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Tracer Study on the Profile and Employability of Bachelor of Science

A Case Study of Food Service Management Graduates of Camarines Sur Polytechnic Colleges

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the profile and employability of Bachelor of Science in Food Service Management (BSFSM) graduates from Camarines Sur Polytechnic Colleges (CSPC) across three batches (2018–2019, 2019–2020, and 2020–2021). Employing a descriptive survey approach, the study utilized a Google Form questionnaire to collect data from a sample of 168 graduates, selected using Slovin's formula. The research explored the graduates' personal, professional, and employment profiles and their reasons for job retention, acceptance of unrelated jobs, and unemployment. Employer assessments of the graduates' job performance were also analyzed. Key findings reveal the employability trends of BSFSM graduates and the challenges they faced, particularly in light of the economic disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Statistical tools were used to interpret the data, including percentage calculations and weighted mean. The study underscores the importance of aligning curriculum programs with industry demands to enhance graduate outcomes. Recommendations are provided to improve the employability of BSFSM graduates and address identified gaps.

Keywords
Curriculum Assessment
Employability
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Introduction

Higher education institutions (HEIs) primarily aim to produce graduates who are competitive and prepared for the demands of the job market. To achieve this, HEIs continuously strive to enhance the employability of their graduates by improving curriculum programs and aligning them with industry needs [1]. These efforts not only benefit students but also bolster the institution's reputation [2]. Researching graduate employability is a crucial step in achieving this goal. Tracer studies, in particular, provide valuable insights into the outcomes and career paths of graduates, enabling institutions to assess the effectiveness of their programs and identify areas for improvement [3]. Such studies are especially relevant for evaluating the employability of graduates from the Bachelor of Science in Food Service Management (BSFSM) program.

Following Section 7 of CMO No. 46, series of 2017, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) mandates HEIs to conduct tracer studies to evaluate graduate employability and curriculum relevance to industry demands [4]. These studies serve as tools for accountability and continuous improvement, ensuring that educational programs remain responsive to the evolving needs of the workforce.

The food service industry presents diverse career opportunities as it continues to grow and adapt to changing consumer preferences. The BSFSM program was designed to equip students with the skills and knowledge required to manage food service operations effectively in various settings, including restaurants, hotels, and healthcare facilities. However, in 2021, the program was transitioned to the Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management (BSHM) in compliance with CMO No. 62, s. 2017. The BSHM program provides a holistic education in administrative, analytical, and operational competencies, preparing graduates for success in a dynamic hospitality industry.

Despite these advancements, the COVID-19 pandemic has posed unprecedented challenges for graduates, particularly those from the batches of 2018–2019, 2019–2020, and 2020–2021. The global economic downturn, business closures, and heightened competition for limited job opportunities have significantly impacted their employability. These challenges underscore the importance of examining the specific barriers faced by BSFSM graduates during this period.

This study aims to explore the employability of BSFSM graduates in the context of the pandemic, identifying the factors that have influenced their career trajectories and the sectors most affected. By addressing these issues, the research seeks to provide actionable recommendations to improve graduate outcomes and ensure that HEIs remain effective in preparing students for a competitive and ever-changing global job market.

Material And Methods

A. Research Design

The study used a descriptive survey to gather, analyze, and evaluate data. According to Timulak and Elliott [5], descriptive research is an essential method for characterizing a population's attributes through observation and analysis of variables. This approach was chosen to provide a comprehensive and accurate description of the employability of BSFSM graduates.

B. Respondents

The study focused on graduates of the BSFSM program at Camarines Sur Polytechnic Colleges (CSPC). Three batches of graduates were included: the 2018–2019 batch with 135 graduates, the 2019–2020 batch with 89 graduates, and the 2020–2021 batch with 68 graduates, resulting in a total population of 292 graduates. Using Slovin's formula, a sample of 168 graduates was selected for the study.

