

**Research Article****CURRICULUM ADEQUACY AND RELEVANCE, SKILLS AND COMPETENCE, AND EMPLOYABILITY OF THE GRADUATES OF MASTER OF ARTS IN EDUCATION MAJOR IN FILIPINO PROGRAM****\*Rodel B. Guzman, and Criselda D. Ngislawan**

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**Received** 20<sup>th</sup> October 2023; **Accepted** 25<sup>th</sup> November 2023; **Published online** 29<sup>th</sup> December 2023

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**Abstract**

The performance of the graduates reflects the quality of the institution where they graduated. This descriptive research was conducted to trace the graduates of Master of Arts in Education major in Filipino of the Isabela State University from 2016 to 2020. A purposive sampling was used to identify the participants of the study. The study was participated by young, married, female, government and permanent teachers who have high job satisfaction. The study revealed that the graduates assess all areas of the program to be very relevant and important. In addition, employment skills and competence are assessed to be very high by the respondents. Moreover, the respondents revealed that they have lower competence in the areas of leadership or managerial skills, entrepreneurial skills and extension skills. Hence, focus on the development of these competencies should be given priority.

**Keywords:** Graduate performance, Tracer study, Graduate program, Filipino.**INTRODUCTION**

The quality of students and graduates of the Isabela State University is considered to be its best indicator for academic excellence. The university ensures that students are given proper and appropriate curricular and non-curricular experiences to develop knowledge and skills responsive to the need of the industry. The performance of the graduate reflects the academic status of the University. Looking at the performance and whereabouts of the graduates of the University is imperative in developing and enhancing its curriculum towards providing a more responsive programs to the need to the industry. The Isabela State University as a university for people, environment, entrepreneurship and innovations offer various graduate programs in the field of agriculture, education, engineering, information technology, sciences, business, public management and the like. It aims to provide advanced trainings in the various fields of academic endeavour towards developing content specialist and leaders. Furthermore, the university provides rich experiences in research and extension which will benefits their graduates of any advanced higher education program in the university. As its quest for continuous development, the conduct of tracer studies is a must (GS Manual, 2019). One of the graduate offerings of the university is its Master of Arts in Education (MAEd) major in Filipino. It aims at providing advanced and practical knowledge and skills in the field of teaching Filipino language and literature. It provides avenues for the students to become expert in the field of Filipino in order to produce researches which will improve the teaching and learning of the subject among basic education learners. In addition, it provides various research and extension activities that will develop and enhance the ability of the students to support research-based innovation and community initiatives in their organization. Looking at this noble aspiration of the university, there is a need to assess the actual situations and accomplishments of the graduates in order to further improve the curricular offering of the university. A tracer study as an impact assessment tool where the “impact on target groups is traced back to specific

elements of a project or programme so that effective and ineffective project components may be identified. In educational research the tracer study is sometimes referred to as a graduate or alumni survey since its target group is former students. It is important to note that graduate surveys are popular for “analysis of the relationship between higher education and work. They provide quantitative-structural data on employment and career, the character of work and related competencies, and information on the professional orientation and experiences of their graduates (Millington, 2020). In addition to this, Plata (2020) explains that tracer study is an essential instrument to assess the ability of a university in developing 21<sup>st</sup> century skills towards active participation in the Education 4.0 revolution. According to Badiru & Wahome (2016), tracer study is becoming a recognizable practice worldwide. Graduate tracer studies involve identification and follow-up of graduates from higher education institutions (HEIs) worldwide spurred by the need to give careful consideration to how graduates view their experiences they underwent during their degree study and their transition to the job market. If universities are to improve their teaching and training of graduates the precedence should be to learn and garner improvements from graduates’ nuanced experiences. Furthermore, Gines (2014) explains that by conducting a survey on the status of graduates from a specific institution, profession, discipline, level of education, their employment characteristics, competencies and skills development, and have a comparative analysis, the information gained from these can be used by the graduate’s alma mater and other education stakeholders for curriculum development and other emerging reforms. According to Ramirez, et al. (2014), the University graduate tracer study provides the desirable information as to what is happening to graduates when they join the world of work. It is equally important to find out how adequate is the training provided by the institution in the overall performance of their career life, the extent by which the knowledge, communication and other skills have been developed. This tracer study is also a way which can provide valuable information for evaluating the results of education and training of an institution and thereby serve as a basis for future

