

Tracer Study of Hotel and Restaurant Management Graduates of One State College in the Philippines from 2014-2016

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Abstract - *This study aimed to determine the employability of the graduates of Bachelors of Science in Hotel and Restaurant Management of one State College in the Philippines. Descriptive quantitative design was used in this study. This study found that majority of graduates are successfully employed locally and internationally, but only few are working internationally because of extreme qualification and ample requirements. Majority acquired their first job in less than three months. Ironically, the graduates still had a struggle or difficulty in finding a job because of few job vacancies or lack of position or item. Most of them are working in the hotels and fast food stores. Most of them also have their jobs relevant to their field of expertise and are regular employees. Majority of them receive a gross monthly salary of ₱5,000 to less than ₱10,000 which may not be really and practically enough, especially for those who have family dependents and other special responsibilities. The place whether local or international, position, and type of company are factors to the type of salary the employee will receive. Those who work internationally receive more than those who work locally or in the Philippines. All of the skills (i.e. entrepreneurship skills, knowledge and technical skills, management and critical thinking skills, oral and written communication skills, human relation skills, problem-solving skills, and information technology skills) are believed to have been useful, helpful and relevant to their current employment.*

Keywords: *BSHRM Graduates, Hospitality Industry, Tracer Study, ZSCMST*

INTRODUCTION

Tracer study is unquestionably one of the most important elements to determine the success of the programs or courses the school offers. It documents the status, characteristics of employment, struggles, and extent of applicability of skills in the current employment of the graduates. ILO Thesaurus [1]

defined it as “an impact assessment tool which during evaluation, the impact on target group is traced back to specific elements of a project or programme so that effective and ineffective project components may be identified.” Millstone, in the study of Gines [2], also says that tracer study “provides quantitative data on employment and career, the character of work and related competencies, and information on the professional orientation, and experiences of the graduates. Hence, the tracer study can serve as a basis for curriculum review or revisit, for intervention, for appropriate actions of the institution for the improvement of the programs.

The Bachelor of Science in Hotel and Restaurant Management is one of the in demand courses nowadays because of the increased number of industries in tourism, accommodation, restaurant, etc. The Commission on Higher Education Memorandum Order no. 30 series of 2006 [3] stated that tourism is the largest industry that generated USD 514 billion in receipts from 697 million tourists in 2003. In the study conducted by Celis, Festijo and Cueto [4], it shows that there is a high demand for hospitality and tourism practitioners which means that graduates can easily get a job because of the demand of the hospitality industry. They also noted that majority of their graduates were working in the Philippines which implies the job opportunities outside the country require ample work experience. However, in the study of Fronda and Villanueva [5], they found notable findings that most of their HRM graduates work abroad. This indicates that their institution produces globally competitive human resource.

Other researchers have found many hospitality graduates who either left the industry with no intent to return or never entered it. Hence, it is important for the institution that offers courses or programs related to hospitality industry to determine the gaps for appropriate actions. Schoffstall [7] found out in his study that it takes years to achieve manager or supervisor position.

In a similar vein, in 2014, the CHED has lifted the moratorium on HRM course which took effect in 2015 for continuous recruitment and hiring of graduates or professionals by the tourism industry, both local and abroad and for regional and global increase in labor mobility. In 2015, according to the Market Insight report of Pinnacle Real Estate Consulting Services Inc., the Philippine's hotel industry is expected to see a continued growth in the next five years. Hospitality companies such as Filinvest Group's Chroma Hospitality, Ayala Land, Red Planet, etc. are looking to expand in some parts of this country by the year 2020. The Ayala itself has a target opening of the developments with nearly 2,000 hotel rooms in 2016 to 2018 and has plans to achieve a portfolio of 6,000 hotel and resort keys.

