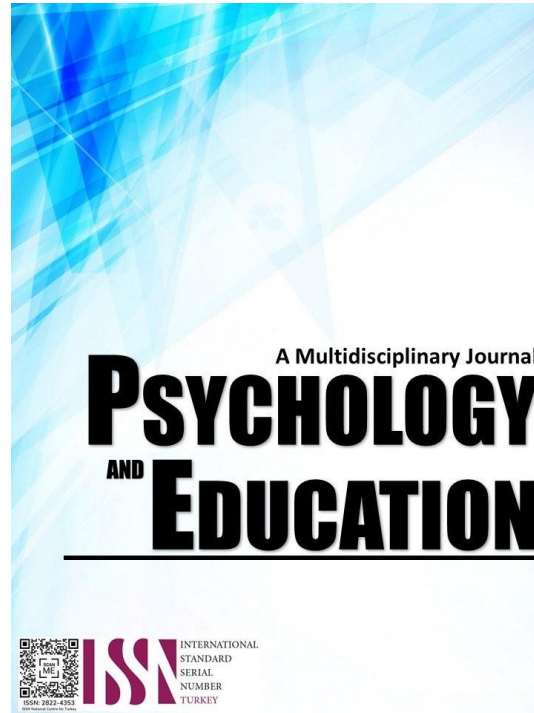


**TRACERS STUDY ON HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT  
AND TOURISM MANAGEMENT BATCH  
2015-2019 GRADUATES**



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## Tracers Study on Hospitality Management and Tourism Management Batch 2015-2019 Graduates

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### Abstract

The alumni are known to be the best proof of a program's success in terms of jobs and roles held. Also, a strong source of input on the importance of the program of the Hospitality and Tourism management including the two-year course program (AAHM). This research was performed to assess the employability of the HM/TM and AAHM programs' graduates and also to collect feedback that could be used to enhance the quality of its education. The respondents are graduates of 2015-2019 and were identified using descriptive statistics. A guided questionnaire was used to gather data. Significant findings of this study indicate that 59% were employed wherein the status is subdivided into permanent, temporary, contractual, casual and job orders status in the different government and private business establishments. There are 16.2% who are self-employed and most are online entrepreneurs. It was also found out that most of the online entrepreneurs are involved in selling and baking of products which shows the same interest and a practice of the skills learned. Thus, showing that the graduates of both programs can easily find job aligned to their field of specialization as it was supported by the 59% who are employed.

**Keywords:** *hospitality management, occupation, tourism management*

### Introduction

Tourism generates around 200 million jobs world-wide and account for 10% of the world global GDP according to WTTC 2003 as cited by Faladeobalade et al. (2014). Like in Canada, year 2011, tourism created \$78.8 billion in total economic activity and 603, 400 jobs and tourism accounted for more on gross domestic product than agriculture, forestry and fisheries combined (Tourism Industry Association of Canada, 2014). In connection to this, the hospitality industry now caters to the needs of tourists by providing them quality service. In order to provide the quality service, the sector seeks for manpower to accommodate this type of needs through employment, since tourism industry is a vast system consisting of several sectors with airlines, hotels, resorts, travel agencies and tour operators constituting the greater bulk.

The myriad of smaller entities that thrive and wane with tourism's upswings and downturns include souvenir shops, restaurants, bars and the like. The industry goes also beyond its business realm; it covers governments and non-government organizations as well as educational institutions (CMO No.30, series of 2006). Furthermore, the reality in the economy is a stiff competition since changes happen every day, but when it comes to relevance of employability is being agreed by policy makers and scholars alike (Peeters et al., 2019). For the graduates to find jobs they have to continue with their employability once they have been

part of the labor market (Akkermans et al., 2013).

In line with this, Hospitality management higher education's historic origins have resulted in a strong vocational ethos permeating the curriculum (Morrison & Barry O'Mahony, 2003). Therefore, the hospitality management started as vocational courses before it was integrated into universities as a course. Mostly of the subjects offered in the course hotel and restaurant management and tourism or hospitality management were generally on the demand of the industry in terms of skills and industry knowledge instead on the enquiries in order for all of this to be offered.

