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Pathways to a Successful Career: Unveiling the Post-Graduate Journey – A Tracer Study

Imelda G. Parcasio 1✉; Benguet State University, Philippines.

Russell B. Dolendo 2; Benguet State University, Philippines.

Brenda A. Langaoen 3; Benguet State University, Philippines.

Percyveranda A. Lubrica 4;

Abstract: This Tracer Study looked into the contributions of the Program Doctor of Philosophy major in Educational Management to the employment status, professional growth, contribution of curricular activities to its graduates as well as the benefits they received from finishing the program. Recommendations for the improvement of the offerings were also sought. The descriptive survey was utilized to gather data from the respondents (n=66). Triangulation was used to validate the data. Results show that a high percentage of the respondents are employed in the government, with permanent status and got promoted after finishing the degree. The greatest contributions of the degrees to the professional competencies of the respondents include: the performance of independent work, critical thinking and intellectual and moral discourses; and evaluation of services and programs offered to clients. The curricular activities namely: research-based activities, core course offerings and major field offerings were the greatest contributors to the professional growth of the graduates. The benefits that the respondents enjoy are job promotions and salary increase, prestige and awards. The recommendations for the improvement of program are: more partnerships and strengthened community extension activities, improved admission policies, curricular and additional PhD Program offerings, strengthening of research and publication endeavors.

Keywords: Educational Management, Employment, Professional Growth, Curricular Activities

✉ i.parcasio@bsu.edu.ph

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INTRODUCTION

The graduate programs offered in the College of Teacher Education of Benguet State University aim to provide quality education that emphasizes the development of relevant pedagogical and technical knowledge, skills, competencies, and values for good citizenship; and to produce competent and highly qualified teachers (BSU Graduate School Goal).

Quality education is characterized by relevant and responsive curricula. To be such, periodic review and upgrading of content, delivery and facilities are necessary to ensure that the goals of the program are met. Conducting a tracer study is necessary in generating pertinent data to inform the college of the status of the attainment of its goals. Subscribing to the same idea at a much earlier time are Gines (2014) and Millington (2001) who supported the use of tracer study as source of quantitative structural data on employment and career, the character of work and related competencies, and information on the professional orientation, and experiences of their graduates for the general purpose of developing or enhancing curriculum and other emerging reforms.

Specifically, the result becomes a benchmark of the curriculum committee for curricular review which will result in the enhancement of the program. It will serve as a guide for faculty members in the revision of content and teaching methodologies; in conjunction to this, plans for professional development activities may also be crafted to further upskill the faculty members. The study also becomes one of the bases of the graduate school and the college in upgrading their facilities and equipment. It would also become an instrument for the alumni office to be provided with a data on the employability of BSU graduates that would help them to plan for future alumni projects and activities. Once published, it would add to the reading resources of graduate school

students for self- reflection as they seek to increase their leverage in their profession. It may be considered as additional resource for other programs seeking to conduct their own tracer studies. Along with the other tracer studies of the other colleges, this current tracer study would eventually contribute to the strengthening of the graduate programs of the university in its pursuit for world-class education. The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) might also use the results in its continuing endeavor to provide relevant graduate programs in the region and beyond and in crafting excellent professional development opportunities particularly for educators, librarians, and guidance counselors.

General Objective: Generally, the study was designed to seek answer to the contribution of the program, Doctor of Philosophy major in Educational Management to the employment status, professional growth, and competencies of the respondents. The benefits gained as well as the recommendations to improve the curricular programs were also sought.

Specific Problems:

- 1.What is the profile of the respondents along:
 - a. employment status while studying at BSU – Graduate School.
 - b. type of organization/agency where they are employed in; and
 - c. job status after enrolling at BSU – Graduate School?
- 2.What is the contribution of the program finished to the professional competencies of the respondents?
- 3.What is the contribution of the curricular activities to the professional growth of the respondents?
- 4.What are the benefits that the respondents received after graduating from their GS degree program?
- 5.What are the recommendations that the respondents can suggest for the betterment of the CTE GS Program?

