

Employability of Dentistry Graduates

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Abstract – *Determining the status of employment of dentistry graduates is needed, to assess dental schools produce competent and job-ready dental practitioners. This study aimed to determine employability of dentistry graduates of 2013-2018. Specifically, to determine the respondents' job placement profile in terms of employment status, nature of employment, present occupation, location of occupation; competencies, work-related values, and school-related factors such as curriculum and instruction, faculty and instruction, student services, organization and administration, community extension, linkages and research influencing their employability. Descriptive method was used to evaluate employment status of the dentistry graduates using a survey instrument. Results revealed that majority of graduates are working as self-employed professionals locally. The most useful competencies learned in college are communication, critical thinking and human relation skills, while honesty and love for truth, perseverance and hard work, and professional integrity are the work-related values much applied. The most relevant school-related factors to job placement in terms of curriculum and instruction in GE subject is Natural Science, while Restorative Dentistry and Prosthodontics in professional subjects. Faculty conducting themselves in a dignified and professional manner is most relevant in terms of faculty and instruction. Library services, college dean's office services and laboratories are the most relevant student services. Department heads effective in guiding training and development of students to improve their performance and administration ensuring that training programs for students are adequate and well-organized, are noted as very relevant, along with Community Extension services. Action plan was proposed based on these results.*

Keywords – *competencies, dentistry, employability, graduates*

INTRODUCTION

The aim of a credible undergraduate Dentistry program is to prepare dental students for independent clinical practice and success in their potential jobs. Over the academic years, graduates acquire certain sets of skills and qualities to enhance their employability, as they applied their knowledge to solve problems and develop innovations for the betterment of society. Employability, as a criterion for higher education efficiency reflects the value and utility of a study program for future job and duties [1]. It can be assessed by doing a graduate tracer survey to gather information about a graduate's college experience, including skills gained, instructional efficiency, and how it contributes to employability. Tracer survey enables us to better understand the connection between college experience and labor market results, as well as to develop strategies for the higher education field [2].

This research determined the employability of Dentistry graduates as they applied the competencies and work-related values developed by the university, and school-related factors that could influence employability of the graduates.

Dentistry graduates may prefer to work individually or in collaboration with other dentists. In 2013, the average solo general dentist saw 1,350 patients, compared to 2,052 for the average group of general dentists. As a result, dental group practice saw over 700 more patients per year than solo practitioners. This significant disparity has far-reaching consequences for the dental delivery system and dental education in the future [3].

In 2018 Census of Philippine Business and Industry, with 7,159 (75.7 percent) establishments, medical and dental practice activities led the industry category in terms of number of establishments, followed by hospital activities with 1,283 (13.6 percent) establishments. In addition, hospital operations were compensated the most, receiving PHP 35.1 billion, followed by medical and dental practice activities, which got PHP 10.7 billion [4]. With this high demand and compensation for medical and dental practitioners, it created more work opportunities for Dentistry graduates to practice their profession. In a tracer study by Maderazo [5], most of the graduates begin their dental career as associate dentists on the recommendation of the department or alumni of the college, and after 6 months, they decided to start their private dental practice, motivated by satisfying salaries

and sufficient benefits, and an initial gross income of more than P25,000.

This study analyzed the employability based on a comparative survey among graduates of the Lyceum of the Philippines University Batangas (LPU-B) College of Dentistry from 2013 to 2018. There have been tracer studies conducted in the said college covering the period of 1990-2012 [5], however there is no current survey for graduates since 2013. Hence, the need to determine the employability of graduates in more recent years to improve the functionality and relevance of the curriculum to the current setting and employability of graduates. The graduates' personal perceptions were used to determine employability or the effectiveness of the study program in terms of work. The study is important to identify whether the level of skills possessed by graduates during their studies are appropriate in helping them to begin and build their dental profession. Enhancing the employability of dental graduates is crucial to resolve in the dynamic, financially limited world of dentistry and dental education, with the goal to produce highly competent practitioners for the society.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to determine the status of employment of the Dentistry graduates from 2013-2018. More Specifically, it aimed to present the job placement profile of the respondents in terms of employment status, nature of employment, present occupation, location of occupation; to determine the competencies and work related values developed by the university; to determine the relevance of the school-related factors to the job placement of the graduates in terms of curriculum and instruction, faculty and instruction, student services, organization and administration and community extension, linkages and research. Finally, an action plan is proposed to promote employability of dental graduates based on the result of the study.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

This study used descriptive method of research to evaluate the employment status of the dentistry graduates using a survey instrument. Questionnaire was disseminated among 2013-2018 dentistry graduates. The gathered data were tabulated and analyzed, to interpret the profile and employability of the graduates.

