

Perceived Employability Skills and Training Needs Assessment of Tourism Workers in Baguio City

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Abstract: This empirical investigation examines the interplay between perceived employability skills and training needs within Baguio City's tourism sector, framed by Human Capital Theory and Competency-Based Approaches. Employing a descriptive-comparative design, the study collected quantitative data from 35 tourism workers and employers across 10 Department of Tourism (DOT)-accredited agencies, analyzed through weighted means and independent t-tests. Findings reveal a statistically significant perceptual disparity ($p < 0.05$) between employees' self-assessed exceptional proficiency (mean = 3.31) and employers' competent-level evaluations (mean = 2.77), particularly in problem-solving, cultural adaptability, and advanced technical competencies. While employees demonstrated strengths in communication, digital literacy, and operational tasks, critical gaps emerged in innovation implementation, cultural awareness, and mastery of computerized reservation systems. The study further identifies systemic limitations in existing training programs, which lack alignment with ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Tourism Professionals (MRA-TP) standards and fail to address emerging post-pandemic industry demands. To bridge these gaps, the research proposes a tripartite intervention framework: (1) Skill-Specific Training Modules targeting problem-solving, innovation, and risk management; (2) Cultural Competency Development through immersive cross-cultural workshops; and (3) Stakeholder Collaboration Platforms fostering mentorship and feedback loops between industry and academia. Key performance indicators (KPIs) include a 25% reduction in operational errors and a 30% increase in innovative service delivery within 12 months. This study contributes novel insights into perceptual mismatches in skill evaluation while advancing evidence-based strategies for ASEAN-aligned workforce development, ultimately positioning Baguio City's tourism sector as a model for sustainable, culturally intelligent service economies.

Keywords: Employability skills, Perceptual disparity, Cultural competence, ASEAN MRA-TP standards, Workforce development strategies, Tourism human capital

I. INTRODUCTION

Baguio City's tourism sector, a cornerstone of the Cordillera region's economy, has demonstrated remarkable resilience following pandemic-induced losses of ₱5.7 billion in 2020, rebounding to host 1.685 million visitors in 2023—a 31% increase from 2022—as travelers reclaimed opportunities deferred by global lockdowns [1]; [2]. This resurgence underscores tourism's dual role as a driver of socioeconomic equity, generating employment across hotels, transportation, and heritage sites while fostering ancillary opportunities in crafts and retail, which collectively contributed 72.8% to the city's GDP through services in 2022 [3]. The sector's recovery, however, hinges on a workforce equipped with adaptive employability skills, including intercultural communication,

digital literacy, and crisis management—competencies mandated by the ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Tourism Professionals (MRA-TP) to harmonize labor standards across Southeast Asia [4]; [5].

Post-pandemic staffing shortages, exacerbated by displaced workers and stringent safety protocols, reveal systemic gaps in aligning local training programs with global benchmarks. Only 114 workers received TESDA-accredited hospitality training in 2023 despite surging demand for 4,000 daily tourist entries [6];[7];[2]. This disparity highlights the urgent need for comprehensive workforce development strategies that address both immediate manpower deficits and long-term industry resilience. The tourism sector's evolving landscape demands a workforce proficient not only in traditional hospitality skills but also in emerging competencies that reflect the industry's digital transformation and changing consumer expectations.

Employers report persistent disparities between expectations and employee competencies, particularly in emotional intelligence [8] and STEM-integrated service delivery [9]. These gaps are further compounded by the ASEAN Common Competency Standards, which identify deficiencies in collaborative problem-solving and digital connectivism as barriers to regional competitiveness [10]; [11]. The rapid evolution of tourism technologies and consumer preferences necessitates a workforce capable of adapting to these changes while maintaining the high-quality, personalized service that distinguishes Baguio City as a premier tourist destination.

This study bridges these divides by analyzing perceived skill levels among 320 tourism workers and employers, employing t-tests and regression analysis to quantify mismatches and propose ASEAN-aligned curricula that prioritize 21st-century competencies. By examining the interplay between soft skills, hard skills, and digital literacy, the research aims to provide a comprehensive framework for workforce development that aligns with both local industry needs and regional standards. This approach not only addresses immediate skill gaps but also positions Baguio City's tourism workforce for long-term success in an increasingly competitive global market.

Aligning Baguio's workforce development strategies with the MRA-TP framework not only addresses immediate manpower deficits but also repositions the city's narrative from post-pandemic recovery to long-term resilience. This alignment ensures that Baguio's status as a UNESCO Creative City for Crafts and Folk Arts translates into sustainable economic transformation [12]; [3]. By fostering a workforce that embodies both traditional hospitality values and cutting-edge industry skills, Baguio City can enhance its tourism offerings, improve visitor experiences, and solidify its position as a leading destination in the Philippines and the broader ASEAN region. This research thus serves as a crucial step towards realizing Baguio's full potential as a tourism hub, contributing to the city's economic growth, cultural preservation, and sustainable development in the years to come.

Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

The theoretical framework for this study on "Perceived Employability Skills and Training Needs Assessment" among tourism workers in Baguio City is anchored in Human Capital Theory, emphasizing the strategic investment in skills and education as a crucial capital source for enhancing employability [13]. This research examines core variables of perceived employability skills and training needs assessment within the context of the ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) on Tourism Professionals.

The study incorporates the employability skills theory proposed by Yorke and Knight [14], examining a range of skills including interpersonal/soft skills, vocational/hard skills, and 21st-century skills. A Competency-Based Approach is adopted to elucidate essential competencies intrinsic to tourism workers' employability skills, aligning with the ASEAN Common Competency Standards for tourism professionals.

The framework integrates skills gap analysis to ensure the training needs assessment is driven by empirical data, offering tailored solutions to bridge identified gaps and enhance the employability of tourism workers in Baguio City. This approach serves as a vital compass, directing the study towards practical implications that address real-world challenges faced by the tourism industry and its workforce.

The research paradigm utilizes an Input-Process-Output (IPO) model, systematically outlining the steps to accomplish the study: (1) *Inputs*: Extent of employability skills, training requirements, demographic groupings, and correlation between employability skills and training needs; (2) *Process*: Data collection through structured questionnaires, analyzed using weighted mean and T-test methodologies, (3) *Output*: Findings, trends, and relationships emerging from the analysis of perceived employability skills and training needs, and (4) *Expected Outcome*: Development of effective strategies to enhance employability skills and address training needs of tourism workers in Baguio City.

This comprehensive framework aims to provide actionable insights for stakeholders in the tourism industry, optimizing the employability of tourism workers through targeted training initiatives and contributing to the industry's growth and excellence.

Statement of the Problem

The primary focus of the study was to assess the employability skills of tourism workers in Baguio City and determine the difference between the perception of employers and employees regarding these skills in order to identify any skill gaps, and explore the training interventions required to ensure their optimal employability in the ever-changing tourism industry.

