

Employment Outcomes of Advanced Education Graduates in a State University: A Five-Year Retrospective

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Abstract

Postgraduate studies are essential in the academic field and industry, for they help produce highly employable graduates. The study investigated the employment outcomes of advanced education graduates in a state university over the past five years. Literature on employment outcomes of advanced education graduates suggests higher employment rates and earnings than those with lower levels of education. It shows a variation in employment outcomes across fields of study and types of employers. Descriptive quantitative research using a convenient sampling method was used in the study. Twenty-two graduates representing different fields and graduation years served as respondents. Results revealed that all respondents were permanently employed, the majority in the public system and a few in private institutions. The respondents perceived that their master's degree was a great help in their promotion, and they are also active and involved in educational organizations, with some serving as coordinators or heads.

Keywords: *Employment outcomes, advanced education, state university, five-year retrospective*

1. Introduction

Graduate education has a significant role in furthering the academic development of professionals in their areas of specialization. It is expected to expand their basic skills, enhance their knowledge, and significantly improve their career prospects and targets. Postgraduate institutions contribute to the academic field and industry by producing highly employable graduates. The employability and success of their graduates determine the viability of a postgraduate education program. The reason for tracer studies is to serve as an essential tool for institutions to assess the effectiveness of their programs and make necessary improvements.

Many researchers have utilized various methodological approaches to investigate the employment outcomes of advanced education graduates. These include surveys, interviews, and longitudinal studies. Recent studies have shed light on the dynamic landscape of postgraduate education and its impact on employment outcomes. Findings suggest that many postgraduate graduates are securing permanent positions in academic and non-academic sectors. Furthermore, the role of postgraduate education in career progression and promotion has been underscored, as evidenced by graduates attaining various academic ranks and administrative positions within educational organizations.

In the case of Iloilo Science and Technology University (ISATU), the Master of Arts in Education, formerly known as the Master of Education, formerly known as Master of Science in Industrial Education program central in Educational Management, has existed for quite a time. However, there has not been a tracer study or employment data of its graduates in the last five years. Thus, this study aims to fill this gap by investigating the employment aspects of graduates in the last five years.

Generally, recent literature indicates that postgraduate studies are a valuable investment for professionals seeking to enhance their employability and advance their careers in the academic field and industry. The relationship between postgraduate education and employment outcomes is multifaceted, influenced by factors such as field of study and involvement in professional organizations. Understanding these dynamics is essential for educators,

policymakers, and institutions to make informed decisions regarding postgraduate education and its impact on graduates' career trajectories.

2. Literature Review

In the current landscape of advanced education, postgraduate studies have gained prominence as a pathway to enhancing one's career prospects and employability. This literature review aims to examine the current state of knowledge regarding the employment outcomes of advanced education graduates, with a specific focus on recent research findings and trends in the field.

Postgraduate education, including master's and doctoral programs, plays a pivotal role in shaping the future of the academic field and the industry. It serves as a substantial body of literature that highlights the positive impact of advanced education on employment outcomes, including higher employment rates, increased earning potential, and improved career advancement prospects.

Supported by the Republic Act of 1994, otherwise known as Republic Act 7722, which is in pursuance of an outcomes-based quality assurance system and alignment with the Philippine Quality Assurance (PQA) CHED Memorandum Order and under Referendum No RO70-2019 dated December 19, 2019, it stipulated to adopt the policies, standards, and guidelines related to advanced education programs. The first section of the CMO demands new enhanced competencies among students to meet the requirements set by globalization, regional integration, internationalization of higher education, and the Fourth Industrial Revolution, and students must be able to optimally use 21st-century skills in their daily work and professions thereby strengthening the nation's innovation, research and development.

Research suggests that the relationship between postgraduate education and employment outcomes should be intertwined, though not uniform, across all fields of study and types of employers. Numerous studies have identified significant variations based on the specific area of specialization, with some disciplines yielding more favorable employment outcomes than others. Additionally, employment outcomes can differ between graduates entering public versus private academic institutions or transitioning to industry roles.

