

Workplace Performance of Hotel and Restaurant Management Interns of West Visayas State University, Calinog, Iloilo, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to examine the workplace performance of Hotel and Restaurant Management practicum students of West Visayas State University – Calinog Campus as perceived by the interns themselves and the supervisors in different hospitality establishments in Iloilo City where students were deployed for on-the-job training in relation to industry-site internship / practicum program for academic year 2013-2014. The result of the study serves as the basis for designing a proposed education or training program in enhancing the workplace performance of Hotel and Restaurant Management Students. The study surveyed 35 practicum students and 23 supervisors in different hospitality establishments in Iloilo City using survey questionnaire based from Competency Standards for hospitality related courses of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Memorandum Order No.30 series of 2006. Findings revealed that both supervisor and student respondents agreed on the satisfactory performance of the interns in terms of Higher Order Thinking Skills and very satisfactory rating on Personal Qualities. With regard to the Basic Skills (e.g., numerical computation, oral and written communications), the students rated themselves Very Satisfactory while supervisors gave a Satisfactory rating. The same Very Satisfactory performance rating was achieved on Professional Competencies by both respondents. Of the five common competencies, Interpersonal and Technological skills of the interns were rated very satisfactory by both respondents on Interpersonal Skills and on Technological Skills. Also the same satisfactory rating was given on Information skills by both the supervisor and interns. Whereas for the Resources Skills, the interns rated themselves Very Satisfactory rating while the supervisors rated them Satisfactory. It is recommended to continue the review and upgrade industry training in the curriculum and consistently redefine the curricular focus to meet the perceived need of the industry.

Keywords: Workplace, Performance, Practicumers

I. INTRODUCTION

Competency based curriculum has become the byword in today's hospitality education specifically since the release of the CHED Memorandum on Policies and Standards for Hotel and Restaurant Management and hospitality related courses in 2006. Such memorandum requires all colleges and universities to strictly adhere to its provisions on competency standards in view of keeping abreast with the demand of globalization and the volatile hospitality employment market. Consequently, universities and colleges offering hospitality courses need to address this issue by reassessing refocusing the course curricula to the changing needs of the society they want their graduates to be globally competitive.

In every facet of Colleges or University's curricula, one of the requisites in determining the student's ability to perform job responsibilities is by means of a practicum subject. Practicum, on-the-job training (OJT), internship, externship, field exposure and /or experiential learning, regardless of how it is called, the essential element is that students learn by doing. This educational program aims to provide students with hands-on experience in all aspects of basic job tasks and responsibilities and while doing this; the students also observe

and participate in the essential aspects of the business. According to Clark (2006), that providing effective internships creates goodwill for the business organization among universities and colleges and it also provides the workplace with up-and-coming professional workers full of fresh ideas and enthusiasm. Furthermore, Internship according to Desler (2001) can be a win-win situation for both for both students and employers.

This school program is beneficial not only in the business management courses but likewise in the hospitality career program wherein practicum is believed to expose the students in a variety of employment experiences that will improve the employability of the students prior to graduation. For students, it may mean being able to hone their business skills, check out potential employers, and learn more about their preferences when it comes to choosing their careers. On the other hand, the employers can use the interns to make useful contribution while they're being assessed for a possible future job placement.

Employers consider many aspects of the applicants and try to match them to the requirement of a particular job because the specific job depends on an individual's qualifications (Dittmer

& Griffin, 1997). They should, therefore, attempt to assess all of an applicant's attributes.

Specifically, the researcher raised these issues to be able to assess the various skills and competencies applied by the students on their respective workplace exposure. The study was conducted to help address the gap and enhance the instructions and curriculum program of the Department of Hotel and Restaurant Management of West Visayas State University – Calinog Campus and ultimately the students' career development.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

This study utilized the comparative descriptive design. The purpose of which was to investigate the comparison of hospitality supervisor's and the interns' self-assessed perception of the West Visayas State University-Calinog Campus HRM interns' performance in the workplace. The researcher used the survey questionnaire to collect relevant data from the population in this study. The researcher believes that this method will yield quantitative data about perceptions on the workplace performance of HRM interns in relation to industry-site internship /practicum program by both the WVSU – CC HRM students and hospitality supervisors who have supervised WVSU-CC HRM interns at hotels and restaurants in Iloilo City during the AY 2013-2014.

