

Relevance of the Master in Business Administration Curriculum to the Graduates' Career

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ABSTRACT: Taking further studies is one of the most effective steps in attaining success on the corporate ladder. This study aims to trace the employment status of the graduates of the Master in Business Administration (MBA) program at the University of Cebu Graduate School for the school years 2015-2018 to devise a program-level action plan. This study utilized the descriptive research design using a standardized tool devised by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) to trace the employment data of the graduates of Master in Business Administration of the University of Cebu-Graduate School for the school years 2015-2018. The study was conducted at the University of Cebu Graduate School, and using a purposive sampling technique, there were two hundred ninety-three (293) graduates with a Master in Business Administration who served as respondents. Simple percentages and ranks were used in the data analysis. As to the profile of the graduates, most were single at the time of the survey, females, and were residing in Cebu City. The respondents' top three (3) reasons for taking their undergraduate degree were passion for the profession, prospect for employment, and advice from their parents/relatives. Nevertheless, their reasons for taking the Master in Business Administration (MBA) degree were career advancement, passion for the profession, and to get attractive compensation. In terms of the employment status of the MBA graduates, most of them were employed and had regular or permanent status. For those graduates who are not employed, their reasons for unemployment were the following: they were taking advanced or further studies to concentrate on their family and for health reasons. For those employed, most of their present occupation relates to providing professional service, while their employer's business line is education. Moreover, they all worked at domestic establishments, and their gross monthly earnings on their first job were between Php 5,000.00-below Php 10,000.00. For those whose job is their first, the topmost reason for staying there relates to salary and benefits. At the same time, most of them answered that the job was related to their college/undergraduate course and that the primary reason for accepting the job was career challenges. For those whose job is not their first job, the primordial reason for changing jobs was to attain career challenges, and they stayed in their first job for one (1) year to less than two (2) years. There were more respondents who could find a job through a walk-in application strategy, and most of them could find their first job in less than a month. For the first job, the job level of most respondents was clerical, and in their current job, they were holding supervisory positions. The gross monthly earnings in their first job after college were within Php5,000.00 to less than Php10,000.00, while in their current job, they earned Php25,000.00 and above. Most respondents disclosed that their college or undergraduate degree was relevant to their first job. In contrast, the top three (3) competencies that they learned in college that they found helpful in their first job were communication, human relations, and critical thinking skills. The majority of the respondents further answered that the MBA curriculum was relevant to their current/present job, and the top three (3) competencies that they find helpful in their current job were human relations, communication, and problem-solving skills. Lastly, more respondents were promoted after finishing the Master in Business Administration degree. In conclusion, the graduates of the Master in Business Administration (MBA) program at the University of Cebu Graduate School are employable in various fields of business, including education. Since career advancement was the reason for taking advanced or further studies in business, expectedly, there are manifestations of career progression after the students obtained the graduate degree in terms of position and salary level, as well as benefits. Further, the MBA curriculum offers courses or subjects that are relevant to the performance of the graduates' jobs and lead them to attain promotion.

Keywords: Business education, tracer study, curriculum, competencies learned

I. INTRODUCTION

Learning is always a significant part of the educational process that seeks to develop and strengthen every learner's knowledge, skills, and values. Academic institutions of higher learning are constantly generating graduates capable of applying technology and knowledge-based information to the nature and demands of their work environment (Kearns & Sabherwal, 2006; Laguador & Dotong, 2013).

Graduate education is part of the most effective means of developing capacities related to research that will improve educational theory and practice in different aspects of the education process (Bueno, 2017). 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 important of all, securing the dream of graduates to get jobs and become socially recognized and successful in their respective field of endeavors. 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).

Schomburg (2003) shares that graduate survey results are essential 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 their graduates' professional orientation and experiences. Witte and Kalleberg (1995) also noted that there is theoretical importance to the issue of education-job match, as it brings attention to the understanding of how and why individuals are matched to their employment, which concerns many labor market specialists.

The Commission on Higher Education requires all HEIs to conduct a tracer study in the Philippines. It is equally reflected as a required document by any higher education accrediting body, such as the Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines (AACUP), Inc. (Gines, 2014). This means that all HEIs in the Philippines should study tracing their graduates' employability, employment status, and the competencies they learned to apply in their jobs. Further, the programs offered in the Graduate School of an HEI are not exempted from this mandate.

One program offered at the University of Graduate School is the Master in Business Administration degree. A Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree is a popular option for individuals looking to enhance their understanding of business. MBA programs typically feature courses in areas such as management, accounting, human resources, marketing, and operations. Some students may keep their courses general, while others specialize in a particular industry. Deciding to enroll in an MBA program is a significant step.

Given that it is a post-graduate degree, one may already have a successful career, familial commitments, or both, which can result in a full schedule. Many institutions recognize that a typical MBA student's life differs considerably from an undergraduate's. Universities understand the need to craft MBA programs that can be worked into a student's already demanding professional and social calendar. While it is possible to earn an MBA and strike a healthy work-life balance, one may still wonder if the endeavor is worthwhile regarding career prospects upon graduation. The good news is that employers continue to revere candidates with an MBA (Villanova School of Business, 2018).

Regarding salary, the Graduate Management Admissions Council (GMAC) reported that the median salary of an MBA graduate is approximately \$88,000 per year. The figure is higher in Europe, where graduates can command almost \$95,000 annually. MBA graduates are also rewarded with high salaries across Asia and South America, pointing to the plethora of international opportunities an MBA can unlock.

Mihail (2006) said that by analyzing graduates' perceptions and attitudes, the findings indicate that MBA studies positively affect skills, employability, and compensation and significantly affect career advancement. An accredited MBA program adds value to graduates' managerial skills and employability in an ever-changing labor market.

The policies, standards, and guidelines for graduate programs in Business Administration, based on the Guidelines for the Implementation of CMO 46 series of 2012, implement the shift of learning competency-based standard/outcomes-based education. It specifies the core competencies expected of Masteral and Doctoral Programs in Business Administration graduates regardless of the type of HEI they graduate from. However, in recognition of the spirit of outcomes-based education and alignment with the typology of HEIs, it provides ample space for HEIs to innovate their curriculum in line with the assessment of how best to achieve learning outcomes in their particular contexts and their respective missions (CHED Memorandum Order, 2016).

