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## Gender Equality in the Workplace: A Tracer Study on the Employment Status of Mindanao State University at Naawan Graduates and Its Implications on Gender Gap

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### Abstract

Gender role inequalities in the workplace take place since there are gender-based imbalances of individuals in power to direct and influence the management of the organization. Women are not able to be promoted into higher paid positions as quickly as men. Despite various debates and discussions about the inequalities faced by women in the workplace, there is still a lack of progress closing the gender gap. Women are underrepresented not because of lack of education or expertise but merely because of gender role (Epetia, 2019). To contextualize the issue on gender gap, this study proposed to assess the employment status of its graduate or alumni in order to objectively measure if gender gap, employment inequality, and gender role differences in the job setting currently exist in the workplace. This tracer study on gender gap among the graduates is a pioneering research for MSU at Naawan. The main objective of this paper is to trace the MSU-Naawan 2018 - 2019 graduates not only to know their recent locations but also to get data on their employment status to assure that the skills and knowledge they had learned and undergone during their entire coursework and practical trainings in the university. In gender gap research, this paper is significant to present updated empirical information about the gendered practices, norms, and discourses experienced by the MSU-Naawan graduates in the workplace. Since MSU-Naawan has no data yet on the employment status and gender gap experience of its graduates, this study is timely for the latter to comply with the government agencies' requirements for HEI's budget funding and levelling instrument for future accreditation of programs.

**Keywords:** gender equality in the workplace, gender gap, employment equality, alumni tracer activity

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## INTRODUCTION

Gender role inequalities in the workplace take place since there are gender-based imbalances of individuals in power to direct and influence the management of the organization. Women are not able to be promoted into higher paid positions as quickly as men. Despite various debates and discussions about the inequalities faced by women in the workplace, there is still a lack of progress closing the gender gap. Women are underrepresented not because of lack of education or expertise but merely because of gender role (Epetia, 2019). To contextualize the issue on gender gap, this study proposed to assess the employment status of its graduate or alumni in order to objectively measure if gender gap, employment inequality, and gender role differences in the job setting currently exist in the workplace. This tracer study on gender gap among the graduates is a pioneering research for MSU at Naawan. The main objective of this paper is to trace the MSU-Naawan 2018 - 2019 graduates not only to know their recent locations but also to get data on their employment status to assure that the skills and knowledge they had learned and undergone during their entire coursework and practical trainings in the university. In gender gap research, this paper is significant to present updated empirical information about the gendered practices, norms, and discourses experienced by the MSU-Naawan graduates in the workplace. Since MSU-Naawan has no data yet on the employment status and gender gap experience of its graduates, this study is timely for the latter to comply with the government agencies' requirements for HEI's budget funding and levelling instrument for future accreditation of programs.

## Materials and methods

This research study used a combination of quantitative and qualitative research approaches, where respondents were asked to respond to the questionnaire adapted from Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Graduate Tracer Study (GTS). The survey form is based on the premise that CHED is the only organization that has the appropriate motivation and incentive to conduct a policy-oriented graduate tracer study. To assess gender gap there are two tools to be adapted: One is a gender analysis tools from DOST-assisted MSMEs (micro-medium enterprises) to assess the gender sensitivity areas of human resources and lay-out/design/infrastructure. The other instrument is the technical needs assessment tool from Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) National Gender and Development Resource Program to evaluate the respondents' familiarity on GAD concepts and policies. The gathered data were analyzed using frequencies, percentages, and mean scores. Using a purposive non-randomized sampling procedure, a total of 442 MSUN graduates participated in this study and table 1 below shows the profile of the participants.

**Table 1. Profile of survey respondents**

College	Male		Female		Total	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
SMFT	24	5.43%	33	7.46%	57	12.89%
CSE	29	6.56%	33	7.46%	62	14.02%
CESS	27	6.11%	131	29.64%	158	35.75%
CBAA	42	9.50%	95	21.27%	137	30.77%



CAF	12	2.71%	16	3.70%	28	6.41%
Overall total	134	30.32%	308	69.68%	<b>442</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 1 presents that a total of 442 alumni responded to the survey and from the total respondents, 134 (30.42%) are male participants and 308 (69.69%) are female participants. Therefore, majority of the respondents are female alumni of MSU-Naawan. Many respondents are from the College of Education and Social Sciences (CESS with 35.75% participants) and College of Business Administration and Accountancy (CBAA with 30.77%). Only 28 (6.41%) responded from the College of Agriculture and Forestry (CAF).

### Results and discussion

This research study gathered relevant information concerning the alumni of MSU-Naawan, their current socio-economic status, overall professional advancement, and the gender gap and equality occurring in the workplace. The succeeding tables provide information on the current condition of some alumni of MSU-Naawan, including their demographic profiles and job status.

**Table 2. Frequency and percentage distribution of the respondents based on civil status**

Civil Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	391	88.4%
Single with a child	27	6.1%
Married	23	5.2%
Widow	1	.2%
Total	<b>442</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 2 presents the number of respondents when grouped based on their civil status. Majority of the respondents are still single; while 27 (6.1%) of them indicated that they are still single, though with a child. Only 23 (5.2%) are married and 1 is a widow.