Participants of the Study

The participants of this study were consists of two groups: The hospitality supervisors and the WVSU-CC Hospitality students. Out of convenience and very limited time, the respondents for the hospitality supervisors group were limited only to supervisors who have supervised WVSU-CC HRM interns/practicum students in AY 2013-2014. The list of hotels and restaurants where the students had their practicum were obtained from the Practicum Coordinator. For the students' group, the respondents were consist of all WVSU-CC Hospitality students who are enrolled in Restaurants and Hotel Phase Practicum for the AY 2013-2014. The number of enrolled students was obtained from the university registrar. A Total of 23 supervisors and 35 students were included in the sample. The self –administered survey questionnaires were distributed accordingly.

Survey Procedures

The Practicum Coordinator took care of the distribution of the questionnaires to the Human Resource Directors of the hotels and restaurants. The researcher took charge of the distribution of the survey questionnaires to the student-respondents. Two sets of questionnaires were created for the demographic profile survey, for both the supervisors and another for the students group of participants. While for the second part of the survey instrument, which is the Workplace Performance Survey, the same set was used. The questionnaires

included a cover letter on the first page that advised the participants of their anonymous response and the importance of the research. The questionnaires also included the researcher's phone number and email address in case the participants had any questions regarding this survey. The survey process took three weeks from original contact to survey return. Out of convenience and very limited time, the researcher used purposive sampling. The researcher identified two groups of participants for this study; the hospitality supervisors and the HRM students. The respondents for the supervisors group were limited to selected hotels and restaurants, which were likely to have supervised WVSU-CC HRM practicum student in AY 2013-2014 in Iloilo City. While for the students group, the respondents were limited only to the WVSU-CC HRM students who have enrolled in Practicum in AY 2013-2014. A Total of 23 supervisors and 35 students were included in the sample. It would mean that the results of the study are based on the perception only of the said groups. The data gathered is also limited only to some particular aspects of the CHED's Competency Standards for Hotel and Restaurant Management and other hospitality related courses.

Instrumentation

Construction. The research instrument was constructed based on the Competency Standards for hospitality related courses of the Commission on Education's (CHED) Memorandum Order No.30 series of 2006. The author also referred to the Training Regulations for Hospitality Courses of Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (2006), and other research studies. The self-administered questionnaire about the supervisor and students' perception on the WVSU-CC HRM Practicum Students workplace performance was divided into two parts: demographic data and level of satisfaction on interns' workplace performance. The first part of the research instrument, which was in multiple-choice formats. This was created in 2 versions; one for the supervisor and another for the student respondents. The demographic information for the supervisors' group included age, gender, level of education, years in hospitality industry, the current unit/department affiliation, the questions about their supervisory experiences, the student-interns' value in the workplace and the significance of students practicum program/ work experiences in the workplace. The later required a simple "yes" or "no" answer.

This section also included: the length of time spent in training the students and the supervisor' opinion about the needs for work experiences and the value of practicum students in the workplace with a blank space. On the other hand, demographic information of the students group of participants included age, gender, course of study, level of education, practicum program enrolled in, questions about the student-interns' value in the workplace and the significance of students practicum program/ work experiences in the workplace , the duration of internship training; the students' opinion about their

need for work experiences and the practicum students' perception of their value in the workplace with a blank space.

The second part of the survey questionnaire is about the Workplace Performance rating. The researcher used the same survey questionnaire for both the supervisors and students. A five-point Likert-type format was used to assess the level of satisfaction for the students' performance for the identified competencies namely: the Personal Skills and Qualities (i.e., Basic Skills, Higher Order Thinking Skills & Personal Qualities); the Professional Specific Competencies; and the 5 Common Units of Competencies (i.e., Resources, Interpersonal, Technological, Information and Systems).

