

# Professional Career Aspirations and Enrollment Intentions Toward a Doctor of Business Administration Program

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## Abstract

This study was conducted to determine the professional career aspirations and enrollment intentions of individuals toward a Doctor of Business Administration (DBA). It specifically explored the demographic profile of respondents, reasons for enrolling, and the factors they consider when choosing a school. The study was conducted in SOCCSKSARGEN Philippines to assess the demand for advanced business expertise in the region. A quantitative-descriptive research design was employed. The study surveyed 139 respondents, consisting of MBA students and graduates. Data were analyzed using frequency, percentage, and mean. The majority of these professionals are female, single, and currently employed, largely in the government sector. Professional enhancement and career advancement were the primary drivers for pursuing a DBA. When choosing schools, tuition costs, and the mode of instruction were considered as critical factors, while nearness of location was perceived to be the most critical factor. The majority of the respondents expressed high to very high intention to enroll. Thus, indicating a strong market potential. The significant interest in the DBA program is driven by work-related goals and practical feasibility. Hence, in order to tap this market, higher educational institutions (HEIs) may design flexible, affordable programs that align with the needs of working professionals.

**Keywords:** Professional career aspiration, enrollment intention, Doctor in Business Administration, Graduate School, SOCCSKSARGEN

## 1. Introduction

The business environment is rapidly evolving and is influenced by various factors that shape the way organizations operate. Technological advancements have transformed business operations, communication, and customer expectations. Globalization has expanded markets and increased competition on a global scale. Consumer preferences and expectations vary as they are more informed, empowered, and socially conscious. Increasing awareness of environmental issues and sustainability has compelled businesses to incorporate environmentally friendly practices into their operations. Hence, with the fast-changing business landscape, the demand for highly skilled and knowledgeable business professionals with advanced expertise in business administration has become increasingly important. As the business environment continues to change, it is essential to provide aspiring individuals and business practitioners with a platform to further enhance their business proficiency. It is on this premise

that the study on “Professional Career Aspirations and Enrollment Intentions Toward a Doctor in Business Administration Program” was conducted. The Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) is an advanced postgraduate research degree that emphasizes professional business practice. It builds on the existing strengths of the students and provides them with the opportunity to develop research skills, enhance their understanding of contemporary business theories and gain a competitive advantage in business by conducting in-depth research in their chosen discipline. In general, the program aims to offer a transformative educational experience to individuals by providing them with the advanced knowledge and skills necessary for them to take on the challenges of the modern business world. Studies show that a DBA degree holds significant value in the business landscape. Lepak and Snell (2019) argue that strategic human resource management which is a critical component of the DBA curriculum is crucial for driving organizational performance and success. Furthermore, the strategic management concepts covered in a DBA program are essential for organizations to achieve and sustain a competitive advantage (Hitt, et al, 2020).

In the Philippines, there is a growing emphasis on advanced education and research as evidenced by the growth in the higher education sector (Bayudan-Dacuycuy, Orbeta, & Ortiz, 2023). In January 2018, the Philippine Qualifications Framework (PQF) was institutionalized through Republic Act 10968. One of its objectives is for the Philippines to adopt national standards and levels of learning outcomes. The PQF has eight levels, wherein doctoral degrees and post-doctoral programs are considered as the highest level. Individuals who are at this level are expected to "demonstrate highly advanced and systematic knowledge and skills in highly specialized and/or complex multi-disciplinary field of learning for complex research and/or professional practice and/or for the advancement of learning” (Philippines qualifications framework, n.d.).

In South Cotabato, Philippines- where many professionals balance full-time roles in government, education, SMEs, and larger enterprises, the offering of a local DBA program creates a timely opportunity to pursue advanced study without relocating, but also raises questions about what drives or constrains enrollment decisions in a provincial context. Specifically, this study determined the demographic profile of the respondents, their reasons for enrolling in DBA, the important factors in choosing school that offers DBA program and the enrollment intention of the respondents in taking the DBA program.

Specifically, it sought to do the following:

1. Describe the demographic profile and employment profile of the respondents.
2. Determine the reasons for enrolling in the DBA program.
3. Determine the importance of location, cost of tuition and other school fees, mode of delivery of instruction, faculty, and facilities in choosing a school that offers a DBA program.
4. Determine the level of enrollment intention of the respondents in taking DBA program.

