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Conference Papers

- Strategic Marketing Framework of Community Based Ecotourism: A Case of Panguil, Laguna Philippines towards Sustainable Perspective** 1
Merle U. Ruiz, Ernesto Mandigma and Florenda de Vero
ETY College of Business, Malayan Colleges Laguna, Philippines
- The Impact of Measure and Time on Quality Wine-Food Pairing** 19
M. Thashneem Thaqseen Bhanu and Prasanna Kumar J.P.
Ramaiah University of Applied Sciences, Bangalore, India
- A Cursory Content Study of Indian Wine Label vis-à-vis New World Wine Label to Enhance Impulse Buying among Novice Wine Consumers** 37
M. Thashneem Thaqseen Bhanu and V. Jaykumar
Ramaiah University of Applied Sciences, Bangalore, India
- Restaurant Customers Awareness Level on the Benefits of Using ‘Luto Sa Palayok’ in Filipino Cuisine** 63
Marivic Delos Santos, Reymarie Lobo, Arthur Digman, Ronalyn Pereña, Rosszen Yorika Rivera Tuazon and Andrew Nico Pilapil
College of International Tourism and Hospitality Management, Lyceum of the Philippines University Cavite
- Influence of Chinese Foodways to the Filipino Culinary Heritage: Preservation of Best Practices** 75
Marichu Liwanag
Far Eastern University, the Philippines
Antonino Alejandro
Philippine Women’s University, the Philippines

Destination Competitiveness of Beach Tourism: A Case of Batangas Province Towards Sustainability	89
Ernesto C. Mandigma Jr., Merle U. Ruiz, and Florenda J. De Vero <i>Malayan Colleges Laguna, A Mapua School, the Philippines</i>	
Hospitality Education at Vocational and Tertiary Level: A Comparative Study of France and Malaysia	111
Chiew Boon Tian and Jeetesh Kumar <i>Taylor's University, Malaysia</i>	
Compliance to Food Safety Standards of Ambulant Vendors in Two Cities of Nueva Ecija, Philippines	125
Celyrah B. Castillo <i>Central Luzon State University, The Philippines</i>	
Tourism Education Program of De La Salle Schools in Region Iv-A, Philippines: A Sustainable Approach	149
Ernesto C. Mandigma JR. and Faustino I. De Chavez <i>De La Salle University Dasmariñas Philippines, the Philippines</i>	
A Sustainability Framework of River-based Tourism in Panay Island	175
Ma. Flora C. Collado <i>West Visayas State University, the Philippines</i>	
Touristic Restaurants In Tagaytay City: A Service Quality Approach	193
Tabuyo, Jimford U, Koh, Jaya Mhea I, Hiponia, Kathleen Daniel V and Katsumata, Ellie S. <i>De La Salle University- Dasmariñas, the Philippines</i>	
A Deeper Shade of Green: Adaptation of Competitive and Sustainable Green Practices among selected Hotels in Metro Manila	217
Wendell L. Galapate <i>Lyceum of the Philippines University/ St.Dominic College of Asia, the Philippines</i>	
Value-Based Fairness in Malaysian Five-Star Resorts: Measuring the Roles of Service-Related Attributes and Guest Behavioral Loyalty	227
Md Sazzad Hossain <i>Taylor's University, Malaysia</i>	
Gamal S. A. Khalifa <i>Fayoum University, Egypt, and Lincoln University College, Malaysia</i>	
Muhammad Abu Horaira <i>IUBAT-International University of Business Agriculture and Technology, Bangladesh</i>	
Factors Influencing Millennials' Satisfaction of Café Restaurants in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	255
Murugan Krisnamoorthy and Kandappan Balasubramanian <i>Taylor's University, Malaysia</i>	

Conference Paper

Hospitality Education at Vocational and Tertiary Level: A Comparative Study of France and Malaysia

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Abstract: Tourism is among the rapid growing industry worldwide. Tourism aligns with the hotel industry, food and beverage, and other commercial industry has created many job opportunities and generates much revenue for the country. There is an increasing need of workforce parallel with this phenomenon and has led to continued growth of public and private institutions offering hotel management courses. This paper studies the comparative extent of hospitality education at the tertiary level of individuals in both Malaysia and France. It aims to compare the system and variety of input of the hospitality education in both of the countries. The finding shows both Malaysia and France education in Hospitality were influenced by the external and the internal environment factors because the progress of the programme closely relates to the tourism industry. By meeting the demand of the industry that emphasize on skilled workers, both Malaysia and France education provider had planned the programme structure by collaboration with the industry player to expose the student of the working environment.

