

Employment Trends of Master of Science in Home Economics Graduates from a State University in the Philippines

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Abstract

Descriptive research to determine the employment trends of the Master of Science in Home Economics (MSIE) graduates. Thirty-four MSHE graduates of class 2017 to 2021 participated in the study by answering an online questionnaire during the first semester of the academic year 2021-2022. Interviews are also used as an alternative to gathering information. The profiling focused on MSHE graduates' identified variables. Findings showed that most MSHE graduates are permanent government teachers in junior high school and tertiary institutions and have either been promoted or transferred to a rank/position with tenure and higher level. Ten or 29.41% of MSHE graduates have been designated to various positions according to their skills and leadership potential. The top five helpful knowledge and skills were planning and organisation, use of technology, creativity, technical skills, soft skills, and communication.

Keywords: Career pathway, Employment trends, graduates, Master of Science in Home Economic, Profiling of the MSHE graduates, Whereabouts.

INTRODUCTION

Employment is essential to meet the financial needs and improvement of the quality of life of a person. Bilevičienė, Bilevičiūtė, and Drakšas (2016) identified different parameters that can influence life quality, such as a country's level of development, political situation, geographical location, culture, and society's level of education, and others.

Furthermore, economic indicators include employment and unemployment level indicators. Wherein observation shows a relation between the evaluation of life quality and work or quality of the job. An individual's employment status also determines his economic compensation and other benefits. Civil Service Commission (2022) cited that employment status may be permanent, temporary, coterminous, fixed term, contractual (duration of employment is provided in the appointment), substitute, or provisional. Thus, both government and non-government agencies can give work.

Modish Project (2022) explained that the employment trend might change from time to time depending on society's emerging needs, economic interests, and industry direction. This trend matches education program outcomes and the industry's demand. Furthermore, the analysis of such can provide job-based information evidence. The data may help institutions and curriculum makers craft new curricular programs or modify existing courses that best fit the trend. Moreover, education can provide individuals with the necessary market skills to gain high employability in a global setting and to be relevant in the economy. In this respect, researchers Ali and Jalal (2018) and Harvey (2010) found long-run solid relationships between higher education and employment. Teichler (2015) cited that in an education meritocracy, individuals' educational attainment and competencies determine monetary resources and social recognition.

LEVEL OF TEACHING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Teaching is a noble profession because one has the responsibility to contribute to the holistic development of the future citizens of society. In the country, an aspirant teacher may choose at which level of education he will devote his career to before entering college. The teaching path may be for primary education (kindergarten to grade), junior high school, senior high school, or higher education. There are also programs under the technical-vocational tracks. Results.amarujala.com (2019) the quality of teachers at all levels of education is essential in producing quality students and graduates. Professional development is not only limited to those teaching in tertiary education but also those in primary education. Celik (2017) emphasised that teachers' career development is a concern in the education system since they are the core of education. Their constant development in their field of knowledge and teaching skills can influence students' performance. LeTendre and Akiba (2017), the teacher quality concern, which includes teacher development and recruitment and retention, has been a global issue since the mid-2000s. Teachers with more exposure to professional development improve quality education in primary and higher education and have better job satisfaction. Toropova, Myrberg, and Johansson's (2021) analysis revealed that educators with more exposure to professional development and considered more effective teachers tended to have higher levels of job satisfaction. Moreover, Sequeira (2012) emphasised that good educators nurture their knowledge and skills through continuous and deliberate efforts.

ADVANCE HIGHER EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Graduate education provides students with higher advanced learnings, skills and competencies that could further equip them for employment and other movements such as promotion. It also intends to develop baccalaureate graduates to be more specialised in their field. Based on Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Memorandum Order (CMO) Number 15 series of 2019, Policies, Standards, Guidelines for Graduate Programs, the master's program level of outcome or competency must be aligned with Level 7 of the Philippine Qualification Framework (PQF). PQF CHED (2019) stipulated the level descriptors demand the following from the master's program graduates: "a) advanced knowledge and skills in a specialised, interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary field of study for professional practice; b) self-directed research; c) lifelong learning with a highly substantial degree of independence that involves individual work or teams of interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary experts; and d) application of skills mentioned above in research, professional or creative work." CMO Number 53 Series of 2007, Policies and Standards for graduate programs in Education of Teachers and other Education Professionals cited that competency standards for master's graduates include the demonstration of the following: "a) in-depth understanding of a more complex and coherent body of knowledge and skills in an area of study in education, which may be applied in many types of schools or other educational environments; b) a higher order of level of skill in analysis, critical assessment, and application and communication of knowledge in the field; c) an ability to apply knowledge and skills in the field to new situations in more creative and flexible ways, and to solve complex problems in the field of ways that involve rigorous thinking and independent work" (Commission on Higher Education, 2007).

