Finding 2D Assistant Animators: A Tracer Study

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Abstract

When the "Animation Council of the Philippines (ACPI)" joined forces with the "Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA)" and "Iloilo Science and Technology University", formerly "Western Visayas College of Science and Technology (WVCT)", to promote technical and vocational (Tech-Voc) education after the 2007 introduction of the 2D Assistant animation program, five batches of applicants totalling more than 100 people, were recruited. What happened to them now that they had completed the animation program? Now, where are they? Do they now work in the targeted animation sector or hold another position? Setting up this tracer aims to track animators' whereabouts, career paths, and employment in a given sector. The data from this study will help technical schools and tertiary institutions improve their curricula and skills in pursuing nationally and internationally competitive and high-quality graduates.

Keywords: 2D Assistant Animators, TESDA and ISAT U Technical-Vocational Education, Partnership, Animation Council of the Philippines, ICT Industry

Introduction

"Animation is the language of caricature. It offers a medium of story-telling and visual entertainment which can bring pleasure and information to people of all ages everywhere in the world."

-Walt Disney

The classic Walt Disney comment on animation, "All cartoon characters and narratives must be an exaggeration, caricatures," was used by Hutyra (2022). Animation is regarded as a massive industry due to creating 2D and 3D animations. It is the very nature of fantasy and fable. Through the years, advancements in animation alone have been made using cutting-edge hardware and software. This industry will improve every year, with more and more nations getting involved. Japan is well-known outside the US for "anime," which gave them this reputation. Korea, for instance, and other ASEAN nations like it are prospering.

In light of the booming animation industry, the Philippines also contributed by introducing animation to the nation. Therefore, with the assistance of the "Bureau of Export and Promotions (BETP)" within the "Department of Commerce and Industry (DCI)", the "Animation Council of the Philippines (ACPI)" was established in 2000. The government has identified the animation business as a budding, money-making sector that needs to be encouraged and supported. The Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) sector, which is expanding, now includes the Filipino animation industry as one of its IT-enabled services. The government began developing plans to push these industries at the forefront to increase employment in the country regarding workforce services. These industries are collectively represented under the "IT & Business Process Association of the Philippines (IBPAP)" umbrella, along with other expanding BPO sectors like "Call Centres, Software Industry, Health Management, and Medical Transcription" (TESDA, 2023).

Moreover, ACPI contributed to creating the Visual Graphics NCIII - 800 hours curriculum for graphic designers and artists. By 2006, the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) board of directors had approved the printing and worldwide distribution of all TESDA Tech-Voc schools' curricula prepared by TESDA and ACPI. The association also pushed a finished curriculum created by industry-based comic artists and illustrators, Illustrator NCII. The official TESDA scholarship vouchers for TESDA Animation Courses were available in 2007. For Animation NCII, 2D Animation NCIII, and 3D Animation NCIII, the cost per student at the time was Php 10,000.

In addition to the scholarship programs, TESDA maintains global alliances. Regarding tech-vocational education, South Korea is one of TESDA's active partners. The Quezon City building housing the Korea-Philippines IT training facility was completed in 2007. The administration of Quezon City gave the property, the government of Korea funded the building, and

TESDA oversaw the training. The partnership's projects should fall under IT-enabled services, including animation. According to a TESDA-ACPI Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), the first three batches of animation scholars were trained at the Phil-Korea IT training facility. The Quezon City administration has owned and operated the structure since it was handed over.

The host institutions would like to trace their graduates in line with this context. The European Training Foundation (2017) stressed that tracer studies are referred to as graduate surveys, former students' surveys, or graduate monitoring, according to European Training Foundation (2017). A target audience is typically a uniform group of trainees or students who graduated from their courses simultaneously (generation or graduation cohort). Schomburg, H. (2016). Tracer studies, which combine factual and subjective data from graduates, can provide precious information on matching talents. Tracer studies enable the measurement of aspects of horizontal matching (relevance of the field of study for the tasks performed in the job) and vertical matching (suitable position considering the level of formal qualification), in addition to obtaining feedback to improve the study plan.

European Training Foundation (2017) further mentioned that although widespread in higher education, tracer studies are gaining popularity in vocational education. The main goal is to evaluate education programs' medium- to long-term effects. The substance of education and training and the study environment should be improved, as should the graduates' transition from school to the workforce and the supply and demand of skills. The goals are specific. Topics for tracer study questionnaires can vary greatly but frequently cover study progress, the transition to the workplace, admission into the workforce, careers, the use of acquired skills, present employment, and ties to the educational institution.

