

Employment Status of the Tourism Graduates of Batch 2013 in Lyceum of the Philippines University-Batangas

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Abstract

A growing number of employees and newly graduates must be a fully equipped with knowledge and skills to be competitive in their perspective field. At this point the educational attainment of the individual is given great emphasis. Investment on tertiary education serves as the foundation that prepares the students for their future careers can get a systematic feedback from former students. The researchers focused their study on the Employment Opportunities Among Tourism Graduates of Lyceum of the Philippines University Batangas Batch 2013. More specifically, it described the data and employment status of the graduates, assessed the work related values to employment, determined the school related factors affecting graduates employability and proposed an action plan or program to enhance the curriculum and services offered by Lyceum of the Philippines University Batangas towards greater employability rate of graduates. The researchers used the descriptive method or design. The researchers found out that, majority of the graduates are presently employed, all the identified work related values particularly professional integrity was possessed by the respondents, school related factors is very essential for the employability as it has a greatest influence on their employment, and proposed curriculum enhancement and program maybe sustained for improvement to produce greater employability rate of the graduates.

Keywords: Employment Opportunities, Tourism Graduates, Filipino Students, Knowledge, Skills

INTRODUCTION

A growing number of employees and newly graduates must be fully equipped with knowledge and skills to be competitive in their respective field. At this point the educational attainment of the individual is given great emphasis. Investment on tertiary education serves as the foundation that prepares the students for their future careers can get a systematic feedback from former students. To know the whereabouts of the graduates, their working conditions and their retrospective assessment of their course of study might stimulate the curricular debate and could also be very interesting for their current or later students (Alday et al. 2007).

As regular employees they have plenty of benefits. All workers are wanted to be regular to their job to gain experience. They find status of associate graduates in terms of employment status are regular and some are contractual basis, it is because many of the industries hired a professional or managerial position to be regular employees and some of the applicants are fresh graduates or the only want is to gained experience are place to contractual (Uy et al 2013).

Richardson (2010) agrees in declaring that employee's attitudes, performance and behavior are key determinants of service quality, which has a direct linkage to customer satisfaction and loyalty.

A high- quality tourism work store can only be achieved through high standard of tourism education and training. Tourism education and training involves the communication of knowledge, concepts and techniques that are specific to the field of tourism, but which draw upon the core disciplines and themes of areas such as geography, finance and marketing (Agtay et al, 2013).

Perseverance is important because in the continuity of regular tasks or ideas in spite of several complications or difficulties. It is being able to bear difficulties calmly without complaint. It is a commitment, endurance, patience and hard work. In other words if happiness ranks superior than wealth, a person should not persist in making money in many ways which may become the reason for personal unhappiness (Campbell, 2007). Being self motivated is the ability to determine what should be done and decide how to accomplish it. This is an invaluable skill, especially if you are working without any direct supervision as thus an independent sales representative, (Rice et al, 2008).

Ensuring the quality performance of an employee begins with himself, since tourism industry is in a people business. Tourism is generally a people business, there are many important behind the scenes support careers that require individuals having well developed technical expertise to ensure the delivery of a high visitor experience. Those who prepare themselves, maintain high energy, have a talent for working with people, and have a dedication to high quality service will find themselves climbing the ladder to success (Agtay et al, 2013).

In the study of Uy et al (2013), found that the graduates of tourism are molded in terms of communication skills, and they are ready to faced and to talk to other people. Also, they are learned how to interact with the behavior of the people around them. The LPU Dusit Thani curricula meet the CHED requirements as indicated in the CHED Memorandum Order (CMO) 30, series 2003. Specialization were created in the 18 units free electives which were designed to provide students with unique subjects that will developed their competencies in the specific areas of their interests. Aside from the LPU institutional requirements, students are also provided with additional courses that are common for all tourism and hospitality management programs. As a result, the specialized pre elective go beyond the required units of CHED. Competencies identified in the TESDA relevant trades of tourism as well as, as the competencies in ASEAN Common Competency Standards for Tourism Professionals (ACCSTP) have been integrated to provide the LPU graduates preparation for the ASEAN GATS by 2015.