Finally, it is expected that the institutions that offer HRM course will produce globally competitive graduates. This, however, does not absolutely mean that the graduates should work in international companies or abroad. The graduates still have the discretion to choose the company and nature of work they want to have. Nevertheless, the success of this implemented program depends on the success the graduates will achieve and its relevance to the course being taken. Thus, the purpose of this study is to determine the employability of the BSHRM graduates from 2014-2016.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Specifically, this study aimed to determine and describe the job placement status of the BSHRM graduates; determine their length of time in acquiring first job; identify the common struggles or difficulties they encountered in looking for a job; and determine the extent of applicability of the skills in their current employment.

METHOD

This study used the descriptive quantitative research design. Stratified random sampling technique was used in selecting the respondents of this study.

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Graduates

Year/ Batch	Total Number of Graduates	No. of Graduates Traced	%
2014	139	49	35%
2015	123	58	47%
2016	86	37	43%
Total	348	144	41%

There are a total of 348 BSHRM graduates of the Zamboanga State College of Marine Sciences and Technology from 2014-2016; however, only 144 graduates responded to this study. This study was conducted from June 2016 to January 2017.

The graduates were reached through the social media – Facebook and Messenger, for they are the easiest ways of reaching out the graduates. Each of the respondents was given a questionnaire which consists of four parts: profile, job placement, struggles and difficulties, and extent of applicability of skills in their current employment. Some of them answered the questionnaire form actually; others answered it on the messenger. Some of the respondents, since they were not easy to reach through phone, were interviewed for clarification concerning the nature and function of their work. In addition, some of the graduates who were reached and contacted did not participate due to personal reasons.

The instrument was submitted to three reliable professors for the validation. Corrections and suggestions were accepted. Hence, the research instrument underwent minor revision which some information was removed and some information was added. It had also undergone pilot testing for higher reliability.

This study used the frequency and percentage distribution to analyse the job placement status of the graduates and the length of time in acquiring their first job. Weighted mean was used to determine the common struggles or difficulties they encountered in looking for a job and the extent of applicability of skills in their current employment. Interpretations of means were based on the following scale: 1.00-1.50: Not at all; 1.51-2.50: Very Limited; 2.51-3.50: Limited; 3.51-4.50: To Some Extent; 4.51-5.00: To a Great Extent

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2. Status of the BSHRM Graduates

	f	%
Employed	111	77
Underemployed	16	11
Unemployed	17	12

Table 2 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of employability of the graduates. It shows that out of 144 graduates, 77% ($n=111$) or majority of the graduates are presently employed. In other words, their course is matched to their current employment. On the other hand, there are 11% ($n=16$)

underemployed which means that their present work is not relevant to their degree and 12% ($n=17$) are not employed. It can be implied that there is a high demand in the hospitality industry for the BSHRM graduates and that they can just easily search a job. This study supports the findings of Celis, Festijo and Cueto [4] that HRM graduates can easily find a job due to the demands of the market in the hospitality industry. Thus, with these findings, the aim to supply the demand of the hospitality industry is somehow met.

Table 3. Job Placement of the BSHRM Graduates in terms of Occupation/Profession of the Graduates

Occupation	Freq.	%	Rank
Account Receivable Associate	2	2%	8 th
Accounting Staff	1	1%	9 th
Assistant Purchaser	1	1%	9 th
Bellman	2	2%	8 th
Bartender	1	1%	9 th
Call Center Agent	6	5%	4 th
Cashier	5	4%	5 th
Computer Technician	1	1%	9 th
Cook	2	2%	8 th
Coordinating Officer	1	1%	9 th
Customer Service Representative (<i>at vehicle store</i>)	2	2%	8 th
Dicer	1	1%	9 th
Encoder	1	1%	9 th
Entrepreneur	4	3%	6 th
Front Desk	5	4%	5 ^h
Front Office Agent	2	2%	8 th
Hotel Staff	3	2%	7 th
Housekeeping	8	6%	3 rd
Human Resource Officer	1	1%	9 th
Kitchen Staff	1	1%	9 th
Linen Coordinator	1	1%	9 th
Manager (<i>Assistant</i>)	2	2%	8 th
Manager	10	8%	2 nd
Management Trainee	2	2%	8 th
Market Researcher	1	1%	9 th
Office Clerk/Staff	4	3%	6 th
Operation Associate	1	1%	9 th
Quality Control Inspector	2	2%	8 th
Room Attendant	4	3%	6 th
Receptionist	1	1%	9 th
Secretary	1	1%	9 th
Service crew	32	25%	1 st
Service Staff	2	2%	8 th
Supervisor	2	2%	8 th
Support staff (<i>in School</i>)	1	1%	9 th
Travel Agent	2	2%	8 th
Waiter/Waitress (<i>Head</i>)	8	6%	3 rd
Waiter/Waitress	1	1%	9 th

