

Conference Paper

Tracer and Employability Study: BS Tourism Graduates of Laguna State Polytechnic University Los Banos Campus

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Abstract

The main thrust of the study was to assess and trace the employability of graduates of Bachelor of Science in Tourism from LSPU LB Campus AY 2009-2013. The instrument used was an adopted and modified tracer questionnaire that was then validated by pool of experts in the field. The respondents of the study were the BS Tourism graduates class of 2009 to 2013. Total enumeration was employed as sampling technique. The frequency and the percent distributions were used in presenting the profile of the respondents on the employability of graduates of Bachelor of Science in Tourism. Based from the findings of the study it revealed the relevant reasons behind their difficulty in landing a job were lack of work experience; no personal connections/strong referrals; there are very few jobs hence there is a strong competition and; economic recession; For the employed graduates, 57 or 100% said that it took them 6 months before landing their first job after graduating from college. Out of 57 employed respondents, 55 or 96% are working in the government sector. It indicates that majority of the graduates still prefer to render their services to our Motherland. Moreover, 38 or 67% of the respondents' company are engaged in service; For the present position, 47 or 82% are in a rank-and file level. Moreover, the empirical findings of this research led to the following conclusions that there is a need to improve the employment rate of BS Tourism at the LSPU-LB Campus; The graduates are challenged by the lack of opportunity and by their lack of competence. The findings of the study yield the following recommendations: Functional facilities must be sustained; continual job placement services should be strengthened; The university administration may consider additional faculty members in the field of tourism management.

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1. Introduction

Higher Education is universally recognized as a fundamental building block for human development, a powerful driver for the development of individuals and society improving health, gender equality, peace, and stability, Tertiary education systems are generally too small to meet the demands of their growing economies. It responds to three distinct national goals. First, it aims to educate the youth to become active and productive members of society. Second, it seeks to meet and match industry demand with a competent and globally competitive workforce. Finally, through a continuing effort to reach global education standards, through increasing the quality of human capital and productivity vis-à-vis national and economic progress.

London (2006) shared the information that some of the most important trends in U.S. workforce are in education, because the health and effectiveness of the educational system determine the quality of future entre-level workers. Furthermore, he sustained that what people learn in college will not enough to ensure effective performance at work for long.

Duderstadt et. al. (2002) also mentioned that the fastest growing group in the workforce today is composed of knowledge workers, who have two main needs: formal education that enables them to enter knowledge first place and continuing education throughout their working lives to keep their knowledge up-to-date. In industrial societies. schooling traditionally stopped when work began. In the knowledge society, it never stops.

The Philippines, according to the World Travel and Tourism Council is positioned at the epicenter of global travel and tourism growth and development. (WTTC2007). In 2007, tourism contributed 8.7% of the country's GDP, generating 2.3 million jobs (or one in every nine nationwide), and accounting for some 10.5% of Philippine investments. The trade surplus from tourism for the same period was estimated at Php. 22 billion, driven mainly by visitor spending. The WTTC expects tourism to contribute 10.9% of the country's GDP by 2007, and to generate as much as 1.4 million more jobs between 2008 and 2011.

Expectedly, many issues continue to plague the tertiary education system. Substandard institutions habitually fail to produce graduates with industry-standard competencies. Lately, It has been observed that the emergence of institutions that take advantage of industry trends by offering courses that aim solely to generate more revenue for the institution rather than deliver quality education to its enrollees. Other observation include the proliferation of the so-called state and community colleges

that create poor options for students through providing substandard education. Given these circumstances, the following tertiary education components now deserve tighter scrutiny.

In the study of Khan (2003) he explored the prospects of generating employment-friendly growth in the Philippines with the specific purpose of analyzing trends towards the globalization of the world economy, and the liberalization of the Philippine economy with emphasis on how they affect the problem of employment in the country and what policies need to be adopted to be able to cope with these problems.

According to Sinclair (2007) The tourism industry is characterized by further divisions between the workers themselves, notably in the form of gender and race. While not as evident as those between tourism consumers and producers, such divisions are significant not only for the operation of tourism but for the relative incomes, status and power of those involved in it.

