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EMPLOYABILITY, COMPETENCY DEVELOPMENT, AND CAREER OUTCOMES OF MASTER IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION GRADUATES (2021–2026)

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ABSTRACT

This descriptive tracer study examined the employability, competency development, and career outcomes of Master in Public Administration (MPA) graduates of Bataan Peninsula State University (BPSU) from 2021 to 2026. Using total enumeration, all thirteen (13) accessible graduates participated. A structured questionnaire adapted from the CHED Graduate Tracer Study instrument was used to gather data on graduate profiles, employment characteristics, program contribution, and overall program effectiveness. Findings reveal that all respondents are employed full-time with permanent status, demonstrating a 100% employability rate. The majority are female mid-career public sector professionals, with 92.3% reporting direct relevance between their MPA degree and current employment. Career advancement was the primary motivation for enrollment (46.15%). The degree yielded measurable returns: 69.2% were promoted, 61.5% received salary increases, and 53.8% earned professional awards or certifications. The MPA program was rated Very High in its contribution to interpersonal and soft skills (WM = 4.62), cognitive and technical skills (WM = 4.46), and community engagement (WM = 4.27), while professional advancement and career growth received a High rating (WM = 4.07). Overall program effectiveness was rated Very High (WM = 4.46), with faculty competence identified as the standout institutional strength. The study concludes that the BPSU MPA program effectively fulfills its mandate under outcomes-based education frameworks, though improvements in information technology integration, extracurricular programming, and international engagement are recommended to further enhance program quality and graduate competitiveness.

KEYWORDS: *graduate employability; competency development; career outcomes; outcomes-based education; public sector; higher education*

INTRODUCTION

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the Philippines are mandated to ensure that their academic programs are high-level, globally competitive, and responsive to the needs of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Under CHED Memorandum Order (CMO) No. 15, Series of 2019, graduate education is tasked with producing advanced competencies that spur leadership, innovation, and good governance (CHED, 2019). To validate these goals, graduate tracer studies have become a cornerstone of the Philippine outcomes-based quality assurance system, serving as an essential tool for assessing the alignment between advanced academic training and the complex requirements of the modern labor market, particularly in terms of graduate employability, program relevance, and institutional accountability(Dave, DBM et al., 2025). Click or tap here to enter text.

Tracer studies provide empirical data on graduates' career trajectories and employment outcomes by systematically tracking their transition into the workforce. These studies are critical in evaluating higher education programs, as they assess graduate employability, the effectiveness of academic training, and the extent to which acquired knowledge and skills are applied in professional practice. (Agoylo et al., 2024) Furthermore, recent policy updates in CMO No. 21, Series of 2025 emphasize that graduate programs must demonstrate "scholarly output and knowledge advancement," making tracer studies even more vital for documenting how research training translates into workplace innovation and evidence-based decision-making in the public sector (CHED, 2025).

Tracer studies provide systematic and empirical data on the employment status, career progression, and professional experiences of graduates after completing their academic programs. These studies are widely used in higher education to characterize graduates' employment profiles and assess program effectiveness and relevance (Garcia et al., 2024). They are integral to outcomes-based education (OBE), as they evaluate the extent to which acquired knowledge, skills, and competencies are applied in the workplace (Selda & Galicia, 2025). Moreover, tracer studies support evidence-based decision-making by serving as a basis for curriculum enhancement, program evaluation, and institutional planning, ensuring that academic programs remain responsive to labor market and societal needs (Jodelle John A. Enriquez et al., 2024).

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The Master in Public Administration program is designed to develop advanced competencies in governance, policy analysis, administrative management, and leadership in public service (CHED, 2011). Anchored on the principles of good governance, accountability, and public service effectiveness, the MPA curriculum aligns with broader public administration theory that underscores ethical responsiveness, citizen-centered service, and institutional integrity in public sector work (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2000). As such, the program seeks to enhance competencies in policy analysis, administrative and organizational management, fiscal governance, and community development, which are essential functions of modern public administration practice (Rosenbloom et al., 2022).

In the context of CHED's emphasis on graduate outcomes and employability, graduate education is recognized as a mechanism for enhancing professional advancement, leadership capacity, and specialized competencies (Melba et al., 2021). Tracer studies in the Philippines further show that graduates pursue master's programs primarily for career progression, promotion, and professional development (Nunez et al., 2022). Empirical findings also indicate that completion of graduate studies contributes to improved employability, career advancement, and workplace performance, including promotions and salary increases among graduates (Maghamil, 2025). These findings highlight the perceived value of graduate education in strengthening human capital and improving organizational effectiveness in both public and private sectors (Melba et al., 2021).

However, beyond these perceptions, there is a need to generate comprehensive data on graduates' employment characteristics, such as employment status, job relevance, position level, and income progression. Equally important is the evaluation of how the competencies acquired from the program—such as leadership, technical skills, work values, and decision-making abilities—are applied in their respective workplaces. These dimensions are central to CHED's framework for assessing program outcomes and institutional effectiveness.

This tracer study focuses on the graduates of the Master in Public Administration program from 2021 to 2026. Specifically, it aims to determine the employability profile of graduates, assess the relevance and usefulness of the competencies acquired, and evaluate the overall contribution of the program to their personal and professional growth. The study also seeks to identify gaps between academic preparation and workplace demands, thereby providing a basis for curriculum review and continuous quality improvement.

