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INTERNATIONAL JOB REQUIREMENTS FOR TOURISM GRADUATES OF THE LYCEUM OF THE PHILIPPINES UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to find determine the profile of selected tourism establishment and their most preferred requirements for international job hiring; as well as the different problems encountered by the tourism establishments in hiring personnel. This study also intended to identify the prospects in the next five years of the tourism establishment in terms of international job placement. This study utilized the descriptive method of research. Findings revealed that most of the tourism establishment hired male employees, 22-29 years of age, single and college graduate; Height, physical appearance, health, work experience were some of the factors to be considered in hiring employees for an international job; inadequate work experiences of the applicant were one of the common problems encountered by the international tourism establishments; There would be a stricter implementation of policies in the recruitment process for the international placement; the demand for careers in the hospitality industry was high in Dubai, Singapore but in the United States job opportunities were declining during the time of study.

Keywords: International Job Requirements, employability, tourism industry, LPU graduates

INTRODUCTION

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 on the profession as its trans-global expansion continues apace.

One of the many wonderful aspects of this industry is the flexibility and choices it offers. One can start by working in hotels, and if that doesn't suit, he can change to contract catering or use his experience to go into consultancy, manage a bar, run a restaurant or fast-food outlet. If a person loves action and adventure, then there is the forces' catering sector. In short, there is a job to suit just about everyone!

Cruz (2003) further explained that another factor contributing to the problem is the tendency of the industry to be selective / very particular in their hiring practices, which delimit the opportunities of most graduates in finding better careers that pay well. The United States, Dubai in United Arab Emirates and Singapore are just three of the world's leaders in terms of job opportunities in the hospitality industry. Over the years, the Philippines has deployed more than three million Filipino workers in 190 destinations in various fields – professional, medical, technical, operations and maintenance, construction, hotel and seafaring sectors.

Job requirements for the different careers abroad are commonly based on the following aspects: demographic profile, educational attainment, work experiences and personal background. However, there are still problems that arise and are encountered inside the tourism establishment in hiring personnel. It will be necessary to know these problems and how tourism establishments manage to solve such problems. The hospitality industry is a fast growing industry today. It will always undergo changes and innovations. The trend today will differ as years pass by. It is beneficial if we could foresee the possible prospects of this industry after five years.

In Lyceum of the Philippines University - Batangas, tourism graduates through their curriculum showed potentials to be hired for international jobs. Since the institution promotes global competitiveness as one of its core values, this will be an avenue to know if the college

really produces graduates who are at par with international standards. For this reason, the researchers conducted this study to assess the international job requirements for tourism graduates in the hospitality industry. This study aims to determine the recruitment process in the United States, Dubai, U.A.E. and Singapore which are considered to have the fastest growing hospitality industry in the world.

The study (Cruz, 2003) suggests that the mapping of private HEIs' and SUCs' programs and curriculum should eliminate duplication of programs as well as inefficient institutions and setting up more centers of development / excellence instead of substandard ones. Arangorin et. al (2008) proved that the demand for careers of hospitality industry in Dubai and United States is high. Abel et. al (2000) in their study stated in terms of personality traits found out that in terms of personality traits, Lyceum HRM practicumers showed that punctuality is their best trait while leadership is the least. In fine dining and fast food restaurants in Makati City, Aguila (2000) concluded that fast food servers are well groomed and have a pleasing personality, food servers are courteous, polite and friendly, sensitive to the needs of the customers, perform assigned duty with positive attitude, know how to handle unexpected circumstances, are very approachable and food delivery comes on time. Gamez (2000) stated that human resource managers fail to promote employees because of behavior attitudes and work values rather than deficiency in jobs or technical knowledge. This is compounded by their lack of communication skills and specialized knowledge and lack of training and not following employees in rules and regulation (Gonda, 2003).

Education and training institutions must also try their best to explore the possibility of new programs in collaboration with the user sector (industries themselves); as well as to rationalize the student financial assistance programs in favor of priority courses. In addition to this, the education and training institutions should not only concentrate on making their students competent in their field of studies, but also in harnessing their communication skills which may prove useful especially at the early stage of job-seeking.

