

Employability of Master in Physical Education Graduates of Leyte Normal University: A Tracer Study

Maricar C. Tegero, Ed.D,JD.

Leyte Normal University

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ABSTRACT

Graduate employability in the Graduate School serves as a vital indicator of an academic institution's success, showcasing how well the institution prepares its advances to meet the demands of their chosen fields. This study aims to conduct a tracer survey on graduates of the Master in Physical Education program at Leyte Normal University, focusing on cohorts from the 2019 to 2024 academic years. Specifically, the study seeks to gather data on graduates' current employment status, demographic profiles, educational backgrounds, and career trajectories. Additionally, the research delves into the specific competencies and skills these graduates have acquired throughout their studies and examines how these attributes have translated into tangible benefits in their professional roles. A descriptive-survey quantitative research design was used, employing the CHED-standard Graduate Tracer Survey questionnaire to ensure consistency and comparability in data collection. By focusing on graduates of the Master in Physical Education program, the study specifically evaluates the program's effectiveness in fostering career-relevant competencies within the field of physical education, sports science, and related industries. The study findings reveal that the curriculum, instructional strategies, and practical training embedded within the Master in Physical Education program have played a significant role in preparing graduates to meet the demands of their current job roles. Graduates reported that the knowledge and skills acquired throughout their education at Leyte Normal University have proven highly relevant, aiding them in fulfilling job responsibilities with confidence and competence. These insights underscore the program's effectiveness in delivering an education that meets industry standards, making graduates competitive and adaptable within the field. Ultimately, the results of this study offer valuable feedback for Leyte Normal University's academic and administrative bodies, guiding potential refinements to the curriculum and supporting the continuous improvement of program implementation strategies. Through data-driven enhancements, the institution can ensure that its offerings remain aligned with industry demands, thus bolstering the employability and professional success of future Master in Physical Education graduates.

Keywords: Employability, Master in Physical Education Graduates, Tracer Study, Leyte Normal University

INTRODUCTION

In the Philippines, graduate education is vital for academic professionals. The Department of Education (DepEd) focuses on improving educational quality by upskilling teachers, while the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) has updated policies to strengthen graduate programs for 21st-century demands. These guidelines emphasize the need for skills in technical knowledge, communication, leadership, research, and ICT, helping educators enhance teaching, student services, and program management. Through these competencies, graduate students gain the confidence to make informed decisions, evaluate critically, and innovate in their roles (CHED, 2019). Similarly, graduate tracer studies are vital for gathering insights about graduates from Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) (Dela Cruz, 2020). They offer valuable data to assess educational outcomes, supporting ongoing improvement and quality assurance within institutions (Tutor et al., 2021). These studies are also crucial for evaluating and enhancing the effectiveness, marketability, and sustainability of graduate programs (Woya, 2019).

Graduate employability is a key indicator of an academic institution's success, reflecting how well graduates are prepared with the knowledge, skills, and values required for their professional fields. Graduates are expected to possess competencies that align with international standards (Berja, 2021). The increasing focus on employability and career growth in the global market calls for ongoing enhancement of graduate program delivery to better align with global demands (Qureshi et al., 2014; Abulencia et al., 2021; Burke et al., 2017; Rowe & Zegwaard, 2017).

Leyte Normal University is recognized as one of the leading state universities both regionally and nationally, earning accolades from various agencies for its academic achievements. As a designated center for teaching excellence in Region 8, the university has produced top scorers in the licensure exams for teachers. Among its graduate programs, the Master in Physical Education stands out, aiming to develop professionals and leaders with strong values, expertise, and high-level competence aligned with the university's mission.

Moreover, the program aims to produce graduates with skills that meet international standards. This tracer study seeks to assess the employability of Master in Physical Education graduates, providing critical insights for university planners and administrators. The findings will serve as a framework for developing strategies to enhance the program for both students and the broader community it represents.