One of the graduate programs offered at the University is the Master of Science in Home Economics (MSHE). These graduates are expected to have mastery, expertise, and advanced and relevant skills needed in teaching Home Economics. For example, in Foods and Nutrition Education, Human Development and Family, Home Management and Family Economics, Clothing and Shop Management, Arts and Craft, and Administration and Supervision on Home Economics Program. Moreover, demonstrate positive values, attitudes and work ethics, and be competent in managing home economics projects and activities. Research and experimentation with new materials, processes and products are highly encouraged to develop critical thinking skills. (WVCST BOT Resolution No. 05/16/2008 (2008) and Quality Procedure Manual of the University for Outcome-Based Education (2017).

To determine the MSHE's program relevance to the needs of society, the institution conducted a study on the employment trends of the graduates through a tracer study. Albina and Sumagaysay (2020) denote that higher education institutions may conduct a periodic review of the curriculum to enhance the employability of the graduates. Hazaymeh and Dela Peña (2013) espouse results of the study can provide information on the impact of the graduates' training and education on the individual, institution, and country. Furthermore, Schomburg (2013) explained that a tracer study could serve as baseline data for evaluating the program's relevance based on the needs and the changing demand of the job market for curricular improvement and in the context of quality assurance. Aquino, Punongbayan, Macalaguim, Bauyon, Rodriguez, and Quizon (2015) agreed that the data collected, such as the employment profile of graduates, can identify the strengths and weaknesses of the program. The improvement in the employment of graduates can measure the effectiveness of the content and implementation of the curriculum. On the other hand, the institution may improve the possible identified deficits in the curriculum for better growth and development of the graduates to be more competent and highly qualified for employment.

Among the challenges today is to enhance the employability of the workforce. Aside from being individually qualified and competent, there is competition with the employability of others. The competitive advantage of institutions in the knowledge-based economy depends on technological innovation, applied knowledge and a highly skilled workforce. Brown, Hesketh, and Williams. (2004) mentioned another scenario: there are not enough high-skilled and high-salary jobs or positions to accommodate qualified graduates. Thus, the recruitment scheme must match individual capabilities with the organisation's requirements.

CHED No. 29 series of 2013 stated that one of the performance indicators of state colleges and universities for advanced education services is to determine the percentage of graduates who engage in employment and whose employment status improved within one year after graduation.

The improvement in employment status is not limited to promotion but also includes a change in status from temporary to permanent or from contractual or regular, a grant of award or incentive in recognition of the upgraded qualification, and designation to more responsible positions or tasks.

This study is essential for the graduate program, specifically the MSHE. Monitoring the performance of the graduates as to employment trends can gather systematic feedback on the status of the graduates, their working conditions, how long they are promoted after taking the degree, and the skills they learned from the University. The results of this study will serve as a basis for formulating improved curricular programs for graduate school that will help future graduates have a higher position after earning the degree.

CONCEPTUAL PARADIGM OF THE STUDY

Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the study.

