

Employment Trends of Graduates in Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin Polytechnic

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Abstract: The main purpose of this paper is to analyses the employment trends of graduates in Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin Polytechnic (PTSS) in 10 years. There are several elements that will be discussed in this papers such as the number of graduates from 2007 to 2017, graduates' gender, programs, employment status, employment groups, wages, and the reasons why some of the graduates are unemployed. For this research, the data was downloaded from Graduates Tracer Study (www.graduan.mohe.gov.my). Based on the data downloaded, SPSS was used to analyze the data. For 10 years, (PTSS) had produced a total of 9077 graduates and based on the data, 6152 graduates (67.68%) had been employed within the time they completed their studies and their convocation. It is summarized that, majority of diploma graduates had around RM1001-RM1500 monthly wages and most of them are in permanent jobs. Most of the students work in private sectors, followed by multinational private and government. This paper not only focus on the graduates who are employed but also study on the reasons why some of the graduates are unemployed. Since employment is important not only to graduates, it is hoped that this paper can give complete information on the employment trends in PTSS. For future works, a detailed analysis will be done on the comparison of graduates based on their fields and departments.

Key words: *Graduates' Employment, Graduate Tracer Study, Trends, Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin Polytechnic*

INTRODUCTION

In current “competency based education” model, higher education institutions such as universities, polytechnics and colleges are being pressured to make sure that students who graduated were employed within their field of study [1]. The main issue in any higher education institutions' graduates is that to find the right job based on their field of study [2]. As stated by Lin et al [3], graduates employment is having difficulty in Chinese society. Mourshed et al [4] added, graduates face a major challenge in finding employment after graduation.

Employment is important not only for the graduates itself but also for the parties such as national higher education, human resource, and economic development ([3],[4]). As stated by [2], employment covers four objectives which are first, it allow assessing for demand

for professionals in different areas, second, it allow strategies for finding and changing jobs, third, is allow satisfaction with the employment and lastly it allow satisfactions with the employment and with the quality of university education and other indicators such as the process of labor adaptation of young graduates.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Employment is defined as an occupation by which a person earns a living. Employment of the higher education graduates is one of the debated issues in nowadays economic climate. In general, students need to equip themselves with skills and knowledge to fulfil various employment demands in the labor market after they have completed their studies.

There are a lot of researches focusing on employment of the higher education graduates that focuses on different

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types of elements. In this topics, related works on employment will be discussed.

The annual report by TalentCorp [5] in 2017 cited a study by the Ministry of Education Malaysia stated that in every year, over 250,000 students graduate from institutions of higher learning, but 1 out of 5 graduates in 2017 remain unemployed within six months of graduating, with majority are Degree holders of arts and social science background. A major finding shows 51.5% unemployed fresh graduates was in science field. The majority 50% of unemployed fresh graduates are from the public universities, while 47% are from private universities, 2% of polytechnics and 1% of community college and TVET institutions.

This finding shows an increasing than the statistics outcome in 2011 (Ramakrishnan et. al. [6]. Based on the research on the reasons of unemployment among graduates in 2009, majority of the unemployed graduates are looking for jobs but unsuccessfully get any [6]. The issue arise is the factors leading to the decrease in demand for these graduates. However, the Malaysian job market is expected to gain momentum with 30% of Malaysian employers indicating an increase in hiring activity in 2018. Besides that, graduates seem to be technically equipped in terms of the important skills and personal attributes [7] to perform their jobs to meet the employers' requirement. The utilization of the highly skilled workers can contribute to more robust economic growth in the country. Meanwhile, Omar et. al. [8] research find that the national and global economies' employers tend to recruit graduates with high soft skills competencies. There are much higher now than before. Unfortunately, graduates nowadays lack soft skills and most of them are still troubled to keep up with the employer's requirements and expectations [9].

