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PREFERRED COMPETENCIES FOR TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY GRADUATES': EVIDENCE FROM TRACER STUDIES (2018-2020)

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Abstract: The objectives of this study to analyze multi cohort tracer studies from tourism and hospitality management graduates' employability, competencies, and job-specific skills. This study also investigates on the fundamental skills and competencies preferred by the tourism and hospitality management graduates' relevant with the industry need and to determine competencies that affecting graduate's employability. The data was obtained from 1,694 tourism and hospitality graduates who has filled online tracer study surveys between 2018 and 2020. The result showed that fundamental competencies and functional competencies constitute the critical skills required in future employment for tourism and hospitality graduates. This study also suggested that preferred graduates' job competencies for the tourism and hospitality sectors can be achieved by integrating stakeholders' collaboration strategies such as internship program, industry-related certification program. In the context of learning experiences development for students, this study also found that tracer studies play a key role as the initial stage for developing a new higher education curriculum relevance to the course subject areas especially for tourism and hospitality management programs. This study per se is significant to provide a better understanding of vocational education and training (VET), especially in tourism and hospitality higher education sector from their graduates' perspective.

Key Word: *Competencies, Job Skills, Tourism and Hospitality, Tracer Study, Vocational Education and Training.*

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis tracer studi multi cohort dari kemampuan kerja, kompetensi, dan keterampilan spesifik pekerjaan lulusan manajemen pariwisata dan perhotelan. Penelitian ini juga mengkaji keterampilan dan kompetensi dasar yang disukai lulusan manajemen pariwisata dan perhotelan yang relevan dengan kebutuhan industri serta untuk menentukan kompetensi yang mempengaruhi kemampuan kerja para lulusan. Data diperoleh dari 1.694 mahasiswa lulusan pariwisata dan perhotelan di Indonesia yang telah mengisi survei tracer study tahun 2018 hingga 2020. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kompetensi dasar, kompetensi fungsional, dan kompetensi profesional merupakan keterampilan penting yang dibutuhkan dalam pekerjaan bagi lulusan pariwisata dan perhotelan di masa depan. Hasil studi ini juga menyarankan agar kompetensi pekerjaan yang diutamakan untuk lulusan di sektor pariwisata dan perhotelan dapat dicapai dengan mengintegrasikan strategi kolaborasi dari para pemangku kepentingan antara lain program magang, program sertifikasi terkait industri. Selain itu dan dalam konteks pengembangan program belajar bagi siswa, studi ini juga menemukan bahwa tracer studi berperan peranan penting sebagai tahap awal pengembangan kurikulum pendidikan tinggi baru yang relevan dengan bidang studi mata kuliah khususnya untuk program manajemen pariwisata dan perhotelan. Studi ini sendiri penting untuk memberikan pemahaman yang lebih baik tentang pelatihan dan pendidikan kejuruan (VET), terutama di sektor pendidikan tinggi pariwisata dan perhotelan dari perspektif para lulusannya.

Kata Kunci: *Kompetensi, Keterampilan Kerja, Pariwisata dan Perhotelan, Tracer Study, Pelatihan dan Pendidikan Kejuruan.*

1. Introduction

The development of the tourism industry has provided job opportunities and welfare for tourism and hospitality sector workers (Banjarnahor et al., 2021). However, Madera et al. (2017) has argued that one of the weak points of national and regional tourism development lies in the limited quality and quantity of human resources in business actors, industry, and government. Hence, vocational education and training (VET) of human resources in tourism and hospitality are critical to the success of the tourist sector and hence the global economy (Deaconu et al., 2018). According to Yiu and Law (2012) tourism and hospitality management programs offer a mass of professionally trained students ranging from hotels, restaurants, travel agencies, and tourism and hospitality related business fields.

With the growing of tourism industry, the demand for formal tourism and hospitality education programs has been gradually developed, and it is suggested that productivity and welfare of workers are involved by developing capacity and capability through relevant education and training programs (Cuffy et al., 2012; Haryana, 2020). The journey of tourism hospitality education in Indonesia has been establishing since 1962 by the launching of national tourism academy (Akademi Pariwisata Nasional) later known as Bandung Institute of Tourism (STP Bandung) as the government vocational education program, which only offer diploma program (Oktadiana & Chon, 2017). This establishment was then followed by other institutions both public and private sectors to deliver tourism and hospitality education. At the moment, there are about thirty-five higher institutions with tourism study at the bachelor level in Indonesia (Krisnawati et al., 2020; Oktadiana & Chon, 2019). Moreover, improving the quality of human resources and revitalizing the VET sector is one of the policies of the Ministry of Education and Culture. There is an urgent need to develop information on higher education outcomes and a monitoring system to measure the performance of VET in Indonesia which focuses on four areas, one of which is the creative economy and hospitality (Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Vokasi, 2020).

