

Tourism Career Opportunities Amidst COVID-19: A Thematic Analysis of Job Posting Sites in the Philippines

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to examine the demand of tourism careers amidst COVID-19 and categorize them according to which tourism sector they fall into. This study uses Ncapture and Nvivo for gathering its data and makes use of thematic analysis to identify themes and categorize the data according to the framework. The findings of this study indicate that there are indeed tourism-related careers in the Philippines that are available during this time of Covid-19. The greatest number of jobs fell under the category labelled “other jobs” which was an emerging category that wasn’t included in the framework with Business Processing Outsourcing being the most plentiful, followed by the food and beverage sector, travel agencies, and accommodation sector respectively. The researchers recommend further continuation of this study as means of knowing if there are changes in the demand for tourism careers once quarantine restrictions are eased and the threat of Covid-19 is over.

Keywords: job posting sites, tourism jobs, tourism career, thematic analysis, Covid-19, Philippines.

1. INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry plays a vital role of serving as a source of living in the Philippines; providing lots of job opportunities which in turn raises the number of employment for a variety of sectors such as the hotel and hospitality sector, transportation sector, service sector, and even the entertainment sector (Camilleri, 2018). As Dayuda (2019) declared, the tourism industry is a prime producer of jobs on both direct employment and indirect employment. In fact, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority (2020) the tourism industry is a major contributor to the fast-economic growth of the country, significantly adding 12.7 percent to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2019, alongside an increase of 6.5 percent in the annual employment rate of tourism related industries that same year. In addition, tourism gives a big impact to foreign exchange (Sotiriadis, 2018). However, with the rise of tourism comes the impeding presence of the Covid-19 pandemic whose global crisis has severely affected the tourism and hospitality sector (Ugur & Akbiyik, 2020). This widespread pandemic has overwhelmingly brought about negative impacts to several establishments under the tourism industry. Liew (2020) pointed out that the Covid-19 outbreak strongly diminished tourism related firms. Many tourism-related businesses in the country have opted to stop their service offerings temporarily or even permanently due to the broad restrictions and lack of supply and demand. As such, workers in the tourism and hospitality industry were extensively affected by the Covid-19 pandemic in a lot of ways (Baum, Mooney, Robinson, & Solnet, 2020) and many employees under the tourism industry have lost their jobs.

Department of Labor and Employment Secretary Silvestre Bello III stated that there is an estimate of about 5 million workers who have lost their jobs due to the Covid-19 pandemic with a possibility of reaching 10 million job losses if the

pandemic continues to dominate the Philippines. Additionally, Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat of the Department of Tourism said that there was already a 54% revenue lost in the tourism department because of the decline of tourist arrivals in the country (Manila Bulletin, 2020). The airline industry is one amongst the tourism sectors badly affected by the pandemic with the International Air Transportation Association (IATA) foreseeing the loss of over 400,000 jobs within the airline industry as passenger demand drops down 36% based on past year's record (Inquirer.net, 2020). The Philippine Overseas Employment Association (POEA) is assuring the protection and benefits of those Filipino seafarers who have been laid off from their jobs (DOLE, 2020). Although there are no precise records that will determine the exact number of affected job loss in the Philippines, Covid-19 has also severely affected the tourism industry given that many established businesses closed and have stopped operations due to profit loss (Rappler, 2020). Incidentally, the accommodation sector continues their operations with the Department of Tourism releasing a list of accredited hotels and other type of accommodations serving as quarantine facilities for those people who are positive from the virus and those who are still under observation such as OFWs (CNN Philippines, 2020).

Despite the challenges brought by this pandemic, some companies in the country are still operating given that they are following the new normal regulations by the government. As it is known, face-to-face transactions are strictly prohibited in most establishments within the Philippines. Palpable adjustments were made in response to the ever-changing environment that comes with the virus. Nevertheless, it is during these trying times where innovation starts to come into consideration. The threats of this pandemic can be an opportunity for tourism businesses to engage in technological innovations to increase their competence (Liew, 2020). With the threat of Covid-19 looming over people's shoulders, job posting sites offer a way for potential employees to search for work in the comfort of their own homes. Brandão, Silva & dos Santos (2018) state that the latest trend in numerous job applications is through online recruitment; moreover, job posting sites are essential compared to traditional employment procedures nowadays. In fact, in an online interview with the Director of Alumni Relations and Placement Office (ARPO) for De La Salle University Dasmariñas, Mr. Leo Manansala stated that the recruitment process during these days is very different from the usual process that the applicants need to undergo during the pre-pandemic era, stating that most of the companies here in the Philippines limit face-to-face contact with their applicants and instead utilize the use of online platforms for hiring. He also stated that there are some firms whose hiring process needs to be done on their site. In addition, it was also noted that information dissemination in general is more effective online, thus making it more suitable for job procurement in this time of pandemic. Furthermore, Schneider and Treisch (2019) also asserted that tourism and hospitality employers should adapt to the prospect of online job postings for recruitment.

Today when people in the tourism industry are slowly losing their jobs due to the pandemic, it begs the question of whether there is still a demand for tourism employment in the country. In contrast to recent studies by Bucak & Yigit (2020) which was fixated on the future of the chef occupation within the food and beverage sector in Turkey during Covid-19, and another study conducted by Forsythe, Kahn, Lange & Wiczer (2020) which focused on in-demand labor in general during the Covid-19 crisis as they examined job vacancies from job listings within the US, this study focused its attention towards the various careers under the umbrella of tourism in the Philippines, with special emphasis on finding out what specific tourism related careers are in demand during the corona virus pandemic from job posting sites within the country. This study determined the various tourism sectors and their respective employment opportunities within the job market with the purpose of giving further insights on what people should expect in terms of future job prospects within the tourism sector during the Covid-19 crisis and even when the pandemic is over.

