

# EMPLOYER SATISFACTION ON THE JOB PERFORMANCE OF CAGAYAN STATE UNIVERSITY GONZAGA CAMPUS GRADUATES (AY 2019–2021): IMPLICATIONS FOR PHILIPPINE GRADUATE EMPLOYABILITY AND CURRICULUM ENHANCEMENT

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## ABSTRACT

This study assessed employers' satisfaction with the job performance of Cagayan State University (CSU) Gonzaga Campus graduates from academic years 2019 to 2021. Understanding employer perceptions is crucial for aligning academic preparation with workplace expectations, ensuring that graduates remain competitive in the labor market. Specifically, the research aimed to evaluate the competencies of CSU graduates in communication, leadership, human relations, problem-solving, and IT skills, as well as their personal work qualities such as diligence, initiative, and punctuality. A descriptive survey research design was employed, utilizing a structured questionnaire distributed to employers and immediate supervisors of CSU Gonzaga graduates. The sample consisted of professionals across various industries who directly evaluated graduates' workplace performance. Quantitative data were analyzed using mean ratings and thematic interpretation of qualitative feedback. Results indicated that employers are generally satisfied with the performance of CSU graduates, particularly in communication, IT, and human relations skills. Leadership abilities were well-rated for managerial roles, while moderate satisfaction was noted in problem-solving and leadership skills among rank-and-file employees. Employers also commended graduates' diligence, punctuality, and adaptability, though some expressed concerns about job-specific knowledge and deeper technical competence. The findings highlight the need for enhanced training in critical thinking, leadership development, and technical upskilling. To bridge these gaps, curriculum review, experiential learning opportunities, and stronger industry-academe linkages are recommended. These initiatives will not only boost employability but also ensure that graduates are equipped to thrive and lead in an evolving professional environment.

**Keywords:** employers' satisfaction, job performance, graduates' employability

## INTRODUCTION

Philippine Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs) play a pivotal role in preparing graduates for successful and meaningful employment. These institutions are expected to equip their students with not only technical knowledge but also the cognitive, behavioral, and social skills required to thrive in professional environments. Graduates must also demonstrate adaptability to the dynamic challenges of the modern workplace. Possessing such a well-rounded skill set enables them to apply advanced knowledge in solving complex problems, contribute innovative ideas, and thrive in culturally diverse settings. Without these competencies, graduates may struggle in an increasingly competitive job market, which may further exacerbate graduate unemployment (World Bank, 2020).

The performance and reputation of a university are closely tied to the quality and employability of its graduates. Consequently, the types of employment and the professional success achieved by its alumni often serve as benchmarks for institutional effectiveness. Andrews and Higson (2008) highlighted a persistent gap between the skills

developed in academic settings and those demanded by employers. Similarly, Jackson (2016) emphasized that soft skills such as communication, problem-solving, and teamwork are increasingly prioritized by employers. Despite this, graduates often fall short in demonstrating effective communication, both in verbal and written forms, particularly in team-based and cross-functional work environments.

The exploration of how core psychological competencies are demonstrated in actual workplace contexts through employer satisfaction provides meaningful insights into applied psychology domains, particularly emotional intelligence, interpersonal dynamics, and behavioral performance in organizational settings. These competencies including emotional intelligence, adaptability, interpersonal communication, and self-management are increasingly recognized as critical drivers of job performance, team dynamics, and organizational success (Mayer et al., 2020; Clarke, 2021). By examining attributes such as communication, leadership, human relations, problem-solving, and personal work ethics, the study contributes to the growing discourse on personality traits, behavioral performance, and individual differences within organizational contexts. The use of a structured, psychometrically grounded survey instrument to assess employer perceptions highlights both methodological rigor and applied relevance. Moreover, the study moves beyond descriptive outcomes by proposing actionable curriculum and workforce development strategies, thus supporting the journal's focus on research with practical and theoretical utility. This work stands at the intersection of applied psychology and professional intervention, offering data-driven insights into how academic preparation translates into workplace competence—an essential consideration for psychologists, educators, and policy developers alike.

