The International Hospitality and Tourism Student Journal

An investigation of the status of hospitality education and its impact on the condition of sectoral professional labour markets: The case of Vietnam's hospitality workforce

Thu Thuc Doan Bui (Joanne)

HTMI, Hotel and Tourism Management Institute, Switzerland

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Abstract

Given hospitality is a human industry, it is essential to educate qualified professionals in the field. This indicates that academic institutions contribute to developing human capacity to address workforce concerns. Numerous research has been undertaken on skills shortages among institutions and industry; however, there have been few studies on higher education and VET in particular. The aim of this research study is to look into the current state of hospitality education and its impact on the state of sectoral professional labour markets. To facilitate the completion of the research's aim, conceptual background regarding hospitality education, vocational education and training, and skill formation is being used. In addition, the quantitative method is used with an email questionnaire for both students with and without experience, as well as hotel managers, to explore the relationship between institution curriculum and industry requirements. As a result, this paper will assist the Vietnam education system to enhance the quality of programmes for higher efficacy in order to develop students' skills and knowledge.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background Information

Hospitality and tourism is not only one of the fastest-growing industries, but also one of the top job-creating sectors that contributes to the global workforce. The annual report of the World Travel & Tourism Council in 2019 showed that 330 million jobs were supported by the global hospitality and tourism industry, which contributed around 10.4% of total employment worldwide (WTTC, 2020). Despite the advancement of technologies in the current era, the hospitality industry remains to be an interaction industry between people and people. Because of that, high quality human resources will ensure the competitiveness and productivity of enterprises as well as to adapt and innovate with the rapid change of the industry.

Responding to the human resources requirements of the skilled workforce within the hospitality industry, the education system needs to be upgraded in order to provide skilled labor. Various institutions of hospitality and tourism are growing due to the interest and demand of society (Butler, 1999). These institutions focus on the implementation of values and the skills necessary to enhance professional and intellectual abilities (Cooper and Shepherd, 2014). Kay and Russette (2000) clearly stated that students with higher education programs graduate with better qualities than students from secondary level within the hospitality sector. Besides, employers in the hospitality sector have also expressed concern that newly students entering the workplace could not make an easy transition from school to industry (Ricci, 2005). For this reason, university curriculum and industry professionals must cooperate with each other to ensure that students have the skills they need to engage in the workforce (Millar et al., 2010).

While the substantial economic impact of Vietnam's hospitality and tourism sector is highly recognized (Crotti and Misrahi, 2015), the lack of human resource preparedness has been identified as a drawback (Ha, 2012). Consequently, it is a major challenge for the education sector in Vietnam to create more professional training for human resources, popularise tourism practice and promote the activities of the industry as well as its need, so that locals are more aware of the situation (Nguyen and Chaisawat, 2011).

1.2 Rationale

According to a survey conducted by the Vietnam Student Association, about half of the graduates were not able to obtain a position in their field of education and a considerable proportion of pupils have required additional work training (Giang, 2012). Anh et al. (2018) researched the factors that affect successful tertiary hospitality education in Vietnam, which is the increasing demand for jobs with the oversupply of vocational graduates, that leave the higher education graduates in shortage for the industry. Furthermore, it is the distinction between two programs in two career paths and the lack of cooperation between industry and education. Nguyen and Chaisawat (2011) highlighted the country 's challenges to the industry, such as the lack of trained and skilled staff due to the gap between the education ability of academic institutions and the needs of the industry. However, limited research has been done on the crucial role of education in the shortage of quality human resources for the hospitality industry in Vietnam. Moreover, there is a lack of study on the cooperation between higher education institutions and industry (Tran, 2015). This research will contribute to previous related studies by using different theories and approaches to achieve the aim and objectives. The author will be focusing on the current program of hospitality education in Vietnam both in higher education and vocational training. In addition, the author will analyse the role of education on the shortage of skilled human resources in order to develop the hotel industry in particular and the tourism sector in general.

1.3 Aim and objectives

The aim of this research paper is to investigate the status of hospitality education and its impact on the condition of sectoral professional labour markets: the case of Vietnam's hospitality workforce.

To achieve the aim, followed objectives will be considered:
- To identify needs and expectations of hospitality professionals in the Vietnamese hospitality sector
- To examine VET policies and programme contents for hospitality education in Vietnam

- To explore the expectations of the hospitality educated workforce from the perspective of hospitality sector leaders

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Introduction

Throughout times, there is a notable concern from participants in the industry is that hospitality education is not providing well-prepared graduates with expectations that are appropriate to the needs and practices of the industry (Hearns, Devine, & Baum, 2007; Nolan, Conway, Farrell, & Monks, 2010). Therefore, the author will analyse the current situation as well as elaborate the relation between stakeholders by using concepts, existing empirical research to achieve the aim and objectives of this research.

