



JOURNAL OF TERTIARY EDUCATION AND LEARNING (JTEL)

ISSN: 2994-4015 (Online)

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 3 (2024)



PUBLISHED BY
E-PALLI PUBLISHERS, DELAWARE, USA

Tourism Student Satisfaction with Extra-curricular Activities in a Public Higher Education Institution in the Philippines

Catherine Magboo-Campo^{1*}

Article Information

Received: July 17, 2024

Accepted: August 30, 2024

Published: October 31, 2024

Keywords

Action Plan, Extra-Curricular Activities, Higher Education Institution, Student Satisfaction, Scale Program

ABSTRACT

Higher education institution (HEI) is viewed as a significant driver of individual and national prosperity. HEI in the Philippines like Mindoro State University (MinSU), the only university in the province, delivers student development services that are designed for the exploration, enhancement, and development of the student's full potential for personal growth, leadership, and social responsibility through various institutional and student-initiated activities. Recognizing this, MinSU is focusing on meeting its students' needs, expectations, and satisfaction, the ultimate beneficiaries of the educational experience. This study assessed the satisfaction of tourism management students with extra-curricular activities (ECAs) during the academic year 2023-2024. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the study utilizes a quantitative survey to gauge overall satisfaction and identify areas of strength and weakness. Additionally, qualitative interviews provide an in-depth exploration of student experiences, allowing them to articulate the "why" behind their satisfaction levels and let them make recommendations. Findings show students prioritized participation in cultural ECAs that provided opportunities to showcase their talents and creativity, contributing to reduced academic stress. Additionally, to improve student preparedness, the Council of Tourism Students Organization might consider a phased implementation of the existing SCALE program for the next semester. This study provides the factors that contribute to student satisfaction with ECAs, ultimately for the development of more engaging and enriching action plans that enhance the holistic experience towards student-initiated activities for lifelong learners as the future tourism industry workforce.

INTRODUCTION

Viewed as a key driver of individual and national prosperity, higher education's mission extends beyond simply teaching existing knowledge to students (Weerasinghe *et al.*, 2017). Higher education institutions (HEIs) like universities and colleges are not only centers of knowledge creation and dissemination through innovation but also places that prepare students for the future workforce. Recognizing this, these institutions are focusing on meeting their students' needs and expectations, the ultimate beneficiaries of the educational experience. In the Philippines, through the provisions of the Republic Act (RA) No. 7722, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) was established to create a complete, adequate, and integrated system of higher education. As part of its vision, a "Philippine higher education system that is equitable and producing locally responsive, innovative, and globally competitive graduates and lifelong learners", HEIs are continuously doing their job of preparing students with the skills they need in the future through initiated activities or sometimes referred to as extra-curricular activities. In a public HEI in the Philippines like Mindoro State University (MinSU), student activities are a vital part of the semestral accomplishments and something that students look forward to. By RA 10596 as amended by RA 11006, the Mindoro State College of Agriculture and Technology (MinSCAT) was converted into Mindoro State University on June 4, 2013, with provisions for compliance before

the grant as a full-fledged university through House Bill No. 4448. The Mindoro State University (MinSU) is the first-ever University in the province of Oriental Mindoro and the youngest in the MIMAROPA Region. Currently, it has over 10, 000 students, 301 staff, and 9 colleges from its three campuses located in Calapan City, Victoria, and Bongabong Campus. One of its nine colleges is the College of Business and Management (CBM). The CBM has three programs namely: BS in Tourism Management, BS in Hospitality Management and BS in Entrepreneurship. This study focused on the satisfaction of the student with the semestral extra-curricular activities conducted by the student organization under the tourism management program. Tourism management is accredited level III by the Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines, Inc. (AACUP). It has 343 students for the academic year 2023-2024. It has its institutionally accredited student organization which is the Council of Tourism Students (CTS) Organization. CTS has prepared its action plan for the entire semester involving student-initiated activities. These aim to equip students with the social capabilities that they need aside from the academic teaching that they acquire from the four corners of the classroom. CTS activities are patterned with global and national events like the World Tourism Day celebration every September, the GAD event, World Food Day, and National Arts Month among others. They also introduced the Social Capabilities and Life Skill Enhancement (SCALE) program which was