Honors/awards	Frequency	Percentage	Employment status			
			employed	Not employed	#	%
Graduated with honors	83	19%	55	66%	28	34
Graduated without honors	359	81%	189	53%	170	47
Total	<b>442</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>45%</b>
Graduated with awards	17	4%	11	65%	8	35%



<i>Graduated without awards</i>	425	96%	234	55%	191	45%
Total	<b>442</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>45%</b>
<i>With licensure</i>	158	35.7%	94	59%	64	41%
<i>Without licensure</i>	284	64.3%	150	53%	134	47%
Total	<b>442</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>45%</b>

**Table 3. Frequency and percentage distribution employment status based on award, honors, and licensure holdings**

Table 3 shows the frequency and percentage distribution of the respondents when grouped based on whether or not they hold a professional license and if they receive academic and non-academic awards during graduation. The table further shows the employment status of the alumni-respondents. Out of the 442 respondents, only 83 (19%) indicated that they graduate from college with academic distinction awards (either as cumlaude or magna cumlaude). Out of the 83 who received academic honors, 55 (66%) are employed and 29 (34%) are not employed. Out of the 359 alumni who indicated that they didn't receive any academic honors, only 53% are employed and 47% are not. Therefore, in this study, there is a higher percentage of graduates who are employed with honors compared to those who don't have honors during graduation. Also, the employment rate (55%) of alumni who received awards is higher compared to those who didn't receive any award (45%) during college. Moreover, the employment rate is higher (59%) among alumni holding some professional license compared to those who don't have (53%). Therefore, in this study, employment rate is consistently higher among alumni who received honors and awards during college and among those who indicated that they have already acquired some forms of professional license.

**Table 4. Frequency and percentage distribution based on employment status**

Job Status	Frequency	Percentage
<i>Contractual/Job order</i>	128	29%
<i>Permanent</i>	116	26%
Total Alumni respondents who are employed	244 (55%)	
Alumni respondents who are not employed	179	34%
Self-employed/doing business	19	4%
Total	<b>442</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 4 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of the respondents based on employment status. Out of the 442 respondents, 128 (29%) have contractual or job order status in their employment; and 116 (26%) are already permanent employees. 179 (34%) indicated that they are still unemployed and don't have any form of income yet; while 19 (4%) expressed that



they try to find income by doing some business while being unemployed. In this study, majority of the alumni-respondents (55%) are actually employed.

**Table 5.Frequency and percentage distribution based on monthly income**

Range of monthly income	Frequency	Percentage
Below P5,000	96	22%
P6,000-10,000	16	3.6
P11,000-15,000	67	15.2
P16,000-20,000	38	8.59
P21,000-25,000	25	5.66
P26,000-30,000	9	2.03
P31,000-35,000	2	.45
P36,000-40,000	6	1.35
Above 40,000	4	.9
No indicated income	179	40.49
Total	<b>442</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 5 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of the alumni-respondents based on their estimated monthly income. From the table, it can be inferred that many of the respondents (96 or 22%) indicated that they receive income below P5,000. There is also a big number of them (67, 15.2%) who responded that they receive a monthly income between P11,000-15,000. Only a few of them indicated that they receive a monthly income of more than P26,000 and above. It is worth mentioning that many of the alumni-respondents (40.40%) didn't indicate any source of monthly income. Most probably, they don't have work yet and are still dependent on their relatives or parents for their daily sustenance. According to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA, 2020), average Filipinos must earn a net income of P15,200 per month in order to sufficiently meet daily needs. This is alarming because majority of the alumni-respondents of this study indicated that their income is below P15,000 and what is worst is that many are still unemployed even after graduating from college 2 years ago.

**Table 6. Frequency and percentage distribution based on sex and employment status**

	Job status
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	No work		Contractual-job order		permanent		Self employed		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
<b>Female</b>	137	44%	75	24%	83	27%	11	4%	308	70%
<b>Male</b>	61	46%	34	25%	33	25%	8	6%	134	30%
<b>Total</b>	198	45%	109	25%	116	26%	19	4%	442	100%

Table 6 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of the respondents when grouped based on sex and job status. The table further shows that 45% of the respondents are unemployed and 55% have jobs. From the 244 alumni-respondents who indicated that they are employed, 25% have contractual and job order status; while 26% are already permanent employees. It is a good thing to note that majority of the alumni-respondents are employed and that some are engaging into some forms of income-generating activities while being unemployed. The table further shows that many of those who don't have work (61 out of 134, male participants or 46%) are actually male respondents; while unemployed employment rate for female respondents is 44%. Although this difference is not considerably high, this is a matter that employers must consider in order to reduce any gender gap in the workplace.