To enable the higher educational institutions (HEIs) to comply with the stipulations in the CHED Memorandum Order, 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 Master in Business Administration that needs intervention should be addressed for the continuous quality of the educational services of the university. Thus, this study will determine the relevance of the Master in Business Administration curriculum towards the employability of the graduates. The findings of this study will serve as bases for a proposed program-level intervention scheme.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This study anchors the theory of credentialism, which states that diplomas are intrinsically valuable, a situation described as credentialism (Bidner, 2010)—the Weberian theory of educational credentialism views competition for credentials as a primary determinant of modern stratification systems. The key issues that are elaborated include the relationship of educational expansion to economic growth, the relative importance of technical skills versus occupational status-group culture in degrees and recruitment, the significance of the formalization of degrees, and the peculiar dynamics of bureaucratic and professional credential markets (Brown, 2001).

The model overcomes an essential criticism of signaling models by mechanically tying workers' wages to productivity. A worker's productivity is influenced by the skills of their coworkers, where such skills arise from an ability-augmenting investment that is made prior to matching with coworkers. Workers' credentials allow them to demonstrate their investment in the labor market, allowing workers to match with high-skill coworkers in equilibrium. Despite the positive externality associated with a worker's investment, it shows how over-investment is pervasive in equilibrium (Bidner, 2010).

There are at least two interpretations of the dramatic increase in educational attainment experienced in the post-war period in many countries. The first is that it represents a natural response to the changing nature of work, including implementing new technologies that require highly skilled labor. A second perspective asserts that educational attainment is fueled, in part, by credentialism, whereby workers have an intrinsic demand for credentials. Proponents of this perspective assert that credentialing, not educating, has become the primary business of North American universities, that a resume without one or more degrees from a respected institution will not be taken seriously enough even to be considered, no matter how able or informed the applicant may be (Jacobs, 2004) and that economic forces have made credentials the object rather than the byproduct of educational achievement (Labere, 1997).

The job-matching theory is based on the idea that the labor market is composed of jobs with many different skill and experience levels and workers with many different skill and experience levels. The most skilled workers (i.e., the most educated) should occupy the most skilled positions, and there is a mismatch if either the supply of educated workers or skilled positions surpass the other (Boudarbat & Chernoff, 2009).

According to functionalist theory, economic and technological innovation generally raises the skill levels required to perform jobs. At the same time, manual labor jobs disappear as new knowledge-based jobs grow and the need for new knowledge increases within existing occupations. Thus, formal educational institutions must expand for individuals to learn the skills required for more complex jobs (Rubinson & Browne, 1994). The technical functional theory also asserts that education responds to industrial and economic growth. Educational institutions become creators of new technologies and information, increasing the complexity of jobs and sustaining educational growth (Walters, 2004).

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 essential when starting a business. Second, education makes people aware of alternative career choices. Third, education broadens the horizons of individuals, thereby making people better equipped to perceive opportunities. Finally, education provides knowledge 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 better perceive them (Shepherd, 2003).

Hewitt (2011) further demonstrates the value of higher education, that it leads to career success, and that learners who complete their higher education qualification are more likely to start their businesses. The productive potential of an individual that is considered human capital includes the right combination of knowledge, skills, and motivation to excel. These give the organization a competitive advantage (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2004).

Human resources are the key to economic development. What people consider to be meaningful 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 come up with an enormous labor supply (Pagoso et al., 2013)

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, which attempts to capture the social, biological,

cultural, and psychological complexity as they interact in explicit and/or economic transaction transactions. Formal education is one component of human capital that may assist in accumulating explicit knowledge that may provide practical skills to graduates (Sorenson, 2015).

Being educated, being healthier, and so on expand lives directly and through their effects in making better resources for further production, thereby expanding productivity and incomes. To correct what is missed in the narrower perspective of human capital and human resource development, there is a need for a broader conception of development that concentrates on the enhancement of human lives and freedoms, no matter whether that enhancement is – or is not –intermediated through an expansion of commodity production (UNESCO, 2000).

Education is one of the principal means of building the defenses of peace in the minds of men and women everywhere. This is a good moment for the international community to reflect on its understanding of and commitment to the right to education. Education is both a human right and a vital means of promoting peace and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. If its potential to contribute towards building a more peaceful world is to be realized, education must be made universally available and equally accessible to all (UNESCO, 2000).

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 is 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).

As more and more employers demand postsecondary credentials for basic entry-level positions, many investigators are deeply concerned about whether postsecondary credentials are needed in the contemporary labor market. Does a postsecondary education provide students with the skills they need to succeed (Walters, 2004)?

Workers now require various skills to adapt to the constantly evolving requirements of the new knowledge-based and 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).

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

The purpose of any educational institution is to provide quality human resources that are acceptable to employers and society (Natarajan & Kumar, 2004; Orence & Laguador, 2013). Graduate Schools provide an environment for professionals to take advanced degree programs to intensify their chosen career paths. The Master in Business Administration (MBA) is among those professional degrees that prepare the student to enter the business world, and employability or professional advancement may be a desired outcome (MacKenzie, 2003).

The perception of employees confronts traditional views about higher education. It raises questions about the point of having a higher degree: course comprehension and understanding or learning how to learn. This can lead to instability among academe expected to teach employability, skills, knowledge, and values in the classroom in line with modern European and international trends (Bueno, 2007). Graduate education is at the apex of the educational system. Graduate studies is one of the more effective means of improving the capacities of an education professional who aims to contribute to the continued improvement of teaching and learning in the classrooms, delivery of student services, and management of educational programs. Graduate education is one of the most effective means of developing capacities related to research that will improve and practice in the educational process (CHED Memorandum Order No. 53, Series of 2007).

Employability contains different dimensions, such as the actual competence of the individual, 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 aspects that are also central to the understanding of the concept. Thus, when studying employability, it is essential 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).

Harvey and Knight (2003) posit that what employers generally value in new graduates is what most teachers in higher education generally value. This pertains to students who make an effort to fully participate in the

total student experience related to academic, co-curricular, and work experience and benefit from a well-rounded education that contributes fully to the life of the university and community.

