

The Relevance of Public Administration Education: Towards Professional Development of Men and Women in Public Organizations

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Abstract

This study investigated several factors on the need and continuing relevance of the public administration education. Primary data were gathered through the questionnaires administered to the Master in Public Administration (MPA) graduates, their immediate heads, and their co-employees. The data gathered were analyzed through frequency distribution, percentage, mean and t-test.

The findings of the study revealed that the degrees earned by the respondents before taking the MPA degree vary. This implies that the decision to enroll in the MPA degree is not determined by the degrees that they possess, but by their employment in the government agencies or institutions. The findings further revealed that the MPA degree earned by the graduate-respondents had helped them in terms of job advancement, promotions and movement in employment. The knowledge, skills and values that the respondents should acquire and practice as government employees have been inculcated in them through the public administration education that they pursued.

Keywords: public organizations, public administration education, public service, Master in Public Administration (MPA)

1. Introduction

As the scope of governmental functions become complex, there is a need to study and develop strategies in governance and management of the affairs of government. As Wilson (in Greene, 2005) wrote:

It is the object of administrative study to discover, first, what government can properly and successfully do, and secondly, how it can do these proper things with the utmost possible efficiency and at the least possible cost either of money or of energy.

The move toward an autonomous administrative study appeared to have been good for public administration as an academic field. Research indicates that the most effective Master in Public Administration (MPA) programs are administered by freestanding schools and departments of public administration, and these units are experiencing fastest rates of student growth of all organizational types (Henry, 2005). According to Greene (2005):

Public administration trains future public administrators in Master of Public Administration (MPA) programs and provides continuing education and training for mid-career employees through executive institutes and Doctor of Public Administration (DPA) programs. The training includes courses in numerous areas of management, organizational theory and behavior, personnel administration, budgeting and financial management, public policy, program evaluation, and administrative law. The world of public administration is constantly evolving, and the discipline does more than observe and study the practical field. The close involvement with the practice of public administration makes the discipline unique and rich because it helps those in the discipline relate to the everyday world of public management.

Rosenbaum (2007) had described the problems in public administration and governance which are brought about by the continuous change and complexity. He stressed that:

The world of the 21st century will inevitably be a world of rapid change and much complexity. The

last fifteen years of the 20th century was certainly that, and there is no reason to think that the degree of change, and the complexity of problems that governments will have to address in the 21st century, will be anything less. Indeed, the likelihood is that change will come more rapidly and that the problems will be more complex. In part, this is because the dominant trends of the 20th century – globalization, decentralization, democratization and rising inequality – show no signs of decreasing in their prevalence and consequence. These developments obviously place major burdens on the public administrators of the future and especially on those who will bear the responsibility of educating them (Rosenbaum, 2007).

The complexities and the changes in the political, social, and economic landscape and functions of the government manifest the need for excellence in public administration education. The men and women in public organizations should be equipped with knowledge and skills in public administration as a response to these changes and for them to properly discharge their functions as public servants. Rosenbaum (2007) emphasized that:

The complexity of the problems which public administrators face in the contemporary world requires that, especially in their formative years, they have experiences which prepare them to deal effectively with highly complex issues involving very complicated problems of social and economic development. Most of the employees in the public organizations may have enough knowledge about theories that they learned in their academic years. But most of what they have learned focused on their respective fields of specialization and not much about how the government should function, that is, how they should serve as government employees, and what values are required of them in the performance of their duties.

Since working in the government certainly requires commitment to the interest of the public, there is a need for the men and women in public organizations to acquire and develop their knowledge on public organizations. This study examined several factors on the need and continuing relevance of the public administration education by revisiting the current status of the Master in Public Administration (MPA) graduates of Notre Dame of Dadiangas University, General Santos City, Philippines. The study specifically aimed to establish the relevant role of public administration education in the development of the competencies of the employees in the government sector to improve the quality of public service. The thrust of this study is to further substantiate the significance that public administration education assumes in the professional development and acquisition of knowledge of the men and women in public organizations.

