LINKING FILIPINO TOURISM GRADUATES' OCCUPATIONAL COMPETENCIES AND CAREER ADAPTABILITY

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Abstract

At the core of tourism literature, the issue of recruiting and retaining qualified workforce remains a subject for empirical investigation. This study aims to contribute to the growing interest in the nexus between graduate competencies and career adaptability. A case study of Travel Management Program graduates (n=78) in the capital of the Philippines was carried out via a multi-aspect questionnaire. It has been highlighted that career adaptable individuals are more likely to readapt their personal preferences and goal orientation in their career life. Understanding the factor dimensions of career adaptability as well as the usefulness of skills and competencies among travel management graduates in their work will help academicians and human resource practitioners manage students' and employees' career through intervention programs for career development.

Keywords: *Occupational Competencies, Career Adaptability, Tourism*

Introduction

While tourism remains as one of the world's largest and rapidly growing industries that creates many employment opportunities (Aynalem, et al., 2016), issues on the qualified workforce, particularly in the recruitment as well as retention remain at the core of tourism employment literature (Baum, 2007; Chan & Kuok, 2011; Tsai, 2013; Bednarska, 2013). Specifically, identifying the skills requisites for a range of industry positions (Busby, 2005; Munar & Montano, 2009; Tribe, 2005; Dhiman, 2012), equipping the graduates with the essential skills and training to perform well at entry-level position (Munar & Montano, 2009), and educating future managers and executives to serve the common hospitality and tourism elements such as restaurants, hotels, travel, attractions, conventions, and leisure (Ottenbacher, et al., 2009) have gained the attention of tourism scholars. Such perennial concern is shaped by a multitude of factors such as comparatively low salaries, long and not regular working hours, work on holidays and weekends, lack of training and career opportunities (Fominienė, et al., 2015) vis-à-vis the poor image of tourism sector (Jones &

Haven, 2005). The lack of preparedness among graduates for the workplace has, in fact, witnessed a massive call for universities to produce more employable graduates who are equipped with transferable skills (Dhiman, 2012; Spowart, 2011), which include interpersonal, teamwork, communication, and problem-solving skills among the graduates (Christou & Sigala, 2002; Hind, et al., 2007).

Today, more than ever, the task of higher education institutions to develop highly adaptable individuals due to workplace pressures (Autin, et al., 2017; Zhou & Lin, 2016; Akkermans, et al., 2018) cannot be underestimated. With the current work demands, students with high work readiness and employability skills, able to explore possible career paths, form more specific vocational goals and plans, and act to implement those goals (Lent & Brown, 2013) make them more adaptable in the field. As a multidimensional construct, Savickas (2005) defined career adaptability as the individual's readiness and resources for coping with current and imminent vocational development tasks, occupational transitions, and personal traumas. Replacing career maturity, it encompasses being future-oriented and forestalling new career tasks (concern), taking responsibility for career development (control), exploring career opportunities (curiosity) and self-efficacy beliefs in realizing career goals (confidence) and consequently helping people manage career transitions (Savickas, 2005).

In recent years, the concept of career adaptability has been viewed as a survival skill (Kivunja, 2014; Maree, 2015; Ebenehi, et al., 2016), mediator or moderator (Cai, et al., 2015; Johnston, 2016; Nilforooshan & Salimi, 2016) and a resource in support of its positive outcomes and other consequential responses (Chan & Mai, 2015; Johnston, et al., 2016; Zacher, 2015). Factors defining a successful career are certainly intertwined with an individual's career competency (Kuijpers, et al., 2013) which is also evident in the tourism sector (Chang, et al., 2014). While it is true that career experiences of hospitality and tourism graduates in Hong Kong and Australia (King, et al., 2003), hospitality students' readiness for work in Taiwan (Wang & Tsai, 2014), career adaptability of hotel employees in Pakistan (Sattar, et al., 2017), work readiness among tourism graduates, had been investigated, empirical data on the career adaptability of Filipino tourism graduates remains a blank spot in the literature. Hence, this study purports to establish baseline information on the nexus between the perceived utility of occupational competencies and career adaptability among a select group of tourism graduates from academic institutions at the capital of the Philippines.

