Gap Analysis in Hospitality Education and Industrial Requirements

Ashaq Hussain Najar[1], Syed Aasif M. Bukhari[2]
[1,2]Assistant Professor (Central University of Kashmir), INDIA

ABSTRACT

The hospitality industry has seen rapid growth in the last four decades still in today's competitive job market hospitality graduates face uncertainties in terms of the needs and expectations of the hospitality industry. As a well-known fact there is a considerable gap between what educators teach in the classrooms and needs at the actual work place. Thus the paper conceptually analyzes the reasons behind the gap and the factors that will bridge the gap. The result indicates some of the common drawbacks that are identified by the pass out hospitality graduates are as "inadequate computer training, Multi-lingual barrier, Short period of internship etc." while as hospitality practitioners have emphasized on some important skills that need to be injected in hospitality graduates which would help them to be the part of hospitality industry for e.g. "operational skills, management skills, human relation skills, etc."

Hospitality graduates need the above mentioned skills that will enable them to function effectively in the hospitality sectors. These skills are meant to make them more useful to their employers and the customers they will be serving.

Keywords-- Hospitality industry, Hospitality graduates, Operational skills, Management skills, Human relation skills, Hospitality practitioners

I. INTRODUCTION

Hospitality education is technical learning and as we all know that in technical oriented learning practice clarifies theory, therefore it is important for hospitality students to undergo industrial attachment in order to understand the actual business setting of the industry. Hospitality professionals expect hospitality students to be prepared for not only skills and competencies at the front line level, but to also have critical thinking skills, emotional intelligence etc. However, Hospitality education does not necessarily provide the provision of experiential learning experience *(Zopiatis, 2007a)*. *(Goh, 2011; Dale and Robinson, 2001; Airey, 2005; Asirifi et al.., 2013)* claimed that, what educators teach in the classroom does not much current industry trends, hence criticized hospitality educators for not adequately preparing students for employment in the industry, which sometimes impedes employment opportunities for hospitality graduates. *(Johnstone (1994)* pointed out that in the hospitality industry there is a huge gap between formal training and employer demands.

The researchers have discussed the paper conceptually to explore why hospitality graduates face uncertainties in terms of the needs and expectations of the hospitality industry. The study also sums up the skills needed for hospitality graduates to meet the industrial expectations.

The result identifies less exposure/practical work; multi-lingual barriers, short period of internship, outmoded lessons, inadequate computer training and modern equipment for practical lessons at school, more emphasis on theory, etc. are some of the reasons why hospitality graduates are not able to meet industry needs after graduations. In view of this hospitality educators and industrial practitioners suggested that close link between the educators and the industry, organizing field trips for students, regular conferences, seminars and workshops, extending the period of internship etc. can enhance experiential learning of students.

Further the researchers want to join the debate to address the unresolved problem between the hospitality educators and the industry.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

There exists a gap between academics and practitioners in almost all educational fields and industries *(Jenkins, 1999; Stanton, 2006; Anderson, 2007; Lilien, 2011; Brownlie et al., 2008; Belli, 2010).* Hospitality educators are unable to adequately preparing students for employment, which sometimes obstructs their employment opportunities. *(Dale and Robinson, 2001, Airey, 2005, Zopiatis, 2007a, (Goh, 2011, Asirifi et al.., 2013).*

(Collins, 2002; Harkison, 2004b; Li & Kivela, 1989; Petrova& Mason, 2004; Raybould& Wilkins, 2005

as cited in Kim, 2008) has pointed out the difference in perception between educators and industry as a problem. In order to overcome this problem, Hospitality sector courses and curriculum must be driven on industry oriented skills and soft skills (Connolly and McGing 2006). (Walo 2001) also identified some essentials for hospitality graduates i.e. interpersonal communication and human relation skills. According to Kluge (1996), Hospitality curriculum must have information technology as a subject in order to obtain student skills during the study and will prepare a student for a career in hospitality industry. (Asirifi et al, and Avornyo, 2013, Pavesic (1993) also stated that hospitality education is more theoretical and less practical.

Noble Amoako Sarkodie, KwameAdom (2015) pin pointed that multi lingual, communication skills, skills in computing , and operational skills as the most prominent skills needed to fit into the industry. The research is supported by Weing, (2008) who stated that communication skills are the key to graduate employment. Hospitality Industry professionals requires a set of standards from a future employee.

(Rees et al., 2006). The UK Higher Education Academy proposed that knowledge, management and operation skills, transferable skills and intellectual skills, are required by the industry

Furthermore, Ogbeide (2006) have also identified the level of competences i.e. self-development skills,

teamwork, decision making, planning, communication skills needed are the key needs of the hospitality industry. *Chang (2009)* also has figured out that the need for cognitive skills (mainly critical thinking, problem solving, and situation analysis), communication skills, interpersonal skills (leadership and teamwork), ethics and moral responsibility, knowledge recall and demonstration, technology and mathematical statistical techniques.