With its International tie up with DusitThani College of Thailand it allows LPU to offer DusitThani College's popular curriculum in various programs of hospitality management; Hotel and Restaurant Administration, International Travel and Tourism Management and Cruise Line Specialized in Hotel Services. Specializations were created in the 18 units free electives which were designated to provide students with unique subjects that will develop their competencies.

Another study of Gualberto and Ylagan (2008) proves that the graduates were employed in private and government services. It took them more than one year to wait to get employed. They got their jobs from referrals while some of them got the information from job fairs, advertisements and even from the internet. Graduates also claimed that they had acquired much intellectual skills (4.29), interpersonal skills (4.25), and communication skills (4.20). With regard to their present employment, the greater percentage of the respondents is working unprofessional, technical and even supervisory level. Some are assigned to clerical jobs while the rest put up their own business. In terms of unemployment, lack of work experience is one of the reasons. Others mention that no other job opportunities and further studies were their reasons for unemployment. With regards to the employment status and nature of employment, most of the respondents are working on a regular or permanent status

and were gainfully employed.

In terms of length of job search it can be noted that 22 or 44 percent of the employed graduates within 6 months with 12 or 24 percent of the employed graduates within one year, while 6 or 12 percent have reached within 3 months before they got into work. Majority of the employed graduates of BS Marine Transportation and Marine Engineering have stayed in their first job almost more than one year as manifested by 39 or 78 percent of the total employed respondents and still most of them are currently connected and 5 or 10% have worked and stayed in their jobs within one year while 4 or 8 percent of them stayed within 6 months in the company.

Garcia and Laguador (2011) that end of contract is the foremost reason of respondents who left job followed by the strict regulations of the company, low salary, age, related promotion and transferred from on board to shore related work.

Planning for a career in any area of tourism is an excellent investment in your future. As the fastest growing industry in the world, new job opportunities are being created and the diversity of skills needed to fill these positions span a wide range of interest and abilities. Career choices can be found in its many different sectors that include: accommodation; attractions; food and beverage; transportation; adventure tourism; events and conferences; tourism services and the travel trade.

Rice et, al (2008) claims that a travel counselor's job is varied. In fact, most travel counselors say this is what they like best about their job. A typical day can include conferring with suppliers and customers, issuing tickets, making reservations and giving advice on tourist attractions, weather conditions, customs, travel documents and much more.

In the study of Banaag et al (2012) shows that the students of cruise line operation acquired such skills with regard to checking customer service skills to ensure polite, efficient and effective service. They also learned that cruise line operation is also all about demonstration of a harmonious relationship with other prospective seafarers. They also need to be equipped with the skills in checking assistance to customer to ensure that is provided where required, in selection of food, items. They also acquired the skills on customer requirements in items of speed , service, quantity, quality additions and modifications to standard recipes and special requirements are determined and not use of selling skills is checked to ensure that they are appropriately employed according to enterprise procedure and attending scheduled team or shift meeting.

According to the study of Armedilla et al, (2011) the majority requirements needed in an airline are age, vision, body mass index and especially height. Majority of the flight attendants believed that fatigue and turbulence are the major problems they encounter during flight. Being a graduate of a Tourism or Hospitality program is not a major requirement to become a flight attendant.

Celis et. al (2013) claim that today there are more exciting, challenging and varied careers- offering opportunities for fast promotion- such as those offered by the hospitality, tourism and leisure industry. This is the world's fastest growing, job creating profession. The hospitality industry has been experiencing boom.

Another tracer study of Ylagan and Meñez (2007) concludes that HRM graduates can be employed either in a government private company with high job opportunities. According to Felicen and Mejia (2010), the majority of the tourism graduates are currently employed with 85.29 percent and many of them are regular or

permanent in their respective jobs and these jobs are held to be related their field of specialization. Majority of the respondents currently employed in rank and file position.

