

# Assessing the Employability of BS Accountancy Graduates of Notre Dame of Marbel University, South Cotabato, Philippines

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## Abstract

This study was conducted to determine the employment status, career preparation, and employability of Bachelor of Science in Accountancy graduates of Notre Dame of Marbel University from the school year 2013 to 2020. Specifically, the study aims to describe the demographic profile, employment profile, level of educational experience, and level of satisfaction of graduates. It also aims to determine the level of job preparation of graduates in terms of undergraduate preparation from NDMU, professional competencies perceived to be useful in the job, quality of learning gained from NDMU, and other support services from NDMU. A descriptive research design was utilized to explore the key variables of the study. The significant findings reveal that the majority of the graduates are relatively young, female, and single. The majority of them have passed the Licensure Examination for CPAs and only a few are Master's degree holders. Also, the majority of the graduates are currently employed and are currently hired as accountants in either a government or private organization with a regular or permanent status. The study further revealed that graduates have a very high level of preparation at NDMU in taking the CPA licensure examination and the skills and competencies necessary for their first job experience. Moreover, graduates perceived professional skills learned at NDMU to be extremely useful in their jobs. Graduates also rated the quality of learning gained at NDMU to be excellent as well as the other support services offered by NDMU as excellent. Overall, graduates are extremely satisfied with their academic experience and student life at NDMU and this indicates that the NDMU preparation significantly influences the graduates' employability. Recommendations to further improve the curriculum of the program include longer OJT hours to expose students to the actual work of the profession and integrate accounting software that is widely used by businesses as well as improving the support services of the university. Ensuring that the graduates are equipped with the comprehensive knowledge, essential skills, and a strong sense of self-efficacy required by industry demands can significantly increase graduates' chances of employability right after passing the board examination.

**Keywords:** accountancy tracer study, employability, work preparation, employment history, curriculum improvement

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Every academic institution aims to foster competent and highly qualified graduates who can excel in both local and global markets. Graduates are expected to practice their respective fields after graduation by

applying their learnings from their alma mater or to pursue post graduate courses to further their career. According to the Setzer (2024) in his article about the Carnegie Classification, the leading framework for higher institutions in the United States, higher education institutions (HEIs) vary widely in size and specialization but shares a common commitment of providing quality education fostering societal contributions. Graduates are being prepared to be equipped with the employment requirements of their respective industry. In the Philippines, there is a significant increase in the number of college graduates, yet the transition from education to employment remains a challenge. Student enrollment in higher education increased significantly from 2.9 million in 2017 to 4.1 million in 2022, with notable growth in baccalaureate programs and doctorate levels. CHED Chairperson Prospero de Vera attributes this rise to efforts in improving access to education and encouraging faculty to pursue doctoral degrees for higher academic quality (RG Cruz, ABS-CBN News, 2024). Based on the Philippine Statistics Authority, the increase of fresh graduates entering the labor force pushed the unemployment rate to 4.7% in July 2024, which lower than the 4.9% in July 2023. However, in the study of Tutor, M. V., Orbeta, Aniceto C., Jr, & Miraflor, J. M. B. (2021), despite having a gross enrollment rate of 33% in the Philippines in 2018, 23% of the population aged 15-30 years who are at least college graduates were still unemployed. Thus, the rising number of college graduates faces a critical challenge, as a significant portion lacks the essential competencies needed for a smooth transition into the labor market resulting to unemployment (Othman et al., 2022).

The Bachelor of Science in Accountancy is an undergraduate degree program that aims to produce competent and ethical professional accountants equipped with knowledge, skills, values, ethics, and attitude capable of learning and adapting to the demands of the accountancy profession (CHED CMO No. 27 series of 2017). The accounting profession is committed to protecting the public interest, extending beyond serving individual clients or businesses. Educational institutions plays a crucial role in shaping young minds into responsible professionals who uphold this duty. However in a study conducted by Cammayo and Gonzales (2023), there is around 5.7% of accountancy graduates available for work that is unemployed, and 15.8% of people who are employed are underemployed despite the demand for this in the market. According to a 2012 survey by the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), 36% of firms reported that the primary challenge in filling job vacancies was the lack of relevant skills or a skills mismatch among applicants. This highlights the need for educational institutions to go beyond merely preparing students for the board exam but also focus on developing essential competencies and skills that enhance employability. Accounting graduates, therefore, need a combination of technical and soft skills, including information technology proficiency, interpersonal and personal skills (Ismail et al., 2020), communication, emotional stability, and analytical abilities (Ebaid, 2021), teamwork (Ghani et al., 2018), as well as critical thinking and time management skills (Lim, Lee, Yap, & Ling, 2016), as these competencies are highly valued by employers. In addition to skills mismatch and specific skills' considerations of employees in their hiring process, other barriers to employment include an oversupply of graduates in certain fields or limited job opportunities in their area of specialization, low entry-level wages, insufficient competencies and skills among college graduates, and a lack of awareness about available job opportunities (Orbeta, Gonzales, & Francesca, 2016).

Notre Dame of Marbel University has long been delivering quality education for 75 years in the vast island of Mindanao, and one of the premiere universities in Region 12. Over the decades, it has produced thousands of graduates who have contributed to both local and international industries. Committed to excellence, the university strives to develop graduates who are competent, culturally aware, and of strong

character. To achieve this, it continuously enhances its strategies to adapt to evolving industry demands and labor market trends. It has three departments, namely: Accountancy Department, Business Administration Department, and Hospitality Management Department. The Accountancy program offers two courses: BS in Accountancy and BS in Management Accounting. The BS in Accountancy program is PAASCU Level III accredited. Aligned with the standards set by the Commission on Higher Education, the NDMU Accountancy program is committed to providing quality education that equips aspiring accountants with the skills to contribute meaningfully to the profession and society while preparing them to pass the Certified Public Accountant Licensure Examination and pursue diverse career opportunities. This is evident in NDMU's status as the leading provider of accounting graduates in Region 12, as demonstrated by its CPALE results over the past five years, consistently surpassing the national passing rate. To ensure the quality graduates, the program must implement strategies that equip graduates with the essential skills and competencies required in their field. A key step in developing these strategies is assessing graduates' college experiences and early employment outcomes, which can be effectively achieved through a graduate tracer study (GTS). A graduate tracer study (GTS) can explain the relationship between college experience and labor market outcomes (Tutor, M. V., Orbeta, Aniceto C., Jr., & Miraflor, J. M. B., 2021). This is essential in identifying and assessing how effectively their training and experience at NDMU prepared them for the board examination, their careers, the extent of their competency development, as well as their current employment status.

The role of a graduate tracer study in the improvement of the Accountancy program has been widely presented in various studies conducted in the Philippines. It has been conducted by several educational institutions for years and the information obtained from the surveys is useful for the development and improvement of the curriculum. The study of Mendoza and Tuble (2013) found that the respondents were satisfied with the Accountancy program of the school and that the training were useful in their field of work. Moreover, the study of Marilao (2016) showed the strengths of the Accountancy program of the school and possible areas for improvement. Another study by Albrando et al. (2016) noted that the undergraduate review for graduating students greatly helps students to better prepare for the board examination. These studies show how tracer studies help in the assessment of the effectiveness of accountancy programs, guiding curriculum enhancements, and ensuring that graduates are well-equipped for professional success.