Validation. The questionnaire was presented for critique by two (2) professors in hospitality management and evaluated by the researcher's adviser who has master's degree in their respective fields. Likewise, the study was evaluated by a research consultant from WVSU-CC Research Unit and was finally pre-tested to some hospitality supervisors who were not involved in the present study. Items that were not conformed and relevant to the study were recorded in the final draft.

Data-Gathering Procedures

The self-administered questionnaire was developed based from the CHED's Competency standards for HRM and Hospitality related courses (2006). The Training Regulations for Hospitality Courses (2006) of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) and researches from other studies were also used as bases for drafting the survey questionnaire. Two sets of self-directed questionnaires were created for the first part of the instrument that is the demographic profile survey for both the supervisors and another for the students group of participants. While for the second part, which is the Workplace Performance Survey, the same set of questionnaire was used for both participants. The research instrument included a cover letter on the first page that advised the participants of their anonymous response and the importance of the research. It also included the researcher's phone number and email address in case the participants had any questions regarding this survey. Complete data were then encoded, fed and processed in the computer using the software Statistical Program for Social Science (SPSS).

Statistical Treatment

Percentage was use to depict the demographic profile of the participants,. As to the assessment of the workplace performance of the HRM practicum students by hotel and restaurant supervisors among selected hotels and restaurants in Iloilo, weighted mean was used with the following scale:

Value Scale	Mean Range	Verbal Interpretation
5	4.51-5.00	Excellent (E)
4	3.51-4.50	Very Satisfactory (VS)
3	2.51-3.50	Satisfactory (S)
2	1.51-2.50	Fair (F)
1	1.00-1.50	Poor (P)

T-test was used to determine whether there is a significant difference between the ratings of the two (2) groups of participants (hospitality supervisors and HRM interns). This was used to test the null hypothesis.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Assessment of Workplace Performance of HRM practicum students

This phase discusses and analyzes the workplace performance of HRM practicum students as rated according to the performance level by industry partners and the students' themselves. Criteria for assessing workplace performance level were based from the three competencies identified by the Commission on Higher Education and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority as industry relevant for hospitality related courses. These are: Personal Skills and Qualities (Basic /Tool Competencies) under which include the Basic Skills, Higher Order Thinking Skills, and Personal Qualities; the Professional Specific Competencies and the five Common Competencies which include Resources, Interpersonal, Technological, Information and System.

Table 1
Students' Workplace Performance Rating

BASIC/TOOL SKILLS	Supervisors		Students	
	WM	VI	WM	VI
Basic Skills	3.44	S	3.71	VS
Higher Order Thinking Skills	3.41	S	3.42	S
Personal Qualities	3.68	VS	3.76	VS
B. PROFESSIONAL SPECIFIC COMPETENCIES	3.51	VS	3.51	VS
C. COMMON COMPETENCIES				
Resources	3.37	S	3.57	VS
Interpersonal	3.66	VS	3.86	VS
Technological	3.7	VS	3.67	VS
Information	3.26	S	3.45	S
Systems	3.49	S	3.67	VS

Table 1 presents the mean scores of the perceived workplace performance of HRM practicum students by the supervisors and students. The data shows that supervisors rated the practicum students Satisfactory in Basic skills with a weighted mean of 3.44, while the students rated themselves Very Satisfactorily with a mean score of 3.71. While in Higher Order Thinking Skills and Personal Qualities, both respondents rated the practicum students Very Satisfactory with a mean score of 3.68 and 3.51 by supervisors and 3.76 and 3.51 by the

students respectively. In items under Professional Specific Competencies, both respondents gave the same rating of Very Satisfactory with a mean score of 3.51. As to the items under the Common Competencies, the supervisors gave a Satisfactory rating on Resources with a mean score of 3.37, while the students gave themselves a Very Satisfactory rating of 3.57. On Interpersonal and Technological Skills, both respondents gave a rating of Very Satisfactory with a mean score of 3.66 and 3.7 by the supervisors and 3.86 and 3.67 by the students respectively. Again both participants gave the same rating of Satisfactory in Information Skills, with a mean score of 3.26 by the supervisors and 3.45 by the students respectively. On the System Skills, the supervisors rated the students Satisfactory with a mean score of 3.49 while the students Very Satisfactory with 3.67 mean score.

