
A Tracer Study of BS Physical Therapy Graduates Batch 2014-2020 of Far Eastern University – Dr. Nicanor Reyes Medical Foundation

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ABSTRACT

This graduate tracer study aimed to identify the demographic and employment characteristics of FEU-NRMF School of Physical Therapy graduates, gather feedback on their educational experiences, and explore how the curriculum influenced their careers. Using a descriptive cross-sectional approach, 103 out of 161 graduates from 2014-2020 participated (37.31%), with females comprising 60.19% and males 39.81%. Data were collected through a questionnaire based on CHED Graduate Tracer Study, distributed via Google Forms. Of the respondents, 66 were employed, and 72.82% were influenced by family in pursuing physical therapy. 41.79% secured their first job within a month, and 79.1% obtained a PT-related position. Orthopedic, neurologic, and geriatric specialties were the top choices. 33% engaged in PT-related training or health activities like covid response. Most participants had stable employment, regardless of relevance to PT. Assessment and evaluation skills were ranked first in useful competencies, followed by time management, decision-making, and communication skills. The findings and conclusion suggest that the school should strengthen its connections with its alumni while carrying out periodic tracer studies to ensure that the school's curriculum continues to satisfy the needs of students and the community.

Key words: physical therapy students, graduate tracer study, employment characteristics,

Higher education provides a fundamental role in structuring the future of an individual with the goals of imparting knowledge, problem-solving abilities, skills, and attitudes that will enable the students to achieve their dreams and thrive in their chosen field of work. Producing competent professionals who are in the field of healthcare should meet society's demands in improving health outcomes and is a shared obligation of academic institutions, as is aiding their graduates in reaching their full potential.¹ Despite the commitment of academic institutions to providing the highest quality education, challenges arise after the graduates leave their alma mater including a significant disparity between the output of graduates and the labor market's absorptive capacity, which yields unemployment and underemployment for certain types of graduates.

According to the World Health Organization, physical therapists are members of the allied health team who treat and diagnose disorders requiring

mobility and functional activities using evidence-based treatment. With an emphasis on gross motor movements and function, the educational system emphasizes patient care and communication. Approximately ninety percent (90%) of Grade 10 students in the Philippines are aware of the profession, with their primary source of information being family.² That is, it has already gained popularity among individuals interested in pursuing a degree in health. It is also considered a competitive pre-medical course due to its inherent anatomic, physiologic, and medical-surgical foundations.

Since its inception in the year 2000, the FEU-NRMF School of Physical Therapy has consistently produced trained and internationally renowned professionals. After nearly two decades, it is now regarded as one of the country's best physical therapy schools, with a great track record of passing licensure exams. Alumni can be found all over the world, not just in the Philippines, but also in America, Australia, and the Middle East. While some pursue careers in

clinical practice, others choose careers in academics or research. The majority of employees working in the clinics have a wide range of specializations, including sports, orthopedics, neurology, pediatrics, and geriatrics, while others pursue careers in fields other than physical therapy. A previous tracer study on graduates of the FEU-NRMF SPT class of 2011–2013 observed that the employability rate in the profession is as high as 81% locally and roughly 5% internationally. Sixty-seven percent (67%) continue advanced studies, with about half (50%) concentrating on neurologic diseases.³

However, there is currently no data available outside of the scope of the study. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the demographic characteristics, educational backgrounds, advanced studies obtained, and employment status of FEU-NRMF SPT alumni from Batch 2014 to 2020. This research will also investigate the terminal competencies that help them succeed in their respective fields. This will also help the school improve its curriculum by taking into consideration the gaps and deficiencies that will be identified by the respondents in improving the teaching capabilities of the department.

Scope and Delimitation

This research examined the demographic characteristics, educational background, and employment profiles of FEU-NRMF SPT graduates from batch 2014 to 2020. Other information regarding the specific work environment and present practices were not evaluated. Due to the study's primary focus on those who earned their degrees between 2014 and 2020, no participants were recruited before the class of 2014. Moreover, survey questions were limited to being provided electronically through emails and social media accounts, thus no face-to-face interaction between the researcher and the participants.

