

EFFICIENCY OF PALAESTRA CONSORTO IN INTERNSHIP PLACEMENT AS PERCEIVED BY FOURTH YEAR CITHM STUDENTS

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Abstract

This study was conducted in order to know the efficiency level of Palaestra Consortio in internship placements as perceived by fourth year CITHM students. Finding the significant difference of the answers of the respondents in their program and gender in relation to the level of efficiency of Palaestra Consortio in terms of timeliness, compatibility of internships, efficiency of mock interviews and ocular visits. According to the statistical data collected from the respondents, all of the categories fell under high level of efficiency measured through the Likert Scale. There were several categories where some students gave recommendation for improvement such as the processing of internship papers' timeliness, appropriateness of given tasks by the chosen internship companies, effectiveness of mock interviews and duration of ocular visits. To sum it all, majority of the respondents rated the efficiency level of Palaestra Consortio as high, resulting to all categories' rating fall under the High Efficiency Level.

Keywords: *Internship, Efficiency, Effectiveness, Perceived, Significant*

INTRODUCTION

The hospitality and tourism industry is very diverse and is moving in a fast paced. The growth of the hospitality and tourism industry is inevitable that raises the demand for industry practitioners and toughens the competition as well. It is very important to be equipped with the standards of the said industry by nurturing the foundation of a globally competitive professional through proper education and training.

Lyceum of the Philippines University–Laguna (LPU–L) practices outcomes-based education by encouraging students to take the lead. With this notion, LPU–L aims to provide the best education for every student by providing exquisite training to prepare them for their own chosen field of specializations.

Palaestra Consortio is one of the assets and highlights of Lyceum of the Philippines University- Laguna because not all schools, colleges, and campuses have internship linkage arm for internship placements of the students. Majority of the schools lets the students find internship companies on their own while LPU-L has Palaestra Consortio as aid in finding internships for students for a more conducive learning experience.

College of International Tourism and Hospitality Management (CITHM) comprises of two major programs namely Hospitality Management (HM) and International Travel and Tourism Management (ITTM).

For Hospitality Management, Bachelor of Science (BS) programs namely BS in International Hospitality Management (IHM) specialized in Hotel and Restaurant Administration (HRA), Culinary Arts and Kitchen Operations (CAKO), Cruise Line Operations specialized in Hotel Services (CLOHS), Cruise Line Operations specialized in Culinary Arts (CLOCA); and

BS International Travel and Tourism Management (BSITTM). The curriculum of CITHM was designed by Dusit Thani College (DTC) in line with the requirements of Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA). CITHM would like to enrich and nurture the skills of CITHM students in preparation with the standards of both the hospitality and tourism industry. In line with these goals, the internship of majority of CITHM students starts from summer of their first year. As a very diverse and versatile field of expertise, the students of this college must get the most out of their training in order to absorb the reality of the industry and to create an edge from other programs with similar course descriptions.

Internship is the most vital part of training. It is the application of all the knowledge and skills acquired by the students in the four corners of the classroom. That is why, the key for a successful and fruitful internship are having the internship company that can cater to one's chosen fields.

The researchers would like to measure the efficiency of Palaestra Consortio as perceived by the Fourth year graduating CITHM Students. Efficiency and effectiveness are both commonly used management terms. Yet, while they sound similar and start with the same letters, they both mean different things. Efficiency refers to doing things in a right manner. Scientifically, as defined in smallbusiness.chron.com, efficiency is defined as the output to input ratio and focuses on getting the maximum output with minimum resources. Effectiveness, on the other hand, refers to doing the right things. It constantly measures if the actual output meets the desired output.

This study aims to know the efficiency of Palaestra Consortio as a linkage arm of LPU-L in placing interns to the right internship companies and

prepares the students to be competitive on their own chosen fields. Internship programs or trainings is one of the most crucial pillar for the foundation of education that is why the researchers would like to voice out the concerns or opinions of the students regarding the internship linkage of LPU-L. The beneficiaries of this research would be the students of LPU-L. The researches chose the fourth year graduating class of CITHM because all of them have undergone three internships which means they have experienced the service of Palaestra Consortio for all of their internship periods. Second, the Palaestra Consortio will benefit from this because this may help them know if the improvements they need as well as hear the voice of the students when it comes to their internship placements. Lastly, the institution itself because Palaestra Consortio, being one of their important departments, is one of the assets and main highlights that LPU-L offer to their students. It is very important to have Palaestra Consortio at its best most especially to the undergraduates and for incoming students. It is important for CITHM students to have the right internship companies that can cater the real essence of their programs. Aside from vast number of affiliates, Palaestra Consortio has other responsibilities that will help students be equipped with proper trainings they can get from the internship program. With all of these things, the researchers would like to determine the efficiency of Palaestra Consortio as perceived by fourth year students of CITHM. This will be vital for the growth of the said linkage arm of LPU-L.

