

# Unveiling Success: An Appreciative Inquiry into the Triumphs of Graduates of Teacher Education Programs

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**Abstract:** Amid evolving educational challenges, teachers continue to demonstrate resilience by adapting to change and making a lasting impact on students and communities. This qualitative study explored the success stories of eight graduates of teacher education programs from one of the higher education institutions in Ozamiz City, selected through snowball sampling. Data were gathered using a semi-structured interview guide and analyzed through the Appreciative Inquiry 4D model—Discover, Dream, Design, and Destiny—using Hyper Research software. Findings revealed four core themes: (1) Discovering the Significant Milestones and Achievements of Graduates in their Professional Careers as Educators, (2) Dreaming of Continued Growth and Future Contributions to the Field of Education, (3) Designing the Pathways of Professional Success and Impact in the Workplace, and (4) Fulfilling Destiny by Inspiring Colleagues and Future Educators Toward Excellence in the Teaching Profession. Graduates succeeded through professional recognition, research contributions, and active community engagement. They envisioned further growth by embracing leadership, innovation, and technology; they extended their impact by initiating meaningful programs and building professional networks; and they inspired others through mentorship and developing collaborative learning communities. The study recommends that teacher education institutions and alumni associations strengthen mentorship networks by engaging successful graduates in guiding new teachers and recognizing their contributions through awards and leadership initiatives.

**Keywords:** *Appreciative Inquiry, Community Development, Professional Success, Teacher Education Graduates, Transformational Leadership.*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Success in education is more than just earning good marks and academic distinctions. For graduates of teacher education programs, success is a dynamic path that involves overcoming challenges, promoting personal growth, and accomplishing milestones that show dedication and perseverance. Teachers, whose accomplishments are evaluated by their significant

influence on pupils and the community, will find this expanded definition of success particularly pertinent. Given the growing need for qualified teachers, it is imperative to comprehend the elements that led to the success of these graduates.

Teachers represent the dignity of their profession and are frequently regarded as unsung heroes (Garrucha, 2022). However, the constantly shifting social, political, technological, and economic environments have changed education, bringing

with them new difficulties, shifting expectations for professionals, and rising demands (Ancho & Bongco, 2019). Educators must impart knowledge and ideals to help pupils deal with life's challenges (Franklin & Harrington, 2019). Despite its great sense of fulfillment, this labor can be emotionally and physically taxing (Magtalas & Eduvala, 2024). Teachers continue to show perseverance and adaptability in the face of these obstacles, accomplishing fantastic success and making a difference in the lives of their pupils and the larger educational community.

Supporting teachers' development and retention requires defining what a "successful career" entails (Gubler et al., 2019). Good policies draw in teachers and provide them the tools and drive they need to succeed (Bêteille & Evans, 2021). Higher education establishments in the Philippines are essential to preparing teacher education graduates, who propel the country's economic and educational advancement (Pentang et al., 2022). These schools give teachers the fundamental information and pedagogical abilities to engage students, establish productive learning environments, and boost students' self-esteem using successful tactics (Drouet et al., 2022). TEIs equip graduates to implement teaching strategies that cater to the unique needs of students in a range of classroom environments by fusing theory and practice (Olvido et al., 2024).

Beyond the classroom, teacher education graduates act as "change agents," encouraging development via introspection and teamwork to meet changing community and school demands (Henson, 2023). Academic success and professional accomplishments bolster their influence; some have won important scholarships and honors like Most Outstanding Teacher and Most Outstanding Young Professional (Paguio-Aldea, 2019). The dynamic relationship between teachers and students is essential to this transformative function since both parties are equally important to properly executing the teaching and learning processes (Delos Reyes & Torio, 2021).

Education graduates profoundly impact policy creation, program implementation, alternative education, and traditional classrooms. They have brought literacy programs and life skills training through their commitment to the Alternative Learning System (ALS), and their creative teaching methods have garnered national praise (Serafica, 2023). Their contributions to increasing access to high-quality education are further highlighted by their recognition from honors like the ARUGAN Awards for Most Inspiring ALS Teacher and the Most Innovative ALS Teacher of the Year. The majority of the beneficiaries of the ALS program passed the A&E exam and obtained a secondary-level diploma, demonstrating the program's effectiveness in meeting their basic learning needs (Salendab & Cogo, 2022).

Their behavior distinguishes highly effective educators from less effective ones (Whitaker, 2020). With years of experience, they ensure the seamless execution of educational activities by assuming various responsibilities, including

property custodians and school coordinators (Teologo, 2023). Additionally, teachers are essential in ensuring that the curriculum is in line with the needs of students and local priorities (Alek et al., 2021). Beyond teaching, many education graduates are involved in program and policy creation, spearheading efforts to improve digital education and socio-emotional learning. International organizations such as UNESCO have acknowledged their achievements and received national accolades for creating educational materials for underserved populations (Tan, 2023). In order to improve educational institutions and processes, teachers are essential change agents who ensure that their impact extends beyond the classroom to address more general social challenges (Brown et al., 2021).

Teachers impact education and community development outside of the classroom because of their advocacy and leadership (Foxhall et al., 2022). They interact with stakeholders to increase learning possibilities, especially in underprivileged areas, by utilizing their intelligence and communication abilities. In addition to providing necessary educational access, their efforts to create schools and learning centers have strengthened their position as agents of positive social change (Burbos-Gera, 2019). Their function as mentors and role models, which shapes students' academic achievement, values, attitudes, and life skills, is at the heart of their influence. Teachers prepare students for success in various facets of life by providing meaningful learning experiences, encouraging empathy, and instilling trust in them as some of the first mentors outside the home (Aquino et al., 2023). According to research, highly successful teachers have a long-lasting effect on students' academic performance and significant learning outcomes (Bardach & Klassen, 2020). Through their commitment to both formal and informal education, teachers continue to influence society and education in the future.

The strategies employed in teacher education are crucial in ensuring that graduates are ready for success, especially while navigating the cutthroat global labor market and advancing human capital (Karvinen et al., 2019). Research also shows that students who get instruction from highly qualified teachers are more likely to succeed, emphasizing the importance of comprehending the elements contributing to graduates' success in teacher education programs (Engida et al., 2024). In order to shed light on the qualities and experiences that mold these aspiring teachers into leaders in the classroom and beyond, this study sought to investigate the significant factors influencing their success.

The researcher discovered a methodological flaw in the earlier studies. Not many qualitative study designs look at teacher education program graduates' success stories. Because the majority of the existing literature—such as the phenomenological study by Henson (2023) on the success stories of distinguished teachers in Capiz, the descriptive research by Cruz and Cruz (2023) on the employment and employability characteristics of graduate school alums, and the

tracer study by Sabando et al. (2023) on job placement profiles and related school factors—relied primarily on traditional qualitative and descriptive approaches, the researcher discovered a lack of previous studies using participatory and appreciative inquiry research designs. The current study aims to close this gap and offer an alternate perspective by focusing on success-driven inquiry based on appreciative inquiry. Expanding on previous studies on teacher education outcomes, this method seeks to investigate Teacher Education graduates' positive personal and professional experiences (Miles, 2017).

The study's conclusions highlighted the significance of supporting professional development through evidence-based strategies and offered insightful information to educators, legislators, and teacher education institutions. Policymakers were advised to establish support networks that enabled teachers to be empowered throughout their careers, and teacher training programs were urged to incorporate tactics that fostered educators' growth. Additionally, to improve teaching and learning results, educators could implement best practices found in the research. The study emphasized how teacher education institutions could better support educators beyond academic achievements by acknowledging the complex nature of teacher success. This would strengthen teacher training programs and encourage ongoing professional development in a constantly changing educational environment.

## II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was anchored on the following theories: Self-Determination Theory by Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan (1985), Social Cognitive Theory by Albert Bandura (1986), and Transformative Learning Theory by Jack Mezirow (1970).

*Self-Determination Theory (SDT)*, developed by psychologists Edward Deci and Richard Ryan in their 1985 book *Self-Determination and Intrinsic Motivation in Human Behavior*, provides a foundational framework for understanding how intrinsic motivation and personal growth contribute to human success. The theory posits that all individuals have an inherent drive to grow, overcome challenges, and integrate new experiences through self-directed processes (Guay, 2022). According to SDT, human motivation is shaped by three core psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Caring for these needs is essential for personal growth and success because it boosts intrinsic drive. In educational situations, intrinsic motivation is a key factor in how well and quickly teachers can improve their skills. By creating environments that support autonomy, competence, and relatedness, teachers are more likely to experience professional success and fulfillment (Ryan & Deci, 2019).

Previous studies have applied SDT to explore motivation and success across various domains, including education. Research has shown that autonomy-supportive environments are linked to higher teacher motivation, commitment, and professional growth (Niemic & Ryan, 2009). For instance, at

Mentari School Bintaro, teachers were more motivated when they had a say in decisions and were helped by management. This improved productivity and fit SDT's focus on autonomy and competence (Riyanto, 2017). Similarly, teachers who are autonomously motivated—those who are interested and enjoy what they do—are more likely to use teaching styles that support student autonomy, creating settings that encourage student autonomy (Katz & Shahar, 2015). This supports SDT's claim that intrinsic motivation leads to self-directed and effective participation in learning and teaching.

Furthermore, studies have shown that teachers with higher intrinsic motivation employed student-centered teaching methods, which enhanced student engagement and learning outcomes (Hein et al., 2012). Research also suggests that fulfilling the needs for autonomy, relatedness, and competence boosts intrinsic motivation in teachers, leading to greater job satisfaction, improved teaching competence, professional growth, and the adoption of effective practices—all of which are key elements of long-term success (Uysal, 2023). Additionally, teacher motivation has been recognized as vital to quality education and educational reform (Nyakundi, 2012). Continuous professional development and autonomy are essential factors that sustain teacher motivation, aligning with SDT's focus on mastery and self-directed development (Bahramnezhad & Keshmiri, 2025). Moreover, a love for teaching, a joy in working with students, and a desire to make a difference have been highlighted as powerful motivators for teachers (Katz & Shahar, 2015).

Building on these findings, highly determined graduates—those who internalize their goals, pursue them with autonomy, and maintain resilience through self-motivation—are more likely to achieve sustained success in their professional journeys. In line with this, the present study applies Self-Determination Theory (SDT) to examine the success stories of teacher education graduates. In particular, it investigated how intrinsic drive and encouraging surroundings enable graduates to overcome obstacles, keep moving higher in their jobs, and enhance knowledge of how self-determination affects long-term career success.

Another theory is *Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)*, developed initially as social learning theory (SLT) by Albert Bandura in the 1960s and later evolving into SCT in 1986. It highlights the dynamic interaction between individuals, their environment, and their behavior. The theory suggests that learning occurs within a social context, where personal factors, environmental influences, and behaviors continually shape one another (Burney, 2008). According to SCT, individuals develop knowledge, skills, attitudes, and beliefs through observing and interacting with others, guided by self-beliefs and expectations about the consequences of their actions (Schunk & Usher, 2012). Central to this theory is reciprocal determinism, which emphasizes how individuals' behaviors and cognitive processes

are influenced by their social environments, and how they, in turn, affect these environments (Bandura, 2012).

SCT has been widely applied to teacher education and professional development. It demonstrates how teachers acquire new skills, adapt to evolving teaching environments, and increase their effectiveness through self-efficacy and reflective practices (Nabavi, 2012). The theory also helps explain how teachers develop career interests and persist in their professional paths by interacting with their personal and social environments (Lent et al., 1994). Research shows that intergenerational learning—where teachers acquire different skills from younger and older colleagues through informal mentoring, collegial relationships, and collaborative work—illustrates the behavioral and environmental interplay highlighted in SCT (Geeraerts et al., 2018). Furthermore, SCT's idea of learning through social engagement and ecological facilitation has been reflected in the favorable effects of teachers' contacts with colleagues and access to instructional expertise on instructional practices (Sun et al., 2014).

Further supporting SCT, a study identified three vital dialogues—dialogue with colleagues, self, and students—as key channels for teacher learning and reflective practice (Khong et al., 2023). These dialogues represent the interplay of personal cognition, social interaction, and situational context central to SCT. The relevance of collegial support, especially for novice teachers, is also evident in a study's findings that mentoring and peer support mediate work expectations and improve teachers' ability to manage workloads and administrative responsibilities (Pogodzinski, 2014). This atmosphere of support for one another and critical thought is consistent with SCT's claim that learning and behavior are context-dependent and socially produced. Collegial relationships that develop into critical discussions also benefit new teachers, as they foster professional resilience and greater pedagogical understanding (Charner-Laird et al., 2016).

Co-teaching methodologies such as "one teach, one observe" have successfully improved instructors' lesson preparation and teaching techniques in inclusive contexts. This suggests that modeling and collaborative engagement facilitate professional development—a fundamental principle of SCT (Kayhan & Akçamete, 2019). SCT's focus on the environment's formative role in influencing teacher behavior and outcomes is further supported by research showing that work environments that are encouraging, collaborative, and supportive of continuous improvement positively impact job satisfaction and teaching performance (Ker et al., 2022).

Social cognitive theory (SCT) offers a solid theoretical foundation for this study because it emphasizes how graduates' professional accomplishments are co-constructed through the dynamic interplay of personal agency, social relationships, and supporting settings. Graduates who work in environments that offer mentorship, collegial support, and role modeling are likelier to thrive in teaching. These contextual factors reinforce

self-efficacy and foster continuous learning, professional resilience, and the pursuit of long-term career goals.

*Transformative Learning Theory*, developed by Jack Mezirow in the late 1970s and rooted in cognitive and developmental psychology, explains how individuals make meaning from life experiences through reflection and critical self-analysis. It is particularly relevant in examining the success stories of education graduates, offering insight into how personal and professional transformations contribute to their achievements.

Learning is a process of revising and reinterpreting the meaning of past experiences (Mezirow, 1990). People question their presumptions, gain fresh insights, and act with more knowledge when critically reflecting (Fleming, 2018). Personal identity and professional activity are shaped by this introspective process, which promotes development and transformation. This concept has been applied in studies conducted in various educational contexts, providing valuable insights into teachers' professional development (McGray, 2011). For educators, transformative learning involves a shift in viewpoint that alters their knowledge and ways of knowing, influencing their decisions and behaviors in the future (Mayer, 2024).

According to studies, teachers play a crucial role in fostering critical engagement and meaningful learning by assisting students in applying their past knowledge to novel situations (Chand, 2023). Teachers can question presumptions and create more inclusive teaching methods by creating supportive learning settings that promote introspection, discussion, and teamwork (Code et al., 2022). As educators deepen their understanding of themselves and their profession, they become more empowered to align with their values and advance in their careers (Christie et al., 2015).

