

Career Progression of Doctor in Business Administration Graduates of the University of Cebu Graduate School: A Tracer Study

Judy Ann Ong Ferrater-Gimena¹, Eddie E. Llamedo², Ily E. Abella³, Christopher Biore⁴, Yolanda C. Sayson⁵

^{1,2,3}University of Cebu

⁴University of Cebu City, Philippines

⁵University of Cebu-Banilad Cebu City, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

The Doctor of Business Administration is the terminal doctoral program for professionals in business administration. This unique, research-oriented program prepared students to work on corporate operational and strategic problems. The scope of the framework includes extensive research, coursework, evaluation, publication, and the final degree-awarding. The program is ideally designed to prepare future leaders who can bring innovative ways to navigate the demands of changing times and industry evolution. This study aims to determine the career progression of the Doctor in Business Administration [DBA] graduates of the University of Cebu Graduate School, S.Y. 2017-2024, to formulate a proposed program intervention plan.

This study employed a descriptive research design using the standardized Graduate Tracer Study (GTS) questionnaire of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). The study was conducted at the University of Cebu Graduate School. Thirty-six (36) Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) graduates of the University of Cebu-Graduate School for the School year 2017 to 2024 participated in the study. A convenience sampling technique was used to identify and contact the target respondents. Simple percentages and rankings were used in the data analysis. Ethical principles of beneficence, non-maleficence, justice, and autonomy were used in the data analysis.

Most respondents belonged to the age bracket of 36 to 40, were females, married, and had finished a doctorate. Moreover, their primary reason for taking the Doctor in Business Administration (DBA) program at the University of Cebu Graduate School was a strong passion for the profession. Further, all of them were employed at the time of the study. At the same time, the majority worked in a public organization (government) as instructors (professors), had a regular employment status, and worked for 1 to 5 years. More of them earned Php31,000.00 to Php40,000.00.

Furthermore, all of them assessed that the DBA curriculum of the University of Cebu graduate school was relevant to their first job, their degree was relevant to their current job and most of them primarily learned communication skills, human relations skills, problem solving skills critical thinking skills and leadership skills, while and the reasons for accepting their job was on salaries and benefits, career challenge and peer influence. The Doctor in Business Administration (DBA) graduates of the University of Cebu Graduate School were employable in various fields in the business industry, including academia. Since their reason for further studies was to earn attractive salaries and benefits, they aspire to career progression after graduation. However, their career progression cannot be fully established during the survey, as they were still applying for promotion and ranking, which will take considerable time. Further, the DBA program offers courses that prepare students to take significant organizational positions.

Keywords: Doctorate in business education, tracer study, career progression, curriculum relatedness and

relevance, curriculum, competencies learned, descriptive, Cebu City, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

A nation's economy runs on the knowledge and skills of its people. The requirements for skills evolve with external investment, technological advances, and globalization. To keep pace with changes, people need to acquire skills to be productive and earn a living, and all of these can be achieved through education, which is the most important mechanism for empowering people for their socio-economic, political, and technological development (Ramirez et al., 2014).

Moreover, employing an expanding population is one of the nation's most significant challenges. This is particularly acute in developing countries where the population growth far outstrips job opportunities. Mounting a drive to meet that challenge should come from the government and the private sector (Ramirez et al., 2014).

Hence, recognizing the reality in today's academic world, the role of higher education institutions cannot only be limited to imparting knowledge, but also to contribute to maintaining a competitive economy and, most importantly of all, to secure the dream of graduates to get jobs and become socially recognized and successful in their respective fields of endeavor. Every academic institution aims to produce competent and highly qualified graduates who can eventually compete locally and globally (Cuadra, 2019).

Employability upon graduation and over the long term is, understandably, the foremost priority for the vast majority of the university students, over the past two decades or so the university has increasingly offered a broad spectrum of higher education courses that provide students with the necessary tools enabling them to develop their employability skills, to heighten their own awareness of these skills and to improve their ability to articulate them. Once acquired, these skills need to be honed throughout one's working life, being put into practice not only in job searching and interviews but also in personal development planning and making the most of work experience opportunities. There is no doubt that a student's lifelong learning capability and therefore his/her employability are enhanced through their university experience. The core mission of our university continues to be the creation of an open space of higher learning within a lifelong perspective. This is based on the principle of equity of access and should be seen as an opportunity for individual development, enabling all those capable of benefiting from higher education to integrate more effectively into the global knowledge society (Ramirez et al., 2014).

On the other hand, one of the significant factors for underemployment and the difficulty in finding jobs is the inability of graduates to meet the necessary skills and competencies required by the industry (Menez, 2014). One way to address these concerns is to produce fully equipped graduates who will apply what they have learned in school in their work. Moreover, in the challenges of 21st-century education, higher education stands out as a significant key to addressing reforms through instruction, research, and extension. It has become a major challenge for all Philippine Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to implement these reforms (Tertiary Education Commission, 2009).

Universities contribute to nation-building by providing highly specialized educational experiences to train experts across technical and disciplinary areas and by emphasizing the development of new knowledge and skills through research and development. The focus on developing new knowledge is emphasized from basic postsecondary (i.e., baccalaureate) academic programs through doctoral programs; thus, a research orientation is emphasized in Bachelor's, Master's, and doctoral degree programs. Universities contribute to nation-building by producing experts, knowledge, and technological innovations that can serve as resources for long-term development in a globalized context. In order to attain its mandate, Universities should have faculty members with advanced (masters and doctoral) degrees in their areas of specialization, and who participate in research and development activities in their respective disciplines as evidenced by refereed publications, and other scholarly outputs; a comprehensive range of degree programs in all levels, from basic postsecondary to doctoral programs; viable research programs in specific (disciplinary and multidisciplinary) areas of study that produce new knowledge as evidenced by refereed publications, citations, inventions and patents, etc.; comprehensive

learning resources and support structures (e.g., libraries, practicum laboratories, relevant educational resources, and linkages with the relevant disciplinary and professional sectors) to allow students to explore basic, advanced, and even cutting edge knowledge in a wide range of disciplines or professions; Links with other research institutions in various parts of the world that would ensure that the research activities of the university are functioning at the current global standards; and Outreach activities that allow the students, faculty, and research staff to apply the new knowledge they generate to address specific social development problems, broadly defined (Commission on Higher Education [CHED], 2014).

Likewise, educational institutions should partner with the private and public sectors to ensure effective job-market placement for fresh graduates. Stressing specific and well-targeted skills and efficient collaboration between universities and firms will lead to a successful transition from education to the labor market (Drine, 2017).

Further, graduate education is important in developing a workforce that can lead efforts geared towards national development. It molds the human resources needed to propel at least two key drivers of development – education and research (Cagasan et al., 2017). Also, graduate education is among the most effective means of developing research capacities that will improve educational theory and practice across different aspects of the education process (Bueno, 2017).

In addition, graduate students support the research enterprise that contributes to the country's economic development, provide the future intellectual capital for research and development enterprises throughout the U.S., ensuring the country will remain competitive in innovation and discovery, and contribute significantly to the instructional mission in undergraduate classrooms. Sharma 2014) reported that Asian countries have experienced massive increases not only in undergraduate enrolment but also in postgraduate education and university-based research because of the governments' demand for highly qualified faculty to teach at the university level (Cagasan et al., 2017). As with all potentially life-altering decisions, there are pros and cons. On the one hand, pursuing a higher-level qualification can improve job prospects by developing hard and soft skills. On the other hand, the extra time spent at university might be better used to get a foot on the career ladder (Hurcum, 2022).

