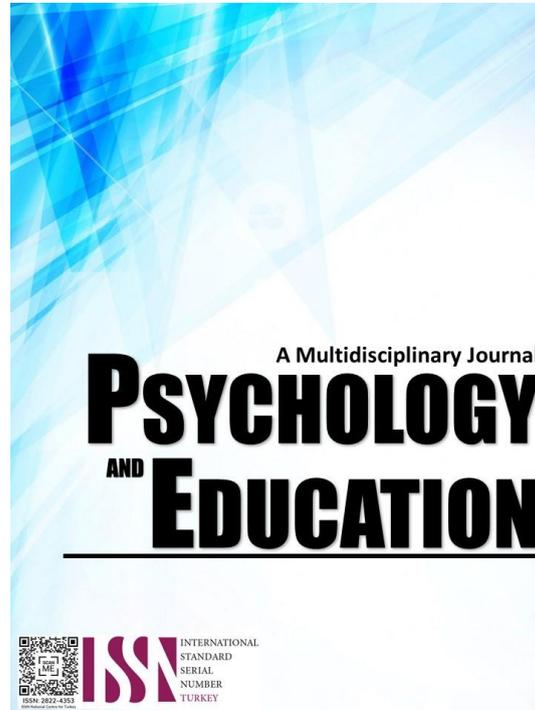


EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS, CAREER ASSESSMENT, AND WORK PERFORMANCE AMONG HOSPITALITY GRADUATES



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Employability Skills, Career Assessment, and Work Performance Among Hospitality Graduates

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Abstract

This survey-correlational study aimed to determine employability skills, career assessment, and work performance among hospitality graduates. The study utilized 51 randomly selected hospitality graduates of Iloilo State College of Fisheries, main campus. Simple random sampling was employed in the selection of the participants. The investigation used three (3) published data-gathering instruments to obtain the data for the study, the Employability Skills Assessment Questionnaire by the Conference Board of Canada (2016), the Career Factor Experience Questionnaire for Hospitality Management Graduates by Brown (2011), and the Employee Performance Evaluation by the University of California (2010). The data were analyzed using rank, mean, frequency count, percentage analysis, standard deviation, t-test, and Pearson's *r*. The .05 level of significance was used in the inferential analysis. The study's findings revealed that the most dominantly manifested employability skills among hospitality graduates were learning skills. They had high career preferences and outstanding work performance. Significant differences existed in their employability skills when they were classified according to industry employment. However, no significant differences were noted when classified according to sex, age, civil status, course graduated, job status, and industry experience. Significant differences existed in their career assessment when they were classified according to job status. However, no significant differences were noted when they were classified according to sex, age, civil status, course graduated, industry employment, and industry experience. Significant differences existed in their work performance when they were classified according to sex. However, no significant differences were noted when they were classified according to age, civil status, course graduated, job status, industry employment, and industry experience. A positive but not significant relationship existed among employability skills, career assessment, and work performance of hospitality graduates.

Keywords: *hospitality, employability, career, performance, quantitative*

Introduction

The hospitality industry is one of the top priority industries for the economic growth of a country. It is a people-oriented industry that requires constant contact with guests from many varied cultural, ethnic, racial, and religious backgrounds. One aspect of the industry is that it is made up of so many different professions. Accordingly, the tourism and hospitality sectors will have to improve the supply of skilled workforce to meet the specialized demands of the rising tourism activity and to deliver a quality product to achieve customer satisfaction and loyalty. Relevant employability skills and attributes have always been essential to effective and successful participation in hospitality workplaces. The hospitality industry acknowledges the importance of hospitality graduates if services are to be delivered efficiently (Hedley, 2013). The nature of work of these hospitality graduates requires adequate skills and competencies in order for them to excel in their chosen careers. This present study aimed to ascertain the level of employability skills of hospitality graduates. When considering career assessment, expectations of hospitality and tourism graduates are important (Richardson, 2009). If graduates know and understand

