

Exploring Employability Perceptions: A Phenomenological Study of Graduating Business Students

Cheryl A. Bancoro, Jaysone Christopher M. Bancoro*
Negros Oriental State University, Dumaguete City, Negros Oriental, Philippines

*Corresponding Author Email: jaysone0611@gmail.com

Date received: May 23, 2025

Date revised: June 12, 2025

Date accepted: July 7, 2025

Originality: 99%

Grammarly Score: 99%

Similarity: 1%

Recommended citation:

Bancoro, C., & Bancoro, J. C. (2025). Exploring employability perceptions: A phenomenological study of graduating business students. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 3(8), 245-253.

<https://doi.org/10.69569/jip.2025.445>

Abstract. Employability has emerged as a central concern in higher education systems worldwide, driven by globalization, technological advancements, and shifting labor market demands. This qualitative study explored the perceptions of employability among 15 fourth-year BSBA students at a state university in Dumaguete City, Philippines. Anchored on the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory, the research employed a phenomenological approach to capture students' lived experiences as they prepare to transition from academia to the workforce. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, then analyzed using thematic analysis. Findings revealed four key themes: (1) Perceived skill gaps and industry expectations; (2) Institutional support and resource limitations; (3) Socio-economic influences; and (4) Community networks as a double-edged sword. The study concludes that employability perceptions are shaped by an interplay of personal, institutional, and community resources, with significant implications for curriculum development, career services, and local policy. Recommendations include integrating digital skills training, extending industry immersion, and strengthening partnerships with local employers better to align educational outcomes with regional labor market needs.

Keywords: BSBA students; Dumaguete City; Employability; Phenomenology; Qualitative research.

1.0 Introduction

Employability is not just about what you know, but what you can do with what you know (Dr. John Dewar, Vice-Chancellor of La Trobe University). Employability has emerged as a central concern in higher education systems worldwide, driven by globalization, technological advancements, and shifting labor market demands. International organizations, such as the OECD and the World Economic Forum, have emphasized the importance of graduates possessing a combination of technical competencies and transferable skills, including critical thinking, digital literacy, and intercultural communication, to thrive in dynamic economies (Mainga et al., 2022). In Europe, employers are increasingly prioritizing innovation-driven skill sets, with studies highlighting mismatches between academic curricula and industry expectations in sectors such as fintech and sustainable business practices (South Asian Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities, 2024). Meanwhile, African nations face unique challenges where socio-economic disparities and infrastructural limitations shape graduate employability, emphasizing resilience and entrepreneurial adaptability as critical assets (Tagulwa et al., 2023). Across Asia, the rapid industrialization and rise of gig economies have prompted countries like India and Singapore to redesign their business education frameworks. However, persistent gaps in practical training and industry partnerships remain (Shrestha, 2023).

In the Americas, Brazil's focus on bridging urban-rural divides in employability reveals stark contrasts between metropolitan hubs and underserved regions, where access to internships and mentorship programs significantly influences student confidence (Alera & Codod, 2023). Australia's emphasis on work-integrated learning (WIL) models demonstrates measurable success in enhancing graduate outcomes; however, critics note an over-reliance on standardized metrics that overlook cultural diversity and Indigenous perspectives (Nieva, 2025). These global trends collectively underscore employability as a multifaceted construct shaped by geographic, economic, and cultural contexts.

Within Southeast Asia, the Philippines presents a compelling case study. As home to one of the world's most extensive business process outsourcing (BPO) industries, the country's labor market demands agility and customer-centric competencies (Alera & Codod, 2023). National studies reveal that while BSBA graduates exhibit strong theoretical knowledge, employers consistently report deficits in real-world problem-solving and proficiency with digital tools (Nieva, 2025). State universities, tasked with addressing these gaps, have implemented curricular reforms such as industry immersion programs and competency-based assessments (Shrestha, 2023). However, regional disparities persist: institutions in Metro Manila benefit from corporate partnerships and funding, whereas those in emerging educational hubs, such as Dumaguete City, a growing center for commerce in Central Visayas, face resource constraints and infrastructural challenges that hinder similar initiatives (Alera & Codod, 2023).