The landscape and perspectives in offering graduate programs have changed dramatically over the past decades. These changes demand new or enhanced competencies among students to meet the requirements set by globalization, regional integration, the internationalization of higher education, and the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Thus, students must optimally use 21st-century skills in their daily work and professions, strengthening the nation's innovation, research, and development (Commission on Higher Education [CHED], 2019).

CHED Memorandum Order No. 15, series of 2019, stipulates that the doctoral program has two (2) types: the Doctor of Philosophy and the Doctoral Degree (Professional Track). One program offered at the University of Cebu Graduate School is the Doctor in Business Administration (Professional Track). It represents a mastery of a professional field's subject matter and techniques to a stage of competence parallel to that required for the PhD. Although the work for the professional doctoral degree may extend the boundaries of knowledge in the field, it is directed primarily towards distinguished practical performance. Admission to the program requires prospective students to have relevant professional experience (Commission on Higher Education, 2019).

CHED Memorandum Order No. 46, series of 2012, stipulated a shift from an input-based to an outcomes-based education (OBE), thereby placing students at the center of all educational planning. There is also a recognition that higher education institutions (HEIs) are different from each other and thus, a typology or classification of HEIs was developed to guide higher education education [HEIs] to have an alignment among their vision, mission, and goals (VMGs); their desired graduate attributes and impact on society; and their educational programs (Commission on Higher Education [CHED], 2014).

Higher education institutions' learning environments must take this into account when structuring their course

programs. For quality assurance of course programs, higher education institutions can make a meaningful contribution by applying the principles of tracer studies to create a sustainable learning and empowerment environment for the continuous professional development of past students. While many higher education institutions train various clients, most forget them as soon as they graduate and leave the institutions' environment with no means to contact them (Ramirez et al., 2014).

In fact, graduates are the most compelling indicator of a program's effectiveness in terms of employment, positions, and promotions. They also provide essential insights and feedback for establishing the program's relevance in today's labor market (Aranda et al., 2024).

Therefore, graduate survey results are important for analyzing the relationship between higher education and work (Schomburg, 2003). They provide quantitative structural data on employment and career, the character of work and related competencies, and information on their graduates' professional orientation and experiences (Millington, 2001).

The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) in the Philippines mandated that all Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) conduct a graduate tracer study to examine the employability of graduates and the alignment of university programs with industry demands (Gines, 2014; Menez, 2014; Sanchez & Diamante, 2017). Results of graduate tracer studies are critical in establishing whether universities are committed to providing high-quality programs and emphasizing courses that target the essential skills required in twenty-first-century learning (Menez, 2014).

Graduate (and employer) surveys constitute one form of empirical study that can provide valuable information for evaluating the outcomes of education and training at a specific institution of higher education. This information may further develop the institution in the context of quality assurance (Schomburg, 2003).

Tracer study results are a powerful tool for documenting graduates' employment characteristics, transition to employment, and level of satisfaction. This tracer study's output is significant primarily for recognizing and addressing the existing curriculum's strengths and weaknesses, and for assessing the adequacy, quality, and relevance of pre-service training in relation to the competencies needed locally and internationally in the market (Gines, 2014).

Higher education institutions (HEIs) worldwide are required to conduct a graduate tracer study (GTS) to improve their program offerings in response to changing labor-market needs. Commonly, the GTS aims to collect basic information from the graduates, including their educational and employment development (Badiru & Wahome, 2016; Schomburg, 2016; Wahome et al., 2015).

By conducting a survey on the cohort of graduates from a specific institution, profession, discipline, level of education, their employment characteristics, competencies, and skills development, and conducting a comparative analysis, the information gained from these can be used by the graduates' alma mater and other education stakeholders for curriculum development and other emerging reforms (Gines, 2014). Likewise, a tracer study is appropriate for evaluating the results of education and training provided in the academic institution. It provides basic information on graduates' whereabouts and employment status. Results of such a study can provide sufficient information on the success of education and training in relation to the graduates and employers (et al., 2019).

Similarly, in the Philippines, the governing body responsible for all HEIs, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), requires GTS to improve the quality of education nationwide (Austria, 2023).

Recent data and knowledge about the career trajectories of doctoral graduates in the country are lacking. The single biggest challenge in graduate destination studies is identifying graduates after they leave university (Mouton et al., 2022).

To enable the higher educational institutions (HEIs) to comply with the stipulations in the CHED Memorandum

Order No. 15, series of 2019, there should be studies on the relevance of the existing curriculum to the graduates' success in the labor market so that the areas in the educational process that is currently provided in the Doctor in Business Administration program that requires intervention to address the weakpoint for the continuous provision of quality of the educational services of the university. Thus, this study will determine the career progression of the Doctor in Business Administration [DBA] graduates of the University of Cebu Graduate School to formulate a proposed program intervention plan.

FRAMEWORK

Career construction theory holds that individual career development is a dynamic process of mutual adaptation between the subjective self and the external objective world, and that different people construct different stories. This theory provides a dynamic perspective to give personal meaning to memories, present experiences, and plans, constructing careers through a sense of meaning and clarifying future directions. The theory includes three parts: vocational personality, career adaptability, and life theme. Occupational personality refers to an individual's career-related abilities, needs, values, and interests. Career adaptability is a psychosocial construct that denotes an individual's resources for coping with current and imminent vocational development tasks, transitions, and traumas (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012).

Savikas (2013) proposed the career construction theory, grounded in personal constructivism and postmodernity. Career construction theory helps students adapt to the complex, changing career world of the future and inspires a richer perspective on career development (Gao & Qiao, 2022).

Career construction theory provides a framework for understanding how individuals choose and use work. The theory presents a model for understanding vocational behavior across the life cycle, along with the methods and materials career counselors use to help clients make vocational choices and maintain successful, satisfying work lives. It seeks to be comprehensive by taking three perspectives on vocational behavior: differential, developmental, and dynamic. From the perspective of individual-differences psychology, the theory examines the content of vocational personality types and what different people prefer to do. From a developmental psychology perspective, it examines the process of psychosocial adaptation and *how* individuals cope with vocational development tasks, occupational transitions, and work-related trauma. From the perspective of narrative psychology, the theory examines the dynamics by which life themes impose meaning on vocational behavior and *why* individuals fit work into their lives in distinct ways (Greenhaus & Callanan, n.d.).

Career construction theory seeks to explain the interpersonal process by which individuals construct the self, establish the direction of career behavior, and assign meaning to careers, offering a unique perspective on career counseling (Hou et al., 2014). Moreover, career construction theory applies to the current borderless career era, and this perspective is more helpful for individuals in adapting to the complex, changing career world in the future (Wang & Li, 2024). Also, career construction theory provides specific ideas to help individuals make career decisions and enhance work satisfaction (Savickas, 2005).

Human resources are the key to economic development. What people consider important goals in their lives- how they think about work, how creative or skillful they are, and how intelligent and motivated they are- will determine whether their country will develop or not. Labor is a vital resource. It is any form of human effort exerted to produce goods and services. Labor covers a wide range of skills, abilities, and characteristics. The labor supply in a country depends on its production and the percentage of its population willing to join the labor force. Naturally, a country with a high population growth rate is expected to have a bigger labor supply (Pagoso et al., 2013).

People in work organizations have diverse abilities, talents, and attitudes, which influence productivity, quality, and profitability. People set overall strategies and goals, design work systems, produce goods and services, monitor quality, allocate financial resources, and market the products and services. Individuals, therefore, become 'human resources' because of the roles they assume in the work organization. Employment roles are defined and described in ways designed to maximize particular employees' contributions to achieving organizational objectives (Orunbon & Ibikunle, n.d.).