Table 1. Respondent Distribution

Batch	Number of Graduates	Frequency	Percentage
2018–2019	135	77	46.00%
2019–2020	89	52	31.00%
2020–2021	68	39	23.00%
Total	**292**	**168**	**100%**

C. Research Instrument

The primary data collection instrument was a Google Form questionnaire. This was developed to gather information about the employability status of BSFSM graduates, including their personal, professional, and employment profiles. The questionnaire also addressed reasons for job retention, accepting unrelated jobs, and unemployment, as well as employer assessments of job performance.

The questionnaire was designed based on existing instruments used in related studies, including those from CHED. Modifications were made to align with the study's objectives, and new sections were developed to assess graduate expectations in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The instrument was validated by the research adviser and editor to ensure reliability and effectiveness. The questionnaire was distributed online via Google Forms with the assistance of the research adviser and CSPC's alumni association. Measures were taken to ensure respondents' anonymity and privacy, encouraging honest and accurate responses.

D. Documentary Analysis and Statistical Treatment of Data

Additional information, such as graduate records and contact details, was obtained from CSPC's Public Relations and Alumni Affairs Services. This facilitated the inclusion of graduates

residing far from the study site. The data collected were organized, tabulated, and analyzed using statistical tools to provide meaningful insights into the employability of BSFSM graduates.

- **Percentage Technique**: This method was used to analyze the proportion of respondents for specific variables.
- **Slovin's Formula**: To determine the sample size
- **Weighted Mean**: The weighted mean was calculated to evaluate the respondents' perceptions of employability factors.

Results and Discussion

A. Personal Profile of the Respondents

The personal profile of BSFSM graduates includes sex, age, civil status, and location of residence. Table 2 presents the personal profile of Bachelor of Science in Food Service Management according to their sex. Out of 168, females ranked first with a frequency of 90 or 53.57 percent; and males ranked second with a frequency of 78 or 46.43 percent.

Table 2. Personal Profile of the Respondents

	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Sex			
• Female	90	53.57	1
• Male	78	46.43	2
Age			
• 23-38 years old	165	98.21	1
• 22 years old and below	3	1.79	2
Civil Status			
• Single	127	75.60	1
• Married	40	23.80	2
• Single Parent	1	0.60	3
Location of Residence			
• Municipality	154	91.67	1
• City	14	8.33	2
Total	**168**	**100**	

This implies that the BSFSM program attracts a significant number of female students who are enrolling at the university. This finding was corroborated by Cuadra et al. [6], who assert that there is a widespread consensus in the Philippines regarding the greater educational progress of women compared to men. As disclosed in Table 2 in terms of age, ranked first are belonging to the age bracket of 23-38 years old (Gen Y) with a frequency of 165 or 98.21 percent; ranked second with a frequency of 3 or 1.79 percent belong to the 22 years old and below (Gen Z); and 39-54 years old (Gen X) and 55 years old and above (Baby Boomers) gathered zero response. This implies that the majority of the respondents fall within the age

range of 23-38 years old, which corresponds to Generation Y. This finding is consistent with the studies conducted by Pentang et al. [7] and Pacleb-Ulanday [8], where the majority of their participants were between 25 and 30 years old.

In terms of civil status, it is evident that a significant majority of the 168 respondents, specifically with a frequency of 127 or 75.60 percent, are single, gaining the rank first; Married was ranked second with a frequency of 40 or 23.81 percent; ranked third, with a frequency of 1 or 0.60 percent, are single parents; and separated, and widows or widowers gained zero responses. This implies that the majority of the respondents are single, which can be related to their recent completion of studies and their priority of finding a job promptly rather than starting a family. This finding aligns with the findings of Ceguera [9], who similarly emphasized that a majority of graduates in a comparable demographic are single as a result of their young age and their focus on the welfare of their families. Furthermore, being single offers certain benefits, such as having additional time to devote to their work and fewer obligations in life.

