



Employer-Based Evaluation on Workplace Performance of Master of Arts in Education Graduates

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Abstract

This study determined the workplace performance of Master of Arts in Education (MAEd) graduates through employer feedback. A descriptive research design was utilized, using a validated 28-item survey questionnaire administered to the school heads, supervisors, and deans who directly supervised the 130 graduates. The instrument was crafted to measure graduates' performance in four dimensions like theoretical and practical knowledge, trainability, work attitude, and professional credibility. Descriptive statistics and nonparametric tests, specifically the Mann-Whitney and Kruskal-Wallis tests were used in this study. Results revealed that graduates' performance exceeded the minimum standard required for teachers across all dimensions, reflecting high degree of competence for professional roles in education. MAEd graduates significantly differed in their over- all level of workplace performance in terms of sex profile while graduates employed in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and Basic Education and in terms of their position did not significantly differ in their workplace performance.

Keywords

Employer evaluation, workplace performance, Master of Arts in Education, graduate employability, higher education

How to Cite

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Ethics Statement

This study was conducted in accordance with ethical standards.

INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutions are expected to produce graduates who possess the competencies required to meet the evolving demands of contemporary workplaces. As labor markets increasingly prioritize professional competence, adaptability, ethical conduct, and lifelong learning, graduate employability has become a key indicator of educational quality.

Employer evaluations provide valuable evidence of whether academic preparation translates into workplace performance because supervisors directly observe graduates' application of knowledge, skills, and professional behaviors. Current literature emphasizes that effective workplace performance extends beyond technical competence to include problem-solving, collaboration, adaptability, communication, and ethical responsibility, all of which are considered essential twenty-first-century competencies (Škrinjarić, 2022; Thornhill-Miller et al., 2023; Tushar & Sooraksa, 2023; Fantinelli et al., 2024). Likewise, employers increasingly value graduates who continuously develop new competencies and demonstrate professional credibility in dynamic organizational environments (Braxton, 2023; Osman et al., 2025; Jackson & Tomlinson, 2026).

Within the Philippine higher education system, graduate outcomes remain an important measure of institutional effectiveness and curriculum relevance. These workplace competencies are consistent with international frameworks that emphasize the development of twenty-first-century skills, including critical thinking, collaboration, communication, ethical responsibility, and lifelong learning as essential outcomes of higher education (Shek et al., 2025). Likewise, global education organizations recognize that strengthening teacher competence through quality graduate education and continuous professional development is fundamental to improving educational systems and workforce readiness (Souza, 2024). For graduate education programs, employer feedback provides an objective basis for evaluating whether advanced academic preparation equips graduates with the competencies required in educational institutions. Studies have shown that successful workplace performance depends not only on the application of theoretical knowledge but also on continuous professional development, effective problem solving, collaborative work attitudes, and organizational support that enables graduates to adapt to changing professional demands (Keravnos & Keravnos, 2024; Guo et al., 2024; Njenga, 2023; Lin, 2026). Professional credibility, trustworthiness, and ethical leadership likewise strengthen organizational effectiveness and institutional confidence (Brown et al., 2005; Dirks & Ferrin, 2002; Fantinelli et al., 2024).

Despite the growing body of research on graduate employability and workplace competencies, an important contextual gap remains regarding employer-based evaluations of Master of Arts in Education (MAEd) graduates in Philippine state universities. Existing studies have primarily examined graduate employability, leadership, or workplace competencies across broader professional contexts (Byrne, 2022; Osman et al., 2025; Rodelas, 2026), while limited evidence specifically investigates how employers evaluate MAEd graduates across multiple dimensions of workplace performance, including theoretical and practical knowledge, trainability, work attitude, and professional credibility. Moreover, few studies have examined whether workplace performance varies according to graduates' demographic and professional characteristics within the context of graduate teacher education programs. Addressing this gap provides empirical evidence that can strengthen curriculum evaluation and quality assurance initiatives.

Accordingly, this study evaluated the workplace performance of Master of Arts in Education graduates of Central Philippines State University based on employer assessments. Specifically, it examined graduates' performance in terms of theoretical and practical knowledge, trainability, work attitude, and professional credibility and determined whether workplace performance differed according to selected profile variables. The findings provided empirical evidence to support curriculum enhancement, institutional quality assurance, and graduate program improvement while contributing context-specific evidence to the literature on graduate employability and workplace performance in higher education.