According to Radigan (2011), internship is the link between theoretical knowledge and concepts learned in the classroom setting and real time industry applications. Internship has long been regarded as an important component in preparing undergraduate students for the entry level job market. Internship provides students with valuable opportunities for growth through the shadowing of mentors, attendance at meetings, and actual

performance of duties. Students who have participated in internship have reported better time management and communication skills, higher level of self-discipline, increased initiative and have higher self-image concepts. Students participating in internships were found to have a significant higher sense of career preparation over students without such experience in five skill areas: computer application, creative thinking, job interviewing, networking and relationship building. Working along aside a seasoned professional allows students to take on meaningful tasks with real responsibility.

Radigan (2011) also said that internships are gaining in popularity for good reason. A well-designed internship program that is properly implemented reaps benefits for all parties involved. Students are given the opportunity to reinforce and practice the theoretical concepts taught in school, thus bridging the gap between the classroom and “the real world”. In addition to having technical skills reinforced and practiced, internships offer the opportunity for students to improve their interviewing and time management skills. Internship also offers students the opportunity to develop a network of contacts in their industry, an invaluable asset to possess upon graduation. Students who intern typically land their first job faster than non-interning students and at higher starting salaries. Many universities have come to use internship opportunities as a valuable recruitment tool. Internship provides an excellent tool for evaluating curricula and ensuring that the programs being offered are up to date and relevant to industry. Internship strengthen the relationship between the school and industry by providing increased access to guest speakers, potential fields trips for students and increased fund raising alliances.

Internship is one of the most important prerequisite and one experience which students must undergo first before they can graduate from

college. There are lots of preparations which students need to practice to improve their skills.

Because internships are one of the most crucial parts of education, Lyceum of the Philippines University - Laguna has made their own internship company inside the university which is the Palaestra Consortio. As stated in Palaestra Consortio website—Palaestra.lpl.edu.ph—Palaestra provides LPL's students with relevant and meaningful learning experiences through its internship programs with partner companies, thereby enhancing their job-readiness and employability. Palestra Consortio also provides training program for various industry needs, enabling a company's workforce with enhanced knowledge and competencies.

According to Monti (2009), one important characteristic that sets apart getting internship from other application processes is the fact that most training sites have many training positions to offer, even up to 15 to 20 positions in some instances. This can make the interview process very cumbersome. Therefore, most centers interview only those candidates who have made it through initial screening process. An applicant who is seriously interested in a particular site should first determine the interview policy. This is important since some programs choose to interview only those whom they invite and some negatively evaluated drop-in visitors.

In finding internship areas for interns, it has to be tailored to their specialization in order to maximize the learning they can get in their specific chosen field. Compatibility of internship areas to interns is very important. Each incoming intern will be matched with a staff level buddy. Buddies will be closer to the intern in terms of level and provide informal support. They are an additional resource but are not mandatory. Interns work accordingly with

their specific program of study for they are more comfortable and knowledgeable with their tasks (Bee, 2008).

Once the compatibility of filtered internship companies tailored to the specialization needs of the interns, one has to ensure compliance of proper documents in order to fix the internship papers and documents timely. In order to fulfill this, one has to observe timeliness to meet certain deadlines of the internship companies to fully start the training.

One of the greatest factors in order to execute good internships is timeliness. The intern should have a detailed timeline of how many hours the entire internship will consist. One should be aware of how long a semester is at the student's institution and plan your weekly hours accordingly with the intern's school schedule. The intern should be placed on time due to their school requirement and activities (Corrales, 2004).

But, in order to prepare for this, the interns must be equipped with knowledge in order to pass the actual interview for the internship companies. The Mock Interview Program is designed to provide students with an opportunity to practice and refine their interviewing skills for internships, jobs and graduate/professional school. Mock Interview Interns receive specialized training in interviewing processes and techniques in order to provide students with appropriate feedback and guidance (Johnson, 2015).

