



Performance and Employers' Feedback of the Master of Arts in Education major in Educational Management Graduates

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ABSTRACT

This study evaluated the professional performance of Master of Arts in Education major in Educational Management (MAEd-EM) graduates, batches 2021–2023, and the extent to which program outcomes were demonstrated in their professional practice. Using an explanatory sequential mixed methods research design, quantitative data were collected from 67 graduates, 285 colleagues, and their employers through a validated 100-item competency assessment tool and existing performance records, followed by qualitative employer interviews to explain the quantitative results. Descriptive statistics, specifically mean and standard deviation, were employed to determine overall and domain-specific performance, while qualitative data were analyzed thematically. The findings revealed that MAEd-EM graduates exhibited Outstanding overall workplace performance (overall weighted mean = 4.42, SD = 0.53), consistently meeting and often exceeding professional expectations across seven program outcome domains: communication capabilities, content knowledge, innovativeness, leadership capabilities, management spheres, professional development, and research capabilities. Performance records further reflected high ratings from immediate supervisors and school heads (teachers' IPCRF: M = 4.66, SD = 0.16; school heads' OPCRF: M = 4.71, SD = 0.19), indicating strong consistency in performance evaluation. Employer feedback highlighted graduates' effective use of evidence-based strategies, collaborative leadership practices, and readiness to assume expanded professional roles. These results indicate that the MAEd-EM program effectively equips graduates with the competencies required in contemporary educational and organizational settings; however, the findings are limited to selected school divisions and respondent groups, which may affect generalizability. The study provides empirical support for curriculum enhancement, strengthened job-embedded learning, and sustained leadership development in graduate education.

Keywords: Educational Management, Employers' Feedback, Graduate Performance, Leadership Development, MAEd Graduates

How to Cite:

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INTRODUCTION

The evolving educational landscape increasingly demands curriculum responsiveness, innovative pedagogical approaches, and competent instructional leadership to address the diverse needs of learners in a globalized context. As institutions strive to enhance learning outcomes, greater emphasis has been placed on strengthening educators' competencies, particularly those responsible for implementing reforms and sustaining school improvement initiatives. Despite ongoing efforts to align academic programs with professional demands, a persistent gap remains between graduate program preparation and the competencies required in actual workplace practice, resulting in inconsistencies in how leadership and management frameworks are enacted in educational settings (Imbong et al., 2025). Recent literature underscores the need for higher education institutions to produce graduates who not only possess disciplinary expertise but also demonstrate advanced competencies in research, leadership, innovation, ethical decision-making, and organizational management (Adams, 2023). Consequently, graduate education in educational leadership and management is expected to equip practitioners with the capacity to apply theoretical knowledge to complex professional contexts while contributing to institutional development and continuous improvement (Richardson & Khawaja, 2025).

At the State University of Northern Negros, graduates of the Master of Arts in Education major in Educational Management (MAEd-EM) program currently serve in a range of instructional and leadership roles across basic and higher education institutions. Given the increasing demand for competent educational leaders, evaluating the workplace performance of these graduates is essential in determining the extent to which program outcomes align with institutional and professional expectations. This study therefore aimed to assess the professional performance and employers' feedback of MAEd-EM graduates from batches 2021 to 2023, generating evidence to inform curriculum enhancement, instructional improvement, and leadership development initiatives within the University.

Despite the expanding body of research on graduate education and educational leadership, relatively few empirical studies have systematically examined how MAEd-Educational Management program outcomes translate into actual workplace performance as evaluated by both colleagues and employers. Existing studies often emphasize self-reported competencies, single performance indicators, or institution-specific assessments, with limited use of employer-based feedback and mixed-methods approaches that integrate quantitative and qualitative workplace data. This gap is particularly evident in regional public university contexts, where graduate programs play a critical role in preparing educators for leadership and management responsibilities across diverse educational environments. By addressing this gap, the present study contributes evidence that is relevant not only to the State University of Northern Negros but also to other higher education institutions offering graduate programs in educational management, providing insights to support curriculum evaluation, program improvement, and leadership development in comparable institutional settings.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to determine the professional performance of Master of Arts in Education major in Educational Management (MAEd-EM) graduates of the State University of Northern Negros from batches 2021 to 2023 and to examine employers' feedback to identify the extent to which program outcomes are demonstrated in workplace settings. Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the professional performance level of MAEd-EM graduates from batches 2021 to 2023?
2. To what extent are the MAEd-EM program outcomes demonstrated, as assessed by colleagues and employers, in terms of the following areas:
 - 2.1. Communication Capabilities
 - 2.2. Content Knowledge
 - 2.3. Innovativeness
 - 2.4. Leadership Capabilities
 - 2.5. Management Spheres
 - 2.6. Professional Development
 - 2.7. Research Capabilities
3. What feedback do employers provide regarding the workplace performance and professional competencies of MAEd-EM graduates??

