

Influential Factors of Graduate Students' Academic Performance: Success Factor of the Doctor in Education Management Alumni

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Abstract

The nature of graduate school programs is clearly stipulated under the CHED Memorandum Order # 53 series of 2017, article 1 as the apex of educational system. Hence, this study wanted to identify the influential factors of graduate students' academic performance in thriving for Doctor in Education Management program. Particularly, the study utilized a quantitative-descriptive design aided by a self-reporting questionnaire used as the main source of data gathering from 65% of the total graduates from 2017-2020. Varying influential factors have already been identified to properly address academic success in the graduate school program. and these factors are considered for a graduate student to continuously thrive to become better version of themselves. The implications of this study can be useful in determining the quality of the graduate program, strategies which can be developed to sustain student's expectations, the important role played by the professors, by the institution of learning, and initiatives to halt attrition and sustain graduate student success.

Keywords: Influential Factors, Academic Performance, Success Factor

Introduction

The nature of graduate school programs is clearly stipulated under the CHED Memorandum Order # 53 series of 2017, article 1 at the apex of educational system. It is also added that in the field of education, graduate studies is one of the more effective means of improving the capacities of education professionals who aim to contribute to the continued improvement of teaching and learning in the classrooms, delivery of student services and management of educational programs and one of the effective means of developing capacities related to research that will improve educational theories and practice in the many different aspects of educational process.

As such, the important role of education, in general point of view has always been underscored on the development capacity of producing human resources responsive to the transformative and changing education landscape of the present times. This may lead to the discussion of staying competitive to go along the transformation and that would mean continuous innovation and improvement. Achieving this depends on the training and additional skills learned from institutions of learning to highly define who are you as the member of the workforce.

The Commission in Higher Education (CHED takes the lead in pursuing quality education which is just an imperative goal of everyone as member of the academic workforce. The Republic Act 7722 otherwise known as "The Higher Education Act of 1994" pave the way to the powers and functions of CHED which include among others are as follows: setting standards and monitoring and evaluating programs and institutions of higher learning. Hence, PUP is amongst the State Universities allowed to offer (61) undergraduate and (12) graduate programs in the traditional set-up; considering the former programs' accreditation levels and its graduates' performance in the industry.

The College of Education is one of the premier colleges in the university to offer undergraduate and graduate programs due to the call of vertical articulation. Among the program to be offered under the graduate programs are as follows: Doctor in Educational Management (DEM), Master in Business Education (MBE), Master in Educational Management (MEM), Master in Library and Information Science (MLIS), Master in Physical Education and Sports (MPES), Master of Arts in Education major in Teaching in the Challenged Areas (MAED-TCA), Master of Arts in English Language Teaching (MAELT), Master of Science in Mathematics Education (MSME), Post Baccalaureate Diploma in Alternative Learning System (PBDALS), and Post Baccalaureate in Teacher Education (PBTE). This allows the students of the undergraduate courses to continue further education in the College particularly aligned in their respective programs.

While sustainability has become a buzzword in different forms in education when continuous development, lifelong learning process received much attention considering its importance of raising the bar of teacher education in the Philippines; to become responsive of what is needed in the present times; adaptable to the changes and transformation of education landscape and the advantages, many among teachers have continuously accept the challenges and face the opportunities ahead through enrollment to higher education institutions and gain graduate programs.

The demands for a graduate school degree are increasingly spreading as nature of Philippine education system provides it for working professionals. For a graduate of teacher education program, the graduate program geared towards providing competitive edge and in-depth knowledge of the job. This is to exactly raising the bar of teacher education in the country. As education is characterized by different theorist of all times as a continuous, a never-ending and a lifelong learning process, prompted the researchers of this study.

This research study pays important attention to the growth of teachers in higher education particularly in the Polytechnic University of the Philippines. It is strongly argued that excellence in education is the prime consideration in offering graduate programs in HEIs; responding to the need to adapt and conform to the global and local needs of the workforce and carrying out the idea of lifelong learning process for teachers' competitive edge taking the leap of the next step as part of the career growth of individuals.

