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FEEDBACK OF UNIVERSITY INTERNS TOWARDS THE ON-THE-JOB TRAINING: IMPLICATIONS FOR ACADEME-INDUSTRY INTERNSHIP COLLABORATION

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ABSTRACT

The on-the-job training program is an excellent opportunity for students of the Hospitality Management Program to achieve a harmonious integration of theoretical knowledge acquired in classroom with their practical application in a professional or industrial setting. This paper aimed at describing the feedbacks of the Hospitality Management students of the Pangasinan State University towards the on-the-job training program with the end goal of identifying points of improving the internship program through an academe-industry collaboration.

Through the use of descriptive method of research employing a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview with the on-the-job trainees, the researcher found out that the trainees have generally positive perceptions towards the on-the-job training program. Their feedbacks along various aspects of the on-the-job training program can serve as significant input to strengthen the collaboration of academe and industry in enhancing the on-the-job training program.

By way of recommendation, the researcher advanced the idea that the university should forge a scheme of cooperation and collaboration with the industry towards the betterment of the existing on-the-job training program based on the feedbacks of the on-the-job trainees.

KEYWORDS: *practical learning program, on-the-job training, academe-industry collaboration*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In accordance with Memorandum Order No. 104 series of 2017 entitled “Revised Guidelines for Student Internship Program in the Philippines (SIPP) for All Programs,” the internship program is meant to provide students with an opportunity to complement their learning with practical knowledge, skills and desirable attitudes and to gain hands-on experience in recognized Host Training Establishment (HTE).

In fact, the Commission on Higher Education is mandated to develop and promote policies, systems, procedures and programs that address globalization, changing policies and liberalization of trade in higher education. Consonant to this, the

Pangasinan State University require student internship and establishment of strong academic linkages with business, industry, and duly recognized government and non-government organizations, e.g., civil society organizations to promote and provide students with competitive skills and attitudes for employment.

The Bachelor of Science major in Hospitality Management Program of the Pangasinan State University requires that its students undergo four hundred eighty (480) hours of on-the-job training programs to hotels, restaurants and other host training establishments, the core functions of which are relevant to the services rendered by hospitality management industry. Such requirement comprises one

of the most important aspect of the academic life of any hospitality management student in the university since the on-the-job training program offers the student an opportunity to apply any theoretical knowledge he has gained from classroom. The OJT program provides a transition from academic works to actual practical underpinnings of knowledge.

The need for skilled and qualified hospitality management practitioners cannot be overemphasized. Needless to say, the development of these skilled workers in the industry serves as the backbone to ensure the continuity and robustness of the industry considering that the tourism industry is a labor-intensive industry. As correctly observed by Amoah and Baum (1997) Tourism is “a labour-intensive service industry, dependent for survival on the availability of good quality personnel to deliver, operate, and manage the tourist product” and it is expected that it will continue to be in future. The tourism industry has indeed been globalized and its operations have been transformed into a massive international level such that “employees are facing to work with people from all around the world and managerial skills, knowledge and environment are influenced by tourism globalization. (Hjalager, 2003)

There are three stakeholders that plays vital role for effective implementation of the on-the-job training program, the needs and expectations of which should be taken into account. Accordingly, the industry’s needs and interests should be considered (Zopiatis and Theocharous, 2013; Donina and Luka, 2014; Sevilia et al., 2014), higher education institutions’ views and goals be incorporated (Lam and Ching, 2007; Ruhanen, Robinson and Breakey, 2013; Mekawy and Abu Bakr, 2014; Hjalager, 2003) and students perceptions and motives when it comes to internship programs considered (Koc et al., 2014; Hughes, Mylonas and Benckendorff, 2013; Pang, 2010; Yafang and Gongyong, 2008) towards a harmonious and well-integrated implementation of the on-the job training program.

This paper looked into the feedbacks of the on-the-job trainees of the BS Hospitality Management Program of the Pangasinan State University with the end view of identifying points of cooperation between the academe and the industry in enhancing the existing policy or program on internship.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

This study aimed to describe the feedback of the on-the-job trainees of the BS Hospitality Management Program of the Pangasinan State University as basis for possible strengthening or improvement of the on-the-job training program for the BS Hospitality Management program of the university.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is classified as a descriptive research. For purpose of this research, the researcher used an online questionnaire which was circulated among the students of the BS Hospitality Management Program. The questionnaire was complemented by a series of semi-structured interview which were done and reported through the Internship Site Monitoring Report by the researcher during the conduct of monthly monitoring of the host training establishments where the trainees are deployed. Using a purposive sampling design, a total of eighty six (86) respondents responded to the online questionnaire which were collated, classified, and quantified using descriptive statistics. Data obtained were computed using the SPSS software.

