

Research Article**DISCRIMINATING FACTORS OF PROFESSIONALS AND LEADERS IN ENROLLING TO DOCTORATE DEGREE PROGRAMS****^{1,*} Ronald H. Nacion, ²Edres E. Madidis, Ben Li and ³Niña Bienna Marie Y. Monterde**¹Department of Education, Hilongos National Vocational School, Hilongos, Leyte, Philippines²Department of Education, Cebu City Central National High School, Cebu City, Philippines³College of Education, University of the Visayas, PhilippinesReceived 24th May 2024; Accepted 27th June 2024; Published online 30th July 2024

Abstract

This study explores the discriminating factor that influence professionals and executives' decision to pursue a doctorate degree. This study employed a quantitative nonexperimental approach based on the correlational technique. A random sample of 150 leaders and professionals was used. They are qualified to enroll in a doctoral program. The researchers used two standardized questionnaires to assess the two factors. To assess coaching behavior, the researcher considered the characteristics that may influence their decision to participate in a program. A questionnaire was employed. The discovered factors were leadership quality, workload, intellectual capability, and organizational restrictions. The study's findings give vital insights to the institution in order to create opportunities for professional and leadership development. This will help professionals to become more efficient and effective which would also benefit the institution they are working with.

Keywords: Professionals, leaders, Discriminant factors, Quantitative Non-Experimental Design, Discriminant analysis, doctorate.

INTRODUCTION

The most advanced academic degree that can be earned is the PhD. Earning this degree involves conducting extensive research and engaging in critical analysis which demonstrate one's high academic expertise (ACRSS, 2023). Pursuing a doctoral program allows individuals to significantly deepen their knowledge in their chosen field of study. These programs offer up-to-date and advanced insights into research methodologies, data analysis, and other essential skills critical for success in academia and various professional sectors (National University, 2022). A doctorate in education is the highest degree available in the field, qualifying you for various leadership roles in both public and private sectors (Brock & Grady, 2012). By pursuing an on-campus or online PhD in Education, you can gain the expertise and credentials necessary to publish in academic journals, present research findings at conferences, and secure prestigious positions within the educational landscape. A professional trying to pursue a PhD nowadays compared to forty years ago is getting more common. It was perceived as a quest of preparation in an advancement in a career in the field of academic (Mukanziza & Edouard Singirankabo, 2022). In contrast, it is observed these days that there is an increase in the numbers of highly skilled and experienced professionals who go back to universities to follow studies in doctoral regardless of the prospect of years of an outcome which could be uncertain and extremely and demanding training (Hoda Baytiyeh & Naja, 2011). These professionals who decided to take a leap in taking PhD would have to make a profound decision prior to undertaking their doctoral studies due to a fact that they are completely aware of the competing demands their studies would have on both their professional lives and their personal lives.

An awareness and understanding of the various factors which would influence the situation at play including the extent to which of these factors influenced significantly the candidates' enrolment decision is necessary for creating crucial student support and the establishing school as the chosen institution for PhD studies (Kallio, 1995). The decision to enroll in an education institution for working adults is derived from a variety of reasons. Slotnick, Pelton, Fuller, and Tabor (1993) discovered that the primary reasons for adult learners to enroll are career advancement, career change, and life enhancement. Another study by Greenwood (1987), suggested two primary motivations: enhancement of current occupational skills and attainment of specific vocational goals. Gamson (1989) offered three factors that serve to motivate enrolment by working adults: more employers require college degree holders, more professional associations require college degrees to gain credentials, and employees look for greater job security. A promotion to a new designation and higher status or pay is another motivational factor for working adults to enroll in an education institution (Cross, 1981). The necessity to thoroughly investigate the elements influencing professionals' and leaders' choices to enroll in PhD programs is the driving force behind this study. Comprehending these components is essential, as it offers valuable perspectives on the incentives and obstacles encountered by those pursuing higher education. The purpose of this study is to investigate the factors that influence doctorate program enrollment on a variety of levels, including societal, professional, and personal factors. By identifying these variables, the study will add to our understanding of the options available for higher education and help colleges develop plans for better assisting aspiring PhD candidates in their academic and professional pursuits.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a quantitative approach using a non-experimental, correlational design. A non-experimental