Participants of the Study

The respondents of the study were the LPU-B College of Dentistry graduates from 2013 – 2018. Out of the total

population of 119 graduates, 104 responded to the survey. Fifteen (15) opted not to respond and participate in the survey. It has a retrieval rate of 87%.

Instrument

The instrument used in the study was the institutional Graduate Tracer Survey. The questionnaire assessed the job placement profile of the respondents in terms of employment status, nature of employment, present occupation, location of occupation; the competencies and work-related values and school-related factors to the job placement of the graduates in terms of curriculum and instruction, faculty and instruction, student services, organization and administration and community extension, linkages and research. A four-point Likert scale was used in the study to determine the relevance of the competency, work related values and school related factors using the scale of: 4 – Highly Relevant, 3 – Relevant, 2- Slightly Relevant, 1 – Not Relevant.

Procedure

The researcher sought the assistance of Dentistry Alumni Association and the College of Dentistry to trace the graduates. Due to the quarantine restrictions brought about by COVID-19 pandemic, the researcher utilized an online survey form, which was disseminated to the respondents through email and available social media accounts where the respondents can be reached. Upon the retrieval, data were tallied and encoded using the Microsoft Excel.

Data Analysis

Data is analyzed using SPSS. Frequency and percentage were used to present the job placement profile of the respondents in terms of employment status, nature of employment, present occupation, location of occupation. Weighted mean and rank were used to determine the competencies and work-related values, as well as the school-related factors to the job placement of the graduates.

Ethical Consideration

The researcher ensured full confidentiality of the personal information gathered, protecting respondents' identity by presenting the overall result, not revealing individual responses that could lead to their identification. Respondents were also notified of the voluntary nature of the research, well informing them that they were free to participate or withdraw from taking

part in the research at any time. With the use of consent form, it assured the ethical consideration of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

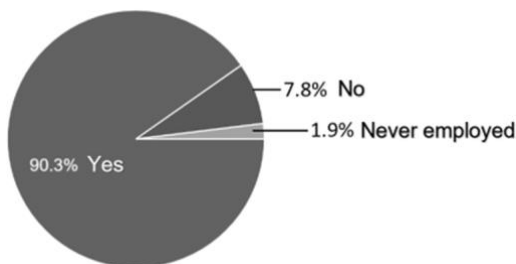


Fig. 1. Employment Status.

Data shows that majority of the graduates (90.3%) were currently employed. 7.8% were currently not employed, while 1.9% were never employed (Figure 1).

Since most of the respondents passed the Dentistry licensure examination after graduation, they were given the opportunity to begin their own private practice or venture into different career opportunities for dentists [5] and being on a private practice offers more freedom and self-determination on when to begin and develop one’s career.

Because replication is required for scientific progress, papers submitted for publication must provide sufficient information to allow readers to perform similar experiments or calculations and use the reported results. Although not everything need be disclosed, a paper must contain new, useable, and fully described information.

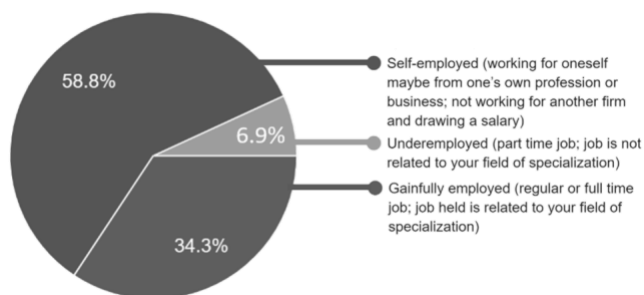


Fig. 2. Nature of Employment.

