

(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



Alignment between the employability attributes of graduating students and industry requirements

FR. WILSON A. JERUSALEM *

Department of Education, Faculty of Graduate Studies, Cebu Technological University – Carmen Campus, Cebu 6005, Philippines.

World Journal of Advanced Engineering Technology and Sciences, 2026, 19(01), 125-134

Publication history: Received on 24 February 2026; revised on 07 April 2026; accepted on 09 April 2026

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30574/wjaets.2026.19.1.0205>

Abstract

This study evaluated the competencies of graduating students at the Cebu Technological University-Carmen Campus in relation to eight employability attributes, assessed the alignment from the perspectives of students, teachers across the five disciplines, and HR professionals or student mentors from partner industries. The primary objective examined whether students' self-assessments match teacher's evaluations and industry's expectations in order to ensure that students can secure employment immediately after graduation. To achieve this, a descriptive-correlational research design was employed. A total of 275 respondents voluntarily participated in the study. Data were analyzed using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to determine significant differences in their assessments of employability attributes. Findings based on the ANOVA point out significant differences among the three respondent groups in four academic programs: Hospitality Management (Systems Thinking Skills), Marine Engineering (all eight employability attributes), Industrial Technology (Work Ethics), and Education (Leadership, Management, Information Technology, and Systems Thinking Skills). These differences in the data propose that existing school-industry partnerships may not be strong enough, and that students still need to improve both skills and values through a reinforced alignment of employability attributes. To address these gaps, the study vouches for the implementation of An Action Plan for Enhancing the Alignment between Graduating Students' Employability Attributes and Industry Requirements. This plan motivates continued school-industry partnerships that comprise hands-on learning—not just towards the end of the course, but throughout the whole program. This better prepares students for direct and significant employment after graduation.

Keywords: Core Values; Skills; Employability; Attributes; Industry Requirements; Respondent Groups; Academic Disciplines

1. Introduction

In the global setting, the increasing number of higher education institutions and the incessant growth of industries have reformed the changing aspects of employability. Education has turned out to be a common priority, with families and societies placing high importance on academic triumph as a means of obtaining future employment. Students across the world are currently confronted with various academic program choices based on individual goals and economic situations. Regardless of the increasing number of graduates across a number of disciplines, a shared global challenge sticks it out: the misalignment between what graduates have in terms of skills and competencies, and what industries require. This matter, often termed "job mismatch," is not just a consequence of a shortage of available jobs, but relatively disengage between educational yields and labor market demands. A strategic and collaborative partnership between academic institutions and industries is thus crucial in addressing this gap. Such partnership comprises the consistent review and co-development of curricula to guarantee that the employability attributes covering essential skills, values, and attitudes attained by students are aligned with the growing opportunities of the global

* Corresponding author: FR. WILSON A. JERUSALEM.