METHODOLOGY

Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive research design using a survey approach to determine the workplace performance of Master of Arts in Education (MAEd) graduates based on employer evaluations. A descriptive research design was appropriate because it systematically described the existing level of graduates' workplace performance without manipulating any study variables. Specifically, the study examined workplace performance in terms of theoretical and practical knowledge, trainability, work attitude, and professional credibility while comparing performance across selected profile characteristics. Consistent with the positivist research paradigm, the study relied on objective measurement and statistical analysis to generate empirical evidence that supports curriculum evaluation and program improvement.

Sampling

The study targeted all 205 Master of Arts in Education graduates of Central Philippines State University who completed the program from Academic Years 2019–2023. A total enumeration sampling technique was employed to maximize representation of the target population. However, only 130 graduates were successfully traced and evaluated by their respective school heads, supervisors, and deans, resulting in a retrieval rate of 63.41%. These supervisors served as respondents because they directly observed the graduates' workplace performance and were therefore in the best position to provide objective evaluations. The inclusion criteria consisted of MAEd graduates who were currently employed in educational institutions and had immediate supervisors capable of evaluating their job performance. Graduates who could not be traced or whose supervisors were unavailable during the data collection period were excluded from the study.

Collection

Data were collected using a researcher-developed 28-item structured questionnaire designed to measure workplace performance across four dimensions: theoretical and practical knowledge, trainability, work attitude, and professional credibility. The instrument also gathered demographic information about the graduates. To establish content validity, the questionnaire was evaluated by subject-matter experts and obtained a Content Validity Index (CVI) of 0.80, indicating acceptable content validity. Internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, which yielded a coefficient of 0.82, demonstrating satisfactory reliability. Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Poor) to 5 (Excellent). Following the validation of the instrument and the approval to conduct the study, the researchers distributed

the questionnaires to the respondents. Supervisors located outside Kabankalan City received the questionnaire through an online platform, while printed copies were distributed to supervisors within the city. Respondents evaluated the graduates based on their direct observations of workplace performance. Completed questionnaires were retrieved, checked for completeness, coded, and organized for statistical analysis.

Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Frequency counts and percentages were used to summarize the demographic characteristics of the graduates, while means and standard deviations were computed to determine the level of workplace performance across the four evaluation dimensions. Differences in workplace performance according to graduates' profile characteristics were determined using the Mann–Whitney U test for comparisons involving two independent groups and the Kruskal–Wallis test for comparisons involving three or more independent groups. These nonparametric statistical procedures were appropriate because the analysis involved independent groups and ordinal data obtained from a Likert-type scale. Statistical decisions were based on a 0.05 level of significance.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to the fundamental principles of research ethics, including voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and data privacy. Prior to data collection, respondents were informed of the purpose and objectives of the study and were assured that their participation was entirely voluntary. They were also informed that all information collected would be treated with strict confidentiality and reported only in aggregate form to protect the identities of both the graduates and their supervisors. The data obtained were used exclusively for research purposes and were managed in accordance with applicable institutional policies on research ethics and data protection.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the MAEd graduates included in the study. Female graduates comprised the majority of the respondents (59.2%), while male graduates accounted for 40.8%, indicating that women constituted a larger proportion of the graduates evaluated. In terms of position, more than half of the graduates were employed as Teacher II (55.4%), followed by Teacher I and Teacher III (16.2% each), suggesting that most respondents occupied mid-level teaching positions in the basic and higher education sectors. Regarding degree specialization, Educational Management recorded the highest representation (29.2%), followed by English and Filipino (11.5% each), whereas Early Childhood Education had the smallest proportion (7.7%). The diversity of academic specializations and professional positions provided a broad representation of MAEd graduates, thereby strengthening the comprehensiveness of employer evaluations across different educational contexts.

Table 1
Profile Characteristics of the Graduates

Variable	Category	<i>f</i>	%
Sex	Male	53	40.8
	Female	77	59.2
Position	Teacher I	21	16.2
	Teacher II	72	55.4
	Teacher III	21	16.2
	Instructor I	9	6.9
	Assistant Professor IV	2	1.5
	Instructor III	1	0.8
	Education Program Supervisor	2	1.5
Degree Enrolled	Principal/School Head	2	1.5
	MAEd Educational Management	38	29.2
	MAEd Early Childhood Education	10	7.7
	MAEd English	15	11.5
	MAEd Filipino	15	11.5
	MAEd Mathematics	12	9.2
	MAEd General Science	12	9.2
	MAEd Social Science	14	10.8
	MAEd Physical Education	14	10.8

Table 2 indicates that the MAEd graduates demonstrated a very satisfactory level of theoretical and practical knowledge ($M = 4.56$, $SD = 0.46$), suggesting that they effectively apply disciplinary knowledge and professional competencies in workplace settings. The highest-rated indicators were observing standard reporting protocols, possessing technical knowledge, applying knowledge and principles in the workplace, and generating creative solutions. These findings indicate that the MAEd curriculum effectively prepares graduates to translate theoretical knowledge into professional practice while responding to workplace expectations. The ability to integrate knowledge with practice is considered a defining characteristic of professional competence because it promotes sound judgment, adaptability, and effective workplace performance (Škrinjarić, 2022; Tushar & Sooraksa, 2023; Thornhill-Miller et al., 2023; Fantinelli et al., 2024).

