

Bar Examination Performance and Post-Bar Job Satisfaction of Lawyers

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DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2025.90400200>

Received: 20 March 2025; Accepted: 01 April 2025; Published: 06 May 2025

ABSTRACT

The bar examination is notorious for being one of the most challenging licensing examinations to pass in the Philippines. However, despite the heavy preparations for the bar examination, post-bar job satisfaction is still uncertain and even rates low in some literature. In this study, the researchers identified the relationship between bar passers' examination performance and their job satisfaction after passing the bar and how bar examination performance influences the post-bar job satisfaction of bar passers in Davao del Sur. Employing a quota sampling technique to gather data, it examined the level of bar examination performance and job satisfaction of 55 lawyers in Davao del Sur through a survey. Results presented the lawyers' bar examination performances as satisfactory ($M=79.43$, $SD=3.69$). Moreover, findings showed that the overall mean of post-bar job satisfaction is very high ($M=4.25$, $SD=0.46$). Findings revealed a weak positive correlation between the bar examination performance of bar passers and their job satisfaction after passing the bar examination ($r=0.305$), indicating a significant relationship. Additionally, the result showed that the bar examination performance could significantly influence the lawyers' job satisfaction based on perception ($p < 0.05$). The R square of 0.093 connotes that only 9.3% of the variation in post-bar job satisfaction can be attributed to the influence of the bar passers' bar examination performance. This result indicates that other factors affecting job satisfaction could not be examined. Future researchers should investigate other factors not covered in this research study.

Keywords: bar examination performance, post-bar job satisfaction, lawyers, Philippin

INTRODUCTION

Over the years, the rate of bar examination passers from Mindanao has continued to rise, but the job satisfaction rate has stayed low. Bar takers do unending readings and reviews for preparation; however, there are instances that even after passing the bar examination, passers still cannot get the job that they want. Therefore, they either settle for another job or remain unemployed. On one hand, some may not be satisfied with their chosen career because of external and internal factors such as necessities and pressure. On the other hand, those who have become lawyers may gain satisfaction. However, passers may not be satisfied with either of the potential outcomes.

The global bar passing rate has experienced fluctuations at times. In the past years, the pass rates of passers have been dropping. The study by Ryan and Muller in Florida (2023) shows that the percentage of recent law school graduates passing the bar exam has fallen and is still relatively low. According to an April 22 press release from the American Bar Association (ABA), as of March 2024, around 10 months after graduation, 85.6% of the 30,160 graduates of the 195 ABA-accredited law schools in 2023 were employed. That compared to 84.6% of 2022 graduates and 83% of 2021 graduates. These studies imply that job employment after passing the bar examination, although it decreases in percentage, is likely guaranteed. Moreover, Dinovitzer and Garth (2007), cited by Andresen and Stapf (2022), said that the law school ranking of American attorneys reduces professional satisfaction and increases the likelihood of a job hunt for the most successful new lawyers.

Several lawyers experiencing job dissatisfaction have also been reported. According to a survey of 300 U.S. in-house lawyers by Moran (2023), 89% of in-house counsel said they are experiencing dissatisfaction with their jobs, and three in 10 said they were very unsatisfied with their position. Additionally, Gattenio (2017) stated that on a happiness scale of 1 to 7, public lawyers in Arizona scored an average of 6.8, whereas private lawyers scored 6.06. Another study showed that the rate of lawyers who reported experiencing burnout was 44% in the third quarter and 47% in the fourth (Debra, 2022). This signifies differences in the satisfaction level of lawyers in different work environments. Moreover, in a study by Dinovitzer (2015), Canadian bar takers consider professions other than pursuing law, signifying bar examination passers' uncertainty about their professional paths. Despite passing the difficult examinations, alternative career paths are considered due to role dissatisfaction and job challenges of lawyers.

Education is considered one of the most critical investments in human capital. As examination takers strive to pass a challenging exam or receive good grades, doing well on exams can help them develop and accomplish goals. This sense of accomplishment can provide the groundwork for future success in both the professional and academic lives of students in India (Rachh, 2024). The study by Ahmad et al. (2024) showed that the only factor that adversely correlates with the job satisfaction of attorneys in Okara, Pakistan, is qualification, indicating that while basic knowledge is important for job satisfaction, advanced knowledge is not. Solomon et al. (2021) also said that obtaining a greater degree of education results in a more satisfying career. Higher educational attainment can lead to more attractive job opportunities, greater labor force flexibility, and more rewarding jobs.