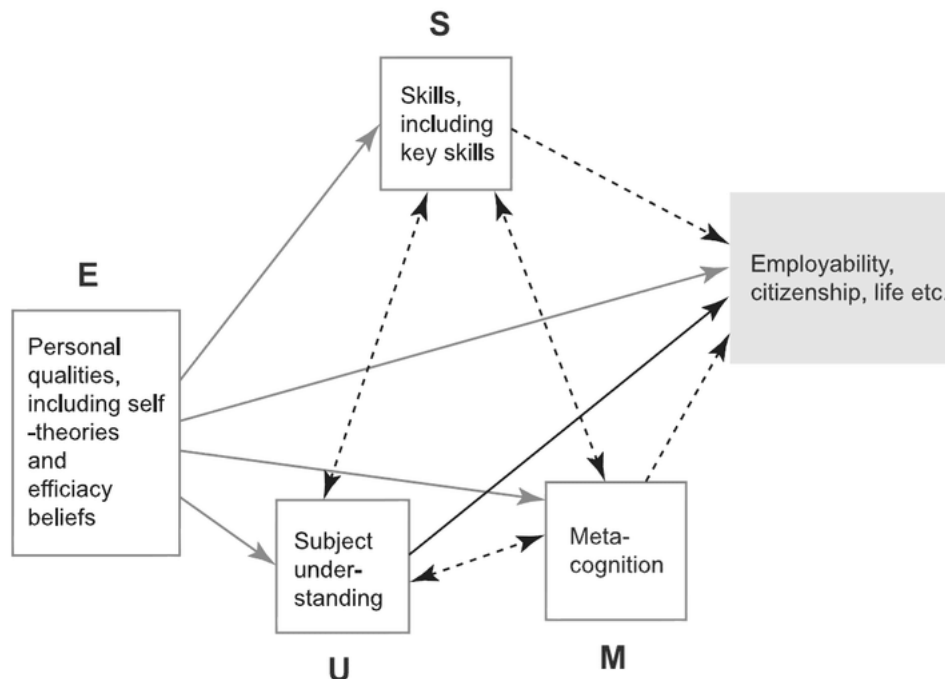
This study covered the graduates of the Accountancy Program from the school year 2013 to 2020 and to determine their demographic and employment profile, their motivations in taking BSA as a course, their level of educational experience as measured by undergraduate preparation, professional competencies, quality of learning, and other support services. Moreover, this study will determine their level of satisfaction in terms of their academic experience and student life. Lastly, it will determine their suggestions and recommendations as to how the current program can be improved in terms of curriculum and skills training. The tracer study is not only to determine the graduates' current work affiliations but more importantly to establish the adequacy and efficiency of the current training provided by the program in terms of the graduate's career life and employment status. The results of the study can serve as a feedback mechanism for the evaluation and improvement of the NDMU Accountancy program.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The USEM framework by Yorke and Knight (2006) highlights that employability is influenced by four interrelated components: understanding, skills, efficacy beliefs, and metacognition as shown in Figure 1.

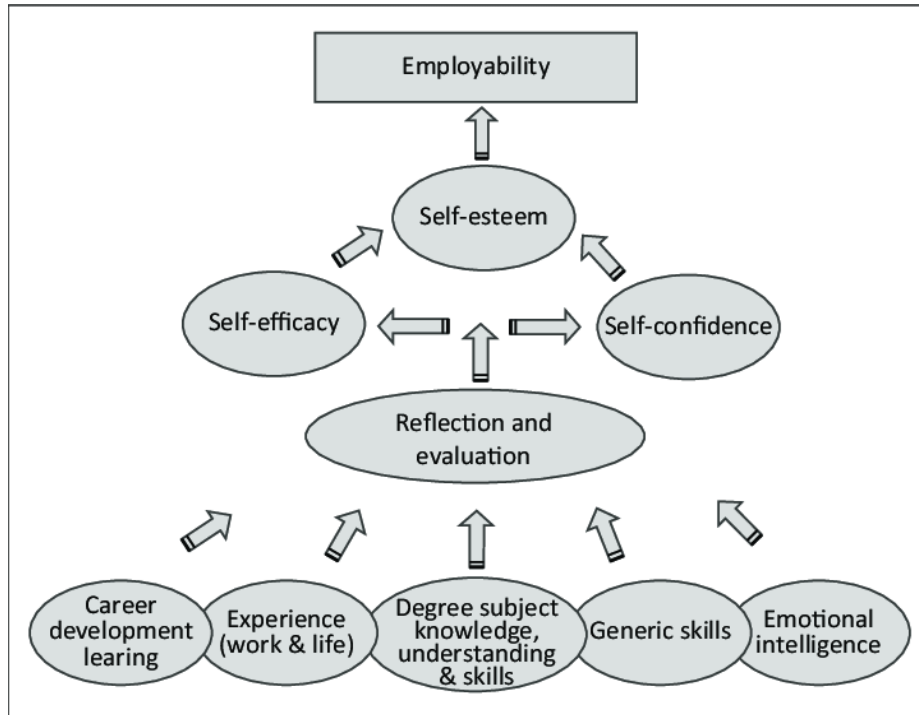
Understanding serves as the foundation, equating to the knowledge gained in higher education, which equips graduates with the theories and principles essential to their profession. This theory explains how the development of skills, both technical and transferable, enables individuals to perform tasks effectively. Furthermore, the ability to apply these learned skills depends on one’s efficacy beliefs of confidence in their capabilities which drive the performance and decision making. Metacognition enhances this integration by fostering self-reflection and adaptability, allowing graduates to continually evaluate and refine their knowledge and skills. These four interrelated components prepare graduates, not only for immediate professional demands but also for sustained growth and adaptability in their careers.

**Figure 1. The USEM Account of Employability**



Another theory which grounds on employability is the CareerEDGE model by Pool and Sewell (2007) which identifies the key components that enhance graduate readiness for the workforce. These components include: Career Development Learning, Experience (Work and Life), Degree Subject Knowledge, Skills and Understanding, Generic Skills, and Emotional Intelligence. At the core of the model lies Reflection and Evaluation, encouraging graduates to integrate and assess their learning experiences. Career development learning helps individuals explore career opportunities and navigate pathways, while work and life experiences provide practical contexts for applying academic knowledge. Degree subject knowledge, skills, and understanding form the technical foundation, complemented by generic skills like communication and problem-solving. Meanwhile, emotional intelligence fosters self-awareness and interpersonal effectiveness, critical in professional settings. Together, these elements contribute to a graduate's sense of self-efficacy, self-confidence, and self-esteem, which, in turn, enhance their employability and career success. The CareerEDGE model underscores the importance of holistic development in preparing graduates for dynamic and evolving career landscapes.

