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Glenn F. Ross

James Cook University of North Queensland

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**TOURISM PROMOTION COMPANY EMPLOYMENT
ATTRACTIVENESS AND THE WORK ETHIC**

BY

DR. GLENN F. ROSS, READER IN TOURISM

**DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM
CAIRNS CAMPUS
JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY OF NORTH QUEENSLAND
P.O. BOX 6811
CAIRNS QLD 4870 AUSTRALIA**

ABSTRACT

This study has examined a range of employment choice responses associated with tourism promotion company work among a sample of potential employees within an Australian tourism community. The study also investigated the relationships between a range of study habits, educational perspectives and also levels of the Work Ethic in so far as they might predict various tourism promotion company employment responses. It has been found that this tourism/hospitality work context is generally regarded as highly desirable among these secondary college graduands. Higher levels of the Work Ethic were found to be predictive of an interest in this employment domain. Moreover the study habits associated with both effort and understanding were found to be associated with tourism promotion company employment. The implications of these findings for both prospective staff and also tourism industry employees are examined.

INTRODUCTION

The identification and investigation of a range of factors which are likely to affect occupational choice among high school graduands have received relatively little research attention in the tourism/hospitality industry employment context. In particular relatively little is known regarding processes associated with very specific tourism industry work domains such as tourism promotion company employment. Those studies thus far completed have tended to focus on general employment contexts and on individual and group socio-demographic variables (3). Here a range of possible occupational choices have been scrutinized together with background characteristics of the individual school leaver. Males and individuals from higher socio-economic backgrounds have been found to have higher levels of occupational aspiration (3). Relatively little research work has been completed regarding the role of personality processes and educational values in occupational choice regarding emergent industries such as tourism and hospitality. Yet the tourism and hospitality industries are clearly among the more prominent employers in many countries. Governments

are increasingly looking to these industries to provide work opportunities for their secondary school graduands. This study thus seeks to explore such issues in the tourism/hospitality industry employment context.

The Work Ethic

Personality dispositions have long been regarded as important moderators of work behaviour. Ross (9, 10) has reported findings supporting an argument for the utility of specific personality variables in the understanding of vocational choice involving industries such as tourism and hospitality. Personality variables such as 'locus of control' and the 'protestant work ethic' have been found by Ross to be predictors of career choice in this context. The work ethic has been found to be associated with an intention to pursue a management career within the tourism or hospitality industry. However most research studies completed in the investigation of the Work Ethic have focused on general organizational contexts. Furnham (4) has gathered together much of the literature and research pertaining to the Work Ethic as a personality dimension within the work context. He writes that the Work Ethic may be basically conceptualized as a system of beliefs focusing on work and, in particular, the avoidance of idleness and the encouragement of industriousness, the discouragement of waste and the encouragement of frugality, the eschewing of failure and poverty, and the praise of ambition, wealth, and success. He takes the view that individuals who exhibit higher levels of this dimension are also more likely to be actively involved in and committed to leisure-time pursuits. Within this context Ross (11) has found that those people more likely to select tourism/hospitality as a

preferred work context exhibit higher levels of this personality dimension.

Approaches to Study

Entwistle and Thompson (2) have noted that long hours of obsessive, but ineffective, work will rarely lead to academic success. They have posed the question that if the time spent studying is not a very good predictor of academic attainment, what other variables might be considered? An answer, it is suggested may be found in the work of researchers such as Marton (7). Here it is acknowledged that higher education students differ in terms of what they believe education to be about. Marton et al suggest one approach is to remember as much as possible of the material students are given, and then reproduce it in the examination. This is referred to as the surface approach. Other students it is suggested adopt a deep approach, where they see themselves as creators of knowledge who have to use their capabilities to make critical judgements, logical conclusions, and come up with their own ideas (7).

In similar vein Entwistle and Ramsden (1) have distinguished four study orientations: meaning, reproducing, achieving (or strategic), and non-academic. Ramsden (8) lists the characteristics of the different orientations:

1. Meaning orientation

Looks for meaning; interacts actively; links with real life; examines evidence critically and uses it cautiously.

Actively relates new information to previous knowledge. Interested in learning for its own sake.