From the ASIAN perspective, job satisfaction of employees with higher ranks is higher than that of employees with lower ranks and is positively influenced by job qualifications. The researchers were not able to find literature relating to examination performance and job satisfaction in the context of lawyers, however, in a study by Amarasena et al. (2015) about the effects of demographic factors on the job satisfaction of university faculty members in Sri Lanka depicted that the satisfaction levels of academic staff members possessing bachelor's degree were marginally lower than those holding masters and doctoral degrees - PhDs. On the other hand, ASEAN law graduates face difficulties in settling for a career. Graduates find it challenging to find acceptable jobs or career possibilities in Indonesia (Khotijah et al., 2019). Additionally, over half of attorneys are pleased with their profession in Vietnam (Pham, 2020). Only four out of ten lawyers with 6 to 9 years of experience report being pleased with their careers.

The Philippines' low bar exam passing rate can affect lawyers' overall job satisfaction. According to Austero and Armenia (2012), as cited by Cornillez et al. (2021), the likelihood of employment was higher for Visayan graduates who obtained honors and awards, performed well on walk-in applications, received recommendations from well-known individuals, scored higher on the licensing exam, and replied correctly to job advertisements. Lina (2023) stated that it can be challenging to succeed, as the passing percentage for the 2023 bar exams in the Philippines is 36.77%, which is lower than the previous edition's 43.47% and a drastic fall from the 2020-2021 bar passing rate of 72.28%. Not all new bar passers will join private practice; some will work in the government and corporate sectors or start businesses (Romero, 2017). However, significant private legal firms continued to have unsatisfactory working conditions. 77% of those employed in these businesses were twice as likely to be negatively impacted by a greater emphasis on economic sustainability than 38% of respondents employed in other contexts (Monahan & Swanson, 2019).

Opportunities after passing the bar vary depending on the passers' bar examination performance. Based on an informal conversation with the lawyers in Digos City, one said that job satisfaction depends on why one pursues law. Additionally, some passers feel high satisfaction as corporate lawyers because of their job stability and financial compensation. However, those who prefer extreme fields like crime defense and litigation often feel dissatisfaction in the corporate field. Moreover, job satisfaction may lead to switching careers. In a study about job switching in Davao City by Berdos and Deluna (2015), those who finished their preferred degree had a higher probability of job switching. Uncertainty about career direction can significantly affect job satisfaction for new lawyers after passing the bar examination.

The urgency of conducting this study arises from the lack of literature about bar passers' bar examination performance and their post-bar job satisfaction in local contexts and specialized research. There are insufficient studies in that field, and the queries have yet to be addressed. No previous research has specifically addressed the post-bar job satisfaction of bar passers in Davao del Sur. None of the existing literature discussed the impact that bar test scores may have on the level of work satisfaction among lawyers in the Philippines, particularly in Davao del Sur; thus, there is a need to conduct this study.

This study is best seen through the lenses of (a) the Signaling Model of Education by Spence (1973) and (b) the Human Capital Theory by Becker and Schultz (1960), which may highlight various aspects that may explain the connection between the passers' bar examination performance and post-bar job satisfaction. The signaling theory states that those who go to college convey to potential employers that they are more competent employees. Thus, education distinguishes between those who are low-productive and those who are high-productive and more educated. A person's educational background, such as a degree or passing a licensing exam, indicates they are highly suited for the positions companies seek. Furthermore, because passing the bar test is often regarded as an indication of professionalism and expertise, a legal degree improves one's chances of landing a desired job, as explained by the signaling model of education.

The Human Capital Theory, established by Becker and Schultz (1960), suggests that individuals' educational skills and experience contribute to their earning potential. Bar passers with specialized work experience will likely take advantage of these opportunities to advance their careers and increase their income. Human capital theory generally assumes that people behave in ways that will boost their future incomes and general well-being. The theory suggests that high-achieving bar passers with relevant work experience can leverage these opportunities for career development and satisfaction, highlighting the impact of examination performance on an individual's earning potential and job satisfaction.

Statement of the Problem

The main objective of this research was to determine the relationship between the bar passers' examination performance and post-bar job satisfaction. Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of bar passers' examination performance?
2. What is the level of post-bar job satisfaction of the passers?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the bar passers' examination performance and post-bar job satisfaction?
4. Does the bar examination result influence the post-bar job satisfaction of lawyers?

Hypotheses

To objectively answer the questions listed in the preceding section, the following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at a 0.05 level of significance:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between the bar passers' examination results and post-bar job satisfaction.

H₀₂: Bar examination results do not influence the post-bar job satisfaction of lawyers.

Significance of the Study

Assessing the impact of Davao del Sur bar passers' examination performance on their post-bar job satisfaction and understanding the relationship of the two variables holds significant importance. The results from this study are beneficial to society, specifically for the following:

Philippine Bar Association Officials. As the oldest voluntary national organization of lawyers in the Philippines, this study is beneficial to promoting competence in the legal profession.

Lawyers. This study appraises lawyers of the frustration that job dissatisfaction engenders within the profession and aids in determining the factors affecting job dissatisfaction, specifically their bar examination performance.

Bar Examination Takers. The results of this study allow bar examination takers to anticipate future outcomes after taking the examination. Moreover, this aids the bar takers in thoroughly assessing their career plans.

