



Implementation of the student internship program in the Philippines: The BSc in Hospitality Management Program of host training establishments in the National Capital Region

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Abstract

The Commission on Higher Education Department Memorandum Order No.104 series of 2017 entitled Revised Guidelines for Student Internship Program in the Philippines states that the internship program is meant to provide the students with an opportunity to complement their formal learning with the practical knowledge, skills, and desirable attitudes while gaining hands-on experience in recognized Host Training Establishment (refers to the lodging and accommodation establishments). Hence, this study was conducted with the following objectives: first, to determine the implementation SIPP in terms of training, obligations/responsibilities, and the training plan of the HTE's for the Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management Program in the National Capital Region, Philippines. Second, to assess the level of improvement of the workplace, industry-wide, and industry sector technical competencies as perceived by the student interns, faculty/SIPP coordinators, and hotel internship coordinators. A descriptive-quantitative method was employed in this study. Frequency and percentage were used to determine the profile of the HTEs. While Mean was utilized to establish the level of implementation of the SIPP. The Kruskal-Wallis H-Test was used to find out if there are differences in the assessment of the level of implementation and improved competencies. The respondents believed that all the essential requirements set by CHED for the HTE's were "highly implemented." Whereas, there were differences in the assessment regarding the obligations/responsibilities. All the respondents believed that workplace competencies were extremely improved. On the other hand, the respondents had gaps in their assessment in the industry-wide competencies.

Keywords: Hospitality, internship, competency, on-the-job training, hotels

Introduction

Over the past sixty years, the tourism industry exhibited continuous progress and transformation to turn into among the largest, remarkable and rapidly expanding economic segments globally (World Travel and Tourism, 2017). The advancement of the hospitality industry demands a competent, well-educated, and highly trained staff to be successful in a competitive labor market (CMO# 62 s. 2017). These changes in the world of hospitality and tourism sector, its increasing levels of intricacy, and the concerns for tourism sustainability development brought the need to examine the quality of hospitality and tourism education. For this reason, the strengthening of the internship program was considered as one of the solutions (Fong, 2014). The internship program is considered to be advantageous to student interns since it offers the opportunity to have an actual hands-on experience of the theories learned inside the four corners of the classroom (Nicolaidis, 2014; 2015). Academe and industry partnership have long been practiced



yet; complaints about job mismatch still arise, and efforts had not been so encouraging (Castro, 2014).

Furthermore, despite the many benefits mentioned in the various studies regarding internship, there are also many challenges, such as low salary, long working hours and shifts, the negative behavior of superiors, the lack of mentorship, and a poor working environment, associated with the internship (Yiu & Law, 2012; Seyitoglu, 2014; and Farmaki, 2018). Here in the Philippines, a study conducted by the Department of Labor and Employment with members from the academe and the industry stated that there are many reasons which led to the mismatch between the graduates produced by schools and the skills needed by the industry. One of the prime reasons is the lack of intense immersion in the industry for students to put into practice the concepts they learned from the higher education institution. In the same research, the student interns agreed with the previous findings that one of the reasons is the inadequate exposure to the “real thing” or lack of opportunities to practice what has been learned in school (Department of Labor and Employment, 2012).

Thus, this study was conceptualized to determine the level of implementation of the Student Internship in the Philippines Program of the Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management Program of host training establishments in the National Capital Region in terms of the requirements, obligations/responsibilities, and training plan/program. Explicitly, it sought to answer the following questions:

What is the level of implementation of the Student Internship Program of the Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management Program of host training establishments in the National Capital Region regarding the following: Requirements; Obligations/Responsibilities; and Training Plan/Program? What is the level of improvement on the competencies of the Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management Student Interns as perceived by the faculty/SIP coordinators, BSHM student interns themselves, and hotel coordinators regarding the following competencies:

Workplace Competencies; Industry-Wide Competencies; and Industry-Sector Technical Competencies (Food and Beverage Service; Food Production; Front Office; and Housekeeping) Is there a significant difference in the assessment of the level of Implementation of the Student Internship Program of the Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management Program of host training establishments in the National Capital Region as assessed by the faculty/SIP coordinators, BSHM student interns, and hotel coordinators of selected host training establishments? Is there a significant difference in the assessment of the level of improvement on workplace competencies and industry-wide competencies of the Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management Students as perceived by the faculty/SIP coordinators, BSHM Student interns themselves, and hotel coordinators?

