

Factors Affecting the Working Conditions of Tourism Graduates: Basis for Enhancing Professional Skillset and Industry Expectations

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ABSTRACT

This research studied the factors affecting the working conditions of tourism graduates to enhance the professional skillset and career expectations of the graduates. The study analyzed data from 100 tourism graduates from four higher education institutions in the Philippines. The demographic profile revealed a predominantly young workforce between 20-29 years old, and a nearly even distribution between graduates working directly in the industry with 48% and graduates working indirectly with 52%. Using weighted means and statistical analysis, the study evaluated the influence of primary factors acquired from school/university (abilities/skills and

self-efficacy) on graduates' career decisions and assessed their attained performance (outcome expectations and performance goals) in the industry.

Findings revealed that graduates perceived their educational preparation positively in terms of acquired abilities for direct and indirect job, the same thing with their self-efficacy. However, a notable gap emerged in outcome expectations, particularly regarding compensation, work-life balance, and career advancement. Although, statistical analysis found no significant differences between direct and indirect job holders across all dimensions examined, indicating that tourism education provides a versatile foundation serving graduates well regardless of their specific career path. Based on these findings, the study suggests enhancement on the skillset of the graduates in preparation for industry by focusing on providing realistic industry perspectives, strengthening preparation for both direct and indirect tourism roles, integrating psychological resilience training, and establishing continuous feedback mechanisms between industry and academic institutions. These targeted modifications aim to better prepare tourism graduates for the diverse realities of the industry, ultimately improving graduate outcomes and strengthening the tourism workforce.

Keywords: tourism education, skillset enhancement, career outcomes, tourism careers, self-efficacy, work-life balance, direct tourism jobs, indirect tourism jobs

INTRODUCTION

The global tourism industry stands as one of the world's most powerful economic forces, generating trillions of dollars annually and supporting millions of jobs worldwide, with its contribution to global GDP and employment reaching approximately 10% of all jobs available internationally (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2023). Beyond its economic significance, tourism provides opportunities for employment, environmental protection, cultural exchange, community development, and the promotion of destinations. Travelers increasingly seek deeper connections, responsible experiences, and personalized journeys, while destinations strive to balance economic vibrancy with environmental integrity. The ripple effects of global shifts—from sustainable practices to technological advancements—are continuously reshaping the industry's course, demanding that tourism professionals adapt, innovate, and collaborate to ensure the industry continues to nourish communities and enrich lives.

However, this dynamic industry has faced unprecedented turbulence. The COVID-19 pandemic delivered a crippling blow to global tourism, with travel restrictions and health concerns bringing the sector to its knees. The World Travel & Tourism Council (2022) reported an 18.6% decline in the sector's workforce, dropping from 333 million jobs in 2019 to 271 million in 2020. The Philippines experienced some of the most severe impacts in Asia, with a nearly 30% decline in tourism employment in 2020, translating to approximately 1.5 million lost jobs—four times the employment losses witnessed in non-tourism sectors (International Labor Organization, 2021). Working hours in the Philippine tourism industry suffered immensely, with losses reaching 38%, the highest among five countries studied, impacting 775,000 individuals who experienced zero working hours.

Beyond the pandemic's immediate devastation, the industry confronts persistent structural challenges. Over-tourism strains infrastructure, depletes resources, and disrupts local communities in popular destinations (Milano et al., 2023; Hall & Page, 2022). Environmental concerns, from climate change to waste generation, threaten the very resources upon which tourism depends (Becken & Habib, 2022; Scott et al., 2023). Technological advancements present both opportunities and challenges, raising concerns about automation, digital divides, and data privacy (Gretzel et al., 2023; Ooi, 2021). Seasonality creates economic instability, with periods of peak activity followed by significant downturns that complicate workforce management and sustainable revenue generation (Morrison & Schwarze, 2023; Song et al., 2022).

Amidst these challenges, a troubling trend has emerged: the declining willingness of tourism graduates to pursue careers within the industry they trained for. Prior research documents the vulnerability of tourism graduates to economic downturns and job insecurity (Rodríguez-Sánchez et al., 2022; Singh et al., 2023), compounded by a mismatch between their acquired skills and the demands of alternative sectors (Sigala & Baum, 2020). Before the pandemic, concerns about career mismatch between tourism graduates and industry demands were already emerging. The worldwide digitalization of the industry and the rise of automation further distorted traditional job boundaries, leaving graduates questioning the long-term viability of certain career paths. Moreover, shifting aspirations among millennial and Gen Z workers—prioritizing work-life balance, personal growth, and sustainability—may not always align with traditional tourism career trajectories (World Economic Forum, 2020).

The Philippine context amplifies these concerns. The country grapples with limited career opportunities, with youth unemployment reaching 12.3% in 2022, significantly exceeding the national average (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2023). Underemployment remains widespread, with an estimated 56% of employed Filipinos holding qualifications for better opportunities but stuck in jobs that underutilize their skills (World Bank, 2022). Career mismatch between graduates and industry needs persists, driven by

outdated curricula and inadequate training programs that fail to equip individuals with skills demanded by the evolving job market (Gonzales et al., 2020; De Luna, 2021). The psychological impact of these challenges manifests in rising levels of stress, anxiety, and depression among job seekers and underemployed individuals (Azurin & De Leon, 2023; Constantino & Policarpio, 2020).

While existing research recognizes the vulnerability of tourism graduates to industry fluctuations and the psychological impact of career transitions (De Grip et al., 2020), the specific challenges and motivations underlying their career decisions—whether to shift away from the industry entirely, pursue indirect tourism jobs, or remain in direct tourism roles—remain insufficiently explored. Studies have documented the existence of these trends, yet a gap persists in understanding the conditions under which graduates navigate these shifts. Furthermore, the potential of transferable skills possessed by tourism graduates and how they apply them in modern roles, particularly within the broader tourism ecosystem encompassing both direct and indirect jobs, remains largely unfamiliar.

Direct jobs in tourism involve immediate interaction with tourists—front-line engagement through roles such as travel agents, tour guides, hotel staff, restaurant servers, and transportation providers. These positions require industry-specific skills, specialized knowledge, and often experience seasonal demand fluctuations (World Tourism Organization, 2020; UNWTO, 2023). Indirect jobs support the tourism industry infrastructure and operations without direct visitor interaction, spanning diverse functions in marketing, finance, IT, event management, and data analysis. These roles typically utilize transferable skills applicable to diverse industries and may offer more stable employment conditions (Page & Connell, 2020; World Economic Forum, 2020). However, the line between direct and indirect jobs grows increasingly blurred in the digital age, with online travel platforms, automation, and remote work evolving traditional job functions and challenging conventional categorizations.

This study addresses these critical gaps by examining the factors that influence tourism graduates' career decisions—whether to shift careers entirely, pursue indirect tourism jobs, or remain in the tourism industry. Set in Manila, the Philippines' capital and a major tourist hub, this research locale provides rich context, having experienced the pandemic's severe impact and observed significant shifts in career decisions among tourism graduates. By determining these factors, the researcher will be able to recommend improvements in career outcomes and identify the skillsets needed by tourism graduates to thrive in an evolving professional landscape.

The significance of this inquiry extends beyond individual career trajectories. Understanding the career shifts of tourism graduates in Manila can inform the development and adaptation of Hospitality and Tourism Management programs, ensuring curricula incorporate relevant skills and knowledge aligned with emerging career paths in the broader hospitality and service sectors. This can lead to improved graduate employability, career satisfaction, and ultimately contribute to a stronger and more adaptable tourism workforce. Furthermore, by delving into the lived experiences of tourism graduates navigating this unfamiliar terrain, this research can inform targeted support systems, equip graduates with transferable skills, and ultimately empower them to chart their course toward professional fulfillment.

