

National Certification of Travel and Tourism Management Graduating Students from one Private University in the Philippines

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Abstract - *This study aimed to assess the National Certification of BS International Travel and Tourism Management (BSITTM) Graduating Students in Lyceum of the Philippines University- Batangas. The study made use of descriptive survey method with the BSITTM graduating students as respondents. The partially adapted and modified questionnaire was administered to 125 BSITTM graduating students. Statistical tools used were frequency distribution, percentage, weighted mean and (ANOVA). Based on the results, majority of the respondents are female. Most of the students, who passed in the practical exams, are competent in TESDA Competency Assessment. Based on the result, most of the students already have five TESDA national certificates. There is a significant relationship between competency assessments when grouped according to the profile. When taking practical exam, the students do not experience any problems. The students may be oriented about the proper rules and regulations before the assessment for them to have sufficient knowledge on what to do during the competency assessment. The study's proposed action plan may be implemented to further increase the passing rate in the competency assessment. Future research about national certification may be conducted to validate the results of the study.*

Keywords: *TESDA National Certificate, TESDA Competency Assessment*

INTRODUCTION

The ASEAN MRA on Tourism Professionals (MRA-TP) tries to expand the universal versatility of tourism work over the ASEAN district in accordance with ASEAN strategy. Every ASEAN country has its own measures, accreditation and

controls for perceiving the competency of specialists in the tourism part. To be qualified to work in a host nation, they should have a legitimate tourism competency declaration in a particular tourism work title issued by the Tourism Professional Certification Board (TPCB) in an ASEAN Member State. There are 32 work titles secured under this MRA, going from housekeeping, front office, sustenance and drinks administrations, and nourishment creation for lodging division, to travel organizations and visit administrator for travel division (ASEAN MRA on Tourism Professionals Handbook).

Lyceum of the Philippines University- Batangas is an accredited TESDA Assessment and Training Center in the field of Tourism Industry. Some of the competencies that LPU is accredited are the competencies for tourism. The university makes sure that its curriculum is constantly applicable and open to the existing necessities of the industry (lpu.gov.ph).

The College of International Tourism and Hospitality Management offers the following competency assessment: Food and Beverage NC II, Events Management NC II, Travel Service NCII, Tour Guiding NCII, Front Office NCII for all BSITTM graduates who want to qualify as NC holders. Verbal question, agreeability for work project and portfolio also composed of examination is done to confirm the gathered procedure. (TESDA, n.d.). One of the major requirements to finish the program is to pass the national competency. Work preparation of the graduates is the concentration of the educational module. Skills are coordinated with the competency guidelines required by the owner of the business in light of the occupation positions that the graduates will in the long run possess upon graduation. This National Certification is part of the implementation of the Outcomes based education as one of the measures of skills and competency of the students acquired in the program (Macatangay et al., 2016; An, 2014; Reyes, 2013; Borsoto et al., 2014; Laguador, 2014; Camello, 2014). Student outcomes of the program can also be assessed using this certification that can be useful for their future employment (Laguador & Dotong, 2014; Cabaces et al., 2014; Caguimbal et al., 2013). This is considered a very good preparation for job placement of the graduating students where they could present and demonstrate certain level of skills and knowledge related to their expertise (Maderazo, 2016; Buenviaje et al., 2015; Chavez et al., 2016; Laguador & Dotong, 2013). The result of the competency assessment will also serve as part of continuous improvement for the institution on how to make the instruction and curriculum are all relevant to the needs and demands of the industry (Chavez et al., 2016; Dotong et al., 2016; Aguila et al., 2016; De Castro et al., 2016; Orence et al., 2013; Celis et al., 2013; Dotong, 2014).

The College of International Tourism Management of the Lyceum of the Philippines University - Batangas is one of the most awarded Hotel and Restaurant Management schools in the Philippines and the first and only Center of Excellence (COE) and Center of Development for its Tourism program. The students experienced the true meaning of world class work because CITHM has been connected to DusitThani through which the University becomes fully equipped with amenities and laboratories that may help them enhance their skills and knowledge for the future. The Hospitality curriculum is created to provide the students with good quality education and internship programs to meet world class standards (Mejia, Manzano & Menez, 2014).