Tourism and hospitality as one of the sectors in VET, implements a learning process that prepares students to enter the workforce after completing their studies. The demand for professionals workers in tourism and hospitality sectors who has relevant technical competencies has become one of the critical factors for the successful operation in these sectors (Bharwani & Jauhari, 2013). However, there seems to be a widening gap between what employers' expectation and what tourism and hospitality education has been provide (Gursoy et al., 2012). The current reality for VET pathways are the quality of educational services has

not been fully supported by adequate learning facilities, infrastructure, quality of the educators, adequacy of internships, and limited capacity for competency certification (Helmy, 2021).

The employability of tourism and hospitality graduates depends on job competencies, job competencies can be defined as the ability of an employee to perform a job and is often perceived from the employers' perspective (Baum, 2002; Wang & Tsai, 2014). Further explained by Wang and Tsai (2014), personal competency and job competency are crucial for the tourism and hospitality student's employability. Personal competency contains career planning and development skills, as well as core skills. Furthermore, the study suggested that the ability to work from hospitality graduates can be enhanced by developing a competency into two central clusters which are fundamental competency and functional competency. The functional competencies are more related to the hard skill of the graduates that more visible for the industry. However, the fundamental competency is the central aspect of graduates' career planning and development skills (Sisson & Adams, 2013). Fundamental competency, which composes of work attitude and personal attributes, is a significant attribute for staffs. Level-specific competency refers to the leadership competency for administrators, whereas professional competency is needed to accomplish a task, consisting of professional management and technical skills.

The role of higher education institutions in the field of tourism and hospitality management is to forming a good quality of graduates by providing instruction in accordance with the personal character of competency and job competency relevance to the sector (Wang & Tsai, 2014). In addition, learning has not encouraged the mastery of soft skills that support work, such as mastery of foreign languages, as well as critical thinking, analysis, innovation, leadership, negotiation, and teamwork skills. Therefore, higher education are required to be able to design and implement innovative learning processes so that students can achieve learning outcomes through optimal and relevant aspects of attitudes, knowledge and skills (Simatupang & Yuhertiana, 2021).

Higher education can use tracer study to gain relevant and up-to-date information about achievements in learning outcomes, graduates competences, and satisfaction from stakeholders (Kardoyo & Nurkhin, 2016). The definition of tracer study is a standardized survey of graduates of higher education institutions that is carried out some time after the graduates leave the higher education institution, tracer study is conducted at least 1 (one) year after graduation (Schomburg, 2003). Currently, tracer study has been known among managers of higher education institutions in both developed and developing countries. In developed countries, especially Europe, tracer study has been carried out with a more systematic, standardized, and

regular mechanism. Moreover, tracer studies can provide information to evaluate higher education outcomes and can then be used to improve and guarantee the quality of the higher education institution concerned (Schomburg, 2016).

In academic literatures, tracer studies conducted in higher education to monitoring for curriculum feedback (Duke & Reese, 1995), analyze graduates satisfaction as well as user satisfaction (industry) towards graduates competencies (Kardoyo & Nurkhin, 2016), relevant skills for the employment (De Castro, 2017), quality assurance (Gonzales et al., 2019). Recently, some scholar also found that tracer study provide valuable information about the relationship between higher education and industry, by assessing the graduate's absorption process for employability such as the duration of work search, horizontal alignment and vertical alignment of the learning outcomes during study, and job position of graduates in the industry (Albina & Sumagaysay, 2020; Heriyadi, 2021).

In the context of Indonesian higher education, The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology in 2011 has developed a national career centre and tracer study development system to measure the higher education performance (Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Vokasi, 2020). Moreover, information obtained from tracer studies is very useful for various evaluations of higher education, quality assurance, higher education accreditation, and most importantly as an indicator for the performance of higher (Kepmendikbud RI No.754/P/2020). STP Bandung as one of the leading tourism and hospitality higher education institution in Indonesia held a tracer study or graduate feedback. The objective of the tracer study are to measure the implementation of the international standard of tourism and hospitality graduates, and to improve the quality of tourism and hospitality education (Pusat Penjaminan Mutu, 2020). Moreover, tracer study has helps STP Bandung in capturing information from graduates about learning process and conformity with competency requirements in tourism and hospitality working environment and to improve the quality of vocational education and training in tourism and hospitality sectors. This activity is also a form of STP Bandung commitment to implementing the National Higher Education Standards (SNPT), which requires higher education conducting tracer study consistently every year.