For location of residence, ranked first with a frequency of 154 or 91.67 percent are living in the municipality, specifically in Nabua with 65 responses followed by Iriga with 46 responses; Baao with 14 responses; Bato with 12 responses; 10 from Buhi; 2 is from Bula and Alabang, Daet, Pili, Boracay; and Ocampo gathered 1 response; and ranked second with a frequency of 14, or 8.33 percent, are living in the city specifically Manila and Naga both gathered 5 responses; 2 responses from Makati and Quezon City; and Baguio City gathered 1 response. This implies that a greater proportion of the graduates chose to reside in the municipality rather than in the city. While this data was supported by Ceguera [9] most of the respondent's locations were in the municipality. The findings of the study of Jintalan (2020), revealed that a significant proportion of the graduates choose to live in the city. Jintalan states that these graduates are attracted to the city because of its superior career prospects, especially in highly competitive and innovative sectors.

B. Professional Profile

The professional profile of the BSFSM graduates includes the year graduated, the highest educational attainment and the training attended. Table 3 presents the professional profile of a BSFSM based on their year of graduation. Out of 168 respondents by year graduated indicates that ranked first with a frequency of 77 or 45.83 percent graduated in 2019; ranked second with a frequency of 53 or 31.55 percent graduated in 2020; and ranked third with a frequency of 39 or 23.21 percent graduated in 2021. This implies that the majority of the respondents graduated in 2019, given this batch had the highest number of graduates. The greater number of respondents from 2019 may suggest factors such as the program's increased popularity during that year, or other contextual influences that impacted the number of graduates in

various years. Furthermore, the study conducted by Mina and Reyes [10], suggests that students' study practices or attitudes may have been altered due to the widespread use of technology in modern society. In addition, considering the declining number of students who are successfully graduating, adjustments may have been made to curriculum design or teaching methods to more effectively cater to the current generation of students.

Table 3. Professional Profile of the Respondents

	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Year Graduated			
• 2018-2019	77	45.83	1
• 2019-2020	53	31.55	2
• 2020-2021	39	23.21	3
Highest Educational Attainment			
• BSFSM Degree Holder	165	98.21	1
• With Units in the Master's Program	3	1.79	2
Trainings Attended after Graduated			
• Local	126	75.00	1
• National	40	23.81	2
• International	2	1.19	3
Total	**168**	**100**	

In terms of Highest Educational Attainment, ranked first with a frequency of 165 or 98.21 percent, have already earned a BSFSM degree; and ranked second, it appears that only 3 or 1.79 percent pursued units in master's program, while with units in doctorate program, master's degree holder and doctorate holder gained zero responses. This implies that a significant portion of the respondents chose not to pursue higher education, opting instead to enter the workforce with their degrees. This finding was corroborated by Patay [11], who discovered that a significant proportion of respondents did not seek postgraduate degrees to enhance their professional careers. They dedicate the most of their time to their work. Additionally, most respondents acknowledged that financial constraints hindered their pursuit of advanced degrees.

Referring to the training attended after graduation, it appears that most of the respondents attended local training, with a frequency of 126 or 75 percent, gaining rank first; Additionally, ranked second with a frequency of 40 or 23.81 percent, attended national training; and ranked third with a frequency of 2 or 1.19 percent, attended training abroad. This implies that the majority of the respondents attended local training, this reveals that the high percentage of respondents attending local training may be attributed to several factors, such as accessibility, convenience, and lower costs compared to national or international training. This finding was confirmed by the study conducted by Pentang et al. [7], wherein it was disclosed that a majority of the graduates pursued local training opportunities after their graduation.

C. Employment Profile of BS Food Service Management Graduates

The employment profile of BFSM graduates includes employment status, place of work, type of organization, occupational classification, number of years working, and monthly income. Table 4 presents the employment profile of BSFSM based on their employment status. The data revealed that most respondents are currently employed, with a frequency of 148 or 83.33 percent. Specifically, ranked first with a frequency of 97 or 54.74 percent are permanent; ranked second with a frequency of 26 or 15.48 percent is job order; ranked third with a frequency of 15 or 8.93 percent are resigned from their previous job; ranked fourth with a frequency of 13 or 7.74 percent are self-employed; ranked fifth with a frequency of 12 or 7.14 percent are contract of service (COS) employees; and ranked sixth with a frequency of 5 or 2.98 percent, have never been employed. While terminated, AWOL, and suspended gained zero responses.