In view of this, the National Certificate is important because it gives knowledge and skills in the travel and tourism industry. Students will be required to complete an assessment to determine their level of competency. The National Certificate is issued to a candidate who has hurdled the assessment procedure. Having a validity of five years, the NC becomes the graduate's most valuable qualification in applying for jobs (TESDA, n.d.).

The study was conducted to benefit the university in order to ensure competency of the students. For the College of International Tourism and Hospitality Management, the study's results may be utilized in ensuring that the students' skills are at par with industry based requirements. For the students to assess the level of their competencies learned and the skills they acquired during classroom discussion or activities in school. Moreover, the study also deals with the problems encountered on the TESDA Competency Assessment. The study's analysis and recommendations would allow the students to further encourage the institution specifically the Department to focus on preparing the students to become globally competitive.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This research study aims to determine the status of TESDA National Certification of BSITTM Graduating Students in Lyceum of the Philippines University-Batangas. Specifically, it aimed to present the profile of the respondents in terms of gender, age, and number of national certificate; to determine the status of National Certification of BSITTM students; to identify the problems encountered in the professional courses with TESDA Competency Assessment; to test the significant difference of TESDA Competency Assessment when grouped according to the profile; and to propose an action plan based on the results of the study.

METHODS

Research Design

The study used the descriptive survey method to determine the National Certification of BSITTM Graduating Students of Lyceum of the Philippines University-Batangas.

Descriptive research is a method obtaining the information in the current status of the variables. This method is a kind statistic that includes newspapers, radio and television. These presentations about numerical and summarized data can be easy to understand because it is translated in an easy manner. It is also a process of establishing information efficiently with the help of graphical or word-based presentation (Vizco & Reyes, 2013).

Participants

The participants of this study are composed of 125 BSITTM graduating students of the Lyceum of the Philippines University- Batangas. The number of participants was based on the total number of Bachelor of Science in International Tourism and Travel Management graduating students from the Registrar's Office.

Instrument

The study utilized a three- part partly adopted questionnaire from the study made by Aro, et.al. (2016). The first part of the questionnaire was designed to describe the profile of the respondents which includes their name, school id number, gender, age, TESDA qualifications and name of instructor. The second part contains items about the status of national certification of the BSITTM Graduating students. Lastly, the third part is about the problems encountered during the process of national certificate assessment.

Procedure

The researchers went to the university registrar to ask for the total number of BSITTM graduating students. Thereafter, they accomplished the study's questionnaire and sought for the approval of their research adviser as well as other authorities of the college. Upon the approval of the questionnaire, it was distributed to the respondents who were ensured about the confidentiality of their responses.

Data Analysis

The needed data was tallied, encoded and interpreted by means of different statistical tools. These include frequency distribution, weighted mean and analysis of

Variance (ANOVA) which was used based on the objectives of the study. In addition, all data were treated using statistical software, PASW version 18 to further analyze the results of the study.

The given scale was used to interpret the result of the data gathered: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree (SA); 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree (A); 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree (D); 1.00 – 1.49 = Strongly Disagree (SD).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Percentage Distribution of the Respondents Profile

	Profile Variables	f	%
Gender	Male	18	14.40
	Female	107	85.60
Age	19-20 years old	104	83.20
	21-22 years old	19	15.20
	23 years old and above	2	1.60
Number of TESDA	2	4	3.20
	3	14	11.20
National Certification	4	8	6.40
	5	99	79.20

Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents' profile and number of TESDA National Certifications. In terms of gender, majority of the respondents are female having 107 frequency or 85.60 percent. On the other hand, only 18 respondents or 14.40 percent are males. Most of the respondents are female because most of the population of tourism students are females. There are only few male tourism students. In the field of tourism, females usually dominate the workforce population, and males are seldom seen. According to the study of (Wan, Wong and Kong, 2014), perceptions in nature and social status affect the students who take these programs.

