Level of Skills Competencies of Tourism Management Students

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ABSTRACT

Tourism is a key driver of economic development and an important factor in job creation and opportunities. With this, the tourism industry recognizes the importance of and responds to the required skills and competencies. This study aimed to determine the level of skill competencies of the tourism management students of Saint Mary's University based on CMO 62s 2017 based on students' perceptions. This was a quantitative study wherein descriptive comparative design was utilized. A survey questionnaire adopted from the CMO 62s 2017 was used in this study. Results showed that female senior tourism students at SMU senior high school took the ABM strand. Researchers determined the level of skills competencies, namely, general, business and management, common tourism and hospitality, and core tourism skills competencies as a high level of skills competencies. Results indicate a significant difference in general skills competencies when respondents are grouped according to senior high school graduates. It indicates that general skills competencies are significantly higher than business and management skills competencies, common tourism and hospitality skills competencies, and core tourism skills competencies when grouped according to sex, senior high school graduated from, and strand in senior high school. Meanwhile, general skills competencies, business and management competencies, common tourism and hospitality competencies, and core tourism skills competencies are classified as high-level skills competencies.

Keywords: Tourism workforce, tourism proficiency, tourism expertise, tourism capability, capacity building

INTRODUCTION

Along with business process outsourcing and remittances from overseas Filipinos, the tourism sector is a major enabler for the resilience of the Philippines' external payments position and overall economic development. It offers a variety of opportunities for businesses and people from every aspect of life. It supports continuous structural foreign exchange inflow as one of the country's largest industries and employment generators. The COVID-19 outbreak devastates tourism since it relies so heavily on individual interactions. In addition, with the rapid growth of mass vaccination and the easing of travel restrictions, the probability of a recovery in the travel industry is increasing (Caynila, 2022).

Tourism is an expanding service sector with immense potential, making it one of the main concerns faced by the global community. growth, but rather it also touches both the social and moral values of nations (Kavya, 2021). Tourism is a key driver of economic expansion and an important factor in job creation and opportunities. The tourism sector has expanded and diversified over the past Given that this is a labor-intensive industry, many job chances are available for both skilled and unskilled workers. Based on the study of Kavya (2022). For women, young people, and migrant workers, who comprise an important percentage of the workforce, the manpower, and employment provided by the tourism sector are especially

significant (Geneva, 2022). Most businesses in the sector are medium-sized, small enterprises, and important workplaces. Despite playing a significant role in creating jobs and businesses, the sector still has issues providing good labor that must be resolved to increase productivity.

Regarding HEIs, the development of new technologies impacts tourism education concerning how information is provided, how they are evaluated in the curriculum, and the proper way to deliberate lessons (Hasenzahi, 2022). COVID-19 has impacted all aspects of daily life. The rapid disruption of the educational systems caused schools and institutions to close (Joseph, 2023). One of the areas of the national Covid-19 pandemic that has been seriously impacted is the delivery of education (Sari, 2021) which had the greatest effect on the learning experience of the students (Barrot, 2021). With that, institutions, administrators, instructors, students, and even parents are not ready to implement the online education process during the Covid-19 pandemic. The shift from direct to indirect teaching methods occurred during the pandemic. As a result, it puts educators, administrators, and students into a complex learning cycle, such as a lack of materials and limitations like internet connections (Rasmitadila, 2020).

According to Ukpere et al. (2018), the most crucial skills competencies in the industry are customer service, communication skills, willingness to take responsibility, ability to work under pressure, time management, and determination skills. However, the study concluded that employees lack entrepreneurial skills and have low skills competencies in career planning, negotiations, and work experience. The lack of an in-depth response to the skills required by the tourism sector and how state colleges and universities may assist in supplying the necessary workforce with these abilities has led to a significant mismatch between jobs and skills, as well as underemployment and unemployment in the country (Patimo, D. 2021).

Bachelor of Science in Tourism Management is a four-year degree program associated with hospitality and tourism education. It allows students to actively participate in managing, developing, and planning the world's biggest people industry – tourism. This focuses on studying history, travel, language, and other management-related topics. Students will be led on a journey toward a senior position in the interesting, diverse, and growing business through exposure to and training for the management of the travel, tour, and hospitality industries. Customer service, marketing, anecdotes, innovation, entrepreneurship, and the ability to recognize new technologies such as big data and artificial intelligence are the only skills needed to succeed in the competitive industry (Balyona, 2021). Thus, this study aimed to determine the level of skills competencies of Tourism Management students of Saint Mary's University based on CMO 62 s. 2017 based on students' perceptions. Therefore, this research study pinpointed the best ways to meet the needs of the students in preparing for their future careers, and they can use it as a springboard to fill in the gaps needed in the tourism sector.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The descriptive-comparative design was used in this study. The descriptive comparative was used to determine the profile of the respondents in terms of sex and their senior high school strand. This study also looked into the difference between the level of skills competencies of Tourism Management students when grouped according to their profile variables. Further, this study also utilized a qualitative method for the respondents' recommendations.