Dumaguete's unique position as a mid-sized city with a mix of agricultural, tourism, and service-sector economies offers a microcosm of broader employability challenges. Local industries prioritize adaptability due to seasonal fluctuations in tourism and evolving demands in retail and hospitality (Nieva, 2025). However, research on how BSBA students in this context perceive their readiness for these markets remains sparse. Existing Philippine studies predominantly focus on metropolitan areas or national-level data, neglecting regional nuances that shape educational outcomes (Alera & Codod, 2023). For instance, while Manila-based graduates cite access to networking events and multinational internships as critical to their employability, Dumaguete's students often rely on community-based enterprises and local government initiatives for practical exposure, a distinction that merits deeper exploration (Mainga et al., 2022).

This disconnect mirrors a broader research gap in employability literature. While global studies provide robust frameworks for understanding skill development in industrialized economies, few integrate perspectives from developing regions where informal labor markets and resource limitations play pivotal roles (Tagulwa et al., 2023). Similarly, comparative analyses between continents often overlook synergies between localized educational strategies and transnational employability standards. For example, African models of entrepreneurial resilience could inform community-centric approaches in Philippine rural universities. At the same time, European innovations in digital credentialing might address Southeast Asia's certification gaps (South Asian Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities, 2024). Prior studies have yet to synthesize these cross-continental insights to assess how students in transitional economies, such as Dumaguete, navigate employability challenges amid competing global and local demands (Shrestha, 2023).

The absence of granular, region-specific data exacerbates these gaps. While tracer studies in Philippine institutions, such as the University of Nueva Caceres, highlight employment outcomes (Nieva, 2025), they rarely examine the perceptual dimensions of employability – how students internalize their readiness for the workforce. This oversight is crucial, as self-perception has a direct influence on career decision-making and resilience during job searches (Mainga et al., 2022). Furthermore, existing research often prioritizes employer perspectives, neglecting the voices of students in co-designing curricula that align with both personal aspirations and market realities (Tagulwa et al., 2023).

By situating this study within the context of Dumaguete's state university, the research addresses these omissions. It bridges global employability discourse with localized educational ecosystems, offering insights into how 4th-year BSBA students negotiate their transition from academia to a hybrid economy shaped by global trends and regional idiosyncrasies.

Consequently, this study is anchored on the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory. This theory posits that individuals strive to acquire, retain, and protect resources, defined as objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies that hold value (Hobfoll, 1989). Stress arises when resources are threatened, lost, or not replenished

promptly. This study on employability perceptions among fourth-year BSBA students in Dumaguete City demonstrates significant alignment with the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory in several ways. First, students' self-perceived employability is shaped by their cognitive appraisal of both personal resources, such as academic skills and adaptability, and environmental resources, including institutional support and local job market conditions. According to COR Theory, the threat of resource loss—such as limited access to internships or mentorship—can lead students to perceive themselves as less employable, as these deficits undermine their overall resource “caravan” (Hobfoll, 1989; Vanhercke et al., 2015). Second, the transition from academia to the workforce is marked by potential losses of resources, such as academic safety nets and peer networks. COR Theory predicts that students with fewer resources, particularly those attending underfunded regional universities, may respond by adopting defensive strategies, such as avoiding competitive job markets, which can intensify their anxieties about employability. Finally, the principle of resource investment within COR Theory highlights the crucial role of institutional and community resources. Universities and local industries serve as external resource pools; for example, work-integrated learning programs provided by institutions can enhance students' resources and create a positive feedback loop that strengthens their confidence in their employability. By framing employability perceptions through COR Theory, the study illuminates how Dumaguete's BSBA students navigate resource dynamics in a hybrid economy, offering actionable insights for resource-based interventions (e.g., targeted skill-building workshops, community partnerships). Ultimately, this study aims to address the aforementioned gaps by investigating the perceptions of employability among 4th-year BSBA students at a state university in Dumaguete City.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design to explore the lived experiences and perceptions of employability among 4th-year BSBA students at a state university in Dumaguete City. The phenomenological approach was selected to capture the essence of students' subjective interpretations regarding their readiness for employment within their unique educational and socio-economic context. By focusing on a single university in Dumaguete City, the research employed a case study approach, enabling a detailed examination of localized factors that influence perceptions of employability.

