

Original Article

Impact of Educational Tours on the Learning and Professional Development of Hospitality Management Students

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Abstract. Educational tours play an important part in enhancing students' learning experiences by providing hands-on exposure to real-world applications of academic concepts. This study explores how educational tours influence the learning and professional growth of Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management (BSHM) students at a state university in Bohol. Using a descriptive-evaluative research design, the researchers collected responses from 62 students who participated in the 2024–2025 educational tour. Data were collected through a validated survey and analyzed using frequency distributions, percentages, weighted means, and thematic analysis. The results showed that educational tours were "very impactful" in enhancing students' learning outcomes ($WM=3.82$), knowledge retention ($WM=3.77$), and professional development ($WM=3.80$). Students shared that their tour experiences deepened their understanding of hospitality concepts, improved their practical and communication skills, and strengthened their readiness for real-world industry work. They also demonstrated better recall of customer service principles, hygiene practices, and operational standards. However, the findings suggest that applying theoretical knowledge and problem-solving in actual settings still needs more focus. The study concludes that educational tours play a vital role in bridging classroom learning with real-life experiences, helping students think critically, adapt easily, and build confidence in their future careers. The study suggests enhancing how educational tours are planned, better preparing faculty members, and building stronger partnerships with the hospitality industry so students can gain more meaningful, real-world experiences that help them become confident, career-ready professionals.

Keywords: Educational tour; Experiential learning; Hospitality Management; Professional development; Student Learning Outcomes.

Educational tours play an important part in enhancing students' learning experiences by providing hands-on exposure to real-world applications of academic concepts. These tours complement traditional classroom instruction by fostering experiential learning, encouraging student engagement, and improving knowledge retention. By participating in educational tours, students gain a deeper understanding of historical, cultural, scientific, and industrial topics, making learning more meaningful and relevant. While many studies acknowledge the value of educational tours in enriching experiential learning and increasing student engagement, there

remains a limited understanding of how these experiences specifically help Hospitality Management students develop the essential professional skills needed for their future careers.

CHED's regulatory framework for off-campus learning, encompassing field trips, educational tours, and both local and international excursions, is principally articulated in CHED Memorandum Order (CMO) No. 17, s. 2012, which establishes foundational definitions, objectives, and procedural requirements for educational tours and field trips. Subsequent CMOs and administrative issuances have expanded and clarified the original guidance, introducing more stringent provisions for international educational trips, standardized templates for local off-campus activities, and revised authority-to-travel procedures that address contemporary operational concerns. Collectively, these instruments require that planned off-campus activities be explicitly linked to course and program learning outcomes, supported by an itemized itinerary and budget, and secured through layered approvals from departmental, college, and institutional authorities (and CHED when specified). By foregrounding curricular relevance, transparency in cost allocation, and expectations regarding safety and insurance, the CMO series seeks to balance pedagogical benefit with institutional accountability and student welfare.

According to Macaranas et al. (2024), the impact of educational tours on junior and senior Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management (BSHM) students at Bestlink College of the Philippines bridges the gap between academic knowledge and real-world industry demands. Their study found that such tours notably improve students' professional skills and reinforce connections between academic learning and industry practices, thereby promoting better preparedness for careers in hospitality.

In the Philippines, educational tours have increasingly been regarded as a vital pedagogical approach in tourism and hospitality education. Uy et al. (2021) emphasized that these activities provide students with opportunities to gain authentic experiences beyond the classroom. Unlike traditional instruction that relies on textual learning, tours immerse students in real environments, thereby engaging their senses, stimulating critical reflection, and enhancing cultural appreciation. While educational tours have long been valued for providing students with real-world learning experiences, there remains a limited understanding of how these activities help develop students' professional competencies. Many studies highlight the positive impact of tours on learning and satisfaction. However, few examine how they develop essential skills such as communication, critical thinking, adaptability, and cultural awareness—qualities important in the hospitality industry. The researchers aim to fill this gap by exploring how educational tours influence the learning and professional growth of Hospitality Management students, focusing on how these experiences enhance both their academic understanding and the competencies they need to succeed in their future careers.