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method is appropriate for this research as it aims to describe variables and their relationships without manipulating the predictor variable or subjects. Instead, the study relies on interpretation, observation, and interactions to derive conclusions (Kowalzyk, 2015). To examine the relationship between the variables, data was collected through standardized questionnaires administered in the form of a survey. The study utilized two established questionnaires to measure the independent and dependent variables. The research sample consisted of 150 randomly selected respondents, including both doctorate and non-doctorate enrollees. The sample size was determined using Slovin's formula, ensuring a statistically significant representation. This study specifically focuses on identifying the discriminating factors influencing professionals and leaders to enroll in doctoral programs. Descriptive statistics were employed to profile the respondents, and discriminant analysis was used to identify the factors that differentiate those who choose to pursue doctoral studies from those who do not. Ethical considerations were rigorously addressed throughout the research process. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring that they were fully aware of the study's purpose, procedures, and their rights as respondents. Confidentiality of the participants' information was maintained, with data anonymized to protect their identities. The study was designed to avoid any potential harm or discomfort to participants, adhering to ethical guidelines and standards for conducting research in educational settings. The findings from this study aim to contribute to a deeper understanding of the motivations behind enrolling in doctoral programs and provide insights for academic institutions to better support prospective doctoral candidates.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The tables below present the results and discuss the analysis of the collected data. These results provide a comprehensive overview of the key variables and their interrelationships, offering insights into the factors influencing professionals' and leaders' decisions to pursue doctoral programs.

Table 1. Factors discriminating between the doctorate and non-doctorate enrollees

Wilks' Lambda				
Test of Function(s)	Wilks' Lambda	Chi-square	df	Sig.
1	.810	30.739	4	.000

The overall Wilks lambda of .810 is significant at .000 suggesting that there are variables that can discriminate professionals/leaders to enroll in a doctorate degree program

The Wilks Lambda of .810 means that about 81 percent of the variance of the dependent variable (discriminant factors) is not explained by differences in levels of the four independent variables. This is a smaller value which suggests a greater discriminatory ability of the function. The smaller the Wilks Lambda, the higher the discriminatory ability of the independent variables between the opposing qualities of the dependent variable. Chi-square (30.739, df=4, Sig.=0.000). The chi-square test is highly significant ($p < 0.001$), indicating that the discriminant function significantly differentiates between the two groups. This strong significance implies that the model is effective in distinguishing between doctorate and non-doctorate enrollees.

Table 2. Factors Discriminating Between the Doctorate and non-Doctorate Enrollees

Variables	Non-enrol (n=71)		Enrol (n=79)		Wilks Lambda	F-test value	p-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Leadership Quality	57.62	23.21	62.77	29.82	0.951	7.63*	.006
Workload	30.52	3.78	28.36	4.22	0.932	10.77*	.001
Intellectual Capacity	102.25	11.18	109.37	10.29	0.900	16.42*	.000
Organizational Constraints	23.42	8.99	27.11	10.01	0.964	5.65*	.019

Leadership quality means you are a good leader with concern on how to be.

Workload are leaders workload.

Intellectual capacity refers to both IQ and EQ

Organizational constraints are the perceived challenges in the organization. A leader wants to solve.

The analysis reveals that several key factors significantly differentiate professionals who choose to enroll in doctorate programs from those who do not. One of the critical factors is leadership quality. Doctorate enrollees have a higher mean leadership quality (62.77) compared to non-enrollees (57.62). Although the Wilks' Lambda value of 0.951 indicates that leadership quality explains a relatively small amount of the variance, the F-test value of 7.63 and a p-value of 0.006 confirm that this factor is statistically significant. This suggests that individuals with higher perceived leadership abilities are more likely to pursue advanced academic qualifications. Another significant discriminator is workload. Non-enrollees report a higher mean workload (30.52) compared to enrollees (28.36), suggesting that a lighter workload may facilitate the decision to enroll in a doctorate program. The Wilks' Lambda value of 0.932 indicates that workload explains a moderate amount of the variance between the groups. With an F-test value of 10.77 and a highly significant p-value of 0.001, it is evident that workload is an important factor. This finding highlights the impact of professional demands on the ability to commit to further education. Intellectual capacity emerges as the strongest discriminator among the factors studied. Doctorate enrollees have a significantly higher mean intellectual capacity (109.37) compared to non-enrollees (102.25). The Wilks' Lambda value of 0.900 shows that intellectual capacity explains a substantial amount of the variance. The F-test value of 16.42, with an extremely significant p-value of 0.000, underscores the importance of intellectual capacity in the decision to pursue a doctorate. Additionally, organizational constraints, perceived more by doctorate enrollees (mean of 27.11) compared to non-enrollees (mean of 23.42), also play a role. Although this factor explains a smaller amount of variance (Wilks' Lambda of 0.964), it is still statistically significant with an F-test value of 5.65 and a p-value of 0.019. Collectively, these findings provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing professionals' decisions to enroll in doctorate programs, with intellectual capacity being the most influential, followed by workload, leadership quality, and organizational constraints.