This study is intended to benefit those future potential employees like the graduating students, especially those under the tourism and hospitality course, as this study will contribute to their awareness on what are the possible tourism related careers that may be available for them. Aside from that, the academe will also be one among the beneficiaries of this study; serving as an eye opener for them to know what are the essential knowledge that they need to pass on to their students. Moreover, this study also serves as a basis for future researchers who will be conducting related studies on this particular area and as such, the researchers addressed that the use of this study is not only limited to the pandemic era but can also be substantial even when the Covid-19 crisis is over.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This research uses the already existing conceptual framework of employment in tourism industries by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and International Labour Organization (ILO). This conceptual framework by UNWTO and ILO

has two versions. The first version included two specific categories, namely: (1) retail-trade of country-specific tourism characteristic goods, and (2) other country-specific tourism characteristic activities (World Tourism Organization & International Labour Organization, 2014). In comparison, the updated version from the book published by ILO did not include them (International Labour Organization (ILO), 2020). The removal of these categories could suggest that job offerings that would fall into those certain sectors are low. This comes with little to no surprise due to the precautions that come with Covid-19 and its strict observance for social distancing and restrictions on travel. In line with this, the researchers focused on the updated conceptual framework which reflects upon the impacts of the corona virus pandemic to the tourism industry. This framework has no areas of disagreement from the researchers as they will be using an already existing conceptual framework from specialized United Nations agencies in the fields of tourism and employment as their basis for thematically analyzing the tourism-related career opportunities from job posting sites in the Philippines.

The updated framework that was used for this research has ten (10) different categories. The first category is the accommodation for visitors which is sub-categorized into: short term accommodation activities, camping grounds, recreational vehicle parks and trailer parks, other accommodation, real estate activities with own or leased property, and real estate activities on a fee or contract basis. The second category is the food and beverage serving activities which is sub-categorized into: restaurants and mobile food service activities, other food service activities, and beverage serving activities. The third category is the railway passenger transport which is sub-categorized into: passenger rail transport, inter urban. The fourth category is the road passenger transport which is sub-categorized into: other passenger land transport. The fifth category is the water passenger transport which is sub-categorized into: sea & coastal passenger water transport, and inland passenger water transport.

Furthermore, the sixth category is the air passenger transport which is sub-categorized into: passenger air transport. The seventh category is the transport equipment rental which is sub-categorized into: renting and leasing of motor vehicles. The eighth category is the travel agencies and other reservation service activities which is sub-categorized into: travel agency activities, tour operator activities, and other reservation service and related activities. The ninth category is the cultural activities which is sub-categorized into: creative, arts and entertainment activities, museums activities and operation of historical sites and buildings, and botanical and zoological gardens and nature reserves activities. And finally, the last category is the sports and recreational activities which is sub-categorized into: renting and leasing of recreational and sports goods, gambling and betting activities, operations of sports facilities, other sports activities, activities of amusement parks and theme parks, and other amusement and recreation activities not elsewhere classified.

3. METHODOLOGY

The research design of this study is qualitative in nature and used the method of thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a versatile tool which can be applied to tourism studies in a variety of ways, showcasing its appropriateness in situations where concepts of written texts are open to multiple interpretations and is especially suitable when it comes to subjects pertaining to social, cultural, and spiritual variations such as the study of meanings of places or representations of leisure (Walters, 2016). This type of research design is very promising given that the method of thematic analysis in qualitative research has become continuously popular for studies which focus on tourism and hospitality in recent years (Esfehani & Walters, 2018).

Since the research heavily relies on secondary data, the research sampling was sourced from the top job posting platforms for the year 2020 as listed by the tech giant, YugaTech, who is not only recognized as the biggest and longest-running technology site in the Philippines but is also considered to be one of the biggest technocentric websites across Southeast Asia (YugaTech, 2020). The researchers also took into account that the chosen job posting sites should also be free to use and allows full access without the need for registration, making it easily accessible for data gathering. Six out of ten job posting sites from the list were selected for the study as the researchers deemed the other four to be unfit, having noticed that two of the websites catered to a broader audience and did not specifically focus on job postings in the Philippines while the others did not generate tourism related jobs when searching for results. That being the case, the job posting sites chosen for this study are LinkedIn, JobStreet, Indeed, GrabJobs, Monster, and BestJobs.

The method of collecting data was done by inputting the keyword “tourism” into the search bars of the selected job posting sites. Once results have been generated by the sites, the researchers collected the results using Ncapture. Ncapture is a free web-browser extension offered by QSR International for Google Chrome and Internet Explorer which enables its users to collect online content such as web pages and capture them into PDFs for import into NVivo, making it a helpful

tool for researchers when gathering large numbers of data from the web (Ncapture, 2020). In this study, the Google Chrome extension of Ncapture was downloaded by the researchers for data collection. Each of the researchers collected the data from their chosen job posting sites in search of tourism related careers. The job postings were captured in the form of *web page as PDF* using Ncapture and stored in a folder to later be imported and analyzed in Nvivo, which is computer software produced by QSR International that helps its users to produce coherent and justifiable findings backed by rigorous evidence and offered easy import and management of research data from a variety of sources, making it an ideal software to used when performing qualitative analysis, whether it be done individually or as a team (Nvivo, 2021).

In order to identify elements of theoretical significance and importance, identification of patterns should be used to deduce themes (Mogaji & Farinloye, 2018). In using the software, the researchers have familiarized themselves with the set of figures they gathered and have grouped the data according to which category the specific tourism careers fit based on the existing conceptual framework of employment in tourism industries (International Labour Organization (ILO), 2020). Codes were created in Nvivo based on this framework and was inputted using acronyms such AC for accommodation companies, FNB for food and beverage, RWP for railway passenger transport, RP for road passenger transport, WP for water passenger transport, AP for air passenger transport, TE for transport equipment, TA for travel agencies, CA for cultural activities, and SR for sports and recreational activities. Apart from these categories, codes were also created based on emerging parameters which the data set had to offer such as other jobs (i.e., BPO or Business Process Outsourcing, construction, education, engineering, finance, government, human resource, insurance, legal affairs, marketing, medical, personal care, and technology), and other classifications (i.e., benefits, employment status, location, qualifications, salary, and seniority level). Cases in Nvivo were created and categorized according to the job posting sites selected for the study.