This study aims to assess the impact of educational tours on the learning and professional development of Hospitality Management students by examining how these experiences contribute to both their academic understanding and industry readiness. The findings will inform institutional decisions that promote experiential learning through strategically designed educational tours. Specifically, the study seeks to: 1) Assess the demographic profile of the students in terms of: Ages; and Sex; 2) Evaluate the extent to which educational tours enhance students' academic learning and understanding of hospitality and tourism concepts in terms of: Learning Outcomes; Retentions; and Professional Development; 3) Determine students' perception the relevance of educational tour experiences to their academic learning and future careers in the hospitality industry; 4) Recommend improvements and future strategies for planning educational tours that support both academic and professional development.

Methodology

Research Design

This study utilized a descriptive-evaluative research design to systematically assess the impact of educational tours on the learning and professional development of Hospitality Management students. This approach allows researchers to describe and evaluate the effects of real-life educational experiences on academic and professional growth. Quantitative data were gathered to provide a comprehensive analysis.

Research Locale

The study was conducted at a state university in Bohol, specifically within the Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management (BSHM) program. This academic environment provides students with both theoretical instruction and practical learning opportunities, including educational tours that are integral to their curriculum. The university organizes field trips to various tourism and hospitality sites, giving students firsthand exposure to industry practices. The 2024–2025 educational tour, which serves as the basis for this study, involved visits to key tourism destinations relevant to the students' academic and career development.

Research Respondents

The participants underwent total enumeration of third-year Hospitality Management students who participated in an educational tour during the 2024–2025 academic year. This targeted selection ensures that the 62 respondents have direct and relevant experience with the tour activities.

Research Instrument

The researchers will use a modified questionnaire based on the studies by Rolida et al. (2024), Effectiveness of Educational Tour Towards Hospitality Management Students in Central Mindanao University, and Suarez et al. (2017), Effectiveness of Educational Tours to the Tourism and Hospitality Management Students, with a reliability test result of 0.830. These sources provide a foundation for assessing the impact of an educational tour on students' learning and professional development. The questionnaire consists of two parts: Part 1: Socio-Demographic Profile – collects respondents' age and sex. Part 2: Perceived Benefits – assesses learning outcomes, retention, and professional development.

Data Analysis

The statistical formula used in this study was frequency counts and percentages to assess and evaluate the respondents' ages and sexes. A weighted mean was used to analyze and interpret the impact of educational tours on the learning and professional development of hospitality management students. The Likert scale responses will be assigned numerical values to compute the overall assessment. Thematic analysis was used to examine and interpret the qualitative responses from the open-ended questions in the survey.

Results and Discussion

This section presents the study's results on the impact of an educational tour on Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Industry students. The study included 62 respondents who participated in the educational tour. Table 1 outlines their demographic characteristics by age and sex. Evaluate the extent to which educational tours enhance students' academic learning and understanding of hospitality and tourism concepts, determine students' perception of the relevance of educational tour experiences, and recommend improvements and future strategies for planning educational tours that support both academic and professional development.

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

The study involves 62 Hospitality Management students at a state university in Bohol. Table 1 outlines their demographic characteristics by age and sex. The majority of respondents were aged 18–25 (93.54%), followed by those under 18 (3.23%) and those aged 26–35 (3.23%). By sex, female respondents accounted for the majority (62.90%), while male respondents accounted for 37.10%. This indicates that most participants were young adults, a common demographic among students participating in educational tours and experiential learning activities. According to Galan (2017), educational tours are predominantly attended by college students aged 18 to 25, who are at a higher stage of engagement and readiness for applied learning experiences.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (n = 62)

Indicator	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
Below 18 years old	2	3.23%
18–25 years old	58	93.54%
26–35 years old	2	3.23%
Sex		
Male	23	37.10%
Female	39	62.90%

Evaluation of Students' Academic Learning and Understanding. In Terms of Learning Outcomes

Table 2. Evaluation of Students' Academic Learning and Understanding in Terms of Learning Outcomes

