

Internship Abroad vs. Local Internship: Effects on BSHRM Graduates' Job Placement and Career Prospects

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Abstract

This study compares the employability of Bachelor of Science in Hotel and Restaurant Management (BSHRM) graduates from the Isabela State University–Cauayan Campus based on their internship profile, focusing on location (abroad vs. local), area of exposure, and duration. A descriptive-correlational research design was used, with purposive sampling of 50 graduates from batches in 2011, 2017, and 2018. Data were collected using a modified CHED Tracer Study Questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics and cross-tabulation. The results showed that graduates who interned abroad were more likely to land their first job abroad, whereas those with local internships found employment within the country. Exposure to dining and front office areas during internships was associated with securing HRM-related jobs after graduation, whereas those primarily exposed to housekeeping were more likely to work in non-HRM fields. The duration of internships did not significantly impact the location of first employment. The findings suggest that internship location and area of exposure influence the employability of BSHRM graduates. Recommendations include evaluating and improving BSHRM internship program design, ensuring a balance between different hotel departments, and strengthening partnerships with local and international industry linkages to provide student-focused internship opportunities. This study offers insights for enhancing internship programs and graduate employability in the hospitality management field.

Keywords: Area Of Exposure, Employability, Internship Abroad, Local Internship, On-the-job training,

1. Introduction

Employment education is one of the fundamental pillars of higher education. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are increasingly required to produce highly skilled graduates who can respond to the ever-changing and complex needs of contemporary workplaces. Thus, HEIs are under pressure to enhance their employability by ensuring that they acquire competencies that make them employable in the labor market (Hollis-Turner, 2015). It is well known that the transition from education to employment is not an easy task (Miralles-Quirós et al., 2018) given the scarcity of financial resources and the rise in graduate unemployment. Employability depends on a multitude of factors that can be broadly put under three categorized into knowledge, skills, and attitude (Khare, 2014). The graduates found that the skills and knowledge they obtained from the university were useful for their jobs. (Abela R. P. et al, 2015). True to this, competencies acquired by graduates during their university studies relate to their jobs, and how such

can help in understanding the relevance of university programs to the job market (Egesah, 2019). Amidst competition in the labor market, graduates are also affirmative that their curricular programs in college have a direct relevance to their employment (Albina & Sumagaysay, 2020). Graduates' educational experiences and skills are significant in performing in the workplace (Reusia et al., 2020). Hence, technical skills, organizational knowledge, and personal and interpersonal skills, are significant predictors of graduate employability in general (Sehgal N., 2017).

Universities and colleges have to respond to this demand, taking into account the functions associated with their role in society, such as the development of curriculum as well as successful internship programs, which will adjust to the needs of the labor market. Academic institutions that incorporate internships within their curricula smoothen out the transition of their students from academia to the business world, and thus increase their reputation (Kapareliotis et al., 2019). Internships are an established mechanism for ensuring graduates' employability (Shoenfelt et al., 2013). It is a channel to prove to the future employer of his or her KSA (knowledge, skills, and abilities) along with their behavioral aspects, and thereby a platform to exhibit the graduate's potential to perform in a job (International Journal of Recent Technology and Engineering, 2019). Internship programs are important for undergraduate students to enhance their self-development and employment abilities (Krishna & Babu, 2021). The study of Jung & Lee (2017) shows that internship experience boosted work performance, reduced the time it took to obtain a job, and increased pay and job happiness, according to the findings. However, the impact on job performance varied by internship type, academic major, institutional features, and working conditions. It should also be considered that young people's early labor market experiences are increasingly dominated by new and developing types of "non-standard" work. Evidently, internship programs embedded in the curriculum are becoming an increasingly important component of the school-to-work transition, and sufficient duration of internships also contributes to increasing the effectiveness of internships (Silva et al. 2018).