Law Students. This research study proposes that law students assess their plans and themselves better before taking the bar examination. In the same way, it can aid career planning.

Future Researchers. By examining this study, future researchers can identify areas with little or no research, allowing them to utilize the gathered data as a foundation for further analysis and exploration of the satisfaction of law students and beyond.

Scope and Limitations

This quantitative descriptive-correlational research study centered on assessing the impact of the level of bar examination performance on the post-bar job satisfaction of bar passers. It specifically involved determining the relationship between the bar passers' examination performance and their employment satisfaction after passing the examination. This research was conducted in Davao del Sur. The respondents were bar passers from different municipalities and cities in the province who had practiced law for over a year. The study covered the period from November 2024 to February 2025.

This study, confined to a single province in Mindanao, has limitations due to its focus on Davao del Sur, a province with a high number of lawyers. Data was collected through survey questionnaires and online forms, using a quota sampling technique. Bar passers, regardless of their post-bar job, were the respondents. The study also used regression analysis to examine the relationship between bar passers' examination performance and post-bar job satisfaction, revealing that other factors were not considered in the analysis.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined to provide a better understanding of the study.

Bar Examination Performance. This refers to the result of an examination held by a jurisdiction's bar association that a lawyer must pass before being admitted to that jurisdiction's bar (Merriam-Webster, n.d). This study refers to different levels of total weighted examination scores.

Job Satisfaction. It is the level of contentment employees feel about their jobs (BasuMallick, 2021). In this study, this term refers to the satisfaction passers think about their professional work and activities after passing the bar examination.

METHODS

In this chapter, researchers discussed the study's research design, respondents, measures, sampling procedure, data collection procedure, data analysis, and ethical consideration methods. Specifically, this chapter thoroughly explained the research study's methodology, including the aspects the researchers followed in interpreting the results comprehensively in pursuit of the research questions.

Research Design

This study used quantitative research to examine the relationship and assess the impact of bar examination performance on post-bar job satisfaction among bar passers. Quantitative research explains the phenomena and infers relationships or tests hypotheses by collecting numerical data using structured instruments. The data are

analyzed using statistical methods to provide conclusions regarding the examined research questions (Mat Roni et al., 2020). Additionally, the researchers used the descriptive-correlational method to quantify it.

According to Stangor and Walinga (2024), this design involves measuring two or more pertinent variables and determining whether there is a correlation between or among them. This method has been proven helpful in gathering data on the current status, which includes correlational phenomena to characterize what is known about the variables and their conditions.

The researchers used these methods as the most suitable designs to handle the study's objectives: to address and assess the relationship and impact of bar passers' examination performance on post-bar job satisfaction. Therefore, the study utilized this research design to determine the significant impact and correlation between the bar passers' examination performance and post-bar job satisfaction in Davao del Sur.

Respondents

To be eligible for this study, the respondents were from Davao del Sur, had passed the bar examination, and practiced law for at least a year. Respondents also had the mental capacity to comply with the study's requirements and were willing to give informed consent and participate in the quantitative surveys. Bar passers were chosen as the target respondents for this study for various reasons. First, Mindanao law colleges ranked in recent bar examinations with strong passing rates. Second, focusing on bar passers in a specific location assures a consistent degree of employment satisfaction, which could indicate a stable routine and lifestyle suitable for observing and influencing post-bar job satisfaction. Finally, reducing the scope allows the study to understand better the relationship between bar examination performance and post-bar employment satisfaction in a particular context.

To ensure that the study achieved the significant result it aimed for, the researchers prepared an exclusion criterion. Suppose a respondent had a significant cognitive impairment or mental health condition that could make it difficult to answer the research surveys and did not qualify with the abovementioned inclusion criteria. In that case, he or she was excluded from participating in the study. Moreover, recent bar passers who have not practiced law for over a year were excluded from this study. These criteria ensured the quality and dependability of the data gathered for analysis and helped to concentrate the study on the target group of Davao del Sur bar passers.

Sampling Technique

The study employed a quota sampling technique to identify and determine the necessary sample size. Quota sampling is a non-probability method that relies on the non-random selection of a predetermined number or proportion of units (Nikolopoulou, 2023). In this study, the researchers identified the required 55 sample size. Then they chose respondents who met predefined criteria, such as bar passers who reside within Davao del Sur and have at least a year of law service. The survey was distributed both physically and online. Besides that, the respondents were also instructed about the standard methods for completing the survey questionnaire to guarantee reliable and accurate findings.

In the case of the research study and the demographic area of Davao del Sur, the quota sampling technique is the most suitable method. According to Simkus (2023), the quota sampling technique is a rapid technique that requires a smaller budget than other methods, which helps researchers find respondents. Moreover, while having these advantages, quota sampling also ensured that in conducting this research study, researchers were subject to specific requirements or limitations which kept track of how many respondents were permitted to finish a survey based on criteria set by the researchers, aiming to utilize preeminent lawyers in Davao del Sur. In conclusion, these factors determine the study's effectiveness and suitability of the quota sampling technique.