Figure 2 illustrates that majority of the graduates (58.8%) were self-employed, working for oneself from one’s own profession or business, and not working for another firm and drawing a salary, while 34.3% were gainfully employed. They have regular or full-time job, and the job held is related to their field of specialization. 6.9% were underemployed in a part time job and their job is not related to their field of specialization.

A graduate of Doctor of Dental Medicine can lawfully pursue general dental practice after passing the dental

board examination, and is offered with a wide variety of roles and career options such as being a general dental practitioner, academician, researcher, dental scientist, innovator, pharmaceutical and allied-industry consultants, and entrepreneur [6]. Given these wide scope of job opportunities, graduates were able to choose and employ themselves in one or more tracks they want to pursue.

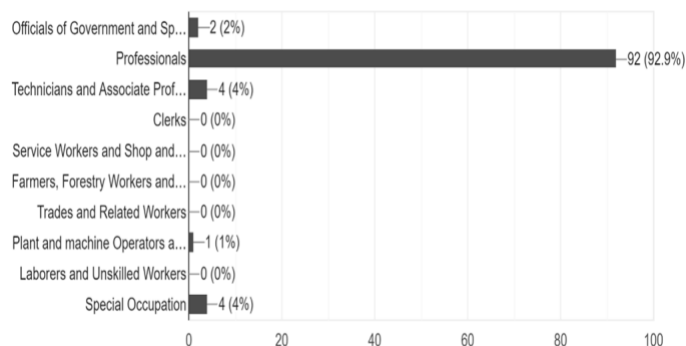


Fig. 3. Present Occupation

Figure 3 shows the job placement profile of the graduates in terms of present occupation. Ninety-two of the employed graduates (92.9%) are professionals. There are four (4%) who are technicians and associate professors, and four (4%) who are having special occupation. Two (2%) are officials of government and special-interest organizations, corporate executives, managers, managing proprietors and supervisors, while one (1%) is a plant and machine operator. Most dentists who graduated from a six-year General Dentistry program pursue a general practice in their own clinic and the rest are either private employees or government employees. Some were able to be specialize, especially in line with orthodontics [7].

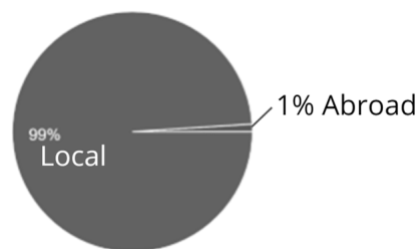


Fig. 4. Location of Occupation.

Figure 4 presents the job placement profile of the graduates in terms of location of occupation. Ninety-nine percent (99%) of employed graduates are working locally, while one percent (1%) is working abroad.

Many dental practices are situated in residential or commercial urban areas because of the needed

population base for the upkeep of the practice from a demographic and economic perspective [8]. Although there are certain opportunities to work abroad, majority of the respondents were employed locally. International career opportunities for dentist were made possible by the recent mutual recognition agreement on dental practitioners among Southeast Asian countries. Its goal is to enable flexibility of dental practitioners within ASEAN, boost exchange of expertise on guidelines and qualifications, foster interchange of best practices in the dental profession, and offer prospects for development and training of dental professionals [9].

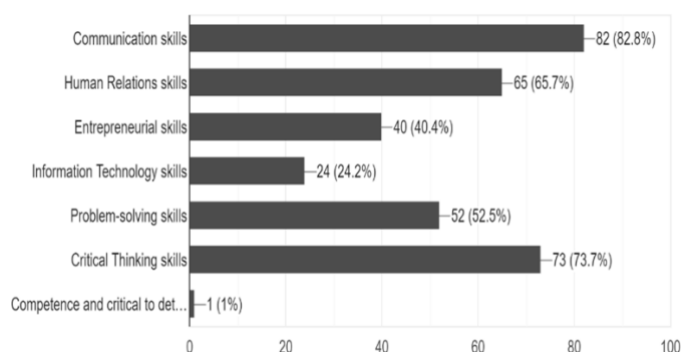


Fig. 5. Competencies Learned in College.

Figure 5 presents the competencies learned in college by the graduates. Communication is considered most useful by eighty-two (82.9%) graduates. This is followed by critical thinking skills by seventy-three (73.7%) graduates and human relation skills by sixty-five (65.7%) graduates. Least useful competencies were entrepreneurial skills (40%), information technology skills (24%) and competence and critical to details (1%).