According to the Asian Development Bank (ADB) study on the Employment Outcomes of Advanced Education Graduates in the Philippines and Asia (2023), advanced education graduates are more likely to be employed than those with only a bachelor's degree, and they earn significantly higher salaries. The study also found that advanced education graduates are more likely to be employed in high-paying occupations and to have jobs that require a high level of skill and knowledge. Another study by the Commission on Higher Education (2018) on employment outcomes of advanced education graduates in the Philippines revealed that the overall employment rate is high, at 93.4%; however, there is a significant variation in employment rates across different fields of study. Moreover, a study entitled, *Advanced Education and Employment Outcomes in the Philippines: A Comparative Study on Employment Outcomes of Advanced Education Graduates in Asia*: (2021) by the World Bank supported other studies that stipulated that advanced education graduates in Asia are more likely to be employed than those with only a bachelor's degree, and they earn significantly higher salaries. The study also found that advanced education graduates are more likely to be employed in high-paying occupations and to have jobs that require a high level of skill and knowledge. However, the study also found that there are significant variations in employment outcomes across different countries in Asia. The study by Sira et al. (2023) entitled, *Professional Track Technology Postgraduate Education: A Tracer Study*, also emphasized that advanced education graduates of MIT mentioned that the credentials they acquired were utilized in their promotion and were promoted.

The study by Boo and Kang (2019) stipulated that postgraduate degree holders often perceive their education as a significant factor in their career advancement and promotion. Employers value the depth of knowledge and expertise that advanced degree holders bring to their organizations, leading to quicker career advancement. A review of the literature (2022) by the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) found that advanced education has a positive impact on employment outcomes in the Philippines. However, the study also found a mismatch between the skills and competencies of advanced education graduates and the demands of the labor market.

As to membership in professional organizations by respondents, a study by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE, 2022) revealed that 73% of employers consider membership in a professional

organization as an important factor when hiring new graduates. The study also found that graduates of professional organizations are more likely to be employed and earn higher salaries than their non-member peers.

In general, the research suggests that advanced education graduates in the Philippines and Asia are more likely to be employed than those with only a bachelor's degree, and they earn significantly higher salaries; however, it is essential to note that the specific outcomes will vary depending on the individual's circumstances, such as their field of study, the quality of the program, and their skills and experience.

3. Objectives:

The study aims to investigate the employment outcomes of postgraduate (advanced education) graduates at Iloilo Science And Technology University over the past five years. Specifically, it tried to determine the following objectives:

1. Assess the overall employment rates of postgraduate graduates from the state university over the past five years.
2. Examine variations in employment outcomes across different fields of study among postgraduate graduates.
3. Analyze variations in employment outcomes based on the types of employers (public vs. private academic institutions) among postgraduate graduates.
4. Investigate the perceived impact of obtaining a master's degree on graduates' career progression and promotion.
5. Explore the level of involvement and roles postgraduate graduates play in educational organizations, including positions such as coordinators or heads.

4. Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored on the theory of constructivism. Constructivism is a paradigm that emphasizes the role of learners in constructing their knowledge and understanding of the world. Constructivists believe that knowledge is not simply transmitted from one person to another but is actively constructed by individuals as they interact with the world around them.

In the context of the study on employment outcomes of Master of Education graduates, constructivism is relevant because it explores their own experiences and perspectives on their employment outcomes. The constructivist paradigm is significant because it allows the researchers to consider the role of context in shaping the graduates' employment outcomes. The proponents of the paradigm believe that knowledge is always constructed within a specific social and cultural context. In the study context, the researchers considered the role of the state university and the Philippine labor market in shaping the graduates' employment outcomes. Overall, the constructivist paradigm provides a framework for the study of employment outcomes of advanced education graduates that allows the researchers to explore the graduates' own experiences, perspectives, and meanings, as well as the role of context in shaping their employment outcomes.

5. Methodology

The study used a descriptive quantitative method and convenient sampling among respondents, and the purpose of this study was to determine the graduates from the Academic Years 2016-2021, employment status, work experience, present position and rank, membership in the organization, and awards received. The respondents were only 22 out of the total population, which is 26.

