



Building skills for employability through training: Gains and challenges

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Abstract

In response to its social responsibility, the College of Hospitality Education of the University of Mindanao conducted short training courses for the out-of-school-youth in Matina Pangi, Davao City in 2010 and 2011. The purpose of the program was to equip the participants with knowledge and skills for their future endeavor. Three modules were taught: housekeeping, commercial cooking and food beverage services. In particular, this research was conducted to find out what were the experiences of the participants in the program; to determine the success of the program; to know the participants' insights; and to know the viability of the extension activity. Results revealed that the participants learned techniques and acquired knowledge and skills. They applied these in their daily lives and gave them a competitive edge for employment and for business. They were happy, exuberant, and satisfied and wanted the University to continue a similar program for others to learn.

Keywords: program on building skills, employability, training, gains and challenges, Davao city, university of Mindanao

1. Introduction

Community involvement in educational endeavor is relevant for the success of the program. Ask (2013) pointed out that community involvement is manifested when people living together involve themselves in planning, operation and control under social organizations. Both individuals and families assume responsibility of the communities' development and welfare. Each community member develops the capacity to contribute to their own and their communities' development. Hence, one needs each other for existence by way of nurturing the environment he is in: as well as by partaking to the growth and development of the society. Wilkinson (2011) on the other hand, affirmed that cooperation for any endeavor is significant to make everything in order.

The University of Mindanao has provided a lot of community extension programs through its different colleges/departments. In particular, the College of Hospitality Education conducted short training courses for the out of school youth in Matina Pangi in 2010 and 2011. The main purpose of the program was to equip the out of school youth with knowledge and skills for their future endeavor. In particular three (3) modules were taught with regards to Housekeeping, Commercial Cooking and Food Beverage Services.

The program was implemented through the initiative of the faculty of College of Hospitality Education. The community extension office provided a communication letter to the Barangay Captain informing them that the College of Hospitality Education Program was interested to render short course training in Housekeeping, Commercial Cooking and Food and Beverage Services. The interested participants were required to submit the needed requirements. However, the training courses were only limited to 20 participants. It was on a first come first serve basis. The persons involved in the community extension program were the faculty of College of

Hospitality Education. The trainers who handled the program were Masters Degree holder, attended several training, NC II passer and Assessor. The program was funded by the University. Moreover, the enrollees were provided with the materials needed and meals.

This research was conducted to find out what were the experiences of the participants in the program; to determine the success of the program; and to know the participants' insights. Moreover, this evaluative study would determine whether to continue similar community extension activity to UM's adopted communities. This thought was in line with University of Arizona (2009) [20] which contended that knowing the program's outcomes and impacts is important for institutional success, promotion and future funding. On the other hand, Bushe (2011) [2] claimed that if participants are given to identify their 'common aspiration' they are also given the confidence to develop their own concrete proposals for their own good.

1.1 Research Questions

This study was undertaken to find out what were the experiences of the participants in the community extension program conducted by the faculty of CHE; to determine the success of the program; and to know the participants' insights. Specifically, this study aimed to ascertain the following:

1. What are the knowledge and skills acquired by the participants from the program?
2. What are the favorable or unfavorable experienced by the participants during the conduct of the program?
3. What are the recommendations of the participants to the program to enhance building skills for employability?

2. Methods

Presented in this chapter are the research design, research

participants, research instrument used in the study.

2.1. Research Design

This study used the qualitative method particularly the phenomenological approach. Participants were grouped according to gender to avoid superiority or inferiority or manipulation of the discussion. Each Focus Group Discussion was composed of six to seven participants. There were three (3) FGD groups. Each group was asked to discuss their experiences with regard to housekeeping, commercial cooking, and food and beverages, which they had taken. Phenomenological method was appropriate to this study because it focuses on that description of what the participants experience and how it is that they experience what they experience (Patton, 1990) ^[11]; because it focuses on the underlying meaning of the experiences (Creswell, 1998) ^[5]; because it focuses on the lived experiences (Rossman and Rallis, 1998) ^[13]; and because it tackles the inter-subjective world from the participants' perspective (Schwandt, 2000) ^[15]. This study qualified to the appreciative theory developed by Bushe (2011) ^[2]. This theory was widely accepted by several academic writers as it is necessary or even useful step in an organization. This theory contended that when the organization's direction is to improve the recipient, then the necessity is to provide prior information as to their experiences and strength to arrive a certain level of trust. In other words, a method of discovery be applied with the researcher and the recipients will now be engaging a more intimate relation onward to the purpose of the research. This allows deeper understanding of how transformation be achieved. Discussion is encouraged to attain fruits of their inquiry. Through this inquiry, participants are allowed to anticipate future result of their understanding to identify their common aspiration as well as to prepare themselves for development. They are also encouraged to develop their own concrete proposals for their own good. It has more social process being employed to allow them develop their own design as part of their contribution to the task presented. This appreciative theory is likewise has a good delivery of services for better outcome and for better creation of new targets for the same objectives. Everyone is encouraged to take action to bring their design to fruition. This theory also allows the right people as well as powerful sponsors to focus and identify high organizational interest for over-all success.

