

## Tracer Study on the BS Psychology Graduates

Remedios T. Navarro<sup>1</sup>, Precious Lyn Cornejo-Babida<sup>2</sup>, Christian Gea A. Florentino<sup>3</sup>,  
Bonna Mae S. Gorospe<sup>4</sup>, Marifel Q. Acena<sup>5</sup>, Kristina Camille V. Pacris<sup>6</sup>, Mico M. Molina<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1-7</sup>University of Northern Philippines, Philippines

<sup>1</sup>remedios.navarro@unp.edu.ph

<sup>2</sup>preciouslyn.babida@unp.edu.ph

<sup>3</sup>christiangea.florentino@unp.edu.ph

<sup>4</sup>bonnamae.gorospe@unp.edu.ph

<sup>5</sup>marifel.acena@unp.edu.ph

<sup>6</sup>kristinacamilly.pacris@unp.edu.ph

<sup>7</sup>mico.molina@unp.edu.ph

### ABSTRACT

*This study examined the employment status of the BS Psychology graduates' 2018- 2020. It determined graduates' personal and employment profiles, study conditions, and competency. The study used descriptive-survey research with an adapted questionnaire to collect data. Fifty-six BS Psychology graduates participated. Frequency, percentage, and mean analysis were used to statistically treat the data. Respondents are mostly females, single, and currently employed. Unemployed graduates are pursuing advanced studies. Lack of work experience, seeking a job abroad, lack of professional qualifications, poor starting wage, or being medical students were also reasons for their unemployment. Most respondents advocate altering the curriculum, syllabi, and class size to enhance Psychology graduates' competitiveness. Many previously employed respondents did not specify their roles. Many were DILG-Contact Tracer supervisors. Only 12.5% of the respondents had clerical experience. Half of respondents worked in private settings. 25% of them said their past jobs were related to their course. Many respondents said the pandemic affected their unemployment, while 5.4% mentioned contract ending, job hunting, and medical school. All respondents favor improving Psychology graduates' facilities and reviewing and amending curriculum and syllabi. Respondents strongly agreed that they had built significant relationships with other UNP students, that most of their courses were relevant, and that the faculty was competent and helpful. Positive professor-student interactions, qualified teachers, and a relevant curriculum are evident. On-campus extracurriculars and study groups were evaluated similarly. Overall, respondents regarded study conditions highly satisfactory, indicating a learning-friendly environment.*

**Keywords:** Competencies, Descriptive Method, UNP Graduates, Tracer Study

### INTRODUCTION

Economic, industrial, and social development depends on education. Philippine universities must produce competitive graduates by raising academic standards and creating new learning and development opportunities for the future labor market. Increasing labor market demands and the number of unprepared graduates contribute to higher underemployment rates. Employers prefer graduates with performance-boosting and goal-achieving skills (Abas & Imam, 2016). Foreign investment, technology, and globalization affect skill needs. Hence, when designing academic programs, colleges must consider

socioeconomic, political, and technical empowerment to adapt to change (Ramirez et al., 2014).

Most university students prioritize finding work after graduation to put their abilities into real-world application (Ramirez et al., 2014). However, they struggle to find work after graduation, not because of no work history, but because they lack industry-relevant skills. Higher Education Institutions serve a critical role in educating and training students who will become graduates with knowledge, skills, abilities, and other competency (KSAO) in their field of study (Javier, 2018).

Before entering their chosen field, students must have the best knowledge and skills. Once learned, these skills must be sharpened throughout one's working life, not just for job searches and interviews, but also for personal and professional growth and maximizing work experience. University experience boosts students' capacity to study for life and employability (Ramirez et al., 2014).

While many colleges teach a wide range of students, most forget about them after graduation. Cuadra et al. (2019) say a tracer study can help universities generate locally and globally competent graduates. It can tell the university where, how, and when graduates are working. Faculty and staff can contribute to the development of an effective curriculum by using tracer study concepts to create a sustainable learning environment structure for previous students' continued professional development (Ramirez et al., 2014) and future students' KSAOs.

The University of Northern Philippines (UNP) prepares students for their chosen careers. The Bachelor of Science in Psychology is one of the university's most flexible programs because it studies human behavior and mental processes and offers several work options. Students are trained in research, clinical, industrial, and educational psychology. It prepares students for graduate courses in psychology, medicine, law, and business management.