A research from [3] stated that due to the Internet advancement and the aftermath of 2008 subprime mortgage policy, the way people live and works had changed drastically. For example, the Internet and Information Technology brings a new ways in the various fields such as in Education field. [3] analyses the historical and current labour supply on computer science (CS) graduation rates in the United States. There are two assumptions made which is first, the number of career changes among CS graduates to non-CS careers compared to that of non-CS graduates is the same or close to equilibrium and the second assumption is that a cohort approach or period approach is used depending on the age group. Analysis was made based on the data collected from 1994 to 2014. The graduates were classified into three types which is graduates with bachelors, masters, and doctoral degree. This research will try to predict the employment of CS graduates in

2024. Based on the analysis, it is concluded that in 2024, graduates with doctoral degree will be around 28300 which meets half of the forecast. It is also estimated that 3,173,900 CS occupations will need bachelor's degree. Associate degree will have around 1,043,600 occupations and there is no employment that needs CS master degree in 2024. Every occupation with CS degree will have a growth from 2014 to 2024 except for programmers which drops by 8% (26500). As a conclusion, it is forecasted that there is a possibility of work shortage on CS graduates in 2024. However, due to the new technology that were developed, more new occupations will be created and higher educational institutions needs to improve on the curriculum for CS student not only on programming skill but also in other supplementary skills.

ANALYSIS

The data for this section is gathered from the system called Graduates' Tracer Study that can be accessed by the link "<http://graduan.mohe.gov.my/>". The main objective of this system is to gain the insights, programme details, facilities and services that the graduates faced during their studies. Students need to provide the feedbacks thru the system before they attend their graduation. Figure 1 to 9 shows the summary of the data downloaded from this system. The data is from the year 2007 to 2017. In this sections several analysis will be made as listed below:

- a) Analysis on the number of graduates from 2007-2017
- b) Analysis on graduate's gender in 10 years
- c) Analysis on the programmes that the graduates enrolled.
- d) Analysis on the employment status.
- e) Analysis on the employment groups.
- f) Analysis on the wages.
- g) Analysis on the reasons why some graduates have not being offered a job.

These information are useful for Polytechnic to improve on their programmes and syllabus.

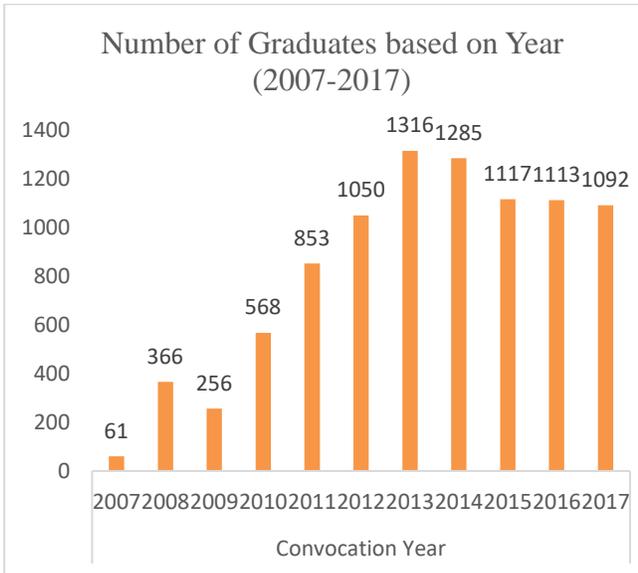


Fig 1: Number of Graduates based on year

Fig 1 shows the number of graduates for Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin from 2007-2017. Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin Polytechnic was founded in 2007 and within these 10 years, there is an increment of graduates from 2007 to 2014 by 1255 graduates. This is due to an increase of departments and programmes within the time that was founded until now. However, there is a decrease of 224 graduates from 2013 to 2017.