This study transcends existing research by offering a systematic examination that captures the acquired skills of tourism graduates from their training and identifies the key factors influencing their career transitions, including individual traits, competencies, and the industry's changing landscape. By investigating both those who have shifted away from direct tourism roles and those who have remained, this research provides comprehensive insight into graduates' decision-making processes regarding direct and indirect employment pathways. Through this approach, the study contributes accessible information on career transitions and graduate employability, offering valuable insights for educators, policymakers,

industry stakeholders, and graduates themselves as they navigate the evolving currents of the twenty-first-century tourism landscape.

Objectives of the Study

The shift of the tourism industry has greatly impacted the job of many tourism graduates, and this research would be seeking answers and understanding on how exactly they were affected through series of data gathering and survey. Hence, the main objectives of the study to complete the study are:

1. To identify the factors that makes the tourism graduates from 2018-2023 to shift to an indirect job within the industry;
2. To assess the reasons for their shift to direct and indirect industry; and
3. To create a recommendation for improvement of the working condition of tourism graduates in the industry.

Statement of the Problem

The tourism industry is highly susceptible to external factors, leading to job instability and career insecurity for graduates. The recent global pandemic has significantly impacted the industry, resulting in widespread job losses and career shifts for many tourism graduates.

This raises several key problems worth discovering by exploring the lived experiences of tourism graduates. Hence, the study is focused on discovering their reasons for pursuing different careers from their current graduate program.

For that reason, this study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents?
 - 1.1 Age
 - 1.2 Sex
 - 1.3 Job description
 - 1.4 Years of service in their current job
2. How do the primary factors acquired from school/university influence tourism graduates' decisions to pursue careers directly or indirectly, in terms of:
 - 2.1 Ability/Skills
 - 2.2 Self-Efficacy
3. What is the attained performance of the tourism graduates in the industry, in terms of:
 - 3.1 Outcome Expectations
 - 3.2 Performance Goals
4. Is there a significant difference in the acquired primary factors in the graduates' school/university and the graduate's outcome expectations and performance goals from working indirectly and directly in the industry?
5. What suggestions can be crafted for the enhancements of the working conditions of tourism graduates?

Hypothesis

Ho: There is no significant difference in the demographic profile of the respondents and the factors (ability/skills, self-efficacy, outcome expectations and performance goals) from working directly and indirectly in the industry.

Theoretical & Conceptual Framework

This study delves into the experience of tourism graduates in working in the tourism industry and those transitioning to indirect jobs, exploring the complex landscape of motivations, challenges, and personal transformations they navigate. To guide this exploration, the researcher will utilize the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) developed by Albert Bandura (1989, 1994) to understand the experience of tourism graduates transitioning to indirect jobs.

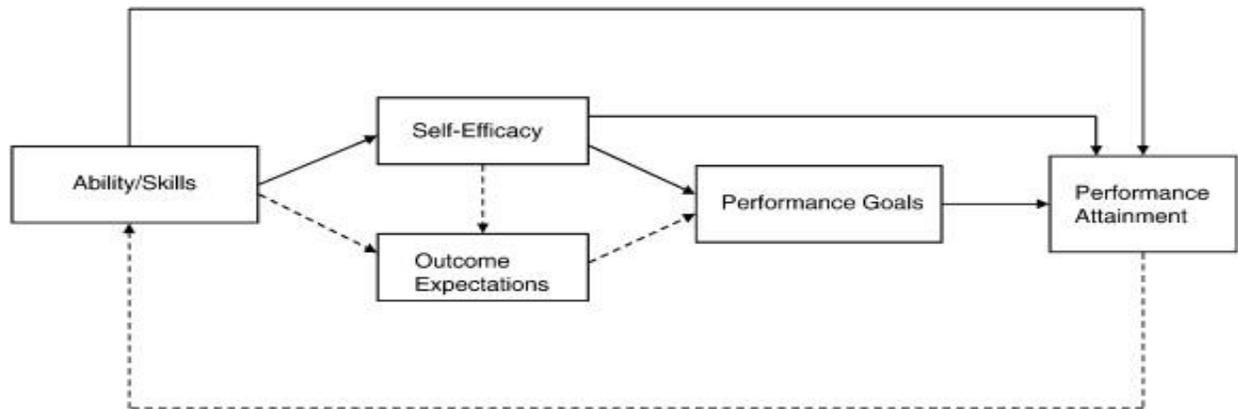


Figure 1. Social Cognitive Career Theoretical Framework

The SCCT offers a valuable framework for understanding career choices and transitions by emphasizing the interconnectedness of individual factors, environmental influences, and behavioral outcomes. This multifaceted approach resonates with the complexity of the research questions: How do graduates' self-efficacy beliefs, career interests, and past experiences shape their perception of indirect job opportunities? How do job market availability, employer perceptions, and societal expectations impact their career decisions? And how do graduates actively explore opportunities, navigate challenges, and transition to new career paths?

By applying these SCCT concepts, the researcher will gain a deeper understanding of the cognitive processes, motivations, and decision-making that underpin tourism graduates' career transitions. This allows us to move beyond simply describing their experiences and delve into the "why" and "how" behind their choices. SCCT serves as a lens, not merely a label. It allows us to move beyond simply describing graduates' experiences. By investigating these questions through the lens of SCCT, this study will help contribute valuable insights into the unique career journeys of tourism graduates and inform interventions and support systems that facilitate smooth transitions and maximize their career potential.

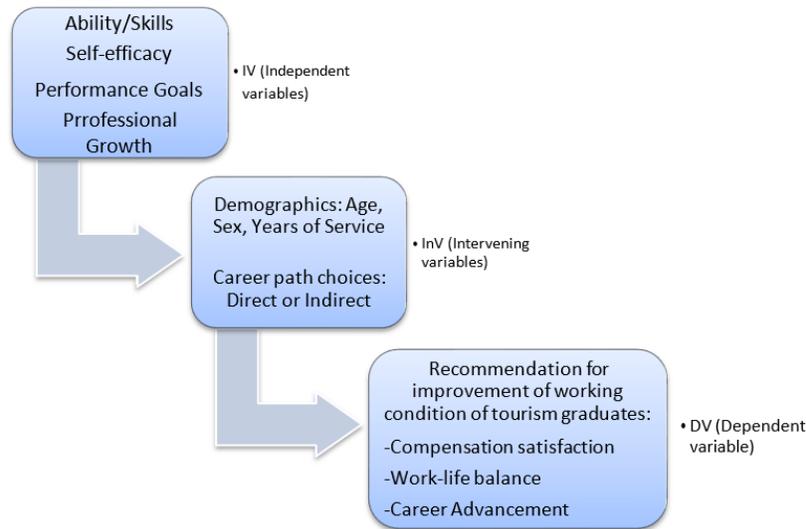


Figure 2. Conceptual Framework

This study explores the factors influencing tourism graduates' career decisions and their perceptions of working conditions within the tourism industry. The conceptual framework identifies first the demographic profile of the respondents, specifically their age, sex, job description (direct or indirect), and years of service. These demographic factors serve as intervening variables, providing context for interpreting how graduates apply their educational background in the industry. The study then explores the individual variable which is the primary factors acquired from school or university, focusing on ability/skills—including technical competencies and professional knowledge—and self-efficacy, or confidence in one's capabilities. Moreover, the research investigates the attained performance of tourism graduates, outcome expectations, such as compensation satisfaction and career advancement, and performance goals, including work-life balance and professional achievement. The framework allows for study of whether there is a significant difference between the industry outcomes of those working in direct and those working indirect tourism roles, in relation to their skills and self- efficacy. Ultimately, the study aims to provide evidence-based recommendations to improve the working conditions of tourism graduates by enhancing their professional skillsets and aligning educational preparation with the demands of the industry.