2.2 Research Participants

The target participants in this study were 5 to 25 purposively selected 4th-year BSBA students from the chosen state university; however, data saturation was achieved with only 15 participants. To ensure a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon, purposive sampling was employed to include BSBA students from various academic tracks, such as financial management and human resource management, as well as those with different levels of involvement in extracurricular activities, including student leadership and internship experiences. The main criteria for inclusion were being enrolled in the final year of the BSBA program and willingness to participate in interviews and focus group discussions. Recruitment continues until thematic saturation is reached, ensuring that the data collected is both rich and representative of diverse student experiences.

2.3 Research Instruments

Data collection was facilitated through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs). The semi-structured interview guide was developed based on the literature, validated by three (3) experts, and pilot-tested with three (3) BSBA students to refine the clarity and relevance of the questions. The guide includes open-ended questions designed to elicit detailed responses about students' perceptions of their employability, perceived skill gaps, and the support provided by the university. In addition, two (2) FGDs, each comprising 7 to 8 participants, were conducted to capture collective insights and facilitate dynamic discussion on common challenges and opportunities faced by students as they prepare to enter the workforce.

2.4 Data Gathering Procedure

Before data collection, ethical approval was obtained from the Dean of the College of Business Administration for the study's conduct. Participants were recruited through purposive sampling. Individual interviews, lasting approximately 45 to 60 minutes, and FGDs, lasting around 90 minutes, were conducted in private settings within the university to ensure confidentiality and comfort. All sessions were audio-recorded with the participants' consent and transcribed verbatim for analysis. To enhance the credibility of the data, member checking was employed, wherein participants were allowed to review and confirm the accuracy of their transcribed responses. The entire data-gathering process was conducted over three weeks.

2.5 Data Analysis

The data collected from interviews and FGDs were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's six-phase thematic analysis framework. The process began with familiarization, where the researcher immersed himself in the data by reading transcripts multiple times. This was followed by generating initial codes line by line using qualitative data analysis software, such as NVivo. Codes were then organized into potential themes, which were reviewed and refined to ensure they accurately reflect the data. Each theme was clearly defined and named, capturing the essence of participants' experiences. The final themes were then synthesized into a coherent narrative, interpreted within the context of Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory, and cross-verified between interviews and FGDs to ensure consistency and depth.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical standards were rigorously upheld throughout the research process. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, who were provided with detailed information about the study's objectives, procedures, potential risks, and measures for ensuring confidentiality. Pseudonyms were used in all transcripts and reports to protect participants' identities, and all data were stored securely on password-protected devices. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any point without consequences. After data collection, a debriefing session was conducted to share preliminary findings and acknowledge participants' contributions. In compliance with ethical guidelines, all audio recordings and transcripts will be securely deleted five years after the study's completion, as recommended by the British Psychological Society.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Perceived Skill Gaps and Industry Expectations

Theme	Core Description	Key Issues Identified	Representative Student Voices	Theoretical Connection	Implications
Theme 1: Perceived Skill Gaps and Industry Expectations	A disconnect between academic training and local industry demands, particularly in digital literacy and practical business competencies	- Advanced Excel skills deficiency - Lack of social media management training - Limited graphic design capabilities (Canva) - Insufficient digital tool proficiency - Gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application	"We learn theories about marketing strategies in school, but local businesses here want us to handle social media campaigns – something we have never practiced in class." "They keep asking for advanced Excel skills I barely know. Our modules only taught basic formulas." "My OJT supervisor required me to make a brochure-booklet type, but I was not trained to make it in school."	Aligns with COR Theory's resource appraisal concept – students perceive deficits in digital skills, which threatens their confidence in employability.	Curriculum reform is needed to integrate industry-recognized digital skills training and practical competencies

Participants consistently highlighted a disconnect between their academic training and the demands of the local industry. For instance, (Participant 3) noted:

"I am a working student. We learn theories about marketing strategies in school, but local businesses here want us to handle social media campaigns-something we have never practiced in class." Similarly, (Participant 7) shared: *"As early as now, I have applied to two retail companies, but they keep asking for advance Excel skills I barely know. Our modules only taught basic formulas."*

Moreover, (Participant 13) lamented:

"In my OJT, my immediate supervisor required me to make a presentation using CANVA, a graphic design platform. I only know how to make presentations using Microsoft PowerPoint. We were not trained to use CANVA in school. Therefore, I just learned how to use CANVA on my own."

Finally, (Participant 8) elucidated:

“One time, my OJT supervisor required me to make a brochure-booklet type, but I was not trained to make it in school. We were just taught basic word and spreadsheets processing skills.”

The need for digital skills, including advanced Excel, Canva, and social media management, aligns with findings from global studies. Shrestha (2023) and the South Asian Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities (2024) both highlight a widening digital literacy gap among business graduates, emphasizing that proficiency in digital tools is now a baseline expectation for entry-level positions in many industries. The World Economic Forum (2023) also notes that digital skills are among the most in-demand competencies in the modern workforce, and graduates lacking these skills may face significant barriers to employment.

Moreover, several participants described learning new skills during their OJT or internships, often through self-directed means rather than formal instruction. This reliance on OJT to bridge skill gaps is common in the Philippines and other developing economies, where educational institutions may not have the resources or industry partnerships necessary to keep curricula updated with the latest workplace technologies (Cabrera, 2020). However, this approach can be inconsistent and may leave students feeling underprepared and anxious about their readiness for employment.

3.2 Institutional Support and Resource Limitations

Theme	Core Description	Key Issues Identified	Representative Student Voices	Theoretical Connection	Implications
Theme 2: Institutional Support and Resource Limitations	Limited institutional resources and support systems affect student preparedness for employment	- Insufficient internship duration (600 hours) - Limited career guidance and job posting visibility - Weak university-industry partnerships - Resource constraints limiting experiential learning - Inadequate effectiveness of career services effectiveness	"Our internships were only 600 hours long. How can we prove our competence in such a short time?" "The career office rarely posts job vacancy postings. There is little guidance on local opportunities in Dumaguete." "I can rarely see job vacancy postings on local or international jobs in the bulletin boards of the School."	COR Theory's resource investment principle – insufficient institutional resources limit students' ability to build employability capital	Extended internship programs and enhanced career services are needed to bridge institutional gaps.

While students acknowledged efforts by their university, many critiqued the lack of practical training opportunities. (Participant 9) stated:

“Our internships were only 600 hours long. How can we prove our competence in such a short time?”

(Participant 12) added:

“The career office rarely posts job vacancy postings. There’s little guidance on local opportunities in Dumaguete.”

Moreover, (Participant 6) echoed this:

“I can rarely see job vacancy postings on local or international jobs in the bulletin boards of the School.”

The theme underscores the critical role of universities in shaping employability outcomes. Students voiced concerns over the brevity of their 600-hour internships and the limited visibility of job postings and career guidance, echoing findings from Tagulwa et al., (2023), and Alera and Codod (2023) who emphasized that institutional support systems—such as curriculum relevance, field exposure, and industry linkages—are crucial for graduate employment success in the Philippines. These institutional factors contribute to the development of

essential graduate capital, including social networks and workplace competencies, which are crucial for navigating the job market.

Resource constraints, a recurring challenge in many state universities, often limit the quality and scope of experiential learning opportunities. Studies from both local and international contexts reveal that inadequate funding, scarce industry partnerships, and logistical hurdles can curtail the implementation of robust work-based learning programs, thereby affecting students' readiness for employment. Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory further supports the necessity of immersive, reflective, and active learning cycles, which are difficult to achieve when internships are short or lack depth due to institutional limitations.