2.2 Conceptual and Theoretical Background

2.2.1 Hospitality Education

According to Cooper and Shepherd (2014), hospitality is certainly a people-industry where human interaction is always the most important element of a customer's satisfaction. That leading to the demand for educated and trained hospitality labor is more apparent than ever (Lee et al., 2016). The quality of human resources thus plays a vital role in the success of the hospitality enterprise in particular and of the industry in general. Education would be an useful tool in the long term in order to raise the level of service and staff within the industry, while it may not have a significant effect in the short term (Cooper and Shepherd, 2014). Hospitality Education as Markovic (2006) describes is a multidisciplinary field, merging the viewpoints of many other fields for implementation and experiment. What differentiates hospitality management education from other academic programs is that it combines both theoretical and practical program content to link the education environment with realistic industry experience (Millman, 2017). However, during the growth of the hospitality education system, it is argued that the hospitality programmes were too technically focused which was called "vocationalization" (Jafari and Ritchie, 1981; Pavesic, 1993; Powers, 1980). Meanwhile, Woods (2003) and Chipkin (2004) assumed that the tourism and hospitality curricula were too theoretical. According to certain International Hospitality Academic Institutions, their objective is to train students for their future careers by developing their knowledge and expertise in a number of similar fields (Alhelalat, 2015). Hospitality education institutions seem to be in principle, a way for graduates to get into the market and to be educated and trained to be a quality source for the hospitality industry (Alhelalat, 2015). Hence, in order to narrow the distance between academic and industry, the hospitality education system should deliver useful

curricula for students to fulfill the demands of the industry (Hawkins, Ruddy and Ardah, 2012). It is proposed that a successful hospitality education curricula should focus on advancing operational, management skills and competencies as a crucial part of the education program (Chathoth and Sharma, 2007). Even though there have been various studies about the relationship between hospitality graduate skills and the industry needs within 20 years lately, there will continue to be a gap in perception between the two parties on what capabilities and responsibilities are necessary for students to come into the sector (Raybould and Wilkins, 2005). Graduates have been blamed for possessing irrational expectations because of the mismatch between task given and the skills required when starting the job (Purcell and Quinn, 1996). Nevertheless, part of this disparity is attributed to a poor quality curricula programme and incompetent management of the education system (Raybould and Wilkins, 2005). That is why, it is necessary to assure that the hospitality educational program would not only follow academic standards but also matches industry and student expectations about the skills required in the industry as students enrolled in hotel or hospitality programs are driven by the expected vocational practices and professional results (O'Mahony et al., 2001; Raybould and Wilkins, 2005).

2.2.2 Vocational Education and Training (VET)

According to European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (2008), Vocational Education and Training (VET) comprises both education (theoretical understanding) and training (practical skills) that designed for a specific job. Moreover, the European Union Commission (2016) suggested a more detailed concept whereby "Vocational education may be undertaken at an educational institution, as part of secondary or tertiary education, or may be part of initial training during employment, for example as an apprentice, or as a combination of formal education and workplace learning". It is claimed that the VET is distinct from the general goals of school education and university education where academic knowledge is mostly perceived as a goal for its own (Karmel, 2008). On the other hand, Karmel and Nguyen (2003) stated that higher education and VET are 'not specifically differentiated' because there are linked industry certification, interdisciplinary terms as well as a significant number of people who have engaged in both categories. Integratedly, the Department of Education, Science and Training (2002) gave an interpretation that higher education is connected to employment-related learning outcomes, while VET offers more relevant skills within its vocational-oriented programmes. In addition, numerous research has given conclusive proof that vocational education has significant impacts on the better transition of school-to-work (Golsteyn and Stenberg, 2017). As a result, students graduating from VET are having more

chances to be employed than students graduating from general education and plus, they also gain job opportunities faster (CEDEFOP, 2013a).

The field of VET could be defined in different terms in different areas. For instance, the term VET is widely used in Europe, although in the United States is using Career and Technical Education (CTE) (Agrawal, 2013). Plus, it could be used as apprenticeship training, Technical/ Vocational Education (TVE), Occupational Education (OE), Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) (Maclean and Lai, 2011). About half of the VET enrolments in schools are referred to the hospitality, office studies and IT fields with the new model of typical school curricula (Malley et al., 2001). Throughout the growth of national education and training institutions over time, the involvement of vocational education has always been an integral part of it (NCVER, 2008). It is suggested that there is a minimum of three ideal forms of vocational systems that have arisen (Agrawal, 2013). The first form of vocational system is a market-led framework where a major part of vocational training is provided by a workforce driven, then is a school model that the VET occurs in schools, and last is a hybrid model with an internship programme (Nilsson, 2010). The school-based vocational program tends to center on general subjects, with the time spent in the workplace being less than 10% of the overall program. In contrast, the work-based vocational program is strongly committed to the company as it offers profession preparation for students with a practical orientation as students will experience the 'real world'. Then, a dual program that includes an apprenticeship as a requirement for graduate help makes a transition from school to work more efficiently (Choi et al., 2019).

The VET programmes offer expertise to learners in order to improve their technical skills (Nicholas, 2008) and develop human resources for particular professions (Pema and Mehay, 2012). Within the sector, hospitality educators and industry experts have claimed that internships should be a core part of hospitality programs for students to participate in the industry as future professionals (Morrison and O'Mahony, 2003). Internships bring opportunities for students to apply theories in their theoretical classes into practice, achieve a broader knowledge of industry requirements, develop career prospects, and obtain essential hands-on, work-related skills (Barron, 1999; Singh and Dutta, 2010; Velde and Cooper 2000). Although having distinct educational principle systems in terms of employment skills preparation, both VET and HE graduates are expected to conduct internships in the hospitality field, particularly in 4-star and 5-star hotel properties, along with multinational hotel companies (Nachmias et al., 2017). Moreover, there are findings on tourism and hospitality internships indicating that job experience has a direct impact on student perceptions of hospitality employment and might contribute to the shift in their attitudes (Kim and Park, 2013). Overall, it is obvious that VET acts a pivotal part in enhancing the nations' human capital

by generating a skilled workforce (Tsai, 2013). As thus, such skills are expected to have a direct and indirect impact on production and thus on economic development (Choi et al., 2019).

