

# EMPLOYABILITY STATUS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE STUDIES GRADUATES IN A POLYTECHNIC STATE COLLEGE IN THE PHILIPPINES

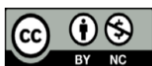
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## Abstract:

*This study examines the employability of graduates from the AB English Language Studies program at Camarines Sur Polytechnic Colleges (CSPC) in the Philippines, with a specific emphasis on the 2022 batch. This study examines the correlation between the educational background of graduates and their career outcomes, evaluates the program's influence on the academic and professional development of individuals, and assesses the pertinence of the curriculum. The study used a mixed-methods research methodology, incorporating both surveys and interviews, to thoroughly comprehend the graduates' experiences and perceptions. The results indicate a significant correlation between the AB English program and the employment outcomes of its alumni, since a majority of them reported securing jobs that are closely aligned with their educational background. Graduates also recognize the program's favorable impact on academic, communicative, and professional advancement. The curriculum is considered comprehensive and pertinent, with high levels of student satisfaction.*



**Keywords:** Employability, AB English program, Camarines Sur Polytechnic Colleges, Curriculum relevance, Academic and professional development

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## INTRODUCTION

With the evolving landscape in higher education, the focus on graduate employability is at the heart of efforts to drive change among educational institutions, policymakers and the labour markets. As is true in many countries, concern with the appropriateness and effectiveness of academic programs in the light of what the job market might expect has been a constant refrain in the Philippines. This paper will attempt to contribute to such on-going debate through an insight into the Employability Status of Graduates from the AB English Language Studies program of

Camarines Sur Polytechnic Colleges. This program is vital to the university's educational status and equips its graduates with the necessary skills for future employment prospects. Addressing a gap in research focused on the most recent graduating class (Gines, 2014), this study will assess graduates' employment status, job alignment with their educational program, and perception of the program's contributions to their individual growth.

The employability of graduates goes far beyond just finding a job. Meaningfully, they include the importance of school courses, skill development, and students' preparedness for changing job markets. This is true for graduates and the academic institutions that educate and train them (Balingbing, 2014). The nexus between curriculum and labor market relevance is crucial in the Philippines. Graduates must acquire the required skill set and competency to prosper in their respective fields, as this not merely pertains to their well-being but is significant to the overall socio-economic growth of the country (Woya, 2019).

With an English Language Studies program in CSPC similar to those found nationwide, there is the hope of equipping learners with valuable language and communication skills, which the job market in the Philippines covets. English skillfulness is highly valuable as the country is a leading worldwide BPO hub with a wide-reaching link with the global community (Lockwood et al., 2008). Hence, the English Language Studies program could be highly effective as an engine towards a lucrative job market in many areas.

But for the program's success, its employability outcomes must be evaluated. This research aims to discover, through a close look at their working experience post-schooling concerning their field's academic training and their opinion about the value they assign to the English Language Studies program regarding their self-development and professional success.

Results from the study are seen to provide valuable lessons not just for CSPC but for schools in the Philippines and beyond. These findings can provide insight for improving the courses, updating the curriculum, focusing on skill development initiatives and providing better career counseling services. Furthermore, they can influence the formulation of national educational policies that aim at bridging the divide between education and the work marketplace. This paper also contributes to the growing body of academic literature on employability within the context of language studies in the Philippines.

Therefore, the paper is set to unravel the degree of job preparedness or employability of the graduates in the said English Language Programme at Camarines Sur Polytechnic Colleges (CSPC) Batch 2022. In a time when education-to-employment alignment is vital, this paper seeks to generate essential data on the program's effectiveness and the factors influencing graduates' career outcomes. Through an extensive analysis of employment status, job relevance, and program perceptions, this paper hopes to improve the English Language Studies program at CSPC and enhance the general landscape of English language education in the Philippines.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

In the higher education landscape, the employability of graduates has emerged as a critical concern, both in the Philippines and globally. Graduates' ability to secure employment aligns with their academic qualifications and is a significant driver of national socio-economic development. This literature review focuses on the graduates employability status, specifically on English Language Studies programs, and identifies the pertinent gaps that shape the current study.