Literature Review

2.1. About Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA)

The "Technical Education and Skills Development Act of 1994," also known as "Republic Act No. 7796", was approved by "President Fidel V. Ramos on August 25, 1994". This Act aims to activate and encourage all sectors of business, labour, local government, and technical-vocational institutions to participate in the country's effort to improve its human resource capabilities. The TESDA was thus established.

"Department of Labour and Employment (DOLE)" and "National Manpower and Youth Council (NMYC)" together. In order to create TESDA, the "Bureau of Local Employment's (BLE)" Apprenticeship Programme and the "Department of Education, Culture, and Sports'

(DECS)" "Bureau of Technical and Vocational Education's (BTVE)" were combined.

One of the main recommendations of the "1991 Report of the Congressional Commission on Education", which conducted a national review of the state of Philippine education and workforce development, was the merger of the offices mentioned above. It was intended to guide the nation's "technical-vocational education and training (TVET)" system and to lessen duplication in skills development initiatives started by various public and private sector bodies. The establishment of an extensive development plan for middle-level people based on the National Technical Education and Skills Establishment Plan is, therefore, a significant focus of TESDA. This plan must include a revamped industry-based training program incorporating dual training, apprenticeship, and other comparable programs.

TESDA's responsibilities include: "integrating, coordinating, and monitoring skill development programs; restructuring initiatives to promote and develop middle-level human resources; approving skill standards and tests; developing an accreditation system for institutions engaged in middle-level staffing development; funding programs and projects for technical education and skill development; and assisting trainers training programs".

In addition, TESDA is required to: "(1) transfer training responsibilities to local governments; (2) revamp the apprenticeship program; (3) involve businesses and employers in skills training; (4) develop a skills development plan; (5) create and implement training incentives; (6) hold skills competitions; and (7) oversee skills development funds".

TESDA generally develops plans for workforce and skills, establishes acceptable standards and tests for skills, coordinates and monitors programs and policies related to human resources, and offers policy directives and guidelines for resource allocation for TVET institutions in both the commercial and governmental sectors.

Today, TESDA has developed into a company that provides a wide range of services to its customers in a timely, effective, and efficient manner. The TESDA Board has developed strategies and programs to significantly influence personnel development in numerous fields, industry sectors, and institutions to fulfil its multifaceted goal.

2.2. Technical Education Skills and Development Authority and Partners

In addition to the scholarship programs, TESDA maintains global alliances. Regarding tech-vocational education, South Korea is one of TESDA's active partners. The Quezon City building housing the Korea-Philippines IT training facility was completed in 2007. The administration of Quezon City gave the property, the government of Korea funded the building, and TESDA oversaw the training. The partnership's projects should fall under

IT-enabled services, including animation. Under the terms of a TESDA-ACPI Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), the first three batches of animation scholars were trained at the Phil-Korea IT training facility. The Quezon City administration has owned and operated the structure since it was handed over.

2.3. The PGMA Scholarships Program

According to Administrative Order No. 66 series of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) (2003), the government cannot adequately meet all the demands of our nation's indigenous people and marginalised communities. President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's (PGMA) scholarship program or sponsoring agencies was founded to give impoverished and underprivileged youngsters access to school. The program was established to support these outstanding kids' college, vocational, or technical education.

Through good collaboration with the President Management Staff (PMS) of the Office of the President or Sponsoring Agency, the initiative offers a free college education to meritorious students from low-income rural and urban families, prioritising KALAHI and CIDSS areas.

Through free vocational, technical, and college educational assistance to their youth members, the PGMA Scholarship Program seeks to improve the socio-economic circumstances of low-income families in rural and urban areas while fostering in young people a sense of responsibility to be productive and responsible citizens. Concerning the specific goals, they are as follows: (1) to offer free college education to young people from rural and urban families; (2) to offer educational assistance to students from (NCR, FO IV, FO VII; FO IX) and other FOs with qualified scholars; (3) to support beneficiary - scholars and their families through appropriate monitoring, evaluation, and guidance; and (4) to lower the dropout rate in the targeted areas.

