

Acceptability of New Normal Work Scheme of Tourism Professionals in Dipolog City

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Abstract — This study aims to know whether tourism professionals in Dipolog City accepts the new normal work scheme in terms of reduction or work hours/ work days, rotation of workers, and forced leave. The researchers used the survey method through the use of self-made questionnaire to assess the acceptability of new normal work scheme of tourism professionals in the city. Purposive sampling was utilized for 82 respondents. The statistical tool used were weighted mean to determine the acceptability of new normal work scheme and chi-square test to determine the test of difference between acceptability of new normal work scheme and the profile of respondents. The respondents find reduction of work hours/ work days as slightly acceptable, while rotation of workers and forced leave as slightly unacceptable. A number of tourism professionals are not open with changes in the reduction of work hours/ work days, majority of the respondents does not prefer to be transferred to another branch or to another workplace, as for forced leave, majority of the respondents does not agree on going on leave for days especially without pay.

Keywords — *Forced Leave, Job rotation, Level of Acceptance Reduction of Work, Tourism Industry, Tourism Professionals*

I. Introduction

T Tourism Industry refers to all activity related to the short-term movement of people to locations away from where they usually reside. Notably, the industry is a driver of job growth and economic prosperity for it has given a lot of opportunities to the people, the locals, the community and even the economy. According to World Travel and Tourism Council (2018), tourism provides jobs where they're needed most, and it goes where other sectors often don't.

Meanwhile, International Labor Organization (2020) stated that “Tourism is a major driver of jobs and growth. But COVID-19 has dramatically changed this. The impact on tourism enterprises and workers, the majority being young women, is unprecedented. Timely, large-scale and, in particular, coordinated policy efforts both at international and national levels are needed in consultation with governments, employers’ and workers’ representatives, taking into consideration relevant International Labor Organization’s international labor standards” (International Labor Organization, 2020)

Tourism and COVID-19 – unprecedented economic impacts: Tourism is one of the world’s major economic sectors. It is the third-largest export category (after fuels and chemicals) and in 2019 accounted for 7% of global trade; for some countries, it can represent over 20% of their GDP and, overall, it is the third largest export sector of the global economy. Tourism is one of the sectors most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, impacting economies, livelihoods, public services and opportunities on all continents. All parts of its vast value-chain have been affected; Export revenues from tourism could fall by \$910 billion to \$1.2 trillion in 2020. This will have a wider impact and could reduce global GDP by 1.5% to 2.8%; It supports one in 10 jobs and provides livelihoods for many millions more in both developing and developed economies (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2020).

The industry or the business itself manages alternative work arrangements, and reducing of manpower. Employees have different jobs and responsibilities and the modifications made to their work vary based on those differences. Departments may institute a schedule of flexible working hours for employees, provided it does not increase staffing costs or decrease department efficiency. Flextime allows employees to maintain a work schedule other than normal hours.

According to the Department of Labor and Employment (2020), flexible work arrangements refer to alternative arrangements or schedules other than the traditional or standard work hours, workdays and workweek. Reduction of Work hours and/or Workdays refers to one where the normal work hours or workdays per week are reduced. Rotation of Workers refers to one where the employees are rotated or alternately provided work within the week. Forced Leave refers to one where the employees are required to go on leave for several days or weeks utilizing their leave credits, if there are any (Department of Labor and Employment 2020).

Regardless of flextime scheduling all offices should be sufficiently staffed to maintain regular operations during normal hours. Flexible scheduling for non-exempt (hourly) employees can incorporate varying times for arriving at and leaving work and/or lunch breaks. When exempt (monthly) employees are expected to work more than 40 hours in a work week, departments are encouraged to offer them flexibility in arranging work schedules (University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 2021).

Significance of the Study

The study is significant to the following particular individuals:

Tourism Industry. This study shall give them an idea on the opinions of their workers regarding the new normal work scheme and use this as basis to either continue or improve the flexible working arrangement.

Tourism professionals. This study shall provide them the changes and adjustments with regards to their work in times of COVID-19 pandemic.

Job Seekers. This study shall give those job-seekers who seek and choose to work in the field of tourism, this serve as their basis in adapting the new work scheme in the midst of COVID-19 pandemic.

Tourism students. This study shall serve as their guide after they graduate or as they choose working in the field of tourism industry. With the pandemic, they already know the adjustments and changes in working in the tourism industry.