LITERATURE REVIEW

Graduate Education in Educational Management and Professional Competence



Graduate education in Educational Management plays a vital role in strengthening educators' professional competence, leadership capacity, and workplace performance. Studies consistently report that educators who pursue advanced academic preparation demonstrate stronger instructional leadership, enhanced organizational skills, and improved performance across school functions. Grounded in Human Capital Theory, graduate education is viewed as an investment that develops specialized knowledge and advanced competencies essential for organizational effectiveness, instructional improvement, and collaborative school environments. Accordingly, graduate programs equip educators to manage complex educational systems, lead reforms, and address institutional challenges through evidence-based approaches.

Empirical studies affirm that Master of Arts in Education (MAEd) graduates exhibit strong teamwork, innovativeness, service orientation, and results-driven practices aligned with professional standards (Pabico, 2024; Estrada & Gumban, 2024). Findings from Satur et al. (2024) and Pagarigan and Guanzon (2025) further indicate that participation in leadership development and professional learning initiatives contributes to higher instructional quality and school improvement outcomes. Nonetheless, much of the literature relies on self-reported measures or program-level indicators, offering limited insight into how graduate-acquired competencies are demonstrated and assessed within actual workplace settings.

Communication Capabilities Developed Through Graduate Education

Communication is consistently identified as a core professional competency strengthened through graduate education. MAEd graduates are often described as effective communicators capable of articulating ideas clearly, facilitating professional dialogue, and engaging diverse stakeholders. Darling-Hammond et al. (2020) emphasize the role of communication in fostering collaboration, instructional clarity, and positive school relationships, while Hattie (2021) links strong communication skills to supportive learning environments and effective feedback practices.

More recent research shows that educators with advanced degrees demonstrate enhanced communication in instructional leadership, mentoring, and community engagement (Leithwood et al., 2022; Fullan, 2023). However, some studies suggest that communication competence does not always translate into leadership influence, particularly in organizational contexts where participation in decision-making is limited. These contrasting findings underscore the importance of examining communication skills through employer-based and workplace-evaluated assessments rather than relying solely on self-perceptions.

Content Knowledge and Instructional Expertise

Content mastery is widely recognized as a defining strength of educators with graduate-level preparation. Advanced degrees deepen pedagogical expertise and enhance educators' ability to connect theory to practice, thereby improving instructional quality (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). Hattie (2021) highlights the influence of teacher expertise on learner achievement, especially when instruction is responsive to students' needs. Robinson (2022) and Timperley (2023) further affirm that strong content knowledge supports curriculum alignment and instructional leadership.

Despite broad agreement on its importance, studies differ in their conclusions regarding the consistency with which content mastery influences workplace performance. Institutional roles, workload demands, and organizational structures may limit opportunities for educators to apply advanced knowledge in leadership and management contexts. These variations highlight the need to examine content knowledge as it is enacted and recognized in real-world professional settings.

Innovativeness and Adaptive Professional Practice

Innovativeness is frequently cited as a key outcome of graduate education, particularly in strengthening educators' adaptability, creativity, and use of learner-centered strategies. Fullan (2020) describes innovation as central to instructional improvement, while the OECD (2021) highlights its role in inclusive and responsive learning environments. Trust (2022) and Harris (2023) further emphasize the contribution of technology, collaboration, and reflective practice in fostering innovative capacity among educators.

However, empirical evidence also indicates that the application of innovative practices may be constrained by organizational structures, limited resources, and workload pressures. These findings suggest that innovativeness should be viewed as a contextualized workplace behavior shaped by institutional conditions rather than an automatic outcome of graduate preparation.

Leadership Capabilities Among Graduate-Trained Educators

Leadership development is a central focus of Educational Management programs. Research consistently demonstrates that graduate education strengthens instructional, transformational, and collaborative leadership competencies (Leithwood et al., 2020; Day & Sammons, 2021). Leadership is often described as developmental, progressing from foundational practices to strategic and transformational roles influenced by experience and institutional engagement (Hallinger, 2022). Contemporary



leadership scholarship emphasizes leadership as a distributed practice shaped by interactions, roles, and organizational context rather than formal position alone (Spillane et al., 2019).

At the same time, studies show that leadership enactment varies across contexts depending on role designation, organizational culture, and access to leadership opportunities. Nguyen et al. (2023) and Garcia and Reyes (2024) emphasize the importance of mentoring and coaching in enabling graduates to apply leadership competencies effectively. These mixed findings reinforce the need for workplace-based evaluation of leadership performance.