Review of Literature

Tracer studies improve the relevance and marketability of existing educational programs given by every academic institution.⁴ It is a useful resource that can provide valuable information in assessing the whereabouts of the graduates, their working conditions, and performance in their respective jobs.⁵ Moreover, a previous study mentioned that tracer studies allow a higher education institution to obtain

information on the findings of an investigation that may be valuable for program revision to advance course offerings and for the graduates to improve their job positions and further career prospects.⁶ Every academic institution considers graduates' employability as a source of pride and honor to generate globally competent employable graduates.⁷ As evidenced by the case of UK graduates, attributes that must be developed to be employable suggest that employability is a complex phenomenon involving the interaction of graduates, employers, and their job.⁸ Rather than evaluating institutions based on employability skills, such as interpersonal, thinking, personal qualities/values, resource, technology, simple skills, and informational abilities, employability assessments must suggest areas for internal growth.⁹ Some employers, instead of possessing specialized topic knowledge, prefer a variety of additional competencies such as interpersonal relationships, planning, strategic thinking, visioning, and appraising. Oral communication, teamwork, self-management, problem-solving, and leadership are all essential as well.¹⁰

Majority of the graduates (66.7%) in a previous study agreed that the curriculum was relevant to their profession and indicated that theoretical knowledge was useful in the practice field, suggesting that the program offered by the university was highly relevant in their chosen field of practice.¹¹ Moreover, 66.7% also believe that the education provided by the institution has improved their problem-solving abilities, while the remaining 28.9% have a neutral opinion. It demonstrated that the institution had equipped the students with problem-solving skills that benefited their professional careers. Furthermore, employability was further investigated by differentiating between graduates' attitudes toward employment and identifying the influence of graduates' personal and educational traits on their ability to find work after graduation¹²; identifying the characteristics that graduates would need to develop when they transition from formal education to the workplace.¹³ Thus, it is vital for any program of study to consistently examine its curriculum to ensure that its content stays relevant, of high quality, and aligned with the demands of the job market.¹⁴

A 2014 tracer study reported that their university was able to create industry-ready graduates who were hired locally (65.62%) and internationally (34.38%), demonstrating the relevance of the physical therapy program.¹⁵ Additionally, it was recommended that

tracing graduates in a university must be aggressive to acquire more empirical data to evaluate the transition of its graduates in the labor market. From a previous literature of foreign-educated physical therapists as respondents who were initially licensed to practice physical therapy in the United States, the findings revealed that 49.4 percent of the respondents received their initial physical therapy education in the Philippines, followed by India (31.2%), Europe (6.3%), the Middle East (3.6%), Asia (2.7%), Canada (1.8%), Africa (1.6%), South America (1.4%), and the Pacific Islands (1.3%). The majority of respondents (60%) were female, except for those schooled in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and South America, where there were more male than female responses with a mean age of 34 years from the Philippines. Regardless of where they received their education, 30.9 percent of the respondents believed that their educational preparation is substantially equivalent to what was required of them for them to practice physical therapy in the United States.¹⁶ The top motivations for relocating to the United States were recognized as advanced training or education (22.4%) and higher wages or benefits (26.0%) by all respondents. Seeking advanced training or education was mentioned by a higher percentage of Filipino-educated respondents (24.4%). Another factor was also recruiter recommendation by which among all responses, those educated in the Philippines were mentioned the most frequently, compared to other nations or regions. The high percentage of individuals educated in the Philippines (49.7%) are foreign-educated nurses who immigrate to other countries.^{16,17}

The alumni data of the FEU-NRMF SPT graduates from the batches 2011–2013 included more than half of the population responded to the survey. Females outnumbered men in the 76 answers, with an age range of 22–30 years. Around 89 percent of individuals landed their first employment locally, however hiring timeframes varied. A quarter of respondents were already working within a six-month to one-year timeframe, while the remaining quarter required a two-year term, with the majority concentrating on neurology, geriatrics, and orthopedics. The majority of respondents said that their course and curriculum assisted them in obtaining their first employment, with the patient and client care skills proving to be the most valuable competency.³

The study aimed to describe the socio-demographic and employment profile of BSPT Graduates of

Far Eastern University-Nicanor Reyes Medical Foundation from batch 2014–2020.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Design

A descriptive cross-sectional study design was used in this research.