Although implementing solutions, synthesizing information, and applying logical reasoning received comparatively lower ratings, they remained within the very satisfactory category. These results suggest opportunities to further strengthen

higher-order thinking and analytical competencies through continuous professional learning and supportive organizational environments that encourage reflective practice and collaborative problem solving (Guo et al., 2024; Keravnos & Keravnos, 2024).

Table 2
Level of work performance in terms of theoretical and practical knowledge dimension

Statement	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Possesses technical skills and knowledge needed for the job	4.72	0.449	Excellent
Observes protocols in reporting using standards	4.77	0.423	Excellent
Thinks creatively to generate solutions	4.72	0.453	Excellent
Implements solutions and acts on opportunities for improvement	4.34	0.936	Very Satisfactory
Applies knowledge, principles, and concepts in the workplace	4.72	0.498	Excellent
Synthesizes and evaluates information gathered	4.37	0.873	Very Satisfactory
Applies logical and rational processes in analyzing problems	4.26	0.665	Very Satisfactory
Overall Theoretical and Practical Knowledge	4.56	0.456	Very Satisfactory

Table 3 shows that the graduates attained a very satisfactory level of trainability ($M = 4.38$, $SD = 0.52$), indicating their willingness to acquire new knowledge and adapt to changing workplace demands. The highest-rated indicator was enthusiasm for learning recent job-related developments, reflecting graduates' commitment to continuous professional growth. Likewise, the consistently high ratings for resource management, problem-solving, and acquisition of new skills demonstrate their readiness to respond to organizational changes. These findings are consistent with evidence that adaptability and lifelong learning have become essential competencies for maintaining employability and responding effectively to evolving workplace demands (Tushar & Sooraksa, 2023; Fantinelli et al., 2024; Škrinjarić, 2022).

Relatively lower ratings for decision-making and the use of information and communication technology suggest areas for continuous enhancement. Strengthening digital competence and workplace decision-making may further improve graduates' capacity to respond to increasingly technology-driven educational environments and organizational challenges (Fantinelli et al., 2024; Tushar & Sooraksa, 2023).

Table 3
Descriptive statistics on level of work performance in terms of trainability dimension

Statement	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Learns new skills and knowledge on the job	4.38	0.685	Very Satisfactory
Adapts to existing technology relevant to the school	4.28	0.705	Very Satisfactory
Demonstrates enthusiasm in learning recent job-related advancements	4.58	0.756	Excellent
Manages available resources and seeks assistance when necessary	4.47	0.809	Very Satisfactory
Applies a range of strategies to solve problems	4.44	0.835	Very Satisfactory
Uses ICT to facilitate work	4.37	0.873	Very Satisfactory
Demonstrates sound decision-making in responding to organizational needs	4.18	0.782	Very Satisfactory
Overall Trainability	4.38	0.522	Very Satisfactory

Table 4 reveals that the graduates demonstrated a very satisfactory level of work attitude ($M = 4.43$, $SD = 0.57$), indicating positive professional behaviors that support effective workplace performance. The highest-rated indicators included teamwork, ethical conduct, adaptability, leadership, and responsibility, suggesting that graduates consistently exhibit behaviors valued in educational organizations. These findings imply that the MAEd program develops not only professional competence but also interpersonal and ethical attributes that contribute to organizational effectiveness. Positive work attitudes have been associated with stronger collaboration, responsible leadership, and improved workplace performance (Škrinjarić, 2022; Thornhill-Miller et al., 2023; Fantinelli et al., 2024).

Although handling workplace stress and placing organizational interests above personal concerns received comparatively lower ratings, both indicators remained within the very satisfactory level. These findings suggest that institutions may further strengthen graduates' resilience and sustained work engagement through supportive leadership and organizational practices that encourage employee well-being and professional commitment (Keravnos & Keravnos, 2024).

