

Foreign Language Preference of University of Cebu Hospitality Management Students

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Abstract: *This study determined the preferred foreign language subject of the Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management (BSHM) students of the University of Cebu Lapu-Lapu and Mandaue campus. The study used a descriptive survey approach to establish the students' preferences in choosing a foreign language subject. The findings revealed that Korean is the most preferred foreign language of hospitality and management students. The basis of students choosing their preferred language is also part of this study. The basis in choosing the language is the significance of the language to the course, the usefulness in the industry practices, demand in the local hospitality industry, and level of difficulty.*

Keywords: Foreign language, language preference, hospitality, hospitality management

1. Introduction

Foreign languages play a vital role in providing exceptional service (Luka, 2015; Umarova et al., 2020) in the hospitality industry since they are a vital tool for making a client feel at ease, which leads to increased brand loyalty and higher cash flows (Altinay et al., 2021).

Considering the vast importance of the tourism and hospitality industry for the economic prosperity of the Philippines and its people, hospitality management representatives must strive to ensure customer satisfaction as the best way to ensure profits and a flourishing business. At the same time, young individuals interested in maximizing their chances of employment in this lucrative but highly competitive field must be descriptive to succeed.

Hospitality Management is a four-year curriculum that teaches students everything about the structure and functioning of the many hospitality industries (Barrows, 2013; Ruetzler et al., 2014). The main topics covered by hospitality management programs include hotel operation, hospitality management communication, catering and

banquet management, applied food services, hotel, and restaurant financial management, marketing, business operation, and foreign language teaching (Zwaal et al., 2015; Hsu et al., 2017). Students receive hands-on training in every subject to ensure that they are ready for the real world, and it also allows them to gain hands-on experience in actual work in the hospitality industry (Brand et al., 2013; Ahmad et al., 2018; Yiu et al., 2012).

Teaching a foreign language is one of the most important fundamental elements in a Hospitality Management school (Zahedpisheh et al., 2017). It is taught in a variety of Hospitality courses because it is necessary and essential in the practice of being a professional hotelier (Ushakov et al., 2020). It improves students' talents in socialization (Duan, 2020), international engagement, and customer service (Petrashkevskaya et al., 2017; Petliovana, 2018). A foreign language demonstrates fresh and diverse approaches, particularly in practical, educational, and cultural practices involving multiple cultures and ideas (Quaye et al., 2019). In order to provide exceptional guest service and experience, it is necessary to use a foreign language as a means of

communication in the hospitality industry (Nasya et al., 2018; Hwang et al., 2016; Tsui et al., 2017).

Everything that makes a guest's daily life easier, such as communication, can impact tourist demand (Tziora et al., 2016; Sørensen et al., 2015). Tourists who receive service in a language other than their native are less likely to leave tips or promote the service to others (Pizam et al., 2016; Guo et al., 2017; Holmqvist et al., 2014), according to international studies investigating consumer language preferences. However, perhaps more importantly, consumers are concerned that if they communicate in a second language, they will not be received correctly, either because of doubt in their language proficiency or because they regard specific communication topics as extremely important (Holmqvist et al., 2014).

Several academics have recognized foreign language skills as crucial managerial competencies (Aichhorn, N., & Puck, J. 2017; Du, 2013). Foreign languages are the best approach to avoid stereotypes and acquire insight into the psyche of foreign people. (Zorina et al., 2014; Caligiuri et al., 2012)). Fluency in a foreign language is also essential for creating commercial relationships with abroad partners or colleagues (Louhiala et al., 2012; Harzing et al., 2011).

The curriculum of the BSHM program of the University of Cebu Lapu-Lapu and Mandaue Campus offers two foreign languages. Including foreign language subjects in the curriculum gives students an advantage when working in the hospitality industry. In terms of subject preference, there has not been a study that asks students what their preferred foreign language is.

This research aims to examine and recommend the best foreign language subject. Based on the students' personal experience in terms of language, verbal, and written, the researchers will determine the best foreign language subject to be taught that is essential in the industry. Knowing what foreign language subject that students want to take is important because they are the ones who can directly assess what foreign subjects are relevant and effective in the field of practice.

The researchers believe that this study is impactful to the department, faculty, and students, especially in enhancing the curriculum.

Research Objectives

This study determined the preferred foreign language subjects of the hospitality management students in the College of Hospitality and Tourism Management of the University of Cebu Lapu-Lapu and Mandaue. The profile of the respondents is determined and their basis in choosing their preferred foreign language in terms of significance to the course, usefulness in the industry practices, demand in the local hospitality industry, and level of difficulty.

2. Methodology

The study employed a descriptive survey approach to determine the students' preferences in choosing a foreign language subject to develop a plausible subject that the researchers should recommend. The respondents to this

survey are third-and fourth-year students at the University of Cebu Lapu-Lapu and Mandaue Campus who are currently enrolled in the second semester of the academic year 2021-2022. The survey instrument has three sections. The first section of the instrument is for BSHM students' profiles, and the second section is for BSHM students' preference for foreign languages. Finally, the final section aims to learn about the BSHM students' motivations for choosing a foreign language.

The researchers wrote a letter addressed to the dean to obtain the specific enrolled population of third and fourth-year students. The researchers distributed the study instrument via Google forms, filled out the respondents, and collected their preferences for foreign languages in the various categorized questions.

3. Results and Discussion

The study revealed that most respondents are 22 years old, female, and 4th-year students. Most respondents ranked the Korean language as their preferred foreign language subject. According to the study of Tsui, 2017, the demand for workers in the hotel business in Asian countries who are familiar with the Korean language and culture is growing. Today's youth (15-30 years old) are enamored of and invested in Korean culture, mainly due to pop culture, which may explain why most respondents chose Korean as their preferred foreign language (Lee, 2015). Furthermore, most respondents ranked Spanish and Japanese foreign languages second and third, respectively, as their favorite foreign language subjects in the curriculum. However, three out of ten foreign language subjects supplied, German, Italian, and Arabic, are the least chosen by respondents.

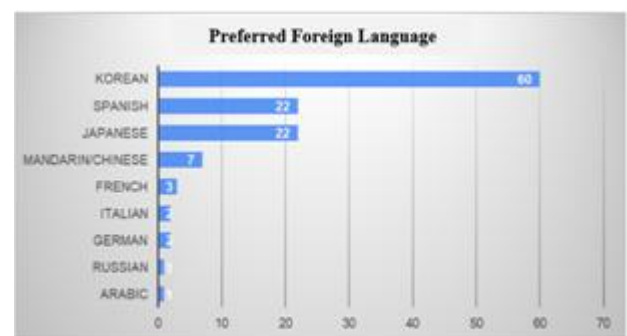


Figure 1. Preferred Foreign Language of the Respondents

The study revealed that BSHM students choose their preferred foreign language to be in the course curriculum based on the significance of the language to the course. The significance of language to the course, which is ranked first, is the basis for choosing their foreign language. The usefulness in the industry practices is in second place, demand in the local hospitality industry is ranked fourth, and the level of difficulty is ranked fifth.

4. Recommendation

Based on these findings, the researchers highly recommend incorporating the Korean language into the BSHM

curriculum. Japanese and Spanish should be considered if the college offers additional languages.

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