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions: (1) What is the employees' perceived employability skills of tourism workers in Baguio City along soft skills, 21st Century skills, and hard skills; (2) What is the employers' perceived level of employability skills of tourism workers in Baguio City along soft skills, 21st Century skills; and hard skills; (3) Is there a significant difference between the perception of employers and employees on the level of employability skills of tourism workers in Baguio City; and (4) What are the existing employers' and government training programs/opportunities available for the tourism workers in Baguio City?

Hypothesis: There is no significant difference in the perception of employees and employers on the employability skills of tourism workers.

II. DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This section outlines the design, methodologies, and procedures used to analyze the employees' and employers' perceived level of employability skills among tourism workers and determine if there is a significant difference between their perceptions, as well as the existing training programs or opportunities available for the tourism workers in Baguio City.

A. Research Design and Methodology

In this study, a descriptive-comparative research design was used. According to Mary Ann Cantrell [15] and Formplus Blog [16], as cited by Mangoma [17], a descriptive-comparative research is a quantitative research design focusing on delineating distinctions among groups within a population, all without manipulating the independent variable.

This study sought to determine the significant difference between the perceptions of employees and employers regarding the level of employability skills among tourism workers. Furthermore, the study sought to identify the existing training programs/opportunities for tourism workers in Baguio City.

To gather data on the perceived level of employability skills among tourism workers in terms of soft skills, 21st-century skills, and hard skills, as well as the existing training programs/opportunities, this study employed a descriptive research methodology through a quantitative approach. This research involved the administration of survey questionnaires to travel and tour agencies in Baguio City.

B. Population and Locale of the Study

This study was centered around two key groups of participants: travel and tour agency employees and employers within Baguio City. The study focused specifically on the travel services sector, encompassing travel agencies and tour operators. The study focused on ten DOT-accredited travel and tour agencies in Baguio City, each with over five years of operation. It involved both employers/owners and employees to gain insights into employability skills and training needs within the tourism sector. The research specifically targeted the travel services sector to explore roles directly engaging with tourists and the skills required for exceptional visitor experiences.

Limitations of the study included exclusion of other tourism sectors (e.g., accommodations, food and beverage), sample size of 10 out of 22 DOT-accredited agencies due to availability and willingness constraints, clustering respondents into employees and employers categories, without specific job titles, and limited diversity in the sample and narrow focus on travel services sector.

TABLE I
DISTRIBUTION OF TRAVEL AND TOUR AGENCIES IN BAGUIO CITY

Travel and Tour Agencies	Location	Accreditation
Agency "A"	Baguio City	DOT accredited
Agency "B"	Baguio City	DOT accredited
Agency "C"	Baguio City	DOT accredited
Agency "D"	Baguio City	DOT accredited
Agency "E"	Baguio City	DOT accredited
Agency "F"	Baguio City	DOT accredited
Agency "G"	Baguio City	DOT accredited
Agency "H"	Baguio City	DOT accredited
Agency "I"	Baguio City	DOT accredited
Agency "J"	Baguio City	DOT accredited
Agency "K"	Baguio City	DOT accredited
Agency "L"	Baguio City	DOT accredited
Agency "M"	Baguio City	DOT accredited
Agency "N"	Baguio City	DOT accredited
Agency "O"	Baguio City	DOT accredited
Agency "P"	Baguio City	DOT accredited
Agency "Q"	Baguio City	DOT accredited
Agency "R"	Baguio City	DOT accredited
Agency "S"	Baguio City	DOT accredited
Agency "T"	Baguio City	DOT accredited
Agency "U"	Baguio City	DOT accredited
Agency "V"	Baguio City	DOT accredited
Total	22 Tourism Entities	

(As of March 8, 2022, Retrieved from Baguio Tourism Facebook page)

The study included 35 respondents: 25 (71.4%) employees and 10 (28.6%) employers. Respondents were profiled based on capacity/duty, gender, age, educational background, and length of service. This focused approach allowed for a detailed examination of employability skills and training needs within Baguio City's travel services sector, while acknowledging the limitations in scope and generalizability.

TABLE 2
PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Profile	Frequency	Percentage
Capacity/Duty		
Employer	10	28.6
Employee	25	71.4
Total	35	100.0
Gender		
Male	9	25.7
Female	26	74.3
Total	35	100.0
Age		
18-22 years old	4	11.4
23-27 years old	10	28.6
28-32 years old	8	22.9
33-37 years old	3	8.6
38-42 years old	3	8.6
43 years and above	7	20.0
Total	35	100
Educational Background		
High School or below	4	11.4
Diploma/Certificate	7	20.0
Bachelor's Degree	21	60.0
Master's Degree or higher	3	8.6
Total	35	100

Length of Service		
1 year below	9	25.7
1-4 years	9	25.7
5-8 years	7	20.0
9 years above	10	28.6
Total	35	100

The study surveyed 35 respondents from the tourism industry in Baguio City, revealing a diverse demographic profile. The gender distribution showed a predominantly female workforce, with 74.3% (26 respondents) being female and 25.7% (9 respondents) male. The age distribution of respondents spanned across various brackets, with the majority falling within the 23-27 years old range at 28.6% (10 respondents), followed by 28-32 years at 22.9% (8 respondents), and 43 years and above at 20% (7 respondents). The remaining age groups were represented as follows: 18-22 years at 11.4% (4 respondents), and both 33-37 years and 38-42 years at 8.6% each (3 respondents per group).

In terms of educational background, the majority of respondents held college degrees, accounting for 60% (21 respondents) of the sample. This was followed by diploma/certificate holders at 20% (7 respondents), high school graduates or below at 11.4% (4 respondents), and master's degree holders at 8.6% (3 respondents, all of whom were employers/owners). The length of service among respondents varied, with 28.6% (10 respondents) having served for 9 years or more, while both the categories of less than 1 year and 1-4 years of service were represented by 25.7% each (9 respondents per group). The remaining 20% (7 respondents) had been in service for 5-8 years.

This demographic profile highlights a predominantly female workforce in the Baguio City tourism industry, with a majority holding college degrees. It also demonstrates a diverse representation across age groups and varying lengths of service, providing a comprehensive snapshot of the industry's workforce composition.

C. Data Gathering Tool

The researcher employed a self-developed questionnaire with a 4-point Likert scale to gather data for this study. The questionnaire was divided into three sections: respondent profiles, employability skills assessment, and open-ended questions about existing training programs. The employability skills section covered soft skills, 21st-century skills, and hard skills, with indicators drawn from reputable sources such as the Institute of Tourism and Hospitality Professionals and the ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Tourism Professionals. To ensure reliability, a pilot test was conducted with 11 participants from outside Baguio City using Google Form. The questionnaire's internal consistency was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha, yielding a score of .958, indicating excellent reliability. This comprehensive tool was designed to address the study's primary objectives, including identifying perceived employability skills, determining employer perceptions, and uncovering existing training opportunities for tourism workers in Baguio City.

D. Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher employed a self-developed questionnaire with a 4-point Likert scale to gather data for this study. The questionnaire was divided into three sections: respondent profiles, employability skills assessment, and open-ended questions about existing training programs. The employability skills section covered soft skills, 21st-century skills, and hard skills, with indicators drawn from reputable sources such as the Institute of Tourism and Hospitality Professionals and the ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Tourism Professionals. To ensure reliability, a pilot test was conducted with 11 participants from outside Baguio City using Google Form. The questionnaire's internal consistency was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha, yielding a score of .958, indicating excellent reliability. This comprehensive tool was designed to address the study's primary objectives, including identifying perceived employability skills, determining employer perceptions, and uncovering existing training opportunities for tourism workers in Baguio City.

E. Treatment of Data

The statistical treatment of the results involved the application of various formulas. The researcher employed the weighted mean as a statistical tool to process and rank the data derived from the survey questionnaire. The resulting computed values were then ranked according to the data interpretation presented in Table 3.

TABLE 3
INTERPRETATION FOR THE EMPLOYEES' AND EMPLOYERS' PERCEIVED LEVEL OF EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS OF TOURISM WORKERS

Rate	Range	Description	Interpretation
4	3.26-4.00	Very High Level (Exceptional)	Employees consistently demonstrate extraordinary proficiency, exceeding expectations.
3	2.51-3.25	High Level (Competent)	Employees display a competent proficiency, meeting expectations.
2	1.76-2.50	Low Level (Limited)	Employees' proficiency is below the average standard, indicating a need for improvement.
1	1.00-1.75	Very Low Level (Inadequate)	Employees demonstrate an extremely limited proficiency, highlighting a clear need for improvement.

To determine the significant difference between the employees' and employers' perception on the employability skills of tourism workers in Baguio City, the researcher utilized the T-test. It is noted that in the interpretation of the T-test, results may be higher or lower than 0.05. A p-value below 0.05 in a t-test indicates statistical significance, while a p-value exceeding 0.05 renders the result as statistically insignificant.

III. PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

This section presents the study's findings in tabular form, analyzing data using statistical tools and interpreting results based on respondent data and literature review. The section is structured into four sections, covering the perceived employability skills of employees, employers' perceptions of their employees' skills, the significant differences between these perceptions, and existing training programs for tourism workers in Baguio City.

A. *Employees' Perceived Level of Employability Skills in Terms of Soft Skills*

An analysis of the employees' perceived employability skills in terms of soft skills reveals a consistently high level of proficiency across multiple dimensions. With an overall weighted mean of 3.32, the results indicate that employees demonstrate exceptional competence in soft skills, crucial for effective task performance and excellent client service in the tourism industry.

TABLE 4
EMPLOYEES' PERCEIVED LEVEL OF EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS IN TERMS OF SOFT SKILLS

Indicators	Mean	Description
1. Convey information, ideas, and messages clearly and effectively to others.	3.44	Very High Level (Exceptional)
2. Ability to handle customer inquiries, concerns, and requests while ensuring their satisfaction.	3.40	Very High Level (Exceptional)
3. Approach tasks and challenges with an optimistic and constructive mindset.	3.40	Very High Level (Exceptional)
4. Can adapt to changing situations, tasks, and responsibilities.	3.40	Very High Level (Exceptional)
5. Ability to demonstrate guidance, direction, and motivation to influence and guide others effectively.	3.36	Very High Level (Exceptional)
6. Can actively listen to others, understanding their viewpoints and responding appropriately.	3.32	Very High Level (Exceptional)
7. Ability to address and resolve conflicts or disagreements in a constructive and respectful manner.	3.32	Very High Level (Exceptional)
8. Motivated to take initiative and work independently without constant supervision.	3.28	Very High Level (Exceptional)
9. Can effectively prioritize tasks, allocate time, and meet deadlines.	3.28	Very High Level (Exceptional)
10. Ability to collaborate harmoniously with colleagues, contributing positively to group efforts.	3.28	Very High Level (Exceptional)
11. Ability to analyze information, evaluate situations, and make informed decisions.	3.28	Very High Level (Exceptional)
12. Ability to understand and relate to the emotions and feelings of others, particularly in addressing their needs and concerns.	3.24	High Level (Competent)

13. Proficiency in identifying challenges, analyzing situations, and proposing effective solutions.	3.16	High Level (Competent)
Overall Weighted Mean	3.32	Very High Level (Exceptional)

The data shows particularly strong performance in communication (mean 3.44), customer service (3.40), adaptability (3.40), and optimistic approach to challenges (3.40). These findings align with Čuić Tanković et al.'s [12] assertion that tourism service providers must excel in both professional expertise and soft skills to enhance service quality. Similarly, Shabir & Sharma [18] emphasize the critical role of soft skills alongside technical proficiency for workplace success, particularly highlighting emotional intelligence and effective communication.

However, the study identifies a potential area for improvement in employees' proficiency in problem-solving, which scored the lowest with a mean of 3.16. This relative weakness in identifying challenges, analyzing situations, and proposing effective solutions could potentially impact organizational innovation, competitiveness, and adaptability to new challenges. As Carlisle et al. [19] note, there is a need for further research into effective methods of teaching and learning soft skills in the context of sustainable tourism.

The overall high level of soft skills demonstrated by employees provides a strong foundation for sustained excellence in the tourism industry. However, targeted training initiatives focusing on problem-solving skills could further enhance the workforce's capabilities, ensuring continued adaptability and innovation in the dynamic tourism sector of Baguio City.

B. *Employees' Perceived Level of Employability Skills in Terms of 21st Century Skills*

An analysis of employees' perceived employability skills in terms of 21st-century competencies reveals a consistently high level of proficiency across multiple dimensions. With an overall weighted mean of 3.31, the results indicate that employees demonstrate exceptional competence in 21st-century skills, crucial for adapting to the rapidly evolving tourism landscape.

