

TRACER'S STUDY ON THE EMPLOYABILITY OF HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT GRADUATES

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Abstract: This tracer study examines the employability and career outcomes of Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management (BSHM) graduates from the University of La Salette, Incorporated (ULS) between 2019 and 2023. The study aims to evaluate graduates' employment status, job satisfaction, and the relevance of their academic preparation to current professional roles, thereby assessing the effectiveness of the BSHM program in meeting Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and accreditation standards. Using a descriptive research design, data were gathered through online surveys and interviews from a representative sample selected via simple random sampling. The structured questionnaire covered graduates' profiles, employment details, perceptions of school contributions, and satisfaction with university services. Statistical analyses were employed to interpret the data, including descriptive statistics, weighted means, ranking, and ANOVA.

Findings indicate that most graduates are young, single males who typically secure regular employment within six months, often utilizing digital platforms and personal networks. The program's curriculum, especially its On-the-Job Training component, was highly relevant, fostering critical competencies such as technical skills, communication, leadership, and critical thinking, supporting career advancement and job satisfaction. Graduates also reported high satisfaction with faculty, instruction quality, and practical training. The study recommends enhancing practical experiences through stronger industry partnerships, expanding career support services, fostering collaborative efforts to improve employment conditions, continuously updating faculty development, and conducting regular tracer studies to maintain curriculum relevance in a dynamic hospitality industry.

Keywords: Tracer study, employability, career outcomes, Hospitality Management, Graduates, Curriculum relevance.

1. INTRODUCTION

The hospitality industry is dynamic and rapidly evolving, demanding a skilled and adaptable workforce that can respond to changing trends and consumer preferences. For graduates of hospitality management programs, the ability to transition seamlessly from academic environments to professional settings is crucial for individual success and the industry's overall growth.

The Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management (BSHM) program at the University of La Salette, Incorporated (ULS), is designed to prepare students for diverse career opportunities in hospitality, tourism, and related fields. Graduates are expected to possess a strong foundation in management principles, customer service, and operational skills, enabling them to excel in various roles within the industry. However, as higher education institutions strive to meet industry standards, it is essential to evaluate how well these programs equip students for the demands of the workforce.

Tracer studies are invaluable for assessing educational programs' effectiveness by tracking graduates' career outcomes. These studies provide critical data on employment rates, job satisfaction, and the alignment between graduates' skills and industry needs (Ferrerias, 2023). The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) in the Philippines mandates conducting such studies to ensure that higher education institutions produce competent and employable graduates who contribute positively to the nation's socio-economic development (CHED, 2021). In addition, accrediting agencies such as the Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation (PACUCOA) emphasize the importance of these studies in the continuous improvement of academic programs and institutional quality.

Despite the recognized value of tracer studies, limited research focuses specifically on BSHM graduates from ULS. This study addresses the research question: "What are the employment outcomes and professional trajectories of BSHM graduates from ULS, and how do these outcomes reflect the effectiveness of the BSHM program in meeting the expectations set by CHED and accrediting agencies?"

This study aims to conduct a comprehensive tracer study of BSHM graduates from the University of La Salette, Incorporated, from 2019 to 2023. This research analyzes their employment status, job satisfaction, and the alignment between their academic training and current professional roles. The study will provide insights to guide curriculum development and help the university enhance its BSHM program in response to industry needs and CHED standards.

This study is significant for several reasons. First, it offers empirical evidence on the employment outcomes of BSHM graduates, contributing to the body of knowledge on hospitality management education in the Philippines. The findings will enable ULS to identify strengths and areas for improvement in its BSHM program, thereby enhancing the quality of teaching and increasing the employability of its graduates. Second, the study supports the initiatives of CHED and accrediting agencies by providing data that can inform policy decisions and quality assurance measures in higher education. According to Teichler (2019), tracer studies are essential for evaluating academic programs' relevance and fostering a culture of accountability and continuous improvement in higher education institutions. By focusing on the experiences of BSHM graduates, this research aligns with CHED's mission to ensure that higher education contributes effectively to national development by producing skilled and competent professionals (CHED, 2021).

2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The hospitality industry significantly contributes to global economic growth, requiring a highly skilled workforce adaptable to ever-evolving industry demands. Educational institutions, particularly those offering programs in hospitality management, play a crucial role in preparing graduates to meet these industry expectations. However, the effectiveness of these programs in equipping students with the necessary skills and competencies is best evaluated through tracer studies, which provide data on graduates' career trajectories, employment status, and job satisfaction.

The Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management (BSHM) program at the University of La Salette, Incorporated (ULS) is designed to equip students with comprehensive knowledge and practical skills in various aspects of hospitality, including hotel and restaurant management, tourism, and event planning. As mandated by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) in the Philippines, institutions offering such programs must conduct tracer studies to assess their graduates' employability and career progression (CHED, 2021). These studies evaluate program effectiveness and fulfill accreditation requirements set by agencies such as the Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation (PACUCOA).

Despite the critical role of tracer studies in assessing educational outcomes, there is a noticeable gap in the literature focusing specifically on the career trajectories of BSHM graduates from ULS. Most existing studies are generalized across various fields or limited to more popular programs, such as business administration and engineering. This gap highlights the need for focused research on hospitality management graduates, whose career paths may differ significantly due to the industry's unique nature, including seasonal employment, diverse career opportunities, and varying job requirements.

This study is particularly relevant as it aims to fill the gap in existing research by providing a detailed analysis of the career outcomes of BSHM graduates from ULS. The findings will offer valuable insights for multiple stakeholders, including educational administrators, faculty members, students, and policymakers. Moreover, the study aligns with CHED's objectives to ensure that higher education institutions produce graduates who are not only academically prepared but also highly employable and capable of contributing to national development (CHED, 2021). The study's outcomes can also guide curriculum development, helping ULS to better align its programs with industry needs and standards set by accrediting bodies.

Given the growing importance of the hospitality industry and the increasing expectations placed on educational institutions, evaluating how well BSHM programs prepare graduates for professional success is imperative. This study addresses the following research problem: "What are the employment outcomes and professional trajectories of BSHM graduates from the University of La Salette, Incorporated from 2019 to 2023, and how do these outcomes align with the standards and expectations set by CHED and accrediting agencies?"

The primary objective of this study is to conduct a comprehensive tracer study of Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management (BSHM) graduates from the University of La Salette, Incorporated (ULS). It aims to determine the current employment status of these graduates from 2019 to 2023, assess the alignment between their academic training and the skills required in their current job roles, and evaluate their level of job satisfaction, identifying factors that influence their career progression. The study will provide recommendations for curriculum development and program improvement based on the findings. The study hypothesizes that there is a significant alignment between the academic training offered by ULS and the skills demanded by the hospitality industry. Additionally, it posits that graduates who have undergone internships and on-the-job training as part of their curriculum exhibit higher employability and job satisfaction (Zebalos, 2011).

The results of this study will provide essential feedback to ULSI and contribute to the continuous improvement of its BSHM program. Furthermore, by aligning with CHED's mandate for quality assurance and accreditation standards, the study will help ensure that the university's graduates are well-prepared to meet the demands of the hospitality industry. Ultimately, this research will contribute to the broader field of educational assessment, offering a model for other institutions to follow to evaluate and enhance their academic programs.

Research Questions

1. What is the profile of respondents in terms of:
 - 1.1. Sex
 - 1.2. Age
 - 1.3. Civil Status
2. What is the employment of the respondents in terms of:
 - 2.1. Employment Status
 - 2.2. Length of time required for the first job
 - 2.3. Sources of Finding a Job
 - 2.4. Common Struggles and difficulties in looking for a job
 - 2.5. Present Occupation
 - 2.6. Reason for staying at the job
3. What are the school contributions and factors related to the employment of the respondents?
 - 3.1. Curriculum
 - 3.2. On-the-job Training Program
 - 3.3. Competencies learned are useful in their job
 - 3.4. Contribution of the program to their employment
 - 3.5. Program Attribute
4. What is the graduates' satisfaction level with the school's different services?
 - 4.1. Services of the School
 - 4.2. Quality of Education
 - 4.3. Skills and abilities development

Significance of the Study

The tracer study on the employability of Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management (BSHM) graduates provides valuable insights and implications for various stakeholders, including the school administration, college dean, teachers, students or graduates, researchers, and future researchers.