Management Spheres and Organizational Competence

Management competence represents another critical dimension of graduate education outcomes. Research indicates that MAEd graduates develop management skills progressively, beginning with basic organizational functions and advancing toward strategic planning, resource management, and data-informed decision-making (Bush, 2021; Cruz & Jimenez, 2023). While some studies report advanced managerial competence among graduate-trained educators, others suggest that management effectiveness is shaped primarily through experiential learning.

This divergence underscores the importance of assessing management competence through workplace performance indicators rather than relying solely on formal training or curricular expectations.

Professional Development and Lifelong Learning

Professional development is widely regarded as both an outcome and a sustaining mechanism of graduate education. Graduate programs promote reflective practice, inquiry, and continuous learning, all of which contribute to instructional improvement and leadership capacity (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020; Timperley, 2021). Educators who model lifelong learning are reported to foster strong professional cultures and support school improvement efforts (Day, 2022; Leithwood, 2020). Longitudinal research further suggests that sustained professional development shapes educators' instructional practices, leadership behaviors, and professional identities over time (Avalos, 2021).

Nevertheless, studies also reveal variability in sustained professional engagement after program completion, with institutional demands and workloads limiting ongoing participation. These contrasting findings highlight the need to view professional development as a context-dependent workplace practice.

Research Capability and Evidence-Based Practice

Research competence is consistently identified as a key outcome of graduate education. Graduate-trained educators are more likely to engage in action research, data analysis, and evidence-informed decision-making, supporting instructional improvement and organizational learning (Hattie, 2021; Cain, 2022; Mertler, 2023). However, some studies indicate limited research application due to time constraints and insufficient institutional support.

These mixed results emphasize the value of mixed-methods research that integrates quantitative indicators with qualitative employer feedback to examine how research competencies are applied in practice.

Synthesis

Overall, the literature confirms the contribution of graduate education to professional, leadership, and management competence while revealing inconsistencies in how these competencies are enacted and evaluated in workplace contexts. The predominance of self-reported measures and single-source evaluations highlights a gap in empirical research that systematically integrates employer-based assessment, quantitative performance data, and qualitative workplace insight. This gap is particularly evident in regional public university contexts. Addressing this gap through an explanatory sequential mixed-methods approach offers a more comprehensive understanding of how MAEd–Educational Management program outcomes translate into actual professional performance and organizational impact.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods research design, specifically an explanatory sequential approach, to examine the alignment between the academic preparation provided by the Master of Arts in Education major in Educational Management (MAEd-EM) program and the workplace performance of its graduates. Quantitative data were collected first using a descriptive–evaluative approach to generate objective evidence of graduates' competencies and professional performance. Primary data were obtained through a researcher-developed 100-item questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale, while secondary quantitative



data were gathered from official performance evaluation records, namely the Individual Performance Commitment and Review Form (IPCRF) and the Office Performance Commitment and Review Form (OPCRF). The use of multiple data sources strengthened objectivity and minimized potential response bias. Descriptive statistical measures, including means and standard deviations, were employed to evaluate the level and consistency of graduates' workplace performance across competency areas.

Following the quantitative phase, qualitative data were collected through employer interviews to further explain and contextualize the quantitative findings. These interviews allowed supervisors to describe graduates' observed competencies, strengths, and areas for improvement based on actual workplace experience. The integration of quantitative results and qualitative explanations provided a comprehensive understanding of how MAEd-EM program outcomes were manifested in professional practice. Overall, the explanatory sequential mixed-methods design offered a systematic and evidence-based framework for evaluating graduate performance and program effectiveness by combining numerical performance indicators with contextual workplace insights.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study comprised Master of Arts in Education major in Educational Management (MAEd-EM) graduates of the State University of Northern Negros from batches 2021 to 2023, along with their immediate supervisors and workplace colleagues. The list of MAEd-EM graduates was obtained from the Graduate School records of the University, through which 67 graduates were identified and included to ensure complete coverage of the target population. To achieve a more comprehensive and triangulated assessment of workplace performance, employers and colleagues were also included as respondents. Immediate supervisors were selected through purposive sampling due to their direct supervisory roles and firsthand knowledge of graduates' professional performance, while colleagues were selected using stratified random sampling to ensure proportional representation across school levels and work contexts. Overall, the study involved 67 MAEd-EM graduates, 67 employers, and 285 colleagues, yielding a total of 419 respondents.