Keywords: Hospitality education, higher education system (HES), Malaysia, France, input-process-output, tertiary level

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Introduction

Tourism is among the rapid growing industry worldwide. Tourism aligns with the hotel industry, food and beverage, and other commercial industry has created many job opportunities and generates much revenue for the country. According to the statistics shown by the Malaysian Association of Hotel (MAH) (2011), the number of tourist arrival has increased from 20.9 million in 2007 to 23.6 million in 2010. There is an increasing need of workforce parallel with this phenomenon and has led to continued growth of public and private institutions offering hotel management courses.

According to Malaysian Qualifications Framework (2011), higher education provider is a body corporate, organization or other body of persons which conducts higher education or training programmes including skills training programmes leading to the award of a higher qualification or which award a higher education qualification and includes the public or private higher education providers, examination or certification bodies or their representatives.

In France, the Ministry in charge of the Higher Education regulates the higher education system (HES). The provinces have no direct competencies in HES, although they support the institutions and laboratories in their area. Both Malaysia and France high education system complies with the European standards:

- The three-level BMD system: Bachelors/Masters/Doctorates.
- A European Credit Transfer System (ECTS): a credit corresponding to the student workload required to successfully complete a course module. These credits can be accumulated and transferred.
- An organisation into six-month periods and teaching units (modules).

This paper studies the comparative extent of hospitality education at the tertiary level of individuals in both Malaysia and France. It aims to compare the system and variety of input of the hospitality education in both of the countries. Thus, it provides an overview of the hospitality education for both Malaysia and France in a tertiary level that the education planner can use as a reference for programme development. This research also benefits the industry of education to add-on knowledge and information. Besides that, this paper also useful for the researcher who interest in doing further research about the topic.

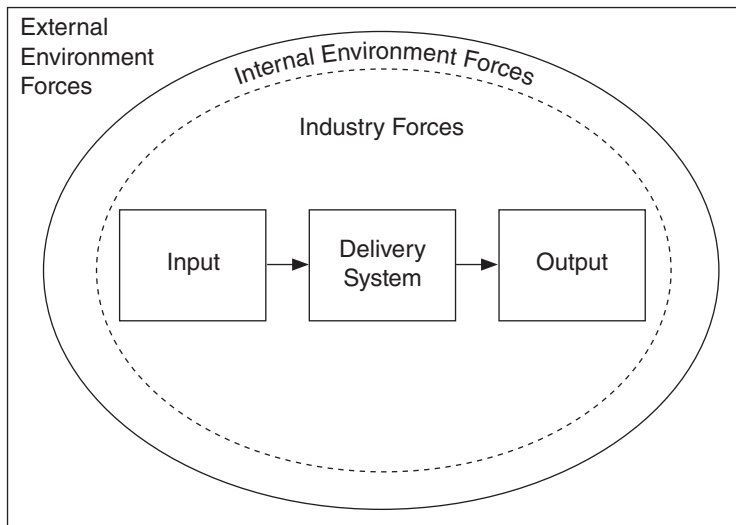


Figure 1. The conceptual framework of the study

The research problem of this paper is to determine the relationship between the higher education system of Hospitality between Malaysia and France. The problem is to understand whether both of the countries have similarity or differences in many aspects. This paper will try to answer the question: Are Malaysia and France high education qualifications in Hospitality cognate enough to be regarded as equivalent, or do they present substantial variances.

The framework shows the elements involve and influence the education program development where the Input is influenced by the External and Internal Environment Forces. The input of the education inclusive of the government policy and outline of the education development, physical resources include the infrastructures, facilities and financial support and other services, the input talents include the adequacy, capabilities and experience of the provider to ensure the quality of the students. The delivery process indicates the relevance, comprehensiveness of curriculum content to the students. This includes the quality of delivery and assessment through making scheme and monitoring. Internship and collaboration between the education provider and the industry player where an initial step to expose the students about the job world. The quality level of graduate will be determined as the Output of the education provider that finally dispense back to the surrounding environment. This framework will be tracing for both Malaysia and France high education in Hospitality program. Comparisons between both the countries were identified through the elements in the framework.