METHODS

Research Design

Delving into the complex phenomenon of tourism graduates transitioning to both direct and indirect career paths demand a multifaceted exploration. This study employs a quantitative research design utilizing a correlational descriptive approach to statistically understand the working conditions of tourism graduates and examine the relationships between their educational preparation, career decisions, and professional

outcomes. This methodology emphasizes quantitative techniques to provide comprehensive understanding of one of the major concerns that has affected the industry for quite some time.

The correlational descriptive approach allows the study to not only describe the current state of tourism graduates' career experiences but also to identify and measure the strength of relationships between key variables such as educational background, skill acquisition, self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and career satisfaction. This approach is particularly suitable for examining how various factors influence graduates' career trajectories without manipulating the variables under study.

A structured, closed-ended survey instrument was developed and administered to a targeted group of tourism graduates who have pursued both direct and indirect career paths. The survey questionnaire systematically explores their professional experiences, examining their motivations, decision-making processes, challenges encountered, coping mechanisms employed, and overall career satisfaction. The instrument captures quantifiable data on graduates' perceptions of their educational preparation, skill development, career expectations, and actual workplace outcomes.

The quantitative data collected undergoes rigorous statistical analysis, including correlation analysis, to identify significant patterns and relationships across individual responses. This analytical approach provides meaningful insights into the interconnections between educational factors, personal characteristics, and career outcomes, offering a comprehensive understanding of the motivations, challenges, and experiences involved in graduates' career transitions.

This correlational descriptive research design and methodology effectively address the key research questions about the factors influencing tourism graduates' career path decisions, the challenges they encounter in both direct and indirect roles, and the relationships between their educational preparation and professional success. The findings contribute valuable empirical knowledge for current students, recent graduates, industry professionals, and future researchers, ultimately informing evidence-based decision-making and supporting more effective career development strategies in the tourism sector.

Research Locale

The target population for this study consists of tourism management graduates from four selected higher education institutions in Metro Manila: La Consolacion College Manila, Far Eastern University, Lyceum of the Philippines University, and National Teachers College. These institutions were selected based on their established tourism management programs and reputation in tourism education within the National Capital Region (NCR). The CHED recorded a total of 43,083 tourism graduates in NCR in 2020, a huge decline from 2019 tourism graduates of 138,447. This suggests that Manila's graduates might have also experienced similar disruptions, potentially leading to alternative career paths.

Population and Sampling

This study aims to understand the experiences and motivations of tourism graduates in Manila who have transitioned to both direct and indirect career paths. Due to the limitations in centralized data on graduates' specific career trajectories, identifying the precise population size presents significant

challenges. Therefore, the target population for this study encompasses tourism graduates in Manila who are currently employed in either direct or indirect positions within the tourism industry. The population includes graduates from various tourism-related programs such as Tourism Management, Hospitality Management, Travel and Tours Management, and related fields offered by accredited institutions. This encompasses both graduates who have pursued direct tourism careers in hotels, resorts, travel agencies, airlines, and cruise lines, as well as those who have transitioned to indirect tourism careers in event management, marketing, retail, banking, and other service industries that support the tourism sector.

A sample size of 100 respondents was determined using principles derived from the Central Limit Theorem, which provides adequate statistical power for meaningful data analysis and inference. This sample size ensures that the data can be assumed to follow a normal distribution, facilitating robust statistical analysis of the relationships between educational preparation, career decisions, and professional outcomes. A combination of purposive and quota sampling techniques supplemented with snowball sampling was employed to distribute the survey effectively. This multi-faceted sampling approach allows for the systematic selection of respondents who possess specific characteristics relevant to the research objectives while ensuring accessibility and convenience in data collection.

The respondent selection was based on carefully defined criteria to ensure relevance and validity. Respondents were required to be graduates with a tourism-related degree from recognized institutions, currently employed in either direct or indirect positions within the tourism industry, have been working in their current workplace for more than six months to ensure adequate work experience, and demonstrate willingness to participate voluntarily in the survey to share their professional experiences and career motivations. The study specifically focused on graduates from four prominent higher education institutions: La Consolacion College Manila, Far Eastern University, Lyceum of the Philippines University, and National Teachers College, with 25 respondents recruited from each institution to ensure balanced institutional representation and prevent any single school from disproportionately influencing the results.

Research Instrument

This study delves into the experiences of tourism graduates transitioning to "indirect jobs" outside the traditional tourism industry and those who stayed to work in a "direct" line of job in the industry.

To delve deeper into the lived experiences, a closed-ended survey will be conducted to graduates who fit the respondents' criteria. These closed-ended survey will probe their personal motivations and decision-making processes, the specific challenges faced, and strategies employed, their emotional journeys and personal transformations, perceptions of transferable skills and industry stereotypes, and their hopes and aspirations for future career development.

The quantitative approach allows for a statistical understanding of the problem. The chosen instruments align with the research questions and allow for efficient and effective data collection from both a larger sample and a focused group of individuals. Using the 4-point Likert Scale of Agree and Disagree, the study will be able to achieve its result.

Table 1. Likert Scale Verbal Interpretation

Likert	Interval	Description
4	4.00-3.51	Highly Practiced
3	3.50-2.51	Moderately Practiced
2	2.50-1.51	Somewhat Practiced
1	1.50-1.00	Rarely Practiced

By utilizing this research instrument, this study aims to offer valuable insights into the working conditions of tourism graduates with their acquired skills from their alma matter and shaping positive career trajectories for future graduates.

To ensure the robustness, clarity, and appropriateness of the research instrument, the researcher conducted a pilot test prior to full-scale data collection. Pilot testing serves as a critical step in the research process, allowing for the identification of potential ambiguities, technical flaws, and respondent comprehension issues within the survey questionnaire (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This preliminary administration provides empirical evidence regarding the instrument's feasibility, item clarity, and internal consistency.

The pilot test was administered to a sample of 38 respondents who possessed demographic and educational characteristics comparable to the target population of tourism graduates. This sample size aligns with established recommendations for pilot studies, wherein 10 to 40 participants are generally considered sufficient to detect instrument deficiencies and compute preliminary reliability coefficients (Hertzog, 2008; Johanson & Brooks, 2010). Participants were asked to complete the survey and provide feedback regarding item wording, response format clarity, length, and overall comprehensibility.

Upon collection of pilot data, the researcher employed Cronbach's alpha coefficient to assess the internal consistency reliability of the instrument. Cronbach's alpha is a widely utilized measure of reliability that estimates the degree to which a set of items consistently measures a single unidimensional latent construct (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). Values range from 0 to 1, with higher coefficients indicating greater interrelatedness among items and, consequently, stronger evidence of reliability.

The analysis yielded a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.939. According to established thresholds in social science research, a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.70 or higher is generally accepted as indicative of acceptable reliability, while values exceeding 0.80 denote good reliability, and those above 0.90 reflect excellent internal consistency (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994; George & Mallery, 2019). Thus, the obtained value of 0.939 substantially surpasses the minimum acceptable threshold, providing strong empirical evidence that the instrument possesses excellent internal consistency and that the items reliably measure the intended constructs.

This high reliability coefficient suggests that the items within each dimension of the questionnaire—covering demographic profile, acquired skills and abilities, self-efficacy, outcome

expectations, and performance goals—demonstrate strong coherence and effectively capture the underlying theoretical constructs they were designed to measure. Furthermore, it indicates that random measurement error is minimal, thereby enhancing confidence in the validity of subsequent statistical analyses and interpretations (Taber, 2018).

Beyond statistical reliability, the pilot testing process also facilitated several substantive improvements to the instrument. Feedback from pilot respondents prompted refinements in item phrasing to improve clarity, adjustments in the sequencing of questions to enhance logical flow, and the revision of potentially ambiguous or double-barreled items. These qualitative insights, combined with the quantitative evidence of strong internal consistency, collectively affirm that the finalized instrument is both methodologically sound and contextually appropriate for administration to the target population of tourism graduates.