planning activities. A tracer study is useful in a various accreditation and curriculum enhancement activities of the university. It is one among the indicator being used to measure the success of a university. Also, one among the inputs for curriculum and instruction development or enhancement of the university is also based on the result of tracer study. For graduate programs, tracer study is useful to check the alignment of the graduate programs to the need of the industry including the knowledge and skills developed by the graduate students while staying in the university. Furthermore, in order to align the current curriculum with the present situation of the industry, a tracer study is also needed. Tracer study in the university, more often than not, are focussing on undergraduate programs. As per record, only few studies were conducted to trace the whereabouts of the graduates of ISU Echague's graduate program. Hence, there is a very limited information as to the whereabouts of the graduates including the responsiveness of ISU graduate programs on the need of the industry of the region or the country. To ensure that quality education in the advanced higher education programs of ISU is provided and based on the above premises, the study was conducted.

### Objectives

1. Identify the profile of the respondents in terms of the following:
  - a. gender;
  - b. civil status;
  - c. tenure;
  - d. type of employment;
  - e. position;
  - f. job satisfaction;
  - g. monthly salary;
  - h. age.
2. Assess the effectiveness of the program areas of the graduate program based on the perception of the respondents.
3. Describe the respondents' perception on the adequacy and relevance of the graduate school programs' curriculum.
4. Know the respondents' learned values that are useful in their employment.
5. Identify the respondents' perception on the importance and their competence on the following:
  - a. employability skills; and,
  - b. employability competence.

### METHODOLOGY

Descriptive research design was utilized for individual studies. The respondents of the study were the graduate of the Master of Arts in Education major in Filipino of Isabela State University from 2015-2020. A total of 62% of the graduates responded in the survey through Google Form. Structured questionnaire from the Commission on Higher Education with revision made by the Office of the University Director of Instruction was used in the study. The questionnaire on employability skills was adapted from the study of Siraye *et al.* (2020).

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 presents the profile of the respondents of the study. It can be gleaned from the table that most of the respondents

were female. They constitute 72.73% of the total respondents with a frequency of 16. On the other hand, there were six (6) male respondents who participated in the study. The result of the study reveals that education as a professional field is still dominated by female teachers. While it is believed that education as a profession knows no gender, data suggests that in the Philippines, most of the teachers are still female (Guzman, 2023). Data from 2008 to 2017, at least 65% to 89% of the total elementary teachers are female while there were at least 52% to 77% female teachers in secondary level (World Bank, 2023; Bongco and Ancho, 2020; Bongco and Abenes, 2019).

**Table 1. The Profile of the Respondents**

Profile	Frequency n=22	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
a. Male	6	27.27
b. Female	16	72.73
<b>Civil Status</b>		
a. Single	10	45.45
b. Married	12	54.55
<b>Employment Status</b>		
a. Contractual	2	9.09
b. Permanent	20	90.91
<b>Type of Employment</b>		
a. Private School	2	9.09
b. Public School	20	90.91
<b>Positions</b>		
a. Full-Time Teacher	21	95.45
b. Coordinator	1	4.55
<b>Immediate Impact of Graduating from the Program</b>		
a. Social Recognition	9	40.91
b. Permanency	11	50.00
c. Promotion		
<b>Job Satisfaction</b>		
a. Very Satisfied	18	81.82
b. Satisfied	4	18.18
<b>Monthly Salary</b>		
a. 14, 000 to 22, 000	2	9.09
b. 22, 001 to 31, 000	18	81.82
c. 31, 001 to 40, 000	2	9.09
<b>Age</b>		
a. 26 to 31	18	81.82
b. 32 to 38	2	9.09
c. 44 to 49	2	9.09

