Multiple Intelligences (MI) of Associate in Hotel and Restaurant Management Students & Its Implication to the Teaching of Oral Communication

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Abstract *–A number of educators argue that MI helps students build positive attitudes toward learning in English class. A study says that "Students who are using their areas of strength to learn feel more competent and confident and enjoy the challenge of acquiring new information". This study sought to find out the MI of selected Associate in Hotel and Restaurant Management (AHRM)students. It also delved on the implication of MI to the teaching of the subject. The research design used was basically a descriptive method employing an adopted MI survey form administered to Oral Communication students. There were five sections of second year AHRM students. Out of 196 students, 111 were selected to answer the survey questions by the use of the combination of stratified random sampling and the Slovin's formula. Results showed that the top three intelligences the respondents have based on their scores are intrapersonal, followed by bodily/kinesthetic and logical/mathematical intelligences; least of the intelligences are verbal/linguistic and visual/spatial.This implied that teaching of Oral Communication should nurture the intrapersonal intelligence and more importantly should enhance and develop the verbal strength of the AHRM students. Teaching should focus more on improving communication skills with others, and not just within themselves.*

Keywords *–multiple intelligences, oral communication, AHRM students*

INTRODUCTION

One's success in a chosen profession depends on his skills and abilities and the most important elements of success are intelligence, determination, toughness and vision [1]. Sir Francis Galton general intelligence provides the single most critical psychological factor underlying success in life. That intelligence can be measured by a person's ability to work and sensitivity to physical stimuli. Until the first intelligence test was developed by Alfred Binet to determine which students would improve if placed in special schools. Then intelligence was described as the ability to judge and understand. It is a skill in achieving whatever one wants to attain in life within his or her sociocultural context by capitalizing on strengths and compensating for weaknesses [2]. It was later defined as the global capacity to act purposefully, think rationally, and deal effectively with his environment. This definition of intelligence serves as the basis on what degree programs a student would enroll for his chosen profession because the level of intelligence has been associated with the kind of profession an individual would pursue to be successful. From this notion, students with above average intelligence are expected to take sophisticated degrees which require higher level of thinking. Therefore, a logical student would probably survive taking up computer science compared to a linguistically inclined student. And a linguistically inclined student would better fare of in hotel and restaurant management compared to a logical student because the course entails great communication skills to deal with different kinds of customers in the hotel, catering or tourism industry.

However, modern concept of intelligence is not only limited to being logical nor linguistic. It was in 1983 when Howard Gardner first introduced his Multiple Intelligences Theory which deviate from the traditional general Intelligence Quotient (IQ) Test. Gardner believed that the individual intellect reflects a unique configuration of several relatively autonomous intelligences which he introduced in his book "Frames

of Mind in 1983 [3]. Likewise, Silverstein [4] noted that "traditional IQ tests deal mainly with logical/mathematical and linguistic intelligences, but are not designed to measure the other kinds of intelligences that people possess." According to Gardner's Theory, there are at least seven different kinds, which include verbal intelligence, musical intelligence, logical-mathematical intelligence, spatial intelligence, body movement intelligence, intelligence to understand oneself, and the intelligence to understand others" [5].

However, in the mid-1990's, naturalistic intelligence was added as the eighth intelligence [6] and existential intelligence as the ninth intelligence [7].Naturalist intelligence designates the human ability to discriminate among living things as well as sensitivity to other features of the natural world while existential intelligence is the sensitivity and capacity to tackle deep questions about human existence[8]. Thus, intelligence is defined in three ways as a property of all human beings, a dimension on which human beings differ, and the ways in which one carries out a task in virtue of one's goals[7].

Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligence sweepingly altered the world's view of human intelligence that intelligence is something one is born with a finite amount and there are tests to tell how smart one is. For Gardner, intelligence

"refers to the human ability to solve problems or to make something that is valued in one or more cultures. As long as a culture values an ability to solve a problem or create a product in a particular way, then it can be considered intelligence".

Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences is possibly the best known of the pluralistic theories. From then on, hundreds of schools around the world have integrated MI principles into their vision, mission, goals, objectives, curriculum, and pedagogy. Others have written hundreds of books on the relevance of MI theory to educators and educational institutions [9].

Consequently, many educational institutions believe that education should encompass a variety of methods to reflect students' different learning styles[4] in order to equip students with the skill demand of various industries.

The hotel, catering and tourism (HCT) industry is among the world's top job creators [10]. The industry is expected to generate 120 million jobs by 2022,

reaching a total of tourism employment worldwide of 328 million jobs [11].

In the Philippines, ADB [12] mentioned that the government recognizes tourism as a powerful economic growth engine as one of the economic boosters because tourism development is expected to create employment in hotels, restaurants, travel agencies, transport services, and tour guide services.

