

Abstract

The tourism industry is one of the largest creators of jobs, wealth and investment in the world. This is the reason for governments around the world to support tourism in their countries. In Thailand, travel agency employment within the tourism industry is a viable option for many individuals graduating from universities. According to the statistics from The Association of Thailand Travel Agents (ATTA), there are a total of 1,060 travel agencies in Thailand. And ATTA has created employment both directly and indirectly for more than two hundred thousand people, who are employed in various facets of the tourism and travel sector generally.

This research aims to study perception of undergraduate students in the tourism field toward working in a travel agency, including travel agency employment responses, and employment acquisition factors. Three hundred questionnaires were distributed to undergraduate students who study in the field of tourism in both public and private universities in the Bangkok area. The respondents were asked to rate their perception of working in a travel agency. They were also asked to rate their perception of the importance on employment acquisition factors for getting a job in a travel agency.

In this study, descriptive statistics were used to summarize travel agency employment responses, employment acquisition factors, and demographic profile. The T-Test was used to signify the difference in perception about working in a travel agency between genders (male/female) of undergraduate students in universities in Bangkok. And Spearman's rho Correlation was used to illustrate the significant value of the relationship

between employment acquisition factors and perception of undergraduate students in universities in Bangkok toward working in a travel agency.

The results represented the significant variables, showing the perception of respondents about working in a travel agency. There were no differences in perception about working in a travel agency between genders (male/female) of undergraduate students in universities in Bangkok regarding working in a travel agency is a good career opportunity and working in a travel agency has flexible working hours. While there was a difference in perception about working in a travel agency between genders (male/female) of undergraduate students in universities in Bangkok regarding working in a travel agency enables one to get good income (female respondents perceived that working in a travel agency will get good income greater than male).

There were four employment acquisition factors that had relationship with perception of undergraduate students in universities in Bangkok toward working in a travel agency. The four employment acquisition factors were flexibility / adaptability, initiative, wanting to achieve, and performance at interview.

This research provides recommendations and implications for tourism educators, career counselors, students in the tourism field, and travel agency employers. In addition, future research direction is discussed at the end.