Data Gathering and Processing Methods

To effectively collect data from tourism graduates working in the industry, a combination of methods can be employed. (1) Online surveys offer a wide reach, cost-effectiveness, and the ability to include multimedia elements. (2) Email distribution allows for targeted outreach and personalization. Social media can leverage existing networks and communities but may require paid advertising for wider visibility. (3) Partnerships with tourism schools and organizations can provide access to a concentrated pool of potential respondents.

To increase response rates and encourage participation, incentives can be offered. Survey length and design will be carefully considered to minimize respondent fatigue and ensure clarity. Follow-up emails will be sent to non-respondents to increase participation. Data validation measures will be implemented to ensure data quality and accuracy. Ethical considerations such as obtaining informed consent, ensuring data confidentiality, and adhering to ethical guidelines for research will be strictly followed.

By strategically combining these methods and considering the insights provided, this research can effectively gather data from tourism graduates, providing valuable information for understanding their career decisions. By collecting data from graduates, the research integrates different perspectives on the research topic. This provides a nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the individual and systemic factors influencing career choices within the tourism industry. The survey questions, data analysis, and interpretation will be directly linked to the four research problems identified earlier. This ensures a focused and rigorous approach to addressing the study's specific objectives.

Ethical Considerations

This study prioritizes the well-being of respondents by adhering to strict ethical principles. These measures aim to contribute valuable knowledge to the field of tourism career trajectories while setting a high standard for responsible research practices. Voluntary and informed consent will be obtained before any data collection begins. This involves providing a clear explanation of the study's purpose, procedures, potential risks and benefits, and respondents' rights to withdraw at any time. Accessible language and diverse consent options (written, verbal, electronic) will be offered to ensure understanding and inclusivity.

Respondents' confidentiality is paramount. All data will be anonymized during collection, analysis, and reporting. The researcher will avoid collecting personal identifiers unless necessary and only with explicit consent. Pseudonymization options will be available to further protect identities. Robust data security measures safeguard sensitive information from unauthorized access, loss, or misuse. Data will be stored for a predetermined period and securely disposed of when no longer needed. All respondents will be treated with respect and compassion, regardless of their career choices or experiences. A non-judgmental and supportive attitude will be maintained throughout data collection and interaction. Power imbalances will be considered to avoid exploiting vulnerabilities. Clear and ethical communication will be ensured, offering opportunities for clarification, and addressing any concerns respondents may have. Potential risks associated with participation, such as emotional distress, will be identified. Support resources will be offered, and respondents will be informed of their right to withdraw at any time. The research process will be actively monitored for unforeseen risks, and procedures will be adapted accordingly. All research methods, procedures, and ethical considerations will be transparently documented in research materials and publications.

By upholding these ethical principles, this study ensures the well-being of respondents while contributing valuable knowledge to the field of tourism career trajectories, setting a positive example for responsible research practices.

Data Analysis

The survey results will be analyzed using statistical tools. This involves identifying recurring themes, patterns, and significant experiences across the respondents' narratives. The analysis will be focusing in uncovering the essence of the lived experience and how individuals make sense of their career decisions. This involves bracketing out assumptions to understand the phenomena from the respondents' perspectives. By investigating the demographic profile of tourism graduates, their career decision-making factors, and their perceptions of working conditions within the tourism industry. To address the research questions, the following statistical tools and analyses will be employed:

- Mean and standard deviation were used to calculate the demographic variables and career factors to provide a basic understanding of the respondents' perceptions of their career.
- P-Value

$$z = \frac{\hat{p} - p_0}{\sqrt{\frac{p_0(1-p_0)}{n}}}$$

- T-Test

$$t = \frac{(\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2) - (\mu_1 - \mu_2)}{\sqrt{\frac{s_1^2}{n_1} + \frac{s_2^2}{n_2}}}$$

The data analysis process will involve data cleaning, preparation, descriptive statistics, hypothesis testing, regression analysis, and interpretation of results. By employing these statistical techniques, the study will provide valuable insights into the factors influencing tourism graduates' career decisions and the implications for its improvement.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2. Age Distribution of the Respondents

Age Interval	f	P
20 - 24 years old	43	43.00
25 - 29 years old	52	52.00
30 - 34 years old	4	4.00
35 years old and above	1	1.00
TOTAL	100	100.00

Table 2 represents the frequency of the age of the respondents which majority of the respondents are between the ages of 25-29 years old with a percentage of 52, while the lowest age bracket is age 35 and above with one (1) respondent only. This age distribution pattern aligns with broader tourism industry trends documented in recent research. According to Tourism HR Canada's 2023 analysis, there is "a steady decrease in employment numbers as age increases, reflecting that two of the larger industries in the sector (food and beverage services and recreation and entertainment) draw heavily on younger workers looking for part-time employment." The predominance of younger workers in this study sample reflects the industry's characteristic reliance on early-career professionals.

This suggests that many graduates have short-term experience in the industry rather than pursuing long-term careers following the result of the study with the 25-29 group representing the peak engagement period for tourism professionals.

Table 3. Gender Distribution of the Respondents

Sex	f	P
Female	73	73.00
Male	27	27.00
TOTAL	100	100.00

Table 2 shows that mostly of the respondents are female with 73 percent of the total respondents, and the remaining 27 respondents are male. The result is consistent with findings in specific tourism subsectors, which various research shows that "women make up more than 50% of the workforce in travel

services and seem to stay in the industry to a later age than men," particularly in areas requiring post-secondary qualifications, according to Tourism HR Canada (2024). Yet, it was also mentioned in their article that "the gender distribution in the tourism sector was fairly balanced, with 52.1% men and 47.9% women, closely mirroring the overall economy's split." However, since the study's focus were recent graduates, this may explain the discrepancy, as younger demographics often show different gender participation patterns.

Table 4. Job Description of the Respondents

Job Description	f	P
Direct Job	48	48.00
Indirect Job	52	52.00
TOTAL	100	100.00

The Table 4 displays the job description of respondents which was the main factor this study was conducted. This shows that majority of respondents are working an indirect job in the industry which comprises of the support industry that does not entirely have direct contact with the customers of the tourism industry with 52%, while the tourism graduates working directly in the industry has a percentage of 48.

Hunter and Geneva (2013) emphasized in their study that direct jobs in tourism are those that immediately interact with tourists, providing services or experiences essential to their travel goals. These roles directly contribute to tourism revenue and often necessitate face-to-face interaction with visitors. Such as front-line engagement, occupations like travel agents, tour guides, hotel staff, restaurant servers, and transportation providers actively engage with tourists, fulfilling their needs and facilitating their itinerary (World Tourism Organization, 2020).

On the other hand, indirect jobs in tourism support the industry infrastructure and operations, contributing to various aspects of the tourist experience without direct interaction with visitors. These roles indirectly generate tourism revenue and often involve behind-the-scenes work. Including diverse job functions that span sectors like marketing, finance, IT, event management, and data analysis, these jobs contribute to various operations within the tourism ecosystem (Page & Connell, 2020).

The result above only supports the record made by the World Travel & Tourism Council on the decline of workforce in 2022 due to the pandemic that forces the graduates to shift in other business models (UNWTO, 2020). It proves that the tourism industry who sought careers in other sectors or left the workforce entirely during the pandemic has stayed working indirectly or the graduates have seen their potential to the indirect industry. In 2020, the International Labor Organization (ILO) reveals a shift towards informal work, with many displaced workers seeking alternative means of income, resulting in 30% decline in tourism employment, it became a factor that forces the workforce of the tourism industry to shift to an indirect job. And due to this displacement, the constant pressure to secure employment, coupled with feelings of inadequacy and uncertainty, takes a toll on mental well-being (Torres & Gonzales, 2022) of the

workers. As such, to further prevent this from happening, investing in curriculum reform and skills development programs, as emphasized by Bautista & Pasiliao (2020) and Cruz & Henson (2020), is crucial to bridge the skills gap and enhance employability. Additionally, promoting career guidance and counseling services, as suggested by Cunanan & Marcelo (2021), can equip individuals with the tools to navigate the complex job market and make informed career choices.

