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Best practices of Lyceum of the Philippines University and Dusit Thani Tie Up: Inputs to program competitiveness

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Abstract

Hospitality education has been a widely studied area in a hospitality curriculum evaluation. Internationalisation and linkages increases the quantity of graduate's efficiency in the way institutions are managed and producing graduates and professional's global outlook ready to be hired by internationalized economies. The Lyceum Hospitality curriculum was developed to integrate an in depth academics, laboratories and field internship programs that will ensure the efficiency and quality to meet worlds class standards. Thus, the purpose of this study was to investigate the tourism and hospitality management awards and linkages and its inputs to program competitiveness. The research was an avenue to evaluate the program competitiveness of Lyceum of the Philippine University-Batangas in the hospitality industry. The researcher used retrospective method of research in analyzing existing data provided by the CITHM department and internship office. The researcher utilized open ended interview and focus group discussions among faculty members of CITHM and students. The gathered data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The results revealed that the program competitiveness of LPU-B is a manifestation of the different awards, recognition and citations at both local and international scene. The linkages are marked by the placement of the On the Job Training (OJT) graduating students at different levels of the hospitality industry both locally and internationally.

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1. Introduction

Lyceum of the Philippines University- Batangas (LPU-B) College of International Tourism Management (CITHM) is considered one of the most awarded Hotel and Restaurant Management schools in the country and the

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first and only Center of Excellence (COE) and Center of Development for its Tourism program. Equipped with state of the art laboratories, with mini Hotel, Le Café, Bar laboratory and Tourism Travel Bureau, software as Microsoft opera and Amadeus to ensure and familiarized in the operation of current trends in on-line booking and hotel reservation, LPU- B has been noted in his competitive image in the field of hospitality education. To enhance the linkages and curriculum competencies, LPU has forged partnership with Dusit Thani International in Hospitality Management at the 4 campuses of LPU in the Philippines, it will provide curricula and academic resource materials for Bachelor of Science in International Hospitality Administration specialized in Hotel and Restaurant Management, Culinary Arts and Restaurant Management, Tourism Management, as well as various intensive professional courses in Hotel Management, including Dusit Thani College's famous Professional Chef and Culinary Arts programs, at LPU's four campuses located in Manila, Batangas, Laguna and Cavite. With the numerous awards and best practices offered by the University, it marked his competitiveness of the program offering thus served as an inspiration to present the university as it take the lead in its Vision to be one of the best Universities in Asia Pacific Region by 2022.

2. Review of Literature

Hospitality education has been a widely studied area in a hospitality curriculum evaluation (Dopson & Tas, 2004). Lowry and Flohr (2005) describe the hospitality sector to be service oriented resulting in most hospitality programs putting more weight on industry expectations and opinions, as opposed to the providers' and students' preferences. Swanger (2007) supports this statement and continues by mentioning that this results in most of the relevant hospitality curriculum studies being overly focused on the employer's perspective, with a very few focusing on the actual providers and recipients of the education. Students and faculty members, on the other hand, are able to rationally assess the hospitality programs with regards to how well they contribute to students' preparedness for their anticipated future hospitality careers (Swanger & Gursay, 2007). Relevance of curriculum is nothing more than a conscious declaration of learning expectations. It is a dynamic plan and score board judged toward expertise. The curriculum of hospitality and tourism curricula have been essentially vocational and designed around industry needs, giving students an understanding of operational issues and a set of wider subjects which affect the industry (Botterill & Tribe, 2000). To enhance competencies of students in HRM and Tourism programs, LPU has forged partnership with Dusit Thani International and with other agencies for the On-the-Job Training of students in local and international establishments including twelve hotels in the United States of America.

The Lyceum Hospitality curriculum was developed to integrate an in depth academics, laboratories and field internship programs that will ensure the efficiency and quality to meet worlds class standards. The said curriculum is in line with collaboration of the LPU and Dusit International vis a vis with CHED CMO 30 Series of 2006, TESDA Training Regulations and ASEAN Common Competency Standards for Tourism Professionals. In terms of content and structure, this curriculum is peculiar designed to address the challenges of globalization. The Council of Hotel and Restaurant Educators of the Philippines in Cooperation conducted a seminar workshop. In this activity, the organization stressed the vital role of Curriculum not just in the arrangement of subjects, but best map to identify the path where students are expected to go through on order to hone their latent knowledge and skills for the discipline. (Accreditation Application Proforma_2011. Retrieved on August 7, 2013). This support the concept of continuous improvement involving repetition and evaluation of the curriculum that Buted (2008) disclosed in his study on Asian competency based curriculum. He mentioned the need to inject international flavor in the curriculum of hospitality programs in order to attract international and local students, implement a balanced curriculum that emphasizes the "hands-on" as well as the "heads" skills, the science and technology-based skills and practical oriented assessment towards improving and imparting values and skills through a forward-looking curriculum, therefore; the practice of benchmarking against international good practices through various consultations are highly recommendable.