This study is beneficial to colleges and universities. The study can bring academic distinct value to schools and universities planning to offer the program. The program can enhance the institutions’ academic profile and attract top-tier faculty and students seeking a vibrant intellectual environment. Furthermore, the DBA program can help develop professionals who are well-equipped to tackle contemporary business issues. The program’s interdisciplinary approach enables students to gain expertise in areas such as strategic management, innovation, and global business. Moreover, through applied research and real-world case studies, students can explore and contribute practical insights to address pressing business challenges.

## 2. Methodology

The study on Professional Career Aspirations and Enrollment Intentions Toward a Doctor in Business Administration Program is a quantitative research. It employed a descriptive-correlational research design. Cooper and Schindler (2008) explained a descriptive research design as a research framework that aims to describe the characteristics of the chosen population in terms of who, what, when, where and how. As a result, the proportion of the population having the same characteristics and associations among variables can be discovered. The study is descriptive because it describes the demographic profile of the respondents, their reasons for enrolling in a DBA, factors in choosing a school that offers a DBA program and the priority in taking the DBA program.

The study was conducted in the SOCCSKSARGEN region. SOCCSKSARGEN is composed of the provinces of South Cotabato, Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, and Sarangani and one highly urbanized city, General Santos. SOCCSKSARGEN is a home to various tertiary schools that offer a Master's in Business Administration. Graduates of those universities and colleges may want to pursue their postgraduate degree in the university.

Also, SOCCSKSARGEN serves as a hub for trade and commerce in South Central Mindanao. The region's strategic location, well-developed infrastructure, and connectivity through seaports and airports facilitate trade and investment. Hence, business practitioners (business owners, managers and supervisors of companies) who are MBA graduates or MBA students in the area may opt to enroll in the program.

The target respondents of the study were the (1) MBA graduates and (2) MBA students currently residing in SOCCSKSARGEN. They were identified as respondents because they are those likely to enroll and pursue higher education. The study used Cochran's Formula in computing the sample size of the respondents. Cochran's formula is usually used if the population of the respondents is unknown. With Cochran's formula, the target sample size of the study was 384. However, a low response rate was observed during the data gathering despite employing both online and printed survey questionnaires. The final response rate was 36%, or 139 respondents out of 384 targeted respondents. Since the study is purely descriptive, the 139 responses are acceptable. The respondents were selected using a Purposive Sampling Technique. The purposive sampling technique is a non-probabilistic technique used in selecting individuals or cases for a sample based on specific characteristics or criteria that align with the research objectives. The criteria for the qualified respondents of this feasibility study were (1) graduates of a Master's in Business Administration and (2) those currently studying for a Master's in Business Administration.

Frequency and percentage were used to analyze the demographic profile of the respondents, the reasons for enrolling in the DBA program in the future, and the enrollment intention of the respondents in taking the DBA program. On the other hand, the mean was used to determine the important factors considered by respondents in choosing a school that offers a DBA program. The following verbal interpretations were used to describe the mean ranges.

**Table 1: Mean Range and Verbal Interpretation for factors in choosing school that offers DBA program**

Mean Range	Verbal Interpretation
4.50-5.00	This factor is very important in choosing a school that offers a DBA program.
3.50-4.49	This factor is important in choosing a school that offers a DBA program.
2.50-3.49	This factor is less important in choosing a school that offers a DBA program.

<b>1.50-2.49</b>	This factor is of lesser importance in choosing a school that offers a DBA program.
<b>1.00-1.49</b>	This factor is not important in choosing a school that offers a DBA program.

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### Demographic Profile of Employers

There are more female respondents than male. In the United States of America, 58% of first-time graduate students were women, however, in terms of fields of study, men constitute more than half of first-time graduate enrollment in business (Lanier et al., 2024). This is despite females having outnumbered males in the majority of states in the US in 2020 (US population by gender 2027, 2022).

In the Philippines, 50% of the population is male (Age and Sex Distribution in the Philippine Population (2020 Census of Population and Housing), 2022). The data implies that the male population dominates postgraduate enrollment in business. However, it was observed that there has been a 93.1% increase in female students earning doctorate degrees from 2001-2020 ("Doctorate recipients from U.S. universities: 2020 | NSF," n.d.). This supports the result of the survey that there are more female students pursuing postgraduate studies in Region 12.

In terms of civil status, more than half of the respondents are single, closely followed by those who are married. Price, J. (2006) studied the graduate student outcomes such as graduation rate, time to degree, publication success, and initial job placement, and found out that married males and females have better outcomes across every measure than single students. On the other hand, cultural context significantly influences the graduate student outcomes in some countries wherein married women have trouble juggling graduate school studies and their traditional gender roles (EL IDRISSEI et al., 2024).