Literature Review

Traditionally, being a graduate meant a secure future and a guaranteed good salary. At least most people think of that idea. Unfortunately, the trueness of this is presently doubtful. According to Petrova and Mason (2004), these trends result in two factors which include the uncertain economic environment and an increase in graduate numbers. On the other hand, employers complaining of the lack of transferable skills offered by the graduates. This issue creates a gap between what providers offer as management level hospitality education and the needs as expressed by the industry. Lam and Xiao (2000) mention another problem is that the higher education institutions and vocational training schools of tourism and hospitality continuously develop pools of graduates every year to meet the demand but few graduates are dedicated to the industry and committed to their jobs. Other than that, industry managers comment that fresh graduates seem to have unrealistic career expectations. This appears that hotel schools cannot provide realistic information for students so that, when the graduates join the industry, they are likely to get reality shock about the nature of the job, work conditions and human relations.

Debates over tourism and hospitality programmes at universities appear to centre on the balance between vocational and academic focus (Inui, Wheeler & Lankford,

2006). Therefore, schools have developed strong connections with the industry as a result of internships and industry-specific education. Students have benefited because they are very employable, with management knowledge, experience and related interpersonal skills.

Hospitality in Higher Education in Malaysia

Hospitality education at the tertiary level in Malaysia is supported by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Malaysia. The fast growth of the tourism market in Malaysia has brought to light the urgent need to expand the supply of skilled staff in the industry. This led to the lack of skilled labour; in spite of this, the solution was recruiting skilled personnel at the managerial level from overseas because tourism education institutions in Malaysia were not sufficiently expert to address the need (Thitthongkam & Walsh, 2011). But other researcher noted that such a practice may lessen the benefits gained from tourism activities (Ahmad & Zainol, 2011).

Goldsmith and Zahari (1994) found that in 1994, colleges did not have enough capacity to produce a sufficient number of graduated to meet the increasing demand for skilled worker since there were only ten private schools and colleges and two public institutions that offer the programme. To date, there is at least 61 private colleges and universities, five public universities, five polytechnics and six community colleges (Ministry of Higher Education - MOHE, 2011). Some of these colleges and universities have a number of branches. Despite the rapid growth in the hotel education sector, shortage of skilled workers in the industry still persists (Ahmad & Zainol, 2011).

Attracting foreign investments is one of the ways for Malaysia to realise its quest to achieve developed nation status by the year 2020. It goes without saying that among the determining factors that foreign investors look at is that of the skills and technical competencies of the local workforce. The Government is very much aware that the future of the country does not solely depend on educated personnel, but on having a large pool of skilled workers that can handle the rapidly changing world of work.

As such, through a multitude of government, semi-government and private agencies, a large number of technical and vocational development programmes are introduced in schools, universities, and training centres. According to the Malaysian Economic Planning Unit (EPU), under the Ninth Malaysia Plan, technical and vocational government schools are allocated approximately RM 629.2 million in development expenditure. This is in addition to the many incentives – directed both to youths and the industry - which the Government introduces to encourage vocational training. For example, companies that take part in certain apprenticeship programmes qualify for tax incentives, whilst the apprentice has assured employment, is eligible for reimbursement of the training costs and is given insurance protection, among many others.

Currently, there are approximately 194 technical-vocational institutions and there are plans were set out to increase this number during the next five-year plan. The Developed of many vocational and technical training institutes is in the fields of engineering, business and services to fulfil the needs of a highly skilled workforce that needed to support the growth of industrial sector. In Malaysia, local graduates' Bachelor's Degree in Hotel Management hardly guarantees the attainment of management position upon entry to the industry. The researcher found this is very different from other countries because, in spite of recruiting management employees internally, they also recruit graduates straight from the university as their managerial staff (Ahmad & Zainol, 2011; Mullen, 2007). Hence, it is not surprising to find managers who have never graduated from any university in Malaysia. Commonly they started their career as an operation staff and gradually been promoted to a managerial position.