The students' critique of internship duration is supported by research indicating that longer, more structured internships foster deeper skill acquisition, confidence, and professional integration. Short internships, such as the 600-hour placements described, may not provide sufficient time for students to demonstrate competence, build networks, or internalize workplace norms—factors shown to be vital for employability in both local and global studies. This suggests a need for curriculum reforms that extend and enrich practical training experiences.

Finally, the limited effectiveness of career services and weak university-industry collaboration further hinder graduate employability. Literature highlights that proactive career centers and dynamic university-industry partnerships can significantly improve employment outcomes by aligning academic training with real-world demands and expanding access to job opportunities. Addressing these gaps through strategic partnerships, enhanced career services, and curriculum innovation could transform resource limitations into strengths, ultimately boosting the employability of graduates from resource-constrained institutions.

3.3 Socio-Economic Influences on Employability

Theme	Core Description	Key Issues Identified	Representative Student Voices	Theoretical Connection	Implications
Theme 3: Socio-Economic Influences on Employability	Family obligations and financial pressures shape career choices and employment decisions	- Immediate employment pressure to support families - Limited career choice flexibility due to financial constraints - Willingness to accept any job regardless of career alignment - Geographic limitations due to cost considerations - Prioritizing family needs over personal aspirations	"I want to start a business, but my parents need me to work immediately after graduation to support my siblings." "I will take any job here in Dumaguete, even if it is not my passion. Moving to Manila is too expensive." "I will take any job, even if it is not in line with my course, as long as it is moral and legal."	COR Theory's resource scarcity principle – students facing financial constraints prioritize immediate resource acquisition over long-term career goals	Career guidance programs must address both economic realities and personal aspirations in collectivist cultural contexts

Family obligations and financial pressures shaped participants' career choices. (Participant 5) explained:
"I want to start a business, but my parents need me to work immediately after graduation to support my siblings."

(Participant 14) echoed this:
"I'll take any job here in Dumaguete, even if it's not my passion. Moving to Manila is too expensive."

Moreover, (Participant 15) elucidated:
"I will take any job, even if it is not in line with my course, as long as it is moral and legal, since it is very hard to find a job these days, and my parents want me to help support the family after graduation."

Finally, (Participant 1) expounded:
"After graduation, I will immediately look for a job to help my siblings and my family as a whole."

Family obligations and financial pressures significantly shape the career choices of the participants. As seen in the participants' narratives, many students feel compelled to seek immediate employment after graduation, often prioritizing their families' needs over personal aspirations. For example, one participant expressed a desire to start a business but felt obligated to work immediately to support their siblings. In contrast, others were willing to accept any available job—even those outside their field of study—to contribute to household finances.

This pattern aligns with the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory, which posits that individuals facing resource scarcity tend to prioritize immediate resource acquisition over long-term goals (Hobfoll, 1989). In the context of developing economies like the Philippines, students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds often experience heightened pressure to become breadwinners, leading them to accept jobs that may not align with their academic training or personal interests. This finding is consistent with international research, which shows that family expectations and financial necessity are primary drivers of career decisions among young adults in collectivist societies.

Literature further supports that family influence is decisive in Asian contexts, where filial responsibility and collective well-being are deeply ingrained cultural values. Studies have shown that Filipino students frequently defer to parental expectations and prioritize family needs in their career trajectories, sometimes at the expense of their own career satisfaction and growth. Financial hardship not only increases the urgency to find work but can also limit students' ability to pursue opportunities that require additional investment, such as relocating for better prospects or starting a business.

These dynamics have important implications for students' perceived employability and long-term well-being. While prioritizing family support can provide immediate financial relief and fulfill cultural expectations, it may also result in lower job satisfaction and hinder career development if students feel forced into roles misaligned with their skills or passions. Thus, the interplay between family obligations, financial pressures, and career choices underscores the need for career guidance programs that address both economic realities and personal aspirations among graduating students.