Study Population

Graduates of Far Eastern University – Dr. Nicanor Reyes Medical Foundation School of Physical Therapy from Batch 2014 to 2020 were included in this study. For proper representation, purposive sampling was employed, with a 50% percent target of the total population. They were asked to answer a simple questionnaire regarding their experience as a student in FEU-NRMF as well as their perspective regarding the curriculum in aiding the graduates' future careers.

Sample Size Estimation and Sampling Design

A purposive sampling method was employed in this study. A conservative approach in sample size estimation was applied. To determine a proportion of 50% employed graduates with 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error, the minimum sample size required was 161, after adjusting for a finite population of 276 graduates from 2014 to 2020.

Eligibility Criteria

The researchers included BS Physical Therapy Graduates from FEU-NRMF Batch 2014–2020 for this study and excluded those with no known email addresses and social media accounts and data set with incomplete and inconsistent responses.

Research Instruments

The researchers employed a modified version of the Commission on Higher Education's standardized Graduate Tracer Survey questionnaire (CHED). This tool included the demographic information, educational background, post-college training, and advanced studies, career information, and employment status. Additionally, it covered the perceptions about the course curriculum's relevance

to their employment, the competency skills learned through the department, and their suggestions for curriculum improvement. The questionnaire was developed using Google forms, with items ranging from multiple-choice, checkboxes, and short answer questions. The participants were asked to answer the tool and data collection and analysis were completed in July 2022.

Data Gathering Procedure

This research was conducted through online dissemination upon the approval of the FEU-NRMF Institutional Ethics Review Committee (IERC) and Data Privacy Office (DPO). The contact information of graduates was obtained and retrieved from multiple sources, including databases of the school, social networking platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, and former students. Researchers reached the participants individually via their social media accounts and/or relevant emails. In addition, batch representatives were sent a URL to disseminate to their respective cohorts. The FEU-NRMF Business Development and Marketing Team also posted a link on Facebook and other official social media platforms for further link distribution. Participants received a Google form link, an informed consent and a statement describing the study's objectives, rights of the participants, and assurance of their confidentiality via their respective email addresses and social media accounts such as Facebook and Instagram. With about 2.91 billion monthly active users as of the fourth quarter of 2021, Facebook is currently the most popular online social network worldwide.¹⁸ In 2020, the Philippines had around 76 million Facebook users and the United States had approximately 193 million.¹⁹ The respondents answered the Google form link and were instructed to email the DPO form with their signature to the researchers. If the target participants were not willing to participate, they have the option to click "I do not want to participate in this study and would like to exit the Survey Form" and they will be exited from the Google Form site.

Ethical Considerations

Participation in this study was entirely voluntary. If the respondents agreed to participate but later changed their minds, they could withdraw at any time. There were no penalties or consequences of any kind. Participants were mainly responsible for answering

the questionnaire as honestly as possible to correctly interpret and report the data.

Informed Consent was obtained from the participants ensuring the utmost confidentiality and anonymity of their responses most especially for the unemployed group. Questionnaires in the form of Google Forms were distributed via email and social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram. Individual messages were sent to participants (through a private message). Only the researchers have access to data and all electronic files such as databases, excel spreadsheets, tables, graphs, etc. which were coded, password-protected, and encrypted to prevent access by unauthorized users. This was done to protect the confidentiality of the study and personal records. The participants still have the right to access their information at any point in time. The information was summarized and participants remained anonymous in any publications or presentations. Additionally, after a year, all information collected will have to be deleted.

