

ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PROGRAM OBJECTIVES IN HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CEBU

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Abstract

The alignment between academic program objectives and industry demands is critical in producing competent, job-ready graduates in hospitality management. This quantitative study assessed the effectiveness of the College of Hospitality Management (CHM) Program Objectives at the University of Cebu Main Campus for the Academic Year 2025-2026. Using a descriptive research design, data were collected from 160 fourth-year Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management students through a structured survey questionnaire measuring perceived effectiveness across 11 program outcome indicators. Results revealed an overall mean of 3.33 (SD = 0.28), interpreted as "Very Effective," indicating that students perceive the program as highly successful in achieving its stated objectives. The highest-rated outcome was preparation for management trainee roles (M = 3.49, "Very Effective"), while the lowest-rated was knowledge provision in gaming and sports activities (M = 2.87, "Moderately Effective"). Chi-square analysis revealed no significant relationships between respondents' age ($\chi^2 = 13.815$, $p > 0.05$) or gender ($\chi^2 = 5.346$, $p > 0.05$) and their perceptions of program effectiveness, suggesting uniform curriculum delivery across demographic groups. The findings demonstrate that the CHM program excels in developing core hospitality competencies and professional readiness but requires enhancement in specialized niche areas. Recommendations include curriculum refinement in gaming and sports management, strengthening of industry partnerships, and maintenance of high standards in core operational areas to ensure continued alignment with evolving industry demands.

Keywords: program effectiveness, hospitality management education, curriculum evaluation, student perceptions, University of Cebu, Philippines

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Hospitality management education has evolved significantly in response to the rapid growth and diversification of the global hospitality industry. As one of the fastest-growing sectors worldwide, hospitality relies fundamentally on well-trained individuals to deliver quality services (Baum, 2019). Higher education institutions bear the critical responsibility of equipping students with the knowledge, skills, and competencies required for successful careers in this dynamic field. The University of Cebu Main Campus, through its College of Hospitality Management (CHM), has positioned itself as a leading provider of hospitality education in the Visayas region, offering comprehensive programs designed to produce industry-ready graduates.

The alignment between academic curricula and industry demands has emerged as a central concern in hospitality education research. Narvios, Quiñones, and Gabuya (2023) emphasized that program evaluations serve as essential bases for curriculum enhancement, noting that students must develop flexibility to cope with technological advances and evolving industry practices. Similarly, Igbojekwe and Anuñobi (2020) characterized hospitality education as a "multidisciplinary field" that integrates perspectives from various disciplines to address specific areas of application and practice within the hospitality sector. This multidisciplinary nature necessitates specialized programs through which students can acquire the diverse skills required for industry success.

Practical learning experiences constitute a vital component of effective hospitality education. Internships, work experience programs, fieldwork, and training in real job scenarios enable students to apply theoretical knowledge to practical contexts (Ko & Tsai, 2025). At the CHM, these experiential learning opportunities are crucial for achieving program objectives, ensuring that students acquire the essential skills, knowledge, and professional demeanor required in the hospitality industry. The integration of practical components with theoretical instruction distinguishes high-performing programs and contributes significantly to graduate employability (Wang & Tsai, 2014).

1.2 Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in multiple theoretical perspectives that inform understanding of program effectiveness in higher education. The Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSA) framework provides a foundational lens for examining how academic programs prepare students for professional practice. According to this framework, effective curricula must develop not only declarative knowledge (knowing what) but also procedural knowledge (knowing how) and the abilities to apply both in workplace contexts. The KSA framework aligns with industry expectations that graduates possess both technical competencies and transferable skills applicable across various hospitality settings.

Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977, as cited in Firmansyah & Saepuloh, 2022) contributes to understanding how students acquire professional behaviors through observation and imitation. In academic settings, faculty members serve as role models whose actions and attitudes influence student development of professional norms and ethical standards (Quiñal Jr., Sumicad, & Geraldizo-Pabriga, 2024). Usher and Schunk (2017) emphasized that social cognitive theory addresses individuals' capacity for self-observation, self-judgment, and self-reaction—processes central to professional development in hospitality education.