Table 1

Participants of the Study

	Respondents	Frequency
MAEd Graduates		67
Employers		67
Colleagues		285
Total		419

Research Instrument

A researcher-developed questionnaire served as the primary research instrument and was designed to align with the objectives of the study. The instrument measured seven core competency areas of Master of Arts in Education major in Educational Management (MAEd-EM) graduates: communication capabilities, content knowledge, innovativeness, leadership capabilities, management spheres, professional development, and research capabilities, with each area consisting of ten items. All items were rated using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Very Poor) to 5 (Excellent), for a total of 100 items. Communication capabilities were further classified into written and oral communication to capture graduates' ability to convey information across varied professional and organizational contexts. Interpretation of weighted mean scores followed the scale descriptors employed in the study, with higher values indicating higher levels of competency demonstration.

To complement the questionnaire data, the Individual Performance Commitment and Review Form (IPCRF) was utilized to assess graduates' workplace performance across five indicators: Content Knowledge and Pedagogy, Learning Environment and Diversity of Learners, Curriculum Planning, Assessment and Reporting, and Plus Factor, using a standardized scale ranging from 1 (Poor) to 5 (Outstanding). In addition, a researcher-developed interview guide was employed to obtain qualitative feedback from immediate supervisors regarding graduates' competencies in communication, leadership, management, professional development, and research capability. All research instruments underwent expert validation prior to data collection to ensure clarity, relevance, and alignment with the objectives of the study.



Validity

The quantitative research instrument developed to measure the core competencies of Master of Arts in Education major in Educational Management (MAEd-EM) graduates underwent content validity evaluation using Lawshe's Content Validity Ratio (CVR) method. A panel of nine experts in education assessed each item in terms of clarity, relevance, and alignment with the study's objectives across seven competency domains: Communication Capabilities, Content Knowledge, Innovativeness, Leadership Capabilities, Management Spheres, Professional Development, and Research Capabilities. The resulting Average Content Validity Ratio (A-CVR) of 0.981 exceeded the required Lawshe threshold for nine experts, indicating a high level of expert agreement and confirming that the instrument possessed excellent content validity for measuring the intended constructs.

The qualitative interview guide was similarly subjected to content validation using the CVR procedure. The same panel of experts evaluated the seven interview questions based on essentiality, relevance, and clarity. All items met the minimum CVR requirement, yielding a perfect Average CVR (A-CVR) of 1.000, which signifies unanimous expert agreement regarding the suitability of the questions to elicit meaningful and relevant qualitative data.

Reliability

The reliability of the quantitative research instrument was established through internal consistency testing using Cronbach's Alpha. A pilot test was conducted among respondents with characteristics similar to the actual study participants but excluded from the final sample. The analysis produced very high reliability coefficients, with Cronbach's Alpha values ranging from 0.916 to 0.951 across the major competency domains and an overall alpha of 0.986, indicating excellent internal consistency and confirming that the instrument consistently measured the intended competencies.

The reliability of the qualitative interview guide was assessed using inter-rater reliability. Two pilot interviews were transcribed and independently coded by two coders using predetermined thematic categories. The coding process resulted in 100% observed agreement across all coding units. Although Cohen's Kappa could not be computed due to the absence of variability in coding decisions, the perfect agreement between coders demonstrates a high level of consistency, confirming the reliability of the interview guide and coding framework in producing dependable qualitative data.

Data Gathering Procedure

Before data collection commenced, the list of Master of Arts in Education major in Educational Management (MAEd-EM) graduates from batches 2021 to 2023 was obtained from the Graduate School records of the State University of Northern Negros. Upon identifying the potential respondents, formal permission to conduct the study was secured from the appropriate authorities, including Schools Division Superintendents, school heads, and participating institutions. The identified graduates, along with their immediate supervisors and workplace colleagues, were subsequently contacted and invited to participate in the study.

The researcher-developed competency questionnaire was administered to the graduates, their immediate supervisors, and workplace colleagues to assess the extent to which MAEd-EM program outcomes were demonstrated in professional practice. Concurrently, documentary performance data were collected using the Individual Performance Commitment and Review Form (IPCRF) and the Office Performance Commitment and Review Form (OPCRF) to determine graduates' workplace performance ratings. In addition, a researcher-developed interview guide was used to gather qualitative feedback from employers regarding graduates' competencies in communication, leadership, management, professional development, and research capability.

All retrieved questionnaires were examined for completeness and accuracy prior to analysis. Quantitative data were then organized, tabulated, and encoded for statistical analysis, while qualitative interview responses were transcribed and prepared for thematic analysis. This systematic procedure ensured accurate, ethical, and comprehensive data collection aligned with the objectives of the study.