As Lyceum of the Philippines University continuously quest for competitiveness, it was granted full accreditation for hotel and Restaurant management and Tourism programs by the ICE (International Center of Excellence in Tourism and Hospitality Education. It also received from the Commission on Higher Education the award as First Center of Excellence and First Center of Development which demonstrated the highest degree of level of standards along areas of instruction, research and extension. (The Patriot ; 2012). It is in this context that the Commission on Higher Education encourages and promotes hospitality- industry partnership or linkages of the Philippine

universities to develop a new wave of competencies by cross cultural training and skills enhancement that will make hospitality graduates globally competitive. This is truly the role of higher education institutions on internationalization which is the demand for improvement in the quality education vis-à-vis quality graduates. (Angeles; 2009)

3. Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study was to present the best practices of Lyceum of the Philippines University and Dusit Thani Tie-Up: Inputs to Program Competitiveness. More specifically, it presented both the local and international CITHM awards and university linkages of hospitality programs in resorts, hotels and related industries, best practices of Lyceum University DusitThani tie-up in as far as program curriculum, instructional materials and practical exposures are concerned. The research was an avenue to evaluate the program competitiveness of Lyceum of the Philippine University-Batangas in the hospitality industry

4. Methodology

The researchers used retrospective method of research. This method is based on the examination of existing data, or events that already occurred. Also, this design was used because data were collected from the already existing school records which do not require manipulation of independent variables. Qualitative analysis was also employed in analyzing the documentary data as provided by the CITHM department and the internship office.

The participants of the study are 7 Faculty Members handling internship and graduating HRM and Tourism students from the College of International Hospitality Management (CITHM) of LPU-B. They represent one hundred percent of their total population. There were also 10 students who are winners of either national or International competitions who were subjected to focus group discussions. The researcher used interview guide which consists of open- ended questions based from the objectives of this study. The gathered data were analyzed using descriptive statistics.

5. Findings

Table1 and Table 2 below shows the national and international awards received by the Lyceum of the Philippines International Hospitality Management for the school year 2008 to 2012. It was found out that for National Awards, school year 2009 and 2012 got the same number of awards which composed of 6 awards from different competitions. However, academic year 2012 was the best year since that year, the college was declared to be the over-all champion for Grand Culinary Challenge and National Food Showdown.

The Grand Culinary Challenge (GGC) is a nationwide foodservice competition exclusively for culinary students. GGC is not just all about the creation of the best tasting, perfectly plated dishes. It is also about culinary creativity, efficiency and profitability. Ultimately, culinary students will be a part of the food service trade where all these three factors will be challenged by the competition. As overall Champion, it seems to show that students are competing for the real world, of culinary arts where current trends of foodservice and mastery of the required skills are measured.

As to International competitions, Table 1.2 shows that for the last five years, there are five (5) international awards that the college received. Within five school years, Monin International Flair tending Challenge WOFEX got the highest awards from 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011. As an internationally recognized award, LPU is very proud of this outstanding accomplishment; however, since the department is continuously joining international competitions, there are areas for improvement. It has to be noted that one measure of quality is an international recognition thru awards and citations by internationally accredited sponsorship and competitions.

Other various awards received by the University manifests curriculum competitiveness as stated by the University dean during interview. Students were subjected to focus group discussions reiterated that they feel so proud of the various awards and citations recognizable of the university's image in the whole Region and other hospitality industries in Asia.

