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Assessment of Hospitality Management Skills of CTU- San Francisco Campus Restaurant Phase Interns

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Abstract

Hospitality management skills are essential to career success in the hospitality and tourism industries. This survey assessment determines the performance level of restaurant phase student interns of Cebu Technological University- San Francisco, Campus regarding hospitality management skills, work values and attitudes, the practicum students' problems, and how they felt such difficulties.

The study uses the researcher made questionnaire where the practicum competencies model is based on Hatcher and Lassiter (2006) and is distributed to 36 student interns for restaurant phase, academic year 2014-2015.

As perceived from the student interns' baseline competence results, it has a grand mean of 4.21, exceeds expectation. Personality skills competencies are 4.33 (exceptional), while interpersonal skills mean a grand mean of 4.25 (exceeds expectations). Cognitive and affective skills, has a great mean of 3.97, expressive and reflective skills were 4.22, (exceeds expectations) in description.

For the perceived problems felt by the student intern respondents a grand mean of 1.56 (not a problem scale) that includes lack of self-confidence, work attitudes, cleanliness and sanitation in the workplace, conflict with co-workers, inadequate knowledge and tardiness.

Thus, student interns assigned in different cooperating agencies during their restaurant phase training had exceptional performance and they consistently exceeded expectations in all essential areas of responsibility. The quality of their work was excellent.

Keywords: CTU- San Francisco Campus, Hospitality management skills, restaurant phase interns, practicum competencies and perceived problems

Introduction

Tourism is considered a potential industry in the global market together with the hospitality industry sectors. The hospitality industry is increasing and contributing nearly 10 % of the world's GDP, it is expanding globally and promoting its growth in a changing multicultural environment. It constitutes many subsectors like hotels and restaurants, which are one of the most sources of economic growth. Furthermore, the hospitality is the main source of foreign currency exchanges and the largest employers to employ the workforce. It brings the different cultures together in the global community.

San Francisco, Cebu as part of Camotes Islands offers a promising venue for local and foreign tourists to capture one's interest in staying on the island. Due to the increasing tourism industry forces, the Cebu Technological University, San Francisco, Campus offered hospitality and tourism courses and a hospitality internship program. This was offered as early as 2006 and the first graduates were produced by school year 2006-2007. The university also offered some short term courses in hospitality skills and other expertise training as part of their extension programs. Furthermore, the university prepared the students for management careers in tourism and hospitality.

The study was conducted to assess the hospitality management skills of CTU- San Francisco Campus restaurant phase interns for the school year 2013-2014 as the basis for an enhanced Practicum 1 course design.

Considering that the tourism and hospitality industries continues to move, there is a need to evaluate the hospitality management skills of restaurant phase student interns in terms of their tourism and hospitality skills as preparation in the workforce.

Review of Related Literature

Hospitality and tourism courses are one of the ever-growing courses offered in universities. It is one of the present trends that provides a promising profession in industries. The main objective of management education is to provide industry with high calibre graduates equipped with relevant management competencies (Christou, 2002). A literature review indicates that generic and transferable skills, including leadership, communication, critical thinking, and human resource management are essential to career success (Kay & Russette, 2000).

This study is anchored on Umbreit, 1993 that universities offered tourism and hospitality courses aim to meet the demands of an impulsive and changing world. He further said that many universities attempt to prepare students by developing and enhancing management competencies and skills needed to operate successfully.

As published in the (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2002), travel and tourism industries generate employment for approximately 250 million people or one in every eleven jobs. In Australia, employment in tourism is 540,700 persons up 1.3% from 2001-02 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2004), yet there is a lack of appropriately skilled human resources.

Gustin (2001) found in the USA that encouraging and teaching critical thinking skills resulted in students better prepared to meet the demands of an ill defined business environment. In Australia, Moscardo (1997) claims that developing problem solving skills, creative and flexible-thinking competencies are critical in building management competencies for tourism students.

A definition of competency that recognizes the importance of skills, knowledge and personal characteristics and the linkages between possessing these and performing certain tasks or roles is one developed by Quinn *et al.* (1996). A competency "suggests both the possession of knowledge and the behavioral capacity to act appropriately. To develop competencies you must both be introduced to knowledge and have the opportunity to practice your skills" Quinn *et al.* (1996: 14).

Employers require graduates with transferable skills, including strong written and oral communication skills, interpersonal skills, teamwork, and problem solving skills (DEETYA, 1998). Competent leadership qualities are needed to determine strategic directions for an organization to take (Scheule & Sneed, 2001) and to creatively solve business problems. Skills must accommodate internal organization flexibility and an ambiguous external environment. This type of environment demands innovative managers to broker their organization through unsettled external times (Quinn *et al*, 1996).