2. Reproducing orientation

Relies on rote learning; conscious of exam demands.

Prefers to restrict learning to defined syllabus and specified tasks.

Anxiously aware of assessment requirements; lacking in self-confidence.

Not prepared to look for relationships between ideas; fact-bound.

3. Strategic orientation

Actively seeks information about assessment requirement; tries to impress staff.

Qualifications main source of motivation for learning.

Competitive and self-confident; motivated by hope for success.

4. Non-academic orientation

Fails to plan ahead; not prompt in submitting work.

Little involvement in work set; cynical about higher education.

Over-readiness to generalize and jump to conclusions without evidence.

From the above it would seem that there are a variety of educational/study approaches which may be adopted, some of which would seem of more use than others. The adoption of orientations such as the reproducing or non-academic are more likely to lead to lower levels of success than are the orientations associated with means or strategy. This study has examined a range of tourism promotion company employment

responses. The study has also examined a set of study habit preferences together with levels of the work so as to examine their predictive efficiency in regard to the various tourism promotion company employment choices.

METHOD

1. Subjects

Five hundred and sixty-six students from a range of state high schools from the Cairns region in Far North Queensland area were chosen for this study. Careers counsellors selected classes so as to include a range of ethnic groups, academic skill levels and post secondary school education/employment interests and aspirations. Respondents from Year 11 and 12 were selected for inclusion in this study because they basically comprise the major potential employee pool for the tourism/hospitality industry of this region. Many young people choose to try for employment in the tourism/hospitality industry or associated service industries. Ross (11) has found that many school leavers in this region show prominent work interest in the tourism/hospitality industry and suggests this is because of its employment/career potential. Respondents were approached during August and September, when most were considering post high school study or employment options.

2. Measures

Respondents were asked to respond to the following Employment Responses using the following scale:

- A. A friend tells you about a job in advertising in a local tourism promotion company. Whilst you

have no formal qualifications in this field, you feel you have a flair for this. How would you rate each of the following approaches?

AGREE COMPLETELY 5 4 3 2 1 DISAGREE COMPLETELY

- A. Have no further interest in the position
- B. Apply for the position
- C. Accept the job if offered

B. We are interested in what you believe are good study habits in any future Uni/TAFE/College course you might do when you leave school. How would you rate each of the following:

AGREE COMPLETELY 5 4 3 2 1 DISAGREE COMPLETELY

- 1. The best way for me to understand technical terms is to memorise the definitions _____
- 2. I try to relate ideas in any subject to those in others, whenever possible _____
- 3. I try to 'map out' a new subject for myself by seeing how the ideas fit together _____
- 4. I put a lot of effort into trying to understand things which initially seem difficult _____
- 5. I usually set out to understand thoroughly the meaning of what I was asked to study _____
- 6. Often I find I have read things without having a chance to really understand them _____
- 7. I often find myself questioning things that I have heard in lectures or read in books _____

- 8. In trying to understand new ideas, I often try to relate them to real life situations _____
- 9. When I tackle a new topic, I often ask myself questions which I should answer _____
- 10. I need to read around a subject fairly widely before I am satisfied with my own ideas _____
- 11. I usually don't have time to think about the implications of what I have studied _____
- 12. To do well in any subject all you really need is a good memory _____

The Ho and Lloyd (5) Work Ethic measure was also included in this study, as were some demographic measures such as age and sex of respondent.

RESULTS

Table 1 contains descriptive measures associated with major variables, and reveals that the Work Ethic was found to be quite high for this group of potential tourism/hospitality industry employees. An inspection of the age and sex variables reveals that the sample closely approximated that profile of secondary college graduands who go on to seek tourism/hospitality industry employment. Table 2 reports results from a repeated measures analysis (by ranks) of the major tourism promotion company employment responses and shows that the most highly favoured response was an acceptance of the position if offered. The least favoured response was found to be a disinterest in the position.

A repeated measures analysis (by ranks) was also performed on the set of study habits, and revealed that the habits associated with 'effort and understanding' and also 'understanding and meaning' were the two most highly ranked study habits. The least favoured study habits involved a lack of time and memory.