Making use of the career guidance programs in the secondary and tertiary level of education is equally recommended. Likewise, the Labor department should also strengthen its career and guidance counseling services and be proactive in coordinating with the education and training institutions and industries to help provide the proper signals as to the 'in-demand' skills, courses, and/ or specialization in the industries.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study aimed to determine the profile of selected tourism establishment in terms of nature of the business, size of business, type of ownership, employment classification, and foreign job offerings; identify the most preferred requirements for international job hiring in terms of demographic profile; physical requirements; knowledge and skills requirement, work experience, trainings, document requirements, and referrals; determine the different problems encountered by the tourism establishment in hiring personnel and prospects in the next five years do the tourism establishment will look forward to in terms of international job placement.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

This study utilized the descriptive method of research. Descriptive research is also known as statistical research that describes data and characteristics about the population or phenomenon being studied. The respondents of the study are composed of Human Resource Managers of tourism establishments in United States, Dubai and Singapore. The researchers decided to select only ten tourism establishments where tourism graduates and practicumers are employed and having training respectively. Specifically, it is also due to time constraint and accessibility since respondents of the study are employed overseas. The respondents were chosen through purposive sampling.

The researchers constructed a special questionnaire intended to answer the problems in their study. This is composed of four parts. First part deals with the profile of the tourism establishments. Second part tackles the different personnel requirements for an international job. Third part enumerates the different problems encountered by the Human Resource Managers of the tourism establishments in hiring personnel. Lastly, the fourth part looks at the possible prospects in the international job placement for the next five years.

The researchers sent the approved questionnaires via electronic mail to the different tourism graduates and practicumers. The contacted tourism graduates and practicumers were the ones who distributed the questionnaires in their respective establishments. After 15 days, the researchers retrieved the necessary data via electronic mail. Researchers tallied, analyzed and interpreted all the data gathered.

The study used frequency and percentage distribution in identifying the profile and personnel requirements of the selected tourism establishments and weighted mean to determine the different problems encountered in hiring personnel and anticipate the prospects in international job requirement.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of the Tourism Establishment

In terms of the nature of business, most respondents have hotel businesses with a frequency of 6 or 40 percent. Others have restaurant businesses which received a frequency of 2 or 20 percent; recreation business with a frequency of 1 or 10 percent. Likewise, travel services business got a frequency of 1 or 10 percent. Medium size of business obtained the highest frequency of 8 or 80 percent while small and large size of business both obtained the same frequency of 1 or 10 percent.

Majority of type of ownership is a chain business, which has 7 or 70 percent of respondents. It only means that there businesses have other branches located worldwide. Others have a corporation type meaning it is owned by group of stockholders. It garnered a frequency of 3 or 30 percent. Contractual employment classification is common among all respondents with a frequency of 10 or 100 percent. It only means that they hire employees with corresponding contracts. Contracts will expire depending on the duration of the work and agreement of both parties.

In terms of foreign job offerings, food and beverage industry which includes chefs, pantry dispatchers, waiters/waitresses etc appeared to have the highest frequency of 8 or 34.78 percent. It was followed by the lodging industry which includes the chambermaid, bellboy, front desk officer etc with the frequency of 7 or 30.43 percent. Commercial recreation industry which includes ride attendant, slot machine attendant, spa therapist, etc went next with a frequency of 5 or 4.34 percent. Airline industry and travel agency followed the list with a frequency of 2 or 8.7 percent and 1 or 4.34 percent, respectively. United States job market revealed that there are nearly one million food service operation in the United States and nearly three hundred thousand hotels. Given this data, enormous numbers of job opportunities, the demand for graduates of hospitality programs is easy to see.

Demographic Profile Requirements

From the findings, it showed that most respondents preferred male applicants alone with the highest frequency of 10 or 55.56 percent. While others, who also preferred female applicants got a frequency of 8 or 44.44 percent. This may be because males are perceived to be stronger than female. That is why they are more preferred in jobs especially in the food industry.