Literature Review

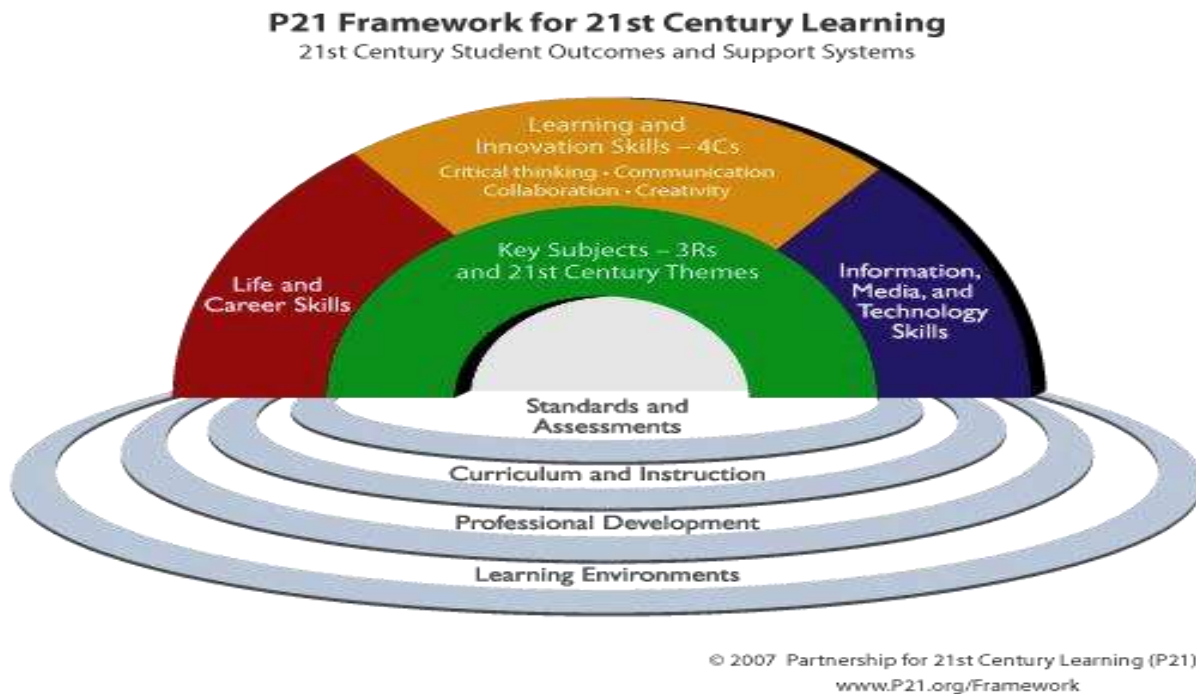
Theoretical & Legal Basis

This paper was anchored in the Partnership for 21st Century Learning Framework and CHED Memorandum Order No. 104 s. 2017. CMO# 104 s. 2017 includes the guidelines of the Student Internship Program in the Philippines (SIPP). While, the Framework for 21st Century Learning supports the qualifications a student intern must possess, such as knowledge, skills, competencies, and attitude needed for his holistic development. These criteria will make learners globally competitive. The Framework of Partnership for 21st Century Learning was formulated with the participation and involvement of different stakeholders such as the teachers, education



experts, and business leaders. For defining and illustrating the competencies, students need to succeed in work, life, and citizenship, together with the support systems essential for 21st-century learning outcomes (<http://www.p21.org/our-work/p21-framework>).

Figure 1. Partnership for 21st Century Learning Framework <http://www.p21.org/our-work/p21framework>



The Student Internship Program in the Philippines

The memorandum defined internship as the practical application of classroom learning to the actual regular work environment such as, but not limited to, commercial and industrial services, government or non-government agencies. The training program composes of the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), faculty/SIPP coordinators, student interns, parent or guardian, and host training establishment. Each party has requirements, obligations, and responsibilities to handle and accomplish, which follows all the aspects of a training program.