2.4. 2D Assistant Animation Curricula

The course is titled 2D Animation NC III and has a total training time of 968 hours, divided into 68 hours of basic training, 28 hours of formal training, and 872 hours of core training. This course aims to improve an animator's knowledge, abilities, and attitudes in line with professional standards. Along with the core competencies, it also covers the fundamental and common competencies, such as how to make conventional key poses and drawings for animation, trans-digital animation, 2D digital cut-out animation, and video file export. However, TVET providers may provide a more comprehensive, laddered course covering the NC III-basic, typical, and core unit types.

A person must possess the competencies listed in Section 1 of the training regulations for the 2D Animation NC III qualifications in order to create key poses and drawings for animation that can be used in TV shows or

films, commercials, audiovisual presentations, motion graphics, and animated e-learning materials. These competencies are among those covered by the units of competency that make up this qualification: "To lead workplace communication, manage small teams, develop negotiation skills, solve work-related problems, use relevant technologies, lead workplace critical thinking and problem-solving techniques, lead creative and critical information use, and work in a diverse environment" are just a few of the skills you'll need. Additionally, this certification is generated from the competency map of the "Information and Communication Technology (ICT)" Industry.

However, the fundamental skills were to (1) apply quality standards, (2) carry out computer operations, (3) make conventional key poses/drawings for animation, (4) construct tradigital animation, (5) produce 2D digital cut-out animation, and (6) export animation to video file format.

When creating training programmes for 2D Animation NC III, TVET providers should take into account the requirements that TESDA provides for training arrangements. These factors comprise data on curriculum development, instruction methods, entry standards for trainees, tools and equipment, training facilities, and trainer qualifications.

The TESDA curriculum offers instruction on creating a competency-based curriculum, allowing trainers to develop their curricula using the elements listed below. Contextualisation is required to deliver knowledge needs for the fundamental, familiar, and core units of competency, particularly in mathematics, science/technology, communication/language, and other academic subjects. To this purpose, TVET providers must create a "Contextual Learning Matrix (CLM)" to align with their curricula that incorporate green technology, concerns about health and drugs, and providing for people with disabilities (PWDs).

2.5. The Curriculum Requirements

For the Animation NCII and 2D Animation NCIII, training takes place for 5 to 8 hours, about five days a week, and can take between 2.5 months and 3.5 months if they train for 8 hours per day for five days a week; for the 3D Animation NCIII, this could take at least six months. The NC could develop into the more advanced NC V.

Firms from abroad and locally may require the NC as a prerequisite when hiring competent candidates, but they will also need the candidates to pass their tests. No college degree is necessary to enrol in the NC courses; high school graduates at least 18 years old can enrol in the Animation NC courses and, upon successful completion, may begin employment with organisations willing to hire them.

An evaluation confirms a person's ability to perform to the criteria outlined in the applicable competency standards for the job. The

evaluation process is founded on data or evidence acquired to demonstrate competency achievement. The procedure may partially satisfy the national qualification requirements for an employable unit(s) of competency. However, a competency assessment is necessary to gather data and determine whether competency has been attained.

Additionally, a nationwide assessment and certification program requires the following tests of candidates: (1) the candidate must exhibit proficiency in each of the units stated in the training regulations to get the National Qualification of 2D Animation NC III. A National Certificate III level, certified by the TESDA Director General, will be given to the winners; and (2) the accumulation of Certificates of Competency (COCs) in all units of competency can lead to the qualification of 2D Animation NC III.

2.6. Career After Animation Course

After achieving this qualification, graduates are expected to become traditional animators, clean-up checkers, in-between checkers, motion graphics animators, web animators, commercial animators, animation checkers, AVP animators, digital library builders, animated e-learning animators, 2D digital animator. Shamsuddin and Choudhury (2013), who studied Islam, believe this business needs trained personnel in various animation-related subjects. We can empower and improve our population in this area if we do this. Bangladesh can provide inexpensive versions of any animation product, unlike those other countries. The training has already started in a few public and private institutions as a diploma, certificate, and bachelor course. These courses all focus on multimedia rather than just animation. If there is any considerable local demand, Bangladesh should take the initiative to enhance all animation-oriented programs in the academic and business sectors.