workforce. However, skills are only one feature of employability. Universities are not just training grounds for technical abilities—they are institutions accountable for nurturing both content knowledge and essential attributes that upkeep long term employability (Oraison et al., 2019). To meet global industry standards, curriculum content must be regularly reviewed and enhanced to ensure relevance and responsiveness. Education mismatch remains a recognized issue when graduates' qualifications do not correspond to job requirements, as noted in studies that examine educational and workforce gaps (Kiang Tal et al., 2016). Addressing this mismatch requires narrowing employability attributes to two major areas: skills and core values, which are essential for workplace adaptability. Collaboration between schools and industries is crucial in fostering this alignment through joint teaching and industry-based training initiatives (Ibeneme & Ashiebi, 2022). When these sectors work closely, the transfer of usable skills becomes more effective. Besides, forming trust, joint ownership, and mutual investment is important in promoting sustainable partnerships, as operative alignment rests heavily on the quality of the relationship between schools and industries (Badgett, 2016). This kind of teamwork is illustrated by the Gateway to Industry Schools Program in Australia, which shows how shared strategies can link the gap between education and employment (Flynn et al., 2016). Such worldwide models focus on the need for resilient institutional partnerships to build reliable learning experiences that improve employability results. The decision to conduct this research stemmed from the need to produce localized, empirical data that could upkeep curriculum improvement and develop the employability results of graduating students at Cebu Technological University-Carmen Campus. While prior studies have explored the alignment between graduates' attributes and industry requirements in overall or nationwide settings, this study offers a context-specific inquiry by focusing on how the skills and core values assimilated by students through five academic disciplines align with actual industry demands. By narrowing the emphasis to an exact institution, the research offers valuable insights into the sole challenges and opportunities encountered by Cebu Technological University-Carmen students as they get ready to enter the workforce. Likewise, the study's localized scope made straight contrasts with other study limited, emphasizing the significance of conducting institution-based studies that address particular academic and industry frameworks. This study holds valuable implications mutually within the Philippine educational setting and in the wider global framework. In the Philippines, it helps in addressing the persistent concern of education-employment mismatch by proposing localized facts that can guide academic institutions mainly Cebu Technological University-Carmen Campus in aligning their curriculum with actual industry needs. By ascertaining gaps between what students are equipped with and what employers necessitate, the results can help form more receptive strategies and curricular improvements that improve the employability of graduates. On a worldwide scale, the study supports current global discussions about connecting education and employment through resilient partnerships between schools and industries. It strengthens the idea that employability attributes mainly skills and core values must develop in response to shifting worldwide labor market demands. As economies become gradually consistent, the significance of this research covers beyond national limits, offering perceptions that may profit other emerging nations striving to develop their graduates' readiness for a competitive workforce. Eventually, this study stimulates the vision of higher education as a shared space where academic learning and industry practice come across to empower future professionals.

2. Experimental

The overall triangular design approach of the research process was presented to guarantee the precision and consistency of the data. This research fell under the general classification of quantitative research, as it focused on gathering and evaluating numerical data to draw deductions by means of tables that comprise actual data. The study is an analytical research, as the data collected were evaluated to validate the inferences. The methodology has this order: research design, flow of the study, research environment, research respondents, research instruments, data gathering procedures, data analysis, and scoring procedures applied in the study.

2.1. Design

This study made use of quantitative research to address the problem at hand. Concerning the quantitative design, this study used a descriptive correlational research design, which connects the descriptive approach—used to recapitulate and present facts as regards the assumed variables—and the correlational approach, which defines the relationships among the gathered variables (Fraenkel et al., 2019). This study used a conclusive research design, which involved the gathering, demonstration, scrutiny, and interpretation of variables to produce findings that could be applied in addressing the research problem. The data from survey questionnaires were collected from the designated teachers, students, and partnered industries of Cebu Technological University-Carmen Campus.

2.2. Flow of the Study

This part used the Input-Process-Output Model, or the IPO Model. This model provided the outline for the study, specifying the overall approach.

Input: In the first phase of the IPO Model, the queries suggested in this study form its contents. These queries are defining features in whether or not the Cebu Technological University-Carmen Campus aligns employability attributes with industry requirements. The queries cover the seven skills: Basic Numeracy and Literacy Skills, Critical Thinking Skills, Leadership Skills, Management Skills, Interpersonal Skills, Information Technology Skills, Systems Thinking Skills, and Core Values (Work Ethic). Ready-made queries were used by the researcher, with minor revisions in the subject and order of the queries.

Process: The second phase of the IPO Model corresponds to a series of activities, based on facts from survey questionnaires, used to bring about the preferred outcomes for the study's Input. The survey questionnaires were disseminated to a number of professors at the Cebu Technological University Carmen Campus, graduating students from the same school, partnered industries, and school mentors. Their answers were collected to determine whether the graduating students are fully competent to enter the workforce, and to evaluate whether there is alignment between employability attributes and industry requirements. These were determined likewise to give weight to the process— Frequency, Percentage, Mean, Standard Deviation, and Analysis of Variance.

