



Research Article

TRACER STUDY OF EMPLOYMENT OF BSHRM GRADUATES OF THE LA CONSOLACION UNIVERSITY PHILIPPINES FROM 2011-2013

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Received October 30, 2015; Accepted November 03, 2015; Published December 08, 2015;

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Cite This Article: Fronda, F., Villanueva, F.(2015). Tracer study of employment of bshrm graduates of the la consolacion university philippines from 2011-2013. Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities Research, 1(2).1-6

ABSTRACT

The study determined Employability of La Consolation University (LCUP) Bachelor of Science in Hotel and Restaurant Management Graduates for Academic Year 2011 to 2013. The study used the survey research method. For the purpose of the study only those presently employed were included in the survey. The instrument of the study was designed by the researchers based on the variables of the conceptual framework with other data such as name, address, contact number, course, and year graduated. Employment potential of the graduates was described by their job movement and the relevance of their positions to their field of study, Hotel and Restaurant Management. The study revealed HRM graduates are employable both locally and abroad. They enter international employment after acquiring experience in the country. Some even got lucky abroad as soon as completing their college degree; Academic achievers in college are mobile in their employment. They gain more knowledge and skills by moving jobs in different hospitality industry companies, the graduates have quite a good perception of the HRM course. They were confident that they have learned the relevant hospitality industry knowledge and skills and were able to find jobs that are related to their course and The HRM curriculum is in place, but it needs enhancement. Firstly in terms of including in the practicum program a variety of hospitality industry companies that the on the job trainees may access to gain more skills and knowledge. Secondly in terms of more opportunities for in- or off-campus skills development programs related to the major subjects.

KEYWORDS:Employment, Graduates

INTRODUCTION

The importance of education in boosting the economic growth of the country cannot be overemphasized. Even today where some jobs abound that do not necessitate college degrees, people still believe that higher education pays. Students enroll in colleges and universities to earn degrees to make them competitive in the job market. Higher educational institutions also continue to increase in

order to serve the growing educational demand. Contrary to this positive outlook on education is seemingly a negative picture of employment

Department of Labor and Employment statistics show that unemployment rate for Metro Manila alone increased from 15% in 2003 to 18% in 2004. The figures continue to rise every year. College students that graduate every year are addition to the nation's unemployment problem, so observers say. Schools, although aware, can only hope for good. The situation does not stop them in their task of

providing the labor force that industries need locally and abroad. Ambitious colleges and universities, inspired by globalization, are aiming to supply the global labor market with the manpower they require. La Consolacion University Philippines (LCUP) is moving towards this direction. Its mission mandates it to produce globally competitive human resources.

LCUP, already enjoying accredited status conferred by PAASCU and PACUCOA, has not rested in its journey towards quality education. Level 1 status was granted by PACUCUOA on April 13, 2012. In the last 2013 external audit, the HRM program did not receive any non-conformance findings. As of 2004, LCUP was added in the list of accredited institutions by the TUV Rheinland ISO 9001 Accreditation. It is now ISO Certified from Preschool to Graduate School. Recently, also, the University was awarded the Autonomous Status by the Commission on Higher Education. With all these reputations attached to its name, LCUP continues to dream and labor to survive further heights of success. The College of Business Education shares with the institution this noble mission. In its desire to live up to the University's expectation of producing quality graduates who would become future business leaders, it continues evaluating its programs and services to identify areas of improvement to sustain and maintain higher grounds of