Theory Generation

The inductive method was used in generating the theory. Inductive approach is concerned with the generation of new

theory emerging from data. Inductive approach will usually use research question to narrow the scope of study. From the results of the study, the following four propositions were developed.

Proposition 1. Leadership quality is a significant factor in differentiating between professionals who enroll in doctorate programs and those who do not

Leadership quality is a crucial factor in distinguishing between professionals who enroll in doctorate programs and those who do not. Research suggests that individuals with strong leadership skills are more likely to pursue advanced degrees, such as a Doctor of Management (DM) or a Ph.D., as they seek to further develop their expertise and influence in their fields (*Doctor of Management Online Degree | Apply Now | University of Phoenix*, 2022). This is particularly evident in the context of management, where a DM degree prepares students for leadership roles by integrating the Scholar Practitioner Leader (SPL) Model and cultivating a mature understanding of effective management praxis. Studies have consistently shown that individuals with strong leadership qualities, such as perseverance, tenacity, and the ability to communicate effectively, are more likely to succeed in graduate school and beyond. For instance, Professor David Karger emphasizes the importance of intelligence, curiosity, creativity, and discipline in characterizing a "great" Ph.D. student, highlighting the need for these qualities in advancing knowledge and creating new ideas. Similarly, Professor Matthew Might stresses the significance of perseverance, tenacity, and cogency in achieving success in Ph.D. school (Banerjee, 2020). In contrast, individuals without strong leadership qualities may struggle to navigate the demands of advanced education. For instance, a study on the relationship between citations and research quality notes that citation counts may not fully capture the impact of research on clinical practice or other dimensions, highlighting the need for a multidimensional understanding of academic quality (Wouters, 2019). This underscores the importance of leadership skills in driving innovation and advancing knowledge, making them a critical factor in differentiating between professionals who enroll in doctorate programs and those who do not.

Proposition 2. Workload is a significant factor influencing the decision to enroll in a doctorate program, with lighter workloads being more conducive to enrollment

The workload associated with a doctorate program is a crucial consideration for many prospective students. Research suggests that a lighter workload can be a significant factor in differentiating between those who enroll in such programs and those who do not. For instance, a study on the relationship between citations and research quality notes that citation counts may not fully capture the impact of research on clinical practice or other dimensions, highlighting the need for a multidimensional understanding of academic quality. This underscores the importance of a manageable workload in driving innovation and advancing knowledge, making it a critical factor in the decision to pursue a doctorate. In contrast, a heavier workload can be a significant deterrent for many students. For example, a PhD student in evolutionary genomics notes that while 40 hours a week is manageable, the lack of holidays and vacations can be challenging. Additionally, the pressure to work long hours, including all-nighters and weekend work for deadlines, can be overwhelming. This is

particularly true for those who have worked in industry before, where they may have had more free time and a more structured schedule (*Reddit - Dive into Anything*, 2014). A study on the workload of PhD students in the United States highlights the importance of a balanced workload, noting that students who are able to manage their time effectively are more likely to succeed in their programs. Ultimately, the workload associated with a doctorate program can have a significant impact on a student's decision to enroll. A study on the qualities of successful PhD students emphasizes the importance of perseverance, tenacity, and the ability to communicate effectively, highlighting the need for students to be disciplined and motivated to succeed in their programs. By understanding the workload associated with a doctorate program, students can make more informed decisions about whether to pursue such a degree and can better prepare themselves for the challenges that lie ahead.