In the context of hospitality management programs, internships have become an integral part of curriculum design because of the practice-oriented nature of their careers. Based on CMO 62, a 2017 series, students should be able to bridge the gap between lecture/laboratory activities and industrial practice by participating in an internship. Consequently, students receive academic units as they complete their on-the-job training. For both local and foreign placements, it is strongly recommended that the practicum location be accredited by the Department of Tourism or its equivalents. Based on this PSGs (Policies, Standards and Guidelines (PSGs), internship is a mandatory requirement among hospitality management students. Along with this PSG, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) formulated other guidelines and policies that would be able to provide hospitality students wider and better opportunities in terms of on-the-job training through the Students Internship Abroad Program (SIAP) under CMO 22, s. 2013. The goal is to give students the opportunity to gain practical knowledge, skills, and desired attitudes in a multicultural workplace. Interns participate in the program to gain hands-on experience with practical learning and cross-cultural training in pursuit of global competitiveness. Interns enhance their interpersonal skills and cultural awareness by immersing themselves in another culture, which is important for their success in the global world. Foreign culture exposure, on the other hand, improves tolerance and cultural sensitivity, both of which are critical in today's workforce. Based on the study of Orahod, Kruze & Pearson (2004), they assume that a positive study abroad experience will lead to a positive international component in one's career. These characteristics would include a good attitude toward working in an international capacity, the development of talents relevant to international business, and the beginning of a career that involves international participation. Several studies also suggest that exposure to

international education and experience plays an important role in preparing individuals for the labor market. Students may acquire or improve several skills that are highly valued in the workplace as a result of participating in study abroad programs and internships (Di Pietro, 2015).

On the other hand, Pinto and Pereira (2019) show that internship experience is an advantage to include in a résumé, but the study does not support that 'the more international the better, ' implying that graduates' employability is based not only on their academic qualifications and talents, but also on expectations about their unique contribution.

Working in the hotel business provides great flexibility and mobility as well as the chance to interact with diverse people from all walks of life. Thus, internship programs may provide crucial opportunities and experiences for new graduates entering the industry.

In general, new and upcoming graduates should invest in industry-related internships to increase their chances of landing a job, according to Hotel Business Magazine (2013). While working in hospitality businesses can be difficult, it can also be rewarding. Starting with these occupations, there is a wide range of employment to select, allowing graduates to explore and ultimately choose a career that best suits their degree.

The findings of this study provide information and direction to universities and other higher education institutions in enhancing and improving the design of internship programs, especially for hospitality and tourism courses, with the crafting and/or enhancement of partnership development programs between universities and potential industry linkages, both at the local and international levels.

2. Methodology

Research Design

This study used descriptive correlational research to gather the internship profile of BSHRM graduates, the employability of graduates in terms of first job after college, location of first job, and duration of first job application, and to compare the significant relationship between variables for hypothesis testing.

Respondents of the Study

Purposive sampling is used in this study. The respondents were 50 BSHRM graduates who had their internships abroad and graduates with local internships; both were studied in the same batches, such as Batch 2011, 2017, and 2018. There were 26 graduate respondents who had their internships abroad and 24 graduate respondents who took local internships. Furthermore, the researcher identified respondents who had a good record of their level of performance in college.

Research Instrument

The researcher utilized a modified CHED Tracer Study Questionnaire as the primary source of the data-gathering instrument. The questionnaire was modified by adding an internship profile and retaining the rest of the questionnaire.

Methods of Data Analysis

Different statistical tools were utilized to treat the data that were tallied, tabulated, and analyzed. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the respondents' internship profiles and employability. Meanwhile, Cross-tabulation analysis was used to compare the employability of graduates when grouped according to their internship profile.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Internship Profile of BSHRM Graduates

The internship profile of the respondents in terms of the location of internship, area of exposure and duration of exposure is presented and described