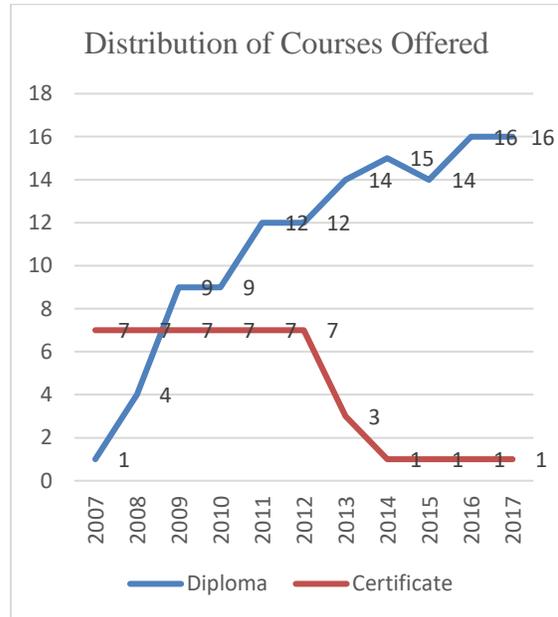


Fig 3: Distribution of courses offered in Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin Polytechnic

There are two type of courses offered by Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin which is Diploma course and Certificate courses. As what is shown in Fig 4, there is an increment of Diploma course from 2007 with 1 course to 16 courses in 2017. However, there is a decreased in Certificate course with 7 courses in 2007 to only 1 course in 2017. This single certificate course is from Department of Tourism and Hospitality while the other Diploma course is from Department of Information Technology and Communication, Department of Electrical Engineering, Department of Design and Communication Visual, Department of Mechanical Engineering, Department of Commerce and lastly from Department of Tourism and Hospitality.

The next figure (Fig 4-Fig 9) will explain in details on the employment status and trends of the graduates in this Polytechnic from 2007 to 2017.

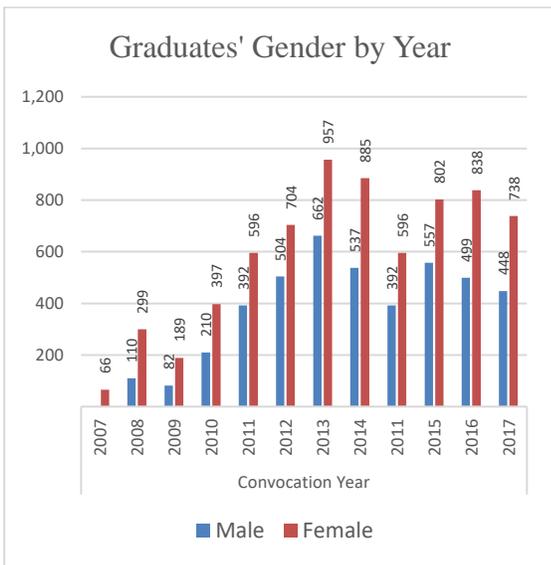


Fig 2: Graduates Gender by Year

Fig 2 shows the gender distributions of graduates in Polytechnic. As what is shown in Fig 2, female graduates are the one that have higher number than male graduates. In 10 years, the number of female graduates normally double than the male graduates.