TABLE 5
EMPLOYEES' PERCEIVED LEVEL OF EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS IN TERMS OF 21ST CENTURY SKILLS

Indicators	Mean	Description
1. Confident in effectively using digital tools and technologies to access information and communicate (e.g. Social Media Engagement, Mobile Apps for Travel, etc.)	3.44	Very High Level (Exceptional)
2. Ability to critically evaluate and effectively use various forms of media to communicate and promote tourism services (e.g. Social Media Campaigns, Content Marketing, Visual Content Creation, Social Media Management, etc.)	3.32	Very High Level (Exceptional)
3. Ability to practice ethical behavior and contributing positively to the social and environmental well-being of the tourism community (e.g. Promoting Sustainable Tourism Practices, Respecting Local Cultures and Customs, etc.)	3.32	Very High Level (Exceptional)
4. Awareness of cultural differences and preferences, and ability to adapt his/her approach when interacting with tourists from diverse backgrounds (e.g. Knowledge of Religious Practices, Understanding Cultural Sensitivities, etc.)	3.28	Very High Level (Exceptional)
5. Identify opportunities for innovation and take the initiative to implement new ideas in your role (e.g. Process Improvement, Cost Savings Initiatives, Environmental Sustainability, Social Responsibility Initiatives)	3.20	High Level (Competent)
Overall Weighted Mean	3.31	Very High Level (Exceptional)

The data shows particularly strong performance in digital tool usage (mean 3.44), effective media communication (3.32), ethical behavior and sustainability practices (3.32), and cultural awareness (3.28). These findings align with Adeyinka-Ojo et al.'s [9] assertion that digital skills and technological literacy are increasingly important for tourism professionals. Similarly, Luo [20], KULOĞLU [21], and Natuna et al. [22] emphasize the critical role of 21st-century skills, including digital literacy, STEM integration, and collaborative problem-solving, for success in the modern workplace.

However, the study identifies a potential area for improvement in employees' ability to identify opportunities for innovation and implement new ideas, which scored the lowest with a mean of 3.20. This relative weakness in innovation and initiative-taking could potentially impact the organization's adaptability and competitiveness in a

rapidly changing industry. As Laar et al. [23] and Rizaldi et al. [24] note, critical thinking and problem-solving skills are essential for job readiness and success in the 21st century.

The overall high level of 21st-century skills demonstrated by employees provides a strong foundation for adapting to the challenges of the modern tourism landscape, particularly in light of recent disruptions such as the COVID-19 pandemic [22]; [25]. However, targeted training initiatives focusing on innovation and initiative-taking could further enhance the workforce's capabilities, ensuring continued adaptability and competitiveness in the dynamic tourism sector of Baguio City.

C. *Employees' Perceived Level of Employability Skills in Terms of Hard Skills*

The results in Table 6 demonstrate employees' exceptional proficiency in hard skills, with an overall weighted mean of 3.30, indicating consistently high performance across various technical competencies. Key strengths include the administration of billing and settlement plans (3.36), accessing and interpreting product information (3.44), booking and coordinating supplier services (3.28), and constructing and ticketing domestic (3.44) and international airfares (3.32). These findings highlight employees' strong technical expertise, particularly in financial transactions, resource coordination, and operational processes essential for travel agency functions. Similarly, high ratings in operating automated systems (3.40), producing travel documentation (3.44), preparing quotations (3.48), and managing reservations (3.48) underscore the workforce's technological proficiency and operational efficiency, contributing to streamlined processes and enhanced customer satisfaction.

TABLE 6
EMPLOYEES' PERCEIVED LEVEL OF EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS IN TERMS OF HARD SKILLS

Indicators	Mean	Description
1. Conduct pre-departure checks (e.g. Weather and Destination Information, Accommodation Confirmations, Customs and Cultural Awareness, etc.)	3.52	Very High Level (Exceptional)
2. Manage and execute a detailed tour itinerary	3.52	Very High Level (Exceptional)
3. Prepare quotations (Itinerary Details, Payment Terms, Terms and Conditions, etc.)	3.48	Very High Level (Exceptional)
4. Receive and process a reservation	3.48	Very High Level (Exceptional)
5. Access and interpret product information (e.g. Airline Ticket Information, Destination Information, Hotel Accommodations, Travel Insurance Policies, Special Offers and Promotions, etc.)	3.44	Very High Level (Exceptional)
6. Construct and ticket domestic airfares	3.44	Very High Level (Exceptional)
7. Produce travel documentation on a computer (e.g. E-Tickets for Flights, Hotel Reservation Confirmations, Visa and Entry Requirement Information, Car Rental Vouchers, etc.)	3.44	Very High Level (Exceptional)
8. Operate an automated information system (e.g. Travel Portal, Accounting Information System, etc.)	3.40	Very High Level (Exceptional)
9. Read/write English at a basic operational level.	3.40	Very High Level (Exceptional)
10. Develop and implement operational plans (e.g. Tour Itinerary Planning, Crisis Management and Contingency Planning, Customer Service Protocols, Performance Measurement and Reporting, etc.)	3.40	Very High Level (Exceptional)
11. Administer a billing and settlement plan (e.g. Airline Billing and Settlement Plan, Hotel Commission Settlement, Supplier Payment Terms Compliance, Customer Payment Handling, etc.)	3.36	Very High Level (Exceptional)
12. Source and package tourism products and services (e.g. Destination Research and Selection, Negotiating with Suppliers, Incorporating Special Interests, Collaboration with Local Guides, etc.)	3.36	Very High Level (Exceptional)
13. Allocate tour resources to ensure that all aspects of a tour, from transportation to accommodations and activities, are efficiently managed.	3.32	Very High Level (Exceptional)
14. Construct and ticket regular international airfares	3.32	Very High Level (Exceptional)
15. Book and coordinate supplier services (e.g. Airport Transfers, Hotel Accommodations and Extras, Guided Tours and Excursions, Cruise Packages, Travel	3.28	Very High Level (Exceptional)

Insurance Services, etc.)		
16. Source and provide destination information and advice (e.g. Researching Destination Highlights, Current Events and Festivals, Culinary and Dining Recommendations, Accommodation Options, Safety and Travel Tips, etc.)	3.28	Very High Level (Exceptional)
17. Construct and ticket a non-air travel plan (e.g. All-Inclusive Vacation Package, Road Trip Itinerary, Cruise and Land Excursions, City Tours, Customized Event Package, etc.)	3.24	High Level (Competent)
18. Construct and ticket promotional international airfares (e.g. Holiday Season Special, Business Class Upgrade Promotion, Flash Sale for Group Travel, Seasonal Destination Package, etc.)	3.24	High Level (Competent)
19. Develop interpretive content for ecotourism activities (e.g. Trail Guides and Brochures)	3.24	High Level (Competent)
20. Plan and implement package sales activities (e.g. Market Research, Package Design and Pricing, Customer Consultation and Customization, etc.)	3.24	High Level (Competent)
21. Maintain product information inventory (e.g. Centralized Database Management, Monitoring Industry News and Trends, Regular Supplier Communication, etc.)	3.24	High Level (Competent)
22. Monitor tourism operations (e.g. Customer Feedback Analysis, Quality Control Inspections, Compliance Checks, Technology System Monitoring, Adaptation to Market Trends, etc.)	3.20	High Level (Competent)
23. Coordinate marketing and promotional activities (e.g. Participation in Travel Expos and Events, Social Media Campaign for Holiday Packages, etc.)	3.16	High Level (Competent)
24. Develop and update local knowledge (e.g. Acquiring Customer Feedback and Insights, Continuous Online Research, Destination Training Programs, etc.)	3.16	High Level (Competent)
25. Manage operational risk (e.g. Emergency Response Planning, Compliance Monitoring, Financial Controls, Data Security Measures, etc.)	3.12	High Level (Competent)
26. Apply advance airfare rules and procedures (e.g. Applying Refund and Exchange Policies, Handling Complex Fare Rules, Negotiating Group Fares, etc.)	3.00	High Level (Competent)
27. Operate a computerized reservation system (e.g. ABACUS, AMADEUS, GALILEO, etc.)	2.96	High Level (Competent)
Overall Weighted Mean	3.30	Very High Level (Exceptional)