Based on the previous mentioned background, thus, the objectives of this study are triplicate. First, profiling tourism and hospitality graduates from three years graduate cohort. Second, this study identifies the relevance's of learning methods and contribution of universities in mastering competencies. Third, investigates critical skills and mapping employability of tourism and hospitality graduates based on fundamental and functional competencies framework (Wang & Tsai, 2014).

2. Methods

Mix methods research (MMR) approach has been used for this study. According to Cohen et al. (2018) mixed method research involves data collection both quantitative and qualitative in a single study or series of study to address a particular phenomenon and provides a better understanding of research problems. Quantitative approach in this study using online surveys. Second, the qualitative method, by using content analysis on the graduates' concrete suggestions related to learning experiences, critical skills, facilities for mapping tourism and hospitality graduates' employability and competencies framework (Wang & Tsai, 2014).

The process of data collection consists of seven stages (Figure 1). The first step is designing the questionnaire, the questionnaire used in this study was adapted from seventeen standard criteria developed by National Accreditation Board of Higher Education (PD-DIKTI). The questionnaires were built with following five scale interpretations of means: (1.00-1.50: Not at all; 1.51-2.50: Very Limited; 2.51-3.50: Limited; 3.51-4.50: To Some Extent; 4.51-5.00: To a Great Extent). Second collecting and verified graduate data, tracer study team consist of fourteen verifiers consists of fresh graduates or final year students from each study program in STP Bandung. Third preparing online questionnaire by using Online-QTAFI (Question Table and Figure) software developed with assistance from career and development center University of Indonesia (CDC-UI). QTAFI software was used to develop the questionnaire which is consist of four features: administration, surveys, questionnaires, and data to support the tracer study (Arutyunyants, 2015).

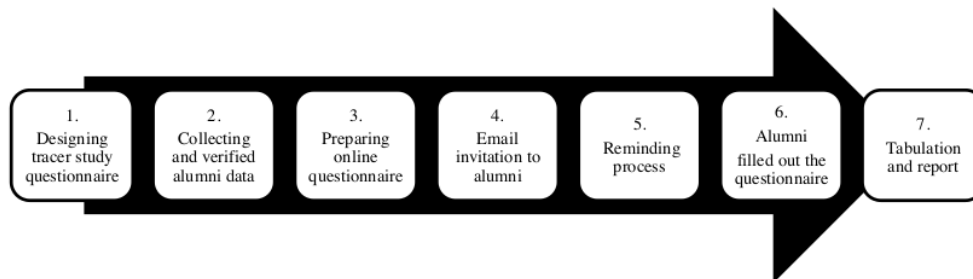


Figure 1. Data Collection Process
Source: (Pusat Penjaminan Mutu, 2020)

The questionnaires then administered by the STP Bandung tracer study team; the data obtained from the longitudinal tracer studies from year 2018 until 2020. The fourth step is invitation for graduate to participate in the tracer study, verifiers ensure that an active email address and phone number can be contacted. Tracer study team simultaneously emailed to each verified graduate to participate the surveys. Fifth, after the official notification process, communication via email and telephone was conducted to remind graduate who had not opened

the questionnaire link send to their email. This activity was carried out three times by a team consist of six reminders. In the process of recalling, the main task of the reminder is to remind respondents of the importance of filling out the tracer study questionnaire for the STP Bandung. The participation of this study is voluntary basis hence, reminders are prohibited from coercing respondents to fill out the questionnaires. The objectives of the online surveys are to profiling tourism and hospitality graduates (i.e., demographic, employment characteristics), to identifies the relevance's of learning methods and contribution of vocational education and training in mastering student competencies that will help to answer first and second objectives for this study.

3. Findings and Discussion

In this section, we present the results findings, followed by interpretation of the tracer study outcomes. The findings divided into the following: (i) profiling tourism and hospitality graduates between 2018 and 2020 including demographic characteristics, employment status, and nature of work, (ii) perceptions of graduates in learning method and assessment of teaching and learning activities towards their employability, (iii) concrete suggestions on how to better prepare graduates for the workforce. The total potential respondents for this study are 1954 graduates. However, only 86.7% graduate are responses the invitation and filled the tracer study questionnaires (Table 1). The response rate still considered satisfactory, compared with previous studies on graduate tracer study for example: 54% (Awang Ngah et al., 2004); 26.4% (Landrum et al., 2010); and 41% (De Castro, 2017).