¹ Mindoro State University-Bongabong Campus, Oriental Mindoro, Philippines

* Corresponding author's e-mail: campocatherinem@gmail.com

conducted for three consecutive months. Lastly, they also had their annual celebration of Tourism Day which is a pot for skills competition among tourism management students. The purpose of this study is to assess the satisfaction of the primary stakeholders and recipients of activities who are the students themselves. The researcher believes that upon knowing their satisfaction with extra-curricular activities, it will be easier to craft an action plan for the succeeding semester to benefit tourism students' welfare and needs holistically.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Extra-curricular Activity

Extra-curricular activities (ECAs) are optional, non-academic programs offered by the school outside of regular class time (Buckley & Lee, 2021). These are not part of the curriculum which allows students to explore their interests. From cultural clubs and publications to athletic teams and fraternities, student societies offer a vast array of extracurricular activities (Buckley & Lee, 2021). Several studies note the importance of ECAs in the holistic development of students. In addition to core academic knowledge, students develop valuable life skills like time management, organization, and teamwork, which all contribute to academic achievement through ECAs. Students' discipline as well as their leadership skills are developed and improved. Students linked their increased self-confidence, well-being, and happiness to participating in the university's ECAs (Munir & Zaheer, 2021). On the other hand, Seow & Pan, (2014) suggest that while extracurricular activities can significantly boost academic performance, excessive participation can become counterproductive if the time commitment crowds out dedicated studying and academic work. According to the CHED Memorandum Order (CMO) no. 9 series of 2013 or the Enhanced Policies and Guidelines on Student Affairs and Services, student development services refer to the services and programs designed for the exploration, enhancement, and development of the student's full potential for personal growth, leadership, and social responsibility through various institutional and student-initiated activities. This is done through the office of the Student Welfare Services or the Student Affairs Services (SAS), which intends to promote basic services and programs needed to ensure students' overall well-being. Relative to that, accreditation, reaccreditation as well as the evaluation of activities are part of their tasks. This is hereby strengthened by CMO no. 8, Series of 2021 Guidelines on the Implementation of Flexible Delivery of Student Affairs and Services (SAS) Programs during the COVID-19 Pandemic. HEI, even on the outskirts of unforeseen circumstances like the pandemic, has the primary mandate of intentionally designing services and programs and services that aim to provide opportunities for student formation and discipline in the context of the 21st century. Through the different mandates of CHED, student services are supported and programmed for sustainability in the monitoring capabilities of student-initiated programs, initiatives, and activities.

Extra-curricular Activities' Impacts to Students

Students in today's university setting belong to Generation Z (Gen Z). Their birth years are the late 1990s to 2010 (University of the National Education Commission, Krakow & Nodzyńska-Moroń, 2024) as shown in Figure 1. Shaped by the digital age, Gen Z spends a significant amount of time online. Their ability to focus on one thing at a time may be shorter than previous generations, with some studies suggesting an attention span of around eight seconds. Social interaction for Gen Z often takes place online platforms (University of the National Education Commission, Krakow & Nodzyńska-Moroń, 2024). They are so-called learning by doing. The short attention span may be caused by fast pacing brought by their early and consistent exposure to social media. Gen Z booms on engaging, hands-on learning experiences. Research suggests that such methods promote greater interactivity, which is particularly effective for this generation.

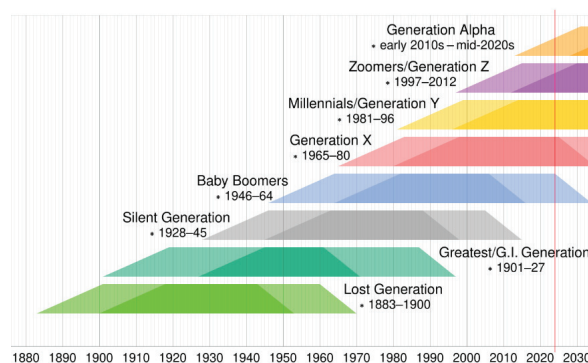


Figure 1: Generation Timeline

Source: [File:Generation timeline.svg](#)