The succeeding parts of the paper include a discussion of the theoretical framing of the paper vis-à-vis the relevant literature on occupational competencies and career adaptability. This is followed by a description of the methodological aspect of the paper. Subsequently, the empirical results of the study and discussion in the light of previous investigations are presented. Finally, the human resource

implications of the study, as well as the limitations and future directions are described.

Theoretical Background

Theoretical Framing

This study is based on Savickas' notion (2009) of career adaptability as a life designing paradigm that could well capsulize the intricacy of careers in 21st-century life. Being extremely substantial in the career development field, career adaptability shows psychosocial constructs that reveal individual resources to confront challenges, such as developmental tasks and work transitions, which are an inescapable part of life (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Savickas (1997) also averred that the construct of career adaptability cuts across learning, decision-making, and coping processes. Ideally, career adaptation resources were outlined within the framework of career construction, namely: concern, control, curiosity, confidence, and commitment (Savickas et al., 2009). When vocational tasks, work transitions, or work traumas happen, adaptable individuals are abstracted as (a) being concerned with preparing oneself for the threats and opportunities of the future; (b) controlling of trying to be responsible to mold oneself with the environment as one encounters what will happen next using self-discipline, effort, and persistence; (c) demonstrating curiosity by discovering the possible and alternative scenarios of the future, and (d) reinforcement of self-confidence to actualize one's goals (Porfeli & Savickas, 2012). The inclusion of cooperation is notionally apt for overall adaptability, and was theorized as the fifth dimension referring to one's ability to positively interact with and work alongside others.

Literature Review

Occupational/Career Competencies

Through the years, identifying valid job competencies and skill sets required for future leaders (Tesone & Ricci, 2005) to make them competitive (Chung-Herrera et al., 2003; Agrusa et al., 2004) has facilitated human resource managers in improving hiring and selection practices as well as in developing strategies to retain managers and career planning initiatives (Chung-Herrera, et al., 2003; Ghiselli et al., 2001).

The role of career competence is of prime consideration in the tourism industry as well as employers' standards for current and future employees (Lertwannawit, et al., 2009). In tourism-related fields, several studies have identified warm hospitality and friendliness to clients (Lertwannawit et al., 2009; Zehrer & Mossenlechner, 2009; Dhiman, 2012; Nagarjuna & Kallarakal, 2014),

communications skills (Bergman & Klefsjö, 2003; Zehrer et al., 2009), empathy, motivation, decision-making abilities, planning abilities, and improvisation abilities (Zehrer, et al., 2009), and commitment to business (Högnäs, 2015), and professionalism, integrity, punctuality, and politeness (Hassan et al., 2009) as relevant competencies. Interestingly, these soft skills are more important than hard skills (Fominienė, et al., 2015) and have been found to have a positive relation with career success (Lertwannawit, et al., 2011).

Career Adaptability

Career adaptation resources are the strength or capability of self-regulation that a person must have to solve problems in vocational or job assignments, job transitions, and job traumas. Studies show that career adaptability has a significant effect on work engagement, which, in turn, predicts employee well-being (Yang, et al., 2019); poses a positive relationship with work performance (Akça, et al., 2018) and employee engagement (Tladinyane & Merwe, 2016); induces the positive effect of core self-evaluations on career planning, career exploration, as well as being positively related to perceived internal and external marketability, which both subsequently were negatively associated with job and career insecurity (Spurk, et al., 2015). Johnston (2016), for his part, emphasized that individuals can capitalize on these resources as they develop their careers; likewise, a need to design, implement, and evaluation of interventions aimed at increasing career adaptability prompts human resource practitioners and managers in organizations for post-career choice work adjustment. Career adaptability resources appear to facilitate adapting responses to changing conditions.