5.1. Respondents

There were twenty-six (26) graduates for the last five years in the program, but only twenty-two (22) of them could answer the questionnaires sent via Google form.

5.2. Sampling Procedure

Convenient sampling was employed for the study and focused on specific population characteristics that are of interest to answer the objectives effectively.

5.3. Data Gathering Instrument

The validated questionnaire comprised three parts. Part 1 described the profile of the respondents; Part 2 inquired about the employment rates, outcomes across different fields of study, and variations in employment outcomes based on the types of employers, the perceived impact of obtaining a master's degree on graduates' career progression and promotion, level of involvement and roles played by postgraduate graduates in educational organizations, including positions; Part 3 provided the open-ended questions sent through the Google Form application. The link was sent to the individual accounts of the graduates, and instructions and a period were given for them to answer the questionnaire.

5.4. Data Gathering Procedure

The validated instrument was prepared to determine the graduates from the Academic Years 2016-2021, employment status, work experience, present position and rank, membership in the organization, and awards received by the graduates and uploaded to the Google Form platform for easy access to the graduates. Responses were automatically recorded and analyzed.

5.5. Data Gathering Technique

The questionnaire was used to gather the necessary data and analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency count and percentage. The tools were used to determine and categorize the responses of the respondents.

6. Results and

Discussion

Table 1 shows the data of respondents covering the periods 2016-2020. There were 22 graduates in the Master of Arts in Education, formerly named Master of Science in Industrial Education, majoring in Educational Management. In 2016, seven (7) graduates expressed 31.8%, the highest among the last five years, and five graduates in 2018 and 2020 with 22.7%, and the lowest were in 2017 and 2019, respectively.

Table 1. Distribution of Graduates during the School Years 2016-2020

Year	Frequency	Percentage
2016	7	31.8%
2017	3	13.6%
2018	5	22.7%
2019	2	9.1%
2020	5	22.7%
Total	22	100%

Table 2 presents the employability of graduates, particularly on their employment status. As shown in the table, it shows that the respondents proved their record of accomplishment in the context of their employability. All graduates have permanent status in the private and government service, having proven themselves with eligibility in educational institutions.

Table 2. Distribution of Graduates according to their employment status

Year	Frequency	Percentage	
		Permanent	Contractual
2016	7	100%	0
2017	3	100%	0
2018	5	100%	0
2019	2	100%	0
2020	5	100%	0
Total	22	100%	0

Regarding work experiences shown in Table 3, the respondents have varied experiences working in private institutions before their appointment to the government service. Their years of experience range from 1- 10 years, while those working in government institutions, 5 -35 years.

Table 3. *Work Experiences of Respondents*

No Years Working in Private Institutions	Number of Respondents
10 years	1
9 years	1
8 years	1
1 year	2
Total	5
No Years Working in Government Institutions	Number of Respondents
30-35	2
24-29	2
18-23	2
120-17	6
6-11	6
0-5	1
Total	21

Ninety-five per cent or 21 of the respondents from 2016-2020 are in the government service, particularly in the teaching field- their services in teaching range from five (5) to thirty-five (35) years. Graduates' employability in the government service declares 4.8 per cent to those already in the five years, 9.5 per cent for those with seven years, 4.2 per cent in ten years, 4.8 having service with 14, 22, 28, and 35 years of employment.

Table 4 shows the present position or rank of the respondents. The ranks are classified based on the agency where they are employed.

Table 4. *Position Rank at Present*

Present Rank	Number of Respondents
Associate Professor III	1
Instructor I	2
Master Teacher I	4
Teacher III	8
Teacher II	3
Teacher I	2
Office Clerk	2
Total	22

The positions and ranks of the respondents range from office clerks to teacher 1, Teacher 2, instructor 1, Master Teacher 1, and Associate Professor 3. The graduates are distributed with 4.5 per cent for Associate Professor 3, 18.2 per cent for master teacher 9.1 per cent for Teacher 1, 13.6 per cent for Teacher 2 and 36.4 per cent for Teacher 3, respectively.