Items	Students (n=62)	
	WM	Description
1. The Educational Tour Enhanced my understanding of hospitality concepts, including guest relations, customer service, sustainable tourism, and quality service management.	3.85	Very Impactful
2. An educational tour helps me gain practical skills, such as event coordination, front office operations, and food and beverage service, that are relevant to my field of study.	3.80	Very Impactful
3. The tour provided insights into industry standards and practices, including safety protocols, service excellence, and professional ethics in hospitality operations.	3.82	Very Impactful
4. The educational tour improved my problem-solving skills related to hospitality management, particularly in handling guest concerns, managing time, and making operational decisions.	3.74	Very Impactful
5. The tour expanded my knowledge and innovations in the hospitality industry.	3.87	Very Impactful
Composite Mean	3.82	Very Impactful

The overall mean was 3.82, corresponding to the interpretation of "Very Impactful". The highest-rated indicator was "The tour expanded my knowledge and innovations in the hospitality industry" (WM=3.87). According to Goh (2011), field trips and study tours help bridge theory and practice, broaden students' real-world understanding, and improve professional awareness, thereby supporting the idea that tours expand students' knowledge. Meanwhile, the least-rated item was the educational tour, which improved my problem-solving skills related to hospitality management, particularly in handling guest concerns, managing time, and making operational decisions (WM=3.74). Through firsthand exposure to real industry operations, students develop critical skills in handling guest concerns, managing time efficiently, and making sound operational decisions. Such experiences allow learners to apply theoretical knowledge to actual situations, thereby improving their problem-solving abilities and professional readiness for future careers in the field. This finding is supported by the study, which revealed that educational tours are highly effective in strengthening students' practical and decision-making skills in hospitality management (Gonzaga & Etrata, 2025).

In Terms of Retention

Table 3. Evaluation of Students' Academic Learning and Understanding in Terms of Retention

Items	Students (n=62)	
	WM	Description
1. The student can recall the key principles of customer service, such as courtesy, empathy, responsiveness, and professionalism, and how to apply them in a hospitality setting.	3.79	Very Impactful
2. The student can recall different types of hospitality businesses and their unique characteristics.	3.74	Very Impactful
3. The student can recall the importance of hygiene and sanitation standards in food and beverage service.	3.82	Very Impactful
4. The student can recall effective communication techniques for interacting with guests from diverse backgrounds.	3.75	Very Impactful
5. The student can recall the different departments within a hotel and their key responsibilities.	3.77	Very Impactful
Composite Mean	3.77	Very Impactful

Table 3 reveal a composite mean of 3.77, which falls into the "Very Impactful" category. The highest-rated indicator was "student can recall the importance of hygiene and sanitation standards in food and beverage service" (WM=3.82). Serrem et al. (2021) found that university food-service students' knowledge, attitudes, and practices regarding food safety and sanitation. Their study emphasizes the need for targeted instruction to improve students' understanding and application of hygiene standards in food and beverage service.

In Contrast, the lowest mean was "the student can recall different types of hospitality businesses and their unique characteristics" (WM= 3.74). Peng et al. (2022) reviewed the evolution of hospitality education, emphasizing online learning and curriculum development. Their study found that modernized curricula and experiential learning enhance students' understanding and recall of various hospitality sectors and their unique characteristics, aligning education with industry knowledge outcomes.

In Terms of Professional Development

Table 4. Evaluation of Students' Academic Learning and Understanding in Terms of Professional Development

Items	Students (n=62)	
	WM	Description
1. Encouragement to take responsibility for my own learning.	3.83	Very Impactful
2. Learning resilience through building self-confidence and understanding.	3.82	Very Impactful
3. Putting theory into practice.	3.77	Very Impactful
4. Development of observational skills.	3.85	Very Impactful
5. Facilitation of experiential learning.	3.82	Very Impactful
6. Establishment of the intellectual value of the educational tour.	3.77	Very Impactful
7. Facilitation of learning about the practical aspects of the subject.	3.79	Very Impactful
8. Development of social skills.	3.80	Very Impactful
9. Improvement of learning resourcefulness.	3.79	Very Impactful
10. Improvement of creative learning.	3.80	Very Impactful
Composite Mean	3.80	Very Impactful

Educational tours play a crucial role in developing students' observational skills by providing immersive, real-world learning experiences. Such tours enable students to observe and analyze phenomena firsthand, fostering more profound understanding, critical thinking, and engagement. This effect on the development of observational skills has been documented in recent research on educational tourism (Chen et al., 2025).

