

Career success of Master of Arts in Education graduates of Naga College Foundation

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the academic writing competence of graduate students at Naga College Foundation, Inc. (NCF) to inform an intervention program enhancing thesis and dissertation writing for SY 2024–2025. It analysed graduates' socio-demographic profiles, employment and promotion status, developed competencies and values, and their relationship to career outcomes. A descriptive-correlational design was used, involving 50 Master of Arts in Education (MAEd) graduates from 2017 to 2024: a researcher-made questionnaire collected data, analysed using weighted mean, Pearson correlation, and coefficient of determination. Most graduates were aged 36–40 or above (34% each), female (66%), and married (79%). The 2023–2024 cohort was the most significant (40%). Employment was high (98%), with 66% in top academic positions. Competency scores were highest in human relations (3.82) and lowest in research (3.45). Correlation analysis showed positive relationships between competencies/values and promotion and employment, with r -values ranging from 0.26 to 0.70. Critical thinking ($r^2 = 0.44$) had the most potent effects. MAEd graduates demonstrated strong employability and career growth potential, backed by competencies in interpersonal, problem-solving, and technological skills. NCF MAEd graduates are mature, competent, and values-driven professionals with strong employment outcomes and leadership roles. Enhancement programs should strengthen research skills and critical thinking while sustaining human relations and value-based education to support career advancement. The results of this study imply that the MAEd program at NCF needs to design targeted interventions to strengthen research and critical thinking skills to enhance graduates' competitiveness and career mobility further.

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1. Introduction

In the era of globalization, cultural diversity in educational environments is increasingly becoming a major concern (Basnet, 2024). Teachers as educational agents have an important role in building an inclusive learning environment that is responsive to cultural differences (Anugrah et al., 2024; Hendriksen et al., 2024; Syamsuardi et al., 2024). Teachers' multicultural competence is a fundamental aspect in building understanding, tolerance, and classroom management that respects diversity (Anthony-Stevens & Langford, 2020; Chima Abimbola Eden et al., 2024). As social complexity in the world of education increases, research on teachers' multicultural competence continues to develop to understand trends, challenges, and solutions in its development (Anugrah et al., 2024; Naz et al., 2023).

Although many studies have been conducted on teachers' multicultural competence, there is still a gap in understanding how this research trend is developing globally (Dyankova & Nikolova,

2023; Muhamad Pilus & Nguyen, 2023; Rodiyana et al., 2022). Most research were focused on theory development and implementation in various educational contexts, but few studies on the development and research patterns of teachers' multicultural competence comprehensively (Anthony-Stevens & Langford, 2020; Karatas, 2020). Bibliometric analysis enables a thorough review that shows all literatures relevant to any field of research but little research used a bibliometric approach to identify publication trends, collaborations between researchers, and the main themes developing in academic literature (Mahendra & Maftuh, 2023).

Various studies have highlighted the importance of multicultural competence in improving teaching effectiveness and building harmony in the school environment (Karacsony et al., 2022). Several studies emphasize the cognitive, affective, and skill aspects that teachers must have in dealing with students from different cultural backgrounds (Hariyadi & Rodiyah, 2023; Young et al., 2024). However, studies that map the evolution of this concept from a global perspective through a bibliometric approach are still very limited (Kilavuz, 2023; Rodiyana et al., 2022; Thresia et al., 2024). Therefore, this study attempted to fill these gaps by identifying publication trends, key keywords, and academic collaborations in teacher multicultural competency research.

Given the aforementioned gaps, bibliometric analysis was used to explore publication trends related to teachers' multicultural competence. The data used come from reputable academic databases covering publications in the last few decades. Using quantitative analysis techniques, publication growth, geographical distribution, collaboration networks, and key emerging themes were mapped. This approach provides a more objective picture of how this research is developing and in which direction the research trend is moving.

The results of this study are expected to provide new contributions to the literature on teacher multicultural competence by offering a data-based perspective on the development of research in this field. These findings are not only useful for academics and researchers who want to understand the dynamics of teacher multicultural competence research, but also for educational policymakers in designing more inclusive and evidence-based teacher training strategies. Thus, this study will contribute to enriching the understanding of the development of teacher multicultural competence research and its implications for educational practices in various countries.