Table 3 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of the respondents of their specific job or occupation. It shows that the service crew job or occupation is ranked first with 25% ($n=32$) out of 127 working BSHRM graduates followed by manager with 8% ($n=10$). Some of the graduates who were service crew before when they were still working student are now manager in some fast food chains. Service crew is one of the easiest jobs to apply for. Hence, even students and non-degree holders are getting hired.

In line with the first results and discussion, some would argue about the relevance of HRM to the call center career; however, according to some of the respondents who were call center agents, they still function as a front desk officer because there are guests who call to book or to make a hotel reservation. According to the CHED Memorandum Order No. 30 series of 2006 [3], front office agent or front desk clerk is one of the career paths of the BSHRM.

Table 4. Distributions of Graduates by Nature of Occupation

Industries/Nature of Work	F	%
Academic	2	1.4%
Auto/Vehicle Store	4	3%
Bakery	1	1%
Bazaar/Mall/Department Store	4	3%
Cakes and Pastries	1	1%
Call Center	6	4.2%
Cruise Ship	1	1%
Entrepreneur/Businessperson	4	3%
Fast food	33	23%
Hardware	1	1%
Hotel	37	26%
Law Firm	1	1%
Lending	1	1%
Networking Business	1	1%
Office	9	6%
Pawnshop	1	1%
Research	1	1%
Restaurant	14	10%
Technical	1	1%
Telecommunication	1	1%
Tourism	2	1.4%
Travel Agency	1	1%
Unemployed	17	12%

Table 4 presents the nature of occupation or the industries where the graduates fall under. It shows that 37 (26%) out of 144 graduates are working in the hotel followed by the fast food which has 33 (23%) and 14 (10%) are working in the restaurant. This means that majority of the graduates are working in

the hospitality industry. All BSHRM graduates in the hotel industry are working in the Philippines only. The places include Zamboanga City, Davao City, Cebu City and Metro Manila.

In addition, most of the BSHRM graduates in the fast food stores are working in the Philippines as well. These famous fast food stores are Jollibee, Greenwich, McDonald, Burger King, etc. However, there are at least 4 graduates who are working abroad and 1 graduate is working in the Cruise Ship; 2 of which are in the fast food service. According to some of the graduates, there are many job opportunities abroad and in the Cruise Ship, however it is very hard to apply because of the extreme qualification and ample requirements. For this reason, majority of the graduates preferred to work locally like any other courses. This finding is contrary to the findings of Fronda and Villanueva [5] where most of the BSHRM graduates of La Consolacion University Philippines had chances or were working abroad. In their study, the nature of work or the kind of job or occupation of the graduates was not mentioned and discussed.

Table 5. Employment Statuses of the Graduates

Employment Status	F	%	Rank
Regular	73	51%	1 st
Temporary	15	10%	4 th
Casual Contractual	35	24%	2 nd
Self-employed	4	3%	5 th
Unemployed	17	12%	3 rd

Table 5 presents the employment statuses of the BSHRM graduates. It shows that 73 graduates (51%) out of 144 graduates are regularly employed followed by 35 graduates (24%) who are contractual, 15 (10%) are temporary and 4 (3%) were self-employed. This means that majority of the graduates are regular in the company they were connected with.