Tourism and hospitality industries are often regarded as 'people industries' and effective human resource management is critical. Many tourism and hospitality researchers maintain that 'soft' human relation skills, including oral and written communication and interpersonal communication are essential for graduates and trainees to possess (Baum, 1991). Their results confirm that communication ability and interpersonal skills were rated most important competencies by all three sectors (Tait *et al.,* 1993).

In addition to the traditional classroom learning, there is substantial agreement between employers, educators, and students that practical work experience is vital for the future success of tourism and hospitality management graduates. Internships aim to enhance students' practical skills and management competencies (Walo 2000) while providing an important link between classroom theory and workplace practice (Cuneen & Sidwell 1994). Students through internship can reportedly develop competence in several generic areas of management, including leadership, human resources, oral and written communication, interpersonal communication, problem solving.

Objectives

1. To determine the performance level of work values and attitudes essential during the on the job training as assessed by the interns;

2. To find out the level of hospitality competency skills that Practicum students performed during internship:

    2.1. Baseline competencies,
    2.2. Personality skills/characteristics,
    2.3. Interpersonal skills,
    2.4. Cognitive and affective skills,
    2.5. Expressive and reflective skills.

3. To find out the difficulties/problems encountered by the intern students during their practice:

    3.1. Personal,
    3.2. Customer relations,
    3.3. Schedule of duty,
    3.4. Performance,
    3.5. Co- workers,
    3.6. Lack of facilities and,
    3.7. Type of guests.

4. To formulate improvement plan on the existing Practicum 1 course design

Methodology

The study is a descriptive type of research using the researcher-made questionnaire based on the profile of the respondents in terms of their age, gender, and their assigned task during internship. It also identifies the hospitality skills and competencies, work values and attitudes of the interns with their level of competency through a rating scale, and the last part is the assessed problems or difficulties that the interns encountered during their actual experience in the restaurant phase. The practicum competencies are based on the practicum competencies outline report by the Association of Directors of Psychology Training Clinics (ADPTC) Practicum Competencies Workgroup by Hatcher and Lassiter (2006). The model used is based on the model of domain learning by Alexander (2004): Reinterpreting expertise as a multidimensional, multistage process.

The study was conducted at Cebu Technological University- San Francisco Campus in San Francisco, Cebu (pls. see figs. 2-4). The Municipality of San Francisco is a 3rd class municipality forming part of the Camotes Group of Islands with coordinates of 10˚ 37' to 10º 43' 10" north and 124º 24' 40" to 124º 29' 4" East. It is situated in Central Visayas in the Philippines, part of the province of Cebu in Region VII. It is located east of Cebu and west of Leyte.

36 respondents are student interns in the restaurant phase. Of the 36 respondents, 69.44% had the age ranges from 19-20 years old, 22.22% ranges from 21-22 years old, and 5.56% with age ranges from 23-24 years old. In terms of gender, 27.78% were males and 72.22% are females. Most of the respondents are assigned under the food and beverage department, as servers and kitchen area officers. Others are assigned as customer service officers, guest relation officers, cashier, purchaser, and a supervisory officer during their internship period.
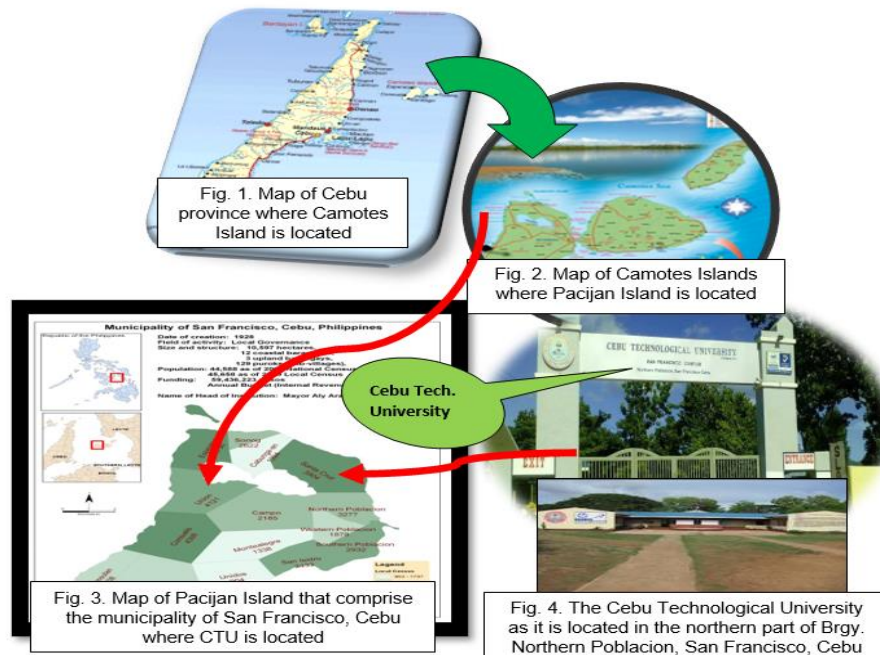
The result was treated statistically using weighted means, and the Likert scale was used to quantify responses of the respondents.