2. Method

2.1. Research design

This study uses descriptive and correlational methods. The descriptive method describes the personal profile (sociodemographic characteristics) of MAEd graduates at Naga College Foundation, Inc., including age, gender, marital status, year of graduation, and academic rank. In addition, this method is also used to describe the employment and promotion status, as well as the competencies and skills developed by graduates of the postgraduate program. Meanwhile, the correlational method is used to determine whether there is a significant relationship between competencies and skills with the promotion and employment status of NCF-GS graduates. This method is also used to test the extent to which CS affects graduates' promotion and employment status.

2.2. Data of the research

The subjects in this study were graduates of the Master of Arts in Education (MAEd) program from the School of Graduate Studies, Naga College Foundation, Inc., from the 2017–2018 to 2023–2024 classes. The population in this study includes all graduates in the period, and the sampling technique used is adjusted to the availability and accessibility of respondent data (purposive or total sampling, depending on the number and accessibility of data).

2.3. Data collection tools

The instrument used in this study was a structured questionnaire, designed to collect data on the personal profile of graduates (age, gender, marital status, year of graduation, academic ranking), employment status and promotion of graduates, level of competence and skills developed (communication skills, interpersonal relationships, problem solving, information technology, critical thinking, and research). This instrument was validated through content validity testing by experts, and reliability testing was carried out before distribution to the research sample respondents.

2.4. Research procedure

The research procedure began with obtaining the necessary permissions from the Graduate School at Naga College Foundation, Inc. and identifying target respondents based on predetermined inclusion criteria. After the research instrument was prepared and validated, questionnaires were distributed to graduates via email, online survey platforms, and in-person contact, depending on their accessibility. Respondents were informed of the purpose of the study, assured of confidentiality, and asked to provide honest responses. Completed questionnaires were then collected, screened for completeness and accuracy, and coded into a database for statistical processing. The organized data were then subjected to descriptive and inferential statistical analyses in accordance with the research objectives.

2.5. Data analysis technique

The data collected were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the sociodemographic characteristics of graduates, employment status, promotion, and the level of competence, skills, and values developed. Analysis techniques such as frequency distribution, percentage, average, and standard deviation were used in this stage. Inferential statistics, specifically Pearson correlation analysis and linear regression, were used to test the significant relationship between competencies and skills (CS) with promotion and employment status. Significance tests were conducted at a 95% confidence level or alpha of 0.05.

3. Results and Discussion

This study explores the socio-demographic profile of MAEd graduates from Naga College Foundation (NCF) and its relationship to their employment and promotion status. The socio-demographic profile includes age, gender, marital status, year of graduation, employment status, and academic rank. The data in Table 1 provides a comprehensive picture of the graduates' background, professional development, and social contexts that influence their educational journey.

Table 1. Personal profile data (socio-demographic) of respondents

Profile	F	%	Profile	F	%
Age			Year Graduated		
20–25	4	8.00	2017–2018	10	20.00
26–30	2	4.00	2019–2020	10	20.00
31–35	10	20.00	2021–2022	10	20.00
36–40	17	34.00	2023–2024	20	40.00
41 & above	17	34.00	Total	50	100.00
Total	50	100.00			
Sex			Employment		
Male	17	34.00	Employed	49	98.00
Female	33	66.00	Not Employed	1	2.00
Total	50	100.00	Total	50	100.00
			Academic Ranking		
Civil Status			T1–T3	33	66.00
Single	8	16.00	MT1–MT2	2	4.00
Married	39	79.00	Instructor 1–3	5	10.00
Separated/Widowed	3	6.00	Part-Time Instructor	5	10.00
Total	50	100.00	School Heads	5	10.00
			Total	50	100.00

The age distribution in Table 1 shows that most graduates are 36 years and above (68%), reflecting a mature and experienced professional group. The dominance of women (66%) shows the general trend of the education sector. Most respondents are also married (79%), indicating personal life stability that may affect career choices and the ability to manage work life. Then, as many as 98% of respondents have worked, reflecting the success of the MAEd program in preparing graduates for the world of work. The majority hold academic positions T1–T3 (66%) and other strategic positions such as principals and instructors, indicating the professional success of graduates.