Employability is a multifaceted concept, encompassing a range of skills, attributes and knowledge that enable individuals to secure and retain employment while adapting to a rapidly evolving labor market (McQuaid & Lindsay, 2005). Responsibility for employability falls on graduates and educational institutions (Budhrani et al., 2018). In the Philippines, employability discussions have gained prominence due to the increasing demand for a highly skilled and adaptable workforce (Labrague et al., 2017).

English Language Studies programs are of interesting, global significance. These programs equip graduates with highly in-demand linguistic and communication skills in business process outsourcing (BPO) and international trade (Boussebaa et al., 2014). While research has provided a glimpse of the importance of language proficiency in employability, research gaps persist concerning a broader range of employability outcomes, the job relevance of language proficiency, and perceptions of language programs.

Several studies have explored employability in the Philippines, with varying emphases. Meñez (2014) investigated the employability skills of Filipino graduates, identifying the competencies employers are looking for. Orence and Laguador (2013) delved into employability factors such as academic performance and work experience. However, research gaps are evident, warranting further exploration:

Several research gaps are found: Specificity to English Language Studies Graduates. Existing studies have not explicitly scrutinized graduates' employability status and experiences from English Language Studies programs, revealing a critical research gap. Second, Alignment with Academic Programs. The extent to which graduates jobs correspond to their academic qualifications remains uncharted, highlighting the need for targeted research. Third, Perceptions of Program Contribution. Graduates' perceptions regarding the program's personal and professional growth are underrepresented in the literature, an unexplored avenue for investigation. Lastly, Dynamic Labor Market Conditions. Research should delve into how dynamic labor market conditions, including emerging industries and technological advancements, influence employability, a vital aspect given the evolving nature of work.

Employability is a multifaceted concept of paramount importance in the Philippines and beyond. While existing research has provided valuable insights, research gaps exist in understanding the employability of English Language Studies graduates, job relevance, program perceptions, and the impact of dynamic labor markets. This study aims to bridge these gaps by examining the employability status

of English Language Studies graduates from Camarines Sur Polytechnic College, batch 2022, contributing to a deeper understanding of employability in language-related programs in the Philippines. The research questions are:

1. How far is the job placement of AB English Graduates from Camarines Sur Polytechnic Colleges, batch-2022, aligned to the knowledge and abilities they have obtained from their undergraduate program?
2. What is the perceived impact of the AB English program at CSPC on its graduates' academic, communication, and professional development?
3. How does a CSPC AB English alumnus assess his degree program in terms of subjects offered, their relevance to his desired field, and the emphasis on research and co-curricular activities?

Theoretical frameworks anchored in this study provide a holistic view of the AB English graduates' employability status from Camarines Sur Polytechnic Colleges.

First is the Human Capital Theory of Becker (Reder, 1967). This provides the essential groundwork for understanding how individuals' various educational, experiential, and skill-based investments can make them more valuable in the labor market. As with the concept of human capital in labor economics, acquired skills through formal education and experience increase a person's productivity and, thus, their value in the workplace. Within the scope of this study, Human capital theory plays a vital role in examining the role of the AB English program in equipping the graduates with the required skills and knowledge for sustainable employability and promotion on the career path.

Second is the Social Capital Theory Bourdieu (1986) and Putnam (2000). This reinforces the importance of social relations/networks, ties, bonds, etc., which enable employability, in contrast to Human Capital Theory. This theory posits that persons with close social connections and networks of acquaintance possess advantageous sources: jobs and information (Dubos, 2017). The research employs Social Capital Theory to examine how a graduate's social networks—including academic and alumni networks— impact their job prospects and how their experiences within these networks inform their beliefs about the program's contributions to their personal and professional development.

By incorporating these theoretical frameworks, the study aims to understand the complex mechanisms that drive the employability status of AB English graduates, considering their education and the social networks that could increase their job opportunities and the course-specific.

## **METHODS**

This study adopted a mixed-methods research design to address both research questions thoroughly. A survey on the employability status of AB English graduates from CSPC batch 2022 and their perceptions of the AB English program was conducted using mixed methods.

For the quantitative phase, a structured questionnaire was delivered to a representative sample of AB English graduates from CSPC, batch 2022. A stratified

random sampling was used to capture heterogeneity in job statuses and course perceptions.

The questionnaire was gathered through numerical survey data regarding core dependent variables such as job status, job fitness, years in post, average monthly salary and evaluations of how the program contributes to education, communication and professionalism. Moreover, demographic parameters like age, gender, and marital status were included.