Since the job listings gathered for this study are accessible in a public domain, the consent of the employers/companies who posted the online job vacancies can be reasonably presumed given that each of the job posting sites require their users to agree to their terms and conditions and privacy policies, thus informing their users that they acknowledge and give permission for their posted data to be viewed, accessed, and stored by other users on the site. Data confidentiality was practiced during this study through the process of ensuring that all gathered data was safe from unauthorized access. This was done by the researchers by safeguarding their research equipment, such as the gadgets they used for this study, with password encryption for data protection.

Lastly, to ensure the validity of data during this research process, data triangulation in the form of investigator triangulation was applied. This process required the researchers involved to evaluate their gathered data using the same methods for a convergence of information from multiple sources. Apart from this, consultations with their research adviser also served as another way to ensure data validity. Furthermore, the researchers also compared results from their gathered data and cross-referenced them with related studies.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Jobs

The researchers classified the tourism jobs into 10 different categories according to their conceptual framework which was also shown in the chart. Upon further analysis, a new category emerged which fell outside of the conceptual framework. This category was labelled “other jobs”. It is absolutely clear that the “other jobs” or those careers outside the tourism sector dominated the other categories with a total of 693 employments. The available careers under this category include: business process outsourcing (BPO), construction, education, engineering, finance, government, human resource, insurance, legal affairs, marketing, medical, personal care, and technology. Following this, the FNB category got the second spot with a total number of 147 employments. The TA category is on the third position with a total of 144 jobs, and the AC category is in the fourth mark with a total of 123 job availabilities. The fifth is the SR that contains other amusement and recreation activities with a total of 20 employments. CA category is the sixth with 13 occupations. Furthermore, the WP category fell on the seventh spot with 10 employments. AP category is the eighth which offers 9 career opportunities within passenger air transport sector. The ninth category is the RP with a total of 8 job vacancies under the passenger land transport sector. On the other hand, there are two categories with no job offerings namely: RWP or the railway passenger transport sector and the TE or the transport equipment rental sector.

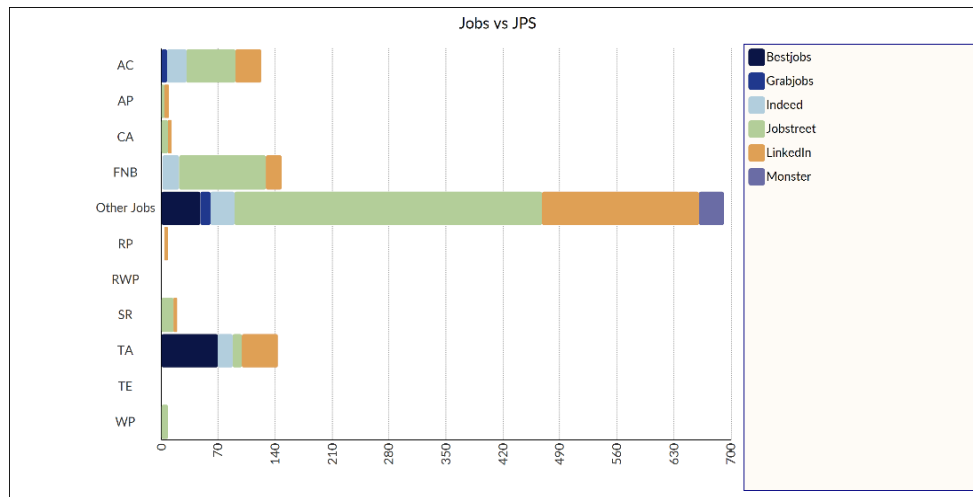


Figure 1. Jobs vs Job Posting Sites

Jobs vs Job Posting Sites

Figure 1 shows that most of the jobs listed in the job posting sites fall under the category of other jobs. As it is revealed, Jobstreet offers most of the employment opportunities under this category. The other jobs category was followed by the FNB category. In which, if you want to pursue a career within this category you can visit these following job postings sites namely: Jobstreet, LinkedIn and Indeed. The third category with the high number of job vacancies is the TA. The figure presented that Bestjobs provides numerous opportunities within the TA category accompanied by LinkedIn and Indeed. This is soon followed by the AC category marked as the fourth in line with plenty of job opportunities. In the said category, Jobstreet, Grabjobs, and LinkedIn are the job posting sites that you need to go over and know their offerings. Nonetheless, the figure also shows that there are still available career opportunities under the category of SR, CA, WP, AP, and RP. Mostly, the listings of job opportunities for the said categories can be found at Jobstreet and LinkedIn. On the other hand, the result evidently exhibited that there are no job availabilities within the RWP and TE category; merely due to the reason that these following categories are affected with the extensive lockdown and still recovering from it.