The results of this study are expected to serve as a valuable input for institutional planning, accreditation processes, and policy formulation. More importantly, the findings will contribute to strengthening the MPA program in producing highly competent, ethical, and responsive public servants who can effectively contribute to national and local governance. In alignment with CHED's quality assurance agenda, this tracer study reinforces the institution's commitment to delivering relevant, outcomes-based, and transformative graduate education.

Statement of the Problem

This tracer study aimed to determine the employability, professional development, and satisfaction of graduates of the Master in Public Administration (MPA) program of Bataan Peninsula State University (BPSU) from 2021 to 2026. It sought to assess how the program contributed to their personal and professional growth and its relevance to their present employment and career trajectories.

Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the graduates in terms of:
   a. Age;
   b. Sex;
   c. Civil Status;
   d. Year graduated;
   e. Place of Work;
   f. Type of Organization?
2. What is the current employment profile of the graduates in terms of:
   a. Employment type;
   b. Employment status;
   c. Current position in the company;
   d. Monthly income range:
   e. Number of years in the company?
3. What were the primary reasons for the respondents pursuing the MPA degree?
4. To what extent is the graduates' current employment related to their MPA degree?
5. What is the contribution of the MPA degree to the graduates in terms of:
   a. Award received;
   b. Promotion; and
   c. Salary increased?
6. How do the respondents rate the contribution of the MPA program to their:
   a. Cognitive & Technical Skills
   b. Interpersonal & Soft Skills
   c. Professional Advancement & Career Growth
   d. Community & Global Engagement
7. How do the respondents rate the overall effectiveness of the Master in Public Administration (MPA) program they completed at BPSU?

Theoretical Foundations

This study is anchored on three complementary frameworks that bridge the gap between academic preparation and professional practice namely Outcomes-Based Education (OBE), USEM Model, and Human Capital Theory (HCT).

The primary framework of this study is Outcomes-Based Education (OBE), which prioritizes the demonstrable results of

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the learning process over the process itself. As mandated by CHED Memorandum Order (CMO) No. 15, Series of 2019, graduate programs must transition from traditional input-based systems to an outcomes-based quality assurance (QA) architecture. Under this model, the Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)—specifically the advanced leadership, policy analysis, and fiscal management skills of the MPA program—are validated only when graduates can demonstrate these competencies in real-world administrative roles (CHED, 2019). This study utilizes the OBE feedback loop to determine if the "advanced high-level" knowledge and work values prescribed in the curriculum have effectively translated into workplace proficiency ((Spady, 1994).

This study further integrates the USEM Model (Understanding, Skills, Efficacy, and Metacognition), which suggests that employability is a complex set of achievements rather than a simple set of core skills. In the context of 2024 Philippine labor market trends, employability is defined not just by initial job placement, but by "career sustainability"—the ability of a graduate to navigate shifting public sector demands and maintain long-term professional growth (Kornelakis & Petrakaki, 2020; updated in PIDS, 2024)Tutor et al., 2021.). For MPA graduates, this theory examines the synergy between technical administrative knowledge and transferable "soft skills" such as emotional intelligence and adaptive leadership in governance.

Finally, the study is grounded in Human Capital Theory (HCT), which posits that investments in education and training increase an individual's productivity and economic value. According to recent literature on Philippine graduate education, a Master's degree functions as a critical investment that yields higher returns in the form of "wage premiums" and upward mobility within the civil service (Becker, 1993; cited in (World Bank, 2024). Within this study, HCT is used to measure how the specialized training received in the MPA program enhances the graduate's "capital"—leading to promotions, increased administrative responsibility, and greater contributions to national development goals.

Conceptual Framework

The study adopts the Input-Process-Output (IPO) model, a systems-based framework that illustrates the transformation of educational inputs into measurable professional outcomes. This paradigm highlights the logical flow from the graduates' baseline profile and institutional resources to the ultimate realization of career advancement and program relevance.



The Input phase represents the variables and resources brought into the educational system. This includes the Graduate Profile, which accounts for the diverse backgrounds, professional experiences, and demographic characteristics of the MPA students upon entry. Complementing this are the MPA Program Components, which serve as the institutional pillars of the degree:

- Curriculum**:** Aligned with CMO No. 15, s. 2019, ensuring theoretical and practical rigor.
- Instruction**:** The pedagogical strategies used to deliver advanced public administration concepts.
- Faculty**:** The expertise, research productivity, and professional qualifications of the academic staff.
- Resources**:** The physical and digital infrastructure, including libraries and research facilities, that support graduate-level inquiry.

The Process phase describes the academic journey and the internal mechanisms used to shape the graduates. It focuses on Competency Development, where students internalize and refine their Knowledge, Skills, and Work Values, specifically tailoring them for Leadership in the public sector. This phase also evaluates the Program Delivery and Learning Experience, examining how the interaction between students and the academic environment facilitates the transition from "learner" to "specialist." This stage is anchored in Outcomes-Based Education (OBE), ensuring that every learning activity is geared toward a specific, measurable workplace proficiency (Spady, 1994; CHED, 2019).

