Employability Characteristics of Teacher Education Graduates in Mindanao State University

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ABSTRACT

With the end-goal of identifying the strength, areas of improvement, and employability of the graduates, this study is grounded by the literature gap tracing the graduate education students at Mindanao State University-College of Education and their employers' feedback and satisfaction. Thus, this present paper focuses on two areas: investigating the employability characteristics of the graduate students of MSU-CED and examining employers' feedback and level of satisfaction with regards to the teaching proficiencies of their employees. Utilizing survey questionnaire for the graduates and checklist-interview with the employers, a total of 216 graduates of Graduate Education Department served as respondents of the study and 18 employers participated in the interview. The findings disclosed that almost all of the respondents are already employed and have permanent employment status. These graduates noted a very adequate rating of the skills in communication, human relations, leadership, and problem-solving; and extremely adequate in research skills which they perceived to have contributed to their employment. They recommended that more masteral and doctorate programs be offered by the college to develop more specialists in Teacher Education. Conversely, the employers mostly shared positive feedback and high satisfaction of their employees' teaching proficiency and services; indicating that MSU-CED sufficiently provided effective graduate education programs that meet the demands of the education industry. Nonetheless, the employers also noted some employees who still need some areas of improvement in their teaching performance.

Keywords: Curriculum Relevance, Graduate Employability, Employer Feedback, Leadership Skills, Teacher Education.

1. INTRODUCTION

Education serves as a fundamental solution to the challenges posed by a nation's socio-economic conditions. It plays a crucial role in cultivating human resources who can contribute effectively and meaningfully to society. Higher education institutions (HEIs) are currently facing new problems as a result of the evolving nature of work and employment in the twenty-first century. Rapid advancements in employability skills have made them more crucial, and appropriate work experience is essential for meeting job requirements. Article 11 of RA No. 7836, commonly known as the Philippine Teachers Professionalization Act of 1994 and the Code of Ethics for Professional Teachers were created by the Board for Professional Teachers under No. 223. This study specifically examines the employability traits of the graduates and measures their performance at work, including how well and efficiently they accomplish the tasks assigned to them and how well they meet their employer's expectations versus their own.

2. METHODOLOGY

The research employed a descriptive design, as it involved collecting quantitative data and analysing it using descriptive statistics. The first set of questionnaires was based on the modified Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Graduate Tracer Study Questionnaire, adapted from the study by Arbis et al. (2023) for employees. Some components of the questionnaire were revised by the researcher to align with the research objectives. The second set of questionnaires used was the updated descriptive survey design that was modified for the Aquino et al. (2015) investigation. Employers' comments on graduates' use of teacher proficiencies in the areas of foundations, characteristics, and opinions of these proficiencies' usefulness for hiring and entry-level teaching. The data were analysed using the thematic analysis. It is a way of seeing and a process for coding qualitative information according to Woods (2011). Quantitative research methods were used to observe events that affect a particular group of people, referred to as the sample population. In this type of study, a range of methods were used to collect diverse numerical data, which were then statistically analysed to aggregate, compare, or show connections between the data. Generally speaking, quantitative research approaches include surveys, experiments, and systematic observations (Sreekumar, 2023).

3. RESULTS
3.1 THE TRAINING AND ADVANCE STUDIES ATTENDED

Table 1 Training(s) and advanced studies attended

Nature of Training	N	Sum	Rank
Teaching methodology training	216	162	1
Computer Literacy Training	216	161	2
English proficiency training	216	121	3
Research capability training	216	106	4
Livelihood training	216	79	5
Radio-based instruction training	216	22	6.5
Others (not mentioned)	216	22	6.5
First-aid training	216	19	8
Real state training	216	13	9

The finding entails that the majority of the training participated by the respondents relate more on their teaching profession and skill-based trainings that are relevant to their field of specialization.

Table 2 *Present Employment Status*

Employment Status	Frequency	Percentage
Regular/Permanent	181	83.8
Probationary	6	2.8
Casual	1	5
Contractual	15	6.9
Self-Employed	3	1.4
Unemployed	10	4.6
Total	216	100

The findings highlighted the interest of the teacher-respondents in growing in their field professionally and personally. This indicates a strong desire among teachers to enhance their teaching competencies, adapt to innovative instructional strategies, and stay updated with advancements in their field.

