ATTRIBUTES OF HOTEL AND RESTAURANT MANAGEMENT DEGREE PREFERRED BY COLLEGE STUDENTS: A CONJOINT ANALYSIS

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Abstract: **The main purpose of this study is to determine the best combination of attributes of an HRM degree as preferred by the college students in terms of quantitative, non-experimental research design employing location, facilities, affiliation, accreditation, and instructors using Conjoint analysis. There were 300 respondents in the study selected through stratified random sampling. Data were gathered using a survey questionnaire consisting of 20 plan cards. Results of the study reveal that attribute of instructors claimed the highest importance value rating followed by affiliation, accreditation, location, and facilities. A conjoint model of located near their household or their homes; provides exclusive state of the art facilities, locally and internationally affiliated, accredited, and all faculty members are Master's degree holders was derived to help schools offering Hotel and Restaurant Management Programs improve their marketing activities.**

Keywords: **management, hotel and restaurant degree, attributes, preference, conjoint analysis, Philippines.**

1. INTRODUCTION

The transformations in the higher educational setting are having a remarkable impact on the educational process, curricula, learning outcomes and instructional practices (Baum, 2001). The tourism and hospitality sector in the global economy makes use of a functional and human resource qualities, that makes it different from other business sectors and these have direct cost for the provision of education and training (Baum, 2001). Study conducted by (Nel & Rogerson, 2005) revealed that the crucial dilemma for hospitality enterprises, is the lack of expertise and skills needed in the administration of the enterprise. A related study conducted by Stryker and Rajaratnam (2004) recognizes the inadequacy of receptiveness and the rigidity of programme providers as the primary reasons affecting the mismatch of skills offered by the higher educational establishments and those that are needed by the hospitality sector. They also mentioned the range of hospitality domain requiring specialist skills as a near second.

Meanwhile, available written literatures in the last ten years provided different reasons on why prospective students enrolled themselves in hospitality courses worldwide. Also in the last decade, the topic on study motivations has become the center of a number of researches that attempted to understand what inspire students to enrol in hospitality and tourism management course (Bushell, Prosser, Faulkner, & Jafari, 2001; Huyton, 1997; Kim, Guo, Wang, & Agrusa, 2007; O'Mahony, McWilliams, & Whitelaw, 2001; Purcell & Quinn, 1996; Zhao, 1991). In the United States, it was reported that there has been unusual development of hospitality and tourism management programs in the last twenty years. The range of hospitality and tourism courses has become broader with the introduction of new subjects such as convention and exhibition management, special events, and others. Students now have many alternatives to choose from aside from the traditional HTM subject areas (Riegel, 1995). In Australia, results of the study conducted by O'Mahony et al. (2001) to pinpoint the reasons why Australian students prefer HTM courses suggests that students view the University as a bunch of attributes that include teachers, and the school reputation which include the facilities and services. In Asia, a study conducted by Kim et al. (2007) on the motivating attributes behind students' decisions to study HTM, revealed that

students from China and Hong Kong demonstrated higher level of motivation in 'job opportunity offered' as compared with other countries.

In the Philippines, it was reported that Hospitality Management is one of the courses that is in-demand among incoming college students (Tan, 2009). The Bachelor of Science in Hotel and Restaurant Management (BSHRM) program is geared towards providing students with the essential knowledge, skills, and attitude to afford quality service in the hospitality business. The program contains subjects that tackle the needs of the various sectors in the hospitality industry, such as culinary, front office, tourism, resort and hotel operations. Its main focus is on the advancement of practical knowledge and management skills which are accomplished through the combination of theoretical classes, practicum exercises, and experiential learning (Commission on Higher Education [CHED], 2006). In Davao City, Hotel and Restaurant Management course was also found to be one of the most popular courses among incoming college freshmen. The course is very much in demand that there are twenty six (26) tertiary institutions offering the course to cater the increasing student's demand in the region (finduniversity.ph, 2017). With several thousands of potential students wishing to enrol in the HRM program, no local studies have been published on determining the relevant attributes attached to the program.

