

FACTORS AFFECTING THE AVAILMENT OF LPU–LAGUNA CITHM STUDENTS OF THE WORK AND TRAVEL ABROAD PROGRAM

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Abstract

The aim of the study is to determine the factors affecting the availment of LPU-Laguna CITHM students of the Work and Travel Abroad Program. Using quantitative research, the researchers gathered data using survey questionnaire that helped determine the leading factors that affects the availment of the participants for the Work and Travel Program. The researchers surveyed the 31 participants of United Towers Philippines for the summer 2015 Work and Travel Abroad Program. Based on the results gathered, the researchers concluded that majority of the participants are female and mostly Tourism students. All the participants are single and the majority of the population is 18 to 19 years old. The factor Culture and Travel Abroad showed the greatest factor that affects the participant in availing the Work and Travel Program while the least factor that affect the participants are the influence of Family and Relatives Abroad. The researchers found significant relationship between Gender and Culture and Travel Abroad, Friends and Previous batch of Applicants and Return of Investment and Future Employment. The perceived benefit of the program for the participants is gaining new knowledge and skills that cannot be learned in the four corners of the room and also being able to meet new friends and helps them in their credentials for future employment. The researchers made recommendation that will help increase the number of participants for the program relevant to the results of the study.

Keywords: *Availment, Work and Travel, Culture, Travel Abroad, CITHM*

INTRODUCTION

The hospitality and tourism industry is one of the biggest industries around the world. It consists of many sectors from the accommodation, housekeeping, transportation, food and beverage and travel agencies and tour operators. Each of these sectors then has its own roles in administrative fields like sales, marketing, accounting and human resources along with front-line positions like front desk operations and tour guiding. Many students are choosing courses under this industry because they think that it is an easy course but it is the complete opposite because it is a very labor intensive program. The thing about being in the course of the Hospitality and Tourism Industry is that it gives you a lot of choices when it comes to work opportunities.

Various companies today are offering work and travel abroad program that would give opportunities to the students who would like to avail of the program. These types of companies mainly state the financial benefits, self-fulfillment, and independence that you will get when you avail of this program as their marketing tool. With all of these benefits that a student can get, it is without a doubt, expensive. More and more students nowadays are very interested in this kind of program and even choose work and travel abroad instead of local internship and this study aims to know why.

Internships are a great way to get connected within your field and since traveling is central to a lot of hospitality sectors, having a global background will look great on a resume'. An internship is part of every college students' life before graduating. It serves as a training and experience in the real-world and what you will be facing when you are already working for yourself. Internships will help you get to know what is in store for you in the near future. Since the majority of the top to middle

management position recruitment in hospitality is rarely posted publicly, if one wants to make a career for himself in the industry, knowing the who's who is highly important.

Presently, most companies are open for interns because the interns serve as extra help for the business and the company owners do not have to worry about their salary but in return, the host company should provide necessary incentives to the student trainee as contained in the memorandum of agreement, such as free duty meals, travel allowance, and uniform, if possible according to Article 4, Section 6, of the CHED Memorandum Order No. 25, Series of 2009 entitled "Guidelines for Student Internship Program in the Philippines (SIPP) for all Programs with Practicum Subject". Consequently, the interns will get the training they are required to have while being equipped for the industry they have chosen. Interns are treated like normal employees and as time goes by, they will know how to act professionally.

There are some misconceptions between internship and the work and travel abroad program. Some people think that these two are the same when in fact, they are not. Internship is a temporary position in a company with work that is related in your chosen field. This should be connected to your program and should fit within the requirements. On the other hand, the work and travel program as defined by United Towers Philippines is a cultural exchange program sponsored by the United States. This program is available for college students, and provides them an opportunity to have a cultural experience in the U.S. while having work opportunities to subsidize their stay. The work they will have may or may not be connected to their chosen college program. The work and travel abroad program will only be considered as an internship when the work that you applied for fits in college program requirements.