Output: The third phase of the IPO Model focuses on the outcomes after gathering, presenting, and evaluating the figures. Based on the true answers of CTU-Carmen Campus students, teachers, partnered industries, or school mentors, the output of the survey questionnaires indicated whether the school's graduating students are fully competent in the 7 skills and core values. Likewise, this presented the alignment between the employability attributes that are supposed to be acquired and industry requirements, and their ability to be employed instantly after graduation. An action plan was introduced after the data were collected and interpreted.

2.3. Environment

This study, basically, was conducted at the Cebu Technological University Carmen Campus, through the support of several partner industries and schools. The campus is in Poblacion, Carmen, Cebu, right along R.M. Durano Avenue, and covers about 72,000 square meters. There is relatively a variety of programs for undergraduate and graduate students. At present, in terms of undergraduate programs, the College of Education Arts and Sciences has programs, the Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEED), Bachelor of Secondary Education major in Mathematics (BSED-Math), and the Bachelor of Technology and Livelihood Education major in Home Economics (BTLED-HE). The College of Technology has two programs, the Bachelor of Industrial Technology Major in Computer Technology, and BS Hospitality Management, and the College of Fisheries and Allied Sciences, and the College of Maritime Sciences. The graduate studies, the university offers the succeeding programs: the Master of Arts in Education, Major in Administration and Supervision, and the MA in Vocational Education, Master in Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences, and two Doctorate Programs — Doctor of Development Education (Dev.Ed.D.) and Doctor of Philosophy in Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences. Numerous partner industries and locations requested privacy. Hence, their buildings are left out from the Location Map of the Research Environment. The researcher upholds confidentiality by keeping all names and facts strictly private.

2.4. Respondents

The 275 respondents of this study comprised of the following: 31 CTU Carmen Instructors; 182 graduating students from five Cebu Technological University-Carmen programs; and 62 individuals consisting of HR Professionals, Immediate Supervisors, and School Mentors from partner industries and schools. Samples were taken from the several programs to guarantee proper illustration. The programs comprised BS Hospitality Management, BS Marine Engineering, BS Fisheries, BS Industrial Technology, and Education (BEEd, BTLEd, and BSEdMath). Besides, before the dissemination of the survey questionnaires, transmittal letters were secured to make sure a smooth distribution procedure. For the student-respondents, the questionnaires were randomly disseminated through the five academic programs: Hospitality Management, Marine Engineering, Fisheries, Industrial Technology, and Education. A reliable employee from Cebu Technological University-Carmen Campus helped the process. Random sampling was conducted by getting ready a list of graduating students from every program and opting for 40 participants for each program (not including Fisheries, which had only 22 qualified students). The selection was assisted by the said employee, who guaranteed that only students who freely decided to participate received the survey forms. Once accomplished, the questionnaires were collected by the selected teachers-in-charge and returned to the same employee. The researcher personally collected the accomplished questionnaires. Correspondingly, for the teacher-respondents, random sampling was also applied. A list of faculty members handling every academic program was acquired, and a random selection of teachers was made for each program to join in the study. The same reliable employee of Cebu Technological University-Carmen helped in the dissemination and collection of the questionnaires. Only those who provided their approval took part in the survey. After the teacher-respondents responded the questionnaires, these were given back through the teachers-in charge and forwarded back to the reliable employee, from whom the researcher personally collected the accomplished forms. The respondents from partner industries and

schools—specifically HR professionals, immediate supervisors, and school mentors—the researcher personally handled both the distribution and collection of the questionnaires. The participants were randomly selected from a list of personnel provided by the partner organizations. The same principle of voluntary participation applied.

2.5. Instrument

This study made use of a survey questionnaire by Rosenberg (2012) to acquire, measure, and evaluate the facts. Of the questionnaire that included 47 items, respondents rated every item on a scale from 1 to 4. The same instrument was used for all the respondent groups. The survey questionnaire created by Rosenberg (2012) is appropriate for this study because it is intended to measure key employability attributes that are directly aligned with industry requirements. The instrument's 47 statements provided a comprehensive assessment of competencies such as skills, behaviors, and work-related attitudes needed for evaluating graduate employability.