Pertinent to the mission of UNP to "produce globally skilled and morally upright professionals instilled with rich cultural values," it is very important that the University stay relevant in meeting the workforce needs of the country. Therefore, graduate tracer studies are essential in maintaining such relevance. According to a 2016 article in the Philippine Star, "DECS officials and curriculum development planners and specialists have not taken results indicating poor education-to-employment links seriously." Studies show no correlation between education, employment, and wage rates and a mismatch between graduates and labor market needs.

Connolly (2014) said that unemployment rate is a key economic indicator. According to the Institute for Labor Studies (2015), 1.35 million 15- to 24-year-olds make up 50% of the Philippines' unemployed population; 35.8% of the unemployed are college graduates, or 900,000 people. Ilocos Region's employment rate in July 2015 was 91.8%. (0.4 percentage point lower than the recorded 92.2% in July 2014).

The region's employment rate was lower than the Philippines' (93.5%). The Ilocos Region's labor force participation rate (LFPR) fell from 61.2% in July 2014 to 60.7% in July 2015. The LFPR in July 2015 was 62.9%. Former NEDA Deputy Director- General Emmanuel

Esguerra (2013) said, "Worker applicants, especially those with secondary and higher degrees, must be more employable."

It is in this line that the BS Psychology faculty members conceptualized this study to have a concrete record of the graduates' employment data that could lead to substantial recommendations for the program's course syllabi, students' curricular and extracurricular activities, and the program's management system, which can also be applied to other programs in the University. By making tracer studies a priority for research at UNP, the institution demonstrates accountability to the various stakeholders it interacts with. When taking into consideration the impending adoption of the K to 12 Program, this can serve as a useful instrument for revising and improving the existing curriculum. This also seeks to establish if the curricular programs are being carried out in the appropriate manner and if its desired outcomes are being elicited based on graduates' employability and job performance.

### **Objectives of the Study**

This study determined the employment status of the BS Psychology graduates of 2018-2020. Specifically, it determined the personal and employment profile of the graduates, their study conditions, and their level of competence gained from their curriculum.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Employment for a growing graduating population is a major government issue. The labor market determines workforce skills. Universities must train, inform, and equip future graduates to succeed in the workforce. Examining alumni careers is the best way to measure a school's performance. Educational institutions conduct tracer studies to track graduates' employment. CHED Memorandum Order (CMO) 19, series of 2012-Criterion 8 demands graduate tracer studies to see if alumni are employed, have any awards or recognitions, and occupy management positions in the government, company, and industry in the last five years. These studies are reliable tools for universities to determine the quality of their graduates and the extent of functionality of the services they offer to them. They provide a basis for the institutions to improve the content and delivery of their educational services. Tracer studies provide information on the extent to which the university's vision, mission, goals and the program objectives, and students' learning outcomes have been realized (Tanhueco-Tumapon, 2016).

Several tracer studies have been conducted quantifying graduates' employment status and career paths, work characteristics, applicable competences, and professional orientation and experiences (Pardo et al., 2019). For instance, Galalang et al. (2017) found that most respondents were female, young adults, and were offered jobs in private institutions due to many vacant positions related to the course; were employed in contractual/casual status due to limited permanent positions in public and private institutions; have first job titles of HR Assistant/Staff; and were involved in technical/professional work with opportunities for professional development. Along study conditions and curriculum relevance, Maderazo (2016) discovered that school curriculum is

relevant and responsive support in the dental and other professions, but Pontillas (2018) asserted that graduates' school experiences are crucial to their employability. Cuadra and Gonzaga (2019) found that graduates were able to find jobs relevant to their degree programs and that one of the major strengths of the undergraduate curriculum is the relevance of the degree program to professional requirements.

Albina and Sumagaysay (2020) found 177 IT graduates are employable. Most respondents have regular jobs, giving them tenure security; it took them longer (1-2 years) to get their first job; some were unemployed at the time of the survey due to family concerns, believing that a diploma is no longer a guarantee of work, and colleges are expected to teach employability skills. This finding is consistent with Aguila et al. (2016), who found that one reason people stay unemployed is to further their education. Khatibi (2021) found that the Ministry of Micro, Small, and Medium-Sized Enterprises (MSMEs) was hardest hit by COVID-19, contributing to the loss of jobs for Filipino workers and an increase in the national unemployment rate.

