ABSTRACT

Quote “...if we teach today as we taught yesterday, we rob our children of tomorrow.” John Dewey - believed that education should lead to social reform.

The number of hospitality curriculum models existing across many countries has increased considerably over the past decade. Several countries in the world offer hospitality management programs at the undergraduate level with a duration of four years or in some case three years. The top ranked programs have various curriculum models and have evolved over the years from an extremely vocational to a focused global business management study. These programs offered at the SHA of the Cornell University is flexible and open to the learner’s choice and interests. Whilst investigating and studying the website course content and the curriculum models of the ten top ranked world famous hospitality schools observations are, there are over 248 subject items in various levels, durations and options. It is noteworthy that in some models the subject item were closely connected to the countries orientation to the business of the location or environment e.g. casino management as core at the University of Nevada Las Vegas. Many research papers have findings of perceptions of important stakeholders, mostly differing on what an ideal hospitality curriculum model should have as subject-items. (Gursoy & Swanger, 2013). These curriculum models are appropriate to the varying needs of the important stakeholders of the immediate environment or in some cases global learners or graduates.

In India or elsewhere hospitality industry is part of the tourism and travel industry both for domestic and foreign travels. The tourism industry in India is poised well in India especially the domestic religious and health care travelers.

Given the diverse environment of the hospitality business, it is not very easy to define accurately the subjects that taught are needed on a program to ensure that the graduate is fully competent and meet the industry need. Hybrid models of curriculum are encouraged;(e.g. tourism with hospitality/ events / retail / real estate/wellness) there is a need to rethink the model to reposition the curriculum on the lines of international models that seek a balance between learning at work and learning at the college without losing the strength of either.
Hospitality curriculum models in most universities across countries may not fulfill the scale of the employability competencies of the hospitality graduates according to the five forces of the environment e.g. Perspectives gathered from key stakeholders may hold an answer to arrive at the most important subjects needed for a generic curriculum model in hospitality management. The results is to provide a suggested framework that as applied to the curriculum, which equips, the graduates with competencies for the industry at large. The purpose of the thesis was to develop and suggest a curriculum model for undergraduate hospitality management programs offered in both private or state run universities and institutions, or in business management colleges that may offer hospitality, as options or focus. (India)

The study provides a list of suggested subject items in eight broad categories derived from the internationally benchmarked model curriculum of the top ten ranked hotel schools of the world and two top ranked hospitality models (regulated by AICTE and UGC) from India particularly focused on the 4 year undergraduate curriculum model of hospitality.

The final survey instrument was a questionnaire developed listing 116 subject items, used to measure the perspectives of 3 main stakeholders of hospitality education i.e. the industry (practitioners managerial employees / experts HOD’s of star hotels) academia (faculty and administrators of hotel schools) and management trainees (an employee in a hotel who has completed his graduation but remains a trainee- due to be promoted as an employee).

The 116 variables of subject item were determined after a pilot study among expert faculty. An assessment of the factor analysis of 248 item listed from all the subjects offered in all the top 10 hotel schools of the world and two from India. 140 items were retained after expert review and fine tuning of subject item names that were similar in content or outcome. An initial pilot study conducted among a group on faculty resulted in 26 subject with less than .4 eliminated. A comprehensive questionnaire tool was designed with two section covering the 116 subject items and also 13 socio demographic question and two qualitative questions Based on the responses from 704 stakeholders of three categories, a suggested grouping of the course subject items for each category is presented. The labelling for the model was appropriately
developed based on the theoretical constructs of similar nature in ranked institutes curriculum models. Responses from 60 cities in India from four distinct zones north-south- east- and west of India are collated. A questionnaire, using a 5-point Likert scale, sent out to 3050 hospitality stakeholders (management trainees, industry practitioner and faculty from academia) with 704 valid (25.14%) respondents. Of the 116 course subject variables measured 22 subject items observed high mean of above 4.

An electronic web based questionnaire using google docs was developed comprising of 13 demographic questions 116 Likert scale testing questions and one ranking question was administered. 704 returned questionnaires are valid. 43 responses are from the first group of stakeholders the management trainees, 268 responses are from the academia and faculty as the stakeholder, 393 responses are from industry practitioners, managers and senior employees of the 3 star and above category of hotel employees in India. In all over 198 organizations of academia and industry responded. 60 questionnaires were rejected from 764 due to incomplete data amounting to about 7.8% void questionnaires. The management trainees are also represented from the industry as they are trainees but yet to be confirmed. Results of the survey indicated that of the 116 subject item variables assessed distributed into through factor analysis onto eight distinct categories.