Furthermore, CIIT College of Arts and Sciences (2023) included a few well-known Filipino animators who achieved success in the field, to wit:

1. *Nelson Bohol, who worked for Pixar and contributed to Inside Out, Monsters University, Brave, WALL-E, Ratatouille, Cars, and Finding Nemo;*

2. *Ruben Aquino from Walt Disney, who appeared in the movies Winnie the Pooh, The Princess and the Frog, and Lilo and Stitch after receiving his architecture degree from Manuel L. Quezon University. He also took home the Outstanding Achievement in Character Animation prize at the 26th Annual Annie Awards of the International Animated Society;*

3. *Walt Disney's visual development artist Armand Serrano is one of the minds behind movies like "Big Hero 6, Brother Bear, and Lilo and Stitch". He was a Sony employee who appeared in the film "Hotel*

Transylvania and Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs". He has been employed in the field for approximately three decades.

4. *Films like "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, Sabrina: The Animated Series, and Joseph", to mention a few, featured animator and layout artist Mars Cabrera. He received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree at the "University of Santo Tomas (UST)".*

5. *Josie Trinidad, a story artist for Walt Disney, contributed to movies like "Zootopia, Wreck-It Ralph, Tangled, and The Princess and the Frog". She has a degree in character animation from CalArts.*

6. *On the one hand, "Bobby Pontillas, a character designer and animator at Walt Disney Animation Studios", created Zootopia as his most recent project. He received an Oscar nomination for One Small Step for Best Animated Short Film. He has also demonstrated his talents in the movies Rio, Ice Age 4, Big Hero 6, Wreck-it Ralph, and Frozen.*

7. *One of the people behind the film The Incredibles is Virginia "Gini" Cruz-Santos, a UST alumna. Before joining Pixar, she majored in advertising while studying fine arts at UST.*

8. *"Inside Out, Wall-E, Finding Nemo, The Road to El Dorado, and The Prince of Egypt all feature work from Pixar's story artist and designer Ronnie del Carmen". He collaborated on the screenplay and was co-director of the 2015 Pixar movie Inside Out, for which he received an Academy Award nomination for Best Original Screenplay.*

9. *One of the many creators behind the countless television series, including The Walking Dead, was Anthony Ocampo of Stargate Digital. The USA Network Productions program Helen of Troy, for which he created the Trojan horse, earned him a prize from the Visual Effects Society. He received his degree from the College of Fine Arts at the University of the Philippines.*

10. *Before joining Disney, the effects supervisor, Cesar Velasquez, worked as an effects animator at Cinesite and Warner Digital Studios. He appeared in Bolt, Chicken Little, Tangled, and Wreck-It Ralph movies.*

Objectives of the Study

The primary purpose of this study is to trace the graduates of 2D Assistant Animators of TESDA-ISAT U graduates.

It specifically aimed to establish a profile of the graduates concerning:

1. identify the profile of the CIT postgraduates' program from 2007 (2 batches), 2008 (2 batches), 2009 (1 batch), and 2019 (1 batch) in concerning age, sex, civil status, place of residence, nature of the
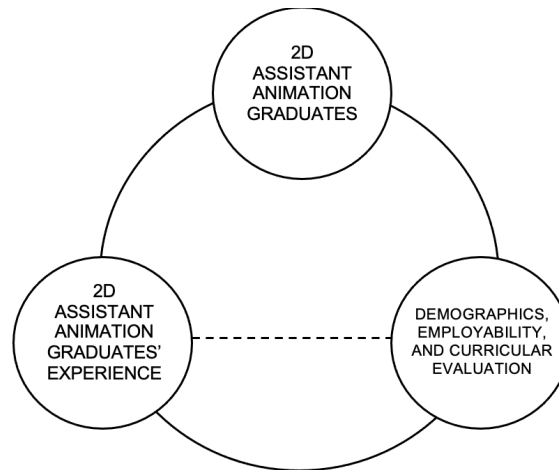
employer, category of employer, eligibility, and job placement after graduation from the program;

2. the degree of their satisfaction with the animation program; and

3. seek suggestions to enhance the animation program offers further.

3.1. Conceptual Paradigm of the Study

Figure 1. The Conceptual Paradigm of the Study.

The basic structure for the investigation into how newly graduated 2D assistant animators felt about their training is shown in Figure 1. The program aims to give hope to students who could not pursue formal education due to budgetary constraints or failed to meet admissions standards during the application period. These students were young people who weren't in school and were given a second chance to pursue an education through this initiative. After completing the animation school, these alumni were anticipated to find employment in the animation sector or launch their start-up businesses.

