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# Education Leaders, Research Scholars, and Expert Practitioners: Feedback of Employers and Immediate Heads of Educational Management Graduates

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## Abstract

The institution under the present study desires to provide education leaders, research scholars, and innovative teachers with the values of truth, excellence, and service. The findings of the study strengthen the attributes of the graduates as education leaders. Based on the employer and immediate head feedback, graduates have possessed the capacity to provide directions of the institution, lead projects and committees, and provide accountability by demonstrating ethical, transformative, and equitable leadership. As research scholars, graduates have exhibited promising feedback, especially in an era when research is emphasized in informed decision-making and evidence-based practices, with a mean of 3.865. M.A. and Ph.D. graduates are equipped with the necessary skills needed to conceptualize, plan, and conduct academic inquiries anchored on practices and institutional agenda, with a mean of 3.841. M.A. and Ph.D. graduates are considered education leaders, with a mean of 3.84, who can link theory into practice, and actualize philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of the educational management program by highlighting intercultural competency, ethical leadership, and sensitivity and respect to various beliefs and ways of life.

## Introduction

The contemporary world has transitioned to meet diverse changes, demands, challenges, and opportunities. Education is seen as a mechanism to address these changes and demands by producing caliber education leaders of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Graduates have a significant role in society as responsible individuals as well as productive citizens in the country. A check and balance provide inputs on whether learning institutions are

producing the right competencies and apparently, tracer study is a retrospective analysis that documented the status of the graduates through a standardized survey. In addition, Gines (2014) discussed that the tracer study result is an influential tool that determines the characteristics of employment, transition to employment as well as the satisfaction level of the graduates. Tracer study is one of the aspects needed to determine the effectiveness of the academic institution through the

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performance of its graduates. It also explains the exploration within the group of people as products of academic institutions. Employer feedback as a domain of tracer study provides links in determining how each graduate has performed vis-à-vis expected roles at work.

Educational management as a field of study requires a broad context for an individual to be successful in leading a team. It has a multifaceted global idea that can be used interchangeably and overlaps. Education management also evolved both historically and culturally which can have observed in the various disciplines (Grace, 2005). It is a field that focuses on the educational organizations' process and utilizing efficiently and effectively the resources whether human or materials. Educational management also captures the achievement of goals and objectives of the organizations. Okumbe (1998) attested to the process of education management to accomplish organizational goals and objectives. Everyone involved in the institution should acquire knowledge in education management as it is vital for the success of attaining goals. Educational management involves the use of official power derived from a formal rank to persuade members of an organization to obey. It comprises executing tasks with the help of others to achieve set goals. Management's goal is to achieve organizational goals cost-effectively and efficiently.

Involvement in school management affairs varies among educational managers for various environmental settings and the people they serve (Del Rosario & Ancho, 2020). Education leaders must develop their different domains not only in being education leaders but also being research scholars and expert practitioners in their institutions. It is critical to understand that an organization operates through a variety of processes and is staffed by individuals performing a variety of functions.

The institution under the present study desires to provide education leaders, research scholars, and innovative teachers with the values of truth, excellence, and service. The program nurtures the student's ability in accordance with the institution's vision through various theories, practices, and conducting research in educational management discipline. The outcomes of the programs encompass the student's competence in education research, provision of leadership and management skills, and capacitating areas in the research publication. Students are trained to create educational alternatives that will solve the gap and challenges faced by the institution and the country.

Graduate students in the present study are

considered to be the catalyst of transformation. Graduates also exhibit their commitments and advocacy in leadership to transform education by developing policies, identifying the essential concepts, theories, and principles in the field of education management and leadership. With actions being predicted in one's values and beliefs, developing leadership skills will equip an individual to improve the management practices allowing the leader to have an insightful view of what is valued by the organization. Mazurkiewicz (2021) discussed that education systems and institutions put a lot of effort, time, and money into their work. With this, school leaders must have high hopes and a lot of effort to keep education processes running smoothly. Everyone involved in developing solutions and completing duties must be aware of the global context, issues, and processes.

The present study aims to look at the graduate curriculum by capturing the voices of employers and immediate heads of graduates. To be specific, it looks at how graduates of the program perform based on the outcomes as education leaders, expert practitioners, and research scholars. Data from this study could serve as solid inputs in revisiting the curriculum in terms of industry response and needs and how these are being addressed by the graduates of the program. Recent program accreditation surveys suggest that employer feedback should be given attention and this study is an attempt to comply with the said suggestion.

The notable inputs of the present study will serve as the assessment of the program as the basis of the performance of the graduates as particular to research scholars, as expert practitioners, and as education leaders. This will contribute to identifying and ensuring that the graduates of education management are well-equipped with necessary competencies, knowledge, skills, and values that will manifest in their respective workplace.