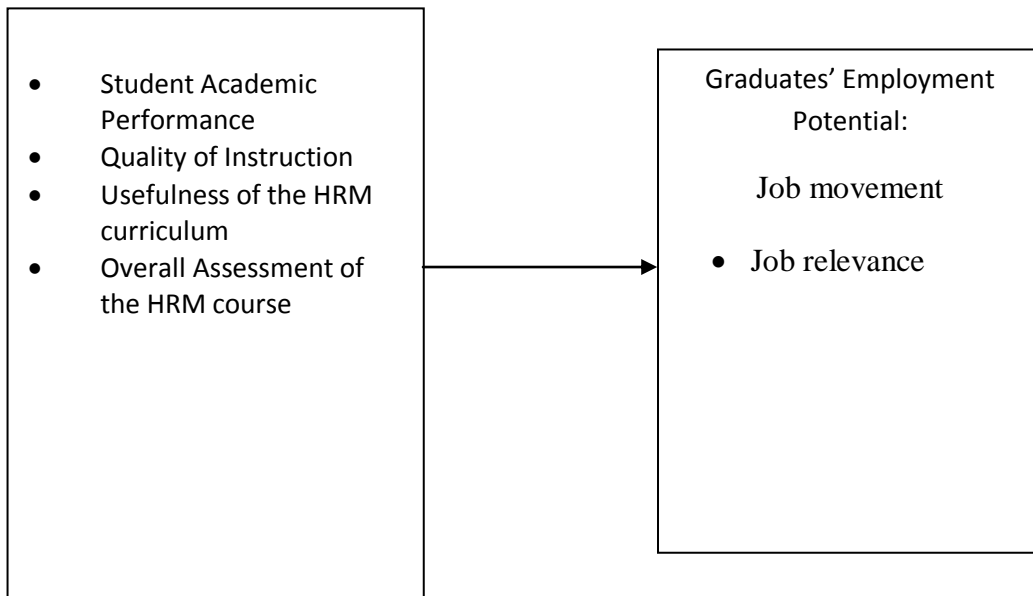
quality education. Having completed the survey of its BSC students, the department is now prepared to study its Hotel and Restaurant Management graduates.

The Hotel and Restaurant Management program was offered in 1994 and the Tourism program, in 1997. It started with a humble number of graduates, but at present, it is the most enrolled program in LCUP. The Practicum program attached to the course is its main attraction. The University boasts of the BarCIE International Center as the students' laboratory for skills and theory applications. Another special feature is the course's International Practicum program. Several students had been deployed to Singapore and the United States, and the current study would be useful in determining the program's impact on their employment potential.

FRAMEWORK

The research paradigm consists of four independent variables namely: academic performance, instructional quality, HRM curriculum and overall rating of the HRM course. These are the factors that are assumed to be related with the graduates' employment potential, the dependent variable of the study. Figure 1 shows the hypothesized relationships of the variables.

Figure 1: Conceptual Model of the Study



OBJECTIVES

- i. Determine the present profile of BS HRM graduates (2011-13) including their employment status.
- ii. Describe the graduates' perceptions in terms of their college academic performance, quality of instruction provided by the professors, usefulness of the HRM curriculum and their overall rating of the HRM course.

- iii. Investigate the relationship of the graduates' employment potential and their perceived school-related factors.
- iv. Identify the HRM subjects most applicable and effective in employment.
- v. Analyze the graduates' recommendations to help students improve their employment potential in the future.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Data Analysis

Research Design

The study used the survey research method. It utilized a researcher-made questionnaire. The research used purposive sampling, descriptive statistics, and Pearson's Chi-square and Fishers' Exact tests of relationship between the variables of the study.

Locale of the study

The respondents of the study are the graduates of hotel and restaurant Instrumental Analysismanagement course of the College of Hospitality Management, La Consolacion University Philippines for the period 2011-2013. The study aimed to cover 100%of the graduates during the given period, but only 90 graduates responded. For the purpose of the study only those presently employed were included in the survey.

The instrument of the study was designed by the researchers based on the variables of the conceptual framework with other data such as name, address, contact number, course, and year graduated. Closed-ended responses using Likert Scale and open-ended responses were adopted. Narrative inputs were used in the recommendations of the graduates on how to help employment potential.

The tabulation of data was processed using the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics like mean, percentages, frequency distribution and standard deviation were used to describe the present employment status of the graduates and the subjects they considered most applicable in their employment. Recommendations from interviews of graduates were also content analyzed. This enabled the researchers to determine the trending of responses and to discover some underlying factors that may contribute to the improvement of the Hotel and Restaurant Management program.

Employment potential of the graduates was described by their job movement and the relevance of their positions to their field of study, Hotel and Restaurant Management. From the graduates' job history, it can be seen how they changed jobs and moved from one company to another. Based the job positions and duties and responsibilities, it may be identified if their jobs were relevant or not to HRM course. Job movement and job relevance are the dependent variables of the study.

The independent variables are respondent academic performance measured on a 4-point scale, usefulness of the curriculum to their employment measured on a 5-point scale, quality of instruction measured on a 4-point scale and overall rating of the HRM course measured on a 5-point scale.