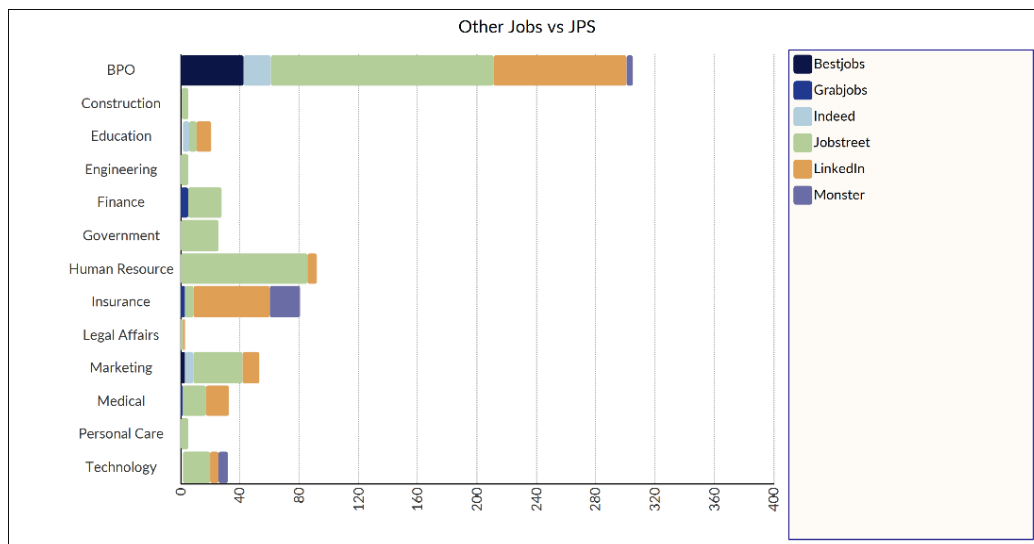


Figure 2. Other Jobs vs Job Posting Sites

Other Jobs

Figure 2 presents the various employment opportunities found under the category which the researchers labelled as “other jobs”. As it is clearly shown, the BPO has the greatest number of job offerings in our present time. In fact, according to the Philippine News Agency (2020) over 10,000 jobs in the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) industry would be offered to displaced tourist employees around the Philippines. In line with that, Department of Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat stated that both tourism and BPO are people-oriented businesses. The department believes in

their abilities, and claims that by taking on this new project, the tourism workers will be able to overcome the hardships brought by the Covid-19 crisis. Furthermore, aside from the said opportunities under the BPO industry, the results revealed that there are also job offerings that are related to Human Resource, Insurance, Marketing, Medical, Government, Technology, Education, Finance, and so forth.

The emergence of these other job listings with varying themes imply that workers in the tourism industry are flexible individuals who are suitable to work across different fields. In fact, since jobs in the travel and tourism market are all about people-oriented service, employers might prefer hiring workers under the tourism industry as they are able to provide the skills they need and in turn, bring about customer satisfaction. Additionally, Agyeiwaah, Dayour, & Zhou (2021) pointed out that employees' attitudes have a significant impact on customer satisfaction, and that their degree of quality of service has a direct influence towards a customer's loyalty.

Food and Beverage

The employment in the given subcategories such as: restaurants and mobile food service activities, beverage serving activities, and other food service activities are still operating and opening its doors amidst the pandemic. In fact, some of the job postings which can be found under FNB are: Bar Attendant, Barista, Coffee Specialist, Assistant Cook, Assistant Restaurant Manager, Food and Beverage Supervisor, Front-of-the-House Servers, Service Staff, Chocolate Maker, Pastry Chef, Butcher, and Personal Cook.

According to the study of Yang, Liu, & Chen (2020) epidemic crises are particularly challenging for the food service industry, due to its heavy reliance on human interaction and gatherings, but as stated by Norris, Taylor Jr, & Taylor (2021) the restaurant industry has undergone lots of operational changes ever since the pandemic such as the expansion of takeout and delivery operations, innovation, as well as community outreaches as means of adjusting and remaining flexible amidst Covid-19. This reflects well on the availability of jobs which fell under the food and beverage sector, as this study has shown that this sector has indeed remained on-going despite the pandemic. It's no surprise to see that careers in the food and beverage sector are still very much in demand during this time of Covid-19 given that the products and services they offer are a necessity. Innovations in terms of offering food delivery services and online orders may have also heavily influenced the demand for these businesses as they provide their consumers with means of accessing their services without the risk of going out.

Travel Agencies

Covid-19 has severely affected the travel industry, with the travel agencies being one among those who took the hardest hit (Biesiada, 2020). However, this implies that there are various career opportunities within the TA category in these trying times. Under this category are the three subcategories specifically the travel agency activities, other reservation service and related activities and tour operator activities. Some of the job postings under TA include: Travel Agent, Travel Consultant, Travel and Tourism Specialist, Ticketing Agent, Ticketing Reservation Officer, Tour Operator, Corporate Travel Specialist, and Tour Guide.

These findings contrast with the statement from Manila Bulletin (2020), who claimed that several travel agencies have considered permanently closing their business due to the massive losses caused as a result of Covid-19. Moreover, according to Ritchie Tuano, president of the Philippine Travel Agencies Association (PTAA), approximately 95 percent of the 439 travel agency members have temporarily closed their doors, with some considering permanent closure (Manila Bulletin, 2020). Despite all the identified challenges, the results still proclaimed that there is still hope and opportunities that are available under this industry.

Accommodation

As stated by Guillet & Chu (2021), despite the current challenges brought about by the pandemic, the hotel industry is on the road to recovery. This statement was proven by the result which revealed the career opportunities under the AC category, with its subcategory "short term accommodation activities" having the most job offerings within this sector. Career opportunities which fall under the AC category include: Front Desk or Receptionist Job, Front Desk Associate, Accounting Supervisor, Hotel Reservations Assistant, Banquet Sales Executive, Guest Services Coordinator, Hotel Supervisor, and Housekeeping Supervisor.

The results in this category are not surprising given that, as stated earlier on, the accommodation sector is still very much on-going and operating during this pandemic with the Department of Tourism listing down accredited hotels and other

type of lodging as quarantine facilities (CNN Philippines, 2020). In fact, depending on the quarantine level, staycations are allowed when quarantine is eased, with the Department of Tourism granting certificates of authority to operate for staycations to various hotels in NCR. (Rappler, 2021)

Guillet & Chu (2021) have also asserted that as the industry begins to recover, many hotels are expected to highlight improved cleaning and safety protocols in their marketing messages to their patrons. In addition, the global pandemic has compelled hotel firms to reevaluate several standard operational practices and formulate new and innovative strategies (Sharma, Shin, Santa-María, & Nicolau, 2021).

Sports and Recreational activities, Cultural Activities, Water Passenger transport, Air pPassenger transport, and Road Passenger Transport

On the other hand, after further discussion and analysis, the following categories of SR, CA, WP, AP, and RP, respectively, have generated only a few job listings, and when compared to the previous categories cited earlier. It revealed that there are few establishments under the SR sector who are looking for potential employees with a total of 20 job postings falling under this category which included career opportunities such as: Casino Teller, Content Creator, Mall Manager and Spa receptionist. In line with this, Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque said that as the Philippines works to recover from the effects of the epidemic, it wants to enable additional establishments, including theatres and public attractions, to restart or extend their operations anytime soon (Reuters, 2021). With that being said, the industries that will be allowed to reopen include arcades and amusement parks (Reuters, 2021).