## METHODOLOGY

The study made use of the descriptive-survey method of research in answering its objectives. Total enumeration was used to determine the number of respondents. However, only 56 out of the 62 graduates for the period 2018-2020 participated.

**Table 1**

*Distribution of Respondents*

<b>Batch</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
2018	4	26	30
2019	3	18	21
2020	2	3	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>56</b>

Table 1 shows the distribution of the respondents. A questionnaire adapted from Martinez and Seguismundo (2016) and content validated by knowledgeable persons in the field, with a validity index of 5.0 described as high validity, was utilized in gathering pertinent data. The study underwent in-house, ethics, and Harmonized Gender and Development Guidelines reviews. Once approved, the researchers proceeded to data gathering. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, online informed consent was secured from the respondents and data gathering was done through the use of Google Forms. The link to the online questionnaire was sent to the respondents through Facebook Messenger. Frequency, percentage, and mean were used to statistically treat the data.

The study adhered to research ethical standards. The nature, purpose, benefits, and risks of the study were first explained before the consent of the participants was sought. Only those who volunteered served as respondents to the study. To maintain privacy and confidentiality, the researchers used codes instead of names in encoding and treating the

data. Online responses were kept in a password-encrypted laptop and will be permanently deleted two years after the conduct of the study. No remuneration or incentives were given to the respondents.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Personal Profile

**Table 2**

*Profile of the Respondents*

	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	9	16.1
Female	47	83.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Civil Status</b>		
Single	54	96.4
Married	2	3.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Highest Educational Attainment</b>		
Doctorate Level	2	3.6
MS/MA Degree	1	1.8
MS/MA Level	8	14.3
College Degree	45	80.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Employment Status</b>		
Currently Employed	42	73.2
Previously Employed	8	14.3
Never Employed	6	12.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 2 shows the profile of the respondents. A great majority of the respondents (83.9%) are females, and the rest (16.1%) are males. Most of the respondents (96.4%) are single while only 3.6% of them are married. Employers recruit singles because they believe they are more committed to their jobs and are more eager to accept challenges and responsibilities than married employees are (Gagalang et al., 2017). There is 1.8% of the respondents with an MS/MA degree, and 14.3% have gained MS/MA units. The increasing number of graduates pursuing advanced studies indicates graduates having the desire to enrich their knowledge and skills in the field to improve themselves and the services they offer in their current or future jobs. This implies that the graduates are aiming for a higher and stronger academic background. Those who have not pursued advanced education may still be deciding on which field to pursue, others may still be saving finances, and others may

be more focused on supporting their families. On a practical note, graduate education is a potentially expensive and time-consuming endeavor (English, 2012). Graduates' employment status reveal that the majority of them (73.2%) are currently employed; 14.3% of the graduates were previously employed; and 12.5% are never employed.

## Employment Profile

**Table 3**

*Reasons for Unemployment (Never Employed)*

	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Engaged in further study	3	33.3
Have plans to seek job out of the country	1	11.1
Lack of professional eligibility	1	11.1
Lack of work experience	2	22.2
Starting pay is too low	1	11.1
Still studying doctors of medicine	1	11.1

Table 3 shows the reasons for unemployment (Never Employed) of the respondents. The graduates who are not employed have the following reasons: engaged in further study (33.3%), lack of work experience (22.2%), have plans to seek a job out of the country (11.1%), among others. This means that graduates want to earn an MA/MS or MD before finding work. This implies that graduates want to improve their knowledge to interact on a more intellectual level in their personal lives, which will help them when they seek employment and become professionals. This is supported by Albina et al. (2020) who concluded that graduates tend to seek for further studies before engaging in an actual job for better preparation. Similarly, Aguila et al. (2016) found that one reason for graduates' choice to stay unemployed is pursuing an advanced education. One respondent is unemployed because s/he plans to work abroad. This may be related to a fall in the Philippines' employment rate, resulting in fewer job openings, forcing graduates to look elsewhere (Albina et al., 2020). Two respondents also claimed lack of professional eligibility and work experience. This is because more graduates increase competition in the limited job market, thus employers prefer applicants with more education, expertise, and a license. A diploma alone does not ensure employment, according to Albina et al. (2020).