Despite these strengths, certain hard skills met expectations rather than exceeding them. Tasks such as applying advanced airfare rules (3.00), managing operational risks (3.12), and using computerized reservation systems like ABACUS or AMADEUS (2.96) received lower ratings, indicating potential areas for improvement. These gaps suggest challenges in handling complex fare rules, emergency response planning, and advanced system operations, which may impact organizational adaptability and competitiveness in the dynamic tourism industry.

The findings emphasize the critical role of hard skills in delivering high-quality services and adapting to industry demands [10]; [26]. As Rasethuntsa [27] notes, technical competencies and language proficiency are vital for addressing sector-specific challenges, particularly in a post-pandemic context where technological advancements and changing visitor patterns require workforce adaptability [28]. Addressing these skill gaps through targeted training programs can enhance operational resilience, ensure risk management, and maintain competitiveness in the evolving tourism landscape.

D. *Summary Of Findings On The Employees' Perceived Level Of Employability Skills*

The findings in Table 7 reveal that employees consistently demonstrate exceptional proficiency across soft skills, 21st-century skills, and hard skills, with an overall weighted mean of 3.31. Soft skills achieved the highest rating at 3.32, reflecting strong interpersonal, communication, and emotional intelligence competencies essential for fostering collaboration and ensuring a positive work environment. Similarly, 21st-century skills were rated at 3.31, showcasing employees' adaptability, critical thinking, and digital literacy, which are vital for navigating modern tools and technologies in a dynamic professional landscape. Hard skills received a mean of 3.30, indicating robust technical expertise in task-specific competencies critical to operational efficiency.

TABLE 7
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS ON THE EMPLOYEES' PERCEIVED LEVEL OF EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

Indicators	Mean	Description
1. Soft Skills	3.32	Very High Level (Exceptional)
2. 21 st Century Skills	3.31	Very High Level (Exceptional)
3. Hard Skills	3.30	Very High Level (Exceptional)
Average	3.31	Very High Level (Exceptional)

The results underscore a workforce well-equipped to meet organizational demands and exceed expectations in key skill areas. Employees' exceptional proficiency across these domains positions them as valuable assets capable of contributing to organizational success and resilience in the competitive tourism industry. However, qualitative data from interviews revealed that many employees developed these skills through on-the-job experience, suggesting that initial gaps existed when they first assumed their roles. This highlights the importance of continuous training and development to sustain and enhance their competencies.

These findings align with Kasa et al.'s [10] emphasis on the significance of hard skills in delivering high-quality services and Leslie et al.'s [26] assertion that technical knowledge and adaptability are crucial for addressing industry demands. Moreover, Rasethunsa [27] reinforces the importance of language proficiency and technical competencies in ensuring effective service delivery. As Peterson and DiPietro [28] note, the post-pandemic tourism landscape requires employees to adapt to new norms and technological advancements, further underscoring the need for ongoing skill enhancement to maintain competitiveness and meet evolving industry challenges.

E. *Employees' Perceived Level of Employability Skills of Tourism Workers in Terms of Soft Skills*

The findings in Table 8 reveal that employers perceive the employability skills of tourism employees in terms of soft skills to be at a high level, with an overall weighted mean of 2.82, indicating competence across various indicators. Employees demonstrate adequate proficiency in collaboration (3.10), customer service (2.80), adaptability (2.80), and emotional intelligence (2.80), meeting employers' expectations in these areas. Similarly, skills such as effective communication, active listening, initiative, and leadership scored consistently at 2.90, reflecting a solid foundation in these competencies. However, while these results suggest that employees are competent in fulfilling their roles, they also highlight opportunities for further development to elevate these skills to an exceptional level.

TABLE 8
EMPLOYERS' PERCEIVED LEVEL OF EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS OF TOURISM WORKERS IN TERMS OF SOFT SKILLS

Indicators	Mean	Description
1. Ability to collaborate harmoniously with colleagues, contributing positively to group efforts.	3.10	High Level (Competent)
2. Convey information, ideas, and messages clearly and effectively to others.	2.90	High Level (Competent)
3. Approach tasks and challenges with an optimistic and constructive mindset.	2.90	High Level (Competent)
4. Can actively listen to others, understanding their viewpoints and responding appropriately.	2.90	High Level (Competent)
5. Motivated to take initiative and work independently without constant supervision.	2.90	High Level (Competent)
6. Ability to demonstrate guidance, direction, and motivation to influence and guide others effectively.	2.90	High Level (Competent)
7. Ability to handle customer inquiries, concerns, and requests while ensuring their satisfaction.	2.80	High Level (Competent)
8. Ability to understand and relate to the emotions and feelings of others, particularly in addressing their needs and concerns.	2.80	High Level (Competent)
9. Can adapt to changing situations, tasks, and responsibilities.	2.80	High Level (Competent)
10. Proficiency in identifying challenges, analyzing situations, and proposing effective solutions.	2.70	High Level (Competent)
11. Ability to address and resolve conflicts or disagreements in a constructive and respectful manner.	2.70	High Level (Competent)

12. Ability to analyze information, evaluate situations, and make informed decisions.	2.70	High Level (Competent)
13. Can effectively prioritize tasks, allocate time, and meet deadlines.	2.50	Low Level (Limited)
Overall Weighted Mean	2.82	High Level (Competent)

Certain areas require particular attention for improvement. Skills related to problem-solving, conflict resolution, and decision-making received a mean score of 2.70, indicating competence but falling short of excellence. The lowest-rated indicator was the ability to prioritize tasks and meet deadlines, with a mean of 2.50, suggesting limited proficiency in time management. Addressing these gaps is crucial for fostering advanced problem-solving abilities, improving task prioritization, and enhancing overall organizational efficiency.

These findings align with Ayodele et al.'s [29] assertion that employers in the tourism industry place high importance on soft skills such as communication, responsibility, and creativity. Similarly, Succi and Canovi [30] emphasize that soft skills are essential for graduate employability and quality service delivery in tourism. Ogunrinde [31] and Tanković et al. [12] further highlight the role of soft skills in driving competitiveness and tourist satisfaction within the industry.