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. On the Profile of the On-the-Job Trainees and their Preferred Location for OJT

A great majority of the on-the-job trainees are female as evidenced by 61.1 percent while a small percentage of 39.9 percent are males. This suggests that the hospitality management program is predominantly a female degree program.

In terms of the location, it appears that a great majority of the on-the-job trainees preferred the city of Baguio as their place of internship with 39.8 percent; followed by the following provinces: Pangasinan, 35.2 percent; Pampanga, 12.9 percent; Manila, 6.5; and Batangas, 5.6 percent.

Apparently, Baguio City is the most preferred location for the on-the-job training program of the students for some obvious reasons. Firstly, some students preferred the cool and favourable climate of the city. Secondly, Baguio City is just two-hour drive away from Pangasinan which makes it easily accessible in case the trainees opted to go back home for some reasons. Finally, the city of Baguio is home to a number of best rated hotels in the country considering that it is the summer capital of the country. On the contrary, only a few of the trainees opted to undertake their on-the-job training program in Batangas. The reason is plain and simple. Due to geographical distance, some of the trainees who were interviewed cited accessibility reason why they less prefer distant location like Batangas.

4.2. On the Feedback of the Trainees on the Training

Table 1 below presents the interns’ feedback on the training that they have undertaken in their respective host training establishment.

Table 1
University Interns' Feedback on the Training

On the Quality of the Training	AWM	Descriptive Equivalent
1. The trainings provided in my workplace are very relevant to the core skills I needed to develop to be competent in the world of work.	3.36	Strongly Agree
2. I am satisfied with the investment my organization makes in training and education.	3.35	Strongly Agree
3. The host establishment where I was deployed allows trainees like me to develop initiative and independence	3.32	Strongly Agree
4. The training allows the supervisor/mentor to complete a task first then demonstrate how the trainee should do it	3.34	Strongly Agree
5. The training allows me opportunities for learning and developing skills	3.13	Agree
6. My training provides fun and challenges as well.	3.88	Strongly Agree
OVER-ALL MEAN	3.35	Strongly Agree

1.00-1.75 Strongly Disagree

1.76-2.50 Disagree

2.51-3.25 Agree

3.26-4.00 Strongly Agree

As shown in Table 1, the interns of the BS Hospitality Management Program strongly agree that training provides fun and challenges as well as evidenced by a weighted mean of 3.88. They also strongly agree that the trainings provided in workplace are very relevant to the core skills needed to develop to be competent in the world of work, 3.36; that they are satisfied with the investment the organization makes in training and education, 3.35; that the training allows the supervisor/mentor to complete a task first then demonstrate how the trainee should do it, 3.34; and that the host establishment where they were deployed allows trainees like me to develop initiative and independence, 3.32.

Over-all, the interns of the BS Hospitality Management Program have favourable feedback respecting the quality of training they have received from their host training establishment as shown by the over-all mean of 3.35.

The findings imply that the university interns generally have positive perception as to the quality of the on-the-job training program they have undertaken.

Acquiring quality training during the on-the-job training program is undeniably necessary for interns as the OJT enables them to gain what they call a 'real world' perspective of the workplace. It is also an opportunity for them to "test drive" the knowledge they have obtained from theoretical setting. With the interns having positive feedback on the quality of training they were exposed to, it is important for the university to look for ways and means on how to further improve existing policies on the OJT program to leverage upon existing good practices.

4.3. On the Feedback of the Trainees on the Conditions of the Workplace

Table 2 below presents the interns' feedback on the conditions of the workplace. Truly, one of the most important considerations that is taken into account during pre-OJT departure is the selection of the workplace where the OJT is to be undertaken and alongside this consideration is the condition of the workplace to ensure the safety and security of the interns.

Table 2
University Interns' Feedback on the Workplace Condition

On the Conditions of the Workplace	AWM	Descriptive Equivalent
1. The physical work conditions in the workplace are within the acceptable standards.	3.09	Agree
2. The workplace allows allocated work breaks and rest hour for trainees.	3.45	Strongly Agree
3. The department or unit where I was assigned is organized and keeps effective management of trainees.	3.22	Agree
4. The workplace allows flexibility as to the trainees' capability and capacity to do certain works	3.34	Strongly Agree
5. The workplace provides free meal or snacks from time to time.	3.34	Strongly Agree
6. The workplace does not discriminate against trainees on the basis of religion or gender.	3.25	Agree
7. There are no forms of physical or sexual harassment in the workplace where I was deployed.	3.01	Agree
OVER-ALL MEAN	3.24	Agree

1.00-1.75 Strongly Disagree

1.76-2.50 Disagree

2.51-3.25 Agree

3.26-4.00 Strongly Agree

As gleaned in Table 2, most of the interns of the BS Hospitality Management program agree that the condition of the workplace is suitable for the conduct of the on-the-job training program as evidenced by the average weighted mean of 3.24.