**Table 4**

*Reasons for Unemployment (Previously Employed)*

	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
No job opportunity	1	1.8
Family concern	2	3.6
Lack of work experience	2	3.6
starting pay is too low	2	3.6
have plans to seek job out of the country	1	1.8

	<i>f</i>	%
retrenched due to the Pandemic	3	5.4
Others: (End of contract; Seeking job opportunity to other city; and taking up doctors of medicine)	3	5.4

Table 4 shows the reasons for unemployment (previously employed) of the respondents. A great number (5.4%) of the respondents confirmed that the reason for their unemployment during the conduct of the study is retrenchment due to the pandemic. The same 5.4% specified the end of a contract, seeking job opportunities in other cities, and taking up Doctor of Medicine as reasons for unemployment. According to Khatibi (2021), the MSMEs are the most affected sector during the COVID-19 pandemic. Hence, contributing to the loss of work for Filipino workers and ultimately increasing the unemployment rate in the country.

**Table 5***Positions Held*

	Previously Employed		Currently Employed	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Clerical	1	12.5	14	33.3
Technical	0	0	4	9.5
Supervisory	2	25.0	4	9.5
Others:	2	25.0	11	26.2
Not Applicable	3	37.5	9	21.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 5 shows the position held of the respondents. Among the previously employed, 25.0% of them held supervisory and DILG- Contact Tracer positions. This means that they engaged in tasks that involved managing and interacting with people. This confirms that they may work in human resources or communications. Further, companies hire Psychology graduates for supervisory positions because of the trainings and preparations that they have which made them qualified for the said positions. Being a supervisor is not for everyone, as it requires highly organized, committed, and inspiring leaders. Applicants must therefore have taken courses in organizational behavior and human resource management (Kelchner, 2018).

The Psychology program curriculum is based on the CMO No. 34 series of 2017 which includes Industrial/Organizational Psychology and Group Dynamics as major courses. Their on-the-job training also exposes them and provides them trainings in the government and private Human Resource and Management offices which made them more equipped for supervisory positions.

Among the currently employed, 33.3% of them are holding clerical positions, while 26.2% specified holding non-supervisory positions or are instructors, tutor, psychometricians, customer service advisor, admitting clerk, data analyst, and assistant

restaurant manager. Psychology graduates have good research, writing, and problem-solving skills; can analyze, synthesize, and evaluate material, according to the APA. Many works in administrative support, public affairs, education, business, commerce, service sectors, health, and computer programming. Employment counselors, correction counselor trainees, interviewers, personnel analysts, probation officers, and writers are also possible jobs.

Previously employed respondents worked in the private sector (50.0%) and in the government sector (25.0%). This indicates that the graduates are offered opportunities in private organizations as a result of the course's numerous open vacancies. This also relates with the respondents' previous positions which include supervisory positions in private agencies.

**Table 6***Types of Agency*

	Previously Employed		Currently Employed	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Government Sector	2	25.0	11	<u>26.2</u>
Private Sector	4	50.0	25	<u>59.5</u>
State Universities and Colleges	0	0.0	3	7.1
Not Applicable	2	25.0	3	7.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 6 shows the types of agency of the respondents. Majority of the currently employed (59.5%) are in the private sector, while 26.2% are in the government sector. This means that the graduates preferred to work in the private sector due to various vacant positions related to the course, which is similar among previously employed. Same results were found by Gagalang et al. (2017) who showed that majority of Psychology graduates are employed in private institutions due to numerous relevant positions (e.g., HR assistants/office staff, administrative/training officer, early childhood and psychology instructor).

**Table 7***Status of Appointment*

	Previous Job (Previously Employed)		Current Job (Currently Employed)	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Regular/Permanent	2	25.0	17	40.5
Temporary/Contractual	2	25.0	10	23.8
Job Order/Contract of Service	2	25.0	10	23.8
Self-Employed	1	12.5	4	9.5
Others:	1	12.5	1	2.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.0</b>



Table 7 shows that most respondents were employed, but they had diverse jobs. This means they accepted jobs regardless of status to apply their knowledge and gain work experience. Due to the limitations of permanent positions in both the private and public sectors, no permanent item for psychometricians is included in the DBM's Index of Occupational Services/Groups, Classes, and Salary Grades. This may be due to contractualization in the labor market, resulting in fast turnover (Gagalang et al., 2017). A great percentage (40.5%) of currently employed are regular/permanent employees and the least (9.5%) are self-employed. Due to the fact that the graduates have already achieved security of tenure, this is a positive step in the graduates' careers. This provides support to Albina et al. (2020), who found that 46.04% of the respondents have regular employment status.

