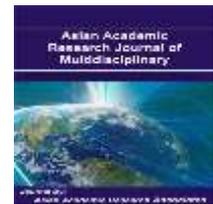




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**GRADUATE'S EMPLOYABILITY: A TRACER STUDY FOR BACHELOR OF
SCIENCE IN HOTEL AND RESTAURANT MANAGEMENT**

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ABSTRACT

This study primarily determined the employability of the graduates of Hotel and Restaurant Management of Lyceum of Philippines University from 2005-2009. Specifically, it sought to determine the job placement profile of the graduates and relevance of school related factors to job placement. It also identified the work related values and skills that contribute in meeting the demands of the present job. Furthermore, this research proposes a program to improve employment rate for Hotel and Restaurant Management graduates of LPU. This tracer study used the descriptive research design. Majority of the respondents are gainfully employed and landed a job from one to two years after graduation. Most of them are on contractual basis and are working in the Philippines. Majority are professionals working as rank and file in HRM establishments. Salaries and benefits play a big role in staying or leaving the first job. Human Relations skills and communication skills are deemed to be the most useful competencies learned by the graduates from LPU; perseverance was the highest work value for the respondents. Languages play an important role in their work while professional subjects are relevant for job placement and the faculty member's communication and mastery skills proved the most important in terms of school related factors in terms of faculty and instruction.

Keywords: Hotel Management, Restaurant, employment, employability skills, communication skills, tracer study

INTRODUCTION

One of the factors that determine the effectiveness of an academic institution is through the employability of its graduates. The quality of graduates is very much a function of quality instruction and facilities because these will help ensure that graduates are equipped with the knowledge, skills and values that will enable them to work in their respective field. Mitchell and Ashley (2006) also pointed out that the most important pro-poor impact of tourism is the local employment generated by the industry. Tourism is significantly more labor intensive than other non-agricultural sectors as supported by cross-country comparison data.

Lyceum of the Philippines University through the College of International Tourism and Hospitality Management specifically Hotel and Restaurant Management program has developed a well-organized and strategic program of career counseling and job placement to support students and young alumni. Establishing and expanding linkages to both local and international firms for possible job placement and assistance is another major responsibility of the University. At present, the university is enjoying the fruitful collaboration with Dusit International. This collaboration opens the door for continuous improvement of the programs' curricular offerings, instruction and other academic undertakings that will ensure the quality of hospitality and tourism education.

Buted (2009) investigated the competency-based curriculum enrichment of HRM Education in the context of Asian Hospitality Business Experiences. He posited that the philosophy of education in Southeast Asian countries is developing the potential of individuals in a holistic and integrated manner, to achieve the fullest potential for all by giving quality education to provide high quality human resources and to help their students discover their own talents, make the best of these talents and realize their full potential.

However studies have shown that there has been a serious gap in the education system that arises from having curricula that are unsuitable in providing graduates opportunities for employment. It is also noted that the one million college graduates annually, only five to ten percent are employed in jobs consistent to their course, only 30 to 40 percent will find any

employment. According to Soriano in the article of Milan (2010) that the vast majority of graduates will remain unemployed.” He says the country is producing too many nursing and tourism graduates who are unqualified to be hired abroad.

Faced with these challenges of putting the Philippines in the growing international tourism market, educational institutions have to strengthen its competitiveness in order to produce graduates worthy of employment.

Notable findings of a tracer study by Celis and Felicen (2011) this research revealed that majority of Tourism graduates or 76.74% landed a job related to their course, with a three-month waiting period. However, the research recommended a strong program for enhancement in communication skills for the students to be prepared as front liners in tourism industry. Further, that the university has to put up job consultation office to intensify its program on graduates’ employability. The studies of Menez and Ylagan (2011) and Buted and Menez (2005) whose findings revealed that there is a high demand for job opportunities of BS HRM and that the graduates of the said program immediately find employment along their field of specialization.

In the light of the mandate that LPU has to provide a challenging and relevant curriculum in the fulfillment of its mission, it is imperative for CITHM HRM program to examine its curriculum to facilitate more effective learning among HRM students and thus better respond to the needs of the tourism and hospitality industry. Hence this study has been undertaken.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study primarily determined the employability of the graduates of Hotel and Restaurant Management of Lyceum of Philippines University from 2005-2009. Specifically, it sought to determine the job placement profile of the graduates and relevance of school related factors to job placement. It also identified the work related values and skills that contribute in meeting the demands of the present job. Furthermore, this research proposes a program to improve employment rate for Hotel and Restaurant Management graduates of LPU.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

This tracer study used the descriptive research design. The respondents of the study were 96 Hotel and Restaurant Management Graduates from 2005 to 2009. Questionnaire was the main instrument used in this study. The questionnaire consists of four parts: respondents' profile, job placement of the respondents and relevance of school related factors to the job placement of the respondents and skills developed by LPU and work – related values.