employment conditions prevailing in the hospitality industry, they will have realistic expectations of what work entails. Realistic expectations could lead to graduates being retained in the hospitality industry. A combination of intrinsic and extrinsic motivators (namely, exciting work, generous benefits, and good working conditions) be the most highly valued factors in the hospitality and tourism (Kim, Hallab, & Lee, 2009). However, the main predictors of high turnover among young managers in the hospitality industry are the need for opportunities to continue learning and growing while being able to plot their career paths (Walsh & Taylor, 2007). Work performance is a significant prerequisite for future career development and success in the hospitality industry. A well-performing workforce contributes to the competitive edge of the establishment. Managing people at work is considered essential for achieving various organizational outcomes, including work performance. Core task proficiency, demonstrating effort, and maintaining personal discipline are essential components of performance in every job (Campbell, McCloy, Oppler, & Sager, 1993). Thus, it is vital to find out the factors affecting the performance of workers and the reasons inhibiting optimal performance. Recently, a widespread trend has paid attention to the

qualities of graduates in terms of skills, abilities, and productivity. Limited research has closely investigated hospitality graduates employability skills, job preferences, and performance. Exploration is required to gain an understanding of these constructs.

Research Questions:

This study aimed to determine employability skills, career assessment, and work performance among hospitality graduates. Specifically, this study sought answers to the following questions:

1. What employability skills--communication skills, thinking skills, learning skills, attitude and behavior skills, and working with others skills are dominantly manifested among hospitality graduates taken as an entire group? How do these skills rank among hospitality graduates?
2. What is their career assessment when they are taken as an entire group and classified according to
 - 2.1. sex;
 - 2.2. age;
 - 2.3. civil status;
 - 2.4. course graduated;
 - 2.5. job status;
 - 2.6. industry employment; and
 - 2.7. industry experience?
3. What is their work performance when they are taken as an entire group and classified according to
 - 3.1. sex;
 - 3.2. age;
 - 3.3. civil status;
 - 3.4. course graduated;
 - 3.5. job status;
 - 3.6. industry employment; and
 - 3.7. industry experience?
4. Are there significant differences in the employability skills among hospitality graduates classified according to
 - 4.1. sex;
 - 4.2. age;
 - 4.3. civil status;
 - 4.4. course graduated;
 - 4.5. job status;
 - 4.6. industry employment; and
 - 4.7. industry experience?
5. Are there significant differences in their career assessment when they were classified according to
 - 5.1. sex;
 - 5.2. age;
 - 5.3. civil status;
 - 5.4. course graduated;
 - 5.5. job status;
 - 5.6. industry employment; and
 - 5.7. industry experience?
6. Are there significant differences in their work

performance when they were classified according to

- 6.1. sex;
 - 6.2. age;
 - 6.3. civil status;
 - 6.4. course graduated;
 - 6.5. job status;
 - 6.6. industry employment; and
 - 6.7. industry experience?
7. Are there significant relationships among employability skills, career assessment, and work performance of hospitality graduates?

Literature Review

Kluytmans and Ott (2009) claimed that employability is the security of the future and the certainty that current job functions would increase future work opportunities. It promotes a new psychological contract, a collaborative relationship between employees and employers where employees seek to retain the ability to obtain work, and employers will, in return, create opportunities to realize the employees' ambitions. Hillage and Pollard (2013) stressed that employability is about three abilities: gaining initial employment, maintaining employment, and obtaining new employment if required. It is the capability to move self-sufficiently within the labor market to realize potential through sustainable employment. Owens, Motl, and Krieshok (2015) examined the relative performance of three career counseling protocols: a strengths-based protocol, an interest-based protocol, and a protocol that combined strengths and interests. Results suggest that the interests protocol (IP) was the most effective approach when considering the conservation of resources. However, results also merit further exploration of the combined protocol (CP; strengths plus interests), given that the most significant gains were achieved by this approach on all but one construct, though similar to the IP. Chen, Johnson, Hull, and Reid (2015) studied the impact of certain factors on unattached youth workplace skill development. The findings indicated that specific individual characteristics, such as neuroticism and agreeableness, significantly impact their workplace skills development. Based on these results, career counseling and development be considered to help unattached individuals to develop their workplace skills to reach their potential.

Methodology

The survey-correlational research method was

Results

employed in the study. According to Check and Schutt (2012), survey research involves collecting information from a sample of individuals through their responses to questions to describe characteristics of that group.

Participants

The participants of this investigation were the 51 randomly selected hospitality graduates of the four batches (2012-2015) of the Bachelor of Science in Hotel and Restaurant Management and Tourism course at Iloilo State College of Fisheries, Iloilo, Philippines.