School Administration. This study's findings offer the school administration a comprehensive understanding of how well the BSHM program prepares graduates for the workforce. This information is crucial for strategic decision-making regarding program development, resource allocation, and enhancing institutional policies to improve graduate employability. It also supports the school's efforts to meet the quality assurance standards set by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and accrediting bodies, strengthening its reputation and competitiveness in the education sector.

College Dean. The study provides the college dean with critical data on the employment outcomes and career paths of BSHM graduates, which can be used to evaluate and improve the program's effectiveness. This information is essential for making informed decisions regarding curriculum enhancements, faculty training, and industry partnerships. The results can also help the dean implement targeted initiatives such as career counseling, skills development workshops, and job placement services to support better student transitions from academia to the hospitality industry.

Teachers. The study offers teachers valuable feedback on the relevance and impact of their teaching methods and curriculum content. Understanding the skills and competencies that employers value most allows educators to refine their instructional strategies and integrate practical, industry-related experiences into their courses. This ensures that graduates are better equipped to meet the challenges of the hospitality sector.

Students or Graduates. The study provides insights into the employment opportunities and career prospects for current students and recent graduates within the hospitality industry. It highlights the skills and qualifications that are most in demand, encouraging students to actively pursue internships, certifications, and extracurricular activities that will enhance their employability. Graduates can also use this information to make informed decisions about their career paths and further education or training.

Researchers. The findings contribute to the academic discourse on graduate employability and educational outcomes in hospitality management. Researchers can use this data to conduct comparative studies across different institutions or programs, explore the factors influencing graduate success, and assess the effectiveness of various educational interventions. This research will help build a more robust understanding of how higher education can better serve the needs of the hospitality industry.

Future Researchers. This study provides a methodological foundation and baseline data for future research on the employability of hospitality management graduates. Future researchers can expand on this study by exploring additional variables, such as the impact of global trends on hospitality careers or the role of specific experiential learning opportunities in enhancing graduate employability. Such research will contribute to the continuous improvement of hospitality management education and its alignment with industry demands, ultimately benefiting educational institutions, students, and the broader hospitality sector.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Tracer studies are vital for gathering information on graduates of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). They provide essential data for assessing educational outcomes, which serve as a basis for these institutions' continuous improvement and quality assurance. Additionally, tracer studies evaluate and enhance graduate programs' outcomes, marketability, and sustainability, supporting HEIs in adapting to global market demands for employability and career advancement. Graduate education holds significant value in the academic sector, with quality education and professional development highlighted by the Department of Education through upskilling and reskilling initiatives for teachers. The Commission on Higher Education has introduced updated policies, standards, and guidelines (PSGs) to elevate the quality of graduate education in the Philippines, aligning with 21st-century demands. These revised PSGs emphasize advancing educators' skills in teaching, student services, and program management, including technical knowledge, communication, leadership, research, and ICT skills. Such skills enable graduate students to navigate complex work environments confidently, make informed decisions, and explore more effective ways to fulfill their roles (Woya, 2019; Tutor, et al, 2021, Rowe, et al, 2017; Abulencia, et al, 2021; Burke, 2017; dela Cruz, 2021).

Aldea and De Guzman (2019) define tracer studies as systematic evaluations used to track the career paths, employment status, and relevance of the education graduates received concerning roles. These studies provide valuable insights into how well educational institutions prepare students for the workforce. The authors highlight the importance of such studies in informing curriculum development, ensuring that academic programs are aligned with labor market demands. By analyzing graduates' workplace experience data, educational institutions can identify gaps in their curricula and adjust their programs to equip students with the skills employers require. The study concludes that tracer studies are essential for improving graduate employability and enhancing the overall quality of education in the Philippines.

Bacatan (2020) discusses the significance of tracer studies in evaluating the effectiveness of higher education institutions in the Philippines. He notes that these studies offer critical feedback on academic program outcomes and the employability of graduates. Tracer studies enable institutions to gain valuable insights into alumnae career trajectories and employment status, which can be used to identify areas where academic programs need improvement. The study emphasizes that this feedback is crucial for universities to enhance the relevance and quality of their curricula, ultimately improving graduates' employability in a competitive labor market.

Tiongson and Dela Cruz (2021) further explore the role of tracer studies in assessing graduate employability in Philippine universities. They explain that tracer studies systematically track graduates' career paths and evaluate the relevance of their education to employment outcomes. These studies are crucial for identifying skill gaps between what graduates possess and what employers require. By analyzing these gaps, institutions can adjust curricula to ensure that graduates have the competencies needed in their respective fields. The authors argue that tracer studies help align academic offerings with labor market demands, ultimately enhancing graduates' employability and employment outcomes.

Professional skills can be categorized into personal, interpersonal, and technical skills. Personal skills involve working effectively and harmoniously with others in a professional environment. Technical skills, on the other hand, refer to the practical application of field-specific knowledge, demonstrating ease and proficiency. In the context of graduates' competencies, personal skills, particularly human relationship and communication skills, are often regarded as key learnings. Graduates also acknowledge the value of entrepreneurial and information technology skills. Published studies reveal that communication and human relations skills are the most commonly acquired by graduates, followed by information technology and critical thinking skills.

In contrast, entrepreneurial skills are considered less essential. Regarding career decisions, graduates indicate that salary and benefits are crucial factors in accepting job offers. The administration may consider strengthening alum programs, such as hosting job fairs or establishing professional learning communities to support alums. Building partnerships with stakeholders can further enhance the alumni support system. Additionally, offering capability enhancement seminars and training is recommended to improve graduates' skills and knowledge further. Most graduates report remaining in their first job for 1 to 6 months, with many securing roles related to hospitality management. Among the competencies learned, human relationship and communication skills were the most frequently cited by graduates as key areas of learning (Marchante, Ortega & Pagan, 2007; Queroda, 2017; Queroda, 2018; Braga & Queroda, 2020; Queroda, 2020).

Fernandez, M. M., Queroda, P., & Sison, R. T. (2019) focused on the brain-based and individualized instructional strategies employed by hospitality management faculty members at Pangasinan State University, Philippines. The study found that faculty members utilized various strategies that catered to students' individual learning needs and cognitive styles. These strategies were designed to enhance student engagement and improve learning outcomes. One key feature of the study was its emphasis on integrating brain-based learning theories into teaching practices, where instruction was tailored to stimulate cognitive functions and maximize retention. It highlighted the importance of individualized approaches to accommodate diverse student learning preferences, essential in fields like hospitality management that require both practical and theoretical knowledge. The study's results revealed that such instructional strategies positively impacted student performance and engagement in the hospitality management program, suggesting the effectiveness of adaptive teaching methods in higher education.

Tracers on the Employability of Graduates

In their study, Sabando, Catubig, and Blanca (2022) show that the university graduate tracer study results revealed several key findings regarding the employment and competencies of graduates from the Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management (BSHM) program. The study found that 49% of the graduates were employed, primarily in the Food and

Beverage Department, while 45% were unemployed and 6% had never been employed. Most employed graduates worked within the Philippines, with a significant portion satisfied with their salaries and benefits. Most had been used for about six months as rank-and-file employees, earning between 15,000 and 19,999 pesos. The study also highlighted the graduates' perception of the competencies they acquired in college. Graduates reported that the university helped strengthen their communication and human relations skills.

Additionally, the graduates rated the strengths of the BSHM program in areas such as values formation, student services, quality of instruction, and program relevance. However, they indicated a need for improvement in research, extension services, and library support. Overall, the study concluded that the graduates could secure jobs related to their profession, with the competencies they gained from the university helping them compete in the labor market. The researchers recommended that the university establish partnerships with industries to enhance graduate employability further.

The study found that most Bachelor of Science in Hospitality and Restaurant Management (BSHRM) graduates from 2014 to 2016 were successfully employed, both locally and internationally, though fewer worked abroad. The primary barriers to international employment were high qualification requirements. Graduates mainly found jobs in the hotel and fast-food sectors, and most secured positions relevant to their degree. The study also revealed that international job placements offered higher salaries than local positions, though the company's size did not always correlate with higher pay. Many graduates found their first job within three months after graduation but faced challenges due to limited job vacancies.

Furthermore, the study showed that the competencies learned in school, such as entrepreneurship, technical, management, critical thinking, communication, and IT skills, were valuable in their current employment. The study recommended that schools better prepare students for the realities of the HRM profession by providing career orientation and counseling. Faculty should help develop essential skills and update course syllabi to meet industry needs. The study also suggested that future research should explore a broader sample of graduates and employ mixed methods to deepen understanding (De Castro, 2017).