Human capital is the stock of competencies, knowledge, and social and personality attributes, including creativity and cognitive abilities, embodied in the ability to perform labor to produce economic value. It is an aggregate economic view of human beings acting within economies. It attempts to capture the social, biological, cultural, and psychological complexity as they interact in explicit and/or economic transactions (Sorenson, 2015).

Employability comprises dimensions such as the individual's actual competence, formal qualifications gained through educational activities, hard technical-vocational employability skills, and soft skills, including transferable meta-competence and interpersonal skills. Employability is not concerned only with aspects central to the concept. Thus, when studying employability, it is important to consider the following: 1) both soft and hard skills; 2) actual and formal competence; 3) personal characteristics; 4) attributes and talents of an individual; 5) social networks and structural factors; 6) the implicit and explicit requirement of the job; 7) the characteristics of the organization; and the 8) relations between them (Nilsson, 2010).

Human resource management (HRM) emphasizes that employees are critical to achieving sustainable competitive advantage, that human resource practices need to be integrated with corporate strategy, and that human resource specialists help organizational controllers meet both efficiency and equity objectives (Orunbon & Ibikunle, n.d.).

Workers now require a range of skills to adapt to the constantly evolving demands of the new knowledge-based, competitive economy (Walters, 2004). It is therefore important from a public policy perspective that graduates use their postsecondary education in their subsequent employment (Boudarbat & Chernoff, 2009).

What it means to be employable varies by profession, individual prerequisites, and the specific job's competence requirements. This is evident in the case of engineering, as it is a heterogeneous profession, meaning that the graduates from this educational program tend to end up in a wide array of positions on the labor market and are engaged in widely different kinds of work (Nilsson, 2010).

In different contexts, for example, different kinds of hard and soft employability skills are needed depending on the position. Some aspects of competence cannot be assumed to be deployed without problems arising, but are instead shaped by the actual context of the work (Guile, 2002).

Employability comprises dimensions such as the individual's actual competence, formal qualifications gained through educational activities, hard technical-vocational employability skills, and soft skills, including transferable meta-competence and interpersonal skills. Employability is not only concerned with individual factors. It is a relational concept, and contextual aspects are central to understanding it. Thus, when studying employability, it is important to consider both soft and hard skills, actual and formal competence, personal characteristics, attributes and talents of an individual, social networks, as well as structural factors, the implicit and explicit requirements of the job, the characteristics of the organization, and the relations between them (Nilsson, 2010).

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Complexities and insecurities characterize working life an individual may experience due to, in part, the development of new knowledge, technological innovation, increased division of labor, deteriorating job security, internationalization, and competition associated with new professional and organizational demands (Nerland & Jensen, 2007).

Brown and Hesketh (2004) further argue that there is an apparent mismatch between individuals' expectations of employability and the realities of the labor market. Under these conditions, students will use several tactics in the labor market to maintain a competitive advantage. According to Harvey and Knight (2003), there are two broad approaches to defining employability: job getting and individual development attributes. The first concerns

a graduate's ability to get a job. These definitions include varying levels of qualification regarding the nature and timing of the job, as well as the ability to retain and succeed in it. In this sense, employability is defined on a range that varies from: the ability to secure a job after graduation through; the ability to secure a graduate (or appropriate) job within a specified time after graduation; the ability to secure a graduate (or appropriate) job within a specified time after graduation, to retain the post and to develop and succeed within the chosen career.

Vertical mismatch of education (the mismatch between educational level and job) is not the only form of educational mismatch. Another important form of mismatch is horizontal mismatch (i.e., mismatch of field of study and job). Paying attention to the field of study is important because it allows for analyzing different skills; education provides not only general human capital, but particular fields of study provide occupationally specific skills for the job market (Robst, 2007; Van de Werfhorst, 2002). Education mismatch can have important consequences for the labor market for the mismatched individual, employers, and society (Boudarbat & Chernoff, 2009).

Predicting what competence one will need to become and remain a successful practitioner and to manage one's individual employability effectively has become increasingly complex (Barnett, 2004). Witte and Kalleberg (1995) also noted that the issue of education-job match has theoretical importance, as it draws attention to how and why individuals are matched to their employment, which concerns many labor market specialists.

Career decisions have their roots not only in past experiences but also in a vision of the future. Encounters with the world can teach people about themselves- what they enjoy doing, what they are good at, and what really matters in work and life. In most cases, career decisions are based on the belief that the future in a particular occupation, job, or organization can offer meaningful and satisfying experiences and rewards. However, careers can be highly unpredictable, especially in today's world. IT is often tricky, and sometimes impossible, to foresee the roadblocks and detours that can arise as we progress through our work lives. How we cope with the twists and turns in our careers distinguishes effective from ineffective career management (Greenhaus et al., 2010).

Career management combines structured planning and the active management of one's professional career. Career management is also defined as the use of adaptive or planned strategies to align with an individual's career interests or orientation and the application of successive tactics to maintain and advance that career (Hooley et al., 2013).

A central premise of career management is that individuals can exert considerable- although not total-control over their careers. Effective career management requires keen insight into oneself and the world of work, as well as sound decision-making skills that can be developed and refined (Greenhaus et al., 2010).

People also need opportunities to do things differently, access relevant training, and, most crucially, employment (Brown & Hesketh, 2004).

Career success is frequently used in academic and popular writing about careers. It refers to how an individual can be described as successful in working life (Gunz & Heslin, 2005).

During the 1950s and 1960s, individuals typically worked for one or two firms throughout their careers, and success was defined by the organization and measured by promotions, salary increases, and/or status (Sullivan, 1999). Early career success may breed disappointment later, especially when a person's self-worth is tied up in their career or achievements. Professional success tends to come early in some fields, such as scientific research, and later in other fields, such as teaching (Brooks, 2019).

The term career development, as descriptive of the factors and the processes influencing individual career behavior and as synonymous with intervention in career behavior (e.g., the practice of career development), is relatively recent (Herr, 2011).

Developing one's career is ultimately one's own responsibility. No matter how carefully an employer plans for employees in today's technologically and socially complex world, the risk of career mismanagement is substantial unless the employee takes an active role on his or her own behalf (Rashid, 2005).

Employability enhancement is a burning topic in the present world. To sustain in this competitive world, every human needs the capacity to adapt themselves through their own skills, efficiency, and knowledge. Building a nation and improving one's capabilities, knowledge, skills, and education are the most vital parts of every country. Economic development of a country comes through proper education. Education does not mean that one has to be a good scholar. Education is a power at work that molds people. They are molded to rely on higher critical thinking (van der Heijden, 2002).

Education is a key driver of economic growth for both developed and developing countries, benefiting nations, firms, and individuals alike. A well-educated population enhances innovation, productivity, and social stability, leading to sustainable economic development. At the firm level, investment in education fosters a skilled workforce, which is essential for competitiveness. Individuals with higher education enjoy better job prospects and earning potential, contributing to overall economic health (Kokkinopoulou et al., 2025).

Education in the broadest sense is important for stimulating entrepreneurship for several reasons. First education provides individuals with a sense of autonomy, independence, and self-confidence. These qualities are important when starting a business. Second education makes people aware of alternative career choices. Third, education broadens individuals' horizons, thereby making them better equipped to perceive opportunities. Finally, education provides knowledge that individuals can use to develop new entrepreneurial opportunities (Hewitt, 2011). Therefore, if profitable opportunities for new economic activity exist, individuals with more or higher-quality human capital should be better able to perceive them (Shepherd, 2003).

