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SOFT AND TECHNOLOGICAL SKILLS OF HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT GRADUATES: INFLUENCE ON THEIR WORK PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the influence of employability and technological skills on work performance among hospitality management graduates from Community Colleges in Misamis Oriental, Philippines. Using a descriptive-correlational design, the research assessed 150 graduates (2019-2023) across six employability dimensions (communication, problem-solving, numeracy, adaptability, leadership, interpersonal skills), technological proficiency, and work performance through a validated questionnaire. Findings revealed that graduates generally rated themselves highly across all employability dimensions in communication and lowest in numeracy skills. While demonstrating good general technological literacy, participants showed less confidence with industry-specific systems. Work performance was evaluated positively, with particular strengths in ethical conduct. Regression analysis determined that employability and technological skills collectively explained a significant portion of variability in work performance, with adaptability emerging as the strongest predictor, followed by leadership and technological skills. Surprisingly, communication, problem-solving, numeracy, and interpersonal skills showed no significant direct effects despite their theoretical importance. The findings suggest that educational institutions strengthen numeracy skills development and incorporate more hands-on training with industry-specific technologies, while emphasizing adaptability and leadership skills. Future research may explore why certain skills did not significantly influence performance and investigate specific components of adaptability that most strongly influence work performance in the hospitality industry.

Keyword: Employability skills, technological skills, work performance, hospitality management, adaptability, leadership skills

1. INTRODUCTION

The hospitality industry is experiencing rapid transformation due to technological advancements, evolving customer preferences, and changing work paradigms. Hotel chains, restaurants, and tourism enterprises now require personnel with specialized competencies beyond fundamental knowledge. Contemporary hospitality graduates must possess both technical proficiencies and interpersonal capabilities to thrive in this evolving sector. Research indicates that employability skills encompass abilities that facilitate adaptation to new circumstances, accelerate learning processes, and enhance collaborative efficiency (Demir, 2021; Kim & Qu, 2021). Despite the recognized importance of these skills, insufficient research exists regarding the specific competencies required for hospitality graduates.

Studies have demonstrated that interpersonal skills such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving are critical for securing and maintaining employment in the hospitality sector (Wang & Tsai, 2020; Lugosi & Jameson, 2022). Effective communication enables personnel to interact appropriately with clients. Teamwork is essential because hospitality operations depend on coordinated staff efforts. Problem-solving capabilities allow employees to address unexpected situations that frequently arise in hospitality environments.

Technological proficiencies are gaining prominence in the hospitality industry. These competencies include utilizing computerized systems, managing digital reservations, analyzing consumer data, and employing social media for

marketing purposes (Goh & Okumus, 2020; Buhalis & Leung, 2022). Hospitality establishments increasingly implement digital solutions to enhance service delivery and operational efficiency. Personnel proficient in these tools represent valuable assets to employers.

Evidence suggests that technological competence contributes to improved job performance and increased job satisfaction among hospitality employees (Lemy et al., 2023). When staff members demonstrate proficiency with reservation platforms, point-of-sale systems, and customer relationship management databases, they operate more efficiently and deliver superior guest services. This results in enhanced job performance metrics and elevated customer satisfaction levels.

The technological infrastructure within hospitality organizations extends beyond operational facilitation. It creates innovative service delivery methods and creative problem-solving approaches. For instance, certain hotels have implemented mobile check-in procedures, electronic room access, and artificial intelligence-powered customer service interfaces to enhance guest experiences. Employees who comprehend and utilize these technologies demonstrate greater preparedness for contemporary hospitality positions.

A significant discrepancy exists between academic preparation and industry requirements in hospitality education. Numerous hospitality programs emphasize traditional knowledge transmission while insufficiently addressing emerging technologies and interpersonal skills development (Bharwani & Talib, 2022; Cheng et al., 2020). This educational gap leaves graduates inadequately prepared for workplace demands.

The findings from comprehensive research in this field can provide practical recommendations for hospitality management educational programs. By identifying employer-valued competencies, educational institutions can modify curricula appropriately. This educational alignment will facilitate improved employment prospects and enhanced workplace performance for graduates. Such research can also assist current hospitality professionals in identifying skills requiring development for career advancement.

This area of study aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 4 (Quality Education) and Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). Through hospitality education enhancement aligned with industry requirements, more graduates can secure appropriate employment and contribute to economic development (Cantele & Zardini, 2022). Relevant skills-focused quality education generates improved employment opportunities and contributes to poverty reduction.

