Strategic Planning for Effective Hospitality and Tourism Education
—Some Observations and Suggestions—

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[ABSTRACT]

Tourism education has been considered as one of the important tool for the sustainability of tourism industry. In fact, we cannot think the development of hospitality and tourism industry without imparting education in this field. The current status of tourism education in India as well as future need which might arise soon is discussed in this paper. The aim of the study is to suggest a strategic approach in order to make tourism education more effective and worthy.

Deans, Directors of the institutions offering tourism education in India were asked to complete a questionnaire. A total of 40 usable questionnaires were seveted. Participants were asked to rate the extent of their business schools collaborating with industry on 23 listed areas on a scale of 1 to 5. The various modes of academia–industry interface were also highlighted to understand the pedagogy. The importance of guest lectures, training and internship of students was also discussed with participants. The Paper also highlights the number of avenues through which hospitality & tourism institutions can collaborate with industry. The top five modes are—Guest lectures, training and internship of students, inclusion of industry experts in board of studies executive level programme and industry inputs in curriculum designing. The paper also highlights the extent of perceived benefits from mentioned partnership methods. It was found that joint seminars and case reading were the most useful in this regard.

Keywords: Tourism Education, Industry, Academia.

Introduction

Universities and industry, which for long have been

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International Journal of Culture and Tourism Research, Vol 7(1) 2014
Available on line at http://www.kasct.co.kr/eng
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operating in separate domains, are rapidly inching closer to each other to create synergies. The constantly changing management paradigms, in response to growing complexity of the business environment today have necessitated these two to come closer. Higher education institutions not only contribute skilled human resources to business, but also in various intangible ways. The intersecting needs and mutually interdependent relationship requires identifying means of further strengthening academia–industry partnerships.

Extremely dynamic business world and the rapidly developing knowledge based service economy have put in an increased demand for professionals to manage the business effectively. And this is precisely the reason why amongst various other fields of knowledge, desire for acquiring management qualifications is growing, both amongst the fresh graduates and working executives. The very simple initiatives can help in bridging the gap between.

1. The skill-gap studies should be looked into while planning new curricula so that students can take advantage of more placements in their respective sectors.

2. At the same time, the industries must need to help in the related research activities grow through endowments in chairs so that technology upgradation would help them cut costs.

More such collaborative ventures would pave the way for providing training to students and in helping design courses which would be relevant to the needs of tourism industry.

**Literature Review**

According to Portelli (1987), more than 120 definitions of the term curriculum have been provided in the professional literature. Although no definition is universally accepted as comprehensive, certain definitions can provide insights about particular characteristics within the general idea of curriculum. For example: Curriculum is the totality of learning experiences provided to students so that they can attain general skills and knowledge at a variety of learning sites (Marsh and Willis, 2007, p.11).

The growth in tourism education is reflected by the growth in tourism education research (Airey and Johnson, 1999). Tourism education has reached maturity (Cooper, et al., 1996) and has provided a number of fields for research. A brief historical record of tourism education research, showing the rapid growth in tourism education research especially in the 1980s and the 1990s, by the end of 2001, a stock of about 300 articles researching tourism education emerged in the literature, which addressed the problem of lack of data (Tribe, 2005).

The rapid growth of the tourism industry creates large numbers of jobs. As tourism plays an important role in the economy, there is a need to examine tourism education in relation to employment. Tourism is a multidisciplinary field, characterised by a large number of small and medium-sized businesses (Thomas, 2000; Ayres, 2006). It is estimated that the tourism and hospitality industry consists of at least 80% small business operators, and these small businesses (employing less than 20 people) make up around 50% of the total tourism workforce (Beeton and Graetz, 2001; DITR, 2002). Riley et al. (2002) indicate that the tourism industry includes a number of sectors and activities. There is debate as to whether