**Figure 2. The CareerEDGE Model**



These two models served as the basis for the development of the conceptual framework used in assessing the employability of the BS Accountancy graduates from Notre Dame of Marbel University. The USEM model emphasizes four key components; understanding, skills, efficacy beliefs, and metacognition, which collectively influence a graduate’s ability to secure employment as well as to sustain and grow their careers. On the other hand, the CareerEDGE model identifies critical factors such as Career Development Learning, Work and Life Experience, Degree Subject Knowledge, Generic Skills, and Emotional Intelligence, with Reflection and Evaluation at its core. Considering these models, the conceptual framework was formulated to assess the employability of BS Accountancy graduates in NDMU.

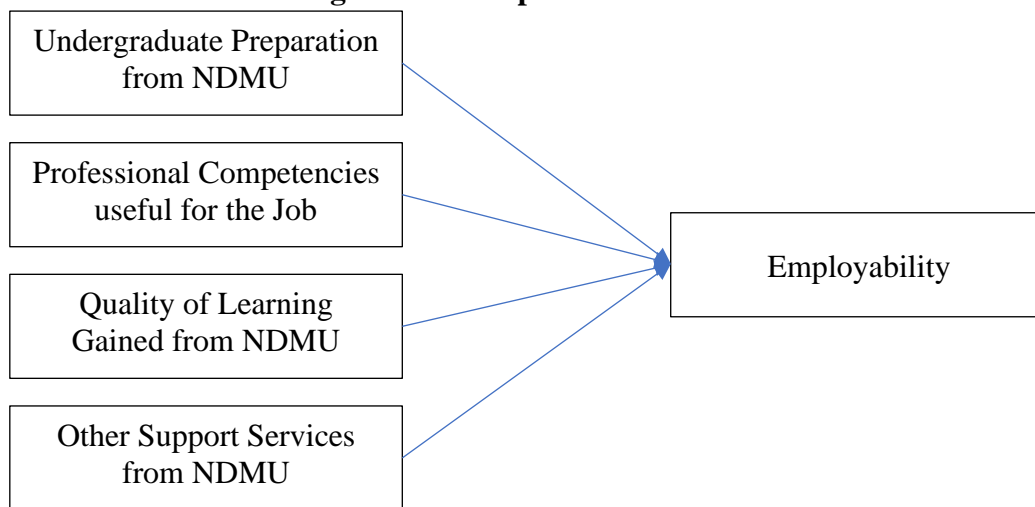
### Conceptual Framework

Employability is often linked to an individual's personal attributes and intrinsic qualities. Hillage and Pollard (1998) define it as a person’s capability, while Yorke (2006) describes it as a combination of achievements, including skills, knowledge, and personal traits. Similarly, De Vos et al. (2011) emphasize both an individual’s competencies and their willingness to seek opportunities. These perspectives highlight the fundamental aspects of employability, which focus on whether a person possesses the necessary skills, attitudes, and abilities sought by employers (Morrison, 2012). Supporting this view, the Bolton Career Services Employability Guide, as cited in Harvey (2004), defines employability as an individual’s ability to secure a job, remain employed, and explore new career opportunities for professional growth. In this study, employability is considered as the dependent variable, assessed by the length of time before a graduate landed his/her first job after graduation. This is categorized into three possible outcomes: (1) landing employment in within six months after graduation, (2) landing their first job between six months and a year after graduation, and (3) landing their first job more than one year after graduation.

The level of employability of graduates may be influenced by the following independent variables: (1) undergraduate preparation from NDMU, (2) professional competencies useful for the job, (3) quality of

learning gained from NDMU, and (4) other support services of NDMU. These four variables were based on the USEM Account of Employability Theory as well as the CareerEDGE Model. All these variables are important factors for graduates to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills, embrace self-belief, and develop metacognition. The University has prided itself in honing graduates in a holistic approach, which goes beyond academic excellence. This means that the institution emphasizes a well-rounded education equipping students with technical knowledge and industry-specific skills enhancing graduates' employability.

**Figure 3. Conceptual Framework**



### Objectives of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine the employment status of BS Accountancy graduates as well as their level of educational experience and level of satisfaction towards the academic and student life provided by Notre Dame of Marbel University. Specifically, this study aimed to determine if the following variables, provided by NDMU, the undergraduate preparation, the professional competencies gained, quality of learning, and other support services, can influence the employability of the BS Accountancy graduates of the University:

### Specifically, the study answered the following:

#### 1. Describe the demographic profile of the BS Accountancy graduates respondents in terms of:

1. Age;
2. Sex;
3. Place of Origin;
4. Civil status;
5. Result of the CPA Licensure Examination
6. Highest Educational Attainment;
7. Reasons for taking BS Accountancy

#### 2. Describe the present employment of BS Accountancy graduates respondents in terms of:

- a. present occupation
- b. employment status
- c. type of organization

- d. status
- e. relatedness of the course to the present job
8. gross monthly income
9. reasons for accepting and staying in the job
- 3. Determine the employability of BS Accountancy graduates respondents.**
- 4. Describe the employment history of BS Accountancy graduates respondents in terms of:**
  - a. information about first job**
    - first job the same with present employment
    - relatedness to the college degree
    - length of time to land the first job
    - first employment occupation
    - number of months employed
    - gross monthly income
    - manner of finding the job
  - b. employment history**
    - number of times employed
    - reasons for leaving first job
- 5. Determine the level of educational experience provided by the university to BS Accountancy graduates respondents in terms of:**
  - a. undergraduate preparation from NDMU
  - b. professional competencies useful for the job
  - c. quality of learning gained from NDMU
  - d. other support services from NDMU
- 6. Determine the level of satisfaction of BS Accountancy graduates in academic experience and student Life at NDMU.**
- 7. Determine the respondents' recommendations to further improve the BS Accountancy Program of the College of the College of Business Administration.**
- 8. Determine if undergraduate preparation from NDMU, professional competencies to be useful in job, quality learning gained from NDMU, and other support services of NDMU, can predict the employability of the graduate-respondents of the BS in Accountancy.**

## Hypothesis

Ho: Undergraduate preparation from NDMU, professional competencies useful for the job, quality learning gained from NDMU, and other support services of NDMU cannot predict the employability of the graduate-respondents of the BS in Accountancy

## 2. Methodology

The study employed a quantitative research in determining the employment status and employability of BS in Accountancy graduates of Notre Dame of Marbel University. According to Te et al. (2019), the objective of a quantitative research design is to generalize findings across the studied population, typically utilizing survey questionnaires for primary data collection. Furthermore, Cooper and Schindler (2008) explain descriptive research design as a research framework that aims to describe characteristics of the chosen population in terms of who, what, when, where and how. Therefore, this design is considered

appropriate for conducting descriptive-correlational studies. The data for this study was collected using a survey questionnaire patterned after the CHED GTS survey form. The respondents of the study were graduates of the BS Accountancy program from the school year 2013 to 2020 with a total population of 154, as per records of the University Registrar. All graduates of the program were reached out to answer the online survey questionnaire. All members of the population were given a copy of the survey questionnaire through KoboToolbox and Google forms. However, only those who responded were included in the data analysis. The data gathering started last June 2022 and ended last December 2022 with an overall response rate of 86% or an equivalent of 132 responses.