Objectives

The researchers attempt to study the acceptability of the new normal work scheme of tourism professionals to know if they have accepted the changes made by their company in adjusting to the new normal work scheme. This research will then serve as a basis for the industry to improve the new normal work scheme of tourism professionals in Dipolog City.

Review of Literature

As the Philippine government exerts effort to fight the spread of COVID-19, nearly all companies in Metro Manila are under work from home and flexible work arrangements. A few recommendations to the House of Representatives have been made to permanently shorten the workweek here in the Philippines, even after the pandemic is over. Under existing laws for private sectors, an employer can require an employee to report to work for at least six days a week, giving employees only one full day of rest in the same week. For government employees, at least 40 hours a week is required (Urbano, 2020).

Moreover, government agencies may adopt alternative work arrangements for their employees starting May 22 to help prevent the spread of the new coronavirus, according to Commissioner Aileen Lizada of the Civil Service Commission (CSC). The offices could resort to one or several of these arrangements or even combine them depending on their needs, Lizada said. These arrangements include work from home, skeleton force, four-day compressed workweek and staggered working hours. Combining the different arrangements could also make things easier for the public, government officials and employees (Salaverria, 2020).

Flexible work arrangements are also being adopted by businesses to maintain social distancing and avoid a reduction of the workforce. In line with the Government's goal for the preservation of employment, the DOLE issued Labour Advisory No. 17, series of 2020 ("Employment Preservation Guidelines") which aims to assist employers to protect jobs and prevent layoffs. Under the Employment Preservation Guidelines, any of the following work schemes may be adopted by the employer: Transfer employees to another branch or outlet; Assign employees to other functions or positions; Reduce normal working hours; Job rotation; Partial closure of establishments; and other feasible work arrangements, considering the individual requirements of the business. The Employment Preservation Guidelines also allow employers and employees to mutually agree in writing to temporarily adjust wages and benefits provided under

an existing employment contract, company policy, or collective agreement (Herrera et al. , 2020). Leave benefits allow employees to be absent from work without incurring any reduction in pay or any penalty, and is thus a benefit which presupposes availability of work. They are also in the nature of a right given to employees, either by law (e.g., for service incentive leaves) or by contractual relation (e.g., employment contracts or company rules). As a general rule, leave benefits can only be used by the employee as the owner of such right. As an exception, employers of essential establishments which continue to physically operate may require their employees to go on “forced leave,” as authorized under the COVID-19 Flexi-Work Advisory, whenever they are sick, or as an exercise of management prerogative to mitigate the effects of COVID-19 in the workplace when doing so is necessary to protect the workplace from the threat of COVID-19, such as when a COVID-19 Confirmed, COVID-19 Probable, or COVID-19 Suspect employee has been found in the workplace. (Navarro et. al, 2020)

As part of their business continuity plans and instead of terminating employees or closing down businesses, the Department of Health (“DOH”) directs and the Department of Labor and Employment (“DOLE”) highly encourages employers to develop work arrangements that will reduce the number of people in the workplace and the need to travel. These include work from home arrangements for employees whose tasks can be done at home and among employees who are at high risk (those aged more than 60 years, or of any age with co-morbidities or pre-existing illnesses such as hypertension, diabetes, cancer, or with immune compromised health status, or with high risk pregnancy)(Platon Martinez Law, 2020).

Theoretical/ Conceptual Framework

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Keynesian Theory of Employment by John Maynard Keynes, 1936 where he assumed that the factors of production, such as capital goods, supply of labor, technology, and efficiency of labor, remain unchanged while determining the level of employment. Therefore, according to him, the level of employment is dependent on national income and output. In addition, Keynes advocated that if there was an increase in national income, there would be an increase in level of employment and vice versa.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework discussed the flow of the research taken. Figure 1 shows the independent variables such as the acceptability of the new work scheme in terms of reduction of work hours/work days, rotation of workers and forced leave. On the other hand, the profile of tourism professionals in terms of age, gender, educational attainment, civil status, the number of years working in the tourism industry, type of employment and sector of the industry currently employed to, serves as the dependent variable.