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Pursuing graduate studies has become a trend in the millennium for all those whose careers required a baccalaureate degree. Before, it was simply an option but with the increasing demand for upgrading one's knowledge and skills, taking graduate studies has become a necessity. From various literature, three major reasons propel individuals to take graduate studies namely: for better employment, for professional development and for personal enhancement.

Better employment refers to promotion to a higher position, better income, and benefits. It may also bring opportunities such as being invited as resource person in seminars or trainings wherein honoraria and other perks are given. Research suggests that the successful pursuit of a graduate degree is correlated with increased lifetime earnings and an increased quality of life (Baum, Ma, & Payea, 2010). To other students, they would like to finish their graduate studies because the nature of their chosen profession, teaching, requires a graduate degree while others are looking forward to changing their profession or they would like to have a better position for better opportunities.

Ashelfelter and Rouse (1998) argue that education enables the development of skills that increase individual productivity. With this, productivity, is reflected on one's salary or income. Thus, it is seen here that education is a determining factor in the perception of getting a much better higher wage gains.

Graduate students can be employed in either private or public institution. Employment status is the legal status where one is classified as someone in employment as either an employee or working on their own account as self-employed. In practice, most classifications of employment status in official statistics expand this simple two-fold distinction into a fuller typology which identifies large employers, small employers, the self-

employed without any employees, unpaid family workers contributing labour to a family farm or business, partners in a legally defined partnership, apprentices, and supervisors, as well as ordinary employees (Encyclopedia.com, 2020). The private sector is run by individuals and companies for profit and is not state controlled and operated by the government. (Investopedia.com, 2019).

Alongside the goal for better employment is the pursuit for professional development. Many students seek to grow more in their profession-be it as educators, librarians, or guidance counselors. Graduate education also provides the opportunity for innovation and the discovery of knowledge. Some studies claim that many graduate students work side-by-side with faculty members in the pursuit of knowledge while pursuing their degrees and then carry this work forward both inside and outside the halls of academia (Kallio, 1995; Millett, 2003; Wendler et al., 2010).

The need for further learning is also backed by the study of Baruch and Peiperl (2000) who evaluated a group of MBA graduates working in four companies in the UK, comparing them with their colleagues in the same hierarchical position who did not have an MBA. To establish the said comparative study, the authors used a scale composed of 18 skills and abilities. The results show that those who finished an MBA performed better in all the competencies assessed by the study. With this, earning an MBA guarantees students in gaining an advantage as compared to their peers, at least in the area of self-assessment.

A similar methodology was used by Sulaiman and Mohezar (2008) who used a scale composed of 15 skills and abilities, as well as evaluating aspects related to satisfaction with the program, such as curriculum, teachers, infrastructure, program coordination, support services, selection processes and career-oriented services. On skills,

graduates evaluated their proficiency before and after the course, and in all, the mean scores after the course were higher than those identified before the course. The survey, that was conducted in Malaysia, showed that people who finished MBA and obtained at least over five years of professional experience are promoted faster in their ranks. The same study revealed that among the main motivations for undertaking an MBA are career advancement, job or career change and becoming an entrepreneur.

Some students pursue graduate studies primarily for personal reasons. A graduate studies handbook (Boland, ed., 2012) mentioned that many professionals pursue graduate studies for the love of learning and discovery. Some also mentioned cultural motivation and family traditions having unquestionably positive influence on the decision to enter graduate studies.

Studies about the feedback from graduates of post-baccalaureate studies show how important it is in the enhancement of the curriculum. A survey on students' perceptions provides information on strategic resources that can assist in the continuous improvement of graduate programs. Several decisions on curriculum structure, program content, the role of the faculty, teaching methodologies, support services for students and management information to support institutional planning and resource allocation can be made based on findings of tracer studies (Donald and Denison, 1996). Thus, the issue of competencies reveal the way the curriculum itself is designed and organized, having a direct impact on students' learning. International cooperation agencies, such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), contributed greatly to this change in educational guidance. According to Rychen and Salganik (2005), the OECD Definition and Selection of Competencies Project has collaborated with a wide range of institutions, researchers and

experts in identifying a set of key competencies, which should contribute to valuable results for society and individuals; help individuals meet important demands in a wide range of contexts; and be important not only for work but also for all individuals.