2.2.3 Skill formation

According to the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (2013), skill formation is defined as "the development of work-related skills or competencies through vocational education and training". Moreover, Capsada-Munsech et al. (2018) described that skill formation is related to the areas that various stakeholders provide skills training and some of them fully participate in this training to develop their skills. There are two components that build up the concept of skills formation which are: 'Supply of skill formation' and 'Demand of skill formation'. The activities that are offered to encourage individuals to learn, such as instructing, training, learning materials plus entry to the educational organisation's environment are all referred to 'Supply' that comes from the government through the structured education curriculum (Green, 2013). The 'Demand' occurs from students who want to develop their skills and make education investing decisions based on their expected returns (Valiente et al., 2020). Extensively, skill formation is the growth of social competence about learning, innovation and productivity (Brown, 1999) that encourages a country to shift towards a high-skills economy and society (Mori, 2019). On this account, the formation of a skilled labour is perceived to be one of the key factors for the improvement of the industrial structure of a nation (Perkins and Vu, 2010). On the other hand, Baum (2002) stated that the skill formation by training in the modern economy and its role is a subject of substantial academic and political controversy as it involved educational institutions and government policies (Mori, 2019). Inevitably, the disputation on skills issues of relevance with the hospitality industry is advised by a broader, more comprehensive view of skills in the context of changing careers, innovations, and vocational education in both developed and developing economies (Baum, 2002).

Continuously, many international development agendas have emphasised the skill formation of young people and faced the concerns of youth unemployment and underemployment (OECD, 2017a). For that reason, arranging the supply and demand of skills would facilitate transitions amongst young people easier and help to minimize skills mismatches in the youth workforce (Quintini, 2014). Recently, there are many discussions on skill mismatch that have centered on over-qualification as well as skill shortages and gaps (Lloyd and Payne 2016). Raybould and Wilkins (2005) discovered that graduates were deemed 'over-qualified but under-experienced,' even for entry-level management positions. Which means that academic qualifications are not enough to guarantee a job after graduation and in reality, many employers are under-use students' abilities and efforts (Mason, Williams and Cranmer, 2009). Looking into another side, Harkison et al. (2011) claimed that there is a discrepancy between hospitality graduates and corporate executives' viewpoint of skills. While students think that their experience and expertise are suitable to get a job in the industry, managers are making choices based on their character and enthusiasm. The viewpoints of business leaders show that managers consider attitudes rather than skills (Harkison et al., 2011). Furthermore, Williams, Bosselmanb, Hurstb, and Zhengb (2013) argued that the hospitality industry appears to lack capable managers, proposing that the large percentage of hospitality graduates accomplish their academic degrees without appropriate managerial skills. Manager expectations analyses have shown industry stakeholders agree that management skills are more important in the educational program than technological skills (Baum, 1990; Okeiyi et al., 1994; Tas, 1988; Umbriet, 1993)

Despite those factors above and the clear role of skills formation in almost all fields of education and industry, studies have shown that hospitality educators are not sufficiently prepared to graduate the skills required to fulfill industry demands (Brown et al., 2001). Najar and Bukhari (2017) have summed up some of the skills needed for hospitality graduates to meet the industrial expectations. For instance, industry-oriented skills and soft skills must be brought through courses and curricula in hospitality education (Connolly and McGing, 2006). Stewart and Knowles (2000) suggested that graduates should deliver employers two features of their employability: transferable skills that are suitable in their chosen profession, and subject skills that are essential to a particular profession. Besides, some of the basic principles for hospitality graduates, such as human interaction and social communication skills that are needed for students, have been recommended by Walo (2001). Furthermore, The UK Higher Education Academy stated that knowledge, academic prowess, operational and managerial skills, and specialized skills would also be needed by the industry (Rees et al., 2006). Recently, by far some of the most vital skills required to adhere into the industry have been outlined such as multilingual, interpersonal skills, computer skills and operational skills (Sarkodie and Adom, 2015).

On the whole, the hospitality area does not fall neatly into any of the types of skills mentioned – instead it embraces many and blends together (Baum, 2002). Moreover, the skills formation agenda in the hospitality industry creates awareness upon the transformation of a knowledgeable labour force and addresses policy concerns regarding sustained government expenditures in education and training (Baum, 2002).

2.3 Empirical Research

2.3.1 Vocational Education and Training Programs (VET) in Asia

While Asian countries are growing their VET systems, it is vital to guarantee that the increase in number does not result in a decrease in system quality. More effort has been provided to the VET programs in order to fulfill the need for a qualified workforce in hospitality (Agrawal, 2013). Governments in these countries have taken different initiatives towards the improvement of a stable VET program (Agrawal, 2013). Japan, Korea and Singapore are great examples where the VET program has made a major contribution to economic growth (ADB, 2004). While Bangladesh, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal and Pakistan have 'uneven' VET systems; Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Sri Lanka are justified in providing 'quite evolved' VET systems (Tilak, 2002). Particularly in Indonesia, while there are many tourist attractions and destinations, as well as the variety of culture and tradition, the needs of a skilled workforce has not met the explosive growth of the hospitality sector (Oktadania and Chon, 2017). For that reason, the government has made efforts in the field of hospitality and tourism education through solid curriculum and training programs to provide an efficient labour market for the industry (Oktadania and Chon, 2017). Despite broad popularity, the VET system in South Asian nations has not grown significantly in recent years. Agrawal (2013) disclosed two key issues plaguing the VET system are the quality of institutions and the inadequacy of interconnections between VET institutions and enterprises. Although there are advantages to the current efforts for the VET system, it remains that it is primarily considered as an alternative to the long-overlooked root and branch restructuring of tertiary institutions (Ryan, 2002).

