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Tracer Study of Bachelor of Science in Tourism Management Graduates from Camarines Sur Polytechnic Colleges: 2018 and 2019 Cohorts

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ABSTRACT

This research is primarily a tracer study on alumnae of the Bachelor of Science in Tourism Management (BSTM) program at the Camarines Sur Polytechnic Colleges in Nabua, Camarines Sur, from 2018 to 2019. It tried to ascertain the individual's personal, professional, and employment profile. Additionally, it found factors for employees' retention in their present or former positions and their happiness with their current or previous jobs. Similarly, the study examines respondents' perceptions of the program's perceived benefits to themselves. Respondents were asked to rate the program personally for each indicator. More so, this research makes recommendations for enhancing the employability of BSTM alumnae. This study employed a descriptive survey method. Respondents included BSTM alumnae. Most graduates find meaningful employment in private enterprises, primarily in hospitality-related roles. Their employability was influenced by socioeconomic, academic, and school characteristics. The environment significantly affects an employee's ability to retain their employment. There is still significant room for improvement in the college's BSTM program, particularly topic offerings and extracurricular activities.

Keywords
Bachelor of Science
Professional
Perceptions
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Introduction

The most important objective of a college education is employment [1]. Most parents send their children to college with the hope that after graduation their children will be able to find a stable and decent job. A graduate tracer study is mainly a survey intended to trace graduates from their school origin to their place of employment or self-employment. Tracer Study is envisioned by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) to perform institutional analysis of the factors determining employability, the competencies/skills that should be developed, the hiring areas of graduates of various programs, and identification of the most responsive or in-demand course-based on the job waiting time of graduates. According to the study by Ref. [2], graduates must be reached and regularly informed on annual homecoming to be updated on what's going on in the college. At the same time, the annual gathering should be well-planned to encourage the alumni to return. It was also stated in the study of Ref. [3], affirmed the tracer study is beneficial to both the institution and its graduates. It showed that the institution can determine and show its effectiveness in molding highly competent graduates as an answer to increasing technological competition.

A tracer study is an approach that is widely used in most organizations, especially in educational institutions to track and keep records of their students once they have graduated from the institution [4]. Through tracer study, an institution can evaluate the quality of education given to their graduates by knowing the graduates' placements and positions in society. Ref. [5] examines the adequacy of one particular institution providing for the manpower needs of all sectors. To attain this purpose, the level of employment and unemployment situation of graduates, relevance, and competence of graduate employees, employer perception, and both graduates and employer feelings were about to be deemed. As stated, graduate tracer study also aims to demonstrate the success of education and training to the graduates and employers, to find out how the graduates obtained their first job, to determine whether their work assignments are related to their field of study, and to indicate possible deficits in a given educational program and serve as the basis for future planning activities

The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) is conducting a comprehensive study that requires all HEIs to do individual graduate tracer studies on their respective alumni [6].

The result of the research will become a tool in the envisioned upgrading of the educational system in the country. The tracer study is used by universities to determine the success of the educational process that has been done for their students [7]. Tracer's study also provides information about college, like the year of graduation, the job waiting period, the first salary to work, the first job, the relevance of the curriculum to the work, and compliance with the major areas of work taken in college. Graduate Tracer Studies constitute an important tool for educational planners, as they can provide valuable information for evaluating the results of higher education and training institutions. This information may be used to minimize any possible deficits in a given educational program in terms of content, delivery, and relevance and for further development of the institution in the context of quality assurance.

The main objectives of the study were to trace the destination of the graduates since they left the university with a view to establishing among others their current activity, utilization of skills, level of employment, unemployment and underemployment, labor mobility, and job satisfaction [8]. The tracer study also aimed to assess the contribution of university training to graduates' personal development as well as the quality of the programs of study in terms of content, delivery, and relevance to the world of work.

The graduate tracer studies provide important information that will help educational institutions assess the attainment of their vision, mission, and goals [9]. An Online Tool for Graduate Tracer Studies it is a web application that also allows users to create custom tracer surveys applicable to their contexts. With the iterative systems development as the chosen research framework, feedback gathered from the pre-tests and the prototyping generated relevant contributions to the development of the graduate tracer tool.

Given CSPC's commitment to providing high-quality education and services that satisfy its clients and stakeholders and result in the production of world-class professionals through continuous improvement of all its programs, it is critical to determine whether graduates better respond to industry needs. That is why new tracer studies focusing on the BSTM program have been done. The Bachelor of Science in Tourism Management program was established in 2014 at the Camarines Sur Polytechnic Colleges. As a result, the first graduates of this program were registered in 2018, four years after it began. The proponent determined that it was essential to ascertain the locations of BSTM alumni to evaluate if they were adequately engaged in their chosen field of expertise and to assess the academic sufficiency of the college in terms of providing students with applicable information.