CMO #104 s. 2017 is guided with the principles that the training program is made to provide interns with the possibility to complement their formal know-how with practical knowledge, skills, and desirable attitudes and to gain hands-on experience in recognized Host Training Establishment (HTE). Moreover, to promote the well-being of higher education students, guarantee the quality of their learning and exposure, and ensure their safety while undergoing internship and considering the nature of the program. The content of the CMO #104 s. 2017 was aligned with CMO #62 series of 2017, which is the Policies, Standards, and Guidelines for Bachelor of Science in Tourism Management and Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management which was patterned from the industry professionals and organizations, other government and non-government agencies, and members of the academic community. Moreover, the CMO was also outlined from the ASEAN-MRA TP and Common ASEAN Tourism Curriculum.



Competencies Required and can be Enhanced During Internship in the Hospitality Industry

Student interns were commonly placed in the sections of the hospitality operation that have direct interaction with the guests. These areas include the front office, dining, kitchen, and housekeeping areas (Chen T.-L. & -C., 2012). But at present, based on the result of this study, interns were also assigned to events, sales and marketing, human resource department, finance, and accounting.

Based on the study conducted by Castro (2014), he discussed the different domains that will lead to employability. The vital skills are leadership, industry knowledge, communication, self-management, interpersonal, critical thinking, strategic positioning, and implementation domains for the Asia Pacific region. Nolan et al. (2010) believes that the essential skills are customer service, professional ethics, teamwork, cost control, performance management, training, interpersonal, and professional knowledge and skills domains. As stated by Millar et al. (2010), there are five competency domains: administrative, conceptual, interpersonal, technical, and leadership. In the study of Johanson et al. (2011), the three include functional business areas (human resources, financial management, etc.), communication skills, and customer relations focus. He also introduced new competency areas: ethics, global perspectives, sustainability, and knowledge of green practices. Ineson and Alexieva (2011), said that the competencies that student interns must have are leadership, industry knowledge, communication, self-management, interpersonal, critical thinking, and they also require strategic positioning, and implementation domains (Nicolaidis & Kearney, 2012).

More undertakings were done regarding the different competencies necessary in hospitality. According to Sisson (2013) and Nicolaidis (2008; 2012; 2015) soft, hard, and mixed skills are needed in hospitality. Under the hard competencies, these cover the analyzing financial statements conducting performance evaluations, controlling costs, developing a marketing plan, developing and managing budgets, developing staffing schedules, forecasting revenues, forecasting staffing needs, identifying target markets, knowledge of and compliance with legal and regulatory requirements, managing crises, such as fires, employee or guest injuries, tornados, etc., sales techniques, and using computers effectively. Soft skills involved the Coaching/developing staff, cultivating a diverse environment, customer service problem resolution, delegation of tasks, developing positive customer relations, facilitating teams and teamwork, leadership abilities, managing personal stress managing staff meetings, negotiating techniques, presentation skills, professional demeanor and appearance, supervising subordinates, using ethics in decision making, working effectively with peers, and written communication skills. Mixed competencies comprised of conducting hiring interviews, critically using information for decision making, training employees, and managing staff grievances. Millar (2015) identified the specific industry sector competencies in food and beverages and the lodging industry. Her respondents were industry professionals and educators. She focused on five (5) domains, which are administrative, conceptual, interpersonal, technical, and leadership. For the food and beverage sector, administrative includes sanitation laws/food safety and food laws. Conceptual Domain pertains to understanding general food service operations, problem-solving skills, critical thinking skills, analytical skills, decision making, and understanding general foodservice operations. Interpersonal Domain refers to labor management, time management, communication (written & verbal), motivation, leadership abilities, people skills, customer service skills, communication (written, verbal, presentation), cultural awareness, multiple language skills, working in groups, and leadership skills.