The distribution of positions and ranks among the respondents reveals exciting insights into the employment outcomes of postgraduate graduates from the state university. The data indicate a diverse representation of academic ranks among the respondents, ranging from office clerks to associate professors. This diversity suggests that the impact of postgraduate studies extends beyond just entry-level teaching positions and is influential in the career development of academics across various levels.

In particular, 4.5 per cent of the respondents hold the position of "Associate Professor 3." This position indicates that a small but significant proportion of postgraduate graduates have achieved high academic ranks, which is a promising outcome for the university and the academic field. Advanced education can contribute to academic excellence and respondents' development in their respective fields.

Most respondents (36.4 per cent) are employed as "Teacher 3." This finding suggests that postgraduate education is playing a crucial role in filling teaching positions, potentially contributing to the quality of education in both public and private academic institutions. The presence of "Teacher 1" and "Teacher 2" positions (combined 22.2 per cent) also indicates a wide range of teaching roles within the education sector.

The presence of "master teachers" (18.2 per cent) among the respondents indicates that many postgraduate graduates have achieved positions that involve greater responsibilities, such as curriculum development, mentoring, and leadership. This result suggests that postgraduate education contributes to career progression and leadership roles in education.

In summary, the distribution of positions and ranks among the respondents underscores the positive employment outcomes of postgraduate education. Graduates of postgraduate education are not only securing teaching positions. However, they are also advancing in their careers, taking on leadership roles, and contributing to the growth and development of educational institutions. This diversity in positions and ranks highlights the multifaceted impact of advanced education on the academic field and the industry.

In Table 5, memberships in the organization of respondents are generally related to their present employment in the teaching profession. There are nine (9) graduates having membership in professional organizations such as the Public School Teachers' Association, LEPSTEA, GAD, and SUCTEA. Some are active members and officers of a professional organization and as President.

Table 5. Membership in Organizations

Name of Organization	Position	Number of Respondents
Dingle Public School Teachers' Association	Member	1
Alimodian PSTA	Member	1
LPSTA	Regional President	1
LEPSTEA	Member	2
Unified Western Visayas	Member	1
GAD	Coordinator	2
SUCTEA	Member	1

The data on the memberships of the respondents in professional organizations underscore their commitment to professional growth, active participation in educational communities, and their role in positively influencing the teaching profession. Such involvement is not only a testament to their dedication but also a mechanism for bringing positive change and development to the field of education; however, it could be noted that not all respondents are members or part of any professional organization.

7. Conclusions

Based on the findings, the following can be concluded:

- Findings indicate a decrease in the number of graduates in a certain period. Despite the pandemic, the number of advanced education graduates is increasing.
- The respondents were all permanently employed both in public and private institutions. Their advanced education degree made a great deal in terms of their employment status.
Most graduates are employed in government institutions, with only one in private institutions. Furthermore, five of them started their career in private institutions and were able to transfer to public institutions years after they finished their master's degree. Government institutions are the major employers of advanced education graduates.
- The respondents' master's degrees paved the way for them to get promoted, as reflected in the results. The majority occupied a Teacher 3 position, and it is noteworthy that some are Master Teachers and Associate Professors. Advanced education degrees can lead to promotions and higher-level positions.
- Respondents are not only active and involved in some educational organizations, but they also serve as coordinators in some prestigious organizations. This affiliation is for their professional growth and development and to get updated as they continue their quest for excellence. Educators need to work and strengthen partnerships with employers to ensure that graduates have the skills and knowledge that employers are looking for.

8. Recommendations

1. In order to increase the number of graduates every year, administrators should also strengthen policies that make advanced education more comprehensive, affordable, and accessible to students.
2. Educators should continue to provide updated and high-quality advanced education programs that prepare students for success in the workplace. Likewise, they should also strengthen partnerships with employers to ensure that graduates have the skills and knowledge that employers need.
3. The study suggests that respondents and advanced education graduates join other national and international organizations and consider investing in advanced education to improve their employment prospects and earnings potential.
4. This study suggests further research incorporating the respondents' performance and satisfaction rating, research conducted, and administrative position experiences.

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