The researcher finds this study to be very relevant to the present time and situation since various studies have been conducted to establish how students select their preferred choice of course. However, most of these studies are theoretical in nature. Furthermore, the factors or attributes may differ from one country to another and even regions. According to Soutar and Turner (2002), there might be several attributes which are helpful in identifying a student course however, some attributes will be more vital than the others. In deciding student's course preference, they have to consider the attributes significant to them and the exchanges between these attributes. It is the nature of this exchange process that the present study sought to investigate and comprehend. Hence, this study attempts to establish the best possible set of attributes that would determine student's choice of HRM as a course in college under the Philippine context, specifically in Davao City using conjoint analysis. This paper intends to generate new ideas and knowledge that could be very beneficial to current and future school administrators in their decision to offer the program in their institution and provide the best services for their potential student-clients.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This chapter presents the research design, the research locale, the population and sample, the research instrument, the data collection procedures, the statistical tools used, as well as the ethical consideration in the conduct of the study.

The research design used in this study is a quantitative, non- experimental marketing research design utilizing conjoint analysis. The technique seemed to be the most appropriate research design to be used in this study since the study aimed to predict the best possible combination of attributes of student preference in choosing Hotel and Restaurant Management as a degree in college for School Year 2020 -2021. Malhotra (2006) described conjoint analysis as a kind of analysis that tries to find out the relative importance that consumers affix to leading attributes along with the utilities they attach to the same level of attributes. Conjoint analysis place assigned values to the levels of each attribute, so that the resulting values or utilities attached to the stimuli complements, as close as possible, the input evaluations provided by the respondents. The fundamental postulation is that any set of stimuli, such as products, brands, or stores, is appraised as a bunch of attributes.

This study was conducted in Davao City, a progressive city situated in the southern island part of Mindanao, Philippines lying in the grid squares of 6.58' to 7.34'N latitude, and 125.14" to 125.40'E longitude. It is bordered on the north by province of Davao, on the east partly by Davao Province and Davao Gulf; on the south by Davao del Sur, and on the west by North Cotabato. It is about 946 aerial kilometers or 588 statute miles, southeast of Manila. Being strategically located, the City turned to become as a regional trade hub for Southern Mindanao; international trade center for Southern Pacific; and Southern gateway to the neighboring countries like Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, Australia, among others (NEDA Region XI, 2018).

In light of the hotel and restaurant industry in the City, the metropolis is looming with hotels and convention centers that makes the City to become a major tourism destination and venue for meetings, exhibitions and other events in the Southern part of the Philippines. However, the growing number of tourists, it therefore needs additional hotels and other tourism facilities (Colina, 2017). In an economic perspective, the city's strong tourism and ease of conducting business, make it as one of the best areas for hotel operations in the country (Perez, 2018). These views challenge HEIs to enhance

its HRM curriculum so that graduates are able to cope with the changing requirements of the industry. Among the well-known educational institutions which offer HRM programs in Davao region are the University of Mindanao, Philippine Women's College, Joji Ilagan College of Hospitality Administration, Davao Doctors College, and Davao Central College.

3. RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of the study after undergoing statistical analysis. The results are presented in the following order: the relative importance of the attributes of HRM; individual and aggregate models for HRM; the goodness of-fit statistics; and the best combination of attributes of an HRM program as preferred by college students

Relative Importance of the Attributes of Hotel and Restaurant Management Degree

This section determines the relative importance of the attributes of a Hotel and Restaurant Management degree by the predetermined delivering institutions as preferred by the college students who participated in the study in terms of location, facilities, affiliation, accreditation, and instructors.

Presented in Table 1 is the summary of the relative importance of attributes of a Hotel and Restaurant Management (HRM) Degree as preferred by college students. Data revealed that *instructors* has the highest importance value and influence among college students in their preference for an HRM Degree as reflected by the 28.84 percent rate of importance. This was closely followed by *affiliation* with 28.10 percent rating and *accreditation* with 15.34 percent importance rating; then followed by *location* with an importance rating of 15.19 percent, and lastly by *facilities* with an importance rating of 12.54 percent.

Table 1: Summary of Relative Importance of the Attributes of a Hotel and Restaurant Management Degree

Attribute	Importance Value	Attribute Level	Utility Estimate	S.E.
Location	15.19	Near the household	0.011	0.016
		In the downtown area	-0.011	0.016
Facilities	12.54	General use	-0.004	0.016
		Exclusive and state-of-the-art	0.004	0.016
Affiliation	28.10	Local	0.022	0.021
		National	-0.044	0.025
		International	0.022	0.028
Accreditation	15.34	Not accredited	-0.029	0.016
		Accredited	0.029	0.016
Instructors	28.84	All have no master's degree	-0.088	0.021
		Some have no master's degree	-0.033	0.024
		All have master's degree	0.121	0.028
(Constant)			2.880	0.019

