

Chapter 9

Higher Education in Tourism and Hospitality in the Philippines: Stakeholders, Forces, Processes, and Outcomes

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ABSTRACT

This chapter asks the question: How do broader sociological forces affect the production of tourism knowledge? This is a problem posed by Tribe and Liburd in 2016 when they proposed a reconceptualization of the structure, systems, processes, and outcomes that define the field of tourism. Using the Enhanced Basic Education Act or Republic Act No. 10533 as the starting point, the chapter contributes to the discussion by looking at the formulation of curricula in tourism and hospitality in the Philippines, and examining the structure that has evolved from the interaction of forces, stakeholders, and processes. FGDs were conducted to gain insights into the issue. Findings show that wider socioeconomic forces, mediated by a range of stakeholders, dictate the content and direction of tourism and hospitality higher education. The findings demonstrate the permeability of the higher education sector to external actors, processes, and institutional arrangements, as stakeholders view tourism and hospitality education from the lens of neoliberalism. The chapter concludes by suggesting theoretical implications.

INTRODUCTION

How do broader sociological forces affect the production of tourism knowledge? This is the question posed by Tribe and Liburd (2016) when they proposed a reconceptualization of the structure, systems, processes and outcomes that define the field of tourism. This paper contributes to the discussion by looking at the formulation of curricula in tourism and hospitality in the Philippines, and examining the structure that has evolved from the interaction of global and local forces, stakeholders and processes.

This paper uses as a starting point the enactment in 2013 of the Enhanced Basic Education Act or Republic Act No. 10533. The law lengthened basic education from 10 years to 12 years by adding senior high school. In these two years, students choose from four (4) career tracks, namely, academic track, technical-vocational-livelihood track, sports track and arts track. The main aim of the program, called K to 12, was to let high school graduates decide whether to seek employment, be an entrepreneur, or pursue further education in college.

Although the reforms were targeted at basic education, it has affected college education as well through the introduction of college-level general education courses in senior high school and the reduction in college enrolment, if not absence of students in certain year levels (Manasan, 2015). Thus, higher education institutions have had to confront the issue of formulating the appropriate response, that is to say, how they would restructure their programs and practices in light of the reform and its effects.

In order to analyze this response, it is necessary and important to identify the set of forces and stakeholders upon whose shoulders fall the task of formulating a response. According to Pforr (2005), the broad identification of stakeholders and an assessment of their relative powers lead to a determination of how each one influences the policy process. Within tourism and hospitality education research, such insights could clarify the actors and processes that populate the curriculum space, clarifying who among them package knowledge (Tribe 2005). Krutwyscho and Bramwell (2010) emphasize that such knowledge provides insights into the workings of a society.

The argument is that in the face of basic education reform (as represented by the K to 12 program) wider socio-economic forces, mediated by a range of stakeholders that follow a neoliberal orientation, dictate the content and direction of tourism and hospitality higher education in the country. The paper develops this point by noting in the review of related literature the range of global and local forces that planners consider when designing and implementing curricula. Then, the paper discusses the methods used and presents findings from focus group discussions conducted among educators across the country. Implications of the results conclude the paper.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Scholars have noted that the power to shape higher education does not fall exclusively now in the hands of universities. That is to say, a more democratic process currently permeates university halls in terms of curriculum planning. Belhassen and Caton (2011, pp 1389-1390), observe that “the seat of epistemic power is shifting from disciplines traditionally contained within the universities to the public sphere, where growing numbers of people are demanding that knowledge be produced in line with mass understandings and values”.

The government and industry are among the top stakeholders which have influenced the development of tourism and hospitality curricula, with Dredge et al. (2012) arguing that they are both responsible for

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