

Factors Affecting Graduates' Employability of Business-Related Programs: A Tracer Study

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ABSTRACT

The goal of the study was to ascertain the job history and status of Jose Rizal Memorial State University graduates, in particular those who completed the bachelor's degree programs in tourism and hotel and restaurant management between 2012 and 2016. The design of this tracer study utilized a descriptive quantitative methodology. To collect pertinent study data, a modified, standardized questionnaire and interviewing methods were employed as the instrument. Only 109 graduates out of a total of 241 responded to the survey via email and social networking sites. In order to determine the respondent's profile and mean for the degree of usefulness and relevance of the work-related values and abilities and curriculum-related elements, a frequency count and percentage computation were used. According to the survey, honesty and love of God are "Very Much Helpful" in the tourism industry, along with work-related qualities. Communication abilities were identified as being "Very Much Connected" to the job requirements for both tourism and the management of hotels and restaurants. With the exception of Natural Science, Culinary Arts and Services, and Accounting for HRM, practically all of the variables had significant relevance from elements relating to the curriculum. It is advised that the curriculum be modified to reflect changes in the new educational system and to accommodate the shifting needs of business. To increase the number of graduates, teachers should also improve or change their teaching methods to better meet the needs and requirements of the different types of students they are teaching.

Keywords: *employability, business-related programs, work-related skills, curriculum-related factors, work-related values*

1.0 Introduction

Millions of people have been employed in the hospitality and tourism sectors, which are among the fastest expanding in the world. The Global Travel and Tourism Council (2010) forecasts a surge in global tourism employment to 235,785,000 jobs, or 1 in 12.3 jobs, or

almost 8.1% of all occupations worldwide. Tourism and hospitality will account for 9.2% of all jobs worldwide by 2020. Although there are plenty of job prospects, finding competent and skilled human resources has been a constant difficulty for businesses. Many students proudly earn their diplomas as they march through commencement events each year, but not all of them are successful in landing jobs.

The demands of an increasingly competitive world have made it more difficult than ever for universities and colleges to create graduates with the basic competencies needed by employers, such as critical and creative thinking, interpersonal skills, and leadership abilities (Paranto and Kelkar, 2008). Nevertheless, many college grads lack the necessary preparation for success when they enter the workforce (Conference Board, 2016). The abilities students will need to compete are no longer memorization and subject-specific information; instead, students' ability to perform and analyze through challenging situations in real-world work settings will determine whether or not they are employable. According to studies, there is a significant gap in the educational system that results from having curricula that don't adequately prepare graduates for the job market. Also, it is claimed that only 5–10% of the one million college graduates each year find employment in fields related to their studies, and only 30–40% will find any employment (Celis, Festijo, and Cueto, 2013).

Being the top university in Zamboanga del Norte, Jose Rizal Memorial State University (JRMSU) wants its graduates to be globally competitive and embody the values of dynamism and cultural variety in the creation of a just and humane society. By improving the curriculum's design and creating connections with several industry partners on a local and national level, it enthusiastically embraces the challenges of outcomes-based education and ASEAN integration. The fact that JRMSU has received ISO certification and AACUP certification for the majority of its programs suggests that the university's dedication to offering services of the highest caliber has not ceased, nor has its pursuit of effective, high-quality education. Higher education institutions must increase their competitiveness in order to create graduates deserving of employment as they face the task of introducing the Philippines to the expanding global tourism market (Celis, 2013). In light of this, the researchers were driven to investigate the job histories and circumstances of its alumni, especially for the Bachelor of Science in Hotel and Restaurant Management and Bachelor of Science in Tourism programs. This study also aimed to identify factors that affect university graduates' employment.

The Human Capital Theory of Schultz (1961) and Becker (1993), which claims that "the economic prosperity and functioning of the nation depend on its physical human stock," serves as the study's theoretical foundation. According to this notion, human capital refers to the investment made by individuals to increase their economic production. It is viewed as a collection of skills and personality traits that are expressed in the capacity to execute work in a way that creates economic value. It is a skill that a worker develops via training and experience. It underlined how education boosts employees' productivity and efficiency. This is accomplished through raising the cognitive stock level, which results from intrinsic abilities and investment in people. This view paints a more favorable picture of higher education, describing it as a source of the skills required to carry out complicated occupations, increasing productivity, and supporting economic progress.