In responding to the demand of the industry, the tourism and hospitality force today are facing challenges resulting to change, and current trends.

The College of Hospitality Management and Tourism of the Laguna State Polytechnic University in its four external campuses namely: Sta Cruz, Siniloan, Los Baños and San Pablo City Campuses had been established to help each student develop into a total person, who is well equipped with knowledge and skills; and good values, complimentary to the campaign of the Department of Tourism in promoting this industry.

The Tourism industry is the combination of institutions, supporting human resources, financing mechanisms, and information systems, organizational structures that link institutions and resources that cater to the needs of domestic and foreign travelers. Edralin and Castillo (2007) reiterated that supporting human resources include hotel and restaurant managers and assistant managers, housekeeping supervisors, security personnel, chefs, cooks, waiters, bartenders, and other related workers and professionals directly involved in Tourism services.

2. Objectives of the Study

This research generally aimed to determine the employability of graduates of the Bachelor of Science in Tourism at Laguna State Polytechnic University – Los Baños Campus for school years 2009 to 2013.

Specifically, this study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the graduates in terms of:

- age;
 - sex;
 - civil status;
 - year graduated;
2. What is the employment status of the graduates relative to the following aspects:
 - institution
 - private
 - government
 - position
 - job description
 - monthly salary
 3. How is the employability status among the graduates compared when grouped according to their profile?
 4. What changes do the respondents suggest to improve the competitive edge of the BS Tourism graduates of LSPU-LB?

3. Materials and Methods

The researcher used the quantitative approach to collect data of The Employability of Graduates of Bachelor of Science in Tourism of Laguna State Polytechnic University Los Baños Campus Batch 2009-2013, the approach will also use a format instrument that is much easier to generalize. Quantitative research provides generalized data on the objects that are being analyzed, thus, the information is not so detailed on behavior and attitudes of the subject matters.

The researcher utilized 68 graduates as the respondents of this study. To qualify as respondents, they should be a LSPU-LBC BS Tourism graduates from school year 2009 to 2013 for a total of 68 graduates. Total enumeration was employed as all of them were utilized.

The researcher used a survey questionnaires as the data-gathering tool for this study. Questionnaires were distributed to 2009- 2013 graduates of LSPU-LBC. In-person distribution, e-mail questionnaires, facebook messaging and telephone was used by the researchers to collect data. Through In-person distribution the researcher scheduled a specific time to locate the respondents in their residences based on the

addresses given by the University Registrar. E-mail questionnaire and facebook messaging will be conducted over electronic mails sent over through computers, was done for those respondents who were not able to answer in-person distribution because of some reasons. The telephone questionnaire has little to recommend beyond speed and low cost. It was conducted over the phone. The researcher administered a survey to the respondents who are not capable of answering through e-mail and in-person distribution (Portillo et. al, 2003). Questionnaires gave the respondents time to think about the questions and their responses, thus producing more accurate information period. It can also eliminate the problem of geographic limitations because this can be e-mailed. The instrument was developed based on the objectives of the study. The instrument is composed of several parts which helped the researcher in gathering the necessary data needed for the study. The questionnaire includes the personal information and the contact confirmation of the respondents.

The employment profile which includes employment status and participant's job information were included.

A survey questionnaire which was adopted and modified from PUP (Polytechnic University of the Philippines) and it was then validated by pool of experts in the field before it was administered. It is composed of two parts. Part I including the profile of the respondents while Part II shows their employability status.

The frequency and the percent distributions were used in presenting the profile of the respondents on the employability of graduates of Bachelor of Science in Tourism.

4. Results and Discussion

1. **Profile of the Respondents in Terms of Age.** The distribution of respondents in terms of age. 18 or 27% are 24 years old while only 6 or 9% are 22 years old. 7 or 10% are 20 years of age, 8 or 12% are 25 years old, 9 or 13% are 21 and 25 and above years old while 11 or 16% are 23 years of age. According to De Guzman (2007), in the workplace, professionalism is expected. The problem is that even after college, the person is still not prepared to work. Many employees are too immature, they cannot even pass interviews. So it ended up with countless numbers of jobless all waiting in vain for that little luck in looking for a job. On the other hand, older people experience most age discrimination. However, it also takes place against young people. It is now unlawful for an employer to impose a lower age limit when recruiting, unless this age restriction can be objectively justified or is imposed by law.