Table 3 *Difficulties encountered in looking for a job*

Difficulties Encountered in Seeking for a Job	N	Sum	Rank
No job opportunity	216	111	1
Family concern and decided not to find a job	216	97	2
Advance or further study	216	89	3
Lack of political patronage	216	88	4
Few jobs/Vacancies	216	87	5
Health-related reason(s)	216	73	6
Mismatch of educational qualifications	216	72	7
Passing the pre-employment interview	216	37	8
Lack of work experience	216	36	9
Did not look for a job	216	25	10
Personality Factors	216	22	11
Not meeting paper requirement/s	216	18	12
Inadequate knowledge or skills	216	17	13

Similar to the findings of Pentang (2022), ranking standards (29 or 41.43%) emerged as the most common challenge for graduates, followed by limited training and a lack of teaching experience (23 or 32.86%).

Table 4. *Frequency and Percentage Distribution on how long did you stay in your previous job*

How long did you stay in your previous job	Frequency	Percentage
Less than a month	44	20.4
1 to 6 months	18	8.3
7 to 11 months	8	3.7
1 year to less than 2 years	29	13.4
2 years to less than 3 years	32	14.8
3 years to less than 4 years	17	7.9
5 years above	68	31.5
TOTAL	216	100

In alignment with the findings of Cornillez Jr. et al. (2021), a significant proportion of graduates, 33.52%, secured their first employment within one to six months after graduation.

Table 5. *Frequency and Percentage Distribution on their job level position*

Job level position	Frequency	Percentage
Rank or clerical	4	1.9
Professional, technical or supervisory	151	69.9
Managerial or executive	55	25.5
Self-employed	6	2.8
TOTAL	216	100

This is line with Pentang's (2022) study, the majority of graduates (56 or 80%) were employed as teachers or instructors, while others secured jobs in finance or marketing firms (6 or 8.57%), supervisory or administrative roles (5 or 7.14%), and clerical positions (3 or 4.29%).

Table 6 *Frequency and Percentage Distribution on initial gross monthly income*

Initial gross income	Frequency	Percentage
Below P5,000	18	8.3
P5,000 to less than P10,000	54	25
P10,000 to less than P15,000	60	27.8
P15,000 to less than P20,000	21	9.7
P20,000 to less than P25,000	24	11.1
P25,000 and above	39	18.1
TOTAL	216	100

Similar results were observed in the tracer study of Cornillez Jr. (2021), which found that most teacher education graduates earned a monthly salary between 20,000 and 25,000 pesos.

Contribution of the curriculum programs to the development of the graduates' skills
Table 7 *Adequacy of Training in Communication Skill*

Indicators of Communication Skills	Responses (n=216)					Mode	QD
	NA	SA	A	VA	EA		
1. I can express ideas in clear and logical manner.	0	4	20	147	45	VA	Very Adequate
2. I can use various forms and styles of written communication.	0	14	46	132	24	VA	Very Adequate
3. I can use grammatically correct language and vocabulary.	0	14	23	160	19	VA	Very Adequate
4. I can listen with objectivity to gain understanding of the ideas of others.	0	0	14	170	32	VA	Very Adequate

Legends: NA=Not Adequate, SA=Somewhat Adequate, A=Adequate, VA=Very Adequate, EA= Extremely Adequate, QD=Qualitative description

Similar to the results of the study of Gines (2014), the communication skill also obtained a "Very Adequate" response among the 2009 – 2011 PNU graduates. Included in the indicator is the capacity to listen objectively in order to comprehend the thoughts of others which has the highest rank. On the other hand, the usage of different written communication formats and styles had the lowest mean (4.02).