The distribution of respondents per year graduated is presented in Table 1. There were 132 respondents: 17.5% were graduates from the school year 2018, followed by graduates in 16.7% and 2020 with 14.4% graduates.

**Table 1: BSA graduate-respondents per year graduated**

<b>Year graduated</b>	<b>Population of BSA Graduates</b>	<b>No. of BSA Graduates who Participated in the Survey</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>2013</b>	18	13	9.8%
<b>2014</b>	20	14	10.6%
<b>2015</b>	14	12	9.0%
<b>2016</b>	15	15	11.4%
<b>2017</b>	17	14	10.6%
<b>2018</b>	24	23	17.5%
<b>2019</b>	26	22	16.7%
<b>2020</b>	20	19	14.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>100%</b>

The survey questionnaire used was a self-completed survey questionnaire and was adapted from the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Graduate Tracer Study Form and was modified by the NDMU Research and Publication Center and was patterned from the Tracer Study of Panganiban in 2013 and Capistrano in 2018. Additional questions were also added considering the suggestions of the faculty and to further improve the information to be gathered. The survey questionnaire has four: (1) demographic profile of the graduates, current employment status, information about their first job and their employment history, (2) the level of the educational experience of the graduates in terms of undergraduate preparation, professional competencies, quality of learning and other support services (3) level of satisfaction of graduates with their academic and student life at NDMU (4) suggestions and recommendations of the graduates on how the curriculum of the program can be improved.

The survey questionnaire was digitalized by the NDMU Research and Publication Center using KoboToolbox and was later on converted to Google forms for faster dissemination. The online survey questionnaire was sent to the respondents in the form of Google form link or Kobotoolbox link. One of the features of Google forms and Kobotoolbox is that respondents cannot proceed unless all questions with required answers were answered. Such a feature ensures that the information gathered were complete and free of any missing data.

Also, the data obtained from the survey questionnaire especially those questions on Likert scale was tested using the Post-Hoc Test of Cronbach Alpha. The Cronbach alpha result of 26 Likert questions is .956



interpreted as good (Te, 2020). This means that the respondents understood the questions very well and that the survey questionnaire really measure what it purports to measure. The data gathered through survey were analyzed using quantitative statistics, particularly frequency counts, percentages and means. Demographic and employment profiles were analyzed using frequency counts and percentages. The level of educational experience and the level of satisfaction of the graduates were analyzed using means. Data on the recommendations and suggestions of the graduates was analyzed using frequency counts and ranking. Ordinal logistics regression analysis was used to test if the identified independent variables in the conceptual framework can predict the employability of the BS Accountancy graduates. Assumptions were tested prior to running the regression analysis.

### 3. Results and Discussions

#### Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Table 2 presents the age, sex, and marital status of the respondents. The majority of the respondents (41.67%) are in the age group 22-25 years old while only 19.70% in the 30-33 years old age group. Furthermore, the majority of the respondents (59.85%) are female and are still single (86.36%). The majority of the respondents (79.55%) have already passed the CPA Licensure Examination. In terms of the highest educational attainment, only 10.61% already have a Master’s Degree. The majority of the graduates strive to become CPAs which is supported by the results showing that the majority of the graduates are already license holders. This means that the graduates are competent and ready in taking the CPA Licensure examinations resulting in a high percentage of produced CPAs. The results presented also indicate that the majority of the respondents are relatively young (below 30 years old) since the study covered graduates from 2013-2020 and since higher responses came from graduates of 2018-2020. These shows that a significant proportion of young professionals are composing the field (Cammayo, E. U., & Gonzales, J. I., 2023). The results confirm that majority of accounting professionals are women indicating that in the Philippines there are 47% of female accounting professionals with senior management roles – this being higher than any other country (Thomason-Stewart, 2022).

**Table 2. Demographic Profile of the BS Accountancy graduates in terms of Age, Sex, Marital Status, Result of CPA Licensure Examination, and Highest Educational Attainment**

Age	Frequency	Percent
22-25 years old	55	41.67%
26-29 years old	51	38.64%
30-33 years old	26	19.70%
<b>Total</b>	132	100.00%
<b>Sex</b>		
Female	79	59.85%
Male	53	40.15%
<b>Total</b>	132	100.00%
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single	114	86.36%
Married	18	13.64%
<b>Total</b>	132	100.00%

<b>Passed the Licensure Examination</b>		
<b>Yes</b>	105	79.55%
<b>No</b>	27	20.45%
<b>Total</b>	132	100.00%
<b>Highest Educational Attainment</b>		
<b>Baccalaureate/BS Degree</b>	118	89.39%
<b>Master's Degree</b>	14	10.61%
<b>Total</b>	132	100.00%

### Reasons for Choosing BS Accountancy as a Course

Based on the data presented in Table 3, primarily reasons for choosing the BSA course is due to the influence of parents or relatives (50%), followed by prospect for immediate employment (41.67%), and prospect for career advancement (30.30%). It is also good to note that the passing rate of the profession (6.82%) is the least considered by the graduates in choosing the course which means that despite the low national passing percentage, accountancy still is a choice for incoming college students. Results show the course is an attractive profession to parents and that accountancy as a course is perceived to result to immediate employment and career advancement. Similar results was noted by Uyar et. al (2021) which states that the accounting field is desired by students since they believe it offers good job opportunities and aligns with their abilities and interests. Furthermore, a study conducted by Wally-Dima (2013), highlighted that the societal regard for Certified Public Accountants (CPAs) and the status and job opportunities the qualification provides as factors motivating students in taking the course.

**Table 3. Reasons for Choosing BS Accountancy as a Course**

<b>Reasons</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Influence of parents or relatives</b>	66	50%
<b>Prospect for immediate employment</b>	55	41.67%
<b>Prospect of career advancement</b>	40	30.3%
<b>Status or prestige of the profession</b>	35	26.52%
<b>Peer influence</b>	25	18.94%
<b>No particular choice or no better idea</b>	25	18.94%
<b>Affordable for the family</b>	24	18.18%
<b>Availability of course offering in chosen institution</b>	24	18.18%
<b>Good grades in high school</b>	22	16.67%
<b>Prospect of attractive</b>	19	14.39%
<b>Inspired by a role model</b>	17	12.88%
<b>Opportunity for employment</b>	15	11.36%
<b>Others</b>	11	8.33%
<b>Strong passing rate of the profession</b>	9	6.82%

### Present Employment Profile of the Respondents

The employment information of the respondents were discussed based on the status: employed, self-employed, or not employed as presented in Table 4. For employed respondents, their present occupation,

type of organization, status, and relatedness of the course to the present job are presented on Table 5. Their current gross monthly income are presented in Table 6. On the other hand, the reasons of graduates for accepting and staying on the job are presented in Table 7.