The analysis of data are presented through SPSS. T-tests, ANOVA, EPA, KMO. This was done to check whether the data were pertinent for factor analysis. In order to test the inter-correlation of the items, Bartlett’s test of sphericity (using chi-square) was applied. Likewise, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling. Reference Chapter IV.

Key stakeholders in light of ongoing changes have called the relevancy of program curricula in hospitality management education into question in the multifaceted tourism and hospitality industry and service economy. Various hospitality program models identified are studied. Program content and quality of student preparedness debated prevail in many research studies. Balance and areas of emphasis in program curricula have formed part of the discussions. This thesis identifies the stakeholder’s perspectives on how important or not is a particular subject item that needs to be on
an ideal hospitality undergraduate curriculum model. The program typically is of four-year duration and eight semesters.

Since perspectives and perceptions are not directly observable phenomena’s, this study is a meritorious base for a comprehensive theoretical construct. In addition, provide some innovative perspectives given the diversity of the stakeholders, and the geographical spread across India.

Hospitality education is not about providing competencies for being a labor force in hotels; it is about dealing with people, creating exceptional moments, unique memories and sharing distinct incidents. Curriculum models should specially focus on soft skills and cultural studies to prepare students for jobs across industries around the world. With the rise in AI and automation, values and soft skills are more important than ever as they are what sets one apart.

In order to provide the graduates of these specialized institutions with a holistic curriculum including other relevant branches of knowledge, it would be necessary that their curriculum model is so designed that they could work in partnership with other institutions in their vicinity. Institutions should evolve creative ways of engaging with diverse range of knowledge areas and cross-disciplinary offerings. It may not seem strange if a hospitality graduate is expected to take a course on paramedical science or artificial intelligence.

An overview of the literature on these curriculum models is provided, discussing models of hospitality and subjects. No one model is ideal and no one model may suit a full program. However, identifying and being consistent with these models will help support cohesion and clarity of approaches in a program. For example, it is typical in some Science and Professional Health Science programs that the early years may have a more technical-scientific approach, whereas later years may have a more experiential approach. However, in relation to student engagement these models integrated and streamlined are across a program. Is it valuable to think back over a program and question what would a graduate remember, still finds helpful, three years later (Fink, 2003). As a program team, it is worth exploring views on these different
models and using them to help design and deliver your program to obtain the best and most coherent educational experience for both students and teacher.

Seventy six new subject items were perceived as important by all three stakeholder categories. The perceptions to name a new subject was captured through a qualitative question open ended. The items ranged from much unexpected subject like agriculture, poultry and dairy studies and in extreme case yoga was observed as a subject item to be on a hospitality curriculum. More than 300 statements were received to the qualitative open ended question, of which 148 statements were retained due to clarity and to avoid repetition. Repeated words were coded and 24 dominant themes emerged.

Curriculum model is a broad term referring to the guide used to write curriculum guides, or the documents used in education to determine specific aspects of teaching, such as subject, period, and manner of instruction. The Subject-Centered Curriculum is the traditional model that was laid out by Ralph Tyler in 1949 in his seminal book, Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction. Also called the Knowledge-Centered Curriculum, it is the most widely used method of instruction.

It is typical to find models of hospitality curriculums with specialization in marketing, finance and human resources. However in this study specialization or concentrates have event management, marketing, IT and F&B service and production.

In 2018 we will see the trend continuing where students demand to learn when they want and how they want. Combined with the ever-growing demand from the hotel industry to recruiting graduates with highly developed set of transferable skills, education providers will be further challenged to develop flexible learning environments while providing a true student-centered, even personalized delivery. The most successful (hospitality) business schools will be the ones that can innovate in their delivery models and effectively tailor education to the specific needs and wants of each learner. Finally the outcomes of the research has provided a model which seems very different from the way the other countries may look at what is core to a curriculum or what is elective. Importantly HACCP is suggested as core by one of the stakeholders and English language as core. This makes it all the more evident
that stakeholders will continue to have differing opinions which will keep changing from time to time and hence needs an ongoing capturing and reformation.

The 116 subject item suggested model is presented in eight categories. Finally the study details the way the three stakeholders differ or agree on subject importance in the Indian hospitality environment, all stakeholders’ opinions have been discussed. Recommendations and conclusion have been provided of which the most important finds is that all stakeholders are very important and that specializations are not the same as proposed elsewhere. Refer chapter V for the suggested model.

This study needs to be taken forward with different research method approaches and different stakeholders. It should also be ongoing and capture all opinions. The model suggested is not be generalized. The limitations are that subject objective, learning outcomes and pedagogy is not discussed as the literature review and stated objective of this study did not have it in the scope of study. These areas are left for further research, since curriculum development processes are influenced both by local needs and by broader, transnational trends, a comprehensive international perspective on curriculum issues, trends and approaches is critical.