2.6. Data Gathering Procedures

The method used in data gathering is handled with precaution. First, the respondents were informed ahead as regards the purpose of the study before the data collection initiated. Second, they were instructed that the questionnaires will be collected individually to guarantee the confidentiality of their answers. Above all, informed consent was acquired from the participants. This informed them to make sure informed consent and voluntary participation, as informed consent is a necessary principle of research ethics that permits participants to freely enter research with complete facts as regards their participation and to provide consent before participating (University of Oxford, n.d.). Before data collection, transmittal letters, signed by the researcher, thesis adviser, and dean of the Graduate School, were sent by the researcher to the Campus Director of Cebu Technological University-Carmen Campus, asking for approval to conduct the survey and distribute the questionnaires to the a number of respondents. Upon approval by the director, the survey was initiated.

2.7. Sampling Technique

The data collected from the survey questionnaires, which were disseminated through random sampling and were used for statistical analysis. The respondents were provided the survey questionnaires to answer. Before answering the questions, the purpose and content of the questionnaires were expounded to them. They were informed that the questionnaires were intended to address the serious job mismatch concern in the Philippines through the alignment of employability attributes with industry requirements. The respondents were cheered to respond the questions in all conscience. The respondents' responses would not result in any negative penalties for them, as the data were not used against them. Instead, their responses contributed to the achievement of this study in addressing the recognized problem. Another transmittal letter, signed by the Schools Division Superintendent, Senen Priscilo P. Paulin CESO V, was likewise secured, along with the PSDS endorsement letter signed by Mr. Glicerio L. Camongay, Public Schools District Supervisor-Department of Education-Carmen District.

2.8. Statistical Treatment of Data

The collected data were statistically evaluated using Microsoft Excel (Version 2010). Descriptive statistics, comprising mean and standard deviation, were calculated to summarize the dataset or the central tendency and dispersion of the answers. The mean was utilized to define the average answer, while the standard deviation measured the variability within the data. For inferential statistics, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), was conducted to determine if there were significant differences between groups—teachers, students, HR Professionals, and school mentors. The Excel Data Analysis ToolPak, with a significance level set at 0.05, was utilized to do the test. Here, the p-value, $p < 0.05$, that designates a statistically significant difference, and the p-value, $p > 0.05$, that recommends no significant difference, are the bases of the interpretation of the ANOVA results. Besides, the hypothesis testing approach, where the null hypothesis (H_0) holds that there was no significant difference between the ratings of employability attributes by the respondent groups, and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) affirms that a significant difference occurred, was followed in the study. This statistical treatment helped measure whether students' self-assessed employability attributes aligned with industry expectations. The data, after being evaluated by the researcher, are guaranteed that they are handled with caution to sustain their confidentiality.

2.9. Scoring Procedures

In calculating the score based on the data collected, this study used the 4 Point Likert Scale for Agreement (Formplus, 2022). This scoring technique comprises four agreement scales: Always, Sometimes, Rarely, and Never. These scales were evaluated based on the respondents' responses. To know the frequency of a specific scale, the Mode was determined. To ascertain the average answer based on the specified scales, the Mean was likewise computed. In

addition, the subsequent measures were identified: Frequency, Percentage, Standard Deviation, and Analysis of Variance. The rating scale ranges, starting from 4.00, each category spans 0.75 units: Always (3.26-4.00), Sometimes (2.51-3.25), Rarely (1.76-2.50), and Never (1.00-1.75), were calculated by dividing the overall range (4-1=3) by the four categories, resulting in an interval of 0.75.

3. Results and discussion

This study gathered data from three key groups: students, teachers, and HR professionals (or school mentors), in order to assess their perspectives on the importance of seven skills: basic literacy and numeracy skills, critical thinking skills, leadership skills, management skills, interpersonal skills, information technology skills, and systems thinking skills, as well as core values, including work ethic.