Notably, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) in the Philippines was the driving force behind the conduct of the graduate tracer study (GTS) among a select group of

HEIs to gather information on whether or not these institutions are providing courses or programs that produce graduates who can meet the demands of business and society. The GTS would also enable HEIs to coordinate their efforts with the labor requirements of the sector. Furthermore, Tan and French-Arnold (2012) argued that higher education institutions (HEIs) have a duty to improve graduates' employability and competitiveness so that they can meet the ever-increasing needs of the labor force. He went on to explain that the improvement of the new information system, the creation of skilled workers, and the growth of the labor force are all examples of how higher education institutions (HEIs) contribute to economic prosperity. As a result, it is now widely accepted that Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) should respond to the demand for their graduates to be employable by using employability as a measure of the effectiveness of the educational system.

2.0 Methodology

This study used a descriptive-quantitative research design. Of the 241 people who were surveyed, 109 responded. The primary research tool was a modified standard questionnaire that was adapted from a study by Celis (2013). Social networking sites and electronic mail were used to collect data. Furthermore, this study also included a documentary analysis. The index and curriculum vitae of the undergraduate theses of the graduates from 2012 to 2016 provided personal information such as names, addresses, and telephone/cellular phone numbers. Frequency counting and percentages were employed as statistical tools to determine the respondents' profiles.

3.0 Results and Discussions

Table 1

Profile of the Respondents in Terms of Sex

Sex	BSHRM		BST	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Male	26	30.23	3	13.04
Female	60	69.77	20	86.96
Total	86	100	23	100

The sex profile of the responders is shown in Table 1. The 109 respondents' responses are displayed in the table. Only 29 people, or 26.60 percent, were men, and 80 people, or 73.39 percent, were women. According to this conclusion, there are more female respondents than male respondents. This suggests that women are predominately represented in hospitality and tourism programs. Women control this area, which is where many social exchanges take place. Being in this area demonstrates that both men and women contribute to the economy. This discovery is consistent with Zhong's (2006) analysis of Texas Tech University's hospitality graduates, the majority of whom were female.

Table 2

Profile of the Respondents in Terms of Civil Status

Civil Status	BSHRM		BST	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Single	80	93.02	22	95.65
Married	6	6.98	1	4.35
Total	86	100	23	100

The information about the respondents' civil status profile is included in Table 2. According to the data, 102 respondents, or 93.58 percent, were single, while 7 respondents, or 6.42 percent, were married. According to the results, the majority of respondents are single. Because they put their careers first and have control over their time, money, and leisure, which to others is a difficult life, it appears that the majority of the respondents have not yet committed to the domestic responsibilities that married life entails. This is because persons who are married must play various roles in addition to their many responsibilities as employees, such as those of wife and mother to their children.

Table 3

Profile of the Respondents in Terms of Highest Educational Attainment

Educational Attainment	BSHRM		BST	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
BS Graduate	82	95.35	22	95.65
With Master's Unit	4	4.65	1	4.35
Master's Degree	0	0.0	0	0.0
Doctoral Degree	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total	86	100	23	100

The information on the respondent's educational background is shown in Table 3. The table reveals that 104 respondents, or 95.41 percent, graduated with a bachelor's degree, while 5 respondents, or 4.59 percent, had a master's degree. This demonstrates that the vast majority of respondents had BS degrees. This indicates that the majority of respondents did not pursue graduate degrees for the purpose of advancing their professional careers. They spend the majority of their time working. The majority of respondents admitted that financial limitations prevented them from pursuing higher degrees. Due to their contractual job status, their compensation hardly covers their essential necessities.

Table 4

Profile of the Respondents in Terms of Year Graduated

Year Graduated	BSHRM		BST	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
2012	18	20.93	5	21.74
2013	20	23.26	5	21.74
2014	16	18.60	4	17.39
2015	17	19.77	6	26.09
2016	15	17.44	3	13.04
Total	86	100	23	100

The respondent profiles are displayed in Table 4 according to the year they graduated. According to the table, there were 23 graduates, or 21.10 percent, in 2012, 25 graduates, or 22.94 percent, in 2013, 20 graduates, or 18.35 percent, in 2014, 23 graduates, or 21.10 percent, in 2015, and 18 graduates, or 16.51 percent, in 2016. This demonstrates that more

respondents than in prior years received their degree in 2013. This indicates that more BSHRM and BST students in the past were successful in finishing the curriculum.

This suggests that students' study behaviors or attitudes may have changed given the prevalence of technology exposure in today's society. Also, given that fewer students are graduating successfully, curriculum design or teaching practices would have been altered to better meet the needs of the present generation of students. According to Celis (2013), many HRM graduates had to wait between one and two years before finding employment. It was soon followed by a job search that lasted less than a month.