Based on multi-year tracer studies, the study explores the key employability, competencies, and job-specific skills required by graduates from a tourism and hospitality higher education institution in Bandung, Indonesia. It identifies fundamental, functional, and professional competencies as crucial for future employment in the sector. The study highlights the importance of vocational education and training (VET) in developing these competencies, noting that the curriculum structure plays a significant role in preparing graduates for the demands of the industry. One of the key findings is the importance of internships as a core learning approach, which helps students gain practical experience and improve their employability. The tracer study also plays a crucial role in assessing the alignment between academic learning and industry requirements, contributing to the continuous improvement of the VET curriculum. The model used in the study follows the national standards set by Indonesia's Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, reinforcing its relevance and impact on the quality of vocational education. However, the study acknowledges limitations, including its focus on vocational education in Indonesia, and suggests that future research could involve a broader geographical comparison, particularly between Asian and Western countries. It also points out potential biases in the data collection process, such as the reliance on online surveys that may exclude certain participants. To enhance the reliability of findings, the study recommends conducting focus group discussions with stakeholders, including faculty, alumni, industry partners, and government bodies. It suggests expanding the sample to include other institutions for a more comprehensive analysis (Kusumah, Saepudin & Utami, 2022).

Many graduates were employed, starting their careers in family businesses or managing their own. However, they faced challenges finding employment due to limited job openings. Satisfaction with their current roles was generally low. The study also found that the curriculum positively impacted the graduates' skill development, with respondents agreeing that the program adequately prepared them for their careers. Based on these findings, the researchers proposed several recommendations, including a policy where hospitality companies could consider hiring fresh graduates without requiring prior work experience.

Additionally, institutions must enhance their curriculum by organizing workshops, seminars, and training sessions to improve students' employability skills. Graduates were also encouraged to pursue jobs that align with their interests within the hospitality industry to increase job satisfaction. The study acknowledged certain limitations, such as the reliance on responses gathered via social media and email, which may not fully represent all graduates. Future researchers could enhance the study by collecting data earlier and ensuring the timely distribution of survey materials. Publicizing their findings could contribute further to the knowledge on the subject (Cerdeña et al., 2022).

The study of Jastia, Cajala, and Benito (2023) found that the Bachelor of Science in Hospitality and Restaurant Management (BSHRM) program at AIMS effectively equips students with the knowledge and skills required for a career in hospitality management, as well as other industries. The curriculum provides training that benefits both the maritime and hospitality sectors. The program instills key values such as integrity, achievement, and respect for others, which are demonstrated by graduates from 2015 to 2020. Despite these qualifications, some graduates faced challenges such as family concerns, lack of connections, health issues, and insufficient work experience, leading them to pursue careers outside their field of study. Many graduates have ventured into entrepreneurship, successfully establishing businesses, even during the pandemic. Others have joined the BPO industry, where they have been employed for several years, showcasing their adaptability, communication, and human relations skills. Although many graduates are currently used in other fields, many still aspire to return to roles more aligned with their academic background in hospitality management. The study concludes that the skills developed during the program, such as human relations, communication, adaptability, time management, and problem-solving, have been highly applicable in various workplace settings. However, the COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted the hospitality industry, leading to job losses and career shifts. The hospitality sector, alongside other industries, experienced widespread closures and slower recovery periods. Despite these setbacks, many graduates are optimistic about returning to the hospitality industry. This resilience aligns with the findings of Ntounis et al. (2022), which discussed the significant effects of the pandemic on the tourism and hospitality industries. As Hernandez (2021) noted, the hotel business remains a key player in global tourism. It continues to evolve, eventually motivating many graduates to return to their original career aspirations.

The study on the employability of Bachelor of Science in Hotel and Restaurant Management (BSHRM) graduates from LSPU Siniloan (2014–2021) offers significant insights into their professional trajectories. The demographic analysis highlights the graduates' diversity in age, gender, civil status, and geographic location, emphasizing the need for targeted support services to cater to their varied profiles. Educationally, all respondents have completed their undergraduate degrees, with limited engagement in post-graduate studies, which points to potential areas for future academic exploration and career advancement (Kane et al., 2019).

The graduates' passion for hospitality was identified as a key factor in choosing their course of study. This suggests that aligning educational programs with students' intrinsic motivations could enhance their engagement and satisfaction (Grewal et al., 2021). Post-graduation training, with TESDA NC2 programs being the most common, reflects a commitment to continuous skill development, reinforcing the importance of staying competitive in the job market (Armenia, 2018).

Regarding employment, the graduates are spread across various sectors and job roles, with a notable concentration in the hotel and restaurant industry. This highlights the need for adaptable career support strategies (Ntounis et al., 2022). The global mobility trend among graduates indicates the importance of considering international employability in career services (Sussman & Klein, 2020). Key factors influencing job retention include competitive salaries, career challenges, and the relevance of specialized skills, offering valuable insights into workforce motivations (Michelli, 2019).

Perceptions of the relevance of academic training to current jobs and the reasons for changing initial employment emphasize the complex relationship between education and career development, underscoring the need for ongoing curriculum improvements (Knepper et al., 2021). The analysis of job distribution and starting salaries suggests that employability outcomes vary, indicating a need to refine program elements to better align with graduates' career goals (Becker et al., 2021). Competencies like communication, practical training, and human relations skills were identified as crucial for curriculum development (Hernandez, 2021).

Interestingly, demographic factors such as age, gender, civil status, and location did not significantly influence employability, suggesting that other factors may play a more critical role (Fiorini, 2019). The study offers actionable insights for educational institutions, employers, and policymakers to enhance programs and support services, ultimately optimizing graduates' success in a dynamic job market.

The graduates from 2018 to 2019 analyzed 205 graduates, though only 44 respondents participated. The low response rate may be attributed to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism and hospitality industry, with some graduates hesitant to admit job loss due to the pandemic. The study found that respondents stayed in their jobs because of good working environments, and the skills and knowledge gained during the program were valuable in their current roles. However, graduates reported that the range of subjects offered and extracurricular activities was limited. Based on the findings, the researchers recommend that graduates consider furthering their education through a Master's degree and pursue certifications such as TESDA national certificates to improve employability.

Additionally, the hospitality industry should be revitalized, focusing on securing managerial or executive positions in tourism and hospitality to enhance career prospects. For graduates who are currently unemployed, the researchers suggest leveraging social media platforms to search for jobs and using their internship experiences to improve competitiveness. They also recommend employers provide competitive salaries and benefits to enhance job satisfaction. Finally, the study calls for CSPP to offer a broader range of program subjects and strengthen alum engagement through extracurricular activities and relevant events (Sotero et al, 2021).

Most graduates from the Hotel and Restaurant Management (HM) and Tourism Management (TM) programs are employed, with online selling being the most common occupation among them. Many work in the hotel and restaurant industry, where communication and human relations skills are considered the most relevant and applicable skills acquired during their studies. Employers agree that these graduates are highly competent in their roles, with strengths including the ability to work well under pressure, timely task completion, confidence in handling guest complaints, and up-to-date knowledge of the hospitality and tourism sectors. However, there is room for improvement in financial and budgeting skills and knowledge specific to the country where they work. Graduates contribute positively to their employers by applying the skills they learned in school to effectively support their organizations' operations and objectives. Recommendations from these graduates include requiring students to obtain TESDA certifications, enhancing hands-on training opportunities, and placing more emphasis on the business side of the program, which would open up additional career prospects for students (Comicho & Apangchan-Laurel, 2023).

4. METHODOLOGY

The research design for this tracer study of Hospitality Management graduates at the University of La Salette, Inc. employs a descriptive research method. Calderon (2019) describes this approach as one that addresses questions and seeks to understand a phenomenon's nature and causes as they exist at the study's time of the survey. Descriptive research analyzes current conditions and interprets their meaning and significance, using data with or without statistical support. Bains (2010) adds that descriptive research explores causes and behaviors, which is particularly useful in consumer behavior studies. This type of research requires identifying the purpose, forming research questions, and establishing a hypothesis. Du Bois (1975) notes that descriptive research simplifies quantitative data using data analysis tools, assisting in exploratory data analysis and visual representation of descriptive metrics. Borg & Gall (1989) clarify that most quantitative research describes events or seeks causal inferences, often using observational or survey methods to capture "what is." De Jesus (1984) explains that descriptive research includes describing, recording, analyzing, and interpreting current conditions, and it may involve comparisons to explore cause-and-effect relationships among non-manipulated variables. This descriptive approach will help thoroughly understand Hospitality Management graduates' current status and outcomes, focusing on their career paths and relevance of education to employment.