**Table 8***Waiting time from graduation to first job*

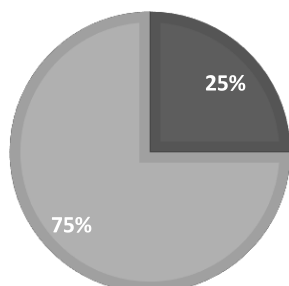
	Previously Employed		Currently Employed	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Less than a month	1	12.5	0	0
1-6 months	4	50.0	12	28.6
7-11 months	1	12.5	10	23.8
1 year to less than 2 years	2	25.0	16	38.1
2 years to less than 3 years	0	0	1	2.4
Not Applicable	0	0	3	7.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 8 shows the waiting time from graduation to first job. Half of the previously employed (50.0%) landed on their job within one to six months after graduation, implying that they were determined to apply acquired knowledge and skills immediately. Further, this conveys the respondents' marketable traits; they can find a job in a few months, considering the flexibility of the course and availability of various psychology-related careers.

A great percentage (38.1%) of the currently employed took one year to less than two years of waiting after their graduation before landing on their first job, and the least (2.4%) had waited for a period of two years to less than three years. With patience and dedication, the graduates applied for jobs immediately after graduation, having obtained their credentials like transcripts and diplomas, which are required in the recruitment process.

**Figure 1**

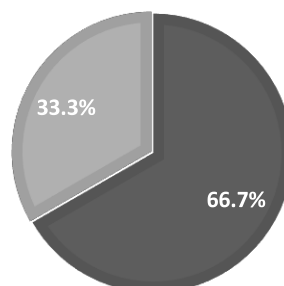
*Relevance of Previous Job to the Course*



■ Relevant  
 ■ Not Relevant

**Figure 2**

*Relevance of Current Job to the Course*



■ Relevant  
 ■ Not Relevant

On figure 1, majority of the respondents (75.0%) did not attribute their previous jobs to their course, while 25.0% of them confirmed the relevance of the course. This may indicate the challenges and difficulties in landing a job relevant to their field of specialization. However, this can also be attributed to their perseverance to gain work experience where they can hone their skills and develop as ethical employees regardless of its relevance. On figure 2, majority (66.7%) of the respondents said that their course is relevant to their job. This means that the graduates were employed in a job that highly corresponds to their academic degree. This finding confirms the analytical claim that there is a parallelism and job match between employment and degree sought in the program for recent graduates. This is further reinforced by Albina et al. (2020) who found that their respondents stated that the college program curriculum they completed is indeed relevant. This study's findings support the notion that "competitive graduates on the labor market frequently depend on a rigorous curriculum" (Ahmad et al., 2012).

**Table 9**

*Frequency and Percentage Showing the Items Top-ranked by the Respondent*

Suggestions to enhance the competitive edge of the Psychology Graduates	Never employed			Previously employed			Currently employed		
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Rank</i>
	1. Employ only competent faculty members and continuously train them to update and improve their teaching competencies	3	50	3	5	62.5	4	23	54.8

2. Review and update the curriculum and syllabi	4	66.7	1.5	7	87.5	2	20	47.6	4
3. Add more major subjects	3	50	3	4	50	5	22	52.4	3
4. Upgrade the facilities	3	50	3	8	100	1	23	4.8	1.5
5. Limit the class size to 40 or less students	4	66.7	1.5	6	75	3	16	38.1	5