Furthermore, cultural tourism is a form of tourism that aims to inform visitors about the art, architecture, and history of a specific destination (Petrović & Barović, 2019). According to Petrović & Barović (2019) it is undeniable that there is a surge of interest in cultural tourism around the world. In relation to that, the CA sector has opened its doors and offer minimal job opportunities as the study revealed a total of 13 job listings under CA which included jobs such as: Trail Manager, Sales Associate for Conventions & Exhibitions, and Museum Researcher. Spokesman Roque confirmed that museums and other historical landmarks will also be allowed to resume their operation despite the current challenges that the country is facing (Reuters, 2021).

Cruise ships are considered one of the major settings where an outbreak starts because of their closed environment, contacts between people from different countries, and crew transfers between ships (Gössling, Scott, & Hall, 2020). As proclaimed by Chan & King (2020), cruises and other modes of water transportation were also strongly affected by the pandemic. This was obviously proven by the data that was gathered by the researchers in which it unveiled that there are only 10 job offerings within the WP sector and included jobs such as Boat Mechanic and Crew.

As an enabler of other industries, the air travel industry has a significant impact on the economy, both direct and indirect (Dimitrios & Maria, 2018). But according to Sobieralski, 2020 throughout the history the airline industry has faced several challenges, but none have been as swift or as serious as the spread of COVID-19 crisis. In addition, with decreased volume, sluggish demand, and an indefinite return to pre-2020 levels, the latest COVID-19 pandemic has devastated the airline industry (Sobieralski, 2020). That is why as it is expected, the AP sector has a total of just 9 career opportunities in this present moment, with job listings that include: Guest Relations Representative, Flight Firmer, and Hotel and Tourism Management Intern among other things.

As the virus continues to spread, the public land transportation in most areas of the Philippines were eventually suspended (Philippine News Agency, 2020). Furthermore, the RP sector gradually lost their revenue since most of the Filipino commuters are not allowed to go out if they do not have any essential appointments to do. Given that quarantine restrictions are still being observed across various parts of the country, its no wonder as to why this category only garnered a total of 8 job postings which included jobs such as: Delivery Driver, Chief Mechanic, and Customer Experience Managers for Automotives.

Railway Passenger Transport and Transport Equipment Rental

Meanwhile, the last two categories of railway passenger transport and transport equipment rental did not garner any results. This concludes that companies in that given sector are not looking to hire any new employees. We could speculate that it's due to the low demand of railway operations given that we are in strict compliance of following social distancing protocols; something which is very plausible given that the Philippine railway system is infamous of being the type of passenger transport that is very crowded and full of people. Additionally, the government has agreed to maintain only 20 to 30 percent of passenger capacity for the railway industry (Rappler, 2021). On the other hand, transport equipment

rentals may not be popular as of the moment due to people not really needing to move from place to place, thus eliminating the need for renting any transport equipment.

Other Classifications

Apart from determining the types of jobs available, the researchers also noted emerging themes and elements in their study. It showcases the other classifications that can be found on the selected job posting sites such as the qualifications which include the type of skills, educational attainment, and experience required for potential job seekers, as well as the jobs' location, salary range, employment status, seniority level, as well as their added perks and benefits.

According to a study, different occupation categories require specific skills (Adeyinka-Ojo, 2018). After examining the six different job posting sites, the researchers gathered the variety of skills that a specific job in the tourism sector is requiring. As you can see in the Figure 1, majority of the result fall under the qualifications category; the sub-classifications under this category are the skills, educational attainment and the experience required.

Skills

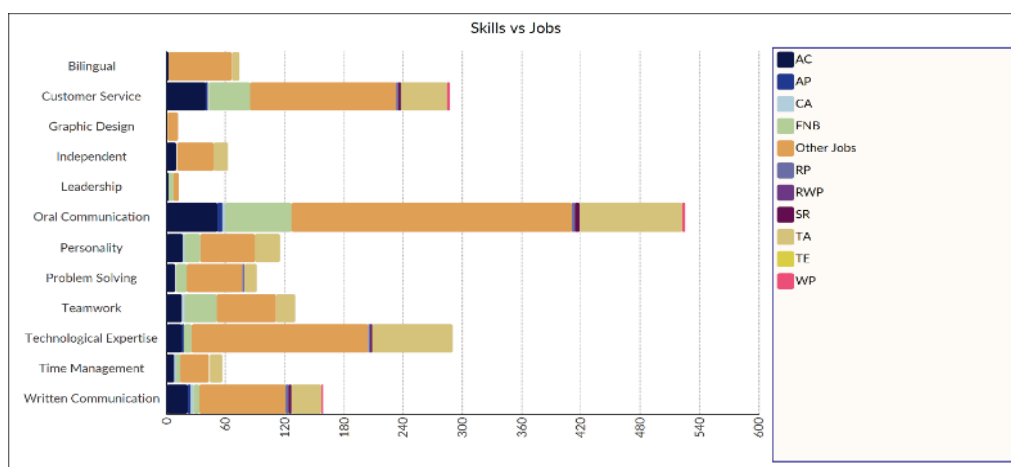


Figure 3. Skills vs Jobs

The findings above proclaimed that having strong oral communication skill is an edge for an applicant who is applying for a job in the tourism industry, and is the major skill that employers look for when hiring a prospective employee. This goes hand in hand with what Adeyinka-Ojo (2018) stated, asserting that skills in which many employers under the tourism and hospitality sector value the most are the communication skills which covers good verbal and listening skills. In addition, Kimeto (2020) pointed out that professionals value interpersonal communication skills since they think it is one of the most powerful competency indicators.