In terms of age requirement, the most preferred age for an international job is in between 22 to 29 which obtained the highest frequency of 7 or 22.58 percent. It is followed by 36 above age with a frequency of 6 or 19.35 percent. Age in between 34 to 35 came next which achieved the frequency of 5 or 16.13 percent. Following the list is the age bracket in between 30 to 33 with a frequency of 4 or 12.9 percent. The least preferred age is in between 18 to 21 which acquire a frequency of 2 or 6.45 percent. This specific may be because these ages have already gain experiences suited for job.

Single individuals are more preferred in terms of civil status requirement which obtained a frequency of 10 or 37.04 percent. Married people came next with a frequency of 9 or 33.33. Following the list are widow and separated persons having the same frequency of 4 or 14.81. Single individuals have lesser responsibilities.

In terms of educational attainment requirements, respondents mostly prefer college graduates which achieve the highest frequency of 9 or 45 percent. It is followed by vocational course graduate which has a frequency of 5 or 25 percent. High school graduates came next with a frequency of 3 or 15 percent. With MA units and MA degree holder follow the list acquiring a frequency of 2 or 10 percent and 1 or 5 percent, respectively. Respondents believed that college graduates have already acquired skills and necessary knowledge, while applicants with MA units or masters degree holder are eligible for managerial positions.

Physical Requirements

Most respondents agreed that height is one of the factors to be considered in hiring an applicant. Tourism establishments require employees to have an acceptable height as per establishment standards. This requirement is very important because in the operation of the tourism establishment requires employees to have a good grasp of all the needs and wants of the guest or customers. With regards to the physical appearance most of the establishment has the

same opinion about the importance of a very good personal appearance. The employees of every tourism establishment can be considered as front liners, the interactions with various guests are very high.

The personal grooming of every employee of the tourism establishment is in consonance with the physical appearance. The employees are said to be, the first contact of guest on a hotel property. He/She who is well-groomed will represent fully the image of the property. He/She should be a person of professionalism and reliability. India's largest online men's magazine, *Adonis Corner* provided some tips on male grooming. It stressed the importance for men to look good as much as it for their lady loves; Men should take some time out at least once if not twice every month to take care of their facial skin, nails and feet. On one week end every month men should begin a very basic skin cleansing routine that should include cleansing the skin, removing unwanted hair properly and then moisturizing the skin to get the best results from a professional facial. Unwanted hair on the facial area should also be removed. Nails should be clipped and hands should be moisturized.

The same applies for the ladies. Women should also observe proper hygiene. It is preferred of the ladies wear light make-up to project a professional business image and not a “ghost” foundation. Uniforms should be clean and neatly pressed and excessive jewelry should be avoided while flat shoes with sturdy heels are advised.

In line with the health requirements majority of the tourism establishment agreed that health consideration of its future employees plays a crucial role in recruitment. Various health examinations must be undertaken by applicants to check the eligibility for the job. The tourism businesses need healthy workforce because of its nature. Employees are not exempted during holidays and might work in graveyards that need strong resistance from different sickness or ailments. Another concern why health is wealth for tourism establishments is that its workforce has frequent interactions with guests or customers. The workload in the establishment will not be as easy to handle especially for those future applicants who will be placed at the back of the house of the establishment where jobs are cannot be underestimated.

Knowledge and Skills Requirements

Majority of the respondents prefer applicants with superior and above average IQ. The high level of intelligent quotient or IQ in working in tourism establishment is necessary because the nature of work requires the capacity of the worker to think to answer the queries of the customers and or the challenges brought by the job.

According to Schmidt and Hunter, "for hiring employees without previous experience in the job the most valid predictor of future performance is general mental ability." The validity depends on the type of job and varies across different studies, ranging from 0.2 to 0.6. However IQ mostly correlates with cognitive ability only if IQ scores are below average and this rule has many (about 30 %) exceptions for people with average and higher IQ scores. Also, IQ is related to the "academic tasks" (auditory and linguistic measures, memory tasks, academic achievement levels) and much less related to tasks where even precise hand work ("motor functions") are required.