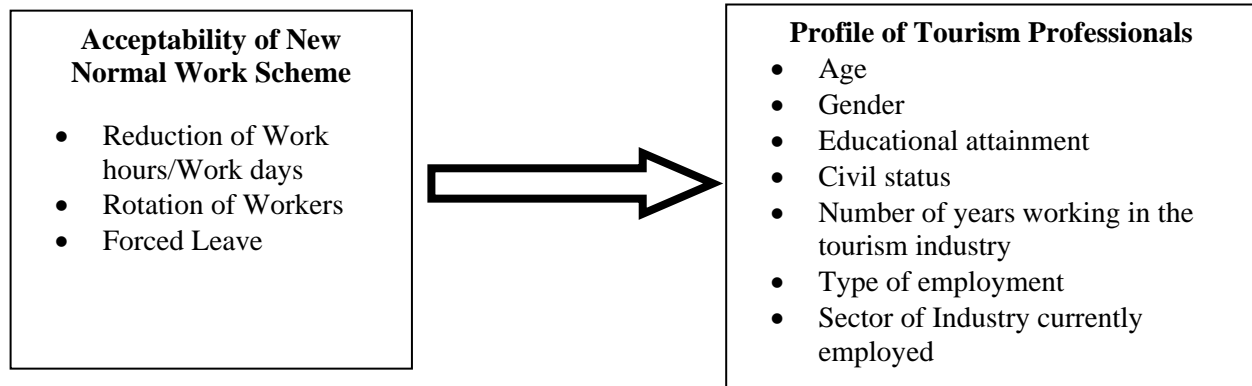
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Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the study

II. Methodology

The researchers used the survey method through the use of social media platforms and personal distribution of research instrument. The instrument used was a self-made questionnaire to assess the acceptability of new normal work scheme of tourism professionals in Dipolog City. For the validity of the instrument used, the researchers presented a copy of the study to three validators to check on the content and the statements in the instrument. Purposive sampling was used by the researchers with a total of 82 tourism professionals who are employed in the identified sectors in Dipolog City. The respondents of the study were described according to the data they provided relative to their age, gender, civil status, educational attainment, number of years working in the industry, type of employment and sector of the industry currently employed to. The study was conducted in Dipolog City, Zamboanga del Norte in five (5) sectors of the Tourism Industry such as; Accommodation Sector, Food and Beverage Sector, Travel and Tour, Tourism Services and Transportation. There were 27 identified tourism business establishments in the different sectors of which 9 are hotels, 6 restaurants and cafés, 4 tourism services, 2 travel agencies, and 2 transportations.

The researchers considered the consent of the respondents through giving them a letter before answering the questionnaires. The confidentiality of the respondent's information and their right to refuse to participate is given importance. The researchers reached out to some tourism establishments to ask permission whether they can distribute links for the google forms. The researchers visited and distributed hard copies to tourism establishments who requested for it. The data were analyzed through: Frequency Count and Percentage computation; Weighted Mean; Chi – Square Test.

III. Results and Discussion

Figure 3 presents the profile of respondents in terms of age. The graph shows that majority of the tourism professionals belonged to the age bracket 24 - 27 years old which indicates that the tourism industry is dominated by young professional. The table also reveals that only few employees fell on the age bracket 43 years old and above. Figure 4 presents the profile of respondents in terms of Gender. As shown in the graph, majority of the respondents are feminine which implies that most tourism industry workers are female with 59.8 % The table also reveals that lesbian, gay and bisexual has the lowest percentage.

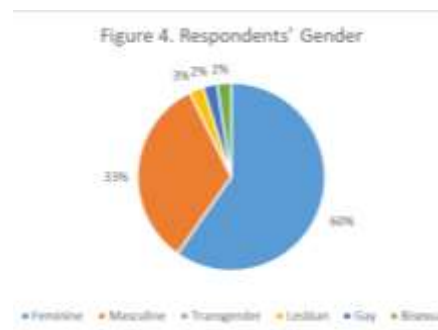
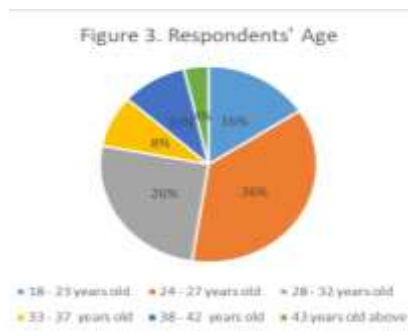


Figure 5 shows the profile of respondents in terms of educational attainment. As shown in the table, bachelor's degree holder contains the highest percentage followed by college level. This data implies that most tourism workers possess high educational attainment. Figure 6 shows the profile of respondents in terms of Civil Status. The majority of the respondents are single followed by respondents who are married and the lowest rank is for widowed. This shows that most tourism professionals are unmarried. Figure 7 presents the profile of respondents in terms of number of years working in tourism industry. Most of the respondents are working for 1-3 years as it has the highest percentage followed by 4-6 years. The number of years that has the lowest percentage is more than 12 years. This implies that most tourism professionals have been with the industry for a few years only.