Instruments of the Study

The investigation adopted three (3) published data-gathering instruments to collect the data for the study: (1) Employability Skills Assessment Questionnaire by the Conference Board of Canada (2016) for employability skills; (2) Career Factor Experience Questionnaire for Hospitality Management Graduates by Brown (2011) for career assessment; and (3) Employee Performance Evaluation by California State University (2010) for work performance.

Procedure

Permission to conduct the study was secured from the Human Resource Office of the different establishments where the participants are currently employed. The researcher distributed the data-gathering instruments to the different graduates. Those working outside Iloilo City were reached through e-mail and social media. The researcher explained to the graduates the study's objectives and how to accomplish the data-gathering instrument. The accomplished questionnaire were retrieved after three weeks.

Ethical Considerations

To ensure the ethical norms of research, all retrieved questionnaires were secured and coded numerically to maintain confidentiality. Upon retrieving the accomplished questionnaires, the data were encoded, tallied, computer-processed, and interpreted using appropriate statistics such as Rank, Frequency count, Percentage Analysis, Mean, Standard Deviation, t-test, and Pearson's *r*. The significant level for all inferential tests were set at .05.

The rank of predominant employability skills among hospitality graduates. Data in Table 1 revealed that the hospitality graduates' most dominantly manifested employability skills were *learning skills* ($M = 4.75$, Rank 1). On the other hand, the least dominantly manifested employability skills were *thinking skills* ($M = 4.2$, Rank 5). Other manifested employability skills were: working with others ($M = 4.65$, Rank 2), attitude and behavior ($M = 4.52$, Rank 3), and communication skills ($M = 4.36$, Rank 4).

Table 1. Rank of Predominant Employability Skills Among Hospitality Graduates

Skill	<i>M</i>	Rank
Learning skills	4.75	1
Working with others	4.65	2
Attitude and behavior	4.52	3
Communication skills	4.36	4
Thinking skills	4.22	5

Table 2. Career Assessment Among Hospitality Graduates

Category	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Entire group	4.04	0.49
Sex		
Male	4.10	0.44
Female	3.97	0.54
Age		
Younger	4.01	0.51
Older	4.21	0.30
Civil status		
Single	4.06	0.50
Married	3.95	0.47
Course graduated		
HRM	4.05	0.44
Tourism	4.02	0.57
Job-status		
Permanent	3.89	0.47
Contratual	4.17	0.48
Industry employment		
Hospitality-related	4.13	0.32
Non-hospitality related	3.92	0.63
Industry experience		
Shorter	4.04	0.48
Average	4.03	0.52

Career assessment among hospitality graduates. In Table 2, the data revealed that the hospitality graduates assessed a *high career preference* whether they were taken as an entire group or classified according to specific identified categories. This was revealed by the



obtained mean scores, which fell within the 3.66-5.00 scale. The standard deviations, ranging from 0.30-0.57, showed the narrow dispersion of the obtained means indicating the graduates' homogeneity regarding their career assessment.

Work performance among hospitality graduates.

The data in Table 3 showed that the hospitality graduates had *outstanding* work performance, whether taken as an entire group or classified according to certain identified categories. This was revealed by the obtained mean scores that fell within the 4.21-5.00 scale. The obtained standard deviations, ranging from 0.13-0.35, showed the narrow dispersion of the obtained means indicating the graduates' homogeneity in their work performance.

Table 3. *Work Performance Among Hospitality Graduates*

Category	M	SD
Entire group	4.70	0.25
Sex		
Male	4.80	0.29
Female	4.59	0.13
Age		
Younger	4.70	0.23
Older	4.64	0.35
Civil status		
Single	4.71	0.24
Married	4.60	0.27
Course graduated		
HRM	4.73	0.24
Tourism	4.65	0.25
Job-status		
Permanent	4.64	0.27
Contratual	4.74	0.21
Industry employment		
Hospitality-related	4.74	0.22
Non-hospitality related	4.64	0.27
Industry experience		
Shorter	4.73	0.21
Average	4.66	0.29

Differences in employability skills among hospitality graduates are classified according to sex, age, civil status, course graduated, job status, industry employment, and industry experience. The *t*-test results in Table 4 showed significant differences in the employability skills among hospitality graduates classified according to industry employment, $t = 2.911, p = .005, p < .05$. However, it was noted that the hospitality graduates did not differ significantly in their employability skills classified according to sex,

age, civil status, course graduated, job status, and industry experience. Obtained *ts* were .582, .690, .807, .745, 1.670, and 1.629, respectively. Obtained *ps* were .563, .494, .424, .460, .101, and .110, respectively, which were all higher than .05.