3.1.1 Location of Internship.

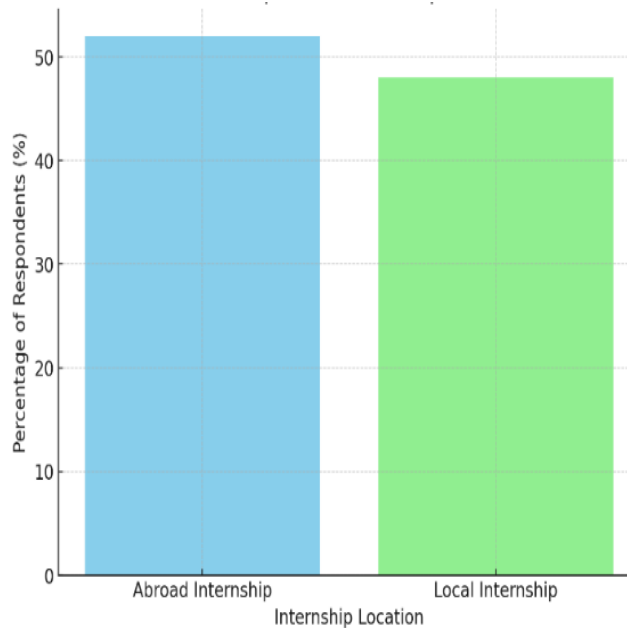


Table 1 lists the locations of internships. Of the 50 respondents, 26 (52.0 %) had an internship abroad and 24 (48.0 %) had a local internship.

3.1.2 Area of Exposure.

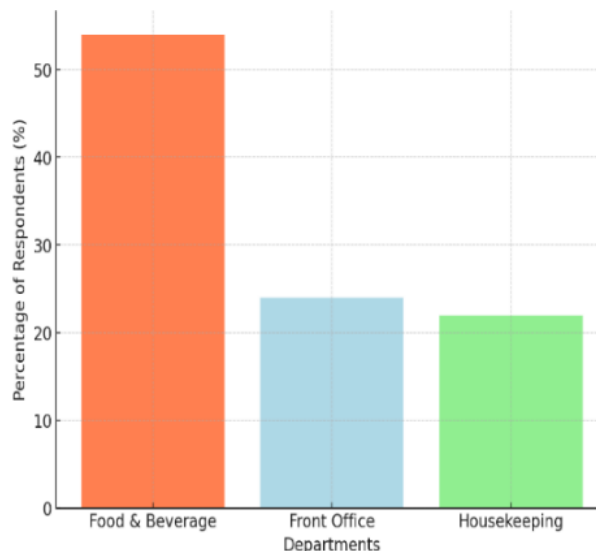


Table 2 Shows In terms of the area of exposure, the majority of respondents were exposed to dining or food and beverage departments (27 or 54.0% out of 50 respondents). There were 12 or 24.0%) were exposed to the front office, while 11 (22.0%) were assigned to the housekeeping department. This implies that most of the respondents were assigned and gained practical skills and knowledge in the dining area or the food and beverage department.

3.1.3 Duration of Exposure.

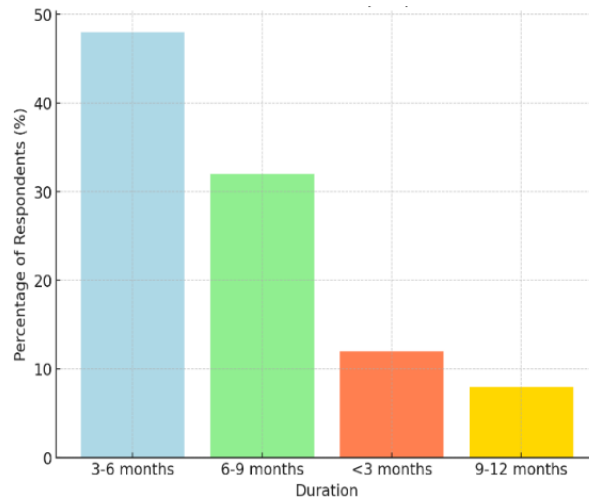


Table 3 Shows Relative to the duration of exposure, out of 50 respondents, 24 or 48.0% had their on-the-job training between 3-6 months of internship. In comparison, 16 or 32.0 % of the respondents had their internship between 6-9 months. Meanwhile, 6 or 12.0 % were exposed to on-the-job training for less than 3 months, and 4 or 8.0 % were exposed to internship for a duration of 9-12 months.