Vietnam seems to be an example of an ASEAN country that the growing hospitality and tourism sector faces a range of workforce concerns, including lack of professional education and training facilities (Hampton, Jeyacheya, & Pham, 2018). Consequently, the education system has to be improved consistently in order to adapt to the expeditious developments of the industry (Luong and Kim, 2020).

2.3.2 Skill Formation in Developing Countries

Lately, many developing countries have drawn more attention to the situation of the skills gap in the demands of several industries and the abilities of the graduates (Mori, 2019). The supply-side approach of skills formation has infiltrated these countries, considering that certain countries along Asia and Africa have been implementing better TVET systems in line with employers' skills needs (Boahin and Hofman, 2014; Yamada et al., 2018). Particularly, such in developing countries which have industrial development by getting the benefit of the FDI inflows, are confronting skills shortages and skills gaps, whereas developed countries are facing over-qualification concerns (World Bank, 2012d). The findings of Fleming and Soborg (2010) have revealed that Denmark, Singapore and Malaysia are addressing the difficulties of the knowledge-based economy by developing educational institutions to facilitate skills forming. These diverse of Nordic and SEA cases conclude that all three national skills formation systems are greatly affected by the skill formation program of the leading companies (Fleming and Soborg, 2010). In addition, in the context of a developing country such as Egypt, it also faces the same issues as the skills mismatch between the requirements of employers and the education system provided. The International Labor Organisation (2015) has indicated that an improvement to the apprenticeship system would be an effective way to overcome this challenge, thereby helping to promote the recruitment of drop-outs who no longer have the ability to access the traditional systems, as well as to raise the limited public perception of VET. Furthermore, with income growth and robust structural shifts in the economy, it has caused considerable demand for skilled labor in Sri Lanka (Dar, 2016). For this reason, improving employment-relevant skills is an essential part towards creating a sustainable and productive middle-income economy. In order to achieve this, skills formation must have been part of a holistic economic development plan, with job creation and the development of lifelong skills should be achieved simultaneously (Dar, 2016). Over time, the indifference between ideas and strategies shows that the current empirical approaches have not sufficiently clarified the obstacles that developing countries confront in their skills formation systems, nor have they offered realistic solutions to tackle these obstacles and improve their systems (Mori, 2019). The character of hospitality skills, in turn, is shaped by the workforce that is relevant to it, both directly and by educational and training institutions. (Baume, 2002).

2.4 Primary Research Context

The context of this research is Vietnam, a middle-income developing country, one of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) members. It is one of very few developing economies in South East Asian that has not gone into downturn as a result of the global economic crisis. The GDP growth trend has been surprisingly stable at about 6% a year over the last 20 years (McGuinness, 2021). Furthermore, the digital era has the potential to advance laborers into more customer-focused professions in the service industry, in which a rising number of jobs are being conducted (ILO, 2018). In fact, the country's hospitality industry is at an initial stage of growth, and so are the educational institutions (Le at al,. 2018). Vietnam tends to be an instance of an ASEAN

country where the rapid growth of the hospitality and tourism sector presents a variety of labour shortages, including a limited supply of professional training and education resources (Hampton, Jeyacheya, & Pham, 2018). The hospitality education program, which is part of the higher education system, has recently been extended and updated to include a sufficient number of qualified workforce to obtain socio-economic outcomes (Harman et al., 2010). Even so, previous researchers have identified a significant skills disparity amongst university graduates (Bodewig et al., 2014; Manpower Group, 2011). There are different factors that lead to the skills mismatch: outdated university curriculum, theoretical-focused rather than practical-focused, inadequate academical knowledge, corporate gap with the industry regarding the training skills for students, and student disengagement (Harman et al., 2010; Tran, 2015). Moreover, past findings have stated that graduates from educational institutions in Vietnam are not fully prepared with the skills needed to work efficiently. Which means that the current curriculum in Vietnam does not provide enough industry relating skills for students to work in the sector, and extensively, in a global business context (Le, Klieve, and McDonald, 2018; Losekoot, Lastern, and Tran, 2019).

This research is preceded by a study of hospitality higher education in Vietnam, taking into account both hospitality professionals and hospitality leaders' perspectives. The existing Vietnamese higher education system comprises 223 colleges (assigning 3-year diplomas), 163 universities (assigning 4-year or 5-year bachelor's degrees and postgraduate degrees) and 76 academic institutions (assigning doctoral degrees) (Anh et al., 2018). Especially, there is only one hospitality-focused school in the whole nation - VATEL, which is an international hospitality school chain that cooperates with a domestic private university to authorise BSc and MBA degrees. Minimizing the context to Ho Chi Minh City which has 19 universities authorised BSc degrees and 7 vocational colleges that provide hospitality and tourism as a major of the curriculum (Hoteljob.vn, 2020). The study will be conducted in Ton Duc Thang University, since it is a multidiscipline public university which ranked No.1 in Vietnam according to Academic Ranking of World Universities (2020). The university has a community of about 24.000 students and 1,400 faculty members with 5 campuses located across Vietnam (TDTU, 2020). It provides both undergraduate and postgraduate programs for Vietnamese and foreign students, focusing on quality research, training and internationalization (TWUR, 2020). The schools' hospitality major incorporates academic and practical experience as well as an internship in order to train students for careers. Hence, Ton Duc Thang University is a combination of international approaches within Vietnamese climate. Students would from there develop skills needed and be aware of the conceptual and practical hospitality industry. Additionally, 2 luxury hotels will be taken into consideration from the managers

viewpoint of the educated workforce which are Hôtel des Arts Saigon - MGallery and New World Saigon Hotel. The 2 hotels are the 5-star properties in the city with a professional working environment. These hotels are offering internships for hospitality students with a variety of positions. In addition, they are connected with numerous institutions for employment opportunities for graduates, including Ton Duc Thang University. As a result, the study would acquire a general situation about hospitality education in Vietnam in terms of a nation-based structure.