This theory offered a lens to explore how education graduates underwent personal and professional transformation. The study examined how critical reflection and transformative learning influenced their accomplishments by examining their success stories. This approach has been used in earlier research on career transition, social change, and holistic learning (Dirkx, 1998), all of which highlight the value of reflecting activities in promoting development. Through this theoretical lens, the study highlighted how education graduates continued to evolve as educators, empowered by transformative learning.

### III. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The findings of this study revealed four core themes: (1) Discovering the Significant Milestones and Achievements of Graduates in Their Professional Careers as Educators, (2) Dreaming of Continued Growth and Future Contributions to the Field of Education, (3) Designing the Pathways to Professional Success and Impact in the Workplace, and (4) Fulfilling Destiny by Inspiring Colleagues and Future Educators Toward



Excellence in the Teaching Profession. The study also identified various concepts derived from these themes, namely: receiving recognition and awards in education and research; engaging in community development and support; expanding leadership and professional development opportunities; integrating technology and innovative practices; building strong professional networks; initiating and leading meaningful projects; empowering others through mentorship and guidance; and fostering collaborative professional communities.

*Discovering the significant milestones and achievements of graduates in their professional careers as educators.* The professional success of teacher education graduates is reflected in key milestones such as effective classroom management, measurable student academic progress, and cultivating positive relationships with learners and colleagues (Darling-Hammond, 2021). Graduates also demonstrate adaptability in diverse educational contexts and can implement innovative, learner-centered strategies (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Sustained engagement in professional development and lifelong learning further contributes to their growth and continued excellence in the teaching profession. An Appreciative Inquiry lens offers a strength-based perspective by highlighting and amplifying these successes, which serve as evidence of the effectiveness of teacher education programs (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005).

Professional dedication, intrinsic motivation, and a strong sense of purpose also shape teachers' ability to plan, organize, and implement instruction effectively (Vaso, 2015). This sense of fulfillment often inspires long-term commitment to nation-building through education (Nor, 2020). Nevertheless, it is essential to recognize that such successes often emerge alongside challenges, including stress and burnout risks (Nwoko et al., 2023). Student achievement is primarily determined by the quality of the instructor, not socioeconomic situation, linguistic proficiency, or minority status (Dubash et al., 2020). These achievements collectively demonstrate the transformative potential of top-notch teacher preparation programs and the enduring impact of their graduates.

*Receiving recognition and awards in education and research.* Teachers are the cornerstone of academic advancement, transferring knowledge and developing students' potential who will eventually shape the course of nations (Gramipour et al., 2019). Due to their central position, ensuring they are constantly motivated and professionally developed becomes important. Research shows that awards and recognition significantly boost teachers' work morale, promote innovation, and stimulate intrinsic motivation, all necessary for maintaining high teaching practice standards (Karmila & Rohmah, 2024). Recognition in any form—financial rewards, public recognition, and training opportunities—enhances teachers' self-confidence and motivation and reinforces their devotion to professional excellence and peer collaboration (Lim, 2021). Aside from the direct psychological effect, recognition fosters a culture where teachers are esteemed, challenging them to innovate and make more effective

contributions to student achievement and educational reforms (Odhiambo et al., 2023).

Expanding on the individual advantages of recognition, studies further say that institutions with effective recognition schemes reap a competitive edge through greater teacher performance and retention (Khaemba et al., 2024). Positive acknowledgment by principals, administrators, and the general educational community confirms teachers' professional competencies, unleashes their intrinsic motivation, and fosters a greater sense of ownership in the institution (Ndirangu & Mungai, 2024). Recognition of accomplishments—through formal presentation, verbal thanks, or public praise—greatly improves teacher job satisfaction and work performance (Oyolla et al., 2021). In addition, tracer study findings underscore that teacher education graduates who were awarded recognition, including academic honors and awards, were more employable, had passed the licensure examination successfully, and were highly committed to continuous professional development (Pentang et al., 2022).

*Engaging in community development and support.* It is becoming increasingly required that graduates of teacher education programs act as active contributors to educational innovation and community development in addition to becoming classroom teachers. Teachers who actively participate in community projects develop their professional identities and establish themselves as collaborators in promoting social change outside the classroom (Banderlipe, 2022). Research confirms that teachers' comprehension of students' cultural settings is enhanced via genuine participation in community partnerships, which increases education's inclusiveness, responsiveness, and impact (Aspe & Hernandez, 2024). Additionally, cooperation between schools, families, and outside stakeholders improves educational outcomes and creates long-lasting learning communities based on mutual trust and common objectives (Chasanah et al., 2023). Through collaborations, teachers increase their impact, enhance professional development, and help democratize education.

Integral to this engagement is developing leadership capacities among teachers, empowering them to guide peers, lead school initiatives, and champion community-driven reforms (Sharar Nawab, 2020). Teachers who assume leadership roles within community settings experience greater professional growth, job satisfaction, and innovation in practice (Daniel et al., 2019). Looking toward the future, teacher education graduates envision themselves advancing educational change by continually refining teaching methods, integrating new technologies, and deepening community ties. Preparing for these future contributions necessitates a lifelong commitment to building strong, respectful partnerships with families and stakeholders (Cruzat et al., 2022). Tracer study findings further reveal that graduates who engaged meaningfully in community development were more likely to pursue advanced studies, occupy leadership roles, and initiate sustainable educational

projects, highlighting the enduring impact of community-centered professional practice.

*Dreaming of continued growth and future contributions to the field of education.* The aspiration for continued professional development and meaningful contributions to the field of education is a consistent theme among graduates of teacher education programs. Research indicates that to improve their teaching methods and have a greater influence in classrooms and communities, these graduates actively look for chances for further education, specialized training, and leadership positions (Darling-Hammond, 2021). This pursuit is often driven by a commitment to stay updated with evolving educational trends, improve student outcomes, and participate in broader educational reforms (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

Mentorship, collaborative learning, and reflective practice nurture a growth-oriented mindset among graduates, contributing to sustained professional engagement and innovation in teaching (Dreer, 2023). Through these practices, graduates develop a vision for their role in education, which is further shaped by their lived experiences during teacher education programs (Ritter, 2009). Studies show that educators see technology as a tool and a catalyst for creative teaching methods that improve student learning outcomes and teaching efficacy (Azam, 2019). However, professional growth, resource accessibility, and support networks are frequently critical to successful integration. Individual and institutional stressors can still result in burnout and attrition, even though many teachers are resilient and use coping mechanisms to deal with stress (Anbazhagan & Selvan, 2022).

Occupational well-being involves continuous professional development, supportive leadership, and active engagement with stakeholders such as parents and school heads (Nwoko et al., 2023). Transformational leadership in educational institutions enhances teachers' cooperation, drive, and dedication to school objectives (Superman et al., 2018). Teachers flourish in this encouraging atmosphere, which promotes long-term development and increases their ability to shape the direction of education.

*Expanding leadership and professional development opportunities.* As teachers aspire beyond classroom teaching, many envision themselves taking on leadership roles to influence educational policies, mentor peers, and advocate for inclusive and transformative learning environments (Steinert et al., 2019). Research shows leadership is a core feature of effective professional development, fostering teacher motivation, collaboration, and continuous improvement (Aquino et al., 2022). School leaders play a pivotal role in this process by creating nurturing environments and empowering teachers through coaching and support (Ahmad & Hamid, 2021). Teachers can take charge and take on leadership roles both within and outside the classroom thanks to these techniques, which also increase their competence and confidence (Warren, 2021).

Institutional support and individual initiative are also necessary to maintain professional advancement. Teachers regularly look for possibilities such as attending seminars, enrolling in graduate programs, and engaging in reflective practices to stay relevant in the rapidly evolving educational landscape (Ancho & Arrieta, 2021). Regular professional development can improve student learning since it fosters creativity and breaks up the teaching routine (Kilag et al., 2023). In order to ensure that Filipino educators meet domestic and international requirements, the CPD Act of 2016 also requires licensed professionals to engage in continuous education (Alvarez et al., 2020). The graduates' commitment to educational justice, societal change, and professional achievement is reflected in their leadership readiness and culture of continuous learning.

*Integrating technology and innovative practices.* As graduates realize the need to shift from traditional, rote learning to dynamic, application-based instruction, including technology and new techniques in the curriculum, has become a crucial component of teacher preparation programs. This change aligns with the changing needs of Education 4.0, which uses digital tools like artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things, and virtual labs to improve individualized and active learning (de Souza & Debs, 2024). Findings that demonstrate instructors' increasing skill and confidence in using technology to enhance education and improve student engagement support the significance of digital fluency among educators (Dogan et al., 2021). Moreover, technology-integrated teaching approaches such as flipped classrooms, gamification, and blended learning have proven effective in promoting student motivation and retention, especially when combined with culturally responsive and inclusive pedagogies (CG, 2024).

Recent literature also emphasizes the importance of teacher perceptions and competencies in technology adoption. According to studies, educators see technology as a tool and a catalyst for creative teaching methods that improve student learning outcomes and teaching efficacy (Karolčík & Marková, 2025). However, professional growth, resource accessibility, and support networks are frequently critical to successful integration (Bui, 2022). Teachers who perceive themselves as technologically skilled tend to utilize instructional and application software more confidently and meaningfully (Dogan et al., 2021), aligning with the belief that technological pedagogical content knowledge is vital for effective instruction (Akram et al., 2021). Thus, integrating technology and innovative methods in teacher education enriches classroom practices and equips graduates with adaptive competencies essential for contemporary education.

*Designing the pathways to professional success and impact in the workplace.* The design of the initial experiences and continuing professional development of graduates significantly impacts their achievement during the crucial transition from teacher education programs to professional

practice. To promote early career success and a seamless transition, research highlights the value of mentorship programs, induction assistance, and chances for ongoing learning (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Studies also show that schools that train teachers help graduates prepare for classroom challenges, such as planning lessons, managing the class, and working with diverse students (Podolsky & Darling-Hammond, 2019).

Graduates of teacher education affect more than just one classroom. They also affect society and the overall quality of education. Literature stresses how important it is for graduates to be able to do thoughtful practice, work with others, and fight for fair education (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). Studies show that graduates who are well-prepared and given support are more likely to stay in the field, which helps keep the teaching workforce stable and effective (Ronfeldt et al., 2015).

Effective educators possess diverse skills and qualities, emphasizing the need for comprehensive preparation in higher education (Bullin, 2018). Adapting to the changing classroom dynamics and implementing innovative teaching strategies is also important (Azam, 2019). Teacher education programs are crucial in equipping future educators with the tools they need to succeed in the classroom and beyond (Nwoko et al., 2023).

*Building strong professional networks.* These networks help graduates build credibility and authority in their school groups, which usually comes from showing a dedication to sharing knowledge and working together (Kianinezhad, 2023). Research shows how teachers' reputation affects how engaged students are, how fair they think things are, and how well they do in school (Ibrahim, 2024). Such confidence is built through trustworthiness, pedagogical knowledge, classroom management, and authentic relationships (Tanase, 2022). When graduates develop these traits, they become respected professionals who can successfully inspire and lead (Prenger et al., 2021). Also, credibility and nonverbal immediacy are strong predictors of teacher success, which shows how important professional presence is for building trust and impact (Nayernia et al., 2020).

Furthermore, professional learning networks (PLNs) serve as platforms where these graduates can continuously develop and assert their professional identity. Structured collaboration, shared goals, and distributed leadership within PLNs enhance teacher learning and drive school improvement (Azorín et al., 2020). Strong collaborative cultures and trust relationships—rooted in reciprocity and mutual support—are also essential for building and maintaining effective networks (Kolleck et al., 2021). In addition, communicating credible expertise and building trust are crucial in educational development and peer influence (Little & Green, 2022). These studies affirm that building strong professional networks collectively consolidates graduates' accomplishments and expands their influence within the broader educational landscape.

*Fulfilling destiny by inspiring colleagues and future educators toward excellence in the teaching profession.* Teacher education programs are important for developing this sense of fate because they allow students to think about themselves, make moral choices, and grow as leaders (Weisberg & Dawson, 2023). Research shows that grads who do well often have a strong sense of purpose and see teaching as a calling and a way to make a difference in the world (Day, 2004). When graduates are happy with their jobs, they are more likely to help their coworkers and inspire future teachers. This makes the teaching area better through a positive feedback loop (Darling-Hammond, 2021). Schools keep their high level of success up by creating a space where people can work together.

Transformational leadership qualities, such as inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration, are crucial in fostering this sense of destiny among educators (Wu et al., 2024). Teacher educators play a significant role in shaping future teachers' views, attitudes, and ways of teaching (Wyatt, 2015). Mentorship and guidance from more experienced teachers build confidence and independence, which leads to professional growth and better student results (Sarong, 2024). Teacher education programs should deliberately cultivate these leadership qualities by offering opportunities for collaboration, reflection, and professional development (Wu et al., 2024). "Fulfilling Destiny" also speaks to a teacher's journey, marked by stages of transformation and growth, echoing the metaphor of the 'Hero's Journey' (Neapolitan, 2004).

Effective professional development programs equip teachers with the knowledge and skills to inspire colleagues and future educators (Wyatt, 2015). The capacity to communicate, share, and utilize information to solve complex problems is essential in today's enterprises (Colonel & Tan, 2019). In particular, the function of mentor teachers in supporting and assisting teacher education is necessary. Therefore, pre-service teachers must be allowed to develop their mentoring abilities as part of their education programs in preparation for the demands and expectations of the profession (Akinwale & Okotoni, 2019). By looking at the details of sound teaching, this essay wants to show how important teachers are for encouraging critical thought and creating an environment that is good for overall growth (Macklin, 2011).

*Initiating and leading meaningful projects.* As innovation becomes valued across disciplines, teachers who exemplify this through project leadership demonstrate professional agency and contribute to systemic educational improvement (Soleas & Bolden, 2020). Their projects are usually based on being creative, adaptable, and looking for better ways to teach and find answers, which aligns with what the world expects from knowledge societies (Vermeulen et al., 2022). In today's schools, where traditional methods may not be able to solve complicated problems (Cui & Yin, 2023), this willingness to move and try new things is critical.

Research underscores that teachers who initiate projects aligned with their school's mission experience higher professional fulfillment and are likelier to advance in their careers (Vare, 2021). A core aspect of their effectiveness lies in their sustained motivation to innovate and transform educational practices (Jakavonytė-Staškuvienė & Barkauskienė, 2023). Leadership ability can also be improved through teacher education programs that teach future teachers helpful problem-solving skills, preparing them to lead immediately (McGhee & Stark, 2021). These results show that the ability to lead and develop new ideas is a sign of personal success and a force behind educational progress in general.