According to study, bachelor's degrees in hotel and restaurant management are 4-year programs that offer the management skills, financial knowledge and problem-solving abilities required to oversee staff and guarantee smooth operations at a tourism-related establishment. This degree instills into students the knowledge and skills that they need to become hospitality professionals and not only to have a job but to be managers and owners of hospitality establishments. The major subjects are related to the future jobs the students will be encountering after graduation. Together with this degree is the bachelor's degree in tourism which is a related industry to the hospitality industry. On the other hand, Bachelor of Science in Hotel and Restaurant Management (BSHRM) became popular degrees in the Philippines because of the countless occupations that graduates from this degree can go to.

With the influx of tourists in the country is the launching of different tourism-related establishments which made both courses attractive to incoming college students. This means graduates from both courses will surely be working in these establishments. In addition to this, the hospitality industry is the combination of the accommodation and food and beverage groupings, collectively making up the largest segment of the industry (Discover Hospitality 2015).

Therefore, the researchers decided to conduct this tracer study in order to determine the employment characteristics of Hospitality and Tourism management graduates; to determine their response rate to their courses and year graduated; and to determine the employability rate; and possible activities to be conducted to improve and qualify the graduates. Data from the study will also help conclude if the Hospitality Management and Tourism Management department is attaining their goals and objectives. In this study, the researchers' goal is to contribute to Psychology and Education by tracing the graduates of HM and TM programs and be able to track their status.

### Research Questions

This study aimed to trace the graduates of the HM and TM programs of the Mountain Province State Polytechnic College – Bontoc campus from 2015 to 2019. Specifically, it aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the status of employment of HM/TM graduates in terms of:
  - 1.1 Present Position Handled;
  - 1.2 Employment Status; and
  - 1.3 Nature of the Job?
2. What skills do HM/TM graduates consider as relevant to their current job?
3. What is the level of competency of HM/TM graduates according to employers' perspectives?
4. What are the strengths and areas of improvement among HM/TM graduates in terms of:
  - 4.1 Graduates' perspectives; and
  - 4.2 Employers' perspectives?
5. How do HM/TM graduates help their agency attain their goals and mission?
6. What suggestions do graduates and employers of HM/TM graduates have for the improvement of the College's instructional processes and enhancement of the curriculum?

### Literature Review

Tracer study is used to support the standardized study survey graduates from educational institutions that takes place sometimes once the students graduated or the training ended. Tracer study can discuss diverse topics and these can be about study progress, work transition, entrance to works, careers, the competencies that were acquired, occupations that they are currently into, and their communication to the institution they graduated from (Schomburg, 2016). Through the tracer study can an education institution know where their graduates are and based on some of the subjects the school may have information helpful in knowing what other aspects they can include in the curriculum and to become more competitive on the trends on the hospitality and for the greater endeavors of the graduates through fast employment.

Like the Lyceum of the Philippines University who conducted a tracer study, their results show that most of their graduates who responded were employed one to two years after graduating. They are mostly working within the Philippines and on a contractual basis. While majority of them are in the hotel and restaurant establishments working as rank and file. Human relation skills and communication skills are the two competencies that were deemed useful by the graduates. When it comes to their professional subjects, the graduates also considered these subjects as important in job placement. Lastly, the faculty member's mastery and communications skills were the most important factors when it comes to faculty and instruction.

Also, according to another tracer study of one state college of the Philippines they found out that majority of graduates are successfully employed locally and internationally. Majority acquired their first job in less than 3 months but graduates still had a struggle or difficulty in finding a job because of few vacancies or lack of position. Most of the respondents are working in hotels and fast-food chains and other have jobs relevant to their field. All the skills like entrepreneurship are believed to have been useful and relevant to their current employment. Moreover, a tracer study of the Mountain Province State Polytechnic College on Bachelor of Secondary Education and Bachelor of Elementary Education graduates by Madjaco & Tican (2015) found that bulk of the graduates are employed as regular or permanent teachers in private and public schools or colleges. While having no job opportunity and having no eligibility are the two main reasons for unemployment of some of the graduates.