Furthermore, research in this domain supports Goal 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure) by emphasizing technological competencies that promote innovation within the hospitality sector. Enhanced technological proficiency among employees facilitates organizational adoption of innovative systems and processes. This advances industry modernization and operational efficiency. Such research also addresses Goal 10 (Reducing Inequalities) by identifying competencies that expand access to quality employment opportunities in the expanding hospitality sector (Pinto et al., 2021; Wut et al., 2023). Educational programs that develop appropriate skills create equitable opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds to achieve success in this significant industry.

The examination of employability skills, technological competencies, and their relationship to workplace performance represents a critical research focus that can significantly impact educational practices, industry standards, and individual career trajectories within the hospitality management field. Through continued scholarly attention to these intersecting domains, meaningful advancements in hospitality education and professional development will emerge.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study assumes that employability and technological skills influence the work performance of the hospitality management graduates. This assumption is grounded in Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1964), Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent et al., 1994), and Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989), serves as a foundation to help better understand this argument.

The Human Capital Theory provides a fundamental framework for understanding how

employability and technological skills influence work performance among hospitality management graduates. According to this theory, individuals make deliberate investments in developing their skills and knowledge to enhance their economic value in the job market (Becker, 1964). This perspective is particularly relevant to the hospitality industry, where continuous skill development directly impacts career advancement opportunities.

In the context of hospitality management, Human Capital Theory suggests that graduates who actively develop key employability skills such as communication, problem-solving, numeracy, adaptability, leadership, and interpersonal abilities are making strategic investments in their professional future. These investments yield returns through improved work performance, increased earning potential, and enhanced job security. For example, a hospitality graduate who develops strong problem-solving skills can more effectively handle guest complaints, leading to higher customer satisfaction ratings and potentially faster career progression.

The theory further explains how technological skill acquisition represents a specific form of human capital investment that has become increasingly valuable in the modern hospitality landscape. As hotels, restaurants, and tourism businesses adopt sophisticated property management systems, customer relationship management platforms, and data analytics tools, graduates who possess these technological competencies become more valuable to employers. Research by Goh and Okumus (2020) confirms this relationship, demonstrating that hospitality employees with advanced technological skills typically demonstrate superior work performance metrics, including higher efficiency ratings and greater contributions to organizational innovation.

Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) offers valuable insights into how hospitality graduates develop confidence in their professional abilities and how this confidence influences their work performance. This theory emphasizes the importance of self-efficacy—an individual's belief in their ability to successfully perform specific tasks—in determining career outcomes (Lent et al., 1994). Within the hospitality sector, self-efficacy plays a crucial role in how graduates approach technological challenges and apply their employability skills in workplace settings.

Hospitality graduates with strong self-efficacy regarding their communication skills are more likely to engage confidently with guests, resolve conflicts effectively, and contribute positively to team discussions. Similarly, those with high technological self-efficacy are more inclined to embrace new digital tools, learn complex systems quickly, and apply technological solutions to workplace challenges. This relationship between self-efficacy and performance aligns with findings by Wang and Tsai (2020), who demonstrated that hospitality professionals with greater confidence in their abilities typically show higher levels of job performance and career satisfaction.

SCCT also highlights the role of observational learning in skill development, which is particularly relevant to the hospitality industry's apprenticeship-based training traditions. New graduates often develop their technological and employability skills by observing more experienced colleagues, adapting these observations to their own work contexts, and receiving feedback on their performance. This social learning process helps explain how hospitality graduates internalize industry-specific skills and eventually transform these into improved work performance outcomes. The theory suggests that educational programs should incorporate opportunities for observational learning and practical application to strengthen self-efficacy among hospitality management students.

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) provides essential insights into how hospitality graduates' attitudes toward technology influence their willingness to adopt and effectively use technological tools in the workplace. According to Davis (1989), two primary factors determine technology adoption: perceived usefulness (the degree to which a person believes using a particular system would enhance job performance) and perceived ease of use (the degree to which a person believes using a particular system would be effortless).