At this point, the need for higher education has been considered an important vehicle to alleviate a person's productivity and employability. This would lead him/her to generate more income, increase his prestige and power, and uplift his standard of living and social status. According to Arzu Akkoyunlu-Wigley and Simon-Wigley (2008), the value of education is commonly measured in terms of its ability to improve economic growth or the earnings of individuals. Education will occupy a more prominent place in people's lives as its role among the forces at work in modern societies increases. There are several reasons for this. The traditional division of life into separate periods – childhood and youth devoted to schooling, adulthood, working life, and retirement – no longer corresponds to things as they are today and corresponds less to the demands of the future. Today, no one can hope to amass during his or her youth an initial fund of knowledge that will serve for a lifetime. The swift changes in the world call for knowledge to be continuously updated. At the same time, the initial education of young people tends to become more protracted. A shorter working life, shorter working hours, and a longer life expectancy after retirement also increase the time available for other activities (UNESCO, 2000).

Universities have taken different approaches to developing graduate employability skills. Therefore, the connection between higher education and employment has elicited keen interest among researchers as it takes up 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 still, the actual score is on their employability and their inclusion in the workforce. The number of graduates and employment must be directly proportionate. However, the fewer employers there are, the more challenging competition among the graduates (Macatangay, 2013).

There are many reasons for going to university, including – naturally – a love of studying the subject and the opportunity to experience a different way of life. Higher education is much more than a production line for work-ready graduates. Nevertheless, there is no denying that people see higher education as a stepping stone to a good job. People mainly value higher education as much as apprenticeships, further education, and adult and community learning.

While there are variations in the classification of employability, there is a broad understanding of what qualities, characteristics, skills, and knowledge constitute employability in general and specifically for graduates. Employers expect graduates to have technical and discipline competencies from their degrees but must 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).

Developing one's career is ultimately one's responsibility. No matter how careful an employer plans for employees in today's technologically and socially complex world, the chances of career mismanagement are substantial unless the employee takes an active role on his or her 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 through skills, efficiency, and knowledge. To build up a nation and to improve one's capability, the power of knowledge, skill, and education are the most vital parts of every country. The 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).

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

The meaning of employability is individual, contextual, and relational (Clarke, 2008). What it means to be employable varies with the profession, individual prerequisites, and the competence requirements of the specific job. This is evident in the case of engineering as it is a heterogeneous profession, meaning that the graduate 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 does not only refer to attributes of the individual but is also developed through participation in different communities of practice.

Employability contains different dimensions, such as the actual competence of the individual, 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 aspects associated with the individual. It is a relational concept, and contextual aspects are central to understanding it. Thus, when studying employability, it is essential to consider both soft and hard skills, actual and formal competence, personal characteristics, attributes and talents of 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).

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 competitive advantage. According to Harvey and Knight (2003), two broad approaches to defining employability are job-getting and individual development attributes. The first relates to the ability of a graduate to get a job. These definitions include varying levels of qualification about the nature and timing of the job and the ability to retain and succeed in the job. 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.

Complexities and insecurities characterize the 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). Predicting what competence one will need to become and remain a successful practitioner and to manage one's employability effectively has become increasingly tricky (Barnett, 2004).

Moreover, competencies can be considered along a spectrum: needed to survive in the workforce, to a range of advanced competencies needed to sustain employability, and advanced competencies needed to sustain employability and advance in one's career (Marquis & Huston, 2009).

Employeehip is more critical to success than special professional knowledge or skill. Indeed, more people fail because they need to possess their trade skills adequately. The higher a person climbs the ladder, the more he/she gets into administrative or executive work and the greater the emphasis on the ability to work within the organization rather than on technical competence or professional knowledge (Drucker, 2005). People also need opportunities to do things differently, to access relevant training, and, most crucially, to employment (Brown & Hesketh, 2004).

Menez (2014) explained that the Master of Business Administration is a program meant for those students who are preparing themselves with the skills and competency in functional areas such as business and law, accounting and finance, marketing and management, strategic decision-making process, and other matters about business and societal issues as any graduate education of uncertain claims that graduate school represents the apex of the entire educational system, a graduate program requires a great deal of work in acquiring specialized skills to earn the degree Master in Business Administration.

Given that the MBA program is broad in scope, many paths are open to MBA graduates. The following are three of the exciting and disparate career paths an MBA Graduate can choose to pursue:

1. Human resources specialist. A human resources specialist is responsible for hiring and onboarding, benefit enrollment, tax and visa forms, and mediating workplace disputes – it all falls under the purview of this multifaceted role. Human resources positions are found in large international corporations and small local startup companies. MBA graduates are well suited to this role because management and administration education are the program's cornerstones. MBA graduates will take a core class on the fundamentals of human resources practice and management. Typical salaries for human resources specialists vary considerably, contingent on a candidate's experience and the size of the company he or she works for. The U.S. Department of Labor reported that the median nationwide salary for a human resources specialist in 2015 was a little over \$58,000 per annum. Lower-end starting salaries are sometimes less than \$34,000 a year, while the top 10 percent of earners in this field across the U.S. earn close to \$100,000 a year on average.

2. Investment fund manager. An investment fund manager typically oversees managing a client's money. They have the power to make investment decisions on a client's behalf and are tasked with deciding the kinds of investments that may or may not be suitable. Most investment fund managers oversee and are responsible for vast sums of money. They are usually found in large organizations with sizeable companies and other organizations as clients.

Individuals who manage the money of independent clients are usually regarded as financial advisers, which is another popular career path for MBA graduates. This role necessitates strong interpersonal and communication skills, as investment fund managers spend considerable time meeting with clients. Investment fund managers also need a comprehensive understanding of global finance and the investment industry. A career as an investment fund manager can be incredibly lucrative, mainly if one works within a large investment bank and has extensive experience. Payscale reported that investment fund managers can earn six-figure salaries, sometimes over \$150,000 annually—the national median salary stands at around \$86,000, with entry-level salaries averaging \$51,000 per annum.

3. *Chief financial officer (CFO)*. Every large company has a chief financial officer who oversees and manages the entire organization's finances. He or she will oversee everything from spending and the bottom line to the cost of onboarding new employees. CFOs also scrutinize data to identify problems and propose solutions. This is a high-powered role with a considerable amount of responsibility. Many chief financial officers have both an MBA degree and an extensive amount of professional experience. Given the level of responsibility and the potential consequences of a CFO's decisions, recruiters tend to be highly selective in their search for candidates. The best CFOs will blend financial acumen, practical leadership skills, and strong work ethic seamlessly. Chief financial officers are compensated generously. CFOs are earning almost \$90,000 per year. The median national salary is \$158,000, while some of the highest-paid CFOs command yearly salaries over \$285,000 (Villanova School of Business, 2018).