Eight-five percent (85%) of the respondents are holders of a Master in Business Administration degree, followed by those who are still earning their MBA degree (29.50%). While a little over 9% are doctorate degree holders or are earning units.

**Table 2: Sex, civil status, and highest educational attainment of the respondents**

<b>Sex</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Female</b>	85	61.2
<b>Male</b>	54	38.8
<b>Total</b>	139	100
<b>Civil Status</b>		
<b>Single</b>	81	58.3
<b>Married</b>	57	41
<b>Separated</b>	1	0.7
<b>Total</b>	139	100
<b>Highest Educational Attainment</b>		
<b>MBA graduate</b>	85	61.2
<b>MBA with units only</b>	41	29.5
<b>Doctorate with units only</b>	11	7.9
<b>Doctorate degree</b>	2	1.4
<b>Total</b>	139	100

**Present Employment Profile**

The majority of the respondents (93.50%) are employed with 53.80% in the government sector while the rest are in the private sector. In the academic year 2022-2023, there were 97 HEIs (2023 Higher Education Facts and Figures, 2023), and 143,109 SHS students last 2019 ("Number of Enrollment in All Sector Senior High School," n.d.) in Region 12. This led to an increase in the demand for college and SHS faculty members, requiring them to complete their master’s degrees, thereby also increasing the demand for master's degree programs.

**Table 3: Employment Status, Sector of Employment, and Position Held by the Respondents**

<b>Employment Status</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Employed</b>	130	93.5
<b>Self-employed</b>	8	5.8
<b>Not employed</b>	1	0.7
<b>Total</b>	139	100
<b>Sector</b>		
<b>Government</b>	70	53.8
<b>Private</b>	60	46.2
<b>Total</b>	130	100
<b>Position</b>		
<b>Rank and file</b>	80	62
<b>Supervisor</b>	31	24
<b>Manager</b>	18	14
<b>Total</b>	129	100

The majority of the respondents (62%) hold a rank-and-file positions, while 24% are in a supervisory positions, and 14% are at the managerial level. In terms of the respondents’ average monthly earnings, the largest proportion falls within the Php 25,001–30,000 bracket (29 or 21.5%), followed closely by Php 20,001–25,000 (28 or 20.7%) and Php 45,000 and above (25 or 18.5%). A notable share also earns Php 30,001–35,000 (22 or 16.3%), indicating that most respondents belong to the lower-middle to middle-income range. Meanwhile, smaller proportions reported earnings of Php 15,000–20,000 (10.4%), Php 35,001–40,000 (8.9%), and Php 40,001–45,000 (2.2%), while only a few earn below Php 15,000 (1.5%).

**Table 4: Average Monthly Earning of Respondents**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Below Php 15,000</b>	2	1.5
<b>Php 15,000 - 20,000</b>	14	10.4
<b>Php 20,001 - 25,000</b>	28	20.7
<b>Php 25,001 - 30,000</b>	29	21.5
<b>Php 30,001 - 35,000</b>	22	16.3
<b>Php 35,001 - 40,000</b>	12	8.9
<b>Php 40,001 - 45,000</b>	3	2.2
<b>Php 45,000 above</b>	25	18.5

<b>Total</b>	135	100
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**Reasons to Pursue DBA**

Table 5 presents the respondents’ reasons for taking up a Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) program. The findings reveal that professional enhancement was the most frequently cited reason, with 71 respondents (51.1%), followed by career advancement with 47 respondents (33.8%). These results indicate that the majority of prospective DBA students are motivated by work-related goals, particularly improving professional competence, expanding managerial expertise, and strengthening their credibility in their respective fields. This pattern is consistent with research on business professional doctorates showing that participants are primarily driven by the desire to enhance leadership capabilities, develop applied research skills, and improve workplace performance (Grabowski & Miller, 2015).

A smaller proportion of respondents identified personal interest (17 or 12.2%) as their motivation, suggesting that intrinsic factors such as intellectual curiosity and lifelong learning also contribute to the decision to pursue doctoral education. Meanwhile, only a few respondents indicated job requirements (2 or 1.4%) as a reason, implying that enrollment is largely voluntary and aspiration-driven rather than mandated by employers. The minimal responses for “low interest” and “not interested” (0.7% each) further highlight the generally positive perception of DBA study among the sample. These findings align with the broader literature on doctoral motivation, which emphasizes that both intrinsic motivations (e.g., personal growth, intellectual fulfillment) and extrinsic motivations (e.g., promotion, professional recognition) shape participation in advanced professional degrees (Boud & Tennant, 2006).