Technical skills cover the following product knowledge, purchasing, human resources, marketing, finance, technological skills, technology, finance, food & beverage costs, menu planning, product knowledge, recipe writing, and human resources. Leadership embraced ethics. The lodging competencies also the same domains mentioned in the food and beverage sector. But the work of Millar (2015) showed the differences between the two industries. This time, Conceptual Domain includes model analytical skills, understanding trends, decision making, critical thinking, problem-solving, decision making, critical thinking, analytical, and understanding general hotel operations. Interpersonal competencies involve working in groups, building relationships, multiple language, communication (verbal and written), motivation, customer service, accountability, emotions, personal development, leadership, customer service skills, communication (written, verbal, presentation), leadership skills, service quality, time management, and networking. Technical skills are finance, technology, revenue management, technology, finance, human resources, marketing, real estate, franchising, cost control, revenue management, and preventative maintenance.

Research Methodology

According to Kumar (2011), descriptive research attempts to explain by systematically describing a condition, problematic situation, phenomenon or event, service or program, or describing data about, say, the conditions of a community or society, or describes attitudes towards an issue. Hence the descriptive-quantitative method was employed in this study since the researcher wanted to determine the implementation of Student Internship Program in the Philippines. The respondents were 225 student interns, 26 faculty/SIPP coordinators, and 25 hotel internship coordinators. The sample size was determined by using the Cochran formula. Frequency and percentage were used to determine the profile of the host training establishments. Hotel Training Establishments were under the 3 to 5star categories. Mean was utilized to establish the level of implementation of the SIPP. Kruskal-Wallis H-Test was used to find out if there are differences in the assessment of the level of implementation and improved competencies. The questionnaire was subjected to Cronbach's Alpha to check the validity and reliability of the questionnaire. The survey contains three (3) parts.

The first part determined the profile of the respondents. Several factors were considered in the profile such as the classification of the host training establishments/hotels, reason for choosing the HTEs, the rate of occupancy of the HTEs, rotation of duty and the assigned areas, required number of hours for the entire duration of internship, number of duty hours per day, pre-practicum and post practicum requirements of the HTEs. The second part assessed the practices, requirements, and level of implementation of the Student Internship Program in the Philippines for the Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management Program anchored from CMO# 104. s. 2017. The third part was the evaluation of Workplace Competencies and Industry-Wide Competencies that was anchored from the Hospitality, Tourism, and Events Industry Model. While, the Industry Sector Technical Competencies were taken from the ASEAN MRA toolbox for Tourism Professionals for Food and Beverage, Food Production, Front Office and Housekeeping.

To easily interpret the answers of the respondents, the researcher utilized a Likert Scale in her questionnaire. Likert Scale is also known as a summated rating scale, a tool to assist evaluators in gathering data. It is commonly used to measure attitudes, knowledge, perceptions, values, and behavioral changes (Kumar,2014). A Likert-type scale is comprised of a various number of choices that respondents may choose to rate their responses to evaluative questions. Likert Scale was applied for determining the level of importance of competencies and the level of implementation of the Student Internship Program in the Philippines.



Results

Table 1. Kruskal – Wallis Test on the Assessment of the Level of Implementation of the Student Internship Program of the Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management Program of Host Training Establishments in the National Capital Region When Grouped According to Type of Respondents

Level of Implementation	Type of Respondents	Mean rank	Chi-Square	p-value	Decision	Remarks
1. Requirements	Student Interns	150.47	4.542	0.103	Failed to Reject Ho	Not Significant
	Faculty Coordinator	155.90				
	Hotel Coordinator	181.94				
2. Obligations/ Responsibilities	Student Interns	154.58	12.878	0.002	Reject Ho	Significant
	Faculty Coordinator	109.06				
	Hotel Coordinator	188.68				
3. Training Plan/ Program	Student Interns	152.35	12.128	0.002	Reject Ho	Significant
	Faculty Coordinator	125.60				
	Hotel Coordinator	194.24				

The table presents the Kruskal–Wallis Test on the respondents’ assessment of the level of implementation of the Student Internship Program of the Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management Program of host training establishments in the National Capital Region when grouped according to the type of respondents. It shows that in terms of requirements, its p-value of 0.103 was greater than the 0.05 level of significance. The result implies that the null hypothesis was not rejected, and there was no significant difference in the respondents’ assessment of the level of implementation of the SIPP of the BSHM Program of HTEs in the NCR when grouped according to the type of respondents. It shows that the respondents attained the same perceptions on the level of implementation with regards to requirements. However, in terms of obligations/responsibilities and training plan/program, they had the corresponding p-value of 0.002, which is less than the 0.05 level of significance. It means that the null hypothesis was rejected and implies that there was a significant difference in the respondents’ assessment. It also shows that student interns, faculty/SIPP coordinators, and hotel coordinators gained different perceptions on the level of implementation with regards to obligations/responsibilities and training plan/program.