Moreover, it is of practical importance that studies relating to credentialism, the relevance of the curriculum, and the jobs that the graduates perform should also be considered. The following are the related studies that relate to the topic:

In his study, Walters (2004) cross-tabulated question about whether employers requested a specific postsecondary credential for the job and compares this to whether graduates used the skills and knowledge they acquired in their postsecondary education on the job. The author finds a strong connection for occupationally specific disciplines but not general ones.

In addition, the study of Bueno (2017) about ascertaining the curriculum relevance of the graduate school through tracer study in a Philippine private higher education institution, it found out the graduates of the various programs in the graduate school were employed in regular or permanent status. 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 are relevant skills learned. Love of God, honesty, punctuality, obedience to superiors, perseverance, creativity, professional integrity, unity, fairness, love for others, nationalism, and being eco-friendly are manifested in their workplaces. Thus, graduate schools continuously nurture and embrace the quality of education.

Further, the investigation of Menez (2014), found that 96 percent of the Masters in Business Administration graduates from 2008-2012 were gainfully employed locally with regular status and holding professional and managerial positions. The MBA course has contributed to the graduate's professional advancement. Communication, human and technical skills, and the values of love of God, honesty, love for truth, perseverance, and hard work are relevant to their job.

The preceding theories and related literature on credentialism as a means to achieve fast career progression, guided by these facts with the existing challenge of job mismatch and underemployment, provided more profound insights on the topic.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aims to trace the employment status of the graduates of the Master in Business Administration (MBA) of the University of Cebu Graduate School for the school years 2015-2018. The findings served as bases for a proposed program-level intervention plan. Specifically, this study aims to present the following: 1) profile of the graduates; reasons graduates for taking the undergraduate and graduate courses; 2) the employment status of the MBA graduates; for those graduates who are not employed, the reasons for unemployment, while for those who are employed, their employment data; 3) reasons for staying in the job; 4) relatedness of the first job to the college course; and reasons for accepting the job for those whose job is their first job and for those whose job is not their first job; 5) strategies used in finding the first job and length of time in landing the first job; 6) job level position for their first job and current or present job, the gross monthly earnings in the first and current job; 7) relevance of the

curriculum in the first and current/present job; and 8) promotions attained after finishing the Master in Business Administration.

IV. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study utilized the descriptive research design using a standardized tool devised by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) to trace the employment data of the graduates of Master in Business Administration of the University of Cebu-Graduate School for the school years 2015-2018.

The study was conducted at the University of Cebu, a non-stock and non-profit corporation duly registered under the Securities and Exchange Commission. It is a private educational institution that provides quality education at low tuition fees. The main building is located at Sanciango Street, Cebu City. The Graduate School offers various programs such as Master in Business Administration (MBA), Doctor in Business Administration (DBA), Master in Criminal Justice (MSCJ), Doctor of Philosophy in Criminology major in Criminal Justice (PhD Crim.), Master in Hotel and Restaurant Management (MSHRM), Master of Science in Teaching (MST), and Doctor in Education (EdD.).

The respondents of this study were graduates of the Master in Business Administration program at the University of Cebu Graduate School for the school years 2015-2018. Using a purposive sampling technique, two hundred ninety-three (293) graduates served as respondents in this study.

The instrument used in this study was the Graduate Tracer Survey (GTS), a standardized tool designed by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). It has twelve (12) sections with 34 items.

The researchers wrote a letter to the Dean of the University of Cebu Graduate School asking permission to conduct the study. Another letter was sent to the Registrar's Office to obtain data about the number of graduates in the Master of Business Administration for the school years 2015-2018, and assistance with their contact information was requested. When all of the requests were approved, the survey tool was administered to graduates through the assistance of the Graduate School Office, who have more contact with the graduates, especially those who would request the release of their scholastic records such as diplomas and Transcripts of Records (TOR).

Simple percentages were used to determine the profile of the respondents and their employment data, and Rank was used to interpret the data relating to the questions that entail multiple responses.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents, analyzes, and interprets data on the profile, employment data, and relevance of the Master in Business Administration curriculum to the job of the graduates of the school years 2015-2018. The data are presented in tabular form with corresponding analysis and interpretation. The data sources were the graduates' answers to the Graduate Tracer Study (GTS) questionnaire.

Profile of the Graduates

This section shows the demographic profile of the graduates of Master in Business Administration (MBA) of the University of Cebu Graduate School. This part displays the graduates' civil status, gender and residence.

Table 1. Profile of the Graduates (n=293)

Profile Indicators	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Civil Status		
Single	198	67.60
Married	77	26.30
Annulled/ Separated	2	0.70
Single Parent	15	5.10
Widowed	1	0.30
Gender		
Male	78	26.60
Female	215	73.40
Location of Residence		
City	164	56.00
Municipality	129	44.00

The data in Table 1 shows that the majority, or 67.60 %, of the MBA graduates were still single at the time of the study. On the other hand, only one (1) or equivalent to .30% of the total respondents was already widowed.

This data relates to the current behavior manifested by the present generation of young adults who emphasize the importance of attaining career advancement while single. So, it is the trend nowadays that those who have just graduated from college and have newly been employed would enroll in the Master in Business Administration (MBA) program to be able to find a job that offers a higher position and salary. The students in the MBA programs were within the age bracket of 22-20 years old.

Therefore, the days when those who will enroll in the master's program belong to the supervisory and managerial level are gone. The current generation is already interested in obtaining an MBA even though they are still in the rank-and-file position since they believe they can find a better job or transfer to higher positions once they get the diploma.

Moreover, 56.00 % of the MBA graduates were residing in Cebu City at the time of the survey. In comparison, the remaining 44.00 %, or 129 graduates, were already residents from the different municipalities and neighboring provinces of Cebu. It is expected that MBA graduates tend to stay and work in Cebu City since there are many job opportunities compared to other cities outside Manila. These graduates tend to venture into high-paying jobs that would fit and compensate for their capabilities and educational background.

Reasons of the Graduates for Taking the Course

This section presents the data on the reasons of the graduates for taking the undergraduate course and Master in Business Administration program. Table 2.1 shows the data for the reasons that prodded the respondents to enroll in their college course.