2. Related Literature

Different writers have variously defined public administration. In the words of Marx (in Greene, 2005):

Administration is a determined action taken in pursuit of a conscious purpose. It is the systematic ordering of affairs and the calculated use of resources aimed at making those things happen, which one wants to happen.

Public administration in contemporary society has assumed different crucial roles. Caiden (in Rosenbloom, 2005) has listed these roles as:

The preservation of polity, maintenance of stability and order, institutionalization of socio-economic change, management of large scale commercial services, ensuring growth and economic development, protection of the weaker sections of society, formation of public opinion, and influencing public policies and political trends.

Shafritz (2005) said that:

Public administration is what the government does. It is the totality of the working day activities of all the world's bureaucrats – whether those activities are performed legally or illegally, competently or incompetently, decently or despicably. Public administration is both direct and indirect. It is direct when government employees provide services to the public as varied as mortgage insurance, mail delivery and electricity. It is indirect when government pays private contractors to provide goods or services to citizens. Public administration is a phase in the public policy making. Public policy and public administration are two sides of the same coin. One decides the other does. They cannot be separated because one side cannot exist without the other. Public administration is implementing the public interest. The latter is the universal label in which political actors wrap the policies and programs that they advocate.

Generally, public administrative activities fall into the following main categories: (1) protective and regulatory activities, like maintaining police, fire, health protection agencies, national defense, education, conservation of natural resources (protective), and regulation of particular business or activities by the different agencies (regulatory); (2) promotional activities and/or assistance to particular economic and social groups, like farmers, factory workers, businessmen, women, and children in industry, the aged, the unemployed; (3) entrepreneurial activities, where a government owns and operates enterprises serving the public, like post offices, irrigation, public corporations or a municipal water or electric power department. Finally, public administration is concerned with organizational relationships and the problem of integration, which may be related to the following: the citizen, the structure of government, society and the economy, the human factor in administration, techniques and values, stages of national development, levels of operation, and to the ingredients that constitute the synthesis of public administration itself.

Public administration is both a practice or profession and an academic discipline. Greene (2005) stated that:

The practice involves the work of the people who are employed in the different government agencies, both in the national and local levels. The academic discipline involves studying the activities that take place in public agencies, mainly by professors and other researchers. Public administration is a multidisciplinary field that involves other academic areas including management and political science.

Henry (2005) noted that:

In the United States of America, there are over 29,000 students enrolled in master's degree programs in public administration and public affairs, over 8,000 undergraduate majors, and 2,900 doctoral students. Meeting the educational needs of these students, whether graduate or undergraduate, and, in the process, supplying the public with capable managers, is no easy task. Since universities are primarily responsible for advanced training in our society, they share a unique opportunity and obligation to prepare a profession of public servants equipped to discharge the responsibilities to the nation.

The study of public administration is concerned with understanding the complexities of public agencies. According to Henry (2005):

This includes understanding the environment in which public agencies function, how they function, what they do, and why they do it. By assembling a body of knowledge and working closely with those in the practical field, it is expected that the efforts of the discipline will help create better government, better public agencies, and therefore a better society. The body of knowledge is acquired through rigorous research involving methodologies that range from simple observations to complex econometric models. Public administration is a social science because it studies social phenomena and human behavior. The field of inquiry is broad and complex, just like the world in which public agencies exist.

The education and career paths of public administrators show the developments of public administration. Swope (2001) in a study conducted in the United States entitled "Ways to Sway an M.P.A." found out that:

There are now more than eighty public administration graduate programs specifically geared toward nonprofit management, and the number is growing. More to the point, the graduates of master's program in public administration or public policy do not necessarily go to work for government. Less than two-thirds of the graduates of all MPA programs are employed by governments on graduation, and at the twenty top programs, less than half are. The remainder is employed by independent organizations and private firms, in that order, and the percentage of public administration graduates going to work in these sectors is growing.

According to Light (1999) in a study entitled *The New Public Service*:

Not much more than a third (36 percent) of the public administration graduates of the elite schools in the United States of America started and then stayed with government. Nearly a fourth (23 percent) left government for the public or nonprofit sector. Far fewer (5 percent) started work in the nonprofit or private sectors, and then switched to government. These graduates of top twenty MPA programs are not leaving government for greener pastures; only 27 percent say that they departed government for a better salary, but almost three times that number (73 percent) say that they left for "more challenging work".