Kiser and Partlow (1999) concluded that the hospitality educators have recognized the need for experiential learning but the implementation and variety of experiential learning techniques are limited in scope.

III. METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

This paper is conceptual and the information gathered has been pooled together from the previously researched strands mainly literature review from various journals, magazines, newspapers, world wide web, Ministry and hotel association reports like that of FHRAI, MOT-GOI. The study outline (Fig.01) has been developed to analyze the reasons behind the gap and the factors that will bridge the gap. This formulated study outline can be considered as the base of this research. It spells out the reason of the gap between hospitality education and industrial requirements.

(A). General teaching methodology in hospitality institutions	
➢ Lectures	➢ Mock interviews
➢ Practical classes	➢ Events
➢ Assessments	➢ Conferences
➢ Group Discussions	➢ Internal examination
➢ Presentations	➢ Computer knowledge
➢ seminars	➢ field trips
(B). Industrial Requirements	
➢ Customer service	➢ IT skills
➢ Languages	➢ Professionalism
➢ Specialty knowledge	➢ Managerial potential
➢ Operational skills and understanding of the industry	➢ Financial management
(C). Gap Analyzed Between Teaching And Industrial Needs	
➢ Multi-lingual barriers and Poor Communication skills	➢ Fewer workshops for both teachers and students
➢ Short period of internship	➢ Less exposure to practical work
➢ Poor Operational skills	➢ Outdated text books and Inadequate computer training
➢ Very less knowledge of security functions and first aids skills.	➢ Inadequate modern equipment for practical lessons at institutions
➢ Little exposure to customer relationship and leadership skills	➢ Lacking personal and problem solving skills
(D). How To Bridge The Gap	
➢ There should be a close link between the educators and the industry	➢ Regular conferences, seminars and workshops will help in exchanging the ideas among students and teachers
➢ Organizing field trips so that students will get exposed to current industrial trends	➢ Providing a good library with new and updated books for effective research work.
➢ Improving institutional infrastructure	➢ Providing the latest teaching materials and regular review of the curriculum
➢ Emphasis on strengthening of the communications skills and multi-language	➢ Building modern food laboratory and computer laboratory furnished with modern equipments.
➢ Extending the period of internship	➢ Regular in-service training of educators

IV.   CONCLUSION

A sense of complacency within microcosms (hospitality training institutes), augmented with lack of understanding of current trends and requirements of hospitality sector remains one of the profound reasons for the gap between what is required and what is offered. An ideal situation would have been taking hospitality professions on board while devising curriculum for hospitality institutes, who can give inputs to greater extend. It is an irony that a hospitality graduate is expected to learn operational skills in four main areas , conceptual skills in general and strategic management, organizational behavior , human resource management, accounting management skills within three years which puts him under lot of pressure and mostly a graduate ends up becoming jack of all traits and master of none.

Faculty development programmes are perceived as redundant exercise by hospitality training stalwarts , the faculty members spent most of the time reading the books and imparting bookish knowledge to the students , the lack of infrastructure and practical exposure also plays its role in making a candidate unemployable. The student spends time imagining things, he learns from books.

Assignments have become a mockery and two day show, where is student is forced to copy things from internet and other sources because of fear of losing marks and to stay in good books of professors who have to do with how well a candidate scores at the end of term or semester . There is absolutely no effort made to make assignment scientific and learning exercises.

V.   RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Close and continuous interaction between students and hospitality professionals to impart skills and knowledge about entire gamut of current service expectations and trends

2. Training and development programmes for the hospitality educators, which must necessarily include the on the job training and refreshment training capsules.

3. Requiring students to complete assignments on scientific lines , which can include analysis and study of specific operation of particular organization

4. Change in curriculum, and reformation antediluvian process to bring newness and freshness where scope for innovation is provided

5. Putting checks and balances in place so that training institutes don't become   small kingdoms for arbitrary rule by autocratic directors who define the institutes by what suits their person interests .

6. Encouraging faculty to undertake research and development projects by incentivizing such efforts.

7. Defining at outset what is expected of a particular semester and   introducing braches   for specialization during undergraduate   level itself

8. Increasing duration of course if required, and introducing parallel and continuous programmes for industry interface during entire course.

9. Shedding off unnecessary   study load , redundant subjects and   nugatory   knowledge   as per the requirements of industry

10. Attending the concerns of students arising out improper handling and aquiline attitude of seniors during industrial training.

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