The study was conducted at the University of La Salette, Inc., a higher education institution in Santiago City, Philippines. Known for its commitment to quality education, the university offers a range of programs, including Hospitality Management, to equip students with industry-relevant skills and knowledge. This tracer study focuses explicitly on graduates of the Hospitality Management program to assess their employability, career progression, and the alignment of their education with industry demands. Participants in this study include graduates from the Hospitality Management program who completed their degrees between 2019 and 2024. These graduates provide valuable data regarding their employment status, career paths, and perceived relevance of their academic training to their current roles. Information on their employment positions, job responsibilities, and challenges faced in the industry will be collected to gain insights into the program's effectiveness in preparing students for the workforce. Participants are expected to represent various sectors within hospitality, including hotel and restaurant management, event planning, tourism, and customer service, providing a broad view of employability outcomes. This tracer study employs online surveys and interviews to ensure comprehensive data collection, enabling graduates from different locations and career levels to contribute. Their responses will be analyzed to identify patterns in employability, skills application, and career advancement, offering valuable feedback for curriculum development and enhancement of the Hospitality Management program. The study's results will be essential for the university's continuous improvement efforts, aligning educational outcomes with the dynamic needs of the hospitality industry.

The population for this tracer study includes all graduates of the Hospitality Management program at the University of La Salette, Inc., from 2019 to 2024. This population represents all students who completed the program within these five years, providing a comprehensive overview of recent graduates' employability and career outcomes. A sample size will be

determined based on this population, aiming for a representative portion that ensures sufficient data reliability. Suppose the total number of graduates from 2019 to 2024 is significant. In that case, the sample size may be calculated using Rao's calculator to achieve a desired confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5%. A simple random sampling technique will be employed to select participants. This method allows each graduate an equal chance of selection, reducing bias and ensuring that the sample accurately reflects the diversity within the population. Stratified random sampling may be used to ensure proportional representation across each graduating year or specific subgroups within the program. This approach will help gather data that accurately reflects the employability trends and industry relevance of the Hospitality Management program at the University of La Salette, Incorporated. The researcher used a survey questionnaire as the primary data collection tool to evaluate the employability of Hospitality Management graduates from the University of La Salette, Incorporated. This instrument was carefully developed based on studies on employability in the hospitality field. Drawing on Bagason's (2022) work on Gordon College Hospitality Management graduates, Firth's (2019) employability skills framework, and Ngoepe and Wakelin-Theron's (2023) analysis of employability factors in the hospitality industry, the questionnaire was divided into four main parts: Profile of the Respondents, Employment Status, School Contribution and Factors Related to Employment, and Level of Satisfaction with School Services.

Part I – Profile of the Respondents aimed to gather essential demographic and educational background information about the graduates, including their graduation year, age, and specific coursework or extracurricular activities undertaken during their studies. This section helps contextualize the employment outcomes and career trajectories of the respondents.

Part II and III - Employment Status, School Contribution, Factors Related to Employment, and the program attributes included questions about the graduates' current job roles, industry sector, and time to find employment after graduation. This part also assesses graduates' perceptions of the school's contribution to their skill development and employability, and factors influencing their employment. By examining the impact of specific skills, technical competencies, and school support on job attainment, this section provides insight into how well the program prepares students for the workforce.

Part IV – Level of Satisfaction with School Services, focused on graduates' satisfaction with services offered by the university, including academic resources, career services, and practical training opportunities. This segment was inspired by Firth's (2019) framework, which underscores the importance of supportive services in developing employability skills. Here, graduates reflect on how these services supported their transition into the workforce.

These four sections offer a structured, comprehensive approach to understanding the employability outcomes of Hospitality Management graduates and the effectiveness of the University of La Salette, Inc.'s program in preparing students for industry demands. This design allows the researcher to identify specific strengths and areas for improvement within the program to enhance future graduates' career success in the hospitality sector.

To begin the study, the researchers prepared a formal letter addressed to the Dean of the College of Business Education and Research Director of the university to request permission to conduct the research for the approval of the title and to distribute the survey questionnaire to potential participants. Once approval was obtained, the researcher visited the selected participants in person to provide an overview of the study's objectives and give detailed instructions on completing the survey. Each participant was provided with a written informed consent form, which they were asked to read and sign. This form emphasized that participation was voluntary and assured that all personal information would be kept confidential and used solely for educational purposes. Upon obtaining signed consent forms, the researchers administered the survey questionnaire. Participants were given sufficient time to complete the questionnaire at their own pace. After completing the surveys, the researcher collected each questionnaire and carefully reviewed it to ensure all items were thoroughly and correctly answered. This systematic approach ensured data completeness and accuracy, preparing the research for the analysis and manuscript preparation stages, followed by the supervision of the adviser and statistician.

The data obtained from the questionnaires were systematically tallied, classified, and presented in a table format to facilitate easy analysis and interpretation.

The following statistical tools were utilized to provide a deeper understanding of the collected data:

1. Simple Frequency and Percentage. This method was employed to quantify the various responses from the respondents regarding their demographic profiles, enabling the researcher to identify patterns and distributions within the sample population.
2. Ranking. This method was used to determine the sequence of the different reasons why respondents stayed for their job, from the highest to the lowest responses of the respondents.

3. **Weighted Mean.** The weighted mean was used to assess the central tendency of respondents' perceptions concerning their acquired and learning skills, and even the satisfaction with the different programs and services of the school. This statistical measure allowed for a more accurate representation of the participants' attitudes by considering the relative importance of other responses.
4. **Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).** The ANOVA will be used to identify significant differences among various dimensions, including the Profile of the Respondents, Employment Status, School Contribution, factors related to employment, and the Level of Satisfaction with the services offered by the school. This analysis helped the researcher understand how these variables interact and impact the study's findings.

To quantify the responses of the respondents, they will be interpreted using a four-point Likert scale as shown below:

SCALE	RANGE	SCALE LABEL	QUALITATIVE INTERPRETATION
1	1.00 – 1.74	Not at all Strongly Disagree Very Dissatisfied	No observable impact from the factor, meaning it does not influence the outcome, and no satisfaction
2	1.75 – 2.49	To some extent Disagree Dissatisfied	A minimal or peripheral impact, where the factor has a small role but doesn't substantially affect the outcome and satisfaction
3	2.50 – 3.24	To a great extent Agree Satisfied	A noticeable but less pronounced impact, where the factor plays a role but isn't as influential as others, and satisfaction
4	3.25 – 4.00	Completely Strongly Agree Very Satisfied	A strong, noticeable influence that significantly impacts the outcomes, such as job placement, skill acquisition, and satisfaction

To quantify the responses of the respondents, it will be interpreted using a four-point Likert scale as shown below on the usefulness of the competencies learned they found used in their first job:

SCALE	RANGE	SCALE LABEL	QUALITATIVE INTERPRETATION
1	1.00 – 1.74	Not Useful	It does not contribute to competency development and lacks relevance, clarity, or applicability.
2	1.75 – 2.49	Slightly Useful	It provides minimal support in competency acquisition; it may be somewhat relevant, but lacks depth or practical application.
3	2.50 – 3.24	Moderately useful	It contributes to competency development with relevant information and application, but may have some limitations or gaps.
4	3.25 – 4.00	Very Useful	Highly effective in developing competencies; comprehensive, relevant, and directly applicable to skill or knowledge acquisition.

To quantify the responses of the respondents, it will be interpreted using a four-point Likert scale as shown below on the attributes to assess the usefulness of the learnings they found used in their first job:

SCALE	RANGE	SCALE LABEL	QUALITATIVE INTERPRETATION
1	1.00 – 1.74	Strongly Disagree	express a negative perception or a complete lack of agreement with the statement. This indicates strong opposition or dissatisfaction.
2	1.75 – 2.49	Disagree	show a negative perception or moderate disagreement with the statement. This suggests some level of opposition, but not as intense as "Strongly Disagree."
3	2.50 – 3.24	Agree	indicate a positive perception or general agreement with the statement. This reflects support or satisfaction but without firm conviction.
4	3.25 – 4.00	Strongly Agree	demonstrate a very positive perception or complete agreement with the statement. This reflects strong approval or high satisfaction.

For the computation and analysis of the data, the researcher utilized SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) and Microsoft Excel. These software tools provided the necessary functionalities to perform the statistical analyses accurately and efficiently, supporting the research process from data entry to the interpretation of results.