The Lyceum Research Center provided the survey questionnaire to be used for this study. This research focused on the relevance of curriculum, faculty, instruction and laboratories to the job placement of the respondents because these are the variables revealed with somehow significant relevance to their job placement. The skills developed by LPU and work-related values are also being looked into by the use of researcher-made questions. The questionnaire was validated by the research experts and Research Director of Lyceum of the Philippines University.

Personal data such as names, addresses and telephone/cellular phone numbers of the graduates from 2005 – 2009 were obtained from their undergraduate theses' index - curriculum vitae. The researchers administered some of the questionnaires personally and others were mailed to the graduate – respondents. The researcher also asked for the help and assistance of friends, relatives and currently enrolled students from the time of data gathering for the personal delivery of the questionnaire to the identified respondents.

The researcher used electronic mail or e-mail in sending the questionnaires. It was the most convenient and fastest way of sending notes, letters and messages. Most of the graduate respondents use computers in their offices or companies which meant that it was easier to communicate with them to solicit their participation in the study.

The data collected were tabulated and coded for analysis. The following statistical tools were employed in interpreting the data obtained from the survey: percentage was used to analyze the profile of the respondents with respect to the selected variables; weighted mean was used to determine the degree of perception of the graduate respondents in the school factors related to

their job placement; and Rank was utilized to will show the position of importance of the items used.

The respondents were given five options to identify the factors that contributed to the placement of the computer engineering graduates in their present employment and to determine the skills developed by Lyceum of the Philippines University and work related values of the respondents.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Majority of the respondents (78 or 81.30%) were employed compared to those graduates who were unemployed (15.60%) or never employed (3.10). This is indicative of the high demand for hospitality and tourism practitioners it can be concluded that graduates of HRM can easily find a job due to the demands of the market in the hospitality industry. This was supported by Mitchell and Ashley (2006) who point out that the most important pro-poor impact of tourism is the local employment generated by the industry. Tourism is significantly more labor intensive than other non-agricultural sectors as supported by cross-country comparison data for tourism employment. In the past Tracer Study of Bachelor of Science in Hotel and Restaurant Management of Lyceum of the Philippines University from 2001-2005 conducted by Meñez and Ylagan (2011) they also posted a 91.30 percent employability for CIHM graduates. The table also revealed a 15.60 percent unemployment rate and 3.10 percent of those who have never been employed. The reasons given were family concerns, personal decisions, and health concerns.

Majority of the HRM graduates are contractual (29%) and temporary (26.92%) with 8 percent self employed. The hospitality and tourism industry like any other industry strictly adheres with the policy on employment status. Unfortunately some of this hospitality and tourism enterprises made a paradigm shift in regularizing their employees, wherein they utilize the outsourcing mechanism which unloads them from their regularization responsibilities. This new mechanism hinders the possibilities of the HRM graduates to be permanent in the job, because they are employed on contractual basis.

Majority of the graduates are gainfully employed on a regular or full time basis (60.26%) in their field of specialization followed by being self-employed (23 or 29.49%) which means they may be working for oneself in one's own profession or business or not working for another firm and drawing a salary. At least eight or 10.26% disclosed that they are underemployed (part-time job; job is not related to field of specialization).

Majority (21 or 26.92%) of the respondents are all professionals, followed by being clerks. The least present occupation of the respondents is a special occupation (1.28%). Employment in the hospitality industry means more opportunities than just working in hotels and motels. Cruise ships, resort accommodations, spa and sport locations, private bed and breakfasts, retirement communities, RV parks and really any place that affords overnight lodging can also be factored into the mix. The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that over 62,000 American service-related companies provide rooms to vacation seekers as well as those who travel for business.

Major lines of business of the companies where HRM graduates are employed are those that did with hotels and restaurants represented by 37 or 50 percent. Other companies are engaged in wholesale and retail of vehicles, real estate, private employment, and a host of other businesses.

The types of hospitality jobs are so diverse; the service industry represents the largest occupational group of all workers, including part time and seasonal employees. Typical management jobs are regional manager, front of house manager, front desk manager, training and personnel manager, operations manager, guest services manager and night manager. Service employees responsible to these various departments are the food and beverage manager, restaurant and bar managers, head housekeeper, maintenance and security manager, banquets and catering managers, executive chef and sales executive, head receptionist and night auditor. Working conditions, of course, will vary as each individual job description is so unique, but essentially the new hire will most likely be working rotating shifts according to experience and seniority in this 24-hour service business. There are peak seasons when more staff will be brought on and workers will find themselves working overtime, or on odd shifts to cover a

particularly high demand, such as might come about with a festival, specific celebration or convention.