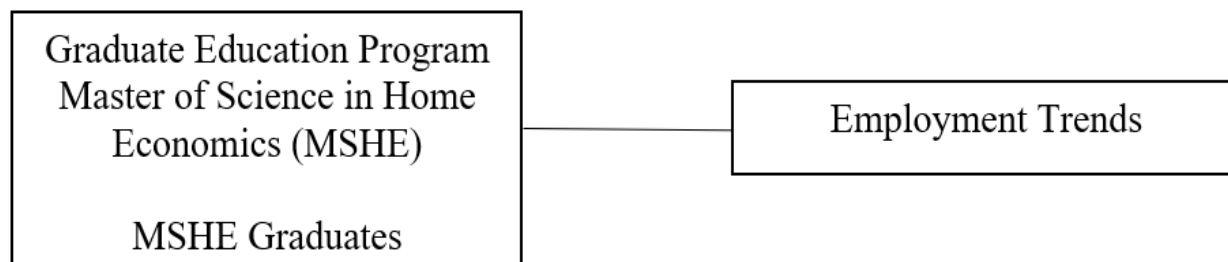


Figure 1 shows the conceptual paradigm of the study. The trend of employment of the MSHE graduates can help the University improve the curriculum and serve as a guide in achieving its goal of producing quality and competitive alums.

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

This study aimed to evaluate the employment trend of the Master of Science in Home Economics graduates of the Academic Year 2017 to 2021.

Specifically, it determined the:

1. profile of the MSHE graduates as to employment, work affiliation, level of teaching and employment status as a whole and based on year of graduation;
2. position/rank of the MSHE graduates before graduation and current position/rank;
3. promotion or movement after the graduates earned the degree;
4. designations or ancillary services of the graduates;
5. knowledge and skills the graduates acquired from the MSHE Program, which are helpful in the graduates' current jobs;
6. recommendations and suggestions for the improvement of the program.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This tracking of graduates is descriptive research. Nassaji (2015) mentioned that a descriptive study aims to describe a phenomenon and its characteristics. Calderon (2006) noted that this type of research gathers, analyses, classifies and tabulates data, practices, processes and trends to ascertain prevailing conditions that give qualitative or quantitative descriptions of the group under study. Burgess, Connor, Galloway, Morrison and Newton, Best and Kahn (2003) discussed that the descriptive research method is concerned with developing conditions or relationships and trends.

Moreover, it considers the past events and how these influence or relate to the present conditions. There are various methods for conducting descriptive research. Gall, Gall and Borg (2007) stressed that observation and survey tools are often used to gather the data. Rojas & Rojas (2016) used mixed methods of employment. Hence, this study focused on tracking the MSHE graduates from 2017-2021. The yielded data from the survey is crucial to advancing the curriculum through enhancements and revision, making it pleasing to the newcomers.

Respondents, Data Gathering Instrument, and Gathering Procedure

The respondents were the MSHE graduates of 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021. All 34 graduates were considered. One hundred of the graduates were tracked. The 34 respondents were tracked. The data gathering instrument is anchored on the CHED tracer research instrument and the institutional tracer study of the University, stipulating relevant items to determine graduate's whereabouts and career pathways. Modifications were made to achieve the suitability of the tool. Some of the items were taken from the study of Echaveria, Tucur, Belmes, Subosa (2007); Gines (2014); Nivera, Toledo, Sualibio, Boral, and Asuncion (2015); Sira, Celda, Sobrepeña, and Valenciana (2018); and Sira and Valenciana (2018). Due to the pandemic, the online version of the questionnaires was made available during the first semester of the academic year 2021 to 2022 thru google forms and links were sent to Facebook Messenger, observing the Data Privacy Act. An alternative form of collecting data was through phone calls and video conferencing. Furthermore, the questionnaire is composed of two parts. Part 1 asked about the respondents' personal information with ten items, while Part 2 asked about their employment experiences with 15 items.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following figures were presented to show the employment, work affiliation, level of teaching, and employment status of the MSHE program graduates.

Table 1. Employment Profile of MSHE Graduates as a Whole

Employment	Frequency	Percentage over Number of Graduates Tracked
Employment		
Employed	34	100%
Unemployed	0	0
Work Affiliation		
Government	34	100%
Non-Government	0	0
Level of Teaching		

Elementary	0	0
Junior High School	13	38%
Senior High School	5	15%
Tertiary	15	44%
Non-Teaching	1	3%
Employment Status		
Permanent	32	94%
Temporary	0	0
Casual/Contractual	2	6%
Job Hire	0	0

Table 1 shows that all the 34 MSHE graduates from 2017 to 2021 were tracked. Results revealed that all of them are currently employed in government offices. Most of the graduates teach at the tertiary level (15 or 44%), a little more than 30% are connected at the junior high school level (13 or 38%), 15% are in the senior high school, and one is in the non-teaching sector. Almost 100% of the graduates have permanent items. These data mean that most MSHE graduates are permanent government teachers at the secondary and tertiary levels.