Employment opportunities maybe identified by studying jobs and determining the knowledge and skills requires. Once that is accomplished it is possible to plan employment progressions. These progressions can then serve as a basis for developing career paths. Once career ladders, it is possible to inventory jobs and determine where individuals with required skills and knowledge are needed or will be needed (Uy et al 2013).

The number of tourism graduates searching for jobs in the tourism industry is increasing information related to employment provided in this study reflects the expectations of the tourism industry to improve the skill attributes and knowledge required by the tourism industry, helping them to improve their employability (Wang Jie 2008).

In the study of Celis et. al (2007), they claimed that today, there are more exciting, challenging and varied careers offering opportunities for fast promotion such as those offered by the hospitality, tourism and leisure industry. This is the world's fastest- growing, job creating profession. 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 profession as its trans- global expansion continues apace.

Lyceum of the Philippines University in Batangas City, in its desire to be contributory to tourism education, offered Bachelor of Science in Tourism was recognized by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) in the year 1995 with recognition no. 057. The program was first offered with eight students and currently has seven hundred thirty five. For two consecutive academic years SY 2005-2006 and 2006-2007, LPU's Tourism students was the over – all national champion in the Tourism Skills Competition such as poster making, tour guiding, quiz bee and cultural presentation. This may be one proof that tourism students excel academically. The succeeding years LPU maintains the rank of second among the colleges and universities nationwide. Annual skills competition organized by the Tourism Educators of Schools, Colleges and Universities (TESCU) now with its new name, Union of Filipino Tourism Educators (UFTE).

Today, College of International Tourism and Hospitality Management is the First and only International Center for Excellence for Tourism and Hospitality Education (THE ICE) in the country. It is the first College to be recognized by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) as Center of Excellence in Hotel and Restaurant Management and Center for Development for Tourism Education. Winners of more than 35 National Awards and more than 8 International Recognitions in various skills competition, CITHM remains the most awarded HRM and Tourism School in the country. An active member of both professional organizations, CITHM remains to be a dynamic member of the group.

With its International tie up with DusitThani College of Thailand it allows LPU to offer Dusit Thani College's popular curriculum in various programs of hospitality management; Hotel and Restaurant Administration, International Travel and Tourism Management and Cruise Line Specialized in Hotel Services. Specializations were created in the 18 units free electives which were designated to provide students with unique subjects that will develop their competencies.

The aim of the researchers in conducting this study is to evaluate the current condition of the tourism

graduates in terms of their employment status for the benefit of the students who are currently enrolled in Travel and Tourism Program and for the aspiring graduating students. This may serve as their guide to be aware of the employability of tourism nowadays. To make it possible, the researchers will utilize tracer study that can help in assessing the relevance of knowledge and skills of the graduates acquired from the institution with their respective jobs and how the school related the factors affect then in terms of employment status.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The study determined the employability of Bachelor of Science in International Travel and Tourism Management graduates under the School Year 2012-2013. More specifically, it described the data and employment status of the graduates, assessed the work related values to employment, determined the school related factors affecting graduates employability and proposed an action plan or program to enhance the curriculum and services offered by Lyceum of the Philippines University-Batangas towards greater employability rate of graduates.

METHODS

The descriptive design of research was used by the researchers to accomplish this study. Descriptive research was used to describe characteristic of a population or phenomenon being studied. There were 137 graduates of Bachelor of Science in International Travel and Tourism Management batch 2013 under the Dusit Thani Curriculum. Using the 10 percent margin of error, the sample were 58 who became the respondents of the study. The researchers distributed the questionnaire personally, email and social networking sites. Thereafter, the data gathered were analyzed and interpreted. The questionnaires were the main instrument in gathering data. The questionnaires were based on CHED mandates of tracing university graduates. It consists of four parts: respondent's profile, job placement of the respondents and relevance of school related factors to the job placement of the respondents, skills developed by LPU and work-related values. The data collected were classified, tabulated and coded for analysis. The following statistical tools such as percentage and weighted mean were used to treat the obtained data. The weighted mean is computed with the different scores assigned with different weights. The weighted mean was calculated by assigning different weights to different values.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1 shows that the majority of the respondents are currently employed with the frequency of 36 and percentage of 62.10, and many of them are regular or permanent in their respective job. It also states that these jobs are held to be related to their field of specialization given the frequency of 34 and percentage of 94.44. The graduates also said that their nature of work is here locally in the Philippines were the frequency of 33 and 94.44 percent and majority of them are in a rank or clerical position with the frequency of 19 and 52.78 percent. The table also implicates that majority of the respondents currently employed in rank and file position followed by professional, technical or supervisory position. The respondents were currently employed in rank and file position followed by professional technical or supervisory.