Data Gathering Procedure

To guarantee a systematic data collection procedure and accomplish the intended result of gathering sufficient and highly relevant data, the following procedures were used and followed for the conduct of the study:

1. The researchers secured a letter of approval from the school principal to proceed with the data gathering.
2. The researchers obtained reliable questionnaires relevant to this study. Professionals validated the questionnaires to ascertain their reliability.
3. The researchers conducted a pilot test to test the reliability of the research instrument.
4. The statistician's recommended approach was used to determine the final number of research participants.
5. The researchers provided the selected respondents with essential information about their participation in this study. They explained the ethical considerations, including their right to accept or decline the researchers' invitation.
6. Respondents who consented to participate in the study received a physical survey form or a link to a Google form, which they completed in 5-10 minutes.
7. Researchers securely gathered and stored the questionnaires in a location accessible only to them, ensuring they did not violate the ethical guidelines they aimed to follow.
8. The gathered questionnaires were examined, computed, and interpreted using the most objective statistical analysis method to obtain precise results for this study.

Measures

The study's research instrument consisted of two surveys combined in one survey form. The first instrument is a researcher-made one-question survey. This survey tool involved an interpretation scale of total weighted scores with descriptive equivalents that are highly satisfactory, satisfactory, and unsatisfactory. The respondents answered the questionnaire by indicating the total weighted scores from their bar examination. Table 1 below served as a basis for interpreting the total weighted score of the bar passers as supported by the Grading System for the 2020/21 Bar Examinations Resolution issued by the Philippine Supreme Court (2021).

Table 1. Interpretation scale of bar examination performance

Total Weighted Scores	Descriptive Equivalent	Interpretation
>85%	Highly Satisfactory	Respondents show exemplary performance in the bar examination.
75-84.9%	Satisfactory	Respondents show satisfactory performance in the bar examination.
<75%	Unsatisfactory	Respondents show unsatisfactory performance in the bar examination.

Another tool from the Comparison of Role Conflict, Self-Efficacy, Job Satisfaction, and Job Involvement (Chin et al., 2012) study was employed with modification to measure bar passers' post-bar work satisfaction. It is a 15-item self-report questionnaire designed to assess the satisfaction of bar test passers with their post-bar job employment. This survey tool involved a five-point scale ranging from strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, and strongly agree, representing the amount of satisfaction the bar passers experienced after the examination. Due to the modification of the questionnaire, the researchers carried out a pilot test to demonstrate the validity and reliability of this instrument. This questionnaire was proven reliable when the

pilot testing demonstrated high reliability, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.805. Table 2 describes the interpretations of the study's results.

Table 2. Rating scale of post-bar job satisfaction

Mean Scores	Descriptive Equivalent	Interpretation
4.21 - 5.00	Very High	Respondents were extremely satisfied with their post-bar job.
3.41 - 4.20	High	Respondents are genuinely satisfied with their post-bar job.
2.61 - 3.40	Moderate	Respondents are moderately satisfied with their post-bar job.
1.81 - 2.60	Low	Respondents are not satisfied with their post-bar job.
1.00 - 1.80	Very Low	Respondents are dissatisfied with their post-bar job.

Data Analysis

The results of the study were quantified using the following statistical methods:

The **mean score** was employed to quantify the degree of bar examination performance and post-bar job satisfaction among the respondents. The mean is a statistical metric that represents the average score of the participants in each variable, serving as a measure of central tendency (Sykes et al., 2016). This was utilized to answer research questions 1 and 2.

The **Pearson correlation coefficient (r)** was used to investigate the relationship between bar passers' examination results and post-bar job satisfaction. The Pearson correlation coefficient assesses the strength and direction of a link between two variables (Vetter & Schober, 2018). A high correlation coefficient suggests a strong association. In contrast, a negative coefficient indicates a harmful link. The coefficient's magnitude represents the correlation's intensity, with values closer to +1 or -1 indicating a stronger association. This was utilized to answer research question 3.

In addition, **regression analysis** was used to determine whether there is a significant association between bar passers' examination results and post-bar employment satisfaction. According to Mahbobi and Tieman (2015), regression analysis allows us to quantify the extent to which changes in the independent variable can explain changes in the dependent variable. It aids in determining the influence of the independent variable on forecasting the dependent variable. This was used to answer research question number 4.

Ethical Consideration

This study places significant importance on ethical considerations to protect the rights of the study respondents.

Informed consent is a vital component of this study, ensuring that participants provided their consent with a thorough grasp of the potential consequences. Respondents were thoroughly informed about the benefits and potential dangers of participating in the research (American Psychological Association, 2020). This process was carried out in compliance with recognized ethical principles, indicating their willing participation.