### Conceptual framework

This study is anchored on three outcome domains as stated in the educational management program of the institution under study. Graduates of the program are expected to demonstrate these outcomes, thus the inquiry. The research involves employers or immediate heads of the graduates who are capable of evaluating the performance of their employees as the subject of this research.

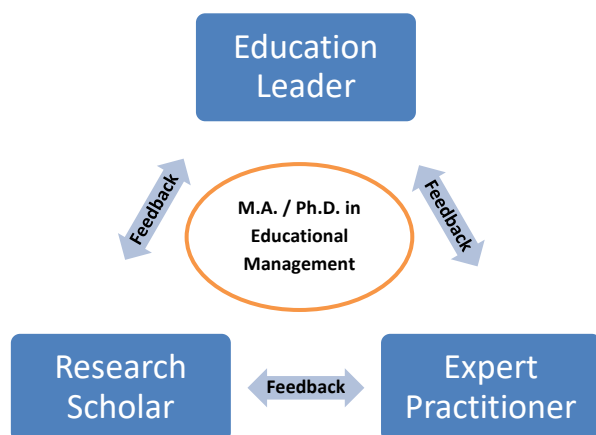


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework of the study.

## Research methodology

The respondents of the study were asked to complete a survey about their rating on the performance of the graduate of educational management who happens to be an employee of their respective institutions. While a total of 25 employers and immediate heads were identified and asked to participate in the study, 17 responses were successfully received by the researchers. Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the respondents. The sample may appear to be relatively small to inform effective and supportive research outcomes, but it can also be seen as an effective measure that captures the perspectives of the graduates' employers and immediate heads. For the last six years, the M.A. average enrolment pegged at 115 (25.75% male and 74.24% female). For the Ph.D. level, 115 has been the average enrolment with 37.15% male and 62.84% female.

Table 1 Profile of the respondents

Demographics	Position		Sex Assigned at Birth		Academic Level			Type	
	Employer	Immediate Head	Male	Female	Basic Educ	Higher Educ	N/A	Public	Private
Frequency	4	13	4	13	14	2	1	12	5
Percentage	24%	76%	24%	76%	82%	12%	6%	70%	30%
Total	100%		100%		100%			100%	

The present study is anchored on the institution's graduate outcomes, mainly education leaders, expert practitioners, and research scholars. Table 2 shows the description of these outcomes. The employers and immediate heads of the graduates of the educational management program completed a survey about their rating on the performance of the graduates based on these outcomes.

Table 2 Outcome domains and description

Outcome Domains	Description
Education Leader	"Education leaders who are competent with knowledge, skills and attitudes, values, and ethics to lead and manage high quality education programs."
Expert Practitioner	"Innovative teachers who are excellent in their discipline and at par with the best of graduates in Teacher Education in the world; responsive and deeply rooted in one's heritage, sensitive to cultural diversity and appreciative of different value systems."
Research Scholar	"Research scholars who are proficient in groundbreaking cross-disciplinary inquiries."

The data set was standardized by using a 4-point Likert scale: 3.5 – 4.00: Very Good (VG); 2.5 – 3.49: Good (G); 1.5 – 2.49: Fair (F); 1.0 – 1.49: Poor (P). The rating was based on the performance of the educational management graduates in the respondents' institution. Each employer/immediate head was instructed to tick the number that best reflects the performance of the graduate. An online web provider was used as a platform to conduct the survey.

The rating was then ranked in the results and discussion section, from highest to lowest of the magnitude to determine the position concerning the graduate outcomes. The proponents of the study have strictly adhered to ethical research protocols regarding the research procedure and data management. The present study involved no ethical and safety risks to the respondents and researchers. Confidentiality was observed in handling the data used in the study.

## Results

The respondents revealed that the EdM graduate as research scholar rated as very good and 3 statements stood out in this domain; (1) manifest competence in conceptualizing a research problem that is shaped by theoretical or practical issues in educational leadership and management, (2) demonstrate knowledge and understanding of quantitative and qualitative research methods and designs applicable and appropriate to the conduct of research undertakings in the field of educational leadership and management, and (3) display capability to communicate research findings and their implications to existing theory and practice in educational leadership and management ( $m=3.88$ ,  $SD=0.33$ ). While EdM graduate can design and conduct process-oriented, theory-driven, methodically sound research in educational leadership and management and other related areas got the mean of 3.82; 0.39 as standard deviation.