This finding supports the human capital theory proposed by Fleisher and Kinsmen, which states that education and skills are critical in increasing job opportunities and career promotion. Education is essential in economic empowerment, creating jobs, and supporting social progress (Manzano-Sánchez, 2023). Older employees tend to have more work experience and higher educational qualifications, which affect promotion opportunities (Dumla, 2023; San Jose, 2014). However, the academic institution's reputation where a person graduated also influences career success, supporting the assumption that the quality of education at NCF contributes significantly to the success of graduates (Dumla et al., 2020).

The role of Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) in producing graduates who are adaptive to new learning methods, in line with the NCF curriculum approach responsive to industry needs (Ahmad & Sharma, 2023; Caingcoy, 2020; Kumar, 2023). This is a key factor in the high employment rate and the variety of job positions of graduates. This study also supports the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 1 (No Poverty), and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequality) (Nazar et al., 2018; Zguir et al., 2021). This shows that postgraduate education, such as the NCF MAEd program, contributes significantly to graduate career growth and sustainable socio-economic development.

3.1. Status of the MAEd graduates of NCF, Inc. along employment and promotion

This study also explores how graduates of the Master of Arts in Education (MAEd) program at Naga College Foundation, Inc. (NCF) perceive the impact of their education on employment and promotion opportunities. Table 2 shows graduates' perceptions of the effects of an MAEd degree on employment prospects, skills, and professional networks.

Table 2. Status of the MAEd graduates of NCF, Inc. along with employment

Employment Opportunities	WM	Int	Rank
I believe obtaining my master's degree will help me secure a better job.	3.90	SA	1
The skills I learned in the program have made me more attractive to potential employers.	3.88	SA	2
The master's program has enhanced my job prospects	3.86	SA	3.5
I have established a professional network through my classmates and faculty.	3.86	SA	3.5
The program facilitated connections with industry professionals.	3.82	SA	5
Overall Average Weighted Mean	3.86	SA	

The results show that graduates feel that an MAEd degree improves their employment opportunities, especially in obtaining better jobs (WM = 3.90) and being more attractive to employers (WM = 3.88). Professional networking and improved job prospects were also recognised (WM = 3.86). Connections with industry professionals, although still strong, were ranked the lowest (WM = 3.82). According to the Philippine Constitution, education drives social and economic growth (Manzano-Sánchez, 2023). Innovative teaching strategies to prepare graduates for the workforce (Caingcoy, 2020; Igwe et al., 2021; Okolie et al., 2019). Education and training increase individual productivity and income (Marques dos Santos et al., 2013).

Age and education level influence job satisfaction and promotion (San Jose, 2014), while graduates from reputable institutions have an advantage in employment and promotion (Syzdykova et al., 2022). This suggests that the MAEd program at NCF, which has a relevant curriculum and competent faculty, prepares graduates for success. This is consistent with the Human Capital Theory, which states that educational investment generates economic benefits through increased skills and productivity (Grugulis, 2024; Hooley, 2021). Table 3 illustrates the perceptions of MAEd graduates regarding the program's influence on promotion opportunities.

Graduates felt confident about pursuing promotions after completing the program (WM = 3.88). They also rated the skills gained as relevant to their jobs, and they stated that a degree from NCF was valued by employers (WM = 3.86). Although networking was also considered helpful, its impact was slightly lower (WM = 3.78). These findings are in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequality). Education from NCF prepares graduates to advance careers and reduce inequality in line with human capital theory (Grugulis, 2024; Lisowski et al., 2023).

Table 3. Status of the MAEd graduates of NCF, Inc. along with promotion

Promotion	WM	Int	Rank
I feel more confident pursuing promotions after completing my Master's Degree at NCF.	3.88	SA	1
The skills and knowledge gained from my Master's program at NCF are directly applicable to my job.	3.86	SA	2.5
Employers value a Master's Degree from NCF when considering candidates for promotion.	3.86	SA	2.5
I believe that obtaining a Master's Degree from NCF significantly enhances my chances of promotion.	3.84	SA	4
Networking opportunities provided by NCF have positively impacted my career advancement.	3.78	SA	5
Overall Average Weighted Mean	3.84	SA	

3.2. Competencies and skills developed by the MAEd graduates of NCF, Inc

The Master of Arts in Education (MAEd) program at Naga College Foundation, Inc. plays a vital role in developing graduates' professional competencies and skills in education. The comprehensive curriculum and practical experiences enable graduates to master theoretical knowledge and practical skills relevant to the real world. These competencies include communication, interpersonal, and problem-solving skills that support teaching practice, leadership, and long-term career development.