Results show that 86.36% of the respondents are currently employed. Those who are currently not employed (6.82%) may either be engaged in their own business, currently applying for work or are preparing for the CPA Licensure examination. It is also good to note that those who decided to be never employed (1.52%) were those graduates who decided to pursue advanced study after graduation and may be enrolled either in postgraduate degrees or in Juris Doctor programs.

**Table 4. Present Employment Status of the Respondents**

<b>Presently Employed</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Yes</b>	114	86.36%
<b>No</b>	9	6.82%
<b>Self Employed</b>	7	5.3%
<b>Never Employed</b>	2	1.52%
<b>Total</b>	132	100.00%
<b>Reasons for not being employed</b>		
<b>Currently applying for a job</b>	3	33.33%
<b>Reviewing for LECPA</b>	6	66.67%
<b>Total</b>	9	100.00%
<b>Reasons for being never employed</b>		
<b>Pursue advance study after graduation</b>	2	100%
<b>Total</b>	2	100.00%

**Present Occupation, Type of Organization, Status and Relatedness of the Course to Job**

Table 5 shows how graduates are distributed based on their present occupation, the type of organization they are affiliated with, status, and the relatedness of their job to their course. Majority of the graduates (57.85%) work as an accountant either in private companies or in government agencies. Only 9.92% of the respondents work as auditors and only 1.65% entered the education sector. It is interesting to note that 21.49% of the respondents work as government employees with non-accounting or non-auditing roles. Furthermore, an almost equal distribution of the respondents work in the government sector (47.93%) and private companies (42.98%). The others (5.79%) represent those graduates who are freelancing or are business owners. Data also shows that the majority of the respondents (75.21%) have regular or permanent status already with only 4.13% under probationary status. Overall results show that majority of the respondents are currently working in a job that is related to their course.

**Table 5. Profile of the Respondents based on present occupation, type of organization, status and relatedness of the course to present job**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Present Occupation</b>		
<b>Accountant</b>	70	57.85%
<b>Government employee (position is not an accountant or auditor)</b>	26	21.49%

<b>Auditor</b>	12	9.92%
<b>Private employee (position is not an accountant or auditor)</b>	4	3.31%
<b>Freelance</b>	6	4.96%
<b>University Teacher</b>	2	1.65%
<b>Business Owner</b>	1	0.83%
<b>Total</b>	121	100.00%
<b>Type of Organization</b>		
<b>Government</b>	58	47.93%
<b>Private Company</b>	52	42.98%
<b>Others</b>	7	5.79%
<b>Non-government Organization</b>	4	3.31%
<b>Total</b>	121	100.00%
<b>Status</b>		
<b>Regular/Permanent</b>	91	75.21%
<b>Contractual/Casual</b>	18	14.88%
<b>Others</b>	7	5.79%
<b>Probationary</b>	5	4.13%
<b>Total</b>	121	100.00%
<b>Relatedness of the Course to Present Job</b>		
<b>Yes</b>	93	76.86%
<b>No</b>	28	23.14%
<b>Total</b>	121	100.00%

### Gross Monthly Income

As shown in Table 6, 24.79% of the respondents are in the salary range of P30,000-P40,000 while 21.49% of the respondents are in the highest salary range which is above P50,000. It is also good to note that only 0.83% of the respondents are in the salary range of P5,000-P10,000. These findings align with national data, which reports an average monthly salary for accountants in the Philippines of approximately ₱31,108 (Indeed, 2024). Additionally, the average monthly salary for financial accountants in online hiring platforms ranges from ₱50,000 to ₱60,000 (JobStreet, 2024). This suggests that a significant portion of the graduates are compensated at or above the national average for their profession.

**Table 6. Profile of the respondents based on their Gross Monthly Income**

<b>Gross Monthly Income</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Below 5,000</b>	0	-
<b>5,001-10,000</b>	1	0.83%
<b>10,001-20,000</b>	20	16.53%
<b>20,001-30,000</b>	28	23.14%
<b>30,001-40,000</b>	30	24.79%
<b>40,001-50,000</b>	16	13.22%
<b>Greater than 50,000</b>	26	21.49%
<b>Total</b>	121	100.00%

**Reasons for Accepting and Staying on the Job**

As shown in Table 7, the majority of the respondents considered the most is the salaries and benefits (35.38%) for accepting the job and 49.23% for staying on their job. In addition, relatedness to their special skills is also a major consideration, 33.08% and 46.15%, for accepting and staying on the job, respectively. It is also good to note that proximity to residence (25.38%) is the least considered by the respondents in accepting a job. Similarly, a study conducted by Kossivi et al. (2016) indicates that factors such as compensation, career development opportunities, management/leadership quality, and work environment significantly influence employee retention.

**Table 7. Reasons for Accepting and Staying on the Job**

	Frequency	Percent
<b>Reasons for Accepting the Job</b>		
Salaries and benefits	46	35.38
Related to special skills	43	33.08
Career challenge	48	36.92
Proximity to residence	33	25.38
<b>Reasons for Staying on the Job</b>		
Salaries and benefits	64	49.23
Related to special skills	60	46.15
Good working relationships	48	36.92
Career challenge	68	52.31
Proximity to residence	36	27.69
Good working conditions	27	20.77
Others	7	5.38

**Information about First Job**

**First Job the same as Present Employment, Length of Time to Land the first Job, First Employment Occupation and Manner of Finding First Job**

Based on the data presented in Table 8, the majority of the respondents (77.27%) have left their first job after college. It is good to note that 22.73% of the respondents are currently working and are still affiliated with their first job. It also shows that 31.54% of the respondents were able to land their first job 7 to 11 months after graduation, with 29.23% and 21.54% of the respondents landing their first job 6 months or less after graduation, and only 4.62% for more than 2 years. Furthermore, the majority of the respondents worked as an accountant (40.77%) or an auditor (33.85%) in their first job. The data also shows that 36.92% of the respondents stayed for only less than a year in their first job while 23.08% were employed for more than 1 year but less than 2 years in their first job. Only 8.46% of the respondents remained employed in their first job for more than 5 years. In terms of the manner of finding their first job, the respondents' first job was recommended by someone (47.69%) and only 3.08% landed their first job with their family connections.