There were 67.95 percent of the graduates are working in the Philippines. The result implies that most of international hospitality and tourism job opportunities require ample work experience that they have to settle for a local job. The hospitality industry has been experiencing boom. A plethora of new hotels have been opened; contract catering is becoming an ever-stronger force to be reckoned with; new concepts are abounding; and there is a constant need for top-level industry consultants to advise on the profession as its trans-global expansion continues apace.

On the other hand, the succeeding table presents the First job After College of the HRM graduates, it was revealed that 61.54 percent of the respondents is presently working with their first job after graduation. This table shows that majority of the HRM graduates are showing stability in their chosen first job. It was revealed in an informal interview with the graduates that most of them are still with their first job because they like to gain industry experience.

Thirty one respondents or 39.74 percent stayed for salaries and benefit reasons, and followed by career challenge. The respondents had a first job related to HRM (44 or 56.41%). The industry has changed dramatically over the past 20 years, requiring a high degree of technical and managerial competence for aspiring professionals wishing to enter the field. The industry's rate of growth is unmatched by any other field – offering professions that have consistently shown real growth.

The data in reveal that majority of the respondents find the first job in one year to less than two years and followed by one to six months responses. This result only signifies the competitiveness of the LPU CITHM graduate especially in, the hospitality and tourism industry where the demand and looking for qualified employees who will carry out the job required by the business is high.

The data show that 37.18 percent or 29 of the HRM graduates accepted the first job even it is not related to hospitality and tourism is because they believe that it is somehow related with

their special skills. This was followed by the reason of salaries and benefits (32.05 percent). It was revealed in the interview that LPU-CITHM graduates believe that experience will play an important role in looking for a more stable job in the industry.

Salaries and benefits are the main reason why they have their jobs, followed by the reason of relatedness to special skills. The data show that LPU-CITHM graduates really value the competitiveness of the benefits and salaries as they believe that it will compensate very well the competency that they have.

Majority of the respondents stayed for one year to less than two years in their first job. There were 38.46 percent of the respondents utilized information from friends in searching for jobs. It was followed by advertisement and job fair with 17.95 percent.

There were 26.92 percent of the HRM graduates waited for one year to less than two years before they landed a job. It was immediately followed by less than a month of job waiting. The job level position of first job of the respondents, and it shows that 52.26 percent of the respondents had a rank or clerical jobs.

There were 26.92 percent of the HRM graduates is earning P15,000.00 to less than P20,000.00, this was followed by below P5,000.00 as the initial gross monthly earning. Hospitality industry salaries vary widely according to the type of job. Someone who is the manager of a resort will earn vastly more than someone who cleans rooms. Many jobs such as waiters and housekeepers make a little more than minimum wage, or about \$18,720 a year, according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics. Food and beverage directors, according to Pay Scale, average around \$64,000 as of 2010. The highest paying job in the hospitality industry belongs to the managers. Banquet managers, revenue managers, and directors of hotel sales and hospitality earn an average of around \$50,000 a year.

The responses showed that entrepreneurship skills ranks number 1 and followed by human relation skills. The problem solving skills had the lowest responses with 34.62 percent.

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Hotel and Restaurant Management Graduates In Terms of Competencies Learned in College They Find Very Useful in Their First Job

Skills	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Communication skills	45	57.69
Human relations skills	68	87.18
Entrepreneurship skills	71	91.03
Information technology skills	32	41.03
Problem-solving skills	27	34.62
Critical thinking skills	31	39.74

**Multiple Responses*

The HRM program injected Entrepreneurship course to its curriculum to give students a strong foundation in Hospitality and Tourism skills as well as in entrepreneurship and management. Entrepreneurship contributes a significant portion of job creation both nationally and locally. Managing or starting a business requires a unique combination of skills in management, finance, marketing, technology, and communication. The skills learned in this degree, together with work experience, are intended to qualify graduates to enter management in an existing hospitality business or start a new venture.

However, problem solving skill was considered the least useful among the listed indicators because this was not emphasized in the curriculum of BS HRM. Therefore, it is suggested to include problem solving or critical thinking subjects applied to hospitality and tourism industry in the new curriculum.

Almost half of them considered problem solving skills to be one of the useful competencies learned in college as well as critical thinking skills. These are being utilized by the respondents in answering the demands and challenges of the day-to-day activities on their respective work places. It is always necessary to develop these skills to boost their self-confidence and resourcefulness that would make them successful in dealing and giving answers to company problems.