Privacy and Confidentiality are critical to the integrity of this research. In this context, privacy refers to being secluded from public scrutiny, whereas confidentiality ensures that sensitive information is safely kept and

only accessible to authorized individuals. All personal information gathered for this study was kept confidential, with strict safeguards to prevent unauthorized access (Resnik, 2018).

Voluntary participation emphasizes the autonomy of all research subjects in choosing whether or not to participate, free of force or pressure. It is critical to support and accept participants' decisions without imposing any negative repercussions or seeking to influence their choices. Even if chosen randomly, participants who chose not to answer had their decision respected, and no attempt was made to pressure or persuade them otherwise. According to Nosenzo and Tufano's (2017) findings, this devotion ensures an accurate and voluntary engagement culture.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter deals with the presentation, analysis, and interpretation of data gathered from the qualified respondents during the conducted data collection. It began by discussing the bar passers' level of bar examination performance, then followed by the discussion of the respondents' job satisfaction after passing the bar. The chapter ended by presenting the relationship between the bar passers' examination performance and post-bar job satisfaction.

Level of Bar Examination Performance among Bar Passers in Davao del Sur

Table 3 shows the level of bar examination performance among bar passers in Davao del Sur. It shows that the overall mean of this variable is 79.43, which is described as satisfactory, which means that the respondents have satisfactory examination performance. It suggests that bar passers in Davao del Sur obtained satisfactory bar examination scores. Furthermore, the overall standard deviation is 3.69, indicating that the ratings provided by the respondents are mainly consistent and show minimal variation.

Table 3. Level of Bar Examination Performance among Bar Passers in Davao del Sur

	Mean	SD	Description
Bar Examination Performance	79.43	3.69	Satisfactory

This finding is supported by Boyd (n.d.), that a score of 280 (approximately the 73rd percentile) is generally considered to be a good score, and a score of 300 to 330 (90th to 99th percentile) is considered to be excellent. Only 3,812 or 36.77 percent of the 10,387 law graduates who took the 2023 bar test passed, making the Philippine bar exam undoubtedly one of the most difficult licensure exams in the nation (Barlis, 2023).

The study of Morton (2016) and Eagan et al. (2017) stated that getting a satisfactory job remains one of the most important reasons students pursue higher education. Additionally, the primary motivations for students attending law school include pursuing a challenging and rewarding career, furthering their academic development, and working toward financial security (Bauld, 2023). Moreover, Maslen (2019) said that the motivation for students to pursue a career in law is also rooted in personal achievement, meaningful work, and promising opportunities for career advancement; thus, attesting to the argument that bar examination performance is an essential factor in the bar passers' employment satisfaction.

Despite the related literature supporting this study's findings, Bratman (2015) said that scholars and professionals widely and rightfully criticize the bar examination as unrelated to the real work of lawyers. This suggests that bar passers' examination scores do not play any role in the actual job of lawyers. In Nevada, USA, Scott et al. (2023) found that performance on both the Multistate Bar Examination (MBE) and essay components of the Nevada Bar has little relationship with the assessed lawyering effectiveness of new lawyers, calling into question the usefulness of these tests.

The preceding paragraph explained that the results also concern the bar passers' demographic getting into an adequate job. According to Ryan and Muller (2023), bar excellence depends on various circumstances,

including matriculant credentials, systemic racism, privilege, transfer rates, pedagogy, and academic attrition. Moreover, Cavanaugh (2021) assesses the privilege of where someone received their high school graduation, where they attended college, their money, their familial circumstances, and their ability to score well on standardized examinations. If an examinee lacks privilege in any or all of those areas, they are less likely to pass the bar test on their first attempt, regardless of their rigorous legal education. Students from disadvantaged groups typically have less educational privilege than their White counterparts, which affects their performance on standardized tests such as the bar examination.

Level of Post-Bar Job Satisfaction among Bar Passers in Davao del Sur

The data in Table 4 reveals that the overall mean of the lawyers' post-bar job satisfaction is 4.25, which is very high. This indicates that the respondents were extremely satisfied with their post-bar job. The interpretation of a very high level suggests that bar passers in Davao del Sur are extremely satisfied with their job after passing the bar examinations. Furthermore, the overall standard deviation is 0.46, which is below one, indicating that the ratings provided by the respondents are mainly consistent, with minimal variation.

Based on the results, the respondents perceived a very high level of job satisfaction, as reflected in their interest in their job and the sense of achievement they feel upon completing work, with average ratings of 4.82 and 4.80, respectively. This suggests that respondents were extremely satisfied with their job after passing the bar examination. On the other hand, respondents rated the statements "I enjoy my work more than my leisure time" and "Each day of work seems like it will never end" as the lowest among the indicators, with scores of 3.42 and 3.38, respectively. However, these were still rated at a high level, which implies that respondents are genuinely satisfied with their job after passing the bar examination.