As to civil status, most of the graduate of MAEd Filipino program are married. There were 12 married respondents of the study while the unmarried respondents were 10. It can also be noted from the table that 20 respondents of the study are employed in public school with permanent status while there are only two (2) respondents who are teaching in private school under a contractual status. As to positions, the table revealed that most of the respondents are full-time teacher while one (1) respondent identified himself to be a coordinator. The table also revealed that as to the perceived immediate impact of graduating from the program, 11 of the respondents identified promotion to be the most immediate impact. Moreover, nine (9) among the respondents stated that the immediate impact of graduating from the program was permanency while the remaining two (2) respondents identified social recognition to be the most immediate impact of their graduation. Pursuing graduate education provides bigger opportunity among the teachers. Even in the recent Department of Education Order No. 007, s. 2023, Teacher 1 applicant will have an advantage over other applicants if they finished their master's degree. Literature provides data that personal and professional growth were the main reasons for

pursing graduate education. Taking and graduating advanced education such as master's degree is seen to be an avenue to enhanced teaching skills, promotion, personal and professional development which in return is viewed to be an indicator for their students' success and improvement of work environment (Sevim and Akın, 2021; Abellana and Abadiano, 2020, Faria *et al.*, 2017). In terms of job satisfaction, the respondents identified themselves to be very satisfied. There were 18 respondents who were very satisfied in the job while there were four (4) respondent who identified themselves to be satisfied in the jobs. As to monthly salary, it can be noted that most of the respondents are receiving a salary from 22 to 31 thousand. In the Department of Education, this is between Teacher 1 and Teacher 2. For the University Level, this is between Instructor 1 and Instructor 2. Moreover, there were two (2) respondents who are receiving a salary between 14 to 22 thousand and 31 to 40 thousand. As to age, the graduates are young. There were 18 respondents who are at age bracket of 26 to 31 years old while there were two (2) respondents who are between 32 to 38 and 44 to 49 years old. Generally speaking, teachers in the Philippines are satisfied in their chosen career specifically in areas like their present position, work environment, participation in the school's development, etc. (Oco, 2022; Bona, 2020, Baluyos *et al.*, 2019)

**Table 2. Respondents' Evaluation on the Program Areas**

Areas	Mean	Description
1. Vision, Mission, Goals and Objectives	4.95	Very Satisfactory
2. Faculty Competence	4.77	Very Satisfactory
3. Curriculum and Instruction	4.91	Very Satisfactory
4. Support to students	4.82	Very Satisfactory
5. Research development	4.68	Very Satisfactory
6. Extension and community involvement	4.55	Very Satisfactory
7. Library services	4.64	Very Satisfactory
8. Physical plant and facilities	4.77	Very Satisfactory
9. Laboratories	4.59	Very Satisfactory
10. Administration and management	4.91	Very Satisfactory
Grand Mean	4.76	Very Satisfactory

Table 2 presents the evaluation of the respondents on the different areas of the Master of Arts in Education major in Filipino program. It can be deduced from the table that a grand mean of 4.76 and a mean value from 4.55 to 4.95, the respondents were very satisfied with the different areas of the MAEd Filipino program. The highest mean was given with vision, mission of the university and the goals and objectives of the program. This was followed by the areas of curriculum and instruction and administration and management. Also, the graduates were very satisfied in areas like support to students, faculty competence, physical plant and facilities, research and development library services, laboratories, extension and community involvement. These 10 areas are crucial to learners' development and the status of the university. The various areas of the MAEd Filipino program are the specification of the different activities and offices of the university which provide holistic development among its learners especially in the areas of instruction, research, extension and production. The university should provide support and innovations among these areas in order to improve itself which will eventually provide positive impact among the learners. In addition, these are the priority areas to be evaluated during accreditation of the Accreditation Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities of the Philippines (AACCUP). At

the moment, the program is awarded Level IV accredited program. According to Batoon (2022), in order to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of programs in higher education, accreditation should be conducted since it will be an honest and objective way of evaluating the status of the program along its 10 areas with the aim of further improvement.

