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Critical Thinking Skills and Emotional Intelligence of Tourism Students in Manila Philippines

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ABSTRACT

The paper is aimed at knowing the critical thinking skills and emotional intelligence of selected tourism students in Manila, Philippines. The findings of the study revealed that the respondents generally have high critical thinking skills and high level of emotional quotient. Based on the findings it can be infer that the students of the University of the City of Manila could be highly employable given the results of the study.

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INTRODUCTION

Opening its doors in June 2001, the College of Tourism, Hotel and Travel Industry Management (CTHTIM) of the University of the City of Manila (Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila) was originally a department under the then-College of Arts and Sciences. It had an initial population of one hundred and sixteen (116) students; however, because of the very strict retention policy of the college, only seventy-nine (79) students are left out of the pioneer batch. Becoming immensely popular and appealing, CTHTIM's population has grown through the years.

The college aims to train students and equip them with skills to be employed in the tourism, hotel, and travel industry or to put up their own tourism establishments. It also provides the students knowledge in Information and Communication Technology (ICT), environmental awareness, and the business industry. What is most emphasized is showcasing the cultural and tourist spots while appreciating the diversity brought about by international travel.

The main unique aspect of this course is the college's commitment to producing professionals who are to be employed for a managerial position with emphasis on character and personality. As a graduate of CTHTIM, the individual is not only professional and skilled in the three disciplines but morally and spiritually upright as well.

It is envisioned to produce dynamic , morally & spiritually upright, productive professionals & entrepreneurs; an industry shall preserve the cultural heritage and the people's core values & traditions, in making every Filipino an effective ambassador of goodwill.

A totally service oriented College of Tourism, Hotel and Travel Industry Management dedicated to quality education with a progressive program sensitive to the demands of world tourism. Further, the program aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To provide the students with a knowledge concepts, principles, philosophies and practices applied to the travel and hospitality industry.
2. To inculcate among students the appreciation and the importance of the industry and the vital role of the hotel and hospitality sector in terms of contribution to economic, socio-cultural and environmental well-being of local, national and global communities;
3. To develop the students proper perspective and attitude require in this industry, a dynamic, multi-disciplinary and multi-stakeholder system in the context of development and growth, global competetiveness and the ever changing environment, thus enabling them to contribute to sustainable tourism development in the practice of their chosen career;

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4. To acquire the interrelated foundation of knowledge, skills and exposure through clustered general and professional courses in the specialized field of hotel and hospitality management.

5. To ensure student's career path in the future with supervisory and managerial education and skills imbibed through the courses during their junior and senior years and;

6. To inculcate and nurture among our students the true "Filipino Brand of Service" that will make PLM-CTHTIM the pioneer among academic institutions in the country.

This study is made to find out the critical thinking skills of student and their level of emotional intelligence of selected students in Manila, Philippines. The reason for this is because most employers would require graduates with high level of critical thinking ability and high sense emotional preparedness especially in the working environment. Most employers in the Philippines named these attributes as the most important competencies needed by the students to effectively surived the challenges in the world of work.

Critical thinking is defined as the ability to remove all emotion from an issue and observe the facts objectively to make a logical decision. Critical thinking skills forces employees to look at a situation and weigh all possible solutions before coming up with a final answer. It can be a long process that requires input from different people within the organization. The benefits to critical thinking make it a worthwhile practice as it forces employees and managers to look beyond conventional solutions and look for new ideas that can help to efficiently address problems.

Meanwhile,according to most theories relating to emotional intelligence, or EQ, success is strongly influenced by personal qualities such as perseverance, self-control and skill in getting along with others. Workers with high EQ are better able to work in teams, adjust to change and be flexible. No matter how many degrees or other on-paper qualifications a person has, if he or she doesn't have certain emotional qualities, he or she is unlikely to succeed. As the workplace continues to evolve, making room for new technologies and innovations, these qualities may become increasingly important.

Considering critical thinking skills as a variable in this research draws basis from the studies of Benson and Curtis et. Al. Specifically, Benson in 1983 made a summary of the skills needed by the student entering different professions. In his study, a survey was made among 25 studies in business journals. Results revealed the following: listening, written communication, oral communication, motivation/persuasion, interpersonal skills, informational interviewing, critical thinking skills and group problem solving. In the study of Curtis et. al. (1989) entitled: "Skills Needed to Obtain Employment" which include 428 members of the American Society of Personnel Administrators in the United States, it revealed that verbal communication, listening, enthusiasm, written communication, critial thinking skills, technical competence and appearnce are the most important employment skills needed.

The theoretial foundation of emotional intelligence as used in this paper was based on the theory of Halonen & Santrock (1999) and Goleman. They identified four dimensions of emotional intelligence such as emotional self-awareness, managing emotions, reading emotion and relationship management. The first one deals with the ability to recognize and understand one's own feelings from moment to moment. The second one which is management emotions deals with the ability to control and check both negative emotions (such as irritability, gloom, and anxiety) and positive emotions (such as excitement and ecstacy) resulting from encounters or events. The third one deals with reading emotion in other persons which is the extent to which one is in tune with the subtle social signals that others display. The last one is the ability to manage others' emotions and to interact smoothly with others.