As a health care provider, dental graduates make use of communication, critical thinking, and human relation skills to be able to deliver appropriate dental services to their clients. Patient examination, diagnosis, treatment planning and maintenance are important clinical phases where these three skills are most used and developed over time. Dental health care provider must have critical thinking abilities to make analytical decisions and good communication skills to resolve human relations issues with patients and care providers.

As a result, dental graduates should learn these skills to improve their problem-solving abilities, which are highly needed in dental clinical practice [10]. Although useful, entrepreneurial skills, information technology and competence and critical to details were least considered by the graduates because not all were into business and enterprise mindset during their college years. Developing business skills and innovative devices

and technology related to dentistry are given less focus, rather clinical skills and competencies were mastered during their stay in the university. Most practicing dentist hopes to turn their clinical practice into a business, which is a difficult undertaking due to several factors that are needed for successful building of dental enterprise, which may also include manufacturing dental materials, equipment, and laboratory technologies [11].

Table 1. Work Related Values Applied in the Work Setting

Work-Related Values	WM	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. Love for God	3.83	Much Applied	5.5
2. Honesty & love for truth	3.88	Much Applied	2
3. Punctuality	3.57	Much Applied	16
4. Obedience to superior	3.65	Much Applied	15
5. Perseverance & hard work	3.88	Much Applied	2
6. Creativity/innovativeness	3.74	Much Applied	12
7. Courage	3.76	Much Applied	9
8. Professional Integrity	3.88	Much Applied	2
9. Love for co-workers and others	3.76	Much Applied	9
10. Unity	3.75	Much Applied	11
11. Fairness and Justice	3.81	Much Applied	7
12. Leadership	3.73	Much Applied	13
13. Tolerance	3.68	Much Applied	14
14. Efficiency	3.83	Much Applied	5.5
15. Supportiveness	3.76	Much Applied	9
16. Perseverance	3.86	Much Applied	4
17. Nationalism	3.55	Much Applied	17
Composite Mean	3.76	Much Applied	

Legend: 1.00 – 1.49 = Not at All, 1.50 – 2.49 = Very Little, 2.50 – 3.49 = little, 3.50 -4.49=Much, 4.49 – 5.00 = Very Much

Table 1 presents the Work-Related Values Applied in the Work Setting with composite mean of 3.76 denoting they are much applied in the work setting as perceived by dentistry graduates.

Honesty and lover for truth, perseverance and hard work, and professional integrity got the highest rank with weighted mean of 3.88 which were interpreted as much applied.

While in their collegiate years, professional integrity which is inculcated to the student’s morale by safeguarding honesty and encouraging hard work. Due to the academic rigors of dental education especially in clinical setting, students were being trained to be persevering in fulfilling all the requirements in their six-year course.

Resilience, the capacity to persevere or overcome a stressful situation, is considered an asset that can help learners succeed in a difficult environment like dental school [12]. Professional integrity is important because

people have a high level of faith in the Dentistry profession. Many people have trust in dentists, and a lack of faith in dentistry, can be a barrier to obtaining care, leading to decreased patient satisfaction, increased patient anxiety, poorer compliance, and a lesser likelihood of favorable results [13].

Meanwhile, even though interpreted as much applied, Nationalism (3.55), Punctuality (3.57) and Obedience to superior (3.65) got the lowest rank.

Nationalism in the form of social responsibility, appreciation of one's role in nation-building and wider roles in the society is important to the holistic growth of a learner. However, this is least among the work values inculcated to the dental graduates due to less time given for civil activities and socio-political awareness in the college. Most of a dental student's time is allocated towards academic and clinical works, related mostly in medical and health care field. Recognizing the important role of young students and graduates to the society and as heirs to the political and social systems, students are encouraged to be involved in public and civic affairs, aligned to the occasional community extension activities of the college.

Majority of dentistry students arrive on time for class, and there is a pattern of punctuality among them [14]. However, those who lack time management and self-discipline were not able to comply to punctuality and orderliness of their academic requirements. Few dental students experience extension of time for the completion of their clinical requirements.