Data Analysis Procedure

The data analysis procedure was designed to determine the extent to which Master of Arts in Education major in Educational Management (MAEd-EM) graduates demonstrated the intended program outcomes and to assess their overall workplace performance based on evaluations by colleagues and employers. Quantitative data obtained from the researcher-developed



competency questionnaire, together with documentary performance records from the Individual Performance Commitment and Review Form (IPCRF) and the Office Performance Commitment and Review Form (OPCRF), were encoded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

Descriptive statistical measures, specifically mean and standard deviation (SD), were computed for each competency domain, subdomain, and for the overall instrument. Since the data were collected using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Very Poor) to 5 (Excellent), the mean was used to summarize the general level of graduates' performance and extent of program outcome demonstration, while the standard deviation indicated the variability and consistency of responses among raters.

The interpretation of mean scores followed the standard IPCRF/OPCRF rating scale, which served as the basis for determining the verbal descriptions of graduates' performance levels, as presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Interpretation of Likert-Scale Scores for Program Outcomes

Mean Range	Descriptive Rating
4.50 – 5.00	Outstanding
3.50 – 4.49	Very Satisfactory
2.50 – 3.49	Satisfactory
1.50 – 2.49	Unsatisfactory
Below 1.50	Poor

The descriptive analysis provided a clear overview of graduates' professional performance across all program outcome domains, highlighting areas of strength and potential areas for improvement. Consistent with the descriptive–evaluative design of the study, only descriptive statistics were applied, as the primary focus was on summarizing performance levels and examining the alignment between academic preparation and workplace expectations rather than on conducting inferential comparisons. The quantitative findings also served as the basis for subsequent qualitative exploration through employer interviews, allowing for deeper explanation and contextual interpretation of the results.

Data Trustworthiness

To ensure the trustworthiness of the qualitative data, several strategies were employed in accordance with established qualitative research standards. Credibility was enhanced through expert validation of the research instruments and by conducting interviews with employers who had direct knowledge of the graduates' workplace performance, while prolonged engagement further supported the accuracy and authenticity of responses. Dependability was ensured by following systematic and transparent procedures for data collection and analysis, including transcription, coding, and thematic analysis. Confirmability was addressed by grounding interpretations in direct quotations and documentary evidence from questionnaires, IPCRF records, and interview transcripts, thereby minimizing researcher bias. Transferability was strengthened through detailed descriptions of the participants, research context, and data-collection procedures, enabling readers to assess the applicability of the findings to similar educational settings. Collectively, these measures ensured that the qualitative findings were credible, consistent, and reflective of the graduates' actual professional performance and competencies.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical standards governing research involving human participants were strictly observed throughout the study. Institutional approval and ethical clearance were obtained prior to data collection from the appropriate university authorities, Schools Division Offices, and school heads. All respondents were informed of the purpose, scope, and nature of the study, and voluntary participation was secured through informed consent. Confidentiality was ensured by limiting the use of all data to academic and research purposes, while anonymity was maintained by excluding names and personally identifiable information from questionnaires, interview guides, and data records. To minimize potential bias, the study employed data triangulation, integrating multiple sources of evidence—including IPCRF and OPCRf records, colleague evaluations, and employer interviews—along with standardized data-collection instruments and uniform procedures. These measures ensured objectivity, consistency, and



the protection of participants' rights, dignity, and welfare in accordance with established institutional and ethical research guidelines.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Quantitative Results and Discussion

This section presents the quantitative findings of the study together with their corresponding interpretations based on data gathered from the respondents. The results are organized according to the key areas examined, focusing on the workplace performance of Master of Arts in Education major in Educational Management (MAEd-EM) graduates from batches 2021–2023 and the extent to which program outcomes are demonstrated across identified competency domains. Descriptive statistical measures were utilized to provide an objective overview of graduates' professional performance, which is further contextualized in the succeeding sections using qualitative employer feedback, consistent with the explanatory sequential mixed-methods design.

Table 3

Professional Performance of MAEd–Educational Management Graduates Based on IPCRF and OPCRf Ratings

Position	n	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
Teachers (IPCRF)	59	4.6607	0.1575	Outstanding
School Heads (OPCRF)	6	4.7127	0.1890	Outstanding

The mean scores obtained from the IPCRF and OPCRf evaluations indicate that the professional performance of MAEd-EM graduates is consistently rated as Outstanding based on established performance standards. Teachers' evaluations yielded a mean score of 4.6607 (SD = 0.1575), while school heads reported a mean of 4.7127 (SD = 0.1890), reflecting high levels of competence in instructional practice, leadership functions, and professional responsibilities. Scores within this range signify that graduates consistently meet and frequently exceed workplace expectations, demonstrating strong proficiency in the knowledge, skills, and professional behaviors required in their roles.