The Output phase represents the tangible results of the MPA program as manifested in the graduates' professional lives and the

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program's overall standing. This is categorized into three key areas:

- Employability**:** Assessing the immediate success of graduates through their Employment Status, the Relevance of their current roles to the MPA curriculum, and their Income levels.
- Career Progression**:** Measuring long-term growth through Promotions and the assumption of Strategic Leadership Roles in government or non-government organizations.
- Program Feedback and Recommendations**:** Serving as the critical evaluative component, this output provides the data necessary for Curriculum Enhancement and Institutional Quality Assurance.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive research design utilizing a graduate tracer study approach. The descriptive method was appropriate as it aimed to systematically describe the employment profile, career progression, and professional experiences of Master in Public Administration (MPA) graduates from 2021 to 2026.

The tracer study approach enabled the researcher to gather empirical data on graduates' employment status, job relevance, and perceived contribution of the program to their personal and professional development. It also examined the relationship between the graduates' reasons for pursuing the MPA degree and the relevance of their current employment, consistent with outcomes-based education (OBE) and CHED quality assurance frameworks.

The study was conducted at the Bataan Peninsula State University Graduate School offering the Master in Public Administration program. The respondents are graduates who are currently employed in various sectors such as government, private organizations, and academic organizations. The target population of the study consisted of all graduates of the Master in Public Administration program from 2021 to 2026.

A total enumeration technique was utilized, wherein all accessible graduates within the specified period were invited to participate in the study. This approach ensured a more comprehensive and representative assessment of graduate outcomes.

The study utilized a structured questionnaire adapted from the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Graduate Tracer Study (GTS) instrument and modified it to suit the objectives of the research. The instrument was designed to gather relevant data on the graduates' profile, employment characteristics, career outcomes, and assessment of the MPA program.

The data collected were analyzed using appropriate descriptive and inferential statistical tools to answer the research questions. Descriptive Statistics specifically frequency and percentage distribution were used to describe and summarize graduate profile (age, sex, civil status, year graduated, place of work, type of organization), employment profile (employment type, status, years in company, position), career outcomes (awards, promotion, salary increase).

Weighted Mean was used to measure contribution of the MPA program across the four domains cognitive & technical skills, interpersonal & soft skills, professional advancement & career growth, community & global engagement and

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the analysis and interpretation of data gathered from the graduates of the Master in Public Administration (MPA) program from 2021 to 2026. The discussion focuses on the graduates' employment profile, career outcomes, motivations for pursuing the degree, and the overall implications of these findings in assessing program effectiveness.

I. Profile of the Graduates

Age

More than half of the respondents (53.85%) fall within the 30–39 age group, indicating that the majority of MPA graduates are young to mid-career professionals. Meanwhile, 46.16% are aged 40 and above, suggesting that the program also attracts experienced professionals seeking career advancement or further specialization. This distribution highlights that the MPA program caters to a broad range of career stages, particularly individuals aiming for upward mobility.

Table 1.
Distribution of Respondents by Demographic Profile

Profile	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age Group	30–39	7	53.85%
	40–49	3	23.08%
	50–59	3	23.08%
Sex	Male	5	38.46%
	Female	8	61.54%
Civil Status	Married	10	76.92%
	Single	3	23.08%
Year Graduated	2021	2	15.38%
	2022	2	15.38%
	2023	2	15.38%
	2025	1	7.69%

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	2026	6	46.15%
Place of Work	Local	11	84.62%
	Abroad	2	15.38%
Type of Organization	Public	11	84.62%
	Private	2	15.38%

Sex

The majority of respondents are female (61.54%), indicating strong female participation in the MPA program. This suggests increasing representation of women in public administration and leadership-related fields. This trend reflects the growing role of women in governance, administration, and organizational leadership.

Civil Status

Most respondents (76.92%) are married, which may imply that many are established professionals balancing career, education, and family responsibilities. This further supports the idea that the MPA program is pursued by individuals who are already engaged in professional careers and are seeking advancement.

Year Graduated

Nearly half of the respondents (46.15%) graduated in 2026, indicating that the dataset is dominated by recent graduates. This suggests that the findings largely reflect current labor market outcomes and recent program effectiveness.

Place of Work

A large majority (84.62%) of graduates are employed locally, indicating that the MPA program primarily contributes to national and local workforce development, particularly in public service. However, the presence of graduates working abroad (15.38%) demonstrates the program's global relevance and transferability of competencies.

Type of Organization

Most respondents (84.62%) are employed in the public sector, which is consistent with the nature of the MPA program. This indicates strong alignment between the program's objectives and actual employment outcomes. The presence of graduates in the private sector (15.38%) suggests that MPA competencies are also applicable beyond government institutions, particularly in management and organizational roles.

II. Employment Profile

Employment Type and Status

All thirteen (13) respondents, representing 100% of the population, are currently employed full-time and hold permanent positions in their respective organizations. This finding indicates an exceptionally high level of employability among the graduates of the MPA program. A 100% employment rate suggests that the program effectively equips graduates with competencies that are highly valued in the labor market. Furthermore, the fact that all respondents are in permanent employment reflects not only employability but also job stability and security, which are strong indicators of career success.

This result reinforces the principles of outcomes-based education, where academic programs are evaluated based on their ability to produce graduates who can successfully integrate into the workforce. It also supports the notion that advanced education contributes to improved employment outcomes and professional advancement.

Table 2.