In the study of Decheng Zhao Xiaorong and Ma Shanbin Qiao (2017), the rapid expansion of graduate education in China, aroused great concern from the administrators and researchers. Many higher education institutions have developed their graduate curriculum evaluation system based on educational policy, job analysis or discussions of school administrators. To date, very few systemic studies in this field have been done in China, and little is known about students' view on the evaluation system. In this study, 30 second-year graduate students from a comprehensive university were selected to participate in a semi-structured interview. The result revealed that graduate students attached more importance to the following 5 aspects: 1) The curriculum objectives should be employment-oriented and in line with students' need of future employment and long-term development; 2) The curriculum content should be up to date and its breadth and depth of coverage are appropriate; 3) The instructor's teaching approaches should be flexible and varied, emphasizing student participation and teacher-student interaction; 4) The learning evaluation should be conducted fairly and reasonably in various ways; 5) The curriculum should be able to effectively promote students' mastery of knowledge and capacities. This study revealed the evidence for rethinking and improving graduate curriculum evaluation system.

Professional and practice-based learning is a process, a procedure, which manifests itself in many varied forms. It is different by personal characteristics of the learners, levels of their professions, fields of practice, intentionality of their learning, and formalization of the

learning activities. Perceptions of competence have shown this diverse practice in many ways. The question posted here is whether conceptions of professional competence have helped the practice of professional and practice-based learning. Although various attempts to implement competence-based professional learning programmes were heavily criticized, later developments in competence theory and research gave new insights which pointed the integrative meaning of competence within professional practice. It aided in mapping professional fields from a domain-specific as well as a generic behavioural perspective.

The growth of the competencies demanded by the labor market leads to the adaptation of educational institutions to the notion of competency. Thus, institutions have planned their educational courses and programs with the objective of developing in their graduates the key competencies they will need in the world of labor, as well as for life in society (Paixão & de Souza, 2018). However, it is important to consolidate perceptions of what the real effectiveness of these institutions is when providing the conditions for competency development. A way to achieve this consolidation would be through the evaluation of graduates' perception (Donald and Denison, 1996) on their participation in a specific educational program and the subsequent impact of that on their personal life through career development and income.

Competency development has been discussed under various approaches in literature. In this sense, during the past decade, an approach has emerged, which seeks to determine the role of educational institutions, with emphasis on *stricto sensu* graduate programs, regarding the development of competencies by graduates (Paixão & de Souza, 2018). Competency development can be developed in a particular academic endeavor which entails the expanding and honing skills and

expertise To measure the impact of the programs they offer, educational institutions have given increased importance to mechanisms that allow capturing students' perceptions regarding the learning process (Baartman and Ruijs, 2011; Bleiklie *et al.*, 2017). Students' perception is related to metacognition, in which students, through a realistic perception of their own strengths and weaknesses, should direct their learning process (Baartman and Ruijs, 2011). From the development of these general competencies, the individual would be able to perform activities not only in one or multiple professional contexts but also for life in society. Thus, it is guaranteed to the individual value in the labor market and social value (Paixão & de Souza, 2018).