An essential ethical consideration in conducting the study on tracers of graduates' employability in Hospitality Management is practicing anonymity and confidentiality. Researchers will take diligent steps to protect participants' identities and personal information throughout the research process. The study should be designed to maintain anonymity so that participants' identities cannot be linked to their responses. This can be achieved by assigning unique identifiers to each participant instead of using names or other identifying details. By reporting data in aggregate form, researchers can ensure individuals remain anonymous, allowing them to respond more freely and honestly without fear of repercussions.

Confidentiality is another critical aspect, and researchers will implement vigorous measures to protect the confidentiality of participants' data. This includes securely storing physical and digital records, using password protection for electronic files, and restricting access to the data to only authorized personnel involved in the research. In the informed consent process, it is essential to outline how confidentiality will be maintained and to what extent information might be shared in reports or publications, ensuring that data is presented in a manner that does not reveal sensitive information or identifiable characteristics.

As part of the informed consent process, researchers should communicate to participants how their anonymity and confidentiality will be upheld. Participants should be informed of the steps taken to protect their information and the importance of their privacy within the study context. Furthermore, researchers must consider long-term data protection by having a plan for securely disposing of or anonymizing the data even after the study. This ensures ongoing respect for participant privacy long after their involvement in the study has concluded. By prioritizing anonymity and confidentiality, researchers adhere to ethical guidelines and create a safe environment that encourages honest responses from participants. This commitment to ethical practices strengthens the integrity of the research and enhances the overall validity of the study's findings.

5. RESULT

Part I –Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents According to Their Demographic Profile

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Sex		
Male	43	59
Female	30	41
Age		
22 Years Old and Below	10	14
23 – 25 Years Old	29	40
26 – 28 Years Old	28	38
29 Years Old and Above	6	8
Civil Status		
Single	71	97
Married	2	3

n=73

As gleaned from Table 1 regarding the distribution of demographic profiles of the respondents, 43 or 59 percent were male and 30 or 41 percent were female.

Concerning age of the respondents shows that 29 or 40 percent belong to age bracket of 23 – 25 years old, 28 or 38 percent belong to age bracket of 26 – 28 years old, 10 or 14 percent belong to age bracket of 22 years old and below and 6 or 8 percent of the respondents belong to age bracket of 29 years old and above.

The respondent's civil status shows that 71 or 97 percent were single, and 2 or 3 percent were married. It implies that most of the respondents were male (N=43), belonged to the age bracket of 23 – 25 years old (N=40), and were single (N=71).

Part II – Employment

Table 2. Distribution of the Respondents by their Employment

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Employment Status		
Regular/Permanent	50	68
Contractual	6	8
Temporary	5	7
Self-employed	7	10
Casual	2	3
Unemployed	3	4
Length of Time Required for the First Job		
Right after Graduation	24	33
1 – 6 Months	33	45
7 – 11 months	5	7
1 Year	4	5
More than a Year	7	10
Sources of Finding a Job		
Response to an advertisement	8	11
Walk-in applicant	19	26
Recommended by relatives/friends	8	11
Information from friends	6	8
Family Business	11	15
Public Employment Services	6	8
Internet/Company website	15	21
Every Day Struggles and Difficulties in Looking for a Job		
Few job vacancies/Lack of a position or item	33	45
Inadequate experience	17	23
Mismatch of educational application	2	3
Personality factors	10	14
Passing the pre-employment interview	2	3
Lack of political patronage	4	5
Passing the pre-employment exam	1	1
Not meeting the paper requirement	2	3
Inadequate knowledge and skills	2	3
Present Occupation		
Food and Beverage	16	22
Business	9	12
Hospitality	24	33
Retail	4	6
Office Staff	8	11
Seafarer	4	6
Freelance	4	6
Travel Agency	1	1
Fastfood/Restaurant Manager	2	2
Fastfood Crew	1	1

As shown in Table 2 about the employment of the respondents shows that 50 or 68 percent were regular/permanent in their job, 7 or 10 percent were self-employed, 6 or 8 percent were contractual employees, 5 or 7 percent were temporary

employee, 3 or 4 percent unemployed, and 2 or 3 percent were casual employees and on the length of time acquiring for the first job shows that 33 or 45 percent of the respondents consume 1 to 6 months, 24 or 33 percent were acquired their job after graduation, 7 or 10 percent were more than a year, 5 or 7 percent were 7 to 11 months, and 4 or 5 percent waited for 1 year before landing for a job. As to the source of their job, 19 or 26 percent were walk-in applicant, 15 or 21 percent got the information from internet/company website, 11 or 15 percent stay in the family business, 8 or 11 percent were able to find the job in response to an advertisement and recommended by relatives/friends, and 6 or 8 percent they see their job from information from friends and public employment services. While the respondents looking for a job, they have everyday struggles and difficulties in looking for job, 33 or 45 percent experienced a Few jobs' vacancies/Lack of position or item, 17 or 23 percent were encountered inadequate experience, 10 or 14 percent based on personality factors, 4 or 5 percent experienced due to lack of political patronage, 2 or 3 percent due to mismatch of education application, passing the pre-employment interview, not meeting the paper requirements, and inadequate knowledge and skills and 1 or 1 percent experienced difficulty on passing the pre-employment interview. At present, 24 or 33 percent were working in hospitality industry, 16 or 22 percent were connected in food and beverage, 9 or 12 percent were in business, 8 or 11 percent were office staff, 4 or 6 percent were seafarer, freelance, and in retail, 2 or 2 percent were in fastfood/restaurant manager and 1 or 1 percent were working in travel agency and fastfood crew. It implies that most of the respondents were regular/permanent (N=50) as to employment status, land for a job for 1 to 6 months (N=33), they find their job as walk-in applicant (N=10) and thru internet/company website (N=15), they experiences difficulties or few jobs' vacancies/lack of position or item (N=33), and still working in hospitality industry (N=24) and food and beverage (N=16) and it shows that their work is in line with their course finished.

Table 2a. Ranking Distribution of Respondents: Reasons for Staying in their Job

Reasons for Staying in their Job	Frequency	Ranked
Salaries and benefits	58	1
Related to the course	25	2
Related to special skills	24	3
Career challenges	18	4
Chances of promotion	17	5
Contented and happy	16	6
Family influence	12	7
Friendly co-worker	10	8
Proximity to residence	6	9
Influence of my friends	5	10
Good retirement	4	11

As presented in Table 2a, the primary reasons for employees staying in their jobs are ranked as follows: salaries and benefits rank 1, with 58 respondents identifying them as their main reason; course-related factors rank 2, with 25 respondents; and special skills rank 3, with 24 respondents. Career challenges follow in rank 4 with 18 respondents, while chances of promotion rank 5 with 17 respondents—job satisfaction and happiness rank 6, with 16 respondents indicating contentment with their work. Family influence ranks 7th with 12 respondents, followed by friendly co-workers in rank 8 with 10 respondents. Proximity to residence ranks 9th with six respondents, while influence of friends and good retirement benefits rank 10th and 11, with 5 and 4 responses, respectively. These findings suggest that financial compensation remains the most significant factor influencing job retention, aligning with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, which highlights salary and benefits as key hygiene factors in job satisfaction (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959). Similarly, a study by Ryan and Deci (2000) on self-determination theory emphasizes the role of extrinsic rewards, such as salary and career advancement, in motivating employees to remain in their jobs.

Furthermore, research by Buelens and Van den Broeck (2007) supports the idea that employees tend to stay in positions where they perceive financial security and career growth opportunities. The Australian article (2024) states that financial compensation remains the most significant factor influencing job retention and career development opportunities to enhance job satisfaction and retention. These results reinforce that monetary incentives, career development, and a supportive work environment are vital in employee retention.

Part III - School Contributions and Factors Related to Employment

Table 3. Distribution of Respondents' Responses on School Contributions and Factors Related to Employment

Questions	Frequency	Percentage
Was the college curriculum relevant to their first job?		
No	3	4
Yes	70	96
Is the on-the-job Training (OJT) subject of the curriculum relevant to their first Job		
No	5	7
Yes	68	93

As gleaned in Table 3 about the responses of the respondents on school contribution and factors related to employment shows that their college curriculum is relevant to the first job with a frequency of 70 or 96 percent and 3 or 4 percent believed that is not relevant not only the curriculum but also the on-the-job training program or subject of the curriculum is also relevant with a frequency of 68 or 93 percent and only 5 or 7 percent state that on-the-job training program is not relevant. It implies that the curriculum and on-the-job training program are relevant and contribute significantly to their work performance. Studies show that aligning curriculum and on-the-job training (OJT) with industry needs ensures graduates are equipped with relevant job skills. Research by Caingcoy (2021), Deguplo et al (2019), and Pentang et al (2022) highlights that structured programs enhance job readiness and match workplace demands. Reports from Tutor et al (2021) and Albina & Sumagaysay (2021) confirm that integrating OJT into education improves job placement and workforce adaptability.