*Empowering through mentorship and guidance.* Mentor teachers help new teachers build their confidence and toughness by giving them technical advice and mental support. Mentorship leads to professional growth because mentors want to help the next group of teachers (Ben-Amram & Davidovitch, 2024). Effective feedback, structured mentorship, and emotional support significantly impact teachers' ability to thrive in the classroom, promoting long-term retention and job satisfaction (Keiler et al., 2020).

Mentorship also helps graduates transition into leadership roles, empowering them to support colleagues and future educators (Nwoko et al., 2023). Graduates create an atmosphere of always learning and working together by sharing their experiences and getting help. Studies have shown that having a

coach improves adaptive strategies, boosts confidence, and builds professional relationships. These lead to better teaching methods (Sawalhi & Chaaban, 2021). This large group of people helping each other is good for the school (Petrovska et al., 2018).

*Building collaborative professional communities.* Building collaborative professional communities is vital to the success of teacher education graduates, as it fosters mutual support and shared growth. This shift from isolated practice to collective engagement enhances individual effectiveness and the overall quality of education (Rowe et al., 2020). Graduates who share strategies and collaborate with peers demonstrate stronger teaching practices and a deeper understanding of learners' needs (Voytecki & Anderson, 2021). Therefore, teacher education programs must prioritize collaborative skill-building to prepare future educators for team-based professional environments (Simiyu et al., 2021).

Active participation in collaborative networks supports continuous learning and innovation (Massa et al., 2021). These networks allow educators to exchange best practices, solve challenges, and build constructivist learning environments (Slater & Davies, 2020). Such collaboration reflects an understanding of teaching as a shared professional responsibility, reinforcing the value of community in sustaining growth and commitment within the education sector (Voytecki & Anderson, 2021).



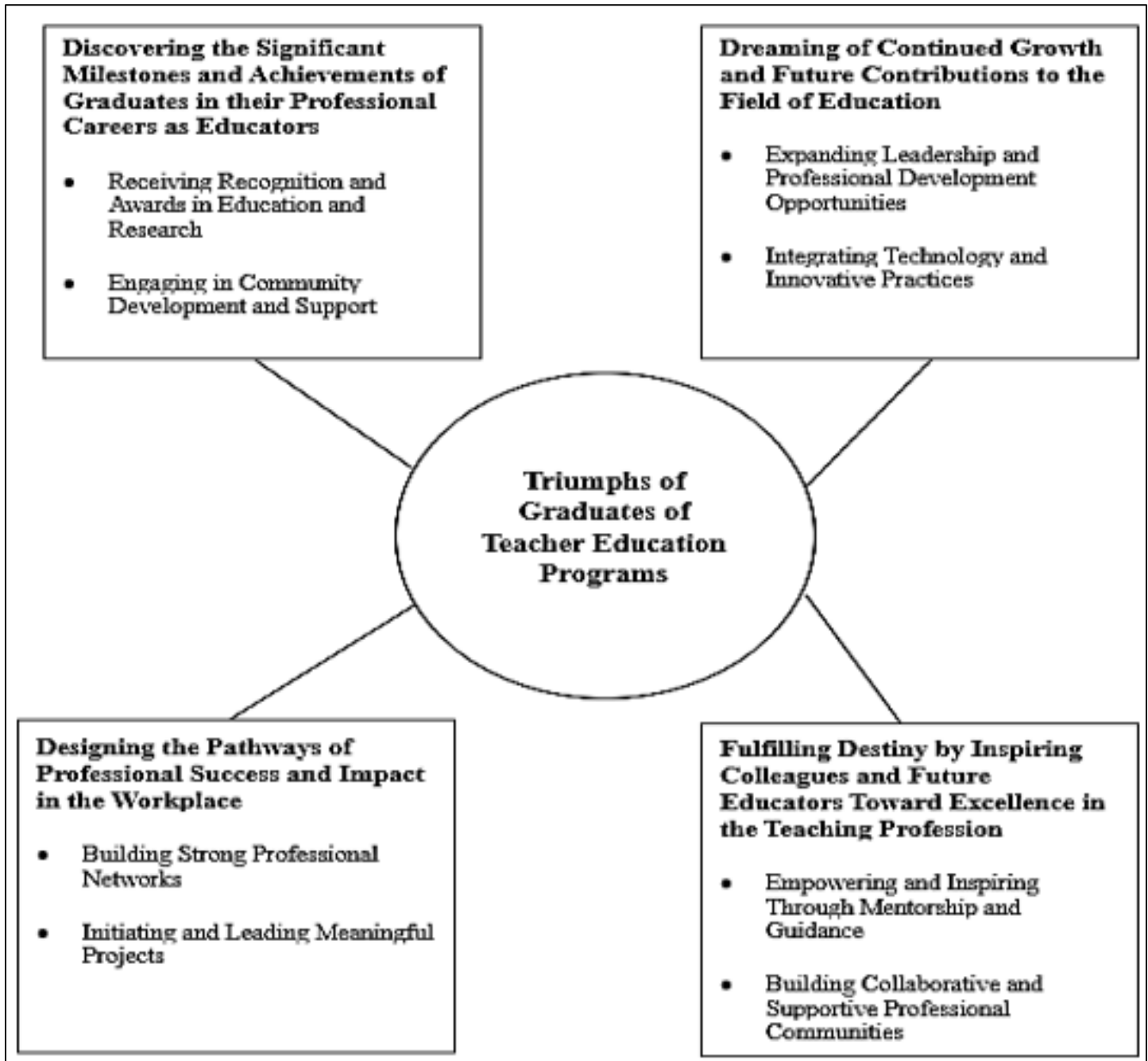


Fig 1 Schematic Diagram of the Study

➤ *Statement of the Problem*

This study aimed to explore the success stories of graduates of Teacher Education Programs at one of the Higher Education Institutions in Ozamiz City through Appreciative Inquiry. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

- What are graduates' significant milestones and achievements in their professional careers as educators?
- How do graduates envision their continued growth and contributions to the field of education?

- How do the achievements and milestones of graduates contribute to their professional success and impact in the workplace?
- 4. How do graduates inspire and guide their colleagues and future educators in achieving success in the teaching profession?

#### IV. MATERIALS AND METHODS

##### ➤ *Design*

This qualitative study used Appreciative Inquiry (AI). Appreciative Inquiry is a research approach that was initially proposed by David Cooperrider and Suresh Srivastava in 1987 (Whitney & Amanda, 2003). It explored the strengths, successes, and values that energized human systems when they functioned at their best (Moore, 2008). AI was based on the premise that every living system had an underutilized "positive core," which, when revealed and harnessed, became a lasting energy source for personal and organizational transformation (Ludema & Fry, 2008). Appreciative Inquiry was suited to this study as it prioritized positive experiences, values, and practices. These success stories showed the natural skills that helped teachers do well at work. This gave teachers more power and encouraged long-lasting change in their practice and the wider educational community.

##### ➤ *Setting*

The study was conducted in Northern Mindanao (Region X), at one of the Higher Education Institutions in Ozamiz City. Northern Mindanao, known for its blend of urban and rural landscapes, hosted diverse educational institutions contributing to the region's strong academic foundation. The chosen school was a top spot for training teachers, and its students regularly did very well on the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET). It got a Plaque of Recognition from CHED Region X for excellent training and teaching, and one of its graduates did very well on the March 2023 LET for Elementary, ranking in the top 10. These achievements showed the importance of the college in turning out highly skilled teachers whose work improved many Northern Mindanao school districts.

##### ➤ *Participants*

This study involved eight graduates of teacher education programs. A purposive sampling technique—specifically, snowball sampling—was used to identify key participants for the study. The researchers asked the first participant who took part to recommend other suitable people who met the same criteria. Using this sampling method, professional networks were used to increase the number of people who could take part. The following criteria were used to choose the participants: 1) they must have earned their degrees from the College of Education at Misamis University, 2) they must have completed their degree from academic year 2000 up to the present, 3) they must have held or currently hold higher teaching-related positions in their workplace, and 4) they must have notable achievements in their teaching careers. The researcher ensured that the criteria mentioned were fulfilled before conducting the interviews.

##### ➤ *Instrument*

The researcher collected data for this study using a researcher-made semi-structured interview guide designed to explore the success stories of education graduates. Panel members reviewed the instrument to ensure its trustworthiness.

The interview process started with an introduction, which told the participants about the study. This was followed by profiling questions that got more information about the participants, like where they went to school, how long they'd been teaching, and their current job. This gave the researchers a better idea of the sample group. There were opening questions, central questions, and final questions in the interview. The researcher made sure that the people who took part would give complete answers to the main questions. This way, they could talk about specific events and show off what they had done. People thought about their answers to the open-ended questions, which told us a lot about their work lives.

##### ➤ *Data Gathering Procedure*

Before conducting the actual interviews, the researcher obtained permission from the Dean of the Graduate School to carry out the study. A formal research proposal and other required documents were submitted for review. The study proceeded only after official approval was granted. Once authorized, the researcher identified potential participants based on the study's inclusion criteria.

The researcher placed a high value on the voluntary participation of participants and the acquisition of informed consent. Participants were fully informed that their participation was entirely voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time without facing penalties. After receiving a detailed explanation of their rights, participants signed the informed consent forms, indicating their understanding and agreement to participate.

Once consent was secured, the researcher scheduled interviews according to the participants' availability and preferences. Online interviews were the most convenient for the participants and were conducted through platforms such as Zoom. The researcher requested participants' consent to record the sessions to facilitate accurate transcription and analysis of their responses.

After completing the interviews, the researcher engaged in a comprehensive data analysis process. The recorded interviews were transcribed into written text, ensuring all responses were accurately documented. The transcripts were translated, maintaining accuracy and preserving the participants' intended meanings. The researcher then reread the transcripts multiple times to become thoroughly familiar with the data and identify initial patterns. Through a systematic coding process, significant words, phrases, and ideas were labeled to categorize participants' responses. Related codes were grouped to identify common themes and patterns across the narratives. Finally, the researcher analyzed and interpreted the findings by connecting the identified themes to the research questions, providing meaningful insights into participants' experiences.

### ➤ *Ethical Considerations*

This study adhered to the ethical principles outlined by Creswell (2014), ensuring ethical integrity across all phases of the research process. Prior to conducting the study, approval was sought from the Misamis University Research Ethics Committee before its commencement. The study was carefully designed to minimize any potential risks to participants, with clear ethical safeguards in place, including voluntary participation, informed consent, and the right to withdraw at any time. The researcher also acknowledged positionality and potential biases to promote transparency and objectivity.

At the beginning of the study, participants were provided with comprehensive information about the study's objectives, procedures, and their rights. Written informed consent was secured, ensuring participants of confidentiality, anonymity, and the freedom to exit the study without consequences.

Throughout the data collection phase, participants' dignity, privacy, and emotional well-being were prioritized. Interviews were conducted respectfully and sensitively, with recordings and field notes taken only with consent. The researcher remained attentive to participants' comfort, allowing for pauses or withdrawal when needed.

In the analysis phase, ethical responsibility continued as the data were interpreted with the goal of authentically representing participants' voices. Pseudonyms replaced real names, and identifying information was removed to protect anonymity. Reflexivity was practiced throughout, with the researcher bracketing personal assumptions to uphold the credibility and integrity of the findings.

During reporting and data storage, participant narratives were handled with care, ensuring no harm or misrepresentation. Data were stored securely in password-protected digital files and locked physical folders, accessible only to the researcher, and retained according to institutional guidelines.

In publishing the study, all sources and contributions were properly acknowledged. Findings were reported transparently and respectfully, with a commitment to upholding the dignity of the participants and contributing meaningfully to the discourse on teacher education and graduate success.

### ➤ *Data Analysis*

In analyzing the data obtained from the interviews, this study used the 4D model of Appreciative Inquiry (AI) developed by Cooperrider et al. (2008), which consisted of four phases: Discover, Dream, Design, and Destiny. The data were analyzed as follows:

During the Discover phase, the focus was on identifying factors that contributed to the success stories of teacher education program graduates. The participants' past successes and the good things that had happened to them at work were looked at. The point was to find out what these graduates did

that helped them deal with problems and do well in their jobs as teachers.

In the Dream phase, the analysis shifted toward envisioning future possibilities for education graduates based on past successes. The participants shared what they had accomplished and how they wanted to build on what they had already done successfully. By looking at these stories about the future, the study found the collective visions of education graduates and their hopes for making a bigger difference in the field of education.

The design phase explored how participants could leverage their success stories to design actionable strategies for future achievements. The analysis focused on how these graduates described the practices, mindsets, and approaches that contributed to their success and how they intended to continue refining these aspects. The goal had been to identify patterns that could be used to create strategies for long-term growth and sustained success in their careers.

In the Destiny phase, the analysis had centered on the concrete actions and commitments participants had planned to take to continue building on their success stories. During this phase, participants discussed how they planned to deal with possible problems and continue toward their job goals. By focusing on these doable steps, the study showed how people planned to build on their successes and make sure their growth would last throughout the years.

## V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This study explored the success stories of eight graduates of Teacher Education Programs at one of the higher education institutions in Ozamiz City using Appreciative Inquiry. The participants, identified as P1 to P8, included six males and two females, all of whom held degrees in education, four in Bachelor of Elementary Education and four in Bachelor of Secondary Education majoring in Mathematics. Four participants had pursued graduate studies: two had completed master's and doctoral degrees, while two had earned only master's degrees. The other four held only undergraduate degrees or were still pursuing further studies. All were active in the education sector, with four serving as school leaders, and one working as a Master Teacher, a division planning officer, an ESL teacher abroad, and a university director overseas. Their careers spanned public schools, DepEd offices, international institutions, and higher education, with professional experience ranging from 6 to 26 years.

An in-depth semi-structured interview was conducted with eight graduates of the Teacher Education Programs at one of the Higher Education Institutions in Ozamiz City through Appreciative Inquiry. The analyzed data revealed four core themes: (1) Discovering the Significant Milestones and Achievements of Graduates in their Professional Careers as Educators, (2) Dreaming of Continued Growth and Future

Contributions to the Field of Education, (3) Designing the Pathways of Professional Success and Impact in the Workplace, and (4) Fulfilling Destiny by Inspiring Colleagues and Future Educators Toward Excellence in the Teaching Profession.

➤ *Discovering the Significant Milestones and Achievements of Graduates in their Professional Careers as Educators*

This theme discovered the various significant accomplishments and turning points experienced by teacher education graduates in their professional journeys. These professional milestones referred to the meaningful achievements that graduates consider as markers of their success as educators, such as awards, promotions, published research, leadership roles, and impactful community initiatives. These milestones are symbols of personal success and reflections of their growth, resilience, and contributions to the broader educational landscape. The theme underscores how graduates perceive success beyond classroom instruction, embracing broader roles that shape education and society.