Table 2. Kruskal – Wallis Test on the Assessment of the Level of Improvement on Industry-Wide Competencies of the Student Internship when Grouped According to Type of Respondents

Competency Type of Areas	Respondents	Mean rank	Chi-Square	p-value	Decision	Remarks
1. Workplace Competencies	Student Interns	157.58	9.330	0.009	Reject Ho	Significant
	Faculty Coordinator	109.77				
	Hotel Coordinator	157.40				
2. Industry-Wide Competencies	Student Interns	153.07	4.296	0.117	Failed to Reject Ho	Not Significant
	Faculty Coordinator	134.33				



This table shows the Kruskal–Wallis Test on the respondents' assessment of the level of improvement on workplace and industry-wide competencies of the Student Internship Program of the Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management Program of host training establishments in the National Capital Region when grouped according to the type of respondents. It shows that in terms of industry-wide competencies, the p-value of 0.117 was greater than the 0.05 level of significance. The result implies that the null hypothesis was not rejected and there was no significant difference in the respondents' assessment of the level of improvement on industry-wide competencies of the student internship program of the Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management Program of host training establishments in the National Capital Region when grouped according to the type of respondents.

It shows that student interns, faculty/SIPP coordinators, and hotel coordinators gave the same perceptions on the level of Industry-Wide Competencies of the Student Internship Program of the Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management Program of host training establishments in the National Capital Region. However, in terms of workplace competencies, it received a p-value of 0.009, which is less than the 0.05 level of significance. It means that the null hypothesis was rejected and implies that there was a significant difference in the respondents' assessment of the level of Workplace Competencies of the student internship program of the Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management Program of host training establishments in the National Capital Region when grouped according to the type of respondents. It also shows that student interns, faculty/SIPP coordinators, and hotel coordinators got different perceptions on the level of Workplace Competencies of the student internship program. The internship has become an integral part of tertiary education. It plays a significant role in enhancing the competencies of the students. It represents the peak of experiential learning. Its importance in developing students professionally and personally has been well documented and acknowledged.

In terms of requirements, the respondents believed that all the essential requirements required by the Commission on Higher Education for the host training establishments were "highly implemented" and complied. The student interns overall mean value was 3.56, the faculty/SIPP coordinators' overall mean value was 3.34, and the hotel internship coordinators got the highest overall mean value of 3.75.

In terms of obligations/responsibilities, both the students and faculty/SIPP coordinators rated the implementation of the Student Internship Program as "Implemented" with the overall weighted mean value of 3.16 and 2.92, respectively. The student interns gave the lowest ratings to HTEs' obligations of providing the travel allowance/allowance with a mean value of 1.89 and paid uniforms with a mean value of 1.81 or "Slightly Implemented." A similar evaluation was given by the faculty/SIP coordinators this time in the area of the paid meal, which is "Slightly Implemented" with a mean value of 1.77 and travel allowance/allowance with a mean value of 2.00. In contrast with the evaluation of the student interns and faculty/SIP coordinators, the hotel coordinators rated the HTEs' obligations/responsibilities as "Highly Implemented" with an overall mean value of 3.28. The hotel coordinators agreed that the HTEs "Slightly Implemented" the travel allowance/allowance with a mean value of 1.76 and paid uniform with a mean value of 1.88. They firmly believed that the HTEs were "not implementing" a paid meal with a mean value of 1.72.

In terms of training plan/program, all the respondents assessed the implementation as "Highly Implemented" with the overall mean value of 3.56 (Student Interns), 3.39 (Faculty/SIP Coordinators), and 3.77 (Hotel Coordinators). The lowest evaluation given by the student interns was on the implementation of an exit interview with a mean value of 3.04 or "Implemented." The faculty/SIP coordinators and hotel coordinators received the same rating with a mean value of 2.96 and 3.12 accordingly. Another significant finding came from the evaluation of the faculty/SIP



coordinators on the areas of termination with a mean value of 3.00 and grievances/complaints with a mean value of 3.04 or “Implemented.”

