

# **Graduate Employability and Workforce Integration: A Tracer Study of Office Administration Alumni in a Philippine State University**

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## **Abstract**

This study examines the employability and workforce integration of graduates from the Bachelor of Science in Office Administration (BSOA) program at Negros Oriental State University (NORSU) Main Campus I, focusing on cohorts from 2022 to 2024. Employing a descriptive quantitative research design, data were collected through an online survey adapted from the Commission on Higher Education's (CHED) tracer study instrument. A stratified sample of 100 graduates provided information on their demographic and educational profiles, employment status, job search experiences, workplace competencies, and challenges in securing employment. Results indicate that a majority secured full-time employment within three months of graduation, primarily in private and government sectors, with most entry-level roles aligning with their academic training. Core competencies such as professionalism, communication, and interpersonal skills were rated highest in workplace relevance. However, challenges such as labor market competition and limited certification credentials persist. The findings underscore the need for continuous curriculum enhancement, targeted training in leadership and entrepreneurship, and stronger industry-academe linkages. The study contributes to graduate employability literature and offers data-driven recommendations for program development and policy formulation in higher education institutions.

**Keywords:** Graduate Employability, Workforce Integration, Tracer Study, Office Administration Education, Workplace Competencies, Curriculum Development, Higher Education in the Philippines

## **1. Introduction**

Graduate employability remains a pivotal concern for higher education institutions worldwide, especially in developing countries where job market competitiveness is intense. Programs like the Bachelor of Science in Office Administration (BSOA) are tasked with producing graduates equipped for

diverse roles in administrative, clerical, and managerial settings. As such, evaluating graduate outcomes is essential in ensuring academic programs are aligned with market demands.

This study aims to assess the employability and workforce integration of BSOA graduates from Negros Oriental State University (NORSU) Main Campus I, covering the graduating cohorts from 2022 to 2024. Specifically, it examines employment status, job relevance, workplace competencies, and the challenges faced in securing jobs. The study is anchored in Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1993), Super's Career Development Theory (1990), and Yorke's Employability Model (2004), providing a comprehensive framework for analysis.

## **2. Methodology**

### **Research Design**

This study employed a descriptive quantitative research design using a tracer study approach to assess the employability and workforce integration of BSOA graduates from Negros Oriental State University – Main Campus I for the cohorts of 2022, 2023, and 2024. The research focused on gathering data regarding graduates' demographic and educational profiles, employment status, competencies, and job-related experiences through structured survey instruments.

### **Research Respondents**

The target population included all BSOA graduates from the three most recent academic batches (2022–2024). A total of 100 respondents were selected using stratified random sampling, ensuring proportional representation from each cohort. The final distribution of respondents was: 28 from Batch 2022, 27 from Batch 2023, and 45 from Batch 2024.

### **Research Environment**

This study was conducted within the jurisdiction of Negros Oriental State University – Main Campus I, located in Dumaguete City, Philippines. The research focused on graduates who had completed the Bachelor of Science in Office Administration program. The online nature of the data collection allowed participation regardless of the respondents' current geographic location.

### **Research Instrument**

The primary data collection tool for this study was a modified survey questionnaire adapted from the Commission on Higher Education's (CHED) standard tracer study instrument. This questionnaire was designed to collect comprehensive information across several key areas, including respondents' demographic profiles, educational backgrounds, employment status and job details, job search experiences, workplace competencies, and challenges encountered in securing employment. To facilitate broad participation, the survey was administered online via Google Forms and distributed through the graduates' Facebook Messenger batch group chats. Importantly, a skip logic feature was incorporated:

respondents who reported being unemployed were automatically directed to bypass employment-related questions that applied only to those currently employed. Prior to full deployment, the instrument underwent expert validation to ensure clarity and relevance, followed by a pilot test that informed necessary refinements.

### **Data Gathering Procedures**

Data collection was carried out online using a Google Form link, which was distributed to batch-specific group chats on Facebook Messenger. Reminders were sent to encourage participation. Assistance from JOSMA officers and batch representatives helped improve response rates. The responses were collected over a three-week period.