2. **Profile of the Respondents in Terms of Sex.** It revealed that majority of the respondents are female with a frequency of 58 or 85% of the total respondents and only 10 or 15% are male. This result indicates that the Tourism Industry is dominated by female constituents.
3. **Profile of the Respondents in Terms of Civil Status** that 50 or almost three-fourths of the respondents are single, 16 or 24% are married and only 1 or 1% are widow and separated.
4. **Profile of the Respondents in Terms of Year Graduated** that 24 or 35% graduated on 2013, 14 or 21% obtained their degree on 2010, 11 or 16% finished their studies on 2012 and 2009 while the remaining 8 or 12% of the total respondents received their diploma on 2011. Notably, there was an increase in the number of graduates for the last three years.
5. **Employment Status in Terms of Type of Organization/Institution** revealed that 57 or 84% of the respondents are gainfully employed, 6 or 9% are resigned/laid off/separated while 5 or 7% are unemployed. For the employed graduates, 57 or 100% said that it took them 6 months before landing their first job after graduating from college. Out of 57 employed respondents, 55 or 96% are working in the government sector while only 2 or 4% are engaged in the private firm. Further, 51 or 94% are employed locally while 6 or 11% are employed in a foreign land. It indicates that majority of the graduates still prefer to render their services to our Motherland. Moreover, 38 or 67% of the respondents' company are engaged in service, 11 or 19% of the employed graduates are working in commercial company, 4 or 7% are in other related company, 3 or 5% are in financial firm while 1 or 2% is employed in a manufacturing company.
6. **Employment Status of Respondents in Terms of Position.** 47 or 82% are in a rank-and file level while the remaining 10 are holding a managerial and supervisory position with 5 or 9% for each level. This further demonstrates the way in which individuals are employable. Students' approaches to their future work and employability reflect the way in which they come to view themselves in relation to work and careers, and how they come to make sense of who they are as individuals. Students' employability, and how they come to constructed perceptions of changes within the labour market and in higher education, but also their dispositions to work and careers.
7. **Employment Status of Respondents in Terms of Job Description.** 57 respondents were employed graduates, as exhibited in Table 1 below, have different job titles

and these include the following: Account Specialist (2); Admin/Secretary (1); Airport Operations Asst. (1); Assistant Manager (1); Assistant Secretary (1); Brand Specialist (2); Call Center Agent (1); Cashier (3); College Instructor (1); Customer Service Rep. (4); Data Encoder (1); Data Entry Operator 1 (1); Dining Supervisor (1); Front Desk Officer (3); Front Line Associate (1); Gift Registry Assistant (1); Ground Stewardess (1); Head Waitress (1); Hotel Receptionist (2); HR and Admin Officer (1); Information Officer (1); Manager (2); Marketing Assistant (1); Marketing Associate (1); Marketing Officer (1); Marketing Specialist (1); Office Secretary/Tutor (2); Office Staff (1); OFW (2); Purchasing Officer (1) Receptionist (2); Reservation Officer (3); Restaurant Manager (1); Sales Associate (3); Sales Representative (1); Shift Manager (1); Ticketing Agent (1); Training Staff (1) and; Travel Agent (1).

TABLE 1: Employment Status of Respondents in Terms of Job Description Table 1.