Table 2. Yearly Employment Profile of MSHE Graduates

Year	No. of Graduate	No. of Graduate Tracked	% of Graduate Employed		Work Affiliation (% of Graduates Working in Gov't)		Employment Status (% of Graduates)	Level of Teaching (% of Graduates)											
			f	%	f	%		Permanent	Contractual	JHS	SHS	Tertiary	Non-teaching						
2021	1	1	1	100	1	100	1	100											
2020	8	8	8	100	7	87.5	7	87.5	1	12.5	3	37.5	2	25	2	25	1	12.5	
2019	4	4	4	100	4	100	4	100			2	50			2	50			
2018	7	7	7	100	6	85.7	6	85.7	1	14.3	3	42.9			4	57.1			
2017	14	14	14	100	14	100	14	100			4	28.6	3	21.4	7	50.0			
TOTAL	34	34	34	100	32	94.1	32	94.1	2	5.9	12	38.2	5	14.7	1	3	44.1	1	3

As to employment status of the MSHE graduates (Table 2), the following were the results: for Batch 2017 MSHE, 14 (100%) are permanent; for Batch 2018, 6 (85.7 %) are permanent and 1 (14.3%) is contractual; for Batch 2019, 4 (100%) are permanent; for Batch 2020, 7 (87.5%) are permanent and 1 (12.5%) is contractual; and for Batch 2021, 1 (100%) is permanent. These show that there were only two graduates who had no permanent items. As a result of the interview, these two graduates are part-time faculty and food laboratory assistant at a university.

In terms of the level of teaching, out of the 14 MSHE graduates of 2017, 7 (50%) are in tertiary institutions, 4 (28.6%) are in junior high school, and 3 (21.4%) are in senior high school. For batch 2018, out of 7 graduates, 4 (57.1%) are in tertiary, and 3 (42.9%) are in junior high school. For batch 2019, there is an equal number of 2 (50%) teaching in tertiary and junior high schools. For 2020 graduates, 3 (37.5%) are in tertiary level, 2 (25%) are in senior high school, 2 (25%) are in tertiary education and 1 (12.5%) is non-teaching. The lone graduate of batch 2021 is a junior high school teacher. There is a greater number of teachers in tertiary education for MSHE graduates of 2017 and 2018 while junior high school for batch 2020.

Concerning the promotion of the graduates, Table 3 and Figure 2 show that 2017, 5; 2018,1;2019, 2; and 2020 and 2021, 1. The graph also shows that one of the graduates was employed in 2017, 2018, and 2020. This result means that earning the MSHE degree facilitated the employment and promotion of most graduates in the field. Graduating from the program also allowed them to open their gates from the Department of Education to State Colleges and Universities. In the year 2017, seven of the graduates transferred from DepEd to SUC. Two graduates transferred in 2018, and two also in 2020.

Earning the MSHE degree also helped the transfer of teachers from private institutions to public schools. Two graduates transferred from private to public, one in 2017 and one in 2018. Two graduates were given endless things from a part-time position. Also, the graduates secured a permanent item after graduation. Some 34 graduates were not promoted from their teaching rank or position. Like in 2018, only were announced, and four in 2020. They remained Master Teacher 1, Teacher 2, Teacher 1, Laboratory Assistant, and Part-time. Promotion and tenure are still dependent on the availability of the items.

These results mean that most graduates have either been promoted or transferred to a rank/position with tenure and higher level. These imply the relevance and need of the MSHE graduates in the field after earning the degree.