According to Article 1, Section 1 of the CHED Memorandum Order No. 24, Series of 2009 entitled “Policies, Standards and Guidelines (PSGs) on Student Internship Abroad Program (SIAP)”, CHED encourages and promotes student exchange and strong academic linkage with business and industries in other countries for cross cultural training and skill enhancement to make Filipino students competitive for employment here and abroad. It just goes to show that the government is supporting schools that offer this kind of programs and that the government is ensuring the safety and well-being of the students while providing applied learning opportunities and cross-cultural training and skills enhancement in reputable companies and training institutions in various parts of the world.

The decision of students to engage in the work and travel or culture exchange program may be influenced by different factors. One can be peer influence. If one or more of the so-called circle of friends show interest in the program, then most likely, he will be encouraged to join as well. Another possible factor would be the influence of family and relatives. Family support is very important because it gives us confidence in pursuing what we want to do. Relatives abroad also influence the decision of the applicant and the family especially when financial support is being talked about. Another factor can be the own desire to apply in such program.

This study aims to determine the factors that lead the selected Hospitality students of Lyceum of the Philippines University–Laguna in availing of the work and travel abroad program despite its expensive cost. Also, this will help the future hospitality students in considering whether to avail of this program or not. Lastly, the researchers wanted to know if applying for the program after graduation will be beneficial especially because the researchers would also like to avail of such program after they graduate.

Conceptual Framework

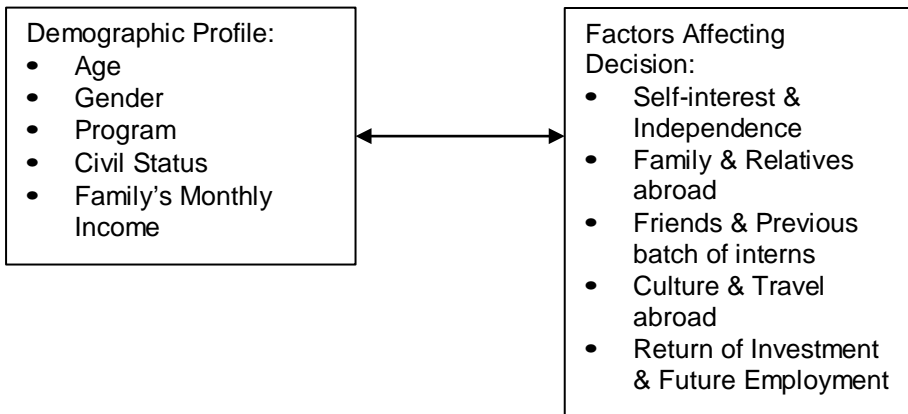


Figure 2. Conceptual Framework of the Study

This figure illustrates two variables, which is the demographic profile of the participants and factors affecting decision. The demographic profile of the participants, which is the independent variable, consists of age, gender, program, civil status, and family's monthly income. The demographic profile of the respondents influences their decisions regarding whether to avail of the work and travel program or not. Their demographic profiles support the factors that affect them in choosing this program. The other variable, which is the dependent variable, is the factors that affect the students in choosing the work and travel program which is consists of friends, family, cultural exchange, independence, self-interest, return of investment, and future employment. The relationship between the demographic and factors is symbolized by the arrow connecting the two given variables.

Statement of the Problem

The objective of the researchers in doing this study is to determine the factors that affect the availment of LPU-Laguna CITHM students of the

Work and Travel Abroad Program. This study answers the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of:
 - 1.1. Age;
 - 1.2. Gender;
 - 1.3. Program;
 - 1.4. Civil status; and
 - 1.5. Family's Monthly Income?
2. What are the factors that affect the decision of the respondents to avail of the program in terms of:
 - 2.1. personal interest and independence;
 - 2.2. family and relatives abroad;
 - 2.3. friends and previous batch of applicants;
 - 2.4. culture and travel abroad;
 - 2.5. return of investment and future employment?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the demographic profile of the respondents and the factors that affected the decision of the respondents?
4. What do you think are the benefits that you will acquire during the work and travel program?