For Gen Z, a generation known for digital connection, extracurricular activities (ECAs) provide a vital space for fostering real-world interaction. Participation in extracurricular activities (ECAs) has become a cornerstone of a holistic education. It consistently demonstrates that ECAs benefit students in numerous ways, from fostering self-confidence and exploring new passions to deepening engagement with learning and developing crucial life skills (Lien, 2024). Since college students directly experience extracurricular activities, their satisfaction with both the delivery and outcomes of these programs is crucial for improving the quality of extracurricular activities in colleges. This focus on student satisfaction has become a key driver of innovation in this area (Xue *et al.*, 2021). Student satisfaction with ECAs reflects how happy they are with the range of activities offered by their college. This includes both the “tangible” aspects, like equipment and facilities, and the “intangible” aspects, like instruction and support. It's all about how students feel about the quality of these programs when they participate (Xue *et al.*, 2021). When students are happy with the extracurricular options, they're more likely to participate actively and get involved. This can lead to them discovering new interests, developing skills,

and forging connections with peers who share similar passions (Kumar, 2016). News outlets and recent studies consistently highlight the importance of ECAs for both students and colleges in the job-hunting and employment process (Kim & Bastedo, 2017). They also note that there's a well-established positive relationship between extracurricular activity involvement and career-related skills development. In industries like tourism, where the workforce is expected to be excellent in communication, interpersonal, and problem-solving skills, extra-curricular activities are contributors to honing these life-long skills. Students benefit a lot in terms of camaraderie, leadership, belongingness, and friendship that they can get from the conduct of ECAs (Hui-Yuan, & Chun-Lan, 2019). This can boost their confidence and help them to get out of their comfort shell and feel at ease in the environment they are in. Additionally, it also alleviates the level of stress and pressure brought about by the academics. However, overconsumption of student's time may also hamper their academics and might sacrifice other equally important areas on their educational journey. In some studies conducted, findings showed that employers might look at the ECAs that applicants participated but they are also particular with the average and ranking that they get from an excellent academic track (Lobo & Varona, 2024).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study utilizes a mixed method approach to comprehensively evaluate tourism management students' satisfaction with the extracurricular activities initiated by the CTS. A quantitative survey instrument employing a 4-point Likert scale was employed to determine student satisfaction levels following each of the five extracurricular activities offered. This Likert scale allowed students to rate their satisfaction on a continuum, ranging from (e. g., "Strongly Dissatisfied" to "Strongly Satisfied"). The resulting data served to identify key strengths and weaknesses associated with the activities. It was done through pen and paper evaluation forms as well as online forms specifically through Google Forms for cost-saving purposes. Qualitative semi-structured interviews were conducted with a sample of student participants to complement the quantitative data. These interviews provided an in-depth exploration of student experiences, allowing them to articulate the rationales behind their satisfaction levels and offer recommendations for improvement. The interview questions focused on student evaluation of the activity's conduct, to assess student acceptance and inform the development of a more effective action plan for the following semester. Both

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study shows that for each activity, students have their fair share of evaluation as follows:
Evaluation Report

ECA 1:

World Tourism Day: Tourism and Green Investments

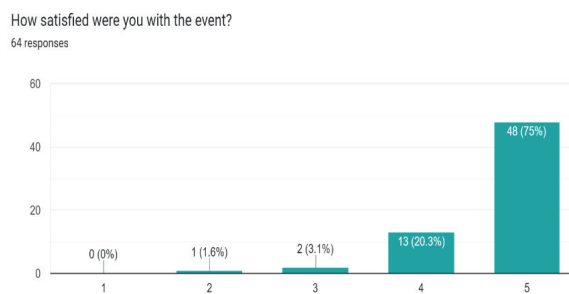


Figure 1: Overall satisfaction

Figure 1 shows that the students are very much satisfied with the event with 75 %, while some students are not satisfied with 1.6 percent.

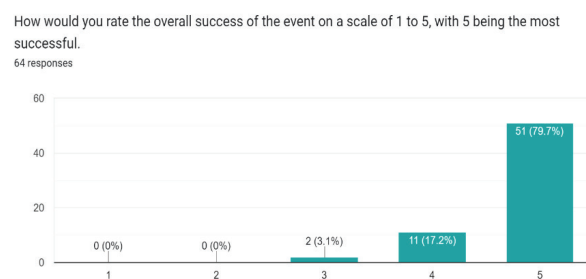


Figure 2: Overall Success of the Event

Figure 2 shows that students deemed the event to be very successful with 79.7 %, while some students perceived it as not very successful with 3.1 %.

