

REVISITING THE CURRICULUM: THE ROLE OF THE ACADEME IN CULTURE AND TOURISM PROMOTION

Gerald S. Abergos, Educational Leadership and Management Department, De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines; gerald_bergos@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

PAPER OBJECTIVES

This paper sought to:

- a) Establish the active role of the academe in building the country's image as rich in culture and tourist-friendly place, as well as evaluate existing curriculum designed to strengthen the promotion of tourism in the country;
- b) Identify Filipino culture and traditions as interests of study for people outside of the country;
- c) Recommend to the academic community the integration of culture and tourism as a separate module or as integral part of subjects in the elementary, secondary and tertiary levels of education.

SUMMARY

The saying, "Mas mabuti pa ang kubo kung ang nakatira ay tao, kaysa palasyo kung ang nakatira naman ay kuwago" translated as "It is better to live in a shanty where true people stay, than in a huge palace where animals live," has its prominent place in the tourism industry, where people, local or foreign is emerged in our culture. For how can we expect people from other countries to visit us again, or visit us for the first time, if experiences of crimes, petty or otherwise, are often times reported? No matter how physically-attractive and refreshing, or emotionally-inviting a place may be, experience will dictate whether one intends to return or not. Tourism reflects our culture.

Tourism has been identified as one of the viable industries which does not easily succumb to economic repression

But neither promotional tools nor media mileage can alter the image instilled in the minds of victims of untoward incidents which could have been prevented if people of the host country are imbued with values truly depicting their culture as a nation. This is where the role of the academe as industry reinforcement, through a culture enriched tourism-promoting curriculum, becomes imperative.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S SUPPORT IN TOURISM PROMOTION

DECS Memorandum 34 s1998 stated that pursuant to Presidential Proclamation no. 894 s 1996 "Declaring the Last Week of the Month of September Every Year as Tourism Week," National Tourism Week (1998) was celebrated on September 21-27, 1998 with the theme " Public-Private Sector Partnership: the key to Development and Promotion."

The National Tourism week 1988 program aims to instill national consciousness on tourism as an instrument of progress towards an accelerated national development, unity, and identity as a nation, and encourage appropriate activities in line with the declaration of the World Tourism Organization (WTO) and Presidential Proclamation no 1942 s 1980 on the observance of World Tourism Day every 27th day of September. Schools are requested to conduct tourism quizzes, photo exhibits, and symposia on tourism awareness and career opportunities and benefits in the field of tourism or any innovative projects related to the theme.

In the DECS Memorandum no 392 s 2000, in connection with the celebration of National Tourism week (NTW) on September 18-24, 2000, the Department of Tourism (DOT) and its marketing arm, the Philippine Convention and Visitors Corporation (PCVC), in cooperation with the Department of Education, Culture and Sports, will undertake activities to generate awareness and support of tourism as an important economic activity.

With the Theme "Pride of Place", this year's (2000) celebration aims to mobilize all schools to undertake activities that will promote the support of tourism among the Filipino youth and students. For this reason, all public and private schools are encouraged to participate in activities to highlight the theme during the week.

In DECS order 71 s 2009, "Guidelines for Effective Implementation of the Elementary Curriculum," the teaching of Edukasyong Pagpapakatao and Sibika

at Kultura/HEKASI shall put emphasis on demonstrating nationalism and love for cultural heritage. The Pambansang Awit (Lupang Hinirang) shall be sung properly following the 2/4 time signature in 57 seconds. National songs, folk dances, poems, folklore, other literature and customs and traditions that enrich the Filipino culture must be embedded in the school environment.

METHODOLOGY

The grounded theory approach was used in this study in which involves probing systematically at qualitative data aiming at the generation of a theory that accounts for a pattern of behavior. In like manner, the descriptive and some documentary analysis was used to identify how the academic community through curriculum development strategies can strengthen in the promotion of culture and values formation integration supportive of the tourism industry. Theoretical sampling was used in this study. Respondents of the study are school administrators, principals, department heads, academic coordinators, school teachers in preparatory, elementary, high school and collegiate, and tourists – both locals and foreigners.

In the interviews and focus group discussions, the following are the problems presented by some tourists who frequent fiestas and festivals:

- lack of tourist information services
- uncontrolled discriminatory pricing of souvenir items or product offerings in the tourist areas
- apathy for victims of people in conflict with the law
- lack of concern for the needy
- lack of communication skills or ability to relay messages to people who do not understand the language or dialect
- lack of concern for the environment

The following are the identified cultural values to be further integrated into the curriculum to support tourism promotion:

- hospitality
- honesty and truthfulness
- environment awareness
- respect and courtesy
- loyalty and patriotism

The following are the responses on the questions pertaining to the promotion of culture education and tourism:

- Academicians have not fully realized their role in Filipino culture and tourism promotion.

- A directive to promote love of culture and tourism is not explicitly laid down by school administrators and curriculum developers, however the curriculum can be emphasized more attuned to culture and tourism and its promotion.
- Academicians are willing to exert effort in culture and tourism promotion – had it been directed to them earlier.
- Tourism and hospitality, as well as Filipino cultural values have been observed to be “trivial” and little ownership or pride is evident.
- Lack of information in tourism.
- Little or lack of national pride with regard to tourism destinations festivities and customs.
- Little knowledge retention in cultural events and tourism have been observed.
- Admittedly, discussion of culture, values, and tourism is not given much focus; curriculum is already “heavy.”

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Inform and remind the academe their role as an agent of promotion of culture and tourism.
- Several courses offered in the schools have been identified as the best venues for emphasis in promotion of Filipino culture and the study of tourism-strengthening activities.
- Inculcate and intensify emphasis on topics and ideas in Philippine culture and tourism in the subjects taught to the students.
- Create several school programs and events directly related to promotion of culture, nationalism, and tourism.

It has always been said that one cannot give what it does not have. It would be highly improbable for one to invite somebody to see festivals and share the culture when he, himself does not even know the what, why, how, and when's of these activities. The colors, flares, sounds, decors, and sumptuous foods which mark the celebration of festivities in the country have their reasons for being.

The improvement of the curriculum provides the missing link between appreciating and fiestas and festivities in all of 7,100 islands – with all the splendor of its diverse, yet unique, culture.

References Available on Request