Thus, a large number of studies suggested that emotional intelligence can be taught and influenced positively, that is, people can achive higher levels of emotional intelligence with careful teaching and training. The different competencies of emotional intelligence are presented in the figure below:

	Self (Personal Competence)	Other (Social Competence)
Recognition	Self Awareness Emotional Self-Awareness Accurate Self-Assessment Self-Confidence	Social Awareness Empathy Service Orientation Organizational Awareness
Regulation	Self-Management Emotional Self-control Trustworthiness Conscientiousness Adaptability Achievement drive Initiative	Relationship Management Developing others Influence Communication Conflict management Visionary leadership Catalyzing change Building bonds Teamwork and collaboration

Fig. 1: Emotional Intelligence Competencies

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Findings and Discussions:

The respondents of this study were 4th year students of tourism course at the University of the City of Manila. Of the total number of population in tourism course ten (10) percent (%) were drawn as a sample which constitute a total of 45 students. Quantitative analysis was used to analyze the data.

Likert Scale was used to describe the scaling responses of the students in survey research. Results of analysis showed the following findings:

Table 1: Mean Distribution of the Respondent's Critical Thinking Skills

Critical Thinking Skills	Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. I often find myself questioning things I hear or read in this course to decide if I find them convincing.	3.71	Much True of Me	3.5
2. When a theory, interpretation or conclusion is presented, I try to decide if there is good supporting evidence.	3.71	Much True of Me	3.5
3. I treat the course materials as a starting point and try to develop my own ideas about it.	3.84	Much True of Me	2
4. I try to play around with ideas of my own related to what I am learning in this course.	4.02	Much True of Me	1
5. Whenever I read or hear an assertion or conclusion in this class, I think about positive alternatives.	3.57	Much True of Me	5
OVERALL MEAN	3.77	Much True of Me	

Table 1 revealed the overall mean score of the respondents in terms of their critical thinking skills. It could be gleaned from the above table that generally the respondent's critical thinking ability is high as it reflects that most variables/descriptors of critical thinking skills were rated to be much true about the respondents with an overall mean score of 3.77. While the verbal interpration were all rated as much true; playing around ideas related to what they are learning was rated to be the highest among the 5 variables which garnered an overall mean score of 4.02. Meanwhile, assertions and conclusions and thinking about positive alternatives was rated to be the lowest among the 5 variables which obtained an overall mean score of 3.77

Table 2: Mean Distribution of the Respondent's Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Self Awareness	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. I am good at recognizing my emotions	4.022	Much Like Me
2. I am good at understanding the causes of my feelings	3.911	Much Like Me
3. I am good at separating my feeling from my actions	3.622	Much Like Me
OVERALL MEAN SCORE	3.85	Much Like Me
Reading Emotions	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. I am good at taking other people's perspective	3.84	Much Like Me
2. I show empathy and sensitivity to other's feelings	4.22	Very Much Like Me
3. I am good at listening to what other people are saying	4.31	Very Much Like Me
OVERALL MEAN SCORE	4.12	Much Like Me
Handling Relationships	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. I am good at analyzing and understanding relationship	4.08	Much Like Me
2. I am good at solving problems in relationships	3.86	Much Like Me
3. I am assertive (rather than passive, manipulative or aggressive)	3.68	Much Like Me
4. I have one or more good close relationships	4.68	Very Much Like Me
5. I am good at sharing and cooperating	4.48	Very Much Like Me
OVERALL MEAN SCORE	4.16	Much Like Me
Managing Emotions	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. I am good at tolerating frustration	3.37	Like Me
2. I am good at managing my anger	3. 48	Much Like Me
3. I have positive feelings about myself	3.60	Much Like Me
4. I am good at coping with stress	3. 55	Much Like Me
5. My emotions don't interfere with my ability to focus and accomplish my goals	3.62	Much Like Me
6. I have good self-control and am not impulsive	3.93	Much Like Me
OVERALL MEAN SCORE	3.59	Much Like Me

Table 2 shows the respondent's emotional intelligence level. Specifically, in terms of emotional self-awareness, the respondents were high at *recognizing their own emotions*. However with regard to reading emotions, the respondents were high at *listening to what other people are saying.* In terms of handling relationship, they generally specified *having one or more good close relationship* as high. Finally, in terms of managing emotions, having self-control and not being impulsive obtained the highest mean score.

Table 3: Summary of the Respondent's Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. Emotional Self Awareness	3.85	Much Like Me
2. Managing Emotions	3.60	Much Like Me
3. Reading Emotions	4.12	Much Like Me
4. Handling Relationship	4.15	Much Like Me
OVERALL MEAN SCORE	3.93	Much Like Me

Table 3 shows the summary of the respondent's emotional intelligence. It could be seen from the above table that among the 4 dimensions of emotional intelligence, handling relationship was named to be highest while managing emotions obtained the lowest mean score among the four.

Conclusion:

Given the positive result of the student's emotional intelligence and critical thiking skills, it could be stated that the students of the University of the City of Manila are highly employable and could be the most preferred employees by the industries. This result is backed up by a report made by Summit Express which revealed that in 2015 report, companies in the Philippines still place high importance on which university the graduates come from. 71-percent of the companies who responded toJobstreet survey said that it was an important factor when considering applicants. This year's result though lower by 6-percent against the 2014 percentage still shows employers favor graduates from UP, UST, La Salle, Ateneo, and government schools such as PLM, PNU, and PUP. Indeed, critical thinking skills and emotional intelligence are high among PLM students as it reflects the preference of most companies as revealed in the survey made by summit express.

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