

# **LEVEL OF DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED AND THE PERFORMANCE OF NUTRITION AND DIETETICS GRADUATES IN FOOD SERVICE, COMMUNITY AND HOSPITAL PRACTICUM**

**OLIVIA J. FACTORIZA**

Faculty, College of International Hospitality Management  
University of Perpetual Help System Laguna  
odeinejf@gmail.com/09958112242

This descriptive-correlational study aimed at determining the relationship between the level of difficulty encountered by BS Nutrition Dietetics graduates and their practicum performance in the different areas. Results of the study from thirty-four (34) program graduates showed that they encountered a high level of difficulty in the Hospital practicum but low level of difficulty for both the Foodservice and Community practicum. Although the graduates encountered high level of difficulty in Hospital practicum, their practicum performance ranged from Outstanding to Satisfactory. Results also showed that the graduates perform better in both Community and Foodservice practicum than in Hospital practicum. However, there was no significant relationship between the difficulties encountered by the graduates and their practicum performance. These findings implicate that the training of the BSND students should be strengthened by conducting a pre-practicum hospital training and that faculty of the program should have more laboratory activities that will enhance students' knowledge and skills in all aspects of hospital practicum.

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*Keywords: Practicum performance, Foodservice, Community and Hospital Practicum*

## **INTRODUCTION**

From a variety of research available, internship programmes, have tended to benefit the student, the student's institution and the employer. However, for the student, it is the learning that is of utmost benefit. The individual can apply knowledge learned in the classroom to the workplace. The individual gains understanding of the qualifications and duties of a position and can explore their interest in a field and gains an understanding of the skills and knowledge required in the workplace. They also acquire decision making skills, critical thinking skills, increased confidence and self-esteem.

The University of Perpetual Help System educate and train students to be competitive in different areas of their workplace by providing them with required knowledge, skills and attitude not only from the classroom more so with practicum or internship programmes. The College of International Hospitality Management of UPHSL offers internship or practicum in three areas in the field of Nutrition and Dietetics. These are Foodservice, Community and Hospital Practicum. It is a total of a 12 unit course offered to students who have passed all the professional requirements of the program.

In each aspect of this practicum, the assessment is being done by the manager for the Foodservice, the NFP coordinator for the Community practicum and the Chief dietitian for the Hospital practicum. In this regard, the Practicum coordinator, should be able to coordinate properly with these authorities to assess the difficulties encountered by the students to enable her to make necessary actions for the next batch of practicumers. To do this, the latter require students to submit weekly journal for the foodservice and the submission of its final report. In the case of the Community practicum, the same report submitted to the Nutrition Foundation of the Philippines serves as the final report for the Practicum coordinator. In hospital practicum, an informal assessment is conducted after they are finished which actually always falls on the hurried phase of graduation preparation.

In an article written by Kapadia ( 2014), learners and teachers work shoulder to shoulder and develop a feeling of pursuing the same goal when training on the job. Training becomes something not simply given to employees, but something in which they participate. Employees can give immediate feedback about what they do not understand and offer suggestions about how to improve lessons and processes.

On-the-job training also improves learning retention. Project Management Institute's Lead Instructional Designer Karen Holloway said, "The in situ experience helps strengthen recall of information in a way that classroom learning can't. When learning and everyday work are combined, an employee's mind is processing and associating the sights and sounds of the environment with the skills being developed". On-the-job training helps instructors, too. They can see how their lessons work in practice and then fine-tune them. The process even lets instructors field-test the ideas and techniques they teach. Sometimes, this testing leads not only to better teaching, but also to better processes. Ultimately, education programs can achieve the best results by blending classroom teaching with on-the-job training.