However, there is a criticism regarding the focus of the competency-based education system. The main existing criticism concerns the gap between the knowledge that is offered by the programs and the actual needs of the market (Mihail and Kloutsiniotis, 2014). Thus, there is a gap between the practice of work and what is taught in educational institutions, which needs to be narrowed down (Paixão & de Souza, 2018). Cornuel (2005)

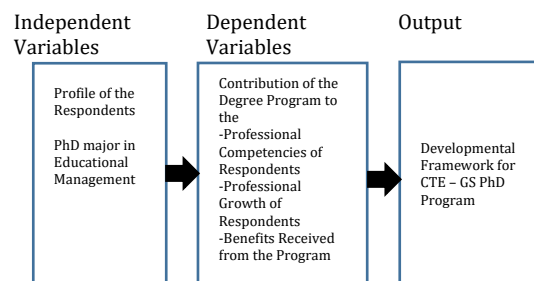


Figure 1. Paradigm of the Study

The interrelationship of variables used in the study are shown in Figure 1. The independent variables include the profile of respondents and CTE graduate school program offering specifically PhD in Educational Management. The dependent variables are the assessed contribution of the degree program to the professional competencies and

professional growth of the respondents. It is assumed that after finishing the graduate school degree program, graduates are more enhanced in their professional competencies and in their professional growth. Also, as a result of their exposures in the various curricular activities, there are expected benefits that the graduates receive after graduating the program. Based on the findings and recommendations from this study, a Developmental Framework to CTE graduate school degree programs is formulated.

METHODS

Research Design

This study used the descriptive survey covering the employment information of the BSU GS PhD graduates, employer’s details, assessed contribution of the GS Degree to their professional competencies, assessed contribution of their GS Degree to their professional growth as well as the benefits that they received after graduating from the degree and their recommendations to enhance the programs.

Respondents and Sampling Plan

Respondents of this study included the graduates of the Doctor of Philosophy major in in Educational Management. Respondents were delimited to the alumni of the College who graduated from 2006 to 2019. A random sample for the batches of the CTE Graduate School Curricular programs for 2006-2019 were considered with a total of 66 respondents (51.95 %).

Instruments and Data Gathering Procedure

This research used the tracer study questionnaire as the main data gathering tool. It included two parts: Part 1 – on Biographical Data covering a) personal data, b) educational background, c) employment information. Part II - is on Retrospective Evaluation of the Program covering the a. assessed contribution of the GS program to professional

competencies, b. assessed contribution of the GS Degree program to the Professional growth of the respondents, c. benefits received after graduation and recommendations suggested for the betterment of the GS program. Various modes to gather data were also used including email, messenger, direct contact and google forms. The researchers initially set up a directory of the graduates covered by this study. It took some time before the respondents have been tracked and were further instructed to accomplish either the hard copy or the web-based questionnaire.

Data Analysis

This study primarily employed frequency counts, percentage, mean and ranking. Interpretation of means was based on the following scale:

SCALE	EXTENT OF CONTRIBUTION
3.50-4.00	Very High Contribution
2.50-3.49	High Contribution
1.50-2.49	Moderate Contribution
1.00-1.49	Low Contribution

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Profile of the Respondents

Employment Status

As gleaned from Table 1, 62 or 93.93% of the PhD graduates are with permanent status before enrolling in the program. Most of them are connected with the government and that status allowed them to pursue higher studies either as venue for promotion or for salary increase. The data shows a quite obvious result of the said enrolment – promotion! Many or 92.42% were given the chance to get promoted to a better job level. A higher pay is always a motivation. Not to discount a certain percentage (7.57%) indicating that their enrolment did not affect their employment status, promotion wise possibly because there are no available positions or because they are already administrators. Their enrolment indicates that they want to improve in their functions and may be for some

other personal reasons. Leonard et al. (2005) explained that many enroll in the degree for professional development or as it was a requirement in their job. Further, the same source mentioned that a quarter of their research respondents mentioned a concern with aspects of personal development. According to the Director for Graduate Studies of the School of Statistics, advancement is one of the main reasons that motivate students to pursue their master’s degree (Almeda, 2014). Graduate programs have the benefit of not only launching the start of career, but has also the benefit of working on a valuable program that is tailored by the companies. Some graduate positions that are offered provide opportunities that may not always be found in jobs that are open to any applicant. These opportunities may include the benefits of extensive induction and training, formal mentoring, career development planning, additional training (Tarin, 2016).