Table 8 *Adequacy of Human Relation Skills*

Indicators **Adequacy of Training in Human Relation Skills**	Responses (n=216)					Mode	QD
	NA	SA	A	VA	EA		
1. I can demonstrate effective social behavior in a variety of setting and under different circumstances.	0	14	35	124	43	VA	Very Adequate
2. I can respond to the needs of colleagues in the workplace.	0	14	44	68	90	EA	Extremely Adequate
3. I can apply effective conflict resolution skills.	0	0	53	77	86	EA	Extremely Adequate
4. I can foster professional relationships with people in the workplace.	0	0	48	83	85	EA	Extremely Adequate
5. I can exhibit cooperative and supportive relations with others.	0	14	6	103	93	VA	Very Adequate

This suggests that MSU-CED honed their ability to be dependable, reliant, and helpful towards their colleagues or co-teachers, exemplifying the professionalism of the respondents and that they are also kind enough to share whatever sources they have or offer help in whatever capacity that they can. It also demonstrates one of the values among Meranaws which is helping others who are indeed.

Table 9 *Adequacy of Training in Leadership Skills*

Indicators Adequacy of Training in Leadership Skills	Responses (*n*=216)					Mode	QD
	NA	SA	A	VA	EA		
1. I can stimulate collaborative efforts with colleagues in the workplace.	3	0	34	94	85	VA	Very Adequate
2. I can motivate, mobilize and inspire people to move toward the goal of the organizations.	0	0	15	127	74	VA	Very Adequate
3. I can organize and coordinate people and tasks to achieve the organization's goal.	0	0	14	133	69	VA	Very Adequate
4. I can facilitate effective implementation of programs of the departments/School/organization.	0	0	12	115	89	VA	Very Adequate
5. I can maintain self-control in the midst of stressful encounters with group members.	0	4	9	76	127	EA	Extremely Adequate
6. I can take responsibility and risks in making decisions.	0	6	22	49	139	EA	Extremely Adequate

According to Caingcoy (2021), one of the most employable abilities is leadership. Leyaley (2015) emphasized that graduates tend to develop their leadership abilities after graduation. In the study of Abas et al. (2020), it revealed that Cavite State University Teacher Education graduates felt that leadership was one of their employable talents.

Table 10 *Adequacy of Training on Problem Solving Skills*

Indicators Adequacy of Training in Problem Solving Skills	Responses (*n*=216)					Mode	QD
	NA	SA	A	VA	EA		
1. I can identify the underlying issues in a problem.	0	6	8	101	101	VA/ EA	Very Adequate /Extremely Adequate
2. I can examine alternative solutions and strategies to make an informed decision on the problem.	0	0	20	109	87	VA	Very Adequate
3. I can develop a clear plan to solve the problem.	0	0	43	78	95	EA	Extremely Adequate
4. I can evaluate action for making future decision.	0	0	26	85	105	EA	Extremely Adequate

The respondents acknowledge that MSU-CED has contributed to the development of their problem-solving skills and this contribution is more than adequate. Cornillez Jr. et al. (2021) reveals that among the competences that university graduates learnt, communication skills score first at 70.39%, indicating that they thought this talent would be highly helpful in the workplace.

Table 11. *Adequacy of Training in Research Skills*

Indicators Adequacy of Training in Research	Responses (*n*=216)					Mode	QD
	NA	SA	A	VA	EA		

Skills							
1. I can identify research problems in one's discipline.	0	0	72	62	82	EA	Extremely Adequate
2. I can formulate testable hypothesis.	0	6	64	46	98	EA	Extremely Adequate
3. I can demonstrate knowledge of various data gathering techniques.	0	0	54	77	85	EA	Extremely Adequate
4. I can apply appropriate statistics in processing data.	2	6	67	59	82	EA	Extremely Adequate
5. I can analyze and interpret research results.	0	0	41	77	98	EA	Extremely Adequate
6. I can draw conclusions and generalization from research data.	0	0	46	71	99	EA	Extremely Adequate
7. I can use technology to acquire needed information.	0	0	62	55	99	EA	Extremely Adequate

With the respondents acknowledging the high adequacy of the contribution of their graduate education program to their skills in research implies that they have the ability to spot research problems, formulate hypothesis, knowledgeable of research methodology and analyse and interpret data, and finally come up with sound conclusion to contribute to the body of literature in their discipline.