There are several advantages of student internship, one of the advantage of student internship or practicum is to be able to experience a prospective career path. Since there are three paths to choose from such foodservice, community or public health and the hospital setting, it is important for the students to get a feel of the workplace. For those who are still undecided in which field to work into, practicum is very important. Second, is to gain practical experience, by applying methods and theories learned in classes. Many people learn best by being hands on. But everyone can benefit from seeing the things that they have been learning in class, put to action. Third, it is an effective way to build network with professionals in your field, for references and future job opportunities. As a student intern, students are surrounded by professionals in the industry that you are seeking access to. It's more than just about getting a grade or earning credit. This is an opportunity to learn from everyone around and ask questions. These people can be future colleagues or can be the connection to the first job. Fourth is to develop new skills and refine others by learning the strengths and weaknesses by creating learning objectives and receiving feedback from supervisors. This is a unique learning opportunity that students may never have again as a

working adult. Lastly, is to gain confidence in the field of expertise ( UA Career Services, 2015).

Based on CMO no. 54, s. 2006, there are three types of practicum that a BSND student must accomplish. The on-the-job training programs are done under the supervision of a faculty member who is a Licensed Nutritionist-Dietitian and a designated authority in hospitals, food establishments and food companies ( PD No. 1286, 1978 ).

As stipulated in the CHED Memorandum Order, #54 series of 2006, The following are the guidelines in the three areas of Nutrition and Dietetics practicum:

### **Hospital Dietetics Practicum**

The Hospital Dietetics Practicum where students experience interviewing patients on their diet history, reading and interpreting nutrition related data in medical charts, participating in ward rounds and interpreting and carrying out diet prescriptions. The hospital practicum should be in a tertiary level hospital with at least 100 bed capacity and accredited by the Department of Health (DOH) supervised by a registered Nutritionist – Dietitian. The total number of hours required for this practicum is 200 hours, 24 days or equivalent to four practicum units.

The hospital practicum is divided into two phases: the clinical and administrative phase. In the clinical phase, the following objectives should be met: 1. Develop nutritional and dietary evaluation of patients by evaluating their dietary history or food intake, 2. Accurately interpret and transcribes diet prescriptions, 3. Give appropriate diet counseling and participate in ward rounds by the health team, 4. Conducts at least one mothers' or patients' class, 5. Plan and prepare therapeutic diet, 6. Assist in the supervision of tray line, 7. prepare and present a case study.

On the other hand on the administrative phase, the following should be learned: 1. Plan and evaluate and adjusts menus, 2. Identify and compare the different purchasing methods, 3. Use appropriate measures of storeroom control and costing, 4. Prepare and standardize quantity recipes, 5. Develop skills in food presentation and services, 6. Apply management skills in the dietary hospitals and services, 7. Familiarize with the kitchen and dining layout, equipment, their care operation and maintenance, 8. Evaluate and apply existing sanitation and safety practices, 9. Determine food cost and per capita of one day's menu, 10. And finally develop skills in budgeting and preparation of monthly food cost ( CMO #54 s.2006).

Given these objectives, students should be very knowledgeable in Nutrition Therapy. It is a course that emphasizes on the latest methods in the nutritional management of various clinical disorders, medical and alternative therapies of disease conditions. Laboratory experience will include the circulation, planning, preparation and evaluation of therapeutic diets. It will also include the preparation of dietary materials and teaching plan: for instructions as well as actual instruction of modified diets (Escott-Stump, 2012).

### **Foodservice Practicum**

In Foodservice, there are five aspects that students must experience in this practicum: food production, foodservice, personnel management, cost control and sanitation and safety. The number of hours required of this practicum is 150 hours, 18 days or equivalent to three practicum units. The food service practicum of BSND is conducted in the fine dining restaurants and is divided into two areas, kitchen and dining area. It includes, menu planning, purchasing, receiving, storing and issuing, food production, food presentation and services, personnel management, equipment care, operation, maintenance and sanitation and finally cost accounting.

In menu planning, student interns should be able to prepare, cycle menus and menus for special occasions and prepare market orders. Purchasing in hospital is different from purchasing in foodservice in such a way that they should know the specifications of the different items and place orders to specific suppliers. They should be able to practice receiving and inspection of deliveries, checking and recording of invoices, familiarization with storeroom procedures and control forms and be able to participate in physical and perpetual inventory.

During food production, they should be able to observe food cost control by proper conservation and utilization of ingredients and proper portioning. Familiarization with the kitchen and dining layout, equipment, their care operation and maintenance in any institutional food service should be is also part of their internship. Evaluation and application existing sanitation and safety practices in the kitchen should also be made. Determination of food cost and per capita of one day's menu and preparation of monthly food cost are also included ( CMO #54 s.2006).