This survey aims to trace graduates from the Master in Physical Education program from 2019 to 2024 to gather feedback on their employment status, demographic profile, educational background, and career information. Additionally, the study seeks to understand which competencies and skills acquired during their education have proven valuable in their current roles. It also explores graduates' perceptions of the competencies, values, and skill sets developed at Leyte Normal University, providing insights into the program's impact on their professional growth.

Statement of the Problem

The study traces the graduates of the Bachelor of Physical Education at Leyte Normal University. Specifically, sought to answer the following:

1. Demographic profile in terms of:
 - 1.1 Profile of the Graduates
 - 1.2 Licensure Examination Status
 - 1.3 Employment Status
2. The extent of the learning competencies they learn in LNU.
3. Based on the findings, what suggestions can be obtained for an improve Master in Physical Education program?

METHODOLOGY

The researchers employed a descriptive-survey quantitative research design. Descriptive research aims to systematically and accurately represent a particular population, situation, or phenomenon, addressing questions of what, where, when, and how—but not why (McCombes, 2019). This approach was deemed suitable for the study, as the primary goal was to trace the employment status of Master in Physical Education graduates. In this study, the researcher gathered detailed information on the employability of graduates from 2019 to 2024. The data was identified, described, analyzed, and interpreted to provide an in-depth understanding of graduate employability trends.

Research Instrument

This study utilized the CHED-standard Graduate Tracer Survey questionnaire, which covered general information, educational background, post-college training, employment data, and an evaluation of the academic program. Only data relevant to the research objectives were analyzed. Additionally, interviews were conducted to supplement and enrich the information gathered about the respondents.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents of this study were the graduates of the Master of Physical Education program at Leyte Normal University in Tacloban City from the 2019 to 2024 academic years. A total of four graduates successfully completed all program requirements, including their theses.

Data Gathering Procedure

The study employed a researcher-designed questionnaire, developed by pooling items from CHED tracer study questionnaires and slightly modified for this research. The names, addresses, and contact numbers of the graduates were obtained from the placement and alumni office to facilitate tracking. The researcher administered some questionnaires via email and Facebook messages, as most graduate respondents have access to computers in their workplaces, making communication and participation easier. To assist with data collection, the researcher enlisted the help of friends, relatives, and current students for the personal delivery of questionnaires to the identified respondents.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study primarily relied on descriptive statistical methods to interpret and summarize the gathered information. This included calculating frequencies and percentages to represent the distribution and occurrence of various responses among participants. Additionally, weighted means were used to provide an average measure that accounts for the relative importance or frequency of each response, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of key factors. Together, these methods offered a comprehensive view of the data, ensuring that the findings were clearly represented and easily interpreted.

Ethical Considerations

This study emphasizes the importance of research involvement, outlining its purpose, participant engagement, procedures, and acknowledgments. It aims to benefit the educational sector by tracing graduate students, encouraging respondents to participate without risk concerns, and sharing results and recommendations. Researchers considered alternative data collection methods, ensured confidentiality, and specified access to records. Standardized questions were distributed via Google Forms, with provisions for compensation and support for emotional distress. Respondents could withdraw at any time, and their data would not be used if they chose to opt out. Respondents signed an informed consent form to confirm their voluntary participation and ensure the confidentiality of their responses. A small gift was offered as a token of appreciation, and the researchers guaranteed no conflicts of interest while committing to properly cite the study's findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Profile of the Graduates

Civil Status

Civil Status	Frequency	Percent
Single	3	75%

Married	1	25%
	4	100%

The table above presents the civil status of respondents at the time of this study. According to the data, a significant majority of respondents, specifically 3 individuals (or 75%), identified as single, whereas only 1 respondent (or 25%) reported being married. This distribution reveals that most graduates from the Master in Physical Education program are likely to prioritize establishing their professions and obtaining stable employment before entering into marriage. Such inclination may reflect the growing significance placed on career development and financial stability by individuals in this demographic, which often leads to pausing marriage until they feel workwise and financially prepared. This finding provides insight into the personal priorities and life planning considerations of recent graduates in the field.