Table 4. Level of Post-Bar Job Satisfaction among Bar Passers in Davao del Sur

	Mean	SD	Description
I am interested in my job.	4.82	0.39	Very High
I feel a sense of achievement when finishing my work.	4.80	0.49	Very High
I think that my workload is reasonable for my working hours.	3.98	1.05	High
I think that I love my job more than others.	4.04	0.98	High
Even if the work is not pleasant, I finish it by all means.	4.40	0.71	Very High
This is the job that I think I deserve.	4.45	0.77	Very High
I get recognition for good work.	4.35	0.82	Very High
I enjoy my work more than my leisure time.	3.42	1.21	Very High
My job is usually interesting enough to keep me from getting bored.	4.24	0.72	Very High
Each day of work seems like it will never end.	3.38	1.27	High
I am satisfied with my income.	4.04	0.92	High
I gain respect despite diversities (e.g. gender, age, race, etc.).	4.55	0.66	Very High
I have great relationships with my colleagues.	4.53	0.60	Very High
I handle job pressure and stress very well.	4.29	0.71	Very High
My specialty and knowledge match my position.	4.51	0.63	Very High
Overall Mean	4.25	0.46	Very High

As the findings show that the highest mean score in the results is 4.82, the lowest mean score is indicated as high with a mean score of 3.38, and the overall mean score of 4.25 is indicated as very high, various studies support the study's outcome, attesting that lawyers are satisfied with their jobs. This result is supported by Chambers (2014), who stated that more than two dozen statistically based studies show that most lawyers place themselves on the satisfied side of job satisfaction scales, despite various literature frequently portraying US lawyers as discouraged and dissatisfied.

Lawyers frequently struggle to control their stress levels because of the demanding nature of their work. Bergin and Jimmieson's (2014) study revealed that 37% of law professionals were dealing with moderate to severe depression, and 35% were at risk for harmful drinking. In response to the Lawyer Satisfaction Survey, 1,247 American lawyers reported that they were stressed out at least occasionally, with 38% reporting that they were stressed out all the time, however, they are satisfied with their jobs (McCall, 2024). Two-thirds of the respondents reported overall job satisfaction. Roughly half of lawyers rated their financial stability excellent, and 73% said they would still become lawyers if they had to do it all over. Furthermore, on item number 5, indicated as very high with a mean of 4.40, the respondents finish their work by all means despite it sometimes being unpleasant. Additionally, on item number 14 with a mean of 4.29 and indicated as very high, lawyers handle job pressure and stress very well. These outcomes are supported by the survey reported by McCall (2024), indicating that lawyers are chronically stressed but satisfied.

Lawyers' differences at work and their level of job satisfaction have been explored. Compared to men, women lawyers were also more likely to be dissatisfied (Jalain, 2020). Workplace discrimination against women is more likely evident among women lawyers, which may lower their job satisfaction. Additionally, Collins et al. (2017) stated that women of color attorneys experience lower career satisfaction levels due to work diversity. Moreover, older workers are more satisfied with their jobs than younger workers. Compared to more seasoned lawyers, younger lawyers express increased career dissatisfaction, although they are also generally content (Markovic & Plickert, 2018). In contrast, the findings of this study show that on item number 12, lawyers gain respect despite individuality such as gender, race, age, etc., with a mean score of 4.55 and a standard deviation of 0.66, indicating that the ratings given by the respondents are mainly stable with minimal variation. Perez and Soe (2022) also stated that gender issues do not significantly influence women lawyers' job happiness in the workplace; thus, rejecting the claims above.

Wages and salaries are considered essential factors influencing employee job satisfaction. According to a National Association for Law Placement Foundation and NALP report issued on Wednesday, the class of 2019 law school graduates have higher overall job satisfaction, and some are earning more than past classes; yet, many also have more student loan debt (Charnosky, 2023). Large private legal firms continued to have unsatisfactory working conditions. 77% of those employed in these businesses were twice as likely to be negatively impacted by a greater emphasis on economic sustainability than were respondents employed in other contexts by around 38%. However, Monahan and Swanson (2019) discovered that respondents had high levels of life and professional satisfaction, with 91% feeling content with their lives overall and 77% satisfied with their choice to become lawyers. Based on the data from this study's results, on item number 11, bar passers are considered genuinely satisfied with their income, having a mean score of 4.04 and a standard deviation of 0.92. Moreover, Espinoza et al. (2024) support that graduates who receive higher incomes and those who are horizontally well-matched have greater levels of job satisfaction.

Relationship between the Bar Examination Performance and Post-Bar Job Satisfaction of Lawyers

Table 5 shows the result of the correlation analysis between bar examination performance by bar passers and their perceived job satisfaction. It can be noted that the Pearson correlation coefficient is 0.305, denoting a weak positive correlation between the variables. Additionally, the p-value is 0.024, which is less than the level of significance set at 0.05, which means that the correlations between the variables are significant. This suggests a significant relationship between the bar passers' examination performance and their employment satisfaction after passing the bar examination.