For clarification and legal purposes, under the CMO 22, s 2010 or the Enhanced Guidelines for Student Internship Abroad Program (SIAP) For All Programs with Practicum Subject, specifically under Section 11, it has been stipulated that students could have an internship abroad for not less than 6 months but not greater than 12 months.

3.2. Employment Profile of BSHRM Graduates

3.2.1 Nature of the First Job After College.

Employment Profile of Graduates	Frequency N=50	Percentage (%)
Nature of First Job After College		
Food and Beverage	28	56.0
Lodging and Accommodation	14	28.0
Travel and Tourism	1	2.0
Not HRM Related	7	14.0
Employment Profile of Graduates	Frequency N=50	Percentage (%)

Table 4 shows that regarding the nature of their first job after graduation, most of the respondents landed on their first job related to food and beverages, that is, 28 out of 50 or 56.0%. In comparison, 14 or 28.0% landed on jobs related to lodging and accommodation, and 2.0% landed their first job in travel and tourism. Meanwhile, 7 or 14% of the 50 respondents got their first job after graduation, which is not related to the HRM course.

3.2.2. Location of First Job.

Employment Profile of Graduates	Frequency N=50	Percentage (%)
Abroad	11	22.0

Local	39	78.0
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Table 5 In terms of the location of first job, out 50 respondents, 39 or 78.0 % landed on their first job locally or within the country. Meanwhile, 11 (22.0 %) of the respondents had their first job after graduation abroad.

3.2.3. Duration of the First Job Application.

Employment Profile of Graduates	Frequency N=50	Percentage (%)
Less than a month to 6 months	41	82.0
7 months to 12 months	6	12.0
1 year to 2 years or more	3	6.0

Table 6 Regarding the duration of the first job application, 41 out of 50 respondents (82 %) landed on their first job between less than a month to six months. In comparison, there were 6 or 32.0% who got their first job between 7 and 12 months after application, and 6% landed on their first job between 1 and 2 years or more.

3.3 Comparison of the Employability of Graduates When Grouped According to their Internship Profile.

Internship Profile	χ^2	p-value
Location of Internship	0.040*	0.027
Area of Exposure	5.322	0.070
Duration of Internship	10.276*	0.001

* means significant at 0.05 p-value

Table 7. Difference Between the Location of First Employment Relative to Internship Profile in terms of Location of Internship reveals that there is a significant difference between the location of first job after college relative to the internship profile of graduates specifically on the location of internship, with a significance level of 0.027 ($\chi^2 = 0.040$).

The contingency table or cross-tabulation in Table 4 further implies that those who took their internship abroad were more likely to land their first employment abroad as well. In addition, those who were exposed to local internships decided to apply to companies within the Philippines.

Location of Internship * Location of First Employment Crosstabulation		Location of First Employment		Total	
		Abroad	Local		
Location of Internship	Abroad	Count	9	17	26
		Expected Count	5.7	20.3	26.0
	Local	Count	2	22	24
		Expected Count	5.3	18.7	24.0
Total	Count	11	39	50	
	Expected Count	11.0	39.0	50.0	

Table 8. Comparison Between the Location of First Employment of BSHRM Graduates Relative to Location of Internship

Internship Profile	χ^2	p-value
Location of Internship	1.231	0.267
Area of Exposure	6.710*	0.035
Duration of Internship	0.100	0.080

* means significant at 0.05 p-value

Table 9. Difference Between the Nature of First Job After College When Grouped According to Internship Profile in terms of Area of Exposure

In terms of the nature of first job after college relative to the area of exposure during their internship, there is a significant difference with a significance level of 0.035 ($\chi^2 = 6.710$) as shown in Table 5. The cross-tabulation in Table 6 shows that those who were exposed to dining and front office were more likely to land HRM-related jobs after college. Meanwhile, those who were exposed to most of the internship program in the housekeeping department landed on jobs that were not related to HRM. This can be related to the findings of Kasli et al. (2013), which reveal that during internships, student interns are given only very basic employee rights, that interns are viewed as cheap labor, and that the service business does not contribute to the professional development of interns. All these issues negatively influence interns' motivation. The results of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) utilized by Kasli et al. show that problems encountered during internships negatively affect students' attitudes toward tourism-related jobs, which in turn undermines their intention to work in this sector in the future. Moreover, HRM students and student interns should understand the significance of each area of exposure in the entire internship program in relation to their professional growth and development. As Ismail (2010) quoted in his book, within the room division, there is arguably no more vital position than housekeeping.