The relatively low standard deviation values across both evaluator groups indicate a high degree of consistency in performance ratings, suggesting that excellence is not confined to a small number of graduates but is a shared characteristic across the cohort. This consistency strengthens the reliability of the findings and supports the stability of graduates' professional performance across evaluators and workplace contexts. The convergence of ratings from both teachers and school heads further enhances the credibility of the results, as assessments were derived from multiple external sources rather than self-reports alone.

The uniformly high-performance ratings may be attributed to several contextual factors. MAEd-EM graduates represent professionally experienced educators who pursued graduate studies to strengthen their instructional, leadership, and management competencies. Moreover, the use of actual workplace evaluation instruments (IPCRF and OPCRf) ensures that the results reflect sustained professional practice rather than isolated observations. The alignment between instructional and supervisory assessments indicates that competencies developed through the MAEd-EM program are consistently demonstrated and recognized across professional roles.

Based on evaluations provided by 59 teachers and 6 school heads, the findings offer a reliable representation of graduates' overall workplace performance. The combination of high mean scores and low variability provides strong empirical evidence that the MAEd-Educational Management program effectively prepares graduates to perform competently and consistently in instructional and leadership roles. Following this analysis of workplace performance, the succeeding results examine the extent to which graduates demonstrate specific program outcomes across competency domains as assessed by colleagues and employers.

Table 4

Extent of Demonstration of MAEd–Educational Management Program Outcomes



Program Outcome/Subscale	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
A. Communication Capabilities			
a. Written Communication	4.44	0.5577	Outstanding
b. Oral Communication	4.47	0.5672	Outstanding
Overall Communication	4.46	0.5764	Outstanding
B. Content Knowledge	4.39	0.5769	Outstanding
C. Innovativeness	4.39	0.5810	Outstanding
D. Leadership Capabilities	4.39	0.5763	Outstanding
E. Management Spheres	4.47	0.5863	Outstanding
F. Professional Development	4.32	0.6287	Outstanding
G. Research Capabilities	4.46	0.5520	Outstanding
OVERALL	4.42	0.5323	Outstanding

The results presented in Table 4 indicate that Master of Arts in Education major in Educational Management (MAEd-EM) graduates demonstrated Outstanding levels across all program outcome domains. These findings suggest that graduates possess the essential knowledge, skills, and professional attributes required for effective performance in instructional, leadership, and management roles. Consistently high mean scores reflect the program's effectiveness in preparing graduates to meet professional expectations in diverse educational contexts.

In terms of Communication Capabilities, graduates obtained Outstanding ratings in both written and oral communication, indicating strong proficiency in expressing ideas clearly, facilitating professional interactions, and engaging stakeholders. High communication competence is widely recognized as a critical dimension of professional effectiveness, particularly in leadership and instructional environments where collaboration and clarity are essential.

Similarly, Content Knowledge and Innovativeness registered Outstanding levels of demonstration, indicating that graduates possess a strong grasp of academic and managerial concepts and are capable of applying innovative and adaptive strategies in professional practice. These competencies support effective problem-solving and continuous improvement in both instructional delivery and organizational processes.

The domain of Leadership Capabilities also reflected Outstanding performance, suggesting that graduates demonstrate leadership behaviors related to guiding teams, supporting decision-making, and fostering positive organizational environments. In parallel, Outstanding ratings in Management Spheres indicate strong competence in planning, organizing, and managing institutional resources—skills necessary for operational efficiency and strategic goal attainment.

Finally, the Professional Development and Research Capabilities domains yielded Outstanding ratings, highlighting graduates' commitment to lifelong learning and research-informed practice. These findings underscore the program's role in cultivating reflective practitioners who value continuous improvement and evidence-based decision-making.

Overall, the consistently high mean scores and moderate standard deviation values across all domains indicate both high levels of competence and uniformity in program outcome demonstration among graduates. Collectively, these results affirm that the MAEd–Educational Management program effectively prepares graduates to perform competently across multiple dimensions of professional practice, including communication, leadership, management, innovation, research, and professional growth.

Qualitative Results and Discussion

The qualitative findings were generated to provide deeper explanation and contextual understanding of the quantitative results, particularly the uniformly high-performance ratings obtained from IPCRF, OPCRF, colleague, and employer assessments. Employer interviews revealed a consistent pattern of professional strengths among MAEd–Educational Management graduates, offering concrete workplace examples that help explain how program competencies are demonstrated in practice.

With respect to communication capabilities, employers consistently described graduates as clear, confident, and adaptable communicators who effectively express ideas in both written and oral forms. Graduates were observed to adjust their communication strategies based on stakeholder needs and to foster collaborative and respectful professional relationships. These



observations provide practical explanation for the Outstanding ratings in communication, indicating that these skills are actively applied in everyday workplace interactions.