Conversely, the lowest mean of 3.77 pertains to the indicators "Putting theory into practice" and "Establishment of the intellectual value of the educational tour". This study examines how field trips and experiential learning enhance student engagement and deepen understanding of core Social Studies concepts. It highlights that such approaches improve retention, critical thinking skills, and motivation. By providing opportunities to observe, interact with, and reflect on subjects, field trips make abstract concepts more tangible and relevant, effectively bridging the gap between classroom lessons and real-life experiences (Oloyede & John, 2025).

Students' Perception of the Relevance of Educational Tour

This section presents data on students' perceptions of the relevance of educational tours. The composite mean of 3.80 for Learning Outcome, Retention (WM=3.77), and Professional Development (WM=3.80), all of which fall within the "Very Impactful" range, indicates that the students had a strong positive impact on their learning and professional development.

Table 5. Students' Perception of the Relevance of Educational Tour

Students' Perception	Composite Mean	Description
Learning Outcomes	3.82	Very Impactful
Retention	3.77	Very Impactful
Professional Development	3.80	Very Impactful

The findings reveal that respondents strongly agreed (WM = 3.82) that the educational tour significantly enhanced their learning outcomes. This suggests that participants perceived the activity as an effective experiential learning strategy that strengthened their understanding of tourism-related concepts and applications beyond classroom instruction. A study that students rated field trips highly for enhancing their practical understanding, engagement, and ability to apply theoretical concepts to real-world tourism settings. This highlights the effectiveness of experiential learning in strengthening academic and professional competencies in tourism management programs (Arcodia et al., 2020).

Regarding retention (WM = 3.77), respondents agreed that the tour helped retain knowledge and skills acquired during the trip. The result implies that while the educational tour reinforced students' comprehension, there remains room for improvement in post-tour reflection and integration activities to ensure deeper retention of learning. This result aligns with Galan's (2017) findings, which emphasize that educational tours provide students with meaningful experiences that enhance their ability to recall and apply theoretical concepts learned in class.

For professional development (WM = 3.80), respondents strongly agreed that the educational tour provided opportunities for personal and career growth. It provided them with practical exposure, developed interpersonal and communication skills, and enhanced their professional readiness in the tourism and hospitality industry. The

study of González et al. (2021) examined the impact of academic field trips on tourism students' experiential learning and professional growth.

Students perceived the educational tour as a significant and relevant component of their academic development and future professional pursuits in the hospitality industry. The experience allowed them to apply theoretical concepts learned in the classroom to real-world settings, deepening their understanding of hospitality operations, tourism management, and customer service practices. Through direct exposure to actual industry settings, students were able to cultivate essential professional competencies, including communication, teamwork, and adaptability.

Conclusion

This study highlights the important role of educational tours in supporting the academic learning and professional growth of hospitality and tourism students. While the findings show that students generally had positive experiences, the results also indicate areas for improvement, particularly in applying classroom theories to real-world situations, developing problem-solving skills, and gaining a deeper understanding of industry practices. These gaps suggest that educational tours should be more carefully planned and closely linked to course objectives through hands-on activities, guided reflection, and stronger collaboration with industry partners. By emphasizing these aspects, the study contributes to existing knowledge by showing that educational tours are most effective when they go beyond observation and become meaningful experiential learning opportunities. Overall, the findings are important for educators, students, and institutions, as they highlight the value of well-designed educational tours in bridging classroom learning and real-world practice, and point to future research opportunities, such as exploring different types of tours or comparing learning outcomes across hospitality and tourism programs.

Contributions of Authors

Jesssa Cimagala was the Principal Author, responsible for conceptualizing the study, designing the methodology, collecting data, and conducting the overall analysis. Jesszon B. Cano oversaw the study to ensure it met ethical standards and led the statistical analysis and interpretation of the data. Lilanie M. Olaso ensured the accuracy and relevance of the study's content throughout the process.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors confirm that they have no conflicts of interest related to the conduct, data analysis, or publication of this study.

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