Anchored on the Human Capital Theory and the Graduate Employability Model, which collectively provide the foundational lens through which employer satisfaction is assessed. Human Capital Theory, originally articulated by Schultz (1961) and further developed by Becker (1993), posits that investments in education and training enhance the productivity and economic value of individuals, thereby increasing their employability. It implies that higher education institutions, such as Cagayan State University-Gonzaga, play a pivotal role in equipping graduates with the necessary competencies for the labor market. Complementing this is the Graduate Employability Model proposed by Yorke and Knight (2006), which underscores a comprehensive set of graduate attributes—including cognitive skills, interpersonal capabilities, and professional ethics that contribute to workplace readiness. This model aligns with contemporary calls for employability-focused education, as emphasized by Holmes (2013), who advocates for viewing employability not just as a set of skills but as a dynamic interaction between identity, performance, and employer perceptions.

Additionally, Bridgstock (2009) emphasizes that lifelong learning and adaptability are essential in responding to the fast-changing demands of the 21st-century workforce. These theoretical and empirical perspectives justify the rationale of this study—to assess the alignment between the competencies of CSU Gonzaga graduates and the performance expectations of employers. In doing so, the study contributes to the discourse on graduate employability and institutional accountability in producing work-ready professionals.

Problem-solving has emerged as a crucial skill for employability in today's complex and rapidly evolving professional landscape. Suleman (2018) noted that graduates must be prepared to tackle real-world challenges that require analytical and critical thinking. Yorke and Knight (2006) stressed the importance of integrating problem-solving tasks into academic programs to bridge the gap between theory and practice. This is further supported by Ting et al. (2017), who observed a disconnect between academic training and the real-life problem-solving demands of the workplace. The World Economic Forum (2020) also identified problem-solving as one of the most essential future skills for workforce success.

Moreover, interpersonal or human relation skills are critical as companies move toward more collaborative, team-based work structures. Schulz (2008) advocated for embedding these skills in the curriculum to better prepare students for group dynamics and workplace relationships. Jackson (2010) added that teamwork, conflict resolution, and emotional intelligence are as vital as technical abilities. Succi and Canovi (2020) also reported that employers highly value graduates who can effectively collaborate, communicate, and integrate within diverse teams, arguing that technical proficiency alone is no longer sufficient.

Leadership skills have also become an essential component of graduate employability. According to Hinchliffe and Jolly (2011), leadership qualities such as motivating others, managing teams, and demonstrating initiative are increasingly expected, even in entry-level roles. McCrindle and Fell (2019) similarly emphasized that the potential for leadership is now seen as a desirable trait across industries, reinforcing the need for graduates to develop these competencies early on. Additionally, with the digitalization of nearly all business operations, IT and digital literacy have become indispensable. Suleman (2018) emphasized that proficiency in digital tools is now a basic requirement across professions. Pan et al. (2020) supported this by noting that digital fluency is no longer optional, as

industries now demand employees who can effectively use technology to communicate, analyze data, and perform tasks efficiently.

Cagayan State University-Gonzaga currently offers a variety of undergraduate programs, including Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education, Secondary Education, Accounting Information System, Information Technology, Agriculture, Hospitality Management, and Criminology. To maintain its relevance and competitiveness in the labor market, the institution must continuously assess the employability and job performance of its graduates. As Tomlinson (2017) argued, employability is not merely the possession of academic skills but also the ability to adapt, learn continuously, and thrive in an evolving labor environment.

This study was conducted to assess employer satisfaction with the job performance of CSU Gonzaga graduates from 2019 to 2021. By gathering data from employers regarding the skills, qualities, and workplace readiness of these graduates, the university can identify strengths and areas needing improvement in its academic programs. The findings of this study will be instrumental in guiding CSU Gonzaga to align its curricula with labor market demands, enhance program outcomes, and support continuous quality improvement. Furthermore, the results will serve as valuable input for accreditation processes across the university's programs, ultimately strengthening CSU Gonzaga's commitment to producing highly employable and competent graduates.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The primary objective of this study is to assess the level of employers' satisfaction regarding the job performance of graduates from Cagayan State University – Gonzaga Campus (CSU Gonzaga). Specifically, the study aims to (1) determine the demographic profile of the employer-respondents; (2) evaluate the graduates' competencies in communication skills, problem-solving skills, human relations skills, leadership, and information technology (IT) skills; (3) examine employers' assessments of the graduates' work qualities such as knowledge and diligence, initiative and commitment, as well as punctuality and attendance; and (4) identify the perceived strengths and challenges encountered by CSU Gonzaga graduates in the workplace. The findings of the study are intended to provide relevant feedback for enhancing the university's curriculum and support systems to ensure that graduates are better equipped for the demands of the labor market.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

This study employed a descriptive survey research design to systematically assess the satisfaction of employers with the job performance of Cagayan State University (CSU) Gonzaga Campus graduates from academic years 2019 to 2021. The descriptive method was deemed appropriate as it allowed the researchers to collect quantitative data on perceptions, evaluations, and attitudes from the actual work supervisors of CSU graduates, providing valuable insights into graduate employability and workplace effectiveness (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). This approach is particularly useful in educational research where the goal is to describe trends, assess perceptions, and identify relationships among variables based on real-world data.