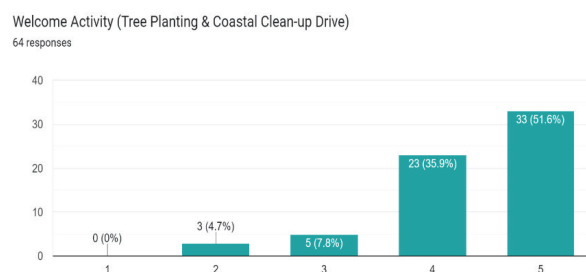


Figure 3: Welcome Activity (Tree Planting and Coastal Clean-up Drive)

Figure 3 shows that students are very much satisfied with the tree planting and coastal clean-up drive of the event with 51.6 %, while some students are not dissatisfied with 4.7 %.

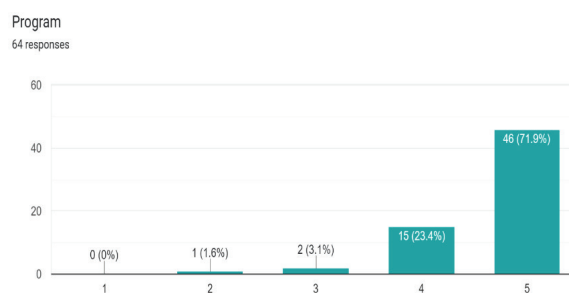


Figure 4: Program

Figure 4 shows that most of the students are very satisfied with the program with 71.9%, while some students are dissatisfied with 1.6 %.

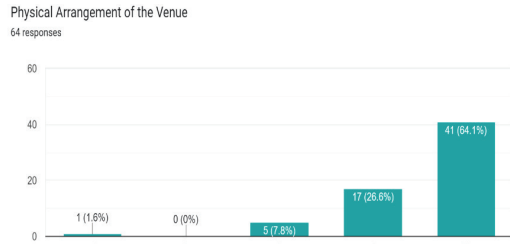


Figure 5: Physical Arrangement of the Venue

Figure 5 shows that students are very much satisfied with the physical arrangement of the venue with 84.1 %, while some are dissatisfied with 1.6 %.

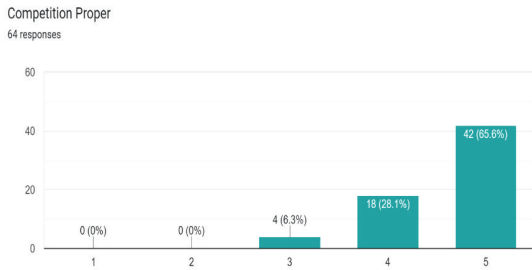


Figure 6: Competition Proper

Figure 6 shows that students are very much satisfied with the competition during the program with 65.6 %, while some students are dissatisfied with 6.3 %.

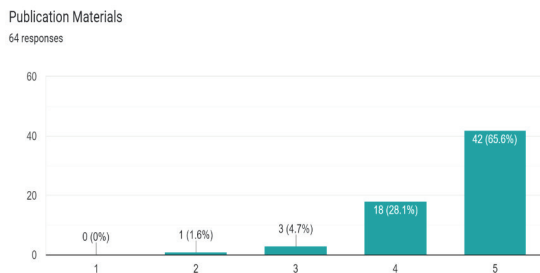


Figure 7: Publication Materials

Figure 7 shows that students are very much satisfied with the publication materials that were used in the program with 65.6%, while some students are dissatisfied with 2.6%.

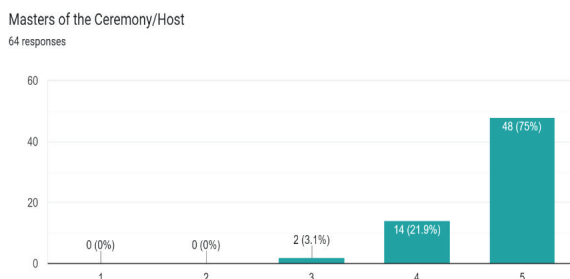


Figure 8: Master of the Ceremony/Hosts

Figure 8 shows that students are very much satisfied with the hosting skills of the masters of ceremony.

Overall Evaluation

Student evaluations of the event indicated a high level of satisfaction, despite the compressed planning timeframe.