The 4-point scale for academic performance and quality of instruction will be described as:

1.0-1.49	Excellent
1.5-2.49	Above average
2.5-3.49	Average
3.5-4.00	Below average

The 5-point scales for usefulness of the HRM curriculum and overall rating of the HRM course will be described as:

Usefulness of the HRM curriculum		Overall rating of HRM course	
Not useful	0- 0.49	1.0-1.49	Poor
Less useful	.50-1.49	1.5-2.49	Fair
Useful	1.5-2.49	2.5-3.49	Satisfactory
Very useful	2.5-3.49	3.5-4.49	Very satisfactory
Very much useful	3.5-4.00	4.5-5.00	Excellent



The Pearson Chi-square test of significance was used to test the relationship between the variables of the study. This was supported by Fisher's Exact Test in cases where there were more than 20% of cells with expected counts less than 5.

To augment the analysis of the effectiveness of the curriculum on the employment of the graduates, the respondents ranked 5 subjects which they took during college that are relevant to their employment. Frequency distribution and ranking were used in the analysis. The graduates' recommendations to make their course more attuned to make them employable were also content analyzed as this may be helpful in designing future improvements of the HRM curriculum.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It can be noticed that majority of the respondents were graduates of 2011 and 2012. Most of these graduates had chances or presently working abroad and have been communicating with the College Dean through email and Facebook. This is the communication media that they used in responding to the survey. For the 2013 graduates they had the chance to be part of the survey through friends and acquaintances and occasional visits to the university after their graduation.

It is noteworthy that a good number of the graduates worked or presently working abroad. This is a proof that the University's goal of producing internationally comparable human resource is to some extent realized. With job movements the graduates either work locally or abroad and around 20% started working abroad and still holding their positions.

The students considered their academic performance as above average as registered by the mean of 2.31 and standard deviation of .74, although a greater number, 40 or 47.6%, considered themselves as average in academic performance. In terms of quality of the instruction provided by their professors, the respondents perceived it as above average with a mean of 1.79 and a standard deviation of .64. It is also the rating of the majority of the respondents. A great majority of the respondents, 66 or 78.6% indicated that the HRM curriculum was very much useful as evidenced by the mean of 3.79 with a standard deviation of .41. Overall rating of the HRM course registered a mean of 4.62 which is interpreted as excellent; standard deviation was .53. A very high percentage, 97.6%, of the graduates rated the HRM course from very satisfactory to excellent.

Job movement as used in the study refers to job transfers from one company to another. This is also referred to as job mobility in other studies. This is a trend used to characterize the younger generation ages 18-38 who tend to hold an average of 10 jobs throughout their 20 years of employment. Job mobility enhances diffusion of knowledge, innovation and technology across firms. This practice makes individuals become more self-directed in obtaining a variety of experiences and knowledge across jobs and workers benefit by building their skills set. Organizations also benefit by having an inventory of multi-

skilled workers that would be useful in effective human resource planning especially in economizing on skills development programs—talents are available anytime these are needed. For the LCUP HRM graduates who acquire several skills through job movement, the University can only support them through its course innovations with their feedback and recommendations.

Among the surveyed HRM graduates there as much who had no job movement and those who moved jobs. The most number of times of job movement was five during the graduates' four working years. Data also reveals that a very good majority, 74 or 88% of the graduates held positions that are relevant to hotel and restaurant management field.

Four factors were assumed to be related with the graduates' job movement and job relevance. These are graduates' academic performance in school, perceived quality of instruction provided by the professors, usefulness of the HRM curriculum and the overall rating of the HRM course.

Of the four variables hypothesized to be unrelated with job movement, academic performance showed relationship to job movement with a chi-square value of 10.71, 2 df and a p-value of .005 which is below the .05 level of significance. It maybe said then that a relationship exists between job movement and academic performance while quality of instruction, usefulness of HRM curriculum and overall rating of HRM course are not at all related with job movement. The findings may also imply that moving jobs from one to another depends more on the person holding the job - the kind of personality and ability the graduates have. These are the majority of the surveyed graduates who considered them to be academic performers from above average to excellent. This is one group exhibiting the conscientious type of personality described as achievers and dependable—the group who are not content with what they have acquired in school and in their first jobs and desire more skills and opportunities through job movement.