Current political and economic discourses position employability as a responsibility of higher education, which deploys mechanisms such as supervised work experience (SWE) to embed employability skills development into the undergraduate curriculum (Gracia, 2009).

The purpose of any educational institution is to provide quality human resources that are acceptable to employers and society (Orence & Laguador, 2013). Formal education is one component of human capital that may help graduates accumulate explicit knowledge and develop practical skills (Sorenson, 2015).

Hewitt (2011) further demonstrates the value of undertaking higher education, the fact that it leads to career success, and that learners who have completed their higher education qualification are more likely to start their own businesses.

The expansion of access to higher education and the proliferation of formal degree requirements for entry to employment have been enduring trends over the past century. The dominant U.S. ideology holds that this educational expansion and heightening of occupational entry requirements are necessary because of the increasingly complex demands of workplaces, that is, the need for skilled labor. The popular wisdom among the few critics of these expansion trends is that extensive links between schooling and vocational pursuits are neither necessary nor desirable because they lead to diminished academic inclinations among students who pursue degrees purely for their instrumental, sheepskin effects in job hunting (Brown, 2001).

According to Harvey and Knight (2003), what employers generally value in new graduates is what most higher-education teachers value. This pertains to students who make an effort to fully participate in the total student experience, including academic, co-curricular, and work experience benefits, to gain a well-rounded education that fully contributes to university and community life.

Universities have taken different approaches in developing graduate employability skills. Therefore, the connection between higher education and employment has attracted keen interest among researchers, as it accounts for a significant share of the education budget. The significant output of an educational institution is its graduates. They can be a measure of efficiency, but the real score is on their employability and inclusion in the workforce. The number of graduates and employment must be directly proportionate. However, the fewer employers there are, the more intense competition among graduates becomes (Macatangay, 2013).

Employees' perceptions challenge traditional views about higher education. It raises questions about the point of having a higher degree: whether it is about understanding the material or about learning how to learn. This can lead to instability among academics who are expected to teach employability, skills, knowledge, and classroom values that align with modern European and international trends (Bueno, 2007).

Graduate education is at the apex of the educational system. Graduate studies are among the most effective means of enhancing the capacities of an education professional who aims to contribute to the continued improvement of teaching and learning in classrooms, the delivery of student services, and the management of educational programs. Graduate education is one of the most effective means of developing research capacities that will improve and enhance the practice of the educational process (CHED Memorandum Order No. 53, Series of 2007).

While there are variations in the classification of employability, there is a broad understanding of the qualities, characteristics, skills, and knowledge that constitute employability in general and, specifically, for graduates. Employers expect graduates to have technical and discipline competencies from their degrees. However, graduates must also demonstrate broader skills and attributes, including teamwork, communication, leadership, critical thinking, problem-solving, and managerial abilities. Arguably, specific definitions are less important than an agreed focus on approaches to promote such transferable skills and fostering attributes that will enable graduates to find appropriate employment, progress in their work, and thus facilitate the success of their organizations and contribute to society and the economy (Lowden et al., 2011).

The relevance and effectiveness of students' learning from higher educational institutions where they graduate, in terms of their employability, require a proper linkage between the economy and the labor market to avoid a mismatch between skill requirements and other qualifications. Therefore, industry requirements need to be communicated to higher education institutions and the government to enable them to assist in developing future skills and career development policies (Macatangay, 2003).

A graduate tracer study is a powerful tool that can provide valuable information on the whereabouts and workplace performance of graduates (Cuadra, 2019). Schomburg (2003) states that graduate survey results are important for analyzing the relationship between higher education and work.

Moreover, Millington (2001) states that "they provide quantitative structural data on employment and career, the character of work and related competencies, and information on the professional orientation, and experiences of their graduates." Additionally, the collected data is an important indicator of the quality of higher education. In some surveys, graduates are asked which of the qualifications acquired in their academic studies they use for their job, which fields of study they consider to be especially useful, for which professional tasks they were appropriately prepared at the university, and about which area of responsibility they state a lack of qualifications (Schomburg, 2003).

A tracer study is needed to understand how well a university has developed its students' competencies and prepared them for the world of work (Cagasan et al., 2017).

A tracer study is an approach used in most organizations, especially educational institutions, to track and record students after they graduate. It is a powerful tool for documenting employment characteristics, transitions to employment, and graduates' levels of satisfaction with a university's services, learning environment, and facilities (Gines, 2014). It can also reveal graduates' dissatisfaction with the curricular offerings (Shongwe & Ocholla, 2011).

A graduate tracer study is a subject that evaluates the results of education and training provided in the academic institution. It provides basic information on graduates' whereabouts and employment status. Results of such a study can provide sufficient information on the effectiveness of education and training for graduates and employers (Cuadra et al., 2019).

Graduate tracer studies are important for educational planners because they provide valuable information to gauge the outcomes of higher education and training institutions. This information, the commission explained, may be used to minimize potential deficits in a given educational program in content, delivery, and relevance, and further to develop the institution in the context of quality assurance. Through graduate tracer studies, an educational institution can evaluate the quality of education provided to its graduates by examining their placements and societal positions, which can later serve as a benchmark for producing more qualified and competitive graduates (Tertiary Education Commission, 2009).

A tracer study of the program's graduates is needed to determine how well the program's outcomes match their actual career trajectories and achievements (Guiamalon, 2021). A tracer study is crucial for assessing the program's applicability and influence on their professional lives. By tracking their professional journeys, accomplishments, and contributions to education, universities can collect vital information to guide future developments in curriculum design, instructional strategies, and student support services. In addition, this kind of analysis will highlight the program's strengths and potential areas for improvement, ensuring it continues to adapt to the evolving needs of the educational field. The tracer study's findings are crucial because they show how well the curriculum prepares graduates to be highly qualified academics and influential members of their fields of expertise (Gines, 2014). These findings will serve as feedback for the state university, enabling it to improve its curricula, highlight its strengths, and address any knowledge or support gaps. Furthermore, the collected data can aid in developing policies that ensure educational initiatives remain current and adaptable to regional and global educational issues. The study's conclusions can also serve as a guide for other institutions seeking to improve their graduate education programs (Sanchez et al., 2024).

Rogan and Reynolds (2016) asserted that a Graduate Tracer Study (GTS) is appropriate for educational policy and equity implications. They have suggested that policies should not just focus on providing interventions for the school but also on concentrating closely on university students from the poorly resourced schools, and at the earliest stage of their studies. They also argued that they should address graduate unemployment rather than confront study choices.

The impression of HEIs in the Philippines is likely tied to their reputation for producing graduates who would undoubtedly secure good, stable jobs after graduation. Tracer studies are standard research methods used by educational institutions to assess the employability of their graduates (de Ocampo et al., 2012).

Moreover, it is significant that this investigation presents related studies related to career progression for graduate school graduates.

In the study by Bueno (2017) on ascertaining the curriculum relevance of the graduate school through a tracer study in a Philippine private higher education institution, it was found that graduates of the various programs in the graduate school were employed in regular or permanent positions. They now occupy supervisory and managerial positions and are highly satisfied with their basic salary. The graduate curricula are responding to the needs of the various industries. Administration and governance, curriculum and instruction, research, professional and cognate courses, student services, library, internet laboratory, interdisciplinary learning, and teaching/learning environment are the school-related factors relevant to the current employment of the graduates. Communication, human relations, entrepreneurship, information technology, problem-solving, critical thinking, and research skills are considered relevant skills. Love of God, honesty, punctuality, obedience to superiors, perseverance, creativity, professional integrity, unity, fairness, love for others, nationalism, and eco-friendliness are evident in their workplaces. Thus, graduate schools continuously nurture and embrace the quality of education.