TABLE 1. Employment Status of Respondents

Program	Permanent	Contractual
PhD	62	4

Type of agency

Sixty two—or 93.03% of the PhD graduates traced are permanently connected in different institutions or organizations both in the department of education and in universities and colleges. Many are educational practitioners. Results can be attributed to the fact that many of them, especially those who are working as heads or supervisors, are hoping to enter, or more often had moved into a higher post. Leonard et.al (2005) stated that a higher degree is required for credibility and to provide basis for becoming “research active”, which somehow is a must for educators. Teachers and teacher educators (BERA, 2014) may be equipped to conduct their own research, individually and collectively, to investigate the impact of particular

interventions or to explore the positive and negative effects of educational practice. Common to the respondents are working in the public sector. Either, they are connected with a state university or in the department of education. It can be inferred that although there is a big difference in the numbers when compared to the type of organization they are working with, it can still be said that that the graduates are heterogeneous in terms of the said category. The curriculum the program is generic and is aligned with the minimum requirement and need for the competencies of an educational manager. It can also be concluded that as members of the public sector, finishing the degree was a part of the requirement, especially on recruitment and qualification. Recruitment policy with respect to the selection and appointment of teachers shall be clearly defined by the Department of Education (Section 3. REPUBLIC ACT No. 4670, 1966).

TABLE 2. Type of Agency

Program	Private	Public
PhD	9	57

Job status after finishing the program

The PhD data shows a quite obvious result of the said enrolment, - promotion! Many (92.42 %) were given the chance to get promoted to a better job level. A higher pay is always a motivation. Not to discount a certain percentage (7.57 %) indicating that their enrolment did not affect their employment status, promotion-wise possibly because there are no available positions or because they are already administrators. Their enrolment

TABLE 3. Job Status of Respondents After Finishing the Program

Program	Promoted	Remained
PhD	61	5

indicates that they want to improve in their functions and maybe for some other personal reasons. Leonard, Becker and Coate (2005) explained that many enroll in the degree for professional

development or as it was a requirement in their job. Further, the same source mentioned that a quarter of their research respondents mentioned a concern with aspects of personal development. According to the Director for Graduate Studies of the school of Statistics advancement is one of the main reasons that motivate students to pursue their master’s degree (Almeda, 2014).

Contribution of the Program to the Professional Competencies of the Respondents

Table 4 shows the contribution of the GS degree to the professional competencies of the respondents in performance of independent work, management and leadership, critical thinking and academic and ethical discourses, policy making, organization

TABLE 4. Contribution of the PhD Program to the Professional Competencies of Graduates

Contribution	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalency
1. Application of scientific approach in identifying issues and solving problems regarding social, economic, political, educational, environmental, and technical concerns.	3.63	VHC
2. Performance of independent work, critical thinking, and intellectual and moral discourses	3.72	VHC
3. Demonstration of leadership in my field of specialization	3.54	VHC
4. Integration and application of knowledge learned along:		
a. Formulation of policies and strategies in the work setting	3.63	VHC
b. Management of an organization or in the work setting	3.62	VHC
c. Evaluation of services and programs offered to clients	3.72	VHC

management and evaluation of services among others.

At a glance, the Doctor of Philosophy major in Educational Management are assessed by the surveyed graduates to have high contribution to their professional competencies as indicated in the overall mean.

Results show that the Doctor of Philosophy major in Educational Management program greatly contributed to the professional competencies of the surveyed graduates in all the identified indicators with mean values that fall within the range of 3.51 to 4.00. It can be noted from the results that with the academic exposure of students in all their courses had developed them to become proficient in performing independent work, critical thinking, and intellectual and moral discourses (3.72); Evaluating the services and programs offered to clients (3.72); Applying the scientific approach in identifying issues and solving problems regarding social, economic, political, educational, environmental and technical concerns (3.63); Formulating policies and strategies in the work setting (3.63); Managing an organization or in the work setting (3.62); and Demonstrating leadership in their respective field of specialization (3.54). Such results imply that the graduates are professionally competent along their field of work as demonstrated by their proficiency in viewing holistically the situation in their work and can perceive from normal pattern in their work. With this, it can be inferred that the program objective of equipping the graduates with personal and professional competence and skills to become managers and supervisors and preparing them to work under conditions of continuing societal change and global competitiveness is realized.