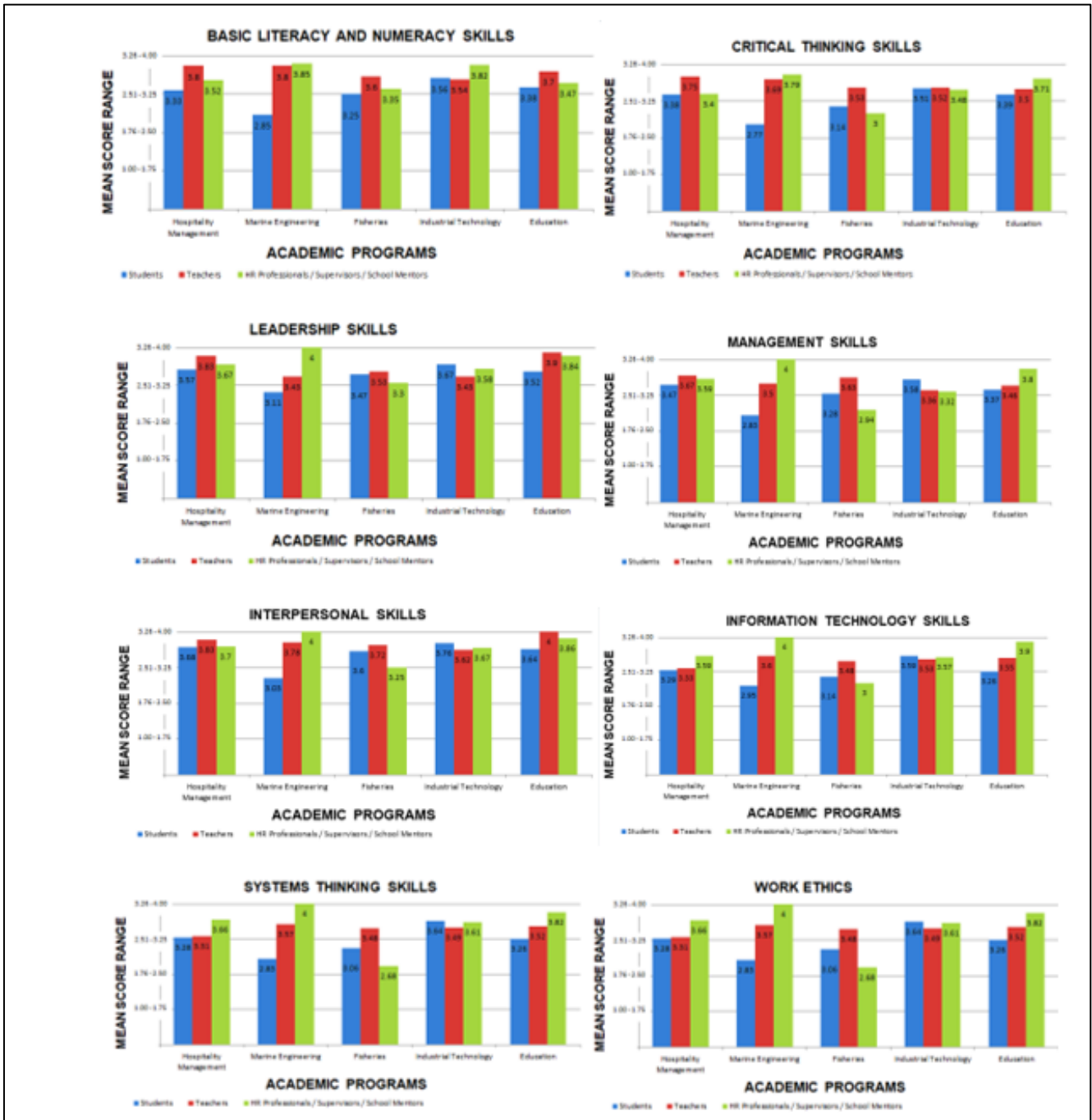


Figure 1 Comparison of Five Academic Programs Based on Mean Scores Presented in Eight Column Charts