Scale used for interpretation on competency skills

Weighted Mean	Interpretation
4.21 - 5.00	Exceptional
3.41 - 4.20	Exceeds expectations
2.61 – 3.40	Meets expectations
1.81 - 2.60	Improvement needed
1.00 – 1.80	Not satisfactory

Scale used for interpretation on the degree of problems felt

Weighted Mean	Interpretation
4.34-5.00	Very extreme
3.10-4.33	Severe
2.34 – 3.09	Moderately
1.67 – 2.33	Less severe
1.00 – 1.66	Not a problem

The Research Environment

Fig. 1. Map of Cebu province where Camotes Island is located

Fig. 2. Map of Camotes Islands where Pacijan Island is located

Cebu Tech. University

Fig. 3. Map of Pacijan Island that comprise the municipality of San Francisco, Cebu where CTU is located

Fig. 4. The Cebu Technological University as it is located in the northern part of Brgy. Northern Poblacion, San Francisco, Cebu

RESULTS

The following were the results of the study.

Table 1. Work Habits and Values of HM Interns
n=36

Work Habit/Values	Weighted Mean	Interpretation	Rank
1. Always come to office on time	4.78	Exceptional	6.3
2. Observe proper break time period	4.83	Exceptional	2.5
3. Cooperation in all group areas	4.75	Exceptional	8.5
4. Perform the assigned task within the assigned time	4.78	Exceptional	6.3
5. Flexibility in the work is observed	4.78	Exceptional	6.3
6. Always see to it that the works and reports are neat, presentable and correct	4.81	Exceptional	4.5
7. Dependability in all areas is achieved	4.81	Exceptional	4.5
8. Utilize office hours to do school assignments, reports, projects, etc.	4.83	Exceptional	2.5
9. Possess professional appearance	4.75	Exceptional	8.5
10. Regular attendance is observed	4.97	Exceptional	**1**
GRAND MEAN	**4.24**	**Exceptional**	

Table 2. Work Attitudes of HM Interns

n=36

Work Attitudes	WM	Interpretation	Rank
1. Has friendly disposition	4.86	Exceptional	3.5
2. Deals with supervisor and others with courtesy	4.94	Exceptional	1
3. Patience and diligence in performing assigned task	4.78	Exceptional	7
4. Is confident	4.67	Exceptional	10
5. Interest and enthusiasm in performing the assigned task	4.81	Exceptional	5.5

6. Has sense of humor	4.75	Exceptional	8
7. Is compassionate	4.72	Exceptional	9
8. Open to constructive criticisms	4.89	Exceptional	2
9. Work harmoniously with the office mate	4.81	Exceptional	5.5
10. Is reliable and hardworking	4.86	Exceptional	3.5
GRAND MEAN	**4.21**	**Exceptional**	

Table 3. Baseline Competencies Acquired by HM Interns

n=36

Baseline Competencies	Mean	Description	Rank
1. Readily understands instructions	4.58	Exceptional	3.3
2. Perform the task even the supervisor is not around	4.58	Exceptional	3.3
3. Usually came with sound suggestions	4.69	Exceptional	2
4. Showing strength and stability	4.78	Exceptional	1
5. Cooperate with all the other members in the organization	4.58	Exceptional	3.3
6. Being resourceful	3.94	Exceeds expectations	6
GRAND MEAN	**4.21**	**Exceptional**	

Table 4. Personality Skills Possessed by HM Interns

n=36

Personality Skills	Mean	Description	Rank
1. Report to office neatly and well - groomed	4.50	Exceptional	1
2. Report to office properly attired	4.29	Exceptional	2
3. Posses' emotional maturity always	4.28	Exceptional	3.3

4. Showing self-confidence	4.28	Exceptional	3.3
5. Have the knowledge on the job assigned	4.28	Exceptional	3.3
GRAND MEAN	**4.33**	**Exceptional**	