Level of Improvement of Competencies of the Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management Student Interns as Perceived by the Faculty/SIP Coordinators, BSHM Student Interns Themselves, and Hotel Coordinators in Terms of Workplace Competencies (teamwork, customer focus, planning & organizing, creative thinking, problem-solving & decision making, working with tools & technology, scheduling & coordinating, checking, examining & recording and business fundamentals); Industry-Wide Competencies (sustainable practices, product quality & cost control, safety & security, marketing & sales, principles & concepts, operations & procedures, and accessibility); and industry-sector technical competencies (food & beverage service, food production, front office, and housekeeping)

Workplace competencies were evaluated by the student interns and hotel coordinators as “Extremely Improved” with a Grand Mean of 3.77 and 3.60, respectively. Contrarywise, the faculty coordinators, rated the implementation of workplace competencies as “Highly Improved” with a mean value of 3.23. These were in the areas of working with tools and technology with a mean value of 3.23, planning and organizing, checking, examining and recording, and business ethics with a mean value of 3.15, scheduling and coordination with a mean value of 3.00 and lastly, problem-solving, and decision making with the lowest mean value of 2.92.

The industry-wide competencies were rated as “Extremely Improved” by the student interns, faculty/SIP coordinators, and hotel coordinators. The overall Grand Mean was 3.53 as assessed by the student interns, 3.37 as determined by the faculty coordinators, and 3.61 by the hotel coordinators.

The industry-sector technical competencies, particularly on food and beverage service, both the student interns and hotel coordinators assessed the level of improvement on Food and Beverage Service as “Extremely Improved” with a Grand Mean of 3.44 and 3.85 respectively. As for the faculty coordinators, they rated the level of improvement on food and beverage service competencies as “Highly Improved” with a mean value of 3.23. The student interns gave the lowest rating on the competencies in providing French Service/Gueridon Service/Trolley Service/Butler Service with a mean value of 3.21 or “Improved.” The skills in managing responsible service of alcohol and providing a Russian Service/Silver Service/Platter Service both got a mean value of 2.67 or “Highly Improved.” Also, the skill in presenting the account/billing to the guest had a mean value of 2.62 or “Highly Improved.”

The competencies on food production were evaluated as “Extremely Improved” by the respondents. Student interns’ assessment got a mean value of 3.50, faculty/SIP coordinators had a mean value of 3.30, and hotel coordinators received a mean value of 3.71. A lower evaluation was given in preparing and cooking of seafood with a mean value of 3.06 and preparing and cooking of poultry and game meats with a mean value of 2.94.

Front office competencies received an “Extremely Improved” rating from the respondents. Student interns rated them with a mean of 3.41, the faculty coordinators’ mean value was 3.34 and 3.71 from the hotel coordinators. Though all the respondents gave the same rating, the faculty/SIP coordinators rated the following competencies as “Highly Improved” on providing international call service information with a mean of 2.77 and maintenance of guests’ financial records with a mean of 2.92.



The housekeeping competencies of the student interns were evaluated as “Extremely Improved.” The respondents provided the following mean value in this area, 3.50 (student interns), 3.38 (faculty coordinators), and 3.70 (hotel coordinators). But, competency in laundering the linens and guests’ clothes was assessed as “Highly Improved” with a mean value of 2.60 and reporting of suspicious items or situations with a mean value of 2.75.

Significant Difference in the respondents’ assessment of the level of implementation of the student internship program of the Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management Program of host training establishments in the National Capital Region when grouped according to the type of respondents in terms of requirements gained a p-value of 0.103 which is greater than the 0.05 level of significance. Meaning, there were no significant differences in the assessment of the respondents. However, in terms of obligations/responsibilities and training plan/program, they had the same p-value of 0.002, which is less than the 0.05 level of significance, meaning there were significant differences in the assessment of the respondents.