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Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Graduates

Tracer Study Report (Year)	Number of graduates	Number of respondents	Response rate (%)
2018	689	492	71.41%
2019	637	620	97.33%
2020	628	582	92.68%
Total	1954	1694	86.69%

Sources: (Pusat Penjaminan Mutu, 2018, 2019, 2020)

The summary data for the employment status of the STP Bandung graduates who are participating in the tracer study can be seen from Table 2 and Table 3. Most of the graduates already have a full-time job (75.33%) and the small number working as a part-time worker (4.33%). Some of them has self-employed or starting their own business (11.67%), this number is above STP Bandung target, that 10% of their graduates becoming an entrepreneur. While

there is still graduates unemployed (8.67%) because of various reasons such as still looking for the job, family matters, continuing professional or postgraduates' study, and others reasons that not being mention by the respondents.

The distributions for type of sectors that graduate join as full time and part-time worker, where most of the graduates are working in hospitality and tourism-related industry with majority (76.4%) work in food and beverages and lodging sector (i.e., restaurant, café, catering, hotel, resort, and others type of accommodation companies). While the rest of graduates (24.6%) working for tour and travel, tourism attraction, leisure and recreation, destination management organization (DMO), meeting, incentive, convention and exhibition (MICE), transportation (airlines, train, land transport), and tourism consultant.

Table 2. Employment Status of STPB Graduates (n=1694)

Employment Status	%
Full time	75.33 %
Part-time	4.33 %
Self-Employed*	11.67 %
Unemployed	8.67 %

*Note: Include graduates that start their own business.

Sources: (Pusat Penjaminan Mutu, 2018, 2019, 2020)

Table 3. Distributions of Graduates Nature of Work in Tourism, Travel and Hospitality related sectors (n=1694)

Nature of Work	Rank	%
Food & Beverages	1	40.7%
Lodging	2	35.7%
Tour and Travel	3	8.3%
Tourism Attraction, Leisure and Recreation	4	4.3%
Destination Management Organization	5	3.3%
Meeting, Incentive, Convention and Exhibition (MICE)	5	3.3%
Transportation (airlines, train, land transport)	6	2.3%
Tourism Consultant	7	2.0%

Sources: (Pusat Penjaminan Mutu, 2018, 2019, 2020).

Table 4 present about graduates' perception related to the learning methods while study in STP Bandung. The majority of graduates think that learning through internships / field work is the most effective learning method during their studies, followed by the learning process in class theory (lecturing), practical activities carried out both on campus and off campus. In addition, learning activities are considered to help them in gaining the experience, knowledge and competencies needed in accordance with the fields they study. Those activities are including research activities (individual, in groups and with faculty member), guest lecturer,

seminars, workshops, and exhibition that invites practitioners from industry, policy makers, entrepreneurs, and successful alumni. In addition, other activities such as involvement in student organizations (i.e., student senate, student associations, extracurricular activities related to sports, art, music, and skill development such as barista clubs, culinary clubs) are considered to help them gain social learning experience during college. However, the graduates think that the experience to be involved in community activities is still lacking.

Table 4. Graduates Perceptions on the Learning Methods

Type of Learning Methods	Rank	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Internship	1	4.46	To some extent
Lecturing	2	4.29	To some extent
Practicum (Field trip, laboratory activities and demonstration)	3	4.28	To some extent
Research Project	4	4.19	To some extent
Guest lecture, Seminar, and Workshop	5	4.05	To some extent
Student organization	6	3.93	To some extent
Exhibition	7	3.74	To some extent
Extracurricular	8	3.62	To some extent
Community services	9	3.43	Limited

Note: Interpretations of means were based on the following scale 1.00-1.50: Not at all; 1.51-2.50: Very Limited; 2.51-3.50: Limited; 3.51-4.50: To Some Extent; 4.51-5.00: To a Great Extent.

Sources: (Pusat Penjaminan Mutu, 2018, 2019, 2020).

Table 5. Assessment of teaching and learning activities towards work

Skills	Rank	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Self-development	1	4.33	To some extent
Job performances	2	4.31	To some extent
Continuous learning on work	3	4.23	To some extent
Work-related values	4	4.22	To some extent
Career development	5	4.19	To some extent
Entrepreneurship	6	3.89	To some extent

Note: Interpretations of means were based on the following scale 1.00-1.50: Not at all; 1.51-2.50: Very Limited; 2.51-3.50: Limited; 3.51-4.50: To Some Extent; 4.51-5.00: To a Great Extent.