Analysis of variance (by ranks) analytic procedures have been employed in this study so as to examine the relationship between major study habits and the three tourism promotion company employment responses. An inspection of mean ranks in Table 4 reveals that lower levels of assent to the 'effort and understanding' study habit were associated with graduands more likely to have no interest in the position. Those respondents who rank highly the 'effort and understanding' study habit were found more likely to apply for such a position and accept it if offered. An inspection of mean ranks from Table 5 reveals that a similar tourism promotion company employment response pattern emerges in regard to the understanding and meaning study habit. Lower levels of assent to this study habit was found to be associated with a lack of employment interest whereas higher levels of assent to this study habit was found to be associated with a willingness to apply for such a position and to also accept such a position if offered.

Analyses of variance (by ranks) analytical procedures were also employed so as to examine the relationship between levels of the Work Ethic and the tourism promotion company employment responses. An inspection of Table 6 reveals that the analysis involving a willingness to apply for the position and a willingness to accept such a position if offered were both found to produce significant findings. A higher level of the Work Ethic was found to be

significantly associated with a greater willingness to apply for and also to accept a tourism promotion company position if offered. Lower levels of the Work Ethic were more likely to be associated with a lessened likelihood to lodge such an employment application and to accept such employment if it was offered.

DISCUSSION

This study has focused on a commonly neglected tourism/hospitality human resource management area. Factors associated with vocational interest in specific tourism/hospitality employment domains such as tourism promotion company employment are generally little understood. The present study has examined both personality and educational factors as they may predict employment intentions in this context. In particular, the work ethic has been scrutinized as having a range of study habits which respondents might bring to the educational and skilling process. First of all, it has been found that employment within a tourism promotion company is regarded as a highly desirable objective among many of these secondary college graduands. Indeed the most popular response to this particular employment context was to indicate a readiness to accept such a position if offered. Disinterest in the position was found to be relatively low.

Analyses regarding study habits have been found to be quite illuminating of specific educational preferences among many of these respondents who are likely to find their way into tourism/hospitality industry employment and education over the next few years. The study habits associated with effort and understanding and also with understanding and meaning were found to be the most salient ones. Thus these

prospective tourism/hospitality industry employees have indicated they believe that effort is a very important component in the understanding of new knowledge or information that at first appears difficult. Many have also declared that they attempt a thorough-going understanding of the material they are asked to learn. Both of these habits auger well for success in future careers within the tourism/hospitality industry. Relatively new staff members are called upon to learn a very great deal in their early and formative years. A realization of and commitment to effort will be of considerable assistance to them in this process, as also will be an attitude of persistence until a relatively comprehensive understanding is obtained.

This study has also revealed that those respondents less likely to be interested in challenging yet rewarding industry employment such as that which may be found in tourism promotion company employment were less likely to recognize the important connection between effort and understanding, and between thorough understanding and meaning. Conversely those graduands who did realize the importance of these two essential study habits were the ones more likely to seek and accept tourism promotion company employment. It may well be that these are the more highly motivated individuals who possess a more outgoing and entrepreneurial temperament. They may be more likely to recognize the close link between effort and understanding and the value of thoroughness in the acquisition of skill and understanding.

Moreover such realizations may better equip them for challenging yet potentially satisfying tourism promotion company employment. The final analysis involving the Work Ethic has found that those potential employees espousing higher levels of this personality domain were the ones most likely to seek and accept tourism promotion company employment if offered.

These findings would seem to give support to the notion that such employment is regarded as more attractive by these prospective employees with the temperamental qualities more likely to succeed in their professional goals. In this particular case the personality domain investigated has been the work ethic. It may however be the case that yet other personality domains such as an internal locus of control or a need for achievement might also be found to be associated with those whose educational and skilling perspectives would best fit them for successful employment within contexts such as that of a tourism promotion company. Further research would be of some benefit here. It is also the case that tourism/hospitality industry employers may need to become more active in contexts such as secondary school information sessions. Employers may need to become more active in the supply of accurate and helpful information to prospective employees so that they, as early as is reasonable, come to understand the unique demands of temperament and work habit that are needed for a successful career.

