

Bridging the Gap between Academia and Industry in Hotel Management

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Abstract - Hospitality educators need to identify the needs of hospitality employers and their expectations from hospitality graduates so that curriculum must address the needs and expectations of industry professionals. Present study was conducted using qualitative research methodology in order to find out the views of hotel management educators and industry professionals regarding areas that require immediate attentions in order to bridge the gap between academia and industry in context of hotel management. A total of 20 hospitality educators and 10 industry professionals were approached during an academic conference specially addressing the bridging the gap between academia and industry was conducted. Interview guide method was used in order to collect participant's views on the key areas that require special attention for minimising the gap. Areas in the academia –industry relationship and requires key attention to address them were *Curriculum Design and development, Evaluation, Industrial training, EDC (Entrepreneurship Development Cell)&FDP(Faculty Development Programmes)*. Hence taking care of the above said key issues addressed by both group and mutual cooperation among groups could be a win win situations for all stakeholders of hospitality sectors.

Keywords – Academia, Industry, gap, Hotel Management.

I. INTRODUCTION

Hospitality educators need to identify the needs of hospitality employers and their expectations from hospitality graduates so that curriculum must address the needs and expectations of industry professionals. Several researchers highlighted the fact that there is a gap between academics and practitioners in all educational fields and industries (Lilien, 2011; Brownlie et al., 2008; Anderson, 2007; Stanton, 2006; Jenkins, 1999). At present there is a need of healthy and practical collaboration should exist between the industry and academia so that academia prepares employment ready workforce. In order to develop knowledge based economy there is a dire need of collaboration between education and industry linkages. The best way to improve industry-academia engagement comes when both realise that they need each other. Where this realisation fails, the best of intentions and efforts is bound to fail. Present papers aims to address the key areas that require special attention by both the group such as educators and hotel industry professionals in order to bridge the gap.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Present study was conducted using qualitative research methodology in order to find out the views of hotel management educators and industry professionals regarding areas that require immediate attentions in order to bridge

the gap between academia and industry in context of hotel management. A total of 20 hospitality educators and 10 industry professionals were approached during a academic conference specially addressing the bridging the gap between academia and industry was conducted. Interview guide method was used in order to collect participant's views on the key areas that require special attention for minimising the gap. During interaction with the participants key points were identified, break them into units, search for similar patterns and discover what is important and to inform others.

III. RESULTS

In discussion participants of both sector stated that in light of this academia have designed different modes of industry –Academia interface, which are in practice. However certain areas require special attention .Following are the biggest areas in the academia –industry relationship and requires key attention to address them.

- *Curriculum Design and development*
- *Evaluation*
- *Industrial training*
- *EDC(Entrepreneurship Development Cell)*
- *FDP(Faculty Development Programmes)*

IV. CURRICULUM DESIGNING

- Hospitality professionals highlighted that present curriculum at undergraduate level requires **restructuring** as per Industry requirements and industry professionals should be part of curriculum design and development.
- **Board of Studies:** Educators must include industry professionals as member of BOS for curriculum design and development and periodically take their feedback for revisions and modifications as per emerging trends in place.
- **Nomenclature Modification of the existing subjects:** Both the group (educators and industry professionals) emphasized that there is a dire need of revising the nomenclature of existing core subjects as well as need to further break them for example :At present most of the universities are framing subject as Foundation course in F & B Service for first year , Advance – I ,Advance –II for the second year ,Management for the final year ,instead of that keep it like Foundation course in first year ,Bar & beverage Management second year ,Banquet Management in third year , F & B Management in the final year..
- **Innovative Courses/ Subjects :** Subjects: Industry professionals suggested that institutions should include new subjects such as *Fast food chain ,Work life Balance ,Safety & security ,Indian classical cuisine, foreign cuisine, Slow food ,Business ethics & sustainability ,Food plating ,Food photography etc* in course curriculum of hotel management as elective subjects in order increase the specialization skills of the students
- **Flexibility:** Discipline core, Discipline Elective, Compulsory non credit papers, Interdisciplinary etc. should also be part of the curriculum .Few university have incorporated elective options in their curriculum .
- **Industry Visit:** Credit components of visit in the curriculum.
- **Project Assignments:** Educators pointed out that List of project based assignments should be identified by Industry professionals and forward them to academic institutes for student's assignments.

V. EVALUATION

- **Practical evaluation:** Both the participants group highlighted that joint evaluation comprises of both industry professionals and Academicians together should take place. Evaluation sheet should be more specific and outcome of the assessment either be competent or not competent instead of awarding marks. However difficulty in getting leave for industry

professionals for at least 3 to 5 days for practical group evaluations is the limitation.

- **Theory evaluation:** Majority of hospitality professionals stated that presently theory evaluation mechanisms in most of the universities are same for all semesters. There is a need to change the evaluation as student progress year wise from first to final year in terms of having question papers comprises of MCQ, Reasoning, Case study applied knowledge based questions etc. **Pattern** should vary as student progress through further semesters. No more **direct questions** .Even theory papers should be focused on concept application .**Paper setting: Panel** should also include industry professionals for paper setting.

VI. INDUSTRIAL TRAINING

- Hotel educators highlighted that there is a need to strength the existing industrial training practices .At present not roll out properly or conducted in **haphazard manner**. As educators pointed out that students are going for I.T at varied duration and time (semester) and having different learning aspirations from hotel but all are assigned at same task. **Learning Aspiration** of senior student (specialized training) differs from aspirations of junior student. **No task clarity** and variation. Whereas industry professionals stated that there is need to follow **uniform training** in terms of right duration and time in the course curriculum. **WTO Sheets:** in consultation with industry experts academic institutes must develop WTO Sheets and circulate and brief students before going for industrial training. Industry professionals stated that Feedback forms should **redrafted and focused** on getting response on student competency levels. Industrial professionals should also conduct **off the job training sessions** for the trainees during industrial training. Weekend or after completion of training from one respective department Industry professionals also **conduct assessment and feedback sessions** with the students. Educators pointed out that Industry professionals should devise certain innovative practices by giving assignment or real project based on hotel problems .Timetable should also have the **provision of few sessions** to be conducted for briefing the students before sending students for the I.T and after the completion of the I.T in order to brief them how to prepare reports and counseling sessions to overcome the negative perceptions formed among students.

EDC –Entrepreneurship Development Cell

- Start up or incubation centers: Industry professionals should assistance academic institute by giving expert talks for setting own venture.

Faculty Development Programs

- There must be some provisions in the industry to organize and allow faculty members to undergo **some refresher course** or development programs to get brush up with latest trends and practices. At present very limited **UGC-HRDC Centers** are conducting refresher courses on hospitality /Tourism Sector. Industry should take initiatives in this.

VII. CONCLUSION

In the present scenario there is a crucial requirement of creating synergy between universities and industry, failure to do so can create mismatch between demand and supply of quality manpower. As mushrooming of a large number of hospitality schools led to producing a large number of hospitality graduates. However the transition rate is not easy and in great numbers from campus to hotels. This may be due to gap in what institutes teach and what the hotel industry expects from current graduates. Majority of the students are not able to clear initial rounds of recruitment drive during campus placements drives, before evaluating their technical skills, majority of students eliminated in the group discussions rounds. Hence taking care of the above said key issues addressed by both group and mutual

cooperation among groups could be a win win situations for all stakeholders of hospitality sectors.

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