The cross tabulations reveal that there were more than 20% of cells with expected counts less than 5 which prompted the researcher to consider the Fisher's Exact Test to determine the relationships of the variables under study. Based on the results the hypothesis that no relationship exists between job relevance and academic performance, quality of instruction and usefulness of the HRM curriculum are true because all registered p-values are higher than the .05 level of significance. Only one variable, the overall rating of the HRM course, was found to be related with job relevance proven by the p-value of .009 which is well below the .05 level of significance.

Ranked first are all the major subjects indicated by the students as HRM1-5, HMC 1-5, food and beverage, food preparation, bartending/bar mgt, front office mgt, event mgt, rooms mgt, banquet and catering, etc. Ranked second is Personality Development and Public Relations; third, OJT/Practicum and English-Business Communication and lastly Bus Organization and Mgt. In addition to all the major subjects the graduates found the need for hospitality industry workers to be skilled in talking to people and

presenting themselves well in front of customers. The workers must also understand business operations to be of help to the company towards competitiveness in the hospitality industry.

In analyzing the statements one can read the sincerity of the graduates in their desire for students to succeed in their chosen field of study. Behind the statements are graduates who are proud to have taken the HRM course and are now applying what they learned in the University.

Although most of the recommendations are addressed to future graduates, important points are implied to make the HRM curriculum more relevant and attuned to real world of work in the hospitality industry local and abroad. The major subjects are in place, and the graduates suggest linkage to a variety of hotel industry establishments-hotels, restaurants, airlines, and other HRM-related companies. It is also recommended for the provision of more HRM-related skills training in the school especially done in the laboratory and through other venues like inter- and intra-competitions. In addition to HRM-related skills, the curriculum may also need to intensify English communication skills training to students to make them more confident in working with and through people in the industry.

Given the right curriculum, what needs real improvement is student attitude. The students need to trust that they are in the right course and take seriously their studies, maximize learning's gained inside the classroom and in the co- and extra-curricular activities provided by the school. Proper behavior of an individual with a goal to achieve, proper attitude of a college student trying to acquire as much knowledge, skills, values as possible and building positivity and confidence-these will surely help propel the students towards success in the hospitality industry. The right time and place to acquire all these right attitudes is now in the school as reiterated in the recommendations, not after graduation. Learning from these, the Dean, teachers and staff must be firm in molding students to become the best provider of hospitality services in the future.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following are arrived at:

- i. HRM graduates are employable both locally and abroad. They enter international employment after acquiring experience in the country. Some even got lucky abroad as soon as completing their college degree.
- ii. Academic achievers in college are mobile in their employment. They gain more knowledge and skills by moving jobs in different hospitality industry companies.
- iii. The graduates have quite a good perception of the HRM course. They were confident that they have learned the relevant hospitality industry knowledge and skills and were able to find jobs that are related to their course.

- iv. The HRM curriculum is in place, but it needs enhancement. Firstly in terms of including in the practicum program a variety of hospitality industry companies that the on the job trainees may access to gain more skills and knowledge. Secondly in terms of more opportunities for in- or off-campus skills development programs related to the major subjects.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are thus offered:

- i. HRM students who are performing very well in academic performance are proof that the HRM course is not only a second choice among college entrants. Together with HRM students who have good academic background from high school and are making it good as well in the HRM course, these group of performing students should be at the frontline in helping the Hospitality Department market the HRM course to college entrants with good academic standing. Especially those who are fluent in the English language, they should be allowed to speak before graduating classes about their good experiences in the HRM course as one of the department's effort to increase its enrollment.
- ii. The department should enforce discipline on the HRM students who are not taking their studies seriously. The beneficiaries of this are the students themselves when they join the workforce to apply confidently the HRM knowledge and skills they have acquired in school.
- iii. The HRM department should explore more agencies locally. The place of practicum may not only be Metro Manila, but other cities as well where hospitality industry is growing. This will expose the students to a variety of Philippine culture and hospitality management practices. Internationally, the HRM department should link with more agencies and explore other countries where HRM practicumers can enter.
- iv. Intensity in-house competitions for skills learned in HRM major subjects. The department should also continuously join inter-school and industry-sponsored competitions, local and abroad, even online contests, to showcase student skills and competencies to the widest audiences possible.
- v. Successful graduates in the field of hospitality industry should be invited regularly to school activities and speak before the students to inspire them to take the course seriously and work hard for future success in their chosen career.

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