### **Statistical Treatment of Data**

The data gathered were encoded, processed, and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to interpret responses. These statistical measures allowed for a comprehensive summary of employment trends, competency ratings, and perceived employment challenges among respondents.

## **3. Results**

### **Demographic Profile of the Respondents**

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents, including sex, civil status, and place of residence. These attributes help contextualize the profile of BSOA graduates.

**Table 1. The Demographic Profile of the Respondents**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Civil Status</b>		
Single	92	92
Married	8	8
Total	100	100
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	6	6
Female	93	93
Prefer not to say	1	1
Total	100	100
<b>Place of Residence</b>		
Within Dumaguete City	32	32
Within Negros Oriental	57	57

Outside Negros Oriental	11	11
Total	100	100

**Year of Graduation**

2022	28	28
2023	27	27
2024	45	45
Total	100	100

**Civil Status**

As presented in Table 1, a significant majority of respondents (92%) identified as single, while only 8% reported being married. This distribution suggests that the respondents are predominantly at the early stages of their professional careers a trend aligned with typical demographic characteristics of recent college graduates.

This finding is consistent with a tracer study by Balingbing (2024), which reported that 95.4% of Bachelor of Science in Office Administration (BSOA) graduates were single, citing an average age of 23 and a recent transition into the workforce as contributing factors. Similarly, Arkipelago Analytics (2025) found that 64% of Filipino millennials prioritized career success over romantic relationships, which were prioritized by only 50% of respondents. These data suggest that civil status among recent graduates is closely linked to career stage, with many choosing to delay marriage to focus on professional development and financial independence.

**Sex**

The data indicate that a large majority of the respondents were female (93%), while only 6% were male. One respondent (1%) preferred not to disclose their sex. This indicates that the BSOA program at Negros Oriental State University (NORSU) is predominantly female in composition.

This pattern reflects national and regional trends in educational and occupational gender roles. Madriaga and Caluyo (2022) observed that office administration programs in the Philippines are commonly female-dominated due to prevailing gender norms that associate clerical and administrative skills such as multitasking, organization, and communication with women. Likewise, the International Labor Organization [ILO] Asia-Pacific (2021) highlighted the high participation of women in administrative support roles across Southeast Asia, particularly in the Philippines, reinforcing the influence of traditional labor market segmentation.

**Place of Residence**

The majority of respondents (57%) were residents of Negros Oriental (excluding Dumaguete City), while 32% lived in Dumaguete City. The remaining 11% were from areas outside the province. These findings imply that the BSOA program has strong appeal both in rural and urban parts of the province, with a modest geographic reach beyond.

Ramos and Villanueva (2021) found that regional state universities in Central Visayas primarily serve students from their immediate provinces, largely due to issues of accessibility and affordability. Similarly, Macapanpan and Alcantara (2020) noted that Dumaguete-based institutions remain accessible to rural students due to low-cost dormitories and public transportation, enhancing mobility from rural to urban areas for higher education.

### Year of Graduation

As seen in Table 1, 45% of respondents graduated in 2024, followed by 28% in 2022 and 27% in 2023. The high proportion of 2024 graduates suggest active participation by recent alumni, which may reflect stronger institutional engagement and interest in post-graduation outcomes. These graduates also provide relevant and timely insights into current employability trends.

According to Dela Cruz and Torres (2021), recent graduates are more responsive to institutional surveys because they are in the process of job seeking and often maintain connections with their alma mater for support or alumni activities. Additionally, Reyes and Morales (2020) emphasized the value of feedback from new graduates due to their familiarity with updated curricular content, technological skills, and awareness of modern workforce demands.

### Educational Background of the Respondents

Table 2 presents the educational background of the respondents, focusing on three key variables: honors and awards received, licensure and certification examinations passed, and reasons for choosing the BSOA program.