3.4 Community Networks as a Double-Edged Sword

Theme	Core Description	Key Issues Identified	Representative Student Voices	Theoretical Connection	Implications
Theme 4: Community Networks as a Double-Edged Sword	Local connections provide both opportunities and barriers to employment access	- Positive networking through family connections - Part-time work opportunities through local networks - Dependency on "backers" or personal connections - Merit-based hiring challenges - Exclusion of students without established networks	"My aunt connected me to a local hotel for a part-time role, which helped me gain experience." "Everyone here relies on 'backers' [connections]. If you do not know someone, it is hard to get hired, even with good grades." "What you know is not enough to land a job; it should be coupled with whom you know."	Demonstrates COR Theory's resource dynamics—social capital serves as both an enabling and constraining resource, depending on access.	There is a need for more inclusive employment strategies and transparent hiring practices to democratize opportunities.

Local networks provided both opportunities and limitations. (Participant 2) shared:
"My aunt connected me to a local hotel for a part-time role, which helped me gain experience."

Moreover, (Participant 10) echoed this:

"I am very happy that there are companies here in Dumaguete City that accept part-time workers while these workers are still studying."

Conversely, (Participant 11) lamented:

“Everyone here relies on ‘backers’ [connections]. If you don’t know someone, it’s hard to get hired, even with good grades.” Finally, (Participant 4) explained further: *“These days, what you know is not enough to land a job, it should be coupled with whom you know.”*

This theme highlights how local connections in Dumaguete City both facilitate and hinder employability among 4th-year BSBA students. Several participants reported that familial and community ties provided direct pathways to employment, such as internships and part-time work, which helped them gain valuable experience while pursuing their studies. For instance, one participant attributed their first job opportunity to a relative’s connection with a local hotel. At the same time, another expressed gratitude for companies in Dumaguete that are open to hiring students as part-time workers. These experiences highlight the positive impact of bonding social capital, where close-knit relationships within the community can bridge skill gaps and provide practical work experience, aligning with studies that emphasize the value of local networks in supporting youth employment and community development.

However, the same networks can also perpetuate exclusion and inequity. Other participants lamented that hiring in Dumaguete often depends on having “backers” or personal connections, making it difficult for qualified individuals without such ties to secure employment, even if they have strong academic credentials. This reliance on social capital can undermine meritocracy and reinforce existing social hierarchies, a phenomenon documented in Southeast Asian contexts where community ties both empower and marginalize job seekers (Nieva, 2025). The situation reflects broader critiques of social capital’s “dark side,” where exclusive networks can gatekeep opportunities and disadvantage those outside established circles.

In sum, while community networks in Dumaguete City serve as vital resources for some participants, they simultaneously create barriers for others. This duality suggests the need for more inclusive strategies that democratize access to employment opportunities, such as formalized industry-academe partnerships and transparent hiring practices. Encouraging students to cultivate both strong and weak ties—beyond immediate family and friends—can help level the playing field, as broader networks are linked to greater job mobility and access to diverse opportunities. Ultimately, addressing the double-edged nature of community networks is crucial for fostering equitable graduate employability in the local context.

4.0 Conclusion

The study reveals that 4th-year BSBA students in Dumaguete City perceive their employability through a complex interplay of skill mismatches, institutional limitations, socio-economic pressures, and localized networking dynamics. While they value their theoretical foundation, the lack of hands-on training in digital tools and industry-specific competencies undermines their confidence. Institutional support, although present, is hindered by resource constraints, which exacerbate anxieties about transitioning to a regional job market. These findings underscore the relevance of COR Theory, as students’ perceived employability is deeply tied to their access to personal, institutional, and community resources.

It is therefore recommended that the university undertake intentional curricular reforms to address the identified skill gaps, particularly in digital literacy and practical business competencies. Integrating industry-recognized certifications and digital skills modules into the BSBA curriculum can better align academic outcomes with the evolving needs of local employers and the broader business sector. Furthermore, extending the duration and depth of internship programs as well as establishing more robust partnerships with Dumaguete-based businesses, will provide students with meaningful, hands-on experiences that bridge the gap between classroom learning and workplace expectations. These steps are supported by evidence from both local and international contexts, where curricular innovation and industry collaboration have been shown to enhance graduate employability significantly.