Literature Review

This study was based on the Theory of the KASH concept [10]. Learning is more than just knowledge. It also needs attitude, skill, and habitual changes. Learning is a gradual process.

Michaelangelo disagreed with the opinion of Hank Czarnecki on KASH saying that knowledge and skills are the learning component of an individual while attitude and habits are the performance of a person. Michaelangelo said that attitude and habits can also contribute to effective learning.

There is a general agreement that improvement of KASH individually can lead to an overall improvement of individual success. The purpose of KASH in this study show that success does not stop in the learning process of the graduates by knowledge itself but also by their skills, attitudes, and habits.



Fig. 1. Theoretical Framework

Knowledge is information acquired by a person through experience or education. Companies could assess a candidate's knowledge by asking them about the specific role in the company. Knowledge can direct success or failure in a candidate's job interview. Attitude is a way of thinking or feeling about something or someone. To achieve success is to require a sustained mental fortitude. Attitude can help a performance by seeking alternatives and being strategically optimistic. Skills are the expertise or talent needed to do a job or task. A simple example would be communication skills. Foreign language skill is an efficient way to communicate the value to a client of your company. Habit is a routine of behavior that is repeated regularly and tends to occur subconsciously. Consider the habit of reading. In working in a certain company, you should keep yourself up to date with current news that can lead you to success.

Material and Methods

A. Research Method

The researcher adopted a particular descriptive technique. The descriptive survey approach was used to obtain information about the graduates' personal and professional profiles through interviews and surveys. The primary data collection instrument was a

questionnaire.

B. Respondents/Participants/Subjects of the Study

The respondents to this survey were forty-four (44) graduates of the Bachelor of Science in Tourism Management program at Camarines Sur Polytechnic Colleges in Nabua, Camarines Sur, from 2018 to 2019.

Table 1. The Respondents

Year Graduated	No. of Graduates	No. of Respondents	% each year	% Total
2018	119	32	26.89	72.73
2019	86	12	13.95	27.27
Total	205	44	21.46	100

The respondents were 44 graduates of Camarines Sur Polytechnic Colleges with a Bachelorof Science in Tourism Management from 2018 to 2019. The distribution of the 44 respondents by year of graduation is shown in Table 1. 205 graduates between 2018 and 2019, but only 44 became respondents.

C. Sampling Techniques

The study utilized random sampling. Random sampling, or probability sampling,is a sampling technique that enables sample selection to be random, i.e., each sample has the same likelihood of being chosen as a representative of the total population as other samples.

D. Research Instruments

The researcher used a survey questionnaire developed by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and previously utilized in a comparable study to accomplish thestudy's objective. Statistical procedures were employed to collect the data necessary for producing credible output.

E. Data Gathering Procedures

The surveys were distributed electronically by the researcher. The researchers collect data via Google Forms and use social media platforms such as Messenger, Instagram, Twitter, and email. Additionally, landlines and cellular network services were used to expedite data collection.

F. Statistical Treatment of Data

The percentile approach and weighted mean were utilized in this investigation. The percentile technique was used to determine the proportion of the variable in qualitativeterms relative to the whole; the weighted mean was used to determine the average degree of

respondents' self-assessment in terms of satisfaction and usefulness of learnings in their current or previous work, perceived contributions of the program to their selves, and respondents' assessment of the degree program.

To analyze the results of the self-assessment data in terms of satisfaction with and applicability of learnings to their present or prior jobs, the researcher employed a four-point Likert Scale with the following range: 3.5 – 4.0: Very Much; 2.5 – 3.49: Much; 1.5– 2.49: A little; 1.0 – 1.49: Not Useful or Not Satisfied. Meanwhile, a Likert scale of 3.5–4.0: Excellent; 2.5–3.49: Fair; 1.5–2.49: Poor; and 1.0–1.49: Very Poor was used to analyze respondents' perceived benefits of the program to themselves, as well as their appraisal ofthe degree program.

Results

Table 2 shows the personal profile of the respondents in terms of sex, age, civil status, and location of the residence. The respondents consisted of thirty-eight or eighty- six percent (86%) female and six or fourteen percent (14%) male. The big difference in the percentage shows that tourism management is dominated by female practitioners [11]. While women dominate the tourism business, Ref. [12] asserts that exploitation and inequality are pervasive in the industry.