Students should also be very knowledgeable in Foodservice Management. The course includes, techniques, and management of large scale food production particularly on the phases of foodservice cycle: purchasing, receiving, storage and issuance, pre-preparation, production, merchandising and service of food, food safety and sanitation and cost control. Laboratory experiences includes cycle menu planning , standardization and quantification of recipes, portion control and utilization of leftover foods ( Palacio and Theis, 2005).

### **Community Practicum**

In Public Health Nutrition Practicum, students get to assist the community nutritionist-dietitian to define nutritional problems and plan appropriate actions to address them. These tasks include the assessment of nutritional status of the community and implementing programs to

improve the overall health of the community. The required number of hours for this practicum is 250 hours, 6 weeks or equivalent to five practicum units.

The conduct of the undergraduate practical training in Community Nutrition is entrusted to the Nutrition Foundation of the Philippines, Inc. It is the first private, non-stock, non-profit organization engaged in community nutrition with commitment to improve the nutritional status and well-being of the Filipino people. It assigns the community or area where students will be deployed. Among them are in Alaminos, Siniloan and Famy Laguna, others are in Norzagaray Bulacan, Orion, Bataan. and the latest is in Calauan. Laguna.

The objectives of community practicum are as follows: 1. Identify the nature and magnitude of malnutrition in the community and explain its causes and possible consequences, 2. Assist in actual planning, 3. Organize and mobilize the community to participate actively in efforts for nutrition improvement, 4. Generate or mobilize human, material and financial resources from government and non-government organization for selected food and nutrition programs, projects and activities .

To ensure the highest performance of students in the field of community practicum, students should be knowledgeable on Nutrition Assessment particularly anthropometric measurements as well as skills in Nutrition education. During the course of their practicum they will survey the community, identify problems in the community related to nutrition and be able to make necessary projects or activities to at least solve their problems. This is where Nutrition education comes in. Mothers' class, Kiddie class and even seminars for pregnant women as well as elderly are conducted to help the community.

Nutrition Education course involves a study of the principles in teaching techniques and current trends applicable to the dissemination of nutrition information to individuals or groups at

all levels. It includes practical training in the planning, implementation of nutrition education programs ( Ruiz and Claudio, 2010). Likewise Nutrition Assessment is very important, this course deals with the principles and methods of measuring and evaluating the nutritional status of individuals /populations group both in clinical and health setting ( Gibson, R. 2004).

In a study conducted by Sevilla, et.al.,(2014), in Lyceum of the Philippines University which aimed to assess the level of performance of the interns as a result of the evaluation by the manager or immediate supervisors of the different establishments where the CITHM interns were deployed. The researcher utilized the descriptive qualitative design using 50 percent of the interns of second semester 2012-2013 as participants in the area of food and beverage and travel agencies. Results of the study revealed that interns have satisfactory level in academic performance. In training performance they were rated as very good in terms of knowledge, skills, attitude and personality. This study also revealed that there is no significant relationship between the academic performance and the training performance.

This study conducted by Adebakin ( 2015), assessed the academic relevance of internship programme and employment prospect of graduate interns from Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. Population of the descriptive study were graduate students in the Department of Educational Management of the university. A sample of 120 graduate students from 2012/2013, 2013/2014 and 2014/2015 academic sessions were randomly selected. The post internship semester results, a structured interview and a Likert scale type questionnaire were used in the study. The Cronbach alpha reliability test on the questionnaire showed 0.79 reliability index. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used at 5% level of significance. The study found that graduate students participation in internship has impact on academic performance and also has a significance influence on employment prospect. It was recommended that internship should be

geared towards enhancing the knowledge, skills, attitude and personality of graduate students to prepare them in more holistic approach for employment.