Employers also highlighted graduates' strong content knowledge, noting their ability to explain concepts clearly, align instruction with curriculum standards, mentor colleagues, and use assessment data to refine instructional practices. These qualitative insights corroborate the high quantitative ratings for content knowledge and professional competence, demonstrating that graduates are able to translate theoretical preparation into effective instructional and supervisory practice.

Innovativeness emerged as a distinct qualitative theme, with employers describing graduates as proactive in designing learner-centered and technology-enhanced strategies and in introducing creative solutions to instructional challenges. Graduates' openness to experimentation and responsiveness to institutional needs further explain the Outstanding quantitative ratings in innovativeness, suggesting that innovation is embedded in routine professional practice rather than limited to isolated initiatives.

In terms of leadership capabilities, employers observed that graduates demonstrate initiative, guide peers, facilitate planning and decision-making processes, and contribute to positive organizational climates—even in the absence of formal leadership positions. These behaviors reflect emerging transformational leadership qualities and help explain the high quantitative ratings in both leadership capabilities and management spheres. Employers further noted that management competence develops progressively, beginning with task organization and advancing toward more strategic responsibilities such as program coordination, resource management, documentation, and data-informed decision-making.

A strong commitment to professional development was also evident in employer narratives. Graduates were described as reflective practitioners who actively pursue continuous learning, apply new strategies, and model growth-oriented behaviors that positively influence colleagues. These observations clarify why professional development, despite slight quantitative variability, remained at an Outstanding level. Additionally, research capability was identified as a growing strength, with graduates analyzing learner data, applying evidence-based interventions, and participating in school-based research initiatives, including action research aimed at institutional improvement.

Taken together, these qualitative findings provide substantive explanation for the quantitative results by illustrating how MAEd–Educational Management graduates apply program competencies in authentic workplace contexts. The convergence of survey ratings, performance records, and employer narratives supports the interpretation that the high quantitative scores meaningfully reflect graduates' professional competence. Within an explanatory sequential mixed-methods framework, the qualitative results thus validate and enrich the quantitative findings, reinforcing the effectiveness of the MAEd–Educational Management program in preparing graduates for instructional leadership, management, innovation, and continuous professional growth.

Overall Results

The overall findings of the study demonstrate a strong alignment between the academic preparation provided by the MAEd–Educational Management program and the workplace performance of its graduates. The convergence of high quantitative ratings and rich qualitative descriptions indicates that graduates consistently exhibit competencies aligned with instructional, leadership, and management expectations. Beyond affirming program effectiveness, these findings warrant critical interpretation that considers potential contextual and methodological influences.

One possible explanation for the uniformly Outstanding performance ratings relates to the professional characteristics of the respondent group. MAEd–Educational Management graduates are practicing educators who voluntarily pursued graduate education, reflecting high levels of motivation, professional experience, and commitment that may contribute to elevated performance. In addition, supportive workplace environments that emphasize collaboration, mentoring, and continuous improvement may have reinforced positive evaluations.

Another consideration involves the nature of competency-based evaluation tools such as IPCRF and OPCRF. In institutional contexts where professional standards are clearly defined and consistently applied, performance ratings may cluster toward the higher end of the scale. Employer and colleague assessments may likewise reflect norms of collegiality and professional respect that influence evaluation patterns. Despite these alternative explanations, several features strengthen the credibility of the findings. Performance ratings were derived from multiple independent sources, including documentary records, colleague assessments, and employer feedback, reducing the likelihood of single-source bias. The relatively low standard deviations across



quantitative measures indicate consistency rather than inflated scoring. Moreover, qualitative findings provided concrete accounts of graduates' workplace behaviors—such as leadership initiative, instructional decision-making, research engagement, and professional growth—that substantiate the quantitative results.

Taken together, these factors suggest that while contextual influences may shape evaluation outcomes, the consistently high-performance ratings are meaningfully supported by observable professional practice. The alignment between quantitative results and qualitative employer narratives indicates that MAEd–Educational Management graduates demonstrate competencies that are sustained, applied, and recognized in authentic workplace settings. Thus, the overall results reflect not only strong program outcomes but also the interaction between graduate preparation, professional maturity, and supportive educational environments.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the study indicate that Master of Arts in Education major in Educational Management (MAEd–EM) graduates from 2021 to 2023 consistently demonstrate Outstanding professional performance in instructional and leadership roles, as reflected in IPCRF and OPCRf ratings and supported by qualitative employer feedback. These results confirm that the MAEd–EM program effectively equips graduates with competencies aligned with the demands of contemporary educational settings. Quantitative findings further revealed Outstanding levels of program outcome demonstration across communication, content knowledge, innovativeness, leadership capabilities, management spheres, professional development, and research capabilities, highlighting a curriculum that develops graduates who are competent and practice-ready.