Employment Profile

Profile	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Employment Type	Employed/Working Fulltime	13	100%
Employment Status	Permanent	13	100%
Position Level	Supervisory/Managerial	4	30.77%
	Professional/Technical	9	69.23%
	Rank-and-File	0	0%
Monthly Income of Graduates	Below 50,000	4	30.77%
	50,000–80,000	4	30.77%
	Above 80,000	5	38.46%
Years of Service	1–5 years	3	23.08%
	6–10 years	3	23.08%
	11–15 years	4	30.77%
	16+ years	3	23.08%

Position Level Classification

The data show that many graduates occupy mid-level to supervisory and specialized roles, particularly in administrative, managerial, and technical positions. Notably, several respondents hold supervisory positions, indicating leadership roles while others occupy professional and technical roles (e.g., Accountant III, QA Officer, Professor). This suggests that the MPA program contributes to career advancement and leadership development, aligning with its objective of producing competent public sector managers.

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Monthly Income of Graduates

The results reveal that a significant number of graduates earn mid to high-level salaries, with several earning ₱80,000 and above and some even earning above ₱100,000. This indicates that the MPA program contributes positively to economic mobility and earning potential, supporting Human Capital Theory, which posits that higher education leads to increased productivity and income. The distribution also suggests that graduates are not limited to entry-level positions but are progressing into higher-paying roles.

Years of Service

The respondents reported varying lengths of service, ranging from 2 to 22 years, indicating a mix of early-career and experienced professionals. The variation in years of service suggests that the MPA program attracts both mid-career professionals and experienced employees seeking career advancement, as well as individuals aiming to strengthen their qualifications. Graduates with longer tenure (10–22 years) may have pursued the MPA degree to enhance their qualifications for promotion, while those with shorter tenure (2–4 years) may use the degree as a foundation for career entry and progression. This diversity reflects the program's relevance across different career stages and highlights its role in lifelong learning and professional development.

III. Reasons for Pursuing the MPA Degree

Table 3

Summary of Motivations

Reason Category	Frequency	Percentage
Career Advancement	6	46.15%
Professional Development	4	30.77%
Personal Growth	2	15.38%
Public Service Motivation	1	7.69%

The findings indicate that the primary motivations for pursuing the MPA degree are largely career-oriented and developmental. Many respondents emphasized the desire to enhance their ability to serve the public effectively, improve their professional competencies, and qualify for higher positions.

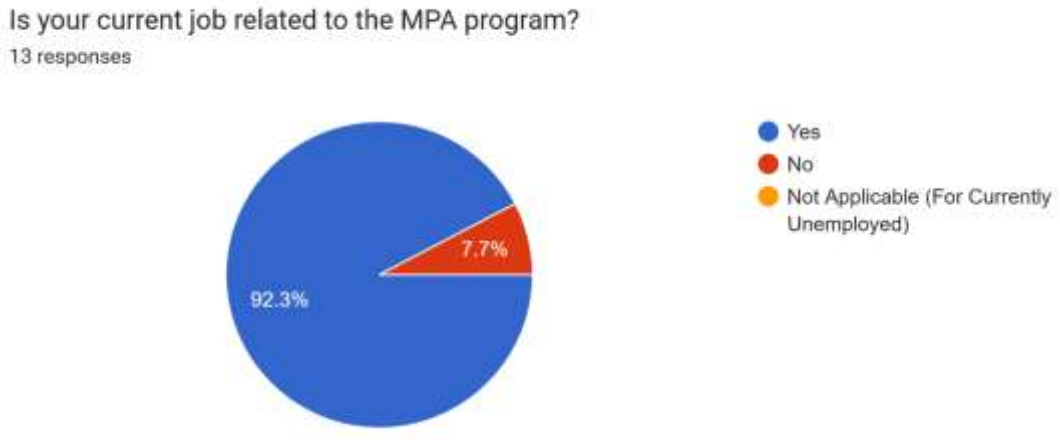
These motivations align with the objectives of the MPA program, which seeks to develop competent, ethical, and service-oriented public administrators. The emphasis on public service capacity also reflects a strong commitment to governance and community development, which is central to the field of public administration. Additionally, the desire for personal growth and knowledge acquisition highlights the role of graduate education in fostering continuous learning and intellectual development**.**

IV. Extent of Relationship Between Current Employment and the MPA Degree

The data reveals an overwhelming alignment between the MPA program and the graduates' professional functions. As shown in the findings**,** 92.3% of the respondents (12 out of 13) indicated that their current jobs are directly related to their MPA degree. Only a negligible 7.7% reported a lack of relevance between their studies and their current employment.

Figure 1

Relationship between current employment and the MPA degree



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This high percentage suggest that the MPA program at Bataan Peninsula State University (BPSU) is effectively fulfilling its mandate under CMO No. 15, s. 2019, which requires graduate programs to provide "advanced high-level" professional training that is responsive to the needs of the public sector.

The relevance is further evidenced by the specific roles held by the graduates. The majority of respondents occupy strategic positions within government agencies and local government units (LGUs), supervising officers, accountant, assistant professors, etc. These roles require a deep understanding of fiscal governance, policy analysis, and administrative management—core pillars of the MPA curriculum. The data implies that graduates are not merely "employed" but are specifically utilized in capacities where their advanced administrative training is a functional necessity.

From the perspective of Employability Theory (USEM Model), this 92.3% relevance rate indicates strong "Disciplinary Understanding" (U). It suggests that the "Hard Knowledge" provided by the program is being directly applied to solve complex public sector challenges.