Research Locale

The object of this study is to evaluate the level of skills competencies of 4th year B.S. Tourism Management students who are officially enrolled in the 2nd semester of S.Y. 22-23 at Saint Mary's University (SMU). The School of Accountancy and Business was established in 1951 and offers courses such as Bachelor of

Science in Accountancy, Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management, Bachelor of Science in Tourism Management, and other related courses. Saint Mary's University's Hospitality and Tourism Management programs are Level 1 PAASCU accredited.

Research Participants

The participants of this study were the 4th year Tourism Management students who are officially enrolled in Saint Mary's University during the 2nd Semester AY 2022-2023. This Academic Year, 2022-2023, 43 4th year Tourism Management students are enrolled in the University, comprising approximately 13% of the total number of students in the Hospitality and Tourism Management Department. Thus, this research utilized the whole population as respondents.

The researchers conducted the study to officially enrolled 4th-year tourism management students whose remaining course is Practicum. The researchers purposively selected the respondents using the criteria that they should have finished all academic subjects. They will attend their Practicum in the 2nd semester. Other 4th-year Tourism Management students with irregular status and other year levels of the BSTM program were not part of the study.

Research Instrument

The primary study instrument was a survey-questionnaire (see Appendix B: Survey-Questionnaire) that was adopted from CMO 62 s of 2017.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers gathered the required details for this study and conducted a survey questionnaire. The researchers approached and asked for the permission of the respondents of this study. The researchers asked for consent from the respondents. They presented and explained the Informed Consent form and gave them time to read the content. The respondents agreed and signed the Informed Consent Form; the researchers scheduled a time to float the research questionnaire. The respondents adjusted their schedules to answer the survey questionnaire. The respondents answered the survey questionnaire for 15-20 minutes, and the researchers personally retrieved the survey questionnaire after the respondents were done answering all parts.

Treatment of Data

For the treatment of data, the statistical tools used were t-tests to determine whether there is a statistically significant difference between the means in two unrelated groups, which is the sex. It sought to investigate the possible differences between sex and skills competencies of fourth-year tourism management students and to examine the causal factors for those differences deeply. ANOVA to compare differences of means among more than two groups, specifically the respondents' SHS strand, what are the advantages of their taken strand in correlation to their current course. Mean, and standard deviation were employed to describe each skill competency's ratings and scores. For our study, the dependent variable would be the respondents' strands they took at their senior high school level. In contrast, the independent variable would be the level of skills competencies based on the CMO 62 series 2017.

Ethical Consideration

This study was submitted for ethics review/assessment and approval to Saint Mary's University Research Ethics Board (SMUREB), headed by Mr. Jason Arnold L. Maslang (email: reb@smu.edu.ph; mobile 0917705341), 2nd floor, Rev. John Van Bauwell Hall, SMU Main Campus, Ponce Street, Don Mariano Marcos; Bayombong, 3700 Nueva Vizcaya, Philippine.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Section 1: Demographic Profile

This section of the study presents the tourism management students' demographic profile regarding their sex, senior high school graduated from, and strands in senior high school.

Table 1: Demographic Profile

Profile	Category	Frequency	Percent
Sex	Male	7	20
	Female	28	80
SHS Graduated From	SMU	16	45.7
	SLS	5	14.3
	Others	11	31.4
	Did not specify	3	8.6
SHS Strand	ABM	17	48.6
	GAS	5	14.3
	Others	10	28.6
	Did not specify	3	8.6
TOTAL		35	100

Table 1 shows the frequency and percentage distribution of the respondents according to their demographic profile. Based on the table above, there are more female students (80%) than male students (20%). Most of the students SHS graduated from are SMU, with a percentage of 45.7%, and most of them are from SLS, with a percentage of 14.3%. 'Others' includes one from each school Santiago City National High School, La Salette of Quezon, Belance High School, Hungduan National High School, University of La Salette, Bambang National High School, Don Mariano Marcos National High School, Quirino National High School, and Centro Escolar University- except Saint Teresita's Academy which has two. The majority of the students took Accountancy and Business Management (ABM) (48.6%) and General Academic Strand (GAS) (14.3%) as their SHS strands. 'Others' includes Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS), Technical-Vocational-Livelihood/ TVL/HE, and STEM.