PUP College of Education

Considering education as the main enabler for a nation; it is the key to success in the future and to have many opportunities in our life (Al-Shuaibi, 2014). It is always underscored in many of the research articles that a good education has the power to change one's life. Putting premiums to the importance of education, the Philippine government has provided a considerable amount of budget to augment the need of education in the country. For the last 3 years, there are around 568,013,018,000 appropriations in education, 437,369,832,000 in 2019, 98,282,939,000 in 2020 and 32,360,247,000 this year (NEDA, 2021). The Polytechnic University of the Philippines as one of the State Universities and College has reported to have a total budget appropriation of 1,389,236,000 in 2019, P 269,114,000 in 2020 and P 90,416,000 in 2021 in the same NEDA report. The data shown a huge amount of decreased in budget appropriated in education having 2019 as the point of reference.

Putting premiums to education, with the end in mind that graduate education is at the apex of the educational system. College of Education envisions to become the country's center of excellence in teacher education among institutions of higher learning, it is dynamically and conscientiously applying various teaching strategies and techniques to cope with the ever changing demands of the society to maintain its outstanding performance in this academic endeavor. It is a big challenge for the College to accommodate the needs of our country by providing competent graduates

capable of implementing developments into their work places at a privilege unit cost of education, Php400 per unit.

The College of Education, with its capacity to provide quality and relevant higher and advanced education in various fields, offers one doctorate degree program, and 7 master's degree programs, 7 bachelor's degree programs, 1- year post baccalaureate degree program in teacher education, and secondary education for its laboratory high school. Advanced education programs are in the fields of education such as Master in Educational Management, Master in Business Education, Master of Arts in English Language Teaching, Master in Mathematics Education, Master in Physical Education and Sports, Master in Library and Information Science. On the other hand, undergraduate courses include Bachelor in Business Teacher Education, Bachelor in Secondary Education majors in English, Mathematics, Filipino, Social Studies, Bachelor in Elementary Education, and Bachelor in Library and Information Science.

As one of the top colleges in the University and identified as the Second Top Performing College in the 2014 Licensure Examination for Elementary Education, 2nd Place on the Licensure Examination for Teachers (Elementary) in 2015, top in the student evaluation of faculty members among the colleges in the University and the 2014 Champion in the academic contest, the College is challenged to maintain and embark quality, responsive and relevant education to its clientele.

The current study investigated, therefore, at specific personal and professional influential factors that might contribute to persist students to doctor in education management level at the Polytechnic University of the Philippines-College of Education.

Methodology

The present study was conducted to determine the influential factors beneficial to pursue graduate school program of the Doctor in Education Management graduates which may consequently assist in the improvement graduate school program offering. This study may benefit the current students enrolled in the program through the participation of DEM alumni by identification of the factors to continue thriving for their academic performance. The findings may be able to improve students' enrollment in PUP COED GS as provided in the study. The researchers utilized a quantitative-descriptive design aided by a self-reporting questionnaire used as the main source of data gathering. Average weighted mean was used to determine the level of importance to the different factors identified which later been strengthened at the third part of the questionnaire with the used of an open-ended question.

The questionnaire was posted via online platforms maximizing google form. An email with the link to the questionnaire was sent to 81 students graduates using google form as platform and getting the students' phone numbers from the COED GS Registrar's Office as permitted by the Dean of the Graduate School program. Forty-six or 65% responses rate were gathered from the total enrolled 81 graduates from DEM program starting from 2017 to 2020.

The questionnaire was used to specifically describe the profile of the respondents as to age, sex, and marital status, employer, work stations, position held, length of service, nature of employment, and monthly salary characterizing the respondents in this study. While, the second part of the questionnaire tackled on the influential factors attributed for their academic performance considering both institutional and relatively personal in nature; and the level of importance the respondents rated the different indicators in the implementation of DEM program. The third part of the questionnaire, consist of the open-ended questions which was thematically arranged as influential factors of the respondents' academic performance in Graduate School program.

