater edge of the number of respondents in the B.Sc and lowest respondents found in BBS. The employment rates among respondents were 38.1 % among which 87.5 % were engaged as full time workers and 12.5 % were part time job. Much of the respondents were found to be enrolled in private job rather than the public and government. More than 90 percent respondent's rated Enhanced academic knowledge as very good in this institutions similarly problem solving ability was rated same. Among 21 respondents, the highest number were fully satisfied with teacher Student Relationship, library and lab etc.

There is a gap after the completion of the study and getting the job and because most of the respondents have no job while some were doing further study.

Implications to Institutional Reform

To use tracer studies as an aid to education/manpower policy making, graduates from all the programmes run by college. To encompass all the programmes, a sample will need to be selected to be precise, the question should be asked of what size of sample is necessary to reflect the market demand for specific types of educated manpower.

Another issue in methodology is formulating questions. At the centre of a tracer study is the questionnaire. In designing questions it should be borne in mind that much of the resulting analysis will be statistical and therefore the answers will need to be in a form whereby they can be aggregated. Another important consideration in designing questions is to ensure that their meaning is clear and unambiguous. There are some factors to take into account in the wording of questions. All wording should be simple, direct and familiar. Each question should have a single issue. The result of tracer studies can be useful to and fed into the work of faculties, particularly Education, Management, Science, and Hotel Management. There should be a permanent tracer study unit in college. The advantage of setting up a permanent tracer study unit is that it can integrate information from tracer studies to college planning purposes. The setting of a permanent tracer study could develop a series of tracer studies right across to education/training system. To improve policy decision on education and manpower, tracer studies need to be organized as part and parcel of the activities of

the institution and the information they generate should regularly be fed into the policy-making process. To get up-to-date information on the market performance of graduates tracer studies should be made regularly.

To train more-people who will be in charge of the tracer studies. The person in charge should have, as a minimum, practical experiences of survey work including coding and analyzing cross tabulation.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The BKC graduates were proven to proficient and competent to be employable in the government and private organization, thus resulted in boon opportunities. The BKC command, as cascaded in its vision-mission, prepared graduates for the field of work, with personality that matters compared than other predetermined factors. Academic preparation and career performance exhibited signification of successful employment in different area.

Based on the findings and conclusions, it is recommended that: (1) BKC may strengthen its linkages in the field of education in identifying the skills and competencies that students must learn in order to meet the manpower requirements, (2) the methods employed in classroom activities and other venues must be geared towards developing well-rounded personalities of students, associated with academic quality standards, (3) the placement services may initiate more activities in enhancing the students' capabilities and readiness into job markets in order to facilitate better employability, and (4) ongoing research should be initiated within the context of graduate follow-up.

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