A. Employability Characteristics

Table 12. *Extent of applications of the skills learned to the personal and professional growth of the teacher's graduates*

Indicators	Responses (*n*=216)					Mode	QD
Employability Characteristics	VL	L	A	H	VH		
1. Enhanced academic profession	0	0	11	69	136	VH	Very High
2. Improved problem-solving skills	0	0	11	89	116	VH	Very High
3. Improved research skills	0	0	27	82	107	VH	Very High
4. Improved learning efficacy	0	0	17	85	114	VH	Very High
5. Improved communication/ interpersonal skills	0	0	37	39	140	VH	Very High
6. Improved information technology skills	2	6	47	67	94	VH	Very High
7. Enhanced team spirit/people skills	0	0	13	65	138	VH	Very High
8. Exposure to the local community within the field of specialization	0	6	15	75	120	VH	Very High
9. Exposure to the international community within the field of specialization	0	16	41	41	118	VH	Very High
10. Critical thinking skills	0	0	23	94	99	VH	Very High
11. Salary improvement and promotion	2	6	16	85	107	VH	Very High
12. Opportunity Abroad	0	10	40	73	93	VH	Very High
13. Personality Development	0	0	34	77	105	VH	Very High

Similar with that of the Daguplo (2020), the College of Teacher Education's graduates expressed their gratitude for the curriculum's significant influence on the growth of their knowledge, abilities, and attitudes.

Table 13. *Recommendations to improve the service of the graduate school*

Recommendation	N	Total	Rank
1. Offer doctoral programs	216	193	1
2. Enhance curriculum	216	190	2
3. Offer additional specializations in the master's programs	216	186	3
4. Improve buildings, ICT, and laboratory	216	179	4.5
5. More qualified professors in some programs	216	179	4.5
6. Time management	216	178	6
7. Construct e-library and e-learning resources	216	175	7
8. Conduct webinars/seminars to enhance students' professional growth and development	216	163	8
9. Proper scheduling of subjects	216	160	9
10. Improve sports facilities and equipment	216	152	10
11. Other Recommendations	216	139	11
12. Partner with private institutions	216	120	12
13. Offer distance learning	216	117	13
14. Offer PhD Program (Reading/Guidance Counselling)	216	60	14

It is then followed by the recommendation of enhancing the curriculum among the 190 (2nd rank) out of 216 respondents. This means that the curriculum of the graduate education programs needs to be updated, which can be done through curricular revisions.

Table 14. *Overall ratings of the Respondents on the Graduate Programs offered by MSU-CED*

Indicators	Responses (*n*=216)					Mode	QD
Overall Rating	VL	L	A	H	VH		
1. Range of the subjects offered	0	0	20	144	52	H	High
2. Relevance of the program to professional requirement	0	0	14	98	104	VH	Very High
3. Extracurricular activities	0	2	56	94	64	H	High
4. Problem-solving	0	6	34	130	46	H	High
5. Premium growth to research	0	14	36	96	70	H	High
6. Interdisciplinary learning	0	2	20	129	65	H	High
7. Teaching and learning environment	0	0	19	138	59	H	High
8. Quality of instruction	0	0	22	123	71	H	High
9. Teacher-student relationship	0	0	83	81	52	A	Average
10. Library resources	2	8	91	73	42	A	Average
11. Laboratory resources	0	10	129	35	42	A	Average
12. Class size	0	14	62	77	63	H	High
13. Infrastructure and facilities	0	0	101	55	60	A	Average
14. Professor's knowledge of the major subjects	0	2	19	82	113	VH	Very High

This finding implies that the Graduate Education department of CED has an effective and relevant curriculum implementation and that their programs offer quality education and services as far as the curriculum is concerned and the structure of their curricular programs.

