

Workplace performance of Hotel and Restaurant Management interns of St. Dominic College of Asia

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Abstract: This study aimed to examine the workplace performance of Hotel and Restaurant Management practicum students of St. Dominic College of Asia, as perceived by the interns' themselves and their supervisors in different hospitality establishments in Bacoor City, where students were deployed for on-the-job training in relation to their industry-site internship/practicum program for academic year 2015-2016. The result of the study serves as the basis for a proposal to design an education or training program to enhance the workplace performance of Hotel and Restaurant Management students. The study surveyed 35 practicum students and 23 supervisors in different hospitality establishments in Bacoor City, using a survey questionnaire based from the 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 the 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 them a Satisfactory rating. The same Very Satisfactory performance rating was achieved in Professional Competencies by both respondents. Of the five common competencies, the Interpersonal and Technological skills of the interns were rated Very Satisfactory by both respondents. Also, both the supervisor and interns gave a Satisfactory rating for Information Skills. For Resources Skills, the interns rated themselves Very Satisfactory, while the supervisors rated them as Satisfactory. It is recommended to continue reviewing and upgrading industry training in the curriculum, and consistently redefining the curricular focus in order to meet the perceived needs of the industry.

Key Words: *Workplace, performance, practicumers*

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. The 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 and refocusing the course curricula to the changing needs of the society they want their graduates to be globally competitive in. In every facet of a college or university's curricula, a practicum subject is one of the requisites in determining the student's ability to perform job responsibilities. Practicum, on-the-job training (OJT), internship, externship, field exposure, and/or experiential learning—regardless if what 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), providing effective internships creates goodwill for business organizations among universities and colleges, and it also provides the workplace with up-and-coming professional workers full of fresh ideas and enthusiasm. Furthermore, according to Desler (2001), an internship can be a win-win situation for both students and employers. This school program is beneficial not only in business management courses, but likewise in a hospitality career program wherein the practicum is believed to expose the students to a variety of employment experiences that will improve their employability 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 for useful contributions while they are being assessed for possible job placement. Employers consider an applicant's many aspects and will try to match them to the requirement of a particular job because getting it depends on an individual's qualifications (Dittmer and Griffin, 1997). They will, 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 in their respective workplace exposures. The study was conducted to help address this gap, enhance the instructions and curriculum program of St. Dominic College of Asia's Department of Hotel and Restaurant Management, and, ultimately, the students' career development.

2. Methodology

Research Design

This study utilized the comparative descriptive design to investigate the comparison of hospitality supervisors and the interns' self-assessed perception of their 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 the perceptions of the workplace performance of HM interns during their industry-site internship/practicum, given by both SDCA SIHTM students and hospitality supervisors at hotels and restaurants in Bacoar City during AY 2015-2016.

Participants of the Study

The participants of this study consisted of two groups: hospitality supervisors and the SDCA BS Hospitality students. Out of convenience and very limited time, the respondents for the hospitality supervisors group were limited only to supervisors who had supervised SDCA SIHTM interns/practicum students in AY 2015-2016. The list of hotels and restaurants where the students had their practicum were obtained from the practicum coordinator. For the students' group, the respondents consisted of all SDCA SIHTM Hospitality students who were enrolled in Restaurants and Hotel phase Practicum for AY 2015-2016. The number of enrolled students was obtained from the

registrar. A total of 23 supervisors and 35 students were included in the sample, and the self-administered survey questionnaires were distributed accordingly.

Survey Procedures

The Practicum Adviser took care of the distribution of the questionnaires to the Human Resource Directors of the hotels and restaurants, while the researcher took charge of the distribution to the student respondents. Two sets of questionnaires were created for the demographic profile survey, one for the supervisors and another for the students. For the second part of the survey instrument, 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 anonymity 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 the 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 SIHTM students. The respondents for the supervisors group were limited to those who belonged to selected hotels and restaurants in Bacoor City, which were likely to have supervised SDCA SIHTM practicum students in AY 2015-2016. For the students group, the respondents were limited only to the SDCA SIHTM students who have enrolled for Practicum in AY 2015-2016. A total of 23 supervisors and 35 students were included in the sample, so the results of the study are based on the perception of the said groups only. The data gathered is also limited to only some particular aspects of the CHED's Competency Standards for Hotel and Restaurant Management and Other Hospitality-related Courses.