Furthermore, according to Human Capital Theory, the high degree of job relevance suggests that the investment in the MPA degree has successfully increased the "economic and professional value" of the graduates. Because the work is relevant to the degree, graduates are better positioned for the 69.2% promotion rate observed in this cohort, as their academic specialization directly supports their eligibility for higher-level technical and managerial positions in the Civil Service.

V. Contributions of the MPA Degree to Professional Advancement

Professional Recognition and Awards

The findings indicate that the MPA program significantly enhances the professional credibility of its graduates. According to the data, 53.8% of graduates reported receiving awards or professional certifications after completing their degree. This majority suggests that the competencies gained—such as advanced research capabilities and administrative efficiency—have made graduates more competitive and recognized within their respective organizations. This alignment with "Efficacy Beliefs" from the USEM Model suggests that graduates do not only possess the knowledge but also the confidence to perform at award-winning levels.

Table 4

Contributions of MPA degree to professional development

Indicator	Percentage of Graduates	Impact Interpretation
Promotion	**69.2%**	High vertical mobility and leadership readiness.
Salary Increase	**61.5%**	Positive economic return on educational investment.
Awards/Certs	**53.8%**	Enhanced professional credibility and recognition.

Career Mobility and Promotion

The most striking evidence of the program's impact is found in the rate of career advancement. The study reveals that 69.2% of the respondents have been promoted since obtaining their MPA degree. In the context of the Philippine Civil Service, where a Master's degree is often a prerequisite for Division Chief or executive-level positions (Salary Grade 24 and above). Graduates transitioned into high-level positions such as Supervising Administrative Officer, Accountant III, and Assistant Professor, validating the program's success in preparing students for greater institutional responsibility.

Economic Returns and Salary Increases

Directly linked to career mobility is the economic value of the degree. The data shows that 61.5% of graduates experienced a salary increase following their graduation.

A significant portion of the cohort now earns between ₱60,001 and ₱90,000, with 15.4% exceeding the ₱100,000 monthly bracket. This economic trajectory supports Human Capital Theory, which posits that advanced education increases an individual's productivity and, consequently, their market value. The "wage premium" observed here is a tangible manifestation of the advanced high-level competencies mandated by CMO No. 15, s. 2019.

The evidence strongly suggests that the MPA degree is a high-yield investment for professionals in the public sector. With 69.2% of graduates achieving promotion and over half receiving professional awards, the degree serves as a primary driver for both vertical career mobility and institutional recognition. These outcomes confirm that the program effectively translates academic learning into measurable professional success, fulfilling both the individual's aspirations for growth and the government's need for highly skilled, ethical leaders.

VI. Contributions of the MPA Program to Graduates' Competencies and Development

This section presents the findings of the tracer study with respect to the perceived contribution of the Master of Public Administration (MPA) program to its graduates. Specifically, it addresses the research question: How do the respondents rate the contribution of the MPA program to their (a) Cognitive and Technical Skills, (b) Interpersonal and Soft Skills, (c) Professional Advancement and Career Growth, and (d) Community and Global Engagement?

Cognitive and Technical Skills

Table 5 presents the graduates' assessment of the MPA program's contribution to their cognitive and technical competencies. This dimension encompasses Research Capability, Learning

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Efficiency, Problem Solving Skills, Information Technology Skills, and Critical Thinking Skills.

Table 5.
Graduates' Assessment of the MPA Program's Contribution to Cognitive and Technical Skills

Category	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Research Capability	**4.54**	Very High
Learning Efficiency	**4.62**	Very High
Problem Solving Skills	**4.46**	Very High
Information Technology Skills	**4.23**	Very High
Critical Thinking Skills	**4.46**	Very High

Legend: 4.21-5.00 – Very High; 3.41- 4.20 – High; 2.61 – 3.40 – Moderate; 1.81-2.60 – Low; 1.00 – 1.80 - Poor

As shown in Table 5, all indicators under Cognitive and Technical Skills were rated Very High, with a composite weighted mean of 4.46. Learning Efficiency registered the highest score at 4.62, suggesting that the MPA program significantly enhances graduates' ability to acquire and process information effectively. Research Capability (WM = 4.54) and both Problem Solving Skills and Critical Thinking Skills (WM = 4.46 each) also posted notably high ratings, affirming the program's rigor in developing analytical competencies essential to public administration practice.

Information Technology Skills, while still rated Very High (WM = 4.23), posted the comparatively lowest score in this cluster. These findings suggest that the program is highly effective in strengthening core intellectual abilities essential for public administration, particularly in analytical thinking, research, and decision-making. The slightly lower rating in information technology skills may indicate an opportunity for the program to further enhance digital competencies, which are increasingly important in modern governance.

Interpersonal and Soft Skills

Table 6 presents the ratings for the program's contribution to graduates' interpersonal and soft skills, covering Communication Skills, People Skills, Personality Development, and Academic Needs.

Table 6.
Graduates' Assessment of the MPA Program's Contribution to Interpersonal and Soft Skills

Category	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Communication Skills	**4.62**	Very High
People Skills	**4.62**	Very High
Personality Development	**4.62**	Very High
Academic Needs	**4.62**	Very High

Legend: 4.21-5.00 – Very High; 3.41- 4.20 – High; 2.61 – 3.40 – Moderate; 1.81-2.60 – Low; 1.00 – 1.80 - Poor

The Interpersonal and Soft Skills cluster recorded a composite weighted mean of 4.62, the highest among all four dimensions. All four indicators obtained a weighted mean of 4.62, each interpreted as Very High. These results suggest a strong and consistent perception among graduates that the MPA program significantly contributes to the development of interpersonal competencies. Communication Skills, People Skills, Personality Development, and Academic Needs were perceived as equally and substantially enhanced by the program.