The researchers found that food handlers are aware of the role they play in restoring patients' health; they consider it important to offer a good-quality diet. However, according to their perceptions, a number of difficulties prevent them from reaching this aim. These include: upper management not prioritizing human and material resources to the dietetic services when making resource allocation decisions; a perception that upper management considers their work to be of lesser importance; delayed overtime payments; lack of periodic training; managers lacking administrative skills; insufficient dietitian staff assistants, leading to overwork, at the same time as there is an excess of dietitians; unhealthy environmental working conditions – high temperature, high humidity, loud and constant noise level, poor ventilation; lack of food, and kitchen utensils and equipment; and relationship conflicts with chief dietitians and co-workers.

With regards to student interns, some of the environmental problems mentioned may also be a hindrance to their good performance. Their insufficient knowledge coupled with lack of good communication skills may hinder them to maximize their learnings. From these findings, improvement in staff motivation could be achieved by considering non-financial incentives, such as improvement in working conditions and showing appreciation and respect through supervision, training and performance appraisal. Management action, such as investments in intermediary management so that managers have the capacity to provide supportive supervision, as well as better use of performance appraisal and access to training, may help overcome the identified problems.

At the University of Canberra, Australia, a Student-Assisted Service (SAS) provides 200 hours of supervised practice as part of an accredited dietetics education program. This service is positioned within a multidisciplinary allied health clinic that includes both private practitioners

and SAS. The dietetics service provides outpatient services and outreach services to residential aged-care facilities. The service uses a constructivist collaborative learning approach with two to three students running the clinic under the supervision of an experienced dietitian. Evaluation of student and client satisfaction is an important measure of the success of the SAS, and a mixed-methods approach, using both qualitative and quantitative data, was applied. Student evaluations of 200 hours of supervised practice in the SAS (n=46/15) followed by 200 hours in a hospital (n=45/15), conducted by a 40-item anonymous online survey, showed the SAS to be similar to the hospital setting.

Satisfaction with the SAS was assessed in the patient groups (outpatients and residents) and in the staff of residential aged care facilities. Thirty-one outpatients, representing 53 initial consultations at the SAS, completed a modified SERVQUAL scale that measures service quality as the difference between client expectations and perceptions.<sup>8</sup> Of this population, most clients were female (67.7%), aged 21 to 30 years (32.2%), employed full-time (54.8%), referred for overweight/obesity management (58%), and had not previously seen a dietitian (35.4%). The overall SERVQUAL scores (meanstandard deviation) for expectation and perception were 5.880.61 and 5.940.69, respectively, with the highest possible score being 7. The GAP score, an indicator of service quality, was positive (0.180.67), indicating overall client satisfaction with the service. Four focus groups and eight semistructured interviews were held with 19 residents and 14 staff from two residential aged care facilities that received SAS care as their only form of dietetics support. Emerging themes showed the SAS included improved staff knowledge, communication, and provision of individualized dietetics care ( Bacon, 2015).

Waller (2015) conducted a study in the University of Guelph Master of Public Health program that seeks to prepare graduates to meet complex public health needs by developing their

proficiency in the 36 public health core competencies. Provision of experiential learning opportunities, such as a semester-long practicum, is part of student development. In the Fall 2013 semester, a new opportunity was introduced in which small groups of students were paired with local public health professionals to complete a capstone business plan assignment that addressed a current public health issue. However, the impact of this external collaboration on the student learning experience was unknown. To address this, quantitative and qualitative information about students' perceived proficiency in the core competencies and their learning experiences was collected using a pre/post survey and focus groups, respectively. A post-assignment survey was also administered to participating local public health professionals in which they assessed their group's proficiency in the core competencies, and provided additional feedback. The results of this study showed that students had unique learning experiences with enhanced proficiency in different areas including policy and program planning, implementation and evaluation, assessment and analysis, and partnerships, collaboration and advocacy. Managing and communicating expectations was important throughout the learning experience. By using realistic community-based assignments, graduate public health programs can enrich students' learning experiences by creating an environment for students to apply their classroom knowledge and gain practical knowledge and skills.