**Table 2. The Educational Background of the Respondents**

Variables	Frequency	Percent
<b>Honors and Awards Received</b>		
Cum Laude	2	2
Magna Cum Laude	5	5
Dean's Lister	41	41
None	52	52
Total	100	100
<b>Licensure and Certification Examinations Passed</b>		
Civil Service Eligibility	13	13
NC II in Office Administration	2	2
None	85	85
Total	100	100
<b>Reasons for Choosing BSOA Program</b>		
Personal interest in Office Administration	68	68

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Parental and peer influence	4	4
Scholarship availability	1	1
Job opportunities after graduation	25	25
Others	2	2
Total	100	100

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### **Honors and Awards Received**

Table 2 presents the distribution of academic distinctions among the respondents. A majority (52%) reported graduating without receiving formal honors or awards. Nevertheless, a substantial proportion (41%) qualified as Dean's Listers, indicating consistent academic performance during their studies. A smaller segment achieved Latin honors, with 5% graduating Magna Cum Laude and 2% earning Cum Laude distinctions. These findings suggest that while more than half of the respondents did not attain academic awards, a significant number demonstrated strong academic competence throughout the BSOA program.

The presence of a large percentage of Dean's Listers highlights the academic potential of students enrolled in the program and suggests sustained engagement in coursework and institutional expectations. According to Manansala and Garcia (2021), students who graduate with academic distinctions often exhibit enhanced cognitive and behavioral competencies, which contribute to improved employability outcomes. Similarly, Cruz and Santos (2020) emphasized that consistent academic performance even in the absence of Latin honors is commonly recognized by employers as a proxy for reliability, discipline, and learning agility during the recruitment process.

### **Licensure and Certification Examinations Passed**

With respect to credential attainment, 85% of respondents indicated that they had not passed any licensure or certification examinations. Only 13% reported earning Civil Service Eligibility, and 2% passed the National Certificate II (NC II) in Office Administration. These figures underscore a relatively low level of credentialing among BSOA graduates, which may present challenges in securing employment in sectors that prioritize formal certifications.

Despite the low participation rate in licensure and certification examinations, the acquisition of such credentials has been shown to enhance employment prospects, particularly in public service and clerical occupations. As Llego and Ubaldo (2022) noted, certifications such as Civil Service Eligibility and TESDA NC II serve as formal validation of core administrative competencies and significantly increase a candidate's credibility and marketability in competitive hiring environments. However, Dela Cruz and Ramos (2021) pointed out that many graduates lack the access, awareness, or institutional encouragement needed to pursue these additional qualifications. These findings imply the importance of strengthening institutional initiatives aimed at preparing and motivating students to obtain relevant certifications, particularly those aligned with the competencies of the BSOA program and current labor market requirements.

### Reasons for Choosing the BSOA Program

As shown in Table 2, the majority of respondents (68%) selected the BSOA program based on personal interest in Office Administration. Another 25% cited job opportunities after graduation as their primary motivator. A minority of respondents indicated external influences, including parental or peer suggestions (4%), scholarship availability (1%), and other unspecified reasons (2%). These findings suggest that the program predominantly attracts students who are intrinsically motivated and perceive the course as a viable path to gainful employment.

This observation is consistent with findings by Cruz and Feliciano (2021), who reported that personal interest is a principal factor in students' program selection, particularly within business-related disciplines. Such interest is often linked to aspirations for administrative competence and organizational efficacy. Alcantara and Lorenzo (2022) further emphasized that the practical orientation of Office Administration programs aligns with prevailing labor market trends, making these programs especially appealing to students who prioritize employability. While family and peer influence remain present, they appear to function more as secondary factors, especially among students with well-defined career goals. These insights reinforce the notion that Office Administration programs attract pragmatic and self-motivated individuals seeking both personal fulfillment and professional advancement.

### Employment Profile of the Respondents

Table 3 presents the employment profile of BSOA graduates from NORSU Main Campus I, covering the years 2022 to 2024. It includes information on current employment status, type of employment, industry sector, job position, and monthly salary. Respondents who indicated that they were unemployed were instructed to stop at this point, as the remaining questions were applicable only to those currently employed.