Table 15. *Employers' Level of satisfaction on the Teaching Proficiencies of MSU-CED Graduates*

Teaching Proficiencies	Responses (*n*=139)					Mode	QD
	VLS	LS	MS	HS	VHS		
1. Knowledge of Philosophy	0	0	19	88	32	HS	High Satisfaction

and History of Education							
2. Research Skills	0	0	36	81	22	HS	High Satisfaction
3. Mastery of Subject Matter	0	0	27	85	27	HS	High Satisfaction
4. Learning and Development	0	2	19	81	37	HS	High Satisfaction
5. Reflective Skills	2	2	16	90	29	HS	High Satisfaction
6. Educational Technology	0	2	27	72	38	HS	High Satisfaction
7. Pedagogical and Professional Skills	0	2	26	79	32	HS	High Satisfaction
8. Assessment	2	2	22	80	33	HS	High Satisfaction
9. Dispositions	2	4	23	80	30	HS	High Satisfaction
10. Management of Diversity of Learners	2	2	27	77	31	HS	High Satisfaction
11. Collaboration and Initiative	0	4	17	83	35	HS	High Satisfaction

This assessment can be viewed as a positive evaluation despite the distribution of Very Low Satisfaction, Low Satisfaction, Moderate Satisfaction, High Satisfaction, and Very High Satisfaction responses.

B. Interview with the Employers
Employers' Satisfaction with the personal and professional characteristics of their employees
Theme 1: Positive Satisfaction of their Professional Characteristics

Employer 1: *("I am satisfied with their personal and professional characteristics. And I think as MSU Graduates you have these kinds of trainings that uphold you to becomes stronger and flexible for whatever work you were assigned to. In terms of good relationship between your co-workers they will able to adjust to any kind of working environment and team work they showcase inside their school.")*

Employer 12: *(..."She was dedicated to her work and actually teaching was her passion bound with good attitudes and values towards her heads and co-workers.)*

As can be seen in the sample interview transcripts, employers 1, 2, and 10 commend their employees' ability to adjust to various work environments and demonstrate teamwork, suggesting that the graduates are well-prepared for the demands of their roles.

Theme 2: Influence of MSU's Education and Training

Employer 7: *(…"Based on my observation as an Atenista as a graduate of MSU, graduates of College of Education in master's and PhD they were quite impressive and doing amazing in our division. In fact, I salute all graduates coming from MSU graduates of degree program of College of Education. I trust the quality and even the quantity also so long you are MSU graduates you good values and ethics. I always tap those master's and PhD holders especially when I serve as the head way back because I believe that if they were with me as support system in the division level, I can have a goof team work.')*

Employer 16: *(…"Many will be impressed of your profession if you are a product of MSU specifically in College of Education who produces numbers of graduates that are all competitive and dedicated in their teaching profession. I think it was because in today's generations compared to our time todays, were gifted. They have all the resources and materials to further research and studies.)*

The second theme emerged from the thematic analysis of the data is the further acknowledgement of the employers with the trainings that graduates receive from MSU-CED. The data underscores the significant influence of MSU-CED's education and training on the professional and personal characteristics of its graduates, particularly those from the graduate education department.

Theme 3: Differences in their Work-related Performance

Employer 13: *(…"Basically, it was very hard for me, because the rating was diverse, they have diverse performance. But I will rate them in general. I can say that they were very dedicated. Their commitment and passion were high along with their values and attitudes were very high. It was because, if you notice as the start of my designation as principal, I saw the participation of the*

elementary teachers. They were every active in terms of different activities inside or outside the campus.

Employer 15: *(…"Not all of them committed and devoted to their work. We know that teacher is a noblest profession. However, some were not maintaining harmonious and pleasant personal and good relations with their head or colleagues. Some don't even complete the given 8 hours daily to sustain the responsibilities and duties assigned to them. Which also reflects that they were not dedicated to their profession. Though some who were already holding degree but not even performing well in their functions.*

Employer 17: (…"*I think I will rate them 50% for their dedication because as I observed they were not fully dedicated to their work. I think it was because they were not fully given expertise in their teaching profession. Their passion and commitment must be awakened to make them more participative and collaborative. Sending them to trainings and seminars will somehow help them to grow.")*

Theme 3 reveals that although majority of the employers have positive satisfaction of the professional characteristics of their employees, they also admitted that not all of the graduates of MSU-CED display such dedication, commitment, ethics, and values in their work. The data reveals notable differences in work-related performance among employees as shared by the employers.