It is in this context that the researcher is prompted to conduct a study focusing on the difficulties encountered by Bachelor of Science in Nutrition and Dietetics ( BSND ) graduates in relation to their practicum performance in Foodservice, Community and Hospital settings. It seeks to answer the following problems: (1) What is the level of difficulty encountered by the graduates in the different areas such as Foodservice practicum, Community practicum and Hospital practicum; (2) What is the practicum performance of the graduates in these areas of practicum; (3)

Is there a significant difference in the practicum performance of the graduates when the respondents are grouped according to area of practicum? And (4) Is there a significant relationship between the level of difficulty encountered by graduates and their practicum performance in the different areas?

This study will benefit the BSND students to improve their perspectives on how to look deeper into the concepts which they learned in school and apply these during their practicum as well as the faculty members to identify areas where the students are having high level of difficulty and strategize on how to improve students' learning and application of concepts. This will also help the industry partners to focus on these areas and be able to intensify the training of the BSND interns.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research design**

The researcher utilized the descriptive-correlational method. This research design enabled the researcher to correlate two variables of the study, the level of difficulty encountered by the BSND graduates in the different areas of their practicum and their practicum performance.

### **Instrumentation and Validation**

The researcher used a self-made questionnaire, the basis of which are the objectives stated in each practicum phase in the CHED Memorandum Order no. 54 s.2006. The instrument is divided into three areas of practicum: Part I pertains to the Difficulties encountered by the graduates in the Foodservice. Part II covers the Community practicum and Part III in the Hospital practicum based on the knowledge and skills they should acquire as indicated in CMO 54. The instrument undergone validation by a statistician and an expert related to the field of expertise.

### **Population of the study**

The respondents of the study included 34 BSND graduates out of the total of 40 graduates who have undergone Foodservice, Community and Hospital practicum. It used purposive sampling targeting graduates from 2012-2017.

### **Data Gathering procedure**

The validated questionnaire were sent thru email or social media. Retrieved questionnaires were checked and verified for completeness. A copy of their practicum grades were requested from the ITS.

## **Statistical Treatment of Data**

The following statistical treatment were used to analyze the data gathered from the survey questionnaire.

Percentage was used to describe the respondents' (a) profile and (b) practicum performance. Weighted Mean was used to determine the level of difficulty encountered by student interns in the different areas of practicum. Analysis of variance was used to determine if there is significant difference in the level of difficulty encountered by the student interns when the respondents are grouped according to areas of practicum and Pearson r was used to determine if there is significant relationship between the level of difficulty encountered by student interns and their practicum performance in the different areas.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Table 1**  
Difficulties Encountered by the Graduates in Foodservice Practicum

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation	Rank
1. Doing the assigned work promptly and accurately.	2.21	Low	7.5
2. Applying the things I've learn in the laboratory classes particularly in cooking, food plating and service.	2.21	Low	7.5
3. Understanding the functions of the tools / equipment used in the area.	2.29	Low	3
4. Following the proper food safety and sanitation standards in preparing food.	2.21	Low	7.5
5. Being productive during the course of my duty.	2.26	Low	4.5
6. Working with minimum supervision once I understand the task assigned to me.	2.26	Low	4.5
7. Maintaining good and effective communication with my superior, colleagues and the guests.	2.35	Low	1
8. Maintaining punctuality during the whole practicum duration.	2.21	Low	7.5
9. Doing other responsibilities assigned to me.	2.32	Low	2
<b>Average Weighted Mean</b>	<b>2.26</b>	<b>Low</b>	

Table 1 shows the difficulties encountered by the graduates in Foodservice practicum. Based on the table, Indicators 7 got weighted mean of 2.35 interpreted as Low and was ranked 1, indicator 9 got a weighted mean of 2.32 interpreted as Low was ranked 2, indicator 3 got a weighted mean of 2.29 interpreted as Low was ranked 3, indicators 5 and 6 got a weighted mean of 2.26 interpreted as Low was ranked 4.5, indicators 1,2,4 and 8 got a weighted mean of 2.21 interpreted as Low was ranked 7.5.

The overall weighted mean of the difficulties encountered by the graduates in Foodservice practicum was 2.26 and was interpreted as Low. This is similar to the study conducted by Sevilla, et.al.,(2014), in Lyceum of the Philippines University which aimed to assess the level of performance of the interns as a result of the evaluation by the manager or immediate supervisors of the different foodservice establishments and travel agencies where the CITHM interns were deployed. Results of the study revealed that interns have satisfactory level in academic performance. In training performance they were rated as very good in terms of knowledge, skills, attitude and personality.