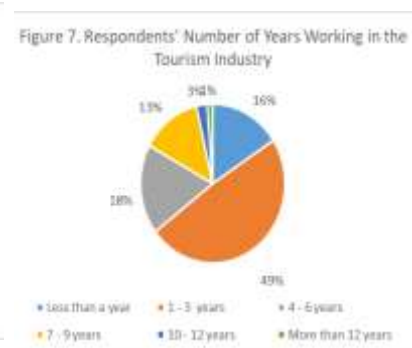
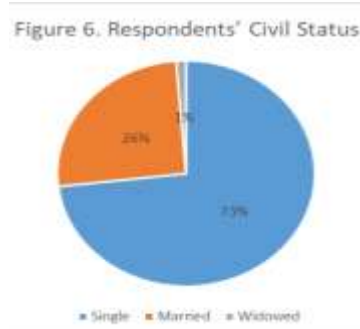
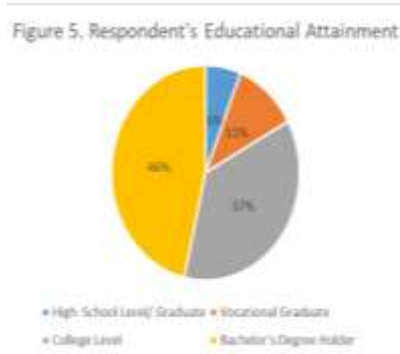
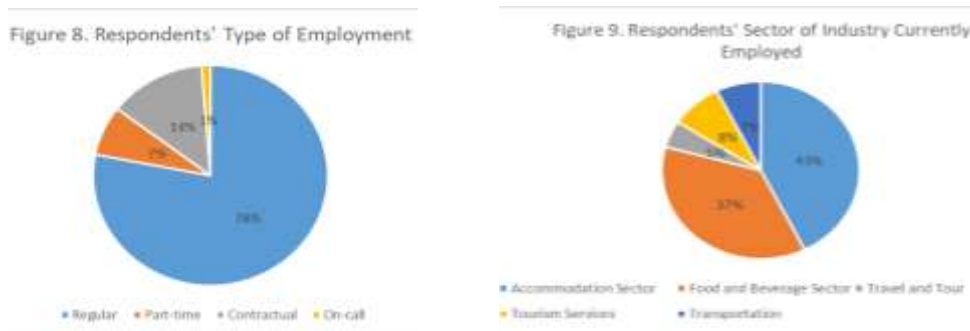


Figure 8 shows the profile of respondents in terms of type of employment. Most of the tourism workers are regular employees while the on-call type of employment has the lowest percentage. Figure 9 presents the profile of respondents in terms of the sector of the industry they are currently employed. The Accommodation sector has the highest percentage followed by Food and Beverage sector. Travel and Tour sector has the lowest percentage in the data, while Tourism Services and Transportation Sector is the third and the fourth percentage respectively. This implies that most of the respondents are working in Accommodation Sector considering that there are still accommodation facilities that operates during the pandemic.



Acceptability of New Normal Work Scheme

Acceptability of New Normal Work Scheme	Average Weighted Mean	Description
1. Reduction of Work Hours /Work Days	2.72	Slightly Acceptable
2. Rotation of Workers	2.46	Slightly Unacceptable
3. Forced Leave	2.46	Slightly Unacceptable

Table 1. The mean score of the Level of Acceptability of the New Normal Work Scheme

According to the data on the reduction of work hours / days is interpreted as slightly acceptable which implies that some tourism professionals in the city are not totally okay on working with lesser number of hours, some are okay for they can choose their own time and day of work and it is effective for them since they can have free or rest days to be with their loved ones. Also having less working days can help them lessen their expenses and their performance can also improve. With the acceptability of New Normal Work Scheme in Terms of Job Rotation it is being interpreted as slightly unacceptable thus, tourism professionals in Dipolog City find transferring to another branch or department stressful and expensive for they have to travel to unfamiliar place or work in an unfamiliar environment. The data presented which is interpreted as slightly unacceptable implies that most of the employees do not agree on having to go on mandatory leave or forced leave considering they are not getting paid during those days. “Employers of essential establishments which continue to physically operate may require their

employees to go on “forced leave,” employees are required to go on leave for several days or weeks utilizing their leave credits, if any. If the leave credits have been used up, employers could consider granting leave of absence without pay