**Table 3. The Employment Profile of the Respondents**

Variables	Frequency	Percent
<b>Current Employment Status</b>		
Employed (Full-time)	90	90
Self-employed	4	4
Unemployed	5	5
Total	100	100
<b>Type of Employment</b>		
Permanent	57	60
Contractual	25	26
Probationary	12	13
Freelance	1	1
Total	95	100
<b>Industry Sector of Employment</b>		
Government	26	27



Private Company	56	59
BPO	11	12
Others	2	2
Total	95	100

  

<b>Job Level or Position</b>		
Entry-Level	68	72
Supervisor	8	8
Managerial	7	7
Executive	2	2
Others	10	11
Total	95	100

  

<b>Monthly Salary</b>		
Below Php 10,000	22	23
Php 10,000 - 15,000	46	48
Php 15,001 - 20,000	14	15
Php 20,001 - 25,000	9	9
Above 25,000	4	4
Total	95	100

### Current Employment Status

As shown in Table 3, the vast majority of respondents (90%) reported being employed full-time. A smaller percentage indicated self-employment (4%), while 5% were unemployed. This high rate of full-time employment suggests strong labor market integration among BSOA graduates, reflecting the program's effectiveness in preparing students with skills aligned with workforce demands.

This is consistent with findings by Torres and Ramos (2021), who reported high full-time employment rates among Office Administration graduates, attributing this to their competencies in administrative work, communication, and office technology. Delos Santos and Villanueva (2022) further emphasized that the practical, skill-based curriculum of BSOA programs contributes significantly to employability outcomes by equipping graduates with job-ready competencies.

### Type of Employment

Regarding the nature of employment, 60% of respondents held permanent positions, followed by 26% in contractual roles and 13% on probationary status. Only 1% were engaged in freelance work. These findings indicate that a majority of graduates secure stable and long-term employment soon after graduation, suggesting a strong alignment between graduate competencies and industry needs.

Mercado and Aragon (2021) found that graduates of business-related programs, particularly in Office Administration, often obtain permanent roles due to their proficiency in clerical, communication,



and organizational tasks. Similarly, Bautista and Delacruz (2022) concluded that job readiness and professional adaptability—key outcomes of a competency-based curriculum—are closely associated with employment stability.

### **Industry Sector**

Table 3 shows that 59% of employed graduates work in private companies, 27% are employed in the government sector, and 12% are in the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) industry. A small portion (2%) work in other sectors. This distribution demonstrates the versatility of the BSOA curriculum in preparing graduates for both public and private sector roles.

Rosales and Villanueva (2021) reported that Office Administration graduates often find employment across diverse sectors due to their transferable administrative skills, including document handling, communication, and office coordination. Reyes and Santos (2020) also emphasized that these core administrative functions are essential across industries, enhancing graduate adaptability and employability in varied settings.

### **Job Level or Position**

Most respondents (72%) reported occupying entry-level positions, while smaller percentages held supervisory (8%), managerial (7%), and executive (2%) roles. An additional 11% reported other classifications. The predominance of entry-level roles reflects the early career stage of most graduates, while the presence of graduates in higher positions indicates potential for career progression.

A tracer study by Reyes (2021) at Pangasinan State University found that most BSOA graduates begin in entry-level roles such as administrative assistants. Over time, however, many transition to supervisory or managerial positions as they accumulate experience. Similarly, Ganiera et al. (2024) highlighted that although most BSOA graduates begin in entry-level posts, their practical training and work ethic position them well for upward mobility, especially with continued professional development.

### **Monthly Salary**

With regard to income, 48% of respondents reported earning between PHP 10,000 and 15,000 per month. Another 23% earned below PHP 10,000, while 15% earned PHP 15,001 to 20,000. Nine percent (9%) reported earning PHP 20,001 to 25,000, and 4% received salaries above PHP 25,000. These results suggest that while most graduates are employed, many remain within entry-level income brackets, indicating opportunities for further training to enhance earning potential.

Ganiera et al. (2024) found that approximately 43% of BSOA graduates from Kapalong College of Agriculture, Sciences and Technology earned PHP 11,000 to 15,000, a range consistent with national trends for entry-level roles. Similarly, Reyes (2021) noted that over half of BSOA graduates at Pangasinan State University earned between PHP 10,000 and 15,000 monthly. Both studies underscore the importance of continuous skill development and curriculum updates to support graduates' access to higher-paying opportunities over time.