Table 5. Years of Service of the Respondents in their Current Workplace

Years of Service	f	P
less than a year (at least 6 months)	19	19.00
1 - 2 years	53	53.00
3 - 4 years	21	21.00
5 years and above	7	7.00
TOTAL	100	100.00

The table above illustrates the year of service of the respondents, and it can be seen that majority of them are working 1-2 years in their current workplace with a 53% and the least respondents are working in their company for more than 5 years with 7% of the respondents. This\

Table 6. Tourism graduates acquired ability/Skills in comparison with working directly and indirectly

Indicators	Direct			Indirect		
	WM	SD	VI	WM	SD	VI
1. Regularly applies the basic skills needed for the current job.	3.77	0.52	Highly Practiced	3.67	0.51	Highly Practiced
2. Consistently demonstrates good communication and customer service skills.	3.75	0.48	Highly Practiced	3.60	0.60	Highly Practiced
3. Frequently uses basic technological and software skills relevant to the job.	3.52	0.65	Highly Practiced	3.58	0.75	Highly Practiced

4. Often practices problem-solving skills to address challenges in the industry.	3.50	0.71	Moderately Practiced	3.56	0.64	Highly Practiced
5. Actively practices leadership skills in professional settings.	3.79	0.41	Highly Practiced	3.62	0.66	Highly Practiced
6. Regularly engages in a structured decision-making process.	3.73	0.45	Highly Practiced	3.79	0.41	Highly Practiced
7. Consistently applies effective time management in daily tasks.	3.79	0.41	Highly Practiced	3.79	0.41	Highly Practiced
8. Regularly pays close attention to detail in work.	3.75	0.53	Highly Practiced	3.79	0.41	Highly Practiced
9. Often collaborates effectively as part of a team.	3.81	0.45	Highly Practiced	3.79	0.46	Highly Practiced
10. Frequently demonstrates cultural awareness in professional environments.	3.83	0.38	Highly Practiced	3.79	0.46	Highly Practiced
GRAND WEIGHTED MEAN	3.73	0.52	Highly Practiced	3.70	0.55	Highly Practiced

This table reveals the usage of the acquired skills of the tourism graduates in their current workplace either directly or indirectly. It can be seen that majority of the graduates working directly in the industry strongly agree that the school/university effectively taught them to have cultural awareness with a weighted mean of 3.83 and a standard deviation of 0.38. On the other hand, the least perceived acquired skills of the graduates working directly in the industry despite having also strongly agreeing that the school/ university effectively trained them to solve problems adequately to navigate challenges in the industry with a weighted mean of 3.50 and a standard deviation of 0.71.

Looking on the graduates working indirectly, majority of them strongly agree that the school/university taught them to have firm decision-making process, good time management skills, to be attentive to all details, work effectively on a team, and to have cultural awareness. These results reveal that their acquired skills in their alma mater were applicable in their current job which resulted in each having a weighted mean of 3.79 and a standard deviation of 0.41, 0.41, 0.41, 0.46, and 0.46 respectively. On the

least acquired skills that they applied in their workplace, is that they strongly agree that the school/university effectively trained them to solve problems adequately to navigate challenges in the industry with a weighted mean of 3.56 and standard deviation of 0.64.

Overall, the grand weighted mean of tourism graduates working directly in the industry is 3.73 with a standard deviation of 0.52, and the grand weighted mean of tourism graduates working indirectly has a mean of 3.70 with a standard deviation of 0.55.

According to Gonzales et al (2020) and De Luna (2021), the outdated curricula and inadequate training programs potentially kills the demand of skills in the evolving market. The mismatch of career and skills limits employment prospect, inadequacy and wasted potential as mentioned by Villanueva and Sicat (2020). However, this results only shows the versatility of the skills the graduates acquired in their respective schools, it shows that the trainings intended for tourism jobs can also be used in other indirect industries. That working indirectly might not be the reason why tourism graduates are shifting their career, but it was rather their applied skills that can be used in other sectors as well. However, it can be noted that direct workers in the tourism industry are slightly falling behind their perceived usage of acquired skills in their workplace despite having an overall mean of 3.73, only .03 higher than those working indirectly. This result constitutes to the need to improve the career training of tourism management that directly align with the industry.

Table 7. Tourism graduates perceived Self Efficacy in comparison with working directly and indirectly

Indicators	Direct			Indirect		
	WM	SD	VI	WM	SD	VI
1. Effectively manages stress in demanding tourism roles.	3.71	0.54	Highly Practiced	3.62	0.53	Highly Practiced
2. Demonstrates adaptability and flexibility in a competitive tourism job market.	3.65	0.53	Highly Practiced	3.46	0.54	Moderately Practiced
3. Shows self-belief and resilience in tourism-related careers.	3.71	0.46	Highly Practiced	3.58	0.54	Highly Practiced
4. Consistently upholds strong work ethics in professional settings.	3.75	0.48	Highly Practiced	3.81	0.44	Highly Practiced

5. Regularly demonstrates a willingness to learn and grow professionally.	3.85	0.36	Highly Practiced	3.81	0.53	Highly Practiced
6. Maintains a presentable appearance by consistently wearing professional attire.	3.88	0.33	Highly Practiced	3.83	0.43	Highly Practiced
GRAND WEIGHTED MEAN	3.76	0.46	Highly Practiced	3.68	0.52	Highly Practiced

The table 3.6 displays the self-efficacy of the tourism graduates working directly and indirectly in the industry. It shows that majority of the tourism graduates working directly in the industry strongly agree that the school/university effectively taught them to always look presentable by always wearing professional attire with a 3.88 weighted mean and standard deviation of 0.33. At the same time, graduates who works indirectly also applied the same standard of wearing professional attire in their workplace with a weighted mean of 3.83 and a standard deviation of 0.43.

On the other hand, the least self-efficacy applied as perceived by the respondents both working directly and indirectly in the industry is that the school/university effectively provided basic training on how to adapt in a competitive tourism job market (flexibility) with a weighted mean of 3.65 with a standard deviation of 0.53 (direct tourism workers) and weighted mean of 3.60 with a standard deviation of 0.53 (indirect tourism workers).

Overall, the grand weighted mean of self-efficacy of tourism graduates working directly in the industry is 3.76 with a standard deviation of 0.46. Followed by the self-efficacy of the tourism graduates working indirectly has a grand weighted man of 3.68 with a standard deviation of 0.52.

This result shows almost the same result with only a slight margin of .08, indicating that regardless of working directly and indirectly, tourism graduates can apply their acquired self-efficacy skills in their respective workplace. However, it can be noted that adapting in the tourism industry while working indirectly could potentially affect their flexibility as it was stated that indirect workers have a weighted mean of 3.46, which is the lowest weighted mean recorded in the table despite ranging in the verbal interpretation as strongly agree.

The result above supports the idea of De Grip et al. (2020) and Singh et al. (2023) that emphasizes the importance of career adaptability and support systems for navigating career transitions within and beyond the tourism sector. World economic Forum (2020) also mentioned that the indirect jobs within tourism offer graduates greater variety, skill development opportunities, and the flexibility they seek.