The findings suggest that these achievements are deeply rooted in the graduates' drive to grow, succeed, and make a difference. Their stories reflect a sense of purpose and fulfilment that emerges from the ability to make choices, pursue professional goals, and overcome challenges. These accomplishments are shaped by their belief in their capabilities, reinforced by the support systems and learning environments they have encountered. Reaching these milestones often involved critical reflection and a willingness to evolve, indicating a transformative experience that reshaped their understanding of themselves and their roles as educators. This internal motivation, self-efficacy, and transformation are central to the graduates' narratives of success.

Two subthemes further illustrated this broader picture of professional success: receiving recognition and awards in education and research, and engaging in community development and support. The first subtheme emphasized how graduates are acknowledged for excellence in teaching, innovation, and scholarly contributions. The second subtheme highlights their commitment to serving and uplifting communities through outreach programs, training, and educational advocacy.

*Receiving Recognition and Awards in Education and Research.* One of the graduates' significant milestones and achievements in their professional careers as educators was receiving international recognition from different global organizations and institutions. Education graduates tended to pursue worldwide recognition and awards to gain acknowledgment for their skills and contributions to the profession, which served as an official quality certificate in a world increasingly dominated by globalization. This kind of recognition opened up more job options, like teaching abroad, working together on research projects, and becoming a global leader in education.

P1 set a great example by winning top awards in several countries. P2 got a foreign scholarship because they were smart and wanted to support education exchange worldwide. P3 was invited to share a study at an academic conference in Tokyo, Japan, which shows that they are becoming more involved in global research. Furthermore, P5 was awarded as one of the Top 16 Excellent Teachers globally—an award earned not only once, but twice. The participants' testimonies corroborated these recognitions.

*“In 2024, I was honored as an Ulirang Guro by the Association of Fil-Am Teachers of America Inc. in New York. While in Oman in 2016, I was recognized as the Most Outstanding Filipino Community Leader... In 2014, I received the Most Outstanding Teacher in Saudi Arabia award.” (P1)*

*“I was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship and will be studying in the United States this August 2024.” (P2)*

*“While still in the submission phase, I already have another study accepted for presentation in Tokyo, Japan, in August 2025, for which I am now processing my visa.” (P3)*

*“During my teaching career in Vietnam, I was recognized as one of the Top 16 Excellent Teachers at Ocean Edu and I have received this recognition twice.” (P5)*

Teacher education graduates have earned global acclaim that testifies to individual achievement and notable contributions to the worldwide community of educators. Such recognitions—spanning highly competitive scholarships to global teaching awards—proved their ability to lead, innovate, and establish positive educational relationships in multicultural, varied environments. These accomplishments showed that they could keep up with foreign trends in education, share cross-cultural learning at the academic level, and come back with new ideas that they could use in their settings. This made them even more globally competent teachers.

Filipino teacher education graduates have continually demonstrated exceptional performance in international education environments, drawing attention that affirms their global teaching competence and adaptability (Ramos & Basbas, 2025). Their success in multicultural classrooms shows they are sensitive to other cultures and can adapt to new workplace situations. This has earned them praise and awards from international organizations (Wright & Villaflo, 2019). Many of these graduates get educational awards, which are well-known signs of excellent teaching and help them advance in their careers and build their professional credibility (Brawer et al., 2006). Professional recognition makes people more committed and opens the door for foreign collaboration (Heneman, 1998), which is linked to higher motivation and performance. Global successes are suitable for teachers' mental health and help them feel like they belong and are valuable in the global educational community (Arcillo, 2023).



In addition to receiving awards and scholarships globally, the teacher education program graduates were also being recognized at the national level through highly acclaimed awards and honors in public service and education. These awards recognized their outstanding teaching, research, and educational leadership work. They also helped to boost their professional image and dedication to excellence at the national level. Because of this, they became role models in their communities and across the country, making them more important in classrooms and in larger efforts to change how schools work.

P2 had shown excellence in literature and instructional innovation by being conferred with a prestigious national award that acknowledges outstanding reading advocacy and development of educational materials. P3 showed exceptional public service and ethical commitment by being awarded a highly coveted national award for outstanding public service. P6, too, had shown a career stamped with national prestige, having been conferred with the award of most outstanding school paper adviser in the country. This is supported further by the responses of the participants:

*“In 2023, I was selected as a ReadExPick for the National Gawad Teodora Alonso Award, with my storybook Ang Kakaibang Ilaw ni Silaw being one of 55 winners from thousands of nationwide entries.” (P2)*

*“Recently, I received the Civil Service Commission Dangal ng Bayan Award, a prestigious recognition given to outstanding civil servants across all government agencies. I was honored to be the only recipient from the Department of Education in the entire Region 10.” (P3)*

*“In 2013, I received the most prestigious award at the national level... the National Most Outstanding School Paper Adviser and I was also named a national finalist for the CSC Dangal ng Bayan Award.” (P6)*

The national awards received by graduates of teacher education programs indicate the diverse contributions they make to the field, from concepts of culturally relevant instructional materials to mentoring student journalists and showcasing public service. Such recognitions affirm impact beyond classroom teaching into the arenas of educational policy, promoting civic values, and quality education nationally.

This aligns with the assertion that teachers are essential to national development by shaping the future workforce through professional commitment (Ramos & Basbas, 2025). Also, national awards for excellent teaching make it even more important to maintain high-quality and pedagogical knowledge standards, as they are essential to building a strong country over time (Gepila Jr., 2020). It also discusses how teachers' roles are changing and becoming more complex; they are seen as guides, organizers, and educational leaders (Sharma, 2017). The awards also reflect the high professional growth, innovation, and

adaptive capacity required of 21st-century educators (Zamora & Zamora, 2022). Finally, the idea that teachers are the core processors of education, and that their national recognition directly impacts student achievement and educational quality, is reinforced (Maba et al., 2023).

Graduates of teacher education programs were also given awards at the division level to recognize their leadership and success in their local school systems. These awards were proof of their outstanding achievements in the field, which were usually made possible by their unwavering dedication, creative ideas, and effective school management. These awards confirmed their professional competence and dedication and raised their status as role models in their divisions.

P4 showed excellence in leadership and stewardship of resources by being among the Top 3 in Outstanding Performance in Fund Utilization (Small Category) and being nominated for the Most Outstanding School Leader in the Elementary Category. P6, who moved from classroom teacher to a school head, gained significant recognition in both capacities. P7 also showed school-level impact through division-wide recognition by being nominated for Most Outstanding Principal. This is further evidenced by the accounts shared by the participants:

*“Additionally, I was nominated for the Most Outstanding School Leader-School Head Teacher (Elementary Category) and ranked Top 3 in Outstanding Performance in Fund Utilization (Small Category) in 2023.” (P4)*

*“When I was still a teacher, I was awarded as the Most Outstanding Teacher in the division in 2011 and as a school head, I received the Division Outstanding School Head award.” (P6)*

*“I was nominated for the Most Outstanding Principal in the division last year and at the school level, we received the Most Outstanding Implementer in Brigada Eskwela for three consecutive years.” (P7)*

Teacher education graduates have received division-level awards that reflect individual achievements and attest to their outstanding contributions to the local educational scene. Awards and recognitions like Most Outstanding Teacher, Outstanding School Head, and Outstanding Principal—combined with regular honors in school-based programs like Brigada Eskwela and utilization of funds—prove their ability to lead, innovate, and implement effective programs that support education priorities. These awards show how dedicated they are to doing a great job as teachers and administrators and how their professional growth has a real effect at the school and division levels.

This captures the expectation that school principals are instructional leaders and administrative managers who propel collaboration, nurture teacher growth, and guarantee student-

centered results (Dellomas & Deri, 2022). Additionally, such awards confirm that practical leadership approaches, based on sound principles of education and ongoing improvement initiatives, do much to generate school success and excellence (Peregrino et al., 2021). The award also mirrors the perception that school heads who boldly defy orthodox thinking become harbingers of school innovation and reform (Gonzales et al., 2024).

These distinctions within divisions indicate not just individual merit as professionals, but also school heads' ability to establish people-to-people relations with communities and maintain programs with lasting positive effects on boosting school-wide performances (Green, 2018). Lastly, these recognitions emphasize the significance of strategic planning, instructional supervision, and outcome-based leadership in accomplishing school goals and sustaining educational quality at the local level (Riani & Ain, 2022).

Graduates of teacher education made significant contributions to educational research. For some, research became not just an expectation in terms of their professionalism but also an arena to effect practice, influence educational policies, and participate in local and international academe. Their commitment to creating new knowledge and its dissemination through writing and presentation reveals a high commitment to academic excellence and continuing education.

P1 has illustrated this dedication by developing a strong research portfolio of 20 published studies with high readership and citations by major international universities. P2, however, has made significant contributions in applied and advocacy research. P3 has shown forward-thinking engagement in international academic forums, with one study already accepted for presentation in Tokyo, Japan, and another paper being considered for a conference in The Hague, Netherlands. P4 contributed to academia by publishing a research paper during doctoral study, demonstrating an ongoing interest in knowledge production amidst the difficulties of graduate-level research activity. This is further supported by the narratives provided by the participants:

*“Aside from teaching, I am also a researcher with 20 published studies in well-respected journals. My research has gained over 12,000 readers and has been cited by top universities like Florida State University, Texas A&M University, Lancaster University, Edge Hill University, and Monash University in Australia.” (P1)*

*“My research on Mathematics Education was featured in DepEd e-Saliksik, the official e-journal of DepEd Central Office. Additionally, in January 2024, I presented and published a study on LGBTQ+ life skills in the Regional Research Pool (Region 10).” (P2)*

*“I am currently working on a paper intended for presentation in The Hague, Netherlands. While still in the*

*submission phase, I already have another study accepted for presentation in Tokyo, Japan, in August 2025, for which I am now processing my visa. And I have also successfully presented research at the Regional Research Congress (RCC) held in De Luxe, Cagayan de Oro City.” (P3)*

*“I successfully published a research paper during my doctorate studies in 2021, though I cannot recall the name of the publishing company at the moment.” (P4)*

Graduates of teacher education programs have made important contributions to educational studies, showing a strong dedication to academic excellence and professional growth. Some people see study as more than their job; it is a way to change practice, help make policy, and connect with academic communities worldwide. Some of the things they have done to help are publishing in peer-reviewed journals, giving talks at regional and international conferences, and conducting applied and advocacy research that deals with important issues in education. These successes show that teachers and researchers actively shape the educational scene by creating and sharing new information.

This aligns with findings that teachers engage in research to enhance teaching practices, improve student outcomes, and advance their careers (Jamoom & Al-Omrani, 2021). Despite challenges such as heavy workloads and limited support (Alcazaren et al., 2022), teacher-researchers persist due to motivations like knowledge generation, professional prestige, and opportunities for collaboration (Vecaldo et al., 2019). Action research, in particular, empowers educators to reflect on and improve their practice, contributing meaningfully to educational development, even as others may find it difficult to engage due to time and relevance concerns (Gomez & Catan, 2021).

Graduates of teacher education programs who won awards and honors in teaching and research showed how competitive, professional, and dedicated they are to improving the teaching field. Their accomplishments, such as winning prestigious foreign scholarships and teaching awards around the world, as well as national awards and divisional honors, show that they have what it takes to lead, innovate, and make a big difference in and out of the classroom. These awards show that they are respected teachers, researchers, public workers, and educational leaders who affect policy and practice. Their work has been recognized many times at different levels, which shows how flexible, culturally aware, and professional they have grown. It also shows their importance to the international education community and nation-building efforts through exemplary teaching, leadership, and research.

*Engaging in Community Development and Support.* Teacher education graduates also possess a strong sense of commitment to community development and support. These graduates have shown they have a strong sense of civic duty by getting involved in and starting programs that meet the needs of

their communities outside of their official roles as school teachers. Their activities take the influence of education beyond the realm of the immediate, emphasizing professional achievement for the educators not simply in terms of academic achievement, but also as a function of significant participation in community development. Through outreach missions, cultural maintenance initiatives, and infrastructure projects, the graduates have emerged as active change agents, linking the educational agenda to community empowerment.

P2 linked teaching with civic involvement by providing complimentary math tutorials and a school pantry activity. P3 extended outreach via civic groups such as the Rotaract Club, focusing on education equity. P4 facilitated academic achievement through directing review programs for national exams. As a school administrator, P6 incorporated outreach into development via home gardening and recording indigenous Subanen stories. P8 spearheaded massive school expansion projects, such as classroom building and establishing a Senior High School Program. The participants' narratives further reinforce this point:

*“In 2023, I organized a School Pantry Activity, providing school supplies to students. Additionally, I offer free mathematics tutorials within my community as part of my outreach efforts.” (P2)*

*“I was previously involved with the Rotaract Club of Ozamiz North, where I actively participated in various outreach initiatives. Currently, my work still aligns with community service, as I travel across Ozamiz City to identify isolated communities in need of new schools, ensuring that children in remote areas have access to basic education.” (P3)*

*“One of our most impactful projects is a collaborative effort for the National Achievement Test (NAT) and ELLNA exam preparation, where we conduct a 10-day review program for Grade 6 and Grade 3 students.” (P4)*

*“During my time as school head of Tipan Elementary School, we launched a project called Gulayan sa Tahanan (Home Gardening Project), another notable project was during my time as school head in Karangan in 2019 where we build a school fence, and we have written Subanen stories in their native language as part of our efforts to preserve and promote their culture.” (P6)*

*“During my stay, I was able to produce and construct nine classrooms for the school. Before I left, the school was granted a four-story building with 12 classrooms and at the same time, I was able to open the Senior High School Program in the school before I officially transferred on January 6, 2025.” (P8)*

Teacher education graduates have firmly committed to community development by participating actively in outreach activities that stretch their functions beyond the classroom. These educators initiated and participated in a series of

programs responding to the needs of the local communities, including school pantry drives, free academic tutorial services, review sessions for national examinations, preservation of cultural heritage, development of infrastructure, and advocacy of education access. Their efforts illustrate how instruction becomes an active force when combined with community service, enabling professional accomplishment through teaching efficacy and providing leadership to community-led projects. By spearheading and continuing these projects, the graduates situate themselves as agents for change, rooting education in communities lived circumstances and demands.