In the field of tourism and hospitality, positive outcomes accruing from career adaptability cannot be underestimated. Previous studies have shown that adaptable individuals are better performers in the industry posing an effect on career adaptability, orientation to happiness, and job performance in the hospitality industry (Sattar, et al., 2017). The value of high performance work practices (HPWP) as a means of performance-enhancing has been identified through their probe on career adaptability which partially mediates the relationship between work social support and turnover intentions (Karatepe & Olugbade, 2016). This study argues that high perceived occupational competencies lead to better career adaptability of Filipino tourism graduates.

Methods

Design, Subjects and Study Site

This study is a descriptive-exploratory study. Target respondents were based on the official lists of graduates of AY 2014-18 provided by the academic institutions

in Metro Manila that were considered Centers of Excellence (COE) by the Commission of Higher Education (CHED). Although the target sample size for each institution was set at 50, the response yielded only 78 completed questionnaires (39% retrieval rate) coming from graduates within the Academic Year 2014-2018 of Bachelor of Science in Tourism or Travel Management program or its equivalent. The low turn-out of respondents was due to the difficulty of reaching out the selected respondents whose original email addresses were no longer active, and failure of some to completely accomplish the tool thus rendering them as non-usable tools. Equally, when the researchers tried tracing all the given names through Facebook messenger, most did not respond to the survey request since the researchers were not known to them. Of the retrieved questionnaires, 39 were found to have graduated in 2018; 16 of whom graduated from the year 2017; 14 graduated in 2014; 4 graduated in 2016; 2 from 2015. Of this, 73 (93.6%) are employees, and the rest hold supervisory and managerial positions.

Data Collection Procedure and Ethical Considerations

Ethical clearance from a local ethics committee was secured for this research. Permission to adopt the survey instrument was sought from the respective authors and permission to conduct the study was obtained from academic institutions recognized as Centers of Excellence with their respective Tourism or Travel Management programs. The researchers provided a survey web link to the respondents through social media platforms such as Facebook messenger and/ or individual emails as well as manual survey distribution. The online survey consisted of the informed consent of participant form and the questionnaire in Google forms, while for manual distribution, hard copies of the survey were given through the department chairs.

Data Measure

In this study, the Career Adapt-Abilities + Cooperation Scale (CAAS+C) (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012) was used to measure graduates' career adaptability skills and competencies, particularly in the five dimensions of the scale, namely: concern, control, curiosity, confidence and cooperation. Likewise, these career adaptability dimensions were measured using an 8-point and 5-point Likert scale, respectively. Cronbach alpha of the Career Adaptability Scale is 0.96, indicating that the instrument is highly reliable and internally consistent. The graduates' perceived utility of their occupational competencies (PUOC) was measured through the Graduate Tracer Study developed by de Guzman and de Castro (2006). Computed Cronbach Alpha values of 95.1% (PUOC) showing that the items are internally consistent to the construct being measured.

Data Analysis

Data were treated in-depth using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24. Cross tabulations of the variables regarding profiles of the Tourism graduates were treated using descriptively using frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation. To determine the interrelationships among the CAAS+C items and bring out its underlying dimensions, the exploratory factor analysis, a data reduction tool, was used. Computation of the Eigenvalues of each dimension was done, and discarded those dimensions with computed values less than 1. Final reduction in the number of items was carried out using factor loadings which indicate correlations between the delineated factors and their individual items. This was done by discarding all items the factors loadings and communalities of which are less than 0.40. Furthermore, Pearson correlation coefficient was used to show the strength and direction of relationship between the tourism graduates' perceived utility of occupational competencies and career adaptability.