Table 4
Descriptive Statistics on Level of Work Performance in Terms of Work Attitude Dimension

Statement	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Works well in a group to achieve goals	4.55	0.706	Excellent
Handles stress and pressure on the job	3.95	0.943	Very Satisfactory
Places organizational concerns above personal interests	4.34	0.936	Very Satisfactory
Displays responsibility and commitment	4.52	0.856	Excellent
Is receptive and adaptable to new ideas and environments	4.54	0.827	Excellent
Demonstrates ethical practices	4.55	0.817	Excellent
Accepts and performs leadership roles willingly	4.55	0.778	Excellent
Overall Work Attitude	4.43	0.573	Very Satisfactory

Table 5 demonstrates that the graduates achieved an excellent level of professional credibility ($M = 4.58$, $SD = 0.53$), indicating consistent demonstration of ethical behavior, professionalism, and institutional responsibility. The highest-rated indicators included protecting school property, professionalism in dealing with colleagues, moral and ethical conduct, and

alignment with institutional vision and values. These findings suggest that graduates possess professional behaviors that foster trust, accountability, and organizational confidence. Professional credibility has been recognized as a fundamental component of effective leadership because it strengthens trust, ethical decision-making, and organizational commitment (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002; Brown et al., 2005; Fantinelli et al., 2024).

Although adherence to organizational policies and transparent practices received slightly lower ratings than the remaining indicators, both were still evaluated as very satisfactory. This suggests that graduates consistently demonstrate integrity and accountability while maintaining professional relationships and responsible stewardship of institutional resources, thereby reinforcing employer confidence in their workplace performance (Thornhill-Miller et al., 2023; Škrinjarić, 2022).

Table 5
Descriptive Statistics on Level of Work Performance in Terms of Credibility Dimension

Statement	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Adheres to organizational policies, rules, and regulations	4.47	0.882	Very Satisfactory
Practices honesty, fairness, and transparency	4.49	0.865	Very Satisfactory
Protects and preserves school property	4.72	0.546	Excellent
Demonstrates professionalism with colleagues	4.67	0.640	Excellent
Serves as a model of moral and ethical behavior	4.60	0.753	Excellent
Listens attentively and provides thoughtful comments	4.54	0.759	Excellent
Demonstrates intentions and values consistent with institutional VMGO	4.60	0.522	Excellent
Overall Credibility	4.58	0.534	Excellent

Table 6 shows a statistically significant difference in the overall workplace performance of MAEd graduates according to sex ($U = 1517$, $p = .013$). Significant differences were likewise observed in the dimensions of theoretical and practical knowledge ($U = 1511$, $p = .011$) and credibility ($U = 1480$, $p = .006$), with male graduates obtaining higher median scores than female graduates. However, the corresponding rank-biserial correlation coefficients (0.199–0.275) indicate small effect sizes, suggesting that although the differences were statistically significant, their practical magnitude was limited. No significant differences were found in trainability ($p = .053$) and work attitude ($p = .076$), indicating comparable performance between male and female graduates in these dimensions.

These findings suggest that sex has minimal practical influence on workplace performance despite the observed statistical differences. The similarity in performance across most dimensions supports evidence that professional competence is more strongly associated with acquired knowledge, workplace experience, and organizational context than with biological sex. Previous studies have likewise reported that although gender differences may exist in perceptions of leadership and workplace performance, these differences are generally small and are often shaped by organizational and social expectations rather than actual capability (Paustian-Underdahl et al., 2024; Belasen & Belasen, 2024; Schaerer et al., 2023). Similarly, workplace competence develops through continuous learning, professional engagement, and opportunities for skill application, enabling both male and female graduates to perform effectively in comparable professional roles (Škrinjarić, 2022; Tushar & Sooraksa, 2023). Recent evidence further suggests that gender-related differences in professional performance are often minimized when employees receive equitable learning opportunities, competency-based training, and supportive workplace environments that promote continuous professional development (Ademi & Loshkovska, 2025; Dagunduro et al., 2024).

Table 6
Test Comparing Level of Workplace Performance Across Sexes

Variable	Male Median	Female Median	U	p	Rank-Biserial Correlation
Theoretical and Practical Knowledge	4.86	4.71	1511	.011	–0.260
Trainability	4.57	4.43	1635	.053	–0.199
Work Attitude	4.57	4.57	1670	.076	–0.182
Credibility	5.00	4.57	1480	.006	–0.275
Overall Work Performance	4.79	4.61	1517	.013	–0.257

Table 7 indicates that there were no statistically significant differences in the workplace performance of MAEd graduates employed in the Department of Education (DepEd) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) institutions across all performance dimensions (all $p > .05$). Likewise, the overall workplace performance did not significantly differ between the two groups ($U = 693$, $p = .904$). The corresponding rank-biserial correlation coefficients ranged from –0.152 to 0.289, indicating negligible to small effect sizes. These findings suggest that the type of employing institution had minimal practical influence on graduates' workplace performance.