After all of these are accomplished, supervision of interns to ensure appropriate tasks was given to cater the needs of the field of interns. Effective supervision during internship with characteristics such as being supportive, demonstrates high work standards and competence provide frequent feedback and develops individual through coaching, provides more opportunities for individual to explore career interest and resolve conflict (Taylor, 1988). The interns should be placed according to their

specializations for them to really apply the skills needed in that specific field of work. Interns are still part of the obligation of the school and therefore, they need to be supervised.

The intern's perception of supervision effectiveness is significantly correlated with the job placement success and overall job performance (Gabris & Michelle, 1989). Another study suggests that supervisor support can represent a commitment to the employee by the organization (Mowday, 1998). A supervisor can help to build the employee's commitment too by showing interest and communicating the organization's valuing of him or her (Keyin, 2010).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

In order to measure the level of efficiency of Palaestra Consortio in internship placements as perceived by fourth year students of CITHM, the researchers' objective is to know the demographic profile of the respondents in order to determine if there are any significant differences between the demographic profile when it comes on how they rate the efficiency level of Palaestra Consortio on internship placements. Specifically, the researchers aim to address the following:

1. To identify the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of:
 - a. gender, and
 - b. program;
2. To know the efficiency of Palaestra Consortio in placing internships as perceived by CITHM students in terms of:

- a. timeliness of placement,
- b. compatibility of internship companies with the enrolled program of students,
- c. efficiency of mock interviews conducted, and
- d. ocular visit to internship companies; and

3. To know if there are significant differences between the demographic profiles of the respondents to their answers on the categories that measures the efficiency of Palaestra Consortio.

METHODS

The researchers conducted a survey and an interview with the fourth year graduating CITHM students. The survey questionnaires were comprised of questions that should be answered on a scale of one to five and there will be open ended questions for other recommendations and suggestions on the efficiency of Palaestra Consortio in placing interns in proper internship companies. In order to come up with the number of respondents, the researchers used the Slovin's formula. The researchers distributed the survey forms to identified programs of fourth year graduating students. After collecting the answered survey by the respondents, the researchers tallied the data collected and encode the data variables to the SPSS application for accurate results. In order to sum up the data for the demographic profile of the respondents, the researchers used frequency distribution to determine the number of respondents according to their gender and programs. For the perception of the students, the researcher compared the mean scores. The statistical significance indicates whether or not the differences between the two groups' averages were likely to reflect a "real" difference in the

population from which the groups were sampled. The variance was also analyzed to see the differences of the variables based from the program enrolled by the students. Likert scale method of ascribing quantitative value to qualitative data was also used so as to make it amenable to statistical analysis. A numerical value is assigned to each potential choice and a mean figure for all the responses is computed at the end of the evaluation or survey. The researchers use four potential choices which are (1) very high, (2) high, (3) low and (4) very low to identify the efficiency of Palaestra Consortio.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Table 1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents in Terms of Program

PROGRAM	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
CAKO	22	17.9%
CLOCA	21	17.1%
CLOHS	33	26.8%
HRA	10	8.1%
TM	37	30.1%
TOTAL	123	100.0%

The table shows that majority of the respondents came from the Bachelor of Science in International Travel and Tourism Management. The hospitality industry is under the tourism industry which means the tourism industry is bigger, resulting to bigger demands and opportunities. Because of higher demands, there is a high number of enrollees for the said program. According to Mohammad (2013), from the demand perspective, there are many reasons that lead students to study tourism hospitality. This is because

they will be able to get more knowledge and increase their chance to land good jobs by learning international languages and new cultures that are part of the curriculum of tourism.

Profile of Respondents based on Gender

Table 2. Demographic Profile of the Respondents in Terms of Gender

GENDER	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
MALE	41	33.20%
FEMALE	82	66.70%
TOTAL	123	100.00%

Table 2 shows that female respondents dominant that study. This supports the fact that most enrollees on CITHM are females. The increasing numbers of women being employed have changed the face of hospitality organizations. According to the study in 2009 of ILO, over 200 million people are employed in the hospitality and tourism industry, and women represent 55.5 percent of this (as cited by Baum, 2013). Women employed in the hotel sector in Greece are found to represent 45.3 percent of the total employment, confirming that the sector employs mainly women (Eurostat, 2009).