Positive student feedback centered on the event's ability to transcend mere entertainment. While students enjoyed the festive atmosphere and sense of community specific to tourism students, the event also provided valuable learning opportunities related to the event's activities. Furthermore, the quality of organization achieved despite the short preparation period significantly contributed to student satisfaction. In their overall assessment, students characterized the event as engaging and surpassing expectations, even labeling it the most enjoyable event they had experienced at the institution. The following recommendations were acquired from semi-structured interviews.

1. To have more proper time management when it comes to the pacing of activities.
2. To have more electric fans at the venue, since it is hot.
3. To inform the students about the event 2 weeks in advance, so they can properly prepare for the program.
4. To also give recognition to the participants who did not win their respective competitions.
5. To still sign the attendance of the students who are late to the event.

ECA 2:

Social Capabilities and Life Skills Enhancement (SCALE): Personality Development and Public Speaking

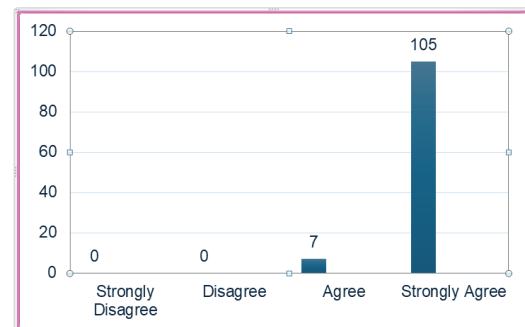


Figure 9: Organization of the Seminar/Workshop

Figure 9 shows that students perceived the event to be excellent with a frequency of 105 or 93.75 %, while some students perceived it to be good with a frequency of 7 or 6.25 %.

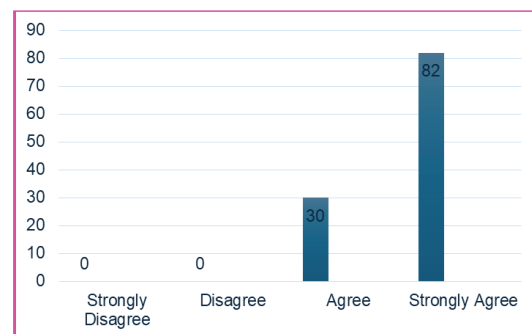


Figure 10: Seminar/workshop objectives were stated clearly and met.

Figure 10 shows that students deemed the objectives of the seminar/workshop to be met with a frequency of 82 or 73.21 %.

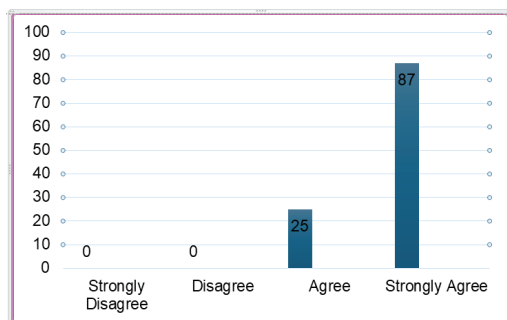


Figure 11: This workshop increased my knowledge and skills in personality development and public speaking.

Figure 11 shows that students strongly agree that the workshop has increased their knowledge and skill in personality development and public speaking with a frequency of 87 or 77.69 percent.

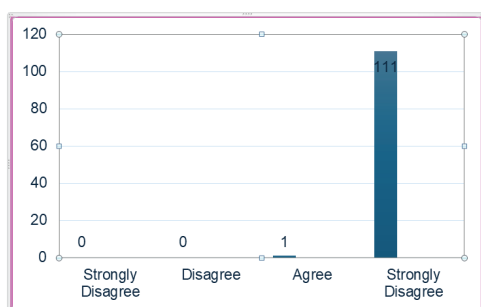


Figure 12: The speaker is knowledgeable in the topic.

Figure 12 shows that the students strongly agree with the guest speaker on the topic during the program with a frequency of 111 or 99.11 percent.

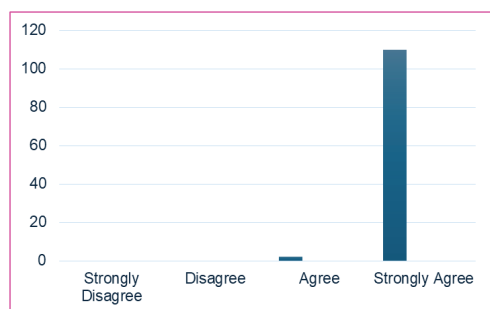


Figure 13: The speaker facilitates and prepares activities that are relevant to the topic.