The foregoing literatures laid down the nature, scope, objectives and activities of public administration as a field of study and as a profession. These literatures provide the bases for the need to strengthen the public administration discipline and its continued relevance in training the men and women in the public organizations. This study finds its basis in the literatures which provide for the foundation of public administration as an academic discipline, however, the present investigation aims to further substantiate and establish the relevance of public administration education of the people in public organizations.

3. Methodology

3.1 Respondents of the Study

The respondents of this study were composed of three sets. The first set of respondents was composed of the 23 Master in Public Administration (MPA) graduates or 29.87 percent of the total respondents. The second set of respondents was the 16 immediate heads of the graduate-respondents or 20.78 percent of all the respondents; and the third set was composed of the 38 (49.35%) co-workers of the graduate respondents. The immediate heads and co-workers of the graduate were included as respondents in this study since they can give information in terms of the knowledge and skills acquired and put into practice by the MPA graduates after they have earned their degrees.

The graduate-respondents of this study have diverse backgrounds in terms of the degree earned before taking the MPA degree. They are working in the different local and national government agencies and institutions with diverse work descriptions and handling different positions. The mean age of the graduate respondents is 38.13, the median age is 39 and the standard deviation is 7.81. This result means that most of the respondents have pursued their Master in Public Administration (MPA) degree after they have already worked or have rendered services for several years in the agency or institution where they are employed. Many of the graduate respondents have not pursued their MPA degree after their graduation in college because work experience is a necessary requisite for entrance to the MPA program. On the other hand, many of the respondents in this study also belong to the age bracket between 41-45 years of age. Most of the graduates who have pursued their graduate studies at the age of 40 or late 30s were those who were handling higher positions and need to pursue higher studies necessary for promotion. There is an even distribution of graduate respondents between male and female. There were 52.17 percent who are male, and 47.83 percent were female. Gender would not determine the decision of the graduate respondents to enroll in the MPA degree but it is the need to pursue higher studies as needed in their employment and professional development. As to marital status, only 8.70 percent were single and 91.30 percent were married. This is consistent with the age distribution of the graduate respondents. Most of the respondents were already on their late 30s and above and under normal conditions, it is expected that they are already married at such age.

The second set of respondents who were the immediate heads of the graduates have a mean age of 43.56 with a median age of 44 and a standard deviation of 8.78. There were 14 or 87.50 percent of the immediate heads of the graduate-respondents who are married and only 2 or 12.50 percent who are single. In terms of their educational attainment, 9 respondents or 56.25 percent have master's degrees, 4 respondents or 25.00 percent have doctoral degrees, and 3 or 18.75 percent have earned units in the doctoral programs. The immediate heads of the graduate-respondents who are included as respondents of this study have served in their present position from 3 years to 12 years.

The mean age of co-employees of the graduates who were included as respondents in this study is 40.12, their mean age is 40 and the standard deviation is 13.46. Most of the respondents, at 84.21% of the co-employees of the graduate-respondents were married and the remaining 6 or 15.79 percent were single. As to their educational attainment, majority at 65.79% have only finished their college degrees, 11 respondents or 28.95 percent have already finished their master's degrees, and while 2 or 5.26 percent of the respondents are currently pursuing their master's degrees. In terms of the length of the service in the public organizations, the respondents have already served in the government for 3 to 20 years already.

3.2 Data-Gathering Instruments and Statistical Analysis of Data

The primary instrument used to gather the data is the questionnaire. There were two sets of questionnaires used in this study. The first set was administered to the graduate-respondents and consisted of two parts. The first part included items on the socio-demographic characteristics and personal profiles of the respondents such as their age, marital status, educational background, the professional examinations they pass, reasons for pursuing the MPA degree, their employment profiles, and their involvement in research and community extension services. The second part consisted of the indicators for the graduate-respondents to determine and assess the extent to

which they have acquired and practiced the knowledge and skills in public administration after they have earned their MPA degrees.