Contribution of the PhD Program to the Professional Growth of the Respondents

The PhD graduates say that the research-based activities that form part of their course requirements contributed as the highest in their professional growth, with a mean of 3.75, described as highly contributed. Education in the 21st century emphasizes “data, information and are evidence-based decision-making” (Llagas, 2016). The respondents believe that decisions and actions

performed in teaching needs to be problem-based or even project-based. The training in doing research helped them to be contented with hard data as compared to soft data.

The second greatest contributor to their professional growth included the core course offerings with a mean of 3.69, described as highly contributed. The core courses composed of: Advance Philosophy of Education, Qualitative and Quantitative Methods of Research, Advance Sociology and Development and a one unit Graduate Seminar. The respondents explained that they value the discussion of philosophies in education because it helped them to strengthen their educational philosophies; the qualitative and quantitative methods guided them in their researches most especially in the crafting of their dissertation; the concepts and theories presented in sociology makes them appreciate the challenges of teaching and the crucial role of education in molding the learners and lastly, the Graduate Seminar served as a review and application of the technical aspect of dissertation writing. The third with greatest contribution to the respondents are the major subjects offered. With the ten courses to finish under the major field of specialization, respondents agreed that all courses were very comprehensive and helpful in their understanding and application of the theories and concepts learned from the discussions. During Comprehensive Examinations, the candidates always say, "all of the courses taught to us made us achieve full understanding of the educational system and how one (Head/Principal) would become successful in leading a school. This validates the overall objectives of BSU CTE Graduate Program which are: to promote the scientific approach in identifying issues on solving problems regarding social, economic, political, educational, environmental and technical areas; to instill in the graduate student the ability to do independent

work, critical thinking, intellectual and moral discourses; to hone professional leadership in the various fields of specialization and to enhance the ability to integrate and apply knowledge learned. Relatedly, access to adequate funding has been shown to impact program completion and students' ability to engage in important academic tasks, such as publishing ([Larivière, 2013](#)).

Table 5. Contribution of the Curricular Activities to the Professional Growth of the Respondents

Contribution	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
Major field of specialization	3.65	VHC
Core course offerings	3.69	VHC
Cognates/electives	3.49	VHC
Number of required units	3.51	HC
Defenses (proposal & final draft)	3.63	HC
Academic advising	3.55	VHC
Comprehensive Examination	3.46	HC
Research - based activities	3.75	VHC
Extension activities	3.29	HC
Teaching - learning methodologies	3.49	HC
Instructional resources (ICT, Books, Manuals, etc.)	3.18	HC

Benefits that the Respondents Received after Graduating from their GS Degree Program.

Completing a doctorate degree can offer a range of personal, academic, and professional benefits. There were three identified benefits that the respondents received after finishing their doctorate degree from the college.

Job Promotion and Salary Increase

It could be gleaned from Table 6

Table 6. Benefits that the Respondents Received after Graduating from their GS Degree program.

Benefits	Rank
Job Promotion & Salary Increase	1
Prestige/Greater respect from colleagues	2
Got an award	3

that job promotion and salary increase ranked first among the benefits of the graduate programs to the respondents.

Second was gaining prestige and greater respect from colleagues or subordinates. Third was getting an award and self-fulfillment. The respondents from State Universities and Colleges (SUCS) explained that finishing one's MA and PhD lead to promotion to a higher rank in their NBC 461, their system of promotion depending on their earned scores. Once they finish their doctorate degree, they get 85 points under educational qualification which allows them to get promoted and to enjoy salary increase.