It was hypothesized in the study that there is no significant relative importance in the attributes of a Hotel and Restaurant Management Degree as a preferred course among college students. However, results of the study showed that there is a significant relative importance given by the individual attribute's rate of importance as illustrated in Table 1. Using conjoint analysis, a positive utility value signifies importance, while negative value signifies the opposite. All five (5) attributes though unequal earned a significant and positive value for importance. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Utility Estimates. It should be noted that negative value for utility estimate indicates that respondents do not significantly value the said profile while a positive utility estimate could relatively mean the opposite. In other words, a positive value of Utility Estimate (UE) signifies higher total worth or preference given by the respondents on it.

When taken individually, data for *location* profile revealed that of the two (2) preferences under this attribute, *near the household* got the highest utility estimate with 0.011 against -0.011 *in the downtown area* with obtained standard error of 0.016. For the *facilities* profile, results showed that of the two (2) preferences under this attribute, *exclusive and state of the art* got the highest utility estimate with 0.004 against -0.004 of preference *general use* with obtained standard error of 0.016.

Similarly, for *affiliation* profile, it was established that of the three (3) preferences under this attribute, both *local and international* received the highest utility estimate of 0.022 each as against -0.044 of preference *national* with obtained standard error of 0.021, 0.028, and 0.025 respectively. On the other hand, data for *accreditation* profile revealed that of the two (2) preferences under this attribute, *accredited* got the highest utility estimate with 0.029 against -0.029 of preference *not accredited* with obtained standard error of 0.016.

Finally, data for *instructor's* profile showed that of the three (3) preferences under this attribute, *all have master's degree* received the highest utility estimate of 0.121 with standard error of 0.028 as against preference *all have no Master's degree, and some have no Master's degree* with utility estimate scores of -0.088 and -0.033 respectively.

Table 2: Individual and Aggregate Models for a Hotel and Restaurant Management Degree

Attribute Levels	Student1 Imp. Value	Student1 Utility Est.	Student 145 Imp. Value	Student 145 Utility Est.	Student 152 Imp. Value	Student 152 Utility Est.	Overall Sample Imp. Value	Overall Sample Utility Est.
(Constant)		2.967		2.630		2.537		2.880
Location	0.043		22.226		5.091		15.186	
Near the household		-0.001		-0.274		-0.080		0.011
In the downtown area		0.001		0.274		0.080		-0.011
Facilities	4.526		34.570		12.530		12.539	
General		-0.088		-0.426		0.198		-0.004
Exclusive		0.088		0.426		-0.198		0.004
Affiliation	47.887		9.444		12.952		28.097	
Local		-0.733		-0.081		-0.036		0.022
National		-0.396		-0.072		-0.186		-0.044
International		1.129		0.152		0.222		0.022
Accreditation	3.884		15.042		37.932		15.338	
Not accredited		-0.075		0.186		-0.598		-0.029
Accredited		0.075		-0.186		0.598		0.029
Instructors	43.660		18.718		31.496		28.839	
All have no master's degree		-0.284		-0.235		-0.403		-0.088
Some have no master's degree		-0.707		0.009		-0.187		-0.033
All have master's degree		0.991		0.227		0.590		0.121

Presented in Table 2 is the individual and aggregate model for Hotel and Restaurant Management Degree of the delivering institution.

Total Utility Scores. The overall utility score is 3.067 as a result of the combined *location near the household* (0.011); *exclusive and state of the art facilities* (0.004); *either locally or internationally affili*ated (0.022); *accredited* (0.029); and *instructors must be all Master's degree holder* (0.121) plus *Constant* (2.880). The range of the utility values (highest to lowest) for each factor provides a gauge of how significant the factor was to overall preference. Factors with larger utility ranges play a more vital role than those with smaller ranges and in this model, *all instructors having Master's degree* has the highest utility value (28.839) while *exclusive and state of the art facilities* (12.539) has the least utility value.

The Goodness of Fit Statistics for the Conjoint Model

The generated model has gone through the goodness of fit evaluation to measure its validity, strength of influence, and efficacy. Models with poor fit are suspect for weak model.