Table 2. Personal Profile of the Respondents

Sex	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Male	6	14
Female	38	86
Total	**44**	**100**
Age		
≥ 22	5	11.36
22-33	39	88.64
Total	**44**	**100**
Civil Status		
Single	41	93.18
Married	3	6.8%
Total	**44**	**100**
Location of Residence		
City	23	52.27
Municipality	21	47.73
Total	**44**	**100**

Forty-one (41) or 93.18% were still single, while three (3), or 6.8% were married. This implies that of the 44 respondents, the majority do not have their own families. This is unsurprising since the respondents of the study are not long graduates of the institution. The study also opined that graduate students often work years before getting married. This is to

pay back to the family of the graduates [13]. More so, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), in 2019, revealed that the median age for marriage among Filipino females and males was 27 and 29 years, respectively [14].

Only five or 11.36% of the sample are aged 22 and below in terms of age. The remaining percentage (88.64%) belongs to the ages 23 and above. This result suggests thatthe classical educational system in the country, with which students are expected to graduate by the age of 18 and the succeeding years, should be spent finding work [12].

Meanwhile, twenty-three, or 52.27% of the respondents dwell in cities, while the remaining portion (47.73%, or 21) lives in municipalities. This result is unprecedented since the onslaught of the Pandemic, most of the employees from cities are urged to go back to their respective provinces, as what the #BalikProbinsya program of the Duterte Administration. Hence, knowing that more than half of the respondents live in the city means they are at a relatively high risk of contracting the deadly COVID-19 [15].

Table 3 shows the professional profile of the respondents with the highesteducational attainment, professional examination passed, and training/seminars attended.

Table 3. Professional Profile

	Frequency	Percentage
Highest Educational Attainment		
Masters	3	6.82
Bachelor's Degree	41	93.18
Total	**44**	**100**
Professional Examination Passed		
TESDA NC II	2	4.55
LET	3	6.82
None	39	88.64
Total	**44**	**100**
Trainings Attended		
Tourism	5	11.36
Management	4	9.09
Hospitality	3	6.82
None	32	72.73
Total	**44**	**100**

The data shows that only three or 6.82% of the respondents have pursued a master'sdegree. The rest have settled to their bachelor's degree. One key factor why the majority ofthe respondents did not try to take a master's degree could be the lack of available programs related to tourism management near the College. More so, the majority of the universitiesor colleges offering master's degrees related to tourism management owe a high tuition feeto their applicants or enrollees. To avoid such difficulty, new graduates from college set their

minds to find a job to provide for their families [16],[17].

Also, most of the respondents did not take any competitive examinations (88.64%).Only three or 6.82% took the licensure examination for teachers (LET), while only two took the TESDA NCII. The result suggests that there is more to work on in terms of encouraging students to take competitive exams. This also suggests that the school lacks benchmarking when redirecting its students to possible career paths.

Meanwhile, in terms of training attended, less than 10% of the respondents claim they have attended management-related training, less than 12% insisted they have attended tourism-related training, and nearly 7% attended hospitality-related training. A staggering almost 90% of the respondents believed they had not attended hospitality, tourism, and management training.

Table 4 presents the employment profile of the respondents. For the nature of employment, forty of the respondents (90.91%) are employed, while four or 9.09% are unemployed. The result suggests that despite the significant impact of COVID-19 on the hospitality and tourism industry [18], especially on the massive firing of once-hired employees, the respondents have devised ways to earn their own money. More so, congruent to the study of Ref. [19], there is observed high employability among tourism management graduates.

Table 4. Employment Profile

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Nature of Employment		
Employed	40	90.91
Unemployed	4	9.09
Job-related		
Directly related	30	68.18
Not related	14	31.82
Job Position		
Clerical	5	11.36
Hospitality	14	31.82
Others	5	11.36
Tourism	2	4.55
Supervisory	2	4.55
Professional	2	4.55
Managerial	1	2.27
Executive	1	2.27
None	9	20.45
Secretarial	3	6.82
Type of Organization		
Government	6	13.64
Private	30	68.18
Self-Employed	4	9.09
Public	4	9.09
Place of Work		
Local	38	86.36
Abroad	2	4.55

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
None	4	9.09
Employment Status		
Contractual	12	27.27
Permanent	20	45.45
Self-Employed	4	9.09
Temporary	6	13.64
Job Order/Casual	2	4.55
Monthly Salary Range		
Below ₱10,000	11	25.00
₱10,000 – ₱20,000	19	43.18
₱21,000 – ₱30,000	12	27.27
₱61,000 – ₱70,000	1	2.27
Ways to find a job		
Word-of-mouth	25	56.82
Job sites	3	6.82
Social Media	1	2.27
Advertisement	8	18.18
Internship	1	2.27
Written Inquiry	4	9.09
Others	2	4.55
Length of Time in the Job		
below 1	15	34.09
1-5	29	65.91
Total	**44**	**100**

In terms of job-relatedness, thirty or 68.18% of the respondents have jobs directly linked to hospitality and tourism management. In comparison, the remaining fourteen, or 31.82%, can hardly be related to the tourism and hospitality sectors. This result suggests that despite being a diverse field of study, hospitality and tourism management graduates find it difficult to benchmark or redirect their degree to the works best suited for the program's attributes [20]. In the job-relatedness, job positions were used. Jobs not related to the program are those labeled none and others. None could mean either unemployed or confidential to say.

