

# **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF FAMILIARIZATION TOUR ON THE PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING SKILLS OF HOTEL AND RESTAURANT MANAGEMENT STUDENTS**

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Familiarization tour (Fam tour) is an effective tool in enhancing skills through its various categories: Seminars and workshops, ocular inspection, sightseeing tour, on-site survey and interview. It is an educational and experiential learning activity participated by the College of Hospitality and Tourism Management every school year. In this paper, product development and planning skills of hotel and restaurant management students, and the effectiveness of familiarization tour in enhancing these skills, were studied. Students were given pre and post assessments, to determine if there was a significant difference on the preferences, level of knowledge and skills before and after the program intervention. The students indicated that familiarization tour was an effective experiential activity. An increase in the level of product development and planning skills after the program intervention was an evidence of its effectiveness. On-site surveys and interviews were the most effective and enjoyed familiarization tour category. The continuity of implementation of familiarization tour for hotel and restaurant management students was recommended. Strong and open communication between the academic leaders of CHTM and their industry partners is also needed to come up with fam tour programs suited for the needs of the BS HRM students in enhancing their different skills