Sources: (Pusat Penjaminan Mutu, 2018, 2019, 2020)

Table 5. presents the benefits of the study program for the development of work-related skills for graduates. It can be seen that graduate's self-development in terms of knowledge and skills is seem rank the highest (4.33). In addition, graduates also mentioned that the ability to do work (4.31) are influenced by the teaching and learning process, including communication skills, presentation skill, research skill, report writing, and computer skills. Moreover, graduates also mentioned that continuous learning process (4.23) such as adaptation, working

under pressure, independency. In term of values held at work is also rate high (4.22) such as responsibility, tolerance, loyalty, integrity, initiative is a helpful part of the work. The graduates also think that the benefits of the college and the study program they choose are very helpful in their current career development process (4.19). In addition, learning in the field of entrepreneurship is felt to be influential in increasing their interest and ability to start a business after graduation. Overall, the contribution of STP Bandung in improving the ability to work is in a high condition (4.19) from the perspectives of their graduate.

Table 6. The Extent of Applicability of Graduates Competencies in Employment

Competencies	Rank	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Team Work	1	4.31	To Some Extent
Tolerance	2	4.29	To Some Extent
Knowledge and skill in your fields	3	4.29	To Some Extent
Responsibility	4	4.28	To Some Extent
Communication Skill	5	4.28	To Some Extent
Working Under Pressure	6	4.24	To Some Extent
Critical Thinking	7	4.23	To Some Extent
Problem Solving	8	4.23	To Some Extent
Adaptation	9	4.22	To Some Extent
Research ability	10	4.21	To Some Extent
Presentation Skill	11	4.21	To Some Extent
Loyalty	12	4.20	To Some Extent
Integrity	13	4.20	To Some Extent
Independency	14	4.17	To Some Extent
Leadership	15	4.15	To Some Extent
Analytical thinking	16	4.14	To Some Extent
General Knowledge	17	4.11	To Some Extent
Initiative	18	4.10	To Some Extent
Negotiation	19	4.07	To Some Extent
Time Management	20	4.07	To Some Extent
Learning Skill	21	4.05	To Some Extent
Report Writing	22	4.03	To Some Extent
Foreign Language ability	23	3.99	To Some Extent
Project Management	24	3.92	To Some Extent
Computer skill and Computer system application (i.e., Galileo, Micros, Fidelio)	25	3.85	To Some Extent

Sources: (Pusat Penjaminan Mutu, 2018, 2019, 2020).

Based on perceptions from graduates, twenty-five competencies applicable and indispensable in workplace (see Table 6). The top five are team work, tolerance, knowledge and skills that relevant with their working fields, responsibility, and communication skills. They feel that those competencies are found relevant and to some extent is high (4.15). In this case, the relationship between mastery of competencies by graduate and the contribution of

STP Bandung and relevant study program has helped graduate to master competencies needed in workplace. In the last section of questionnaire, graduate was asked an open question about their suggestions for teaching and learning activities in STP Bandung in relevance with professional competencies (Table 7).

Table 7. Example Respondents Statements on Relevancies of Teaching and Learning Experiences with Professional Competencies

Respondent Code	Professional Competencies	Method of teaching and learning	Respondent statement
TS012020 TS012019	Initiative Critical thinking Problem solving	Study case Research project Community services	<i>“Real case studies to hone analytical and problem-solving skills. Invite tourism industry players to work out answers to real problems in the field of company management. Critical thinking is also lacking, because they are used to following existing directions rather than trying to find out solutions for the problem”.</i>
TS092020	Teamwork	Field trip Research project	<i>“It is necessary to improve the provision of collaborative and competitive assignments to students through field trips and research activities. Increase intense tutoring activities with each student”.</i>
TS122020	Communication skill Foreign language ability Teamwork Analytical thinking	Lecturing Practicum	<i>“Focus on communication skills, argumentation, foreign languages, analysis, attitude, cooperation skills and disciplines of each study program”.</i>
TS162020	Computer skill and Computer system application,	Lecturing Practicum Internship	<i>“Using the opera system in the hotel or providing theoretical data for the system used in the hotel”.</i>
TS202020	Knowledge and skill in your fields Independency	Internship Practicum	<i>“Up-to-date learning that is appropriate to the job field. Experience from practice and job training, because practice gives confidence in work. So that they can be given the freedom to choose their specialization and the institution where they will conduct the internship”.</i>

Continued...

Table 7. Continued...