Results and Discussion

As the present study warranted that influential factors to graduate students' academic performance are both institutional and relatively personal in nature.

Part I. Personal Information of the DEM Student-Respondents

Table 1. Age of Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
23-32	3	6.53%
33-42	14	30.43%
43-52	20	43.48%
53-62	8	17.39%
63 and above	1	2.17%
Total	46	100%

It could be gleaned from the table that the age of the respondents is ranging from 43-52 years old. The age is considerable factor to enter a graduate school program. The high attrition rate from graduate education at a traditional (younger) age is more likely to attend and complete graduate education, regardless of academic major (Xu, 2014). Meanwhile, the notion of age factor can also be an indication of success in the graduate school program as Lei and Chuang (2010) identified that selection factors in the graduate school programs vary according to certain demographic variables including age, gender, ethnicity, citizenship, socioeconomic status, marital status, and enrollment status. Looking at the educational attainment levels of the adult population sheds additional light on the relatively high graduate school enrollment rate.

Table 2. Sex of the Respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	14	30.43%
Female	31	67.39%
Prefer not to say	1	2.18%
Total	46	100%

Considering sex as factor for enrolment in graduate school program, 67% female respondents are more likely to enroll than the others. With only around 14 or 30% comprising the total number of respondents. Majority of the literature review pointed out on lower rates of attrition with male students (Marcus, 2017) at whatever age.

Table 3. Marital Status of the Respondents

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	13	28.26%
Married	30	65.22%
Widowed	1	2.17%
Divorced	2	4.35%
Total	46	100%

Majority of the respondents 65% or 30 were already married. Married individuals are among the most persistent in the attending graduate school program considering the factors of professional and personal well-being. In other words, this constitutes of individuals who make lifelong learning a part of their life benefit in both their personal lives and in their places of work (Arbetter, 2008).

Table 4. Employer of the Respondents

Employer	Frequency	Percentage
Higher Education Institutions	13	54.17%
Department of Education	7	29.17%
Private Institution of Learnings	2	8.33%
Others	2	8.33%
Total	24	100%

The employer of the respondents of this study is mostly coming from the Higher Education Institutions 13 or around 54% of the total responses gathered. It can be recalled that among the criteria promulgated in the National Budget Circular 461 under Common Criteria Evaluation that educational qualification has 85 points assigned for a graduate of doctorate degree; good for an Instructor 3 position. Putting much premium to education is one of the goals of CHED for faculty to achieve and to get a satisfying result through promotions afterwards. This can also be concluded that respondents of the study were mostly assigned in school and teaching in the tertiary level.

Table 5. Position Held of the Respondents

Position Held	Frequency	Percentage
Managerial/Supervisory	7	35.00%
Instruction	12	60.00%
Administrative	1	5.00%
Total	20	100%

It can be noted from the data above, that those who are currently enrolled are mostly performed teaching responsibilities with 60% of the responses; while, it can also be observed that 7 or 35% hold a managerial or supervisory positions. This only implies why majority of the respondents are still enroll in the DEM program of the College of Education and still aspiring for better position in their work places of assignment.

Table 6. Length of Service

Length of Service	Frequency	Percentage
30-25 years	3	14.29%
24-20 years	4	19.05%
19-15 years	6	28.57%
14-10 years	4	19.05%
9 years and below	4	19.05%
Total	21	100%

It can be noted that mostly or majority of the respondents stayed in their respective institution on the average of 15 to 19 years (28%). This implies that seeing the long-term benefit of pur-

suing DEM program has a satisfying reward to wait in their institution; seeing how the program is aligned to the goal of education system.

Table 7. Monthly Salary of the Respondents

Monthly Salary	Frequency	Percentage
70,001 and above	8	32.00%
60,001 to 70,000	3	12.00%
50,001 to 60,000	4	16.00%
40,001 to 50,000	6	24.00%
30,001 to 40,000	2	8.00%
20,001 to 30,000	2	8.00%
Total	25	100.00%

Salary is one of the motivating factors that really inspires students of DEM to further continue study giving the opportunities ahead that can be observed from the data that majority of them receives 70,001 and above salary range.