These efforts illustrate the role of teachers as leaders who promote local development through service and civic engagement (Smart, 1980). Such initiatives align with the belief that schools must serve the broader community through outreach and extension programs (Roxas et al., 2018). Their work also supports a sociocultural learning environment where knowledge becomes meaningful through community engagement (Wang et al., 2016). These projects are consistent with the goals of extension services designed to address specific communal needs and improve quality of life (Corpuz et al., 2022). Even though they do not have much time, research skills, or work, graduates still do outreach work as part of their career development and commitment to service (Vecaldo et al., 2019).

Teacher education graduates have excelled not only in implementing outreach programs to uplift communities but also in their ability to establish and sustain genuine partnerships with various stakeholders. These partnerships with parents, barangay leaders, local government units, higher education schools, and Indigenous Peoples (IP) leaders show a stronger dedication to community-driven, inclusive education. Through these strategic collaborations, the graduates broaden the impact of their professional practice, demonstrating that academic achievement is most effective when shared, supported, and co-designed with the broader community.

P4, for instance, facilitated community mobilization through engaging parents and stakeholders in critical student-centered initiatives. P6, on the other hand, illustrated a multi-layered stakeholder engagement strategy through collaboration with institutional and cultural stakeholders. Likewise, P7 illustrated how ordinary school activities like Brigada Eskwela can be turned into yearly platforms for vibrant stakeholder partnerships. On a larger level, P8's cooperation with the local government unit and a congressional office saw the latter accomplish a big-ticket infrastructure project, specifically a four-story classroom building. The participants' stories provide additional support for this perspective:

*“As part of this initiative, we work closely with parents and stakeholders who voluntarily prepare lunch for the students throughout the review period.” (P4)*

*“I partnered with La Salle University, who generously provided prizes for families with the best variety of homegrown*

*plants. We partnered with the barangay unit of Karangan and worked together to build a school fence. At present, I serve as the focal person for Indigenous Peoples (IP) Education and in this role, I actively collaborate with IP leaders in the city of Ozamiz.” (P6)*

*“As for community extension, every year, we collaborate with external stakeholders in our Brigada Eskwela program.” (P7)*

*“Before I left, I also coordinated with the local LGU and the office of the congressman. Because of this, the school was granted a four-story building with 12 classrooms.” (P8)*

Graduates of teacher education have greatly benefited the community by taking an active role in outreach programs that benefit the community outside the classroom. By engaging strategically with parents, local government units, barangay leaders, tertiary education institutions, and Indigenous Peoples (IP) leaders, the educators have achieved inclusive, people-centered education. By charting and maintaining partnerships for projects like school infrastructure development, cultural preservation, and education advocacy, they have demonstrated that professional achievement is entwined with community engagement. These graduates are prime examples of how education, when shared and co-designed with the community, can become a force for change and put them as agents of change and leaders in community empowerment.

This is an affirmation of the stakeholder collaboration essential in fostering accountability and enhancing quality in education (Valli et al., 2018). School-community collaboration also enhances education and community vigor by extending services beyond the curriculum (Casto, 2016). Through their engagement with Brigada Eskwela, the graduates' experiences validate the function of diverse stakeholder support in the attainment of educational objectives (Balinas, 2018). Their focus on teamwork and volunteerism is in line with the manner in which Brigada Eskwela promotes unity and community participation (Garcia, 2021). Additionally, the success of such initiatives is underpinned by effective leadership, participatory community involvement, and innovation (Digo et al., 2023).

The findings indicate that graduates of teacher education programs are successful not only as classroom teachers but also as leaders in community development. Their proactive participation in outreach programs, collaborations, and cultural activities underscore the necessity for teacher education programs to enhance training in civic engagement and community service. Through the preparation of teachers to serve schools and communities, education programs ensure graduates become agents of change, transforming education into one that is more inclusive, significant, and effective.

### ➤ *Dreaming of Continued Growth and Future Contributions to the Field of Education*

This theme discussed teacher education graduates' aspirations, goals, and forward-looking visions as they sought to develop themselves further and contribute meaningfully to the educational landscape. These aspirations referred to the graduates expressed desires to pursue continuous learning, enhance their leadership capabilities, explore advanced teaching strategies, and engage in initiatives to drive educational transformation. Their narratives revealed a deep commitment to lifelong growth for personal fulfilment and advancing the teaching profession and the communities they served. This future-oriented mindset demonstrated how success was seen not as a final destination but as an evolving journey fueled by purpose and ambition.

The graduates' expressions of future goals and aspirations reflected a strong inner motivation to improve and expand their educator roles. This drive had been sustained by their sense of competence and autonomy, along with the meaningful connections they had established with learners, colleagues, and communities. Their belief in their ability to shape outcomes, adapt to changing educational landscapes, and overcome challenges reinforced their confidence to take on greater responsibilities. Their willingness to rethink and redefine their roles also indicated a transformative shift in perspective, shaped by prior experiences that challenged their assumptions and inspired them to envision a more impactful presence in education.

Two subthemes further illustrated this commitment to future growth: expanding leadership and professional development, and integrating technology and innovative practices. The first subtheme reflected the graduates' intentions to assume greater leadership roles, pursue advanced studies, and mentor fellow educators. The second subtheme highlighted their eagerness to adopt digital tools and implement pedagogical innovations that addressed the evolving needs of 21st-century learners. These aspirations reflected personal and professional advancement and a broader vision of shaping a dynamic, responsive, and future-ready education system.

*Expanding Leadership and Professional Development Opportunities.* One of the teacher education graduates' visions for their continued growth and contributions to education is to transition from classroom teaching to more prominent leadership roles. Their goal is to change educational policies, practices, and processes so that teachers can better help struggling students, and they want to shape the future of education at the local and national levels. These goals show that they want to grow professionally and as leaders throughout their lives.

P1 wanted to take on a leading role in the school community, going from teaching to motivating other teachers. P4 wanted to be promoted to Principal II within five years. This would give them more power to change how schools are run



and how they teach on a bigger scale. P6 intended to remain in a leadership position within the division but hopes to advance to third-level or higher government posts, potentially as a Chief or executive. P8 had a more defined leadership vision, focusing on inspiring action, implementing inclusive programs, and advocating for marginalized learners, especially those in mountainous areas. These visions were corroborated by the participants' testimonies:

*“In the next five years, I see myself evolving into a leadership role within the education community, moving beyond classroom teaching to focus on empowering fellow educators.” (P1)*

*“In the next five years, I see myself being promoted to Principal II.” (P4)*

*“In the next five years, I see myself still serving as one of the Education Program Supervisors in the Division of Misamis City but if given the opportunity, I would like to move up and apply for a higher position—perhaps as a Chief or to hold a third-level executive position in the government.” (P6)*

*“As I move forward in the next five years, I envision my role evolving into that of a stronger educational leader who inspires action, implements inclusive programs, and continuously advocates for learners in vulnerable situations especially those who are living in mountainous areas.” (P8)*

Teacher educators dream of a time when they do not just teach in classrooms but also hold leadership roles that shape school policies, practices, and processes. The teachers want to impact their peers, speak up for struggling students, and help shape the future of education at the local and national levels. Their visions show they want to impact their career more and support the education community. They want to move up in their jobs and help make learning environments welcoming and effective by focusing on leadership development. They want to improve the world by becoming leaders and promoting inclusive learning. This will help make a permanent difference in the future of education.

The graduates' leadership roles in working with partners show they want to grow professionally and academically. This fits the idea that going to school is necessary to get ahead at work (Aquino et al., 2022). These graduates worked hard on community projects, showing that good teacher leadership can improve schools (Poekert et al., 2016). Additionally, their ongoing participation in professional development and group projects is similar to the finding that teachers want to keep learning throughout their careers to remain relevant in the field (Ancho & Arrieta, 2021). These efforts also validate the need for career progression opportunities to maintain motivation and innovation (Ghamrawi & Abu-Tineh, 2023).

Mentorship helps people who have graduated from teacher education take on bigger jobs. They wanted to go beyond their

main classroom teaching job and become teachers who helped their peers grow as professionals. They wanted to build a culture of working together, where more experienced teachers helped new teachers grow, shared the best ways to do things, and built professional networks that made education better overall. Their larger goals were to help educational groups grow, promote ongoing professional development, and shape the future of teaching. This vision of mentorship fits with those goals.

P1 shared their goal of becoming a master teacher, which shows that they understand they must teach and guide other teachers. P2 said they wanted to get better at helping people grow professionally in ways that go beyond personal growth. Focusing on improving their study skills, P4 clarified that they wanted to share their knowledge with other teachers once they were good at it. These visions were supported by the participants' testimonies:

*“My long-term professional goal is to continue serving as a master teacher... This position enables me not only to teach and guide my students but also to mentor my fellow teachers, supporting their growth and professional development.” (P2)*

*“My goal is to enhance my ability to facilitate meaningful collaborations, ensuring that professional development goes beyond personal learning and contributes to the broader educational community.” (P1)*

*“I want to develop my research skills... Once I acquire these skills, I want to share them with my fellow teachers, especially since research plays a crucial role in professional development.” (P4)*

The graduates from teacher education saw mentoring as a key way to grow professionally and make a difference in the world of education. Instead of teaching in a school, they wanted to help and guide the growth of their peers. The main goal of this idea was to create a culture of collaboration where experienced teachers help new teachers, share the best ways to do things, and build professional networks to improve education. Graduates wanted to help career growth beyond their learning, which would benefit education. Their focus on mentoring showed that they were dedicated to constantly learning, being a leader, and supporting the growth of other teachers, which would eventually shape the future of education.

Mentoring enables teachers to show leadership by modeling best practices, building positive relationships, and promoting collaboration among peers (Gilles et al., 2018). Mentoring is essential to developing teacher leadership capacity, involving patience, ongoing support, and active participation in professional communities (Gul et al., 2019). Through mentoring, educators help develop their colleagues and enhance the wider educational community, in line with the participants' vision of research exchange and professional collaboration (Kutsyuruba et al., 2020). In addition, successful mentoring promotes reflective practice and leadership

confidence, supporting a growth mindset in both mentors and mentees (Swaminathan & Reed, 2020).

Teacher education graduates prioritized academic development as a key aspect of their professional development and contributions to the teaching profession. They thought that by learning more, getting better training, and getting better at what they did, they would be better at being teachers and leaders. There was a belief that academic growth was an individual achievement and a way to improve school teaching, learning, and research.

P1 stressed the importance of joining professional groups to stay current on best practices in education and make working together easier. To improve teaching and leadership, P2 wanted to improve at managing the classroom and working as a team. P3 wanted to attend school outside of Uganda to get his master's and focus on using AI in the classroom. P5 wished to advance knowledge in IELTS teaching to better assist students in succeeding. Both P6 and P8 emphasized research as critical, with P6 seeking to solve education problems through research and P8 targeting the empowerment of teachers to research issues of learners. These aspirations were supported by the participants' accounts:

*"I want to deepen my involvement in professional development by actively engaging in communities of good practice (COPs)." (P1)*

*"I want to improve my classroom management skills... Additionally, I want to develop my teamwork skills." (P2)*

*"In the next five years, I envision myself earning a doctorate degree, ideally through a scholarship abroad... My goal is to integrate artificial intelligence with education, finding ways to enhance teaching and learning through technology." (P3)*

*"To further improve my contributions, I want to refine my expertise in IELTS preparation, ensuring that I can provide high-quality instruction and guidance to my students." (P5)*

*"As I've mentioned, I really want to immerse myself more in research because through research, we're able to identify existing problems and thoughtfully design intervention plans to address them." (P6)*

*"To enhance my contributions, I would like to focus on empowering teachers to engage in research, particularly around the challenges faced by learners." (P8)*

Graduates of teacher education saw academic growth as an important part of their career growth and contribution to the field of education. They wanted to improve their skills, knowledge, and credentials to make teaching, learning, and studying more innovative. Some wanted to become more deeply involved in professional communities, build stronger

classroom management and teamwork skills, or specialize in areas such as IELTS teaching. Others wanted to study for a doctorate abroad, to bring technologies like artificial intelligence into teaching. There was also a deep commitment to research, with graduates wanting to tackle educational issues and empower other teachers through evidence-based practice.

Advancing academically fulfills teachers' career development needs and enhances their job satisfaction and retention, as opportunities for further studies and skill development are key drivers of professional fulfillment (Abu-Tineh et al., 2023). Encouraging teachers to pursue graduate education and leadership training further strengthens their ability to contribute meaningfully to the educational system (Macapagal & Ricafort, 2023). Higher academic qualifications also lead to better student outcomes, as professionally advanced teachers significantly impact student performance (Aderemi, 2023). Given teachers' essential role in societal development and the transmission of knowledge across generations, continuous academic and professional advancement remains crucial (Mwiti et al., 2021).

Teacher education graduates wanted to expand beyond classroom teaching into leadership positions that shaped educational practices, policies, and systems. The graduates thought they could change education at the local and national levels by empowering their peers, speaking up for struggling students, and making practices more welcoming for everyone. Their goal was to become leaders, help their coworkers, and continue their professional growth to the top, which would improve their study and advocacy. The focus on leadership and mentorship was part of a broader commitment to lifelong learning, and graduates sought to create collaborative communities, tackle education issues through research, and ultimately improve educational standards. These goals showed how ongoing academic growth and leadership roles can help keep professionals happy and improve school performance.

*Integrating Technology and Innovative Practices.* The teacher education program graduates stressed the imperative necessity of changing the curriculum to address students' changing needs and contemporary education requirements. This vision of curriculum change is consistent with the imperative for transition from outmoded, memorization-based education to more action-oriented, application-based learning that adequately prepares students for actual challenges.

P1 emphasized the need to go back and improve the curriculum so that students experience some relevant learning, which leads to practical application. This was also shared by P2, who offered an improved way of teaching math concepts through better communication by the teachers to translate representations in textbooks into real, meaningful instruction that better helps them understand. P4 intends to build on predictive algorithms identifying at-risk pupils and preventing dropout, displaying a move to data-driven pedagogy. P6 is focused on constructing a validated diagnostic instrument to

gauge numeracy performance after Grade 3, which would guide more focused competency-based interventions towards students. These visions were corroborated by the participants' testimonies:

*"I want to transform the curriculum by revisiting and enhancing it to ensure that students engage in meaningful courses and practices that truly prepare them for the future. Education should go beyond memorization—it should focus on performance and application, allowing students to demonstrate their understanding in real-world contexts." (P1)*

*"I want to implement a more concrete and effective approach to teaching mathematical concepts. One of the key changes I propose is to help teachers translate manipulatives and pictorial representations from textbooks into meaningful instruction." (P2)*

*"My current focus is on developing algorithms that can predict student outcomes, such as identifying learners at risk of dropping out before they transition from Grade 10 to Grade 11." (P4)*

*"In the field of Mathematics, one of my goals is to develop a validated and in-depth assessment tool for learners beyond Grade 3... This tool would help assess the numeracy levels of learners, and based on the results, we could design targeted intervention plans, such as competency-based workbooks and activities tailored to their needs." (P6)*

Graduates of teacher education programs stressed how important it is to change the curriculum to keep up with changing student needs and the needs of the educational world. They stressed how important it was to stop using traditional memorization methods and switch to a more useful method that trains students for problems they will face in the real world. Graduates saw the need for a curriculum that enhanced instruction through more open communication and practical teaching techniques while offering worthwhile, experiential learning opportunities. They also discussed using technology and data-driven methods together, like using predictive algorithms to find students most likely to fail and creating proper assessment tools to help with targeted, competency-based interventions. All of these points of view show a desire for a program that uses new methods and adapts to the different needs of students, encouraging both academic growth and real-world application in the classroom.