Additionally, the university should enhance its career development services by providing localized job placement support, targeted employability workshops, and mentorship programs that involve alums and local industry practitioners. Policymakers and institutional leaders are encouraged to invest in regional career hubs and entrepreneurship initiatives that address socio-economic barriers and promote inclusive opportunities for all students. Finally, it is recommended that students proactively seek out supplementary online training and

networking opportunities to further develop their skills and expand their professional connections. These recommendations, if implemented, will help ensure that graduates are better equipped to meet local labor market demands and successfully transition into meaningful employment in Dumaguete City and beyond.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

The study was solely written and completed by the two authors. No other individuals contributed to the writing, analysis, or development of the content. All ideas, interpretations, and conclusions presented in this research are the original work of the two authors alone.

6.0 Funding

The two authors fully funded the research study. All expenses related to the conduct of the study, including data collection, materials, and other necessary resources, were personally shouldered by them. No external funding, sponsorship, or financial assistance was received from any individual, organization, or institution.

7.0 Conflict of Interests

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in the conduct of this research study. The study was conducted with full transparency, and the authors declare that they have no financial, personal, or professional relationships that could have influenced the outcome or interpretation of the findings. All results and conclusions were derived objectively and independently.

8.0 Acknowledgment

The authors express their heartfelt gratitude to the Lord Almighty for His divine guidance, strength, and wisdom throughout the conduct of this research study. It is through His grace that they were able to overcome challenges, stay committed to their goals, and complete this academic endeavor. To Him be all the glory and honor.

9.0 References

- Alera, D. P., & Codod, C. L. (2023). The employability study and employers' perception of business administration graduates from a higher state educational institution in the Philippines. *Psychology and Education: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, 9(8), 1-1. <https://ejournals.ph/article.php?id=2122>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- British Psychological Society. (2018). Ethics guidelines for internet-mediated research. Retrieved from <https://tinyurl.com/3at2s5pj>
- Cabrera, W. (2020). Development and validation of work readiness assessment tool for home economics graduates. *International Journal of Economics Development Research (IJEDR)*, 1(2), 70-109. <https://doi.org/10.37385/ijedr.v1i2.47>
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications. <https://tinyurl.com/mrxad55f>
- Nieva, F. (2025). Employability of BSBA graduates: A tracer study of the University of Nueva Caceres class of 2023. *GPH-International Journal of Business Management*, 8(1), 348-367. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14651047>
- Hobfoll, S. E. (1989). Conservation of resources: A new attempt at conceptualizing stress. *American Psychologist*, 44(3), 513-524. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.44.3.513>
- Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Prentice-Hall. <https://tinyurl.com/muazz2b7>
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. SAGE Publications. <https://tinyurl.com/f3twv4t>
- Mainga, W., Daniel, R. M., & Alamil, L. (2022). Perceptions of employability skills of undergraduate business students in a developing country: An exploratory study. *Higher Learning Research Communications*, 12(1), 28-63. <https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/hlrc/vol12/iss1/2/>
- Patton, M. Q. (2014). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications. <https://tinyurl.com/yk7nvwfw>
- Shrestha, B. K. (2023). Perceptions of employability of undergraduate business program graduates. *Journal of Business and Management*, 15(1), 45-60. <https://tinyurl.com/3zf3dudd>
- South Asian Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities. (2024). Factors influencing the perceived employability among university students. *South Asian Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 5(5), 41-65. <https://doi.org/10.48165/sajssh.2024.5503>
- Tagulwa, E. A., Owino, P., Muwonge, F., & Kaahwa, M. G. (2023). Students' and employers' perceptions of employability skills in Uganda. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary: Applied Business and Education Research*, 4(6), 2038-2044. <https://doi.org/10.11594/ijmaber.04.06.28>
- Vanhercke, D., Kirves, K., De Cuyper, N., Verbruggen, M., Forrier, A., & De Witte, H. (2015). Perceived employability and psychological functioning framed by gain and loss cycles. *Career Development International*, 20(2), 179-198. <https://doi.org/10.1108/cdi-12-2014-0160>
- World Economic Forum. (2023). *The Future of Jobs Report 2023*. Retrieved from <https://tinyurl.com/hxpkxt6d>