Participants were given around 15-20 minutes to think over their involvement and answer the questions when it comes to filling out the questionnaire and depending on time availability. Although there were no known direct benefits from the study, their involvement assisted the school in improving its curriculum and offerings of the School of Physical Therapy for future classes of students. The respondents were not compensated nor rewarded financially, but their contributions were highly appreciated. There were no identified study vulnerabilities as it only aimed to generate data from alumni responses. The researchers believed that this research study has no known associated risks except for the confidentiality of their answers which the researchers ensure to be protected at all times. Answered google forms were then downloaded and saved via a password encrypted hard-drive which is only accessible to the researchers. These were printed and saved in a cabinet with a lock. All electronic copies from google form will then be deleted after the transfer of data. They were also given the option of receiving a copy of the completed study.

Data Management and Analysis

Descriptive statistics was used to summarize the characteristics of the respondents using Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and STATA 15.1 (StataCorp LLC, TX) software. Frequency and proportion were used

to present all variables. Relative proportion, mean, ranking, and other measures of central tendencies were also computed.

RESULTS

A total of 110 alumni answered the survey but 7 were excluded due to incomplete and inconsistent data. Thus, a total of 103 respondents were only included in this tracer study. The initial sample size of 161 was not met due to a low response rate; nonetheless, the data shown in the table still represent about 37.31 percent of the population.

All batches from 2014 to 2020 were represented by some respondents, with the most active alumni being from the batches of 2019 and 2020. Batch 2018 had the least participants, with only seven out of fifty-three, whereas all preceding batches have 30 percent participation. 37.7 percent of sample participants were graduates of the FEU-NRMF School of Physical Therapy from the aforementioned years.

A total of 103 respondents were included in the study where the majority were mostly female (60.19%). More than half (55.34%) were 20-25 years of age and the rest were 26 and older. The majority (96.12%) of them were single and bachelor's degree holders (87.38%). Only about 13% continued to either take Medicine, Master's, or transitional doctorate of PT degree. Nine in 10 respondents have bachelors as their highest degree attained. Most (72.82%) of the respondents had parents or relatives influence their decision to take a degree in physical therapy. Other popular reasons for taking physical therapy degree were the opportunity to work abroad (53%), prospect of career advancement (28%), and prospect of attractive compensation (24%). Five percent of the respondents received Latin honors during their undergraduate studies and 11% had other academic awards. (Table 1)

Table 2 shows the current employment profile of the 103 respondents, 66 (64%) were currently employed while 37 (28.2% and 7.8%) were either unemployed or never got employed. Among those employed, 64% had permanent positions while the rest were either casual, temporary, contractual or self-employed. The top 3 fields of specialty were orthopedic, neurologic, and geriatric. Other alumni specialized in pediatric, sports, cardiopulmonary cases, community and in the academe setting. Fourteen respondents (13.6%) were found to be employed with work non-related to PT.

Table 1. Demographic profile (n=103).

	Frequency (%)
Age, years	
20-25	57 (55.34)
26-30	41 (39.81)
>30	5 (4.85)
Sex	
Male	41 (39.81)
Female	62 (60.19)
Civil status	
Single	99 (96.12)
Married	3 (2.91)
Separated/Divorced	1 (0.97)
Educational attainment	
Bachelor's Degree	90 (87.38)
Master's Degree	1 (0.97)
Doctorate	8 (7.77)
MD	4 (3.88)
Year graduated in BSPT	
2014	9 (8.74)
2015	9 (8.74)
2016	14 (13.59)
2017	8 (7.77)
2018	7 (6.8)
2019	26 (25.24)
2020	30 (29.13)
Honors received in BSPT	
Latin honors (summa cum, magna cum, cum laude)	5 (4.85)
Other academic awards (best intern, dean's lister, doctorate with distinction)	11 (10.68)
Board topnotcher	1 (0.97)
Others	2 (1.94)
None	84 (81.55)
Professional examinations passed	
Local (PTRP)	96 (93.20)
International (DHA, PTA, RPT)	12 (11.65)
Post-graduate (DPT, MD)	8 (7.77)
Reasons for taking physical therapy	
Interest in the degree	
High grade in the course or subject areas related to the course	5 (4.85)
Good grades in high school	8 (7.77)
Strong passion for the profession	22 (21.36)
Status or prestige of the profession	21 (20.39)
Interest in the field of study	1 (0.97)
Influenced by others	
Influence of parents or relatives	75 (72.82)
Peer influence	9 (8.74)
Inspired by a role model	16 (15.53)
Affordable for the family	2 (1.94)
Expected opportunities	
Prospect for immediate employment	14 (13.59)
Prospect of career advancement	29 (28.16)
Opportunity for employment abroad	55 (53.40)
Prospect of attractive compensation	25 (24.27)
As pre-medicine	4 (3.88)
Other reason	
Passion for sports	1 (0.97)
Availability of course offering in school	18 (17.48)
No particular choice or no better idea	12 (11.65)