Sex

Sex	Frequency	Percent
Male	3	75%
Female	1	25%
	4	100%

The following table shows that of the 4 respondents, 3 (75%) were male, and 1 (25%) was female. This suggests that, as the course aims to produce future teachers specializing in Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health (MAPEH) for both primary and tertiary education, the teaching profession is increasingly embraced by men and is no longer female-dominated. This finding contrasts with Mayhew's (2014) assertion that teaching has traditionally been, and still largely is, dominated by women.

Location of Residents

Residence	Frequency	Percent
City	2	50%
Municipality	2	50%
	4	100%

The table reveals that an equal number of respondents who graduated with a Master's in Physical Education from Leyte Normal University were residents of both cities and municipalities within Leyte Province. Specifically, 2 graduates (50%) resided in urban areas, including Tacloban City and Ormoc City, while the remaining 2 graduates (50%) were from various municipalities. This balanced representation suggests that the Master's program is valued and well-regarded by individuals from both urban and rural areas of the province. The interest of the program across different residential settings highlights the ability of the university to attract a diverse pool of students, emphasizing its role as a respected educational institution throughout Leyte Province. This reach may reflect the commitment of the university to accessibility, relevance, and quality in its offerings, catering to the professional development needs of residents across both city and municipality contexts.

Year Graduated

Year Graduated	Frequency	Percent
2022	1	25%
2023	1	25%
2024	2	50%
	4	100%

The distribution shows the graduation years of respondents who completed their Master in Physical Education at Leyte Normal University. Two respondents (50%) graduated in 2024, one (25%) in 2023, and one (25%) in 2022. The limited number of graduates per year may be attributed to scheduling conflicts arising from their professional responsibilities, as many serve as sports coaches, dance trainers, or cultural directors in their respective schools.

Licensure Examination Status

LET Passers	Frequency	Percent
LET Passers	4	100%
	4	100%

The results uncover that all respondents in this study are licensed teachers, each having successfully passed the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET). This completion underscores not only their formal qualifications but also their adherence to the rigorous professional standards required in the education field. Achieving licensure reflects a significant commitment to their teaching careers, demonstrating both a dedication to continuous improvement and a readiness to meet the complex demands of educational practice. Passing the LET is a testament to their proficiency in critical areas of teaching, including subject matter expertise, pedagogical knowledge, and the instructional skills necessary for effective classroom management and student engagement. This shared achievement among the respondents highlights their collective preparedness to contribute meaningfully to educational environments, ensuring quality learning experiences for their students and aligning with the broader standards and expectations set forth in the teaching profession.

Employment Status

Employed	Frequency	Percent
Yes	4	100%
No	0	0%
	4	100%

The table indicates that all respondents are currently employed, which demonstrates a noteworthy level of professional engagement among graduates of the Master in Physical Education program. This complete employment status suggests that these individuals have successfully transitioned from their academic studies into the workforce, where they are not only participating but thriving in their respective careers. Their ability to secure employment in a competitive job market indicates that they are effectively applying the skills, knowledge, and qualifications they acquired during their studies. The fact that all respondents are employed highlights the strong connection between the Master in Physical Education program at Leyte Normal University and the opportunities available in the education sector and related fields. It serves as a testament to the program's effectiveness in preparing graduates for real-world challenges and aligning their training with industry needs. This outcome reflects the program's commitment to equipping students with both theoretical knowledge and practical skills that are essential for success in various educational and physical education roles.

Moreover, the employment of all respondents underscores the potential of the master's program to enhance career prospects not only in traditional educational settings but also in related sectors such as sports management, fitness coaching, and community health initiatives. As graduates find roles in diverse environments, including schools, sports organizations, and wellness programs, it reinforces the program's adaptability and relevance in addressing the evolving landscape of physical education and health promotion. Overall, the employment outcomes of these graduates underscore the valuable role of Leyte Normal University in shaping competent professionals ready to contribute positively to their communities and the broader field of education.