While the significant difference in the assessment of the level of improvement on workplace competencies and industry-wide competencies of the Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management Students as Perceived by the Faculty/SIP Coordinators, BSHM Student Interns Themselves, and Hotel Coordinators For the industry-wide competencies, the assessment of the respondents had a p-value of 0.117, which is greater than the 0.05 level of significance. However, in terms of workplace competencies, it got a p-value of 0.009, which is less than the 0.05 level of significance.

Conclusions

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were derived:

The level of implementation of the Student Internship Program of the Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management Program of Host Training Establishments in terms of requirements was highly implemented and complied with.

As for the obligations/responsibilities of the host training establishments, the student interns and faculty/SIP coordinators believed that HTEs performed their obligations. However, all the respondents thought that the provision on travel allowance/allowance, paid uniforms, and paid meals need to be reconsidered by the HTEs as a form of motivation to excel in the field of the hospitality industry.

On the level of implementation of the training plan/program, all the respondents believed that there was a high level of implementation except the exit interview. The application of feedbacking in the form of an exit interview needs reassessment as well as the process of handling termination and grievances/complaints.

The level of improvement of competencies of the Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management student interns as perceived by the faculty/SIP coordinators, BSHM student interns themselves, and hotel coordinators strongly agreed that Workplace Competencies, Industry-Wide Competencies, and Industry-Sector Technical Competencies extremely improved. Despite that, host training establishment must go over the following competencies, working with tools and technology, planning and organizing, checking, examining and recording, and business ethics, scheduling, and coordination, and lastly, problem-solving and decision making since these competencies can still be improved.



All the **industry-wide competencies** were evaluated as extremely improved by the student interns, faculty/SIP coordinators, and hotel coordinators. They all agreed that student interns had maximized their training in the HTEs and achieved a significant level of improvement in this area.

On the part of the Industry-Sector Technical Competencies, particularly in **food and beverage service**, both the student interns and hotel coordinators believed that student interns were highly proficient in this area. Nonetheless, improvement can still be made in the areas of providing French Service/Gueridon Service/Trolley Service/Butler Service, managing responsible service of alcohol and providing a Russian Service/Silver Service/Platter Service, and in presenting the account/billing the guest.

For the competencies in **food production**, the student interns exceedingly improved. Nevertheless, enhancement of skills in preparing and cooking seafood and preparing and cooking of poultry and game meats must be considered based on the assessment given by the faculty coordinators.

The student interns remarkably improved their skills in front office competencies as assessed by the respondents. Though, improvement can still be performed in providing international call service information and maintenance of guests' financial records based on the evaluation of the faculty coordinators.

For **housekeeping competencies**, the student interns exceeded the expectations of the faculty and hotel coordinators. Skills significantly improved during their internship though competencies can still be enhanced in laundering the linens and guests' clothes and reporting of suspicious items or situations as observed by the faculty/SIP coordinators.

All the respondents agreed that the implementation of the Student Internship Program requirements was complied with by the host training establishments. However, in terms of obligations/responsibilities and training plans/programs, they differed in their assessment.^{5.2}

All the respondents agreed that the level of improvement on industry-wide competencies greatly improved. However, in terms of **workplace competencies**, results revealed that the respondents had different perceptions of the level of improvement. Some **workplace competencies** can still be enhanced.

Recommendations

Student interns spent their time on duty at least 8-9 hours a day and 5 to 6 days a week. To some extent, student interns have no day off during the busy peak season. For this reason, host training establishments may consider providing the student interns with allowances such as meals or transportation. Supplying them with free uniforms is also suggested as for many, the costs are exorbitant.

As for the implementation of the training plan/program, the application of an exit interview may be strictly observed as a strategy to gather feedback regarding the overall experience of the student interns' learning experience. The exit interview may prevent problems from occurring regarding future training. Feedback may help the host training establishments in the implementation of their internship program and smooth out the flow of operations. Student interns are the ultimate source of labor/workforce; thus, determining their needs will be of great help to the success of the hospitality sector in general. Feedbacking can also be in the form of a testimonial, where the student interns share their experiences with the faculty and their hotel coordinators. Careful reflection on the process of handling termination and grievances/complaints to avoid conflicts between the schools/universities and host training establishment is also needed. Preventing



conflicts from happening will help future hospitality professionals to cope in similar situations which may arise.