Research Design

The type of research used in this study is a descriptive method with a quantitative approach. Quantitative methods emphasize objective measurements and the statistical, mathematical, or numerical analysis of data collected through polls, questionnaires, and surveys, or by manipulating pre-existing statistical data using computational techniques (Babbie, E 2010). Quantitative research focuses on gathering numerical data and generalizing it across groups of people or to explain a particular phenomenon (Muijs, D 2011). This survey will determine the factors that would lead CITHM students in choosing to apply for the Work and Travel Abroad Program.

Participants of the Study

The researchers surveyed the thirty one (31) CITHM students who applied for the 2015 Work and Travel Abroad program of United Tower Philippines.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Profile

The result shows that the maximum of the participants is in the age of 18 to 19 years old which has a percent of 90.32. On the contrary, the minimum of the participants is in the age of 20 to 21 years old which has a percent of 9.68. The participants of this program are most likely in the 18 to 19 yrs. old age bracket because most of the participants are third year college students and the required age for applying in the program is within 18 to 26 years old and must be enrolled as an undergraduate student (2nd year or 3rd year student).

The results on gender shows that majority of the participants is female with a percent of 93.55. On the other hand, minority of the participants is male with 6.45 percent. In the website Decision Making Confidence, it is said that women use other people opinions to help make their own decision. Men use other people's decisions to help them form their own opinion. On the research conducted by Kersten C. & Welsh S. (2013) it shows that women self-initiate expatriation approximately thirty percent more frequently than men.

The result on program shows that most of the participants are taking up BS in International Travel and Tourism Management which has a percent of 61.29. Following the BSITTM students are the BS Cruise line Operations in Hotel Services with a percent of 12.90. Next on the list are the BS Cruise line Operation in Culinary Arts with 12.36 percent of the population. On the contrary, the minority are taking up BS in Hotel and Restaurant Administration which has a percentage of 6.45.

BS in International Travel and Tourism Management students are more likely to apply for Work and Travel Program since the majority of the population of CITHM students are Tourism students. Since they are tourism students, the opportunity to travel internationally is a big achievement and an expectation for them when they chose to be in this program.

The result on civil status shows that all of the participants are single. Civil status is included in our demographic profile of the participants because demographic variables like civil status can influence the decision making of the students in the work and travel abroad program.

The result on family's monthly income shows that the majority of the participants have a family monthly income of P20,834 and over, which has a percentage of 58.06. On the other hand, participants with a monthly family

income of P8,334 to P20,833.99 with a 38.71 percent is next with the greatest responses. On the contrary, the minority of the participants has an income of under P3,334 which has a percent of 3.23. Based on the results, the great majority of the participants for the program have the financial capacity to join the Work and Travel Program. They have the ability to pay and compensate for their travel and other fees required by the sponsor company.

Factors Affecting the Participants in Availing of the Work and Travel Abroad Program

The result shows that experience independence has a mean of 3.87 while satisfying the personal interest has a mean of 3.77 which both interprets as strongly agree. This means that personal interest and independence is a great factor that can affect the participants' decision in availing of the work and travel abroad program. According to Caskey (2013), working abroad is just like studying abroad because it requires (and helps develop) a certain level of independence. It will serve as a personal development that comes along with professional development.

On the other hand, the result regarding family and relatives abroad states that the influence of parents and other family members has a mean of 3.42 and the influence of relatives abroad who wants to be visited has a mean of 3.06 which both interprets as agree. This data shows that not all the participants in the work and travel abroad program are influenced by their family and relatives. This is contrary to the study of Phang (2013) which said that influences and recommendations from family members, relatives, friends and professors also play an important role in a student's decision-making process. Not all of the decisions of the participants are based on the recommendations from family members. It can be based on their personal

interest of pursuing their chosen careers and developing their skills by actual performance on their jobs.

The result regarding friends and previous batch of applicants shows that the encouragement by the experience of the previous batch of applicants is 3.61 and interprets as Strongly Agree. Meanwhile, the mean of the mean of friends and classmates that are applying for the program is 3.52 which also interpret to Strongly Agree. The study from APS, 2013 supports this data as teens spend an increasing amount of time with their peer and the feedback they get from their friends and classmates may tune the brain's reward system to be more sensitive to the reward value of risky behavior. Most of the participants are classmates and belong to the same circle of friends.