It is not easy to be a regular employee of a certain company, especially for the companies who are committed to a very high standard of service. Work experience, technical and management skills, knowledge or mastery of the field are just few qualities an employee should possess in order to obtain regular position in the world where the battle is about competitiveness. Hence, this finding can be a good indicator that the ZSCMST produces skilful and competitive graduates.

Table 6 presents the gross monthly income of the graduates. It shows that 42 (29%) of the 144 graduates or majority of them receive a gross monthly salary of ₱5,000 to less than ₱10,000 followed by 39 (29%) who receive ₱10,000 to less than ₱15,000. This may

already be a good income for average people and for people with less family dependents. However, for those who have family dependents and other obligations, these salary brackets may not be a good indicator of monthly gross income. A good gross monthly income is within the salary bracket of ₱20,000 to less than ₱25,000 and the best is from ₱25,000 above. Nonetheless, there are only 2 (1%) of the 144 graduates that earn an average salary of ₱20,000 to less than ₱25,000 and 4 (3%) ₱25,000 above.

Table 6. Gross Monthly Income/Salary

Income/Salary Bracket	F	%	Rank
Below ₱5,000	20	14%	3 rd
₱5,000 to less than ₱10,000	42	29%	1 st
₱10,000 to less than ₱15,000	39	27%	2 nd
₱15,000 to less than ₱20,000	20	14%	3 rd
₱20,000 to less than ₱25,000	2	1%	6 th
₱25,000 above	4	3%	5 th
None	17	12%	4 th

All graduates who are earning ₱25,000 above are working abroad. So if we compare the salary of the graduates who are manager or supervisor here in the Philippines and of the graduates who are service crew abroad, it indicates that the salary of latter is higher than the former. In addition, the salary of the employees varies depending on the company. It doesn't also mean that if the company is big, the salary is also big. For instance, a manager who is working in a big fast food company received only ₱10,000 to less than ₱15,000 monthly; while a hotel staff who is working in a small company received ₱15,000 to less than ₱20,000. Hence, it is safe to say that the position and the company are factors to the kind of salary an employee will receive.

Table 7. Length of Time Acquiring the First Job

Length of Time Acquiring the First Job	F	%	Rank
Right after Graduation	50	35%	1 st
Less than a year	46	32%	2 nd
More than a year	27	19%	3 rd
Others	21	1%	4 th

Table 7 presents the length of time the graduates acquired their first job. It shows that majority (35%) of the graduates acquired their first job right after graduation. This means that they acquired it in less than three months less than a year (32%). This also means that about 96 (65%) of the graduates waited for less than a year before they got hired. This is a good indicator of waiting to be landed on the first job. Hence, it may be safe to say that an HRM graduate

will not have to wait for a very longer period of time to be able to acquire his/her first job. This is because of the high demand of the present industries.

Table 8. Common Struggles and Difficulties in Looking for a Job

Common Struggles and Difficulties in Looking for a Job	F	%	Rank
Few job vacancies/Lack of position or item	73	51%	1 st
Inadequate experience	23	16%	3 rd
Mismatch of Educational application	7	5%	4 th
Personality factors	1	1%	7 th
Passing the pre-employment interview	23	16%	3 rd
Lack of political patronage	2	1%	6 th
Passing the pre-employment exam	44	30%	2 nd
Not meeting the paper requirement	2	1%	6 th
Inadequate knowledge or skills	3	2%	5 th

Table 8 presents the common struggles and difficulties encountered or experienced by the graduates in searching for a job. Ironically to the previous discussion, it shows that majority of the graduates (51%) experienced a difficulty in looking for a job because of few vacancies or lack of position or item in the company followed by passing the pre-employment exam (30%). This finding is contrary to the length of time they acquired their first job. This perhaps happened in their first application or because of the number of applicants applying in a certain company.