Table 10. Comparison on the Nature of First Job After College Relative to the Area of Exposure During Internship

Area of Exposure * Nature of First Job After College Crosstabulation			Nature of First Job After College		Total
			Not HRM Related	HRM related	
Area of Exposure	Dining	Count	3	24	27
		Expected Count	3.8	23.2	27.0
	Front Office	Count	0	12	12
		Expected Count	1.7	10.3	12.0
	Housekeeping	Count	4	7	11
		Expected Count	1.5	9.5	11.0
Total	Count	7	43	50	
	Expected Count	7.0	43.0	50.0	

Internship Profile	χ^2	p-value
Location of Internship	6.340	0.175
Area of Exposure	5.479	0.705
Duration of Internship	3.594	0.464

Table 11. Difference Between the Location of First Employment When Grouped According to

Internship Profile in terms Duration of Internship

** means significant at 0.05 p-value*

On the other hand, with regard to the comparison of the location of first employment after college relative to the duration of internship, Table 11 reveals that there is no significant difference in the duration of internship on the employability of BSHRM graduates. This finding is in agreement with that reported by Silva et al.. (2016), where the inclusion of multiple shorter internships throughout the degree is negatively associated with unemployment levels.

The contingency table, as presented in Table 8, implies that out of 50 respondents, 30 who had an internship for a duration of less than six months landed on their first job after college, where 28 landed their first employment locally and two respondents landed their first job abroad. On the other hand, 20 out of 50 respondents who took their internship for six months or more got their first employment, where nine landed a job abroad and 11 got their first employment locally or within the country. This further explains why the length of training they took during the internship had no direct impact on the location of first employment of graduates.

Duration of Internship * Location of First Employment Crosstabulation			Location of First Employment		Total
			Abroad	Local	
Duration of Internship (2 Clusters)	Less than 6 months	Count	2	28	30
		Expected Count	6.6	23.4	30.0
	6 months and more	Count	9	11	20
		Expected Count	4.4	15.6	20.0
Total		Count	11	39	50
		Expected Count	11.0	39.0	50.0

Table 12. Comparison on the the Location of First Employment Relative to the Duration of Internship

In general, the findings of the study show that the internship profile focusing on the location of internships between abroad and local internships has a direct impact on the employability of HRM graduates.

CONCLUSIONS

Several conclusions can be drawn based on these findings. First, BSHRM graduates who completed their internships abroad tended to secure jobs abroad, whereas those who had local internships were more likely to work within the country. Second, most respondents were primarily exposed to food and beverage departments or dining facilities during their internships. Those who gained practical knowledge and skills in both the food and beverage and front office departments were more likely to secure HRM-related jobs. Conversely, respondents who spent most of their internships in the housekeeping department were more likely to work in fields unrelated to HRM. Finally, most respondents completed internships lasting 3-6 months, followed by those who had internships between 6-9 months, with fewer exposed to training durations of less than 3 months or 9-12 months. Despite variations in internship duration, BSHRM graduates remain employable, both locally and internationally.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of these findings, the researcher would like to recommend the following: the design of the inters-

hip program of the BSHRM and/or BSHM curriculum should be evaluated and improved. The rationality and balance between areas of exposure of student trainees in the entire internship program must be taken into consideration to gain knowledge and skills from different areas of a hotel establishment. The internship program design of the course should include not only the main internship but also pre-internship activities to brief student interns what they will expect in the industry and the proper decorum. Post-internship activities should also be taken into consideration in debriefing student interns regarding their experiences in the internship, and for them to be reminded that the experiences they had in all areas of the hotel are vital to their professional growth and development. The institution should craft or enhance the partnership development program among industry linkages and establish and strengthen relationships with esteemed hotel establishments at both local and international levels that offer student-trainee-focused internship plans.

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