Table 3: Goodness-of-fit Statistics for the Conjoint Model

Statistic	Value	p-value
Pearson's R	0.898	0.000
Kendall's tau	0.689	0.000
Kendall's tau for Holdouts	1.000	0.021

Table 3 shows the Goodness-of-Fit statistics for the conjoint model to measure the reliability and validity of conjoint analysis result. Table 3 displays two statistics, Pearson's *R* and Kendall's tau, which presented measures of the correlation between the observed and estimated preferences. The table also displays Kendall's tau for just the holdout profiles. In the conjoint procedure, it computes correlations between the observed and predicted rank orders for these profiles, hence, making the utilities valid and reliable. In this case, the correlations for the Pearson r profiles may give a better indication of the fit of the model with r value = 0.898 at 0.05 level of significance, indicating a good predictive ability.

It is to be noted however, that based on Kendal tau for holdouts, it revealed that it may not be the best fit of the model since it's correlation value is greater than obtained r value. Kendall's Tau for holdouts correlations value must be normally lower than Pearson r value to become the best goodness of fit test (Orme, 2010)

Best Combination of Attributes of an HRM Degree as Preferred by College Students

This section illustrates the best combination of attributes of an HRM degree as preferred by the college students in terms of attributes location, facilities, affiliation, accreditation, and instructor's attributes.

Presented in Table 4 is the identification of the best combination of attributes of HRM degree as preferred by the respondents and extracted from its total utility score. Results revealed that the best combination of student's preference for HRM degree based on their obtained positive utility estimates are the following: a HRM institutions offering the course which is *located near their household or their homes; provides exclusive state of the art facilities, locally or internationally affiliated, accredited,* and *all faculty members are Master's degree holders*. This results showed no evidence that the null hypothesis should not be rejected.

Table 4: Best Combination of Attributes of HRM Degree as Preferred by College Students

Attribute	Preference	Utility Estimates	Std. Error
Location	Near the household	0.011	0.016
Facilities	Exclusive and state of the art	0.004	0.016
Affiliation	Local	0.022	0.021
	International	0.022	0.028
Accreditation	Accredited	0.029	0.016
Instructors	All have Masters Graduates	0.121	0.028

4. DISCUSSION

Presented in this chapter is the detailed discussion of the results of the study. The discussion is outlined in the following order: the relative importance of the attributes of HRM; individual and aggregate models for HRM; the goodness of fit statistics; and the best combination of attributes of an HRM Degree as preferred by college students.

The Relative Importance of the Attributes of a Hotel and Restaurant Management Degree

The Attribute *instructors* have the highest importance value and influence for college students in their preference of HRM Degree. This is indicative that majority of the respondents significantly give relative importance to this attribute. HRM delivering institutions therefore has to give focus on this attribute since it contributes highly to their preference of HRM program to be offered. Therefore, this attribute must be met by delivering institutions of HRM program.

As found out in previous study conducted by Karak (2008), the school employees' individual and occupational requirements is a significant factor for school's internal and external reputation and student's choice of course. A competent and eligible teacher will be able to present educational and instructional service better thus, student success increases. The study of Trammell and Aldrich (2016) found out that students have high expectations for instructors to have many positive personality traits such as being approachable, enthusiastic, knowledgeable, as well as strong teaching skills, and wealth of content knowledge.

Meanwhile, the attribute *affiliation* has the second highest importance value which is indicative that most of the respondents have some degree of preference on this attribute and therefore has to be provided by delivering school or college. Quality assurance for higher education systems thru affiliation and collaboration has become a vital global issue. Initiating and linkage among quality assurance agencies at international and regional levels becomes primordial advantage for academic institutions. In fact, the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) has taken measures to ensure the quality of higher education within Southeast Asian countries through the ASEAN University Network (Umemiya, 2008).

In the Philippines, companies belonging to the Hotel, Restaurant, and Tourism Industry have made ties with schools and universities. These industry- academe linkages have shown to be fruitful to both the industry and the student since the industry can easily acquire qualified graduates and graduates to efficiently fill in the industry's manpower needs. These linkages also made schools become more updated with latest industry developments and expand their knowledge on the use of modern equipment's and applications. In addition, many collegiate academic programs offer OJT and internship programs in order to allow students to acquire the necessary industry exposure and experience within controlled industry settings (Dickerson & Kline, 2008).

Moreover, the attribute *accreditation* obtained the third highest importance value which implies that many of the students give preference to this attribute and delivering institutions of HRM program must have their HRM program offerings be accredited. Accordingly, accreditation is a system of assessing and improving the quality of educational programs among HEIs through self-evaluation and peer judgment leading to the accreditation status, public recognition, and information on educational quality.