Table 2.1. Reasons of the Under Graduate Course

Reasons for Taking the (Undergraduate) Course	f	Rank
1. High Grade in the Course	44	10
2. High Grade in Highschool	62	5
3. Parents/Relatives	80	3
4. Peer Influence	44	10
5. Inspired by Role Model	57	6
6. Passion for the Profession	87	1
7. Prospect for the Employment	85	2.5
8. Status/Prestige	85	2.5
9. Available Course	52	7
10. Career Advancement	63	4
11. Affordable	52	7
12. Attractive Compensation	47	9
13. Employment Abroad	36	13
14. No Particular Choice	15	14

* multiple response

The foremost reason why the respondents took their undergraduate program was passion for the profession. Ideally, the primary reason for a high school graduate to choose their college course was their attraction for a particular profession. So, they have the inclination to take a course that will lead them to a future job that they like.

On the other hand, the slightest reason for taking the course was that when they enroll in college, they do not have any particular choice in the school where they are convenient to study. One culprit for this decision is their financial capability to afford a particular course. So, the tendency is that they will enroll in the course and school that they can afford or their benefactor.

Graduate education is part of the most effective means of developing capacities that relate to doing research that will improve educational theory and practice in different aspects of the education process (Bueno, 2017). 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 important of all, securing the dream of graduates to get jobs and become socially recognized and successful in their respective field of endeavors (Menez, 2014).

Table 2.2 shows the data for the various factors affecting the decision of the respondents to enroll in the Master in Business Administration (MBA) program at the University of Cebu Graduate School.

Table 2.2 Reasons for Taking Master in Business Administration

Reasons	f	Rank
1. High Grade in the Course	32	11
2. High Grade in High School	22	13
3. Parents/Relatives	42	10
4. Peer Influence	66	8
5. Inspired by Role Model	88	6
6. Passion for the Profession	139	2
7. Prospect for Employment	96	5
8. Status/Prestige	109	4
9. Available Course	45	9
10. Career Advancement	209	1
11. Affordable	25	12
12. Attractive Compensation	120	3
13. Employment Abroad	71	7
14. No Particular Choice	12	14

Since the Master in Business Administration program accepts students with various undergraduate degrees, the students taking this course have various educational backgrounds and different working experiences across different industries. The data reveals that the foremost reason the respondents enrolled in the MBA program was for career advancement. Amid stiff competition in the job market for business degree holders, having a master's degree is one stepping stone for them to be promoted and be qualified for higher positions.

However, the most unpopular reason they took the MBA program was that they had no choice. Most probably, they place more consideration on convenience and financial capability just to be able to obtain a master's degree.

According to Mihail (2006), analyzing graduates' perceptions and attitudes, MBA studies positively affect skills, employability, and compensation and moderate career advancement. An accredited MBA program adds value to graduates' managerial skills and employability in an ever-changing labor market.

Employment Data of the Graduates

This portion displays the status of employment of the graduates of Master in Business Administration from 2015-2018. The data are shown in the succeeding tables.

Table 3. Employment Status of the Graduates

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Present Status (n=293)		
Employed	265	90.40
Unemployed	28	9.60
Present employment status (n=265)		
Regular or Permanent	220	83.00
Temporary	11	4.20
Casual	6	2.30
Contractual	17	6.40
Self-employed	11	4.20

The data in Table 4 shows that out of the two hundred nine-three (293) respondents, there were two hundred sixty-five (265) who were employed at the time of the survey administration, comprising 90.40%. In contrast, the remaining twenty-eight (28), or 9.60%, were unemployed.

Of those employed, 83.00 % had a regular employment status, while only six (6), or 4.20 %, had a temporary job status. It can be noted in the data that eleven (11) respondents were self-employed or they already had their own business.

Hence, there is necessity for higher education to be considered as an essential vehicle to alleviate a person's productivity and employability (dela Cruz et al., 2016).

Moreover, education, in the broadest sense, is essential for stimulating entrepreneurship for several reasons. First, education provides individuals with a sense of autonomy, independence, and self-confidence. These qualities

are essential when starting a business. Second, education makes people aware of alternative career choices. Third, education broadens the horizons of individuals, thereby making people better equipped to perceive opportunities; finally, education provides knowledge that individuals can use to develop new entrepreneurial opportunities (Hewitt, 2011).

Reasons for Unemployment

This section reveals the reasons of those graduates who were not working or did not have a job. The data is shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Reasons for Unemployment

Indicators	Frequency	Rank
Advance or further studies	4	1
Family Concentration	3	2
Health Reasons	1	3

**multiple response*

For the twenty-eight (28) respondents who were not working or unemployed at the time of the survey, their foremost reason was that they were still taking advanced or further studies (ranked first), followed by family consideration (ranked second), and for health reasons (3rd rank). Those four (4) respondents who did not work focused on their master's studies and received scholarship grants wherein they could avail themselves of the financial support needed for them to work so that they could concentrate on their studies.

Competencies can be considered along a spectrum: needed to survive in the workforce, to a range of advanced competencies needed to sustain employability, and advanced competencies needed to sustain employability and advance in one career (Marquis & Huston, 2009).

So, to learn more competencies, employees must undertake further studies to update and deepen their knowledge of business and management. In this manner, the employee will be assured that he/she can still be of value in the working arena.

Some tend to concentrate on their family, especially those with children who need more attention and care from their parents. So, instead of working, a college graduate would sacrifice to concentrate on doing the household chores and caring for the children. Moreover, some stopped working because of health-related problems or diseases. Some of them cannot even work anymore due to physical incapability caused by the disease.

Present Occupation and Major Line of Business

Table 5 shows the data on the present occupation of the respondents and the major line of business of the company where the graduates were working or connected.

Table 5. Present Occupation of the Graduates and Major Line of Business of their Employer (n=265)

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Present Occupation		
Government Office	63	23.80
Professional	151	57.00
Technical Association Professional	12	4.50
Clerk	16	6.00
Service Work	5	1.90
Farmer, Fishery	1	0.40
Trades and Related workers	4	1.50
Special Occupation	7	2.60
Did not indicate	6	2.30
Major line of business of the respondents' present employer		
Fishing	1	0.40
Mining	4	1.50
Manufacturing	20	7.50
Electric Water	1	0.40
Construction	10	3.80
Wholesale, Trade	21	7.90

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Hotels and Restaurants	16	6.00
Transport	16	6.00
Financial	51	19.20
Real Estate	20	7.50
Public Advisory	6	2.30
Education	60	22.60
Health Science Work	6	2.30
Social Service	10	3.80
Private Household	1	0.40
Extra Territory	4	1.50
Did not Indicate	18	6.80

The occupation of the majority (57.00 %) of the Master in Business Administration graduates were as professionals or in the provision of professional service. On the other hand, one (1) answered that his occupation relates to farming and fishery.