Part 2. Influential Factors of Academic Performance of DEM Students

Table 8. Attribution to Personal and Professional Growth of DEM Student as Influential Factors of Academic Performance

DEM professional growth	Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
Academic profession	3.72	Very Important	1
Research Capability	3.48	Important	10
Learning Efficiency	3.64	Very Important	2.5
Communication Skills	3.56	Very Important	8
People Skills	3.60	Very Important	5.5
Problem Solving Skills	3.64	Very Important	2.5
Information Technology Skills	3.12	Important	13.5
Meeting Present and Future Professional Needs	3.52	Very Important	9
Exposure to Local Community within Field of Specialization	3.44	Important	11
Exposure to International Community within Field of Specialization	3.28	Important	12
Critical Thinking Skills	3.60	Very important	5.5
Salary Improvement and Promotion	3.60	Very important	5.5
Opportunities Abroad	3.12	Important	13.5
Personality Development	3.60	Very Important	5.5

4.0 – 3.51 Very Important; 3.50 – 2.51 Important; 2.50-1.51 Low Importance; 1.50 – 1.00 Not Important

It is important to note that students of the DEM program put so much premium on the importance of the academic profession 3.72 registered to have the highest mean score among the items. Followed by Learning Efficiency and problem solving skills development with 3.64 mean score respectively' while people skills, critical thinking skills and salary improvement and promotion came

third with 3.60 computed mean scores respectively. On the other hand, communication skills (3.56); meeting present and future professional need (3.52) and research capability (3.48) are still considered as very important factors of academic performance to DEM students.

Improving and growing in their academic profession is students' main reason of enrolling in the DEM program. Pesonen (2017) stated that a great challenge to innovate and develop practices are being faced by a lot of teacher-education organizations in response to the increasing needs of the adults for retraining and career change. This is strengthening the theory of lifelong learning, continuing professional education, upskilling and the likes. The start of Covid 19 pandemic became a wake-up call to all that change is real and that people needs to become adaptive in all these transformations to stay relevant in the workforce.

Table 9. Attribution to Institutional Factors to Succeed in PUP COED GS Program

Indicators	Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank	
Range of Courses offered	3.40	Important	7.5	
Relevance of the program to your profession	3.64	Very Important	2.5	
Extra-Curricular Activities	3.24	Important	10.5	
Premium Given to Research	3.40	Important	7.5	
Interdisciplinary learning	3.36	Important	9	
Teaching and learning Environment	3.48	Important	6	
Quality of Instruction	3.56	Very Important	4	
Teacher- Student Relationship	3.52	Very Important	5	
Library Resources	3.24	Important	10.5	
Laboratory Resources	3.08	Important	13	
Class Size	3.72	Very Important	1	
Infrastructure and facilities	3.20	Important	12	
Professor's pedagogical and content knowledge	3.64	Very Important	2.5	

4.0 – 3.51 Very Important; 3.50 – 2.51 Important; 2.50-1.51 Low Importance; 1.50 – 1.00 Not Important

It can be observed from the data above that DEM alumni provides the highest importance on the formation of class size, graduate school program should be very intensive to measure the higher level of learning. A small size of class would mean better and best outcomes in the long run considering the nature of work assignments and classroom interactions that needs to be facilitated by the experts in the field. Size does matter in providing quality education.

Secondly, relevance of the program to their current profession and to the professor's pedagogical and content knowledge more than ever to receive a computed mean score of 3.64.

To gauge quality education means realizing its relevance which provides an opportunity to grow in the profession; this is just an evidence that graduate students put extra premiums on what is necessary in their field; hence, enrolling in a high-level of education provides different opportunities ahead. Trehearn (2018) underscored that the level of education of a person can show a particular interest in a field, and this is a logical thing; and further added, nothing compares to having a degree

in a certain field. Education does not mean just time spent in school. It essentially means a set of skills, motivation, and self-discipline.