Moreover, a study by Cagasan (2017) was conducted to determine the employment characteristics and job experiences of the Visayas State University's [VSU's] graduate degree programs, and to gather their feedback on their educational experiences. Data were gathered by sending online questionnaires to graduates with active email accounts, handing in questionnaires to alumni working at VSU and at nearby agencies and institutions, and conducting interviews and focus group discussions with graduates working at some institutions in Bohol. Of the 73 respondents, 78% finished a master's degree only at ViSCA/LSU/VSU, while 16% finished both a

master's and a doctorate. Almost all are employed; 84% have regular or permanent positions; 78% are working in academic institutions/state universities and colleges, either as faculty members, researchers, extension workers, or administrative staff; 27% occupy supervisory positions; and 64% were promoted after earning their graduate degrees at VSU. Most respondents (92%) considered the graduate degrees they earned as highly relevant to their current jobs. The top five skills they learned at VSU that they found helpful were teaching (78%), communication (69%), critical thinking (63%), problem-solving (55%), and human relations skills (52%). The graduate programs were rated high by the respondents in terms of seven criteria: relevance of the program to professional requirements (4.65), teaching/learning environment (4.33), teacher-student relationship (4.31), quality of program delivery (4.29), range of courses offered (4.20), library, laboratory, and other facilities (4.10), and work placement (4.07). This suggests the respondents were generally satisfied with the university's graduate curricular offerings. However, they offered suggestions for further improving VSU's delivery of graduate degree programs.

The study of Pentang et al. (2024) evaluated the effectiveness and relevance of a PhD in Educational Administration program at a State University in Western Philippines through a tracer study, offering insights into the graduates' demographic and academic profiles, career alignment, and recommendations for improvement. Results highlight that the PhD in Educational Administration program effectively serves mid-career professionals, attracting individuals from diverse backgrounds and helping them meet evolving leadership demands in educational administration. Graduates reported that the program equipped them with the necessary skills to excel in their current roles. However, they suggested several areas for improvement, including enhancing the program's accessibility and inclusivity. These recommendations are crucial to ensuring the program remains relevant, especially in preparing leaders capable of addressing modern educational challenges. This research provides new insights into the strategic role of tracer studies in shaping the future of educational leadership programs. It aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education) by proposing continuous curriculum review to ensure the program evolves alongside educational leadership trends. The study also underscores the importance of equipping faculty with current insights to strengthen the program's ability to prepare leaders for a dynamic educational landscape.

Objectives Of the Study

This study determined the career progression of the Doctor in Business Administration [DBA] graduates of the University of Cebu Graduate School, School Year 2017-2024, to formulate a proposed program intervention plan. Specifically, this study aims to present the following: 1) profile of the respondents in terms of their age, gender, and civil status, highest educational attainment; 2) reasons for taking the Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) program; 3) employment data, such as employment status, type of organization they work, present occupation, gross monthly income, place of work, employment tenure, and length of time in the company; and 4) relevance of the curriculum to the first job, competencies learned in college that are useful in the first job, relatedness of the job to college course and reasons for accepting the job.

METHODOLOGY

This section presents the research design, research environment, research respondents, research procedures, treatment of data and ethical considerations.

Research Design

The descriptive survey research design was applied to determine the employment status of the Doctor in Business Administration [DBA] graduates of the University of Cebu Graduate School.

A descriptive study is designed to describe the distribution of one or more variables without regard to any causal or other hypothesis (Aggarwal & Ranganathan, 2019). Survey research involves asking questions of a sample of individuals who represent the group or groups being studied. Surveys typically use four general procedures for data collection: questionnaires. The essential task of any survey is to obtain information from a sample of respondents related to the questions being studied (Kho & Owen, 2000).

Research Environment

This investigation was undertaken at the University of Cebu (UC) Graduate School Main Campus.

Research Respondents

The respondents of this study were the thirty-six (36) Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) graduates of the University of Cebu-Graduate School. A convenience sampling technique was used to identify and contact the target respondents.

Research Instrument

This study used the Commission of Higher Education [CHED] Graduate Tracer Study [GTS] survey questionnaire. This tool contains questions about the following: 1) profile of the respondents; 2) reasons for taking the Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) program; 3) employment data; and 4) relevance of the curriculum to the first job, competencies learned in college that are useful in the first job, relatedness of the job to college courses, and reasons for accepting the job.

Research Procedure

The researchers sent a letter to the Dean of the Graduate School for approval to conduct the study. The Informed Consent Form [ICF] was sent to the Doctor in Business Administration (DBA) graduates of the University of Cebu Graduate School prior to data collection to provide a short explanation about the objectives, purpose, and procedures of the study so that their decision on whether they participate or not would be based on their knowledge about the study. After this, they were contacted to ask if they would be willing to participate in this research. Those who answered positively were asked to sign the ICF form and email it back. Then they were asked to visit the Graduate School Office to complete or answer the printed copy of the Graduate Tracer Tool (GTS). Then the retrieval was performed.

Treatment of Data

Frequency counts and simple percentages were used to analyze the respondents' profiles and employment data. Ranking was used to analyze the reasons for taking the program, the competencies learned, the relationship between the job and the degree, and the reasons for accepting their job.

Ethical Considerations

The University of Cebu Research Ethics Committee (UCREC) reviewed the protocol to obtain the Certificate of Protocol Approval before data collection. The researchers ensured that the ethical principles of beneficence, nonmaleficence, justice, and autonomy were adhered to in this investigation. First, orientation about the study was done so that each target respondent understood their rights and the nature of the study before they were asked to sign the Informed Consent Form (ICF). All the data were handled with utmost confidentiality. De-identification of the research respondents was also practiced.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents the profile of the respondents in terms of their gender, and civil status; 2) reasons in taking the Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) program and professional examination results; 3) trainings and advanced studies attended and reasons for pursuing advanced studies; 4) employment data such as their employment status, the reason for unemployment, place of work, and present occupation; 5) length of time in finding the first job, strategies used to find the first job; 6) gross monthly income; and 7) relevance of the curriculum to the first job, competencies learned in college that are useful in the first job, relatedness of the job to college course and reasons for accepting the job. Table 1 and Figure 1 present the respondents' ages.