**First Job and Employment Process of the Respondents**

Table 4 presents key data on the respondents' initial employment experiences, including waiting time before securing their first job, methods used in job searching, factors influencing their employment decisions, and the perceived relevance of their first job to the BSOA program. These findings provide valuable insights into the transition of recent graduates into the workforce and highlight the early career pathways of BSOA alumni.

**Table 4. The First Job and Employment Process of the Respondents**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Employment Waiting Time</b>		
Less than 3 months	60	63
3 to 6 months	24	25
7 to 12 months	7	7
More than 1 year	4	4
Total	95	100
<b>Job Search Method Used</b>		
Online Job Portals	39	41
Referrals from family and friends	20	21
Walk-in application	28	29
Job fair or career events	5	5
Others	3	3
Total	95	100
<b>Factors Influencing Employment Decisions</b>		
Salary and benefits	35	37
Career growth opportunities	35	37
Job location	11	12
Work-life balance	14	15
Total	95	100
<b>First Job Relevant to the BSOA Program</b>		
Yes	62	65
No	33	35
Total	95	100

## **Employment Waiting Time**

As shown in Table 4, the majority of respondents (63%) secured their first job within less than three months after graduation. In contrast, only 4% experienced a waiting period of more than one year. These results indicate that most graduates transitioned quickly into the workforce, though a small portion faced extended periods of job searching.

This finding is consistent with a tracer study by Lopez, Callo, and Escandallo (2024), which reported that over half of the BSOA graduates from Kapalong College of Agriculture, Sciences, and Technology obtained employment within one to three months. The study attributed this swift transition to the relevance of the curriculum and the alignment of course content with industry requirements. Similarly, Ganiera et al. (2024) found that 43% of BSOA graduates secured jobs within the same timeframe, emphasizing the importance of practical training and labor market-aligned education in enhancing graduate employability.

## **Job Search Methods**

Regarding job search strategies, 41% of respondents found employment through online job portals, making it the most commonly used method. Walk-in applications followed at 29%, while job fairs or career events accounted for only 5%, the lowest reported method. These results suggest that digital platforms are the preferred and most effective channels for job searching among BSOA graduates.

This aligns with findings by Villanueva and Dela Cruz (2021), who noted that online job portals are increasingly favored due to their accessibility, wide range of listings, and faster response times. Mendoza and Santos (2022) similarly observed that while walk-in applications remain relevant, the convenience of digital job hunting has led to a steady decline in participation in traditional methods such as career fairs. Logistical challenges and limited awareness were also identified as barriers to job fair attendance, further underscoring the shift toward digital recruitment.

## **Factors Influencing Employment Decisions**

Table 4 shows that salary and benefits (37%) and opportunities for career growth (37%) were the most influential factors in respondents' employment decisions. In contrast, job location influenced only 12% of respondents. These findings indicate that financial compensation and advancement potential are key considerations for graduates when choosing employment, while geographic convenience is of lesser concern.

De Guzman and Pascual (2022) found similar results, highlighting that Filipino graduate prioritize competitive pay and clear promotion pathways as essential drivers of job satisfaction and long-term retention. Cruz and Mercado (2021) also concluded that while location is considered, it is often outweighed by the perceived benefits of compensation and career development opportunities. For BSOA graduates, this reflects a pragmatic approach to employment that emphasizes financial stability and professional growth.

## Relevance of First Job to Field of Study

Most respondents (65%) reported that their first job was related to their BSOA degree, while 35% found employment in fields unrelated to their academic background. These results suggest that a majority of graduates were able to apply their training directly in the workplace, although a significant portion entered roles outside their specialization.

Santos and Ramirez (2021) noted that business administration graduates from Philippine state universities frequently secure positions aligned with their academic preparation, largely due to the practical orientation of their programs. However, Villanueva and Dizon (2020) observed that various factors including job market saturation, personal career shifts, and financial necessity often lead graduates to accept employment outside their field of study. These findings underscore the importance of strengthening industry-academe partnerships to enhance job relevance and support graduates in securing roles that match their qualifications.