Table 4. Employment Profile of Respondents According to Employment Status

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Permanent	97	54.74	1
Job Order	26	15.48	2
Resigned	15	8.93	3
Self-Employed	13	7.74	4
Contract of Service	12	7.14	5
Never been Employed	5	2.98	6
Total	**168**	**100**	

This implies that the majority of the respondents are currently employed and permanent. The substantial proportion of permanent respondents implies that the majority of graduates possess the necessary skills and qualifications to secure permanent employment in their respective professions. Pacleb-Ulanday's [8] study supports the notion that a college's high employment rate among its graduates indicates that the college fulfills its mission, function, and obligation as a higher education institution by providing quality education to its students. Nevertheless, there were a total of 20 respondents who are presently unemployed. The data implies that the industry has a small number of job openings, or that the respondents face particular obstacles or conditions that impede their job prospects. Furthermore, the study conducted by Soundararajanet al. [12] demonstrates that a deficiency in employability skills significantly contributes to the issue of unemployment among those who have completed their education at universities, colleges, and other higher education institutions.

Table 5 presents the employment profile of BSFSM based on their place of work. The table shows that the greatest number of respondents are working locally, with a frequency of 142 or

96.43 percent were ranked first; and a frequency of 6 or 3.57 were working abroad and were ranked second.

This implies that all of them have a preference for working in the country. They opt to remain and impart their expertise, skills, and abilities to their countrymen. The tracer study conducted by Cruz [13] yielded comparable results, indicating that a significant majority of the graduates expressed a preference for sharing their expertise within the country rather than pursuing employment abroad.

Table 5. Employment Profile of Respondents according to Place of Work and Type of Organization

	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Place of Work			
• Local	142	95.95	1
• Abroad	6	4.05	2
Type of Organization			
• Private	131	88.51	1
• Government	12	8.11	2
• NGO/INGO	5	3.38	3
Total	**148**	**100**	

As disclosed in Table 5 in terms of type of organization, ranked first with a frequency of 131 or 88.51 percent, are currently employed in private agencies; ranked second with a frequency of 12 or 8.11 percent are in the government; and ranked third with a frequency of 5 or 3.38 percent, are part of NGO or INGO.

This implies that a majority of the respondents are working in private agencies. The larger percentage of respondents working in private agencies may imply that the food service business offers more financially rewarding prospects in this sector. In addition, private enterprises in the food service sector may impose lower or less demanding eligibility criteria, thereby facilitating persons' entry or transition into the profession. This finding was corroborated by Ceniza et al. [14], where over half of her survey participants were found to be employed in private agencies.

Table 6 presents the employment profile of BSFSM based on their occupational classification. Ranked first with a frequency of 82 or 55.41 percent, were working as service staff or crew; service and sales workers ranked second with a frequency of 28 or 18.92 percent; other occupations such as OFW, baker, business owner, supply aide made up for ranked third with a frequency of 18 or 12.16 percent; assistant managers and clerical support workers comprised ranked fourth and fifth with a frequency of 4 or 2.70 percent; educators and military personnel was ranked sixth and seventh with a frequency of 3 or 2.03 percent; managers and

supervisors were ranked eighth and ninth with a frequency of 2 or 1.35 percent; assistant supervisor and skilled agricultural, forestry, and fishery workers constituted ranked tenth and eleventh with a frequency of 1 or 0.68 percent; and craft an related trades workers and plants and machine operators and assemblers was gain zero responses.