The uniformity of ratings across this cluster is noteworthy. It implies that the MPA curriculum, through its combination of lecture-based instruction, group dynamics, collaborative projects, and seminar-style discussions, provides a robust environment for the holistic development of soft skills that are critical for public sector leadership and management.

Professional Advancement and Career Growth

Table 3 presents the graduates' perception of how the MPA program has contributed to their professional advancement, specifically in terms of Meeting Present and Future Professional Needs, Salary Improvement and Promotion, and Opportunities Abroad.

Table 7.
Graduates' Assessment of the MPA Program's Contribution to Professional Advancement and Career Growth

Category	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Meeting Present & Future Professional Needs	**4.38**	Very High
Salary Improvement & Promotion	**3.92**	High
Opportunities Abroad	**3.92**	High

Legend: 4.21-5.00 – Very High; 3.41- 4.20 – High; 2.61 – 3.40 – Moderate; 1.81-2.60 – Low; 1.00 – 1.80 - Poor

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Table 7 reveals a nuanced picture of the program's perceived contribution to professional advancement, yielding a composite weighted mean of 4.07. Meeting Present and Future Professional Needs (WM = 4.38, Very High) was rated highest in this cluster, indicating that graduates largely view the MPA program as directly aligned with the demands of their current and anticipated roles in public service.

In contrast, Salary Improvement and Promotion (WM = 3.92) and Opportunities Abroad (WM = 3.92) both registered High ratings — the lowest scores recorded across all fourteen indicators. While still favorable, these ratings suggest that tangible career benefits such as salary increases, promotions, and international employment opportunities may be less directly attributable to the MPA degree, or that these outcomes may take longer to materialize. These findings are consistent with the broader literature on graduate program returns, which often highlight a lag between degree attainment and measurable salary or positional advancement, particularly in the public sector where compensation structures are governed by standardized salary grades.

Community and Global Engagement

Table 8 presents the graduates' assessment of the program's contribution to community and global engagement through Exposure to Local Community and Exposure to International Community.

Table 8.

Graduates' Assessment of the MPA Program's Contribution to Community and Global Engagement

Category	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Exposure to Local Community	**4.38**	Very High
Exposure to International Community	**4.15**	High

Legend: 4.21-5.00 – Very High; 3.41- 4.20 – High; 2.61 – 3.40 – Moderate; 1.81-2.60 – Low; 1.00 – 1.80 - Poor

The Community and Global Engagement cluster yielded a composite weighted mean of 4.27. Exposure to Local Community (WM = 4.38) was rated Very High, reflecting graduates' strong sense that the program sensitizes them to domestic governance issues, community-based concerns, and local public administration contexts. This is consistent with the MPA program's mandate to prepare public administrators who are responsive to the needs of Filipino communities.

Exposure to International Community (WM = 4.15), while still favorable and rated High, was comparatively lower. This may indicate that while the curriculum incorporates comparative governance and international public administration perspectives, opportunities for direct international engagement — such as exchange programs, international internships, or globally integrated coursework — may be more limited. Strengthening this dimension could enhance graduates' preparedness for an increasingly globalized public administration environment.

Overall, the study results affirm that the MPA program makes a substantial and wide-ranging contribution to its graduates. The highest-rated dimension was Interpersonal and Soft Skills (WM = 4.62), followed by Cognitive and Technical Skills (WM = 4.46), Community and Global Engagement (WM = 4.27), and Professional Advancement and Career Growth (WM = 4.07). The overall weighted mean of 4.40 confirms that the program is broadly perceived as contributing to graduates' effectiveness and development to a very great extent.

Table 9.

Summary of Composite Weighted Means by Dimension

Dimension	Composite WM	Interpretation
A. Cognitive and Technical Skills	**4.46**	Very High
B. Interpersonal and Soft Skills	**4.62**	Very High
C. Professional Advancement & Career Growth	**4.07**	High
D. Community and Global Engagement	**4.27**	Very High
Overall	**4.40**	Very High

Legend: 4.21-5.00 – Very High; 3.41- 4.20 – High; 2.61 – 3.40 – Moderate; 1.81-2.60 – Low; 1.00 – 1.80 - Poor

The results affirm that the Master in Public Administration program is successful in fulfilling its objective of developing competent, skilled, and professionally prepared graduates. Its strong contribution to both technical and soft skills underscore its alignment with the principles of outcomes-based education and its relevance to the evolving demands of public service.

VII. Assessment of the overall effectiveness of the Master in Public Administration (MPA)

This section presents the findings of the tracer study pertaining to the respondents' assessment of the overall effectiveness of the Master in Public Administration (MPA) program they completed at Bataan Peninsula State University (BPSU).