### **Participants and Sampling Technique**

The respondents of the study were direct employers or supervisors of CSU Gonzaga graduates who were employed between 2019 and 2021. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure proportional representation of employers based on the graduates' year of employment. The strata were formed according to the year of graduation (2019, 2020, and 2021), and a random sample was drawn from each stratum to achieve balanced input across years. A list of employed graduates served as the sampling frame from which employers were identified and contacted.

### **Research Instrument**

The primary instrument for data collection was a structured, researcher-developed questionnaire, validated by a panel of experts in educational research and human resource management. The questionnaire consisted of five parts: (1) Demographic profile of the employer/respondent; (2) Employment and professional background of the CSU graduate; (3) Assessment of job-related skills (e.g., communication, analytical thinking, adaptability); (4) Evaluation of professional attributes (e.g., punctuality, leadership, teamwork, integrity); and (5) Open-ended questions on observed strengths and challenges encountered by the graduate in the workplace. A 5-point Likert scale was used for quantitative items, with the following scale: 5 = Very Satisfied (4.21–5.00); 4 = Somewhat Satisfied (3.41–4.20); 3 = Neutral (2.61–3.40); 2 = Somewhat Dissatisfied (1.81–2.60); and 1 = Very Dissatisfied (1.00–1.80).

### **Data Collection Procedure**

Data collection was conducted from March to May 2025. The questionnaires were distributed personally and via email

or Google Forms, depending on the availability and accessibility of the employers. Personal administration ensured a higher response rate, while the digital version accommodated distant or time-constrained participants. Respondents were given a maximum of two weeks to complete the survey.

### **Ethical Considerations**

This study strictly adhered to ethical standards in the conduct of research. Prior to data collection, a formal letter of request and informed consent form were provided to all potential participants. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the study, their right to decline or withdraw at any stage, and that their responses would be treated with confidentiality and anonymity. No personally identifiable information was disclosed or recorded in the final report. This research was conducted in compliance with the Ethical Guidelines of the CSU Research and Development Office.

### **Data Analysis Technique**

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Frequencies, percentages, and rank distributions were computed to describe the demographic profiles and characteristics of both employers and graduates. Means were calculated for each item to determine the level of satisfaction, interpreted using the defined Likert scale. Open-ended responses were thematically analyzed to identify recurring themes regarding strengths and challenges observed among graduates.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Demographic profile of employer-respondents**

Table 1 presents the gender profile of both employer and employee respondents. Among the employers, the majority are female, accounting for 106 individuals or 53%, while males comprise 94 or 47%. Similarly, a greater proportion of the employees are also female, totaling 116 or 58%, compared to 84 male employees or 42%. These figures indicate a slightly female-dominated representation in both employer and employee groups, suggesting a gender trend toward more female participation and leadership within the sampled organizations. This result also suggests increasing female representation and influence in the workforce and leadership roles within the organizations surveyed. Such gender distribution may reflect broader societal shifts toward gender inclusivity and the empowerment of women in professional settings.

Table 1. Gender Profile of Employers and Employees

Gender	Employers (f)	Employers (%)	Employees (f)	Employees (%)
Female	106	53%	116	58%
Male	94	47%	84	42%

Employer's the job performance of CSU Gonzaga graduates in terms of specific skills such as communication skills, problem-solving skills, human relations skills, leadership skills, and information, literacy, media, and technology skills; (3) evaluate the personal and professional qualities of CSU Gonzaga graduates as perceived by their employers, particularly on quality of work, job knowledge and diligence, initiative, punctuality, and attendance; and (4) identify the strengths and challenges encountered by CSU Gonzaga graduates in their respective workplaces based on the perspectives of their employers.