Table 8. Tourism graduate’s outcome expectation working in a direct and indirect job in the tourism industry

Indicators	Direct			Indirect		
	WM	SD	VI	WM	SD	VI
1. Frequently encounters job opportunities available for tourism graduates.	3.67	0.52	Highly Practiced	3.46	0.58	Moderately Practiced
2. Experiences consistent opportunities for professional growth and advancement in tourism.	3.69	0.55	Highly Practiced	3.60	0.53	Highly Practiced
3. Maintains a good work-life balance in a tourism career.	3.46	0.74	Moderately Practiced	3.06	0.75	Moderately Practiced
4. Views a career in tourism as a pathway to financial stability and personal satisfaction.	3.60	0.54	Highly Practiced	3.33	0.55	Moderately Practiced
5. Receives a rewarding salary from employment in the tourism industry.	3.27	0.82	Moderately Practiced	2.94	0.75	Moderately Practiced
6. Finds it easy to secure employment in the tourism sector.	3.42	0.65	Moderately Practiced	3.25	0.74	Moderately Practiced
7. Achieves desired career outcomes within a reasonable timeframe.	3.29	0.77	Moderately Practiced	3.42	0.70	Moderately Practiced
8. Gains recognition for professional achievements within the tourism industry.	3.40	0.76	Moderately Practiced	3.35	0.68	Moderately Practiced
GRAND WEIGHTED MEAN	3.47	0.69	Moderately Practiced	3.30	0.69	Moderately Practiced

The table above presents the tourism graduates outcome expectations of the industry while working directly and indirectly in the tourism sector. It can be seen on the table that majority of respondents working directly in the tourism sector strongly agree that Tourism provides opportunities for professional growth and advancement with a weighted mean of 3.69 with a standard deviation of 0.55. On the other hand, the lowest perceived expected outcome of the respondents is that Tourism provides rewarding salary with a weighted mean of 3.27 and a standard deviation of 0.82.

Moving on the tourism graduates working indirectly in the industry, the results revealed that majority strongly agree that Tourism provides opportunities for professional growth and advancement with a weighted mean of 3.60 and standard deviation of 0.53. However, the least perceived expectation in the industry which they agree is that Tourism provides rewarding salary with a weighted mean of 2.94 and a standard deviation of 0.75.

Overall, the grand weighted mean of graduates working in direct industry has a 3.47 with a standard deviation of 0.69, while the indirect tourism workers have an average of 3.30 with a standard deviation of 0.69.

The results reveal similar outcome on their perception about tourism industry, and it may have been able to provide opportunities for professional growth and advancement, the respondents still felt that the salary is major factor why they shift careers. As stated in the result of indirect workers, they agreed that tourism industry provides rewarding salary, but the score of 2.94 is way below that what was expected and it therefore the possible reason why they work in the other field of tourism. This salary expectation is also one reason why shortage on employment in the industry is seen, as reported by World Travel and Tourism, there is an expected 7% shortfall of job vacancies by the end of 2023. Several factors contribute to this issue, including uncompetitive wages and benefits, rising housing costs, particularly in tourist destinations, negative perceptions of the industry, limited career advancement opportunities, and demanding work schedules.

Table 9. Tourism graduate’s perceived performance goals working directly and indirectly in tourism industry

Indicators	Direct			Indirect		
	WM	SD	VI	WM	SD	VI
1. Practices a clear sense of career direction and ambition gained from working in the tourism industry.	3.65	0.56	Highly Practiced	3.63	0.56	Highly Practiced
2. Engages in personal and professional growth as emphasized in the tourism trainings	3.63	0.53	Highly Practiced	3.63	0.56	Highly Practiced
3. Demonstrates motivation to excel in chosen career paths within the tourism sector.	3.63	0.57	Highly Practiced	3.50	0.61	Moderately Practiced
4. Participates in continuous learning and professional development within the tourism industry.	3.69	0.51	Highly Practiced	3.62	0.60	Highly Practiced
5. It is easy to demonstrate a high level of job satisfaction in my tourism role.	3.50	0.65	Moderately Practiced	3.44	0.73	Moderately Practiced
6. It is easy to contribute effectively to the success of my respective organization.	3.63	0.61	Highly Practiced	3.60	0.57	Highly Practiced
GRAND WEIGHTED MEAN	3.62	0.57	Highly Practiced	3.57	0.61	Highly Practiced

The table displays the perceived performance goals of the tourism graduates. It can be seen that majority of the tourism graduates working directly in the industry strongly agree that the tourism industry provides continuous learning and professional development with a weighted mean of 3.69 and a standard deviation of 0.51. On the other hand, the least perceived performance goals of those working in the direct industry is that “It is easy to demonstrate a high level of job satisfaction in my tourism role” with a weighted mean of 3.50 and a standard deviation of 0.65.

Moving on the indirect tourism workers, majority of the tourism graduates strongly agree that “tourism industry provides sense of career direction and ambition for the graduates that there is a strong emphasis on personal and professional growth within the tourism with 3.63 weighted mean and a standard deviation of 0.56 respectively.

In result, the tourism graduates working directly in the industry has agreed that their perceived performance goals in their current workplace have a grand weighted average of 3.62 with a standard deviation of 0.57. While those working indirectly in the industry also strongly agreed that the perceived performance goals in their workplace have a grand weighted mean of 3.57 with a standard deviation of 0.61.

Table 10. Significant Difference between the Variables When Grouped According to Age

Age	Ability/Skills		Self-Efficacy		Outcome Expectation		Performance Goals	
	p-value	Decision	p-value	Decision	p-value	Decision	p-value	Decision
20-24	0.16699	Failed to Reject Ho	0.46843	Failed to Reject Ho	0.06085	Failed to Reject Ho	0.09207	Failed to Reject Ho
25-29								
30-above								
	7		1		3		9	

Interpretation: There was no significant difference observed in the variables when the respondents are grouped according to age using 5% level of significance.

Table 11. Significant Difference between the Variables when Grouped According to Sex

Age	Ability/Skills		Self-Efficacy		Outcome Expectation		Performance Goals	
	p-value	Decision	p-value	Decision	p-value	Decision	p-value	Decision
Female	0.83254	Failed to Reject Ho	0.13526	Failed to Reject Ho	0.07674	Failed to Reject Ho	0.76957	Failed to Reject Ho
Male								
	0		0		2		2	

Interpretation: There was no significant difference observed in the variables when the respondents are grouped according to sex using 5% level of significance.

The findings demonstrate no significant differences in abilities/skills, self-efficacy, outcome expectations, or performance goals when respondents are grouped by age (20-24, 25-29, 30-above) or gender (female/male). This suggests that tourism education provides consistent foundational preparation regardless of graduates' age or gender, and that working condition experiences are relatively uniform across these demographic categories. The lack of significant differences indicates that the challenges and successes experienced by tourism graduates are not substantially influenced by age cohorts or gender identity, pointing to more systemic factors affecting the tourism workforce.

Table 12. Significant Difference between the Variables when Grouped According to Years in Service

Years in Service	Ability/Skills		Self-Efficacy		Outcome Expectation		Performance Goals	
	p-value	Decision	p-value	Decision	p-value	Decision	p-value	Decision
Less than a year	0.022387	Reject Ho	0.002941	Reject Ho	0.031315	Reject Ho	0.000313	Reject Ho
1-2 years								
3-4 years								
5 years and above								

Interpretation: Significant differences were observed in all variables when the respondents are grouped according to years in service using 5% level of significance.

In stark contrast, highly significant differences emerge when respondents are grouped according to years of service, with all variables showing statistical significance. This finding indicates that career stage and professional experience significantly impact graduates' perceptions of their abilities, self-confidence, outcome satisfaction, and performance achievement.