TS272020	Analytical thinking Report Writing	Practicum Research project Community service	<i>"Learning in line with conditions in the field and not just studying tourism in general, because tourism consulting services are in fact very much needed even during the COVID-19 pandemic".</i>
TS032019	Computer skill and Computer system application Knowledge and skill in your fields	Lecturing Practicum	<i>"Digital-based understanding and training such as digital marketing, including basic design learning in marketing courses, managing tourism websites, and tourism marketing content. digital analytics, SEO, SEM, User Interface & User Experience (UI/UX)".</i>
TS142019	Communication skill Foreign language ability	Student organizations Extracurricular	<i>"Encourage language student clubs, many students can speak foreign languages other than English but there is no forum for expression on campus".</i>
TS082018	Knowledge and skill in your fields Computer skill and Computer system application	Practicum Exhibition	<i>"Increasing the intensity of lecturers towards students in the field of practice to find out the development of soft skills and hard skills of students". "The ability to hard skills without reducing theoretical thinking in order to introduce the tourism industry, especially the field of travel in ticketing operations, event planning, and others".</i>
TS182018	Knowledge and skill in your fields	Lecturing Practicum Internship	<i>"Accounting learning curriculum is very useful when we become managers. Knowledges about inventory, stock taking, checking variance, etc. which are closely related to the rapidly growing retail industry".</i>

Sources: (Pusat Penjaminan Mutu, 2018, 2019, 2020).

Based on the responses from graduates related to important employability competencies during the learning process (Table 7), it can be seen that the main competencies can generally be categorized into hard skills, including knowledge and skills in your fields, computer skills and computer system application, communication skills including foreign language abilities, and report writing. While for the soft skills includes initiatives, critical thinking, problem solving, teamwork, analytical thinking, and independence. In addition, the graduates conveyed several teaching and learning methods that support the achievement of relevant competencies, most of them mentioned practicum, lecturing, and internship learning experiences are found very helpful. In addition, the graduate also said that learning methods such as research projects,

community services, field trips, case studies, and exhibitions were considered to be able to help them in learning certain skills and competencies. In addition, involvement in student organizations and extracurricular activities are found important in improving organizational skills and communication skills for the graduates. When referring the relation of employability and competencies of tourism and hospitality graduates, the relevant competencies found in this study can be categorized into two major groups, namely fundamental and personal competencies consisting of four categories of competencies, namely work attitudes (five competencies), personal attributes (six competencies), management skills (four competencies), and technical skills (five competencies) for the complete competencies list see Figure 2.