On the other hand, age ranged 19-20 years old represent the majority of respondents with the frequency of 104 or 83.20 percent, 19 or 15.20 percent are 21-22 years old, and only two or 1.60 percent of the respondents are aged 23 years old above.

Most of the respondents belong to the 19-20 years old age range because they are regular graduating students. For those who are 21 years old and above, they are students

who have already graduated in different programs and continue to study in the field of tourism.

The age of graduating students in the Philippines ranges from 19-20 years old. However, in other countries like United States, 25-34 years old is the age of graduating students. Thus, the age of graduating students in the Philippines is younger than the students in the United States (Kena, et. al., 2015).

It is likewise reflected on the previous table that in terms of the number of TESDA National certifications, most of the respondents have five certificates with the frequency of 99 or 79.20 percent. It is followed by holders of three certificates with the frequency of 14 or 11.20 percent. Some respondents have four certificates with the frequency of 8 or 6.40 percent. Those who have two certificates represent the least with a frequency of 4 or 3.20 percent.

Most of the tourism students have five national certificates because it is required by their respective subjects. They must have at least three national certificates in order for them to secure their clearance for graduation. This is also part of the OBE requirement for the program.

Graduates will have their National Certificate as evidence that they are competent and qualified, and that they are a job- ready skilled workers. TESDA installed (RWAC) Registry of Certified Workers for easy access of workers. This is a depository information about the employees in terms of their competencies that made them qualified for their job (TESDA, n.d.).

Table 2. Status of National Certification of BSITTM students

	Competent		Not Yet Competent	
	F	%	F	%
Tour Guiding NC II	121	96.00	4	4.00
F&B Services NC II	111	88.80	14	11.20
Front Office Services NC II	115	92.00	10	8.00
Travel Services NC II	106	84.80	19	15.20
Events Management Services NC II	120	96.00	5	4.00

Table 2 illustrates the Status of National Certification of BSITTM Students whether they are competent or not yet competent. Tour Guiding NCII got the highest rank of being competent with an average of 96 percent or 121 out of 125 followed by the Events Management Services NCIII with the average of 96 percent or 120 out of 125 students, and the third is on Front Office Services NCII with the average of 92 percent or 115 out of 125 students.

As seen from the Table 2, Tour guiding NCII got the topmost rank among the five qualifications. This is mainly because tour guiding is also one of their courses taken by the students and it is included in the curriculum of CITHM which is designed to enhance the knowledge, skills, and attitude of an individual in the field of Tour Guiding NCII in terms of coordinating tour program itinerary, guiding and accompanying tourist in a locality in accordance with industry standards. This is also where majority of them had performed well during competency assessment that is why they became competent.

Trainees or students should possess proficient oral and written communication skills, must be physically and mentally able; with good moral character and can perform basic mathematical computation. They must be also able to obtain and convey workplace information, can participate in workplace meeting and discussion, identify customer needs, deliver service to customer, can handle queries through telephone, fax machine ,internet and e-mail and can handle complaints, evaluation and recommendation (TESDA, n.d.).

Meanwhile, Travel services got the lowest rank in terms of competence with an average of 84.80 percent or 106 out of 125 and highest rank of an average 19 out of 125 or 15.20 percent are not yet competent. This is because several students fail to understand through the module only. In addition, some of them were not able to perform the core and common competencies of travel services during their competency assessment which makes it difficult for them. They need to gain more knowledge which they could possibly achieve through having sufficient time to review and practice to develop and enhance their skills and for them to be competent.

Travel Services NCII qualification consists of competencies that a student must achieve to manage the traveler's request to post trips. For the students to be competent, they have to possess the following qualifications. They must be able to participate in workplace communication, work in a team environment, can practice career professionalism, can practice occupational health and safety procedures and can be able to create travel related reservations and transactions that can provide assistance in travel documentation preparation in travel services (TESDA, n.d.).

Competence of professionals is global and technologically advanced and needs new ways of recognizing competence. Professional certification makes an individual more valuable than others. TESDA National Certification enhanced the understanding of hospitality that could lead to job security and stability while the advantage of TESDA National Certificate holders include more productivity, better preparedness and enhanced credibility with employers (Hansen, 2015).

