
Graduate Education Tourism and Development of Dasmaringas City

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Abstract – The study aimed to determine the extent of the economic contribution, community involvement in terms of consultancy in policy decisions of foreign graduate students in the City of Dasmaringas local government units and derive strategic directions for higher education institutions (HEIs) in the education tourism sector. Two universities were purposively selected for this study which were offering graduate programs, Level IV accredited with Autonomy Status and enjoying international presence. 1,890 foreign graduate school students enrolled in MBA and PhD Business Management programs first trimester of SY 2018-2019. SWOT analysis was employed to determine (1) the extent of the economic contribution, (2) community involvement in terms of consultancy in policy decisions of foreign graduate students in the City of Dasmaringas local government units, and, (3) strategic directions for HEIs in the education tourism sector. The top and middle managers in the export processing zones comprised the big bulk of enrollees in the graduate programs. At approximately 35 top- and middle level managers in each company, with 302 companies operating at FCIE and Business Park, one is seeing at most 4,530 graduate students per trimester in this sector alone. On the average, the fees per trimester term on a 9-unit load in the masters' programs was US\$2,400 and on a 6-unit load per trimester term in the doctorate programs at US\$2,450. Approximately, a foreign student spent at least US\$100 per day for food and other daily needs. Roughly, the annual total educational and non-educational expenditures per graduate student was US\$43,870. All respondents were involved in consultancy work and economic planning with local government units (LGUs) and local businesses as part of their curricular programs. Their efforts were well received and benefited by the recipient LGUs. For future directions, the GS need to design specific programs for each group of executives/managers working in different industries; to enrich research- and industry-based courses in business and management and develop initiatives for collaboration in development programs of the City of Dasmaringas.

Keywords – Education Tourism Impact, Community Development, City of Dasmaringas, Economic Development, Accreditation of Programs, Center of Development, Center of Excellence.

I. INTRODUCTION

The City of Dasmaringas, is classified as a first class city in terms of income classification. The growth of the city is attributed to the influx of industries (export economic zones and foreign direct investments), local businesses, large universities and colleges, health institutions and a growing number of first class large subdivisions.

Objectives of the Study

The study aimed to determine the extent of the economic contribution and community involvement in terms of consultancy in policy decisions of foreign graduate students in the City of Dasmaringas LGUs and derive strategic directions HEIs in the education tourism sector.

Education Tourism

Education tourism is a program which potential learners enroll in a foreign university to acquire a new knowl-

-edge from the Host University and country relative to their current knowledge (Bodger, 1998; Samah and Ahmadian, 2012).

Carlito Puno, the former Chairman of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), led the Philippines' efforts at 'education tourism.' In June 2007, the Philippine government and the Education Ministry of China signed a memorandum that allowed Chinese students to enroll in the Philippines. The government of the Philippines claimed that the country is a good option for foreign students since it offers tertiary education and proficiency in the English language that is at par with English-based schools at comparatively cheap rates.

Currently, over 100,000 Koreans are in the Philippines pursuing mostly English-language courses. The number of foreign students increased from 41,443 in 2011 to 47,478 in 2012 (Bureau of Immigration, 2013).

According to Lawyer Cris Villalobos, BI student desk head, 31,000 special study permit (SSP) holders, mostly based in the provinces, account for the majority of foreign students while 16,478 others were issued student visa.

South Koreans top the list of foreign students enrolled in the country's colleges and universities according to the BI. As of May 2015, at least 1,530 South Korean students acquired student visas to pursue higher education in the country.

In place is Executive Order 285, which, among others, stipulates that only colleges and universities recognized by the Federation of Accrediting Agencies in the Philippines or with equivalent accreditation from the Commission on Higher Education and the Bureau of Immigration are allowed to admit foreign students.

CHED identified educational institutions and course programs for both local and foreign students by designating higher education institutions as either Centers of Excellence (COE) or Centers of Development (COD). The Centers are intended to provide institutional leadership in the development of specific disciplines to ensure accelerated development of higher education institutions in their respective service areas.

Education tourism is an inter-agency program of CHED, in collaboration with the Department of Tourism and the Department of Foreign Affairs. They agreed to issue multi-entry visas to foreign students. More foreign students were coming to the country to study due to educational tourism being promoted by CHED (Puno, 2007). According to Puno, education tourism, is a point of entry in tourism and other economic activities.