Section 2: Skills Competencies of the Tourism Management Students

This section of the study determined the level of skills competencies of the respondents in terms of their general skills competencies, business and management skills competencies, common tourism and hospitality skills competencies, and core tourism skills competencies.

Table 2: Level of Skills Competencies of Tourism Management Students

Skills Competencies	N	Mean	SD	QD
General	35	3.28	.38	High
Business and Management	35	3.23	.41	High
Common Tourism and Hospitality	35	3.14	.39	High

Core Tourism	35	3.26	.45	High
Overall	**35**	**3.22**	**.35**	**High**

*Legend: 1.00-1.49= Very Low, 1.50-2.49=Low; 2.50-3.49=High; 3.50-4.00=Very High

Table 6 shows the level of skills competencies of Tourism Management students. The findings indicate that general skills competencies have the highest mean of M=3.28. In contrast, common Tourism and Hospitality skills competencies got the lowest mean of M=3.14. Overall, the level of skills competencies of tourism management students is high, with an overall mean of M=3.22.

Before COVID-19, the education system worldwide met certain criteria for delivering and conducting educational standards. Constructing a favorable and conducive environment for the well-being and professional development of the students was the intention behind building schools and universities. With that, students unknowingly nurture social and interpersonal skills (Joseph, 2023). Before the pandemic, students were exposed to application type of activities where it gave them a chance to enhance their skills competencies; this factor is one of the reasons why the general skills competencies of the 4th year Tourism students have the highest level of skills competencies among others because subjects like Purposive Communication, Practical Spoken English, Advanced Oral Communication, Quality Service Management in Tourism and Hospitality, Philippine Culture and Tourism Geography, Micro Perspective of Tourism and Hospitality (w/ Local Educ. Tour), and Tour and Travel Management are some of the subjects that enhance the general skills competencies of the respondents are offered before the pandemic happened. It implies that during the 1st year of College of Tourism students, they are already exposed to some application type of activities that enhance their general skills competencies.

On the contrary, during COVID-19, parents, teachers, and students faced various difficulties. The place to attend for learning and assessment was shut down indefinitely, and no one knew how to face this as it had never happened. With this, students and teachers struggle during those times since everything is new. The problem of the academe sector is how to deliver an effective learning method for the students. Due to limited resources and assessment for students, this is reflected in the student's performance (Joseph, 2023). This factor is considered one of the main reasons why the common tourism and hospitality skills competencies of the 4th year Tourism students have the lowest mean to the overall skills competencies. This implies that due to COVID-19 and the sudden shift to online modality, subjects like Tourism and Hospitality Marketing, Strategic Management in Tourism, and Hospitality and Entrepreneurship in Tourism and Hospitality mainly focus on business and management aspects are taught through online learning since these subjects are offered during the pandemic. With the sudden changes, practical activities are limited, and activities are mostly done online. This shows that respondents cannot perform and implement some business management aspects.

Section 3: Difference in the Level of Skills Competencies of Tourism Management Students

This section of the study determined the significant difference in the level of skills competencies of the tourism management students when grouped according to their profile variables.

Table 3: The Difference in Skills Competencies Graduate from by Senior High School (SHS) Graduated From

Skills Competencies	SHS Graduated From	N	Mean	SD	QD	F	df	Sig.
General	SMU	16	3.46	.41	High	5.089	2	.013
	SLS	5	2.93	.29	High			
	Others	11	3.17	.27	High		31	
	Total	32	3.28	.39	High			

Business & Management	SMU	16	3.26	.48	High	.209	2	.813
	SLS	5	3.14	.32	High		31	
	Others	11	3.19	.34	High			
	Total	32	3.22	.41	High			
Common Tourism and Hospitality	SMU	16	3.13	.38	High	.062	2	.940
	SLS	5	3.06	.18	High		31	
	Others	11	3.11	.48	High			
	Total	32	3.11	.39	High			
Core Tourism	SMU	16	3.18	.50	High	.780	2	.468
	SLS	5	3.47	.47	High		31	
	Others	11	3.22	.38	High			
	Total	32	3.24	.45	High			
Overall	SMU	16	3.23	.40	High	.113	2	.894
	SLS	5	3.17	.26	High		31	
	Others	11	3.17	.32	High			
	Total	32	3.20	.35	High			

