Employability of tourism management graduates of a State University in Philippine Eastern Visayas Region

Donald M. Patimo[*], **Ghilson B. Amor and Mia Cheryl E. Casiracan**
Northwest Samar State University, Philippines
donald.patimo@nwssu.edu.ph

Abstract

This research aimed to describe the employability of the tourism management graduates of Northwest Samar State University (NwSSU), a state university in the Philippine Eastern Visayas Region. To achieve the desired result, the study employed a descriptive research design. The researchers extensively employed the Commission of Higher Education (CHED) Graduate Tracer Survey questionnaires to gather the needed data from the tourism management graduates of the university from SY 2011-2012 to SY 2014-2015. To analyze and interpret the collected data, the researchers made use of frequency counts, percentage distribution, ranking, and the stepwise multiple regression analysis. The majority of the tourism management graduates under study were female, single, young, and city-residents. Most of the tourism management graduates under study were employed immediately after graduation in rank-and-file positions. The best predictor of the employability of tourism management graduates was their location of the residence. With these, the employment support system of the university may fully activate in the first 6 months after graduation in tourism management. To improve further the employability of tourism management graduates, the OBEdized curriculum in tourism management may include the strong emphasis on communication and human skills trainings on all subjects offered.

Keywords: Employability, tourism management graduates, tracer, success predictors, competencies.

Introduction

The skills needed in the tourism industry and how the state universities can help supply the needed manpower with these skills has not been fully addressed resulting to massive job mismatch, underemployment, and unemployment in the country. State universities must equip their students now with appropriate knowledge, skills, and competencies to be more competitive in a dynamic and shrinking labor market when they graduate[1].

According to Harvey, state universities insisted to incorporate employability skills in its different curricular offerings. These employability skills may include the knowledge, competencies, skills, and attitudes to be critical, reflective, and lifelong learners[2]. Morley suggests that state universities may serve as mediator between the academy, government, and businesses to improve the employability of its graduates[3].

The Northwest Samar State University (NwSSU) as a higher education institution is committed to produce human resources desired by its service area and the country to meet the country's developmental needs. Also, it is the main mission of the College of Management to produce quality and competitive professionals who cater to the needs of the local, national, Asia-Pacific, and global job market through advancing its programs in business, management, administration, marketing, and business processing, outsourcing, and hospitality industry. Thus,

there is a need to monitor and assess the performance of its graduates in the area of tourism management and track them wherever they may be working to assess the continued relevance of the programs it offers.

With these, the proponents conceptualize this study to determine the distribution of tourism management graduates according to personal, academic, and employment profile and their competencies learned in the university most useful for employment. Also, this study explored personal, academic, and employment factors that best influence the employability of tourism management graduates.

Methodology

This research employed a descriptive research design. Universal sampling method was utilized in the conduct of the study from the tourism management graduates of the Northwest Samar State University (NwSSU) from SY 2011-2012 to SY 2014-2015. The researcher made use of the Graduate Tracer Survey questionnaire adopted from CHED. Questionnaires were distributed to the respondents in an online version using Jot forms and the paper-and-pen version. Frequency, percentage, and ranking were used to present and analyze the data collected as to the personal information, academic background, and employment status of the tourism management graduates. To determine the personal, academic, and employment attributes that can influence the employability of tourism management graduates, a regression analysis was used.

Results and discussion

This section presents, analyzes, and interprets the data to answer the problems raised in this study. The discussion includes the identification of the distribution of tourism management graduates according to personal, academic, and employment profile, competencies from the university which are most useful for work, and the factors that can best influence the employability of tourism management graduates of the university.

Table-1 displays the frequency and percentage of tourism management graduates regarding to their personal information. Among the 147 respondents of the study, 100 (68.03%) were female, 129 (87.26%) were single, 55 (37.41%) were 23 to 25 years old, and 107 (72.79%) resided in the cities. In short, the majority of the tourism management graduates under study were female, single, with the age range of 23 to 25 years old, and resided in the city.

These findings are somewhat similar to the study of Guzman and Castro (2008)[4]. Their study on the employability profile of college graduates showed that the majority of their nationwide respondents were also female, single, age ranges from 21 to 24 years old, and resided in the city.

Table-1: Frequency and Percentage of Tourism Management Graduates according to their Personal Information.

	Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Age (in years)	22 and below	28	19.05
	23 – 25	55	37.41
	26 – 28	33	22.45
	29 and above	31	21.09
	Totals	147	100.00
	Mean Age	25.68 years	
	Standard Deviation	1.863 years	
Sex	Male	47	31.97
	Female	100	68.03
	Totals	147	100.00
Civil Status	Single	129	87.76
	Married	18	12.24
	Totals	147	100.00
Location of residence	City	107	72.79
	Municipality	40	27.21
	Totals	147	100.00

Table-2 displays the frequency and percentage of tourism management graduates regarding their academic information. Among the 147 respondents of the study, 40 (27.21%) were

graduated in the year 2015, 140 (95.24%) have no honors received, 143 (97.28%) have no professional examination passed, and 72 (48.98%) have no relevant training attended. In short, the majority of the tourism management graduates under study were graduated in the year 2015 with no honors received, no professional examination passed, and no relevant training attended.

The data implies that the academic profile does not match the ideal educational qualifications needed by the tourism industry. This phenomenon was referred to as the supply and demand mismatch of tourism management undergraduates[5]. Edgar, et al pointed out the good scholastic standings from colleges or universities as important features of graduates during the prescreening phase of employers or recruiters[6].

Table-2: Frequency and Percentage of Tourism Management Graduates according to their Academic Background.

	Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Year Graduated	2012	32	21.77
	2013	37	25.17
	2014	38	25.85
	2015	40	27.21
	Totals	147	100.00
Number of honors received	None	140	95.24
	1	7	4.76
	Totals	147	100.00
Professional examination passed	None	143	97.28
	1	4	2.72
	Totals	147	100.00
Number of trainings attended	None	72	48.98
	1	25	17.01
	2	20	13.61
	3	20	13.61
	5	10	6.80
	Totals	147	100.00

Table-3 displays the frequency and percentage of tourism management graduates regarding their employment information.

Among the 147 respondents of the study, 125 (85.03%) were employed, 56 (38.10%) waited from 1 to 6 months to land a job, and 69 (46.94%) have gross monthly earnings from P5,000 to less than P10,000. In short, the majority of the tourism management graduates under study were employed with gross monthly earnings from P5,000 to less than P10,000 and got their job from 1 to 6 months waiting period.

This data primarily shows that the tourism industry has massive employment opportunities, but the tourism management undergraduates employment experiences the phenomenon called as "low employment rate and the high turnover rate"[6]. The "low employment rate and the high turnover rate" phenomenon happens when the graduates are not equipped with the needed skills set to gain a bigger salary rate in the tourism industry. This explains why the majority of the tourism graduates of the university were employed immediately after graduation, but with less gross monthly earnings.

Table-3: Frequency and Percentage of Tourism Management Graduates according to their Employment Information.

Variables		Frequency	Percentage
Employment Status	Employed	125	85.03
	Unemployed	22	14.97
	Totals	147	100.00
How long to find the job	Below a month	45	30.61
	1 to 6 months	56	38.10
	7 to 11 months	12	8.16
	1 year to less than 2 years	22	14.97
	4 years to less than 5 years	12	8.16
	Totals	147	100.00
Gross monthly earnings	Less than Php 5,000	33	22.45
	Php 5,000 to less than Php10,000	69	46.94
	Php10,000 to less than Php15,000	20	13.61
	Php 15,000 to less than Php 20,000	15	10.20
	Php 20,000 to less than Php 25,000	10	6.80
	Totals	147	100.00

Another problem considered in this study was the recognition of the competencies from the university which are most useful for work. Table-4 displays the frequency and ranking of the

competencies of the tourism management graduates which are most useful for employment. According to tourism management graduates, the top 3 competencies needed for employment are communications, human relations, and problem-solving. This means that the graduates made use of these important skills to work well in their area of expertise.

In connection to this, Edgar, et al considered communication and human relations skills as main attributes considered during the applications, interviews, and psychometric assessments of applicants[6]. Fugate, et al referred to these skills as the social and human capital in his psycho-social model of employability[7]. These finding also runs parallel with the skills identified on the study of de Guzman and de Castro as valuable to any careers after graduation[8].

Table-4: Frequency and Ranking of the Competencies of the Tourism Management Graduates which are Most Useful for Employment.

Competencies Learned in College	f	Rank
Communication	120	1
Human Relations	88	2
Problem-solving	73	3
Entrepreneurial	26	4.5
Information Technology	26	4.5
Critical Thinking	10	6

Table-5 presents the stepwise multiple regression analysis of the employability of the tourism management graduates concerning their attributes. The table shows that the age, sex, and civil status of the tourism management graduates do not influence their employability. The best predictor for the employability of tourism management graduates is their location of residence.

This finding is supported in the study of Yu when she found out that the majority of the investments in tourism-related businesses were situated in urban areas to facilitate different needs of the tourists for their food, transportation, and accommodation[9]. Felicen and Mejia also found out that most of the employed graduates were city residents[10].

Table-6 presents the stepwise multiple regression analysis of the employability of the tourism management graduates concerning their academic and employment attributes. The table shows that there is no best predictor of tourism management graduate employability among the year graduated, number of honors

received, professional examinations passed, number of training attended, how long attended and gross monthly earnings.

Table-5: Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis of the Employability of the Tourism Management Graduates with Respect to their Personal Attributes.

Personal Attributes	Beta	t	Sig
Constant	1.786	9.205	0.000
Age	0.199	1.362	0.181
Sex	0.050	0.337	0.738
Civil Status	-0.112	-0.741	0.463
Location of Residence	-0.393**	-2.829	0.007
R-Square	0.775		
Adjusted R-Square	0.760		
F-Ratio	8.001**		
p-value	0.007		

Table-6: Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis of the Employability of the Tourism Management Graduates with Respect to their Academic and Employment Attributes.

Academic Attributes	Beta	t	Sig
Constant	-1.037	0.648	0.521
Year Graduated	-0.106	-0.637	0.528
Number of Honors Received	-0.187	-0.187	0.853
Professional Examinations Passed	-0.954	-0.954	0.346
Number of Trainings Attended	-0.445	-0.445	0.659
How Long to find a Job	-0.040	-0.250	0.804
Gross Monthly Earnings	-0.230	-1.442	0.157
R-Square	0.044		
Adjusted R-Square	0.062		
F-Ratio	0.412		
p-value	0.799		

The above mentioned findings were supported by Goodman and Tredway when they found out that the predictor of Perceived Internal Employability is the social motivation factor. This means that graduates' good social interactions, people and communication skills can predict their employability[11]. This is also supported by Felicen and Mejia when they expressed that human and communication relations skills are necessary for the employment of their respondents as compared to other factors[10].

Conclusion

The tourism industry is a booming industry from which it has a high demand for skilled manpower. The majority of the jobs in tourism can be found in the city. Those tourism management graduates who seek employment in the city are more employable compared with their counterparts in the municipalities. Tourism management graduates are under qualified for the job in the tourism industry in terms of professional examination passed and training attended. The tourism industry needs professionals who possess competencies in communication and human relations.

Acknowledgment

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