In the hospitality industry, graduates who perceive technological systems as useful and relatively easy to use are more likely to incorporate these tools into their daily work routines. For instance, a restaurant manager who

recognizes the value of inventory management software and finds it straightforward to operate will likely use this technology more effectively than someone who questions its benefits or finds it confusing. This positive attitude toward technology typically translates into improved work efficiency, more innovative service delivery, and enhanced guest experiences, as demonstrated by Buhalis and Leung (2022) in their research on digital transformation in hospitality organizations.

The TAM framework also explains potential barriers to technology adoption among hospitality graduates. Those who perceive new technologies as overly complex or of limited value may resist incorporating these tools into their work practices, potentially limiting their job performance. This aspect of the model highlights the importance of technology education within hospitality management programs, suggesting that curricula should not only teach specific technological skills but also foster positive attitudes toward technology adoption. By addressing both the practical aspects of technology use and the psychological factors that influence adoption, educational programs can better prepare graduates for the technological demands of contemporary hospitality environments.

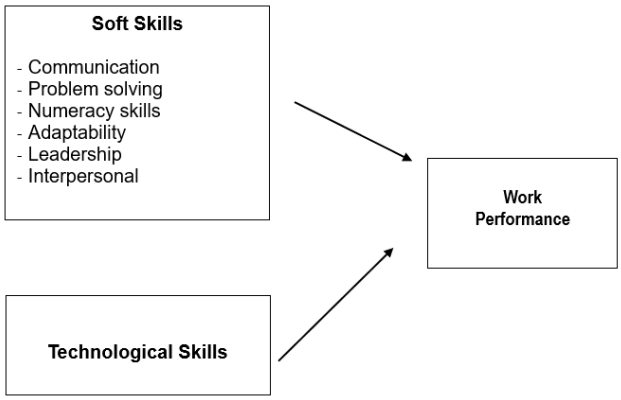


Figure 1. Schematic Diagram of the Study

Objective of the Study. This study determined how the employability and technological skills influence the work performance of the hospitality management graduates of a community college in Misamis Oriental, Philippines. The systematic methodology was carefully selected to ensure reliable and valid results that address the research objectives while maintaining ethical standards throughout the investigative process.

Methods. This chapter presents the methods employed in the study, including research design, participants and sampling procedure, research instruments, data gathering and ethical considerations, scoring procedure, and statistical treatment of data. The systematic methodology was carefully selected to ensure reliable and valid results that address the research objectives while maintaining ethical standards throughout the investigative process.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 7 presents the Summary Table of Level of Employability, highlighting the mean scores, interpretations, and standard deviations across six key dimensions: communication, problem-solving, numeracy skills, adaptability, leadership, and interpersonal skills. These dimensions are widely recognized as essential competencies for employability, especially in the hospitality and tourism industries. The findings reveal that the overall rating across all dimensions is predominantly high (M=4.11), with a moderate standard deviation indicating reasonable consistency in responses (SD=0.43). This mean score falls within the "High" interpretation range (3.51-4.50).

Table 7

Dimensions	Mean	Interpretation	SD
Communication	4.27	High	0.47
Problem Solving	4.09	High	0.54
Numeracy Skills	3.88	High	0.57
Adaptability	4.12	High	0.50
Leadership	4.16	High	0.53
Interpersonal	4.17	High	0.51
Overall	**4.11**	**High**	**0.43**

The "High" interpretation of the overall rating means that participants as a group assess their employability skills at a level that surpasses average expectations but doesn't reach the highest possible rating. This indicates that participants view themselves as having substantial employability competencies relevant to workplace requirements, showing a workforce that trusts in its ability to perform effectively across various professional scenarios. From an employment standpoint, this "High" rating confirms that participants would likely display confidence during job interviews and workplace situations.

Looking at the specific dimensions, all six employability factors were rated as "High", with mean values ranging from 3.88 to 4.27. Communication earned the highest mean (M=4.27), indicating respondents' confidence in efficiently conveying information, actively listening, and adapting communication style to the audience. This finding establishes that participants consider themselves most proficient in communication skills, which are essential in service-oriented sectors where clear engagement with guests, colleagues, and superiors is critical for operational success. The low standard deviation (0.47) for communication skills indicates strong consensus among participants regarding their communication abilities.