In May 2011 data from the Department of Tourism, Region IV-A (CALABARZON) has 10 registered hotels, five restaurants, and seven resorts from which, Batangas has one registered hotel, two restaurants and two resorts. However, at present this number has tremendously improved because boosting the tourism industry is essential as an offshoot of the rapid urbanization taking place. That is why, the provincial government of Batangas has created its tourism motto "ALL HERE, SO NEAR" showcasing different world-class beach resorts and diving sites in the province.

Thus, Hotel, Restaurant and Management (HRM) program is in demand. HRM program like AHRM prepares students for employment in a variety of positions in today's Hotel/Restaurant/Tourism management fields. It also provides learning opportunities which introduce, develop, and reinforce academic and occupational knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for job acquisition, retention, and advancement. Additionally, the program provides opportunities to upgrade present knowledge and skills or to retrain in the area of Hotel/Restaurant/Tourism management.

One of the courses of the program is Oral Communication which orients the students with the definition, models, levels, tenets and processes in oral communication. It also involves the students in the listening process and various levels of communication from intrapersonal to public communication. This course is anchored in the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Memorandum Order No. 59 series of upgrading the General Education Curriculum.This course is needed to equip AHRM graduates with the communication skills that the HRM industry requires from applicants.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

Given this context, this study would like to assess the Multiple Intelligence of AHRM students and its implication to Oral Communication teaching. It also determined the common intelligences of the

respondents and proposed ways to promote MI in the teaching – learning process.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research design was basically a descriptive method in order to gather data needed regarding intelligence of respondents and also for better understanding and easy interpretation of the readers.There were 131 student-respondents from the 196 AHRM students enrolled in Oral Communication. The respondents were heterogeneous (60% female, 40% male) coming from five different sections (2 New, 2A, 2B, 2C, and 2D) of second year AHRM. However, 20 survey questionnaires were not retrieved from the student-respondents. Therefore, there were only 111 respondents left for the study.This study employed the adopted Multiple Intelligences Survey from Walter McKenzie, 1999 of Surfaquarium Consulting which has 80 item questions using the Likert scale of 5 from 0-4 with the following interpretations: 4:always; 3: frequently; 2: sometimes; 1=seldom; 0: never.

Data gathering was done in the classroom as scheduled, before each session ends. The respondents were randomly selected from the five sections. They were asked to accomplish the two-page survey form. They must write their answer on the given table on the second page. Then, they were asked to compute for their own score, following the instruction in the second page. Their responses were handled with utmost confidentiality.

For analysis and interpretation of the gathered information, frequency distribution and simple percentage were used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Common Intelligence of the Respondents

Type of Intelligences	Distribution of Intelligences	
	Score	Ranking
Logical/Mathematical	26.97	3
Verbal/Linguistic	25.44	7
Visual/Spatial	25.05	8
Musical/Rhythmic	26.01	6
Bodily/Kinesthetic	27.27	2
Interpersonal	26.23	4.5
Intrapersonal	28.85	1
Naturalistic	26.23	4.5

Based from the survey result, the top three intelligences of the respondents are intrapersonal, bodily/kinesthetic, and logical/ mathematical. Intrapersonal Intelligence scores 28.85, bodily/ kinesthetic intelligence gets 27.27, while logical/mathematical intelligence has 26.97. This means that most of the respondents have intrapersonal strength which reflects self smart. They have the ability to comprehend themselves, to be aware of one's feelings, anxieties and impulses. They have wisdom, intuition, as well as a strong will, confidence and opinions.They tendto shy away from others; but they are in tune with their inner feelings [13].They usually manifest an effective working model of themselves. Some have kinesthetic strength which reflects body smart. This means that they have the capacity to manage one's body motions and the talent to maneuver objects through touch and movement and often have a highly cultivated sense of direction. In short, they communicate wellthrough body language. Lastly, others have logical strength which reflects logic smart. They have the capability to scrutinize problems logically, perform mathematical operations, examine issues, and sense patterns and explore relationships.They think conceptually, and abstractly.

With the intelligences that they have, they can work appropriately in the hotel, catering and tourism industry. These AHRM students after graduation can perform financial accounting, food preparation, and housekeeping.

On the other hand, the three least intelligences are musical/rhythmic, verbal/linguistic and visual/spatial. Musical intelligence ranks 6th with 26.01; verbal intelligence is 7th with 25.44; and visual intelligence is the least with 25.05 This means that respondents who are not that good in verbal intelligence lack or need to improve their ability read, write, listen, speak, and link information and selection. They cannot also use words effectively. They need to improve their auditory skills [13]. Respondents must be more aware of the varying functions of language, or more specifically, of its power to stimulate emotions [14].

Since 60% of the respondents are female, and the highest intelligence is intrapersonal, this implies that females prefer to work alone rather than in groups. This finding is supported by the results of the study carried out by [15]. In their study of high school students from five countries, the researchers found that female students tended to prefer learning alone,

48

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whereas male students preferred to work with a peer or in a group while learning.