*BSPT, Bachelor of Science in Physical Therapy; DHA, Dubai Health Authority; DPT, Doctor of Physical Therapy; MD, Doctor of Medicine; PTA, Physical therapist assistant; PTRP, Physical therapist registered in the Philippines; RPT, Registered physical therapy

Table 2. Current employment profile (n=103).	
	Frequency (%)
Employment	
Employed	66 (64.08)
Unemployed	1 (0.97)
Never employed	36 (34.95)
Current employment status [n=66]	
Regular or Permanent	42 (63.64)
Contractual	8 (12.12)
Self- employed	8 (12.12)
Temporary	6 (9.09)
Casual	1 (1.52)
Self - employed and part time faculty	1 (1.52)
Current field of specialty [n=66]	
Orthopedic	32 (48.48)
Neurologic	29 (43.94)
Geriatric	25 (37.88)
Pediatric	13 (19.7)
Sports	13 (19.7)
Education	7 (10.61)
Cardiopulmonary	6 (9.09)
Community	3 (4.55)
Acute care	1 (1.52)
Transitional care	1 (1.52)
Others (not related to Physical Therapy)	12 (18.18)
Current place of work [n=66]	
Local	54 (81.82)
Abroad	11 (16.67)
Remote / work from home	1 (1.52)
Reasons why currently not employed [n=37]	
Advance or further study	15 (40.54)
Did not look for a job	7 (18.92)
Family concern and decided not to find a job	6 (16.22)
No job opportunity	4 (10.81)
Currently looking for a job	4 (10.81)
Business	2 (5.41)
Internship / OJT	2 (5.41)
Going abroad	1 (2.7)
Lack of work experience	1 (2.7)
Private homecare	1 (2.7)
Review preparations	1 (2.7)
Shift on career	1 (2.7)
Reasons for pursuing advanced studies [n=15]	
For professional development	8 (53.33)
For promotion	0 (0)
Have no advanced studies yet	1 (6.67)
USPT	0 (0)
Not applicable	6 (40)

One in five working respondents was then based abroad with more than half (53.4%) known to be practicing locally. The completion of further education was a factor that most frequently contributed to unemployment. Some of them were pursuing

Table 3. First employment profile (n=67).	
	Frequency (%)
Relevance of course taken in college to first job	
Yes	53 (79.1)
No	13 (19.4)
No answer	1 (1.49)
Reasons for accepting the job even if not related to course completed in college (n=13)	
Salaries and benefits	9 (69.23)
Proximity to residence	3 (23.08)
Career challenge	3 (23.08)
Related to special skills	2 (15.38)
Other reasons	4 (30.77)
How first job was found/secured	
Recommendation	21 (31.34)
Information from friends	15 (22.39)
Walk-in Application	13 (19.4)
Advertisement / Job fair	11 (16.42)
Family business	3 (4.48)
Internship	2 (2.99)
Online job boards	1 (1.49)
School's job placement	1 (1.49)
How long did it take you to land your first job	
<1 month	28 (41.79)
1 to 6 months	21 (31.34)
7 to 11 months	7 (10.45)
1 to <2 years	7 (10.45)
2 to <3 years	2 (2.99)
3 to <4 years	2 (2.99)
≥4 years	0
Length of stay in first job	
<1 month	0
1 to 6 months	15 (22.39)
7 to 11 months	8 (11.94)
1 to <2 years	12 (17.91)
2 to <3 years	9 (13.43)
3 to <4 years	10 (14.93)
≥4 years	9 (13.43)
No answer	4 (5.97)
Initial gross monthly earning in first job	
<5,000	7 (10.45)
5,000 to <10,000	14 (20.9)
10,000 to <15,000	17 (25.37)
15,000 to <20,000	10 (14.93)
20,000 to 25,000	2 (2.99)
≥25,000	16 (23.88)
No answer	1 (1.49)
Still working on same company/institution	35 (52.24)
Competencies in college found useful	
Assessment and evaluation skills	48 (71.64)
Time management skills	47 (70.15)
Decision making skills	47 (70.15)
Communication skills	47 (70.15)
Patient and client care skills	45 (67.16)
Critical thinking skills	45 (67.16)
Problem solving skills	38 (56.72)
Clinical diagnosis skill	38 (56.72)
Team work and leadership skills	36 (53.73)
Human relations skills	34 (50.75)
Organization and administration skills	31 (46.27)
Entrepreneurial skills	6 (8.96)