Table 5. Interpersonal Skills Possessed by HM Interns

n=36

Interpersonal Skills	Mean	Description	Rank
1. Ability to listen and be empathic with others;	4.33	Exceptional	1
2. Possess verbal as well as non-verbal domains.	4.28	Exceptional	2
3. Respect for interest in others' cultures, experiences, values, points of view, goals and desires, fears, etc.	4.22	Exceptional	3
4. Open to feedback	4.17	Exceeds expectations	4
GRAND MEAN	**4.25**	**Exceptional**	

Table 6. Cognitive and Affective Skills Possessed by HM Interns

n=36

Cognitive / Affective Skills	Mean	Description	Rank
1. Has problem-solving ability	3.83	Exceeds expectations	5.5
2. Possess critical thinking	3.83	Exceeds expectations	5.5
3. organized reasoning	3.94	Exceeds expectations	3.5
4. Has intellectual curiosity and flexibility	3.94	Exceeds expectations	3.5
5. Affect tolerance and understanding of interpersonal conflict	4.11	Exceeds expectations	1.5

6 .Tolerance of ambiguity and uncertainty	4.11	Exceeds expectations	1.5
GRAND MEAN	**3.97**	**Exceeds expectations**	

Table 7. Expressive and Reflective Skills Possessed by HM Interns
n=36

Expressive and Reflective skills	Mean	Description	Rank
1. Ability to communicate one's ideas	4.19	Exceeds expectations	3
2. Ability to communicate one's feelings and information in verbal, non-verbal, and written forms.	4.22	Exceptional	2
3. Ability to examine and consider one's own motives, attitudes, behaviors, and one's effect on others.	4.25	Exceptional	1
GRAND MEAN	**4.22**	**Exceptional**	

Table 8. Problems Encountered by HM Interns in the Workplace
n=36

Nature of problems	Mean	Description	Rank
1. Delayed service due to lack of workers and stock of product	1.89	Less severe	1
2. Problem with the relationship with supervisor	1.53	Not a problem	5.5
3. Difficulty relating with co-practicumers	1.71	Less severe	2
4. Lack of self-confidence	1.58	Not a problem	3
5. work attitudes problems	1.43	Not a problem	9
6. Cleanliness and sanitation in the workplace	1.56	Not a problem	4
7. Conflict between manager and employees	1.47	Not a problem	8

8. Inadequate knowledge between the task assigned to	1.43	Not a problem	
9. Favored treatment of workers of some guests.	1.53	Not a problem	5.5
10. Tardiness in the workplace	1.50	Not a problem	7
GRAND MEAN	**1.56**	**Not a problem**	

Legend:
5- Extreme
4- Severe
3- Moderate
2- Minimal
1- Not a problem

Discussions

Most interns rate themselves exceptional in their work values and habits (4.97 to 4.75) having a grand mean of 4.24. In work attitudes, an average mean of 4.21 means exceptional in all working areas for work values and habits. Most of them exceeded being regular in attendance and performing assigned tasks timely. This can be an indicator that the intern students are more likely hardworking and ready to work on overtime.

As assessed from the student intern's baseline competence results showed that it has a grand mean of 4.21, exceptional. Personality skills competencies is 4.33, which is exceptional, as well as for interpersonal skills, a grand mean of 4.25, which is exceptional. Cognitive and affective skills, has a grand mean of 3.97, exceeds expectations, while for expressive and reflective skills were 4.22, exceptional in description. The baseline competencies as indicated in the result of the study rated by the practicumers further showed that the learning institution which is the Cebu Technological University- San Francisco Campus really did their orientation schemes, training and instruction better and seem very effective as shown in the responses rated by the students on the skills and competencies which are excellent in the quality of work shown.

For the problems felt by the student intern respondents mostly encountered is the difficulty relating with co-practicumers which is less severe but still a grand mean of 1.56 under not a problem scale.

Conclusions

In the light of the findings, it is concluded that student interns had exceptional working values, habits, and attitudes in the workplace during the internship. As to their competencies, they

have the majority rating of exceeds expectations except of the personality skills, which is exceptional in description.

Thus, student interns assigned in different cooperating agencies during their restaurant phase training had exceptional performance and they consistently exceeded expectations in all essential areas of responsibility, and the quality of their work was excellent.

However, there is a need to have intervention schemes on the specific areas of the competencies that needs improvement.

Recommendation

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, it is recommended that the proposed intervention schemes for enhancement of the restaurant phase practicum 1 students be made in terms of their critical and problem solving abilities before going to their internship experiences. Another there is also a need to assess the performance of the interns during the phase 2 training program (hotel phase).

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