The study results in Table 4 convey the message that communication skills are fundamental for personal and professional development. MAEd graduates from NCF showed strength in communicating ideas, participating in discussions, and presenting effectively. This aligns with SDG 4: Quality Education because these skills create an inclusive and effective learning environment. These skills also support critical thinking, problem-solving, and active participation. According to Human Capital Theory, effective communication increases the competitiveness and value of individuals in the labour market (Darmawan et al., 2020; Grugulis, 2024).

Table 4. Competencies and skills developed by the MAEd Graduates of Naga College Foundation, Inc. along with communication

Communication Skills	WM	Int	Rank
Use eye contact, body language, and gestures during presentations or discussions.	3.62	SA	1
Express ideas clearly and logically.	3.54	SA	2
Fluent and articulate in speech during presentations, discussions, or group work.	3.5	SA	3.5
Proficient in academic writing, including grammar, structure, and flow.	3.5	SA	3.5
Ask insightful questions that demonstrate understanding and provoke further discussion.	3.58	SA	5
Overall Average Weighted Mean	3.55	SA	

The analysis results in Table 5 show that human relations skills are essential for collaboration and building effective relationships in academic and professional environments. MAEd graduates demonstrate empathy, teamwork skills, and appreciation for cultural diversity. This supports SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth. Related studies show that interpersonal skills significantly contribute to career advancement and work productivity, according to the Human Capital Theory (Faggian et al., 2019; Grugulis, 2024).

Table 5. Competencies and skills developed by the MAEd Graduates of Naga College Foundation, Inc. along with human relations

Human Relations Skills	WM	Int	Rank
Understand and respect others' feelings, perspectives, and emotions.	3.84	SA	1.5
Effective in working as part of a team, contributing to group success.	3.84	SA	1.5
Manage and resolve conflicts constructively and diplomatically.	3.72	SA	3
Aware and respect cultural differences, fostering an inclusive environment.	3.86	SA	4
Build and maintain professional relationships with peers, mentors, and faculty.	3.82	SA	5
Overall Average Weighted Mean	3.816	SA	

Meanwhile, problem-solving skills are essential to face challenges in the workplace. MAEd graduates demonstrate research skills, application of theory, data-based decision-making, and

creative thinking. These skills directly contribute to graduates' work readiness, are relevant to SDG 4 and Human Capital Theory, and align the educational curriculum with the needs of the labour market (Goldin, 2024; Tasheva & Hillman, 2019). The analysis data can be seen in Table 6.

Table 6. Competencies and skills developed by the MAEd Graduates of Naga College Foundation, Inc. along with problem-solving

Problem-Solving Skills	WM	Int	Rank
Conduct thorough research to inform problem-solving efforts.	3.7	SA	1.5
Apply theoretical knowledge to real-world problems and scenarios.	3.7	SA	1.5
Make informed decisions based on available data and potential outcomes.	3.62	SA	3
Find creative ways to use available resources to solve problems	3.60	SA	4
Analyse complex problems, identify key issues, and evaluate multiple perspectives.	3.56	SA	5
Overall Average Weighted Mean	3.64	SA	

Graduates' information technology competencies show mastery in using technology for professional and academic activities. The two highest competencies are keeping current with the latest educational technology developments and applying critical thinking and problem-solving skills in technology integration, with a weighted average (WM) of 3.70. These abilities reflect the professional readiness of graduates and support SDG 4 and SDG 9 (Nadezhina & Avduevskaia, 2021; Silva et al., 2019; Widarni & Bawono, 2021). The following are the details of Table 7.