**Table 2**  
Difficulties Encountered by the Graduates in Community Practicum

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation	Rank
1. Working individually and doing task alone	2.38	Low	6.5
2. Working with a team.	2.38	Low	6.5
3. Getting the household baseline information in our assigned area in the community.	2.41	Low	5
4. Submitting complete and accurate household baseline information data in a proper manner.	2.47	Low	4
5. Giving practical advice to improve the food intake of the family assigned to me.	2.53	High	3
6. Submitting my diary on time that highlights the accomplishments of the day on time	2.29	Low	11
7. Improving the food intake of the assigned family after implementation of the program.	2.35	Low	8
8. Planning specific nutrition programs based on needs of the community.	2.32	Low	9.5
9. Implementing a wellness activity and community nutrition education.	2.65	High	1
10. Submitting the required reports on time.	2.62	High	2
11. Presenting my report creatively.	2.32	Low	9.5
<b>Average Weighted Mean</b>	<b>2.43</b>	<b>Low</b>	

Table 2 showed the difficulties encountered by the graduates in the Community practicum. Based on the table, indicator 9 got a weighted mean of 2.65 interpreted as High was ranked 1, indicator 10 got a weighted mean of 2.62 interpreted as High was ranked 2, indicator 5 got a weighted mean of 2.53 interpreted as High was ranked 3, indicator 4 got a weighted mean of 2.47 interpreted as Low was ranked 4, indicator 3 got a weighted mean of 2.41 interpreted as Low was ranked 5, indicators 1 and 2 got a weighted mean of 2.38 interpreted as Low was ranked 6.5, indicator 7 got a weighted mean of 2.35 interpreted as Low was ranked 8, indicators 8 and 11 got a weighted mean of 2.32 interpreted as Low was ranked 9.5.

The overall weighted mean of the difficulties encountered by the graduates in Community practicum was 2.43 and was interpreted as Low. This is related to the study of Waller ( 2015), which showed that students had unique learning experiences with enhanced proficiency in different areas including policy and program planning, implementation and evaluation, assessment and analysis, and partnerships, collaboration and advocacy. Managing and communicating expectations was important throughout the learning experience. By using realistic community-based assignments, graduate public health programs can enrich students' learning experiences by creating an environment for students to apply their classroom knowledge and gain practical knowledge and skills.

**Table 3**  
Difficulties Encountered by the Graduates in Hospital Practicum

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation	Rank
1. Applying the theoretical skills I gained from the University during the examination conducted by the dietitians of the hospital.	2.53	High	8
2. Applying the knowledge I gained from the University in case presentations.	2.74	High	1
3. Assessing the nutritional status of patients assigned to me.	2.53	High	8
4. Computing the diet of patients assigned to me.	2.65	High	3.5
5. Setting the menu based on the computed diet.	2.65	High	3.5
6. Giving proper diet counseling to assigned patients with special disease condition.	2.59	High	6
7. Modifying the menu of the day in the hospital according to the patient's disease condition.	2.62	High	5
8. Preparing nutritious recipes for the patient that are aesthetically acceptable. ( nice color combinations )	2.71	High	2
9. Counseling patients to explain to them clearly the importance of adhering to the diet order.	2.53	High	8
10. Monitoring the patient's tray in terms of adequacy and variety of foods given to patients with speed and accuracy.	2.21	Low	10
<b>Average Weighted Mean</b>	<b>2.57</b>	<b>High</b>	

Table 3 shows the difficulties encountered by the graduates in Hospital practicum. Based on the table, indicator 2 got a weighted mean of 2.74 interpreted as High was ranked 1, indicator 8 got a weighted mean of 2.71 interpreted as High was ranked 2, indicators 4 and 5 got a weighted mean of 2.65 interpreted as High was ranked 3.5, indicator 7 got a weighted mean of 2.62

interpreted as High was ranked 5, indicator 6 got a weighted mean of 2.59 interpreted as High was ranked 6, indicators 1,3 and 9 got a weighted mean of 2.53 interpreted as High was ranked 8, indicator 10 got a weighted mean of 2.21 interpreted as Low was ranked 10.