## Competencies in the Workplace

Table 5 presents the respondents' self-assessment of their workplace competencies across seven key domains: communication skills, technical and office skills, problem-solving and critical thinking, interpersonal and human relations, entrepreneurial and business management skills, leadership and supervisory skills, and work ethics and professionalism. These areas reflect essential competencies expected of office administration professionals and provide insight into how graduates perceive their preparedness for workplace demands.

**Table 5. Competencies in the Workplace**

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Description
1. Communication Skills	4.3895	0.98169	Very High
2. Technical and Office Skills	4.3579	0.95556	Very High
3. Problem Solving and Critical Thinking	4.2737	0.93901	Very High
4. Human Relations and Interpersonal Skills	4.4526	0.86009	Very High
5. Entrepreneurial and Business Management Skills	4.0316	1.01534	High
6. Leadership and Supervisory Skills	4.0947	0.93483	Hight
7. Work Ethics and Professionalism	4.6316	0.89979	Very High
Total	4.3188	0.94090	Very High

### Legend:

Mean	Range Interpretation
4.21 – 5.00	Very High
3.41 – 4.20	High
2.61 – 3.40	Low nor High
1.81 – 2.60	Low
1.00 – 1.80	Very Low

As shown in Table 5, Work Ethics and Professionalism received the highest mean score ( $M = 4.63$ ), indicating that respondents consistently exhibit strong ethical standards and professionalism in the workplace. This was followed by Human Relations and Interpersonal Skills ( $M = 4.45$ ), suggesting that graduates demonstrate high levels of collaboration, effective communication, and positive workplace interactions.

These results are consistent with the findings of De Guzman and Tan (2021), who highlighted the critical role of professionalism and interpersonal competence in administrative and service-oriented roles.

Entrepreneurial and Business Management Skills ( $M = 4.03$ ) and Leadership and Supervisory Skills ( $M = 4.09$ ) also received high ratings, though slightly lower than other areas. These scores indicate competence in these domains, while also suggesting opportunities for further development, particularly in preparing graduates for strategic responsibilities.

Mendoza and Rodriguez (2020) emphasized the importance of integrating stronger leadership and entrepreneurship components into higher education programs to prepare graduates for increasingly dynamic and competitive work environments.

The overall mean competency rating was 4.32 ( $SD = 0.94$ ), reflecting a very high level of perceived workplace competence among respondents. This suggests that graduates are well-prepared to meet the demands of professional roles, particularly in areas requiring ethical conduct, effective teamwork, and communication.

Despite the overall strength across all categories, the relatively lower scores in leadership and entrepreneurship highlight the need for targeted skill enhancement in these strategic areas. This aligns with the conclusions of Reyes and Almonte (2022), who noted that empowering graduates with advanced leadership and business skills enables them to transition from technical roles to strategic positions within organizations.

In summary, the consistently high ratings across all competency areas indicate that BSOA graduates possess both the technical proficiency and interpersonal strengths necessary for success in a variety of professional settings.

### **Challenges in Employment**

Table 6 outlines the respondents' perceptions of key challenges encountered during their job search. The analysis covers six areas: lack of work experience, labor market conditions, educational qualifications, competition with other applicants, personal constraints, and logistical issues. These variables provide insight into the barriers that BSOA graduates face as they transition from higher education to employment.

**Table 6. Challenges in Employment**

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Description
1. Lack of work experience	2.9684	1.25861	Moderate
2. Limited job opportunities in the market	3.3684	1.14903	High
3. Educational qualifications and certifications required	3.0105	1.30053	Moderate
4. High competition in job applications	3.4421	1.21791	High
5. Personal and family related constraints	2.4737	1.10936	Low
6. Geographic and transportation limitations	2.6421	1.10044	Moderate
7. Complexity of recruitment and hiring process	2.9895	1.17142	Moderate
Total	2.9850	1.18676	Moderate

**Legend:**

Mean	Range Interpretation
4.21 – 5.00	Very High
3.41 – 4.20	High
2.61 – 3.40	Low nor High
1.81 – 2.60	Low
1.00 – 1.80	Very Low

As shown in Table 6, high competition in job applications received the highest mean score ( $M = 3.44$ ), indicating that respondents perceive intense competition as a significant barrier to securing employment. This was closely followed by limited job opportunities ( $M = 3.37$ ), also rated as a high concern. These findings suggest that structural challenges within the labor market, such as oversaturation and limited vacancies, pose considerable difficulties for new graduates a trend similarly observed by Cruz and Martinez (2022).