The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) has the policy to promote and help HEIs which desire to attain the highest quality educational standards. Therefore, it is very important for the delivering institutions offering HRM program to have their course offerings to be accredited by an accrediting institution to where the Institution is a member (CHED, 2006).

Furthermore, the attribute *location* has the fourth slot as a preference in terms of relative importance value. It indicates that delivering institutions of HRM program must consider their school location (Drewes, & Michael, 2006; Gibbons, & Vignoles, 2009; Theobald, 2005; Shaw, 2008) preferably near the household. Related studies revealed that location is vital for students, either because they want to live in a certain part of the country or because of financial reason.

As reported by New York Times, 72 percent of American students preferred to study in schools near their home, based on study conducted by the National Association for College Admission Counselling (Mcfadden, 2015). In Australia, James et al. (1999) also concluded that the preference for a specific field of study, the institutional reputations, easy access to home, and institutional characteristics are important to student's choice of institution and course.

Finally, the last attribute is *facilities*. Although it registered the least importance value, this attribute should not be disregarded by the delivering institutions of HRM program. In a survey conducted by Carnegie Foundation on Transition from High School to College, it revealed that physical asset of an institution is strongly correlated to choice and selection

of college course. The finding is parallel with the work of Ernest Boyer and Associates in 1990 which concludes that the buildings, the walkways, facilities, and well-maintained campus are among the considerations of students in choosing their schools.

The purpose of infrastructure growth in education is to improve motivation on school attendance and improve students' academic performance. In Malaysia, the most significant factor for student's choice of University include academic quality, facilities, campus surroundings, and personal characteristics (Sidin, Hussin, & Soon, 2003).

Individual and Aggregate Models for a Hotel and Restaurant Management Degree

It can be noted that the highest utility score is with combination of *located near the household*; *exclusive and state of the art facilities*; *either locally or internationally affili*ated; *accredited*; and *instructors must be all Master's degree holder*. The range of the utility values (highest to lowest) for each factor provides a measure of how important the factor was to overall preference. Factors with greater utility ranges play a more significant role than those with smaller ranges and in this model, *all instructors having Master's degree* has the highest utility value while *exclusive and state of the art facilities* has the least utility value.

The student's choice of a college and course is influenced by faculty members (Mcfadden, 2015). The qualifications of the teaching staff were found to be one of the most important factors affecting quality education perception. The students see two types of teacher's image: the ideal teacher image and their own self-image as a teacher. Students view personal qualities such as: kindness, leadership, and attitude toward profession, and professional knowledge to be the most important characteristics of an ideal teacher while professional qualities include knowledge of the subject matter and didactic knowledge (Arnon & Reichel, 2007).

Teachers are vital stakeholders that affect and are affected directly by school's reputation. Therefore, it is necessary to meet teacher's individual expectations and institutional needs for them to become contented and in effect become satisfied in their respective jobs. Employee qualification also affects school reputation since a highly competent and qualified teacher can deliver education-instruction service much better contributing to the achievement of student success (Karak, 2008). In the study by Trammell and Aldrich (2016), they found out that students have high expectations for instructors to possess many positive personality traits, as well as strong teaching skills.

Similarly, international and local affiliations contribute largely to the quality assurance for higher education systems and have become a significant global issue, initiating both local and international affiliations and collaborations among quality industry partners is very important in the success of students (Umemiya, 2008). Many collegiate programs offer OJT and internships to provide students with valuable experience within controlled industry settings (Dickerson & Kline, 2008).

For HRM students to be successful, hospitality management programs must meet the needs of both students and the industry by developing the student skills needed in the industry while achieving the academic requirements demanded by the institution (Raybould & Wilkins, 2005). Graduate students who have no experience are ill-prepared for the work and cannot meet the demands of the hospitality industry (Tesone, 2002). Internship or industry experience, preparation for industry employment, leadership, hospitality management and organization, and ethics have been consistently ranked as top five most important course subjects by the industry professionals during the last 10 years. The most important factor in developing a curriculum that ensures graduates' success in their career is the hospitality program's ability to deal with change (Min, Swanger, & Gursoy, 2016)

Furthermore, program accreditation is also considered as one factor leading to school and career choice of the students. Accreditation is a procedure for assessing and uplifting the educational quality of higher education institutions and programs through self-evaluation and peer judgment (CHED, 2005). Accreditation is vital to public recognition and serves as a concrete expression of institutional excellence and quality. Part of CHED's policy and mandate is to promote and help HEIs attain the highest quality of educational standards. The minimum requirements per program are defined in the Policies, Standards and Guidelines (PSG) issued by CHED.