Table 3a. Mean Responses of the Respondents on School Contributions and Factors Related to Employment about Competencies Learned They Find Very Useful in their First Job

Competencies	Mean	Scale Label	Qualitative Interpretation
Entrepreneurial Skills	3.10	U	It contributes to competency development with relevant information and application, but may have some limitations or gaps.
Written Communication	3.10	U	
Human Relations Skills	3.23	U	
Information Technology Skills	3.10	U	
Research Skills	3.11	U	
Knowledge and Technical Skills	3.30	VU	Highly effective in developing competencies; comprehensive, relevant, and directly applicable to skill or knowledge acquisition.
Management and Critical Thinking Skills	3.27	VU	
Oral Communication	3.32	VU	
Problem-solving Skills	3.27	VU	
Leadership Skills	3.30	VU	
Category Mean	3.21	U	It contributes to competency development with relevant information and application, but may have some limitations or gaps.

Legend: 1.00 – 1.74 = Not Useful 2.50 – 3.24 = Useful
 1.75 – 2.49 = Slightly useful 3.25 – 4.00 = Very Useful

As gleaned on Table 3a school contributions and factors related employment with regards to competencies learned they find very useful in their first job shows that the respondents believed it useful with regards to human relations (M=3.23), research skills (M=3.11) and entrepreneurial skills, written communication skills, and information technology skills were also helpful with a mean of 3.10 respectively. It is interpreted as contributing to competency development with relevant information and application, but may have some limitations or gaps. While oral communication skills (M=3.32) were beneficial, even their knowledge and technical skills and leadership skills, with a mean of 3.30, management and critical thinking skills, and problem-solving skills with a mean of 3.27 were beneficial. It means highly effective in developing comprehensive, relevant, and applied skill or knowledge acquisition competencies. It implies that the different skills were functional with an overall mean of 3.21 and interpreted as contributing to competency development with relevant information and application. However, they may have some limitations or gaps.

Table 3b. Mean Responses of the Respondents on the Contributions of the Program to their Employment, They Find Very Useful in their First Job

Competencies	Mean	Scale Label	Qualitative Interpretation
Enhanced academic Profession	3.36	VU	Highly effective in developing competencies; comprehensive, relevant, and directly applicable to skill or knowledge acquisition.
Improved problem-solving skills	3.27	VU	
Improved research skills	3.25	VU	
Improved learning efficacy	3.40	VU	
Improved communication/interpersonal skills	3.40	VU	
Improved information technology skills	3.40	VU	
Enhanced team spirit/people skills	3.32	VU	
Fair meeting present & future Professional skills	3.27	VU	
Exposure to the local, national, and international community within the field of specialization	3.32	VU	
Critical Thinking Skill	3.37	VU	
Salary Improvement and Promotion	3.44	VU	
Personality Development	3.42	VU	
Category Mean	3.35	VU	
Legend:	1.00 – 1.74 = Not Useful 2.50 – 3.24 = Useful 1.75 – 2.49 = Slightly useful 3.25 – 4.00 = Very Useful		

As gleaned on Table 3b about the contributions of program to their employment they find very useful in their first job and they believed that salary improvement and promotion (M=3.44), personality development (M=3.42), improved learning efficacy, improved communication/interpersonal skills, and improved information technology skills with a mean of 3.40 respectively, critical thinking skills (M=3.37), enhanced academic profession (M=3.36) and even enhanced team spirit/people skill and the exposure to the local, national and international community within the field of specialization with a mean of 3.32. Likewise, with fair meeting present & future Professional skills and improved problem-solving skills with a mean of 3.27, and improved research skills (M=3.25). This implies that most respondents believed that their program completion contributed to their employment, with a category mean of 3.35. Studies have consistently shown that skill enhancement significantly improves employability, productivity, and adaptability across various fields (Tria et al., 2024; Kankaew, 2023).

Table 3c. Mean Responses of the Respondents on the Contributions of Attributes to Work on their Employment, They Find Very Useful in their First Job

Competencies	Mean	Scale Label	Qualitative Interpretation
I am very interested, happy, and satisfied with my work, and it is essential for me	3.42	SA	Demonstrate a very positive perception or complete agreement with the statement. This reflects strong approval or high satisfaction.
I like the kind of job and work I am doing	3.34	SA	
I accepted assignments and tasks given to me at work without complaints	3.34	SA	
I arrived on time to prepare my work and extend working hours if necessary	3.34	SA	
I can work better and functionally under different working environments and situations	3.25	SA	
I participated in all activities and events inside my workplace	3.25	SA	
I have a good relationship with my colleagues and co-employees	3.30	SA	
I submitted the necessary documents and papers on time and beat deadlines	3.27	SA	
I performed my task and job with excellence and outstanding quality	3.30	SA	
I seek assistance and help from others whenever I have clarifications and queries.	3.34	SA	
Category Mean	3.32		
Legend:	1.00 – 1.74 = Strongly Disagree (SD) 2.50 – 3.24 = Agree (A) 1.75 – 2.49 = Disagree (D) 3.25 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree (SA)		

As presented in Table 3c regarding attributes to work, most respondents strongly agreed on the different indicators, like I am very interested, happy, and satisfied with my work. It is essential for me (M=3.42), I like the kind of job and work I am doing, I accepted assignments and tasks given to me at work without complaints, I arrived on time to prepare my work and extend working hours if necessary and I seek assistance and help from others whenever I have clarifications and queries with a mean of 3.34 respectively even on the indicator I performed my task and job with excellence and outstanding quality. I have a good relationship with my colleagues and co-employees (M=3.30), and I submitted necessary documents and papers on time and beat deadlines (M=3.27). I can work better and function in different working environments and situations, and I have participated in all activities and events inside my workplace (M=3.25). It implies that the majority of the respondents strongly agree on the attributes to work that contribute a lot from the learnings they acquired from the university, or simple they demonstrate a very positive perception or complete agreement with the statement and this reflects strong approval or high satisfaction with what they practice from their work or job.

Part IV – Satisfaction Level

4.1 Services of the School

Table 4. Mean Responses of the Respondents on their Satisfaction with the Services of the School during their Stay in the University

Competencies	Mean	Scale Label	Qualitative Interpretation
Range of the subject matter	3.40	VS	A strong, noticeable influence that is significantly satisfied with the services of the school, the quality of education, and the skills and abilities developed
Relevance of the Programs to Professional Requirements	3.41	VS	
Extra-curricular activities	3.41	VS	
Problem-solving	3.42	VS	
Quality given to research	3.42	VS	
Interdisciplinary learning	3.40	VS	
Teaching and learning environment	3.59	VS	
Quality of Instruction	3.55	VS	
Teacher-student relationship	3.55	VS	
Library resources	3.45	VS	
Laboratory resources	3.45	VS	
Class Size	3.45	VS	
Infrastructure and facilities	3.40	VS	
Professor's Knowledge of the major subjects	3.56	VS	
Category Mean	3.46	VS	

Legend: 1.00 – 1.74 = Very Dissatisfied (VD)

2.50 – 3.24 = Satisfied (S)

1.75 – 2.49 = Dissatisfied (D)

3.25 – 4.00 = Very Satisfied (VA)

As gleaned on Table 4 about the satisfaction with the services of the school during their stay in the university the believed that they are delighted showing on the different indicators like the teaching and learning environment (M=3.59), their professor's knowledge of the significant subjects (M=3.56), of course the quality of instruction and teacher-student relationship (M=3.55), even the library resources, laboratory resources and class size with a mean of 3.45 respectively were shown that they are delighted likewise with quality given to research and problem solving (M=3.42), they also believed that the relevance of the programs to professional requirements and extra-curricular activities (M=3.41), the range of the subject matter, interdisciplinary learning, and infrastructure and facilities with a mean of 3.40 interpreted as they are delighted. It implies that the respondents believed that they were pleased with the school services offered, with an overall mean of 3.46, showing a strong, noticeable influence that was significantly satisfied with the services of the school, quality of education, and skills and abilities developed from the university during their stay.