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Table 1

Descriptive Statistics Associated with Major Variables Included in the Study

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Range
Work Ethic	27.081	4.299	9-35
Age	16.321	2.934	14-46
Sex		Male = 185 (32%) Female = 401 (68%)	

Table 2

Friedman ANOVA (by ranks) for the Major Tourism Promotion Company

SUMMARY STATISTICS TABLE

DF	2
#Samples	3
# Cases	514
Chi-Squared	156.731 p = .0001
Chi corrected for ties	211.9999 p = .0001
# tied groups	371

RANKS TABLE

Variable	Rank	Mean Rank
Have no further interest in the position	796.5	1.55
Apply for the position	1134.5	2.207
Accept the job if offered	1153	2.243

Table 3

Friedman ANOVA (by ranks) for the Set of Study Habits Factors

SUMMARY STATISTICS TABLE

DF	11
#Samples	12
# Cases	548
Chi-Squared	187.107 p = .0001
Chi corrected for ties	229.217 p = .0001

RANKS TABLE

Variable	Rank	Mean Rank
The best way for me to understand technical terms is to memorize the definitions	3829.5	6.988
I try to relate ideas in any subject to those in others, whenever possible	3692	6.737
I try to 'map out' a new subject for myself by seeing how the ideas fit together	3194	5.828
I put a lot of effort into trying to understand things which initially seem difficult	4039	7.37
I usually set out to understand thoroughly the meaning of what I was asked to study	3919	7.151
Often I find I have read things without having a chance to really understand them	3760.5	6.862
I often find myself questioning things that I have heard in lectures or read in books	3724	6.796
In trying to understand new ideas, I often try to relate them to real life situations	3795	6.925
When I tackle a new topic, I often ask myself questions which I should answer	3348.5	6.11
I need to read around a subject fairly widely before I am satisfied with my own ideas	3354	6.12
I usually don't have time to think about the implications of what I have studied	2976.5	5.432
To do well in any subject all you really need is a good memory	3112	5.679

Table 4

Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA (by ranks) for Major Study Habits Factors by the Tourism Promotion Company Employment Responses

	HAVE NO FURTHER INTEREST IN THE POSITION	APPLY FOR THE POSITION	ACCEPT THE JOB IF POSITION
LOW	36*	34	35
I PUT A LOT OF	302.056**	166.647	189.357
EFFORT INTO	44	43	44
TRYING TO	280.08	234.523	229.693
UNDERSTAND	127	127	126
THINGS WHICH	274.354	228.449	254.171
INITIALLY SEEM	177	178	177
DIFFICULT	250.771	131	131
HIGH	132	131	131
	234.538	310.286	281.531
	10.197***	38.369	13.827
	.0372****	.0001	.0079

*N of Cases

**Mean Rank

***H (corrected for ties)

****p Value

Table 5

Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA (by ranks) for Major Study Habits Factors by the Tourism Promotion Company Employment Responses

	HAVE TO FURTHER INTEREST IN THE POSITION	APPLY FOR THE POSITION	ACCEPT THE JOB IF OFFERED
LOW	32*	32	31
I USUALLY SET	275.672**	222.297	231.629
OUT TO	52	52	51
UNDERSTAND	310.837	202	200.961
THOROUGHLY	135	135	135
THE MEANING	250.086	245.181	251.111
OF WHAT I WAS	151	150	151
ASKED TO STUDY	259.921	267.73	260.03
HIGH	145	143	143
	238.693	282.878	273.72
	10.83***	16.133	11.211
	.0285****	.0027	.0243

*N of Cases

**Mean Rank

***H (corrected for ties)

****p Value

Table 6

Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA (by ranks) for the Work Ethic Measure by the Tourism Promotion Company Employment Responses

	HAVE TO FURTHER INTEREST IN THE POSITION	APPLY FOR THE POSITION	ACCEPT THE JOB IF OFFERED
LOW	206*	34	41
	257.359**	186.441	224.89
	77	46	39
	244.591	229.359	201.654
WORK ETHIC	97	104	99
	244.567	246.404	236.646
	60	125	108
	259.992	243.952	256.343
	59	186	209
HIGH	230.136	267.476	263.435
	2.203***	10.7	8.597
	.6985****	.0301	.072

*N of Cases

**Mean Rank

***H (corrected for ties)

****p Value