Suggested that female hotel managers communicate better than male hotel managers especially in terms of having a deeper insight into and being more interested in their staff. It is also suggested that women possess the management skills that are required by hospitality organizations. These skills include communication, flexibility, the ability to adapt, and teamwork (Marinakou, 2014). The hospitality industry has no shortage of women entering the business, but senior management positions seem to be dominated by men, especially general managers at major hotel properties.

Although the proportions have probably improved over time, two academic studies by Robert Woods and his colleagues a decade ago indicated that fewer than ten percent of hotel general managers were women. Such disparity is apparent in many hospitality classrooms today where most of the students are female, but most of the senior industry executives who serve as guest speakers are male (Ho, 2013).

This goes to show that since there are a lot of opportunities for females than males in the hospitality and tourism industry, the enrollees for female arises for CITHM because of higher demand in the real industry.

Table 3. Average Level of Efficiency of Palaestra Consortio as Perceived by Respondents' Program

Average (Mean)	CAKO	CLOCA	CLOHS	HRA	ITTM	Total	Scale
Average Timelines	3.12	3.16	3.10	3.22	3.05	3.11	High Efficiency
Average Compatibility	3.14	3.20	3.01	3.28	3.03	3.09	High Efficiency
Average Efficiency	3.14	3.20	2.85	3.34	3.11	3.08	High Efficiency
Average Visit	3.19	2.10	3.02	3.13	2.97	3.04	High Efficiency

Legend: 3.50 - 4.00 very high efficiency; 2.50 - 3.49 high efficiency;
1.50 - 2.49 low efficiency; 1.00 - 1.49 very low

Table 4. Average Level of Palaestra Consortio as Perceived by Respondents' Gender

Ocular Visit (Mean)	Male	Female	Total	Scale
Average Timeliness	3.09	3.12	3.11	High Efficiency
Average Compatibility	3.15	3.07	3.09	High Efficiency
Average Efficiency	3.03	3.11	3.08	High Efficiency
Average Visit	3.04	3.04	3.04	High Efficiency

Legend: 3.50 - 4.00 very high efficiency; 2.50 - 3.49 high efficiency;
1.50 - 2.49 low efficiency; 1.00 - 1.49 very low efficiency

All of the categories to measure the level of efficiency of Palaestra Consortio fall under high level of efficiency.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The researchers conclude that, based on the data gathered, Palaestra Consortio is highly efficient as a linkage arm of LPU-L when it comes to internships. But, there are things that need to be improved. All the conclusions and recommendations made by the researchers are based on the given and interpreted data on this research. Some of the concerns needed to be addressed are the ocular visits, mock interviews and internship hours.

For timeliness category, majority of the respondents rated Palaestra as highly efficient though there are concerns on the processing of internship papers. Even if there are lower ratings on this category, still, everything is interpreted as having high level of efficiency.

The compatibility of internship category is rated as highly efficient but the categories under internship hours and appropriateness of tasks given for specialization are rated lower than majority though still interpreted as having high level of efficiency. There are some students who left comments regarding the reason they rated it lower than majority such as there are certain standards that cruise line industry has to set for interns making the chances for internship narrower than land internships. Specifically, CLOHS students perceive that their training in their internships are not that sufficient compared to the internships conducted on land because of the duration of hours for on-board internship where they have shorter duty hours compared to other programs. They think that this is not sufficient for their whole training.

Mock interviews are rated high though there are lower ratings given; still it is interpreted as having high level of efficiency such as developing communication skills needed for the interview and similarity to the actual job interview. These statements are from CLOHS students because mock interviews are not applicable to all of their internship programs because they already have direct partnership with cruise ships fixed by Palaestra Consortio. For majority, Palaestra Consortio is still rated highly efficient on the overall ratings for mock interview because they find mock interviews effective and efficient and that it caters their need on preparation for an actual job interview.

Ocular visits category are rated high level of efficiency. Graduating students of CITHM find Palaestra Consortio's ocular visit as highly efficient in resolving the issues and improves internship performance.

With all of these, the researchers conclude that the main highlights that Palaestra Consortio offers to the students of LPU–L are highly efficient on all aspects as perceived by the respondents of this study.

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