2.5 Conclusion

Overall, the two concepts of hospitality education and skill formation have been interconnected by the vocational education and training (VET) system that have been explored through Chapter 2, with countries that have the same context with Vietnam. Thenceforth, the perspective of the hospitality industry stakeholders which are graduates and managers have also been indicated.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Aim and objectives

The aim of this research paper is to investigate the status of hospitality education and its impact on the condition of sectoral professional labour markets: the case of Vietnam's hospitality workforce.
To achieve the aim, followed objectives will be considered:

- To identify needs and expectations of hospitality professionals in the Vietnamese hospitality sector
- To examine VET policies and programme contents for hospitality education in Vietnam
- To explore the expectations of the hospitality educated workforce from the perspective of hospitality sector leaders

Hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1
H0 There is no relation between hospitality education curriculum and professional expectations and needs
H1 Hospitality education curriculum positively meets professional expectations and needs
H2 Hospitality education curriculum negatively meets professional expectations and needs
Hypothesis 2
H0 VET has no effect on the hospitality professional labour markets
H1 VET has positive effect on the hospitality professional labour markets
H2 VET has negative effect on the hospitality professional labour markets

Hypothesis 3

H0 There is no association between VET and hospitality tertiary education

H1 VET is positively associated with hospitality tertiary education

H2 VET is negatively associated with hospitality tertiary education

3.2 Research Approach

In order to examine the status of hospitality education in Vietnam and its impact on the professional labour market of the hospitality sector, hence to evaluate the link between the hospitality industry and educational system through the industry stakeholders within the Vietnam context. Therefore, a quantitative research approach with cross-sectional design would be the right piece of the puzzle to clarify this topic. Quantitative approaches focus on analytical, statistical or numerical results and objective measurement. Data of quantitative methods is collected by polls, questionnaires and surveys or by evaluating advance empiric data (Babbie, 2012). As the author wants to investigate the situation of hospitality education in Vietnam, qualitative approaches are inappropriate as it focuses on a limited population (Byrne, 2002). The cross-sectional research design is reasonable, because it gathers data from a large pool of subjects at around the same time and examines the association among variables (Bryman, 2008). In detail, it means that the author will collect data from the students as well as the industry managers, during the skilled labour shortage that Vietnam is facing and examine the skills mismatch between these stakeholders' perspectives. Moreover, this design gives valuable insights into the attributes of industry stakeholders and describes the correlations for further study (Black, 1999). The author would use a cross-sectional descriptive survey to determine the extent of prevalent or severity of the hospitality education system concerns in the students. Moreover, a cross-sectional survey could be a valuable tool for testing hypotheses if the author has comprehensive conceptual assumptions regarding a relation (Stockemer, 2019 p.31). Accordingly, the Deductive Approach will be applied to formulate hypotheses based on the earlier concept and then contribute to the quantitative research strategy to evaluate the hypothesis (Wilson, 2010).

3.3 Sampling

According to Kumar (2019), probability sampling technique is used in quantitative research to guarantee that a sample is chosen in such a way that it accurately represents the study population and to minimize bias. Moreover, Malhotra (1999) indicated that the sampling respondents must be representative of the larger population. Although the "common features" that identify the population are rather limited, it is feasible to examine the whole population (Scharrer and Ramasubramanian, 2021). Therefore, the author

will apply probability sampling with the study population are students in Ton Duc Thang University and the New World Saigon Hotel managers to explore the status of hospitality education and its impact on the professional labour market. There are going to be 3 samples: undergraduate students in higher education programs that experience no internship; graduated students who are working in the industry for at least 6 months; and hospitality managers in the professional enterprise. To ensure generalisation, the central concept of probability sampling is that all the components in the researcher's sampling frame have an equal probability of being chosen for inclusion in the study (Taherdoost, 2016).

3.4 Data Collection

According to Veal (2018), the email survey has the benefit of being able to include a large sample. Furthermore, the usage of an online questionnaire to collect information needed to answer the research issues has become prevalent as communications technology has advanced (Kumar, 2019). By using a relevant tool, researchers might analyse data collected via surveys conducted. Based on the aim and objectives of the study, there will be 3 types of email questionnaires sent out to the students and managers. For the undergraduate students, the email questionnaire with multiple choice answers will be sent out through the internal email system of the school. For the graduated students that have experiences in the industry, the email questionnaire with 5-point variant Likert scale questions relating to agreement – disagreement will be applied. For the managers, the questionnaire with partially open-ended questions will be delivered via email that is taken from the hotels' site. As a result, what abilities and attitudes the company is seeking of students as well as what students are lacking will also be discussed. In addition, how well the institutions prepare for students to enter the industry, plus, whether it is suitable to bridge the gap between academic and reality, is clarified. The author will approach 500 people and anticipate 150 credible responses to be incorporated in the data analysis.