Table 2. Work – Related Values Contributed in Meeting the Demands of the Present Employment of the Respondents

Work-Related Values	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. Love for God	4.35	Much	2
2. Honesty and love for truth	3.67	Much	14
3. Punctuality	3.75	Much	11
4. Obedience to superior	3.58	Much	16
5. Perseverance and hard work	3.66	Much	15
6. Creativity and innovativeness	3.71	Much	12
7. Courage	3.55	Much	17
8. Professional Integrity	3.89	Much	10
9. Love for co-workers and others	4.08	Much	5
10. Unity	3.97	Much	9
11. Fairness and Justice	4.02	Much	7
12. Leadership	3.99	Much	8
13. Tolerance	4.04	Much	6
14. Efficiency	4.12	Much	4
15. Supportiveness	3.68	Much	13
16. Perseverance	4.44	Much	1
17. Nationalism	4.15	Much	3
Composite Mean	3.92	Much	

The Table 2 shows the work related values that contribute in meeting the demands of the present employment of the graduates. It shows that perseverance got the highest weighted mean of 4.44, followed by love for god with a weighted mean of 4.35. Courage got the lowest weighted mean of 3.55. Certainly these and the other work values have contributed to the respondents' ability to meet the demands of this present employment.

Table 3. Relevance of School Related Factors to the Job Placement of Respondents
in terms of Curriculum

General Education Subjects	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. Mathematics	2.96	Relevant	2
2. Languages	3.02	Relevant	1
3. Natural Sciences	2.81	Relevant	3
Composite Mean	2.93	Relevant	
Professional Subjects	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. Fundamentals of Nutrition	2.76	Relevant	15.5
2. Principles of Food Preparation and Selection	2.78	Relevant	13
3. Introduction to Hospitality Industry	2.97	Relevant	5
4. Food and General Chemistry	2.86	Relevant	11
5. Food Microbiology, Hygiene Sanitation	2.94	Relevant	7
6. Bakery Science and Cake Decorating	3.10	Relevant	2
7. Travel and Tour Operations with laws	2.76	Relevant	15.5
8. Meal Management	2.74	Relevant	18.5
9. Bar Management	2.97	Relevant	5
10. Catering and Banquet Service Operations	2.86	Relevant	11
11. Front Office / Housekeeping Management	2.90	Relevant	8.5
12. Food Processing and Preservation	3.09	Relevant	3
13. Principles of Salesmanship in Hospitality Industry	2.77	Relevant	14
14. International Cuisine	2.74	Relevant	18.5
15. Food Service Facilities Design and Layout	2.97	Relevant	5
16. Conservation and Utilization of Natural Resources	2.86	Relevant	11
17. Institutional Food Management with Modern	2.90	Relevant	8.5
18. Recreation Management and Gaming Industry	3.36	Relevant	1
19. Research Methods / Feasibility Study	2.74	Relevant	18.5
20. Tourism Planning and Development	2.74	Relevant	18.5
Composite Mean	2.89	Relevant	

The table shows that the graduates find all the general education courses relevant. With languages getting the highest weighted mean of 3.02. This is similar to the findings of Celis and Felicen (2011), who stated that the curriculum has been effective on producing competitive graduates. Both General Education and Professional Subjects have been useful to the employment of the respondents. Similarly all the Professional Subjects were also found relevant and useful by the HRM graduates.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Majority of the respondents are gainfully employed and landed a job from one to two years after graduation. Most of them are on contractual basis and are working in the Philippines. Majority are professionals working as rank and file in HRM establishments. Majority are still holding their first job after graduation. Salaries and benefits play a big role in staying or leaving the first job. Most of them are earning 15,000 pesos –less than 20,000 pesos per month. Human Relations skills and communication skills are deemed to be the most useful competencies learned by the graduates from LPU; perseverance was the highest work value for the respondents. Languages play an important role in their work.

Professional subjects are relevant for job placement and the faculty member's communication and mastery skills proved the most important in terms of school related factors in terms of faculty and instruction. All school related factors to the job placement of Hotel and Restaurant Management graduates were deemed to be relevant. The employment rate of Hotel and Restaurant Management from 2005 – 2009 of LPU is considered employable and this study aimed to propose a program that would enhance the future employment ratings of its graduates. In this way, the College of International Tourism and Hospitality Management must strengthen their services and focus on quality instruction with the support of research and community extension.

The CITHM may regularly update once a year the status of their graduates and ask for possible curriculum enhancement programs they could offer at the College. The CITHM faculty may encourage the students to be more motivated to work hard and persevere in whatever task and project assigned to them to develop their sense of responsibility and leadership. Their

competencies may be further strengthened through exposure to various competitions and other related training and seminars. Further students should be encouraged continue to participate in the English Proficiency Programs to further enhance their oral and written communication skills. Work skills and values of the HRM students must be further emphasized in the application of the outcomes based curriculum. Faculty Members teaching General Education and Professional Subjects may be encouraged to continue to update and enhance teaching skills through various re training programs facilitated by the university. The CITHM must continue to tap linkages that will bring possible employment opportunities for its graduates.

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