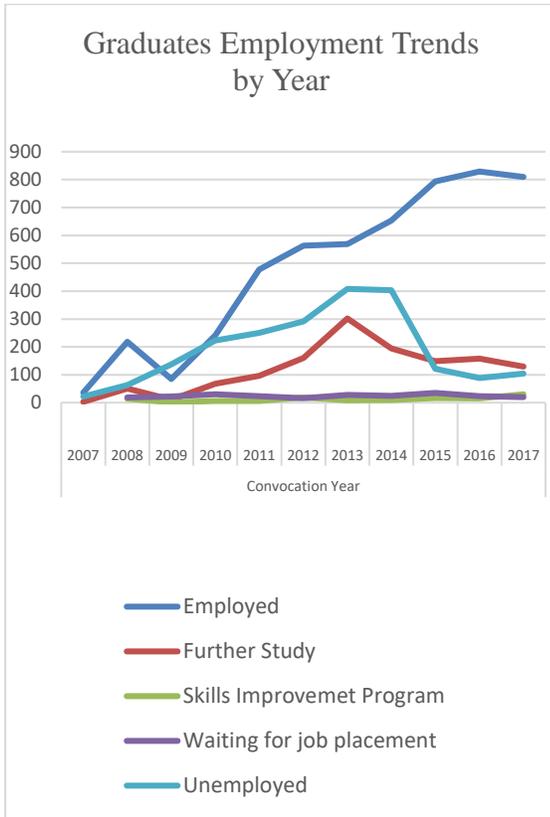


Fig 4: Number of graduates (Employed)

Based on Fig 4, it is stated that most of the graduates were employed within the time they finish their study until their convocation. The second is unemployed, followed by further study, waiting for job placement and lastly joining skills improvement program.

Employment covers majority of the distribution. As shown in Table 1, the data is inconsistent where there is ups and down on the employment status.

Table 1: Employment Trends (2007-2012)

Employment Status	Convocation Year				
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Employed	43	51	71	74	74
Further Study	23	15	13	14	12
Skills Improvement Program	1	1	2	1	3
Waiting for job placement	2	2	3	2	2
Unemployed	31	31	11	8	10
Total	100	100	100	100	100

The total number of unemployed graduates also did not have a lot differences between the employed graduates. The reasons why some graduates are unemployed will be discussed in the last part of this section.

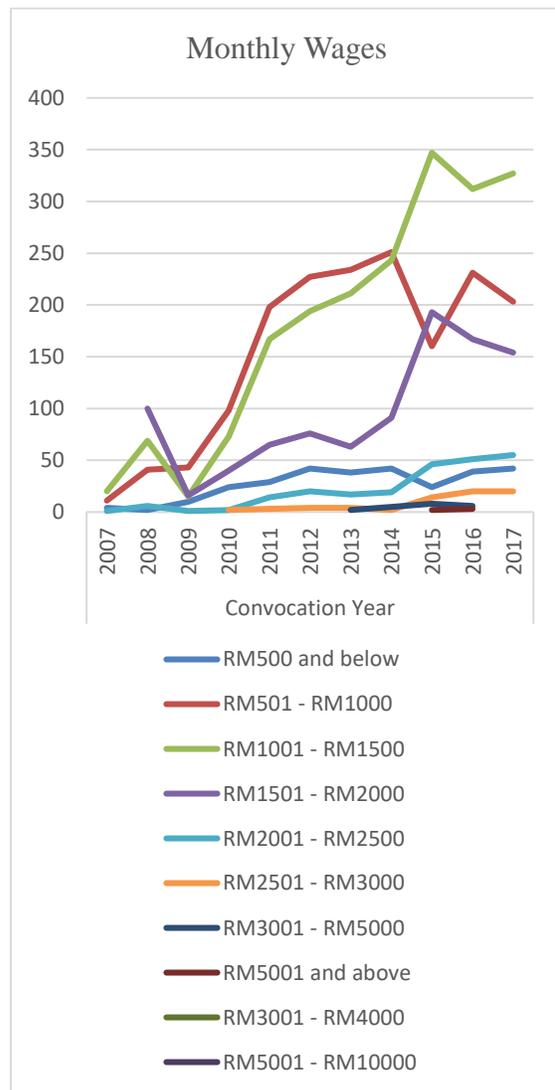


Fig 5: Graduates' monthly wages

Table 1: Employment Trends (2007-2012)

Employment Status	Convocation Year					
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Employed	59	60	33	42	56	54
Further Study	5	14	4	12	11	15
Skills Improvement Program	0	4	0	1	1	2
Waiting for job placement	0	5	8	5	3	2
Unemployed	36	17	54	39	30	28
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Based on figure 5, it is shown that the normal wages that the employed graduates receive monthly is around RM1001-RM1500. The second highest is around RM501-RM1000 and the third is around RM1501-RM2000. Although normal diploma graduates can expect wages between RM1500 to RM2600, there are also graduates who received more than RM2601 as shown in figure 5. However, the number is still low (Below 10 graduates) due to the face that their qualification is still considered low.