II. METHODS

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

The ever changing academic environment requires dynamic and on-time adjustments specifically on the demands of international students and academic integration and minimum standards requirements (Hillman and Keim, 2008; Kachra and White, 2008). Corporate managers in academic institutions need to understand their organizations' potential within its environment by engaging in the analysis of its internal strengths and weaknesses and its external opportunities and threats (SWOT) (David, 1985; Weihrich, 1982; Berdrow, Lin, McDonough and Zack, 2008; Capron, Laurence and Guillen, 2008; Quinn, 1980).

This study is a SWOT analysis of the key points for the two universities under study. It is not an exhaustive one although the various factors deemed significant were identified as seen by the respondents. There were

some instances that a factor seemed to be both a strength and a weakness and an opportunity as a threat (Angwin, Paroutis and Milson, 2008; Gib and Margulies, 1991; David, 1986; Dess, Lumpkin, and Eisner, 2006). Nonetheless, the author was able to end up with a short list in each of the four areas of concerns.

SWOT framework was utilized to determine where graduate programs in the City of Dasmariñas are now in terms of education tourism and their contributions to development programs of the city. The environmental scan is a basic tool to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to a university in the areas of its four fundamental mandates in learning and teaching, research, community outreach and productivity (Lenz, 1987; Grant, 1991; CHED Memo 46 s.1991)). These are fundamental concerns that must be measured and evaluated regularly (Capron and Chatain, 2008; Porter, 2008; Amit, and Zott, 2008; Cannella, Lee and Park, 2008). The result of this study will help the university sets its direction and future in terms of education tourism.

There were two universities in this study that served as case samples (CS). These were purposively selected as they were the only ones offering graduate programs that are granted Autonomy Status, Level IV accreditation and enjoying international presence. The Level IV accreditation status remained a major factor in the decision for enrollment of the students.

Graduate students are considered to contribute significantly to the economic development of a country through their extensive research contributions in industrial, health, medical, and other sciences (Bestre, 2010; Noor, 2012). Hence the choice to limit the study to graduate students. It was expected that their contributions to the City of Dasmariñas would make a significant impact to its development as a city.

Of the 207 foreign graduate students included in the study, 115 (56%) were Koreans, 31 (15%) Chinese nationals, 14 (7%) Taiwanese nationals, 21 (10%) Indians, 6 (3%) Iranians, 16 (8%) Pakistanis and 4 (1%) Myanmar nationals.

One hundred forty-nine (72%) of the foreign graduate students came from the export processing zones and fifty-eight (28%) from foreign universities.

Other graduate programs were offered but only in the business programs that had foreign students enrolled were chosen as sample respondents.

Seventy-two percent (149) of the respondent foreign business administration/management graduate students were either top level-middle-level managers from the export processing zones in the area and twenty-eight percent (58) came from outside the export processing zones.

Of the total 207 prospective graduate students' samples, 200 submitted completed questionnaires for a 97% retrieval rate. The respondents were requested to rank a short list of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats on educational tourism affecting a university and given the option to add to the short list. SWOT analysis was employed to derive strategic directions for the HEIs and COD in the education tourism sector.

The researcher recognized that the study was not an exhaustive one since it was limited only to graduate foreign students enrolled in Master in Business Administration and Doctor of Philosophy in Business Management, although the various factors deemed significant were identified as seen by the respondents. There were some instances that a factor seemed to be both a strength and a weakness and an opportunity as a threat (Angwin, Paroutis and Milson, 2008; Gib and Margulies, 1991; David, 1986; Dess, Lumpkin, and Eisner, 2006).

Nonetheless, the author was able to end up with a short list in each of the four areas of concerns.

III. RESULTS

Extent of Economic Contribution

Enrollment data and fees were considered as proxies to economic contribution of the students. The total enrollment of foreign graduate students in the two CS for SY 2018-2019 was 5,258. Of these, 207 foreign students included in the study were in the business graduate programs of the two CS as of first semester of SY 2018-2019 to which 169 were in the masters' programs (Business Administration) and 38 in the doctorate programs (Business Management). On the average, the fees per trimester term on a 9-unit load in the masters' program was US\$2,400 and on a 6-unit load per trimester term in the doctorate program was US\$2,450. Also, approximately, a foreign student spent at least US\$100 per day for food and other daily needs. On the average, at least, the annual total educational and non-educational expenditures per graduate student was US\$43,870.