Dentistry, as often solo practiced, is challenging students to learn to be independent and hone the value of being able to decide the appropriate steps in the treatment and procedures to be done to the patients. Obedience to superior, although important in building up self-esteem in the individual work, is less practiced later in the Clinical Dentistry, as instructors trained the clinicians to be more and more independent in their own cases, preparing them to be self-reliant in their clinical judgment and treatment plans, however cognizant to their limitations and exerting efforts in discovering better techniques while analyzing different patient's cases. Dental clinicians should strive to improve confidence, self-reliance, and collaboration and clinical abilities by being exposed to conditions not seen in routine practice [15].

Table 2 presents the School Related Factors to Job Placement as to Curriculum & Instruction in General Education (GE) Subject with composite mean of 3.26 denoting that enumerated general education subjects are relevant to job placement as perceived by the graduates.

Table 2. School Related Factors to Job Placement as to Curriculum & Instruction in GE Subject

<i>General Education Subjects</i>	WM	VI	R
Mathematics	2.74	Relevant	3
Languages	3.51	Very Relevant	2
Natural Sciences	3.53	Very Relevant	1
Composite Mean	3.26	Relevant	

Natural Science got the highest rank, showing weighted mean of 3.53, interpreted as very relevant. Since Dentistry is a branch of natural and biological sciences, the graduates find their relevance and importance when applied to their learning and work. Most of the courses learned in Dentistry are related to physics, chemistry, or biology, and are important in appreciating the overall dynamics and technology used in dental care. Inquiry and problem-solving techniques are learned in natural science. Scientific and cognitive skills are employed in the process of scientific inquiry, and graduates were able to do experiments, research, and projects that make use of scientific knowledge [16].

Meanwhile, even though interpreted as relevant, among the subjects listed, Mathematics (2.74) got the lowest rank. As a science of number, quantity, and space, mathematics is deemed by the graduates least relevant because it takes a minor role when exploring medical and health sciences. The curriculum is more focused on biological health sciences, as these are being investigated further in the higher dental collegiate years. Mathematics and Dentistry have differences and unique in its own specialty among fields of science and analyzing both areas would require further training to be able to be experts in the designated field [17].

Table 3. School Related Factors to Job Placement as to Curriculum & Instruction in Professional Subject

<i>Professional Subjects</i>	WM	VI	R
Restorative Dentistry	3.94	Very Relevant	1.5
Prosthodontics	3.94	Very Relevant	1.5
Oral Surgery	3.90	Very Relevant	3
Pedodontics	3.81	Very Relevant	5
Orthodontics	3.86	Very Relevant	4
Endodontics	3.77	Very Relevant	6
Periodontics	3.80	Very Relevant	7
Composite Mean	3.86	Very Relevant	

Legend: 1.00 – 1.49 = Not Relevant, 1.50 – 2.49 = Slightly Relevant, 2.50 – 3.49 = Relevant, 3.50 – 4.00 = Very Relevant

Table 3 presents the School Related Factors to Job Placement as to Curriculum & Instruction in Professional Subject with composite mean of 3.86 indicating that professional subjects are very relevant to job placement as perceived by graduates.

Restorative Dentistry and Prosthodontics got the highest rank presenting the weighted mean of 3.94 and interpreted as very relevant followed by Oral Surgery (3.90) and Orthodontics (3.86). Restorative dentistry and prosthodontics, dealing with repairing and restoring the functionality of the dentition, are both highly important for dental graduates, because these dental services are most employed in private clinics. Public highly demand for dental services like dentures, composite fillings, and other restorative and prosthodontic procedures. These dental treatments improved esthetics and function and so are frequently wished by the patients [18].

On the other hand, even though interpreted as very relevant, among the Professional subjects listed, periodontics (3.90) got the lowest rank, followed by endodontics (3.77) and Pedodontics (3.81). These three specialties in Dentistry, although relevant, ranked lowest because they were not much highly employed at work compared with other specialties. Knowledge, demand, and the needs of lay people ranked least in the areas of endodontics and periodontics [19]. Pedodontics, concentrating on the child and adolescent dental needs, also ranked least because it would require continuing education to specialize. Doing further studies would require time, cost and travelling to distant continuing education centers, which on the part of the graduates pose as barriers in pursuing it [20].