### **Employers' Assessment of the Job-Related Skills and Competencies of CSU Gonzaga Graduates as to Communication Skills, Problem-Solving Skills, Human-Relations Skills, and Leadership Skills, and IT Skills**

Table 2 presents the data of the employers' assessment on CSU Gonzaga graduates' communication skills across four components (CS1, CS2, CS3, and CS4) with mean scores of 4.58, 4.45, 4.13, and 4.33, respectively. The standard deviations range from 0.657 to 0.781, which indicates moderate variability in responses. The table further shows that participants are "very satisfied" with the way the employees clearly express their ideas, use various styles of written communication, and listen objectively to gain understanding (CS1, CS2, and CS4), and "somewhat satisfied" with the employees' language and vocabulary (CS3). With an overall mean of 4.37, it shows that the participants are "very satisfied" with the communication skills of CSU Gonzaga graduates. The high level of employer satisfaction with graduates' communication skills indicates that the campus and the university's curriculum is effective in enhancing essential workplace communication. However, the moderate satisfaction with graduates' grammar and vocabulary usage suggests the need for further refinement in written communication training. Bridgstock (2009) highlights that communication skills are integral to employability, particularly in the modern workplace where clear articulation of ideas and information sharing are key to career success. Shokri et al. (2014) also identified

communication skills as a top priority for employers, particularly the ability to convey information clearly and concisely in both written and oral forms.

Table 2. Employers' Assessment on the Graduates' Communication Skills

Communication Skills	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Descriptor
CS1: Expresses ideas in clear and logical manner.	200	4.58	.690	Very satisfied
CS2: Uses various forms and styles of written communication	200	4.45	.781	Very satisfied
CS3: Uses grammatically correct language and vocabulary.	200	4.13	.657	Somewhat Satisfied
CS4: Listens with objectivity to gain understanding of ideas.	200	4.33	.694	Very satisfied
Overall Mean		4.37		Very Satisfied

As shown in Table 3, it provides the participants' assessment on the problem-solving skills of CSU Gonzaga graduates. The mean scores of the four components (PS1, PS2, PS3, and PS4) range from 4.07 to 4.35, and the standard deviations from 0.668 to 0.723, indicating moderate variability in responses. The participants are found to be "somewhat satisfied" in three problem-solving skill components which include the employees' ability to identify issues in a problem, develop logical plan to solve the problem, and evaluate actions for future decisions (PS1, PS3, PS4), while they are "very satisfied" in one component particularly in the employees' ability to examine alternative solutions before making a decision (PS2). The 4.17 overall mean implies that the participants are "somewhat satisfied" with the problem-solving skills of the graduates.

Table 3. Employers' Assessment on the Graduates' Problem-Solving Skills

Problem-Solving Skills	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Descriptor
PS1: Identify underlying issues in a problem.	200	4.15	.668	Somewhat Satisfied
PS2: Examine alternative solutions and strategies before making a decision.	200	4.35	.706	Very Satisfied
PS3: Develop a clear plan to solve the problem.	200	4.12	.677	Somewhat Satisfied
PS4: Evaluate action and results for making future decision.	200	4.07	.723	Somewhat Satisfied
Overall Mean		4.17		Somewhat Satisfied

The "somewhat satisfied" assessment of employers on problem-solving skills indicates that while graduates possess basic abilities, they may struggle with identifying issues and developing comprehensive solutions. Enhancing problem-solving skills through more practical and analytical coursework could significantly benefit graduates' adaptability and decision-making abilities in dynamic work environments. According to Baking et al. (2015), problem-solving skills are increasingly important in complex workplace environments. The results support the argument that while graduates have foundational problem-solving skills, higher education institutions should emphasize training that prepares students for real-world challenges. Ting et al. (2017) reveal that there is a significant gap between the problem-solving skills taught in universities and those required in the workplace. Their study further emphasizes that graduates need to be more adept at analyzing situations, generating solutions, and making decisions even under pressure.

Table 4 shows data of the employers' assessment on the human relation skills of CSU Gonzaga graduates across four components (HRS1, HRS2, HRS3, and HRS4). The mean scores for HRS1, HRS2, HRS3, and HRS4 are 4.17, 4.33, 4.20, and 4.19, accordingly, while the standard deviations range from 0.678 to 0.814, indicating moderate variability in responses. The results show that employers are "somewhat satisfied" with the employees' conflict resolution skills, supportive relation with others, and social behavior in different circumstances. Moreover, the table



indicates that employers are “very satisfied” with the way the graduates respond to the needs of their colleagues. With an overall mean of 4.22, it implies that there is a high level of satisfaction among the participants on the human relation skills of CSU Gonzaga graduates.