Acceptability of New Normal Work Scheme in terms of Reduction of Work Hours /Work Days

Table 2. The mean scores of the Level of Acceptability of the New Normal Work Scheme in Terms of Reduction of Work Hours/Work Days

Statements	WM	Description
1.Reduces amount of work hours rendered by employees.	2.29	Slightly Unacceptable
2.Lessens the number of work days available for employees.	2.38	Slightly Unacceptable
3.Allows employees to choose their own work hours or work days (within reason).	3.00	Slightly Acceptable
4.Permits employees to maintain a work schedule other than normal hours	3.05	Slightly Acceptable
5.Works at a skeletal schedule for at least 3 days a week.	2.67	Slightly Acceptable
6.Permits employees to work at home.	2.26	Slightly Unacceptable
7.Allows employees to follow a compressed workweek.	2.84	Slightly Acceptable
8.Implements broken time schedule for employees.	2.72	Slightly Acceptable
9.Agrees to allow employees for flexi – holidays.	3.09	Slightly Acceptable
10. Practices on call scheduling for employees.	2.94	Slightly Acceptable
Average Weighted Mean	2.72	Slightly Acceptable

According to the data on Table 2 for the Acceptability of New normal work scheme in terms of reduction of work hours / Work days having a weighted mean of 2.72 which is described as Slightly Acceptable , implies that some tourism professionals in Dipolog City are not totally okay working with less hours and some are okay for they can choose their own time and day of work and it is effective for them since they can have free or rest days to be with their loved ones. Having less working days can help them lessen their expenses and their performance can also improve. “Reducing employees' hours is effective in managing operating costs during an economic downturn. It also allows you to manage their performance by allocating more hours to higher-performing workers and fewer hours to your less efficient ones. Reducing hours in a judicious manner improve the chance of getting the most out of your employees”. Saint-Leger, Randolf (2021).

Acceptability of New Normal Work Scheme in Terms of Rotation of Workers

Table 3. The mean scores the Level of Acceptability of the New Normal Work Scheme in Terms of Rotation of Workers

Statements	WM	Description
1.Switches employees to different schedule to reduce their number.	2.88	Slightly Acceptable
2.Re Assigns employees to another branch or outlet.	2.29	Slightly Unacceptable
3.Assigns employees to another department.	2.57	Slightly Unacceptable
4.Urges employees to work multiple tasks to cover up employees who are not present.	2.06	Slightly Unacceptable
5.Groups employees to work at a specific schedule.	2.35	Slightly Unacceptable
6.Re assigns employees to another position.	2.84	Slightly Acceptable
7.Shifts employees between two or more assignments.	2.45	Slightly Unacceptable
8.Provides alternating work schedule for employees.	1.85	Slightly Unacceptable
9.Enforces monthly rotation of work to employees.	3.04	Slightly Acceptable
10. Changes the assigned tasks for employees.	2.28	Slightly Unacceptable
Average Weighted Mean	2.46	Slightly Unacceptable

The data on Table 3 on Acceptability of New Normal Work Scheme in Terms of Rotation of Workers implies that tourism professionals in Dipolog City wick has an Average Weighted Mean of 2.46 and is described as Slightly Unacceptable, implies that employees find transferring to another branch or department stressful and expensive for they have to travel to unfamiliar place or work in an unfamiliar environment. It can also be seen on the result how employees want to focus only on their descriptive jobs or position, “while the purpose of job rotation is to increase employee satisfaction, it may also lead to frustration. Frequent changes to different job positions can be tiring for people. Job rotation may be unpleasantly stressful for some people, or they may have adjustment issues. Others may just want to get better in a single field rather than covering several ones”. Golemanova, Ralitsa (2022).