Table 5. Significance of the Relationship between Bar Examination Performance and Post-Bar Job Satisfaction among Bar Passers in Davao del Sur

Variables Reviewed	p-value	Pearson's value	r	Decision	Interpretation
Bar Examination Performance and Post-bar Job Satisfaction	0.024	0.305		Reject Ho	Weak Positive Correlation (Significant)

The study of Krieger and Sheldon (2015) agrees by stating that there is little correlation between law school ranking and the well-being of lawyers. Though findings show a weak correlation, one of the elements influencing attorneys' employment satisfaction is their educational background, especially how well they scored on the bar test or even just passed. Many lawyers, their teachers, and employers place great weight on grades, rankings, honors, and financial rewards. Most lawyers who pass the bar test have prosperous careers as practicing attorneys (Choi et al., 2022).

From massive legal research, it is evident that there is a linkage between the bar examination results and job satisfaction. After passing the bar, new attorneys can join the workplace in a position that accommodates their qualifications, which leads to better job satisfaction (Sullivan & Mark, 2020). According to Ward (2022), first-time takers who sit the bar examination tend to be more employable in high-level legal positions, enhancing job satisfaction. Passing the bar examination has been a strong determinant of long-term career success, which opens up more stable and rewarding employment (DeFabritiis & Vinson, 2019). Passing difficult professional examinations, such as the bar examination, helps increase job satisfaction, which is related to the fulfillment one feels at work (Ćulibrk et al., 2018). Passing the bar is crucial for professional growth as it determines who a lawyer is in general by providing an individual with an identity boost, which goes hand in hand with workplace engagement and overall career gratification booster (Krieger & Sheldon, 2015). The importance of a positive bar examination outcome lies not only in determining one's career outcome but also in increasing overall professional fulfillment.

Although Frisby et al. (2020) state that the bar examination does not predict lawyers' effectiveness, Scott et al. (2023) state that passing the bar test is a prerequisite for practicing law in almost all jurisdictions. This makes theoretical sense since bar results predict a future for aspiring attorneys: higher scores imply a brighter future, while scores below a particular cut point show a deficiency in the abilities necessary for minimal competency. Therefore, the bar test is a strong predictor of evaluations of lawyer performance. With a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.305, the study's results indicate a significant association between the two variables, thus, the better their performance on the bar examination, the more satisfied bar takers are with their post-bar jobs.

This finding is further supported by the Signaling Model of Education by Michael Spence in 1973, emphasizing that education separates the high-productivity and more educated workers from the low-productivity people. Educational credentials such as a degree or passing a licensing examination of an individual are a strong signal that an individual is highly qualified for jobs that potential employers need. Unlike many other academic fields, law offers a unique combination of theoretical knowledge and practical abilities that may be applied to a wide range of job routes. All occupations perform better when there is a higher level of intelligence, and the gains in productivity that come from employing intelligence have a significant impact on companies. According to Schmidt and Oh (2023), people with more incredible intellect do better at work partly because they learn more about the job faster. Nevertheless, regardless of prior job expertise, intelligence is also applied immediately in the workplace to address performance-related issues.

Impact of Bar Examination Performance on the Post-Bar Job Satisfaction among Bar Passers in Davao del Sur

The result of the regression analysis is presented in Table 6. The data shows that the bar examination performance could significantly impact their job satisfaction based on perception ($p < 0.05$). Also, a unit improvement in the level of bar examination performance leads to a 0.744 increase in job satisfaction.

The regression model's R square of 0.093 indicates that only 9.3% of the variation in post-bar job satisfaction can be attributed to the influence of the bar passers' bar examination performance. This means that other factors equivalent to 90.7% are not covered in this study.

Table 6. Significance of the Impact of bar Examination Performance on the Post-bar Job Satisfaction among bar Passers in Davao del Sur

Individual Influence of Predictors	B	Post-bar Job Satisfaction		
		p-value	R ²	Remarks
Bar Examination Performance	0.038	0.024	0.093	Significant

This finding is supported by the study of Jackson and Cochran (2021), who states that passing the bar examination is the culmination and most critical outcome of legal education for most law graduates. The bar examination assesses management abilities since it evaluates one's capacity for efficient time management. It assesses long-term commitment to a project by demonstrating the capacity to focus, work hard, and devote time and energy to any project. It offers a thorough analysis of specific legal topics so that students will have a solid grasp of them, and these skills will significantly affect their job satisfaction. Skills listed by Advanced Group Services (2019) are an asset for any business as they play a prominent role in developing a company's reputation and ongoing success.