Table 1. National Awards of Lyceum of the Philippines University-Batangas from 2008 – 2012

Awards	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
National Bartending Warriors	1st	No Competition	No Competition	No Competition	No Competition
Goldilocks Intercollegiate Cake Decorating Contest	1st	1st / 40	No Competition	No Competition	Second
Chef TV National Food Showdown	1st	1st	1st	No Competition	1 st Bar 1 st Culinary
Grand Culinary Challenge	No Competition	No Competition	No Competition	1st	Overall Champion
COHREP Skills Competition	1 st	1st	Hall of Famer	Overall Champion	No Competition
Philippine Chocolate and Ice Cream Show	No Competition	No Competition	2nd	No Competition	No Competition
Manila Food and Beverage Expo, Flair Cup Competition	No Competition	No Competition	1st	No Competition	No Competition
TESDA National Skills Competition	No Competition	No Competition	No Competition	No Competition	1st / 10
LTSP	No Competition	No Competition	No Competition	No Competition	1st / 30
Manila Flair Open		1st			
Umami Culinary Challenge	No Competition	2nd	No Competition	No Competition	No Competition
UFTE Competition	No Competition	2 nd	No Competition	No Competition	2nd
Flair tending Competition	No Competition	1st	No Competition	No Competition	No Competition
Mastah Flair Warriors	1st / 10	No Competition	No Competition	No Competition	No Competition
National Food Showdown	1 st	1 st	1 st Bar	3rd	Overall Champion
Invitational Bartending Challenge	No Competition	No Competition	No Competition	No Competition	1st

Table 1.2: International Awards of Lyceum of the Philippines University-Batangas from 2008-2012

Awards	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Monin International Flairtending Challenge WOFEX	First	First	First	First	Did not join Competition
Professional Pastry Showpiece	No Competition	No Competition	No Competition	First	No Competition
Monin International 1st Philippine Mixology Cup-Asian Food Expo	No Competition	No Competition	Second	No Competition	No Competition

In terms of linkages of the university, it was found out that BS HRA was all distributed to different F and B division. Also, it was observed that among the division, restaurant obtained the highest number of students placement, followed by hotel, catering and the least was on board.

In addition, among the program BS CLOHS got the highest number of students assigned to different division except on board. It was also observed that the deployment of BS HRA students decreases as to the division assigned. Program competitiveness is an outcome of the university's innovative step to an advantageous positioning of their graduates to the various sectors of placements during job trainings. This was clearly stipulated by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) MEMO No. 19. RA 7722 S.2000 encourages and promotes university to partner or link to develop a new wave of competencies by cross cultural training and skills enhancement. This will make Filipino students globally competitive specifically in the field of international hospitality relations and tourism services.

Therefore, the importance of higher education institutions on the learning experiences provided for graduates need to develop with emphasis on the meaningful approach to learning through which where employable skills built up, for the true test of student empowerment is the gradual acquisition of control over educational skills and processes in post-graduation lives.(De Guzman and De Castro ;2005).

6. Instructional Materials and Practical Exposures

Based on interview and focus group discussions with the LPU management, it was confer that LPU has a working agreement with the leading hotel-brand in Thailand the DusitThani Public Company Ltd since December 2008. The agreement includes curricula design and instructional material development assistance, support in refreshment training for faculty, laboratory and classroom facilities enhancement, with an end view of defining quality standards that meet international standards. Such tie-up also provides practicum training for LPU students, and faculty immersion opportunities.

The current programs integrate the core values of LPU, as well as puts a premium on the seven learning outcomes that include communication skills, computer literacy creative & analytical thinking information retrieval - and evaluation teamwork & leadership entrepreneurial skills proactive and spiritual values aside from the competencies that meet local and international standards in the various tourism and hospitality sectors.

Exceeding the minimum requirements mandated by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), all campuses provide the same curricula for all TH&E programs, except for one or two general education subjects that are required by the region. The professional and specialized subjects have been designed specifically to develop competencies required by the industry. To ensure the effectiveness of the learning outcomes of all programs, LPU curriculum, is being evaluated every end of the semester through the verification of students' competence process, which is also part of the university's quality management system. The institution ensures that the programs being offered are in accordance with the Policies and Standards of the Commission on Higher Education, TESDA, and other regulating bodies. Importantly the learning outcomes should be in line with the University's mission, vision, goals and objectives. Under the Dusit Thani tie-up, curricula design and academic resource materials for all programs will be developed collaboratively by LPU and DTC.

As the dean of the college, it was ensured that the faculty members meet the academic and work experiences required to teach a particular subject. Their curriculum is outcomes based education (OBE) as evidenced by the various teaching techniques used such as simulation, laboratory activities, field trips, and a 1000 hour practicum training requirement in three areas specified by each program. Facilities meet international standards where student - teacher ratio is 1:25 for laboratory classes, and 1:40 for lecture classes.