Table 4. School Related Factors to Job Placement as to Faculty and Instruction

Faculty and Instruction	WM	VI	R
1. Conducts himself in a dignified & professional manner	3.78	Very Relevant	1
2. Has good communication skills	3.72	Very Relevant	5
3. Teacher has mastery of the subject matter	3.76	Very Relevant	2.5
4. Makes use of various teaching aids	2.74	Very Relevant	5
5. Relates subjects to other fields & other life situation	3.76	Very Relevant	2.5
6. Conducts accurate & objective evaluation of Student Performance	3.69	Very Relevant	6.5
7. Quality of instruction is relevant to the course	3.69	Very Relevant	6.5
Composite Mean	3.77	Very Relevant	

Legend: 1.00 – 1.49 = Not Relevant, 1.50 – 2.49 = Slightly Relevant, 2.50 – 3.49 = Relevant, 3.50 -4.00=Very Relevant

Table 4 presents the School Related Factors to Job Placement as to faculty and instruction. The composite mean of 3.77 denotes that enumerated items on faculty and instruction are very relevant to Job Placement as perceived by the dentistry graduates.

Conducts himself in a dignified & professional manner (3.78) got the highest rank which were interpreted as very relevant followed by Teacher has mastery of the subject matter and Relates subjects to other fields & other life situation with the weighted mean of 3.76. Graduates highly value professionalism, mastery and life application to help them comprehend the topics that lead to long-term pertinency of their learning to their current workplace.

In Dentistry, practice is based on theory, and sufficient theoretical understanding is indispensable to successful practical application. Therefore, there is a need for good theoretical instruction to improve the performance of students in the practicum or clinical training [21]. To bridge the gap between theory and practice, universities must consistently enhance the transfer of learning from the classroom to the practical care setting. Medical professors can affect student’s interest towards a certain clinical specialty because they consider their instructors as role models to obtain professional skills and to explore further a certain medical specialty [22]. They also regarded the teaching-learning process to be affected by their teachers’ commitment to educate medical students. Such teaching ideals help the students master the topics and relate them further down the road of their career as dentists.

On the other hand, even though interpreted as Very relevant, conducts accurate & objective evaluation of student performance as wells as quality of instruction is relevant to the course (3.69) got the lowest rank, followed by makes use of various teaching aids (2.74).

The graduates deem evaluation of student performance, quality of instruction and use of teaching as least relevant to their job placement because they recognize the different ways their professors address their learning needs in terms of their knowledge, attitude, and skills. Variety of courses in Dentistry can be learned in different ways and methodology, more widely in its clinical settings. Students appreciate diagrams, flowcharts, and presentations and these make lectures clear, understandable, well-organized, and even stimulate students for further reading [23].

Table 5 presents the School Related Factors to Job Placement as to student services with composite mean of 3.40 implying that student services are relevant to job placement as perceived by graduates.

Table 5. School Related Factors to Job Placement as to Student Services

Student Services	WM	VI	R
1. Library services	3.49	Relevant	2
2. Registrar’s Office services	3.35	Relevant	5
3. College Dean’s Office services	3.49	Relevant	2
4. Office of Student Affairs services	3.29	Relevant	8
5. Health services	3.43	Relevant	4
6. Counseling and Testing Center	3.30	Relevant	7
7. Physical Plant and Facilities	3.34	Relevant	6
8. Laboratories (Computer, Science, HRM Laboratories, etc.)	3.49	Relevant	2
Composite Mean	3.40	Relevant	

Legend: 1.00 – 1.49 = Not Relevant, 1.50 – 2.49 = Slightly Relevant, 2.50 – 3.49 = Relevant, 3.50 -4.00=Very Relevant

Library services, College Dean’s office services and Laboratories (3.49) got highest rank which were interpreted as relevant followed by health services (3.43). Due to extent and depth of Dentistry curriculum, the use of library services is one of the most important supports to the learning of the students. Using books and web-based services such as database, journal, and library website logins had the strongest and most positive correlations with student performance. The utilization of these reference services was found to be favorably related to the student’s academic involvement and competence [24].

Students facing obstacles and concerns before and after graduation were helped by the college dean’s office services, and students recognized this support as very helpful for them because the college office are developing services to help students transition from college to their first jobs after graduation, particularly in passing the board exam and establishing their practice as a dentist.