Table 4. *t-test Results for the Differences in the Employability Skills Among Hospitality Graduates Classified According to Sex, Age, Civil Status, Course Graduated, Job Status, Industry Employment, and Industry Experience*

Category	M	df (2-tailed)	t-value	sig
Sex				
Male	4.53	49	.582	.563
Female	4.48			
Age				
Younger	4.52	49	.690	.494
Older	4.44			
Civil status				
Single	4.52	49	.807	.494
Married	4.42			
Course graduated				
HRM	4.48	49	.745	.460
Tourism	4.54			
Job-status				
Permanent	4.57	49	1.670	.101
Contratual	4.44			
Industry employment				
Hospitality-related	4.41	49	2.911*	.005
Non-hospitality related	4.62			
Industry experience				
Shorter	4.45	49	1.629	.110
Average	4.53			

Differences in the career assessment among hospitality graduates are classified according to sex, age, civil status, course graduated, job status, industry employment, and industry experience. The *t*-test results in Table 5 showed significant differences in the career assessment among hospitality graduates classified according to job status, $t = 2.147, p = .037, p < .05$. However, it was noted that the hospitality graduates did not differ significantly in their career assessment classified according to sex, age, civil status, course graduated, industry employment, and industry experience. Obtained *ts* were .926, .981, .581, .161, .507, and .040 respectively, and obtained *ps* were .359, .331, .564, .872, .138, and .969, respectively, which were all higher than .05.



Table 5. *t*-test Results for the Differences in the Career Assessment Among Hospitality Graduates Classified According to Sex, Age, Civil Status, Course Graduated, Job Status, Industry Employment, and Industry Experience

Category	M	df (2-tailed)	t-value	sig
<i>Sex</i>				
Male	4.10	49	.926	.359
Female	3.97			
<i>Age</i>				
Younger	4.01	49	.981	.331
Older	4.20			
<i>Civil status</i>				
Single	4.06	49	.581	.564
Married	3.95			
<i>Course graduated</i>				
HRM	4.05	49	.161	.872
Tourism	4.02			
<i>Job-status</i>				
Permanent	3.89	49	2.147	.037
Contratual	4.17			
<i>Industry employment</i>				
Hospitality-related	4.13	49	.157	.138
Non-hospitality related	3.92			
<i>Industry experience</i>				
Shorter	4.04	49	.040	.969
Average	4.03			

Table 6. *t*-test Results for the Differences in the Work Performance Among Hospitality Graduates Classified According to Sex, Age, Civil Status, Course Graduated, Job Status, Industry Employment, and Industry Experience

Category	M	df	t-value	sig
<i>Sex</i>				
Male	4.80	49	3.214	.002
Female	4.59			
<i>Age</i>				
Younger	4.70	49	.667	.508
Older	4.64			
<i>Civil status</i>				
Single	4.71	49	1.221	.228
Married	4.60			
<i>Course graduated</i>				
HRM	4.73	49	1.132	.263
Tourism	4.65			
<i>Job-status</i>				
Permanent	4.64	49	1.520	.135
Contratual	4.74			
<i>Industry employment</i>				
Hospitality-related	4.73	49	1.417	.163
Non-hospitality related	4.64			
<i>Industry experience</i>				
Shorter	4.73	49	.994	.325
Average	4.66			

Differences in work performance among hospitality graduates are classified according to sex, age, civil status, course graduated, job status, industry employment, and industry experience. The *t*-test results in Table 6 showed significant differences in work performance among hospitality graduates classified according to sex, $t = 3.214, p = .002, p < .05$. However, it was noted that the hospitality graduates were similar in their work performance classified

according to age, civil status, course graduated, industry employment, and industry experience. Obtained *ts* were .667, 1.221, 1.132, 1.520, 1.417, and .994, respectively. Obtained *ps* were .508, .228, .263, .135, .163, and .325, respectively, which were all higher than .05.

Relationship among employability skills, career assessment, and work performance of hospitality graduates. The data in Table 7 revealed that a positive but not significant relationship existed between hospitality graduates' employability skills and career assessment ($r = .230, p = .105$), between employability skills and work performance ($r = .164, p = .251$), and between career assessment and work performance ($r = .140, p = .328$).