Table 3 presents the respondents' assessment on the adequacy and relevance of the MAEd Filipino Curriculum. The table revealed that the respondents assessed the adequacy of the MAEd Filipino curriculum to be "Very High" with mean rating from 4.64 to 4.91. In addition, the respondents also evaluated the relevance of the MAEd Filipino Curriculum as "Very High" with mean rating from 4.68 to 4.91. The respondents of the study assessed that the MAEd Filipino curriculum was able to develop a very high competence of relevant knowledge, skills and competencies like the ability to grasp basic and comprehensive understanding of the field of specialization, application of scientific procedures in solving problems, and display meaningful and comprehensive pedagogical content knowledge of their field of specialization. In addition, the respondents assessed that the MAEd Filipino curriculum provide high level of competency on designing and utilizing appropriate instructional materials, employing effective teaching techniques for diverse type of learners, designing and utilizing variety of appropriate assessment techniques, and analyzing assessment results and use these to improve learning and teaching. The respondents also assessed that the curriculum of MAEd Filipino program is able to develop among its graduate a high level of competence on providing regular feedback to students, utilizing appropriate pedagogy and use of technology in teaching, creating and utilizing learning experiences to develop learners' skills in learning, problem solving and critical thinking, development of effective classroom management style, communication, and demonstrate mastery of the subject matter and display professional and ethical teaching standards. Curriculum is an indispensable part of education as it provide structured experience among learners towards the attainment of the desired knowledge, skills and competencies necessary in a particular field of expertise. According to Mulenga (2018), it is a systematic, organized, and integrative course of experiences either known or unknown among the learners which are under the supervision of an education expert towards the attainment of learning outcomes and will result to growth and development. Furthermore, Stabback (2016) expounded that a quality curriculum is something that is contributing to the attainment of equitable and inclusive education as mandated in SDG No. 4 (Quality Education).

Curriculum evaluation is a must. According to Karakus (2021), evaluation of curriculum will provide avenue for the implementer identify the strength and weakness of the curriculum which can be a basis for the revision of the curriculum and to strategize possible activities, policies and innovations that will improve the identified issues and problems. Data of the study revealed that the curriculum of the Master of Arts in Education major in Filipino is highly adequate and relevant based on the assessment of the graduates. This only means that based on their assessment, the curriculum provides rich, integrated, innovative experiences among the students of the programs towards the attainment of the desired knowledge, skills and competencies necessary in the field of teaching Filipino as a subject, language and field of discipline.

**Table 3. Respondents' Assessment on the Adequacy and Relevance of the MAEd Filipino Curriculum**

Statements	Adequacy		Relevance	
	Mean	Description	Mean	Description
1. Display basic and comprehensive understanding of the field of specialization	4.91	Very High	4.86	Very High
2. Apply scientific procedures in solving problems	4.73	Very High	4.77	Very High
3. Manifest meaningful and comprehensive pedagogical content knowledge of their field of specialization	4.86	Very High	4.77	Very High
4. Design and utilize appropriate instructional materials	4.73	Very High	4.73	Very High
5. Employ effective teaching techniques for diverse type of learners	4.73	Very High	4.68	Very High
6. Design and utilize variety of appropriate assessment techniques	4.77	Very High	4.73	Very High
7. Analyse assessment results and use these to improve learning and teaching	4.77	Very High	4.77	Very High
8. Provide regular feedback to students	4.68	Very High	4.68	Very High
9. Utilize appropriate pedagogy and use of technology in teaching	4.73	Very High	4.73	Very High
10. Create and utilize learning experiences to develop learners' skills in learning, problem solving and critical thinking	4.64	Very High	4.73	Very High
11. Develop effective classroom management style	4.68	Very High	4.82	Very High
12. Effective is communication	4.86	Very High	4.91	Very High
13. Demonstrate mastery of the subject matter	4.91	Very High	4.82	Very High
14. Practice professional and ethical teaching standards	4.77	Very High	4.82	Very High

Table 4 presents the perception of the respondents on the values they learned from Isabela State University. The mean rating from 4.77 to 4.95 shows that the respondents have strong agreement on the different values inculcated to them by the university. The respondents strongly agreed that the University have taught them the value of competence, compassion, honesty, punctuality, leadership, confidence, faith, diligence, love of service. Also, the respondents strongly agreed that they develop in the university the values like sociability, creativity, commitment, hope, workmanship and an advocate for the environment.