Table 1. Employment Status of the Bachelor of Science in Tourism

	F	%
Presently Employed or Not		
Yes	36	62.10
No	15	25.90
Never Employed	7	12.00
Present Employment Status		
Regular or Permanent	18	50.00
Temporary	1	2.78
Casual	2	5.56
Contractual	13	36.11
Self - employed	2	5.56
Nature of Employment		
a. Gainfully employed (regular or full time; job held is related to field of specialization)	34	94.44
b. Self-employed (working for oneself maybe from one's own profession or business; not working for another firm and drawing a salary)	1	2.78
c. Underemployed (part time job; job is not related to your field of specialization)	1	2.78
Present Employment Status		
Local	33	91.67
Abroad	3	8.33
Current Job Level Position		
Rank or Clerical	19	52.78
Professional, Technical or Supervisory	17	47.22

Table 2. Skills Learned in College

Skills	F	%
a. Communication skills	42	70.00
b. Human relations skills	28	46.67
c. Entrepreneurship skills	6	10.00
d. Information technology skills	19	31.67
e. Problem-solving skills	24	40.00
f. Critical thinking skills	26	43.33

*Multiple Responses

It can be gleaned from the table that communication skills is the first factor that can contribute to the job

placement of the respondents with the frequency of 42 and a percentage of 70.00. Communication skills help them to be competitive in their career.

Employees must have strong communication skills, as they have to communicate with one another and with supervisors. Some employees working in customer service must also communicate directly with customers. Effective communication skills, are important to ensure written emails are clear, documents are readable and speech during presentation is clean and professional. Listening skills are also crucial, as employees must listen to different approaches and ideas for projects and assignments, especially when working as part of a team.

Table 3. Work Related Values

Work-Related Values	WM	VI	Rank
1. Love for God	4.83	Very Much	5.5
2. Honesty and love for truth	4.87	Very Much	2.5
3. Punctuality	4.85	Very Much	5
4. Obedience to superior	4.75	Very Much	12
5. Perseverance and hard work	4.87	Very Much	2.5
6. Creativity and innovativeness	4.60	Very Much	16
7. Courage	4.70	Very Much	14
8. Professional Integrity	4.89	Very Much	1
9. Love for co-workers and others	4.77	Very Much	10
10. Unity	4.83	Very Much	5.5
11. Fairness and Justice	4.81	Very Much	7
12. Leadership	4.79	Very Much	8
13. Tolerance	4.72	Very Much	13
14. Efficiency	4.68	Very Much	15
15. Supportiveness	4.77	Very Much	10
16. Perseverance	4.77	Very Much	10
17. Nationalism	4.51	Very Much	17
Composite Mean	4.77	Very Much	

Legend: 4.50 – 5.00 = Very Much; 3.50 – 4.49 = Much; 2.50 – 3.49 = Little; 1.50 – 2.49 = Very Little; 1.00 – 1.49 = Not at all

Based on the table, all the work- related values are considered the following work- related values with very much contribution, among these were: Professional Integrity (WM= 4.89), Perseverance and Hard work/ Honesty and Love for truth (WM=4.87), Punctuality (WM= 4.85), Love for God/ Unity (WM= 4.83), Fairness and Justice (WM= 4.81), Leadership (WM= 4.79), Love for co- workers and others/ supportiveness/ perseverance (WM=4.77), Obedience to superior (WM= 4.75), Tolerance (WM= 4.72), Courage (WM=4.70),Efficiency (WM=4.68), Creativity and innovativeness (WM=4.60) and Nationalism (Wm= 4.51).