The second set of questionnaire was administered to the immediate heads and the co-employees of the graduates. The first part of the questionnaire consisted of items to determine the demographic characteristics of the respondents, and the second part was composed of the indicators for the respondents to assess the extent to which the graduates have acquired and practiced the knowledge and skills in public administration after they have earned their MPA degrees.

The scale on the extent to which the graduate-respondents have acquired and practiced the knowledge and skills in public administration after they have earned their MPA degrees ranges from 1 or *Very Low Extent* and 4 or *Very High Extent*. For analytic purpose, the mean scores of the respondents in each of the indicators and from each set of respondents were interpreted using the following arbitrary scale: 1.00 – 1.75 = *Very Low Extent*; 1.76 – 2.50 = *Low Extent*; 2.51 – 3.25 = *High Extent*; and 3.26 – 4.00 = *Very High Extent*.

To supplement the data gathered through the questionnaires, an interview guide was also formulated and used during the conduct of the interviews with several respondents from the different sets.

The data on the demographic characteristics of the different sets of respondents were analyzed using the descriptive statistics such as frequency count, percentage, mean, median and standard deviation. The data on the extent to which the graduates have acquired and practiced the knowledge and skills in public administration after they have earned their MPA degrees were analyzed through mean. The t-test was used to compare the self-assessment of the graduate-respondents of the extent to which they have acquired and practiced the knowledge and skills in public administration and the assessments of them by their immediate heads and their co-employees.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Professional Preparations Prior to Government Service

There were six (6) respondents or 26.09 percent who have finished engineering degrees before they started their MPA degree. They are distributed to the different fields of engineering as civil, industrial, agricultural, mechanical and electrical. All of them are working in the government agencies and institutions. There were four (4) respondents or 17.39 percent who have finished Bachelor of Arts degree before taking the MPA degree. Three (3) of them are teaching in the tertiary level. Four (4) respondents or 17.39 percent have finished the Accountancy degree and all of them are employed in the government agencies. Three (3) respondents or 13.04 percent have finished the Bachelor of Science in Agriculture degree and they are working either as municipal agriculturist or agricultural technologist. The two (2) respondents (8.70%) who have finished the education degree have taken the MPA degree because they are working in the government agencies. There is one (1) respondent (4.35%) for each of the following degrees: Criminology, Computer Science, Law and Doctor of Veterinary Medicine.

The degrees earned by the respondents before taking the MPA degree vary. This implies that the decision to enroll in the MPA degree is not determined by the degrees possessed by the respondents but by their employment in the government agencies or institutions. The respondents' undergraduate degrees also vary because most of them are employed in the different local and national government offices and agencies, as well as in the government-owned and controlled corporations. The offices and agencies to which they are currently employed include engineering office, agriculture and veterinary offices, Philippine National Police, Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, Central Bank of the Philippines, and City Water District. There are also respondents who are teaching in the government and private educational institutions.

The government employees need to pursue advance studies either for professional development or for employment promotion. They tend to take the MPA degree because it is related to the nature of their governmental functions. According to Henry (2005):

The government is the biggest employer of every state. Employment in the government includes all areas or sectors. This may range from protective and regulatory works like maintaining police, fire, health protection agencies, national defense, education, public works, conservation of natural resources, and regulation of particular business or activities by the different agencies. Employment in the government also includes works or jobs in the entrepreneurial activities, where a government owns and operates enterprises serving the public, like post offices, irrigation, public corporations or a municipal water or electric power department.

In terms of the professional examinations passed by the respondents most of them have passed the civil service professional examination. Other respondents have passed different government-administered examinations such as civil service sub-professional examination, engineering board examination, teacher's board examination, accountant's board examination, criminology board examination, and board examination for veterinarian. There were two (2) respondents who have not passed any of the professional board examinations.