In order to prepare faculty members in instruction delivery and the use of the Dusit Thani Curriculum materials, a Train the Trainers workshop was facilitated by Dusit Thani College . It was conducted where opportunities are provided to the teaching and non-teaching personnel for their continuing professional education. There is also an institutional Training Institute Program (TIP) that has been put in place by the university to respond to the needs identified by the teachers and staff. The Training Institute Program aims to re tool its faculty members and staff with necessary teaching and work strategies. Presently there are various modules on various topics that have been formulated and are being facilitated by the Human Resource Development Office. With such collaboration with DusitThani College and Dusit International for the international faculty development programs, 10 faculty members were sent for international exposures which include visits to various countries like Thailand, Indonesia and others. Faculty members meet the academic and work experience required to teach a particular subject. The curriculum is defined in outcomes based education. There are various teaching techniques used such as simulation, laboratory activities, field trips, and a 1000 hour practicum training requirement in three areas specified by each program. The students are given actual work-life experiences during their internship, through a strong collaboration with local and international companies, agencies and institutions. Teachers regularly attend various conventions and conferences hosted by professional organizations in which the teachers are members. This Council of Hotels and Restaurant Educators of the Philippines (COHREP), Union of Filipino Tourism Educators (UFTE), Association of Administrators in Hospitality, Hotel and Restaurant Management Educational Institution. The university particularly the College of International Tourism and Hospitality Management is a member of the Hoteal and Restaurant Association of the Philippines (HRAP) and International Council of Hotel and Restaurant Educational Institutions (I CHRIE) .

Instructional materials for students have been developed by DTC in collaboration with LPU team that will be exclusively used by students and faculty in the implementation of the LPU- DTC curriculum. To determine the degree of competitiveness of the students, they are exposed to local, national and international competitions that

hone their skills and inculcate in them the values of humility in victory and gracious acceptance of defeat. For instance the College of International Tourism and Hospitality Management (CITHM) became Grand Champion in the National Chefs Parade in Intramuros, Manila, in 2004 represented the Philippines in the International Skills competition in Hanoi Vietnam in 2005, and in Brunei, Darussalam in 2006 and went home with the Diploma of Excellence Award for two successive years.

As to internship and practical exposures, students are given actual work-life experiences during their internship, through a strong collaboration with local and international companies, agencies and institutions. A teaching hotel, The Bayleaf Intramuros, is located in Manila and allows the students' immersion opportunities as well as practicum training. Facilities meet international standards where student - teacher ratio is 1:25 for laboratory classes, and 1:40 for lecture classes. A teaching hotel, The Bayleaf Intramuros, is located in Manila and allows the students' immersion opportunities as well as practicum training.

College of International Tourism and Hospitality Management local linkages include: DusitThani Hotel, The Peninsula Hotel, Ascott, Mandarin Hotel, A. Venue Hotel Suites, Shangrila Hotel, EdsaShagrila Hotel, Sofitel Philippines Plaza manila, Traders Hotel, Lancaster Hotel, Discovery Suites, Bellevue Hotel, Hyatt Hotel and Casino Manila, Diamond Hotel Philippines, Century Park Hotel, The Heritage Hotel Manila, Manila Pavilion, The Pan Pacific Manila and Inter-Continental Manila

7. Conclusions

The linkages are marked by the placement of the On the Job Training (OJT) graduating students at different levels of the hospitality industry both locally and internationally. More so, the different accreditations of the CITHM department such as: Center of Development (COD) for tourism and Center of Excellence (COE) for Hotel and Restaurant Management certifications are indications of quality and measure of excellence. Dusit Thani curriculum manifest best practices of Lyceum University in as far as instructional materials provided by the Tie-up. The collaboration of this Dusit- Thani tie-up open doors of opportunities for faculty members to be professionally equipped with global standards of the hospitality programs. Under DTC – LPU students developed the professional and specialized subjects designed specifically to develop competencies required by the industry as they are exposed to international standards of Internship.

The best practices of Lyceum of the Philippines University are it's continuously quest for quality as well as international tie-ups with both reputable schools locally and internationally. It ventures on curriculum competitiveness at par with other leading universities in Asia. It submitted itself to various certification standards to lead as the Center of Excellence and Center of Development, Accreditations and International Certification in all programs of the hospitality and tourism industry to realize the vision as the leading school in Asia Pacific region by 2022.

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