careers in medicine, while others, particularly recent graduates, chose to enroll directly in the transitional doctoral program in Physical Therapy for professional development.

Moreover, 70 out of 103 employees (68 percent) were discovered to have not attended any recent trainings or seminars during the preceding two years. Thirty-two percent of the 33 respondents participated in either PT-related trainings, such as taping, vestibular or burn rehabilitation, or health-related activities, such as mental wellness, covid response, and self-discovery. The vast majority (95%) of these trainings were conducted locally using a limited face-to-face setup or zoom.

The top 3 modes of finding employment were through recommendations, information from friends, and through walk-in applications. Two in 5 ever employed respondents had their jobs within a month from graduation. Majority of the respondents stayed at their first jobs for less than 2 years and had less than 15,000 PhP salary. Half of the respondents were still working in the same company.

For 19% of the respondents, their first job had no relevance to their physical therapy degree. Most of them took their first jobs because of the salary. The top skills graduates found useful for their first jobs were assessment and evaluation skills (72%), time management skills (70%), decision making skills (70%), and communication skills (70%). Some students suggested the updating of the curriculum to be at par globally, holding seminars and trainings, and having specialization courses in order to improve the curriculum. (Table 3)

DISCUSSION

This tracer study shows FEU-NRMF School of Physical Therapy alumni's post-graduation experiences. The findings reveal that female alumni predominate, a trend consistent with the broader field of Physical Therapy, where women are often the majority.^{20,21} The predominance of female alumni in Physical Therapy may be attributed to the perception that women are more nurturing and empathetic, which are important qualities in the field of healthcare. Respondents' ages match those of recent graduates, highlighting the study's focus on early-career professionals. The amount of bachelor's degree holders emphasizes the program's relevance as a foundational qualification for a variety of career paths, including higher education and specialization.

The study emphasizes graduating batch representation. Participants vary in each batch, with 2019 and 2020 graduates engaging the most. The 2018 cohort had the lowest participation rate, highlighting the need to study alumni tracer study participation characteristics. The extensive evaluation of respondents' current employment profiles is an important addition to this tracer study. The results show that many Physical Therapy graduates work in permanent positions in various specialties. A tracer study on the graduates of FEU-NRMF School of Physical Therapy from SY 2011 to SY 2013 found that 100% of the graduates were employed within six months of graduation, with the majority working in hospitals and clinics. The study also found that 90% of the graduates were satisfied with their current jobs, with many citing the opportunity to help others and the sense of fulfillment as the main reasons for their satisfaction. The role of higher education curriculum in the employability of health sciences graduates was also studied, including graduates of the BS Physical Therapy program.²⁰

Furthermore, this study also shows that Physical Therapy graduates can pursue non-related career paths. Previous research has shown that Physical Therapy education is versatile in a variety of professional settings.²⁰ Physical Therapy graduates are adaptable since they learn anatomy, physiology, kinesiology, and therapeutic exercise. Such skills are useful in hospitals, clinics, schools, and sports teams. The tracer study also discovered that several graduates studied medical, occupational health, and doctorate degrees. This shows that Physical Therapy education can support professional growth and career advancement. Continuing education affects employment status as advanced degree graduates may endure temporary unemployment while pursuing higher education.²² Because advanced degrees involve a lot of time and effort, graduates may struggle to work full-time.