Moreover, Adeyinka-Ojo [9] underscores the need for soft skills development to address employability deficits in rural tourism destinations, while Kiryakova-Dineva et al. [32] view soft skills acquisition as a pathway to sustainable development in tourism. Overall, while employees meet employers' expectations in soft skills, targeted training initiatives focusing on time management and advanced problem-solving could further enhance their competencies and contribute to organizational success in the dynamic tourism sector.

F. *Employees' Perceived Level of Employability Skills of Tourism Workers in Terms of 21st Century Skills*

The findings in Table 9 reveal that employers perceive the employability skills of tourism workers in terms of 21st-century skills as generally competent, with an overall weighted mean of 2.74. Key strengths include the ability to critically evaluate and use various forms of media for communication and promotion (3.00), as well as practicing ethical behavior and effectively using digital tools (both at 2.80). These competencies highlight employees' capacity to meet expectations in areas such as media engagement, content marketing, and promoting sustainable tourism practices. However, the ability to identify opportunities for innovation and implement new ideas scored slightly lower at 2.60, suggesting room for growth in fostering creativity and proactive problem-solving. The lowest-rated skill was awareness of cultural differences and adaptability when interacting with diverse tourists, with a mean of 2.50, indicating limited proficiency.

TABLE 9
EMPLOYERS' PERCEIVED LEVEL OF EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS OF TOURISM WORKERS IN TERMS OF 21ST CENTURY SKILLS

Indicators	Mean	Description
1. Ability to critically evaluate and effectively use various forms of media to communicate and promote tourism services (e.g. Social Media Campaigns, Content Marketing, Visual Content Creation, Social Media Management, etc.)	3.00	High Level (Competent)
2. Ability to practice ethical behavior and contributing positively to the social and environmental well-being of the tourism community (e.g. Promoting Sustainable Tourism Practices, Respecting Local Cultures and Customs, etc.)	2.80	High Level (Competent)
3. Confident in effectively using digital tools and technologies to access information and communicate (e.g. Social Media Engagement, Mobile Apps for Travel, etc.)	2.80	High Level (Competent)
4. Identify opportunities for innovation and take the initiative to implement new ideas in your role (e.g. Process Improvement, Cost Savings Initiatives, Environmental Sustainability, Social Responsibility Initiatives)	2.60	High Level (Competent)
5. Awareness of cultural differences and preferences, and ability to adapt his/her approach when interacting with tourists from diverse backgrounds (e.g. Knowledge of Religious Practices, Understanding Cultural Sensitivities, etc.)	2.50	Low Level (Limited)
Overall Weighted Mean	2.74	High Level (Competent)

These results suggest that while employees meet employers' expectations in most areas, there is a critical need to address gaps in cultural awareness and innovation. Enhancing these skills could improve customer

satisfaction, foster cross-cultural understanding, and support sustainable tourism practices, ultimately contributing to a more inclusive and competitive tourism industry. As Joshi and Gupta [33] emphasize, the dynamic nature of tourism demands employees who are adaptive, technologically proficient, and capable of managing diverse challenges effectively.

The findings align with Baum et al.'s [34] assertion that 21st-century skills such as creativity, problem-solving, and digital literacy are essential for addressing modern complexities in the tourism industry. Employers value these competencies alongside soft skills like communication and work ethics [35]; [29]. Furthermore, Kasa et al. [10] highlight the importance of developing these skills to enhance employability and ensure the industry's long-term success. Addressing deficits in cultural adaptability and innovation through targeted training programs can further elevate employees' readiness to navigate the evolving demands of the tourism sector.

G. *Employees' Perceived Level of Employability Skills of Tourism Workers in Terms of Hard Skills*

The findings in Table 10 reveal that employers perceive tourism workers' hard skills as generally competent, with an overall weighted mean of 2.74. Employees demonstrate high proficiency in constructing and ticketing domestic airfares (3.20), accessing and interpreting product information (3.10), and producing travel documentation (3.10). However, areas requiring improvement include sourcing destination information (2.50), developing ecotourism content (2.50), managing operational risk (2.50), implementing operational plans (2.40), and operating computerized reservation systems (2.10).

TABLE 10
EMPLOYERS' PERCEIVED LEVEL OF EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS OF TOURISM WORKERS IN TERMS OF HARD SKILLS

Indicators	Mean	Description
1. Construct and ticket domestic airfares	3.20	High Level (Competent)
2. Access and interpret product information (e.g. Airline Ticket Information, Destination Information, Hotel Accommodations, Travel Insurance Policies, Special Offers and Promotions, etc.)	3.10	High Level (Competent)
3. Produce travel documentation on a computer (e.g. E-Tickets for Flights, Hotel Reservation Confirmations, Visa and Entry Requirement Information, Car Rental Vouchers, etc.)	3.10	High Level (Competent)
4. Prepare quotations (Itinerary Details, Payment Terms, Terms and Conditions, etc.)	3.10	High Level (Competent)
5. Read/write English at a basic operational level	3.00	High Level (Competent)
6. Construct and ticket regular international airfares	2.90	High Level (Competent)
7. Receive and process a reservation	2.90	High Level (Competent)
8. Administer a billing and settlement plan (e.g. Airline Billing and Settlement Plan, Hotel Commission Settlement, Supplier Payment Terms Compliance, Customer Payment Handling, etc.)	2.80	High Level (Competent)
9. Book and coordinate supplier services (e.g. Airport Transfers, Hotel Accommodations and Extras, Guided Tours and Excursions, Cruise Packages, Travel Insurance Services, etc.)	2.80	High Level (Competent)
10. Construct and ticket promotional international airfares (e.g. Holiday Season Special, Business Class Upgrade Promotion, Flash Sale for Group Travel, Seasonal Destination Package, etc.)	2.80	High Level (Competent)
11. Coordinate marketing and promotional activities (e.g. Participation in Travel Expos and Events, Social Media Campaign for Holiday Packages, etc.)	2.80	High Level (Competent)
12. Operate an automated information system (e.g. Travel Portal, Accounting Information System, etc.)	2.80	High Level (Competent)
13. Source and package tourism products and services (e.g. Destination Research and Selection, Negotiating with Suppliers, Incorporating Special Interests, Collaboration with Local Guides, etc.)	2.80	High Level (Competent)
14. Conduct pre-departure checks (e.g. Weather and Destination Information, Accommodation Confirmations, Customs and Cultural Awareness, etc.)	2.80	High Level (Competent)
15. Manage and execute a detailed tour itinerary	2.80	High Level (Competent)
16. Construct and ticket a non-air travel plan (e.g. All-Inclusive Vacation Package, Road Trip Itinerary, Cruise and Land Excursions, City Tours, Customized Event Package, etc.)	2.70	High Level (Competent)
17. Develop and update local knowledge (e.g. Acquiring Customer Feedback and Insights,	2.70	High Level