Table 3. Problems Encountered on Professional Courses with TESDA Competency Assessment

Indicators	WM	VI	Rank
1. Briefing during the practical exam is not conducted. Has no provisions on rules and regulations inside the working area.	2.11	D	9
2. Instructor / professors are not approachable enough to help the students.	1.94	D	10
3. Inadequate space for working areas during practical exam.	2.19	D	5
4. Unavailability of necessary equipment, materials needed for the practical activity and some equipment are not in good condition.	2.14	D	7
5. Insufficient lighting on the working areas during practical exams.	2.14	D	8
6. Only manuals or written lectures are provided by the instructors, students were not given actual demonstration of some tasks to perform.	2.20	D	3.5
7. Hands on or laboratory class hours provided to the students are limited.	2.42	D	1
8. Laboratory/ Practical exams are difficult and the students have short allotted time in practicing for the exam.	2.38	D	2
9. The practical exam is done by groups and not individually making some students have no participation in the activity.	2.20	D	3.5
10. Some tasks to perform during assessment were not taught or discussed by the instructor.	2.18	D	6
Composite Mean	2.19	D	

As gleaned Table 3, no problems were encountered on the professional courses with TESDA Competency Assessment with a composite mean value of 2.19 and were all rated as disagree.

It can be seen that hands on laboratory class hours provided to the students are limited got the highest ranking with a weighted mean of 2.42 next, the practical exams are difficult and the student have short allotted time in practicing for the exam with the 2.38 weighted mean. Third, only manuals or written lectures are provided by the instructors, students were not given actual demonstration of some task to perform and the practical exam is done by groups and not individually making some students have no participation in the activity, with the 2.20 weighted mean and a verbal interpretation of disagree.

Hands on laboratory class hours provided to the students are limited, got the highest ranking, because during the assessment, the laboratory is already prepared and scheduled to be used for the assessment.

There are allocated periods for the learners who had fairly- unsatisfactory evaluation for the work attendance or performance. They have the opportunity to correct the problems. Moreover for this situation, they are also given time to expand their

performance. If the students remain unable to perform in accordance to the standards, these students should still be informed (Sible et al., 2014; Felicen, 2014).

Instructors / professors are not approachable enough to help the students have the lowest ranking with the weighted mean of 1.94, because professors always find time to let their students gain knowledge on their professional courses.

Practicing and training students are the aims of hospitality management. The hospitality management provides quality service for the students in their courses. With the use of on hand practices and laboratories, students enhance their skill before they face the industry world (Feisel, 2015).

Table 4. Relationship Between the Profile Variable (Gender) and the Status of National Certification of BSITTM Students

	λ^2_c	p-value
Tour Guiding NC II	0.366	0.545
F&B Services NC II	2.569	0.109
Front Office Services NC II	0.277	0.599
Travel Services NC II	0.273	0.601
Events Management Services NC II	0.876	0.349

*Legend: *Significant at p-value < 0.05*

Table 4 reveals the relationship between profile variables (Sex) and the status of national certification of BSITTM students. Based on the results, all computed p-values were greater than 0.05 alpha level, thus the researchers fail to reject the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between the respondents' sex and their status of NC. This means that the respondents' sex do not affect the National Certification status they earned.

Hence there is no significant relationship between the gender and sex of the students. It shows that every course in the National Certification of BSITTM students is programmed for gender equality. Any person regardless of gender can apply in this program because it condemns gender discrimination. This shows that all of the qualifications are not affected by the respondents' gender in earning National Certifications. This likewise explains that gender is not a requirement for completing and complying with all the competencies needed in the Tourism industry.

Invariably, many people can say that it is easier to work in one company if the genders are all the same. But many corporations tend to prefer diversity groups because they can easily succeed than homogeneous people (Munroe, 2016).