Quantitative data were analyzed quantitatively using statistical tools such as descriptive statistics. This analysis sought to answer both Research Questions 1 and 2, investigating the match between graduates' post-baccalaureate employment and the subject/discipline of their program and the perceived effects of the AB English program on their overall academic and professional development.

The qualitative phase used in-depth interviews or focus groups. It was composed of graduates from various industries and different program evaluations. In-depth interviews or Focus Group Discussions were conducted with graduates for a qualitative deep understanding of their journey, hurdles and perceptions. Using a semi-structured interview guide, the study examined the influence of employability-associated variables and experiences related to the curriculum.

Integration of Findings: Quantitative and qualitative data were combined to yield an overall perspective on the employability state of AB English graduates from CSPC and their views on the program. Triangulation of data can improve the credibility of study results.

Ethical Considerations: These issues included ensuring appropriate participant knowledge about informed consent, confidentiality, and anonymity during the research process to defend their rights and keep their privacy.

Thus, using a mixed-methods research design enabled a more comprehensive approach towards providing actionable insights for improving CSPC's offerings while shedding light on what other AB English graduates perceive about their employability.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### ***Alignment between Education and Employment: Graduates Thriving in Fields Relevant to AB English Program***

Quantitative analysis has revealed an almost perfect overlap between the employment of AB English graduates from CSPC, batch-2022, and the competencies and skills they acquired while going through their undergraduate curriculum. Out of all the respondents, 75% reported that their job today is because of AB English. This suggests a clear link between teaching the AB English program at CSPC and applying such theoretical knowledge to real-world situations in the job market.

Moreover, when asked how their undergraduate education prepared them for their current jobs, 87% of Respondents in roles directly aligned with AB English were "satisfied" or better. They indicated that the training program adequately prepared them with the technical and procedural knowledge to perform effectively in their roles. Positive feedback reinforces the linkage between the curricular content of the program

and hiring trends in the marketplace, signalling an effective education that equips graduates with skills and knowledge that companies covet.

Another example of this impact: The alignment of jobs gained and knowledge/abilities acquired within the AB English program here at CSPC speaks volumes about the program's effectiveness. Graduates' employability in their respective degree fields is evidence of the programme's suitability and flexibility towards the needs of the labour market. This outcome accords with the predictions of Human Capital Theory, which is predicated upon the assertion that educational investment increases employability among graduates and job-seeking.

Equally notable is the exceptional level of readiness of grads in AB English jobs. This commitment is evident in its efforts to prepare students with relevant skills and abilities which can be directly utilized for job opportunities. This supports the purpose of universities in producing graduates who are 'employable' and fit for purpose for their chosen professions (Yorke & Knight, 2004).

The results suggest that AB English students from CSPC are well-prepared for job placement based on their education. This alignment benefits graduates and helps the program's reputation and relevance in the broader educational ecosystem.

### ***Holistic Development: Program's Positive Influence on Graduates' Academic and Professional Growth***

The qualitative data is highly positive regarding its effectiveness as reflected in AB English program's influence on the academic achievement, communication skills, and professional development of CSPC's AB English graduates of batch 2022. When asked about the importance of the AB English program for academic growth, an impressive 90% of the surveyed students mentioned how the AB English program had a significant effect on improving their academic abilities/knowledge. High scores confirm the program's effectiveness in developing their cognitive gifts and school readiness.

Furthermore, 85% stated that the training has substantially made them more effective communicator. Clearly, communicating is essential for many professionals (and this result suggests that our focus on language and communication did indeed pay off with how graduates could articulate their ideas and messages).

Moreover, 80% of these graduates attributed their professional accomplishments to the AB English degree program offered by CSPC. This correlates with progress in careers. Graduates credited the program not just with giving them the skills they needed academically and linguistically but also with having helped to determine the entire course of their careers.

The incredibly high evaluations about the effect of the AB English program on graduates' academic, communicative and professional development reveal an extremely successful program for promoting comprehensive growth. This is reinforced with the high 90% score for academic growth, indicating their students' successful development, enlightenment and knowledge acquisition. This is consistent with the

program's core objectives of fostering a solid grounding in English language studies, literatures and related disciplines.