Table 7. Competencies and skills developed by the MAEd Graduates of Naga College Foundation, Inc, along Information Technology

Information Technology	WM	Int	Rank
Stay updated with new educational technologies to enhance my work.	3.70	SA	1.5
Apply critical thinking and problem-solving skills to address technology integration challenges.	3.70	SA	1.5
Use digital collaboration tools to share resources, ideas, and strategies for professional development.	3.62	SA	3
Use digital communication tools (e.g., email, online meetings) to collaborate with colleagues.	3.60	SA	4
Developed strong digital literacy and technical skills, utilizing digital tools in professional and academic contexts.	3.56	SA	5
Overall Average	3.64	SA	

The critical thinking skills developed reflect the ability to analyse, reflect, and draw conclusions based on evidence. The highest competency is the ability to ask critical and thought-provoking questions (WM=3.62). The other three competencies have the same average value (WM=3.58), indicating high consistency in reflective thinking and information synthesis. Critical thinking skills support SDG 4 and SDG 8 by preparing graduates to face global challenges logically and innovatively (Ellahi & Sharif, 2020; Nguyen et al., 2024). The analysis can be seen in Table 8.

Table 8. Competencies and skills developed by the MAEd Graduates of Naga College Foundation, Inc, along with Critical Thinking

Critical Thinking Skills	WM	Int	Rank
Ask probing, insightful questions that challenge assumptions and surface underlying issues.	3.62	SA	1
Use clear, rational steps to connect evidence to conclusions.	3.58	SA	3
Reflect on one's own thought process, identifying gaps or weakness.	3.58	SA	3
Integrate information from diverse sources to form a coherent understanding or solution.	3.58	SA	3
Recognize cognitive biases, emotional influences, or preconceived notions in reasoning.	3.54	SA	5
Overall Average Weighted Mean	3.58	SA	

Graduates' research skills are also quite good, with finding credible sources of information being the highest competency (WM=3.68). However, statistical software use and understanding research methodology ranked the lowest with WM of 3.15 and 3.14, respectively. This indicates the need for improvement in the technical aspects of research, although other competencies have developed well. Graduates' research competencies support SDG 4 and SDG 9, and align with Human

Capital Theory, which emphasises the importance of investing in individual education and skills (Mellander & Florida, 2021). The results of this analysis can be seen in Table 9.

Table 9. Competencies and skills developed by the MAEd Graduates of Naga College Foundation, Inc, along research

Research Skills	WM	Int	Rank
Effectively search for and identify credible sources of information relevant to my research topic	3.68	SA	1
Capable of effectively presenting my research findings in both written and oral formats	3.64	SA	2.5
Proficient in designing surveys and questionnaires for data collection purposes	3.64	SA	2.5
Comfortable using statistical software (e.g., SPSS, R, Excel) to analyze quantitative data.	3.15	SA	4.5
Have a solid understanding of various research methodologies (qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods)	3.14	SA	4.5
Overall Average Weighted Mean	3.45	SA	

Human Relations competency ranked highest (3.82), indicating the importance of interpersonal skills in the professional success of graduates. In contrast, Research ranked lowest, indicating that this aspect requires more attention in curriculum development. These skills support Human Capital Theory, SDG 4, and SDG 8, and strengthen graduates' readiness to face complex work challenges and a world based on innovation and technology (Kuzminov et al., 2019). The results of this analysis can be seen in Table 10.

Table 10. Competencies and skills developed by the MAEd Graduates of Naga College Foundation

Skills	OAWM	Int	Rank
Human Relation	3.82	SA	1
Problem Solving	3.64	SA	2.5
Information Technology	3.64	SA	2.5
Critical Thinking	3.58	SA	4
Communication	3.55	SA	5
Research	3.45	SA	6
Grand Mean	3.61	SA	

3.3. Significant relationship between the competencies and skills and the promotion and employment status of graduates of NCF

This study also highlights the significant relationship between MAEd graduates' competencies, skills, and career success, especially regarding job promotion and opportunities. The findings suggest that education and professional development play an essential role in shaping career success by improving critical thinking and research skills. Table 5 shows a significant positive correlation between various skills and promotion. The results of the analysis can be seen in Table 11.