Table 5
Profile of the Respondents in Terms of Employment Status

Employment Status	BSHRM		BST	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Regular/Permanent	29	33.72	5	21.74
Temporary	2	2.33	1	4.35
Casual	9	10.47	1	4.35
Contractual	39	45.34	15	65.22
Self-Employed	7	8.14	1	4.35
Total	86	100	23	100

The profile of the respondents according to employment status is displayed in Table 5 below. The data shows that there were 34, or 31.19 percent, permanent employees, 3 or 2.75 percent temporary employees, 10 or 9.17 percent casual employees, 54, or 49.54 percent contractual employees, and 8 or 7.34 percent self-employed individuals. The table demonstrates that the majority of respondents were employed on a contract basis. This indicates that the majority of university-affiliated BSHRM and BST graduates do not have stable employment. Their service will terminate after their contract expires, and they will need to find another job. This outcome could also be explained by the seasonality of the hospitality and tourism industries, whether local or worldwide. Employers do not actually require a lot of permanent or regular employees even if the company does not need them because it will just result in financial loss because tourist arrivals increased only during specific months of the year.

Table 6
Profile of the Respondents in Terms of Nature of Occupation

Nature of Occupation	BSHRM		BST	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Business Process Outsourcing (BPO)	6	6.98	6	26.08
Telecom/Communication	1	1.16	2	8.70
Banking and Finance	1	1.16	1	4.35
Electronic/Electrical	1	1.16	0	0.0

Government	7	8.14	2	8.70
Trade/Industry	39	45.35	9	39.13
IT/Computer/Software	0	0.0	0	0.0
Services	26	30.23	2	8.70
Insurance	0	0.0	0	0.0
Academic	5	5.81	1	4.35
Total	86	100	23	100

The respondent's occupational profile is displayed in Table 6. According to the data in the table, there were 12 people, or 11.01 percent, working in business process outsourcing; 3 people, or 27.52 percent, in telecom or communication companies; 2 people, or 1.83 percent, in banking and finance; 1 person, or 0.92 percent, in electronic or electrical engineering; 9 people, or 8.26 percent, in government agencies; 48 people, or 44.04 percent, in trade or industry; 28 people, or 25.69 percent, in services; and 6 people, or 6 percent, in Compared to other agencies, this indicates that the majority of responders are working in the industry. According to Hotel Business Magazine (2013), internships can be crucial for presenting opportunities to individuals just entering the field. Companies frequently show a preference for candidates with real-world experience over those without. Companies are interested in hiring people who are currently in the workforce since it expedites the training process.

Table 7

Profile of the Respondents in Terms of Job Level

Job Level	BSHRM		BST	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Rank-in-File or Clerical	16	18.60	2	8.70
Professional, Technical, or Supervisory	56	65.12	17	73.91
Managerial or Executive	6	6.98	1	4.35
Self-Employed	8	9.30	3	13.04
Total	86	100	23	100

Table 7 contains information on respondent profiles broken down by employment level. The table reveals that 18 respondents, or 16.51 percent, were working in clerical or rank-and-file positions; 73 respondents, or 66.97 percent, were in professional or supervisory positions; 7 respondents, or 6.42 percent, were in managerial and executive positions; and 11 respondents, or 10.09 percent, were still working for themselves. According to the results of the data, between 60 and 70 percent of BSHRM and BST respondents held professional, technical, or managerial positions. In other words, the majority of the graduate's job was consistent with the degree they received. This suggests that the university has provided the graduates with nearly everything they need to find employment in terms of work-related values, work-related abilities, and curriculum.

Table 8*Profile of the Respondents in Terms of Monthly Earning*

Job Level	BSHRM		BST	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Below P5,000	10	11.63	3	13.04
P5,000 to less than P10,000	23	26.74	4	17.39
P10,000 to less than P15,000	23	26.74	10	43.48
P15,000 to less than P20,000	16	18.60	3	13.04
P20,000 to less than P25,000	5	5.81	1	4.35
P25,000 and above	9	10.47	2	8.70
Total	86	100	23	100

The information on the wage profile of the respondents is presented in Table 8. According to the data in the table, 13 people, or 11.93%, had monthly salaries of less than \$5,000; 27, 24, 7.7% had salaries between \$5,000 and \$10,000; 33, 30.28% had salaries between \$10,000 and \$15,000; 18, 16.51% had monthly salaries between \$15,000 and \$20,000; 6.50% had monthly salaries between \$20,000 and \$25,000; and only 10.09% had monthly salaries of more than \$25,000. According to the results in the table, roughly 30% of the respondents had monthly earnings between Php10,000 and Php15,000, which is a range. This indicates that none of these graduates have pursued professional growth. They no longer participate in graduate and post-graduate programs that could advance them to better positions. Also, their prospects of attending trainings, seminars, and similar events to advance their knowledge and abilities are usually limited, which lowers their chances of advancement.