The determined demographics based on the programmes, such as "sex, age, civil status, place of residence, type of employer, employer category, eligibility, career" after graduation with their perception of the teaching-learning, and the retrospective evaluation of the ISATU-TESDA programmes, are therefore also regarded as expected outputs. These specifics are required in order to improve and increase the program's course offerings in the future.

Methodology

4.1. Research Design

In this study, the established demographics, including graduates' impressions after they graduated from the program, were evaluated

retrospectively and described in a survey. According to Kramer (1985), descriptive or exploratory research aims to understand a phenomenon better or produce fresh insights. Descriptive research is a type of research that is used to describe the characteristics of a population. It is the first step in developing new knowledge. It may result in a tentative hypothesis for further testing or an idea for a conceptual framework to explain the action of variables (McCombes, 2022). It gathers information to respond to various what, when, and how inquiries regarding a specific population or group. This setting will influence how questions concerning a person's profile, whereabouts, level of happiness, and opinions of the targeted population regarding an animation program are formulated.

4.2. Respondents and Sampling Plan

According to Lee and Landers' definition from 2022, sampling in quantitative research aims to maximise the statistical representativeness of a population through a selected sample, whereas selecting in qualitative research typically aims to capture the entirety of an interest phenomenon. For two initiatives, the researchers conducted both qualitative and quantitative studies.

Sequential sampling, described by Explorable.com (2010) in Etikan, Alkassim, and Abubakar (2015), is a non-probability sampling technique in which the researcher selects a single or a group of population within a specified time frame, conducts his research, analyses the findings, then selects another group of the population, if necessary, and so on. The researcher has countless opportunities to improve his research techniques and develop an emotional connection to the issue he is currently investigating thanks to this sampling methodology.

The researchers were obligated to use messenger and text to gather information from the responders by supplying links to graduate emails and group talks. The researchers also selected 21 volunteers from the 2D Assistant Animator scholars from TESDA using snowball sampling. Data from the ISAT U and TESDA roosters were used in the poll. Participants in this study include graduates from 2007 to 2019 who provided responses through email, phone interviews, and Google Forms.

4.3. Instrument and Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers utilised the standard questionnaire developed by the university but modified it to tailor fit to answer the study's purpose. Salient features from the existing questionnaires were taken into consideration. Such as asking about the personal profile of the participants, their degree of satisfaction when taking the scholarship on animation, and their suggestions to improve the course offering through open-ended questions and interviews. The study had undergone in-house university review as part of the requirements to conduct research under the approved policies of the Office of the Vice President for Research and Extension through the Office of the Research Division. After the approval

to conduct the study, the group used different online platforms to deploy questionnaires, such as messenger, emails, calls, and text messages for data collection. Most of the respondents responded online. The information acquired will be the cornerstone of the university's efforts to strive for excellence and exemplary graduate program graduates.

4.4. Data Analysis

After collecting data, the researchers tallied the responses using MS Excel for frequency and percentage. For cross-tabulation, using "Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS)" version 22 gave comfort and assured accuracy of the results. The researchers utilised frequency counts and rates to establish the participants' demographic. However, solicited interviews were used for satisfaction with the animation program.

Results and Discussion

Due to the participants' responses, only 21 graduates from 2007, 2008, 2009, and 2019 participated in the tracer study. The official list obtained from the university registrar's office served as the starting point for the data collection procedure. Contacts were made with the closest and most accessible participants via text and instant messaging. These two communication channels offer the quickest access to the participants and include inquiries about their personal information, employment status, and a retrospective assessment of the animation program. They are now working, own their firm, or hold another relevant position.

Despite the relatively small sample size, it produced significant data that will serve as the foundation for future improvements to the graduate industry placement process at ISAT U and TESDA. One of the best aspects of this tracer study is highlighting some of the successful graduates who were working for major international animation studios like Industrial Light and Magic, a George Lucas Company Limited company with offices in Luxembourg, Europe, Unitop Group of Companies, Inc., Aseana in Manila, The Print Ministry, an illustrator and graphic designer, Marikina City, NBLX LTD, a graphic designer in Cyprus, and Makinaugalingon & Bookbinder Printing in Iloilo City.