Dewey's (2022) experiential learning theory reinforces the importance of practical engagement in educational contexts. Learning occurs through the transformation of experience, with knowledge creation emerging when content meets authentic practice (Shetty & SK, 2020). This perspective underscores the value of simulations, internships, and hands-on training in hospitality programs, as these experiences bridge the gap between didactic instruction and real-world application (Quinn, 2007).

Baumeister's (2016) general motivation theory contributes to understanding the challenges and obstacles that motivate individual growth. In hospitality management programs, challenges may include maintaining balance between theoretical and practical learning, while obstacles may involve insufficient industry partnerships or outdated curricula. Assessing how effectively program objectives address these challenges is central to evaluating overall program effectiveness.

1.3 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework guiding this study posits that program effectiveness is a multidimensional construct influenced by curriculum design, instructional quality, experiential learning opportunities, and alignment with industry standards. Student perceptions of effectiveness serve as valuable indicators of how well program objectives translate into tangible learning outcomes and professional preparedness. These perceptions may vary across demographic groups, though previous research suggests that program quality often overrides individual differences in assessment (Yu, Shek, & Zhu, 2019).

1.4 Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to assess the effectiveness of the College of Hospitality Management Program Objectives at the University of Cebu Main Campus for the Academic Year 2025-2026. The findings served as a basis for developing recommendations to enhance the CHM program's curriculum and service performance.

Specifically, this research sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of age and gender?
2. What is the level of effectiveness of the Hospitality Management Program Objectives as perceived by students?
3. Is there a significant relationship between respondents' demographic profile and their perception of program effectiveness?
4. Based on the findings, what recommendations may be proposed to enhance program effectiveness?

1.5 Null Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance:

H₀: There is no significant relationship between respondents' demographic profile (age and gender) and their perception of the level of effectiveness of the Hospitality Management Program Objectives.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study holds significance for multiple stakeholders. **Students** will gain valuable insights into how program objectives align with their learning experiences, empowering them to navigate their academic journeys more effectively and make informed career decisions. **The College of Hospitality Management** will receive evidence-based recommendations for curriculum enhancement and service improvement. **Faculty members** will obtain insights for reflection and professional development, enabling them to adjust teaching approaches to better meet student needs and industry demands. **The University of Cebu** will benefit from findings that support continuous quality improvement and institutional effectiveness. **Future researchers** will find this study a valuable reference for comparative investigations and theoretical development in hospitality education.

2. Research Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive research design to assess the effectiveness of CHM Program Objectives. Descriptive research aims to systematically observe, describe, and document aspects of a situation as they naturally occur (Polit & Beck, 2019). This design was appropriate for characterizing student perceptions of program effectiveness and examining relationships between demographic variables and those perceptions without manipulating conditions.

2.2 Research Environment

The study was conducted at the College of Hospitality Management, University of Cebu Main Campus, located in Sanciango Street, Cebu City, Philippines. Founded in 1964, the university offers comprehensive educational programs from pre-school to postgraduate levels. The CHM provides state-of-the-art facilities including kitchen laboratories, front office simulation rooms, and other practical training areas that supplement academic instruction. The program is designed to equip students with the values, practical skills, and theoretical knowledge necessary for employment in the hospitality and tourism sectors.

2.3 Research Respondents

Respondents comprised 160 fourth-year Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management students enrolled during the Academic Year 2025-2026. Purposive sampling was employed to select participants from the fourth-year level, as these students possessed the most extensive experience with the curriculum, having completed their freshman, sophomore, and junior years. This positioning enabled them to provide comprehensive assessments of how well the program prepared them for professional practice.