Customer service is also a significant skill for an aspiring employee in the tourism industry, most especially since a person who wants to pursue a career in the tourism sector should know how to handle the needs as well as be able to reach the expectations of their clients or guests. As what Kimeto (2020) declared, guest care skills and working with other people are all desirable skills in the tourism and even in the hospitality industry.

Expertise in using different technological applications is also what many tourism employers are looking for during these days. This finding proves the declaration of D'Eloia & Fulthorp (2016) that an applicant should develop technological skills and gain deeper understanding on technical innovation. In line with this, technological skills are also somewhat connected to graphic design skills, an emerging skill in some job postings which also makes use of broad technological knowledge and experience.

Aside from obtaining good oral communication skills which was mentioned as the most in-demand skill in the tourism industry, having a wide range of writing abilities is also needed. This result coincides with the study of D'Eloia & Fulthorp (2016) who declared that possessing effective written communication skills or the ability to construct well written office reports is an important skill that needs to be put into consideration.

Still part of the skill classifications are these set of employability skills. First is the personality skill; an aesthetic skill that means the ability to present their selves well according to Adeyinka-Ojo (2018). Second is the ability to work with a variety of people; Adeyinka-Ojo (2018) stated that having a well-managed relationship with your colleagues and being

able to motivate them positively shows that a person has good teamwork ethics. Third is being bilingual; according to Lindholm-Leary (2016), being bilingual can affect your academic advantages as well as your career opportunities positively in a way that it can open a lot more job opportunities. Moreover, some individuals consider being bilingual as a privilege and an edge for them when applying for a specific job. Fourth, is the ability to solve working problems, which as reported by Adeyinka-Ojo (2018), means taking the initiative in identifying the problems within their organization and create possible solutions to solve it. Fifth is the independent skills; this skill is relevant nowadays due to the fact that the Philippines is still under the existence of the Covid-19 pandemic. Additionally, working independently shows the capacity of an individual to effectively fulfill their duties despite having limited time of supervision. With that being said, an employee must also acquire this skill which is the ability to manage their time well. Lastly, based on these findings, employers in the tourism sector are also demanding leadership skills, which according to Kimeto (2020), is a skill that has the ability to inspire others to act on a common vision, and is a factor that is necessary to tourism workers.

Educational Attainment

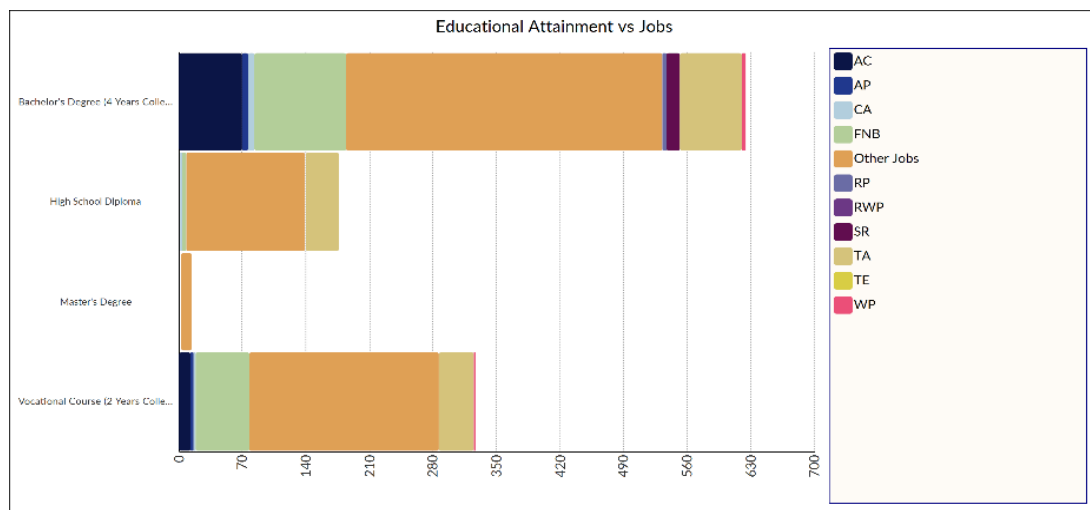


Figure 4. Educational Attainment vs Jobs

The figure above unveiled the level of educational attainment in seeking a job within the tourism sector. The data clearly presented that there is a high demand for applicants with a bachelor's degree in the tourism industry. This goes hand in hand with the statement of Jaworski, Ravichandran, Karpinski & Singh (2018), who declared that many employers are usually looking for applicants who have gained their bachelor's degree. In addition, a study conducted by Lillo-Bañuls, Casado-Díaz, & Simón (2018) pointed out that in regard to the educational attainment of potential employees, obtaining a university degree is a notable factor for hiring. Moreover, D'Eloia & Fulthorp (2016) also declared that college graduates with degrees in the tourism and hospitality management can be better prepared for entry-level and full-time employment by gaining direct industrial experiences.

On the other hand, attaining a vocational course or a 2-year college course also serves as an edge in applying for a tourism related career. As per Ju-Hsuan, Lo, Wu, & Wang (2021), the aim of vocational education is to provide students with up-to-date practical experience, ranging from basic skills, problem-solving skills, suitable work attitudes and employability skills, technical skills, and other vocational skills, in order to train them for the job market. In terms of the vocational education course material, it should be "basic ability-training" focused, with emphasis on expertise and skills that are particularly required in the workplace (Ju-Hsuan, Lo, Wu, & Wang, 2021).

The results also showed that there are companies or tourism businesses that consider hiring individuals with a high school diploma as a potential employee. This is further proven by the statement of Jaworski, Ravichandran, Karpinski, & Singh (2018) stating that there are also employers who are hiring applicants that are not yet finished with their studies and attained high school level of education. Also, there are some tourism jobs looking for an applicant who has earned a master's degree. In accordance to this, the researchers discovered that being part of an academy requires a master's degree; supported by the assertion of Khuong & Thi Tran (2018) that many tourism educators have graduated with a master's degree before qualifying the program of teaching.