Most of the respondents have passed the civil service professional examination because they are employed in the government agencies and institutions. The civil service professional examination is a requirement for their employment in the government agencies. Besides, the examination is open to all professionals who are interested to be employed in the government agencies. The Civil Service embraces every branch, agency, subdivision, and instrumentality of the government, including every government-owned or controlled corporation with original charter (Sec. 2, Article IX-B, 1987 Philippine Constitution). The intention of the foregoing constitutional provision is to extend the requirements and benefits of the Civil Service System over the administrative personnel of the entire governmental organization – national, local including the military organization (De Leon, 2013). Since the Civil Service covers all the government agencies and institutions including the government-owned and controlled corporations, employment into such offices requires a competitive examination which is administered by the Civil Service Commission. According to De Leon (2013):

The selection of any appointee to any government position shall be made only according to merit and fitness to be determined as far as practicable by competitive examination. Most of the graduate respondents in this study are employed in the government, so they need to pass the Civil Service examinations.

On the other hand, other graduate respondents have passed the licensure examinations as requisite for their employment. Passing the licensure examination in the field of specialization is also one of the requirements for employment to the government agencies and institutions. This is also provided by the Civil Service Commission provision in the Philippine Constitution that other methods of determining merit and fitness for employment the government can be resorted such as the academic achievement and records of the employee. In this instance, the professional license in one's field can be used (De Leon, 2013). This is true among the graduate respondents who are employed in the engineering offices of the different local government units.

4.2 Employment Profiles of the Respondents

A large number of respondents in this study composed of 19 or 82.61 percent are employed in the public sector, and only four (4) or 17.39 percent of the respondents are employed in the private sector. It is expected that most of the MPA graduates are employed in the public sector because the degree is intended for the administrators and employees of the different agencies and institutions of the government. The curriculum for the MPA degree program is intended for the students to be well-equipped with the knowledge and skills in public administration, public affairs and governance.

For Greene (2005), as an academic discipline, public administration involves studying the activities that take place in public agencies. The study of public administration is concerned with understanding the complexities of public agencies. According to Henry (2005):

This includes understanding the environment in which public agencies function, how they function, what they do, and why they do it. By assembling a body of knowledge and working closely with those in the practical field, it is believed that the efforts of the discipline will help create better government, better public agencies, and a better society.

In terms of the status of employment of the graduate respondents before they finished their MPA degree, there were 18 or 78.26 percent who have permanent employment status and five (5) respondents or 21.74 percent were having contractual, casual or probationary employment status. Presently, there are 22 respondents or 95.65 percent who have permanent employment status and only one (1) respondent or 4.35 percent is having a contractual/casual/probationary employment status. As to the movement in the employment of the respondents after finishing the MPA degree, there were four (4) respondents or 17.39 percent have moved from causal/contractual/probationary employment status to permanent status. There were 11 respondents or 47.83 percent who have enjoyed promotions in their positions and eight (8) or 34.78 percent have stayed in their position.

A large number of the respondents have positive movement in their employment as a result of obtaining their MPA degree and this is an indication that having MPA degree is good. Those who have stayed in the same position were employed in the government agencies and institutions. There are no movements in their

employment because in the public sector, it is necessary that there will be a vacant job item for a certain position before they could avail of the job movement even if they are qualified for the position.

As to the present job description of the respondents, there were 16 respondents or 69.57 percent are handling administrative positions in their present employment. They are working as supervisor, coordinator, Provincial Veterinarian, Human Resource Officers, information officer, engineers, Senior Officer, Chief Investigator, Municipal Agriculturist, Agricultural Technologists, operations officer and director.

Most of the graduate respondents are presently handling administrative positions in the government sector. The graduate respondents who are handling administrative positions were either handling lower administrative positions or middle administrative positions. The MPA degree is one of the necessary requisites for those employed in the public sector to become administrators. This degree is primarily intended to equip the public administrators with the necessary knowledge and skills in public administration. The result of the study on the positions handled or job description of the graduate respondents that majority of them are handling administrative positions is supported by de Guzman (2003). He noted that:

In the Philippines, a public administration academic program would be deemed relevant if it meets the educational needs for the administrators equipped with the necessary perspective, knowledge, skills, and attitudes to enable them to perform their various roles as expert, change agent and modernizer in the society.