In terms of written and oral communication skills the respondents prefer applicants with excellent, very good and good communication skills in both oral and written. Probably the place that matters most about good oral and written communication would be in the workplace. Even the slightest mistake could bring about a catastrophe. It is in the workplace that one should strive to be as specific as possible. For instance, if the manager of a store asks his or her employee to create a presentation about that store (and leaves it at that) that employee has no clue when the deadline is, etc. This commonly happens in the workplace, and is the reason why employers look for strong communication skills in potential employees to avoid miscommunication. Written miscommunication is also common in the workplace. A small memo may be left for someone and may not make sense. How then would that recipient carry out what was instructed in the memo? It really causes problems. Most would agree that taking a communications class is exceedingly beneficial to everyone. Not only does it help in getting a job, but it also helps one co-exist harmoniously with others.

Moreover an applicant must combine skill in proper handling of customer by becoming good sales persons, displaying strong interpersonal communication skills and demonstrating a personal charisma that is appealing to the clientele. It is important that the applicant has the ability to express and explain things about restaurant service operation and to communicate with

ease and comfort to the guests regarding certain issues/concerns. They should possess a wide range vocabulary, to be understood by the guests and make the guests look forward for the service that a staff can give, be able to build interpersonal relationship, for everyone is a prospective guest.

Work Experience Requirements

Majority of the tourism establishments prefer applicants with one to three years working experience, followed by four to six years work experiences. According to the tourism establishments they prefer to hire applicants with work experience because it will entail less cost for training and development. Minimal supervision will be facilitated by the establishment to the newly hired employee, thus it will not require additional expenses for the business. In Canada skilled workers are people who may become permanent residents because they have the ability to become economically established. One must meet the following minimum work experience requirements to allow you to apply as a skilled worker (1) one must have at least one year of full-time work experience. (2) Must have been paid for this work, and (3) must have had this experience within the last 10 years.

Training Requirements

According to the respondents this is beneficial to the operation of their business. In the United States it is the employer's responsibility to ensure that their employees receive training. The employee may not perform their duties unless they have received training either from inside or an outside source and which should be evaluated through a competency test.

Employees must be trained in the following areas such as: (1) General Awareness training: provides familiarity with the requirements and allows employees to recognize hazardous materials (dangerous goods) in their workplace, (2) Function-specific training: detailed job-specific training. Example; if you mark and label packages, your training must include detailed information on those subjects; and (3) Safety training which includes emergency response and measures to be taken in case of an emergency at your workplace. This training should also include proper handling procedures to avoid mishaps. Furthermore, the staff's conduct is very important in delivering service. Unless they are interested and excited to do things over and over to a number of guests, then it will be a difficult task for them. Enthusiasm is

the passion to deliver with excellence, the manifestation of extreme and often uncritical devotion to satisfy guests.

Document Requirements

Visas or work permit and passports are necessary in order for the applicants to have a legal capacity to work in the that country. Other documents required by the tourism establishment to supplement the needed proof of expertise in the position applied for include transcript of records and diploma for educational attainment, certificate of employments or proof of previous employment. On the other hand birth certificates and NBI/Police clearance are required to ensure that the applicant has no pending cases or accountabilities in the Philippine government. The birth certificate ascertains that the applicant is of legal and acceptable age to work abroad.

Problems Encountered in Hiring Personnel

The respondents' often encountered inadequate work experience; physical appearance; processing document like passport and visa; psychological preparedness of applicant to work abroad; incomplete requirements like authenticated birth certificate from National Statistics Office (NSO); and health with a weighted mean values obtained ranging from 2.5 to 2.9. Respondents sometimes encountered problems in height requirements; attitudes; low score in IQ test; background information and limited knowledge in the field of specialization where these items got the same weighted mean value of 2.3.

The United States' Department of Labor included employability/soft skills in their list of hospitality industry's issues. Employability/ soft skills, employers have difficulty finding workers who pose basic "soft skills", which are often a pre-requisite for success in a customer service-oriented field. Respondents never encountered problem in religion which obtained a weighted mean of 1.3. This only means that one can be hired for a position regardless of one's religion. It appears that religion is not a vital consideration for international job placement.