Results

Of the 78 Tourism and Travel Management graduates involved in this study, a good number of respondents were females (58 or 74.4%), single (69 or 88.5%), and belonged to the 21-25 age group (47 or 60.2%). Majority were not directly hired by the company where they had their OJT/practicum/internship (57 or 73.1%). Additionally, most of them were hired from 0-6 months after their graduation (63 or 80.8%); hired locally (71 or 91%) and with only 5 (6.4%) hired overseas. Notably, 37 (47.4%) enjoy a regular or permanent status, while 20 (25.7%) and 18 (23%) work under probationary status and contractual basis, respectively. The majority of the respondents enjoy the entry-level status (73 or 93.6%), with only a few holding supervisory (3 or 3.9%) and managerial (2 or 2.6%) positions. Interestingly, 62 (79.5%) said their first job was related to their collegiate program.

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of Graduate Respondents (n = 78)

	n	%		n	%
Gender			**First job employment status**		
Male	20	25.6	Regular or Permanent	37	47.4
Female	58	74.4	Probationary	20	25.7
			Contractual	18	23
Age					
16-20	2	2.6	**Type of Organization**		
21-25	47	60.2	Private	73	93.6
26-30	6	7.7	Government	5	6.4
			Others		
Civil Status					
Single	69	88.5	**Job level position**		
Married	8	10.3	Employee	73	93.6
Single Parent	1	1.3	Supervisory	3	3.9
Year Graduated			Managerial	2	2.6
2013	1	1.3			
2014	14	17.9			
2015	2	2.6			
2016	4	5.1			
2017	16	20.5			
2018	39	50.0			
2019	1	1.3			
Honors/Awards					
Cum Laude	50	64.1	**First job related to college program**		
Magna Cum Laude	8	10.3			
None	20	25.6			
			Yes	62	79.5
Hired by OJT/internship/practicum company after graduation			No	16	20.5
Yes	41	19.8			
No	57	73.1	**Length of stay in first job**		
			Less than a year	29	37.2
			1 year but less than 3 years	23	29.5
			3 years or more	8	10.3
Job waiting time					
0-3 months	50	64.1			
4-6 months	13	16.7			
7-9 months	3	3.9			
10-12 months	5	6.4			
Place of work					
Local	71	91			
Abroad	5	6.4			

Table 2

Exploratory factor analysis results of tourism graduates' career adaptability

Career Adaptability Factors and Items	Factor Loading	Eigenvalue	Variance	Reliability Coefficient
People Orientation		4.67	17.40	.928
Cooperating with others on group projects	0.792			
Acting friendly	0.787			
Going along with the group	0.787			
Getting along with all kinds of people	0.715			
Playing my part on a team	0.658			
Learning to be a good listener	0.656			
Compromising with other people	0.647			
Becoming less self-centered	0.635			
Sharing with others	0.589			
Contributing to my community	0.508			
Future Orientation		3.79	14.57	.904
Preparing for the future	0.784			
Becoming aware of the educational and vocational choices that I must make	0.769			
Planning how to achieve my goals	0.758			
Keeping upbeat	0.731			
Realizing that today's choices shape my future	0.731			
Thinking about what my future will be like	0.724			
Concerned about my career	0.649			
Decisional Orientation		2.97	12.78	.883
Taking responsibility for my actions	0.738			
Making decisions by myself	0.733			
Counting on myself	0.733			
Doing what's right for me	0.678			
Sticking up for my beliefs	0.660			
Taking care to do things well	0.524			
Performing tasks efficiently	0.427			
Learning and Flexibility Orientation		2.73	11.28	.894
Probing deeply into questions that I have	0.688			
Becoming curious about new opportunities	0.687			
Observing different ways of doing things	0.656			
Investigating options before making a choice	0.607			
Looking for opportunities to grow as a person	0.594			
Learning new skills	0.591			
Exploring my surroundings	0.533			
Endurance Orientation		1.00	6.39	.809
Working up to my ability	0.691			
Overcoming obstacles	0.563			
Solving problems	0.452			
Total Variance Explained			62.43	