In Malaysia, a study conducted by Yusof et al. (2008), posited the availability of the required programs is essential among freshmen in choosing a particular college or university. In his study, Ismail (2009) indicated that students' choice is practically based on their satisfaction with respect to the school's academic recognition. Ford et al. (1999) also found that program issues such as variety of study program, flexibility of degree program and range of degree options are important variables in deciding which institution to go.

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Finally, exclusive and state of the art facilities were found to be a factor in student's school and career choice. Schools therefore, have to improve its physical facilities to entice and motivate students to enroll. School infrastructure development leads to increase school attendance (Roy, 2011). The age of building, general appearance, and student-friendly environment influence the perception of those attending that school. In similar thoughts, schools' physical infrastructure must be student-friendly to inspire learning and academic achievement (West, 2006). In fact, Absher and Crawford (1996) suggested that educational infrastructure like classrooms, laboratories and libraries are significant predictors of college choice decision.

On the other hand, students also value the reputation of the college; hence, it plays a vital role in the college choice decision process (Keling, 2006: Laym & Maguire, 1981; Murphy, 1981; Servier, 1986). Further, Keling (2006) stated that most students choose schools that are known and have established a brand of excellence and quality. The existence of this relationship validates the positive association between college reputation and college choice decisions.

The Goodness of Fit Statistics

Pearson r correlation was the goodness of fit test used. The obtained r value is significant which indicates that it has a good predictive validity, hence the rank order data can be considered for the conjoint analysis and the utilities calculated by the analysis is valid.

The preference rating for the five validation profiles were predicted from the utilities. These were correlated with the input ratings for these profiles obtained from the respondents such as the combination model of *location that is near the household, facilities that are exclusive and state of the art; affiliation that is either local or international; that is accredited;* and *instructors who are Master's degree holder.* Further, the factor with the greatest utility is instructor, while the least utility value is facilities.

Best Combination of Attributes of an HRM Degree as Preferred by College Students

Results revealed that the best combination of student's preference for HRM degree based on their obtained positive utility estimates are the following: a HRM institutions offering the course which is *located near their household or their homes; provides exclusive state of the art facilities, locally and internationally affiliated, accredited,* and *all faculty members are Master's degree holders*. It is therefore imperative that HRM delivering institutions must consider the conjoint model derived and this would be helpful in marketing their HRM program since it is the most preferred combination for attracting students to enroll in HRM program.

 This result is in congruence with the result of the study of Hossler in 1984, that different attributes were linked to choosing a course though in different orders. Among these attributes are: proximity to home, academic reputation, special academic programs, and social atmosphere of the institution. Result is also in line with the findings that one determinant of choice of school and career is the school location (Drewes, 2006; Gibbons & Vignoles, 2009). In a related study, it was underscored that among the important factors for student's choice of university included academic quality, facilities, campus surroundings, and characteristics of faculty (Sidin, Hussin, & Soon, 2003). Alternatively, among Indonesian students, they put premium on cost, reputation, proximity, job prospects, and parent's approval when choosing a course and a school (Kusumawati, Yanamandram, & Perera, 2010).

5. CONCLUSION

Overall, it can be concluded that respondents have shown different level of importance on the five attributes under study as shown by different relative weights of importance that were given to each attribute. Attribute *instructors* was found to have the highest relative importance and attribute *facilities* was found to have the least importance rating. The conjoint model on the preference of students in choosing HRM revealed that the *school location be near the households*; it must have *exclusive and state of the art facilities*; it should be *locally or internationally affiliated*; and the *instructors must all Master's graduate*. Students may have the same inclination on taking the HRM course as a need but may have different criteria to fulfil this need before making a choice decision which actually involves the attributes: school location's proximity, the teacher's educational qualification, the school's having an accreditation status, local and international affiliation, and provision of modern school facilities related to course offering.

These conclusions find parallelism with the Choice Theory which states that people satisfaction of their needs differs from one another although they may have the same needs. Individual person, since their birth, has a unique encounter in life

which can either be pleasing or distressing. These varying experiences help them discover new ideas and means of satisfying their own needs. Pleasing experiences becomes part of one's quality of life and eventually develops into a norm for their choice behavior. This is specific to each person based on their past experiences, realizations and learning's especially on how they make choices in fulfilling their needs and wants.

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