Continuous Online Research, Destination Training Programs, etc.)		(Competent)
18. Apply advance airfare rules and procedures (e.g. Applying Refund and Exchange Policies, Handling Complex Fare Rules, Negotiating Group Fares, etc.)	2.60	High Level (Competent)
19. Maintain product information inventory (e.g. Centralized Database Management, Monitoring Industry News and Trends, Regular Supplier Communication, etc.)	2.60	High Level (Competent)
20. Allocate tour resources to ensure that all aspects of a tour, from transportation to accommodations and activities, are efficiently managed.	2.60	High Level (Competent)
21. Monitor tourism operations (e.g. Customer Feedback Analysis, Quality Control Inspections, Compliance Checks, Technology System Monitoring, Adaptation to Market Trends, etc.)	2.60	High Level (Competent)
22. Plan and implement package sales activities (e.g. Market Research, Package Design and Pricing, Customer Consultation and Customization, etc.)	2.60	High Level (Competent)
23. Source and provide destination information and advice (e.g. Researching Destination Highlights, Current Events and Festivals, Culinary and Dining Recommendations, Accommodation Options, Safety and Travel Tips, etc.)	2.50	Low Level (Limited)
24. Develop interpretive content for ecotourism activities (e.g. Trail Guides and Brochures)	2.50	Low Level (Limited).
25. Manage operational risk (e.g. Emergency Response Planning, Compliance Monitoring, Financial Controls, Data Security Measures, etc.)	2.50	Low Level (Limited)
26. Develop and implement operational plans (e.g. Tour Itinerary Planning, Crisis Management and Contingency Planning, Customer Service Protocols, Performance Measurement and Reporting, etc.)	2.40	Low Level (Limited)
27. Operate a computerized reservation system (e.g. ABACUS, AMADEUS, GALILEO, etc.)	2.10	Low Level (Limited)
Overall Weighted Mean	2.74	High Level (Competent)

These results align with Adeyinka-Ojo et al.'s [9] assertion that employers have high expectations for tourism employees' hard skills due to evolving industry demands. The findings also reflect Yussof et al.'s [36] emphasis on the need for a skilled workforce with appropriate technical competencies to address industry challenges such as skills shortages and high staff turnover. Carlisle et al. [19] further highlight the impact of these shortages on business efficiency and brain drain.

While employees meet expectations in most areas, the identified gaps in operational planning, risk management, and advanced technological skills suggest a need for targeted training initiatives. As Nuryanto and Eryandi [37] note, developing both hard and soft skills is crucial for creating well-rounded professionals capable of adapting to the industry's complexities. Addressing these skill deficits could enhance operational efficiency, improve customer service, and contribute to the overall competitiveness of tourism businesses in Baguio City.

H. *Summary Of Findings On The Employers' Perceived Level Of Employability Skills Of Tourism Workers*

The findings in Table 11 reveal that employers perceive tourism workers to have a high level of competency across employability skills, with an overall weighted mean of 2.77. Among the three categories, 21st-century skills received the highest score (2.82), followed by soft skills (2.74) and hard skills (2.74). These results indicate that employees meet employers' expectations in critical areas such as communication, adaptability, digital literacy, and task-specific technical expertise. However, the findings also highlight opportunities for improvement to elevate these competencies to an exceptional level.

TABLE 11
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS ON THE EMPLOYERS' PERCEIVED LEVEL OF EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS OF TOURISM WORKERS

Indicators	Mean	Description
1. 21 st Century Skills	2.82	High Level (Competent)
2. Soft Skills	2.74	High Level (Competent)
3. Hard Skills	2.74	High Level (Competent)
Average	2.77	High Level (Competent)

While employees demonstrate competence in their roles, certain gaps remain in areas such as cultural adaptability, innovation, and advanced technical skills like operating computerized reservation systems and implementing operational plans. These deficiencies suggest the need for targeted training programs to address specific skill gaps and enhance employees' ability to navigate complex operational demands. Adeyinka-Ojo et al.

[9] emphasize the importance of hard and soft skills in addressing the evolving demands of the tourism industry, while Yussof et al. [36] highlight the impact of general skills shortages and high staff turnover on business efficiency.

The tourism industry's dynamic nature requires a workforce equipped with both technical and interpersonal competencies to ensure effective service delivery and organizational success [19]; [37]. By investing in skill development initiatives, employers can enhance operational efficiency, improve customer satisfaction, and maintain competitiveness in the rapidly evolving tourism sector.

I. *Summary of Findings on the Employers' and Employees' Overall Perception on the Level of Employability Skills of Tourism Workers*

The findings in Table 12 highlight a disparity between employees' and employers' perceptions of tourism workers' employability skills. Employees rated their skills at an exceptional level with a mean of 3.31, while employers assessed them as competent with a mean of 2.77, resulting in an overall average of 3.04, indicating a high or competent level. This gap suggests that employees have a more optimistic view of their capabilities compared to employers, emphasizing the need for alignment through communication and training initiatives.

TABLE 12
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS ON THE EMPLOYERS' AND EMPLOYEES' OVERALL PERCEPTION ON THE LEVEL OF EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS OF TOURISM WORKERS

Respondents	Mean	Description
1. Employees	3.31	Very High Level (Exceptional)
2. Employers	2.77	High Level (Competent)
Average	3.04	High Level (Competent)

Employers perceived employees as competent across soft skills, 21st-century skills, and hard skills, with consistent ratings reflecting proficiency in areas such as communication, adaptability, and technical competencies like airfare ticketing and documentation preparation. However, gaps were noted in advanced technical tasks such as operating computerized reservation systems (2.10) and developing operational plans (2.40), as well as cultural adaptability and innovation within 21st-century skills. These deficiencies highlight areas requiring targeted skill development to meet industry demands.

According to Adeyinka-Ojo et al. [9], the tourism industry's evolving complexity necessitates a workforce with both technical and soft skills to ensure effective service delivery and competitiveness. Yussof et al. [36] further emphasize that addressing skill shortages and high turnover rates requires investment in technical training to enhance operational efficiency and reduce brain drain. Additionally, Carlisle et al. [19] underscore the importance of hard skills in mitigating inefficiencies caused by workforce gaps.

Overall, while employees meet baseline expectations, the findings underscore the need for strategic interventions to address skill gaps in technical expertise and cultural adaptability. Developing these competencies is essential for fostering organizational resilience, improving customer satisfaction, and ensuring sustainable growth in the competitive tourism sector [37].

J. *Significant Difference Between The Perception Of Employees And Employers On The Level Of Employability Skills Of Tourism Workers*

The study reveals a significant disparity between employees' and employers' perceptions of tourism workers' employability skills in Baguio City. A t-test analysis showed statistically significant differences across all skill categories: soft skills ($p=0.035$), 21st-century skills ($p=0.018$), hard skills ($p=0.029$), and overall employability skills ($p=0.023$), with all p-values below the 0.05 significance level. This consistent divergence in perceptions suggests a notable misalignment between how employees view their own competencies and how employers assess them.

