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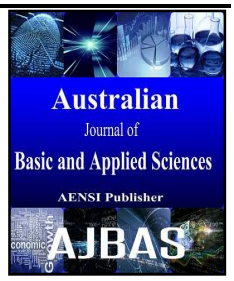

Career Preparation Plans of Selected Tourism Students:Towards A Proposed Center for Job Opportunities

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ABSTRACT

The College of Tourism and Hospitality Management, University of the City of Manila has been in existence for more than a decade now. Since its inception and operation ten (10) years ago there was never an attempt to look into the student's readiness in entering the world of work. Realizing how important it is for program managers and providers to know the student's level of preparedness in the world of work, this paper will look into the career preparation plans being made by the students to better equip themselves of the requirements and challenges of the workplace. This paper will particularly look into self-directed initiatives being made by the students. The purpose of this work is for the College or the University to be able to propose a program for career services to appropriately assist students to explore potential career options under the guidance of professionals.

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism is said to be the world's largest industry, generating in 2003 over USD 514 Billion in receipts from 697 million tourists and employing hundreds of million people worldwide. Almost 760 million travelled across borders in 2004; several times more travelled domestically. In the Philippines alone, there were 4.6 Million visitor arrivals that was recorded by the Department of Tourism which brought about a total 4.3 M (USD) tourism receipts. It was during the last decade that the probability of one being able to visit foreign lands in his lifetime has never been higher.

The tourism industry is a vast system consisting of several sectorswhich includes airlines, hotels, resorts, travel agencies and tour operators constituting the greater bulk. The various smaller entities that thrive and wane with tourism's upswings and downturns include souvenir shops, restaurants, bars and the like. The industry also goes beyond its business realm; it covers government and non-government organizations as well as educational institutions. Tourism generates both positive and negative effects and impacts on the culture, economy, and environment of generating and receiving countries. It can uplift country's living standards, instil greater pride in one's identity and make people more aware of their cultural and natural heritage.On the other hand, it can also corrupt values, cultures, traditions and degrade the environment. (Commission on Higher Education [CHED],CMO No. 30-2006)

Further, CHED also emphasizes that the aforementioned factors have ramifications on the Philippine education system ontourism. CHED (2006) also mentioned that a good starting point for reform was to make a thorough review of the management oriented curriculum that has, since the 70's, pervaded among tourism and hospitality schools. To be able to produce graduates that will not only survive but also thrive in a borderless economy, a paradigm shift made by the Commission on Higher Education from supply-driven to market-driven curriculum in terms of structure and content was adopted and prescribed by them. Responding to the needs of the industry, the new program on tourism emphasizes skills and competencies instead of just theoretical management approach and is expected to provide more but focused options for the students in

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terms of career paths. The curriculum generally incorporates subjects on international standards, sustainable development and practices to address issues that arise from market imperfections and the challenges of internationalization or globalization.

Considering sustainable development as the key to optimal growth in tourism industry, this set of programs on tourism, hospitality management and related fields was developed to support the tourism industry and to address its manpower needs more particularly, in preparation for the full implementation of the General Agreement of Trade and Services (GATS) under the aegis of the World Trade Organization.To support the Commission on its effort to institutionalize standards and quality assurance, the University of the City of Manila has in two (2) occasions revised its curriculum to align with that of CHED prescriptions. This is to realize the needed preparations and change to be able to produce graduates at par with the industry needs and requirements.

In pursuance of CHED's goal of providing graduates who contribute to the overall economic growth and development of the country, the College of Tourism and Hospitality Management, University of the City of Manila established in 2001; it has been in existence for more than a decade now. Since its inception and operation ten (10) years ago there was never an attempt to look into the student's readiness in entering the world of work despite its long years of operation. Realizing how important it is for program managers and providers to know the student's level of preparedness in the world of work, this paper will look into the career preparation plans being made by the students to better equip themselves of the requirements and challenges of the workplace. This paper will particularly look into self-directed initiatives being made by the students at their level. The purpose of this work is for the College or the University to propose a program for career services to appropriately assist students to explore potential career options under the guidance of professionals.

Further, to be able to come-up with good programs in preparing graduates in the future world of work, this paper was prepared to be able to know individual career preparation plans being undertaken by the students to acquire the needed competencies required of by most industries.

Objective:

The study will generally find out the student's career preparation plans after graduation. Specific questions were asked as to whether the students a. took civil service examination and how many percentage of those who took actually passed the said examination; b. attended career orientation seminars; c. uploaded CV in an online recruitment agency e.g. jobstreet, jobsdb, etc.; d. applied personally to different companies; e. are already working; f. have no the intention to work right away as they wanted to have a rest for a while; g. have plans to pursue graduate school works; h. have intention to pursue law school; i. are not yet ready to graduate and j. are excited to work.