Legend: 1.00-1.49=Very Low, 1.50-2.49=Low; 2.50-3.49=High; 3.50-4.00=Very High

Table 8 shows that ANOVA results for general skills competencies reached statistical significance (F=5.089, Sig.=.013). Post hoc results using LSD indicate a statistical difference between SMU and SLS (Sig.=006) and other schools (Sig.=.047). While M=3.24 is the mean for core tourism skills competencies, there is no significant difference in respondents' core tourism skills competencies when grouped according to their senior high school graduates from [F (2,31) =.780, Sig.=.468]. While M=3.22 is from the business and management skills competencies, this information shows no significant difference in respondents' business and management skills competencies when grouped according to their senior high school graduates from [F (2,31) =.209, Sig.=.813]. Moreover, with an M=3.11, the common tourism and hospitality skills competencies show no significant difference in respondents' common tourism and hospitality skills competencies when grouped according to their senior high school graduates from [F (2,31) =.062, Sig.=.940]. With the overall M=3.20, this indicates that there is no significant difference in respondents Skills Competencies Graduate from by Senior High School (SHS) Graduated From [F (2,31) =.113, Sig.=.894].

Furthermore, unlike the education system they had before, K to 12 offers more opportunities for employment and entrepreneurship. Graduates of the new system can begin looking for employment as soon as they receive their diplomas and pass competency-based assessments. Alternatively, individuals can launch businesses or enroll in college to further develop their skills. Each student will be assisted by all of the possibilities in taking a step forward in developing their professional qualities, competence, and skills. Moreover, the capacity and ability to demonstrate and perform various activities in the industry still lie and depend on themselves; it is not dependent on where school you graduated from.

Section 4: Recommendations for the Skills Competencies of Tourism Management Students

The students' responses were tallied and then grouped into different categories based on the study. Out of 35 respondents, 15 students answered the qualitative part of the questionnaire. The positive perception displayed by the respondents shows that possessing a strong set of skills and the ability to learn any technical skills is very important to the industry (f=1). This is in correlation to business and management

skills competencies. It is also mentioned general skills competencies as the students start to engage and immerse in tourism management course, a self-directed motivation is recommended, such as "should take studies seriously" (f=1), "be transparent" (f=1), "keep it up" (f=1), "aim higher" (f=2), and "just be yourself" (f=1). Some indicated individual qualities such as time management, confidence, honesty, optimism, flexibility, transparency, strong written and oral communication skills, interpersonal skills, teamwork, and problem-solving (f=1). Other general skills competencies that the respondents recommend are "training and workshop" (f=1), "create more opportunities and practice their skills, provide interactive activities" (f=1), focus on skills and executing them and try" (f=1), and "all excellent" (f=1). A common hospitality and tourism skills competency is also recommended for more frequent immersion and mock-up (f=1).

According to Patiniotis (2019), education is a highly important source for developing professional identity and work ethics: motivation, engagement, and job quality factors. Flexibility is a fundamental characteristic that applies to schedules, working hours, and seasons. This matter is already new. However, it creates issues for which suitable solutions have not yet been created. (Patiniotis, 2019). Additionally, while managers in the hospitality and tourism industries need to have 'hard' management skills like accounting, financial analysis, and marketing, success in what is a 'people company' depends on having strong, soft skills in addition to hard skills.

With the implementation of distance learning, students cannot be maximally supervised by the subject teacher during learning activities at home. Students are late when it comes to deadlines and classes. With this, students have been unable to manage online learning time properly (Sari, 2021). Hence, when the universities reopen schools for the new normal set-up, students struggle to manage their time since they are no longer stationed in their homes. Some universities require students to attend classes physically, so students no longer use online learning for discussions and assessments. In addition, students' confidence is also affected by the COVID-19 situation. Before the pandemic, students have high self-confidence in participating more in a classroom, sharing their opinions, and being more comfortable with teachers and peers. However, because of the pandemic, students lack confidence in meeting and communicating with people. This is because students after the pandemic have no experience or have little experience. Unconfident students struggle to improve their speaking skills since they lack experience speaking in front of their class or peers (Bouhadad, 2022).