**Table 1** EdM Graduate as Research Scholar

EdM GRADUATE AS RESEARCH SCHOLAR	Mean	Standard Deviation
Manifest competence in conceptualizing a research problem that is shaped by theoretical or practical issues in educational leadership and management	3.88	0.33
Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of quantitative and qualitative research methods and designs applicable and appropriate to the conduct of research undertakings in the field of educational leadership and management	3.88	0.33
Display ability to design and conduct process-oriented, theory-driven, methodically sound research in educational leadership and management and other related areas	3.82	0.39
Display capability to communicate research findings and their implications to existing theory and practice in educational leadership and management	3.88	0.33

**Table 2** EdM Graduate as Expert Practitioner

EdM GRADUATE AS EXPERT PRACTITIONER	Mean	Standard Deviation
Display mastery of the essential and emerging concepts, theories, models, frameworks, and principles in educational leadership and management	3.76	0.44
Manifest ability to express scholarly views and opinions on various issues and problems in educational leadership and management	3.94	0.24
Exhibit a conceptually and theoretically based approaches in teaching educational leadership and management	3.94	0.24
Manifest expertise in the utilization and integration of communication and information technology in the design and delivery of instruction, assessment, or research in educational leadership and management	3.94	0.24
Design and implement evidence-based approach and strategies in addressing issues and problems in educational leadership and management	3.65	0.34
Display commitment to and advocacy for social transformation in the school, community and even to national level	3.82	0.39

The results presented that EdM graduates as expert practitioners were marked as very good by the respondents. Out of all given statements, three stood out which pegged at 3.94; 0.24 as standard deviation; (1) EdM graduate has the ability to express scholarly views and opinions on various issues and problems in educational leadership and management, (2) they can exhibit a conceptually and theoretically based approaches in teaching educational leadership and management, and (3) show the expertise in the utilization and integration of communication and information technology in the design and delivery of instruction, assessment, or research in educational leadership and management.

The lowest among the statements was the design and implement evidence-based approaches and strategies in addressing issues and problems in educational leadership and management of EdM graduates which nailed at 3.65; 0.34.

**Table 3** EdM Graduate as Education Leader

EdM GRADUATE AS RESEARCH SCHOLAR	Mean	Standard Deviation
Display competence in applying theories and principles of effective leadership and management in leading and managing school organizations and education-related programs and systems	3.76	0.44
Lead in the development of educational programs, practices, and policies in educational leadership and management	3.94	0.24
Exhibit commitment to and advocacy for transformational leadership	3.82	0.39

For the domain EdM graduates as education leaders, the respondents rated as very good in all statements. It revealed that they lead in the development of education programs, practices, and policies in educational leadership and management which has a mean of 3.94; 0.24 as standard deviation. EdM graduates also exhibit a commitment to and advocacy for transformational leadership which nailed at 3.82; 0.39. Meanwhile, the lowest rate with the mean of 3.76 and the standard deviation 0.44 among the statements was EdM graduates display competence in applying theories and principles of effective leadership and management in leading and managing school organizations and education-related programs and systems.

## Discussions

### Research Scholar

Responding to the goals of the graduate school, the EdM graduates are researchers who are able to foster rigorous inquiry about educational theories and practices as bases for generating knowledge and sound policies, and improving professional practice. Moreover, they are able to demonstrate ability to design and conduct scientific research, studies and investigations that contribute to the advancement of knowledge of theory and practice in educational leadership and management. It could be noted that most benchmark statements in this domain have been rated to be “very good” which could be attributed to the efforts of the college in strengthening the research culture in the program as most courses lead to student outputs on research proposals, publishable journal articles, and other research-related tasks. The coursework is also a period for the students to prepare for their M.A. thesis or Ph.D. dissertation. With it, research becomes a part of the endeavor, making each student truly acquainted and competent in this area.

Scutt (2004) attested that management educators and researchers increasingly find themselves managing or at the very least leading others through complete

learning programs that require new and rigorously proven methods and procedures. The respondents believe that education management graduates strengthen their capabilities and expertise in writing research both quantitative and qualitative research in their institutions. In addition, education leaders as researchers were enclosed as a challenge and a commitment (Schoorman, 2014). They also re-conceptualize all the existing theories based on everyday actions and observations as they practice all theories and principles learned in their discipline.

### Expert Practitioners

It is important that graduate students will be able to apply whatever they have learned in their workplace particularly after they have graduated. The EdM graduates are able to perform well in their respective schools which can be attributed to the program of the graduate school. As expert practitioners, they are able to generate knowledge and products with strong theoretical and practical implications in policy and practice in the field of education sciences and related disciplines.

Jenkins (2009) asserts that the educational manager places instructional excellence at the top of the school's priority list and works to make it a reality. This showed that the respondents give weight on the abilities of the EdM graduates in expressing their thoughts and perspectives in different problems that the institutions encountered based on various approaches. With this, they seek the success of the institution, as an education leader, it is necessary to have a broad vision in reaching goals, maintain the culture on progression and analyze the issues for the achievements of their goals and objectives. EdM graduates also entail both leaders and followers developing a shared purpose and collaborating to effect change for social transformation. As most students are education leaders in their own contexts, their graduate program experience becomes a melting pot of theory-practice intersection. The EdM program has been an opportunity to uncover practices through theories, making them competent and prepared to perform not just as school heads, but as expert practitioners in the field. This becomes the rationale for the high rating in this domain.