Meanwhile, the respondents who are DepEd teachers cited that after finishing their graduate studies, they also got promoted in their job, which made them receive an increase in their salary. They had an edge in the ranking over other teacher applicants for a higher position because of their educational qualification. Cruz & Ramirez (2016) affirm that the benefits of a graduate school education are not limited to personal growth. They enumerate some of the more tangible benefits which include: a raise in salary; a promotion; an entry into a new field that requires an advanced degree (e.g. college professor); and more openings in the job market. They claimed that obtaining masters and/or doctorate degrees guarantee promotion. They further recommend that NBC #461 final print out in the case of SUCs should be published or be known to all concerned in the shortest possible time so that position reclassification or promotion will be provided accordingly. Similarly, Mertens & Röbbken (2013) found that a doctoral degree has a positive effect on the income-situation in nearly all tested fields of study. Graduates from the field of Economics and Law in particular earn comparatively high incomes.

Shepherd and Nelson (2012) cite that it is widely known and accepted that higher levels of educational attainment have a positive effect on individuals, society and higher education (Bowen, Chingos, & McPherson, 2009; Nevill & Chen, 2007; with educational levels;

higher educational levels increase contributions to and participation in society; and participation in higher education benefits academies via increased enrolment rates and completion levels which has a positive effect on funding.

It is also interesting to note in the study of Shepherd and Nelson (2012) that motivations to return to higher education for graduate studies were primarily centered on anticipated financial gain. In a study on factors doctoral candidates attribute to their persistence by Spaulding & Rockinson - Szapkiw (2012), participants cited that monetary incentives and social recognition are generally associated with promotions and new appointments. One participant stated, "it was the only way I was going to get a pay increase." Another participant noted that the raise associated with the degree would allow him to send his children to private school. Similarly, Masters-Education.com (2019) highlights that the most tangible benefit of earning a master's degree is the higher pay and career growth opportunities. On the other hand, Yang & Webber (2015) found that the number of postdoctoral researchers has increased dramatically in the past decade. Because of the limited number of academic staff openings and the general levels of salary, the role and value of the postdoctoral appointment are changing. Using a sample of respondents with continuous data in the 1999 through 2008 *Survey of Doctoral Recipients*, this study examined whether taking a postdoctoral position contributed to one's faculty career and salary 10 years after doctorate completion. Results show that completing a postdoctoral position positively contributed to working in educational institutions and securing a tenure-track appointment. Taking one, but not two or more, postdoctoral positions increased one's written scholarly productivity. However, the postdoctoral experience had no

statistically significant impact on one’s salary a decade after degree completion.

Prestige/Greater Respect from Colleagues and Getting an Award

Earning a doctorate degree is among the highest honors in one’s journey of academic progress. In this tracer study, the participants expressed their delight that when they have finished their graduate studies, they are gaining more respect from their colleagues. They are even called with their title, e.g. Dr., which gives them a sense of satisfaction. The awards received by the teachers include Baguio Exemplary Secondary Teacher, Best Performing Private Secondary School Teacher, and Lingkod Bayan - CSC - CAR Award.

Said respect is attributed to their educational qualification and to their contribution to their respective institutions. This finding corroborates with Mujtaba’s study (n.d.) as he summed up reasons for earning a doctorate degree which include: personal and intellectual development, recognition of contribution, entrance into academia (research, professorship, lecturing), better employment opportunities, and social mobilization or networking with professional colleagues.

In addition, Spaulding & Rockinson - Szapkiw (2012), points out that increased credibility, “the recognition of being a doctor,” and the status associated with the title were significant motivators that drive adults to pursue doctorate studies. Receiving an award is also related to finishing graduate studies. Other institutions recognize their faculty members who finish their graduate studies. Other award-giving bodies also recognize the outstanding performance of individuals which may be related to their degree, research outputs, academic achievement, contribution to the community, etc. In a study on the benefits derived from pursuing graduate studies by Cruz & Ramirez (2016), feeling of

achievement and earned recognition are among the cited benefits.