Experience Required

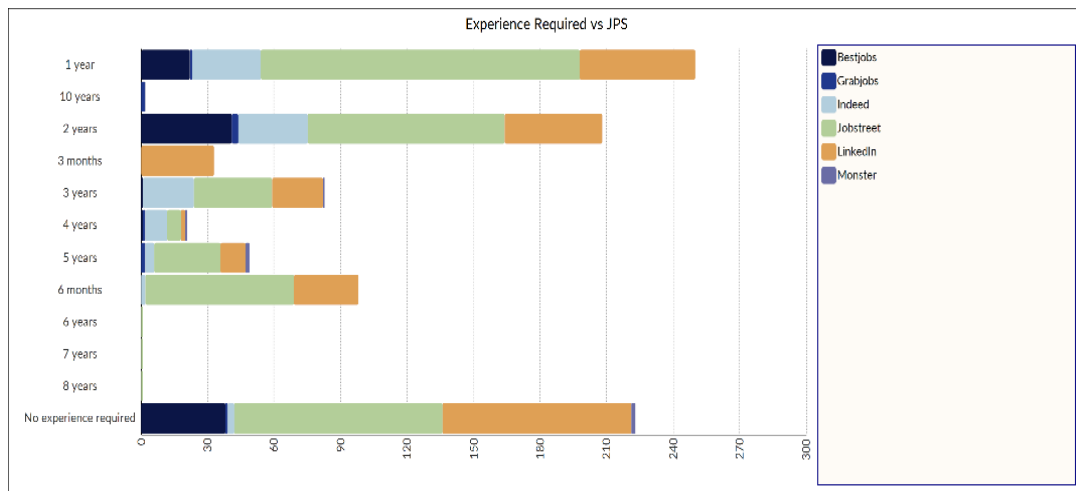


Figure 5. Experience Required vs Jobs Posting Sites

This figure shows the years of experience that is required by employers in the selected job posting sites. Kalia & Bhardwaj (2019) believed that job experience improves workplace skills, which leads to better job results, and is a major predictor of task-based and situational efficiency. Furthermore, they also asserted that work experience is best described with the western proverb that goes “one ounce of experience is better than a ton of theory”.

Predicated on the data that was collected, the majority of the results went into the span of 1-2 years working experience needed, soon followed by the category requiring no experience for potential employees which also garnered lots of results. In addition, it is shown that a span of 3-6 months of employment experience was required as well. Upon further analysis, the researchers noticed that the job postings which required no experience was offered as long as the individual possesses a bachelor’s degree which was one of the major requirements for educational attainment. In comparison, vocational and high school degree holders required more experience than those with a bachelor’s degree.

The figure above also showed that there is a demand of 3-5 years working experience and a range of 6-10 years of experience. These research findings slightly contradict the declaration of Yenidoğan & Şencan (2017) who stated that when the working period dimension is tested, it is discovered that 43.5% of participants had a working period of 0-2 years and 21.2 % of them had a working period of 3-5 years, with a percentage of 21.5 % participants working for 6-10 years.

Benefits

The researchers found out that aside from the salary, tourism related companies are also giving other working benefits such as health insurance, paid trainings, allowances, travel incentives, as well as other pays or bonuses. Based on the study of Jaworski, Ravichandran, Karpinski & Singh (2018), various benefits such as health insurance, paid vacation, employee incentives, and paid trainings are the predictors of job satisfaction. Apart from that, job benefits is also one factor that adds up to an employee’s excellent job performance and commitment.

Location

The six job posting sites also contained location details for their job vacancies. The data that the researchers gathered clearly proclaimed that Luzon has more tourism job opportunities offered for the job seekers. This may be due to Luzon being much more populated compared to Visayas and Mindanao.

Employment Status

At this moment in time, most of the employers in the tourism industry are looking for an applicant who are willing to work in their company full time. This coincides with the statement of Marin-Pantelescu (2017) who claimed that main workers are regular and full-time, with job stability and high earnings, and work in a flexible environment. Nonetheless, there are also tourism related establishments who are looking for part time employees, who were defined to be secondary employees with positions and have seasonal contracts (Marin-Pantelescu, 2017).

Salary

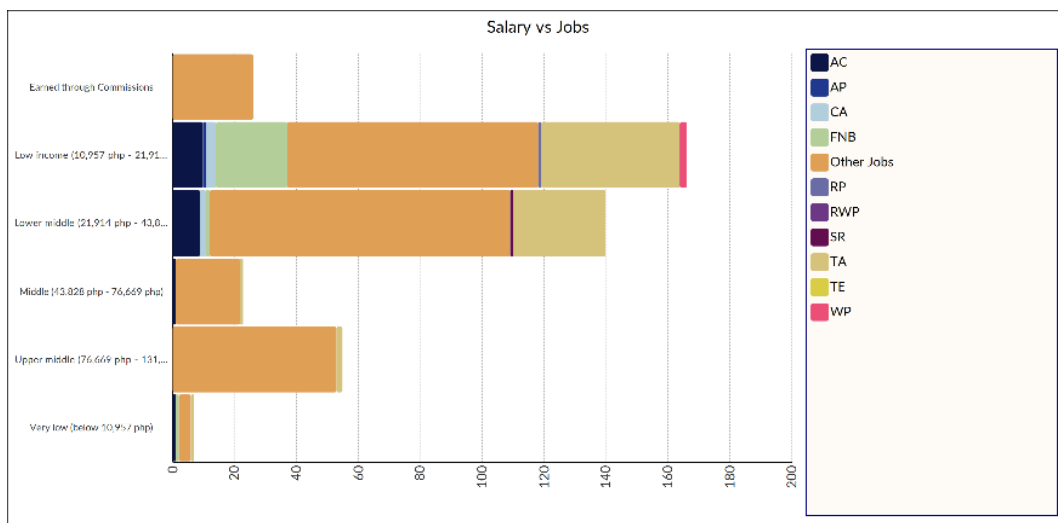


Figure 6. Salary vs Jobs

The figure above presents the range of salary offered for the different job opportunities within the tourism industry. In line with this, the researchers based the salary theme on the article issued by ABS-CBN News (2020). According to ABS-CBN News (2020), during the year 2018 the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) released the following income brackets in the Philippines: Very low: Below P10,957 monthly income; Low-income: P10,957 to P21,914 monthly income; Lower middle: P21,914 to P43,828 monthly income; Middle: P43,828 to P76,66 monthly income; Upper middle: P76,669 to P131,484 monthly income.