Figure 13 shows that students strongly agree that the guest speakers' prepared activities are relevant to the topic of the event with a frequency of 110 or 98.21 percent.

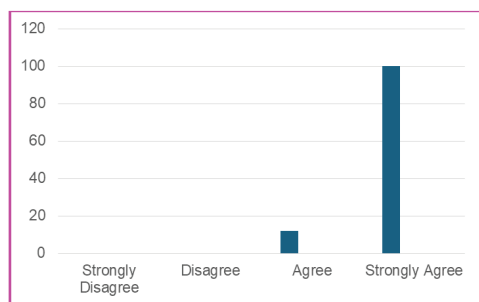


Figure 14: The information and/or skills presented were relevant and useful.

Figure 14 shows that the students strongly agree that the information presented by the guest speaker is relevant and useful with a frequency of 100 or 89.29 percent.

Overall Evaluation

Initial feedback from students who participated in the Social Capabilities and Life Skills Enhancement program suggests a high level of satisfaction with the program's inaugural event. The seminar-workshop format was particularly well-received, with students highlighting the acquisition of valuable knowledge applicable to personal development and public speaking skills. Furthermore, the workshop component demonstrably addressed a significant need, as evidenced by participants reporting a reduction in their public speaking anxiety. Students also acknowledged the program's relevance to their future careers in tourism, recognizing the importance of these skills for success within the industry. The following recommendations were acquired from semi-structured interviews.

1. Have a nice microphone for upcoming events.
2. Check the microphone before the program starts.
3. Add more electric fans at the venue.

ECA 3:

Social Capabilities and Life Skills Enhancement (SCALE): First Aid and Safety Training

Speaker (Jared M. Melendres - Disaster Preparedness and Basic Occupational Safety & First Aid)

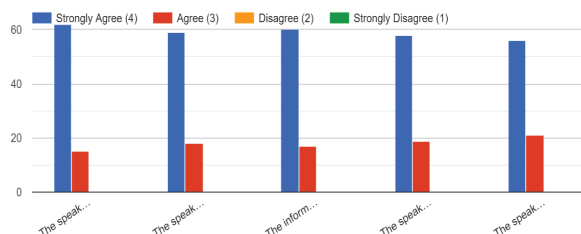


Figure 15: Speaker (Disaster Preparedness and Basic Occupational Safety & First Aid)

Figure 15 shows that most of the students strongly agree that the guest speaker was excellent.

Program Flow

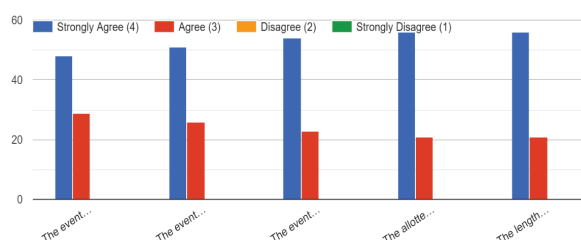


Figure 16: Program flow

Figure 16 shows that most of the students strongly agree that the seminar workshop was well-paced and had adequate time for the speaker.

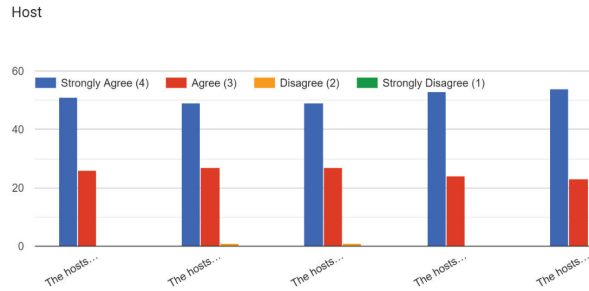


Figure 17: Hosts

Figure 17 shows that students strongly agree that the hosts for the event have great energy and have shown excellent communication skills.

Overall Evaluation

Post-event evaluations from students revealed a high degree of satisfaction with the overall program. Students emphasized the utility of the information and knowledge presented by the guest speaker, perceiving it as directly relevant to their future endeavors. The engaging nature of the presentation, coupled with its practical value, was particularly well-received. Furthermore, students reported an enhanced sense of preparedness for unforeseen disasters or emergencies as a result of the event. The program also demonstrably fostered a deeper understanding of first aid principles and techniques, empowering students to assist others in need. Overall, the students found the seminar as a big help as it improved their knowledge as individuals.