Recommendations that the Respondents Suggested for the Betterment of PhD Program

Table 7 presents the recommendations of the PhD graduates to improve the offering of the program. The first in rank is Partnerships and Community Extension activities. During discussions in classes, it is emphasized that one of the four-fold function of the University is extension activities. There are some classes who do extension activities as part of the class requirement. The respondents find it useful to do extension activities because according to them, “it is the application of what they learned from the discussions”. This observation is strengthened by what educators believe that theories are built inside the classroom and its application is done in the field. Extension activities are strengthened when partnerships are sealed through a Memorandum of Agreement or Understanding. The respondents see the advantage of an MOU , a legal document describing a bilateral agreement between parties, expressing a convergence of will between parties, indicating an intended common line of action, rather than a legal commitment (University of Alaska Southeast, year). This result implies the need to strengthen the partnerships and linkages of the Graduate School.

Table 7. Recommendations of the Respondents

Recommendation	Rank	Sample Answers
Partnerships & Community Extension Activities	1	-Involve us in extension activities (R50,61),More partnerships (R12,19,21)
Curriculum & Additional PhD Programs	2	-Review the curriculum (R1,25,32), Add other PhD Programs (R 51)
Research & Publication	3	-Make research a requirement in courses (R5,11), Publish our research outputs in a journal (R39)
Admission Policies	4	- Be stricter with admissions. Include teaching experience as a requirement (R30)

The existing MOUs of the College is for the undergraduate programs. The second recommendation is for the college to do curriculum review, or curriculum evaluation to find out whether the curriculum is relevant and responsive to the needs of the society and the learners. It is a scientific and dynamic process of understanding the merit of the curriculum (Pawilen, 2019). Since the PhD Program had its enhancement in 2012, it is timely to enhance the curricular offerings of the program because of overlapping contents. The College revised the PhD Curriculum last December 2020, incorporating the PSGs coming from the Commission on Higher Education (CHED Memo on GS Programs, series of 2017). For the third recommendation, the respondents also would like the college to offer other PhD Programs. This is considered as part of Curriculum Change and Innovation. According to Merriam Webster's Dictionary (1995), innovation is the introduction of "something new" and as "a new idea, method or device". The GS students said, "it would be better if we have more programs to choose from aside from the existing lone program in PhD.

The fourth recommendation is the importance of research as part of the course offerings. They say, "we will be trained more if research will become part of our requirement in class to prepare us in doing our dissertation". In addition, a request for the college to publish these research outputs was added. The graduates see the importance of publication in their promotion later and again, to prepare them for the publication of their books.

The last recommendation is for the college to be stricter with the admission policies by including experience in teaching as part of the requirements. In an interview, a respondent said, "As a PhD student, one should share in discussions to make learning engaging and worth. One will not be able to share

very good insights if he/she has no experience in the field."

CONCLUSION

The Graduates of the Doctor of Philosophy Program were proven to be competent, showing a high percentage of employment after finishing their degrees and they are mostly employed in the government sector. The very comprehensive major courses and its curricular activities alongside the core course offerings of all the GS Degree Programs of the College proved to have greatly contributed to the professional growth of the respondents. The respondents were promoted and had salary increases after finishing their degrees. The recommendations show a need to regularly review and enhance the curriculum to make it more relevant to the needs of the time and inclusion of students to extension activities and strengthening of the GS -CTE partnerships and linkages.

Recommendations:

- Enhancement of course content by integrating the evaluation of services and programs offered to clients in the field, like the learners and other stakeholders, integration of how to's of policy formulation and strategies in the work setting may be considered by the Faculty teaching the programs;
- Guidance in the selection of cognates/electives may be extended by the respective advisers for alignment of knowledge and skills learned from the major field of specialization;
- Hone the skills of the Graduate School students so that their training in the program will lead to excellent performance in the field, contributing much to the performance of their institutions and at the same time, for them to be promoted and recognized;

- Adoption of the Developmental Framework as basis in the planning and enhancement of CTE GS offerings;
- A validation research may be done to look into the employment status of graduates before and after enrolling in the program and the performance of the graduates in their respective work places with their employers as respondents.

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