There were three (3) respondents or 13.04 percent who are teaching in tertiary educational institutions, one (1) respondent or 4.35 percent each who works as a bank teller, a draftsman, a legislative staff and a cashier. For the graduate respondents who are teaching, the master's degree is a minimum requirement for them to teach in tertiary educational institutions. This is a requirement set by the Commission in Higher Education (CHED) in the Philippines. The need for the public administrators to pursue a master's degree in public administration and the requirement of the CHED for those who are teaching in college are among the motivations of the graduate-respondents to pursue the MPA degree.

The findings of the study on the employment profiles of the graduate respondents revealed that the MPA degree earned had helped them in terms of job advancement, promotions and movement in employment.

4.3 Extent to Which the Graduates Manifest the Knowledge and Skills in Public Administration

Table 1 (Appendix A) shows the results of the study on the extent to which the graduate-respondents, manifest the knowledge and skills in public administration as assessed by the graduates themselves, their immediate heads and their co-employees.

On the indicator whether the graduates have obtained the theories in public administration needed in the performance of their duties, the factor average of the mean ratings given by the respondents is 3.51 interpreted as *very high extent*. In terms of the application of the theories in public administration learned by the MPA graduates, the respondents gave a rating of 3.50 or *very high extent*. These results mean that the MPA graduates have obtained and have applied the theories in public administration needed in performing their duties and functions. These findings are substantiated by the immediate heads of the graduates during the interviews conducted. They emphasized that the learning acquired by the graduates when they studied in terms of the theories and concepts in public administration is very evident. This is especially true among the MPA graduates whose knowledge in public administration and governance is limited because their college education focused on their specific fields of specialization and not on government service.

The indicator on whether the graduates have obtained the necessary knowledge and skills in research has a factor average of 3.29 interpreted as *very high extent*, and the indicator on whether the graduates have developed the competency in research has a factor average of 3.17 interpreted as *high extent*. These results indicate that the MPA graduates may have obtained the knowledge and skills in research but they may not have developed the competencies or expertise in research. The knowledge in research that they have gained when they have studied was not applied because majority of the graduate-respondents have no involvement in research activities after they have finished the MPA degree. According to the graduate-respondents who were interviewed, they have a very limited opportunity to apply their knowledge and to develop their skills in research as the nature of their functions do not require research works. The immediate heads also stressed that the functions of most of the graduate-respondents are defined and they need to follow these functions. The knowledge acquired by them may not be applied because their functions are routinely done.

The indicator on whether the MPA graduates have obtained the necessary knowledge and skills in human resource and personnel administration needed in the performance of their duties has a factor average of 3.31

interpreted as *very high extent*. Most of the MPA graduates who are respondents in this study are employed as administrators yet their immediate heads and co-employees have perceived that they only manifest to a *high extent* the knowledge and skills in human resource and personnel administration. The MPA program pursued by the respondents may lack some subjects or training of students relative to the competencies and skills on human resource and personnel administration needed by the public administrators in the performance of their duties.

The indicator on whether the graduates have obtained the necessary knowledge and skills in public policy and program administration has a factor average of 3.42 interpreted as *very high extent*. The indicator on whether the graduate respondents have developed competency and skills in planning, programming and budgeting systems needed in the performance of their duties has also a factor average of 3.41 interpreted as *very high extent*. The graduates' superiors and co-employees perceived that the MPA graduates have obtained and manifest knowledge in public policy and program administration that includes planning, programming and budgeting. The immediate heads and the co-workers of the graduate-respondents have agreed during the interviews conducted that the latter manifest the knowledge and skills in planning and programming after they earned their MPA degrees. This is evident because many of the graduate-respondents themselves and their co-employees are involved in the planning of the activities and programs of their respective agencies or offices. The immediate heads and the co-workers observed that the graduate-respondents have acquired knowledge and developed competencies in planning and programming.

The respondents have, to a *very high extent*, perceived that the graduates obtained the necessary knowledge in local government administration and legislation with a factor average of 3.50. This means that the graduates learned the principles and theories as well as the practical application of the provisions on local government and legislation. This is due to the fact that most of the graduate-respondents are working in the local government units. Their experience working in the local government had helped them to obtain the knowledge in local government administration and governance.