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy = 0 .921

The result of factor analysis on how strong the Tourism and Travel Management graduates have developed each of the abilities stipulated in the CAAS+C Scale likewise, the factor analysis results of tourism graduates' career adaptability is presented in Table 3. The data were factor analyzed using the principal component method with varimax rotation resulting in five factors (62% of variance explained, a Kaiser-Meyer- Olkin measure of .921, and Cronbach alphas ranging between .809 and .928), discarding all items loading less than .40. Decision rules resulted in accepting all 34 statements surfacing five factor dimensions, labeled in order to decrease explained variance. Factor 1, which regarded *People Orientation*, is composed of 10 variables which describes the social abilities that enable the graduates to interact and collaborate with others. Factor 2, which reflects *Future Orientation*, includes 8 variables that represent essential skills that facilitate the graduates' determination to achieve their goals. Factor 3 consists of 7 variables, which define the *Decisional Orientation* that allows the graduates to have that sense of responsibility and accountability for decisions and actions. Factor 4 implies the *Learning and Flexibility Orientation* which contains 7 variables that typify graduates' ability to be analytical and inquisitive when dealing with various situations. Lastly, Factor 5 outlines Endurance Orientation consisting of 2 variables that help the graduates sustain their strength and confidence to confront challenges and opportunities.

Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics of the dimensions of the tourism graduates' perceived utility of occupational competencies and career adaptability. On an 8-pt Likert scale measuring utility level, the graduates asserted that the yielding skills (mean=7.54) are most useful to them, followed by enhancing skills (mean=7.51) and accelerating skills (mean=7.16). Moreover, career adaptability strengths developed by tourism graduates rated on a 5-pt Likert scale, indicated that they had been more endurance oriented (mean=4.36) and future oriented (mean=4.35), followed by being learning and flexibility oriented (mean= 4.24) and decisional oriented (mean=4.23). Notably, although being people-oriented (mean= 4.18) ranked last among the career adaptability dimensions, tourism graduates still rated it very strongly. Standard deviations ranging from 0.51 to 0.65 indicated a more homogenous response among the respondents though there is a little heterogeneity in their responses in rating the accelerating skills.

Pearson Correlation Coefficients (Table 4) indicated a number of weak positive correlations between the dimensions of the graduates' perceived utility of occupational competencies and career adaptability. Correlation values showed that the more the graduates utilize their enhancing ($r = 0.233$, $p<0.05$) and accelerating skills ($r = 0.259$, $p<0.05$), the more they are future oriented. Moreover, the more they utilize their enhancing skills, the more they are decisional ($r = 0.235$, $p<0.05$) and endurance-oriented ($r = 0.263$, $p<0.05$). Notably, yielding skills did not relate to any career adaptability dimensions.

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics of tourism graduates' perceived utility of occupational competencies and career adaptability

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Scale
Perceived Utility of Occupational Competencies			
Enhancing Skills	7.51	.53	8-pt scale (utility level)
Yielding Skills	7.54	.51	
Accelerating Skills	7.16	.82	
Career Adaptability Dimensions			
People Orientation	4.18	.65	5-pt scale (Strength of development)
Future Orientation	4.35	.58	
Decisional Orientation	4.23	.62	
Learning and Flexibility Orientation	4.24	.60	
Endurance Orientation	4.36	.63	

Table 4
Correlation of tourism graduates' perceived utility of occupational competencies and career adaptability dimensions

	Enhancing Skills	Yielding Skills	Accelerating Skills
People Orientation	0.189	0.144	0.061
Future Orientation	0.233*	0.124	0.259*
Decisional Orientation	0.235*	0.105	0.183
Learning and Flexibility Orientation	0.175	0.039	0.120
Endurance Orientation	0.263*	0.125	0.157