In contrast, personal and family-related constraints received the lowest mean score ( $M = 2.47$ ), categorized as low. This indicates that such factors are not considered major obstacles by most respondents. This is consistent with the findings of Lim and de la Cruz (2020), who reported that external labor market conditions, rather than personal circumstances, primarily influence job-seeking behavior among Filipino youth.

The overall mean score of 2.99 ( $SD = 1.19$ ) suggests that graduates moderately experience employment-related challenges. While typical entry-level concerns such as lack of work experience, educational qualifications, and the complexity of recruitment processes were rated moderately, the most pressing issues remain centered on systemic factors namely job competition and market saturation.

David and Santos (2021) noted that skills mismatches and limited practical training are key contributors to transitional employment gaps among new graduates. Similarly, Reyes and Almonte (2022) emphasized the importance of bridging academic preparation with labor market demands through targeted interventions to enhance employability.

Overall, the results highlight the need for institutional strategies such as career readiness training, internship programs, and strengthened job placement support. Addressing these challenges could better align graduate competencies with employer expectations and facilitate smoother transitions into the workforce.

#### **4. Discussion**

The findings affirm that BSOA graduates from NORSU integrate relatively quickly into the workforce, supported by strong foundational skills. Their employment mostly in entry-level administrative roles is consistent with literature on early career trajectories for business graduates. However, lower confidence in leadership and entrepreneurial skills points to areas needing curricular reinforcement.

The dominance of digital job search platforms underscores the necessity of embedding digital career readiness into higher education. Moreover, aligning curricula with real-world requirements—such as certification opportunities and leadership training can enhance graduates' job market competitiveness.

This study reinforces the need for higher education institutions to continuously refine academic offerings, foster industry-academe partnerships, and support graduates' transition into the workforce through structured career services and certification programs.

#### **5. Conclusion**

This tracer study provides valuable insights into the employability and workforce integration of Bachelor of Science in Office Administration (BSOA) graduates from Negros Oriental State University, covering cohorts from 2022 to 2024. The findings reveal a high rate of full-time employment shortly after graduation, predominantly in entry-level positions within the private and government sectors. Graduates demonstrated strong competencies, particularly in work ethics, professionalism, and interpersonal skills, which are essential for their roles in administrative and clerical settings. However, the study also identified challenges such as intense competition in the labor market and limited pursuit of licensure and certification credentials, which may impede some graduates' employment prospects. Additionally, lower confidence in leadership and entrepreneurial skills suggests areas for curricular enhancement. Overall, the BSOA program effectively prepares its graduates for initial employment, but continued efforts are necessary to strengthen career advancement and adaptability in a dynamic labor market.

#### **6. Recommendations**

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance the employability and career development of BSOA graduates:

1. Curriculum Enhancement: Integrate advanced training in leadership, entrepreneurship, and certification preparation into the BSOA curriculum to equip students with strategic competencies and recognized credentials that improve employability.



2. Career Readiness Programs: Develop and institutionalize career services that include job search workshops, internship placements, and employer engagement activities to facilitate smoother transitions from academia to the workforce.
3. Strengthening Industry Partnerships: Foster stronger linkages with local and national industries, government agencies, and professional organizations to ensure curriculum relevance, create employment pipelines, and promote work-based learning opportunities.
4. Digital Literacy and Job Search Skills: Expand training on digital job search strategies, including effective use of online job portals and professional networking platforms, reflecting the prevalent recruitment methods identified in this study.
5. Alumni Tracking and Support: Establish a comprehensive alumnus tracking system and support network to monitor graduate outcomes and provide ongoing professional development resources.
6. Further Research: Encourage longitudinal studies to assess the long-term career progression of graduates and the impact of implemented interventions on employability and job satisfaction.

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