The indicators on whether the graduates have developed competency in the management of an organization and whether they have developed ethics in public service and skills in public relations obtained factor averages of 3.32 and 3.49 respectively, both interpreted as *very high extent*. The findings revealed that the MPA graduates are competent in the management of their respective organizations, institutions or agencies. The MPA graduates have also manifested ethics in public service as they may have imbibed the values that they should practice as public servants and as taught to them when they took their degree.

In general, the factor average of the ratings given by all the respondents is 3.39 interpreted as *very high extent*. The factor average of the ratings given by the immediate heads of the graduate-respondents is 3.39, the co-workers ratings has a factor average of 3.37, and the ratings of the graduate-respondents themselves has a factor average of 3.39. These results revealed that the MPA graduates have learned and developed the knowledge and skills in public administration after they have finished their degrees. These knowledge and skills are also put into practice by the graduates in the performance of their duties and functions. Since the graduates have manifested the competencies in public administration in the performance of their duties, the knowledge, skills and values that the respondents need to acquire and practice have been inculcated to them through the public administration education that they pursued.

The results of the statistical analysis on the comparison of the mean results of the assessments on the extent to which the graduates manifest the knowledge and skills in Public Administration are shown on Table 2. The results revealed that there are *no significant differences* in the mean ratings given by the MPA graduates and their immediate heads with a *t-value* of 1.857 and a *p-value* of 0.090; between the mean ratings of the immediate heads and the co-workers with a *t-value* of 1.21 and a *p-value* of 0.248; and between the mean ratings of the MPA graduates themselves and their immediate heads and co-workers with a *t-value* of 0.539 and a *p-value* of 0.600. There are differences in the mean ratings of the MPA graduates, their immediate heads and their co-workers on the extent to which the graduates have acquired and practiced the knowledge and skills in public administration after they have finished their MPA degrees. But the results of the statistical analysis showed that evidence is not enough to show that the differences are significant.

On the other hand, the result of the statistical analysis revealed that there is a *significant difference* between the mean ratings given by the MPA graduates and their co-workers with a *t-value* of 2.387 and a *p-value* of 0.036. The graduate-respondents believed to a *very high extent* with a factor average of 3.42 that they have acquired and put into practice the knowledge and skills in public administration after they have earned their MPA degrees. Though the assessment of their co-workers revealed that the graduates have also to a *very high extent* with a factor average of 3.37 manifest the knowledge and skills in public administration after they earned their MPA

degrees, they may not have observed a substantial change in the performance of the duties and functions of the graduates as a result of earning the MPA degree. As explained by Bertucci (2007), education and training is recognized as significant in the effective public administration and governance. However, the impact of the education and training given to the students is long-term rather than immediate.

4.4 Relevance of Public Administration Education to Practice

Almost all of the 22 respondents who were interviewed said that they took the MPA degree for their professional development. Professional development refers to skills and knowledge attained for both personal development and career advancement. Jasper (2006) stated that:

Professional development encompasses all types of facilitated learning opportunities, ranging from college degrees to formal coursework, conferences and informal learning opportunities situated in practice. A wide variety of people, such as teachers, military officers and non-commissioned officers, health care professionals, lawyers, accountants and engineers engage in professional development. Individuals may participate in professional development because of an interest in lifelong learning, a sense of moral obligation, to maintain and improve professional competence, enhance career progression, keep abreast of new technology and practice, or to comply with professional regulatory organizations.

Individuals who are working in the government agencies and institutions pursue graduate degree on Public Administration for professional development education in order to strengthen their knowledge on their works as public servants. The graduate respondents have pursued the MPA degree for them to be equipped with the knowledge and skills in public administration. These knowledge and skills include but are not limited to the following: theories in public administration, research, personnel administration, public policy and program administration, planning, budgeting, local government administration, local legislation, administrative law, management and organization, ethics in public service, policy analysis and program advocacy. These competencies are necessary for the public employees in their respective functions in the government agencies and institutions.