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Discussion

Factors influencing tourism graduates' career adaptability

In this study, contributing the most to tourism graduates' career adaptability is their people orientation. Being a people-oriented industry, the tourism industry considers the interpersonal dimension an important segment of the model of career adaptability. As Nye et al., (2017) argued, adding the cooperation factor is vital when attempting to embody the full career adaptability construct. This is similar to what Liburd and Edwards (2018) emphasized: professional tourism is a skilled practice engaged with others in a social and physical world. Findings of this study also revealed that Tourism graduate respondents rated the future orientation as a contributory dimension to their career adaptability. Similarly, Chan, et al., (2016) and Guan, et. al. (2015), for their part, affirmed that the recognition of goals is enabled by the choices and opportunities as well as the career satisfaction in their occupation leading them to aim for higher life or professional goals. The learning and flexibility orientation which came in third,

found semblance with previous studies, which indicated that graduates are enthused to discover potential opportunities, that may influence work roles and amplifies probable actions that may lead to these career prospects (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012; Bimrose & Hearne, 2012; Fiori, et al., 2015; Zacher, 2014). Relative indicator of the self-governing and self-determination component, decisional orientation is connected with a control that empowers individuals to become accountable for shaping themselves and their environments towards career advancement (Douglas & Duffy, 2015; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012; Fiori, et.al., 2015). Endurance orientation, the least among the factor dimensions, is associated with self-confidence and self-assurance, implying that confident people perform tasks more efficiently with a great belief in one's ability to solve problems and succeed (Zacher, 2015).

Tourism graduates' perceived utility of occupational competencies and career adaptability

In this study, graduate respondents considered the yielding skills, which include initiative, leadership skills, productivity, time management skills, and collaboration skills, as the most important. The same skills, according to Johnson, Huang and Doyle (2019) are needed by tourism professionals in their pursuit of sustainable tourism. The tourism graduates considered enhancing skills (adaptability, social and relational skills, verbal communication skills, critical thinking skills, problem solving skills, self-reliance, flexibility and tolerance) to be important in delivering goods and services in the industry. This finds concurrence with what Willams (2015) and Azim, et al. (2010) highlighted: the industry's demands are employees who are adept both in the technical and soft skills, which would include communication, teamwork, leadership, conflict management, negotiation, professionalism, and ethics. Even accelerating skills (media literacy skills, information and technology literacy, written communication skills, entrepreneurial skills and ability to work independently) are highly valued among tourism graduates. As Spante, et al., (2018) stressed, the concept of digital literacy would cover cognitive skills, social practices and proactive engagement with digital content.

The career adaptability strengths developed by tourism graduates in this study show that they had been more endurance-oriented. This is in concurrence with the assertions of Savickas (2005) and Greenleaf (2011) that career adaptability resources like readiness, confidence, control, support and decision-making skills, and problem-solving skills facilitate individuals to overcome career life transitions. Markedly, while being people-oriented ranked last among the career adaptability dimensions, tourism graduates still rated it very strongly. This finding runs parallel with Tsai (2017), Wickramasinghe and Perera (2010), and

Finch et al. (2013), who all underscored the importance of soft skills or interpersonal skills likewise, the value of teamwork for learning real-world communications, decision-making, and business planning).

Correlation of tourism graduates' perceived utility of occupational competencies and career adaptability dimensions