## Methodology

The study employed a descriptive research design since its objective is to display the current status of the hospitality and tourism including two-year course program graduates of Mountain Province State Polytechnic College for the Academic year 2015 to 2019. The research study utilized a survey research method to map the job status of graduates. The methodology was also used to assess the feasibility and validity of the program catering to the requirements of their work.

## Participants

The researchers traced sixty-eight (68) graduates of two-year course hotel and restaurant services (AAHM), fifty-one (51) graduates of Bachelor of Science in Hotel and Restaurant Management (BSHRM) and Twenty-five (25) graduates of Bachelor of Science in Tourism (BST). Therefore, the total number of populations in all of the three programs offered by the department of Hospitality Management that the researchers will be tracing is one hundred forty-four (144) graduates. Below is the breakdown of the population:

Table 1. *Breakdown of Respondents*

Year Graduated	AAHM	BSHRM	BST	Number
2015	17	11	4	32
2016	15	10	5	30
2017	12	5	2	19
2018	17	7	9	33
2019	7	18	5	30
<b>Total</b>				<b>144</b>

While Table 2 presents the number of graduates who were able to respond through the questionnaire. For the year 2015, there were thirteen (13) AAHM graduates, eight (8) BSHRM graduates and three (3) BST graduates who were able to answer and submit the questionnaires. The total number of graduates who responded on the year 2015 is twenty-four (24). On the year 2016, twelve (12) AAHM graduates, eight (8) BSHRM graduates and four (4) BST graduates with a total of twenty-four (24) were able to respond. The total number of graduates who responded on 2017 is fifteen (15) and is composed of ten (10) AAHM graduates, four (4) BSHRM graduates and seven (1) BST graduate. The next year which is 2018, the

number of AAHM graduates who responded is nine (9), while for BSHRM is three (3) and BST had seven (7) totaled to nineteen (19) respondents. On the year 2019, twenty-three (23) graduates were able to respond with six (6) AAHM graduates, fourteen (14) BSHRM graduates and three (3) BST graduates.

Table 2. *Number of graduates who were able to respond*

Year Graduated	AAHM	BSHRM	BST	Number
2015	13	8	3	24
2016	12	8	4	24
2017	10	4	1	15
2018	9	3	7	19
2019	6	14	3	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>105</b>

## Instruments of the Study

The main gathering tool that the researchers used was a questionnaire type for the study. The questionnaire was based from the institutionalized survey questionnaire of the Mountain Province State Polytechnic College. It is composed of eight parts. The first part is focused on the general information of the graduates. Second part is on their educational attainment which comprises on the following sub parts; A) Educational Attainment (Baccalaureate and Graduate degrees), B) Professional examination(s) National Certificate Exam (s) Passed, C) Scholarships and/ or Grants availed while pursuing undergraduate degree and; D) Research studies conducted after your graduation. The third part viewed the employment data that includes: Present Employment Status, Present Occupation, and Place of work, Starting Job level position in their present job, present position, and the time length before they land to their first job, length of stay in their current job, reasons in accepting their current job, and basic competencies in the program they find relevant to their current job, and suggestions to improve the course curriculum which this part will be answered only by the employees of the Mountain Province State Polytechnic College Alumna.

The part four focused on the competencies of the graduates in relevance to the course program aligned to it. Part five of the survey questionnaire dictated on the strengths of graduates they display on their work performance and part six is on the areas of performance that needs improvement. The seventh part focused also on the graduate's contributions and how the agency achieves its goals and objectives. While the eighth part of the survey questionnaire was based on



the graduates’ performance and suggestions to help and improve the graduates’ competencies.

**Procedure**

The list of graduates was obtained by the researchers from the Admissions Office. The researchers then communicated with the graduates through social media applications and through other graduates who may have contact with them. Subsequently, the questionnaires were sent to the graduates through their preferred channels. Finally, the questionnaires were retrieved by the researchers for processing and analyzing.