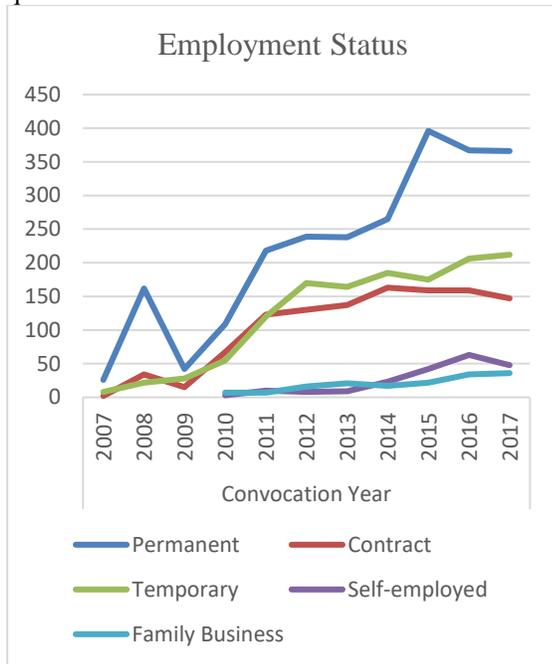


Fig 6: Graduates' employment Status

From figure 6, we can see that majority of the graduates got permanent job followed by temporary job, contract job, self-employed and lastly family business. Permanent have the highest value while between temporary and contract job there is only a slight differences. Self-employed and having family business also have a slight differences as similar to temporary and contract job.



Fig 7: Graduates' CGPA

Figure 7 shows the graduate CGPA in 10 years. As shown in this figure, majority of the graduates got around 2.99-3.00 for their CGPA, followed by 2.50-2.99 and third with 3.50-3.69. Based on Sarwar [10], although CGPA plays an important role in getting a job, most of the employers nowadays tend to look at skills, qualities and experience as its additional core point. In Polytechnic, students do not only focus on academic but they are also trained to perform in other activities such as co-curricular activities, trainings, events, workshops and other technical activities that can build up their skills. A research from Ismail et al [11] focusing on the perceptions of employers towards Polytechnic graduates shows that employers tend to focus on the graduates' technical skill and also other skills like communication skills, their interests in doing a job,

analytical skills, computer skills, their level in managing pressure or stress and also their experts in their fields.