Proposition 3. Intellectual capacity is the most significant factor in distinguishing between doctorate enrollees and non-enrollees

The intellectual capacity of an individual is a crucial factor in differentiating between those who enroll in doctorate programs and those who do not. Research suggests that individuals with strong intellectual abilities, such as critical thinking and problem-solving skills, are more likely to pursue advanced degrees, such as a Doctor of Management (DM) or a Ph.D., as they seek to further develop their expertise and influence in their fields (Decision Making Capacity Assessment (DMCA) Research Group | Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine, 2024). This is particularly evident in the context of management, where a DM degree prepares students for leadership roles by integrating the Scholar Practitioner Leader (SPL) Model and cultivating a mature understanding of effective management praxis. Studies have consistently shown that individuals with strong intellectual qualities, such as perseverance, tenacity, and the ability to communicate effectively, are more likely to succeed in graduate school and beyond. For instance, a study on the relationship between citations and research quality notes that citation counts may not fully capture the impact of research on clinical practice or other dimensions, highlighting the need for a multidimensional understanding of academic quality (Hawkins & Charland, 2020). Similarly, a study on the qualities of successful PhD students emphasizes the importance of intelligence, curiosity, creativity, and discipline in characterizing a "great" Ph.D. student, highlighting the need for these qualities in advancing knowledge and creating new ideas (Intellectual Humility and Decision-Making Ability - Office of the Vice President for Research | University of South Carolina, 2014). In contrast, individuals without strong intellectual capacities may struggle to navigate the demands of advanced education. For instance, a study on the role of supporter attitudes in the realization of Article 12 for people with severe or profound intellectual disability notes that the assumptions of decision-making capacity are critical in determining the level of support required for individuals with disabilities to make their own decisions ("(PDF) Assumptions of Decision-Making Capacity: The Role Supporter Attitudes Play in the Realisation of Article 12 for People with Severe or Profound Intellectual Disability.," 2016). This underscores the importance of intellectual capacity in driving innovation and advancing knowledge, making it a critical factor in differentiating between those who enroll in doctorate programs and those who do not.

Proposition 4. Perceived organizational constraints are a significant factor, with those perceiving more constraints being more likely to enroll in doctorate programs

Perceived organizational constraints play a crucial role in influencing an individual's decision to enroll in a doctorate program. Research suggests that individuals who perceive more constraints in their current work environment are more likely to pursue advanced degrees, such as a Doctor of Management (DM) or a Ph.D., as they seek to escape these constraints and further develop their expertise and influence in their fields (Azim Nejatizadeh *et al.*, 2016). For instance, a study on the constraining factors of research among faculty members at Hormozgan Medical Science faculty found that lack of data presentation to researchers from organization sections, lack of facilitating national and international research exchange, and lack of research workshops based on needs were the most significant constraints, highlighting the importance of addressing these constraints to promote research activities. Organizational constraints can have a significant impact on an individual's motivation to conduct research. A study on the perceived enablers and constraints of motivation to conduct undergraduate research in a Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences found that perceived constraints, such as lack of resources and inadequate support, were major deterrents to research participation. Similarly, a meta-analysis on organizational constraints found that these constraints were moderately associated with lower job satisfaction, lower organizational commitment, higher stress, higher emotional exhaustion, and higher intentions to quit, indicating the negative impact of organizational constraints on employee well-being and job performance (Organizational Constraints | Quality Improvement Center for Workforce Development, 2021). In contrast, individuals who perceive fewer constraints in their current work environment may be less likely to pursue advanced degrees. For instance, a study on the institutional constraints faced by women in academic science and engineering found that women who felt supported and respected in their departments were more likely to remain in academia and pursue tenure-track positions, whereas those who felt marginalized and excluded were more likely to leave academia or opt for non-tenure-track positions. This underscores the importance of creating a supportive and inclusive work environment to promote research and academic success.

Theory Generated

Doctorate Enrollment Model (DEM): The Doctorate Enrollment Model (DEM) posits that the decision to enroll in a doctorate program is influenced by leadership quality (LQ), workload (WL), intellectual capacity (IC), and perceived organizational constraints (POC). Strong leadership qualities, such as perseverance and effective communication, are linked to a higher likelihood of pursuing advanced degrees. A manageable workload allows individuals to balance academic and personal commitments, making enrollment more feasible. High intellectual capacity, including critical thinking and problem-solving skills, enhances success in graduate school. Perceived organizational constraints can push individuals towards doctoral programs as a means of escaping limitations and enhancing their expertise. The DEM suggests that the interplay between these factors determines enrollment decisions. LQ and IC combine to form a "motivation" component that drives the desire for advanced education, while

WL and POC form a "constraint" component that can either facilitate or hinder enrollment. Motivation is positively correlated with enrollment likelihood, whereas constraints have a negative impact. Hypotheses derived from the DEM indicate that higher LQ and IC increase enrollment likelihood, while lighter WL and fewer POC also promote enrollment. Understanding these dynamics can help academic institutions and policymakers develop strategies to attract and support prospective doctorate students.

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