**Ethical Considerations**

Ethical issues essential in the researcher-participant process when collecting, analyzing, and disseminating data were all adhered to during the conduct of this study. Respondents received consent letters wherein parts of the study were explained and also the expectations from them. The form together with a letter were signed by the participants if they agreed to be part of the study. Anonymity and confidentiality of the participants were preserved by not revealing their names, identity, and other information during the data collection analysis and reporting of findings. The Data Privacy Act of 2012 (R.A. 10173) served as a basis for the researchers when it comes to the data collection from the participants. Data gathered and analyzed were erased permanently to avoid others using or looking into the data. The researcher’s contact number and email account were given to the participants in case they have questions or clarifications.

**Results**

This section presents the findings based from the research questions. This is composed of different tables showing the employment status of graduates, present occupation, nature of graduate’s job, skills acquired and level of competence according to employers.

There were 105 respondents who were able to submit the questionnaire and 39 were not able to answer because some were unreachable since their contact information is unknown to their former classmates, some refused to answer, while others did not respond. Most respondents were graduates of AAHRM with 50 (47.6%) in total while BSHRM graduates totaled to 37 (35.2%) and 18 (17.1%) were BSTM graduates. From the 105 respondents only 5 (4.8%) were able to have

national certification in the competencies Front Office, Bread and Pastry Production, Housekeeping and Food & Beverage Services.

Table 3. *Employment status of graduates*

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Employed		
Permanent	12	11.4%
Temporary	9	8.6%
Contractual	36	34.3%
Casual	3	2.8%
Job Order	2	1.9%
Total of Employed	62	59%
Self-employed		
Online Seller	12	11.4%
Technician	1	1.0%
Freelancer	4	3.8%
Total of Self-employed	17	16.2%
Not yet employed	26	24.8%
Total	105	100%

Table 4.A shows the present occupation of graduates who are employed and the highest number of employed graduates with a total of 28 (45%) are presently working under the hospitality industry. While second with the highest number of present occupation is 15 (25%) under office administration.

Table 4.A. *Present Occupation of Employed Graduates*

<i>Category of Occupation</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Construction	1	1%
Health	1	1%
Hospitality	28	45%
Household	4	7%
Manufacturing	2	3%
Office Administration	15	25%
Sales & Marketing	9	15%
Tourism	2	3%
TOTAL	62	100%

For table 4.B these are the present occupation of self-employed graduates wherein online sellers have the highest number with 12 (70.6%) in total. While others are freelancers with 4(23.5%) and 1 (5.9%) technician.



Table 4.B. *Present Occupation of Self-Employed Graduates*

<i>Present Position</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Freelancer	4	23.5%
Online seller	12	70.6%
Technician	1	5.9%

For Table 5, this represents the industry where the employed graduates are currently working in and it shows that 16 (20.2%) out of 79 employed graduates are working in the hotel industry. Whereas 12 (15.2%) graduates are in the online business as the second industry with the most number. The third industry with 6 (7.6%) who are currently working in is the restaurant industry.

Table 5. *Nature of the Graduates' Job*

<i>Nature of the Job</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Academic	1	1.3%
Agriculture	1	1.3%
Bank	2	2.5%
Call Center	3	3.7%
Clothing Shop	4	5.1%
Computer Shop	1	1.3%
Cooperative	1	1.3%
Construction	1	1.3%
Courier Company	2	2.5%
Cruise ship	1	1.3%
Employment Agency	1	1.3%
Event Management	1	1.3%
Fastfood Chain	2	2.5%
Food Manufacture	1	1.3%
Government Agency	3	3.7%
Hardware	1	1.3%
Hotel	16	20.2%
Hospital	1	1.3%
Household	4	5.1%
Mall	1	1.3%
Microfinance Agency	2	2.5%
Mobile Phone Shop	1	1.3%
Online Business	12	15.2%
Pawnshop	2	2.5%
Real Estate Agency	1	1.3%
Restaurant	6	7.6%
Shipping company	2	2.5%
Travel Agency	2	2.5%
Tour Guide Association	3	3.7%