Theme 4: Collaboration and Teamwork

Employer 6: *(…"we are harmonizing in work and have unity in all plans and activities we want to execute in our department.")*

Employer 11: ("(in) *our school, I have composed of more than teachers and 20 staff, but luckily with the kind of people surrounds me it makes work easier. There is teamwork, collaboration and dedication to work I will always rely on. They were very respectful, reliable and they can even manage some queries even if I am not around.")*

Employer 13: ("*I saw the participation of the elementary teachers. They were very active in terms of different activities inside or outside the campus. The dedication and passion were already there and as head I just need to be awaken by leading as an example. They were all given opportunity to work and very committed even not school days they have time to work at school if needed.")*

Another shared characteristic of the teachers disclosed by the employers are collaboration and teamwork. According to the employers, these are traits that they commonly observe among their teachers who are graduates of MSU-CED.

Employers' Feedback on the Level of satisfaction when it comes to the teaching services of their employees

Theme 1: High Levels of Satisfaction

Sub Theme 1: Quality and Engaging Teaching Performance

Employer 1: ("*I have been very satisfied with the services provided by the teachers under me. Their lessons are well-prepared and engaging and they create a positive and supportive learning environment.")*

Employer 2: ("*I will rate them very high satisfaction, since they were working their assigned work accordingly and appropriately.")*

Employer 5: ("*I am very satisfied with their work ethics, technical skills and communications skills.")*

Employer 9: *("I will rate them a very high rating, because of my observations as a faculty member of the College they were all behaving and doing a great job with their duties and responsibilities assigned to them.")*

The employers generally rated their teachers with very high rating indicating their high satisfaction. One of the bases for their high satisfaction is the teaching performance of the teachers.

Sub Theme 2: Passion and Dedication

Employer 11: ("*…there was teamwork, collaboration and dedication to work I will always rely on. They were very respectful, reliable and they can even manage some queries even if I am not around.*")

Employer 14: ("*I am highly satisfied with their performances, commitment and passion in teaching and for their love in the profession. They are the teachers who are doing very satisfactorily in   classroom   instruction.*"

Another reason for the high satisfaction of the employers is the dedication and passion that they observed from their teachers who are products of MSU-CED Graduate Education Department.

Theme 2: Room for Improvement

Employer 15: (…"*I will give "Very low satisfaction for some indicators such their reflective skills, assessment and management for diversity of learners…*")

Employer 17: (" … *I am satisfied with their teaching services, but close monitoring and evaluation is highly recommended*".)

Employer 18: ("*…. I will rather rate them 8, because we can see in colleges how it functions and   work.   They   just   need   some   improvements   and   modifications..*")

Meanwhile, there are employers who rated some of their teachers with low satisfaction because these teachers still need to improve in some areas in their personal and professional attributes.

Table 4.37 *Usefulness of the Graduates' Teaching Proficiencies according to the Employers*

Proficiencies	Responses (n=139)				Mode	QD
	NU	SU	U	VU		
1. Knowledge of Philosophy and History of Education	0	11	71	57	U	Useful
2. Research Skills	0	17	69	53	U	Useful
3. Mastery of Subject Matter	0	11	68	60	U	Useful
4. Learning and Development	0	16	65	58	U	Useful
5. Reflective Skills	2	13	65	59	U	Useful
6. Educational Technology	0	13	66	59	U	Useful
7. Pedagogical and Professional Skills	0	15	70	54	U	Useful
8. Assessment	2	13	72	52	U	Useful
9. Dispositions	2	15	71	51	U	Useful
10. Management of Diversity of Learners	2	15	79	43	U	Useful
11. Collaboration and Initiative	0	13	76	50	U	Useful

In essence, according to Singh & Choo's (2012) research, employer feedback can provide proof of the high caliber of graduates, their performance, and their academic aptitude. Employers typically describe it as the graduates' degree of satisfaction.