Present Occupation

Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Undergraduate PE Instructor	2	50%
Junior High School Teachers	2	50%
	4	100%

The table shows that two respondents (50%) are undergraduate instructors, teaching at the tertiary level, while the remaining two (50%) are junior high school teachers, working within the secondary education system. This distribution suggests that graduates from the Master in Physical Education program at Leyte Normal University find career opportunities across different educational levels, reflecting the versatility of their qualifications. Their roles in both higher education and secondary education indicate a broad applicability of their expertise in Physical Education, with potential impacts on diverse student age groups and learning environments.

Employment Status

Status	Frequency	Percent
Permanent/regular	4	100%
Temporary	0	0
Contractual	0	0
Other	0	0
		100%

All respondents have attained permanent or regular employment status in their respective positions, signifying job security and stability in their careers. This status indicates that they have successfully completed any necessary probationary periods and have been recognized as full members of their organizations. Achieving permanent status not only reflects their competence and performance in their roles but also suggests that they are valued contributors to their workplaces. This level of employment stability allows them to focus on their professional development and effectively engage in their responsibilities, ultimately benefiting their students and the educational institutions they serve.

Extent Of Learning Competences

Relevance of the Curriculum in the First Job

Relevance	Frequency	Percent
Yes	4	100%
No	0	0%
	4	100%

All respondents indicated that the curriculum was relevant to their first job, highlighting the effective alignment between their academic training and professional responsibilities. This relevance suggests that the knowledge and skills acquired during their studies were directly applicable to the tasks and challenges they faced in the workplace. Respondents likely found that the concepts learned in college provided a solid foundation for their roles, enabling them to perform effectively and confidently. This feedback underscores the importance of a well-designed curriculum in preparing students for real-world applications in their chosen fields.

Competencies Learned in College That Proved Useful in Your First Job

Competencies	Frequency	Percent
Communication skills (verbal, non-verbal, written, digital, interpersonal)	4	100%
Human Relations skills (respect for diversity, leadership, conflict resolution, teamwork, time management, adaptability, emotional intelligence, cultural awareness, networking, negotiation, self-awareness, flexibility)	4	100%
Entrepreneurial skills (business planning, marketing, financial management, risk management, time management, innovative thinking, data analysis, customer service, technology savvy, team building)	0	0
Information Technology skills (software skills on Microsoft office, google suites, database management system, networking and security, data analysis and science, web development, operating system)	0	0
Problem-solving skills (logical reasoning, analytical thinking, creative problems solving, critical thinking, strategic planning)	0	0
Critical Thinking skills (analysis, evaluation, comparison, inference, induction, deduction, contextualization, pattern recognition, analyzing argument, synthesizing information, adapting to new information)	0	0
Technical skills (hospitality-industry – front-desk operations, food & beverage services, housekeeping and laundry, customer relation management, hotel operation, digital literacy, inventory management, financial management; tourism-management – event & coordination, data visualization, marketing & social media skills, customer relationship management; education – skills on learning management system, digital tools for teaching, online collaboration tools, digital citizenship, computer-aided design software, e-learning online collaboration tools, digital citizenship, computer-aided design software, e-learning content development, podcasting and audio production)	0	0

The results above indicate that the competencies deemed most relevant to their first job after graduation encompass a range of essential skills. Among these, Communication Skills play a critical role, including verbal and non-verbal communication, written communication, digital communication, and interpersonal interactions. Mastering these skills enables graduates to convey information clearly and effectively, engage in meaningful conversations, and collaborate successfully with colleagues and clients.

Additionally, Human Relations Skills are equally important and encompass a variety of attributes and abilities. These include respect for diversity, which fosters an inclusive work environment, and leadership skills that empower individuals to guide and inspire their teams. Conflict resolution skills are vital for addressing and resolving disagreements constructively, while teamwork is essential for collaborative projects.

Furthermore, effective time management and adaptability allow professionals to navigate changing circumstances and meet deadlines efficiently. Emotional intelligence, which includes the ability to understand and manage one's own emotions as well as those of others, is crucial for building strong relationships in the workplace. Cultural awareness enhances sensitivity to different perspectives and practices, and networking skills are important for establishing professional connections. Negotiation and self-awareness further contribute to effective communication and collaboration, while flexibility enables individuals to adjust to new challenges and opportunities as they arise.