Despite the excellent improvement of the student interns, some skills need to be addressed for them to become globally competitive. In this era of technology, extra attention must be given to the utilization of tools and technology as the 4IR ramps up. Most of the host training establishments, continuously upgrade their technology to cope with the tremendous competition faced both locally and internationally. Hence, student interns must be technologically knowledgeable to deal with the challenges of the diverse and challenging world of the hospitality industry. Aside from providing the students with entry-level technical competencies, managerial know-how must be strictly incorporated in the courses offered by the schools and universities, giving hospitality management programs. Proficiency in management functions such as advising, planning and organizing, checking, examining, recording, business ethics, scheduling, coordination, problem-solving, and decision making are all necessary for one to be a successful manager.

On the part of the Industry-Sector Technical Competencies, particularly in food and beverage services, careful reflection must be given in the areas of providing French Service/Gueridon Service/Trolley Service/Butler Service, managing responsible service of alcohol and providing a Russian Service/Silver Service/Platter Service, and in presenting the account or billing the guest. Schools/universities may revisit their course syllabi to enhance their teaching strategies/methodologies in handling the technical courses. The mission of tourism professionals is to wow the guests and exceed their expectations and offer top-notch quality driven services on an ongoing and consistent basis (Nicolaidis, 2008; 2012). Therefore, providing the student interns with knowledge and skills in formal table service is essential. Moreover, guest safety is paramount in the beverage industry, thus managing the responsible service of alcohol must be strictly implemented. Both higher education institutions and host training establishments are responsible for teaching the value of health and safety to student interns. Aside from hard skills, soft skills must also be given extra attention. Attitude, values, and business ethics are just a few of the soft skills that must be reiterated during the conduct of classroom learning. Honesty must be strictly performed by the student interns so they may be trusted by their hotel internship coordinators and colleagues. Consequently, such training on honesty in business should be strictly implemented. An excellent foundation of soft skills is indispensable in the world of the hospitality business. For the competencies in food production, the student interns' skills in preparing and cooking seafood and poultry and game meats must be enhanced during their laboratory activities. Schools/universities must provide the students with the essential technical competencies before their internship so as to be ready in the actual work settings they are likely to encounter.

In the area of front office competencies, higher education institutions may consider the application and utilization of the Property Management System. Almost all hotels and guest transactions are conducted online. Therefore, an actual immersion into the Property Management System will be beneficial. Incorporation of courses such as Hospitality Accounting, Revenue Management, Cost Control, and the like, can help the students to handle the hotel and guests' financial transactions more effectively and efficiently.

For housekeeping competencies, the student interns' improvement of skills in laundering and reporting of suspicious items or situations may be considered while teaching the housekeeping subject. Activities that may enhance their skills in laundering may be given attention so as to deliver quality service. Handling of lost and found items must also be taught to make them ready for the actual work setting challenges where guests lose things daily. To ensure a better quality



of education, and a highly competent workforce, as required by the hospitality industry, there should be robust collaboration between the higher education institutions and the hospitality sector.

The student interns must maximize their stay with the host training establishment. They must seize every opportunity to improve their skills, grab the chance to look for the potential workplace, and seek to determine their area of preference in the workplace setting. The higher education institutions may consider planning the Student Internship Program with the industry practitioners, specifically the hotel coordinators, to bridge the gap between the academe and the hospitality industry. Continuous and close coordination before, during, and after the internship will be a great help to prevent problems from occurring related to the on-the-job training. The host training establishments should trust the student interns' capability in performing the assigned tasks. HTEs may also consider assigning the interns to "critical" areas like handling billing and handling guest concerns with supervision. The experience will develop the interns' competencies while hopefully making a useful contribution. On the part of the Host Training Establishments, they can already assess the interns for possible future job placement.

For future researchers, further study on industry-sector technical competencies may be considered. Competencies in food and beverages both in the kitchen and dining area, front office, housekeeping, and events management may be assessed. The study may also be conducted identifying reasons why students are mostly assigned to the back of the house, specifically in the Human Resource Department and Finance. The academe, together with the host training establishments, should formulate the basic standards across the hospitality industry, such as a standard training plans to avoid confusion between what was taught in the academe and what is ultimately expected by a demanding global industry.

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