From the eight column charts above, the study reveals the following five key findings:

3.1. General Alignment with Notable Areas of Misalignment

Based on the data, misalignment is evident primarily in Marine Engineering across all assessed skills, including work ethic, systems thinking, critical thinking, leadership, management, interpersonal, information technology, and basic literacy and numeracy skills, where students consistently rated themselves as only sometimes competent, while teachers and industry representatives rated them as always competent or necessary. In the Fisheries discipline, misalignment is also observed in critical thinking skills, where students perceived themselves as sometimes competent, teachers rated them as always competent, and industry viewed them as only sometimes necessary. Additionally, management and interpersonal skills in Fisheries showed misalignment, as students and teachers considered them always competent, while industry representatives regarded them as only sometimes necessary. These discrepancies highlight significant gaps between student self-perceptions and the expectations of educators and industry stakeholders.

3.2. Mismatch between Industry Expectations and Student Self-Perception in Employability Skills

Industry stakeholders consistently view employability skills as necessary, but student self-perception does not always reflect this, especially in technical fields like Marine Engineering. The data reveals a consistent trend: industry stakeholders across all disciplines—particularly in technical fields like Marine Engineering—regard employability skills such as work ethic, systems thinking, critical thinking, leadership, management, interpersonal communication, and information technology skills as always necessary for students to succeed in the workplace. However, Marine Engineering students, in particular, do not perceive themselves as possessing these competencies to the same degree. In all assessed areas, they consistently rated themselves as only sometimes competent, showing a lack of confidence in understanding how their abilities align with professional standards.

3.3. Inconsistent Integration of Critical Soft Skills in Academic Programs

Soft skills such as leadership, communication, and critical thinking are often undervalued or inconsistently developed across disciplines, even though industries rate them as highly necessary. The data highlights that soft skills such as leadership, communication (interpersonal skills), and critical thinking are not consistently integrated or developed across disciplines, even though industries rate them as highly necessary for workplace success. This inconsistency is most prominent in Marine Engineering, where students rated themselves as only sometimes competent across all key employability areas—including leadership, critical thinking, and interpersonal skills—while both teachers and industry representatives rated them as always competent or necessary. This significant gap points to a possible lack of emphasis on the practical development of these soft skills within the curriculum, or a failure to help students recognize and internalize their own capabilities. In Fisheries, a similar pattern emerges. Students rated themselves as sometimes competent in critical thinking, while teachers considered them always competent, and industry viewed the skill as only sometimes necessary, revealing confusion or inconsistency about its importance and expected performance. Moreover, in management and interpersonal skills, students and teachers aligned positively, yet industry stakeholders rated the necessity of these skills lower, suggesting a mismatch in how schools and industries prioritize or understand soft skill development.

3.4. Gaps in Student Assessment Linked to Limited School-Industry Communication

Lack of sustained collaboration and communication between schools and industries resulted in inconsistent evaluation of student competencies and expectations. The data highlights that limited and inconsistent collaboration between schools and industries contributes to gaps in student competency assessments. In Marine Engineering, students consistently rated themselves as only sometimes competent, while teachers and industry rated them much higher, revealing a disconnect in feedback and expectations. Similarly, in Fisheries, mismatches in evaluating critical thinking, management, and interpersonal skills suggest unclear alignment between academic preparation and industry needs. These discrepancies point to the need for sustained school-industry communication to ensure that student assessments accurately reflect real-world competency requirements.