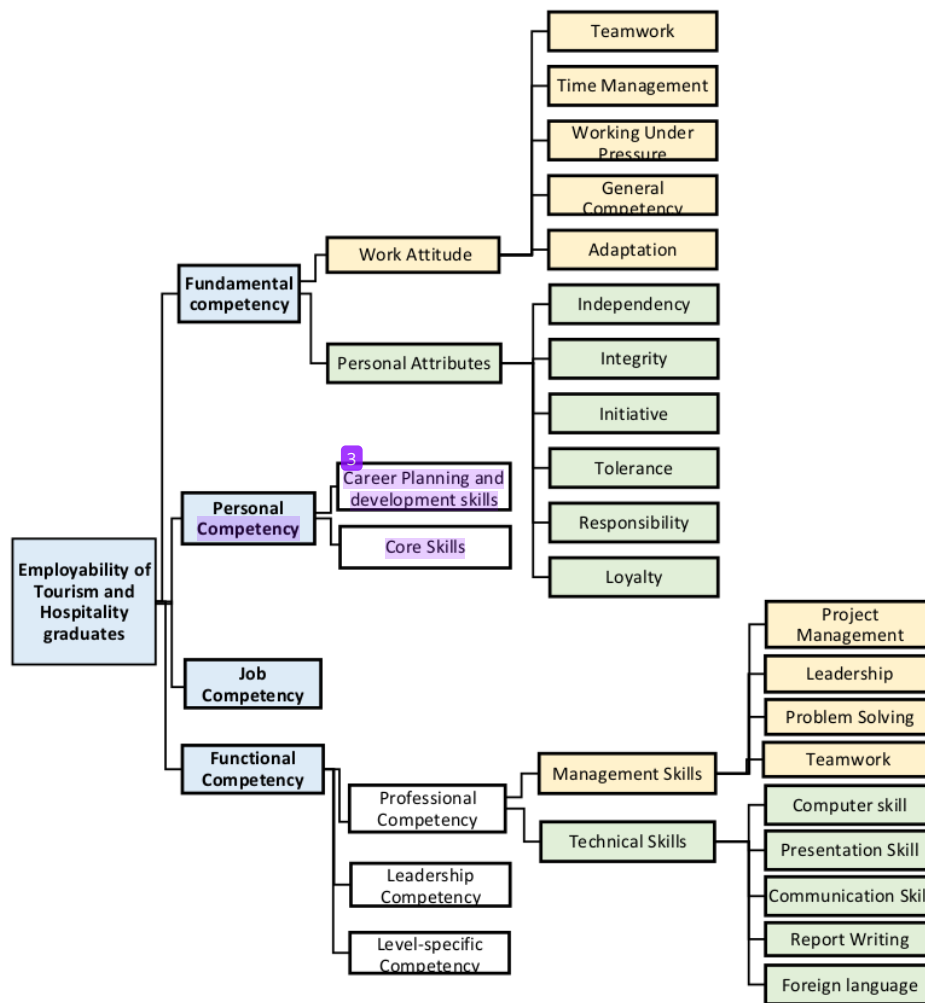


Figure 2. Employability and Competencies of Tourism and Hospitality Graduates'
Adapted from: (Wang & Tsai, 2014)

Discussion

Related to the four main competencies in the field of tourism and hospitality adapted from (Wang & Tsai, 2014) namely fundamental competencies, personal competencies, job competencies, and functional competencies. Based on the results of our study of tourism and hospitality graduates at STP Bandung between 2018 - 2020, it can be seen that the two main competencies, namely fundamental and functional, are the most important aspects in the process of teaching and learning activities (see Table 6 and Figure 2). Where for fundamental activities can be classified into the work attitude and personal attributes of the graduates which emphasize soft skills in employability, including teamwork, time management, working under pressure, adaptation, independence, integrity, initiative, tolerance, responsibility and loyalty. All of these aspects are supported by the general competency possessed by graduates in work related to their work.

Meanwhile, for functional competencies that are closely related to professional skills in the field of work, namely management skills which emphasize more on aspects of project management, leadership, ability to cooperate in teams and problem solving. Then technical skills related to the ability to execute work in related fields with the support of computer skills, presentation skills, communication skills, report writing and foreign language abilities. In addition to the two main competencies previously mentioned, personal competency aspects including career planning and development of core skills, and job competencies are part of the employability process for tourism and hospitality graduates. From the findings it is also found that graduates employability including both core employability and specific employability, graduates believe that the learning process need to be align with job competencies required by industry needs, therefore for the hospitality graduates should identify during curricular design. Previous researchers has mentioned that the expectations industries towards tourism and hospitality graduates, as was noted by Raybould and Wilkins (2005) tourism and hospitality student learning experience can be maximized by conducting industrial exposure on the industry placement or internship. They also explained that employability skills have been identified as the ability to acquire, maintain, and excel at a job which consist of nine generic skills including interpersonal communication, problem solving, analytical thinking, information management, teamwork, leadership, social networking, adaptability, and self-management. Where the interpersonal communication, problem solving and self-management skill have been regarded as the essential skills from the industry (Raybould & Wilkins, 2005).

Other researchers such as Zehrer and Mössenlechner (2009) are much more concerned with social, personal, activity- and action-oriented skills are much more vital when hiring

tourism students. Meanwhile, vocational skills and language skills are also very emphasized by the industry. However, some soft skills are required, such as interpersonal skills and organizational experiences. While Gursoy et al. (2012) has argued that some critical changes in the hospitality subject areas, where the top three essential skills for the hospitality graduates are leadership, internships or industry experience, and preparation for industry employment.

According to (Riggs & Hughey, 2011) one of the challenge for tourism and hospitality educators today is to ensure that the soft competencies are given equal or portion than hard competencies, even though hard competencies are often easier to be implemented and grades. Moreover, technical skills such as information technology skills and legal and regulatory requirements must be taught but should not take precedence over the soft competencies. It is imperative for the school to focus on the development of these skills among the students. Therefore, hospitality education should focus not only on cultivating technical skills but also on reinforcing competency development, motivating students to learn professional management skills and promoting their self-efficacy. Educators can play some significant roles by giving a bit of advice to teach management theory practically and to upgrade teaching techniques to maximize the effectiveness of school education.

Strengthening the capacity of tourism human resources is a key success factor for national and regional tourism development (Marais et al., 2017). However, there seems to be a widening gap between what employers' expectation and what tourism and hospitality education has been provide. Thus, collaboration between tourism and hospitality and industry is crucial to enhance the quality of education and ensure the competitiveness of human capital in the industry (Elsharnouby & Elbanna, 2021; Wang et al., 2010).