This vision resonates with the proposition that curriculum development as an effective process should be dynamic in response to the changing needs of students and society (Alsubaie, 2016). Involving teachers in the curriculum development is critical to developing relevant, meaningful, and supportive instruction for improved student outcomes (Kusmawan et al., 2025). Teachers' active participation in the shift ensures that the curriculum shifts from merely delivering content to placing educators as transformative change agents

who can draw on classroom experience to inform the learning culture (Baş & Şentürk, 2019). This comprehensive strategy for curriculum reform addresses not only academic success but also prepares students to face the challenges of the future (Rimal, 2018).

The teacher education program graduates emphasized the importance of continuous professional development to enhance their growth and contributions to the field of education. As things change in education, these teachers are dedicated to enhancing their work and encouraging a culture of shared growth. This dedication to teacher growth aligns with the growing awareness of how important it is for dealing with the changing problems in and outside of school.

P1 stated that funding teacher development could significantly enhance how the curriculum is implemented, giving pupils a more worthwhile and enjoyable educational experience. P4 shared a pragmatic approach to development by arranging a district-wide research seminar. P7 focused on the necessity of shifting the mindsets of both teachers and students in response to the significant challenges posed by non-face-to-face learning environments. These visions were supported by the participants' testimonies:

*"By investing in teacher development, we can improve curriculum implementation and create a more dynamic and impactful learning experience for students." (P1)*

*"I would like to enhance my colleagues' knowledge and skills in conducting research and one of our primary plans is to organize a district-wide research seminar and orientation for teachers. We are targeting the next school year, particularly during our INSET, to finally carry out this initiative." (P4)*

*"One of my innovations is focusing on shifting the mindset of teachers and students. After several years of non-face-to-face classes, many teachers and students are still adjusting to the new normal of in-person education." (P7)*

Teacher education graduates were committed to ongoing professional development as a significant stimulus for growth and contributions to teaching. Teachers see that ongoing development is important for meeting the changing challenges in the classroom. Investing in teacher development is essential for improving the learning process, strengthening curriculum implementation, and fostering a collaborative development culture. Practical steps like organizing seminars and orientations are being explored to further enhance instructors' knowledge and abilities, particularly in areas like research. Furthermore, a shift in perspective is essential for effectively transferring from non-face-to-face to face-to-face learning environments, highlighting the necessity of flexibility in the face of educational change.

Teacher development is pivotal in enhancing curriculum implementation and student learning experiences. Continuous professional development (CPD) is essential for addressing the limitations of pre-service training and supporting long-term teacher competence (Luneta, 2012). CPD initiatives, such as research seminars, are critical for strengthening teachers' research capabilities, especially in action research, despite challenges in data analysis and publishing (Oestar & Marzo, 2022). The transition to in-person education post-pandemic requires teachers and students to adapt, making innovation and mindset shifts crucial (Anabo & Fischl, 2025). Collaborative partnerships and ongoing professional development foster innovation, creativity, and adaptability in meeting evolving educational needs (Tancredi et al., 2023).

The graduates of teacher education programs recognized the significant role that technology and resources played in advancing both their professional growth and their contributions to the field of education. They highlighted the growing importance of integrating innovative technological tools into the classroom to improve students' learning experience and better equip educators with the necessary resources to stay relevant in an ever-evolving educational landscape.

P3 emphasized the transformative potential of artificial intelligence (AI) in predicting student outcomes, such as identifying learners at risk of dropping out. P5 proposed integrating interactive AI-based applications that students could use outside the classroom to practice skills such as speaking. P6 shared a unique approach by linking technology to Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd). P7 also discussed the importance of keeping up with technological advancements in the classroom. P8 expressed a vision of implementing technological innovations to tackle challenges like resource access. These visions were corroborated by the participants' testimonies:

*"My current focus is on developing algorithms that can predict student outcomes, such as identifying learners at risk of dropping out before they transition from Grade 10 to Grade 11 because by leveraging AI for early intervention, we can provide targeted support to ensure students continue their education."* (P3)

*"If given the opportunity to propose a change, I would suggest implementing interactive AI-based applications that students can use at home to practice their speaking skills."* (P5)

*"In terms of Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd), I am passionate about helping revive the Subanen language, which is sadly becoming endangered in Misamis Occidental. As our way of giving back to the community, we aim to revive Subanen through culturally responsive learning materials. We plan to develop more stories and resources written in Subanen, especially for use in the classroom."* (P6)

*"With the rapid evolution of technology, we are striving to ensure that our classrooms are equipped with the necessary technological tools to captivate students' attention and enhance learning."* (P7)

*"In my workplace, I would like to implement innovations that address the current challenges faced by students, particularly in terms of access to resources... I envision a system where the school not only ensures that students have laptops and access to Wi-Fi but also provides free printers and necessary materials for both students and teachers."* (P8)

Graduates of teacher education programs understood how necessary resources and technology were to furthering their professional development and educational achievements. They emphasized the significance of incorporating cutting-edge technologies like artificial intelligence to forecast student outcomes and assist at-risk learners. Additionally, they highlighted AI-based applications for remote skill practice and the use of technology in Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd) to promote cultural inclusivity. To improve learning and assist teachers and students, keeping up with technology developments and guaranteeing fair access to resources like laptops, Wi-Fi, and printers in schools was crucial.

Predictive algorithms and interactive software are examples of AI-based technologies that can modify learning activities to meet the needs of each student, improving performance and engagement (Eden et al., 2024; Rane et al., 2023). Technology utilization in conserving cultural heritage, like creating digital resources to bring back endangered languages, also underlines its utility in promoting inclusivity and cultural consciousness (Lortie, 2020). Additionally, closing the digital gap by ensuring that classrooms have the technology that all kids need, including laptops and Wi-Fi, gives them the resources they need to achieve and increases the effectiveness of teachers (Ghory & Ghafory, 2021). The revolutionary power of technology in education enables the move towards Education 4.0 and 5.0, with adaptive learning systems and immediate data capable of enhancing learning and encouraging lifelong learning (Umida et al., 2024).

Teacher education program graduates firmly believe that the future of education depends on a dynamic curriculum and strategic technology integration. With an emphasis on AI technologies that forecast results, offer individualized help, and improve learning experiences, they emphasize the necessity of curriculum change to match changing student demands. Equal access to resources like computers and Wi-Fi and the use of culturally sensitive materials in Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd) were highlighted as examples of how technology can foster inclusivity. In order to promote growth, adjust to shifting educational environments, and enhance teaching strategies, graduates emphasized the significance of ongoing professional development. This emphasis on creativity and adaptability fits well with more general educational trends that prepare educators and learners for the future.



➤ *Designing the Pathways of Professional Success and Impact in the Workplace*

This theme captured how teacher education graduates actively navigated their careers by making deliberate choices and creating opportunities that led to professional success and meaningful workplace contributions. These professional pathways referred to the intentional strategies, actions, and decisions the graduates took to shape their professional identities, establish credibility, and create lasting impact within their institutions and communities. Their narratives revealed a pattern of purposeful planning, goal-setting, and proactive engagement with individual and collaborative initiatives that defined their success as educators and leaders.

Graduates demonstrated a deep sense of agency in shaping their career trajectories, showing motivation fueled by personal goals and supported by their belief in their ability to succeed and influence others. Their success stemmed from external recognition and an internalized commitment to make their work meaningful. They adapted to challenges, sought continuous learning, and reflected critically on their experiences, allowing transformation in how they viewed their roles and responsibilities. Their confidence in taking initiative, solving problems, and influencing their environments indicated high self-efficacy, autonomy, and reflective thinking—essential elements in navigating professional growth and achieving sustainable impact.

Two subthemes emerged supporting this overarching narrative: building strong professional networks and initiating and leading meaningful projects. The first subtheme illustrated how graduates cultivated connections with colleagues, mentors, and stakeholders, enabling collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and mutual support. The second subtheme highlighted how graduates took the lead in projects that addressed real educational needs, such as curriculum development, school improvement initiatives, and capacity-building efforts. These subthemes emphasized how graduates did not simply adapt to their professional contexts but actively shaped them, resulting in sustained success and positive contributions to their workplaces.

*Building Strong Professional Networks.* The achievements of teacher education programs have impacted graduates' professional performance and influence in the workplace. These accomplishments were a strong foundation for establishing authority, credibility, and leadership in their respective capacities. Through the combination of demonstrated expertise and the validation of their contributions, these graduates enhanced their capacity to lead, inspire, and influence the educational environments in which they worked.

P1 emphasized how success inside and outside the classroom contributed to leadership capacity. The participants' effect in work environments was increased by the capacity to "walk the talk," illustrating the theories taught through personal experience. P2 shared how important research projects and

professional development were in promoting leadership. The participant described the experience of implementing action research training, emphasizing how colleagues' research methodology changed. P3's leadership journey underwent a sea change as accomplishments, such as obtaining third-level eligibility, were acknowledged and validated. These were corroborated by the participants' testimonies:

*"My achievements, both inside and outside the classroom, have strengthened my credibility and leadership. They allow me to walk into any teaching or professional setting with a strong sense of purpose and presence. My students listen because they know I walk the talk; I don't just teach theory—I live it." (P1)*

*"My achievements, particularly in research and professional development, have strengthened my credibility and empowered me to be more effective in my role. When I implemented an action research training in 2019, I witnessed a transformation in how my colleagues approached research." (P2)*

*"Earning third-level eligibility—particularly after undergoing the rigorous CESB validation—has not only validated my competence but also reinforced the importance of integrity and interpersonal relationships in leadership. This credibility strengthens the weight of my guidance and decisions, making me more effective in my current role." (P3)*

Graduates' professional success and contribution in the workplace were primarily determined by how well they performed in teacher education programs. Building authority, credibility, and leadership in their industry was firmly based on these accomplishments, both internally and externally validated. These graduates improved their capacity to lead, inspire, and impact the educational environments in which they worked by incorporating their demonstrated knowledge and receiving recognition for their achievements.

The leadership and credibility of teacher education graduates are strongly influenced by their achievements and milestones (Oloo & Kiramba, 2019). Recognized through personal reflection and external validation, these accomplishments establish authority and inspire confidence among peers and students (Griffiths et al., 2013). Graduates who embody the principles they teach enhance their influence within educational environments (Carver & Meier, 2013). Professional development and research initiatives further nurture leadership by introducing innovative pedagogical approaches and evidence-based strategies, which, in turn, benefit the broader school community (Supermane et al., 2018).

Building a solid professional reputation for teacher education graduates involves individual achievements and acting as role models and mentors, encouraging and assisting others in realizing their potential. These accomplishments help them develop their leadership skills and make them well-known members of their academic communities. Their

accomplishments, whether through creative teaching methods, effective classroom management, or active involvement in professional development, are vital in building authority and credibility as they progress through their careers. Consequently, this enhances their ability to guide, motivate, and impact the learning settings in which they operate.

P5 described how her behavior control and classroom management proficiency enabled her to assume a mentoring role, solidifying her leadership position. P6 highlighted that taking on a leadership role allowed him to demonstrate best practices for teachers and school administrators, earning colleagues' respect and trust via dedication, cooperation, and respect. P7's story demonstrated how his accomplishments improved the classroom atmosphere more broadly. These were supported by the testimonies of the participants:

*"My achievements have earned the trust of my colleagues and classroom managers, allowing me to support other teachers—especially in areas like behavior control and classroom management. This role as a mentor has made me more reflective and intentional in my practices, thereby increasing my overall effectiveness." (P5)*

*"Taking on the role has allowed me to model effective practices for both teachers and school heads. By demonstrating commitment, respect, and cooperation, I've gained the trust and admiration of my colleagues, which has led to more collaborative and productive work relationships." (P6)*

*"Seeing my journey has encouraged many to pursue their own educational goals, which in turn creates a motivated and more focused learning environment. When others witness my progress, they are more inclined to develop themselves and work towards similar successes, benefiting both the workplace and the students." (P7)*

Teacher education program graduates stressed the importance of role modeling and mentoring in creating robust professional networks and promoting success. Because of their accomplishments in professional behavior, classroom management, and self-improvement, they gained the respect of their peers and school administrators, which allowed them to motivate others and promote a growth-oriented culture. They developed their careers and fortified their institutions by exemplifying professional principles and successful procedures, demonstrating how individual accomplishments have a greater influence on the workplace.

Graduates can motivate colleagues and spearhead educational advancement because of their accomplishments in professional conduct, classroom management, and ongoing self-improvement, which cultivate trust and respect. This supports the claim that developing strong professional networks increases graduates' influence in educational communities (Sawalhi & Chaaban, 2021). Successful classroom management and professional development practices strengthen their

credibility and mentoring capacity (Odell & Ferraro, 1992). Moreover, mentorship extends beyond guidance, representing an investment in the growth of others and fostering a culture of collective improvement (Ojo et al., 2017). Through effective mentorship and modeling, graduates develop leadership capacities that transform them into influential figures in their educational spheres (Larsen et al., 2023).

Graduates of teacher education programs projected their professional influence beyond direct teaching assignments, exhibiting leadership, innovation, and community involvement. They moved beyond the confines of the classroom to assume positions that greatly influenced educational communities, changed institutional procedures, and started initiatives that would benefit society for years to come. Participants showed how their success benefited their individual careers and opened up wider opportunities for others by generating collaboration, facilitating a culture of professional development, and addressing broader systemic requirements within education.