**Table 5: Reasons of the respondents in taking up DBA**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Professional enhancement</b>	71	51.1
<b>Career advancement</b>	47	33.8
<b>Personal interest</b>	17	12.2
<b>Job requirement</b>	2	1.4
<b>Low interest</b>	1	0.7
<b>Not interested in pursuing this degree .</b>	1	0.7
<b>Total</b>	139	100.0

**Factors in Choosing School that Offers DBA Program**

The table indicates that respondents place the greatest emphasis on nearness of location (M = 4.518, very important), suggesting that accessibility is a primary consideration when selecting a school for DBA studies. This aligns with higher education choice literature showing that travel/geographical factors (including proximity) consistently influence institutional choice, particularly because they shape time demands and day-to-day feasibility for students (Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2015).

Next, the cost of tuition and other fees (M = 4.4388, important) and the mode of delivery (M = 4.3525, important) emerged as key considerations, reflecting the financial and scheduling realities of prospective doctoral students. Evidence from graduate management education indicates that for part-time candidates, program cost is a major barrier, while online and hybrid delivery and flexible pacing are strongly preferred because they help students manage competing responsibilities (Graduate Management Admission Council, 2024). Finally, respondents rated faculty (M = 4.3165) and facilities (M = 4.1007) as important—

findings that mirror established reviews highlighting institutional “quality” dimensions (such as teaching/academic quality and facilities) as recurring drivers of school choice (Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2015).

**Table 6. Important factors in choosing school that offers DBA program**

Factors	Mean	Interpretation
Location	4.52	This factor is very important in choosing a school that offers DBA program.
Cost of tuition fees and other school fees	4.44	This factor is important in choosing a school that offers DBA program.
Mode of delivery of instruction	4.35	This factor is important in choosing a school that offers DBA program.
Faculty	4.32	This factor is important in choosing a school that offers DBA program.
Facilities	4.10	This factor is important in choosing a school that offers DBA program.

**Level of Enrollment Intention to Pursue Doctor in Business Administration Degree**

Table 7 presents the distribution of respondents according to their level of enrollment intention toward the Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) program. Results show that the largest proportion of respondents (45 or 32.4%) demonstrated very high enrollment intention, followed by 39 respondents (28.1%) with high enrollment intention. This indicates that a substantial majority of the participants expressed strong interest in pursuing the DBA program. The combined percentage of very high and high intention (60.5%) suggests a favorable level of readiness and motivation among prospective students, implying that the proposed DBA offering has promising demand within the target population. This pattern is consistent with evidence that candidates in business-related professional doctorates are commonly motivated by career-related outcomes (e.g., advancement, expanded career options, and professional credibility) alongside intellectual challenge and applied research interests (Grabowski & Miller, 2015).

Meanwhile, 21 respondents (15%) reported a moderate enrollment intention, indicating a group that may still be undecided.

**Table 7. Extent of priority in taking up DBA degree**

	Frequency	Percent
<b>Very High Enrollment Intention</b>	45	32.4
<b>High Enrollment Intention</b>	39	28.1
<b>Moderate Enrollment Intention</b>	21	15
<b>Low Enrollment Intention</b>	19	13.7
<b>Very Low Enrollment Intention</b>	15	10.8
<b>Total</b>	139	100

**4. Conclusions and Recommendations**

**Conclusion**

The findings suggest a stronger representation of single women among the potential DBA applicants with substantial graduate preparation—primarily at the MBA level—indicating strong potential readiness and interest for DBA progression. Most respondents are actively engaged in the workforce employed in both

the government and private sectors with varying organizational roles. The majority of respondents have stable but moderate income levels, which may influence their capacity to finance graduate education. Professional and career-related aspirations are the dominant drivers of DBA enrollment interest, reinforcing the importance of positioning the program as a pathway for workplace impact, leadership development, and career progression. Prospective DBA students prioritize practical feasibility (location, affordability, flexibility) while still valuing academic resources and quality (faculty and facilities) when choosing a school.

Overall, the study suggests strong market potential for the DBA program.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the given suggestions and recommendations, higher educational institutions (HEIs) offering a DBA may design the program to match the career goals of professionals, offer flexible delivery modes, strengthen affordability and payment options, and ensure strong faculty and advising support. Additionally, employers and organizations may provide institutional support for employees pursuing a DBA and create research partnerships with the DBA program.

### **5. Acknowledgement**

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