**Table 8. Information about First Job in relation to present employment, length of time to land the first job, first employment occupation, number of months employed and manner of finding the job**

	Frequency	Percent
<b>First Job the same with Present Employment</b>		
No	102	77.27%
Yes	30	22.73%
<b>Total</b>	132	100.00%
<b>Length of time to land a first job</b>		
Less than a month	28	21.54%
1 to 6 months	38	29.23%
7 to 11 months	41	31.54%
1 year to less than 2 years	17	13.08%
2 years to less than 3 years	5	3.85%
3 years to 5 years	1	0.77%
<b>Total</b>	130	100.00%
<b>First Employment Occupation</b>		
Accountant	53	40.77%
Government employee (position is not an accountant or auditor)	11	8.46%
Auditor	44	33.85%
Private employee (position is not an accountant or auditor)	13	10.0%
Freelance	5	3.85%
Accounting Teacher	3	2.31%
Business Owner	1	0.77%
<b>Total</b>	130	100.00%

<b>Number of months employed</b>		
Less than 1 year	48	36.92%
1 year - less than 2 years	30	23.08%
2 years - less than 3 years	27	20.77%
3 years - less than 4 years	10	7.69%
4 years - less than 5 years	4	3.08%
more than 5 years	11	8.46%
<b>Total</b>	130	100.00%
<b>Manner of finding first job</b>		
Recommended by someone	62	47.69%
Advertisement	20	15.38%
Information from friends	18	13.85%
As walk-in application	15	11.54%
Others	12	9.23%
Family connection	4	3.08%

**Gross Monthly Income, Relatedness to the Course, Reasons for Leaving First Job and Employment History**

Based on the data presented in Table 9, the majority of the graduates (59.23%) earned P10,000-P20,000 on their first job. Also, the 93.08% of the respondents were hired for the first time for a job that is related to their college degree. It is also good to note that 37.69% of the respondents left their first job because of better career opportunities and professional development. Futhermore, next to career opportunities, low salaries, benefits and financial reasons are the second driving force for the respondents to leave their first job. Moreover, the majority (40.77%) of the respondents were employed twice, while 28.46% have worked with one employer only, and 20.77% worked with three employers. Also, 7.69% were employed four times and only 2.31% five times.

**Table 9. Information about first job in relation to gross monthly income, relatedness to the degree, reasons for leaving first job and employment history**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Estimated gross monthly income of first job</b>		
<b>Below 5,000</b>	5	3.85%
<b>5,001-10,000</b>	29	22.31%
<b>10,001-20,000</b>	77	59.23%
<b>20,001-30,000</b>	18	13.85%
<b>30,001-40,000</b>	1	0.77%
<b>Total</b>	130	100.00%
<b>Relatedness of the first job to the college degree</b>		
<b>Yes</b>	121	93.08%
<b>No</b>	9	6.92%
<b>Total</b>	130	100.00%
<b>Reasons for leaving first job</b>		
<b>Better career opportunities and professional development</b>	49	37.69%
<b>Better work environment</b>	13	10.0%
<b>Family and personal concerns</b>	10	7.69%
<b>End of Contract</b>	4	3.08%
<b>Low salaries, benefits and financial reasons</b>	20	15.38%
<b>Review for LECPA</b>	5	3.85%
<b>Proximity of the new job to home</b>	5	3.85%
<b>Number of times employed</b>		
<b>Once</b>	37	28.46
<b>2 Times</b>	53	40.77
<b>3 Times</b>	27	20.77
<b>4 Times</b>	10	7.69
<b>5 Times</b>	3	2.31
<b>Total</b>	130	100.00%

### **Educational Experience of BSA Graduates**

This section discusses the level of educational experience of the accountancy graduates at Notre Dame of Marbel University. Respondents were asked to indicate the level of preparation acquired during their undergraduate studies in terms of content knowledge, various skills, and values formation. They were also asked about the level of professional competencies learned in NDMU which they deemed useful in their actual working careers. They were also asked to assess the quality of learning they have acquired as well as the impact of other support services offered by the university.

### **Undergraduate Preparation**

As shown in Table 10, most of the graduates rated themselves to have acquired a very high level of preparation in terms of acquiring content knowledge and skills for the CPA board examination (mean=4.61) and the acquired values formation which helps actualize their future responsibilities at work (mean=4.60). However, they rated lowest in terms of skills in conducting research (mean=4.20). Overall, the graduates perceived that they have a very high level of preparation from NDMU (mean=4.42). This results indicates that graduates have a strong sense of preparedness in terms of content knowledge and values formation for the CPA Licensure examination. This shows that structured academic preparation significantly correlates with CPA exam pass rates (Allen & Woodland, 2006). Furthermore, a study conducted by Rodrigues et al. (2017) which examines the factors affecting success in Brazil's professional entry exam for accountants found that comprehensive academic preparation significantly correlates with higher pass rates. This indicates that institutions that emphasize core competencies in board examination topics produce graduates with higher success rates in certification exams which also reflects high level of job preparation. However, results also shows the potential improvement in the area of training for proficiency of research.

**Table 10: Undergraduate Preparation at NDMU as Perceived by the BSA Graduates**

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Verbal Interpretation</b>
<b>Acquiring content knowledge and skills in preparation for the board examination of accountants.</b>	4.61	The graduate has a very high level of job preparation.
<b>Values formation helpful in actualizing responsibilities at work</b>	4.60	The graduate has a very high level of job preparation.
<b>Leadership skills to contribute to the community and workplace</b>	4.35	The graduate has a very high level of job preparation.
<b>Skills and competencies to actualize learning in the first job experience</b>	4.32	The graduate has a very high level of job preparation.
<b>Acquiring skills in conducting research</b>	4.20	The graduate has a high level of job preparation.
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>4.42</b>	<b>The graduate has a very high level of job preparation.</b>

### **Professional Competencies**

Table 11 shows that most graduates rated critical thinking skills (mean=4.60) and problem-solving skills (mean=4.55) as the top professional competencies they have learned which they deemed extremely useful



in their occupation. In addition, graduates also rated communication, human relation and creative skills as extremely useful. However, graduates rated entrepreneurial skills (mean=3.82) as the least among the professional competencies learned. The graduates perceived that they learned extremely useful skills from NDMU that are deemed useful in occupation (mean=4.24). This indicates that graduates perceived the competencies gained from NDMU, particularly the technical and analytical competencies, as useful in their jobs. This supports Wolcott and Sargent (2021) which confirmed that accountants entering the workplace are expected to demonstrate strong critical thinking skills early in their careers. Furthermore, Papageorgiou (2023) noted that as requested by employers and professional associations, critical thinking skills development should be a core component of higher education programs. However, results also show that there is a potential gap in the curriculum when it comes to entrepreneurial skills. Overall, this findings indicates that the graduates recognizes the usefulness of the competencies gained from NDMU to essential in the professional roles.