The comparable performance of graduates across DepEd and CHED institutions may be attributed to the shared professional standards, competency requirements, and performance expectations that govern educational institutions in the Philippines. Regardless of institutional affiliation, educators are expected to demonstrate comparable levels of professional competence, ethical conduct, and instructional effectiveness. Previous studies have likewise reported that standardized organizational policies, competency frameworks, and continuous professional development contribute to relatively consistent employee performance across public educational institutions (OECD, 2023; Heneman & Milanowski, 2024). Moreover, workplace performance is influenced more by individual competencies, lifelong learning, and organizational support than by institutional classification alone (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2023; Škrinjarić, 2022; Tushar & Sooraksa, 2023).

Table 7
Mann-Whitney test comparing level of workplace performance across positions (regrouped by employer)

Variable	DepEd Median	CHED Median	<i>U</i>	<i>p</i>	Rank-Biserial Correlation
Theoretical and Practical Knowledge	4.71	4.57	697	.928	0.016
Trainability	4.43	4.64	504	.098	0.289
Work Attitude	4.57	4.50	651	.644	−0.081
Credibility	4.71	4.43	601	.373	−0.152
Overall Work Performance	4.71	4.54	693	.904	0.018

Table 8 shows that workplace performance did not significantly differ across degree programs in terms of theoretical and practical knowledge ($\chi^2 = 9.11$, $p = .245$), trainability ($\chi^2 = 12.18$, $p = .095$), work attitude ($\chi^2 = 5.09$, $p = .648$), and overall workplace performance ($\chi^2 = 10.96$, $p = .140$). However, a statistically significant difference was observed in the credibility dimension ($\chi^2 = 15.60$, $p = .029$). The effect sizes ranged from 0.040 to 0.121, indicating small to moderate practical effects. These findings suggest that while graduates from different degree specializations generally demonstrated comparable workplace performance, variations in professional credibility were evident across academic programs.

The absence of significant differences in most performance dimensions indicates that workplace competence is developed through common professional preparation and workplace experiences rather than degree specialization alone. The observed variation in credibility may reflect differences in professional roles, workplace expectations, or opportunities for leadership and ethical practice associated with particular specializations. Nevertheless, the relatively small effect sizes indicate that degree specialization accounts for only a limited proportion of the variation in workplace performance. Similar findings have shown that employees' competencies become increasingly influenced by professional experience, continuous learning, and organizational context after entering the workforce, thereby reducing the influence of academic specialization on overall job performance (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2023; Škrinjarić, 2022; Tushar & Sooraksa, 2023). These findings likewise support international perspectives emphasizing competency-based graduate education and lifelong professional learning as primary determinants of sustained workplace performance across diverse educational settings (Souza, 2024).

Table 8
Kruskal-Wallis test comparing level of workplace performance across degree programs

Variable	χ^2	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	ϵ^2
Theoretical and Practical Knowledge	9.11	7	.245	.071
Trainability	12.18	7	.095	.094
Work Attitude	5.09	7	.648	.040
Credibility	15.60	7	.029*	.121
Overall Work Performance	10.96	7	.140	.087

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study demonstrated that employers consistently evaluated Master of Arts in Education graduates as competent education professionals who possess strong theoretical knowledge, adaptability, positive work attitudes, and high professional credibility. The findings indicate that the graduate program effectively prepares its graduates to meet workplace expectations and contributes positively to institutional quality assurance and curriculum effectiveness. Although statistically significant differences were observed according to sex and credibility across degree programs, the corresponding effect sizes were relatively small, suggesting limited practical implications. Overall, the evidence supports the continued effectiveness of the MAEd curriculum in producing workplace-ready education professionals capable of responding to the evolving demands of educational institutions.

To sustain the positive workplace performance of MAEd graduates, the university should continue strengthening curriculum implementation and instructional practices that promote professional competence, ethical leadership, and workplace readiness. Greater emphasis may be placed on enhancing digital competence, information and communication technology integration, analytical decision-making, and stress management to prepare graduates for increasingly dynamic educational environments. Furthermore, the university should institutionalize regular employer feedback mechanisms and periodic graduate tracer studies to continuously monitor graduate outcomes and align the curriculum with evolving workplace expectations. Future studies may employ longitudinal research designs involving multiple institutions and broader samples to examine long-term workplace performance and identify additional factors influencing graduate success across different educational contexts.

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