Of the 207 foreign graduate students, 115 (56%) were Koreans, 31 (15%) Chinese nationals, 14 (7%) Taiwanese nationals, 21 (10%) Indians, 6 (3%) Iranians, 16 (8%) Pakistanis and 4 (1%) Myanmar nationals. One hundred forty-nine (72%) of the foreign graduate students came from the export processing zones and fifty-eight (28%) from foreign universities. Other graduate programs were offered but only in the business programs that had foreign students enrolled were chosen as sample respondents.

Education tourism was pursued aggressively by CHED as early as 2007. The share of the CS in the graduate school as an entry point in tourism and other economic activities in the City of Dasmarias was significantly high. Considering the approximate US\$43,870 annual expenditure per student in the graduate school, the economic contribution per student can be considered relatively high.

There were no concrete peso/dollar figures to show the economic contributions of the graduate students to the City of Dasmarias nor quantified in the development changes in aesthetic, cultural, and social aspects. Nonetheless, these peso/dollar figures could be reflected on the project costs and derived benefits to which the graduate students were involved in including implementation of approved projects.

Community Involvement in Terms of Consultancy

Community involvement was in the form of consultancy where the students were invited to participate in LGUs policy decision making. These were conducted during plenary sessions and on special project planning. Consultancy was also actively engaged with local business entrepreneurs specifics to global product marketing, design, and branding.

Strengths

The strengths cited are institutional in nature that are within their specific graduate programs of the CS under study. Nonetheless, these did not address beyond these programs.

Table 1. Summary of swot analysis no. of respondents = 200

Strengths	Weakness
Prestige; Qualified and respected faculty; Academic reputation and national ranking; Convenient class schedules; Relevant community	Funding; Few foreign graduate students; Minimal alumni and development activities.

Strengths	Weakness
<p>outreach programs; International presence in terms of extension programs (Cambodia, South Korea, the Middle East, Indonesia, Myanmar, Bangkok, United States, Vietnam, and Africa)</p> <p>Technology; Quality of facilities. Considered at par in a global environment.</p>	<p>Alumni and Development Programs.</p>
Opportunities	Threats
<p>Presence of the export processing zones</p>	<p>Manila-based competitors</p>

Prestige

The CS enhanced the prestige of the City of Dasmariñas resulting to being considered the university belt South of Manila. Their graduate programs attracted local students comprising approximately 10% of their total enrollment. Foreign students comprised less than 2% of total enrollees in the graduate programs.

Qualified and Respected Faculty

Only doctorate degree holders were allowed to teach in the graduate programs. At least 55% are engaged in research activities. The part-time faculty members are holding top-level positions in either public or private companies and at least 85% are also engaged in consultancy work. Annual intensive training and development programs for both full- and part-time faculty members were being conducted to enhance their skills. The faculty offered a remarkable intellectual engagement with each student.

Academic Reputation and National Ranking

The universities CS offered graduate programs in health and sciences, computer and information technology, engineering, business, economics, management, social work, religious studies, development administration and education. The graduate programs are Level IV Accredited and enjoyed Autonomy Status, i.e., these graduate programs are not controlled by CHED. It is interesting to note that the courses of choice were Master in Business Administration and Ph.D. in Business Management.

Convenient Class Schedule

Students can choose their preferred schedules: weeknights, weekends, or week days. Classes were offered on a trimestral basis. Only 1% of the graduate students were full time students. Ninety-nine percent were employed and came to class only on Saturdays.

Relevant Community Outreach Program

The faculty and graduate students served actively as consultants to the officials of the city. Their services and expertise were delivered free of charge. Most often, they participated as observers in the regular and special meetings of the City Officials and prepared position papers or project proposals. Their consultancy services were on community outreach and economic development programs thus providing the City of Dasmariñas significant development changes in aesthetic, cultural, and economic aspects.

International Presence in Terms of Extension Programs

The CS offered Transnational Education graduate programs in different countries such as Cambodia, South K

-orea, the Middle East, Indonesia, Myanmar, Bangkok, United States, Vietnam, and Africa.

Technology

The CS upgraded their technology capabilities annually which were considered at par in a global environment by the respondents.