**Table 11: Professional Competencies Learned at NDMU Deemed Useful in Job**

Questions	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
<b>Critical Thinking Skills</b>	4.60	This skill is extremely useful in my job
<b>Problem-Solving Skills</b>	4.55	This skill is extremely useful in my job
<b>Communication Skills</b>	4.30	This skill is extremely useful in my job
<b>Human Relation Skills</b>	4.30	This skill is extremely useful in my job
<b>Creative Skills</b>	4.10	This skill is extremely useful in my job
<b>Information Technology Skills</b>	4.05	This skill is very useful in my job
<b>Entrepreneurial Skills</b>	3.82	This skill is very useful in my job
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>4.24</b>	<b>This skill is extremely useful in my job</b>

**Quality of Learning**

Table 12 shows the level of the quality of learning gained by the BSA graduates. Most of the graduates rated first the quality of lectures in the major subjects (mean=4.60) followed by the teaching faculty (mean=4.57) and examinations/evaluations (mean=4.51) as excellent. The graduates rated the multimedia learning equipment, facilities and materials (mean=4.23) and field study/OJT (mean=4.10) lowest. Overall, the graduates considered the quality of learning they have gained as excellent (mean=4.38). The findings supports the study Alhebri (2018) which states that effective teaching strategies improve the standard of accounting education and that excellent lectures given by competent instructors are crucial in helping accounting students acquire critical knowledge and skills necessary for their preparation in the board examination as well as for their job preparation. The results show that graduates perceived NDMU to be highly effective in equipping them with essential knowledge, skills, and competencies needed for their careers.

**Table 12: Quality of Learning gained by the BSA graduates**

Questions	Mean	Interpretation
<b>Quality of lectures in the major subjects</b>	4.60	The graduate experienced very high level of quality learning.
<b>Teaching faculty</b>	4.57	The graduate experienced very high level of quality learning.

<b>Examinations/evaluations that enhance knowledge and skills</b>	4.51	The graduate experienced very high level of quality learning.
<b>Adequacy of curriculum to equip me as a professional</b>	4.43	The graduate experienced very high level of quality learning.
<b>Teacher Learning Center and other facilities</b>	4.32	The graduate experienced very high level of quality learning.
<b>Printing learning materials (books, hand-outs, manuals, etc.</b>	4.30	The graduate experienced very high level of quality learning.
<b>Multi-media learning equipment, facilities and materials (audiovisuals, internet, LCD projectors, CDs</b>	4.23	The graduate experienced very high level of quality learning.
<b>Field Study / OJT</b>	4.10	The graduate experienced very high level of quality learning.
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>4.38</b>	<b>The graduate experienced very high level of quality learning.</b>

### Other Support Services

As shown in Table 13, the graduates rated the academic mentoring or advising (mean=4.22) as the most excellent support services they have acquired and considered helpful. Career guidance and counseling is the least among other support services (mean=3.86). Overall, the graduates considered the other support services they have experiences as very helpful (mean=4.07). This means that support services such as those of career guidance counselors significantly influence students' career decisions, underscoring the need for robust career services within educational institutions (Jain, 2017). The results presented highlights the institution's strong support system in guiding students through their academic journey.

**Table 13: Other Support Services at NDMU helpful to BSA graduates**

Questions	Mean	Interpretation
<b>Academic mentoring/advising</b>	4.22	The support services are very helpful to the students
<b>Values formation activities (Retreats, recollections, etc.</b>	4.20	The support services are very helpful to the students
<b>Trainings and seminars</b>	3.99	The support services are very helpful to the students
<b>Career guidance and counseling</b>	3.86	The support services are very helpful to the students
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>4.07</b>	<b>The support services are very helpful to the students</b>

### Satisfaction of BSA Graduates

This section discusses the level of satisfaction of the accountancy graduates at Notre Dame of Marbel University. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction in terms of their academic experience as well as their student life.

As presented in Table 14, graduates are extremely satisfied with their overall academic experience in NDMU (mean=4.55) as well as with their student life (mean=4.41). This confirms that NDMU provides a positive and supportive environment for its graduates. This implies that the institution's academic programs as well as extracurricular activities and support services effectively contribute to graduates preparedness and success.

**Table 14: Satisfaction of BSA Graduates**

Variables	Mean	Interpretation
Academic experience at NDMU	4.55	The graduates are very highly satisfied.
Student life at NDMU	4.41	The graduates are very highly satisfied.
Overall Mean	<b>4.48</b>	<b>The graduates are very highly satisfied.</b>

**Recommendations for the Improvement of the Accountancy Curriculum**

Table 15 shows the recommendations of the respondents for the improvement of the Accountancy Curriculum. Top on the list is to provide longer OJT hours (f=31, 38.75%) to expose students to the actual work of the profession which is to support the result presented in Table 12 which shows that Field Study/OJT is the least excellent among the learnings gained by the graduates. The graduates also recommended the integration of accounting software (f=21, 26.25%) that is widely used by businesses and conducting career orientation about the four sectors of the accountancy profession. Conducting career orientation (f=13, 16.25%) specifically focusing on the needs, roles, and responsibilities in the four sectors of the profession is recommended. In addition, ensuring the availability of updated accounting textbooks and review materials (f=4, 5%) in the library and intensifying the conduct of tutorials (f=4, 5%) for first-year students are included among the Top 5 recommendations. Furthermore, three of the respondents recommended conducting a fast-paced in-house review and two of the respondents recommended the conduct of seminars for communication skills and development of entrepreneurial skills.

**Table 15: Suggestions & Recommendations to Improve Accountancy Curriculum**

	<i>f</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Rank</i>
<b>Longer OJT hours to expose students to the actual work of the profession.</b>	31	38.75%	1
<b>Integrate accounting software that are widely used by businesses.</b>	21	26.25%	2
<b>Conduct career orientation about the four sectors of the profession</b>	13	16.25%	3
<b>Ensure availability of updated accounting textbooks and review materials in the library.</b>	4	5.00%	4
<b>Intensify the conduct of tutorials to first year students</b>	4	5.00%	5
<b>Conduct a fast paced in house review that will cover majority of the topics in the CPALE</b>	3	3.75%	6
<b>Conduct seminars for communication skills.</b>	2	2.50%	7.5
<b>Integrate in the curriculum ways to develop entrepreneurial skills</b>	2	2.50%	7.5

**Predictors of Employability**

This sections discusses the results of the ordinal logistics regression analysis. The tool was used to determine which independent variable(s) predict the employability of the graduate-respondents of the BS in Accountancy of NDMU.

**Assumptions**

There are four assumptions that must be satisfied before an ordinal logistics regression analysis must be done. The first assumption requires that the dependent variable should be measured at the ordinal level. In this study, the dependent variable, Employability, is assessed in terms of the time taken to secure employment, with three possible outcomes: (3) less than six months, (2) between six months and one year, and (1) more than one year, making it an ordinal variable.

The second assumption requires that there be one or more independent variables that are continuous, ordinal, or categorical. In this study, four independent variables are considered: (1) undergraduate preparation from NDMU, (2) professional competencies useful to the job, (3) quality of learning gained from NDMU, and (4) other support services of NDMU. These variables are measured on an interval scale using the mean, classifying them as continuous.

The third assumption addresses the absence of multicollinearity among the independent variables. According to Chatterjee & Simonoff (2013), multicollinearity exists when the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) exceeds 5 or the Tolerance Index (TI) falls below .20. As shown in Table 16, the VIF values for all four independent variables are below 5, and the TI values are above the .20 threshold, indicating that the independent variables are not highly correlated with each other, thus ensuring that multicollinearity is not an issue.