In terms of job positions, fourteen or 31.82% of the respondents have job positions related to hospitality. Nine respondents are either unemployed or hesitant to provide information regarding the matter. Meanwhile, job positions that are managerial andexecutive garnered the least with a percentage equal to 2.27%.

Six respondents classified themselves as employee of the government, and thirty, or 68.18% classified themselves as private working individuals. Both the self-employed and public types of organization garnered four respondents making a percentage equal to 9.09%. The private type of organization dominates the other organization. This, in general,is the trend in hospitality and tourism management as graduates vow their selves to engage with companies that are commonly privately run. Also, the context matters. In the Philippines, most hospitality and tourism businesses are privately owned.

Thirty-eight respondents, or 86.36%, work locally while the remaining numbers work

abroad. This corroborates Ref. [19] study wherein most of the respondents work locally. From such, the analysis could be made that there is a huge opportunity waiting for them within the area of the graduates. This may be attributed to the various works related to tourism management.

The majority of the respondents (45.45%) have permanent work. Twelve respondents classified themselves as working in a contract. Six respondents have temporary work. Four respondents are self-employed, while two have job orders or casualwork.

In terms of the monthly salary range, the most common is ₱10,000 to ₱20,000 with19 respondents. This is followed by the ₱21,000 to ₱30,000 with 12 respondents. Eleven respondents earn less than ₱10,000, while only one has managed to earn a monthly income ranging from ₱61,000 to ₱70,000. Noticeably, this respondent works abroad. For instance,the respondents' minimum monthly salary is the commonest range of monthly salary.

In terms of finding a job, the most common response from the respondents is through word-of-mouth. This could be through their peers or relatives. Twenty-fiverespondents claim they had worked through this method. Eight respondents believe they have known their work through advertisements, i.e., social or printed advertisements. Four respondents claimed they had been made aware of their job through written inquiry. Threerespondents have been made aware of work openings through job sites, while only one responded for social media and internships. Ref. [21] believed that the processes mentioned earlier of finding jobs are traditional.

Twenty-nine respondents worked in their jobs for the range of one to five years, while15 respondents (34.09%) worked less than a year. Although there have been four respondents classified as unemployed, these four respondents still answered the category length of time in the job.

Table 5. Respondents' reasons for staying in their work

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
Professional and Career Growth	17	38.64
Good working environment	18	40.91
Salary and Benefits	9	20.45
Total	**44**	**100**

Table 5 presents the respondents' various reasons for staying in their respective work. Among the list is the excellent working environment with a frequency of 18 and a corresponding percentage of 40.91, followed by the professional and career growthgarnering a frequency of 17 and a percentage of 38.64. Lastly, the salary and benefits are on the list with a frequency of nine or 20.45%. Ref. [22] claimed there are various factorsin staying at work and the most common reasons include the environment and the salary rate.

Table 6. Self-assessment in terms of satisfaction and usefulness of learnings

Indicator	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
How useful to your job are theknowledge and skills learned from CSPC?	3.41	Much
How satisfied are you with your current or previous job?	3.34	Much

Table 6 presents the respondents' assessment of their level of satisfaction in their current or previous job and the usefulness of the knowledge and skills taught in the College.With a weighted mean of 3.41 in total, the respondents believe the skills and knowledge taught by the College have helped them in their current work. This is congruent with the results of Ref. [20] study. Additionally, with a weighted mean of 3.34, the totalityof the respondents believe they are very satisfied with their current or previous work.

Shown in Table 7 are the respondents' perceived contributions to the program BSTM to themselves. Leading in the list are present and future professional skills with a weighted mean of 3.27 verbally interpreted as fair. This is followed by the indicators, exposure to the local community within the field of specialization, and enhanced academic profession, garnering a weighted mean of 3.23, which is verbally interpreted as fair. Ref. [23] have found that the tourism program has positively impacted respondents in their study in terms of employability. This is analogous to the present study. The respondents claimed that they are fairly developed in meeting present and future professional skills and exposure to the community within their field of specialization. This enhanced academic profession proved to be essential in employability.