The result about culture and travel abroad shows that the mean of the desire to travel abroad is 3.90 which interpret as strongly agree and the desire to experience different culture or cross-cultural experience is 3.87 which also interprets as strongly agree. Hence, the average factors in availing of the work and travel abroad program in terms of culture and travel abroad program are strongly agreed. Working with other nationalities and learning about their culture is one of the benefits of Work and Travel as per the answer of one of the participants.

The results regarding financial gain and future employments indicates that enhancement of credentials for future employment has a mean of 3.87 and financial gain has a mean of 3.74 which both interprets to strongly agree. Thus, the average of the factors in choosing the work and travel abroad program is strongly agreed in terms of return of investment and future employment. The answer that the researchers got from the participants supports this data as majority of them answered that it will help

them in their future career. In one of the answers, the participants said that the benefit of applying for the Work and Travel Program is the independence and helps them for the future.

Caskey 2013) also stated that one of the benefits is standing out. This means you will stand out to future employers, especially if you convey what a meaningful experience your international internship was, both personally and professionally. Financial gain is also important because this program lets the participants experience working and earning money that will use to pay for the house rent, the groceries and other personal things. This will motivate participants to value and budget the salary given to them and experience the real-life of working in the industry.

Significant Relationship between Demographic Profile and Factors

Based on the results of the study, the researchers found no significant relationship between the demographic profile in terms of age, program, family's monthly income and the factors that affect the availment of the participants of the Work and Travel Abroad Program. However, the results showed that there is a significant relationship between Gender and Friends and Previous Batch of Interns, Culture and Travel Abroad and Return of Investment and Future Employment

Perceived Benefits in Applying for the Work and Travel Abroad Program

The researchers asked the participants of the study on what do they think would be the benefits of the work and travel program for them. Majority of them answered that they would be able to gain experiences like traveling abroad and working in the United States. They also answered that this opportunity enables them to gain new knowledge and skills that the four

corners of the classroom cannot offer. Moreover, more than half of the students answered that they would meet new friends while on this program and they would learn how to be independent. Some also answered that the work and travel program could also be used as credentials for their future careers in the hospitality and tourism industry.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

This chapter summarizes the results gathered from the study and the conclusion is also based on the hypotheses of the study.

The result of the study regarding the demographic profile of the participants shows that most of the respondents are in the age of eighteen to nineteen years old. Majority of the participants in the study are female. All of the participants surveyed are single. Most of the respondents have an income of eight thousand to twenty one thousand pesos. Moreover, majority of the participants are currently taking up BS International Travel and Tourism Management.

The participants strongly agreed that the factors personal interest and independence, friends and previous batch of applicants, culture and travel abroad and return of investment and future employment have influenced the participants in choosing the Work and Travel Program.

The relationship between the demographic profile of the participants and the factors that lead them to choose the work and travel program resulted to negligible relationship and is not significant.

The work and travel abroad program has several benefits like gaining more travel experience and working in the United States. Moreover,

opportunity to gain new knowledge and skills, meeting new friends, independence, and additional credentials for future employment were deemed as benefits of the work and travel program.

Recommendations

The researchers' recommendations are based on the results or the findings of the study. From the results, the researchers concluded to recommend that the company must have a strategy that will encourage more male participants to join the program like a male representative from the company that can be present in the orientation. The company can also offer a discounts and flexible terms of payment for participants with a low family income. The company can also offer work that will fit the different programs so that there will be more participants from the other programs.

Regarding the results in terms of factor, since the previous batch of applicants showed a great factor that influenced the decision of present applicants the company can feature the experience of the previous applicants from LPU – Laguna and can also let them share what their lives have been like during the Work and Travel Program and share their experiences so that more students will be encouraged to join the program.

However, this study is only limited to the applicants of United Towers Philippines in Lyceum of the Philippines University - Laguna. Future researchers can expand the scope and limitation of this study to the other partners of the university in terms of work and travel or even other universities offering their students the same program. Moreover, this study could be used by future researchers who would also like to conduct studies regarding the work and travel abroad program that is not included in this study.

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