Laboratories are also important support service according to the graduates because of the clinical and practical implication of Dentistry as a profession, as the students were also spending the last two years in college fulfilling their clinical requirements that necessitate the use of various laboratory and specialty clinics. There have been many new initiatives with the potential to improve student career assistance that would address students’ requests and needs [25].

Even though interpreted as relevant, Office of Student Affairs (OSA) services (3.29) got the lowest rank, followed by Physical Plant and Facilities (3.34) and Counseling and Testing Center (CATC) (3.30).

The graduates regarded these services as least relevant among the services due to less exposure and demand to these kinds of services, in relation to the

demands of their course. Their engagement outside their college and the confines of their physical environment became limited due to the focus and extensive time given by the students to their study. It is crucial to establish effective student services that are centered on their needs to offer the adequate assistance for academic activities while also stimulating the learners’ personal, social, cultural, and cognitive growth [26].

Table 6. School Related Factors to Job Placement as to Organization and Administration

Organization and Administration	WM	VI	R
1. The school officers & heads include within their spheres of responsibility, all the vital activities of the institution and colleges	3.46	Relevant	5
2. The organization & administrative set-up of the institution and colleges are well integrated & function efficiently	3.44	Relevant	6
3. Department heads are effective in guiding training & development of students to improve their performance	3.51	Very Relevant	1.5
4. Department heads possess positive attitude towards work, staff and students	3.50	Very Relevant	3
5. The administration ensures that training programs for students are adequate and well-organized	3.51	Very Relevant	1.5
6. The administration adheres to its vision-mission and institutional values	3.49	Relevant	4
Composite Mean	3.49	Relevant	

Legend: 1.00 – 1.49 = Not Relevant, 1.50 – 2.49 = Slightly Relevant, 2.50 – 3.49 = Relevant, 3.50 -4.00=Very Relevant

Table 6 presents the School Related Factors to Job Placement as to organization and administration with composite mean of 3.49 indicating that these student services are relevant to job placement as perceived by the dentistry graduates.

Department heads are effective in guiding training and development of students to improve their performance as wells as the administration ensures that training programs for students are adequate and well-organized (3.51) got the highest rank which were interpreted as very relevant followed by department heads possess positive attitude towards work, staff, and students with the weighted mean of 3.50.

The graduates considered training and development as well as the positive attitude towards work of their department heads very relevant because these programs and attitude being promoted by the college helped them prepare for their roles as dentist and as a working

professional in their various fields. Colleges must develop a framework for student skill training, ensuring that students can learn professional methods and providing basic job security. Facilitating and providing professional skill training to poor college students is beneficial for them so that they can obtain professional practice, resolving the disconnect between theory and practice. It also enhances poor college students' advantages by assisting them in finding jobs [27].

Even though interpreted as relevant, the organization & administrative set-up of the institution and colleges are well integrated & function efficiently (3.44) got the lowest rank, followed by the school officers & heads include within their spheres of responsibility, all the vital activities of the institution and colleges (3.46) and the administration adheres to its vision-mission and institutional values (3.49).

The graduates found it relevant, though least among their choices, because they recognized the importance of the contribution and roles of the college in the overall function and essence of the institution, even though their collegiate life mainly focused on the dental education and demands effort and attention rather than giving time to other institutional endeavors and activities. In terms of the student's perception on the dental school learning environment, dental students were assessing the emotional climate, flexibility, breadth of interest, supportiveness, and organization among other elements of their educational experience [28]. Students wanted to feel supported by their faculty and administration from their early years in college until they can graduate.

Table 7 presents the School Related Factors to Job Placement as to Community Extension, Linkages & Research with composite mean of 3.46 implying that these are relevant to job placement as perceived by the dentistry graduates.