Table 3. Position/Rank of Graduates Before and After Earning the MSHE Degree

Year Graduated	No. of Grad	No. of Grad Tracked	Position/Rank Before Graduation													
			No Job		Part-time		Lab. Asst		Teacher 1		Teacher 2		Teacher 3		Master Teacher 1	
			f	(% of Grad)	f	(% of Grad)	f	(% of Grad)	f	(% of Grad)	f	(% of Grad)	f	(% of Grad)	f	(% of Grad)
2021	1	1											1	100		
2020	8	8	1	12.5			1	12.5	4	50	2	25				
2019	4	4			2	50			1	25	1	25				
2018	7	7	1	14.3	1	14.3			3	42.9	1	14.3			1	14.3
2017	14	14	1	7.1	1	7.1			8	57.1	3	21.4	1	7.1		
Year Grad			Position/Rank After Graduation													

	No. of Grad	No. of Grad Tracked	Part-time		Lab. Asst		Teacher 1 (Public)		Teacher 2		Teacher 3		Master Teacher 1		Instructor 1	
			f	(% of Grad)	f	(% of Gra)	f	(% of Gra)	f	(% of Gra)	f	(% of Gra)	f	(% of Grad)	f	(% of Grad)
2021	1	1											1	100		
2020	8	8			1	12.5	3	37.5	2	25					2	25
2019	4	4									2	50			2	50
2018	7	7	1	14.3			1	14.3	1	14.3			1	14.3	3	42.9
2017	14	14							2	14.3	4	28.6	1	7.1	7	50.0

Figure 2. Promotion or movement of MSHE graduates.

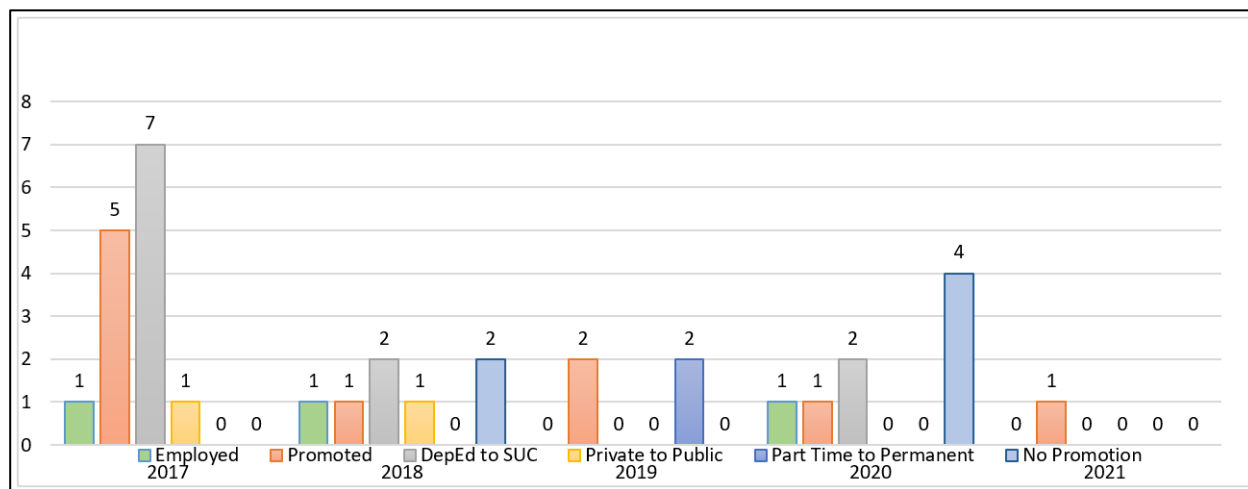
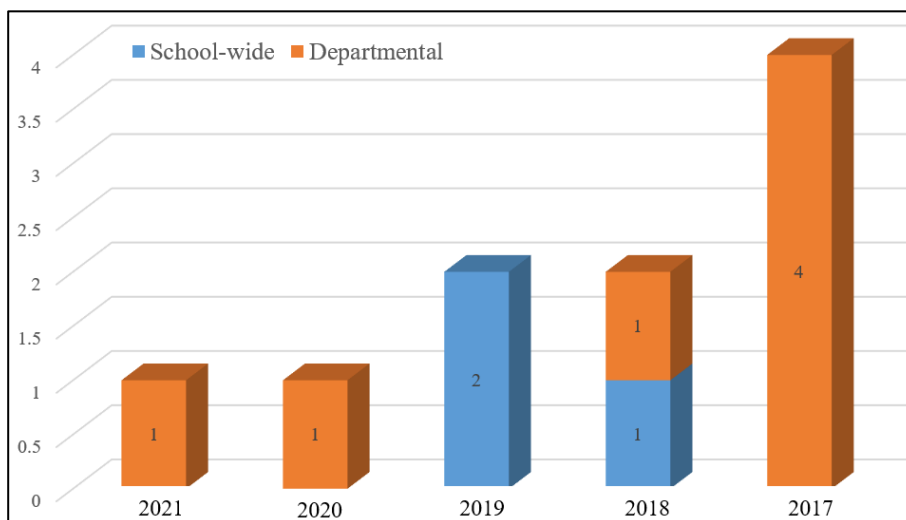