Table 1. Age of the Respondents (n=36)

Age Range	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
46-50 years old	3	8.33
41-45 years old	5	13.88
36-40 years old	20	55.56
30-35 years old	8	22.22

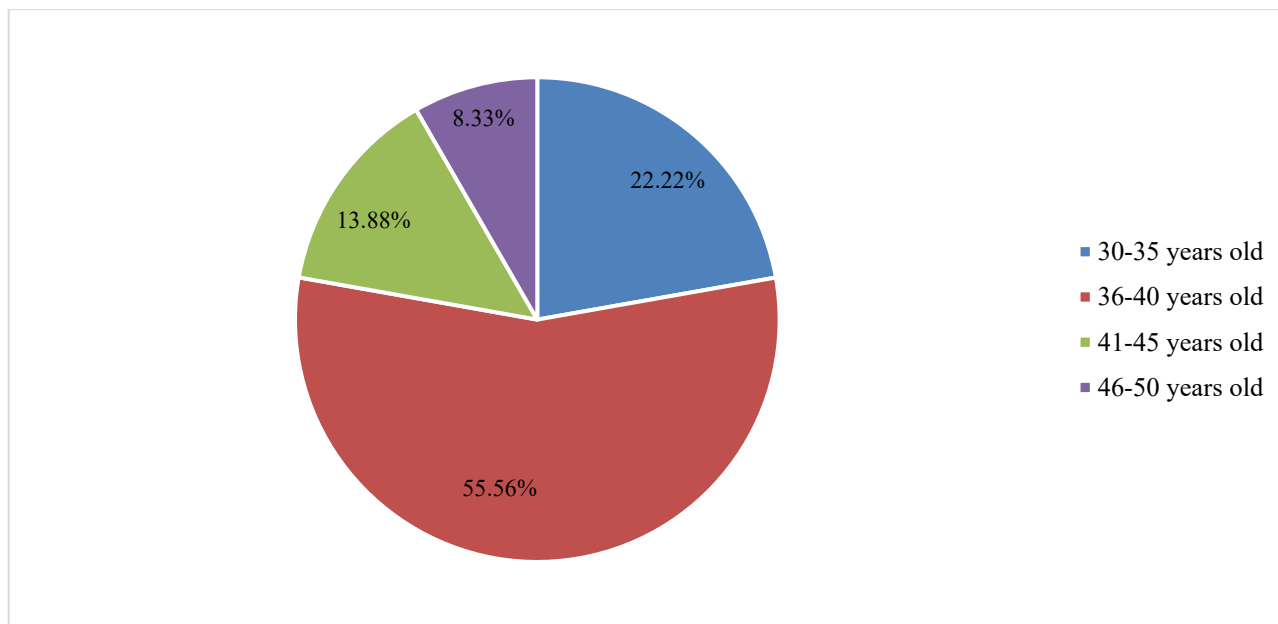


Figure 1. Age of the Respondents

Out of the total respondents, twenty (20), or 55.56%, belonged to the age bracket of 36 to 40, while three (3), or 8.33%, were aged 46 to 50. This information indicates that the majority of Doctor in Business Administration (DBA) graduates of the University of Cebu Graduate School who responded to this survey were in middle adulthood, at the prime of their productive years, and pursuing career advancement. Most often, their career has reached a leadership transition.

The late thirties (or age 40) through the mid-60s are referred to as middle adulthood. This is a period in which earlier physiological aging becomes more noticeable. It is a period in which many people are at their peak of productivity in love and work. It may be a period of gaining expertise in specific fields, understanding problems, and finding solutions more efficiently than before. It can also be a time of becoming more realistic about life's possibilities; of recognizing the difference between what is possible and what is likely. Referred to as the sandwich generation, middle-aged adults may be caring for both their children and their aging parents. While caring about others and the future, middle-aged adults may also question their mortality, goals, and commitments, though not necessarily experiencing a “mid-life crisis (Lumen Learning, n.d.).

Table 2 and Figure 2 present the respondents' gender.

Table 2. Gender of the Respondents (n= 36)

Gender	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Female	19	52.78
Male	17	47.22

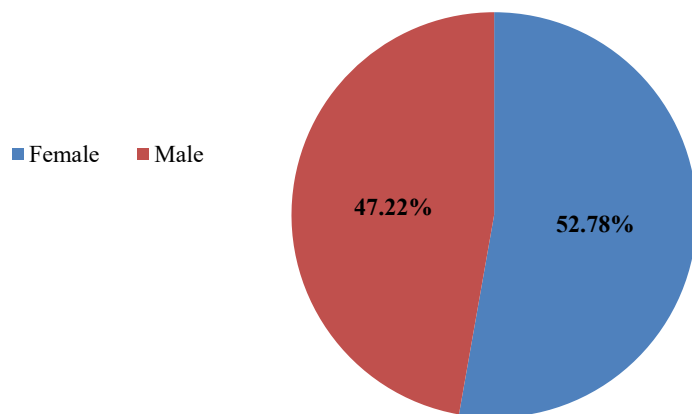


Figure 2. Gender of the Respondents

Of the thirty-six (36) respondents, nineteen (19), or 52.78%, were females, while seventeen (17), or 47.22%, were males. This data indicates that the graduates of the Doctor in Business Administration (DBA) program of the University of Cebu Graduate School were predominantly ladies since the careers in business management and administration nowadays are commonly subscribed to and led by women who possess the competencies and skills in accounting, management, marketing, human resource, operation management, finance and economics that are essential in managerial positions in the organizations. Table 3 and Figure 3 show the civil status of the respondents.

Table 3. Civil Status of the Respondents (n= 36)

Civil Status	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Single	15	41.66
Married	21	58.34

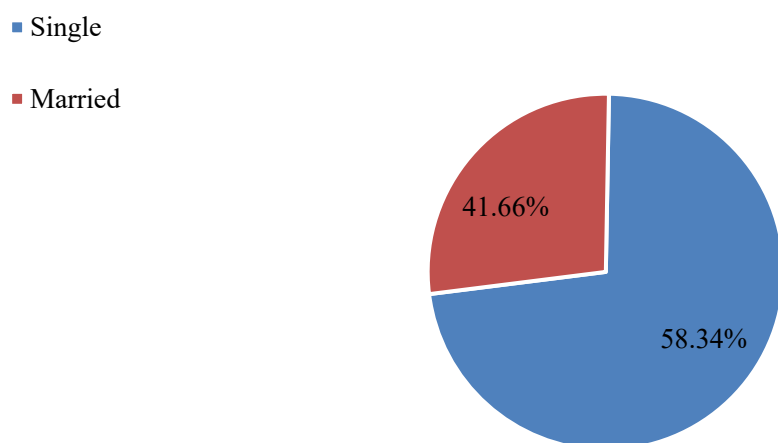


Figure 3. Civil Status of the Respondents

Twenty-one (21), or 58.34%, of the respondents were married at the time of the survey, while fifteen (15), or 41.66%, were still single. This information indicates that the Doctor in Business Administration graduates of the University of Cebu Graduate School were still unmarried, as the trend for marriage among career-oriented

women is in their late thirties. This information suggests that most DBA graduates were in their late thirties to early forties. Hence, this group of business leaders focuses on advancing to higher positions within their companies and becoming financially stable before settling down.

Table 4 presents the data about the highest educational attainment of graduates from the University of Cebu Graduate School.

Table 4. Respondents' Highest Educational Attainment (n= 26)

Indicator	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Doctorate Degree	26	100

Twenty-six (26), or 100%, of the respondents completed the doctorate. This data indicates that they all completed the Doctor in Business Administration (DBA) program of the Graduate School based on the regulatory requirements set forth by the University of Cebu and the Commission on Higher Education [CHED].

Table 5 presents the respondents' reasons for taking the Doctor in Business Administration (DBA) course.