Table 4.38 *Further Recommendations to Strengthen the Teacher Education Program*

Recommendations	Frequency (n=216)	Rank
1. More offerings of Advance Program	186	1
2. Support graduate students in research presentation and publication	153	2
3. Offer Scholarship Program both for Private and Public teachers	145	3
4. Hire faculty members who specialized in prof. ed and major courses	143	4
5. Emphasize personality development and values formation	128	5
6. Enrich curriculum to meet the demands of future employment or yearly revision	125	6
7. Benchmarking with the outside top performing Universities.	115	7

8.	E-library or provide separate library for the program to be intensified	115	8
9.	More educational field trip	91	9
10.	Sustain activities & events on Research	89	10
11.	Decongested Curriculum	76	11
12.	Emphasize more on the development of technological skills	74	12
13.	More faculty development program to improve instruction	67	13
14.	More exposure of students in human and public relations	45	14
15.	Engage seminars and trainings	35	15
16.	Establish a teacher education research journal	27	16
17.	Inclusion of ICT in the Curriculum	23	17
18.	Keep in contact with CHED for updates on graduate programs needed locally & internationally	16	18
19.	Engage successful alumni who are in the field of education especially in administration	15	19
20.	Inclusion of Culture and Arts in the course	5	20

The paper of Abela et al. (2015) reported that graduates recommended offering more relevant training, seminars, and workshops, revising the K-12 curriculum, and providing additional courses on communication and human relations skills. Similarly, Reusia et al. (2020) agreed that improvements are needed in the content and pedagogy of programs for pre-service teachers.

SUMMARY

Based on the data gathered and analysed, the following major findings are enumerated:

(1) Majority of the respondents attended various training and advanced studies, with 162 (ranked 1st) participating in teaching methodology training and 161 (ranked 2nd) attending computer literacy training.

(2) Respondents rated the curriculum's adequacy for communication skills as "Very Adequate," particularly in expressing ideas clearly and logically. For employability skills, they rated Human Relation skills as "Very Adequate," with "Extremely Adequate" ratings for responsiveness to colleagues' needs and conflict resolution.

(3) Majority of the respondents indicated that the employability characteristics of teacher graduates, particularly in terms of applying the skills they learned to personal and professional growth, were rated as "Very High."

(4) Majority of the respondents has "Very High" overall rating of the graduate programs offered by MSU-CED. As to the respondents' recommendation to improve the services of the graduate school department, 193 (1st rank) of them recommended the offering of the additional doctoral programs, specifically PhD in Curriculum and Instruction, PhD in Research & Evaluation, PhD in Reading and PhD in Guidance in Counselling.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study provided valuable insights for the MSU-CED graduate department, relevance of the curricular programs in the graduate level, as well as insights in to the employment landscape in the education sector in Lanao del Sur. On the other hand, employers positively rated "High Satisfaction" with the application of teacher proficiency among MSU-CED graduates. From interviews, several themes emerged, underscoring positive professional characteristics, the influence of MSU's education and training, differences in work-related performance, and the importance of collaboration and teamwork. Moreover, regarding the proficiencies required for hiring entry-level teachers, employers rated all indicators of proficiency as "useful," with Mastery of Subject Matter standing out as the most critical attribute.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the findings and implication of the study, the following recommendations are drawn:

1. The Graduate School Department of the College of Education may:
   a. Sustain and develop the different employability skills of graduate students, especially for communications and research skills as most of the respondents believed that these skills are relevant to their current work.
   b. Propose and introduce additional PhD and MAEd programs, particularly in major courses, to address the growing demand for advanced education among graduates. They may also explore the development of interdisciplinary programs that combine education with emerging fields such as technology integration and educational leadership.
   c. Implement targeted professional development programs focusing on identified areas for improvement in teaching performance. These may include activities such as regular workshops and mentoring sessions to enhance classroom management, instructional strategies, and innovative teaching practices.
   d. Design a faculty development plan that would address the suggestion of the graduates to hire faculty members who have expertise in some major courses.

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