1. To have more knowledgeable programs that students can enjoy.
2. To have a mental health awareness program.
3. To have skills and management program.
4. To have more electric fans because the venue is very hot.

ECA 4: Social Capabilities and Life Skills Enhancement (SCALE): Life Industry Skills Enhancement

Speaker (Ms. Stephanie Rae Umali Yuzon & Mr. Arllan Riego)

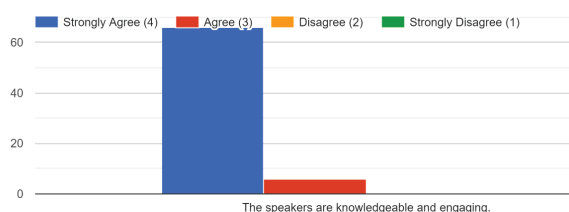


Figure 18: Speaker

Figure 18 shows that the students strongly agree that the guest speakers for the seminar-workshop are knowledgeable about the topics they discussed, and they are engaging.

Program Flow

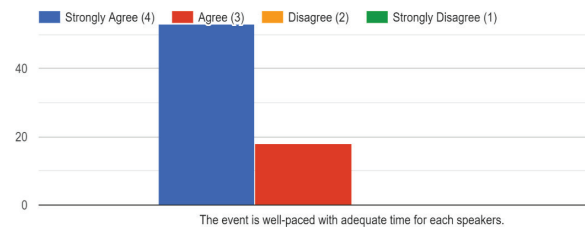


Figure 19: Program Flow

Figure 19 shows that students strongly agree that the seminar-workshop has enough time for each speaker. Additionally, the officers were well-prepared for the event and the length of the whole seminar-workshop was appropriate.

Hosts

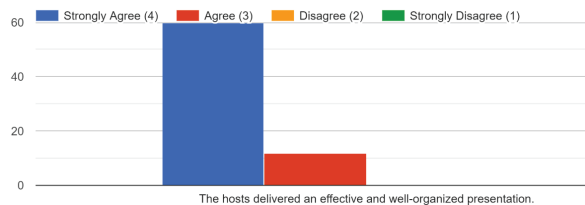


Figure 20: Hosts

Figure 20 shows that students strongly agree that the hosts of the event gave an effective and well-organized presentation. Additionally, the hosts were confident and energetic and showed excellent communication skills.

Overall Evaluation

Student evaluations indicated the program's utility in equipping them with valuable knowledge and skills imparted by the guest speakers. These newly acquired competencies were perceived as directly applicable to their future careers in tourism, as evidenced by students highlighting their relevance. Furthermore, the program demonstrably fostered career motivation within the tourism industry, with students reporting an increased interest in pursuing such paths. The following recommendations were acquired from semi-structured interviews.

1. Provide more electric fans.
2. To continue doing these kinds of events for the incoming tourism students.
3. To improve the preparation for the event.

ECA 5:

Tourism Day 2024: "Tourism and Peace: Cultural Exchange and Peacebuilding Through Tourism"

Figure 21 shows that the students strongly agree that

Speaker (Mr. Eugene De Guzman)

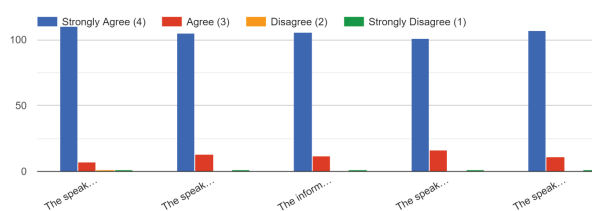


Figure 21: Speaker

the guest speaker for the event is knowledgeable and has presented relevant and useful information.

Program Flow

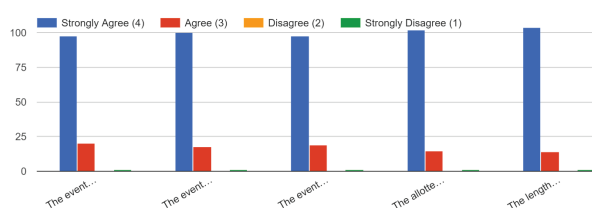


Figure 22: Program Flow

Figure 22 shows that students strongly agree that the program is well-paced, well-organized, and the organizers are well-prepared.