4.2 Quality of Education

Table 5. Mean Responses of the Respondents on their Satisfaction with the Quality of Education of the School during their Stay in the University

Competencies	Mean	Scale Label	Qualitative Interpretation
Availability of course materials and different learning resources needed for our studies	3.55	VS	A strong, noticeable influence that is significantly satisfied with the services of the school, the quality of education, and the skills and abilities developed
Quality of course content from courses offered, as well as the teaching and learning process	3.47	VS	
Conduciveness of the learning environment and atmosphere	3.44	VS	
Provision of quality practicum guidelines and activities that develop my skills and abilities from different industry partners and linkages	3.55	VS	
Quality of learning facilities for first-hand and direct experiences, like different laboratories	3.44	VS	
Quality of different courses offered in the program that develops the total sum of the student's skills	3.55	VS	
Level of optimum interaction and contact with my fellow students through different on-campus activities	3.42	VS	
Well-trained and self-renewing Faculty members and staff	3.47	VS	
Different trainings, seminars, and workshops that prepare students for employment	3.47	VS	
Varied learning assessments and instructions that assess students' progress and learning fairly and equally	3.47	VS	
Category Mean	3.48	VS	

Legend: 1.00 – 1.74 = Very Dissatisfied (VD) 2.50 – 3.24 = Satisfied (S)
 1.75 – 2.49 = Dissatisfied (D) 3.25 – 4.00 = Very Satisfied (VS)

As presented on Table 5 the respondents believed that are very satisfied with the quality of education they acquired as manifested with the different indicators like the availability of course materials and different learning resources needed for our studies, provision of quality practicum guidelines and activities that develops more my skills and abilities from different industry partners and linkages and quality of different courses offered in the program that creates the total sum of the student skills (M=3.55), even on the quality of course contents from courses provided as well as the teaching and learning process, a well-trained and self-renewing faculty members and staffs, the different trainings, seminars and workshops that prepare students for employment, and the varied learning assessments and instructions which assess students' progress and learning fairly and equally (M=3.47) likewise with conduciveness of the learning environment and atmosphere and the quality of learning facilities for first-hand and direct experiences like of different laboratories (M=3.44), and the level of optimum interaction and contact with my fellow students through different in-campus activities (M=3.42). This implies that the respondents were very satisfied with an overall mean of 3.48, which is interpreted as a strong, noticeable influence that significantly satisfied them with the services of the school, quality of education, and skills and abilities developed during their stay in the university.

4.3 Skills and Abilities Developed

Table 6. Mean Responses of the Respondents on their Satisfaction with the Skills and Abilities Developed by the School during their Stay in the University

Competencies	Mean	Scale Label	Qualitative Interpretation
Organizational and leadership skills	3.55	VS	A strong, noticeable influence that is significantly satisfied with the services of the school, the quality of education, and the skills and abilities developed
Problem-solving and critical thinking skills.	3.60	VS	
Ability to work independently as well as in a team.	3.58	VS	
Creative thinking and creativity, initiative, and taking a risk if necessary	3.63	VS	
Time Management and decision-making skills.	3.58	VS	
Writing competence and skills, including technical writing.	3.60	VS	
Communication and interpersonal skills	3.55	VS	
Computer and ICT Skills	3.63	VS	
Technical and Entrepreneurial Skills	3.63	VS	
Ability to work under pressure	3.55	VS	
Ability to prepare any reports essential to my field of expertise	3.58	VS	
Ability to follow the legal, ethical, and moral standards of society	3.58	VS	
Knowledge of hospitality marketing skills, such as advertising, editing, and any skills related to my field	3.55	VS	
Analytical and Investigative skills.	3.53	VS	
Trainings, seminars, and workshops about preparing and evaluating strategic management planning applied in business.	3.63	VS	
Category Mean	3.58	VS	
Legend: 1.00 – 1.74 = Very Dissatisfied (VD) 2.50 – 3.24 = Satisfied (S)			
1.75 – 2.49 = Dissatisfied (D) 3.25 – 4.00 = Very Satisfied (VS)			

As shown in Table 6 concerning the skills and abilities developed during their stay in the university shows a very satisfied evaluation on the different indicators like creative thinking and creativity, initiative and taking a risk, if necessary, computer and ICT Skills, and technical, entrepreneurial skills, and trainings, seminars and workshops about the preparation and evaluation of strategic management planning applied in business. (M=3.63), problem solving and critical thinking skills and writing competence and skills including technical writing (M=3.60), their ability to work independently as well as team work and team play, time management and decision-making skills, ability to prepare any reports essential to my field of expertise, and ability to follow the legal, ethical, and moral standards of society (M=3.58) even the organizational and leadership skill, communication and interpersonal skills, ability to work under pressure, and knowledge with hospitality marketing skills such as advertising, editing and any forms of skills related to my field (M=3.55) likewise their analytical and investigative skills (M=3.53) were assessed as very satisfied with their current practices in work site. It implies that the majority of the respondents were delighted with a category mean of 3.58 and interpreted a strong, noticeable influence that significantly satisfied them with the services of the school, quality of education, and skills and abilities developed.

6. DISCUSSION

This section discusses and presents an in-depth analysis of the findings from the tracer study on the employability of Hospitality Management graduates. This section interprets the results about key employment indicators such as job placement rates, alignment between academic preparation and industry demands, and the graduates' career progression. By examining these outcomes, the study aims to provide insights into the effectiveness of the educational program in preparing graduates for the hospitality industry while identifying areas for improvement to enhance future employability.

Part I – Demographic Profile of the Respondents

The tracer study on the employability of Hospitality Management graduates reveals that the respondents are predominantly male and fall within the age brackets of 23–25 and 26–28 years, with a minority aged 29 and above. Additionally, most respondents are single. The male predominance among respondents aligns with certain studies indicating a higher enrollment of males in hospitality management programs. However, this trend can vary by region and institution. Understanding gender distribution is crucial, as it can influence employability outcomes and workplace dynamics within the hospitality industry. The concentration of respondents in the 23–28 age range suggests that graduates typically enter the workforce shortly after completing their studies, which is consistent with the standard academic timeline for obtaining a bachelor's degree. The presence of respondents aged 29 and above may indicate individuals who pursued further education, experienced delayed graduation, or transitioned into hospitality management from other fields. The finding that most respondents are single aligns with the age demographics, as individuals in their early to late twenties are often unmarried (Dela Cruz, 2022). Marital status can impact job mobility and availability, with single individuals potentially more open to relocating or working irregular hours, which are common in the hospitality industry. These demographic factors—gender, age, and marital status—can influence employability in the hospitality sector. Employers may consider these attributes when assessing candidates' suitability for roles that demand flexibility, mobility, and varying work hours. Understanding these demographics helps tailor career services and support mechanisms to enhance employability outcomes for graduates. Studies have explored the alignment between hospitality management education and industry expectations. For instance, research indicates that employers prioritize practical experience, soft skills, and adaptability among graduates.

Additionally, there is an emphasis on the need for educational institutions to update curricula to meet evolving industry demands, ensuring that graduates possess relevant competencies. Furthermore, studies highlight the importance of demographic factors in career progression within the hospitality industry. Understanding these dynamics can assist in developing targeted strategies to improve employability and career development for hospitality management graduates. (De Castro, 2017; Ngoepe & Wakelin-Theron, 2023; Firth, 2019; Reichel & Pizam, 1984).

Part II – Employment

The tracer study on the employability of Hospitality Management graduates reveals several key findings regarding their employment status, job search experiences, and factors influencing job retention.

A significant proportion of graduates have secured regular or permanent positions, while a smaller segment remains in casual employment or is unemployed. This trend aligns with broader industry observations, where the hospitality sector offers diverse employment opportunities, though not all positions provide immediate job security. The prevalence of permanent roles among graduates suggests that their academic preparation effectively meets industry demands, facilitating stable employment.

Most graduates obtained their first job within 1 to 6 months post-graduation, with many securing employment immediately. This swift transition into the workforce indicates a strong demand for hospitality professionals and reflects the industry's dynamic nature, which often requires a steady influx of skilled personnel.

Graduates utilized various strategies to find employment, including online job portals, company websites, family businesses, and direct applications as walk-in candidates. The increasing reliance on digital platforms for job searching is consistent with current trends in recruitment, where online applications have become a standard practice. Additionally, leveraging personal networks and family enterprises underscores the role of social capital in career advancement within the hospitality sector.