Table 5. Reasons for Taking the DBA Degree (n=26)

Indicators	Frequency (f)	Rank	
High grades in the course or subject related to the course	5	11 th	
Good grades in high school	6	10 th	
Influence of parents and relatives	12	6 th	
Peer influence	9	8 th	
Inspired by a role model	11	7 th	
Strong passion for the profession	24	1 st	
Prospect for immediate employment	15	4 th	
Status or prestige of the profession	19	3 rd	
Availability of course offering in chosen institution	13	5 th	
Prospect of career advancement			
Affordable for the family	22	2 nd	
Prospect of attractive compensation	8	9 th	
Opportunity for employment abroad	13	5 th	
	4	12 th	

The data show that the primary reasons respondents took the Doctor in Business Administration (DBA) program at the University of Cebu Graduate School were a strong passion for the profession (ranked first), a prospect for career advancement (ranked second), and the status or prestige of the profession (ranked third). These pieces of information indicate that the DBA graduates were motivated to obtain the highest degree in business administration because of their strong desire to reach the highest rungs of the corporate ladder or rank in higher educational institutions. Also, it can be inferred that this cohort of respondents pursued doctoral degrees to qualify for a high position in the company, attain a professional rank in the academe, and earn a high salary. Moreover, being called and regarded as a doctor in the field of business administration is an honor that everyone can aspire to.

Likewise, studying for a Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) is a way to become an industry expert, enhance leadership skills, and open doors to advanced executive and consulting roles. DBA programs develop rigorous research and analytical skills, allowing students to gain practical knowledge to solve real-world business problems, gain a competitive edge, and potentially increase their salary. It suits experienced business professionals seeking to advance their careers and become influential leaders, educators, or consultants.

Business professionals seeking higher-level roles across industries may pursue a Doctor of Business Administration (DBA). By earning this degree, professionals can demonstrate their commitment to advancing their knowledge of business and finance (Indeed Editorial Team, 2025).

The doctoral journey builds a robust set of key skills that equip students for impactful, progressive careers. Firstly, it is research and analytical skills, the ability to conduct intensive investigations, and the ability to interpret complex data. Complementing this is the problem-solving and critical thinking skill, the ability to approach intricate and massive challenges with a well-defined and logical framework. Furthermore, doctorates sharpen communication skills, developing connections that enable the effective sharing of complex ideas between various experts, including presentations and scholarly publications. It trains them to oversee long-term endeavors. Finally, they develop robust quantitative skills, fostering an understanding and application of various policies and navigating their impacts on the company and people (Euro American Education GmbH, 2025).

Table 6 shows the employment status of the graduates.

Table 6. Present Employment Status of the Graduates (n = 36)

Indicators	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Employed	36	100

Thirty-six (36), or 100% of the graduate respondents, were employed during the study. This information indicates that all Doctor in Business Administration [DBA] University of Cebu Graduate School graduates have jobs in various fields and industries. They managed their time effectively by attending to the demands of their current work, classes, and school requirements. However, taking advanced studies while working is a common practice among graduate students in the Philippines.

Filipino working graduate students experience unique cultural and socioeconomic pressures that exacerbate typical graduate school stressors. The growing trend of professionals pursuing graduate studies while employed full-time aligns with Knowles' (1980) andragogical principles, in which adult learners seek education that is self-directed, experiential, and tied to professional goals (Agbayani & Paglinawan, 2025).

Filipino graduate working students are motivated by career growth and personal development and navigate role conflict (Herman & Marlowe, 2020). The good news is that there are ways to make it easier. Students who do well use innovative time management and lean on support from family, friends, and employers. Institutions should implement flexible policies aligned with self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Table 7 presents data on the type of organization in which the respondents were employed.

Table 7. Type of Organization where the Respondents Work (n = 26)

Indicators	Frequency (f)	Percentage
Private	16	44.45
Public	20	55.55

Twenty (20) respondents, 55.55%, worked at a public organization, while sixteen (16), 44.45%, were employed in a private entity. This data implies that this group of DBA graduates practiced their profession in the government, either in the office or the academe as professors. Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) graduates in the current Philippine labor market can work in various sectors, including the academe as professors, managers, and corporate leaders; management analysts; specialized consulting roles; government agencies; and entrepreneurship, launching their own businesses. They can also work in research roles at think tanks or in specialized fields such as finance, healthcare management, and information systems management. Business administration is an overarching field that ensures a company's smooth functioning and helps it achieve

its objectives efficiently and effectively. It involves all aspects of supervising and monitoring an organization's operations. Today's world needs competent leaders who recognize the rapidly changing business landscape. Today's leaders in our digitally empowered economy are expected to bring new ideas, advanced business models, and empirical findings to meet business challenges and outdo conventional wisdom, generating long-lasting impact on business and the world. A Doctorate of Business Administration is the highest level of business mastery, a program designed to develop future leaders. A DBA is a degree that embodies excellence. Whether one hopes to lead multinational firms, start a pioneering business, or influence the course of academia, a DBA opens exciting and meaningful professional opportunities. Let us see what incredible possibilities await those who choose this path. DBA graduates are best placed to hold a range of C-suite positions, including Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Chief Operating Officer (COO), and Chief Strategy Officer (CSO), Management consulting, business development professionals, entrepreneurs, academician, policy analyst, strategic planner, etc. (Euro American Education GmbH, 2025).

Table 8 presents the information on the workplaces of DBA graduates.

Table 8. Present Occupation of the Respondents (n=36)

Indicators	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
○ Instructor	25	69.45
○ Administrative Staff	3	8.33
○ Prefer not to disclose	8	22.22

Of the thirty-six (36) respondents, twenty-five (25), or 69.45%, worked as college instructors. In contrast, 3 respondents (8.33%) were employed as administrative staff. This data shows that most Doctor in Business Administration (DBA) graduates of the University of Cebu Graduate School were nurse educators or engaged in work that aligns with their discipline, as professional nurses in hospitals.

A Doctor of Business Administration program is a rigorous and intellectually demanding experience that prepares senior-level professionals for leadership roles in business and academia. It combines academic rigor with practical relevance, creating a unique learning environment for experienced professionals seeking to make a significant impact on the business world. They can take senior leadership roles, in which DBA graduates are well-positioned for top leadership positions such as CEO, CFO, or Chief Strategist. They can also provide consultancy services and pursue entrepreneurship. Graduates often become consultants or entrepreneurs, applying their advanced knowledge to solve complex business challenges. Also, they can choose academic careers. Some DBA graduates pursue academic careers, becoming professors and contributing to business education (National University, 2024).

Moreover, a university professor and administrator can teach undergraduate and graduate-level business courses in their field of specialization. This also involves curriculum design and development, student mentorship, and service to the university in various other forms. With experience, one can move into administrative roles at learning institutes, shaping academic programs and departments (Euro American Education GmbH, 2025).

Table 9 presents the gross monthly income data for Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) graduates of the University of Cebu Graduate School.

Table 9. Gross Monthly Income of the Respondents (n= 36)

Indicators	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Php10,000-Php20,000	1	2.78
Php 21,000- Php 30,000	8	22.22
Php 31,000- Php 40,000	15	41.67
Php 41,000- Php 50,000	5	13.89
Php 51,000- Php 60,000	3	8.33

Fifteen 15% (41) of the respondent-graduates earned a gross monthly income of Php31,000 to Php40,000. In comparison, one (1) or 2.78% of the same respondents earned a gross monthly income of Php10,000.00 to Php 20,000.00. These data indicate that Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) graduates of the University of Cebu Graduate School earned salaries above the minimum wage but were from the lower-middle income bracket. This income level is considered higher than the typical income of ordinary workers in the Philippines, but it can still provide a comfortable standard of living, covering necessities.

The monthly family income thresholds for the middle class range from approximately Php25,000.00 to Php145,000.00. This definition groups households with incomes substantially above subsistence levels but below those of the upper echelons of society. By this definition, as many as 4 in 10 Filipinos (39.8%) and nearly half of families (47.4%) can be considered middle-income (Albert, 2024).

Table 10 presents data on respondents' workplace.