P1 increased his influence by establishing teacher associations in Saudi Arabia and Oman and promoting international professional communities. P2 improved research culture and helped several projects secure regional financing by starting action research training. P8 showed leadership by obtaining government approval to build a four-story school facility, meeting urgent demands for educational infrastructure. These achievements were corroborated by the participants' testimonies:

*"When I was in Saudi Arabia, I established a teacher association that has now grown into multiple organizations with branches and headquarters. Similarly, in Oman, I initiated three organizations that continue to thrive." (P1)*

*"One significant initiative is our Project Basa, a school program designed to support struggling readers. We group students based on their reading levels rather than their grade levels to provide targeted instruction." (P4)*

*"My professional milestones have significantly benefited my workplace and my students, particularly in the area of community extension programs. Before my assignment in Marbel 7 in January 2005, I was stationed at Marbel Five National High School... these efforts not only improved the infrastructure but also provided students with more educational opportunities, especially for those who might otherwise have limited access due to financial constraints." (P8)*

By exhibiting leadership, encouraging creativity, and participating in community-building initiatives, graduates of teacher education programs demonstrated their professional influence outside of their immediate teaching duties. Their efforts improved institutional procedures, influenced educational communities, and had enduring societal effects. While some oversaw significant infrastructure projects or

enhanced the research atmosphere in institutions, others broadened their influence globally by founding professional associations. In addition to their observable achievements, graduates developed into mentors and role models who gained the respect of their peers, encouraged teamwork, and stimulated professional development. These collective efforts highlighted how their successes contributed to personal advancement and the broader strengthening and development of their educational environments.

Teacher education graduates expand their influence beyond teaching by leading, innovating, and driving impactful projects (Williams, 2005). By encouraging teamwork, professional development, and addressing systemic educational issues, their accomplishments further their careers and open doors for others (Warren, 2023). These instances demonstrate how graduates can work as change agents, promoting enhancements in teaching methods and advancing society (Zorde & Lapidot-Lefler, 2025). They are often at the forefront of initiatives that tackle sustainability challenges within their communities (Jameel, 2023), demonstrating a strong commitment to integrating sustainable practices into both their teaching and community projects, thereby preparing future generations to become environmentally responsible citizens (Liao et al., 2022).

Teacher education graduates were agents of their constant progress and professional change. They highlighted the importance of individual accomplishments in encouraging people to continually develop their skills, knowledge, and leadership abilities. They pointed out that success professionally was not determined by individual success but also by how those successes impacted and encouraged others in the educational community. Graduates discussed how past successes had influenced their present practices and professional selves, creating a culture of ongoing learning that served both themselves and others.

P2 emphasized the importance of ongoing personal and professional development by describing how his accomplishments gave him clarity and the self-assurance to lead. P7 revealed that his accomplishments, which were not always the result of academic genius, served as a model for others, showing that hard work and determination might pay off. P8 reflected on how his journey from humble beginnings had informed his leadership, enabling him to advocate for equal opportunities and support students from diverse backgrounds. The participants' testimonies confirmed these achievements:

*“Every milestone I reach gives me the confidence and clarity to lead by example and to advocate for practices that enhance both teaching and learning.” (P2)*

*“My achievements have significantly influenced my effectiveness in my current role by inspiring many people. They see my journey and realize that I wasn't necessarily the most*

*brilliant person, but through my accomplishments, I've been able to motivate others to pursue their studies.” (P7)*

*“My achievements have significantly influenced my effectiveness in my current role as a school head. I am a product of Montol National High School... Having come from humble beginnings, I understand what it's like to face challenges in education. That's why, as a school head today, my mission is to ensure that students, regardless of their backgrounds, have the opportunity to finish their studies.” (P8)*

By their success, teacher education graduates became change agents within their working spheres and outside their working circles. Their achievements boosted their progress and influenced others to enhance their ability and leadership continually. They asserted that professional success should be measured, not merely through individual milestones, but through the beneficial effect such achievement has upon others. Graduates considered how their experiences influenced their practices and professional identities, establishing a culture of ongoing learning. Their persistence and commitment, irrespective of academic excellence, inspired others. At the same time, their leadership, informed by modest origins, encouraged a commitment to supporting diverse students and facilitating equal opportunities. These reflections identify their increased influence outside the classroom, leaving a lasting legacy on their educational communities.

Teacher education graduates often view their professional journey as an ongoing process of growth and transformation (Nickel & Zimmer, 2018). They recognized that personal achievements inspire colleagues, fostering a culture of shared learning and development (Schalkwyk et al., 2012). Professional success extends beyond individual accomplishments to include the broader impact on peers and the educational environment, emphasizing collective growth (Griffiths et al., 2013). Past achievements shape current practices and professional identities, reinforcing that learning is a dynamic, continuous cycle (Williams, 2005).

Teacher education graduates' growth and development of professional networks contributed significantly to their success and impact in their careers. The study highlighted how building strong connections, both locally and internationally, enabled graduates to create collaborative opportunities, initiate meaningful projects, and influence positive changes in their workplaces and communities. The study emphasized the importance of networking in fostering professional growth and expanding one's reach within the educational field. Through expanding their networks, graduates advanced their careers and enhanced their ability to drive educational innovation and support the broader learning environment.

P1's efforts in establishing teacher associations in Saudi Arabia and Oman led to multiple thriving organizations, which continued to flourish and expand. P4 emphasized the importance of community engagement, citing the success of

Project Basa. This school program grouped students by reading levels rather than grade levels to provide more targeted support. P8 spearheaded community extension programs in Marbel, noting that their professional journey included enhancing school infrastructure and increasing educational opportunities for financially disadvantaged students. These were supported by the testimonies of the participants:

*“When I was in Saudi Arabia, I established a teacher association that has now grown into multiple organizations with branches and headquarters. Similarly, in Oman, I initiated three organizations that continue to thrive.” (P1)*

*“One significant initiative is our Project Basa, a school program designed to support struggling readers. We group students based on their reading levels rather than their grade levels to provide targeted instruction.” (P4)*

*“My professional milestones have significantly benefited my workplace and my students, particularly in the area of community extension programs. Before my assignment in Marbel 7 in January 2005, I was stationed at Marbel Five National High School... these efforts not only improved the infrastructure but also provided students with more educational opportunities, especially for those who might otherwise have limited access due to financial constraints.” (P8)*

Professional network growth and development were essential to the success and influence of teacher education graduates. Developing strong local and global connections allowed them to build collaborative networks and initiate projects that positively impacted their workplaces and communities. For instance, one participant developed successful teacher associations in Saudi Arabia and Oman, while another spearheaded Project Basa, which organized students by reading levels for more focused support. In addition, one participant led community extension programs that upgraded school facilities and increased educational opportunities for marginalized students. These experiences underscored the decisive role of networking in career progression and educational innovation.

The active role taken by teachers in professional development fosters the emergence of skills, knowledge, and leadership in teaching (Griffiths et al., 2013). Their achievements surpass individual gain, motivating peers and influencing professional identity, thus giving rise to a culture of ongoing learning (Schultz & Ravitch, 2012). This echoes the significance of professional growth in developing purpose and commitment among teachers (Nickel & Zimmer, 2018), with dedication and perseverance central to success, even beyond academic achievement (Nwoko et al., 2023). Moreover, their emphasis on network growth underscores the importance of collaborative relationships in shaping professional journeys, with professional and personal development bringing clarity and confidence in driving educational projects (Williams, 2005).

The success of these graduates, from classroom achievement to leadership positions, provided a solid foundation for developing authority and credibility within their working environments. Their capacity to mentor, exemplify effective practices, and develop collaborative relationships enhanced their leadership potential and broadened their influence. Professional development, research projects, and community engagement were highlighted by graduates as factors that helped both individuals and groups develop, establishing a culture of ongoing learning. Establishing professional networks locally and globally enabled them to launch practical projects, including teacher organizations and community initiatives, that promoted their professional growth and positively impacted their workplaces and communities.

*Initiating and Leading Meaningful Projects.* Graduates from teacher education programs acknowledged the significant role of innovation in shaping their professional journeys. The participants' responses revealed a strong alignment between their achievements and their ability to lead transformative initiatives that made a lasting impact in their professional environments. Many shared that their success stemmed from their continuous drive to innovate and initiate projects that addressed educational challenges and fostered growth.

P1's achievement overseas in building several teacher organizations aligned with his sustainable, effective change principle. His capacity for innovation and leading on a grand scale showcased his leadership skills and resolve to create enduring contributions to the educational framework in a global context. P2 also pointed out that professional development was paramount, especially adopting action research training. For P4, her ongoing enthusiasm for starting and sponsoring effective programs such as Project Basa showed how her success inspired the motivation for future innovations. These statements were further supported by the participants' responses:

*“Establishing multiple teacher organizations abroad reflects my commitment to meaningful, sustainable change.” (P1)*

*“In 2019, I implemented an action research training that transformed how colleagues approached research.” (P2)*

*“My achievements continuously motivate me to initiate and support impactful programs like Project Basa.” (P4)*

Graduates from teacher education programs emphasized the critical role of innovation in their professional success. Their achievements were closely tied to their ability to lead transformative initiatives that positively impacted their work environments. They demonstrated leadership by establishing organizations and initiatives committed to sustainable change. Additionally, they recognized the importance of professional development, citing initiatives that reshaped colleagues' approaches to key areas such as research. Their past successes



also motivated them to launch new programs, driving continuous innovation. These insights highlighted the graduates' strong drive to innovate as a key factor in their professional impact.

Teachers' success is directly related to their capacity to drive change-making initiatives, a significant factor in their professional success (Orr, 2006). These educators emphasized that their achievements stemmed from a steadfast dedication to innovation and the execution of projects to address educational challenges (Schleicher, 2018). Their stories illustrate how the capacity to innovate and lead directly affects educators' professional contributions to the education environment (Rudianti et al., 2024). These accounts amplify the potential for pedagogical innovation to transform, not just to satisfy educators but also to advance the image of educational institutions (Walder, 2016). Also, the success of these graduates shows the positive correlation between innovation and professional learning cultures, promoting increased collaboration, greater engagement, and a culture of risk-taking and collegiality in classrooms (Thumlert et al., 2018).

The professional successes of graduates from teacher education programs supported their growth and inspired and motivated others. Their achievements created an environment where peers and students were encouraged to pursue their goals. By leading by example, these graduates fostered a culture of empowerment, helping others realize their potential and contribute to the workplace. The participants' stories highlighted how personal milestones built a supportive and driven professional community.

P1's commitment and respect within the workplace led others to consider pursuing additional qualifications, such as third-level eligibility. Similarly, P6 shared that his status as a respected and dependable professional prompted others to open up to collaboration, illustrating how leadership rooted in personal achievement can create an atmosphere of mutual support and collective growth. Furthermore, P7's journey of success served as a source of motivation for others, reinforcing that the pathway to professional success is individual and communal. The participants' responses further reinforced these statements:

*“My milestones have inspired others in pursuing third-level eligibility.” (P3)*

*“When they see me as someone committed and respected, they become more open to collaboration.” (P6)*

*“Seeing my journey motivates others to pursue their own goals.” (P7)*

This emphasized that graduates' professional successes not only contributed to their personal growth but also inspired others to pursue their own goals. Achievements such as earning advanced qualifications and establishing a strong professional

reputation encouraged peers to aim higher and collaborate more effectively. Additionally, success stories served as a source of motivation, illustrating that professional growth was both an individual and collective journey. These experiences highlighted how leadership and personal milestones fostered a supportive and empowering environment within the workplace.

Teachers' accomplishments extended beyond their individual career trajectories, fostering an environment that inspired and empowered colleagues and students alike (Pentang et al., 2022). This ripple effect stemmed from their achievements, which created a supportive atmosphere where others were encouraged to pursue their aspirations (Douglass, 2019). By exemplifying leadership through their actions, these graduates cultivated a culture of empowerment, facilitating potential realization and enhancing workplace contributions (Macklin, 2011).

The effectiveness of teacher education program graduates is significantly linked to their capacity to maintain the influence of their efforts and leadership in their respective contexts. Their sustained impact was essential for their personal development and the long-term success of the organizations they managed. Multiple participants indicated that their continuous contributions have transcended initial achievements, significantly influencing the educational landscape in enduring ways.

P1 demonstrated continued leadership in Oman and Saudi Arabia, where their work with educational organizations showcased sustained influence. P2's efforts in securing funding for research projects impacted their professional development and standing in the educational community. P8's contributions to building classrooms and securing funding for school infrastructure reflected a long-term commitment to improving educational access and quality. The participants' responses further supported these statements:

*“My leadership in Oman and Saudi Arabia continues through thriving educational organizations.” (P1)*

*“Seven research projects were funded by the Basic Education Research Fund—an achievement that required rigorous evaluation.” (P2)*

*“I was able to help construct nine classrooms and secure funding for a four-story building with 12 additional classrooms.” (P8)*

Graduates from teacher education programs who effectively sustained their impact demonstrated a deep commitment to continuous growth and improvement within their professional development and the institutions they served. By extending their leadership beyond initial achievements, these graduates solidified their influence in diverse settings, fostering educational environments that thrived over time. Their ability to maintain momentum in their work, whether through

leadership in educational organisations, securing funding for research and infrastructure, or driving lasting educational improvements, illustrated how sustained efforts created a ripple effect, enhancing individual career trajectories and broader educational landscapes.

Sustaining the impact of teachers' work and leadership was key to their professional success, fostering individual growth and long-term effectiveness in educational institutions (Zorde & Lapidot-Lefler, 2025). This impact extended beyond initial achievements, reshaping the educational environment (Nwoko et al., 2023). Graduates demonstrated commitment through continued leadership and securing resources for educational advancements, such as funding for school infrastructure (Jameel, 2023). Transformational leadership was critical in inspiring educators, stimulating growth, and fostering cooperation and commitment (Supermane et al., 2018). These contributions highlighted the lasting influence of sustained leadership in education.

Graduates from teacher education programs linked their success to their ability to lead and innovate, initiating projects that drove sustainable change in their educational environments. Through establishing organizations, implementing training programs, and securing resources, they fostered their colleagues' personal growth and professional development. Their leadership created a ripple effect, motivating others to pursue higher goals and collaborate more effectively. These efforts showed that professional success was not just defined by initial achievements but by the lasting impact of their leadership, which promoted long-term growth in education.

➤ *Fulfilling Destiny by Inspiring Colleagues and Future Educators Toward Excellence in the Teaching Profession*

The fourth theme focused on graduates fulfilling their destiny by inspiring colleagues and future educators toward excellence in the teaching profession. This theme revealed how graduates of teacher education programs found more profound meaning and fulfilment in their professional journeys by serving as sources of inspiration for their colleagues and the next generation of educators. Fulfilling one's destiny referred to the graduates' active roles in influencing others through mentorship, modelling professional values, and fostering environments encouraging excellence and growth within the teaching profession. Their stories reflected a purpose anchored in personal achievement, uplifting others, and contributing to the broader educational community through inspiration, support, and leadership by example.