Instrument Construction

The research instrument was constructed based on the Competency Standards for Hospitality-Related courses of the CHED Memorandum Order No. 30, series of 2006. The author also referred to the Training Regulations for Hospitality Courses of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) of 2006, and other research studies. The self-administered questionnaire was divided into two parts: demographic data, and level of satisfaction on interns' workplace performance. The first part of the research instrument was in multiple-choice format and created in two versions: one for the supervisor respondents and another for the student respondents. The demographic information for the supervisors' group included age, gender, level of education, years in the hospitality industry, their current unit/department affiliation, questions about their supervisory experiences, the student-interns' value in the workplace, and the significance of the students' practicum program/work experiences in the workplace. The later parts required a simple "yes" or "no" answer. This section also included the length of time spent in training the students and the supervisor's opinion about the need for work experiences. On the other hand, the questionnaire for the student respondents' demographic data included age, gender, course of study, level of education, practicum program enrolled in, questions about their value in the workplace, the significance of their program/work experiences in the workplace, the duration of their internship training, and their opinion about their need for work experiences.

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

Validation

The questionnaire was critiqued by two professors in Hospitality Management and evaluated by the researcher's adviser, who has a master's degree in their respective field. The questionnaire was also evaluated by a research consultant from the SDCA Research Unit, and was pre-tested on some hospitality supervisors who are not involved in the present study. Items that did not conform and were not relevant to the study were not recorded in the final draft.

Data-Gathering Procedures

The self-administered questionnaire was based on the CHED's Competency Standards for SIHTM and Hospitality-related Courses (2006), along with the Training Regulations for Hospitality Courses (2006) of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) and researches from other studies. Two sets of self-directed questionnaires were created for the first part of the instrument: the first part being the demographic profile survey for both supervisors and students, and the second being the Workplace Performance Survey. For the WPS, the same 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. The complete data were then encoded and processed with a computer using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

Statistical Treatment

The percentage treatment was used to depict the participants' demographic profile. As to the assessment of the workplace performance of the SIHTM practicum student, the 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)	

The 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 SIHTM interns), and to test the null hypothesis.

3. Results and Discussion

Assessment of Workplace Performance of SIHTM practicum students

This phase discusses and analyzes the workplace performance of SIHTM practicum students, as rated according to the performance level by industry partners and the students themselves. Criteria for assessing workplace performance levels 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, 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 Systems	3.26	S	3.45	S
	3.49	S	3.67	VS

Presents the mean scores of the perceived workplace performance of SIHTM 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 Satisfactory with a mean score of 3.71. 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. In items under Professional-specific Competencies, both respondents gave the same rating of Very Satisfactory with a mean score of 3.51. In the items under 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 types of 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. 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. On System Skills, the supervisors rated the students Satisfactory with a mean score of 3.49, while the students Very Satisfactory with a 3.67 mean score.

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

Table 2

Comparative Result on the Perceptions of Supervisors and SIHTM 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

There is a significant difference between the workplace performance of SIHTM 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 SIHTM 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 SIHTM and hospitality supervisors in terms of common competencies as defined by resources, interpersonal, technological, information, and systems.

4. *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 students rated themselves Very Satisfactory while supervisors gave them a Satisfactory rating. The same Very Satisfactory rating was achieved on Professional Competencies by both respondents. Of the five common competencies, the 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 Skills by both respondents. Whereas for the Resources Skills, the students rated themselves 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 SIHTM 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 Order Thinking Skills, there is a need for the college to look into this aspect of the students' academic preparation for them to gain a competitive edge. There is no significant difference between the workplace performance of practicum students as perceived by SIHTM 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 SIHTM 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 Systems and Resources due to a lack of opportunities for exposure to these specific competencies in the university setting. It may also imply that these competencies were not being observed in the workplace.

5. Acknowledgements

Continually review and upgrade industry training in the curriculum and consistently redefine the curricular focus to meet the perceived needs of the industry. Specifically focus on understanding and performing in Language Skills and Numeric Skills, Higher Order Thinking Skills, Resources, Information, and Systems. Involve and empower students to initiate collegiate activities that will address the following competency gaps: creative learning activities (e.g., role playing, simulation, pre/post conference during internship training, return demonstrations, written report, conduction of research, and feasibility studies). To address the Higher Order Thinking Skills gap, conduct more group dynamics and leadership training, and motivate students to engage in entrepreneurial activities. To address the Resources gap, empower students to initiate and conduct seminar workshops, training camps, and team-building activities. To address the Information gap, orient and motivate students to do research activities, participate in ICT training camps, and engage/encourage students to outsource/access the internet. Finally, to address the Systems gap, enhance classroom knowledge of the industry system prior to industry exposure, and conduct field trips and film viewing/videotaping.

6. References

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