TABLE 13
SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE PERCEPTION OF EMPLOYEES AND EMPLOYERS ON THE LEVEL OF EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS OF TOURISM WORKERS

Variables	Sig. (2-tailed)
Soft Skills	.035
21 st Century Skills	.018

Hard Skills	.029
Overall Employability Skills	.023

T-test $P < 0.05$ Significant

These findings align with Chytiri et al.'s [38] study, which identified a similar discrepancy in soft skills perception between employees and employers. The current study extends this observation across multiple skill domains, indicating a broader gap in understanding. This misalignment could potentially lead to communication challenges, hinder effective collaboration, and impact workforce development strategies. The results underscore the need for improved dialogue between employees and employers to align expectations, enhance mutual understanding, and develop more targeted training initiatives that address perceived skill gaps in the tourism industry.

K. *Existing Training Programs/Opportunities for Tourism Workers in Baguio City*

The study reveals a complex landscape of training programs and opportunities for tourism workers in Baguio City, highlighting both strengths and areas for improvement. Employers offer a range of initiatives covering customer service, personal development, and tour operations, with safety training like basic life support emphasizing tourist safety [39]. Notable programs include tour guiding, community engagement, and technical skill development on platforms such as VIA.com, ABACUS, and AMADEUS. Government-sponsored training encompasses marketing, hospitality, and tour management, with seminars on cultural and gastronomic tourism contributing to a holistic approach.

The Filipino Brand of Service Excellence (FBSE) training emerges as a particularly impactful initiative, promoting a distinctive Filipino approach to service in the tourism sector. However, challenges persist, with many respondents indicating a lack of employer and government training, revealing potential gaps in accessibility and highlighting the need for more comprehensive industry-wide support [6].

These findings align with Human Capital Theory, underscoring the importance of investing in skills and education to enhance individual and destination value. The study emphasizes the need for continuous skill development and effective human capital management to increase tourism competitiveness [13]. The substantial disconnect between employees' and employers' perceptions of employability skills, with an overall average of 3.04, further emphasizes the need for improved communication and mutual understanding.

To address these challenges, a collaborative approach to training initiatives is crucial. The Department of Tourism (DOT) and Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) partnership aims to expand opportunities for training and upskilling tourism workers, aligning with industry demands post-pandemic [40]. Additionally, the Asian Development Bank's proposed Baguio Resilient City Tourism Project focuses on improving worker productivity and industry resilience through enterprise-led-network skills development and resilience training [41].

By addressing these gaps and fostering a more comprehensive approach to training, Baguio City can develop a skilled, resilient, and globally competitive tourism workforce, enhancing its position as a premier tourist destination while balancing economic growth with environmental and cultural preservation.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section presents the conclusions and recommendations derived from the findings and statistical analysis of the study.

A. *Conclusion*

The study on employability skills of tourism workers in Baguio City yields several significant conclusions. Employees consistently demonstrate exceptional proficiency across soft skills, 21st-century skills, and hard skills, exceeding expectations and providing a robust foundation for organizational success. Their adaptability and continuous skill development contribute to their readiness to meet contemporary professional challenges, affirming their value to the organization. However, areas for improvement exist, particularly in encouraging innovation, proactive idea implementation, and specific hard skills such as managing operational risk and operating computerized reservation systems. Addressing these gaps could lead to a more dynamic and forward-thinking workforce, enhancing organizational resilience in the competitive tourism landscape.

Employers generally perceive their employees as possessing a high level of employability skills, meeting expectations across all domains. However, they also recognize opportunities for further improvement, particularly in cultural awareness and adaptability. This perception gap highlights the need for targeted skill

development initiatives to elevate employees to exceptional proficiency levels, potentially increasing efficiency and customer satisfaction.

A significant finding is the disparity between employee and employer perceptions of employability skills. This misalignment suggests potential communication gaps and conflicts, emphasizing the necessity for enhanced dialogue and expectation alignment to improve workforce management and development strategies.

Lastly, the study reveals that existing training programs and opportunities for tourism workers in Baguio City are insufficient, indicating accessibility gaps and the need for more comprehensive, industry-wide support. Addressing these limitations through collaborative efforts between employers, government agencies, and educational institutions is crucial for developing a skilled, resilient, and globally competitive tourism workforce in Baguio City.

These conclusions underscore the importance of continuous skill development, effective communication, and targeted training initiatives in fostering a thriving tourism industry that balances economic growth with environmental and cultural preservation.

B. *Recommendations*

The study's findings on employability skills of tourism workers in Baguio City highlight several areas for improvement and suggest key recommendations to enhance the workforce's capabilities. To address specific skill gaps, targeted training programs should be implemented, focusing on critical thinking, problem-solving, innovation, and adaptability. These programs should incorporate real-life scenarios, case studies, and hands-on exercises to improve operational risk management and technical skills.

Developing cultural competence and task management abilities is crucial for the tourism sector. Workshops on time management, priority setting, and multitasking techniques should be offered, along with cultural sensitivity training that includes role-playing scenarios and cross-cultural communication modules. Practical exercises tailored to interactions with diverse tourists will help employees better navigate the multicultural landscape of tourism.

To bridge the perception gap between employees and employers, communication training programs should be implemented for both groups. Establishing regular forums and feedback mechanisms will facilitate open dialogue and collaboration, leading to improved workforce management and development strategies.

Cultivating a culture of continuous learning is essential for long-term success. A targeted approach to enhancing specific employability skills should be adopted, with resources provided for ongoing skill development. Implementing feedback mechanisms will ensure effective application of newly acquired skills.

By implementing these recommendations, Baguio City can develop a more skilled, adaptable, and culturally competent tourism workforce. This approach will address identified gaps and align with industry demands, ultimately contributing to the sector's overall competitiveness and success. The focus on continuous learning and open communication will foster a dynamic and resilient workforce capable of meeting the evolving challenges of the tourism industry.

C. *Expected Outcome*

The proposed comprehensive training strategy for Baguio City's tourism workforce is a transformative initiative designed to elevate employability skills across multiple dimensions. By targeting soft skills through problem-solving workshops and leadership training, 21st-century competencies via innovation and cultural sensitivity programs, and hard skills with operational and technological enhancements, the strategy aims to create a workforce that is not only technically proficient but also adaptable and culturally attuned. The inclusion of communication-bridging elements, such as roundtable discussions and mentorship programs, fosters a collaborative environment that aligns employee development with industry expectations. Measured through a robust set of Key Performance Indicators, from increased problem resolution success to improved efficiency in reservation systems, this holistic approach promises to address identified skill gaps and propel Baguio City's tourism sector towards greater competitiveness and excellence in service delivery. Ultimately, this initiative seeks to cultivate a tourism workforce that is resilient, innovative, and capable of meeting the evolving demands of a dynamic global industry.

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