The responses in Table 6 show that the skill most graduates consider as relevant to their current job is communication skills with the highest frequency count of 49 (79.0%). They consider communication skills as important because they have to interact with guests in their job and also with their superiors. The communication skills they were able to grasp from

school helps them to converse with their guests or customers, managers and also co-workers. Some graduates added leadership skills, computer skills and event management skills as skills that they acquired which is also important. This is because their jobs require these type of skills. Next to communication skills is human relation skills with 43 (69.3%) frequency count which showed that the graduates also acquired this skill while studying and are able to apply it to their workplace. Entrepreneurial skill has the lowest among the first five skills which had a 25 (40.3%) frequency count which means it still relevant but not that much applied to the workplace.

Table 6. *Skills HM/TM graduates consider as relevant to their current job*

<i>Skills</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Communication Skills	49	79.0%
Human Relation Skills	43	69.3%
Problem-solving Skills	30	48.4%
Entrepreneurial Skills	25	40.3%
Critical Thinking Skills	26	41.9%
Leadership Skills	1	1.6%
Computer Skills	1	1.6%
Event Management Skills	1	1.6%

Table 7 presents the level of competence of an HM/TM graduate as evident in their work performance. The overall mean 2.96 shows that the graduates are Much Competent based from the competencies that are expected from them. This is according to their employers and it could mean that their work performance when rating according to the competencies they are doing their jobs well but there are some parts wherein they need improvement. They are applying what they have learned from school to their workplace.

Table 7. *Level of Competence of HM/TM graduate as evident in work performance*

<i>Competencies of Graduates</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
1. Demonstrate knowledge of tourism industry, local tourism products and services	3.6	Very Much Competent
2. Interpret and apply relevant laws related to tourism industry	2.4	Competent
3. Observe and perform risk mitigation activities	3.0	Much Competent
4. Utilize information technology applications for tourism and hospitality	2.4	Competent
5. Manage and market a service-oriented business organization	2.6	Much Competent
6. Demonstrate administrative and managerial skills in a service-oriented business organization	3.4	Very Much Competent
7. Prepare and monitor industry specific financial transactions and reports	2.0	Competent
8. Perform human capital development functions of a tourism oriented organization	3.6	Very Much Competent
9. Utilize various communication channels proficiently in dealing with guests and colleagues	3.6	Very Much Competent
Overall Mean	2.96	Much Competent

## Discussion

In the employment status of graduates, it shows that graduates of hospitality and tourism can easily find jobs because of high demand for hospitality and tourism practitioners. High demand of graduates from hospitality and tourism is backed by the ABS-CBN news (2017) wherein they reported that tourism is booming in the Philippines because of the creation of tourism infrastructure and economic zone authority. The tracer study for Bachelor of Science in Hotel and Restaurant Management graduates of Celis, Festijo & Cueto (2013) shows that from one to two years after graduation, most of their respondents were employed.

Online selling has the highest number of self-employed graduates. These graduates are selling online dry products while others are selling food products like cooked viand and baked breads. They post their products through their social media account. Since the courses AAHRM, BSHM and BSTM are management courses results therefore suggests that some graduates are pursuing to establish their own businesses by starting through online.

Majority of the graduates are working in the

hospitality industry and some are based abroad like in Hiroshima, Japan and Dubai, United Arab Emirates. While most are working in the Philippines including places like Taguig City, Baguio City and Metro Manila. Additional to this, there graduates working in fast food chain namely Minute Burger and Mang Inasal. Furthermore, a graduate is currently working in Costa Cruise Ship and some BSTM graduates are working in a travel agency and tour guide associations.