Among the values mentioned, professional integrity, perseverance and hard work/ honesty and love for truth are top on the list. Perseverance is important because in the continuity of regular tasks or ideas in spite of several complications or difficulties. It is being able to bear difficulties calmly without complaint. It is a commitment, endurance, patience and hard work. In other words if happiness ranks superior than wealth, a person

should not persist in making money in many ways which may become the reason for personal unhappiness, (Campbell,2007).

Table 3.1
School Related Factors to Job Placement in terms of Curriculum and Instruction

General Education Subjects	WM	VI	Rank
1. Mathematics	3.04	Relevant	2
2. Languages	3.89	Very Relevant	1
3. Natural Sciences	2.85	Relevant	3
Composite Mean	2.88	Relevant	
Professional Subjects			
1. Transportation Management	3.70	Very Relevant	4
2. Airline Business	3.60	Very Relevant	6.5
3. Hospitality and Tourism Law	3.64	Very Relevant	5
4. Tourism Marketing	3.72	Very Relevant	2
5. International Fares and Ticketing	3.71	Very Relevant	3
6. Accommodation Management	3.77	Very Relevant	1
7. Tourism Planning and Development	3.58	Very Relevant	8
8. Tourism Impact and Sustainability	3.60	Very Relevant	6.5
9. Events Management	3.29	Relevant	10
10. Ecotourism	3.38	Relevant	9
Composite Mean	3.60	Very Relevant	

The data revealed that among the General Education Subjects, subjects about language with the weighted mean of 3.89 are perceived to be very relevant by the respondents to their employability. Communication and technical writing skills especially in English as the universal language plays a vital role in the jobs offered especially in tourism industry. Communication skills either oral or written had the greatest impacts on job placement.

While among the professional subjects, Accommodation Management ranked first with the weighted mean of 3.77. According to the respondents, Accommodation management subject holds all aspects of tourism, which is relevant in a way that they are able to acquire all the necessary attitudes especially in communicating guest as if in accommodation it tackles all about hospitality that is very essential to the industry. Tourism Marketing ranks second with the weighted mean of 3.72 which interpreted as very relevant. According to the respondents, Tourism Marketing subjects were very essential to their employability. They learned how to increase the sales of one company by applying the principles in Tourism Marketing.

Events Management subject ranks lowest with the weighted mean of 3.29 which interpreted as relevant. Many respondents were saying that their work was not in line with events and they were not able to apply their learning about events.

Table 4. Plan of Action

Key Result Area	Objective	Activities	Person Responsible
1. Information on Graduates	1. To describe the data and employment status of graduates.	Annual job fair	CITHM INTO (Internship Office)
2. Work Related Values	2. To assess the work related values to employment.	Provide strong connection with different establishments.	INTO (Internship Office)
3. School Related Factors	3. To determine the school related factors affecting graduates employability.	Conduct a survey with regards to the employability.	CITHM
4. University Curriculum & Services	4. To enhance the curriculum and service offered by LPU-B towards greater employability rate of graduates.	Review the current curriculum & determine what course and subject may be recommended for phase out and what must be added.	CITHM

CONCLUSION

Majority of the Bachelor of Science in International Travel and Tourism Management graduates are presently employed that is in line with the course that they have taken. All identified work related values particularly professional integrity was possessed by the respondents in their occupation. School related factors are very essential factor for the employability as it has a greatest influence on their employment. A proposed curriculum enhancement and program may be sustained for improvement to produce greater employability rate of the graduates.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A tracer study may be conducted every two years to achieve a nearly accurate determination of the status of their employment. The instructional competence of the faculty members maybe strengthened to help the students acquire knowledge, skills and values necessary in job placement. Students' communication skills maybe strengthened for graduates to be globally competitive. The proposed curriculum enhancement and program innovation must be tabled for discussions for future use of the CITHM.

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