*Table 4. Employers' Assessment on the Graduates' Human Relation Skills*

Human Relation Skills	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Descriptor
HRS1: Demonstrate effective social behavior in a variety of setting and under different circumstances.	200	4.17	.678	Somewhat Satisfied
HRS2: Respond to the needs of colleagues in the workplace.	200	4.33	.814	Very Satisfied
HRS3: Apply effective conflict resolution skills.	200	4.20	.737	Somewhat Satisfied
HRS4: Exhibit cooperative and supportive relations with others.	200	4.19	.777	Somewhat Satisfied
Overall Mean		4.22		Very Satisfied

The high level of satisfaction in human relation skills, especially in responding to colleagues and cooperative behaviors, shows that CSU Gonzaga graduates are well-prepared for teamwork. This suggests that the campus has successfully integrated collaborative skills into its curriculum, although there is still room to improve in conflict resolution and social adaptability. Jackson (2010) emphasizes that interpersonal skills are vital for working effectively in teams, resolving conflicts, and maintaining productive workplace relationships. The same study supports the idea that while graduates may possess technical skills, interpersonal skills are critical for long-term success and career advancement.

Table 5 displays the employers' assessment on the leadership skills of CSU Gonzaga graduates holding managerial and supervisory positions (LS1.1, LS1.2, LS1.3, LS1.4, LS1.5, LS1.6, LS1.7). The mean scores range from 4.13 to 4.39, and the standard deviations from 0.737 to 0.799, which indicates moderate variability in responses. The results show that the employers are “very satisfied” with the graduates' ability to organize tasks and motivate people in achieving organizational goals, facilitate the implementation of programs effectively, maintain self-control under stressful encounters, and take responsibility in decision-making. Moreover, the employers are “somewhat satisfied” with the graduates' ability to collaborate with their colleagues and foster exemplary actions for other people to emulate. The overall mean of 4.28 reveals a high level of satisfaction among participants on the leadership skills of CSU Gonzaga graduates who hold managerial and supervisory positions.

*Table 5. Employers' Assessment on the Graduates' Leadership Skills 1*

Leadership Skills 1	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Descriptor
LS1.1: Collaborate with colleagues in the workplace.	200	4.17	.737	Somewhat Satisfied
LS1.2: Motivate and inspire people to move towards the goal of the organization.	200	4.39	.749	Very Satisfied
LS1.3: Organize people and tasks to achieve the organization's goal.	199	4.34	.799	Very Satisfied
LS1.4: Facilitate effective implementation of programs of department and organization.	200	4.35	.761	Very Satisfied
LS1.5: Maintain self-control in the midst of stressful encounters with the group members.	200	4.39	.755	Very Satisfied
LS1.6: Take responsibility and risks in making decisions.	200	4.21	.741	Very Satisfied
LS1.7: Foster exemplary actions and behavior for others to emulate.	199	4.13	.747	Somewhat Satisfied

Overall Mean		4.28		Very Satisfied
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The high level of satisfaction with the leadership skills of graduates holding managerial or supervisory roles suggests that CSU Gonzaga graduates exhibit strong leadership capabilities. This reflects well on the campus' ability to prepare its students for leadership positions, indicating that those who take on managerial roles are equipped with the necessary skills to lead effectively. DeRue & Myers (2014) emphasized the importance of leadership development in higher education, noting that students with leadership experience (e.g., through project management or extracurricular activities) are more likely to succeed in supervisory roles. Furthermore, Northouse (2018) asserts that leadership in modern organizations increasingly demands collaboration, effective task management, and the ability to maintain composure in stressful situations.

Table 6 presents data of the employers' assessment on the leadership skills of CSU Gonzaga graduates holding rank and file positions in six components (LS2.1, LS2.2, LS2.3, LS2.4, LS2.5, and LS2.6). Five of the skill components (LS2.1, LS2.2, LS2.3, LS2.4, LS2.5) received mean scores ranging from 4.07 to 4.20 which indicates that participants are "somewhat satisfied" while one component (LS2.6) received a higher mean score of 4.37 described as "very satisfied" perception. The standard deviations for each component range from 0.676 to 0.852 which implies moderate to relatively high variability in responses across the different components. The 4.17 overall mean described as "somewhat satisfied" clearly suggests a moderate level of satisfaction among participants on the leadership skills of CSU Gonzaga graduates who hold rank and file positions.