3.5. Delayed Industry Exposure Hinders Student Readiness and School-to Work Transition

Late exposure of students to real-world industry practices limits their ability to accurately assess their own readiness and hinders smoother transition from school to work. The data reveals that students, particularly in Marine Engineering, consistently perceive themselves as only sometimes competent across essential employability skills such as work ethic, critical thinking, leadership, and IT skills, while teachers and industry stakeholders assess them as always competent or their skills as always necessary. This persistent misalignment suggests that students may lack

firsthand experience with real-world industry expectations, limiting their ability to accurately evaluate their own readiness for the workforce. In Fisheries, similar gaps appear in critical thinking, management, and interpersonal skills, where student and teacher ratings align but differ from industry assessments. These patterns indicate that late or insufficient exposure to industry practices may prevent students from developing the confidence, awareness, and adaptability needed for a smoother transition from school to work. Early and structured immersion in actual industry settings—such as through internships, mentoring, or simulation-based learning—can bridge this gap, helping students calibrate their self-assessments and prepare more effectively for professional environments.

4. Conclusion

Based on a careful analysis of the data, the following conclusions are drawn to address the study's focus on aligning employability attributes with industry requirements.

As to the null hypothesis—which states that there is no significant difference in the perception of employability attributes among the respondent groups in the Hospitality Management, Marine Engineering, Fisheries, Industrial Technology, and Education programs—the results indicate that the null hypothesis should be rejected in four programs and for specific attributes, as the p-values fall below the 0.05 threshold. In the Hospitality Management program, Systems Thinking Skills had a p-value of 0.039, indicating a significant difference in perception among the groups. In the Marine Engineering program, all eight employability attributes yielded significant differences, with the following p values: 0.000 for Basic Literacy and Numeracy Skills, 0.000 for Critical Thinking Skills, 0.001 for Leadership Skills, 0.000 for Management Skills, 0.000 for Interpersonal Skills, 0.000 for Information Technology Skills, 0.000 for Systems Thinking Skills, and 0.000 for Work Ethic. The Industrial Technology program also showed significant difference for Work Ethic with a p-value of 0.0375. Meanwhile, in the Education program, significant differences were found in Leadership Skills ($p = 0.026$), Management Skills ($p = 0.041$), Information Technology Skills ($p = 0.002$), and Systems Thinking Skills ($p = 0.012$). These results clearly indicate that the perceptions of the respondent groups vary significantly in these programs and attributes, thus leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis in those areas.

On the other hand, the null hypotheses that fail to be rejected—because the p-values are above the threshold of 0.05—correspond to four programs and specific employability attributes. In the Hospitality Management program, the following attributes did not show significant differences: Basic Literacy and Numeracy Skills ($p = 0.056$), Critical Thinking Skills ($p = 0.233$), Leadership Skills ($p = 0.366$), Management Skills ($p = 0.503$), Interpersonal Skills ($p = 0.714$), Information Technology Skills ($p = 0.141$), and Work Ethic ($p = 0.260$). In the Fisheries program, the p-values were: 0.391 for Basic Literacy and Numeracy Skills, 0.217 for Critical Thinking Skills, 0.787 for Leadership Skills, 0.196 for Management Skills, 0.346 for Interpersonal Skills, 0.423 for Information Technology Skills, 0.156 for Systems Thinking Skills, and 0.494 for Work Ethic. The Industrial Technology program showed no significant differences for the following: Basic Literacy and Numeracy Skills ($p = 0.237$), Critical Thinking Skills ($p = 0.981$), Leadership Skills ($p = 0.502$), Management Skills ($p = 0.249$), Interpersonal Skills ($p = 0.572$), Information Technology Skills ($p = 0.956$), and Systems Thinking Skills ($p = 0.762$). Meanwhile, in the Education program, no significant differences were found in Basic Literacy and Numeracy Skills ($p = 0.272$), Critical Thinking Skills ($p = 0.157$), Interpersonal Skills ($p = 0.061$), and Work Ethic ($p = 0.094$). These p-values indicate that the respondent groups had relatively similar perceptions of these employability attributes in the respective programs.