As shown, a number of weak positive correlations between the dimensions of the graduates' perceived utility of occupational competencies and career adaptability were noted in this study. Specifically, as graduates utilize their enhancing and accelerating skills, the more they become future oriented. Tourism graduates have seen the value of being proficient both in the technical and soft skills such as communication, teamwork, leadership, conflict management, professionalism, ethics, media, information and technology literacy, entrepreneurial skills and ability to work independently which are essential in facilitating their determination to achieve their goals. This runs parallel with Chan (2010) and Zehrer and Mossenlechner (2009), who asserted that higher-order thinking skills like planning and organizational skills prepare graduates to become effective managers in the latter part of their careers as they confront a highly competitive and globalized business environment. Moreover, the results of this study indicate that the more tourism graduates have a sense of responsibility and accountability for decisions and actions, the more they sustain their strength and confidence to confront challenges and opportunities. This is in accord with the assertions of Fominienė et al., (2015) that personal, social and learning competence is essential to an individual's career planning and choice of a future profession. However, yielding skills (initiative; leadership skills; productivity; time management skills; collaboration skills) did not have a relationship to any career adaptability dimensions. Largely, skills in tourism and hospitality industry would cover a range of competencies within the categories of hospitality operations skills, human resource skills, personal skills, and conceptual skills (Espellita & Maravilla, 2019) likewise, comprehension of the global issues and trends, self-marketing skills, lifelong-learning skills (Tsai, 2017).

Implications to Policy and Practice

With the dynamism of the industry that requires adaptable and flexible workforce, it is therefore imperative for higher educational institutions to manage students' career, to pursue inculcating career-related resources and competencies, particularly in the provision of successful internship program to fully prepare students in their potential world of work. Specifically, the students' personal skills development and practical work experience need to be embedded

in the program planning and course learning outcomes. Similarly, aligning higher education pursuits with the needs of the industry should be stimulated through careful actions by academic institutions to embed skills and attributes within instructional programs. This can be done by implementing a holistic balance of theoretical education and practical training to achieve professionalism based on their occupational preferences in the travel, tour, airline, conventions and exhibitions operations and management, to name a few. Likewise, a strong collaboration between tourism educators and industry partners in designing the curricula, as well as active engagement in creating developmental programs geared towards equipping the would-be professionals with the right attitude and skills needed in their prospective career should be institutionalized.

To sustain a sustainable workforce, it is recommended that human resource policies and practices among tourism businesses, employees must be allowed to demonstrate their career potential through job rotations, job enlargement as their skills and capabilities are accordingly observed and directed. The industry must develop a clear career pathing program. Human resource management must have up-to-date information on the industry's career trends to facilitate them in evaluating the qualifications and required skills and having a framework for the career and training development process. Vital information about these career paths must be made available for current and prospective staff from the time of their induction for them to start planning their careers. Positive work conditions relating to salary and benefits, job security and working hours must also be adopted in the pursuit of sustainable tourism employment. Well-run human resources management initiatives and interventions must be in place in the tour, travel and hospitality industry that would improve the quality of work experience and foster positive image of the industry. Tourism and hospitality HR professionals must be able to map out training plans, multiple career path programs providing engaging work in a positive social and physical environment, and a sense of an attractive career future contributing to the feelings of security and well-being among employees.

Conclusion

This study is an attempt to establish baseline information on the nexus between the perceived utility of occupational competencies and career adaptability among a select group of tourism graduates from academic institutions in the capital of the Philippines. In this study, graduates who have developed yielding skills have seen their advantage in their work in terms of conflict resolution, project conceptualization, and task implementation. Likewise, tourism graduates' social abilities and persevering goal-driven attitude are aptly essential in the tour, travel, and hospitality industry. It was highlighted that graduates' enhancing and accelerating skills facilitate their determination to pursue their life's goals. The study also indicated that graduates with higher coping abilities show their tolerance with the dynamic characteristic of the industry. Knowledge of the use

of skills and competencies and the career adaptability dimensions benefits the academic and industry sector in developing career resources and career intervention programs. The researcher recommends more studies on career adaptability in terms of its theoretical advancement, practical utility in the academe or industry, and interventions that would increase the credibility of the valuable research work carried out in this field. This research theme can pave the way for further studies, using a larger number of respondents coming from the academe within the country and even various country perspectives as well as from the different sectors of the tour, travel, and hospitality industry. More in-depth investigation can be undertaken on the utility of CAAS-C Scale for post-career choice work adjustment and job change, thus, determining career adaptability and the coping mechanism of survey participants with real-life situations.

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