From the findings it shows that all the skills are applicable to some extent of their nature of work in tourism and hospitality sectors, internship program is the most influential learning method plays a pivotal role in the everyday task of the graduates (Raybould & Wilkins, 2005). Therefore, strengthen collaboration initiatives with industrial stakeholders such as internships, apprenticeship, graduate employment is useful. Hence, implementation of VET curriculum relevant with industrial needed are following the link and match policy (Disas, 2018; Verawardina et al., 2019). For Evaluation purposes, tourism and hospitality higher education should emphasize in fostering work attitude rather than focusing theoretical skills to pass the examination. Work attitude and personal attributes should be part of the student internalization as early as possible and incorporated into the work-related values.

Moreover, it is crucial that the competencies required by the industry need to compiled into the curriculum as to produce quality graduates, some of the suggestion is by involving

practitioners as visiting lecturers or tutors is another suggested strategy for enhancing the learning experience among graduates (Sigala & Baum, 2003). Proposed curriculum enhancement and program by involving stakeholders in curriculum planning and development will strengthen collaboration initiatives among academia and industry — some of the initiatives including internships, apprenticeship, practical training, graduate employment — moreover, suggestion on the promotion of the industry-related certification programs globally in the hospitality education.

The success of graduates in entering work is one indicator of learning outcomes and the relevance for the community. Higher education institutions are responsible not only for equipping graduates with certain competencies (learning outputs), but also for facilitating and bridging graduates to enter the workforce. In knowing the absorption, process, and position of graduates in several workplaces, higher education is expected to run an appropriate graduate tracer study program with the aim to prepare graduates according to the competencies needed in the workplaces as well as assisting government programs in mapping and aligning the needs of the job competencies obtained from the higher education. This are aligned with government programs under the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology initiatives to map and harmonize the needs of the industry with the competencies obtained from higher education program called *Kampus Merdeka, Merdeka Belajar* (Simatupang & Yuhertiana, 2021).

Collaboration and involvement of the stakeholders in a constructive manner including giving criticism, evaluation, and recommendations are expected to be able to improve the results of vocational education development (Akomaning et al., 2011). Moreover, re-examining the relationship from the perspectives of different stakeholders and balancing the interests of all parties for win-to-win cooperation are essential strategies to develop this matter. It is necessary for different stakeholders to have a consensus of common understanding of the expectations and outcomes of tourism and hospitality education. It is suggested that stakeholders' involvement in curriculum planning and development is pivotal because it has implications for a holistic tourism and hospitality education, the competencies required by the industry need to be compiled into the curriculum as to produce preferred graduates.

4. Conclusion

The current study attempts to examine tourism and hospitality preferred employability, competencies, and job-specific skills from multi years tracers' studies from one of the tourism and hospitality higher education institution in Bandung Indonesia. The study found that the

fundamental competencies, functional competencies and professional competencies constitute the necessary skills required in future employment. This study has a very important meaning for the development of vocational education and training (VET). First, this study has given more comprehensive information about tourism and hospitality graduate qualifications, competencies and job-specific skills required by industry. Tourism and hospitality program can be successfully preparing its graduates for industry employment, the ever-changing needs of this enormous industry must be reflected in the curriculum. Similarly, for the students to increase their employability, they must prioritize and excel their skills and competencies to best serve the needs of the industry.

Coordination of curriculum settings and industrial needs by improving standards and availability of appropriate courses, the quality of the curriculum structure has become a significant issue in the tourism and hospitality education. The Internship is the most crucial learning approach for underlying graduates. It is suggested that the internship program deserves more attention and should further investigate the effectiveness of an internship program in achieving student learning and career objectives, to optimize students' employability. Tracer study is also one of the requirements for complete accreditation by the National Accreditation Board for Higher Education (BAN-PT) and also the completeness of the self-evaluation documents required. The information obtained is very useful to improve the quality of education and especially in determining the direction of improvement and development of vocational study programs in the future. Furthermore, in an effort to strengthen the benefits obtained, the tracer study model used is the national standard model set by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology.

However, in terms of limitation, this study was carried out in vocational education and training (VET) in Indonesia. The future work could be conducted to utilize the questionnaire survey of this research to other nations and examine the great differences between Asian countries and Western countries. Moreover, as mentioned in the method, the secondary data was retrieved from tracer study reports of STP Bandung. Further analysis including the stakeholders such as faculty member, tourism and hospitality industrial partner, and government representative including Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology. Therefore, there is a need for further study to analyze the raw data to explore more significant information pertain to graduates' competence and employability.

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