This 85% rating of the program's communication training effectiveness is also significant. It is a versatile technique which will benefit any of the following roles—teacher, writer, journalist or PR practitioner. The program's efforts to enhance graduates' communication skills signify the program's dedication to producing graduates who are not merely technically proficient but can effectively convey ideas and knowledge to a wide range of listeners.

In addition, the fact that 80% of alumni attribute their professional achievements to the AB English program speaks volumes for its significant impact on their careers. Graduates appreciate the value of the program in their career trajectory, which, in turn, reflects well on the program's worth as an educational asset.

These findings suggest that the AB English program at CSPC has successfully produced academically, communicatively and professionally competent graduates. These positive attitudes show that the course fulfils its objectives: preparing individuals with the competence, abilities and expertise relevant to academia and industry.

### ***Comprehensive and Relevant Curriculum: Empowering Graduates for Success***

The graduates' evaluations of the AB English program in CSPC, specifically regarding course offerings, their relation to career interests and the stress on research and extra-curricular activities, are highly favorable. 79.26% were satisfied about the variety of the course selection. Thus, this top rating reflects the diverse and inclusive nature of the course's syllabus, which imparts to its students an all-embracing sense of English language studies, literature, etc.

Also, 85 percent of graduates perceived the subject matter as applicable to their field. This highlights the program's market-oriented response and dedication to presenting courses leading to professions including teaching, journalism, writing, and outsourcing business processes.

Furthermore, 75% of participants agreed that the program highly valued research. This indicates that the program is more concentrated on academic work and gives a chance for students to be involved in hands-on experience as well as extra-curriculum activities.

The positive reviews given to the AB English program at CSPC indicate that the program has effectively met the needs and expectations of its students. The high satisfaction rating with course offerings (80 percent) suggests that the program offers an extensive and varied curriculum that enables students to acquire a generalist understanding of English Language Studies and Literature. This interdisciplinary approach aligns with a broad curriculum that exposes students to areas that enrich their intellectual formation.

The 85% rating for the program's alignment with students' career areas indicates the program's market demand. It further highlights the program's focus on offering students tangible technical skills and knowledge they can use in their careers

immediately. Aligning these subjects with practical requirements significantly enhances graduates' employability and job satisfaction. Additionally, 75% of graduates recognizing the program's focus on research and co-curricular activities, which indicates our dedication to providing holistic education in our BS program. Aside from coursework, students can conduct research and join clubs.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The data provides critical insights into AB English at CSPC and its effects on graduates. Through several dimensions, it shows striking concordance between education and occupation, the total development of the individual, and a syllabus empowering graduates for achievement.

The program shows high congruence between the bachelor's degree curriculum and the graduates' job offers. A notable portion of respondents work in industries directly concerned with AB English itself, thus confirming the program's competency in equipping its graduates with professional backgrounds relevant to their respective course-takings. Students report high satisfaction (75%) with the degree's ability to prepare them for these roles and the program's success at endowing students with the knowledge and skills needed.

Two, the AB English program helps the students in their academic, communication and professional life after college. Graduates point towards the learning experience they gained as students of the course, which not only helped them with their theoretical knowledge but also helped them with their communication skills—a skill valued across different professions. Plus, grads cite the program as having substantially contributed to the rest of their professional paths and, therefore, their career arcs.

The programme provides holistic and topical training and equips graduates to become versatile professionals in multiple disciplines. Course selections are met with positive feedback, as they are seen to be diverse and inclusive. Its high market demand is further validated by the high perceived relevancy of the program among its future graduates. Also, the program's focus on research and extra-curricular activities further enhances students' experience over traditional coursework.

Leveraging the program's success, there are noted recommendations. Programs must continually review and update their learning roadmaps to stay ahead of trends in market demand. Searching for internships or apprenticeships opens doors to connecting academic theory with practical job scenarios. Career guidance and counselling services must be introduced at different levels of the education system to ensure that learners are equipped with relevant information on career options and job prospects for better employability and workplace success.

The AB English Program at CSPC has become an essential resource for developing the region's future workforce, providing holistic growth while covering critical academic skills in preparation for employment. This focus will ensure that the programme improves for prospective cohorts of graduates while staying up-to-date with the constantly evolving education and employment environment.



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