Table 11. Test on the Relationship between the competencies, skills and Values and the promotion

Skills	Promotion	r-values	Int	p-values	Int
Communication		0.33	LC	0.02	S
Human Relation		0.31	LC	0.03	S
Problem Solving		0.34	LC	0.02	S
Information Technology		0.34	LC	0.02	S
Critical Thinking		0.67	MC	0.00	S
Research		0.26	LC	0.04	S

In particular, Critical Thinking ($r = 0.67$, $p = 0.00$) shows a significant moderate correlation to promotion. This supports the Human Capital Theory, which states that educational investment improves job performance and career prospects. Table 12 presents the correlation between competence, skills, and job opportunities.

Table 12. Test on the Relationship between the competencies, skills and Values and the employment opportunities

Skills	r-values	Int	p-values	Int
Communication	0.33	LC	0.02	S
Human Relation	0.38	LC	0.01	S
Problem Solving	0.41	MC	0.00	S
Information Technology	0.39	LC	0.01	S
Critical Thinking	0.70	HC	0.00	S
Research	0.37	LC	0.01	S

Critical thinking skills re-emerged as a dominant factor with a high correlation ($r = 0.70$, $p = 0.00$) to employment opportunities. Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) must ensure their graduates have the skills and values required by the competitive job market (Caingcoy, 2020; Okolie et al., 2019). In the context of the MAEd Program at Naga College Foundation, this study provides important insights into how competencies and values shape graduates' career success. This study also supports the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), which emphasize the importance of education in empowering individuals to obtain better jobs and contribute to community development (Hidayat & Syahid, 2019).

This study aims to examine the extent to which competencies and skills influence the promotion and employment opportunities of Naga College Foundation (NCF) graduates. In a competitive working world, especially in the field of education, the career success of graduates isn't only determined by their academic qualifications but also by their competencies and values. Table 13 shows the influence of competencies and values on the promotion of NCF graduates.

Table 13. Extent of Influence between Competencies, Skills and Values influence the promotion of graduates of NCF

Competence & Skills	r-value	r ² -value	Interpretation
Communication	0.33	0.11	VW
Human Relation	0.31	0.10	VW
Problem Solving	0.34	0.11	VW
Information Technology	0.34	0.11	VW
Critical Thinking	0.67	0.44	W
Research	0.26	0.07	VW

The results show that Critical Thinking competency has the most decisive influence on promotion ($r^2 = 0.44$), while competency shows a weak influence. Truth and service values also have a significant impact, although they are classified as weak. This finding emphasises the importance of skilled and innovative graduates in facing the world of work challenges. TEIs (Teacher Education Institutions) must equip students with competencies that guarantee employability and promotion (Aclan et al., 2018). In addition, human capital theory supports the idea that work experience and education level affect promotion opportunities (San Jose, 2014). Meanwhile, Table 14 presents the influence of competency and values on the employment opportunities of NCF graduates.

Table 14. Extent of Influence between Competencies, Skills and Values influence the Employment Opportunities of graduates of NCF

Competence & Skills	r-value	r ² -value	Interpretasi
Communication	0.33	0.11	VW
Human Relation	0.38	0.15	VW
Problem Solving	0.41	0.16	VW
Information Technology	0.39	0.15	VW
Critical Thinking	0.70	0.49	W
Research	0.37	0.13	VW

Critical Thinking competency stands out again with the most significant influence on employment opportunities ($r^2 = 0.49$). This study confirms that in the context of the MAEd Program

at NCF, competencies such as Problem Solving, Communication, and Human Relations. Referring to human capital theory, increasing education and training will improve individual competence, productivity, and employment opportunities. Recommendations for the education and training system to be aligned with the needs of the labour market to increase graduate employment opportunities.

4. Conclusion

MAEd graduates from Naga College Foundation (NCF) are generally of mature age (36 years and above), predominantly female and married, reflecting a family-oriented demographic. The employment rate of graduates is very high (98%), with many occupying top academic ranks and strategic positions such as principals and lecturers, indicating strong professional success and leadership. Graduates also demonstrate high competencies, especially in human relations, problem solving and information technology. A positive relationship exists between skills and employment and promotion opportunities, with a more substantial influence on employment opportunities. Among the skills, critical thinking has the most significant impact on career success, while research has the least impact.

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