*Table 6. Employers' Assessment on the Graduates' Leadership Skills 2*

Leadership Skills 2	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Descriptor
LS2.1: Collaborate with colleagues in the workplace.	198	4.20	.676	Somewhat Satisfied
LS2.2: Initiate and do tasks independently to achieve the organization's goal.	198	4.07	.713	Somewhat Satisfied
LS2.3: Support programs and activities of the department or organization.	199	4.16	.718	Somewhat Satisfied
LS2.4: Maintain self-control in the midst of stressful encounters with the group members.	200	4.17	.724	Somewhat Satisfied
LS2.5: Take responsibility and risks in making decisions.	200	4.07	.754	Somewhat Satisfied
LS2.6: Foster exemplary actions and behavior for others to emulate.	200	4.37	.852	Very Satisfied
Overall Mean		4.17		Somewhat Satisfied

The "somewhat satisfied" rating in leadership skills for graduates holding non-managerial positions indicates that while these employees show initiative and support organizational goals, there is a perceived gap in their leadership potentials. The lower ratings in areas such as independent task initiation and decision-making reflect the need for further development in self-leadership and autonomy among graduates. This could highlight the university's need for more opportunities within the curriculum to cultivate leadership skills among all students, and not just those who are likely to enter managerial positions. Hinchliffe & Jolly (2011) examined graduate employability and found that leadership skills are often developed inadequately in non-managerial graduates. Komives et al. (2011) also underscored the importance of encouraging leadership skills even in non-managerial employees, suggesting that programs should foster leadership capabilities among all graduates, regardless of their expected career path.

Table 7 presents data of the employers' assessment on the IT skills of CSU Gonzaga graduates across two components (IT1 and IT2) which received mean scores of 4.34 and 4.38 accordingly, suggesting that the employers are "very satisfied" with the way the employees utilize technology for research and evaluation of communicative information, and their application of fundamental undertaking of the ethical/legal issues in the access of information

technologies. The 4.29 overall mean suggests that participants are “very satisfied” with the IT skills of CSU Gonzaga graduates.

*Table 7. Employers’ Assessment on the Graduates’ IT Skills*

IT Skills	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Descriptor
IT1: Use of technology as a tool to research, organize and evaluate communicative information.	199	4.34	.843	Very Satisfied
IT3: Apply fundamental undertaking of the ethical/legal issues in the access of information technologies.	199	4.38	.819	Very Satisfied
Overall Mean		4.29		Very Satisfied

The high level of satisfaction with the employees’ IT skills indicates that graduates are well-prepared for the technology-driven aspects of their work. This suggests that the current curriculum meets the technological demands of employers. As noted by Bridgstock (2009), technological literacy is a crucial component of employability in the modern economy. CSU’s focus on IT skills aligns with the growing need for digital proficiency across industries. Suleman (2018) also highlights that with the rapid pace of technological advancement, graduates need to continuously upgrade their IT skills to remain competitive.

#### **Employer’s Assessment on the Qualities of CSU Gonzaga Graduates Work, Knowledge and Diligence, Initiative and Commitment, Punctuality and Attendance,**

Table 8 shows data of the employers’ assessment on CSU Gonzaga graduates’ quality of work as categorized in three components (Q1, Q2, and Q3). The mean scores for Q1, Q2, and Q3 are 4.35, 4.34, and 4.28, respectively, while the standard deviations range from 0.794 to 0.856, indicating moderate variability in responses. With an overall mean of 4.37, it shows that there is a high level of satisfaction among participants on the quality of work provided by CSU Gonzaga graduates specifically in terms of accuracy, acceptability and correctness. Bridgstock (2009) emphasizes that quality of work is directly linked to employability, particularly in how accurately and thoroughly employees complete tasks. Employers expect a high standard of work quality, and graduates who can consistently meet these expectations are more likely to be retained and promoted.

*Table 8. Employers’ Assessment on the Graduates’ Quality of Work*

Quality of Work	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Descriptor
Q1: The employee works accurately and thoroughly.	200	4.3500	.79414	Very Satisfied
Q2: His/her work is presentable and acceptable.	200	4.3350	.82229	Very Satisfied
Q3: He/she can detect and correct errors.	200	4.2750	.85618	Very Satisfied
Overall Mean		4.32		Very Satisfied

Table 9 presents the assessment of employers on the knowledge and diligence of CSU Gonzaga graduates. It shows that employers are somewhat satisfied with the graduates’ knowledge with a mean of 4.10 and are very satisfied with their diligence with a mean of 4.31. This implies that while graduates demonstrate a strong work ethic and concentration, there may be gaps in their job-specific knowledge that need to be addressed. Yorke & Knight (2006) highlight the importance of both knowledge and diligence in job performance. While diligence and hard work can compensate for a lack of knowledge, the ideal scenario involves graduates possessing both attributes to a high degree. Employers value employees who do not only work hard but also demonstrate deep knowledge about their roles. Moreover, Kampkoetter et al. (2021) also highlight the importance of job-specific knowledge in influencing overall job satisfaction. They concluded that more tailored training is necessary to bridge the gap between academic knowledge and industry demands.