3.5 Data Analysis

The 3 types of email questionnaires will be sent out to the students and managers. For the undergraduate students, the email questionnaire with multiple choice answers will be sent out through the internal email system of the school. Maydeu-Olivares (2009) claimed that multiple-choice questionnaires increase survey completion rates while allowing for the addition of more questions and/or response categories in a survey. Thereby, to explore the students appraise on the ongoing education curriculum and how they expect their future job to be. In addition, Likert Scales are used to measure attitudes or opinions and feature fixed option answer formats (Bowling, 1997; Burns

and Grove, 1997). For the graduated students that have experiences in the industry, the email questionnaire with 5-point variant Likert scale questions from Strongly Disagree to Disagree - Neither Agree or Disagree - Agree and Strongly Agree is used to measure how appropriate the education system is with the industry needs that they are working. Moreover, closed-ended questions require respondents to choose an answer from a list of prepared choices, whereas open-ended questions allow them to come up with their own responses in their own words (Stockemer, 2019 p.42). However, open-ended survey questions are rarely used in quantitative research, with quantitative researchers preferring partially open-ended or closed-ended questions (Privitera and Ahlgrim-Delzell, 2018). So as for the managers, the questionnaire with partially open-ended questions will be delivered via email that is taken from the hotels' site. Lastly, Male (2016) suggested that it is important to ensure that the research tool/process is of great quality and that the request is engaging in order to receive a response from potential respondents. In quantitative research, the two major types of statistical studies are descriptive and inferential. The author will apply inferential since inferential analysis seek to extract findings from sampling and generalize them to a population (Stockemer, 2019).

3.6 Validity

According to Veal (2018), the extent to which the data acquired clearly represents the phenomena being examined is referred to as validity. Research is considered valid if solid cause-effect linkages are constructed and the results acquired are generalizable to groups, situations, and contexts outside of the research conditions (Onwuegbuzie, 2021). External validity is relating to generalisation or representativeness; while internal validity relating to how precisely the variables are utilised and the data gathered represent the features of the phenomena being researched (Veal, 2018). In addition, the criteria of questionnaire design and sampling are aimed at minimizing risks to validity (Veal, 2018). Therefore, the author will develop a questionnaire with valid and trustworthy questions that answer the research objectives, organise them in a meaningful sequence, and choose an effective delivery method. Also, for externally accurate results, the author will obtain data on the sample that represents the range of viewpoints in the population.

3.7 Reliability

Veal (2018) explained that the extent to which research results would be the same if the study were conducted at a later phase or with a different sample of participants is referred to as reliability. As Kumar (2019) defined, there are various methods for determining an object's reliability, including test/retest, parallel forms (inter-rater reliability), and split-half (internal consistency). By comparing different variations of the same measurement, reliability might well be estimated (Middleton, 2019). One sign that measurement is valid is high reliability. If an approach is unreliable, it is most likely invalid (Middleton, 2019). Heale and Twycross (2015) stated that even though an exact estimation of reliability is not achievable, an approximation of reliability may be obtained using several measures. Further, throughout the data collecting process, reliability should be addressed. Plus, when data is collected with a useful approach, it is essential that the results are exact, consistent, and reproducible (Middleton, 2019).

3.8 Generalisability

The extent to whereby the research results relate to different subjects, groups, and contexts is referred to as generalisability (Veal, 2018). The extent of how this is necessary as a result of the research will affect the method used. Generalisability is regarded as a crucial basis for assessing the quality of the research in a quantitative approach (Polit and Beck, 2008). Firestone (1993) proposed a classification of three generalisability models that serve as a useful tool for examining generalisations in quantitative and qualitative research: statistical generalisation, analytic generalisation and transferability. The fundamental model behind most quantitative research is statistical generalisation, which is the model that extrapolates from the sample to the population. Moreover, conventional statistical inference tests are founded on the idea of random sampling from the sample population (Polit, 2010).

3.9 Ethical Issues

According to Kaiser (2019), it is important for researchers to have primary ethical attitudes that allow them to perform all the study procedures in a way that is trustworthy and honest. The principles of research ethics are protecting the interests of the respondents and to guarantee that the researcher is responsible and professional (Saunder et al., 2009). Potential respondents will thus be fully aware about the participation in the questionnaire and should have the right to make decisions to participate or not to participate in the study (Nayak and Narayan, 2019). In terms of anonymity and confidentiality, the response will be collected and evaluated securely. It is indeed unethical to share data about a responder with outsiders for purposes apart from research (Kumar, 2019). The author will prepare a consent form to secure the data so that those who are not in the study will not have access to the data. Hence, researchers are obligated to disclose data accurately and never create research findings by creating data that was never verified or collected (Privitera and Ahlgrim-Delzell, 2018).

According to Almedia et al. (2017), while questionnaires can help with cost and time efficiency, the data is particularly dependent on the structure and responses of the respondents. Besides, the involvement and motivation to respond to online surveys are perceived as a limitation. Moreover, questionnaire-based surveys have a variety of disadvantages due to the fact that they are often conducted on samples and depend on self-reported data (Veal, 2018). Over and above that, there has been limited study on the validity or accuracy of questionnaire data in leisure and tourism, such as difficulties of validity and accuracy that occur from a wide range of sources, such as exaggeration and under-reporting; recall accuracy; and sensitivity (Veal, 2018). Kumar (2019) mentioned that the wording and structure of the questionnaire may not be clear enough, leading respondents to struggle to understand the questions as well as provide contradictory results. In terms of open-ended questions, it is possible to contain respondent bias since they allow respondents to express themselves openly whereas closed-ended questions may indeed reflect researchers' bias through the list of answers that have been given (Kumar, 2019). Also, this research is proposed and conducted solely by the researcher. As a result, data collection and analysis were completed by an individual, implying that coding and concept development were also completed independently. Nevertheless, the choices of concepts and methodologies might have been biased since the lack of alternative viewpoints, as well as the involvement of other people in the project, may have hindered a more thorough and precise analysis of the findings, which could have resulted in a more successful research design. Another limitation is that the researchers utilised a representative sample and therefore only collected data from Ton Duc Thang University and the New World Saigon Hotel, limiting the generalizability of the findings of the study. The results, while beneficial for hospitality higher education and vocational education, cannot be extrapolated to the Vietnam national curriculum.