**Table 4. Respondents' Perception on the Values they Learned in the University**

Statements	Mean	Description
1. Competence	4.86	Strongly Agree
2. Compassion	4.91	Strongly Agree
3. Honesty	4.95	Strongly Agree
4. Punctuality	4.77	Strongly Agree
5. Leadership	4.82	Strongly Agree
6. Confidence	4.82	Strongly Agree
7. Faith	4.91	Strongly Agree
8. Diligence	4.82	Strongly Agree
9. Love of service	4.91	Strongly Agree
10. Sociability	4.82	Strongly Agree
11. Creativity	4.77	Strongly Agree
12. Commitment	4.82	Strongly Agree
13. Hope	4.82	Strongly Agree
14. Workmanship	4.82	Strongly Agree
15. Environmental advocate	4.86	Strongly Agree

The Isabela State University is determined to develop among the students' knowledge, skills and competencies necessary of their chosen field of specialization. Aside from this, according to Al-Zoubi and Al-Omari (2018), a university should aim at inculcating different values among the students through the various academic, non-academic and extra-curricular activities. For Isabela State University, the priority values are excellence, integrity, accountability, collaboration, efficiency, innovation, and other importance values. As for the data of the study, it is revealed that the university through the Master of Arts in Education major in Filipino was able to develop different values while studying in the university. It is a manifestation of the dedication of the university to develop globally competitive graduates who are also morally and socially upright and just.

Table 5 presents the perception of the respondents on the importance and their competence on employability skills which they learned from the MAEd Filipino program. It can be noted from the table that the mean rating from 4.55 to 4.91 suggests that the respondents rated all skills as very importance.

Also, in terms of competence, the respondents assessed themselves to be highly competent with mean rating from 4.59 to 4.82. The respondent identified the following employability skills to be very important: adaptability, taking reasonable job-related risk, and ethical considerations. On the other hand, the respondents assessed themselves to be very competent in skills like adaptability, taking reasonable job-related risk, and ethical considerations and managing several tasks at once. The university is expected through its various program to develop the knowledge, skills and competencies among its students necessary for the chosen field of specialization as these are essential in the future work place. According to Abas and Imam (2016), employment skills is indispensable indicator of success in a workplace. A successful employee is someone who is able to match with a necessary skill the need and requirement of their future organization. Data of the study revealed that the respondents perceived themselves to be very competent on the different skills necessary for their employment. Also, they assessed that the skills which the program intends to development among the students are of great importance in the work place. Putting effort to develop various employment skills among the graduates of the program is an effort to address the gaps in the work place especially that there are problems as regard to employment skills of graduates in the Philippines specially on interpersonal relationship, doing the right and acceptable things and ability to communicate (Caingcoy, *et al*, 2021). Table 6 presents the respondents perception on the importance and their competence on their employment competencies they develop under the MAEd Filipino program. It can be noted that based on the table, all employment competencies are rated as "Very Important" with mean rating from 4.77 to 4.91. The respondents assessed to be very important in their employment the competencies like human relation or interpersonal skills, instructional and assessment skills, knowledge and technical skills, extension skills, lifelong learning skills, content-based skills and critical thinking skills. In terms of their level of competence, 12 out of 15 competencies were rated to be "Very High" or "Very Competent" with mean rating from 4.73 to 4.82. The respondents assessed themselves to be very competent in human relations or interpersonal skills, communication skills, information technology skills, instructional and assessment skills, knowledge and technical skills, life and career skills, problem-solving skills and content-based skills. On the other hand, the respondents rated three (3) competencies to be at a "High Level" with mean rating from 4.39 to 4.45. The respondents assessed themselves to be with high competence in leadership or managerial skills, entrepreneurial skills and extension skills.

**Table 5. Respondents' Perception on the Importance and their Competence on Employability Skills they Learned in MAEd Filipino Program**