With the implementation of the K+12 Enhanced Basic Education System and an additional two (2) years at the senior high school level, there had been an increased hiring and demand for teachers in the Accounting, Business, and Management (ABM) Strand. So, a good number of those who already had a bachelor's degree in business, management, accounting, finance, and related fields took a Diploma in Professional Education (DPE) or a Certificate in Professional Education (CPE) and took the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET). Once they obtained the license, they applied as a public senior high school teacher. Since they already have a professional license, their work relates to providing professional services as teachers.

On the other hand, working in the farming and fishing sector is not a joint occupation of a degree holder in the business discipline. So, finding a graduate with an MBA to concentrate in this sector or industry is rare.

In addition, sixty(60) respondents, comprising 22.60%, were working in the academe or education sector. These respondents were the faculty members teaching accounting, management, finance, entrepreneurship, marketing, and other business-related subjects or courses. The undergraduate degrees of these respondents are in accounting, business administration, hotel and restaurant management, and tourism since there is already a policy on vertical alignment between the undergraduate course and the master's degree for teachers in higher education institutions (HEIs).

Universities have taken different approaches to developing graduate employability skills. The significant output of an educational institution is its graduates. They can measure efficiency, but the score is on their employability and inclusion in the workforce. The number of graduates and employment must be directly proportionate. However, the fewer the number of employers, the more challenging the competition among graduates (Macatangay, 2013).

Place of Work and Gross Monthly Earning in the First Job

This section exhibits the data on the place of work of the graduates and their gross monthly earnings in their first job.

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Place of Work		
Local	265	100.0%
Gross Monthly earning (1st Job)		
Below Php 5,000.00	13	4.44
Php 5,000.00 - below Php 10,000.00	123	41.98
Php 10,000.00 - below Php 15,000.00	95	32.42
Php 15,000.00 - below Php 20,000.00	33	11.26
Php 20,000.00 - below Php 25,000.00	8	2.73
Php 25,000.00 and above	9	3.07
Did not provide an answer	12	4.10

The data in Table 6 reveals that all of the two hundred sixty-five (265) respondents worked in the Philippines or locally. Further, one hundred twenty-three (123), comprising 41.98 %, earned within Php 5,000.00 and below Php 10,000.00. This income level could be considered low against the current living standards in Cebu

City since it is even below the minimum income level of Php10,000.00 per month for 26 working days a month. According to the Philippine Statistics Authority [PSA], those earning between Php7,890.00 and Php 15,780.00 per month are low-income but not poor (Albert et al., 2015).

On the other hand, eight (8) earned between Php 20,000.00 and below Php 25,000.00, while another nine (9) respondents reported earning Php 25,000.00 and above. This income level was for those in the lower middle-income group.

Albert et al. (2015) further explained that those earning between Php 15 780.00 and Php31,560.00 were considered lower middle-income earners based on the 2012 Family Income and Expenditure Survey (FIES) and Philippine Statistics Authority calculations.

Reasons of the Graduates for Staying in their Job

This section shows the data about the reasons why graduates stay in their present jobs. The data in Table 7 shows that the primary reasons the respondents stayed in their jobs were salary and benefits. These respondents received a salary level that was above the industry rate and the minimum wage rate. Ideally, suppose the employees perceive that their salary and benefits are commensurate with their competencies, skills, and abilities. In that case, they have a lesser propensity to resign and look for another job or employer.

Table 7. Reasons for Staying in the Job

Indicators	Frequency	Rank
Salary and benefits	65	1
Career challenge	60	2
Related to special skills	42	4
Related to course or program of study	51	3
Proximity to residence	26	5
Peer Influence	7	7
Family Influence	13	6

On the contrary, seven (7) respondents disclosed that their reason for remaining in the job or employer was peer influence. However, it is so uncommon for employees to be loyal to the company since it is a natural human behavior that if a person is confronted with better opportunities to earn more income, benefits, and working conditions, then the person would grab such a chance for the so-called “greener pastures.”

This grouping that the employees form forges bondage and connection that is beyond the performance of their job, yet it will give happiness and social support to each one of the employees whenever one experiences family and work-related problems.

Relatedness of the Job to the College Course and Reasons for Accepting the Job

This section presents the data on whether the college course of the respondents relates to their job and the reasons for accepting the job.

Table 8. Relatedness of the Job to the College Course and Reasons for Accepting the Job (n=293)

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Relatedness of the First Job to the College Course		
Yes	84	28.70
No	38	13.00
Did not Indicate	171	58.40
Reasons for accepting the job		
Salaries & benefits	49	2
Career Challenge	58	1
Related to special skills	44	3
Proximity to residence	21	4

**multiple response*

The data in Table 8 shows that out of the two hundred ninety-three (293) employees, eighty-two (84), or equivalent to 28.70 %, answered that their undergraduate course relates to their first job. In contrast, thirty-eight (38) respondents answered that their course is unrelated to the first job.

These employees work outside the business sector, wherein the competencies taught in school did not apply to their job performance. However, there were one hundred seven-one (171) respondents who did not provide any answer or information about the course's relatedness to their job.

Vertical mismatch of education (mismatch of level of education and job) is not the only form of educational mismatch. Another essential mismatch is horizontal (i.e., a mismatch of the field of study and job). Paying attention to the field of study is essential because it allows for analyzing different skills; education provides not only general human capital but also particular fields of study provide occupationally specific skills for the job market (Robst, 2007; Van de Werfhorst, 2002).

Further, the data reveals the reasons for accepting the job. The primary reason why the respondents accepted the job was for career challenges. The new graduates or the younger working force are commonly very aggressive in taking on challenging jobs since these people are very willing to learn new things.