Acceptability of New Normal Work Scheme in Terms of Forced Leave

Table 4. The mean scores the Level of Acceptability of the New Normal Work Scheme in Terms of Forced Leave

Statements	WM	Description
1.Applies forced leave to employees.	2.09	Slightly Unacceptable
2.Institutes mandatory furlough or layoffs.	1.83	Slightly Unacceptable
3.Requires employees to go on leave for several days or weeks without pay	2.07	Slightly Unacceptable
4.Requires employees to go on leave for several days or weeks with pay	2.80	Slightly Acceptable
5.Employs special privilege leave.	2.95	Slightly Acceptable
6.Implement 5 days forced or mandatory leave.	2.21	Slightly Unacceptable
7.Directs employees to avail leave of absence.	2.35	Slightly Unacceptable
8.Approves employees to take vacation leave.	3.04	Slightly Acceptable
9.Requires employees to go on leave whenever they are sick.	3.10	Slightly Acceptable
10. Enforces paid time off (PTO) to employees.	2.88	Slightly Acceptable
Average Weighted Mean	2.53	Slightly Unacceptable

The data presented on Table 4 on the Acceptability of New Normal Work Scheme in Terms of Forced Leave with an average weighted mean of 2.53 described as Slightly unacceptable implies that most of the employees do not agree on having to go on mandatory leave or forced leave considering they are not getting paid during those days. “Employers of essential establishments which continue to physically operate may require their employees to go on “forced leave,” employees are required to go on leave for several days or weeks utilizing their leave credits, if any. If the leave credits have been used up, employers could consider granting leave of absence without pay. as authorized under the COVID-19 Flexi-Work Advisory, whenever they are sick, or as an exercise of management prerogative to mitigate the effects of COVID-19 in the workplace when doing so is necessary to protect the workplace from the threat of COVID-19”. (Navarro,et. al, 2020).

Test of Difference between Acceptability of New Normal Work Scheme and Profile of respondents

Table 5. Test of Difference between the variables: Acceptability of New Normal Work Scheme and Respondents' Profile

Respondent's Profile	Acceptability of New Normal Work Scheme				
	α	χ^2 – critical value	χ^2 value	Interpretation	Action / Decision
Age	$\alpha = 0.05$	26.296	6.9461	No significant difference	Ho was accepted
Gender	$\alpha = 0.05$	9.488	6.9461	No significant difference	Ho was accepted
Educational Attainment	$\alpha = 0.05$	9.488	7.8614	No significant difference	Ho was accepted
Civil Status	$\alpha = 0.05$	3.841	8.2953	Significant difference	Ho was rejected
Number of years working in the Tourism Industry	$\alpha = 0.05$	16.919	18.7582	Significant difference	Ho was rejected
Type of Employment	$\alpha = 0.05$	9.488	11.0617	Significant difference	Ho was rejected
Sector of Industry Currently Employed	$\alpha = 0.05$	9.488	15.5368	Significant difference	Ho was rejected

Table 5 shows the test of difference between the acceptability of New Normal Work Scheme and profile of respondents in terms of age. The respondent's age does not matter on their level of acceptability of the new normal work scheme considering these employees are still young and still have a strong immune system which is why they can still work during the pandemic. With the acceptability of New Normal Work Scheme and profile of respondents in terms of the number of years working in the tourism industry is significant on their level of acceptability of the new normal work scheme. Most of the respondents are working in the industry for more than a year and this is significant because they still have a lot to learn and experience on their expertise and with the new normal work scheme their learning and experiences are limited. In the acceptability of New Normal Work Scheme and profile of respondents in terms of their type of employment results to an interpretation of significant difference and a decision to reject the hypothesis. The respondent's type of employment has significance on the level of acceptability of the new normal work scheme. Regular employees are more affected on the changes of the new normal work scheme, lastly with the test of difference between the acceptability of New Normal Work Scheme

and profile of respondents in terms of the sector they are currently employed results to an interpretation of significant difference and a decision to reject the hypothesis. The sector of the industry the respondents are currently employed has an influence on their level of acceptability of the new normal work scheme. Majority of the respondents are under accommodation and food and beverage sector which is a need for every tourist or resident and their manpower shall not be limited.

IV. Conclusion

A number of tourism professionals in Dipolog City are not open with changes in the reduction of work hours or work days, majority of the respondents do not prefer to be transferred to another branch or department or to transfer to another workplace, as for forced leave, majority of the respondents does not agree on going on leave for days especially without pay. Profile of respondents in terms of age, gender, and educational attainment does not affect their decision on accepting the new normal work scheme. On the other hand, civil status, number of years working in the industry, type of employment and sector of the industry they are currently employed to has an effect on their decision on accepting the new normal work scheme.

V. Recommendations

After conducting the study and evaluating the results, tourism businesses industries may provide enhancement training for skills development for a more flexible and skilled employee. The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) may implement appropriate policies and programs to increase employee benefits. Moreover, The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) may enhance policies regarding flexible work arrangement.

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