The overall weighted mean of the difficulties encountered by the graduates in hospital practicum is 2.57 and was interpreted as High. This is related to the study conducted by Cilce et.al, (2013), in hospital setting. Unhealthy environmental working conditions – high temperature, high humidity, loud and constant noise level, poor ventilation may also be a hindrance to the good performance of the student interns. Their insufficient knowledge coupled with lack of good communication skills may hinder them to maximize their learnings.

**Table 4**  
Summary Table of the Difficulties Encountered by the Graduates

Area	Weighted Mean	Interpretation	Rank
Foodservice	2.26	Low	3
Community	2.43	Low	2
Hospital	2.57	High	1
<b>Overall Weighted Mean</b>	<b>2.42</b>	<b>Low</b>	

Table 4 showed the summary table of the difficulties encountered by the graduates. Hospital practicum got a weighted mean of 2.57 interpreted as High and was ranked 1. Community practicum got a weighted mean of 2.43 interpreted as Low and was ranked 2. Foodservice practicum got a weighted mean of 2.26 interpreted as Low and was ranked 3. It showed that the graduates encountered a High level of difficulty in the Hospital practicum and Low level of difficulty for both the Foodservice and Community practicum however, an overall weighted mean for all the areas of practicum revealed a weighted mean of 2.42 interpreted as Low.

**Table 5**  
Practicum Performance of the Graduates

Practicum Performance	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Foodservice</b>		
Outstanding (90 and above)	20	58.8
Very Satisfactory (85-89)	11	32.4
Satisfactory (80-84)Fairly	3	8.8
Satisfactory (75-79)	0	0
Poor (74 and below)	0	0
<b>Community</b>		
Outstanding (90 and above)	5	14.7
Very Satisfactory (85-89)	19	55.9
Satisfactory (80-84)Fairly	7	20.6
Satisfactory (75-79)	3	8.8
Poor (74 and below)	0	0
<b>Hospital</b>		
Outstanding (90 and above)	1	2.9
Very Satisfactory (85-89)	12	35.3
Satisfactory (80-84)Fairly	19	55.9
Satisfactory (75-79)	2	5.9
Poor (74 and below)	0	0
Total Respondents = 34		

Table 5 showed the Practicum performance of the graduates in the three practicum areas. In Foodservice area, it shows that 20 out of 34 respondents or 58.8% have an Outstanding performance, 32.4% have Very Satisfactory Performance and 8.8% have Fairly Satisfactory performance. In Community practicum, 5 out of 34 or 14.7% have an Outstanding performance, 55.9% have a Very Satisfactory performance, 20.6% have Fairly Satisfactory performance and 8.8% have Satisfactory performance. In terms of Hospital Practicum, only 1 out of 34 or 2.9% has an Outstanding performance, 35.3% have Very Satisfactory performance , 55.9% have Fairly Satisfactory performance and 5.9% have Satisfactory performance.

**Table 6**  
Difference in the Practicum Performance of the Graduates  
When They Are Grouped According to Area of Practicum

Variable	Mean	Statistical Test (F Test)	p-value	Interpretation
Practicum Performance	X <sub>1</sub> (Foodservice) = 90.38 X <sub>2</sub> (Community) = 85.71 X <sub>3</sub> (Hospital) = 83.97	F = 26.671	0.000	Significant

0.05 level of significance

Table 6 showed the Difference in the practicum performance of the graduates when they are grouped according to area of practicum. The p-value is less than the 0.05 level of significance which means that there is a significant difference in the practicum performance of the student interns when they are grouped according to area of practicum. This means that as the graduates experienced a high level of difficulty, like in Hospital practicum, they acquire only a Satisfactory ( 80-84 rating) practicum performance. On the other hand, as the graduates experienced a low level of difficulty such as in Foodservice and Community practicum, they acquire an Outstanding ( >90 rating) and Very Satisfactory ( 85-89 rating) in their practicum performance respectively.