Weaknesses

Funding. The major sources of funds were from educational revenues. A major constraint is CHED's requirement that of the increase in tuition fees, 70% must be allotted to salaries, 20% to maintenance, and 10% to return on investment. With this scenario, it was difficult to improve physical and instructional materials. Non-academic revenues were not enough to support substantial improvement.

Recruitment of Graduate Students. Aside from the usual walk-in enrollees, the CS engaged in institutional recruitment. They visited companies, non-government agencies, and government agencies and offered their graduate programs either on-site or in-campus.

Foreign Graduate Students. Expat families send their children to the local universities for undergraduate degrees. The company executives and managers enrolled either in the masters' or doctorate programs. Mostly, they entered the masters' programs. About 1% of total masters' graduate students were foreign students and less than 1% were enrolled in the doctorate programs.

Alumni and Development Programs. An alumni office is institutionalized in these CS. Nonetheless, investment in them was limited to alumni fees. Participation of alumni has also been limited mostly to occasional alumni homecomings. Donations were also insignificant.

IV. DISCUSSIONS/CONCLUSIONS

On Opportunities

Changing Demographics. The top and middle managers in the export processing zones comprised the big bulk of enrollees in the graduate programs. At approximately 15 top- and middle level managers in each company, with 302 companies operating at FCIE and Business Park, one is seeing 4,530 prospective graduate students.

Threats

There existed a short list of threats which affected their enrollment significantly. The universities in the Manila University Belt became competitors. There was a significant number of transferees to Manila. Their main reason was due to better physical facilities offered.

V. STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

The university's graduate school planning environment has been always complex and changing. To serve as catalyst for sustainable graduate education tourism and development, the CS need to look into the interest of graduate students, faculty and administrators and mindful of their opportunities and threats while understanding their strengths and weaknesses.

On Current Strengths

1. **Prestige.** In addition to maintaining Autonomy Status, the CS must pursue international accreditation of their graduate programs geared not only on the social sciences, business and economics but also on research in the sciences and technology transfer. They need to pursue collaboration with foreign universities' researchers including sharing of equipment, collaboration in research programs, between academic and student affairs professionals.
2. **Qualified and Respected Faculty.** Faculty need to engage in exchange programs with foreign universities seek membership in international education associations, and engage and publish research outputs.
3. **Academic Reputation and National Ranking.** The CS must pursue equivalency programs with international universities through membership and program accreditation.
4. **Convenient Class Schedule.** The current convenient class schedules work well with working students. Holding classes in their respective workplaces are favorable.
5. **Relevant Community Outreach Programs.** Active involvement of the graduate students in LGUs concerns provided significant improvement in running city affairs. It is also recommended to work in the barangay level to have a clearer understanding of their needs to deliver relevant development programs.

On Current Weaknesses

1. **Foreign Graduate Students.** The export processing zones are rich sources of graduate students. The GS can market its programs by designing specific programs to address the needs of the students in their respective workplaces.
2. **Alumni and Development Programs.** The alumni must be involved actively in all of the major activities of the university. It also behooves that the alumni are included in the Board of Trustees to insure active involvement.

On Opportunities

Changing Demographics. The Top and middle managers in the export processing zones have an average of stay of four years in their place of work. The GS can design programs to address this years of stay with due consideration to addressing the concern of some students that may not be able to finish the program during their regular duration of work. Collaboration with foreign universities and accreditation with foreign embassies can improve enrollment.

On Threats

The threat posed by Metro Manila universities is strong. This threat can be overcome using aggressive marketing with partnership foreign universities and strong tie-ups with industry for industry-based graduate programs.

The GS must commit themselves to recruiting and retaining talented and committed faculty and staff; professionals of exceptional ability and the capacity for growth.

Recommendations

The GS have to exert vigorous efforts in attracting graduate students to make education tourism sustainable w

with the benefits that go with it. On the other hand, active students' participation for meaningful responsible engagement and strong presence within the City of Dasmariñas and its diverse communities will contribute to both city government and its constituent barangays sustained development. The learnings in the classrooms must provide them an enlightened worldview; a deeper understanding of democratic values and social justice; greater commitment to service and leadership for the common good; and play a personal role in the City of Dasmariñas.

Overall, the GS need to design specific programs for each group of executives/managers working in different industries in the export processing zones; to develop research-based, laboratory-based subjects and science-based programs to attract a rich pool of scientists and to pursue aggressively participation/collaboration in the economic development programs of the City of Dasmariñas.

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