2.4 Research Instrument

Data were collected using a structured survey questionnaire administered both in person and via email. The instrument consisted of two sections:

Section 1: Demographic Profile gathered information on respondents' age and gender.

Section 2: Curriculum Effectiveness Assessment measured student perceptions of program effectiveness across 11 indicators representing CHM program outcomes. Items addressed core hospitality competencies including food production, accommodation and front office services, food and beverage service, tourism planning, hospitality business planning, event management, leisure and recreation services, gaming and sports activities, transportation and travel services, tour operations management, and management trainee preparation.

Responses were recorded using a four-point Likert scale: 4 = Highly Effective, 3 = Moderately Effective, 2 = Less Effective, 1 = Not Effective. The instrument underwent validation by research advisers to ensure content validity and clarity.

2.5 Data Gathering Procedures

The research procedures followed a systematic protocol. Phase 1 involved submitting a formal letter requesting permission to conduct the study to the Dean of the College of Hospitality Management. Upon approval, Phase 2 commenced with instrument creation using Google Forms and distribution to respondents through Facebook, email, and face-to-face administration. Phase 3 involved data retrieval and analysis using appropriate statistical tools.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical research principles as guided by the University of Cebu Ethics Review Board. Respondents were provided with informed consent forms in both English and Cebuano, ensuring comprehension of voluntary participation, right to withdraw without penalty, and confidentiality of responses. All data were anonymized and stored securely with access limited to the research team.

2.7 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Frequency counts and percentages described the demographic profile. Weighted means were calculated to determine the level of effectiveness for each program outcome indicator, interpreted using the following scale: 3.26-4.00 = Very Effective, 2.51-3.25 = Effective, 1.76-2.50 = Ineffective, and 1.00-1.75 = Not Effective. Chi-square tests examined relationships between demographic variables (age and gender) and perception levels, with significance set at $p < 0.05$.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the 160 respondents.

Table 1: Profile of Respondents (N = 160)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	21 years	36	22.50%
	22 years	56	35.00%
	23 years	36	22.50%
	24 years	15	9.38%

	25-29 years	17	10.63%
Gender	Male	74	46.25%
	Female	86	53.75%

The largest age group among respondents was 22 years old (35.00%), followed by 21-year-olds and 23-year-olds, each at 22.50%. This concentration in the 21-23 age bracket indicates that respondents were predominantly young adults nearing completion of their academic program. The 24-year-olds (9.38%) and 25-29 age group (10.63%) comprised smaller proportions. Regarding gender distribution, female respondents slightly dominated the sample (53.75%) compared to males (46.25%), reflecting the typical demographic profile of hospitality management programs in the Philippines.

These findings align with Ko and Tsai's (2025) observation that effective hospitality programs, as perceived by students, successfully integrate practical, experiential learning components into the core curriculum. Students in younger demographics seeking job readiness tend to value these components highly, viewing them as critical for achieving program objectives related to professional competence and career preparedness.

3.2 Level of Effectiveness of Hospitality Management Program Objectives

Table 2 presents the mean ratings for each program outcome indicator, rank-ordered from highest to lowest.

Table 2: Level of Effectiveness of Hospitality Management Program Objectives

Rank	Indicator	Mean	Description
1	In preparing me to become an effective management trainee in the industry	3.49	Very Effective
2	In providing me with the necessary skills in food production	3.44	Very Effective
3	In helping me understand transportation and travel services	3.42	Very Effective
4	In developing my skills in planning for hospitality businesses	3.37	Very Effective
4	In giving me insights into managing tour operations	3.37	Very Effective
6	In training me well in accommodation and on front office services	3.35	Very Effective
6	In preparing me to plan and manage events	3.35	Very Effective
8	In enhancing my skills in food and beverage service	3.34	Very Effective
9	In helping me understand tourism planning	3.31	Very Effective
10	In teaching me about leisure and recreation services	3.29	Very Effective
11	In providing knowledge in gaming and sports activities	2.87	Moderately Effective
	Overall Mean	3.33	Very Effective

The overall mean of 3.33, interpreted as "Very Effective," indicates that students perceive the CHM program as highly successful in achieving its stated objectives. This finding suggests that the curriculum effectively addresses the majority of intended learning outcomes and prepares students for professional practice in the hospitality industry.