Among the parameters to support this of which the trainees strongly agree are as follows: workplace allows allocated work breaks and rest hour for trainees, 3.45; the workplace allows flexibility as to the trainees' capability and capacity to do certain works, 3.34; and the workplace provides free meal or snacks from time to time, 3.34.

Some trainees agree that the workplace does not discriminate against trainees on the basis of religion or gender, 3.25; the department or unit where trainees were assigned are organized and keep effective management of trainees, 3.22; the physical work conditions in the workplace are within the acceptable standards, 3.09; and that there are no forms of physical or sexual harassment in the workplace where I was deployed, 3.01.

Over-all, the interns have strong sense of agreement that their host training establishments are capable of providing them a healthy and safe working environment that are well within the acceptable

standards in the industry and compliant of labor laws and standards.

Peliccio (2018) the physical environment of a workplace greatly affects the positivity within the firm. Great energy can be created by an, attractive, comfortable physical environment. This energy ultimately enhances productivity and success. Interpersonal communication, team spirit, and the physical environment of a workplace are all essential to build a positive and conducive working environment which in turn is crucial to developing the professional and personal growth of interns.

The findings imply that the university and industry can work side by side on how well could they improve safety and security of interns working in host training establishments.

4.4. On the Feedback of the Trainees on Supervisor/Employer's Treatment

Table 3 below presents the interns' feedback on the treatment of supervisor and employers.

Table 3
University Interns' Feedback on Supervisor/Employer's Treatment

On the Conditions of the Supervisor/Employer's Treatment	AWM	Descriptive Equivalent
1. I have the opportunity to discuss with my employee or supervisor how I am performing well with respect to my duties.	3.06	Agree
2. I receive adequate feedback on my performance and is allowed to correct any mistake or flaws committed.	3.31	Strongly Agree
3. My supervisor engage in constructive feedbacks with trainees.	3.15	Agree
4. The supervisor perceives differences in skills and knowledge of trainees and engages at them at their respective learning level.	3.14	Agree
5. The supervisor allows trainees like me to engage in finding positive solutions when problem arises.	3.19	Agree
6. My supervisor provides adequate support when problem arises in the performance of my assigned work.	3.08	Agree
7. My supervisor allows me to develop my own skills in my own little way and provides opportunities for me to develop such skills.	3.44	Strongly Agree
OVER-ALL MEAN	3.19	Agree

1.00-1.75 Strongly Disagree

1.76-2.50 Disagree

2.51-3.25 Agree

3.26-4.00 Strongly Agree

As shown in Table 3, the interns of the BS Hospitality Management Program strongly agree that their supervisor allows them to develop their own skills in their own little way and provides opportunities for them to develop such skills as shown by the weighted mean of 3.44. They also have strong agreement that they receive adequate feedback on their performance and are allowed to correct any mistake or flaws committed as evidenced by the weighted mean of 3.31.

They all agree that the supervisor allows trainees like me to engage in finding positive solutions when problem arises, 3.19; that the supervisor engage in constructive feedbacks with trainees, 3.15; that the supervisor perceives differences in skills and knowledge of trainees and engages at them at their respective learning level, 3.14; that the supervisor provides adequate support when problem arises in the performance of my assigned work, 3.08; and that they have the opportunity to discuss with the employee or supervisor how they are performing well with respect to their duties, 3.06.

Over-all, the interns agree that their supervisor or employee treated them well during the duration of their on-the-job training program.

Power (2018) asserts that encouraging and fostering a work environment that is fun and that inspires employees to take joy in their work can reap enormous benefits. He further argued that who genuinely enjoy their work are more productive, happier, and more successful. This increases self-

confidence and inspires greater performance and greater success for both employee and employer. It is important that interns are not forced or coerced nor become victims of harassment or exploitation.

The findings suggest that both the university and the industry can work together to think of ways on how to ensure that student interns get the most out of their OJT experience by close collaboration with one another.

5.0. CONCLUSION

On the basis of the foregoing findings, the researcher arrived at the following conclusions:

- (1) The student interns of the BS Hospitality Management program of the Pangasinan State University have positive perception on the quality of training, conditions of the workplace and the supervisor/employer's treatment of them; and
- (2) The university and industry alongside with the student interns, being important stakeholders in the conduct of internship can work together to improve existing good practices in the conduct of the on-the-job training program.

6.0. RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the foregoing conclusions there is a need to further strengthen university and industry ties on the implementation of the OJT program for the BS Hospitality Management. It is further recommended that feedbacks from the students and inputs from the

training host establishment be integrated by the Pangasinan State University during planning and policy-making on matters affecting internship program to ensure vertical alignment of the goals of the university vis-à-vis the goal of the internship program and the thrusts of the industry.

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