The Signaling Theory posits that graduates signal their capabilities to prospective employers through the knowledge and skills acquired during their education. It is known if students really signal their capabilities through the programs that do not reject the null hypothesis. The Hospitality Management includes Basic Literacy and Numeracy Skills, Critical Thinking Skills, Leadership Skills, Management Skills, Interpersonal Skills, Information Technology Skills, and Work Ethic; Fisheries includes Basic Literacy and Numeracy Skills, Critical Thinking Skills, Leadership Skills, Management Skills, Interpersonal Skills, Information Technology Skills, Systems Thinking Skills, and for Work Ethic; Industrial Technology includes Basic Literacy and Numeracy Skills, Critical Thinking Skills, Leadership Skills, Management Skills, Interpersonal Skills, Information Technology Skills, and Systems Thinking Skills; and Education includes Basic Literacy and Numeracy Skills, Critical Thinking Skills, Interpersonal Skills, and Work Ethic.

The Human Capital Theory says that education increases a person's productivity and helps them earn more in the labor market by building valuable skills. This idea holds true, but the study shows that some academic programs may need better alignment with what employers expect. For instance, we have the Hospitality Management's Systems Thinking Skills; Marine Engineering's Basic Literacy and Numeracy Skills, Critical Thinking Skills, for Leadership Skills, Management Skills, Interpersonal Skills, Information Technology Skills, Systems Thinking Skills, and Work Ethic; Industrial Technology's Work Ethic; and the Education's Leadership Skills, Management Skills, Information Technology

Skills, and Systems Thinking Skills. These results suggest that while the human capital theory remains valid, some fields may benefit from more targeted training or adjustments to better meet labor market needs.

The Technological Theory explains how fast-changing technology creates new job demands that often require highly trained and specialized workers. This idea remains true, and the study shows both strengths and areas that need improvement when it comes to preparing students for these changes. This is true for programs that failed to reject the null hypothesis, as mentioned above, and areas that need improvement for those that rejected the null hypothesis.

To address these issues, schools and industries need to work closely together. This partnership should go beyond job placements and focus on regular communication, joint curriculum reviews, and continuous updates to better match industry needs. By building long-term, open partnerships, both schools and industries can better prepare students for the workforce. This approach will help students connect theoretical knowledge with practical skills, making them more employable.

Compliance with ethical standards

Acknowledgments

Exhausting all possibilities to make this study a reality was, indeed, something for which I am grateful during my time in the United States. There were many instances when I felt like giving up due to my busy schedule while trying catching up. Sometimes, I asked myself why I had to pursue further studies. Did I really need this for my priestly ministry? I could have chosen the comfortable path by not pursuing this study. However, I realized that I was doing this not for myself, but for the Church. With that in mind, I told myself, —I have to continue and persevere.

I finally made it through, not by my effort alone, but by the support and guidance of the following individuals who tirelessly dedicated their skills to help me succeed. They deserve recognition.

I thank the Almighty God, most of all, for the gentle reminder that each work completed out of love is pleasing to Him. Above and beyond, I thank Him for granting me energy and resolve to pursue His will regardless of life's trials and struggles.

I am overwhelmingly thankful to Dr. Anthony S. Ilano, Campus Director, in giving me consent to conduct this study, and to my thesis adviser, Dr. Purity V. Mata, for her assiduousness in making recommendations, improvements, and providing relevant sources connected to the study. Because of her assistance, I felt assured in pursuing this study. I would like to express my appreciation to the panel of examiners: Dr. Don Roel G. Arias, Dr. Emardy T. Barbecho, and Dr. Anna Marie C. Neiz. They provided me with their assurance and encouragement and thoroughly substantiated this study in its entirety. Their excellence has contributed significantly to producing another important output necessary for supporting our graduating students.

I am grateful to my family, finally, for their prayers, lifting me up in supplication for success in all undertakings for the good of the Church.

Disclosure of conflict of interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

Statement of ethical approval

This study was conducted in accordance with ethical standards. Permission to conduct the research was obtained from the appropriate institutional authorities. All procedures involving human participants were carried out in line with established ethical guidelines.

Statement of informed consent

All participants provided informed consent prior to their inclusion in the study. They were informed of the purpose of the research and their right to withdraw at any time without any consequences.

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