Highest-Rated Indicators

The indicator "In preparing me to become an effective management trainee in the industry" received the highest mean rating of 3.49 ("Very Effective"). This finding highlights the program's strength in instilling professional readiness and the attitudes required for entry-level management positions—a critical outcome for a career-focused degree. Students recognize that the program successfully develops the foundational management competencies necessary for career advancement in the hospitality sector.

This result aligns with Wang and Tsai's (2014) assertion that modern hospitality management programs are increasingly measured by the tangible career preparedness of their graduates. The emphasis on developing soft skills, professional attitudes, and experiential learning pathways distinguishes high-performing programs and reflects alignment between program objectives and industry demands for immediately deployable graduates.

Other highly rated indicators included skills in food production ($M = 3.44$), understanding transportation and travel services ($M = 3.42$), developing hospitality business planning skills ($M = 3.37$), and insights into managing tour

operations ($M = 3.37$). These ratings demonstrate that the program excels in delivering core operational competencies essential for hospitality practice.

Lowest-Rated Indicators

The indicator "In providing knowledge in gaming and sports activities" received the lowest mean rating of 2.87 ("Moderately Effective"). While still within the effective range, this rating suggests that the program's coverage of specialized knowledge in gaming and sports activities may require enhancement to meet the full spectrum of industry demands or student expectations.

This finding is consistent with Hurd, Barcelona, and Zimmerman's (2023) observation that niche or highly specialized areas in hospitality curricula frequently receive lower perceived effectiveness ratings. Such gaps often occur because specialized objectives rely on less regularly accessed facilities, faculty with particular expertise, or theoretical delivery methods that lack the practical immersion characterizing core hospitality courses. The relatively lower rating for leisure and recreation services ($M = 3.29$), while still "Very Effective," may similarly reflect this pattern.

3.3 Relationship Between Profile and Perceptions

Table 3 presents the chi-square analysis examining relationships between demographic variables and perceptions of program effectiveness.

Table 3: Relationship Between Respondents' Profile and Perceived Program Effectiveness

Variable	df	Computed Value	Critical Value	Decision	Interpretation
Age	12	13.815	21.026	Failed to Reject H_0	Not Significant
Gender	3	5.346	7.815	Failed to Reject H_0	Not Significant

The analysis revealed no significant relationships between either age ($\chi^2 = 13.815$, $p > 0.05$) or gender ($\chi^2 = 5.346$, $p > 0.05$) and perceptions of program effectiveness. Both computed values were less than their respective critical values, leading to failure to reject the null hypothesis. These findings indicate that age and gender do not significantly influence how students perceive the effectiveness of program objectives.

The absence of significant relationships suggests that perceptions of program effectiveness are uniformly shared across demographic groups. This uniformity implies that the program delivers a consistent, standardized educational experience where the quality of instruction, relevance of practical components, and clarity of learning outcomes override individual demographic differences in assessment.

These findings align with Alexakis and Jiang's (2019) observation that perceptions of curriculum effectiveness in hospitality management are primarily driven by instructional quality and practical component relevance rather than individual demographic factors. When programs successfully align objectives with tangible career skills, positive perceptions are equally shared by all students regardless of personal profile. Similarly, Yu, Shek, and Zhu (2019) found that the lack of significant relationships between student demographics and perceived effectiveness of core learning objectives is common in higher education assessment, suggesting that institutional quality overrides individual differences.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

4.1 Conclusion

This study provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of the College of Hospitality Management Program Objectives at the University of Cebu Main Campus. Based on the findings, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. Fourth-year Hospitality Management students at the University of Cebu Main Campus are predominantly 22 years old (35.00%) and female (53.75%), reflecting the typical demographic profile of hospitality programs in the Philippines.
2. The CHM program demonstrates high overall effectiveness ($M = 3.33$, "Very Effective") in achieving its stated objectives, successfully preparing students for professional practice in the hospitality industry.

