

MAKING A LINK BETWEEN THE HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT HIGHER EDUCATION AND ANTICIPATED INDUSTRY REQUIREMENTS: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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The hospitality and tourism industry has become an emerging industry in Sri Lanka due to its continuous growth. The industry has shown a huge expansion as a result of an unprecedented number of inward tourist arrivals throughout the year. There is a great demand for skilled labor in the hospitality industry to obtain a competitive advantage. Higher education plays a key role in shaping the skilled labor demanded by the industry. Higher educational institutions have the responsibility of educating individuals who can adapt to ever-changing industry needs and who have the skill sets required by each layer of the industry. Hospitality management education is relatively new to Sri Lanka. Nearly two hundred students receive admission to hospitality management undergraduate programs annually in Sri Lankan universities. However, the graduates of hospitality management degree programs find it difficult to find their place in the industry and relatively few graduates settle in the hospitality industry. Industry practitioners claim that graduates do not meet anticipated industry requirements and less than 10% of graduates are currently employed in the industry. The purpose of this study was to explore the gaps between hospitality management higher education and industry requirements through a comprehensive literature review. Furthermore, the extensive literature review answers the question of how to overcome drawbacks in the prevailing hospitality management in higher education system. In this study, relevant secondary sources have been gathered and a descriptive approach is employed, with a comprehensive review of related literature. The literature emphasized that the connection between the educators and industry practitioners is important not only to provide updates on industry changes but also to enhance the opportunities for students to be employed in the industry upon the completion of education. Graduates of the degree programs are lacking industry exposure and this leads to poor professional and personal development. As a result, few graduates of hospitality management degree programs find places in the industry and a majority end-up leaving the industry. The main objective of hospitality management education is to supply skilled labor that possesses transferable competencies. Compared to Management Studies, Hospitality education has its own unique competencies that need technical and vocational training. Hence, hospitality education providers have to identify the anticipated competencies and employability skills that are required by the industry.

Keywords: Hospitality Management Education, Competencies, Human Resource Development, Industry Requirements

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