5.1. Participants' Demographics

Table 1. Participant's Demographic Profile

Participant's Information	Total (N=21)	Percentage (100)
Sex		
Male	18	86%
Female	3	14%
Civil Status		
Married	18	86%
Single	3	14%
Batch		
2007	8	38%
2008	7	34%
2009	3	14%
2019	3	14%
Place of Residence		
Iloilo	17	80%
Manila	2	10%
Abroad	2	10%
Nature of Employment		
Freelance	3	14%
Permanently Working	18	86%
Employment Industry		
Animation	6	29%
Graphics and Design	15	71%

According to Table 1, most animation program graduates were male married, from batch 2007, and primarily working in Iloilo. The majority of them were working as permanent employees in the graphic and animation industry. This result shows that even in the shortest period, these out-of-school graduates were given a chance to develop their knowledge and skill in animation because of the President Gloria (PGS) Scholarship. Hence, these findings were found in the overview of the affidavit of the undertaking of the implementing guidelines on the Group Training Scheme PGS embodied in the TESDA Circular of 2009 to promote and advocate the PGS in enhancing the competitiveness and productivity of the workforce through skill training programs; ensure that all scholars undergo the appropriate assessment upon the completion of the training program; motivate and nurture scholars to maintain 100% passing; establish guidance referral services; and invest in a higher level of technology to expand current capacities and capabilities of the program.

The printing and international distribution of all TESDA Tech-Voc schools' curricula, created by TESDA and ACPI, was approved by the board of directors of TESDA by the year 2006. The country's institutionalisation of animation through ACPI in 2006 played a role in developing the Visual

Graphics NCIII curriculum for graphic designers and artists. The official TESDA scholarship vouchers for TESDA Animation Courses were available in 2007. The association also promoted a completed curriculum developed by industry-based comic artists and illustrators, Illustrator NCII.

The experience felt by neighbouring ASEAN countries in Islam, Shamsuddin, and Choudhury's (2013) study, report that a few institutions have lately begun to provide animation degrees to produce qualified professionals in emerging nations like Bangladesh. They got established with the aid of other countries, including India, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and others. It is now growing and achieving success in this area. The researchers discovered numerous opportunities for the business sector in this study. We interviewed the directors and surveyed the neighbourhood's animation sector. Rosnan & Aziz (2012) cited that economically, developing countries recognise the opportunities brought about by the globalisation of the film business and strive to benefit from it.

Although no on-the-job training was conducted yet, the graduates were able to gain from their learnings and used them as a springboard for higher education. Some became civil engineers, teachers, managers, and office workers. Still, those with passion and dedication to ICT worked as illustrators, designers, and animators—however, those who prefer to be freelancers and own a business.

5.2. Animator's Satisfaction with the PGMA Program

Most animators responded in interviews when asked about their satisfaction with the curriculum. To wit:

"The information and abilities I acquired via my animation program shaped who I am. Due to my promotion to a more senior position and ability to meet my family's wants and requirements, I am content and joyful. I am indebted to the PGMA program for everything.

The program served as my stepping stone to advance and find a better place for myself and the primary source of income for my family. As a program graduate, I am privileged and honoured to work in a prestigious firm, Lucas Industrial Light and Magic, in Luxembourg, Europe. If ISAT U allows me to share my knowledge and experience, I am willing to teach as a part-time instructor later on."

The secret ingredient is dedication and passion, and I know that TESDA is investing in state-of-the-art technology to support the animation program in collaboration with the private entity to promote the benefits and demand of this industry locally and globally.

"TESDA might consider hiring or commissioning experts from the ACPI and other top-tier animation firms in Manila and collaborate with the

graduates of the past batches for mentoring and at the same time for a reunion of the former students,"

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study followed the occupations and localities of TESDA-ISAT University 2D assistant animator graduates in 2007, 2008, 2009, and 2019. The six classes of graduates in animation applied their knowledge and abilities to their current employment, either working for a private corporation or as independent contractors. Because the graduates were placed in appropriate jobs, the accumulated data was the foundation for future enhancement and strengthened private-public partnerships to re-implement the program.

In conclusion, most participants expressed their pleasure, gratitude, honour, and happiness upon graduating from the program. The skills they learned throughout the program helped them individually and gave them confidence when looking for jobs in the multimedia industry.

Hired animators knew they might pick up new skills to become experts in animation techniques. However, individuals who chose not to pursue careers in animation were grateful that they could utilise this as a competitive advantage. The total tracer research result showed that most were employed in the ICT sector, which is still connected to a completed program. They felt that TESDA-ISAT U had allowed them to pursue their ambitions of working in the ICT sector even though they were unemployed youth.

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