

UNIVERSITY OF MACAU

FACULTY OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF THE LABOUR MARKET, SKILLS,
KNOWLEDGE NEEDS AND EDUCATION OF MACAU'S MICE
INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

The Macau Government has announced its focus in encouraging further development of the MICE Industry in Macau in his Policy Addresses (Macau Government Tourist Office Press, December 2002). One of the largest constraints that the industry faces is a workforce that is not sufficient and well-qualified. The MICE industry in Macau, to realize its fullest potential in attracting and providing high quality services to industry stakeholders, must have a well-trained, high qualified work force. Yet, to achieve this goal, full alignment must be in place between the worker skill sets, industry demands, and the education and training being offered by the academic institutions.

In order to provide qualified human resources to the industry, it is essential to conduct a comprehensive study regarding the labour market, the skills and knowledge required, and the gaps between education and industry demands. This study therefore aims to assess the labour market and skills needs of the MICE industry in Macau. Specially, there are four research aims:

1. To assess the labour market of the MICE industry in Macau.
2. To identify the skills and knowledge needs of the industry.
3. To examine if there are skills gaps among existing education program and industry demands and to what extent and where.
4. To propose a MICE educational framework for Macau that serves to solve the shortage of qualified professionals and narrow the gaps between education and the industry demands.

Qualitative methodology was used throughout this exploratory study. Apart from using secondary sources data, primary data were collected from in-depth interviews with the stakeholders. 15 employers and 15 employees were selected to obtain their views on four research questions.

The study has several key findings: the quantitative and quality of human resources for the MICE industry in Macau are lacking due to several reasons such as:

the low public awareness and recognition of the industry, unclear future supply of workers, high pressure jobs that young people are not willing to enter the industry, the mismatch of MICE courses with the market needs. The low quality of services provided as compared with the neighbouring cities is due mainly to the lack of training. To improve the labour market, employers also suggest that more training and education could help to improve employees' human capital. Employers also suggested importing more foreign professional labour into Macau. And government should provide more support in the MICE industry, such as subsidies and encouraging local people to join the industry.

A comparative analysis of the current curriculum with the MICE educational framework has been done. It is shown that Macau current MICE education is lack of design, production knowledge and supervisory skill, which should be incorporated into the curriculum of universities and training institutes. Industry also provided their opinions of the essential skills and knowledge needed for an event manager. Industry suggests include local knowledge, creative thinking and ethic into the current MICE curriculum. Industry people also stress the importance of job attitude. Prolonging the school internship program from 6 months to 9 months is also recommended by the employees. After all, a framework that is suitable for Macau MICE education is proposed.

This study contributes to the understanding the labour market and manpower needs of Macau's MICE industry and how higher education and training programmes may better prepare its students for some of the complexities and idiosyncrasies of MICE industry careers. It lays the foundation for the industry for any future training needs analysis.

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