

SETTING THE RIGHT STANDARDS IN EVENTS MANAGEMENT EDUCATION: A CASE OF PATTS COLLEGE OF AERONAUTICS

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Abstract

Events Management is a course of study in the Philippines that is being embedded in programs such as Bachelor of Science in Tourism Management and Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management according to CHED Memorandum Order 62 series of 2017. This study will focus on answering the issue on why Events Management courses do not have a standardized process of planning, organizing, executing, and monitoring across HEI's. The researcher used a descriptive-qualitative method. The participants of the study have spanned across three semesters of Events Management from academic years 2017-2018 and 2018-2019. Primary data were gathered through immersion and external observation. As a result of the study, the researcher has concluded that HEI's across the country do not have a standardized process simply because of the differences on management styles by the school administrator. It is recommended that there should be a constant periodic review of the course syllabus to update references and methodology of teaching events management. Also, the researcher has developed a proposed model which is recommended to be adapted by HEI's to achieve efficiency on the process of managing events.

Keywords: Events Management, Tourism Education, Event Research, Tourism Management

Introduction

The events sector is a lucrative area of the tourism industry. It is relatively wide and dynamic in nature (Kim Leng & Weng Si, 2016). Seeing the potential of the meetings, incentives, conventions, and exhibitions (MICE) sector as a national economic growth contributor, events management courses have been embedded in courses of study in tertiary education. In Asia Pacific, a few countries have ventured in to offering a bachelor's degree in events management. Indonesia, Malaysia and Macao are some of the risk-takers in doing this.

Here in the Philippines, events management is not an independent program but rather a course of study embedded in Bachelor of Science in Tourism Management (BSTM) and Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management (BSHM). A learner enrolled on such programs mentioned are required to finish the said course of study to attain the degree. Events management is usually assigned by most Higher Education Institutions

(HEI's) in the learner's terminal year. This is because events management requires holistic management skills and maturity from the learners.

PATTS College of Aeronautics has been known to be the premier aviation school in the Philippines. The school started its operations in 1969 and was founded as a joint enterprise of Filipino and American pioneers in aviation. PATTS is an acronym for Philippine Air Transport and Training Services and was originally established to manufacture and assemble trainer aircrafts in the country. Fifty years after its establishment, PATTS College is now in its new home at Lombos Avenue, San Isidro, Paranaque City. Currently, the college is offering nine (9) courses. Among such are the BS Tourism Management and BS Hotel & Restaurant Management programs. The BS Tourism Management program of the institution has been operating for 23 years while the BS Hotel & Restaurant Management program runs for 14 years. Both BSTM and

BSHRM programs have events management courses in their respective curriculum strategically placed at the 4th year level of the programs.

The programs follow the CHED Memorandum Order 30 series of 2006. But just recently, as a response to K-12 Transition of Philippine Education system and in Compliance to CMO 62 series of 2017, the events management course for BSTM was retained on the 4th year level whereas, the BSHRM shifted the events management course to the 3rd year. Under the newly developed events management course, the nomenclature of the program was changed to **Introduction to Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Events Management**. The new course was designed with two units of lecture class and one unit of laboratory class. A total of five class hours a week is required for the said course of study.

Best Practice Case Study

Though events management classes in the institution have a course syllabus to follow in the delivery of instructions, it is still evident that major flaws are arising on a case to case basis in handling actual events. This leads to the development of the problem of this paper. After pondering and conducting a series of consultative meetings with the faculty and student leaders, most of the responses regarding the difficulty in organizing an event in PATTS is that there is the absence of a concrete and custom-fitted guidelines in events management for the institution. There is no step by step guide that the students can view and revisit every time that they encounter a challenge in the process apart from the course syllabus which was not specific in nature. This paper aims to:

- Answer the issue on why events management courses do not have a standardized process of planning, organizing, executing, and monitoring across HEI's
- Provide a proposed model or framework in managing events management classes outputs.

Events management outputs are the most-awaited activity in the Tourism and Hospitality

Management Department of the institution. It assesses the learner's capability to plan, organize, execute, and manage an actual event. For the THM Department, it is the final actual activity that the students must complete before graduating from the program. Under the administration of the proponent of this case, it is evident that there are challenges encountered in handling events classes. Challenges are experienced by both faculty-in-charge and students undertaking the course.