The graduates' influence was deeply rooted in their motivation and belief in their capacity to affect others' growth and development positively. This internal drive and a strong sense of competence and connectedness enabled them to create meaningful relationships and spaces for collaborative learning and support. Their commitment to helping others succeed reflected their confidence in their professional identity and a

sense of moral responsibility to shape the teaching profession positively. Many had undergone transformative experiences that allowed them to reflect on their past, reframe their roles, and embrace the task of inspiring others as part of their professional legacy.

Two subthemes supported this overarching narrative: empowerment through mentorship and guidance, and building collaborative professional communities. The first subtheme emphasized the graduates' efforts in guiding new teachers and peers by offering advice, emotional support, and professional insights from their experiences. The second subtheme highlighted their work in fostering inclusive and supportive communities of practice that encouraged shared learning, innovation, and mutual growth. These efforts demonstrated how the graduates excelled individually and cultivated environments where others could thrive, leaving a lasting impact on the teaching profession.

*Empowering Through Mentorship and Guidance.*

Graduates of teacher education programs played a significant role in inspiring and supporting their colleagues and future educators. The participants highlighted how mentorship, rooted in personal experience and sincere guidance, shaped their approach to empowering others. Graduates served as guides for their colleagues, providing not just technical expertise but emotional and professional support, helping others succeed and grow into leadership roles. Their dedication to mentorship was evident in their actions, whether through offering guidance, sharing personal experiences, or inspiring confidence in their peers.

P1 believed that stepping out of one's comfort zone fostered professional growth, encouraging colleagues to explore new fields. P2 emphasized the value of providing practical strategies during professional development, which promoted individual and collective growth. P5's support and encouragement highlighted the impact of personalized mentorship, while P6's heart-driven feedback-built trust and respect. P4 focused on the power of perseverance, helping a colleague navigate a promotion, and P3's intentional mentorship fostered strong, meaningful relationships, deepening their influence on mentees. The participants' responses further supported these statements:

*"I strongly believe that professional development comes from stepping out of one's comfort zone... I encouraged them to explore other institutions or fields." (P1)*

*"These sessions are opportunities for me to communicate practical strategies, share best practices, and encourage professional growth." (P2)*

*"I make it a point to help fellow teachers... My willingness to support and guide them helped them adapt and become more confident in their teaching." (P5)*

*"I share my experiences and insights during post-conferences and coaching sessions by giving sincere, heart-driven feedback... I believe when you share your knowledge sincerely, those under your care will truly listen." (P6)*

*"I told her it's normal to feel that way, and we never really know unless we try. I guided her through the process and kept encouraging her to submit her documents. Eventually, she got promoted to Teacher III." (P4)*

*"That intentionality has helped me build deeper, more meaningful mentorship relationships." (P3)*

*"I'm incredibly proud that each of them has since taken on higher roles in other countries... seeing them thrive... is a fulfilling reminder of the power of mentorship and guidance." (P1)*

Teacher education graduates were instrumental in motivating and encouraging their peers and prospective teachers through mentorship. They offered technical guidance and emotional support, enabling others to thrive and assume leadership positions. Participants underscored how moving out of one's comfort zone, using practical strategies, and providing individualized guidance promoted professional development. Genuine feedback, persistence, and mindful mentorship fostered trust, strengthened relationships, and enabled colleagues to advance their careers. Generally, their stories illustrated the power of mentorship to transform the success of fellow teachers.

This mentorship fosters professional growth and leadership by creating a supportive environment where trust and confidence flourish (Goldberg, 2018). Encouraging colleagues to leave their comfort zones fosters adaptability and ongoing learning, crucial for success in the evolving educational landscape (Macklin, 2011). Graduates facilitate individual and collective professional development by offering practical strategies and personalized guidance (Ojo et al., 2017). Moreover, heartfelt feedback and empathetic support cultivate trust, strengthening the mentor-mentee relationship (Okumu et al., 2021). Ultimately, mentorship plays a pivotal role in shaping the success and growth of educators, reinforcing the importance of intentional, relationship-driven guidance in achieving professional excellence (Larsen et al., 2023).

The findings of this study underscore the transformative role of mentorship in empowering colleagues and future educators. Graduates of teacher education programs provided technical expertise and emotional and professional support, helping others navigate challenges and grow into leadership roles. The participants highlighted how encouraging peers to step out of their comfort zones, offering practical strategies, and delivering personalized, heart-driven feedback fostered continuous professional development. This approach strengthened relationships, cultivated trust, and promoted adaptability, enabling colleagues to advance in their careers.

The narratives of the graduates emphasized the profound impact of mentorship in creating a supportive, collaborative environment that nurtured professional growth and leadership, essential for success in the teaching profession.

*Building Collaborative Professional Communities.* Graduates of teacher education significantly contributed to developing a supportive and collaborative environment in the teaching profession. As educators transitioned into their professional careers, their commitment to continuous improvement impacted their practice and extended to guiding and mentoring colleagues and future educators. They recognized the importance of creating a network of mutual support, where experiences were shared and strategies exchanged, elevating the collective effectiveness of the profession.

P1 valued regular communication with colleagues, ensuring an open line for feedback and guidance. P4 practiced structured collaborative sessions where successes and challenges were discussed, allowing participants to gain diverse perspectives and practical solutions for overcoming common obstacles. P5 echoed this sentiment by emphasizing the importance of shared learning, particularly during strategy exchange sessions, which fostered a culture of learning from one another. The spirit of collaboration was further evident in P7's account, where, instead of fostering competition, a supportive network was established, with colleagues readily available for guidance, creating an inclusive environment for growth. Additionally, P6's approach to leadership through mentoring, underpinned by empathy and clear communication, demonstrated how effective mentorship played a crucial role in guiding new educators. These practices were further corroborated by participants' testimonies:

*"I made it a point to regularly update my co-teachers—almost every week... This consistency helped create an open line of communication." (P2)*

*"We have what we call a collaborative expertise session... We share experiences—both positive and negative—and discuss possible solutions to common challenges." (P4)*

*"It's during these sessions that I share my personal strategies for classroom management and listen to the insights of others. This exchange of strategies creates a strong culture of learning from one another." (P5)*

*"Instead of competing, we supported each other's growth... I made sure to be available for guidance whenever needed, whether it was lesson planning, classroom management, or even preparing documents for ranking and promotions." (P7)*

*"Mentoring is an integral part of my leadership. I provide direct, honest feedback to teachers and principals... I always choose empathy, clear communication, and integrity." (P6)*

*“After this gathering, we hold informal meetings where we’re encouraged to openly share classroom experiences, including the challenges we encounter.” (5)*

Graduates of teacher education programs played a pivotal role in shaping collaborative professional communities that significantly contributed to the success of both current and future educators. By fostering networks of mutual support, graduates enhanced their practices. They served as mentors and guides for their colleagues, emphasizing the importance of open communication, shared learning, and collective problem-solving. This approach to professional development transcended individual achievement, creating an environment where educators grew together by exchanging strategies, experiences, and insights. The emphasis on mentorship, grounded in empathy and clear communication, further solidified the role of graduates as catalysts for sustained professional growth. By emphasizing collaboration rather than competition, these graduates fostered a culture of inclusivity and ongoing enhancement, thereby reinforcing the overall efficacy of the teaching profession.

Teachers' commitment to continuous improvement extends to mentoring colleagues and creating networks for sharing strategies and experiences, enhancing the profession's effectiveness (Zorde & Lapidot-Lefler, 2025; Simiyu et al., 2021). The importance of structured collaborative sessions and open communication is emphasized, as these spaces allow for the exchange of diverse perspectives and practical solutions to challenges (Voytecki & Anderson, 2021). Collaboration leads to developing innovative strategies and professional growth, promoting a culture of mutual learning and inclusivity (Massa et al., 2021). Mentorship, grounded in empathy and clear communication, further strengthens the teaching community and fosters continuous improvement (Antinluoma et al., 2021). Through these efforts, graduates help build a professional community that prioritizes collaboration and excellence in teaching (Smith et al., 2003).

The findings of this study highlighted the pivotal role graduates of teacher education programs played in building collaborative professional communities that fostered mutual support, shared learning, and continuous professional growth. By prioritizing open communication, structured collaborative sessions, and mentorship grounded in empathy and clear communication, these graduates contributed to the collective effectiveness of the teaching profession. The creation of networks where experiences and strategies were exchanged promoted inclusivity and mutual growth, shifting the focus from competition to collaboration. This collaborative approach enhanced individual practices and empowered colleagues and future educators to overcome common challenges and excel in their careers.

## VI. SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### ➤ Summary

This study aimed to explore the success stories of graduates from a Teacher Education Program at one of the higher education institutions in Ozamiz City. The following research questions were used: 1) What are graduates' significant milestones and achievements in their professional careers as educators?, 2) How do graduates envision their continued growth and contributions to the field of education?, 3) How do the achievements and milestones of graduates contribute to their professional success and impact in the workplace?, 4) How do graduates inspire and guide their colleagues and future educators in achieving success in the teaching profession?

This qualitative study employed Appreciative Inquiry (AI) as its research approach. Eight graduate students from teacher education programs participated and were selected through purposive sampling, explicitly using the snowball technique. A researcher-made semi-structured interview guide was used to collect relevant data. The 4D model of Appreciative Inquiry (Discover, Dream, Design, and Destiny) by Cooperrider et al. (2008), along with Hyper Research software, was used for data analysis.

### ➤ Findings

The following are the findings of the study:

- The graduates discovered the significant milestones and achievements in their professional careers as educators through receiving recognition and awards at international, national, regional, and division levels, contributing to educational research through publications and international presentations, and actively engaging in community development through outreach initiatives, stakeholder partnerships, and projects promoting access to education and cultural preservation.
- The graduates dreamed of continued growth and future contributions to the field of education by expanding leadership and professional development opportunities through mentoring fellow educators, pursuing academic advancement to strengthen their impact on the education sector, and integrating technology and innovative practices to transform curricula, enhance teacher development, and improve access to educational resources.
- The graduates designed pathways to professional success by building strong networks to expand their influence, mentoring colleagues, establishing sustainable educational initiatives locally and abroad, and leading equity-driven projects that sustained long-term impact, transforming their institutions and inspiring professional development in others.



- The graduates fulfilled their destiny by inspiring colleagues and future educators toward excellence through mentorship and guidance, offering encouragement, sharing insights, and supporting professional growth, while building collaborative communities that promote open communication, shared learning, and a culture of continuous improvement.

#### ➤ Conclusions

Based on the findings, the following conclusions are reached:

- Graduates continue to build on their significant achievements by earning recognition in education and research, while actively contributing to community development and cultural preservation. Their ongoing commitment to excellence in education, research, and community engagement positions them as influential leaders who inspire positive local, national, and global change.
- Graduates actively pursue leadership roles and professional growth, positioning themselves as catalysts for innovation and educational transformation. They continue to integrate technology and innovative practices, shaping the future of education by enhancing curricula and expanding access to learning resources.
- Graduates design impactful pathways for professional success by fostering strong networks and leading projects that advocate for equity and innovation. Their leadership and mentorship continue to inspire change, transform institutions, and promote sustained professional growth both locally and internationally.
- Graduates continue to fulfill their destiny by inspiring and guiding future educators through mentorship, creating a lasting impact on the teaching profession. They foster a culture of cooperation and constant progress, creating communities that place a high value on professional development, mutual assistance, and shared learning.

#### ➤ Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, it is recommended that:

- Higher education institutions' alumni associations enhance mentorship networks by asking successful graduates to mentor new instructors and honoring their accomplishments with leadership forums and awards
- Teacher Education Institutions program heads enhance graduates' leadership and professional growth by embedding leadership training, mentoring, and postgraduate preparation into their programs.
- College deans and faculty embed leadership and networking opportunities into the curriculum through programs such as

leadership bootcamps, mentorship training, and service-learning projects that promote real-world leadership and equity advocacy.

- Educational leaders and teacher associations should promote professional learning communities (PLCs) for collaboration and shared learning. To encourage mentorship, administrators and policymakers should recognize mentors through formal acknowledgment, professional development, and career advancement incentives.
- 5. Future researchers in teacher education investigate the long-term impact of graduates' community involvement and research contributions on their careers through longitudinal studies, using interviews, surveys, and career retrospectives. Researchers in global education explore how graduates adapt their teaching practices in international contexts by conducting comparative studies with cross-national surveys, interviews, and field observations to assess their impact on local educational practices.

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## Appendix A

### INTERVIEW GUIDE

#### ➤ *Introduction*

- Introduce yourself.
- Explain the purpose of the study: "This study seeks to explore and understand the successes of graduates in teacher education programs."
- Provide informed consent, outlining confidentiality, voluntary participation, and the option to withdraw at any time.
- Explain the structure of the interview (audio recording and taking notes).
- Ask if the respondent has any questions or concerns.
- Test audio recording equipment.
- Ensure the respondent feels comfortable and ready to proceed.

#### ➤ *Profiling Questions:*

- What year did you graduate, and what degree did you earn?
- What is your current professional role or designation, and how has it evolved since graduation?
- How many years of experience do you have in the education field?
- What type of institution or organization do you currently work with (e.g., public school, private school, higher education, NGO)?
- Have you received any awards, recognitions, or achievements related to your work in education? If so, could you briefly share them?

#### ➤ *Opening Questions*

- Share your journey as a graduate of the Teacher Education Program and what inspired you to pursue a career in education.
- Looking back on your career, what moments or experiences have brought you the greatest sense of fulfillment or personal growth as an educator?

#### ➤ *Core Questions*

- Describe the key milestones (instruction, research, or community extension) in your professional career so far.
- What specific achievements in your workplace are you most proud of?
- How have these achievements impacted your role as an educator?
- What challenges did you overcome to achieve these milestones?
- How has your education or training prepared you to reach these professional milestones?
- What are your long-term professional goals as an educator?
- How do you see your role evolving in the field of education over the next five years?
- What new skills or experiences would you like to gain to enhance your contributions?
- What innovations or changes would you like to implement in your workplace or field?
- How do you envision the impact of your future growth on your students and colleagues?
- How do your achievements influence your effectiveness in your current role?
- In what ways have your professional milestones benefited your workplace or students?
- How do colleagues or leaders in your workplace perceive your contributions?
- What strategies or habits helped you translate your milestones into long-term success?
- How has achieving these milestones shaped your professional goals and aspirations?
- How do you share your experiences and insights with colleagues or new educators?
- What specific actions have you taken to mentor or support others in the profession?
- Share an example where your story or guidance inspired someone in the field?
- How do you ensure your successes contribute to a culture of collaboration and growth in your workplace?

#### ➤ *Exit Questions*

- Is there anything else you'd like to share about your experiences, achievements, or aspirations that we haven't covered?
- What advice would you give to current or future Teacher Education Program students who wish to achieve similar successes?