The respondents got a weighted mean value of 4.0 in policies regarding the recruitment process which should be strictly implemented. International job requirements to be more specified got a weighted mean value of 3.8 and 3.7 both in more job opportunities, more applicants, more policies; and there will be a higher level of standards in selecting applicants; 3.5

in communication in the placement agency and applicants will be better which are verbally interpreted as “strongly agree”.

Personality development will be a must for applicants obtained the weighted mean value of 3.4. This is followed by working visas will be difficult to achieve which garnered a weighted mean value of 3.3. There will be additional job requirements and there will be more skill test went next having the same weighted mean value of 3.2. Respondents believe that agencies will be strict to medical exams and there will be less on referral system. Both achieved a weighted mean value of 3.1. Processing of papers will be easier and selection of applicants will be stricter obtained the same with a weighted mean value of 3. There will be strict written and oral examination got a weighted mean value of 2.9. Placement fees will increase was rated 2.5. All of these variables are verbally interpreted as “agree”.

Assessment of the job requirement (skills and competencies) is imperative in the final selection of employees or training candidates. Every effort is made to objectively formulate exactly what the requirements in terms of skills and competencies are. Employees should be allowed to broaden their vision and understanding of the business and also help them accept more responsibility. When employees achieve these qualities the organization can grow, increase its profits and be more effective in the industry.

These licensed employment agencies ensure that only Filipino workers who are qualified and medically-fit are deployed. Hence, Filipino workers are medically examined by government-accredited medical clinics or hospitals and trade-tested or trained by training centers authorized by the government.

To ensure they are recruiting the right talent, more employers are leveraging the Internet as a vehicle for screening potential employees. Forty-five percent of employers use online search engines and social networking sites to research job candidates and 19 percent say they are likely to start using or increase their use of these resources to research job candidates.

Canada is experiencing a skills shortage and views both home and foreign graduates as an important talent pool. Skills shortages exist in IT, science, engineering and research. British nationals entering the country with experience and skills in these areas may be viewed as a valuable resource by employers. The graduate labor market is very competitive so foreign jobseekers must evaluate their interests, identify their skills and target sectors in which there are

skills shortages. Technical, scientific and specialized business skills, with a solid base in mathematics, are particularly relevant.

While in Dubai skilled workers and professionals have been and still are in great demand in many sectors including but not limited to the following: sales and marketing, oil and gas, finance and accounting, information technology, banking, consumer services, software, and health and medical services. Dubai Media City offers jobs in the media and in the advertising, marketing and publishing industries. Dubai Internet City, a government free economic zone specializing in IT, has many opportunities for people with skills in education and training, software development, business services, web based e-commerce and consultancy. Potential employers include Nokia, Microsoft, Canon and other well-known global giants.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Most of the tourism establishment hires male employees, 22-29 years of age, single and college graduate. Height, physical appearance, health, work experiences are some of the factors to be considered in hiring employees for an international job. Inadequate work experiences of the applicant are one of the common problems encountered by the international tourism establishments. There will be a stricter implementation of policies in the recruitment process for the international placement.

Tourism curriculum should continue to integrate additional programs and activities in connection with food and beverage industries to broaden the knowledge and skills of tourism students since most job vacancies are into that field. Tourism graduates should acquire necessary work experiences and related trainings for further enhancement of their skills before applying for an international job. Written and oral communication skills of the students should be developed by giving extra programs and exercises where they can harness their communication skills. The institution should strengthen its established international linkages to make higher education at par with international standards.

The college must provide adequate training to students by intensifying practicum programs by offering international practicum not only in Singapore but also in other parts of the world like United States, to help the students to be abreast with the job demands in the international scene. The college may also upgrade such international educational tours by

incorporating in the itinerary the necessary activities that will help the students be exposed in the actual operation of a tourism establishment. The university must continue and intensify the career services it offers to the students by providing necessary programs and activities that will prepare the students in applying for an international job. This may include but not limited to examinations, career counseling, career expo, seminars and others. The tourism students should be required by the college to secure necessary documents for international travel like passport, authenticated birth certificate, if possible visas and others; this may be part of the requirement of the Travel Services course. This activity will help the student be prepared in processing all documents for international job application. Further researches regarding international job placement should be done to assess the job opportunities for tourism graduates in the international arena.

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