The result also give weight to the implementation of vertical articulation of the programs in the graduate school this is to further reiterate of producing experts in the field of education. To stay relevant in the future, Whittal (2020) suggested to establish a culture of continuous learning among others and that skilling and learning must be ongoing, especially now as the longevity of skills is different.

Meanwhile, looking at the importance of provider of knowledge has given a great importance by the respondents, considering the great role of professor's pedagogical and content knowledge at the same time. This only implies that graduate students' pursuance to learning is very much influenced by the quality of faculty members to join the academic workforce. It is the same as effort to elevate teaching to the professional status; and that the indicator of quality of teachers' teaching is through assessing students' abilities in making connections between the isolated pieces of knowledge; making connections between the new and old knowledge; thinking with flexibility; and solving problems which may redound into pedagogical and content knowledge (Shing, Saat, and Loke; 2015).

Part III: Open Ended-Question (Extracting Influential Factors to pursue Graduate Education Program)

Theme 1: Institutional Factors

Sub-Theme 1.1: Obtaining Useful and Higher-Level Skills

Following students' attribution to class size, relevance of the program, teacher's pedagogical and content knowledge and growth derived in the academic profession constitutes the main reasons of finishing the program. This is further revealed among their responses which was prevalently shared their views on "quality experience with the professors handling the course", "knowledgeable professor assigned in the graduate school program", "provision of challenging activities", "professional growth and development; career growth and development, academic opportunities, and advance learning".

This only implies that DEM students are intrinsically motivated or practice self-regulation in pursuing their career growth in the university having these are their goals of finishing the higher degree. This also pertains that Graduate School students have deeper reasons as they realized the impact of their enrolment in graduate school program. This is further supported by Singh (2016) who recognized the role played by intrinsic factors for future leaders and managers to tailored management strategies when dealing with co-workers. This provides educators' role in developing graduate expectations within a holistic framework that furthers professional development and career advancement. While, Ben-Hur and Kinley (2016) reiterated intrinsic motivators drive behaviour change by tapping into internal feelings to act for reasons that we find inherently enjoyable or fulfilling and this evidently true; while the benefits of self-regulated learning are evident regarding student achievement and the creation of life-long learners (Cline, 2017), it also teaches individuals to become active, guiding component of their learning and of control of one's goal.

Sub- theme 1.2: Developing a culture of excellence in teaching and learning practices

This sub-theme focused on the indicators of academic excellence and standards being implemented in the DEM program that are said to be aligned to their field of assigned jobs/works. This is evidently being captured through the respondents' responses such as "quality of program offerings in the graduate school, reputation of the university, excellent teaching workforce, and alignment of educational outcomes to student assigned workloads".

This has an implication that the respondents are also after on the reputation of the university when it comes to the responsiveness of the program; alignment of the educational outcomes to what is really needed by the industry as one of the main reasons of pursuing graduate study program.

Considering higher education program as the apex of educational system, developing a culture of excellence as a way of life in the University; where PUP is actually applying for the accreditation of all its program by the AACCCUP, even the working on to comply with the CHED and right now with its ISO 9001 standards. These are all evidence that the practices in the university adheres with the standards offered in present times.

Sub-theme 1.3: Opportunity for Academic Networking and Linkages

Giving importance in academic networking and linkages emerged as the third sub-theme as extracted from the responses. As they emphasized “establish networks, building relationships with other students from the graduate school who are also working in other institutions, sharing of ideas with other researchers from the academe, opportunities to become panel of reactor to international conferences as part of the activities in the graduate school program.

This only implied that enrolling in the graduate school program made a way to widen up professional networks to build connections through classmates who become their friends; academicians and other school leaders who became source of ideas through meaningful academic exchange.

Sub-theme 1.4.: Integrating Theory into Practice

Educators in professional degree programs are charged with multiple responsibilities in the classroom and in practice settings (Wren and Wren, 2009), as such the fourth sub-theme highlighted on how the theory learned has put into practice in their respondents work assignments. Among the reasons as provided by the respondents were “participation in the decision making of their respective school, identification of the different leadership skills needed have easily been put into practice”, greater emphasis is given to acquisition of advanced learning and new techniques to put into practice in the respondents’ assigned task in their respective institution.