This study is somehow similar to the study conducted by Adebakin ( 2015), which found that graduate students participation in internship has impact on academic performance and also has a significance influence on employment prospect. It was recommended that internship should be geared towards enhancing the knowledge, skills, attitude and personality of graduate students to prepare them in more holistic approach for employment.

**Table 7**  
 Relationship Between the Difficulties Encountered by the Graduates  
 in their Practicum and their Practicum Performance

Difficulties Encountered / Practicum Performance	Pearson r	p value	Interpretation
Foodservice	0.091	0.608	Not Significant
Community	-0.097	0.585	Not Significant
Hospital	-0.085	0.632	Not Significant

0.05 level of significance

Table 7 showed the relationship between the difficulties encountered by the graduates in their practicum and their practicum performance. The p-values of the three areas are greater than the 0.05 level of significance which means that the difficulties encountered by the graduates during their practicum has no significant relationship to their practicum performance in the three areas. This means that even if they have encountered difficulties in each area, their practicum performance was not affected and they did not get a grade below the Satisfactory level.

This study also affirmed the study conducted by Sevilla et.al., (2014) which revealed that there is no significant relationship between the academic performance and the training performance of students in terms of knowledge, skills and attitude.

**Conclusion:**

Based on the result of the survey, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The graduates encountered a Low level of difficulty on their Foodservice and Community practicum and a High level of difficulty in Hospital practicum.
2. In terms of practicum performance, majority of the respondents have Outstanding

performance in Foodservice area, Very Satisfactory performance in Community area and Fairly Satisfactory in Hospital area. This means that the graduates perform better in Foodservice and Community practicum compared to Hospital practicum.

3. There is a significant difference on the level of difficulties encountered by the graduates when they are grouped according to their practicum performance. This means that as the graduates experienced a high level of difficulty, like in Hospital practicum, they acquire only a Satisfactory rating in their practicum performance. On the other hand, as the graduates experienced a low level of difficulty such as in Foodservice and Community practicum, they acquire an Outstanding and Very Satisfactory rating in their practicum performance respectively.

4. It also showed that there is no correlation between the difficulties encountered by the graduates in all areas of practicum and their practicum performance. This means that even if they had encountered difficulties in each area, their practicum performance was not affected and they did not get a grade below the Satisfactory level.

### **Recommendations:**

Based on the given findings, the following were recommended by the researcher for implementation in the belief that it will benefit the BSND students who will undergo practicum. The BSND graduates encountered difficulties particularly in Hospital practicum, thus the College and the faculty members should focus more on the improvement of the indicators as stated in the Hospital practicum such as 1. Applying the theoretical skills; 2. Applying the knowledge gained in case presentations; 3. Assessing the nutritional status of patients ;4. Computing the diet of patients; 5. Setting the menu based on the computed diet; 6. Giving proper

diet counseling to assigned patients with special disease condition; 7. Modifying the menu of the day in the hospital according to the patient's disease condition; 8. Preparing nutritious recipes for the patient that are aesthetically acceptable; and 9. Counseling patients to explain to them clearly the importance of adhering to the diet order.

There should be an additional pre-practicum training in the hospital to enable them to gain enough knowledge, skills and attitude needed for Hospital practicum. Faculty members must have more laboratory activities that will enhance students' knowledge and skills in the indicators mentioned.

In terms of community practicum, they encountered a high level of difficulty in giving practical advice to improve the food intake of the family assigned to them, high level of difficulty in implementing a wellness activity and community nutrition education and in submitting required reports on time. In this regard, the students must be more exposed to diet counselling, and be able to think of variety of nutrition education strategy for the community depending on their needs. A stricter policy on submission of reports on time must be implemented by all ND faculty to prepare them for the greater tasks ahead during practicum.

### **Future Direction:**

This result of the study made the researcher understand the needs of the future interns. In the light of this, the recommendations should be carefully studied and implemented so as to help the students cope up with the difficulties they encountered in their practicum specifically in hospital practicum. A study on the best practices of the different universities with Nutrition and Dietetics program on their Practicum for benchmarking strategies can also be done.

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