Furthermore, training, workshop, and immersion are limited during the pandemic. According to Barrot (2021), due to the pandemic, the challenges that students experienced were the lack of fieldwork and access to laboratories. Since most of the laboratory subjects of the 4th year students are offered during the pandemic, it resulted in the lack of application type of activities and immersion for the 4th year students.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

Determining the level of skills competencies of Tourism Management students have led the researchers to the following conclusions:

1. The tourism management students are mostly female; senior high school graduates from Saint Mary's University who took the ABM strand during their senior high school years.
2. The skills competencies of tourism management students based on CMO 62s of 2017, namely, general skills competencies, business and management skills competencies, common tourism and hospitality skills competencies, and core tourism skills competencies, are classified as high-level skills competencies.
3. The result showed a significant difference between SMU and SLS on general skills competencies when grouped according to senior high school graduates. Meanwhile, general skills competencies,

business and management skills competencies, common tourism skills competencies, and core tourism skills competencies indicate no significant difference when grouped according to their sex and strand in SHS from.

4. The tourism management students recommended some skills competencies such as communication, interpersonal, teamwork, and problem-solving. Self-motivated recommendations like aiming higher, being transparent, and being yourself are also given. Frequent immersion and mock-up are recommended under common tourism and hospitality skills competencies.

Recommendations

For the incoming senior high school students who will pursue business management programs such as the Tourism Management program, the researchers recommend enrolling in the ABM strand since this will give them an overview of the topics and subjects such as financial management, operations, and marketing that they will take during the four years course. In addition, the ABM strand will help them improve their communication skills since they will learn how to communicate with different types of people, which is required for various business courses. This strand also teaches time management since you will learn how to budget and allocate your time to make everything efficient, effective, and simple.

Moreover, for the incoming 1st-year students who took the ABM strand, the researchers recommend applying their knowledge and expertise in the business and management subjects. This will help them take the course more easily and confidently as they already have a background in business and management-related topics during their SHS years.

For students who didn't take the ABM strand, the researchers recommend familiarizing themselves with business terms used in business and management-related subjects to cope with those who took the ABM strand. These will also help them grasp the topics discussed in the course.

For the professors of business-related subjects, the researchers recommend enhancing their teaching methodologies, especially in the aspect of finance, marketing, human resource, operations management, information technologies, and strategic management, and other Tourism Management courses like Quality Service Management in Tourism and Hospitality, Tourism and Hospitality Marketing, Strategic Management in Tourism and Hospitality, and Entrepreneurship in Tourism and Hospitality since students are not confident enough in their skills competencies in these aspects. The researchers also recommend having more application types of activities since students during COVID-19 don't have any application types of activities due to the restrictions. With this, students can apply their knowledge to real-life scenarios or situations.

For the instructors in charge of the common Tourism and Hospitality related subjects, the researchers recommend they enhance their teaching techniques in the aspect of the industry's financial transactions and reports by providing real-life activities wherein students can apply what they have learned during the discussions. This will also help the students to gain more knowledge since they don't have any exposure during the pandemic because of some restrictions implemented by the DOH.

For the general education course instructors, the researchers recommend giving more public presentations within and outside the classroom as part of their personal development to boost the student's confidence, improve their communication skills and expose them to real scenarios. The researchers also recommend having more strict and frequent attendance checking to practice the learning habit of students to enhance the skill-set of being professional that is timely and relevant in the industry as needed.

For the Tourism and Hospitality Department, The researchers recommend teaching basic business subjects to the 1st year students who didn't take the ABM strand. Through this, students will have an overview of the

course they took. This will also help them enhance their business and management skills competencies even though they do not have enough background in the course. The researchers also recommend pinpointing the best applicable activities for the students since students don't have enough exposure due to COVID-19 for the past two years. It is best to conduct an activity such as exposure like immersion and other activities to help the students apply what they learned during the discussion. This will enhance their knowledge and understanding of the real-life situation of the industry. This will also help the students enhance their skills and competencies while taking the course.

For future researchers, the researchers recommended exploring other profile variables that may give a significant difference in the level of skills competencies such as TESDA NC II achieved since this research is only limited to three profile variables which are sex, senior high school graduated from, and strand in senior high school from. Researchers also recommend exploring a wider group of students since this study is limited to the 4th year tourism students. It is also recommended to conduct a study for other programs. For future respondents, in consideration to answering survey questionnaires, do self-reflect and analyze questions carefully to avoid doubt and answer in between points. Accuracy is highly encouraged to develop a significant output for the study.

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