*Table 9. Employers' Assessment on the Graduates' Knowledge and Diligence*

Knowledge and Diligence	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Descriptor
Knowledge: He/she knows and performs the functions and responsibilities required in his/her job.	200	4.0950	.79948	Somewhat Satisfied
Diligence: He/she shows hard work and concentrates on the work at hand.	200	4.3050	.88083	Very Satisfied

Table 10 shows the assessment of employers on the initiative and commitment of CSU Gonzaga graduates. Graduates show a strong initiative with a mean of 4.32, but slightly lower commitment in terms of accepting tasks beyond working hours with a mean of 4.14. The result indicates that while the graduates willingly take responsibility, their commitment to perform tasks beyond working hours might be an area for growth. Ting et al. (2017) argue that initiative is a key competency that employers seek, especially in dynamic work environments. Employees who demonstrate initiative tend to perform better and are more likely to take leadership roles. However, commitment, especially in working beyond typical responsibilities, can further enhance career growth and long-term job satisfaction. Khavis and Krishnan (2021) emphasize the role of initiative and commitment in employee ratings. They argue that initiative often leads to faster career growth, but longer-term engagement like commitment to tasks beyond work hours, requires deeper involvement in the organization's goals.

*Table 10. Employers' Assessment on the Graduates' Initiative and Commitment*

Initiative and Commitment	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Descriptor
Initiative: He/she assumes responsibility willingly and voluntarily.	200	4.3150	.83622	Very Satisfied
Commitment: Accepts and performs tasks beyond working hours.	200	4.1350	.72761	Somewhat Satisfied
Overall Mean		4.23		Very Satisfied

Table 11 presents data on the employers' assessment of CSU Gonzaga graduates' punctuality and attendance. The "very satisfied" remarks of employers on the punctuality and attendance of employees indicate that CSU Gonzaga graduates are reliable and dependable in maintaining their work schedules. This is a significant strength as punctuality and regular attendance are essential traits for workplace professionalism. Northouse (2018) notes that punctuality and attendance are foundational aspects of professional behavior. Employees who consistently meet these expectations are more likely to be perceived as reliable and competent, which contributes to their overall performance evaluations and potential for advancement. Similarly, Gottwald and Lejsková (2023) emphasize that reliability, marked by consistent attendance and punctuality, is crucial for fostering trust and dependability within an organization.

*Table 11. Employers' Assessment on the Graduates' Punctuality and Attendance*

Punctuality and Attendance	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Descriptor
Punctuality: Comes to work regularly and on time.	200	4.4300	.80520	Very Satisfied
Attendance: Observes break periods properly.	200	4.2750	.64922	Very Satisfied
Overall Mean		4.35		Very Satisfied

### Strengths and Challenges faced by CSU Gonzaga graduates

The thematic analysis of employer interviews revealed a comprehensive understanding of the strengths and challenges faced by CSU Gonzaga graduates. A primary concern involved the university's curriculum alignment, especially in the field of Information Technology, where artificial intelligence (AI) and other emerging technologies remain underrepresented. While CHED Memorandum Orders like CMO 25, s. 2015 and CMO 5, s. 2018 set broad curriculum guidelines, employers noted that these do not adequately address AI-specific skill sets, leading to skill gaps in modern workplaces. In terms of soft skills, employers highlighted significant deficiencies in communication, particularly in written and verbal forms. Despite possessing technical know-how, graduates struggle with articulating thoughts effectively in professional settings, a problem tied closely to weak reading comprehension and critical analysis abilities, as echoed in the literature (Suleman, 2018). Punctuality and work discipline emerged as moderate concerns. While some graduates demonstrated commendable behavior and professional demeanor, timeliness and adherence to schedules were found lacking. According to Heckman and Kautz (2012), such behavioral traits are strong indicators of career longevity and reliability.