2.2. Research Participants

The participants of this study were twenty (20) out of school youth of Matina Aplaya, Davao City. These individuals were not employed during the conduct of the community extension program. Moreover, their names were endorsed by the barangay to be the participants of the short training courses.

2.3. Research Instrument

Focus Group Discussion (2013) ^[8] suggested that FGD is used to gather information from people of similar backgrounds with the same interest. In this study, the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was utilized to collect pertinent information regarding the experiences of the participants in the conducted short term courses in housekeeping, commercial cooking, and food and beverages. Moreover, a validated research questions were

used to cull information needed for this study. The research guide questions were composed of three main questions and six probe questions. The questions were focused on the knowledge and skills obtained by the participants from the program, the favorable and unfavorable experiences they encountered, and the recommendations the participants could offer to improve future community extension programs.

3. Results and Discussions

Presented in this section are the results and discussions of the explored personal experiences of the participants in the community extension program. Also, conclusion is formulated based on the emerging themes from the gathered information. Implications for practice, implications for future research and concluding remarks are also presented to suffice the utility value of the present study.

3.1. Knowledge and Skills Obtained

The participants learn a lot of techniques in attending the modules like operating the vacuum cleaner; doing the job fast; and knowing how to use appropriate cloth in cleaning the furniture. The participants believed that the knowledge they gain from the training can help them apply for work abroad. Moreover, the aside from the knowledge acquired, the participants also learn some techniques in passing the NC II assessment. The participants reveal that they are to manage their time, to entertain and serve customer in the restaurant, and to use of the plates and china wares. Interestingly, the participants find the training meaningful that they also share what learn to their children, use the acquire skills in winning the competition. In general, the participants cherish the knowledge and skills they obtain because they find them useful not only in their choirs but also in their jobs and future jobs.

This finding corroborate with Career Development (2015) ^[17] which contends that acquisition of knowledge and skills has the aim to benefit the self or organization. On the other hand, Federal Reserve Bank of Boston (2015) ^[12] considers knowledge, skills, and experience as "assets" acquire throughout that can be used for a lifetime. These are as valuable as money in the bank or the home anyone hopes to own. In fact, one's level of knowledge and skills likely affect how much financial wealth one will build up through the years.

3.2. Favorable and Unfavorable Experience

The training does not only become a venue for the transfer of knowledge but also a place where the participants set aside their individual differences to work as a team. During the training, participants work with those individuals whom they had misunderstanding. However, married participants experience difficulty in going to school every weekend because they need to attend first to their family members. Aside from that, the participants also are nervous when they take the examination because they are afraid to fail. All of them observe that the assessor is very strict, which make them fell so nervous. However, despite the odds they fell, they are able to surpass the assessment. The participants highly appreciate the learning they gain from commercial cooking. Some of them plan to put up a business; but they need first to

look for capital.

The above finding imply that giving training to the participants allow them to be determined, disciplined, patient, and industrious. Glossary (2015) says continuing education and training is part of lifelong learning and may encompass any kind of education (general, specialized or vocational, formal or non-formal, etc.). It is important for the employability of individuals.

3.3. Recommendation for Improvement

With the positive impressions obtain from the participants of the training programs, the researchers recommend to the administration of the University of Mindanao (UM), in general and to the College of Hospitality Education (CHE) in particular to intensify such training not only for the out-of-school-youth but also to those who are interested to learn. But the program may only focus on the adopted community of the university. The researcher believed that through the certificates the participants obtain they may be given a competitive chance to find a job.

4. Conclusion

From the sharing of the people from the ground, the trainers including the researcher witness that the banner project in the College of Hospitality Education touches the lives of the individuals who are given the opportunity to participate in the program.

The participants learn techniques from attending the three modules. They have good experience in joining the workshop and they acquire knowledge and skills. After which they are able to apply in their daily lives what they obtain from the program. Thus, giving them an edge compared to those who do not attend the training. The participants are happy, exuberant, and satisfied because of the new information they gain from the three important practical modules in housekeeping, food and beverage and culinary. Hence, it is a life time experience for them. Moreover, the participants want that the University may continue similar program so that other out-of-school-youth and interested individuals can also learn.

4.1. Implication for Practice

The community extension program to the out-of-school-youth struck me as a teacher. I realize that there are other individuals who wish to learn practical knowledge and skills but because of financial constraints their wishes remain to be a dream. I also realize giving back to the community through teaching, giving training to the out-of-school-youth, I could change in a way how they see their lives. Reaching out to them give me opportunity to share what little things I have, to show that I give importance to them and a chance for me to reflect on the dignity of paying back to others.

4.2. Implication for Future Researchers

Another study on the same topic may be conducted; however, with wider coverage of topics and other age group. Further, to sustain the knowledge of the participants, the College of Hospitality Education may consider putting an office that would cater to the participants' inquiry and needs. Likewise, the training program may be done bi-monthly for an effective impact to the community. Lastly, a tracer study may also be

conducted after three to five years after the program is conducted. This is to trace the employability of the beneficiaries of the training.

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