This is exactly the objectives of a graduate program and one of the results expected from a graduate school student and that is to integrate theory into practice. This is further reiterated by Wren and Wren (2009) in concluding that educators of professional degree programs are constantly seeking ways to show students the importance of a solid grounding in theory in order to achieve excellence in their professional practice. This goal is achieved through both classroom and practice learning experiences.

Theme 2. Professional and Personal Factors

Sub-Theme 2.1: Valuing Professional and Economic Benefits of Education

The recurring narratives provided by the respondents towards professional development is where this sub-theme emerged from. The respondents candidly provided their views on “professional undertakings, growth and development in the academe, promotion from work, receive high salary, and provision of other academic opportunities.”

This implies that DEM student enrolment to graduate school program is extrinsically motivated after all. Working harder is not enough as mentioned by Jefferson, Owen, Scott and Spencer (2020) and that to sustain transformational change, it is necessary to aim so high that working harder, by itself, cannot suffice. To reach unprecedented heights of ambition, there is no choice but to think and work in a different way. Hence, enrolling in the graduate school program assists the students to reach greater heights in their career and help them otherwise improve their economic well-being as a professional.

Sub-theme 2.2.: Managing Expectations in Personal and Professional Life

The emergence of this sub-theme in the respondents personal and professional life is clearly recognized their purpose in enrolling the graduate school program. Their aim for enrolment to graduate program are candidly provided as “for professional advancement in meeting university academic standards”; other recurring responses focused on “self-fulfilment, boosting self-confidence in meeting one’s requirement in work stations, and meeting high caliber/profile academicians known in their respective field of interest in education”

It is assumed that graduate students are greatly motivated than those who are enrolled in the undergraduate program for graduate students positive feeling and satisfaction is said to be contingent to the level of support obtained in meeting expectations in life (Money, Nixon and Tracy et al, 2017). And the worst if not meeting these expectations set tends students to fail, withdraw and disengagement thrive (Byrne et al., 2012).

Sub-theme 2.3: Benefits Derived Graduating from DEM Program

The respondents underscored on this sub-theme in graduating from DEM Program mainly to improve their educational qualifications for career promotion. These are freely expressed in their answers such as “promoted as Assistant Professor”, “provided with high impact task of becoming a Department Head”, “promoted due to the educational qualification”, “promoted as School Principal III, OIC Assistant Schools Division Superintendent of SDO Makati”

These recurring responses from the participants implied career earning potentials. Accordingly, as stated by U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistic (2019), salaries depend on the individual experiences and area of expertise. Hence, this connotes that an advanced credentials boost the salary and career prospects in many professions.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Varying influential factors have already been identified to properly addressed academic success in the graduate school program. and these factors are considered for a graduate student to continuously thrive to become better version of themselves.

The implications of this study can be useful in determining the quality of the graduate program, strategies which can be developed to sustain student’s expectations, the important role played by the professors, by the institution of learning, and initiatives to halt attrition and sustain graduate student success.

These influential factors can be best described in two themes: 1) institutional factors and 2) personal and professional factors. These are two important reasons of pursuing a graduate school program. Answers of the respondents were thematically analyzed to come up with the following description. The former is characterized through obtaining useful and higher level-skills, developing a culture of excellence in teaching and learning practice, opportunity for academic networking and linkages and integrating theory into practice. While, the latter underscores on valuing professional and economic benefits of education, managing expectations in personal and professional life and benefits derived graduating from DEM program. Hence, the following are being recommended to ensure success of the students in graduate school program and encourage a greater number of enrollees in the future. Improving of the graduate school offerings by skilling/upskilling of faculty members to handle the program, the graduate students provides greater value on the quality of academic experiences of the graduate school program. A benchmark program on the best practices of other Universities particularly those that are already ISO or with level 4 accreditation status; provision of adjunct professors may also be continued to sustain higher expectations of future enrollees in the program as this study identified that more of the graduate students are intrinsically motivated to finish their program.

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