Chapter 4: Discussion

4.1 Introduction

The three objectives will be addressed in the next chapter in order to gain a better knowledge of the relevant expectations for higher education, and vocational education training in hospitality. Due to the absence of primary research, this chapter will focus on conceptual frameworks and empirical research findings from the literature review.

4.2 To identify needs and expectations of hospitality professionals in the Vietnamese hospitality sector

From then until now, academics have agreed that the requirements of students, industry, and institutions must be fulfilled via educated curriculum design (Bartlett, Upneja, & Lubetkin, 1998). To address the evolving-industry skills that are required, curriculum and delivery methodologies must be updated, improved, and renewed (Sigala, 2021). On the whole, hospitality educators are still unable to fully educate students for the workforce (Goh, 2011; Asirifi et al., 2013). Managers in the hospitality industry claim that nearly half of hospitality graduates are underprepared for the profession; according to Maher and Neild (2005), the main issue was identified in the graduates' communication skills, cooperation, and time management. Further, concerning the discrepancy between higher education and employer needs, professionals stated that graduates need more insight into a real business, not simply theoretical learning from instructors who have never done what they teach in the real world (Fulbright Vietnam, 2020). The hotel managers required students to have at least these three fundamental skills: comprehension of the services offered by the enterprise, knowledge of booking and reservation systems, and understanding of Western foods and beverages (Anh H Le, 2017). Other observed weaknesses were a lack of actual work experience, work commitment, and performance appraisal, indicating that student internships were not greatly valued by the industry. By the same token, individual traits were viewed as significant by all industry leaders as a necessity for student interns. Several attributes were required for a student to be successful in the hospitality industry: honesty, enthusiasm, and passion that considered positive traits in the service industry. As per the perspectives of hotel leaders, hospitality managers also priorities attitudes over abilities (Harkison et al., 2011). Moreover, employers are dissatisfied by graduates' inability to perform under stress and have short-term vision and motivations that are mainly determined by money. Tran (2015) claimed that Vietnamese graduates had to relearn many things when they joined the workforce due to insufficient skill training given by universities, which concentrate on formal education with traditional instructional approaches (Harman, Hayden, and Pham, 2010). It is reasonable to presume that the hospitality education curriculum has proven inadequate to meet the demands and expectations of hospitality professionals. In the context of Vietnam, hospitality education is alleged of providing generic knowledge that is out of date and lacks professionalism oriented. Plus, according to experts, the government and tertiary institutions lack experience with institutional autonomy as well as knowledge of the requirements and outcomes of the industry (Harman, Hayden and Nghi, 2010). For that reason, Vietnam need an interconnected skill formation strategy that promotes comprehensive upskilling beyond employers' skill demands while

encouraging the dynamism of skill demand. VET has been identified as a viable alternative with the goal of filling that void through skill formation. In general, Vietnam's hospitality sector, as well as the educational system that supports it, are still in their early stages. In consequence, the expectations and requirements of hospitality professionals have not been fulfilled satisfactorily.

4.3 To examine VET policies and programme contents for hospitality education in Vietnam

As the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (2008) articulated, the presence of vocational education has always been a crucial component of the growth of national education and training institutions through time. VET graduates are in high demand for the industry since most professions in Vietnam nowadays require skills acquired through VET. Additionally, most of the fastest-growing jobs in Vietnam are VET-related (World Bank, 2018). However, as more technology developments and automation are incorporated into industries, so will the skill requirements for VET graduates. Compared to other Asian nations, Vietnam's Vocational Education and Training (VET) industry is fairly young and growing. Several issues that the Vietnamese VET system must address, for example, insufficiently qualified employees in the field, skill mismatch affecting productivity, adapting VET to technological advancements and so on. There is indeed a shortage of qualified employees and professionals with practical training, and the Vietnamese government has emphasized vocational skills training and job creation as the cornerstone of its development goals (UNEVOC, 2018). Generally, the Technical and vocational system in Vietnam is managed by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET); Ministry of Labour, Invalids, and Social Affairs (MOLISA) and other relevant ministries. Additionally, it is managed at the local level by the local authorities (UNEVOC, 2018). Over and above that, Vietnam's VET program is organised as follows: elementary training, secondary VET training, and college training (practising bachelor training), along with a growing number of higher education institutions providing courses leading to VTET degrees and certifications. Moreover, the government has implemented the VET Law that, businesses are committed to educating human resources, collaborating with TVET institutions in VET activities, putting training contracts, and engaging directly in VET activities such as curriculum creation; training delivery; and assessing graduates' student performance (UNEVOC, 2018). Due to this, Vietnam's VET design has recently incorporated three methodologies: market-led, workforce-driven, and blended. Thence, it is presumed that Vietnam is strengthening the link between education and workforce through VET in order to satisfy the demand for skilled laborers. Also, Vietnam has made various agreements to more expand its VET sector to

international sources, including permitting 100 percent foreign-invested VET organizations and extending the WTO-committed areas of study they can offer. Recently, Cityland Education Vietnam has announced a partnership with EHL Advisory Services to become a VET by EHL Licensed Centre, preparing hospitality professionals to succeed in a changing sector (EHL, 2021). This can be seen, VET is a pillar for the country's growth in Vietnam, not only in terms of education but also of workforce, and it will be reinforced further in the future.