Table 6. Employment Profile of Respondents according to Occupational Classification

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
• Service Staff/Crew	82	55.41	1
• Service and Sales Workers	28	18.92	2
• Others (OFW, Baker, Business owner, etc.)	18	12.16	3
• Clerical Support Workers	4	2.70	4.5
• Assistant Manager	4	2.70	4.5
• Educator	3	2.03	6.5
• Military	3	2.03	6.5
• Manager	2	1.35	8.5
• Supervisor	2	1.35	8.5
• Assistant Supervisor	1	0.68	10.5
• Skilled Agricultural, Forestry and Fishery Workers	1	0.68	10.5
Total	**148**	**100**	

This implies that the majority of the respondents are employed in positions as service/ crew. The occupational classification in this study is consistent with the findings of a previous study conducted by De Castro [15]. The study revealed that a significant number of respondents in similar roles were engaged in service staff/ crew positions, as these jobs were relevant to their field of study and easily accessible. The data clearly illustrates that the majority of respondents pursued occupations that are directly aligned with their academic background, though a few chose alternative sorts of employment.

Table 7 presents the employment profile of BSFSM based on their number of years working. Ranked first with a frequency of 93 or 62.84 percent are working for 2–3 years; ranked second with a frequency of 39 or 26.35 percent working for 1 year and below; and ranked third with a frequency of 16 or 10.81 percent are working for 4-5 years. It implies that the majority of the respondents have been employed for 2-3 years. The study conducted by Figueiredo et al. [16] provided support for the fact that the majority of the graduates had remained employed in their respective jobs for a minimum of two years.

About the monthly salary received by the respondents, it is revealed that the majority of the respondents are receiving an income of ₱ 10,001- ₱ 20,000 was ranked first with a frequency of 45 or 30.41 percent; ranked second with frequency of 43 or 29.05 percent are ₱ 20,001- ₱ 30,000; ranked third with frequency of 24 or 16.22 percent are ₱ 30,001- ₱ 40,000; ranked fourth with a frequency of 15 or 10.14 percent are ₱ 10,000 and below, ranked fifth

with a frequency of 13 or 8.78 percent are ₱ 40,001- ₱ 50,000; ranked sixth with a frequency of 6 or 4.05 percent are ₱ 50,001- ₱ 60,000; and both ₱ 60,001- ₱ 70,000 and ₱ 70,001- above have a frequency of 1 or 0.68 percent and gain ranked seventh and eighth. The data suggests that a significant proportion of the participants had an income ranging from ₱10,001 to ₱20,000. These data indicate that firms are usually complying with the minimum wage rules. This finding was corroborated by Celis et al. [17] study, which revealed that graduates in Hotel restaurant management often earn between P15,000.00 and less than P20,000.00 as their initial gross monthly income, with some earning below P5,000.00.

Table 7. Employment Profile of Respondents according to Number of Year Working and Monthly Income

	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Number of Year/s Working			
• 1 year and below	39	26.35	2
• 2-3 years	93	62.84	1
• 4-5 years	16	10.81	3
Monthly Income			
• ₱ 10,000 and below	15	10.14	4
• ₱ 10,001- ₱ 20,000	45	30.41	1
• ₱ 20,001- ₱ 30,000	43	29.05	2
• ₱ 30,001- ₱ 40,000	24	16.22	3
• ₱ 40,001- ₱ 50,000	13	8.78	5
• ₱ 50,001- ₱ 60,000	6	4.05	6
• ₱ 60,001- ₱ 70,000	1	0.68	7.5
• ₱ 70,001- above	1	0.68	7.5
Total	**148**	**100**	

Conclusion

This tracer study provides valuable insights into the profile and employability of BSFSM graduates from Camarines Sur Polytechnic Colleges (CSPC) for the batches 2018–2019, 2019–2020, and 2020–2021. The findings reveal that while many graduates have successfully transitioned into employment, challenges persist, particularly for those affected by the economic downturn and disruptions brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. The study highlights the importance of aligning academic programs with industry demands to ensure graduates are equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes to thrive in their chosen careers. Additionally, the assessment of employer feedback underscores the need for continued efforts to improve curriculum quality and graduate preparedness. By addressing the identified gaps and implementing targeted recommendations, CSPC can enhance the employability of its graduates, ensuring they remain competitive in a dynamic and evolving job market. This research serves as a foundation for future studies and initiatives aimed at fostering graduate success and institutional growth.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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