High scores in intrapersonal intelligence is observed in other studies conducted on MI. Malm[16] revealed that students and faculty in associate degree career programs have high scores in intrapersonal and low scores in naturalistic intelligence. The study on predominant learning styles and MI of postsecondary allied health students reported intrapersonal intelligence as one of the two most dominant intelligences [17]. Even Cabrera et al. [18] divulged that intrapersonal intelligence obtains the highest mean rating among accounting students. Also, a study of 167 students across different disciplines found out that self and social as the most often, followed by body movement [19].

Implication to the teaching of Oral Communication

The result of the survey that most of the respondents have intrapersonal intelligence, followed by bodily/kinesthetic and logical/mathematical intelligences explains the failure of the respondents in the subject. Thirty-six of the respondents failed in the subject for not performing well in the three major exams, recitations during class discussions, assignments, and one recorded speech delivery as the final exam. Since oral communication entails the communication of ideas and feelings by means of visible and audible symbols, which is more of the verbal intelligence, and which is the second to the least intelligence, many of them failed obviously in the subject.

This implies that teaching of oral communication should nurture the intrapersonal intelligence but on the other hand, more importantly, should enhance and develop the verbal strength of the students. Teaching should focus more on improving communication skills with others, and not just within themselves. This can be done through reading, playing word games, making up poetry orstories. They can be taught by encouraging them to say and see words or to read books together.Tools include computers, games, multimedia, books, tape recorders, and lecture [17].

Intrapersonal is one of the levels of communication, but it is not everything and it does not end there. It should grow from oneself and develop in dealing with others in a dialogue, small group and even in public.

As AHRM students, they should be trained to have effective and fluent communication skills as their chosen profession entails them to be. This training would be essential for those who would continue as third year Bachelor of Science in Hotel and Restaurant Management (BSHRM) as the program expects students to develop competencies needed to become effective and service-oriented hospitality professionals and employees through effective oral and written skills in communication and information technology in hospitality management.

On the other hand, teachers should take innovative actions to determine the level of multiple intelligences of their students to effectively deliver instruction based on their skills and capability to learn. One innovative action is multiple intelligences profiling which is a significant approach towards knowing personally the students' capability to succeed in their chosen course in college. Through this profile, teachers understand their cognitive abilities and eventually help them to succeed [20]. Teachers can better prepare engaging and relevant lessons that correlate with those strengths [19]. Thus, students who learn their learning style may help themselves develop coping strategies to compensate for their weaknesses and capitalize on their strengths. They can participate in an interactive assessment of their learningstyle/MI, and practical tips to make their learning style work [21].

Yet, there is caution when "labeling" students; it is advisable to consider one's reasons for employing a profile [14].

In addition, Dilihunt[22] recommended that to accommodate the various intelligences of students and place them at promise for academic success, teachers must develop various teaching strategies to improve academic performance. Because Katzowitz[17] found out that a relationship exists between MI and academic performance which implies that boosting the intelligences of the students will affect academic performance. This has been also the findings of Shalk[23] on the relationship between MI and achievement.

The results also imply that the teacher/researcher should have done an MI survey from the very beginning of the class which would be the basis of teaching strategies to enhance the verbal skills of the students with least verbal-linguistics intelligence.

But there are still many factors to consider in enhancing students' intelligences as student achievement outcomes (test scores and educational attainment) depend on individual characteristics (innate ability), family background (parent's education and income), classroom features (class size and teacher's experience), as well as neighborhood, school and district effects (percentage of the school that is low income and expenditures per pupil).

For this study, class size of an average 39 students per class which is beyond the normal size affects the performance in class. Usually very large classes may create unhelpful effects for students due to noise or disruptive behavior. In addition, students may benefit less from teacher explanations for fewer opportunities to interact or ask questions for clarification. Likewise, instructors facing larger classes may be unable to identify the ability and interests of the average student.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Every child is believed to possess the eight multiple intelligences in varying degrees. For AHRM students, they are expected to possess high communication skills because of the nature of their work. They are usually at the front desk as receptionist or at the rooms division as housekeeper or chambermaid, dining area as food and beverage attendant or bartender. These works entail that they should have the ability to communicate effectively with their clienteles through high capacity to read, speak, listen, write and think.

However, based on the findings of the study, the most common intelligences of the respondents are intrapersonal, bodily/kinesthetic and logical/mathematical. These intelligences can be enhanced through creative strategies, appropriate instructional materials and a stimulating and nurturing environment.

The result implies that intrapersonal intelligence should be turned to verbal prowess as AHRM students need effective communication skills to succeed in their chosen profession. Therefore, teaching Oral Communication must focus on the enhancement of verbal-linguistic intelligence and interpersonal intelligence.

Thus, it would be better if another study would be undertaken focusing on the employment of MI teaching methods for both AHRM and BSHRM programs.

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50

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