Table 12. Emerging Themes and Employer Feedback on Graduate Employability

Theme	Description	Implication/Employer Feedback
1. Curriculum Alignment with AI	Curriculum is not yet updated with AI and emerging technologies	Graduates may lack competencies in AI, machine learning, and automation
2. Communication Skills	Graduates show weak verbal and written communication skills	Limits performance in documentation, reporting, and collaboration
3. Reading Comprehension	Difficulty in interpreting complex texts	Affects ability to analyze, summarize, and make decisions from written data
4. Punctuality and Work Ethic	Irregular timeliness and schedule adherence observed	Perceived lack of discipline; may affect professional image and reliability
5. Positive Workplace Behavior	Employers note good conduct, respectfulness, and discipline	Indicates potential for long-term professional growth
6. Job Hopping	Graduates frequently shift from one job to another	Signals issues with long-term planning, mismatch of expectations
7. Globalized Curriculum	Emphasis on internationalization (CMO 5, s. 2018)	Need to balance global standards with local and technological relevance like AI

Interestingly, employers lauded the general attitude and discipline of CSU graduates, describing them as respectful and well-behaved in workplace contexts, characteristics valued in long-term employee development (Robles, 2012). However, job hopping was noted, suggesting potential misalignment between career expectations and workplace realities (Baruch & Holtom, 2008). Generally, while CSU's adoption of a globalized curriculum under CMO 5, s. 2018 is seen as a forward-thinking initiative, employers recommended a hybrid model that integrates both global competencies and technology-forward content. This balance is crucial to enhance graduate employability in today's evolving job landscape. These findings imply a strong call for continuous curriculum review, industry collaboration, and the integration of real-world problem-solving scenarios.

## CONCLUSION

This study assessed the satisfaction of employers with the job performance of Cagayan State University (CSU) Gonzaga Campus graduates from academic years 2019 to 2021 using a descriptive survey research design. Overall, findings revealed that employers are generally satisfied with the graduates' skills, work habits, and professional behavior. The demographic profile showed a strong female presence in both employer and employee roles, reflecting a shift toward gender inclusivity in the workplace. Employers rated CSU Gonzaga graduates highly in communication, leadership (particularly in managerial roles), human relations, and IT skills. However, moderate satisfaction was expressed regarding problem-solving and leadership skills among rank-and-file employees. This highlights the need to strengthen critical thinking, decision-making, and self-leadership in the university curriculum. In terms of personal attributes, employers commended graduates' diligence, initiative, punctuality, and general work quality. These traits reflect a solid foundation of discipline and responsibility. Nonetheless, some employers identified areas for growth, particularly in job-specific knowledge and commitment beyond basic tasks, suggesting the importance of fostering deeper technical competence and proactive workplace engagement. Graduates were seen as disciplined and adaptable, yet challenges remain in aligning academic training with evolving industry needs. Gaps in communication proficiency, technological skills, and work ethic in dynamic environments were also noted. CSU

Gonzaga graduates are viewed as capable and dependable employees. However, to meet the demands of an increasingly competitive and fast-changing job market, there is a need for continuous curriculum enhancement, stronger industry-academe collaboration, and more experiential learning opportunities. These efforts will help ensure that future graduates are not only job-ready but also equipped to lead, innovate, and thrive in their chosen fields.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed to improve the employability and workplace readiness of CSU Gonzaga graduates: (1) The university should review and revise its academic programs to integrate more training on problem-solving, critical thinking, and decision-making skills, particularly in programs where graduates assume rank-and-file roles. This will address the moderate satisfaction levels observed in these areas. (2) There is a need to embed self-leadership, initiative, and managerial skills in both curricular and co-curricular activities, especially for non-managerial tracks. Programs such as leadership camps, student-led initiatives, and project-based learning may contribute to developing these competencies; (3) Graduates should be better prepared with updated technical knowledge and industry-relevant competencies through the inclusion of specialized certifications, immersion programs, and real-world simulations in their respective fields. (4) The university should strengthen partnerships with local and national industries to ensure ongoing curriculum alignment with labor market trends, and to offer opportunities for internships, job shadowing, and mentorship programs; (5) Targeted training on professional communication, digital literacy, and collaborative platforms should be integrated into general education and program-specific courses, to ensure that graduates meet current workplace standards; (6) Regular employer satisfaction surveys and graduate tracer studies should be conducted to provide feedback for continuous improvement and ensure that graduate attributes remain relevant and competitive; and (7) Reinforce the importance of discipline, punctuality, and integrity through value-laden instruction and school-wide advocacy programs to sustain the commendable behavioral attributes already recognized by employers.

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