It has been noticed that most of the faculty members of the department would likely turn down the offer to handle events management classes due to the following reasons:

1. **Output-intensive** – it is without a doubt that organizing special events are a very tedious task for a faculty adviser of events management class. It requires the teacher to do intensive collaborative work with the learners from the planning process, implementation, and post event evaluation.
2. **Time demanding** – faculty-in-charge are sometimes expected to take extra hours in advising and guiding the learners undertaking events. They are also expected to assist students in conducting venue ocular, food tasting, canvassing for event suppliers, and other things needed in order to make the event a successful one. It even requires the teacher to work during their rest day.
3. **Unable to meet the faculty's expectation** – many faculty members may not admit it but most of the time, teachers are afraid to handle events management classes because they are afraid to fail and belittled by their co-teachers.
4. **No reward system** – handling events management classes only entitles the faculty-in-charge a 4-unit credit. Apart from that, no other incentives or whatsoever is received by the teacher in performing such task.

At the same time, students are always hesitant to enroll for an events management class due to the following reasons:

1. **Demanding Output** – students enrolled on the events management

class also has other subjects enrolled on in the semester that they are taking it making it difficult for the students to juggle responsibilities and tasks required by each subject.

2. **Expenses incurred while doing the event process** – organizing an event entails challenges in funding and budgeting. Most students are working on a limited budget and most of the time, their personal allowance suffers. This is because students want to create a remarkable event even though their funds are too restrained.

3. **Fear of responsibilities and accountabilities** – most learners don't want to step up their game. The fear of being scolded once they fail is often the main concern on why students are afraid to take responsibilities. Events management requires learners to be responsible for their actions.
4. **Lack of standardized event guidelines** – aside from the course syllabus, students don't have any in-campus published material to guide them in the process of managing an event.

TABLE 1

SWOT ANALYSIS ON THE EVENTS MANAGEMENT CLASSES OF PATTS COLLEGE OF AERONAUTICS

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holistic approach • Includes real-life learning opportunities • Faculty teaching events management course have National Certificates • Constant support on event outputs from the academic department and top management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are not risk takers in conceptualizing events. They will rely on events that have previously worked. • Lacks hard evidence on events management procedures especially when executing in-school activities.
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion of laboratory hours in the new course syllabus for events management • Embedding learning and employability opportunities in the course of study. • Inclusion of the TESDA NCIII in Events Management as the final output. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shifting interest of the learners • Lack of reliable local resources and references in teaching events management

One strength of the events management classes of PATTS College of Aeronautics is summarized as a holistic, real-life learning approach. This is because all the teachers handling the subjects have national certifications to teach the course and also have years of experience in organizing actual events. Another strength is that the whole institution is supportive of all the plans and programs of every events management class. This is because the outputs created by the events management classes are embedded in the academic calendar of the college.

On the other hand, a weakness seen mostly from the side of the learners is the fear of taking risk and responsibility - this is a problem for every class. Students want to work collectively because they are afraid that if they fail, they fail alone. The lack of hard evidences on events management procedure is also a problem. Students of today are very visual. They need something to see so that they will be guided properly.

On the opportunities, the added laboratory hours in events planning is indeed an opportunity to learn more for the students and

at the same time, compensate the faculty-in-charge on the time he/she spends in advising the students. Employability opportunities are basically the on-the-job skills training embedded in the program. Students are asked to participate as event volunteers on local events. National Certification for learners is also an opportunity since it assesses the competency gained by the students.

However, some threats are also evident such as the shifting interest of the learners and lack of localized resources and references. Learners tend to have a shorter attention span on topics. The influence of technology also makes learners lazy. On localized resources and references, most books and publications available in the country are not authored by Filipinos making it a challenge for the learners to understand because of some unfamiliar examples and illustrations.

Through this, the researcher has proposed three (3) solutions:

1. Revision of the events management course syllabus
2. Purchase of new books on events management
3. Creation of events management working team and events management manual

Revision of the events management course syllabus is undertaken with other subjects annually through the conduct of syllabi review by the academic head, faculty, student representative, and representative from the events sector. The gathering entails discussion on current issues and challenges of the events industry and how the course syllabus being proposed keep up to date with the current industry requirements. The syllabi review committee also validates the different instructional methodologies and assessment metrics used for the conduct of the class.

Purchase of new books and references for events management is necessary to update learners and faculty on new topics in events management. Prior to the accreditation of the Institution, a lot of references and textbooks used, not just in events management but also in other course of study, has been outdated. But with the direction of the management and administration to undergo local and international accreditation, all of the references and textbooks of the college has been updated. The utilization of the newly purchased materials are also evident as activities concerning the use of the said materials are embedded on the course syllabus.