Table 7. Respondents' Perceived Contributions to the Program

Indicator	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Enhanced academic Profession	3.23	Fair
Improved problem-solving skill	3.16	Fair
Improved research skills	3.05	Fair
Improved learning efficacy	2.82	Fair
Improved communication/interpersonal skills	3.14	Fair
Improved information technology skills	2.91	Fair
Enhanced team spirit/people skill	2.93	Fair
Meeting present and future Professional skills	3.27	Fair
Exposure to the local community within the field of specialization	3.23	Fair
Exposure to the International Community within the field of Specialization	3.16	Fair
Critical Thinking Skill	3.05	Fair
Salary Improvement and Promotion	2.82	Fair
Opportunity Abroad	3.14	Fair
Personality Development	2.91	Fair
Average Weighted Mean	**3.13**	**Fair**

Meanwhile, last in the rank are the improved learning efficiency and the salary improvement and promotion, garnering only a weighted mean of 2.28. For the least in rank, improved learning efficiency, Ref. [24] believed that physical setting in learningaffects learning efficiency.

Table 8. Respondents' Assessment of the Degree Program

Indicator	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Range of subjects offered	2.30	Poor
Relevance of the program to your professional requirements	2.45	Poor
Extra-Curricular Activities	2.30	Poor
Problem-Solving	2.43	Poor
Premium Given to Research	2.41	Poor
Interdisciplinary learning	2.55	Fair
Teaching and Learning Environment	2.66	Fair
Quality of Instruction	2.98	Fair
Teacher- Student Relationship	2.64	Fair
Library Resources	2.59	Fair
Laboratory Resources	2.36	Poor
Class Size	2.48	Poor
Infrastructure and facilities	2.41	Poor
Professor's knowledge of significant subjects	2.73	Fair
Average Weighted Mean	**2.52**	**Fair**

Shown in Table 8 is the Respondents' Assessment of the Degree Program. It gainedan average weighted mean of 2.53, verbally interpreted as fair. First on the list was that the program has the quality of instruction achieving 2.98 as a mean verbally interpreted as Fair. Ref. [25] discussed the crucial role of quality instruction to learners. Quality instructions motivate the graduates in their studies.

Surprisingly, the indicators, range of subjects offered, and extra-curricular activities rank the least with a weighted mean of 2.30, hence deemed poor by therespondents. So far, the average weighted mean for the respondents' assessment of the degree program is 2.52, making it verbally interpreted as fairly executed. Ref. [26] believed that extracurricular activities help prepare students for real-world scenarios.

Conclusion

Two hundred five graduates between 2018 and 2019, but only 44 became respondents. Perhaps because of the thought that the pandemic had been adversely affected by the tourism and hospitality industry. Thus, the graduates from these batches were too shy to indicate in the survey that the company had laid them off because of COVID-19. Furthermore, the majority of the respondents were female and were still single. Only a few of the graduates were married upon graduation from BSTM. Also, graduates of BSTM age 23 and above most of them dwell in

cities. Moreover, only a few significant respondents are still pursuing master's degrees. The rest have settled to their bachelor's degree. Meanwhile, the respondents stay in their work because of a good working environment. The study also postulated that graduates acquired the necessary skills and knowledge taught by the College, which helped them perform well in their current functions. Furthermore, the BSTM program has contributed to the growth and improvement of the graduates outside the portals of the academe. When asked about their degree program assessment, the graduates believed that the range of subjects offered and the extra-curricular activities were low.

The researchers strongly recommend that graduates of the program consider enrolling in a Master's Degree relative to the course. It is also encouraged training and national certificates given by TESDA may help stay in their hiring and retention. Moreover, working in hospitality should also be revitalized. Applying for managerial or executive positions in the tourism and hospitality industry may be necessary to exemplify competence outside CSPC. Going abroad may be an option for those with an opportunity and a desire to explore. Consequently, for those jobless respondents, it is recommended that they should try to look for a job on various social media platforms. Also, they can use their internship knowledge and experiences to be competitive. Meanwhile, strengthening their stay in the workplace can also reflect their dedication when they studied the BSTM program at CSPC. Salary and benefits should also be given to the respondents by their employers to be satisfied with their current job. However, graduates of the program should not just stay in an organization because of salary improvement and promotion. On the other hand, the CSPC, particularly the BSTM program, should provide a wide range of subjects being offered. Also, spearheading extra-curricular activities for the graduates can be rekindled. It includes alumni membership and other relevant events given by the program to support and recognize the graduates.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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