Statements		Importance		Competence	
		Mean	Description	Mean	Description
1.	Making decision in a short period of time	4.73	Very High	4.68	Very High
2.	Identifying problems	4.59	Very High	4.68	Very High
3.	Writing of reports	4.55	Very High	4.59	Very High
4.	Applying IT as management tool	4.77	Very High	4.68	Very High
5.	Revising plans to include new ideas	4.77	Very High	4.68	Very High
6.	Writing internal and external business communication	4.73	Very High	4.59	Very High
7.	Providing novel solutions to problems	4.59	Very High	4.64	Very High
8.	Smooth relationship with peers and supervisors	4.73	Very High	4.77	Very High
9.	Allocating time effectively	4.77	Very High	4.77	Very High
10.	Meeting deadlines	4.77	Very High	4.82	Very High
11.	Adaptability	4.91	Very High	4.82	Very High
12.	Assigning/delegating responsibility	4.77	Very High	4.77	Very High
13.	Managing/overseeing several task as once	4.77	Very High	4.82	Very High
14.	Taking reasonable job related risk	4.82	Very High	4.82	Very High
15.	Keeping up-to-date with external realities	4.77	Very High	4.73	Very High
16.	Knowing ethical considerations of plans	4.82	Very High	4.82	Very High

**Table 6. Respondents' Perception on the Importance and their Competence on Employability Competence they Learned in MAEd Filipino Program**

Statements		Importance		Competence	
		Mean	Description	Mean	Description
1.	Communication Skills	4.77	Very High	4.77	Very High
2.	Human Relation/ Interpersonal Skills	4.91	Very High	4.82	Very High
3.	Leadership/ Managerial Skills	4.77	Very High	4.39	High
4.	Entrepreneurial Skills	4.68	Very High	4.41	High
5.	Information Technology Skills	4.77	Very High	4.77	Very High
6.	Instructional and assessment skills	4.82	Very High	4.77	Very High
7.	Knowledge and technical skills	4.82	Very High	4.77	Very High
8.	Life and career skills	4.77	Very High	4.77	Very High
9.	Problem – Solving Skills	4.77	Very High	4.77	Very High
10.	Critical Thinking Skills	4.91	Very High	4.73	Very High
11.	Research Skills	4.77	Very High	4.73	Very High
12.	Extension Skills	4.82	Very High	4.45	High
13.	Lifelong learning skills	4.86	Very High	4.73	Very High
14.	Collaborative skills	4.82	Very High	4.73	Very High
15.	Content-based skills	4.82	Very High	4.77	Very High

Note: please look into consideration that the discussion for the Table 6 is too far from each other.

Gaining different competence relevant to teaching and learning is a requirement even among in-service teachers. Hence, the Isabela State University provides various innovations to improve the technical know-how of the teachers as they are factors in enrolling graduate education. According to Mavis and Akm (2021), while most of the teachers are enrolling in graduate education for professional and personal reasons, they also pursue graduate education in order to develop scientific thinking, research skills, communication skills and other valuable knowledge and skills in the field of education.

## Conclusion

1. Most of the respondents are young, Teacher 1 to 3, female, married, permanent and government employee. Most of them are receiving 22 to 31 thousand salary per month and they are highly satisfied with their jobs, and promotion is the most immediate impact of graduating a master's course in Filipino.
2. The graduates are very satisfied on the difference areas of the MAEd Filipino program especially in the areas if curriculum and instruction, and administration and management.
3. The graduates assessed the adequacy and relevance of the MAEd Filipino program to be very relevant and very important.
4. The respondents are positive that they learned values like compassion, honesty, faith, and love of service from the Isabela State University.

5. As to importance and competence of the respondents on the employment skills they learned and develop in the university, they perceived that all are very important and that they are very competent on them especially adaptability, taking reasonable job-related risk, and ethical considerations and managing several tasks at once.
6. As to employment competence, the respondents assessed that very important in their employment the competencies like human relation or interpersonal skills, instructional and assessment skills, knowledge and technical skills, extension skills, lifelong learning skills, content-based skills and critical thinking skills. In addition, the study revealed that the respondents have a high competence in leadership or managerial skills, entrepreneurial skills and extension skills while they have a very high competence in human relations or interpersonal skills, communication skills, information technology skills, instructional and assessment skills, knowledge and technical skills, life and career skills, problem-solving skills and content-based skills.

## Recommendations

1. It is recommended that the findings of this study be used in the adjustment and enhancement of the curriculum and teaching approaches. Focus may be given in developing the leadership or managerial skills, entrepreneurial skills and extension skills of the students.
2. Further study may be conducted along this line. Focus may be given on the areas like assessing the graduate knowledge and skills vis-à-vis the industry needs and expectations.

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