There were 17 respondents who responded that they took up MPA for career advancement and 14 respondents who took up MPA degree for employment promotion. Earning a master's degree in Public Administration prepare individuals for career advancement opportunities in the public sector. A master's degree in Public Administration is one of the basic requirements for rank promotion or career advancement opportunities for those employed in the public sector (Career Overview, 2015). The graduate respondents in this study have also pursued the master's degree in public administration because it is a requirement for their employment promotion.

5. Conclusions

Public administration education is relevant in the professional development of the men and women in public organizations. This is evident in the findings of the study which revealed that the graduate-respondents have acquired knowledge and developed competencies in public administration and governance as a consequence of the attainment of their MPA degrees. When these knowledge and competencies are utilized by the graduate-respondents in the performance of their duties and responsibilities as public servants, this will result to an effective public administration and governance. The results of this study then, support the widely recognized role of public administration education and training in the enhancement of the quality of service afforded to the public.

The relevance of public administration education among the men and women in public organizations can be seen in the development of knowledge and skills that they should possess as public servants. Most of the government employees possess varied professional degrees and they may have not learned the craft of public service when they entered into employment. The professional preparations of many of the government employees were more on the technical aspect and on the theory related to their fields of specializations. Working in the public organizations requires not only the technical knowledge and the theoretical knowledge in one's field of specialization. Knowledge about the government, and other aspects required in government service like public interest and ethics in public service are also important for government employees and all these are not learned in their professional preparations, but are taught in public administration courses.

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Appendices

Table 1. Extent to which the graduates manifest the knowledge and skills in public administration

Indicators	Immediate Head (IM)	Co-Worker (CW)	Factor Average (IM & CW)	Graduates (G)	Factor Average (IM, CW, G)	Interpretation
1. The employee has obtained the theories in public administration, like systems theory, and theories on governance, needed in the performance of his/her duties.	3.48	3.52	3.50	3.53	3.51	Very High Extent
2. The employee has applied the theories in public administration that he/she has gained in the performance of his/her duties.	3.51	3.43	3.47	3.56	3.50	Very High Extent
3. The employee has obtained the necessary knowledge and skills in research needed in the performance of his/her duties.	3.28	3.30	3.29	3.29	3.29	Very High Extent
4. The employee has developed competency in research.	3.14	3.16	3.15	3.20	3.17	High Extent
5. The employee has obtained the necessary knowledge and skills in human resource and personnel administration needed in the performance of his/her duties.	3.24	3.24	3.24	3.44	3.31	Very High Extent
6. The employee has obtained the necessary knowledge and skills in public policy and	3.43	3.39	3.41	3.43	3.42	Very High Extent

program administration needed in the performance of his/her duties.						
7. The employee has developed competency and skills in planning, programming and budgeting systems.	3.39	3.42	3.41	3.43	3.41	Very High Extent
8. The employee has obtained the necessary knowledge in local government administration and legislation.	3.50	3.49	3.50	3.52	3.50	Very High Extent
9. The employee has developed competency in the management of an organization.	3.35	3.29	3.32	3.33	3.52	Very High Extent
10. The employee has developed ethics in public service and has obtained skills in public relations.	3.48	3.46	3.47	3.54	3.49	Very High Extent
11. In general, the employee has obtained and developed knowledge and skills in the following methodological areas:						
a. Policy Analysis	3.34	3.35	3.35	3.38	3.36	Very High Extent
b. Management	3.48	3.45	3.47	3.40	3.44	Very High Extent
c. Program Advocacy	3.40	3.38	3.38	3.45	3.41	Very High Extent
Factor Average	3.39	3.37	3.38	3.42	3.49	Very High Extent

Table 2. Comparison of the mean results of the assessments on the extent to which the graduates manifest the knowledge and skills in public administration

Respondents	Mean	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
MPA Graduates	3.42	1.857	0.090	Not Significant
Immediate Heads	3.39			
MPA Graduates	3.42	2.387*	0.036	Significant
Co-Workers	3.37			
Immediate Heads	3.39	1.21	0.248	Not Significant
Co-Workers	3.37			
MPA Graduates	3.42	0.539	0.600	Not Significant
Immediate Heads & Co-Workers	3.38			

*Significant at $p \leq 0.05$

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