As expert practitioners, education leaders plan to deal with the framework of the school routine, which is defined by rules developed by the school management sectors (Rosa et al., 2021). EdM graduates make critical action in their workplace as they use the concepts,

theories, and principles they learned in their graduate studies. Meanwhile, the respondents give few attention on the evidence-based approach and strategies in talking about the problems.

### Education Leader

Graduate students are expected to become leaders in their respective fields most especially after they have earned their graduate degrees. The respondents believed that the EdM graduates are able to demonstrate the skills of an educational leader who is strongly grounded in theory and evidence-based practice in one's area of discipline. They are able to show commitment, competence and leadership in carrying out their duties and responsibilities as educators.

They also agreed that EdM graduates are transformational leaders who are a catalyst of change. They are eager to uplift and inspire others in the institutions. They empowered their colleagues by sharing their thoughts and opinions that will help their institution. This highlights the critical role played by education leaders in school performance and provides useful insight into how they may truly make a difference. The high rating could be attributed to the kind of training students receive during their coursework and research endeavor. Each class highlights how leadership and management principles and theories could be used to strengthen educational leadership in schools. Education leader covers all activities aimed at achieving the organization's goals, such as developing a vision and objectives for the organization, attempting to unite the organization's members around this vision, managing or maintaining existing organizational arrangements to achieve these goals, and initiating changes to achieve these goals (Piot & Kelchtermans, 2014).

Education leaders were found to have a substantial influence on school development orientation, which is comparable to the concept of a learning organization (Bruggencate et al., 2012). Respondents also perceived that EdM graduates lead in making and innovating policies and innovations in their respective institutions. They organize various programs that will enhance the different skills of everyone in the organization.

Feedback of employer or immediate heads serves as a vital mechanism in advancing employee and organizational development. It serves as an opportunity for individuals involved to reflect on employee performance by highlighting expected roles vis-à-vis



accomplishments and future directions. For education institutions, feedback of employers or immediate heads on the performance of their graduates serves as an avenue to strengthen stakeholder partnership and check-and-balance techniques. The results of the feedback bring crucial inputs to curriculum, training, pedagogy, and overall aspects of the academic program.

As an academic field of study, educational management puts a premium on school operations which may also include other education organizations. It captures the processes and functions of planning, leading, organizing, and controlling various programs in the school context with the end goal of realizing the objectives of the organization. Strengthening educational management programs could be realized by looking at home graduates have performed in their various fields, using the lens of expected outcomes: education leader, expert practitioner, research scholar. The present study is an attempt to affirm the role of stakeholders in shaping the graduate curriculum and related practices.

The findings of the study strengthen the attributes of the graduates as education leaders. Based on the employer and immediate head feedback, graduates have possessed the capacity to provide directions of the institution, lead projects, and committees, and provide accountability by demonstrating ethical, transformative, and equitable leadership. As research scholars, graduates have exhibited promising feedback, especially in an era when research is given emphasis towards informed decision-making and evidence-based practices. MA and PhD graduates are equipped with the necessary skills needed to conceptualize, plan, and conduct academic inquiries anchored on practices and institutional agendas. With this, graduates of the program can be considered as agents who could strengthen and cultivate the culture of research in their own institutions. M.A. and Ph.D. graduates are practitioners who can link theory into practice and actualize philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of the educational management program by highlighting intercultural competency, ethical leadership, and sensitivity and respect to various beliefs and ways of life. As a responsive expert practitioner, the M.A. and Ph.D. graduates navigate the realm of educational management with the primary consideration that practice is rooted in carefully analyzed theories based on contexts and drivers.

Future studies may compare and analyze the feedback of employers and immediate heads of M.A. and

Ph.D. graduates to specifically capture how each academic level addresses the demands of work. Also, seeking feedback through the lens of professional functions (instruction, research, administration, and others) could be a meaningful inquiry. Research in the same context which utilizes qualitative methodology is also encouraged. In terms of the academic program, it is suggested that the EdM coursework strengthen the research culture through constant mentoring on research processes and theory-oriented proposals related to EdM. Experts in the area of education research could provide seminars and workshops outside class hours to complement what has been learned in the course. Also, individuals currently serving as education leaders in various contexts could also be tapped as partners in establishing evidence-based mechanisms to address concerns regarding leadership and management. While EdM students will have their own niche when it comes to approaches and strategies, it would be helpful to provide them with various contexts and concerns. Lastly, transformative leadership should be at the core of every endeavor in the EdM program. This way, the preparation towards becoming transformative leaders of the Philippine education sector is engraved on the smallest desire to serve the school, the community, and the country.

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