Despite successful employment outcomes, graduates faced limited job vacancies, a lack of available positions, insufficient experience, and personal attributes. These obstacles are common in the hospitality industry, where high competition and expectations for practical experience can hinder immediate employment. Addressing these challenges may involve enhancing internship programs and providing career counseling to better prepare students for the job market.

Employed graduates predominantly work in roles related to hospitality businesses, including food and beverage services, office administration, and managerial or crew positions in fast-food establishments. This distribution reflects the comprehensive nature of hospitality management education, which equips graduates with versatile skills applicable across various functions within the industry.

Factors influencing graduates' decisions to remain in their current positions include competitive salaries and benefits, alignment with their field of study, utilization of specialized skills, career development opportunities, prospects for promotion, and overall job satisfaction. These elements are critical to employee retention, contributing to job fulfillment and professional growth. Employers in the hospitality industry increasingly recognize the importance of these factors in maintaining a committed and motivated workforce.

Studies shows that employment and retention in the hospitality industry as published in the International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management examines the role of contextual factors and thriving at work in hospitality career retention and understand employee career retention in the hospitality industry, the study explores a structural model incorporating psychological contract fulfillment, perceived organizational support, thriving, career satisfaction, and career turnover intention. It is grounded in the socially embedded model of thriving, signaling theory, and social cognitive career theory (Chang & Busser, 2020). Even the study in the Journal of Teaching and Learning for Graduate Employability discusses the employability attributes of hospitality graduates and the expectations of hotel managers. Despite challenges in retaining talented employees in the hospitality industry, limited attention has been given to developing effective retention strategies, leading to poor organizational performance and hindered sustainable growth. This study aims to review and discuss employee retention strategies to help retain skilled workers longer. It offers practical guidelines for establishing effective retention practices. The study concludes that satisfied employees are less likely to leave their jobs, while dissatisfied employees are more likely to seek better career opportunities. Managerial implications were also addressed (Ghani et al, 2022). Furthermore, research published in sustainability reviews challenges and strategies for employee retention in the hospitality industry, which suggests that social identity and self-perception have the most decisive influence, followed by school education and work conditions. Subgroup analysis reveals that students' grade levels partially moderate some influencing factors, while no significant statistical changes were observed in their relative effects (Liu, He, & Wu, 2022).

Part III - School Contributions and Factors Related to Employment

The study reveals that the curriculum in college, including the On-the-Job Training (OJT) program, is highly relevant to the graduates' first jobs. This alignment between academic preparation and professional demands significantly supports their successful transition into the workforce. Graduates identified key competencies learned during their studies—knowledge and technical skills, management and critical thinking abilities, oral communication, problem-solving, and leadership skills—as highly useful in performing their job responsibilities effectively. These competencies equip graduates with practical and analytical skills essential for adapting to real-world challenges in the hospitality industry.

The contributions of the academic program extend beyond technical knowledge. Graduates acknowledge the positive impact on salary improvement, promotion opportunities, personality development, and enhanced learning efficacy. Furthermore, the program strengthens essential interpersonal skills, information technology proficiency, and critical thinking capabilities. Exposure to local, national, and international communities within their field of specialization also enriches their professional outlook and broadens their career opportunities. This holistic approach to education fosters the development of a well-rounded professional, prepared to meet diverse industry demands.

Graduates also emphasized the importance of work-related attributes in their professional success. They strongly agreed with indicators reflecting positive work attitudes and behaviors. Specifically, they expressed satisfaction and happiness with their work, highlighting that their job is meaningful and fulfilling. Graduates demonstrate a proactive work ethic by accepting tasks without complaints, arriving on time, and extending working hours when necessary. Their willingness to seek assistance and commitment to performing tasks excellently indicate a strong sense of responsibility and dedication. Moreover, the study underscores the importance of maintaining positive relationships with colleagues, which fosters a supportive work environment and enhances overall job performance.

These findings align with previous research indicating that relevant education and practical training significantly contribute to graduates' employability and job satisfaction (Liu et al., 2022). The combination of academic preparation, personal attributes, and professional competencies enables graduates to navigate the hospitality industry's demands successfully. By fostering both technical and interpersonal skills, the educational program plays a crucial role in enhancing graduates' career outcomes, ensuring their readiness for long-term professional growth and advancement (Sisson & Adams, 2013; Singh & Jaykumar, 2019; Ferrer-Roca et al, 2021).

A well-structured hospitality management curriculum that balances theoretical instruction with practical application, while fostering technical and soft skills, significantly enhances graduates' employability and effectiveness in their initial job roles.

This holistic educational approach benefits individual career progression and contributes to the hospitality industry's overall quality and competitiveness (Ngoepe & Wakelin-Theron, 2023; Carlisle et al, 2023).

Part IV – Satisfaction Level

The studies indicate that hospitality management graduates expressed high satisfaction with various aspects of their university experience. Key areas of satisfaction included the teaching and learning environment, faculty expertise, quality of instruction, teacher-student relationships, and the adequacy of resources such as library and laboratory facilities and class sizes.

This positive feedback aligns with existing literature emphasizing the importance of a supportive academic environment in fostering student satisfaction. The Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education study highlights that well-structured curricula and knowledgeable faculty significantly enhance students' educational experiences and preparedness for the hospitality industry (Giannotti, 2024).

Graduates also reported satisfaction with the availability of course materials and diverse learning resources, which facilitated their studies. The provision of quality practicum guidelines and activities, developed in collaboration with industry partners, was particularly valued for enhancing practical skills and competencies. This finding is supported by research indicating that experiential learning opportunities, such as internships and fieldwork, are crucial in preparing students for real-world challenges in the hospitality sector (JWU, 2024).

The quality of courses offered within the program was another area of commendation, with graduates noting that the curriculum effectively developed a comprehensive skill set. Including well-trained and continually developing faculty members, along with diverse training sessions, seminars, and workshops, contributed to their readiness for employment. These elements are consistent with best practices in hospitality education, which advocate for continuous faculty development and diverse instructional methods to meet evolving industry demands. (Seyitoğlu, Atsız, Kaya, & Taş, 2022; Zhou et al., 2021).

Regarding skill development, graduates expressed high satisfaction with cultivating creative thinking, initiative, computer and ICT proficiency, technical and entrepreneurial abilities, problem-solving, critical thinking, and technical writing skills. The emphasis on independent work and teamwork, time management, decision-making, and adherence to legal, ethical, and moral standards reflects a holistic approach to education. Such comprehensive skill development is essential in the hospitality industry, where a blend of technical expertise and soft skills is required for success (Giannotti, 2024)

Furthermore, the development of organizational and leadership skills, communication and interpersonal abilities, capacity to work under pressure, and knowledge of hospitality marketing strategies were highlighted as significant outcomes of their university education. These competencies are critical in the hospitality sector, where professionals must navigate dynamic environments and effectively engage with diverse stakeholders. The integration of these skills into the curriculum is supported by literature emphasizing their importance in achieving service excellence and customer satisfaction (Prakash, 2018; JWU, 2024).

The study underscores the effectiveness of the university's hospitality management program in equipping graduates with the necessary knowledge, skills, and competencies to excel in the hospitality industry. The high levels of satisfaction reported by alumni reflect the program's commitment to providing a comprehensive and supportive educational experience that aligns with industry standards and expectations (Sabando et al., 2022; Singh et al., 2019).

7. RECOMMENDATION

The following recommendations were drawn from the conclusion of the study:

1. Strengthen the curriculum by increasing practical experience through industry partnerships, extended On-the-Job Training (OJT), and workshops focusing on skills, adaptability, and problem-solving to better align with industry needs and improve employability.
2. Establish stronger career support programs, including job search assistance, digital job application training, and career counseling. Encourage online platforms and personal networks to help graduates overcome employment challenges and secure jobs more efficiently.
3. Collaborate with industry partners to create strategies that promote competitive salaries, career growth, and work-life balance. These measures will enhance job satisfaction and reduce turnover rates among hospitality professionals.

4. Continuously update faculty training and instructional methods to align with evolving hospitality industry trends. Improve access to learning resources, including updated digital tools and modernized facilities, to maintain high levels of graduate satisfaction.
5. Conduct regular tracer studies to track graduate employment trends, identify emerging industry needs, and adapt the curriculum accordingly. This ongoing evaluation ensures the program remains responsive to the demands of the hospitality sector.

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