Table 2
Comparative Result on the Perceptions of Supervisors and SPU
I HRM Interns on the Workplace Performance of Practicum
Students

Classification		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Tool Skills	Students	35	3.6207	.62665	.10592
	Supervisors	23	3.5097	.50218	.10471
Professional Specific Competencies	Students	35	3.5114	.57740	.09760
	Supervisors	23	3.5130	.51106	.10658
Common Competencies	Students	35	3.6446	.54689	.09244
	Supervisors	23	3.4217	.51870	.10816

Table 2 shows the following results of T -test at 0.05 level of significance on the perceptions of the hospitality supervisors and HRM Interns on the workplace performance of the practicum students:

There is a significant difference between the workplace performance of HRM interns and hospitality supervisors in terms of Basic/tool and personal skills defined by basic skills, higher order thinking skills, and personal qualities. There is no significant difference between the workplace performance of practicum students as perceived by HRM interns and hospitality supervisors in terms of professional specific competencies. There is a significant difference between the workplace performance of practicum students as perceived by HRM and hospitality supervisors in terms of common competencies as defined by resources, interpersonal, technological, information and systems.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Both supervisor and student respondents agreed on the satisfactory performance of the interns in terms of Higher Order Thinking skills and very satisfactory rating on Personal Qualities. With regard to the Basic skills (e.g., numerical computation, oral and written communications), the student rated themselves Very Satisfactory while supervisors gave Satisfactory performance rating. The same Very Satisfactory

rating was achieved on Professional Competencies by both respondents. Of the five common competencies, Interpersonal and Technological skills of the interns were rated very satisfactory by both respondents on Interpersonal Skills and Technological Skills. Also the same satisfactory rating was given on Information skill by both respondents.. Whereas for the Resources skills, the students rated themselves a very satisfactory rating while the supervisors rated them satisfactory.

The results of the T-test shows that there is a significant difference between the workplace performance of HRM interns and hospitality supervisors in terms of Basic/tool and personal skills defined by basic skills, higher order thinking skills, and personal qualities. This implies that hospitality supervisors have higher expectations of these skills from the students. Although the discrepancy in the mean result was minimal at 0.27 for Basic Skills and .01 for higher thinking skills, there is a need for the college to look into this aspect of the students' academic preparation for them to gain competitive edge.

There is no significant difference between the workplace performance of practicum students as perceived by HRM interns and hospitality supervisors in terms of professional specific competencies.

There is a significant difference between the workplace performance of practicum students as perceived by HRM and hospitality supervisors in terms of common competencies as defined by resources, interpersonal, technological, information and systems. The result of this study implies that the students have not fully met the expectations of the industry in terms of system and resources due to lack of more opportunities for exposure to these specific competencies in the university settings. Or it may also imply that these competencies were not observed in the workplace.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Continually review and upgrade industry training in the curriculum and need to consistently redefine the curricular focus to meet the industry perceive need of the industry. Specifically focus on understanding and performance on the area of Improve language skills and numeric skills, Higher Order Thinking Skills, Resources, Information and System.

Involve and empower students to initiate collegiate activities that will address these competency gaps: To address creative learning activities e.g., role paying, simulation, pre/post conference during internship training, return demonstrations, Written report, conduct research and feasibility studies; to address higher order thinking skills gap: conduct more group dynamics activity and leadership training; motivate students to engage entrepreneurial activities; to address resources gap empower students to initiate and conduct seminar workshop, training camps, and team building activities; to address information gap : orient and motivate students to do research activities, participate in ICT training camp, engage and encourage students to outsource/access from the internet and to address system gap: enhance classroom

knowledge of the industry system prior to industry exposure, field trips and film viewing/ videotaping.

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