Table 10

Regression Analysis of the Influence of Employability Skills and Technological Skills on their Work Performance

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	.777	.341		2.28	.024
Communication	.019	.108	.018	.174	.862
Problem Solving	-.012	.113	-.012	-.105	.917
Numeracy Skills	.002	.094	.002	.022	.982
Adaptability	.370	.094	.365	3.95**	.000
Leadership	.234	.100	.246	2.34*	.021
Interpersonal skills	.006	.099	.006	.059	.953
Technological Sills	.185	.065	.208	2.86**	.005
Model Summary					
R =0.667	R^2 = 0.445	Adj. R^2 = 0.418	F (7,142) = 16.29**	p = .000	

**significant at 0.01 level

*significant at 0.05 level

Leadership skills are the second most important predictor (β=.246, t=2.34, p=.021), showing significant influence on work performance. This matches Liu et al.'s (2023) research highlighting leadership's essential role in motivating teams, making decisions, and solving problems. Kim and Jeong (2022) also note that good leadership skills improve efficiency, employee engagement, and organizational productivity. The finding supports Coates' (2022) view that people with strong leadership qualities—like taking initiative, being responsible, and guiding teams well—typically do better in their jobs.

Technological skills are the third significant predictor (β=.208, t=2.86, p=.005), confirming that employees with good digital skills can use technology to improve task completion, communication, and customer service. Kim and Kim (2021) and Rahayu and Wirza (2023) found similar connections between technological ability and workplace effectiveness. The World Economic Forum (2023) notes that the hospitality sector increasingly relies on technology, with digital solutions playing important roles in operations, customer interactions, and service improvements.

Interestingly, several employability dimensions—Communication (β=.018, t=.174, p=.862), Problem-Solving (β=-.012, t=-.105, p=.917), Numeracy (β=.002, t=.022, p=.982), and

Interpersonal Skills (β=.006, t=.059, p=.953)—do not show statistically significant effects on work performance when analyzed alongside adaptability, leadership, and technological skills. This unexpected finding may reflect Ngoepe and Wakelin-Theron's (2023) observation that some soft skills, while important for career development, might not show immediate performance improvements when evaluated within comprehensive models.

This pattern matches Hecklau et al.'s view (cited in Zainuddin et al., 2023) that certain general skills like communication and interpersonal skills have become basic requirements in service industries—necessary for getting a job but not enough for exceptional performance. Instead, higher-level skills including adaptive thinking, leadership ability, and digital literacy increasingly serve as differentiating factors for achieving better workplace results.

These findings agree with current research emphasizing the importance of combining soft skills with technological expertise to improve workplace productivity, especially in rapidly changing sectors like hospitality (Hussin, 2022; World Economic Forum, 2023). The study provides valuable insights about which specific skill areas most directly influence performance measures, potentially guiding organizational talent development strategies.

The regression results clearly establish that adaptability, leadership skills, and technological proficiency play decisive roles in determining work performance, while communication, problem-solving, numeracy, and interpersonal skills—though important—may not show direct statistical significance within this analysis. Organizations seeking to improve performance might therefore focus on developing employees' adaptability, cultivating leadership skills, and enhancing technological abilities to maximize workforce effectiveness.

4. CONCLUSION

The study findings indicate that hospitality management graduates from community colleges in Misamis Oriental possess generally high levels of employability skills, with particular strengths in communication and interpersonal abilities. They demonstrate comparatively lower confidence in numeracy skills and specialized technological systems used in the hospitality industry. This difference in skill levels may be noteworthy as the industry continues to incorporate more digital solutions for operations management, guest services, and data analysis.

Graduates typically evaluate their work performance positively, with strengths in ethical conduct and basic technical skills, while showing less confidence in leadership initiative and organizational decision-making. This pattern reflects greater comfort in operational roles than in positions requiring leadership and strategic thinking. The current educational approach appears to prepare students effectively for entry-level positions, with potential opportunities to enhance leadership development.

The regression analysis shows that not all employability skills equally influence work performance. Adaptability emerged as the strongest predictor of work performance, followed by leadership and technological skills. Interestingly, communication, problem-solving, numeracy, and interpersonal skills did not show significant direct effects on performance in this study. This indicates these skills, while important for employment, may function more as baseline requirements in today's hospitality workplace rather than as performance differentiators.

These findings offer insights for both educational institutions and industry employers regarding skill development in hospitality management education. The results highlight the importance of adaptability, leadership, and technological proficiency in workplace performance, while also acknowledging the foundation provided by communication and interpersonal skills. The relationship between specific skills and workplace success appears complex, with certain capabilities having more direct influence on performance measures than others.

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