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

Additionally, twenty-one (21) respondents considered more on the proximity of the place of work to their residence. Accessibility of the location of the employer from the place of residence of the employee is understandably a valid reason for accepting the job, especially if the pay or salary is within the minimum wage level or little way above. The employee can save transportation costs and traveling time to work every day. Another consideration is the worsening traffic congestion, especially in Cebu, due to the increasing population, number of vehicles, and business establishments. So, choosing to work for a company near the residence is an efficient way of thinking.

Reasons for Changing Job

This portion shows the reasons of the graduates in changing or finding another job and how long did they stay in their first job.

Table 9. Reasons for Changing Job

Indicators	Frequency	Rank
Reason(s) for Changing Job		
Salaries & benefits	155	2
Career challenge	171	1
Related to special skills	51	3
Proximity to residence	47	4
<i>* multiple response</i>		
Length of time in staying in the first job		
	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1 to 1month	4	1.50
1 to 6 months	53	20.00
7 to 11 months	24	9.06
1 year to less than 2 years	59	22.26
2 years to less than 3 years	47	17.76
3 years to less than 4 years	41	15.47
Did not indicate	37	13.96

The data in Table 9 reveals that career challenge was the primary reason they changed jobs or transferred to another employee. Usually, those employees who are younger and single are those who have a high probability of hopping from one job to the other in their quest for higher salaries, better benefits, and good working conditions. Aside from that, they are also at the stage where they look for more challenges to learn those skills and aspects they were able to learn in school. The current workforce tends to be more adventurous before they settle for a job after many years of changing from one employer to another.

Nonetheless, the less common reason for changing jobs was the workplace proximity to the workers' residence. Ideally, when the employee can find a job nearer to his/her place of residence, then he/she has more inclination to resign and move to another company or employer where the fare and transit time would be less.

Regarding the time the respondents stayed in the first job, more stayed for one year and less than two (2) years. This length of service is relatively short. This means that the employees only stayed for more than six (6) months after their regularization since the probationary period in the Philippines, as stipulated in the Labor Code, is six (6) months. However, an employer cannot stop an employee from resigning and transferring to another job as long as the employee abides by the 30-day notice and other law provisions.

Strategies Used to Find the First Job and Length of Time in Finding the First Job

Further data about the strategies utilized by the graduates in finding their first job and the length of time after graduation in which they could find their first job. The data are presented in Table 10.

The data shows that out of the two hundred ninety-three (293) respondents, ninety-three (93), or 31.70 %, could find a job as a walk-in applicant to the company or business enterprises. In comparison, another ninety-three (93), or equivalent to 31.70 %, were able to land a job through a recommendation by someone. This data indicates that a business course graduate can find a job by directly applying to the company since there are different positions he/she can fill. These courses encompass various disciplines in business, management, accounting, and other related fields of work. Another effective means of finding a job is through recommendation by a friend, since most, if not all, employers would ask for applicants through endorsement from somebody they know who is reliable, of known probity, and integrity.

Table 10. Strategies Used to Find the First Job and Length of Time in Finding the First Job (n=293)

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strategies Used to Find the First Job		
Advertisement	54	18.40
As walk-in Applicant	93	31.70
Someone Recommended	93	31.70
Information from friends	25	8.50
School Job Fair	11	3.80
Family Business	6	2.00
PESO (Public Employment Service Office)	8	2.70
Others	3	1.00
Length of Time to Land the First Job		
Less than a month	153	52.20
1 to 6 months	100	34.10
7 to 11 months	5	1.70
1 year to less than 2 years	10	3.40
2 years less than 3 years	3	1.00
3 years less than 4 years	2	0.70
Did not indicate	20	6.80

The purpose of any educational institution is to provide quality human resources that are acceptable to employers and society (Natarajan & Kumar, 2004; Orence & Laguador, 2013).

Some graduates were able to work in the family business. This means their employer is related to them through consanguinity or affinity. In the current scenario, the employer could be their parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunties, cousins, or other distant relatives. In this arrangement, they are already given higher management responsibility in managing the financial and human resources in the organization since they are already trusted employees.

Further, the majority, or 52.20 %, of the employees could find a job in less than a month, while only two (2) graduates landed a job in three (3) years or less than four years. This means that the graduates of any business-related degree are highly employable in various business activities, in the academe, and in other business enterprises, so it would be easy for them to be employed. However, it is pretty intriguing why a few took three years to work for the first time after graduating college. These graduates choose voluntary employment, or they do not intend to find a job for various reasons.

Job Level Position

This part reveals the data on the job level position of the graduates in the first job and those who had finished the Master in Business Administration [MBA] degree.

Table 11. Job Level Position (n=293)

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Job Level Position in the First Job		
Rank or clerical	192	65.5%
Professional, technical or Supervisory	72	24.6%
Managerial or Executive	9	3.1%
Proprietor	1	0.3%
Did not indicate	19	6.5%
Job Level Position in the Current or Present Job		
Rank or Clerical	79	29.8%
Professional, Technical or Supervisory	132	49.8%
Managerial or executive	45	17.0%
Self-employed	9	3.4%

The data in Table 11 shows that out of all the respondents in this survey, 65.50 % (192 respondents) were able to work as rank-and-file employees, wherein the nature of their job was more clerical. It is widespread that before an employee rises to higher ranks or positions in the organization, he or she will experience the lower level job position so that he or she will be able to learn different types of jobs before being given any supervisory or managerial position.

There was one (1) respondent who was the proprietor of his or her own business. A proprietor is an entrepreneur who owns and manages a single or sole proprietorship business. This means that he or she changes all aspects of the enterprise's business operations.

Furthermore, there were one hundred thirty-two (132) whose current job relates to professional, technical, or supervisor level. This means that more MBA graduates were already in higher job positions. This result indicates that the respondents were able to attain their purpose of pursuing graduate studies, which is for career advancement and passion for the profession, and also attained high status or prestige.

It can be noted that there were nine (9), or 3.40 %, who were already self-employed. So, the data denotes that after taking graduate studies, additional respondents ventured into business.

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. Formal education is one component of human capital that may assist in accumulating explicit knowledge that may provide practical skills to graduates (Sorenson, 2015).

Gross Monthly Earnings

This part exposes the gross monthly earnings in the graduate's first job after graduation and in their current job. Table 12 shows that one hundred twenty-three (123), equivalent to 42.00%, earned a salary of P 5,000 to less than 10,000 during their first job.