**Table 16: Collinearity Statistics**

Independent Variables	Tolerance	Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)
Undergraduate Preparation at NDMU	.317	3.150
Professional Competencies useful for the Job	.466	2.147
Quality of Learning gained from NDMU	.286	3.491
Helpful Support Services from NDMU	.577	1.734

The final assumption is the presence of proportional odds. The result of the test of parallel of lines presented in Table 17 was used to determine if the presence of proportional odds is observed. Marquier (2019) states that the assumption of proportional odds is present if the p-value is greater than .05. For this model, the p-value is .999, which is greater than .05. Hence, the assumption of proportional odds is present.

**Table 17: Test of Parallel Lines**

Model	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Null Hypothesis	371.311			
General	367.381 <sup>b</sup>	3.930 <sup>c</sup>	16	.999

The null hypothesis states that the location parameters (slope coefficients) are the same across response categories.

- a. Link function: Logit.
- b. The log-likelihood value cannot be further increased after maximum number of step-halving.
- c. The Chi-Square statistic is computed based on the log-likelihood value of the last iteration of the general model. Validity of the test is uncertain.

**Ordinal Logistics Regression Result**

Goodness-of-Fit. The Goodness-of-Fit test measures the adequacy of the model. The model adequately fits the data if the p-value is more than 0.05 (IBM Documentation, 2023). The significance value of

Pearson and Deviance as presented in Table 18 are .295 and 1.000, respectively, which are above the 0.05 threshold. Hence, the model is a good fit.

**Table 18. Goodness-of-Fit**

	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
<b>Pearson</b>	598.847	581	.295
<b>Deviance</b>	359.449	581	1.000

Based on the coefficient of determination produced by Nagelkerke in Table 19, the predictor in the model can only explain 12% of the variations in the length of time before being employed variable.

**Table 19. Pseudo R-Square**

	R <sup>2</sup>
<b>Cox and Snell</b>	0.12
<b>Nagelkerkie</b>	0.12
<b>McFadden</b>	0.004

Parameter Estimates. The parameter estimates of the model is shown in Table 24. Based on its p-value, only one independent variable is considered as a significant predictor of the length of time before graduates are being employed. Contribution of NDMU on Preparation for Work with a p-value of .009 is statistically significant. Hence, the null hypothesis that states that contribution of NDMU on preparation for work, skills perceived to be useful in job, quality learning gained from NDMU, and helpful support services of NDMU cannot predict the employability of the graduate-respondents of the BS in Accountancy is rejected. Based on the parameter estimate, for every one unit increase in the college preparation of BS Accountancy graduates of NDMU, it is expected that there will be a 1.70 increase in the log odds of being employed in less than six (6) months.

**Table 20: Parameter Estimates**

		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
							Lower Bound	Upper Bound
<b>Threshold</b>	<b>NOM=1</b>	-.905	1.453	.388	1	.533	-3.753	1.943
	<b>NOM=2</b>	.421	1.451	.084	1	.772	-2.423	3.264
	<b>NOM=3</b>	1.883	1.460	1.663	1	.197	-.979	4.745
	<b>NOM=4</b>	3.172	1.490	4.534	1	.033	.252	6.092
	<b>NOM=5</b>	4.192	1.558	7.234	1	.007	1.137	7.246
<b>Location</b>	<b>JP</b>	-.262	.543	.232	1	.630	-1.326	.803
	<b>PC</b>	.096	.433	.049	1	.825	-.753	.944
	<b>QOL</b>	.010	.551	.000	1	.985	-1.069	1.089
	<b>OSS</b>	.275	.281	.959	1	.327	-.275	.825

Based on the coefficient exponentiated shown in Table 21, for a one unit increase in the Contribution of NDMU on Preparation for Work (expressed in mean), the odds that they will be hired in less than six (6) months is 5.47 greater than being unemployed longer than six months. Results show that there is a

significant relationship between NDMU’s preparation for work and the likelihood of the graduates to land employment which indicates that NDMU provides preparation increasing graduates employability. This supports a study published in the *Journal of Education and Work* which highlights the role universities in ensuring that the curriculum should be closely aligned with industry needs significantly improving their graduates' employment prospects (Yu et al., 2013).

**Table 21. Coefficient Exponentiated**

		Estimate	Exp (B)	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Lower Bound
<b>Threshold</b>	<b>NOM=1</b>	-0.905	0.4045	0.0234	6.9797
	<b>NOM=2</b>	0.421	1.5235	0.0887	26.1539
	<b>NOM=3</b>	1.883	6.5732	0.3757	115.0078
	<b>NOM=4</b>	3.172	23.8551	1.2866	442.3051
	<b>NOM=5</b>	4.192	66.1550	3.1174	1402.4837
<b>Location</b>	<b>JP</b>	-0.262	0.7695	0.2655	2.2322
	<b>PC</b>	0.096	1.1008	0.4710	2.5702
	<b>QOL</b>	0.010	1.0101	0.3434	2.9713
	<b>OSS</b>	0.275	1.3165	0.7596	2.2819

#### 4. Conclusions and Recommendations

##### Conclusion

The NDMU was able to prepare the graduates holistically. This is evident in the high percentage of graduates who were able pass the licensure examination especially on their first take as well as the percentage of graduates who was able to secure employment in less than six months after graduation and are also currently employed. NDMU was able to provide the graduates the skills necessary to perform their jobs well. In general, the graduates are very highly satisfied with their academic experience at NDMU and their student life in the University. The contribution of NDMU on preparation for work significantly influence the employability of graduates. It increases the probability of the graduates being hired in less than six months. Hence, emphasizing the importance of the role of higher educational institutions in providing adequate, prepared, and matched labor force in the labor market.

##### Recommendations

**Based on the findings of this study, the following actions are recommended:**

**The curriculum and instruction should be enhanced to better equip students for their future careers by:** (a) intensifying programs related to on-the-job training program specifically implementing longer OJT hours allowing maximum exposure of students to real-life work issues specifically in the four different sectors of the profession; (b) integrate in the curriculum subjects related to data analytics, utilization of accounting software, or any course related to ICT; (c) research subjects must allow the students to learn practical skills necessary in conducting studies relevant to their specialization; (d) prepare students for actual work by giving them more seminars and trainings relevant to their field; (e) prepare students for accreditation or certification exams; and (f) strengthen entrepreneurship to foster innovation and business drive even among accounting students.

**Other sectors in the university should enhance their services to better support students by:**

(a) the Guidance Center must regularly update their Facebook page on job postings and could expand peer mentoring programs, provide faculty training in student advising, and integrate mentorship into academic courses for continuous student support; (b) the Accountancy Department together with the Guidance Center could organize career development workshops, and invite industry professionals from the four different sectors of accounting to share insights on career paths as well as offer more specialized training sessions that align with industry demands, technology trends, and students' career aspirations; (c) that facilities like computers for data analytics, multi-media learning equipment, and other facilities are sufficient; and (d) provide more career counseling to senior high school students and incoming first-year students.

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