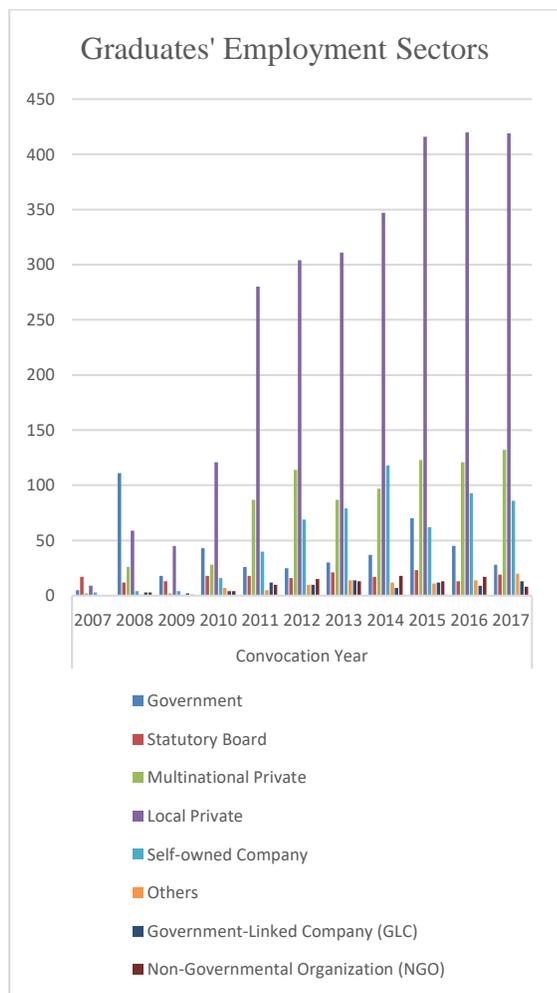


Fig 8: Graduates' Employment Sectors

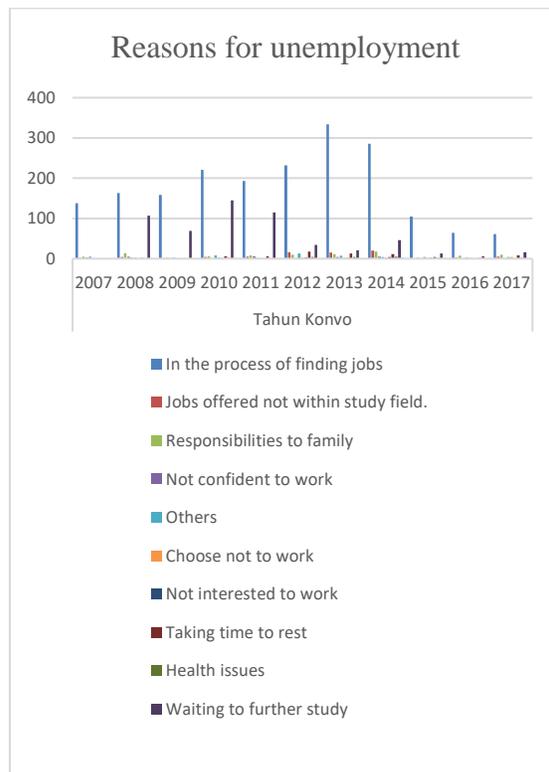


Fig 9: Reasons for unemployment between graduates.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the findings, due to the issues of graduates who did not work in their study field, it is suggested that higher education institutions improved on certain things.

Mourshed et al [4] had suggested on seven improvements. These improvements are listed below:

- a) To improve access to career information where the higher education institution need to provide detailed information such as job opportunities, wages and training.
- b) To address social perceptions in which majority of people nowadays would like to have their bachelor's degree however, vocational training programs are proven to be more helpful in getting a job than academic programs.
- c) Make education more affordable. Mourshad et al (2017) stated that in other countries, people tend to work rather than to further study since education is considered expensive and high cost. Therefore, it is suggested that education is supposed to be affordable and cheap.
- d) Support students through college graduation. This element is important for students who have higher probability in not completing their

studies. This can be done by a comprehensive support network of peers, staff, professional mentors, social service professionals and community based mentors that will provide necessary help for students to succeed in their studies.

- e) Provide hands-on learning opportunities such as internship, physical and computer/digital simulations. By having this hands-on learning opportunities, students tend to gain more skills and knowledge necessary to the companies.
- f) Improve communication between education stakeholders. This is really important so that higher education institutions can provide syllabus suitable with the current needs of companies or industries.
- g) Work with students earlier in the process. This can be done beginning from the first semester of the student started their study. The higher education institution should focus more not only on the enrolment, skill building and finding job but also the communication skills between the students, educators and employers.

CONCLUSION

Due to the fact that employment is important to graduates and educational institutions, it is suggested that these parties should be alerted with all the issues related to the employment factors.

Based on the seven suggestions above, Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin Polytechnic is trying hard to implement all of the suggestions. Workshops, in house training and internships are being implemented so that students can gain more and hopefully can get a job suitable with their education field.

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