The research study by Barlis (2023) contradicts the significant impact of the bar examination performance on job satisfaction as law school preparation largely remains bar-centric rather than practice-oriented. In turn, the bar exam assesses knowledge of several courses not utilized by most practicing attorneys. This leads to a cycle of teaching some law school topics since they are required for the bar test but are not applied in real-world situations once a candidate passes. This implies that the bar examination score of bar passers does not influence what comes after passing the bar. According to Table 6 items 6 and 15, respondents express a very high level of job satisfaction since they believe their post-bar employment is what they deserve and that their knowledge and abilities align with their professional roles.

Finally, the results of the study support the theories anchored in this study, specifically the Human Capital Theory by Becker and Schultz (1960). This theory assumes that people behave in ways that will probably boost their future incomes and general well-being. The finding of this study shows that bar passers' educational attainment and expertise have significant influences on their chance of employment and earning potential.

Summary

This study aimed to assess the impact of bar examination performance on post-bar job satisfaction among Davao del Sur bar passers and examine its correlation. The Quantitative descriptive-correlational research design was used in this study as it was the most suitable design to handle the study's objectives, which were to address and assess the relationship and impact of bar passers' examination performance on post-bar job satisfaction. This study utilized a quota sampling technique and examined the satisfaction of 55 respondents in Davao del Sur.

The study used descriptive-correlational research design to assess the impact of bar passers' examination performance on their job satisfaction, as well as their relationship. Results showed satisfactory bar examination performances with an overall mean of 79.43. Moreover, the finding showed the overall mean of the dependent variable being 4.25, which is categorized as very high. This resulted in a weak positive correlation with a coefficient of 0.305, indicating a significant relationship. Additionally, regression analysis found that the bar examination performance could significantly impact their job satisfaction based on perception ($p < 0.05$). In conclusion, the study offers valuable insights into the bar examination performance and post-bar job satisfaction among lawyers in Davao del Sur.

CONCLUSIONS

After thorough investigation of the variables involved in this study, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. The level of bar examination performance of bar passers in Davao del Sur is satisfactory. The respondents have satisfactory examination performance.
2. The level of post-bar job satisfaction of the respondents is very high, which indicates that the respondents were extremely satisfied with their post-bar job.
3. There is a significant relationship between the bar passers' examination performance and post-bar job satisfaction. This implies that the level of bar examination performance is linked to the post-bar job satisfaction of bar passers.
4. The results revealed a significant influence between the level of bar examination performance and post-bar job satisfaction. This means that the higher the level of bar examination performance of bar passers, the more satisfied they will be with their jobs after passing the examination.

RECOMMENDATION

Given on the study's findings regarding bar examination performance among bar passers in Davao del Sur and their post-bar job satisfaction, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. The Philippine Bar Association Officials should consider encouraging the general well-being of legal practitioners. This might involve providing lectures, workshops, counseling, and training opportunities. They can also work with various law schools to ensure that legal education is appropriate for attorneys. The Philippine Bar Association should also examine initiatives that would help bar takers perform well on the bar test and in the workplace.
2. Lawyers should be willing to learn a lifelong process of professional growth. They should also behave ethically and professionally in the workplace. Lawyers should serve as professional role models for aspiring lawyers. This involves mentoring and offering moral support to boost the performance of aspiring law practitioners.
3. To thoroughly prepare for the bar test, bar examination takers should study and use all available resources. This involves actively participating in review or practice tests, taking the bar exam seriously, and creating a test-taking plan in the same way that you would manage stress and time. They should also seek mentorship and exam preparation materials.
4. Law students should focus on developing a solid understanding of legal ideas and concepts. Law students should also pursue opportunities such as internships to get information and experience working in the legal profession.
5. Future researchers are encouraged to incorporate additional demographic questions to identify the specific field of law in which their respondents are employed. Future studies should also investigate different techniques to improve bar examination performance and factors affecting the job satisfaction of lawyers that are not covered in this study.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The researchers would like to express their heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to the individuals who have made essential contributions that eventually led to the successful completion of their study. Their tireless guidance and constant affirmations made this achievement possible.

First and foremost, the researchers humbly offer their heartfelt gratitude to the Heavenly Father, whose grace, wisdom, and spirit have been a continuous source of strength and motivation.

The researchers offer their genuine appreciation to the parents for their infinite patience and constant financial, physical, and mental support throughout the preparation of this study.

The researchers express their gratitude to Madam Chenie T. Gonzales, PhD for her insightful feedback and critical evaluation, as well as to the panel members Madam Almira A. Batulanon, MEd-LT, Sir Michael L.

Llagas, MA, and Sir Michael Aquino, MBA, for their dedication and commitment to the study's success, and to Sir Cleford Jay Bacan, the statistician and validator, for his assistance in providing statistical analysis and validating the data.

Lastly, they would like to recognize the lawyers as the key contributors to this study. Despite their limited time and busy schedules, they tried to respond to their survey questionnaires, providing valuable insights into this aspect of society.

Ametur Cor Jesu, Ametur Cor Mariae!

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