Table 13. Determining Where the Difference Exist using t test:

	Ability/Skills		Self-Efficacy		Outcome Expectation		Performance Goals	
	p-value	Decision	p-value	Decision	p-value	Decision	p-value	Decision
Less than a year & 1-2 years	0.073409	Failed to Reject Ho	0.146212	Failed to Reject Ho	0.055310	Failed to Reject Ho	0.020453	Reject Ho
Less than a year & 3-4 years	0.525737	Failed to Reject Ho	0.163819	Failed to Reject Ho	0.962733	Failed to Reject Ho	0.241886	Failed to Reject Ho

years								
Less than a year & 5 years and above	0.666958	Failed to Reject Ho	0.267893	Failed to Reject Ho	0.141584	Failed to Reject Ho	0.072586	Failed to Reject Ho
1-2 years & 3-4 years	0.029103	Reject Ho	0.012607	Reject Ho	0.028241	Reject Ho	0.004080	Reject Ho
1-2 years & 5 years and above	0.239730	Failed to Reject Ho	0.983230	Failed to Reject Ho	0.831655	Failed to Reject Ho	0.924294	Failed to Reject Ho
3-4 years & 5 years and above	0.317622	Failed to Reject Ho	0.028051	Reject Ho	0.119573	Failed to Reject Ho	0.011454	Reject Ho

Since significant difference was observed when the respondents were grouped according to years in service, t test was generated in each pair of respondents according to their years in service to determine where significant difference existed. Under the ability/skills, it was observed that significant difference existed between respondents who are in 1-2 years and 3-4 years in service. In addition, significant difference was observed between the pairing of respondents with 1-2 and 3-4 years in service, as well as 3-4 and 5 years and above in service under self-efficacy. Moreover, significant difference under outcome expectation was observed between respondents who were in 1-2 and 3-4 years in service. Finally, significant differences were seen between the respondents who were less than a year and 1-2 years in service, 1-2 and 3-4 years in service, and 3-4 and 5 years and above under performance goals.

Significant differences exist between graduates with 1-2 years versus 3-4 years of experience, suggesting a critical skill development period occurs during the transition from early to mid-career stages. Multiple significant differences appear between 1-2 years and 3-4 years, as well as between 3-4 years and 5+ years, indicating that professional confidence evolves substantially as graduates gain experience and face different career challenges. Differences between 1-2 years and 3-4 years suggest that expectations about career outcomes shift significantly as graduates move beyond the initial career phase and encounter industry realities. The most extensive differences appear across multiple comparisons (less than 1 year vs. 1-2 years, 1-2 years vs. 3-4 years, and 3-4 years vs. 5+ years), indicating that performance expectations and achievement perceptions evolve continuously throughout career development.

Table 14. Ability (Significant Difference of Direct and Indirect)

Graduates	Mean	SD	p-value	Decision
Direct	3.73	0.38	0.6923	Failed to reject Ho
Indirect	3.70	0.34		

The result shows that the significant difference of the tourism graduates working directly and indirectly with the tourism industry has minimal difference. Graduates working directly have a mean of 3.73 with a standard deviation of 0.38, while those working indirectly have a mean of 3.70 and standard deviation of 0.34. By finding the P-value of those working direct and indirect is 0.6923, which is higher than 0.05. Hence, the researcher failed to reject null hypothesis. This suggests that the abilities or skills acquired during education are transferable and applicable whether working directly in tourism or in adjacent fields.

Table 15. Self-Efficacy (Significant Difference of Direct and Indirect)

Graduates	Mean	SD	p value	Decision
Direct	3.76	0.34	0.3022	Failed to reject Ho
Indirect	3.68	0.37		

The result reveals that tourism graduates working directly in the industry is slightly higher with their self-efficacy with a mean of 3.76 and a standard deviation of 0.34, while those tourism graduates working indirectly have a mean of 3.68 and standard deviation of 0.37. However, the difference is not statistically significant with a p value of 0.3022, which results in rejecting the null hypothesis. This suggests that both groups have a comparable level of self-efficiency in their abilities regardless of career path.

Table 16. Expected Outcomes (Significant Difference of Direct and Indirect)

Graduates	Mean	SD	p-value	Decision
Direct	3.48	0.52	0.0806	Failed to Reject Ho
Indirect	3.30	0.45		

While graduates working directly in tourism have slightly higher outcome expectations of 3.48 weighted mean with standard deviation of 0.52 compared to those in indirect tourism careers with a weighted mean of 3.30 and a standard deviation of 0.45. This difference approaches but does not reach statistical significance of p value resulting in 0.0806, thus, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. This suggests that direct pathway graduates may have marginally higher expectations about their career outcomes, though not at a level that can be definitively confirmed.

Table 17. Performance Goals (Significant Difference of Direct and Indirect)

Graduates	Mean	SD	p-value	Decision
Direct	3.62	0.47	0.6187	Failed to reject Ho
Indirect	3.57	0.49		

Both groups demonstrate comparable performance goals, with direct pathway graduates scoring slightly higher weighted mean of 3.62, with a standard deviation of 0.47, than indirect pathway graduates with 3.57 weighted mean and a standard deviation of 0.49. However, this difference is not statistically

significant in the p value of 0.6187, which is higher than 0.05, hence, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis, indicating that graduates set similar performance targets regardless of their career path.

Overall, across all four measured variables, the researcher consistently sees slightly higher scores for direct pathway graduates, though none of these differences reach statistical significance. This pattern suggests a subtle advantage for direct tourism careers but not strong enough to be statistically conclusive.

Summary

Based on the comprehensive analysis of data collected from tourism graduates across four higher education institutions, several important conclusions can be drawn regarding the factors affecting their working conditions and the implications for career development.

What is the demographic profile of the respondents?

The study's respondents represent a predominantly young, female workforce with 95% aging between 20-29 years old (43% aged 20-24, 52% aged 25-29), and 73% female representation. There is nearly equal distribution between direct tourism roles (48%) and indirect tourism positions (52%). Most participants are in the early stages of their tourism careers, with 53% working 1-2 years in their current company, followed by 21% with 3-4 years of experience, 19% with less than one year, and only 7% with five years or more experience. This demographic composition provides meaningful insights into how recent educational programs are preparing new professionals for the diverse landscape of the tourism industry, offering a comprehensive view from both established tourism businesses and supporting sectors that contribute to the overall visitor experience.

How do the primary factors acquired from school/university influence tourism graduates' decisions to pursue careers directly or indirectly, in terms of ability/skills and self-efficacy? The primary factors acquired from school and university significantly influence tourism graduates' career decisions by building strong foundational abilities and self-efficacy that serve

both direct and indirect career paths effectively. Direct job holders reported a weighted mean of 3.73 for abilities/skills, while indirect workers scored 3.70, both indicating strong agreement with their educational preparation. For self-efficacy, direct workers scored 3.76 compared to 3.68 for indirect workers, demonstrating high confidence levels across both groups.

Statistical analysis confirms no significant differences between direct and indirect job holders in their perceived skill development (p-value = 0.6923) and self-confidence levels (p-value = 0.3022), indicating that tourism education successfully prepares graduates regardless of their eventual career trajectory. This suggests that the educational foundation serves as a robust platform that enables graduates to confidently pursue diverse opportunities within the broader tourism ecosystem, whether in core tourism businesses or supporting industries that contribute to the visitor experience.

What is the attained performance of the tourism graduates in the industry, in terms of outcome expectations and performance goals?

The attained performance of tourism graduates in the industry demonstrates a complex picture where graduates exhibit strong confidence in their performance capabilities while experiencing a notable gap between expectations and industry realities. For performance goals, direct job holders reported a weighted mean of 3.62, while indirect workers scored 3.57, both indicating positive performance perceptions.

However, outcome expectations present a more challenging narrative, with graduates experiencing the lowest satisfaction levels in this dimension. Direct workers scored 3.47 while indirect workers scored significantly lower at 3.30, representing the most problematic area across all measured variables. Specific concerns include compensation satisfaction (Direct: 3.27, Indirect: 2.94), work-life balance (Direct: 3.46, Indirect: 3.06), and career advancement opportunities. This suggests that while tourism education successfully develops competent professionals, there remains a substantial disconnect between what graduates anticipate from their careers and what the industry currently delivers.

The statistical analysis reveals no significant difference between direct and indirect job holders in their performance goals (p -value = 0.6187), while outcome expectations approach significance (p -value = 0.0806), indicating that this expectation gap affects the broader industry rather than being specific to particular career paths.