Table 9 shows the frequency and percentage showing the item top-ranked by the respondent. Majority of those never employed (66.75%) recommend changing the curriculum and courses and limiting class size to 40 (or fewer). This means the BS Psychology curriculum and syllabi must be updated so students receive a better education. Curriculums must be revised to improve students' knowledge, skills, and abilities (Jungnickel et al., 2009). Curriculum should be updated frequently to keep up with trends and technology to increase graduates' employability (Pontillas, 2018). Class size affects students' intellectual engagement, learning, and competency. According to Ehrenberg et al., (2001), professors can spend more time with each student in smaller classes, boosting academic engagement. All previously employed suggested upgrading university facilities to improve BS Psychology graduates' competence. This implies that graduates want to improve the university's facilities, especially classrooms and the psychological lab used for lectures and laboratories. Jay and Mohd Zain (2019) found that respondents were unhappy with their classrooms and other facilities. They recommended that universities improve and manage their facilities regularly. Majority of currently employed (54.8%) believe that hiring only competent faculty, continuously training them to update and improve teaching competencies, and upgrading facilities will boost Psychology graduates' competitive edge. These top-ranked suggestions imply that faculty and improved facilities are important to students' personal and academic development. Teachers' competence and performance, educational facilities, and infrastructure are related to students' performance and learning achievement (Omar et al., 2017; Ybnu Taufan, 2022), contributing to graduates' self-concept on their employability and competitive edge in the job market (Tentama & Abdillah, 2019; Ahmad et al., 2012).

**Table 10***Mean Ratings Showing the Respondents' Study Conditions*

	Items	Mean	DR
1.	I actively participated in class discussions.	4.04	A
2.	Most faculty members at UNP are friendly and helpful.	4.25	SA
3.	I have met with a faculty member during his/her consultation hour to talk about questions/concerns over my class work.	4.05	A

Items	Mean	DR
4. I was involved in extra/co-curricular activities on campus.	3.64	A
5. Most students at UNP are friendly and helpful.	3.98	A
6. I was involved in student organizations.	4.05	A
7. I have developed close personal relationships with other students at UNP.	4.39	SA
8. It was easy for me to get to know other students.	3.95	A
9. Most of the UNP staff are friendly and helpful.	3.96	A
10. Most of my subjects at UNP were relevant and applicable to my future.	4.38	SA
11. I have participated in study groups organized by the school.	3.68	A
12. The faculty members displayed competence in teaching.	4.27	SA
13. Buildings and classrooms were properly kept and maintained.	3.71	A
14. Classrooms were properly illuminated and ventilated.	3.71	A
15. Laboratories were adequately equipped with facilities, supplies, and equipment to undertake scientific investigation.	3.66	A
16. The library is equipped with books, journals, and other learning resources.	4.11	A
<b>Overall</b>	<b>3.99</b>	<b>Very Satisfactory</b>

Legend: Scale	Descriptive Rating (DR)	Range	Overall Description
5	Strongly Agree (SA)	4.21-5.00	Excellent
4	Agree (A)	3.41-4.20	Very Satisfactory
3	Neutral (N)	2.61-3.40	Satisfactory
2	Disagree (D)	1.81-2.60	Fair
1	Strongly Disagree (SD)	1.00-1.80	Poor

Table 10 shows the mean ratings showing the respondents' study conditions. The respondents were Very Satisfied with regard to their study conditions ( $\bar{x}$ = 3.99). Having been able to develop close relationships with other UNP students got the highest mean rating of 4.39, while most faculty members at UNP are considered friendly and helpful ( $\bar{x}$ =4.38). This shows that the good interpersonal relationships formed by the respondents with their teachers and peers were helpful for them to have better study conditions, hence helped them improve academic performance. This was supported by Martin (2013) when he explained that the role of the teacher is influential in students' both academic and non-academic development. Further, Juvonen et al. (2012) also found out that positive peer relationships are also beneficial for students' academic and non-academic success.

**Table 11***Mean Ratings Showing the Graduates' Core Competencies*

<b>Demonstrate the capacity to/for:</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>DR</b>	
1. discuss and analyze the major theories and concepts in Psychology	4.02	H	
2. apply the methods of psychological injury in building knowledge on local culture and context	3.98	H	
3. apply psychological theories and methods in personal and professional settings	4.19	H	
4. self-reflection and independent learning in graduate education or in a professional context	4.31	VH	
5. professional and ethical behaviors in research and practice in Psychology	4.48	VH	
6. relate appropriately with colleagues, clients and others in diverse cultural settings.	4.43	VH	
7. conduct psychological assessments and evaluation	4.24	VH	
<b>Overall</b>	<b>4.23</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	
<b>Legend: Scale</b>	<b>Descriptive Rating (DR)</b>	<b>Range</b>	<b>Overall Description</b>
5	Very High (VH)	4.21-5.00	Excellent
4	High (H)	3.41-4.20	Very Satisfactory
3	Average (A)	2.61-3.40	Satisfactory
2	Low (L)	1.81-2.60	Fair
1	Very Low (VL)	1.00-1.80	Poor