Table 12. Respondents' Gross Monthly Earnings

Income Range	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Initial Gross Monthly Earning in the First Job After College (n=293)		
Below 5, 000.00	13	4.40
Php 5,000.00 to less than Php10,000.00	123	42.00
Php 10,000.00 to less than Php15,000.00	95	32.40
Php 15,000.00 to less than Php 20,000.00	33	11.30
Php 20,000.00 to less than Php 25,000.00	8	2.70
Php 25, 000.00 and above	9	3.10
Did not indicate the answer	12	4.10

Gross Monthly Earnings in the Current Job (n=265)

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Below 5, 000	1	0.40
P5,000.00 to less than P10,000.00	12	4.50
P10,000.00 to less than P15,000.00	62	23.40
P15,000.00 to less than P20,000.00	64	24.20
P20,000.00 to less than P25,000.00	51	19.20
P25, 000.00 and above	75	28.30

It is understood that a new graduate will be employed as a rank-and-file and earned within the minimum wage level. However, nine (9) received a monthly salary of Php 25,000.00 and above.

In the current job of the graduates, there were seventy-five (75), comprising 28.30 %, who earned Php 25,000.00 and above, while only one (1) earned below Php 5,000.00. This data clearly shows that having an MBA degree can be a vehicle in uplifting one's job position as well as one's income or income level.

Bueno (2017) disclosed that graduates of various graduate school programs were employed regularly or permanently. They now occupy supervisory and managerial positions and are highly satisfied with their basic salary. Likewise, the value of education is commonly measured in terms of its ability to improve economic growth or the earnings of individuals (Akkoyunlu–Wigley & SimonWigley, 2008).

Relevance of the Curriculum in College to the First Job and Competencies Learned

This part exhibits the findings on the relevance of the respondents' college curriculum towards their first job and the competencies that they learned in college that they found helpful in their first job.

Table 13.1 Relevance of the Curriculum in College to the Job and Competencies Learned

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Relevance of the Curriculum to the First Job		
Yes	225	76.80
No	57	19.50
Did not indicate answer	11	3.80
Competencies Learned in that are Useful in the First Job		
Communication Skills	218	1
Human Relations Skills	201	2
Entrepreneurial Skills	102	6
Information Technology Skills	112	5
Problem Solving Skills	181	4
Critical Thinking Skills	182	3

- *multiple response*

Table 13.1 displays the data that the majority (225 respondents), or equivalent 76.80%, answered that the undergraduate degree of the respondents was relevant to their first job. This means that their learning in the subjects they enrolled in college was helpful in their performance in their job or assigned.

However, fifty-seven (57), or 19.50 %, responded that their college curriculum was related to their job. Understandably, these respondents were those whose jobs were unrelated to the business. They cannot say that what they had learned in college was directly helpful in the performance of their first job.

Communication skills were foremost in terms of the competencies they learned in college, while entrepreneurial skills were the least. In the business arena, communication skills are beneficial for landing a job since it entails an employee conversing with the customers/clients and their co-employees. So, those graduates with communication skills would likely be hired during the interview process. On the other hand, entrepreneurial ability cannot be expected from a fresh graduate unless they are already exposed to the business world through family business or in a job while still studying.

While there are variations in the classification of employability, there is a broad understanding of what qualities, characteristics, skills, and knowledge constitute employability, both in general and specifically for graduates. Employers expect graduates to have technical and discipline competencies from their degrees but require them to 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

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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).

Relevance of the MBA Curriculum and the Current Job and Competencies Learned

This section presents the data about the relevance of the Master in Business Administration [MBA] curriculum to the graduates' current job and the competencies they learned.

Table 13.2. Relevance of the MBA Curriculum to the Job and Competencies Learned

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage (%)	*
Relevance of the MBA Curriculum to the First Job			<i>multiple</i>
Yes	254	95.80	<i>response</i>
No	11	4.20	
Competencies Learned in the Graduate School that are Useful in your Current Job			T
	Frequency	Rank	able
Communication Skill	220	2	13.2
Human Relations Skill	224	1	shows
Entrepreneurial Skill	151	5	that
Information Technology Skills	110	6	the
Problem Solving	209	3	majorit
Critical Thinking Skill	209	3	y,
Others	2	7	compri

95.80 % of the respondents, considered that the Master in Business Administration curriculum was relevant to their current job. This means that their learning in the different courses they took in graduate school was relevant in their present job. There were only (11) respondents who disclosed that there was no relevance of the MBA curriculum to their job.

A worker's productivity is influenced by the skills of their coworkers, where such skills arise from an ability-augmenting investment that is made prior to matching with coworkers. Workers' credentials allow them to demonstrate their investment in the labor market, allowing workers to match with high-skill coworkers in equilibrium. Despite the positive externality associated with a worker's investment, it shows how over-investment is pervasive in equilibrium (Bidner, 2010).

Promotion After Finishing the Graduate School Degree

This section further shows the data on whether the graduate-respondents were promoted after they finish the Master in Business Administration degree.

Table 14. Promotion After Finishing Master in Business Administration (n=293)

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No	69	23.50
Yes	145	49.50
Did not indicate an answer	79	27.00

Those who had finished graduate degrees were not promoted to a higher job position. On the other hand, sixty-nine (69) or 23.50% answered that they were not promoted to a higher position after finishing the Master in Business Administration degree. Further, there were seventy-nine (79), or 27.00 %, who did not answer whether they get promoted once they obtain the master's degree.

The Weberian theory of educational credentialism views competition for credentials as a primary determinant of modern stratification systems. The key issues that are elaborated include the relationship of educational expansion to economic growth, the relative importance of technical skills versus occupational status-group culture in degrees and recruitment, the significance of the formalization of degrees, and the peculiar dynamics of bureaucratic and professional credential markets (Brown, 2001).

VI. CONCLUSIONS

The graduates of the Master in Business Administration (MBA) of the University of Cebu Graduate School are employable in various fields of business, including education. Since career advancement was the reason for taking advanced or further studies in business, expectedly, there are manifestations of career progression after the students obtained the graduate degree in terms of position and salary level, as well as benefits. Further, the MBA curriculum offers courses or subjects relevant to the graduates' job performance. It leads them to attain promotion, coupled with advanced competencies in communications skills, human relations skills, problem-solving, and critical thinking ability. So, there is a need to undertake intervention schemes to reinforce the enhancement of the students to acquire and develop in various areas of business and industry.

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