Table 9 displays the values associated with work that can help graduates satisfy the demands of their current position. It demonstrates that the greatest weighted mean for honesty for the Bachelor of Science in Tourism was 5.00 and the highest weighted mean for love of God was 4.93 for the Bachelor of Science in Hotel and Restaurant Management. Leadership also received the weighted mean with the lowest value, 4.50. The table demonstrates that almost all of the items received similar ratings from the respondents. It is obvious that the list and the other work values were very helpful in getting a job and have helped the respondents be able to handle the demands of their current employment.

The conclusion is corroborated by Macatangay (2013), who found that elements connected to education, in particular curriculum and instruction, as well as work-related values like love of God, honesty, love of the truth, and obedience to superiors, greatly influence employment.

Table 9*Usefulness of the Present Job in Terms of Work-related Values*

Work-Related Values	BSHRM		BST	
	AWV	D	AWV	D
Love for God	4.93	VMU	4.96	VMU
Honesty	4.91	VMU	5.00	VMU

Punctuality	4.84	VMU	4.96	VMU
Obedience to Superior	4.80	VMU	4.83	VMU
Perseverance	4.71	VMU	4.87	VMU
Creativity and Innovativeness	4.62	VMU	4.43	VMU
Courage	4.77	VMU	4.87	VMU
Professional Integrity	4.81	VMU	4.83	VMU
Love for Co-workers and Others	4.71	VMU	4.83	VMU
Unity	4.74	VMU	4.83	VMU
Fairness and Justice	4.53	VMU	4.57	VMU
Leadership	4.50	VMU	4.74	VMU
Tolerance	4.57	VMU	4.87	VMU
Efficiency	4.74	VMU	4.96	VMU
Supportiveness	4.72	VMU	4.87	VMU
Nationalism	4.80	VMU	4.61	VMU

Table 10 contains information on the correlation between respondents' current jobs and their skill sets. According to the findings, problem-solving abilities came in second place after communication skills. The weighted mean for information technology skills among HRM graduates was 4.35, while the weighted mean for entrepreneurial skills among BST graduates was 4.48. The table reveals that almost all of the items were ranked similarly by the respondents, with the exception of one item on the usage of communication skills in the workplace, on which they all firmly agreed.

According to David Bloom, who was mentioned by Vega, Prieto Carreon in *Globalization and Education: An Economic Perspective* (2009), education is more crucial than ever because of globalization. Youth must acquire new abilities that are light years ahead of those taught in schools previously. The task of education is to instill not only values but also skills and competence. One of the most important abilities is communication, which is used by students studying HRM and tourism. When language learners are exposed to situations where they actively use the language or engage in conversation, their language proficiency increases.

Table 10

Relatedness to the Present Job in Terms of Work-Related Skills

Skills	BSHRM		BST	
	AWV	D	AWV	D
Communication Skills	4.71	VMR	5.00	VMR
Human Relation Skills	4.71	VMR	4.87	VMR
Information Technology Skills	4.35	VMR	4.78	VMR
Entrepreneurial Skills	4.41	VMR	4.48	VMR
Problem-Solving Skills	4.62	VMR	4.78	VMR
Critical Thinking Skills	4.59	VMR	4.78	VMR

The importance of the curriculum-related variables for graduate job placement is shown in Table 11. The graduates viewed all of the general education courses as relevant, as evidenced. Natural sciences received the lowest score, with languages receiving the highest weighted mean of 4.91, followed by mathematics, which received equal ratings from both BSHRM and BST respondents. This indicates that the curriculum has been successful in producing graduates who are competitive. For the respondents' employment, both general education and professional courses have proven helpful. The graduates in HRM and tourism felt the same way about all of the professional courses.

Also, professional subjects are pertinent for job placement, and communication and mastery abilities of the faculty member emerged as the most crucial school-related characteristics in terms of faculty and instruction. Any educational factors that affected the employment of graduates in hotel and restaurant management and tourism were found to be pertinent.