The Table 11 shows that the graduates have an excellent level of competence ( $\bar{x}=4.23$ ). They have the highest competence in terms of their capacity to observe professional and ethical behaviors in research and practice in Psychology ( $\bar{x}=4.48$ ) and least competent in applying the methods of psychological injury in building knowledge on local culture and context ( $\bar{x}=3.98$ ). The learning outcomes of the BS Psychology Program are based on competencies defined by the demands of the professional workforce that students enter post-graduation. As such, the ability of a graduate to meet the expectations of stakeholders external to an education program is said to be an indicator of a curriculum's success (Gruppen et al., 2012).

**Table 12***Mean Ratings showing the Graduates' Other Competencies*

<b>Demonstrate.../Ability to...</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>DR</b>
1. good communication skills	4.29	VH
2. proper human relations	4.45	VH
3. think critically	4.38	VH
4. solve problems at hand	4.36	VH

<b>Demonstrate.../Ability to...</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>DR</b>
5. learn new things	4.55	VH
6. manage time	4.36	VH
7. resourcefulness	4.48	VH
8. initiate recommendations for change	4.19	H
9. develop new insights into various work situations	4.26	VH
10. recognize safety measures to minimize risk in the workplace	4.33	VH
11. accept negative criticisms	4.45	VH
12. understand others' point of view	4.45	VH
13. knowledge of effective conflict resolution	4.29	VH
14. recognize and adapt to changing conditions at work	4.48	VH
15. describe rationale of certain decisions	4.31	VH
16. skill in mitigating stressful situations	4.40	VH
17. foster commitment	4.33	VH
18. encourage cooperation	4.40	VH
19. knowledge of basic computer requirements	4.40	VH
20. Ability to facilitate an open exchange of information	4.33	VH
<b>Overall</b>	<b>4.38</b>	<b>Excellent</b>

Table 12 shows the mean ratings showing the graduates' other competencies with regard to other competencies. The graduates reported an excellent level of competence ( $\bar{x}=4.24$ ). They are most competent in the ability to learn new things ( $\bar{x}=4.58$ ) but have the least capacity to initiate recommendations for change ( $\bar{x}=4.19$ ). By integrating competencies that are essential in the world of work into the curriculum, the BS Psychology graduates developed skill sets that go beyond what is characteristic of professionals in the discipline. According to Hooper et al. (2014), competency-based education ensures that students are equipped with an accurate, comprehensive, and realistic sense of what they will be capable of performing when they complete their course.

## CONCLUSIONS

Most of the respondents are single and a great majority are females. The main reason for unemployment among those never employed is enrolment in further studies. They suggested reviewing and updating the curriculum and syllabi and limiting class size to 40 (or fewer) students to enhance the competitive edge of the psychology graduates. The previously employed were in the private sector, permanent, temporary/contractual or job order/contract of service status of appointment but did not specify their positions in their previous employment. They waited for one to six months after graduation to be employed. Majority said that their previous jobs have no relevance to their course. Their reasons for

unemployment are retrenchment because of the pandemic, end of contract, seeking jobs in other cities and pursuing Doctor of Medicine. They suggested upgrading the facilities to enhance the psychology graduates' competitive edge. The currently employed holds clerical positions in the private sector with regular/permanent status and their job is relevant to their course. They waited for one to less than two years after graduation to be employed. They suggested employing only competent faculty and continuously training them to update and improve their teaching competencies to enhance the Psychology graduates' competitiveness.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The college must perform regular tracer studies, which will serve as the evaluative component for the Psychology program. Before contacting any university office, alumni should complete a tracer form. Since the most commonly acquired competency is professional and ethical behavior in psychology research and practice, the minimum learning competency may focus on work ethics and overcoming obstacles, especially in the psychological laboratory. Faculty should visit industries during semester breaks to identify changing demands and capabilities and update the curriculum as needed. Lastly, administrators should invest more in infrastructure to equip students with state-of-the-art learning facilities.

### **ETHICAL STATEMENT**

This study was reviewed and approved by the University of Northern Philippines Ethics Review Committee. Ethical principles observed in the study include the conflict of interest, principle of informed consent, principle of privacy and confidentiality, principle of vulnerability, recruitment, benefits, compensation, and community considerations.

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