Hosts

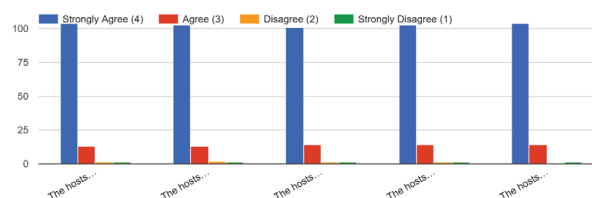


Figure 23: Hosts

Figure 23 shows that the students strongly agree that the host delivered a well-organized routine, showed confidence and great energy, and showed excellent communication skills.

Overall Evaluation

Positive student evaluations characterized the 2024 Tourism Day event as enjoyable and exceeding expectations compared to the prior year. This suggests a continuous improvement in the program's ability to engage students. Effective extracurricular activities, such as well-organized events like Tourism Day, can foster a sense of community and belonging among students with similar interests. Furthermore, the event's well-structured pacing with adequate time for each skills competition highlights the importance of providing opportunities for practical application of knowledge and skills. Extracurricular activities that incorporate both learning and friendly competition, like these skills contests, can be

particularly motivating for students and contribute to the development of valuable competencies relevant to the tourism industry. The following recommendations were acquired from semi-structured interviews.

1. Provide more electric fans, since the venue is hot.
2. Improve the design of the stage and hire a caterer.
3. Improve the planning and preparation phase.
4. Organize a Halloween and masquerade ball.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the tourism management students' satisfaction with five extracurricular activities (ECAs), with three from the Council of Tourism Students' (CTS) SCALE program. The findings reveal that conducted ECAs effectively blend knowledge acquisition, career development, and student motivation. Students consistently reported high levels of satisfaction across all ECAs. They particularly valued guest speakers' expertise and the relevance of the information presented. The opportunity to gain new knowledge and skills perceived as beneficial for future careers in tourism emerged as a key factor in student satisfaction. Program organization and flow played a significant role in the student experience. Overall, students praised the events' structure, suggesting a smooth and engaging experience. However, some students expressed concerns with specific logistical aspects, such as venue temperature and microphone quality. Addressing these areas can further enhance the student experience in future ECAs. Beyond knowledge acquisition, the ECAs significantly impacted student motivation. Students reported feeling motivated to pursue careers in tourism after participating in the events. This finding underscores the potential of well-designed ECAs to foster student interest and career aspirations. The findings of the study also show that students enrolled in the tourism management program desire more culturally inclined ECAs that would further improve their ability to share themselves. Students enjoy ECAs involving cultural dances, arts, and the like.

Recommendation

Building on the success of these five extracurricular activities (ECAs) in tourism management would help improve students' holistic capabilities. Based on student feedback, consider expanding the ECA program to include activities that celebrate and explore cultural exchange. Thus, on the succeeding semestral action plan, SCALE program would be retained with specific inclusion to cultural competitions like dance, creative play among others. This could also involve workshops on traditional dances, arts, and crafts from various regions, fostering intercultural understanding and communication skills valuable for tourism professionals. Furthermore, future program student implementers may maintain the focus on inviting knowledgeable and engaging speakers who deliver relevant and practical information for students' careers. It is also recommended to ensure smooth program flow by addressing concerns like venue

temperature and microphone quality while allocating adequate time for each segment. Moreover, for the succeeding semestral student organization action plan, actively soliciting student feedback to identify areas for improvement and incorporate valuable suggestions for future events, including exploring preferences for specific topics or formats is vital. Also, expanding the program to offer a wider variety of activities is recommended. This could include student-driven initiatives alongside guest speaker events, catering to diverse learning preferences and interests. By implementing these recommendations and continuously seeking student input, organizers can ensure continued effectiveness and student satisfaction with future ECAs. This approach will contribute to fostering a well-rounded educational experience that equips tourism management students with valuable knowledge, skills, and motivation for their chosen career paths in the diverse and multicultural tourism industry.

Acknowledgement

The author would like to extend its deepest appreciation and thanks to the Council of Tourism Student (CTS) officers (Academic Year 2023-2024) for exemplifying leadership in their entire term. The ECAs and programs evaluated by students will not be possible without their initiative and dedication to the program and the student body as a whole. Kudos (Congratulations)!

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