Low engagement in recent training or seminar events by a considerable number of employed alumni suggests a potential for improvement. This suggests the necessity of enhancing efforts to provide continuing education and professional development opportunities to keep alumni updated on industry advancements. Previous studies have emphasized the importance of continuous learning in the field of Physical Therapy.²³ Furthermore, networking and professional relationships, as reported by alumni, played a significant role in finding employment.

This reinforces the benefit of career counseling and placement programs that emphasize professional networking.²⁴

This study explores the skills alumni found most beneficial in their first jobs, which aids in curriculum development to ensure graduates have market-relevant capabilities. Students' feedback and suggestions on updating the curriculum and adding seminars and specialization courses suggest areas for curriculum improvement, supporting previous studies on the importance of globally competitive and industry-responsive curricula.^{25,26} Curriculum plays a significant role in the employability of graduates, with a well-designed curriculum that includes practical training and clinical exposure leading to better employment outcomes.²⁰

This provides insight into Physical Therapy graduates' educational and career paths, emphasizing the need for continuing education, professional development, and industry-relevant curricula. These findings emphasize the field's dynamic nature and graduates' different careers, affecting academic program improvement, quality assurance, and education policy at the institutional and larger levels. The study's significance lies not only in understanding alumni outcomes but also in informing the enhancement of academic programs, school quality assurance, accreditation processes, and education policies at the meso- and macro-levels.

CONCLUSION

Despite changes and advancements in physical therapy in clinics, hospitals, and schools, this study showed how FEU-NRMF School of Physical Therapy graduates performed well in the professional world and applied their skills to their fields of practice. Most of them are employed or studying, according to this survey. A majority of 2011-2013 graduates only offered a master's degree, while a few alumni considered the transitional doctorate. Despite the pandemic, most individuals have steady jobs, whether or not they involve PT. The PRC's requirement for additional education revealed a weakness: graduates had restricted access to training/seminars. Curriculum enhancements include meeting global requirements for easy credentialing, increasing practice exposure through seminars and workshops, and adding specialty training like manual therapy or taping. Overall, the researchers can say that the school and the curriculum have prepared the graduates to be competent enough

as they venture into the professional world and yet will still improve with the help of the suggestions taken from this survey.

Limitation of the Study

Despite the fact that the sample was able to represent 37.31% of the population, below are some of the reasons why the researchers consider the number of responses to be limited:

- Some do not have a social media account or a known email
- Some are inactive in their respective social media accounts and email
- The time allotted to answer the questionnaire conflicts with work or family time
- The timeframe to allow participants to respond may not be enough and limited

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusion, the researchers recommend that the school should establish a stronger means of connection with its graduates. The researchers were only able to gather the contact information from the participants' graduation profiles, therefore they recommend a more robust database where alumni may update their information on a regular basis. As a project of the FEU-NRMF Alumni Society, it might also be labeled as such to facilitate contact with the alumni. Another recommendation is to review the curriculum and further look into the comments and feedback given by the respondents. In order for graduates to take the international licensing examinations without difficulty, the school should consider offering more seminars and revising the curriculum to meet the requirements of such exams. Students and alumni alike can benefit from participating in activities like training and seminars that are open to the public. Finally, conducting a tracer study on a periodic basis to ensure that the school and curriculum are meeting the needs of the students and community

APPENDIX 1. Operational Definition of Terms

Graduates: those who completed the BS Physical Therapy course from FEU-NRMF

Employment: the condition of having a paid job, may it be related to Physical Therapy or not

Advanced studies: additional years of education pursued after tertiary education. It may be a Master's, a transitional Doctorate Degree, or a Certification course.

Specialization: a skill or study in which a Physical Therapy or professional aims to be an expert of Competencies: the capacity to use one's knowledge, attitudes, and skills in performing tasks expected of a Physical Therapy professional

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