From the employer's perspectives, a strength that they see from HM/TM graduates is their ability to work under pressure and that they manage their time well hence tasks are timely done as supported by this statement of one employer, "The ability to work under pressure, multi-task, analyze data and situations before making decisions. Her sense of ownership and responsibility. Her passion to hospitality and dedication to team work." While one employer added, "One strength is time management. She handles task given to her on a timely basis." They also have the confidence and initiative to communicate with their guests delivering efficient customer service as supported by this statement of another employer, "He has self-confidence, attentive, initiative and physically fit." Also one employer said that, "She enhanced her communication skills wherein she can express herself based on her intellectual capacity and effective decision making. Her performance is great and I as her superior recommending for her promotion due to her excellent performance and dedication to help improve the foundation." Another strength is their decision-making skill by handling guest complaints as backed by this employer's statement, "Handles guest complaints promptly." Lastly, another employer said one strength is, "Up to date knowledge in the industry." This shows that the lessons they learned from studying are updated and is connected to what is being done in the real world.

Subsequently, the areas where they need to improve is on finance particularly reporting of budgets as stated by one employer, "Documentation and reporting budget preparation", which can also be done by HM/TM graduates. They just need to understand more on financial management. Another area of improvement as supported by this employer's statement, "He needs to pay attention and be organized", being organized in the job which the employer deems the HM/TM graduates lack. Furthermore, employers of graduates working abroad finds that they also need to improve on their knowledge of the country's language.

The HM/TM graduates help their agency in attaining

their goals and mission by performing efficiently and effectively to deliver quality service in their workplace like what this statement of an employer shows, “She was able to adapt on different situations and able to decide efficiently. When it comes to the foundation policy, she can execute the core policies and do her job accordingly.” They benefit the agency by being vocal and giving suggestions like what this employer said, “She’s vocal and can give suggestions if needed.” By being task-oriented, they achieve the target given to them hence the attainment of their agency’s goals and mission. Lastly, HM/TM graduates help the agency by being the source of knowledge wherein they try to disseminate information they have learned which they deem the organization they are in is lacking and this is backed by one employer’s statement, “He’s been providing orientations and refreshments not only to the new members and apprentices but to all the members of the organization with regard to tour guiding technique, customer service and other tourism related matters.”

Based on their suggestions, HM/TM graduates should have TESDA certifications since it is one qualification employers look into because it is the skill that they need as one graduate stated, “Instructors must require demonstration and hands-on experience toward certification such as TESDA NCII and English fluency.” Another one stated, “Provide NCII exam every competency completed by the students (it will help them to easily land for a job).” The department should concentrate on training the students of their skills hence it is also suggested that hands on trainings are needed for subjects needing more hands on instead of theories. As supported by this suggestion of a graduate, “More on actual application on major subjects like culinary, bartending, housekeeping etc.” Another one said, “More on actual/practicum less theories.” When it comes to its being a management course, it’s a suggestion that business and managerial subjects be given focus so that graduates can also qualify to other opportunities as pointed out by this statement of one graduate, “I respectfully suggest that all major, business and managerial subjects will be given focus and more importance. That in case some graduates will not enter the hospitality industry at least they will be equipped with knowledge on business and management thus qualifying them to more opportunities.”

## Conclusion

Majority of the graduates are employed and online selling is the highest present occupation of these

employed graduates. Most graduates are presently working in the hotel and restaurant industry. When it comes to their skills, communication skills and human relation skills are considered the most relevant skills the HM/TM graduates acquired which they are applying at work. According to employer’s perspectives, HM/TM graduates are very much competent in handling their jobs. The strengths of HM/TM graduates in terms of their employer’s perspective is their ability to work well under pressure, they finish tasks on time, they have confidence to handle guest complaints and they have updated knowledge on the hospitality and tourism industry. While their weakness is on the financial and budgeting aspect wherein, they also need to improve their knowledge on financial management. Lastly, they should also improve on their knowledge on the country where they are working.

The HM/TM graduates help their agency by doing their jobs efficiently and effectively. Through the learnings they acquired from school they contribute to the operations of their agency to achieve its goals and objectives. HM/TM graduates suggest that the program should also require the students to obtain a certification from TESDA skills since these are important requirement needed by employers. Another suggestion is more hands-on training for students to have more experience. Lastly, the business side of the program should be given importance also since it will open more opportunities for students to explore.

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