Table 5. Relationship Between the Profile Variable (Age) and the Status of National Certification of BSITTM Students

	λ^2_c	p-value
Tour Guiding NC II	3.855	0.146
F&B Services NC II	5.560	0.062
Front Office Services NC II	7.063	0.029*
Travel Services NC II	3.441	0.179
Events Management Services NC II	1.052	0.591

*Legend: *Significant at p-value < 0.05*

As seen from Table 5 only Front Office Services show significant relationship with age since the obtained p-value of 0.029 is less than 0.05, thus a relationship exists. This only implies that the students' status on NC for front office services is affected by their age. The more matured they are, the more that competencies they possess.

Based on the results of the study, majority of the respondents are between ages of 19-20. This means that students whose age range from 19-20 years old tend to be more competent to pass the front offices services NC II. Apparently, that when it comes to age, being matured is an advantage to earn front office services NCII certification. Students who are older therefore have the advantage of being more competent in taking front office services in NCII than younger students.

When students of varied ages in months but in the same grade were tested all at once, the younger students performed worse than the others, but when the test was administered to all students at the same age in months, the differences were negligible (Crawford, Dearden, & Greaves, 2014).

Table 6. Relationship Between the Profile Variable (Number of Certification) and the Status of National Certification of BSITTM Students

	λ^2_c	p-value
Tour Guiding NC II	32.231	0.000**
F&B Services NC II	82.728	0.000**
Front Office Services NC II	59.143	0.000**
Travel Services NC II	87.811	0.000**
Events Management Services NC II	15.051	0.002*

*Legend: *Significant at p-value < 0.05; **Significant at p-value < 0.01*

Table 6 shows the relationship between the Profile Variable (Number of Certification) and the Status of National Certification of BSITTM students. Table reveals that all computed p-values were less than 0.05 alpha level, therefore there is no significant relationship between the respondents' number of certification and status of NC. This means that the respondents' competencies are affected by the number of certifications that they earned.

It means that only Event Management Services NCII has a significant relationship with the number of certification and status of their NC. Most of the students are not competent enough or do not have the knowledge and skills in taking this assessment that is the number of certifications was affected.

Trainees or students who wish to enter this training should possess the following requirement: can communicate in basic English in both oral and written forms, physically and mentally fit, with good moral character and can perform basic mathematical computation (TESDA, n.d).

Table 7. Proposed Action Plan of Action to Address the Problems Encountered on the Professional Courses with TESDA Competency Assessment

Key result area / Objectives	Strategies / Programs	Outcomes
To increase the hands-on laboratory hours for students.	Review the syllabus as to the content that requires hands on practice for the student so as to focus on the critical aspects of competency.	The student who will undergo assessment can easily use the laboratory if needed.
To give students more time to review for the exam.	Proper scheduling of practical examination by the faculty members.	Students will be more prepared and focused during the exam.
To perform all necessary tasks required in the course.	Increase the laboratory hours for student demonstration on hands on execution.	Students will gain more knowledge and skills.
To do practical exams individually.	The students will be scheduled so that that the number of the students to take practical exams will be minimized.	They will be given more focus by the instructor.
To have a larger space for the working area.	Minimize the number of students for courses with laboratory.	Students could work easily.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Majority of the BSITTM graduating students are 19- 20 years old, of them are female, and most of them have five national certificates. Most of the students are competent in their national certification. Based on the results, there were no problems encountered on the practical exam given to the BSITTM students. BSITTM student's performance in National Certificate assessment is affected by the respondent's age and number of certification for all qualifications. An action plan was proposed to further improve the results of the competency assessment exams based on the respondent's feedback.

It is recommended that the students may be oriented about the proper rules and regulations before the assessment for them to have sufficient knowledge on what to do during the competency assessment. The institution may focus on the practical exams so that the rate of failing students can be lessened. The university may provide more equipment and ensure that they are properly functioning, to improve the 'hands-on skills' of the students in the working area. The instructor may help and motivate the students on their professional courses for the students to perform well during their competency assessment. The study's proposed action plan may be implemented to further increase the passing rate in the competency assessment. Future research about national certification may be conducted to validate the results of the study.

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