As is shown, most of the results fall under the bracket of low-income which means an employee under the tourism sector is expected to earn a salary range of P10,957 to P21,914 per month. However, lower middle is the second salary theme next to low-income that got the greatest number of results, in which the monthly salary ranges from P21,914 to P43,828. Moreover, there are also job vacancies in the industry who are offering salaries that fall into the bracket of upper middle, middle, and very low. In addition, the researchers added the salary theme “earned through commissions” since there are also job earnings that fall under this category.

Upon further analysis, the researchers noted that jobs which required bilingual skills had salaries that fell on the upper middle scale. These jobs included: Mandarin speakers, Japanese speakers, Korean customer care support and specialist, Korean customer care supervisor, Japanese customer service representative, and Thai customer service representative.

Seniority Level

The level of seniority in a job corresponds to the level of responsibility and the position of an employee in the job. In particular, considering the amount of time that an employee has served in a specific sector or company.

The research findings revealed that most of the job opportunities within the tourism industry at the present time is for entry level. This is understandable given that a majority of the job postings were accepting fresh graduates, or those with no experience who are bachelor’s degree holders. Moreover, according to Ju-Hsuan, Lo, Wu, & Wang (2021) , students undergo internships in a company in order to develop “entry level employees”. Due to this, students can gain job experience in the workplace and actively engage in the professional preparation. In addition, the findings showed that there are also job offerings for an associate, mid-senior level, director, and internship level.

5. CONCLUSION

This research aimed to reveal the tourism career opportunities available amidst the Covid-19 pandemic through a thematic analysis of job posting sites. The findings of this study have revealed that there are three major categories from their conceptual framework that convey the availability of tourism career opportunities during Covid-19. The first category from this framework which showed the greatest number of jobs falls under the food and beverage serving activities with a total of 147 job postings. This was quickly followed by job postings under the travel agencies and other reservation service activities with a total of 144 job postings falling under this category, and the third category is the accommodation for visitors which had a total of 123 job postings. This implies that these three sectors, namely, the food and beverage

sector, the travel and reservation agency sector, as well as the accommodation sector, are the ones whose businesses are persevering the most during Covid-19 as their businesses are still prevalent and are continuing to be on the lookout for recruits.

Job opportunities have also emerged from the other categories in this conceptual framework; however, results were not as plentiful when compared to the first three categories mentioned. Substantial differences were clearly seen from these categories whose results only ranged from about 8-20 job postings, with some categories, namely the railway passenger transport and the transport equipment rental, not even garnering any results. This indicates that workers under these categories are in low demand during the pandemic. A part of the reason as to why they are low could stem from the various community quarantines happening around different parts of the country, therefore hindering companies under these categories from continuing their normal ways of business.

Given this framework however, and upon further analysis, the researchers have deemed that the vast majority of jobs truly fell under a new emerging category labelled as “other jobs”, with a whopping total of 693 job postings. This new category further branched into more sub-categories as themes materialized from various job postings in fields such as education, finance, medicine, technology, government, and marketing among some of them, though the highest number exceedingly fell under the sub-category of BPO, or Business Process Outsourcing, at 305 job postings. These findings indicate that tourism management workers are suitable to be employed in a variety of other industries and are not just limited to the tourism industry alone.

Aside from identifying the demand for jobs in the tourism industry, this research also identified other classifications from job postings such as the qualifications and skills which employers are looking for. As a matter of fact, this study highlights the significance of a bachelor’s degree which has proven to have the largest demand in terms of educational attainment. Additionally, employers do not require an individual to have any experience beforehand when finding a job as long as they are bachelor’s degree holders, further implying that workers who are looking for jobs in this industry must aim to earn their bachelor’s degree for more career opportunities to be available to them.

Apart from that, this study also identified the qualifications and skills which employers are looking for. The results of this study give importance for potential tourism employees to be multi-skilled individuals. In fact, this study has shown that companies look for individuals with skills on technology, writing, customer service, and the ability to speak multiple languages among other things, with special emphasis on oral communication as it proved to be one of the most in-demand skills. This signifies the need for the academe to provide knowledge and skills in these areas for potential tourism employees to be able to find work in their desired field, while also meeting the needs of employers. Moreover, this study sheds light on areas of improvement for the academe, as well as potential tourism employees regarding the preferences of employers. In conjunction with these findings, this study provides insights that may be used by the academe in preparation for tourism management professionals who are fully equipped to provide for what this industry needs. A good example is the inclusion of foreign languages to an academic institution’s curricula, as this research recognized that jobs in the market who offer higher paying salaries involved jobs which required bilingual skills.

In line with that, the researchers also addressed the limitations of this study. Since this research focused solely on the tourism industry, it is limited in such a way where it didn’t cover other closely related industries, such as the hospitality industry for example. Limitations of this study also comes in the form of the researchers’ choice in online job posting sites, as other sources may have generated different results from the ones they have selected. Another limitation which the researchers have addressed is their choice of keyword during their search for tourism related careers, as a different set of queries may have yielded to different results. In addition, using the keyword “tourism” may have been too broad, and has generated job postings that aren’t as related to the industry. The researchers recommend finding other terms or ways of generating tourism related careers for future researchers, such as looking for jobs that are readily categorized in certain job posting sites.

Finally, considering the rising changes that may happen once the quarantine regulations are lifted or eased; future research will make it possible to understand if there are changes in the demand for workers in the tourism industry. This study reinforces the need to reexamine tourism careers once the pandemic is over as means of comparing if there is a change in employment demand due to the change in situations once people and businesses are no longer bound to quarantine restrictions. Thus, the researchers suggest the continuance of this study for future researchers to further look upon as means of understanding the changes in the tourism job market.

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