3. The program excels particularly in preparing students for management trainee roles ($M = 3.49$) and developing core operational competencies including food production, transportation and travel services, hospitality business planning, and tour operations management.
4. A specific area requiring enhancement is the provision of knowledge in gaming and sports activities ($M = 2.87$, "Moderately Effective"), suggesting that specialized niche areas may need curriculum refinement to meet industry demands and student expectations fully.
5. The absence of significant relationships between demographic variables (age and gender) and perceptions of program effectiveness indicates that the program delivers a consistent, standardized educational experience where instructional quality overrides individual differences in assessment.

These findings collectively suggest that the CHM program generally delivers a high-quality, career-focused education to its students. The program's strengths in core operational areas and management trainee preparation position graduates well for entry-level positions and career advancement. However, addressing the identified gap in specialized knowledge areas would further enhance program effectiveness and maintain competitive advantage in the dynamic hospitality sector.

4.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed:

For Curriculum Enhancement:

1. **Strengthen specialized knowledge areas:** The program should improve delivery of knowledge in gaming and sports activities, as this indicator received the lowest rating. Implementation strategies include reviewing the current tourism planning syllabus to embed a core course on sports event bidding and facility assessment, providing specialized training or hiring faculty with expertise in these niche fields, and integrating practical case studies or site visits to facilities specializing in these areas (e.g., resorts with sports complexes, major stadiums, and event management firms specializing in large-scale tournaments).
2. **Enhance coverage of leisure and recreation services:** While still rated "Very Effective" ($M = 3.29$), this area could benefit from strengthening to match the high ratings of core operational areas. Regular curriculum reviews should ensure content remains current with industry trends and practices.

For Professional Readiness Initiatives:

3. **Formalize management trainee pathways:** Given the program's excellence in preparing "effective management trainees" (the highest-rated indicator), additional investment in structured internship programs, mentorships with industry leaders, and professional soft skills workshops will reinforce this strength and maximize graduate employability.
4. **Strengthen industry partnerships:** The program should cultivate stronger relationships with hospitality industry partners to ensure curriculum alignment with employer expectations and provide students with authentic learning experiences. Regular industry advisory board meetings can facilitate ongoing dialogue about evolving skill requirements.

For Core Program Maintenance:

5. **Maintain high standards in core operational areas:** The program should continue its strong performance in food production, accommodation and front office services, food and beverage service, and transportation and travel services. Active adoption of current industry trends and practices, particularly those supported by technology, will ensure graduates remain competitive in the job market.
6. **Regular curriculum auditing:** Utilize the finding of uniform assessment across demographic groups to ensure consistent and equitable learning experiences across all cohorts. Regular auditing of course content and instructor performance should maintain the high quality of instruction and professional training that override individual differences in perceived success.

For Future Research:

7. **Expand stakeholder perspectives:** Future studies should include faculty, industry partners, and alumni perspectives to provide a comprehensive evaluation of program effectiveness. Triangulating multiple stakeholder views would enrich understanding of program strengths and areas for improvement.

8. **Conduct longitudinal research:** Tracking graduate career outcomes over time would provide objective evidence of program effectiveness beyond student perceptions. Employment rates, career progression, and employer satisfaction surveys could supplement perceptual data.
9. **Explore specialized area development:** In-depth investigation of gaming and sports activities education in hospitality programs could identify best practices for curriculum design in niche areas.
10. **Cross-institutional comparisons:** Comparative studies across multiple hospitality programs in the Philippines and internationally would identify benchmark practices and contribute to theoretical development in hospitality education.

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