Also, the profile of the students will also be looked into such as gender, age, monthly family income, number of siblings and whether their houses are rented.

Methodology:

Descriptive research was utilized using an open ended questionnaire. The respondents were basically 4th year tourism students under the College of Tourism and Hospitality Management enrolled during the 2nd Semester School Year 2013-2014. As a whole, there were three (3) sections of 4th year tourism students but convenience sampling technique was employed with a total turnout of 60% of the total population; or 45 students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Findings of the study revealed that 93% of the respondents were female; 62% under the age of 20; with less than 10,000PHP monthly income; with 2 siblings with is 33% of the respondents; first born usually; and house are mostly owned or 57%.

With regard to the career preparation plans of the students, it revealed that majority of the student took the civil service examination and contend that they anticipate to be employed in the public sector particularly at the Department of Tourism which is 87% of the entire number of respondents; the same number also passed the examination which categorizes them as civil service eligible. 98% of the respondents attended various types of career orientation seminars; 62% agreed to have uploaded their Curriculum Vitae in an online recruitment agencies.

51% of the respondents have personally applied in various public and private institutions to look for jobs and left also their CVs to these companies; 91% of the respondents agreed that they will immediately want to be on board and work right away. This findings are contrary to the study made by the University Registrar in 2014 when it asked among graduates of Batch 2014 (specifically findings that applies to tourism) revealed that only 11% was able to secure a job and 84% of the graduates are still looking for a job. Also, in the same study of the University (PLM), it revealed that that none of the respondents would like to work overseas or abroad, neither of them would like to take a second degree nor would like to enter into a business venture or be engaged in a church or religious activities.

58% of the respondents answered that they don't want to pursue graduate school work as they prioritize to earn income first than consider studying again; the remaining figure of 42% have the intention

to pursue graduate school work and study. It is interesting to note however that majority of the respondents plan to pursue law school if given the opportunity. Similar results revealed in the study made Peralta (2014) when she asked in an exit interview, tourism graduates immediate future plans. A question on whether they have been accepted to a graduate school revealed a total response of 2% out of the 128 graduates.

When asked about their excitement to leave school and work, 80% answered that they are not really that excited about work as they still have anxieties especially on the thought that they are going to leave the school.

It appears from the foregoing results that the feeling of separation anxiety from school after college is a valid feeling. Andy Hogg, a psychologist in private practice in Flagstaff, Arizona, said it's normal for recent college graduates to feel stressed and anxious It's a major life transition, and often people have postponed other life events like marriage until after they graduate from college. So frequently graduation is about a job search, change in relationships, change in residence, everything changes.

For many, graduation is still an exciting time full of achievement and exhilaration. Many graduates will feel fulfilled by their newfound independence. But for those who aren't as lucky in the job market, there are a few things they can do to eliminate some of the stress and anxietyOne of the first things to do is to plan after graduation. Many college students simply think about graduating and then they're going to think about their future life, when they really need to start making transition plans. Hogg suggests applying to jobs before graduation, and the best-case scenario is that an internship in college ends up as a full-time job after graduation. For graduates who didn't think ahead, it's important to know they're not alone.He also said when recent graduates are applying for a job, they should "evaluate and articulate their strengths, and for lots of people that's uncomfortable. Recent graduates need to think of a plan, which is probably the best way to counteract questions from family and friends. The process of searching for a good job often takes three to six months. Many times people haven't thought about it until after they are not in school, unemployed, and then they start coming up with a job search strategy. (Weaver, 2015).

In view of the foregoing findings, it is recommended that the University considers putting up a Centrefor Career Opportunities this is to guide the students in a choosing a major and a good career. It is a common knowledge that the choice of career depends entirely upon the vicissitudes of an individual's interests and goals and given this scenario a Centre could help student in their career preparation journey. What may seem like the correct career choice during a student's freshman year may be entirely different from their choices as a senior. The staffs of this proposed centre can assists students in whatever developments may occur during their college career and search for a job. A website for Career Opportunities particularly well-planned at that could provide information on job expos, workshops, panels, outreach opportunities, and fairs to help students decide upon the best path for themselves. A site on crucial interviewing, etiquette, networking, and research techniques outlined on the website could also aid student graduates find job easily. Further, a drop-in services could also be available for students with any questions, and they can also schedule career appointments to discuss in detail their problems, concerns, goals, and plans with an experienced professional.

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