Table 7. School Related Factors as to Community Extension, Linkages & Research

Community Linkages & Research	Extension, WM	VI	R
1. Community Extension services of the college	3.54	Very Relevant	1
2. Linkages with Other Institutions and OJT	3.38	Relevant	3
3. Development of research activities in the college	3.45	Relevant	2
Composite Mean	3.46	Relevant	

Legend: 1.00 – 1.49 = Not Relevant, 1.50 – 2.49 = Slightly Relevant, 2.50 – 3.49 = Relevant, 3.50 -4.00=Very Relevant

Community Extension services (3.54) got the highest rank, interpreted as very relevant. Since Community Dentistry and Public Health is inculcated in the dental curriculum, the graduates appreciated the relevance of community extension into their career as a dentist. A dentist has the ability for health promotion, assessing initiatives, and executing effective treatment methods at the community and population levels, aside from treating individual patient. Dentists should also be knowledgeable and obtain experience on population demographics, health trends and creating policy for a healthcare system [29].

Students' motivations to start volunteer work, which were primarily career-oriented; their passion to keep on volunteering, which included satisfying feelings and self-improvement; the effect of volunteer work on themselves, as they learn from their community extension experience and their perspectives of their charitable giving noted the influence on their employability [30]. The variety of motivations for beginning and maintaining volunteer work improved their career and postgraduate chances.

Even though interpreted as relevant, Linkages with Other Institutions and OJT (3.38) got the lowest rank, because most of the graduates were able to secure jobs and establish their own private practice even without the need for linkages with other institutions. Having variety of means to be employed as a dentistry graduate enables one to have more room for freedom to decide which career path to take, without needing to seek specific employers and highly sought-after companies.

During the last two years in dentistry, Clinical Dentistry is being offered to provide opportunities to engage in different cases of varying level of difficulty, and this is being done within the confines of the school. Since majority of cases in Clinical Dentistry are done inside the institution, there is less opportunity to explore other institutions or dental facilities for on-the-job training. Thus, exposure of students in interprofessional clinical experiences should be developed. It may involve approaches such as integrating professional services provided by another medical and health-related profession into the dental dispensary; letting students experience interprofessional collaboration in community and developing of interprofessional student-faculty teams in Clinical Dentistry [31].

Table 8. Proposed Plan of Action to Promote Employability of Dentistry Graduates

KRA/ Objectives	Strategies
Competencies – to promote entrepreneurial skills and information technology	Faculty members may incorporate entrepreneurial aspect of the dental practice and provide projects that will promote leadership, management and business skills and use of information technology
Global Competitiveness – to provide international linkages and explore learning opportunities in other countries	College may collaborate with other international dental schools and organizations to facilitate learning opportunities
Faculty and Instruction – to make quality of instruction relevant to the course	Faculty may be trained in instruction and latest innovation in clinical dental practice
Student Services – to promote OSA and CATC services for the well-being of the students	Make OSA and CATC services appreciated and accessible to the students, such as extra-curricular activities and counselling
Organization and Administration – to increase the confidence of the students in the organization & administrative support in job employment	Increase awareness on the functions and services provided by the college and the university, especially in helping the graduates secure job after graduation

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Majority of the Dentistry graduates of 2013-2018 are self-employed professionals locally. The most useful competencies that they learned in college are communication, critical thinking skills and human relation skills, while honesty and love for truth, perseverance and hard work, and professional integrity are the work-related values much applied in their job. The most relevant school-related factors to the job placement of the graduates in terms of curriculum and instruction in GE subject is Natural Science, while Restorative Dentistry and Prosthodontics in professional subjects. Faculty being able to conducts himself in a dignified and professional manner is most relevant in terms of faculty and instruction. Library services, college dean's office services and laboratories are the most relevant student services. Graduates also find very relevant department heads who are effective in guiding training and development of students to improve their performance and administration making sure that training programs for students are sufficient and well-coordinated. Community Extension services of the college is also very relevant school-related factors in terms of job placement.

Dental schools may consider strengthening competencies, work-related values and school-related factors that are essential and relevant to graduates in terms of job placement. Collaborating with national and international dental schools and interprofessional organizations may facilitate learning and provide global career opportunities for graduates, instilling nationalism and teamwork. Dental alumni association may provide regular timely updates to graduates regarding

innovations, specialty trainings and career development opportunities locally and abroad.

Dentistry graduates may be encouraged to participate in opportunities to work or be trained locally and abroad, in coordination with the university and alumni association. The proposed action plan could be considered by dental schools for possible utilization. Future researcher may conduct similar study using different variables that may influence employability that were not used in the present study such as emotional quotient, social and soft skills as well as career building strategies for fresh graduates.

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