For the third solution, the proponent, together with the events management working team have developed a model for events management procedure for PATTS College of Aeronautics:

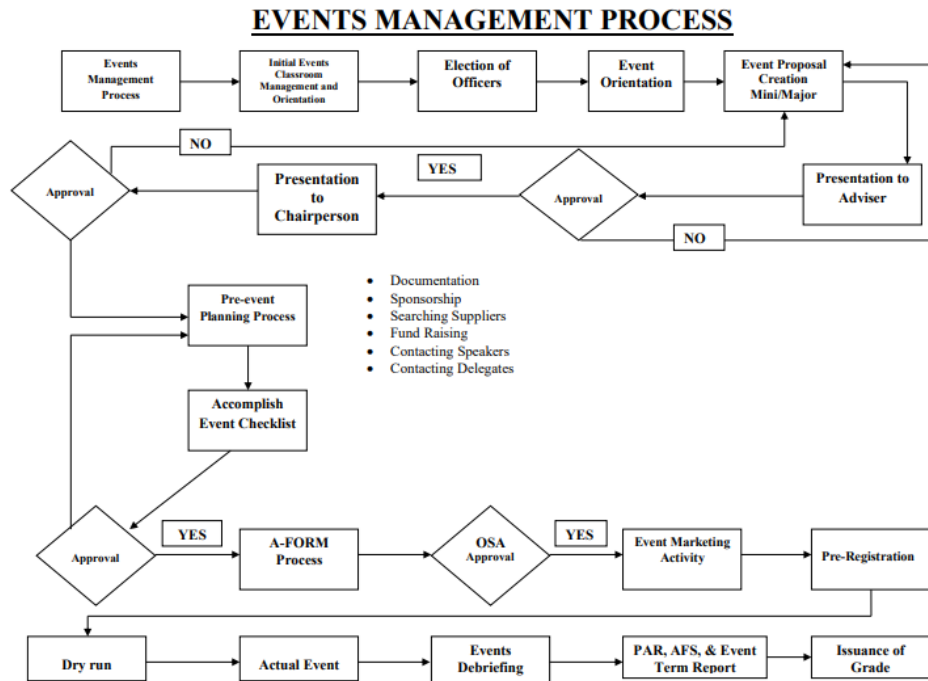


Fig. 1. Events Management Process for PATTS College of Aeronautics

The events management process flow simply put the entire conduct of events by the BSTM department in a more visual and easy-to-understand material. Prior to the implementation of the events management process, everything was done independently by every events management classes. Since every events management classes have different advisers and different take on handling an

event, the results are varying and dependent on the attitude of the events team towards handling concerns in line with their proposed event. Also, there are no standard forms used in the conduct of event. This makes it really difficult to the events management class as they have to construct their own forms. This becomes a problem of the college because the outputs are not uniform in nature.

Fig. 2. Sample Events Management Forms on MS Excel

Through the implementation of the Events Management Manual, every aspects of handling

an event becomes easier to the events class, especially to the event adviser too. Documents

and Forms have a standard “look” also as it follows the suggested format. But the major contribution of the Events Management Manual is the adoption of this best practice to become

an institutional reference in conducting in-house activities of different collegiate units and departments.



Fig. 3. Sample Event Posters of Events Management Class

Reflection and Lessons Learned

Events Management may be a difficult subject to handle because of the intricacies of the required learner’s output and manifestation of learning outcomes but it doesn’t diminish the viability of the course to be standardized based on the HEI’s preference and expectations. The effort of standardizing the course lies on the efforts of the academic officers and faculty through the inputs and suggestions given by industry practitioners. And lastly, the effort of standardizing the course can only achieve success when the learners embrace the policies whole-heartedly.

Conclusion

The challenge of planning, organizing, managing and monitoring event outputs has been a perennial problem of most HEI’s offering the said course of study. In view of this, the proponent of this case has shown the benefits and costs of standardizing events management. Through a semester – wide observation of implementation of events management guidelines, here are the following results:

Benefits:

- Easier implementation because the guidelines are visible and sample forms are provided.
- Standardized forms helped both students and faculty-in-charge not to miss out relevant information.
- Detailed roles and responsibilities of the organizers has helped clear out ambiguity among the events team.

Costs:

- Students, with the nature of being forgetful, tend to by-pass their adviser and go directly to the program chairperson for advice. The Chairperson, however, redirects the student back to their event adviser and event project coordinator.
- Because everything is standardized, the students tend to be restricted in some areas. Provision for a flexible event proposal format should be done.
- Protocols stated on the manual drives organizers and advisers to be challenged in accomplishing the documents.

As parting words, here are the recommendations drawn by the researcher. To

the Administration of PATTS College of Aeronautics, the school should adopt the Tourism and Hospitality Management (THM) Events Management Manual as a basis for College-wide events and activities. Also, the administration should also conduct a consultative meeting with external stakeholders for verification of process and alignment on industry practices. To the learners, they have to

increase event concept exposures to provide more creative event proposals. To the faculty, there should be a strict compliance on the guidelines set to avoid comparison of professors. And to the future researcher, they can adapt the method of conducting the case study using a different locale of study.