Is there a significant difference in the acquired primary factors in the graduates' school/university and the graduate's outcome expectations and performance goals from working indirectly and directly in the industry?

The statistical comparison of graduates working directly versus indirectly in tourism demonstrates no significant differences across all four dimensions examined. Abilities showed no significant difference (p -value = 0.6923), self-efficacy revealed no significant difference (p -value = 0.3022), performance goals showed no significant difference (p -value = 0.6187), and outcome expectations, while presenting the lowest p -value at 0.0806, still failed to reach statistical significance at the 5% level.

This finding is particularly valuable as it suggests that the current tourism curriculum provides a versatile foundation that serves graduates well regardless of their specific career path within or adjacent to the tourism industry. However, the near-significant result for outcome expectations warrants attention as it suggests potential disparities that may require targeted intervention.

What recommendations can be crafted for the enhancements of the working conditions of tourism graduates?

The findings suggest that tourism education provides similar benefits to graduates regardless of whether they pursue direct or indirect career paths, with grand weighted means showing minimal variation across career types. The lack of significant differences in abilities (Direct: 3.73 vs Indirect: 3.70), self-efficacy (Direct: 3.76 vs Indirect: 3.68), and performance goals (Direct: 3.62 vs Indirect: 3.57) indicates

that skills and competencies developed through tourism education are transferable across various career contexts.

However, the concerning gap in outcome expectations, particularly the 17-point difference in weighted means between direct (3.47) and indirect (3.30) workers, along with universally low scores in compensation satisfaction (ranging from 2.94 to 3.27) and work-life balance (ranging from 3.06 to 3.46), requires immediate attention. The near-significant p-value of 0.0806 for outcome expectations suggests a potential trend where career path choice may influence graduate satisfaction levels.

Enhancements to tourism education should focus on bridging the gap between educational preparation and industry realities, particularly by providing more realistic perspectives on career trajectories, compensation structures, and work-life balance challenges. The findings point to the value of establishing formal feedback mechanisms between industry professionals, alumni, and academic institutions to continuously refine curriculum offerings based on actual graduate experiences. By implementing these targeted enhancements, tourism education programs can better prepare graduates for the diverse realities of the tourism industry, ultimately improving graduate outcomes and strengthening the tourism workforce as a whole.

Conclusion

This research comprehensively examined the factors influencing tourism graduates' working conditions to establish a foundation for enhancing professional skillsets and industry expectations through five critical research questions that collectively enlighten the relationship between educational preparation, career decisions, and industry performance expectations.

The demographic profile revealed that mostly young, female workforce with relatively recent industry experience, representing both direct and indirect tourism career paths has provided valuable insights into the contemporary tourism workforce that highlights the sector's appeal to early-career professionals and diverse employment opportunities available across various industries.

The primary factors used demonstrated that tourism programs successfully develop both technical abilities and self-efficacy among graduates, with educational preparation effectively building foundational competencies and professional confidence that enable graduates to pursue diverse career paths, as both direct and indirect tourism workers reported positive perceptions of their skill development and professional self-assurance, indicating that tourism education provides a versatile foundation serving graduates regardless of their specific career path.

The assessment of graduates' attained performance in the industry revealed a complex landscape where professional capabilities exceed outcome satisfaction, with graduates demonstrating strong performance goals and feeling capable of meeting their professional responsibilities, yet outcome expectations presented significant challenges, suggesting a critical gap between what graduates anticipate from their careers and what the industry currently provides, particularly regarding compensation, work-life balance, and advancement opportunities.

The comparative analysis between direct and indirect tourism workers revealed no significant differences in educational preparation effectiveness or performance outcomes, confirming that tourism education successfully prepares graduates for diverse career opportunities within the broader tourism ecosystem, with the absence of significant differences validating the comprehensive nature of tourism education and its applicability across various industry sectors.

Based on these findings, the research establishes that improving working conditions requires a comprehensive approach addressing both professional skillset development and industry expectation alignment, with identified gaps between educational preparation and industry realities providing clear targets for intervention through training enhancement, realistic career orientation, and industry-education collaboration, leading to recommendations for targeted course enhancements that integrate realistic industry perspectives, strengthen psychological resilience training, and establish continuous feedback mechanisms between educational institutions and industry stakeholders to address the core challenge of expectation misalignment while building on the strong foundation of skill development that current programs provide. This requires coordinated efforts to strengthen professional skillsets while simultaneously aligning industry expectations with graduate aspirations, providing a roadmap for meaningful improvement that benefits graduates, educational institutions, and industry stakeholders through collaborative enhancement initiatives, and by addressing the identified expectation gaps proactively, the tourism sector can build a more satisfied, resilient, and professionally competent workforce capable of driving sustainable industry growth and innovation, establishing that improving working conditions is not merely about addressing individual concerns but requires systemic change that enhances professional preparation while fostering realistic industry expectations, ultimately creating a more aligned and sustainable tourism workforce development framework.

Recommendations

Based on the results and conclusion mentioned above, recommendations for follow on research are the following:

- Develop targeted recruitment strategies to attract diverse age groups and maintain gender balance in tourism programs. Implement mentorship networks that connect recent graduates with experienced professionals across different demographic segments to facilitate knowledge transfer and career guidance. Enhance awareness of both direct and indirect tourism career opportunities through comprehensive career counseling services, industry exposure programs, and alumni networks that showcase diverse professional trajectories within the tourism ecosystem. Additionally, create structured professional development programs tailored to different experience levels, ensuring new graduates receive intensive workplace integration support while experienced professionals' access advanced leadership and specialization opportunities.
- Strengthen technical curriculum components through industry-standard software training, digital marketing competencies, and emerging technology integration. Establish practical learning laboratories that simulate real-world tourism operations and provide hands-on experience with industry tools and processes. Implement confidence-building initiatives including public speaking training, leadership workshops, and professional presentation skills development. Create peer mentoring programs where advanced students support newcomers, fostering collaborative learning environments that build professional self- assurance. Develop regular competency evaluations that

align with industry standards, providing graduates with clear understanding of their strengths and areas for improvement while ensuring curriculum relevance to evolving industry needs.

- Establish realistic industry orientation programs that provide accurate information about compensation ranges, career progression timelines, and professional advancement requirements. Partner with industry associations to develop transparent salary benchmarking tools and career pathway documentation. Create structured goal-setting frameworks that help graduates establish achievable short-term and long-term career objectives. Implement regular performance review processes that provide constructive feedback and professional development planning. Finally, establish formal communication channels between employers and educational institutions to ensure ongoing curriculum updates based on industry feedback and graduate performance data.
- Develop programs that address the slight disparities between direct and indirect tourism workers, ensuring equal access to professional development opportunities, industry networking events, and career advancement resources regardless of employment sector. Create specialized support programs for each career stage, including intensive workplace integration for early-career professionals, advanced skill development for mid-career workers, and leadership preparation for experienced professionals. Then implement regular assessment protocols that track graduate satisfaction, career progression, and working condition improvements across different demographic groups and career paths.
- Advocate for industry-wide standards addressing the lowest-scoring areas including competitive compensation structures, improved work-life balance policies, and clear career advancement criteria. Collaborate with tourism industry associations to establish professional standards and best practices. Integrate realistic industry preparation modules, financial literacy training, and psychological resilience building into core curriculum. Develop comprehensive internship programs that provide authentic workplace experience while maintaining academic rigor and professional mentorship. Establish formal partnerships between educational institutions, industry employers, and professional associations to create sustainable pathways for graduate success. Implement regular stakeholder meetings, industry advisory boards, and graduate tracking systems to ensure continuous improvement in working conditions and professional satisfaction. Moreover, develop strategic frameworks for ongoing curriculum updates, industry relationship maintenance, and graduate support services that adapt to evolving tourism industry trends and workforce development needs.

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