Table 7. *Pearsons' r* Results for the Relationship Among Employability Skills, Career Assessment, and Work Performance of Hospitality Graduates

Category (n=51)	Employability skills		Career assessment		Work performance	
	r	r-prob	r	r-prob	r	r-prob
Employability skills	-	-	.230	.105	.164	.251
Career assessment	-	-	-	-	.140	.328
Work performance	-	-	-	-	-	-

Discussion

The research aimed to determine employability skills, career assessment, and work performance among hospitality graduates. Thus, this study used the descriptive-correlational analysis approach to define the respondents' profiles regarding employability skills, career assessment, and work performance. The research also established the order of magnitude of impacts between and among the variables, specifically between the respondents' employability skills and career assessment on their work performances.

Conclusion

The hospitality graduates in this study predominantly manifested learning skills. They may be very well motivated to learn new things, learn from their mistakes, accept feedback, set learning goals, and access learning opportunities regarding their work. However, they need to develop thinking skills to

assess situations,

identify problems, determine the root cause, and evaluate solutions. They also need to develop skills in speaking and writing clearly so that others understand, be confident, plan and manage time to get the job done, achieve goals, and enjoy the give and take of working in a group. The hospitality graduates had high career preferences based on their assessment of their personalities, character traits, and skills. This indicates that their interests, values, preferences, motivations, aptitudes, and skills substantially impact their potential success and satisfaction with their career options and work environments. They should be commended for their outstanding work performance. They are the very employees that the industry aspires for. These graduates exhibit competence in the workplace and apply what they have learned from the school they graduated from and the experience they gained from their on-the-job training. They are hardworking, committed, dedicated, well-motivated, and highly prepared to do their jobs. It indicates that most hospitality graduates were employed in a non-hospitality business. Although not related to their educational qualification, this indicates that these graduates are well-rounded in job skills. Hence, their being in the non-hospitality-related industry only proves that the proper education and training received from their schools and industry exposures may have honed their skills to adapt to any workplace. In addition, regardless of whether one is a male or a female; younger or older; single or married; HRM or Tourism graduate; with permanent or contractual job status; and had industry experience of less than 1 year, 1 to 3 years, or 3 years and above, his or her employability skills remains comparable. Job status is a factor that significantly influences hospitality graduates' career assessment. Contractual employees manifest higher career assessments, such as personalities, character traits, and skills. Their desire to

become permanent employees motivates them to strive some more by showing more outstanding interests, aptitudes, and skills in their performance of their jobs. However, regardless of whether one is a male or a female; younger or older; single or married; HRM or Tourism graduate; employed in a hospitality-related or non-hospitality-related job; and had industry experience of less than 1 year, 1 to 3 years, or 3 years and above, his or her career assessment remains comparable. Sex is a factor that significantly influences hospitality graduates' work performance in favor of male graduates. Male hospitality graduates are more productive, possess better job knowledge, are reliable and creative, render quality customer service,

and adhere to company policies and regulations compared to female graduates. However, regardless of whether one is younger or older; single or married; HRM or Tourism graduate; employed in hospitality-related or non-hospitality-related jobs; and had industry experience of less than 1 year, 1 to 3 years, or 3 years and above; his or her work performance remains comparable. Employability skills and career assessment did not significantly influence the graduates' work performance. Although positive and not significant, employability skills and career assessment bring about outstanding work performance among employees. However, the interplay of other factors not included in this research may be attributed to the outstanding performance of employed hospitality graduates. The graduates exuded these skills in the execution of their jobs while employed.

Given the findings, conclusions, and implications, the following were recommended: (1) Due recognition should be afforded to hospitality graduates for their outstanding work performance, high assessment of their career preference, and learning skills as their predominantly manifested employability skills. It is recommended that these employees maintain their outstanding work performance, elevate their career preference to a higher level, and practice their skills relevant to their respective jobs. This could be attained through self-introspection as well as encouragement and motivation from their employers through workshops, sensitivity training, motivation sessions, and the grant of incentives. (2) Graduates who work in non-hospitality-related establishments are highly encouraged to get employed in an industry where they can apply their knowledge and skills in the hospitality and tourism industry to make them become more effective in their respective careers. (3) Informed of the findings, hospitality educators may continue to revisit their curricular programs vis a vis industry needs and trends. (4) Replication of the study to a broader scope is highly recommended. Aside from employability skills, career assessment, and work performance, future researchers may include variables such as career preferences, work ethics, work satisfaction, etc.

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