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Table 10.
Graduates' Assessment on the effectiveness of the MPA Program

Category	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Range of Course Subjects	**4.42**	Very High
Relevance to your Profession	**4.67**	Very High
Extracurricular Activities	**4.17**	High Extent
Premium Given to Research	**4.42**	Very High
Range of Course Subjects	**4.42**	Very High
Relevance to your Profession	**4.67**	Very High
Extracurricular Activities	**4.17**	High Extent
Premium Given to Research	**4.42**	Very High
Professor's Pedagogical Expertise	**4.50**	Very High
Professor's Knowledge of Subject Matter	**4.75**	Very High
Overall Program Effectiveness	**4.46**	Very High

Legend: 4.21-5.00 – Very High; 3.41- 4.20 – High; 2.61 – 3.40 – Moderate; 1.81-2.60 – Low; 1.00 – 1.80 - Poor

Curriculum and Program Design

As shown in Table 10, the Curriculum and Program Design sub-dimension obtained a composite weighted mean of 4.42, interpreted as Very High. Relevance to the Profession registered the highest score among the four indicators at 4.67, indicating that graduates strongly perceive the MPA curriculum as directly applicable to their professional responsibilities. This finding aligns with the core mandate of public administration graduate programs, which are designed to equip practitioners with knowledge and skills directly deployable in government and public sector contexts.

Range of Course Subjects (WM = 4.42) and Premium Given to Research (WM = 4.42) were rated equally and interpreted as Very High, suggesting that graduates find the breadth of subjects adequate and appreciate the program's emphasis on research as a critical competency in public administration. Notably, Extracurricular Activities recorded the lowest score in this cluster at 4.17, interpreted as High rather than Very High. While still a favorable rating, this may indicate that opportunities for extracurricular engagement — such as symposia, outreach activities, and co-curricular programs — may be less consistently integrated or visible to graduates, representing an area for program enrichment.

Teaching and Learning Environment

The Teaching and Learning Environment sub-dimension yielded a composite weighted mean of 4.42, interpreted as Very High. Teacher-Student Relationships emerged as the highest-rated indicator in this cluster at 4.67, suggesting that graduates value the collegial and professional rapport fostered between faculty and students in the MPA program.

Teaching and Learning Environment as a general indicator and Quality of Instruction both received a weighted mean of 4.50, reflecting graduates' high confidence in the overall instructional quality and the academic atmosphere at BPSU. Library Resources (WM = 4.25), rated Very High, indicates that graduates find the library's holdings and services adequate for their academic needs, though continued investment in digital resources and research databases may further strengthen this dimension.

Class Size (WM = 4.17) was the only indicator in this cluster to fall below the Very High threshold, receiving a rating of High. While this is not a negative assessment, it may suggest that some graduates perceive class sizes as occasionally larger than ideal for the seminar-style, discussion-intensive pedagogy characteristic of graduate public administration education. Managing class sizes to promote more personalized and interactive learning experiences may be a practical consideration for program administrators.

Faculty Competence

The Faculty Competence sub-dimension achieved the highest composite weighted mean among all three sub-dimensions at 4.63, interpreted as Very High. Professor's Knowledge of Subject Matter posted the highest rating across all eleven indicators at 4.75, reflecting graduates' strong confidence in the subject matter expertise of their faculty. This is a critical finding, as the credibility and depth of faculty knowledge directly shapes the quality of learning and the relevance of instruction in a professional graduate program such as the MPA.

Professor's Pedagogical Expertise (WM = 4.50), also rated Very High, further affirms that BPSU's MPA faculty are perceived as not only knowledgeable but also effective in translating that knowledge into meaningful learning experiences. Together, these two indicators paint a strong picture of faculty quality at BPSU, which appears to be one of the program's key institutional strengths.

The results consistently indicate that BPSU graduates rate the MPA program as highly effective across all dimensions. Faculty Competence emerged as the strongest sub-dimension (WM = 4.63), followed by Teaching and Learning Environment (WM = 4.42) and Curriculum and Program Design (WM = 4.42). The overall weighted mean of 4.46 confirms that the program is broadly perceived as effective to a very high degree.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings, the following conclusions are drawn in accordance with each specific statement of the problem:

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1. Graduate Profile

The graduates of the BPSU MPA program from 2021 to 2026 are predominantly female, mid-career professionals between 30 and 39 years of age, married, and employed locally within the public sector. The concentration of recent graduates (2026) in the respondent pool reflects the program's growing enrollment and sustained relevance. The demographic profile suggests that the MPA program primarily serves established public servants who seek advanced qualifications to support career growth, leadership development, and enhanced public service delivery. The predominance of public sector workers confirms strong alignment between the program's target clientele and its enrollment base.

2. Current Employment Profile

All respondents are employed full-time with permanent status, confirming that MPA graduates demonstrate a high level of employability and job security. The majority hold professional or technical positions, with a significant proportion in supervisory and managerial roles, indicating upward occupational mobility. A substantial number of graduates earn mid-to-high monthly incomes. The varied years of service reflect the program's appeal across different career stages, reinforcing its role as an instrument for lifelong learning and professional development in the public sector.

3. Primary Reasons for Pursuing the MPA Degree

Career advancement is the dominant motivation for pursuing the MPA degree, cited by nearly half of the respondents, followed by professional development, personal growth, and public service motivation. These motivations are closely aligned with the program's objectives of producing competent, ethical, and service-oriented public administrators. The findings affirm that graduates pursue the MPA not merely for academic fulfillment, but primarily to strengthen their professional competencies, qualify for higher positions, and deepen their capacity for effective public service.