Figure 3. MSHE Graduates and their designations other than teaching



10 or 29.41% of MSHE graduates have been designated to various positions according to the skills and leadership potentials they nurtured and developed in the program (Figure 3). Three or 8.82% have school-wide designations. School-wide designations refer to the alumni coordinator, feeding program, and practice house person in charge. Seven or 20.59% have departmental appointments, including the program coordinator, chairperson, and program extension coordinator.

Table 4. Knowledge and Skills Acquired from the MSHE Program which are Helpful in the Graduate's Current Jobs

Knowledge/Skills	f	% of Graduates Tracked
Planning and Organisation	25	74%
Leadership	12	35%
Use of Technology	25	74%
Communication	21	62%
Collaboration	18	53%
Critical Thinking	19	56%
Creativity	22	65%
Soft skills (Interpersonal skills etc.)	21	62%
Technical skills (Table set-up, sewing, handicraft, etc.)	22	65%
Research	12	35%
Extension	9	26%

According to the 34 graduates, the knowledge and skills acquired from the MSHE Program were helpful in their job. The top five (5) include planning and organisation, use of technology, creativity, technical skills, soft skills, and communication. Those which were rated below 40% were leadership, research and extension.

Table 5. Recommendations and Suggestions for the Improvement of the Program

Recommendations and Suggestions	f	% of Graduates Tracked
Free Wifi to all department areas	1	2.94%
Constantly update the curriculum with what is being taught in the field or a subject that deals with current trends in the area, may it primary education or industry	1	2.94%
Maybe they focus on the weak part of their system	1	2.94%
Offering a higher degree for MSHE precisely the doctoral degree for Home Economics	3	8.82%
May the University will continue to provide quality education and training and produce more competitive graduates	1	2.94%
Keep moulding students	1	2.94%
No further recommendations/suggestions	26	76.47%
Total	34	100

Most respondents (26 or 76.47%) have no recommendations or suggestions for improving the program. They were satisfied with their quality of education and teaching-learning experiences. Three, or 8.82%, recommended a vertical doctoral degree program at the University. This finding means that the graduates are still interested in enrolling on their higher degree in the institution. One (1) or 2.94% suggested free wifi, constant updating of the curriculum, and focus on weak points of the system. These show that the curriculum will be updated and the students' facilities and services will be provided. Moreover, one (1) or 2.94% recommends that the University continue providing quality education and training and keep moulding students.

CONCLUSIONS

Most of the graduates had promotions, movements, and employment after earning the degree, which showed that the MSHE program is relevant to primary and tertiary education. MSHE graduates were given departmental and school-wide designations and ancillary positions in their current jobs. The knowledge and skills they learned in the program were helpful in their present work; however, leadership, research and extension skills need to be considered. Moreover, the graduates acknowledged their quality education and experiences, but they further suggested continuously updating the curriculum, facilities, and services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The researchers recommend continuously gathering feedback from the MSHE graduates, the industry, and other stakeholders as one basis for improving the program and curriculum. The tracking of graduates may cover greater scope as to the number of batches considered to document the graduates' success further. Curriculum makers and administration may further enhance the courses, teaching-learning process, resources, and services of the program to maintain quality education and address the knowledge, skills, and other facilities that need to be strengthened.

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