Table 9. Extent of Applicability of the Skills in the Current Employment

Applicability of the Skills in the Current Employment	Mean	Interpretation
Entrepreneurship Skills	3.79	To Some Extent
Knowledge and Technical Skills	3.88	To Some Extent
Management and Critical Thinking Skills	3.85	To Some Extent
Oral Communication	3.85	To Some Extent
Written Communication	3.85	To Some Extent
Human Relation Skills	3.81	To Some Extent
Problem-solving Skills	3.75	To Some Extent
Information Technology Skills	3.71	To Some Extent
Overall Mean	3.81	To Some Extent

Table 9 presents the extent of applicability of the skills in the current employment of the graduates with an overall mean of 3.81. It shows that all of the skills are applicable to some extent of their nature of work. This means that all skills (i.e. entrepreneurship skills,

knowledge and technical skills, management and critical thinking skills, oral and written communication skills, human relation skills, problem-solving skills, and information technology skills) are useful, helpful and relevant to their current employment. These skills play a pivotal role in the everyday task of the graduates. Thus, curriculum is a responsible factor to producing competitive graduates. It is imperative for the school to focus in the development of these particular skills among the students.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In conclusion, majority of the BSHRM graduates of 2014-2016 are successfully employed locally and internationally. However, only few are working internationally. Extreme qualification and ample requirements are the primary reasons why most of the graduates do not want to work abroad. Most of them are working in the hotels and fast food stores. Most of them also have their jobs relevant to their field of expertise and are regular employees. Majority of them receive a gross monthly salary of ₱5,000 to less than ₱10,000 which is not really and practically enough, especially for those who have family dependents and other special responsibilities. The place whether local or international, position, and type of company are factors to the type of salary the employee will receive. Those who work internationally receive more than those who work locally or in the Philippines. It doesn't also mean that if the company is big, the salary is also big. In addition, majority of the graduates acquired their first job in less than three months after their graduation.

Ironically, despite there is a high demand in the hospitality industry and the less than three months acquisition of jobs, the graduates still had a struggle or difficulty in finding a job because of few job vacancies or lack of position or item. This was probably encountered at their first application; or maybe during the application, the company has already hired other applicants. Nevertheless, there is no conclusion can be drawn from these findings, since this is an unexpected and differing occurrence.

Moreover, all of the skills (i.e. entrepreneurship skills, knowledge and technical skills, management and critical thinking skills, oral and written communication skills, human relation skills, problem-solving skills, and information technology skills) are believed to have been applicable to some extent in their current employment. This means that all skills

they have acquired in the school are useful, helpful and relevant to their current work.

Thus, it is recommended for the school to orient the incoming HRM students of their career path and job opportunities after graduation. This can also be posted on the bulletin boards for the awareness of the incoming students. During the admission and interview, the mind of the students should be conditioned of what it is really to be an HRM student or a graduate. The students should be advised and counselled if they really want to take the course. Hence, they would have the chance to whether embrace it or refuse to take it. Butcher [8] found out in his study that if the needs and career aspiration were satisfied, genuine commitment would encourage the graduates to remain in the industry.

It is also recommended for the faculty to encourage and to help the students develop necessary skills and sense of responsibility to reach their maximum potential. Faculty members are also encouraged to read current news, events, and researches and to be updated of the trend in the hospitality and tourism industries; hence, this will lead them to update their course syllabus. Needs analysis of the target skills and language is imperative in designing a syllabus. Students should be exposed to various HRM-related activities, communicative activities and exchange of conversation that will make them ready to engage into the real-world scenario. English teachers are encouraged to use the Performance Communicative-based and the Teaching English for Specific Purposes approaches. The implementation of the Outcomes-based Education (OBE) should be strictly monitored.

Since this study is limited only to an average number of respondents and to the graduates of very recent years using the descriptive quantitative method, future researchers are encouraged to conduct similar study in a wider scope which may also include graduates of previous years or five to eight years backward. Mixed methods or descriptive quantitative and qualitative should be used in the future studies. The data and findings of this study can also be used for future investigation and studies.

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