Overall, these competencies not only enhance job performance but also contribute to a positive work environment and career advancement in their respective fields.

Suggestions for an improve Master in Physical Education program

Based on the feedback from graduates of the Master in Physical Education program, the following suggestions aim to enhance the implementation of the curriculum:

1. Incorporate leadership training, sports education management, and coaching psychology as core or elective courses. Additionally, develop mentorship programs that connect students with experienced professionals in the field.
2. Place greater emphasis on financial management, research, and innovation within the curriculum to better prepare graduates for the evolving demands of the profession.

Incorporating leadership training, sports education management, and coaching psychology as core or elective courses is essential for equipping students with the necessary skills to excel in their careers. Leadership training can empower students to take initiative and inspire others, fostering a positive and motivating environment in various educational and athletic settings. Sports education management will provide students with the administrative and organizational skills needed to oversee sports programs effectively, ensuring that they can handle the logistical aspects of athletic programs and activities. Furthermore, coaching psychology will deepen students' understanding of the mental and emotional factors that influence performance, enabling them to support athletes in achieving their personal best.

In addition to these curricular enhancements, developing mentorship programs that connect students with experienced professionals in the field is crucial. Such programs would facilitate knowledge sharing and provide students with valuable insights into real-world practices and challenges. Mentors can guide students through their academic journey, offer career advice, and help them build professional networks that are essential for their future success.

Moreover, placing greater emphasis on financial management, research, and innovation within the curriculum is vital for preparing graduates to navigate the complexities of the modern sports and education landscape. Financial management training will equip students with the skills to manage budgets, allocate resources efficiently, and understand funding opportunities in the sports sector. By integrating research into the curriculum, students can learn how to analyze data, assess program effectiveness, and contribute to evidence-based practices that enhance athletic and educational outcomes. Finally, fostering a culture of innovation will encourage students to explore new ideas, technologies, and methodologies, enabling them to adapt to the ever-evolving demands of the profession and stay ahead in their fields. Overall, these suggestions aim to create a more robust and comprehensive educational experience that will empower graduates to thrive in their careers.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The graduates of the Master of Physical Education program exhibit high levels of employability and success in their professional endeavors, with a significant majority actively working within their field of expertise. This trend indicates that the program effectively equips graduates with the necessary skills and knowledge to thrive in the job market, ensuring that their training aligns well with the current demands and needs of the industry. The successful placement of these graduates serves as a strong testament to the program's capacity to prepare students for real-world challenges, thereby reinforcing its relevance in today's competitive employment landscape. This study plays a critical role in enhancing the existing curriculum by providing a comprehensive evaluation of the program's strengths and limitations. By identifying areas for improvement, the research can help ensure that the curriculum meets the necessary training and educational standards required to strengthen graduates' competencies, making them more competitive for local, national, and international job opportunities. This proactive approach to curriculum development is essential for maintaining the program's relevance and effectiveness in a rapidly changing job market.

Moreover, the findings of this study underscore the significance of tracer studies in aiding graduate schools in meeting accreditation and quality assurance standards, which are vital components of a robust quality management system. By systematically tracking graduates' outcomes and experiences, institutions can gather

data that informs strategic planning and program development. This alignment with accreditation requirements not only enhances the credibility of the program but also assures stakeholders of the quality of education being provided.

Additionally, the insights gained from this study illuminate the current landscape of graduate education, particularly in light of the rapid advancements and transformations characteristic of the 21st century. The findings highlight how graduate programs, such as the Master of Physical Education, contribute significantly to graduates' personal growth and career development. They also reveal the various opportunities for professional advancement that arise from such educational experiences. As the world of work continues to evolve, this research emphasizes the importance of adaptive educational practices that prepare graduates not just for their first job but for a lifetime of career opportunities and growth.

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