Qualitative findings enriched these results by showing that graduates not only possess these competencies but also apply them meaningfully in authentic workplace contexts. Employers consistently described graduates as adaptive communicators, confident content experts, collaborative leaders, capable managers, committed lifelong learners, and reflective, research-informed practitioners. These perspectives suggest that competencies developed through the program extend beyond technical skills and have evolved into integrated professional identities that support instructional improvement, organizational collaboration, and school development.

Taken together, the findings demonstrate that the MAEd–Educational Management program of the State University of Northern Negros (formerly NONESCOST) prepares graduates for transformative educational practice. Graduates emerge as proficient educators and instructional leaders who can influence peers, guide school initiatives, and contribute to a culture of continuous improvement while navigating complex professional demands.

Nevertheless, the findings should be interpreted in light of certain limitations. The study was conducted within specific institutional and workplace contexts and involved a defined group of graduates, colleagues, and employers, which may limit the generalizability of the results. In addition, the descriptive–evaluative design focused on performance levels and outcome demonstration rather than establishing causal relationships. Future studies may address these limitations by examining larger and more diverse populations, employing longitudinal designs, or conducting comparative analyses across institutions. Despite these limitations, the study provides meaningful empirical evidence that MAEd–Educational Management graduates embody a holistic and evolving form of professionalism that contributes to the effectiveness and quality of the educational institutions they serve.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, which revealed consistently high workplace performance and strong demonstration of program outcomes among Master of Arts in Education (MAEd)–Educational Management graduates, the following recommendations are proposed. These recommendations are grounded in the quantitative and qualitative results and aim to sustain and further enhance graduate competencies in response to evolving educational demands.

1. Enhance Communication and Stakeholder Engagement Training

Given the strong performance in written and oral communication and employers' descriptions of graduates as clear, adaptive, and collaborative communicators, the State University of Northern Negros may further strengthen advanced communication training within the MAEd–Educational Management curriculum. Integrating digital communication, professional



correspondence, and stakeholder-engagement strategies may help sustain graduates' effectiveness across instructional, leadership, and administrative roles.

2. Strengthen Leadership and Management Readiness Through Targeted Capacity-Building

Although graduates demonstrated high levels of leadership and management competence, qualitative findings indicate that these skills continue to develop through professional experience. To support graduates' progression into more complex leadership roles, the University may offer targeted capacity-building activities—such as workshops or simulations on strategic planning, change management, conflict resolution, and administrative decision-making—to enhance applied leadership readiness.

3. Institutionalize Structured and Continuous Professional Development Pathways

In light of the strong demonstration of professional development competencies and employers' observations of graduates as reflective lifelong learners, educational institutions are encouraged to institutionalize structured professional development mechanisms. These may include mentoring programs, learning action cells, professional learning communities, and specialized certifications that support sustained professional growth.

4. Expand Opportunities for Research-Informed and Innovative Practice

Considering the solid demonstration of research capability and innovativeness, as well as employers' reports of graduates' engagement in action research and evidence-based interventions, the University and partner schools may expand opportunities for applied research and innovation-driven initiatives. Such opportunities can strengthen the integration of theory and practice and support graduates in implementing data-informed solutions to workplace challenges.

5. Support Distributed and Influence-Based Leadership Roles

Given that graduates demonstrated leadership initiative even without formal leadership positions, employers may promote distributed leadership structures that allow MAEd graduates to contribute through collaboration, mentoring, and instructional leadership. Providing opportunities for graduates to participate in organizational improvement initiatives may maximize their demonstrated leadership and relational strengths.

6. Utilize Findings for Curriculum Review and Policy Development

In view of the strong alignment between graduate preparation and workplace expectations identified in the study, University administrators and educational policymakers may use these findings to inform curriculum review, quality assurance processes, and leadership standards development. The results may serve as empirical input for strengthening competency-based frameworks that promote instructional, managerial, and leadership effectiveness.

7. Directions for Future Research

While the study confirmed strong program effectiveness, future research may explore graduates' professional development through longitudinal designs, comparative institutional analyses, or examinations of graduates' contributions to school culture and student learning outcomes. Such studies would provide deeper insights into how MAEd competencies evolve and support improvement-driven educational practice.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in the conduct of this study entitled "Performance and Employers' Feedback of the Master of Arts in Education Major in Educational Management Graduates." The authors have no financial, professional, or personal relationships that could have influenced the research design, data collection, analysis, interpretation, or reporting of the findings.

All participants, including employers, colleagues, and immediate supervisors, participated voluntarily, and their responses were treated with strict confidentiality and used solely for academic and research purposes. The study was conducted with objectivity, integrity, and in full compliance with accepted ethical research standards.



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