Job Description	Frequency	Percentage %	Job Description	Frequency	Percentage %
Account Specialist	2	4	Information Officer	1	2
Admin/Secretary	1	2	Manager	2	4
Airport Operations Asst	1	2	Marketing Assistant	1	2
Assistant Manager	1	2	Marketing Associate	1	2
Assistant Secretary	1	2	Marketing Officer	1	2
Brand Specialist	2	4	Marketing Specialist	1	2
Call Center Agent	1	2	Office Secretary/Tutor	2	4
Cashier	3	5	Office Staff	1	2
College Instructor	1	2	OFW	2	4
Customer Service Rep	4	7	Purchasing Officer	1	2
Data Encoder	1	2	Receptionist	2	4
Data Entry Operator	1	2	Reservation Officer	3	5
Dining Supervisor	1	2	Restaurant Manager	1	2
Front Desk Officer	3	5	Sales Associate	3	5
Front Line Associate	1	2	Sales Representative	1	2
Gift Registry Assistant	1	2	Shift Manager	1	2
Ground Stewardess	1	2	Ticketing Agent	1	2
Head Waitress	1	2	Training Staff	1	2
Hotel Receptionist	2	4	Travel Agent	1	2
HR and Admin Officer	1	2	Total	57	100

8. **Employment Status of Respondents in Terms of Monthly Salary.** 26 or 46% are receiving a gross monthly salary of P10,000 and below, 11 or 19% are receiving P10,001-P15,000, 10 or 18% are receiving P15,001-P20,000, 5 or 9% are receiving above P30,000, 4 or 7% receive P25,001-P30,000 while only 1 or 2% receives P20,001-P25,000. Out of 57 employed respondents, 48 or 67% firmly believe that their present job is related to their field of training in college while 19 or 33% are otherwise and thus, considered as underemployed. Among 19 underemployed, 17 or 89% pointed out that there was an opening in those fields which they immediately applied for while 2 or 11% stressed that their training is inadequate and they could not compete with other graduates from other universities.

TABLE 2: Comparison of Employment Status of Respondents when Grouped According To Age.

AGE	Unemployed	Resigned/Laid Off/Separated	Gainfully Employed
20	1 (1.47%)	1 (1.47%)	7 (10.29%)
21		1 (1.47%)	7 (10.29%)
22			18 (26.47%)
23	1 (1.47%)	2 (2.94%)	8 (11.76%)
24	2 (2.94%)		4 (5.88%)
25	1 (1.47%)	1 (1.47%)	7 (10.29%)
Above 25		1 (1.47%)	6 (8.82%)

It can be gleaned from the table above that 22-year-old respondents who are gainfully employed comprised the majority of the respondents with a frequency of 18 at 26.47%. The 23-year-olds who are likewise gainfully employed come in second place at 11.76%. The unemployed respondents across age groups are the least represented among respondents.

9. **Comparison of Employment Status of Respondents when Grouped According to Sex.** The female respondents who are gainfully employed comprised majority of the respondents with a frequency of 49 at 72.09%.

10. **Comparison of Employment Status of Respondents when Grouped According to Occupation and Civil Status.** The single respondents who are gainfully employed comprised majority of the respondents with a frequency of 45 at 66.18%.

As shown from the table that 2013 graduates who are gainfully employed comprised the majority of the respondents with a frequency of 19 at 27.94%.

TABLE 3: Comparison of Employment Status of Respondents when Grouped According to Year Graduated.

Year Graduated	Unemployed	Resigned/Laid Off/Separated	Gainfully Employed
2009	1 (1.47%)	1 (1.47%)	9 (13.24%)
2010	2 (2.94%)	1 (1.47%)	11 (16.18%)
2011		1 (1.47%)	7 (10.29%)
2012			11 (16.18%)
2013	2 (2.94%)	3 (4.41%)	19 (27.94%)

- 11. Needed Changes to Improve the BS Tourism Graduates Competitive Edge.** 35 or 52% voted for upgrading of facilities, 18 or 26% favored for providing job placement program, 12 or 18% mentioned that the University should hire competent instructors, 2 or 3% suggested to add more major subjects while 1 or 1% believed that the curriculum and syllabi should be reviewed and updated.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

The empirical findings of this research led to the following conclusions that there is a need to improve the employment rate of BS Tourism at the LSPU-LB Campus; The graduates are challenged by the lack of opportunity and by their lack of competence. The findings of the study yield the following recommendations: Functional facilities must be sustained; continual job placement services should be strengthened; The university administration may consider additional faculty members in the field of tourism management.

Author’s Note

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Disclaimer

There is no conflict of interest in this study.

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Strictly follow the numbered format of citation while observing the proper APA style of referencing

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