Table 10. Place of Work of the Respondents (n = 36)

Indicators	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Local	36	100

Thirty-six (36), or 100% of the Doctor in Business Administration graduates, worked here in the Philippines. This means that there are available jobs or work opportunities for those workers who have a doctoral degree in the Philippines, particularly in higher education as professors and administrators, but also in other fields, in consulting as management experts, and in top-level corporate positions like Chief Executive Officer (CEO), with significant demand stemming from the nation's growing economy and large number of businesses. These positions require advanced business strategy, financial management, and market research expertise to solve complex business challenges and contribute to the theory and practice required in the DBA curriculum. Moreover, their salaries are above the minimum or middle-class income levels, and in some cases even higher, depending on the position and job complexity.

The middle class is crucial in driving economic growth and development in many countries. In the Philippines, the expansion of the middle class is seen as an important indicator of economic progress, improved living standards, and social stability. As the primary driver of consumer spending and a key source of human capital, understanding and supporting this segment of society is essential for sustainable economic development (Albert, 2024).

Table 11 presents data on respondents' employment status.

Table 11. Respondents' Employment Tenure (n = 26)

Indicators	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Permanent	26	72.22
Contractual	3	8.33
Casual	1	2.78
Prefer not to disclose	6	16.67

Twenty-six (26), or 72.22%, of the graduate respondents had a regular employment status, while one (1), or 2.78%, had a casual job status. The data show that 6 respondents (16.67%) preferred not to disclose their employment status, and 3 (8.33%) were contractual employees. This information implies that most Doctor in Business Administration (DBA) graduates of the University of Cebu Graduate School were employed in various industries, working as professors or performing job functions related to administration, management, and other business fields, with regular employment status.

A Doctorate in Business Administration (DBA) can lead to a lucrative position in the company by increasing earning potential and opening doors to high-level executive, consulting, and leadership roles. While direct

salaries vary, the DBA qualifies individuals for positions such as chief executive officer (CEO) or senior consultant, which offer significantly higher income and professional prestige than roles that require only a Master's degree. This degree is in demand for higher-level positions in companies and educational institutions in the Philippines. This degree is also in demand in higher educational institutions [HEIs] in the Philippines. The value extends beyond monetary gains to include enhanced credibility, expertise, and long-term career growth across industries.

Table 12 shows the time graduates have been in the company.

Table 12. Respondents' Length in the Company (n=26)

Indicators	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
1-5 years	20	55.56
6-10 years	5	13.88
11-15 years	2	5.56
16-20 years	1	2.78
Prefer not to disclose	8	22.22

Twenty (20), or 55.56%, of the graduates worked for 1 to 5 years in their jobs, while one (1), or 2.78%, worked for 16 to 20 years. This means that the Doctor in Business Administration (DBA) graduates of the University of Cebu-Graduate School were highly employable across various sectors and industries in Cebu and nationwide. Additionally, a degree in business administration can easily help one find long-term employment in positions that align with their field of study, due to the broad applicability of the competencies and skills in business administration, management, marketing, finance, economics, and related business disciplines.

Table 13 presents the respondents' curriculum relevance to the first job.

Table 13. Respondents' Relevance of the Curriculum to the First Job (n = 36)

Indicators	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Yes	36	100

Thirty-six (36), or 100%, of the respondents reported that the Doctor in Business Administration (DBA) curriculum they completed at the University of Cebu Graduate School relates to their job. Currently, the courses in the DBA programs address the real needs of companies and entities across industries.

Table 14 shows the competencies learned that are useful in the first job of the graduate respondents.

Table 14. Respondents' Competencies Learned that are Useful in the First Job

Indicators	Frequency (f)	Rank
Communication Skills	35	1 st
Human Relations Skills	33	2 nd
Entrepreneurial Skills	12	9 th
Information Technology Skills	15	8 th
Problem Solving Skills	30	3 rd
Critical Thinking Skills	23	4 th
Personality Development	20	6 th
Research Skills	10	10 th
Leadership Skills	22	5 th
Community Building Skills	19	7 th
Productivity and Time Management Skills	20	6 th

*Multiple Responses

The Doctor in Business Administration (DBA) graduates of the University of Cebu Graduate School learned communication skills (ranked first), human relations skills (ranked second), problem-solving skills (ranked third), critical thinking skills (ranked fourth), and leadership skills (ranked fifth). This data suggests that the Doctor in Business Administration (DBA) curriculum at the University of Cebu Graduate School strengthens students' hard and soft skills, helping them advance their careers as business experts. These responses also indicate that the DBA graduates viewed the educational services provided by the graduate school as enhancing their business competencies and decision-making abilities, including their interpersonal and social skills. Also, managing organizational resources effectively may expose them to challenges and pressure, requiring them to use their critical thinking skills. Nevertheless, their accounting and financial management training also harnesses their problem-solving and critical thinking skills, which are needed in managing complex situations in their organization. It should also be noted that they emphasize that their ability to motivate and inspire people in the organization was also strengthened, which is significant in the real world of work and career advancement in the business industry.

Table 15 presents the respondents' assessments of the job's relevance to the college course.

Table 15. Respondents' Assessments Relatedness of the Job to the Degree (n= 36)

Indicators	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Yes	36	100

Thirty-six (36) respondents, or 100%, reported that their doctorate in business administration was relevant to their current job. These results indicate that knowledge gained from the Doctor in Business Administration (DBA) program at the University of Cebu is useful in their job performance as managers and professors.

Table 16 shows the respondents' reasons for accepting the job..

Table 16. Respondents' Reasons for Accepting the Job (n = 36)

Indicators	Frequency (f)	Rank
Salaries & benefits	35	1st
Career Challenge	20	2nd
Peer Influence	15	3rd
Family Influence	10	4th

*Multiple Responses

The respondents' reasons for accepting their jobs were as follows: salaries and benefits (ranked first), career challenge (ranked second), and peer influence (ranked third). Understandably, their primary consideration in pursuing further studies in business administration was to improve their career prospects and advance to a higher position in the company. Moreover, for those working as teachers or instructors in higher education institutions (HEIs), a Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) degree will be a stepping stone to achieving their career goals and earning a higher salary.

CONCLUSIONS

Therefore, the Doctor in Business Administration (DBA) program graduates of the University of Cebu Graduate School were employable in academe and various industries, where they could practice their profession and earn

above the minimum salary level of Php 30,000. However, this salary level falls within the lower-middle-income category. Likewise, they could apply their graduate school learning in the different business establishments where they were employed, enabling them to use their competencies and skills in management, marketing, human resources, operations management, accounting, finance, economics, and other related fields. Likewise, they demonstrated the competencies and graduate attributes outlined in the DBA curriculum, CHED Memorandum Order No. 15, series of 2019, and the University's vision, mission, and institutional goals. Therefore, the DBA program at UC is in line with the regulatory body's requirements and the Philippine business industry's requirements. Since their reason for further studies was to earn attractive salaries and benefits, they aspire to career progression after graduation. However, their career progression cannot be fully established during the survey, as they were still applying for promotion and ranking, which will take considerable time. Further, the DBA program offers courses that prepare students to take significant organizational positions.

Translational Research

Based on the significant findings of this investigation, a program-level intervention plan shall be devised to require regular review, revisit, and revision of the Doctor in Business Administration (DBA) curriculum of the University of Cebu Graduate School to ensure compliance with regulatory standards and alignment with current business industry requirements. It shall integrate feasible means to expose students to research and innovation, which are trends in higher education institutions and in sustaining business organizations. So, business experts must be innovative and creative to promptly lead the organization through the pressures of competition.

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