4.4 To explore the expectations of the hospitality educated workforce from the perspective of hospitality sector leaders

According to Harkison et al. (2011), there is a difference in the perception of skills between hospitality graduates and hospitality leaders. The leaders raise multiple challenges in terms of hospitality educated workforce, including a lack of career directions for hospitality students, limited practical parts, and a perceived mismatch between professional qualifications and management capabilities. In details, there is a lack of awareness of career orientations in hospitality higher education programs led to students having unreal expectations of working in the field. Anh H Le (2017) revealed that students wanted to be assigned managerial-level work, and several managers stated that student interns were hesitant to do basic operational-level specialized positions. To offer graduates with more realistic expectations of their occupations, well-structured internship training courses with internships are required, plus reduce on-the-job training durations. (Harper and Brown, 2005; Irvine, 2005). As internships can assist both students and industry employers since they can provide the 'link' needed for new graduates especially before they have finished their graduate program while also making valuable contributions to the labour force of business. As a consequence, planned internships and employer engagement in academic programme management and implementation have a beneficial impact on students' ability to secure career at qualified professional levels (Mason, Williams, & Cranmer, 2009).

Some relevant stakeholders believe that the tertiary education system is divided and ineffective; the two MOLISA and MOET contradict and do not collaborate well (USAID, 2019). In addition, students were worried about the value of their academic credentials in achieving expected employment outcomes. As hospitality students front difficulties in establishing a competitive advantage in a workforce where academic credentials are less recognized by employers (Brown et al., 2004). The consequence is graduates with varying levels of education are frequently competing for the same opportunities in the current labor market in Vietnam. Such trends of labour force inequality are anticipated to be worsened by the increase of higher education and the decreasing value of academic qualifications (Tomlinson 2008). It

is presumed that traditional theory-oriented higher education curricula were deemed unsuitable for the demands of the hotel sector. Instead, practice-oriented were expected to play a big part in the hospitality higher education curriculum. Industry professionals also preferred the practical aspects given in relevant courses at vocational colleges, proposing that hotel HE programs should refer to college counterparts for development (Anh H Le, 2017).

4.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, Vietnam seems to be an ASEAN country where the rapidly growing hospitality and tourist sectors face various labor issues, one of which is a shortage of quality training and education services (Hampton, Jeyacheya, & Pham, 2018). Whereas tertiary education is highly valued in Vietnamese culture and traditions, the subject of experience and understanding in VET remains ambiguous. Further, training quality has not matched the expectations of society and industries due to a disconnect between training institutions and enterprises. Therefore, finding ways to encourage industry professionals as curriculum advisers or adjunct professors and lecturers are some of the first steps that higher education institutions may take to create employment relationships. Employers might, similarly, create professional training and internship programmes with colleges and offer to hold sessions or tours at their premises.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1 Conclusion

The purpose of this research is to investigate the status of hospitality education in Vietnam by exploring the connection between hospitality educational systems and the industry requirements. Despite the fact that Vietnam does have the fastest expanding economy in Southeast Asia and is an immensely powerful competitor in the regional tourism field, the country is still coping with labour shortages (Luong and Kim, 2020). This means that academic institutions perform a vital part in developing human ability to meet the workforce issues of a tourism-dependent country like Vietnam. However, due to limited skill training in educational institutions, which focus on formal education with traditional teaching approaches, Vietnamese graduates need to relearn several skills when they enter the professional sector (Harman, Hayden, and Pham, 2010). Raybould and Wilkins (2005) also stated one of the reasons for the industry skills shortage is the inadequate curriculum of the hospitality education system. As a result, institutions must embrace more strategies to improve the correlation between education and industry. Necessarily, VET is a new curriculum model to bridge this gap, as it enables students to put theory into practice and develop the skills required for their future careers (Nicholas, 2008). Given the lack of qualified staff and professionals, the Vietnamese government has emphasized vocational skill training and job creation as the pillars of its development priorities (UNEVOC, 2018). Regarding skills mismatch and VET outcomes, the Skill Formation concept is used to demonstrate what hospitality professionals need and what hospitality leaders expect in order to enter the sector. Plus, Baum (2002) advised skills formation in the modern economy, in particular, that the hospitality sector needs a wider, more detailed picture in the background of changing careers, innovations, and vocational education in developing economies, such as Vietnam. As a consequence, proposing Skills Formation as a strategy that the nation should take into consideration in order to develop a better curriculum for a qualified labour market.

5.2 Recommendations

Therefore, this research gives an insight to the skills mismatch of education and the industry and how the stakeholders perceive this concern in order to resolve it. The chosen university with dual national and international approach is suitable. However, it might not be applicable to other schools that may have different features, demographic, and curricula. Moreover, it is proposed that more studies should be conducted at a larger hospitality school and in various contexts ranging from location, and surroundings, to a longer length of intervention time to increase the original study's reliability, validity, and generalisability. The present researcher used a quantitative method with an inferential analysis to investigate the association between hospitality education, VET, and skill formation for the professional workforce. Therefore, the relation between hospitality tertiary education and professionals; VET and professionals, is investigated. In general, the present study will contribute to analyse the shortage of skilled workforce issues in the hospitality industry. Furthermore, in a particular Vietnam context, it will support the educational system to reflect and to improve the programs. These findings motivate stakeholders in Vietnam to establish more cooperative links in order to raise the employability of future university graduates and promote the country's future growth. Furthermore, a broader suggestion for education systems in both developed and developing countries is for a more structured, standardized, deliberate, and evidence-based process that recognizes the employability of graduates as the fourth pillar of the university mission, alongside teaching, research, and community service.

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