However, a documentary review of the BSHRM and BS Tourism curricula found that there were no courses in speech and oral communication. It was previously offered but deleted, as was discovered. The researcher noticed that most tourism students lacked the communication skills necessary for success in JEEP Start and JEEP Act sessions. The outcomes of the front office qualification assessment serve as evidence for this.

Chavez (2016) found that if teachers can effectively impart and present the subject matter with the aid of proper methods and strategies and fairness in assessing the students' academic performance or knowledge inside the classroom, the lessons are considerably learned by the students.

Table 11

Relevance to the Job Placement in Terms of Curriculum-related Factors

Curriculum-Related Factors	BSHRM		Curriculum-Related Factors	BST	
	AWV	D		AWV	D
Mathematics	4.51	VMR	Mathematics	4.65	VMR
Languages	4.79	VMR	Languages	4.91	VMR
Natural Sciences	3.99	MR	Natural Sciences	3.78	MR
Principles of Tourism 1	4.22	VMR	Basic Concept of Tourism 1	4.70	VMR
Principles of Tourism 2	4.22	VMR	Principles of Tourism 2	4.70	VMR
Food and Beverage Service Procedures	4.44	VMR	Entrepreneurship in Tourism	4.65	VMR
Housekeeping Procedures	4.44	VMR	Philippine Tourism (Domestic Tourism)	4.70	VMR
Food and Beverage Control Systems	4.48	VMR	World Tourism	4.70	VMR
Front Office Procedures	4.40	VMR	Transportation Management	4.61	VMR
Culinary Arts and Services	4.41	VMR	Culinary Arts and Sciences	4.30	MR
Accounting for HRM	4.43	VMR	Mountain Climbing and Scuba Diving	4.13	MR

Tourism Planning and Development	4.34	VMR	Tourism Planning and Development	4.65	VMR
Rooms Division Mngt. and Control Systems	4.28	VMR	Accounting for Tourism	4.78	VMR
Principles of Management	4.55	VMR	Principles of Management	4.96	VMR
Total Quality Management	4.65	VMR	Total Quality Management	4.87	VMR
Management Information System	4.51	VMR	Management Information System	4.74	VMR
Entrepreneurship and Business Planning	4.59	VMR	Entrepreneurship and Business Planning	4.57	VMR
Bartending	4.31	VMR	Basic Finance	4.65	VMR
Bakery Products and Confectioneries	4.30	VMR	Heritage Tourism	4.65	VMR
Principles of Marketing	4.57	VMR	Travel Agency mngt. and Operations	4.78	VMR
Hotel and Restaurant Fiscal Management	4.44	VMR	Environmental Management/Conservation for Tourism	4.70	VMR
International Cuisine	4.27	VMR	Tourism Marketing	4.74	VMR
Banquet, Function and Catering Service Procedures	4.29	VMR	Ecotourism	4.52	VMR
Leisure, Sports and Recreational Management	4.17	VMR	Tourism Research Method and Technique	4.61	VMR
Hospitality Organization Management	4.53	VMR	Resort Management	4.78	VMR
Convention Management	4.43	VMR	Cruise Sales and Management	4.65	VMR
Human Behavior in Organization	4.74	VMR	Tourism Impacts and Sustainability	4.78	VMR
Events Management	4.52	VMR	Events Management	4.87	VMR
Hospitality Operational Management	4.62	VMR	Human Behavior in Organization	4.87	VMR
On-the-Job Training	4.86	VMR	Seminars and Field Trips	4.83	VMR
			On-the-Job Training	5.00	VMR

4.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

Single women who are committed to their jobs in the trade, industry, and service sectors predominate among BSHRM and BST graduates. Even though they lack professional growth, the majority of graduates chose not to seek more academic learning, which limits their chances of advancement and pay raises. Although the majority of graduates are employed in professional or technical fields, graduates should go above and beyond the bare minimum to demonstrate personalities that are exceptional in addition to meeting industry standards. Students must go through institutional and national competency testing for a variety of certifications and jobs, provided that these positions are included in the BSHRM and BST programs' curriculum. This ensures that qualified graduates have the knowledge, skills, and attitude necessary for the position. It is advised that the university begin improving the BSHRM and BST curriculum so that it is in line with the ASEAN Qualification Framework and the current needs and trends of the industry. In addition, the curriculum needs to be updated to reflect changes in the new educational system and meet shifting industry demands. To increase the number of graduates, teachers should also improve or change their teaching methods to better meet the needs and requirements of the different types of students they are teaching.

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