4. Extent of Relationship Between Current Employment and the MPA Degree

An overwhelming majority of graduates reported that their current employment is directly related to their MPA degree. This near-universal alignment demonstrates that the program effectively fulfills its mandate under CMO No. 15, s. 2019, producing graduates who are not merely employed, but who are deployed in roles where their advanced public administration training is a functional necessity. The high job relevance rate affirms the curriculum's responsiveness to public sector needs and validates the program's strong orientation toward governance, policy, and administrative management.

5. Contribution of the MPA Degree to Professional Advancement

The MPA degree yields tangible professional and economic returns for its graduates. Sixty-nine percent received promotions following program completion, with many transitioning into higher-level supervisory, technical, and administrative roles. Additionally, majority reported salary increases, and received professional awards or certifications. These outcomes are consistent with Human Capital Theory, confirming that investment in graduate education significantly enhances individual productivity, career mobility, and institutional value. The degree serves as a primary enabler of vertical advancement within the Philippine Civil Service system.

6. Contribution of the MPA Program to Graduates' Competencies and Development

The MPA program is highly effective in developing graduates' cognitive, technical, and interpersonal competencies — with soft skills standing out as its strongest area. Opportunities for improvement lie in three areas: deeper integration of Information Technology Skills in the curriculum, stronger institutional linkages to support career advancement particularly in salary progression and international employment, and expanded global engagement through academic partnerships and exchange programs to complement the program's already strong local community orientation.

7. Overall Effectiveness of the MPA Program at BPSU

The findings show that the BPSU MPA program is highly effective, particularly in delivering a relevant, research-oriented curriculum supported by highly competent faculty. While the teaching and learning environment is generally satisfactory, improvements in co-curricular activities, class size management, and resource provision can further enhance student experience. Overall, the program demonstrates strong capacity to develop competent public administration professionals.

Recommendations

In light of the foregoing conclusions, the following recommendations are offered to the program administrators, faculty, and institutional stakeholders of BPSU's Master in Public Administration program:

1. Sustain and Expand the Program's Reach to Diverse Professionals

Given that the program predominantly attracts public sector employees aged 30–49 who are seeking career advancement, BPSU should sustain outreach efforts to broaden program accessibility. Flexible delivery modalities — such as hybrid or online learning options — should be continued to accommodate working professionals who balance career, family, and academic responsibilities. The program may also consider targeted recruitment among younger professionals and those in the private sector to further diversify the graduate pool.

2. Leverage the 100% Employability Rate as an Institutional Strength

The full employment and permanent status of all graduates is a compelling indicator of program quality. BPSU should formally document and promote these outcomes in accreditation reports, institutional publications, and student recruitment materials. Linkages with the Civil Service Commission, the Department of the Interior and Local Government, and other government

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agencies should be strengthened to maintain and enhance the career pathways available to MPA graduates.

3. Align Curriculum More Explicitly with Career Advancement Goals

Since career advancement is the primary motivation for enrollment, the program should ensure that its curriculum explicitly maps to Philippine Civil Service career progression pathways, including competency requirements for Salary Grade promotions. Career counseling, mentorship programs, and alumni networking sessions may be integrated into the program structure to better guide graduates toward realizing their advancement goals within and beyond the public sector.

4. Strengthen Industry and Government Linkages for Practical Relevance

To sustain the high job relevance rate (92.3%), the program must continuously update its curriculum to reflect emerging governance challenges, policy reforms, and public sector demands. Regular stakeholder consultations — involving employer organizations, government agencies, and professional associations — should be institutionalized as part of the curriculum review process. Practicum components, policy research projects, and capstone courses tied to real government issues may further deepen the practical applicability of the degree.

5. Forge Strategic Partnerships to Enhance Career Mobility and Economic Returns

While the program demonstrates strong outcomes in promotion (69.2%) and salary increases (61.5%), Opportunities Abroad (3.92) and Salary Improvement (3.92) remain comparatively lower. BPSU should: Establish formal partnerships with international public administration bodies, ASEAN governance networks, and overseas government organizations to create structured pathways for international employment and exchange. Work with the Civil Service Commission and the Department of Budget and Management to advocate for clearer recognition of the MPA degree in compensation and promotion frameworks for public servants.

6. Enhance Information Technology Integration andInternational Engagement

To address the comparative gaps identified in competency development, the following targeted enhancements are recommended: Cognitive and Technical Skills: Integrate dedicated modules on digital governance, e-government systems, data analytics, and public sector technology management to address the comparatively lower rating of Information Technology Skills; Introduce international case studies, comparative governance courses, and structured international academic exchange or study visits to address the lower rating for Exposure to International Community.

7. Build on Faculty Strengths and Address Learning Environment Gaps

The outstanding ratings for Faculty Competence — particularly Professor's Knowledge of Subject Matter should be formally recognized and institutionally sustained through competitive faculty retention, continuous professional development funding, and research incentive programs. To further improve program effectiveness, the following are recommended: Design a structured co-curricular program that includes national and international symposia, governance forums, public administration conventions, and community engagement projects that complement academic coursework; Continue investing in online journals, e-databases, and research repositories to support the program's strong emphasis on research capability and evidence-based governance practice.

Overall, the findings of this tracer study affirm that BPSU's MPA program is a high-quality, professionally relevant, and impactful graduate education initiative. The continued refinement of its curriculum, learning environment, and international engagement — anchored on its demonstrably strong faculty and sustained institutional commitment to outcomes-based education — will ensure that it remains a premier program for developing ethical, competent, and globally aware public administrators in the Philippines.

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