**Table 7. Frequency and percentage distribution based on college and employment status**

	NOT EMPLOYED		EMPLOYED		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
<b>CBAA</b>	64	47%	73	53%	137	31%
<b>CESS</b>	61	39%	97	61%	158	36%
<b>CSE</b>	30	53%	27	47%	57	13%
<b>SMFT</b>	30	48%	32	52%	62	14%
<b>CAF</b>	13	46%	15	54%	28	6%
<b>Total</b>	198	45%	244	55%	422	100%

Table 7 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of the respondents based on college and employment status. The college with the highest unemployment rate is the College of Science and Environment (30 out of 57 CSE alumni or 53% who indicated that they still don't have job). The college with the highest employment rate is the College of Education and Social Sciences (CESS, with 97 out of 158 CESS alumni or 61% who indicated that they already have jobs). Also, the College of Agriculture and Forestry indicated to have a higher employment rate (15 out of the 28 CAF alumni or 54% indicated that they are already employed).

**Table 8. Frequency and percentage distribution based on residence and employment status**



<b>City or rural community residence</b>	<b>Not Employed alumni</b>		<b>Employed alumni</b>		<b>Total</b>	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Residence is from rural community	134	68%	163	66%	297	67%
Residence is within the city	64	32%	91	34%	155	33%
<b>Total</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>442</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 8 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of the alumni-respondents based on residence and employment status. From the data in the table, it can be inferred that majority of those who indicated that they are employed (244 alumni), have residence from the rural community or from the provinces. Only 34% who live within the city indicated that they have work. Therefore, employment rate is not dependent on type of residence; but availability of jobs in the locality. Most probably, many of those who live in the rural setting, decided to transfer to the city to look for better jobs.

**Table 9. Gender equality in the workplace**

<b>Grouping</b>	<b>Is there gender equality in the workplace?</b>						<b>Total</b>	
	<b>YES</b>		<b>NO</b>		<b>No idea</b>			
	#	%	#	%	#	%		
<b>Sex</b>								
Female	118	69%	22	13%	31	18%	171	
Male	41	56%	11	15%	21	28%	73	
<b>Total</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>244</b>	
<b>Civil status</b>								
Single	132	73%	12	7%	36	20%	180	
Single with a child	7	39%	4	22%	7	39%	18	
Married	2	17	9	75	1	8	12	
Widow	0	0	1	100	0	0	1	
No response	33							
<b>Total</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>211</b>	

Table 9 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of the responses on the question about gender equality in the workplace. It is further shown that majority of the female respondents (69%) indicated that there is gender equality in the workplace; only 13% said that there is no gender equality observed in their workplace. Majority also of the male respondents (56%) responded that gender equality is observed in their workplace and only 15% said that there is none.



Majority of those who are still single and are employed indicated that they observed gender equality in the work setting; while only 7% of them said that there is none. Moreover, it is worth mentioning that many of the respondents, i.e., 21% of them indicated that they don't have any idea about whether or not gender equality is practiced in the workplace. This implies that workers need to be oriented by their employers on the necessity of being informed as to gender and development issues in the workplace, so that unfair practices in the work setting could be avoided. Also, since a number of the alumni respondents (12%) indicated that gender inequality is observed in their respective workplace, there is indeed a need for employer and heads of agencies to consider implementing programs that address this issue and that provide the employers the opportunity to share their thoughts about gender equality and gender gap occurring in the work social environment.

**Table 10. Sex and monthly income**

	No indicated income	P10,000 below		P10,000-P20,000		P21,000-P30,000		P31,000-P40,000		P41,000 above		Total
Sex	179 (41%)	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Female		74	43%	68	40%	18	11%	7	4%	4	2%	171
Male		41	56%	24	33%	6	8%	1	1.4%	1	1.4%	73
Total		<b>115</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3.3%</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>244</b>

Table 10 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of the alumni-respondents based on sex and monthly income. The table further shows that female alumni respondents generally receive higher income compared to their male counterparts. Majority of the male respondents (56%) earn income within the P10,000 below range; while many of the female alumni employees (40%) earn income within the P10,000-20,000 range. Also a total of 17% of female alumni-respondents further indicated that they receive income higher than P21,000; while only 14% among the male respondents receive income higher than P21,000. Although this difference is not notably high, this situation needs to be addressed and to be discussed in order to see the cause in the differential income of both sexes; and thus reduce gender gap and inequality in the workplace.

## Conclusions and implications

The following are the summary and implications of the findings of this research study: 1) In this study, respondents who receive academic honors, awards, and who secure professional license indicated to have higher employability rate and higher income; 2) Majority of the respondents are actually employed (55%); but majority of them only receive a monthly income within the range of P10,000 below, which is considered as below the expected average monthly income needed to sufficiently meet daily needs; 3) Although 67% expressed that there is gender equality in their workplace, still, 12% of them indicated that gender equality is not practiced in the



work setting; also 21% of them could not decide on the matter and has no idea about gender equality – which calls for a program that provides relevant information as to gender and development issues in the workplace; 4) There is a gender gap concern in terms of the monthly income between male and female alumni-respondents, where female respondents generally fared better economically compared to their male counterparts. Although, there is no indication in this study about whether or not this difference is significant, programs that provide the venue to discuss gender concerns, and employment challenges, and the factors that contribute to professional advancement need to be in place as part of the gender and development platform of every work environment.

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