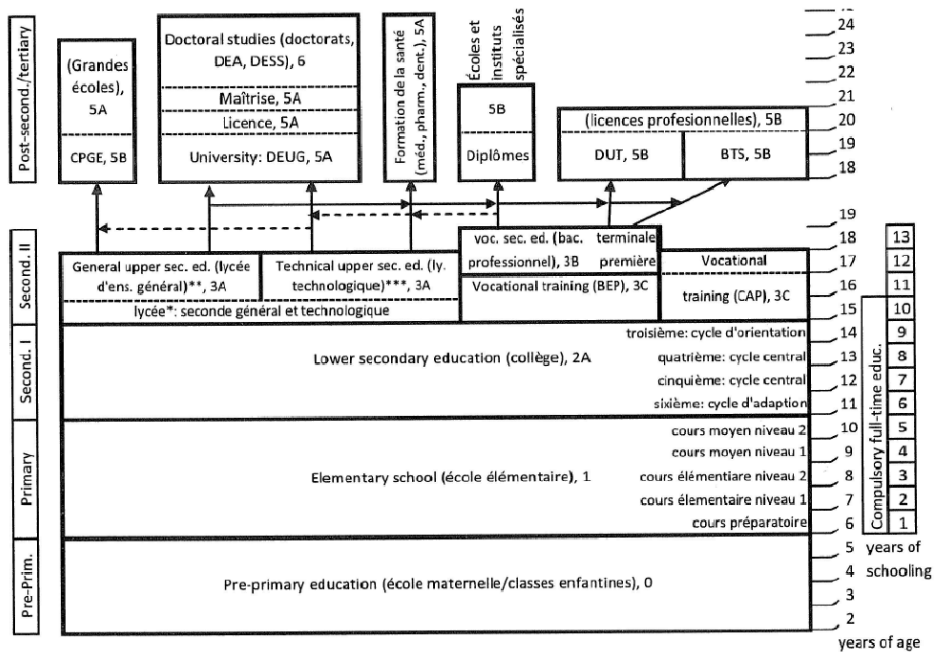
MQF Levels	Sector			Lifelong Learning
	Skills	Vocational and Technical	Higher Education	
8			Doctoral Degree	Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)
7			Masters Degree	
			Postgraduate Certificate & Diploma	
6			Bachelors Degree	
			Graduate Certificate & Diploma	
5	Advanced Diploma	Advanced Diploma	Advanced Diploma	
4	Diploma	Diploma	Diploma	
3	Skills Certicate 3	Vocational and Technical Certificate	Certificate	
2	Skills Certicate 2			
1	Skills Certicate 1			

Figure 2. The education system for the higher education in Malaysia
 (Source: MQA Framework, 2011)

Hospitality in Higher Education in France

According to Lomine (2003), to enter the hospitality industry in France, the golden qualifications are practical, non-HE ones (CAP and BEP: Certificat d’Aptitude Professionnelle and Brevet d’Etudes Professionnelles), comparable to English GNVQs level 1 (Foundation) and 2 (Intermediate), yet there are an increasing awareness and expectation that an HE background will only enhance would-be managers’ chances to get promoted, and indeed 43 per cent of French hotel managers today also have a high education qualification (Wolski-Quéré, 2001).

The main French high education qualification in Hospitality is the BTS (Brevet de Technicien Supérieur) in Hotel and Restaurant Management. Taught in 156 institutions (including public colleges, private schools and professional training centres), it follows a national syllabus ensuring that all graduates have covered the same curriculum, irrespective of their place of study.



* Lycée d’enseignement général or lycée technologique
 ** leading to baccalauréat général
 *** leading to baccalauréat technologique

Figure 3. The education system for the higher education in France (Source: Powell, Coutrot, Graf, Bernhard, Kieffer, and Solga (2009))

Alongside the nationally designed and widely recognised BTS (which attracts over 2,500 students every year) a few universities offer their own programmes in Hotel Management, e.g. a BSc in Hotel Management is taught in Lyon and an MSc in International Hospitality Management is taught in La Rochelle, but these qualifications remain uncommon. A few business schools also offer programmes and options in hospitality management, for example in Paris at the Académie Internationale de Management, or at the prestigious ESSEC Business School which has created an International Institute of Hotel Management in partnership with the School of Hotel Administration at Cornell University (Lomine, 2003).

According to Powell et al. (2009) the introduction of the vocational baccalaureate in France can be viewed as the result of converging interests between (a) representatives of the French Ministry of Education and representatives of vocational teachers unions who saw it as a way to improve the prestige of secondary vocational education and (b) representatives of corporate management who were seeking higher skilled workers to work on the line as factory employees. This policy made the baccalaureate the educational target in France. The increase in the proportion of individuals who attain a vocational or technological baccalaureate is thus partly responsible for the increase in the total number of baccalaureate holders.

The higher education system in France is strongly differentiated but can be divided into three main tracks: the universities, the elite formation at the prestigious professional schools (*grandes écoles*) with its preparatory classes (*classes préparatoires aux grandes écoles* – CPGE) and the technological education, which trains technicians and some engineers. Regarding the latter type, students can either obtain the higher technician certificate (*Brevet de technicien supérieur* – BTS) at higher level technician training programs (*Sections de techniciens supérieurs* – STS), the tertiary technological certificate (*Diplôme Universitaire de technologies* – DUT) at the tertiary technological institutes (*Instituts Universitaires de technologies* – IUT). Vocational bachelors (the *licence professionnelle*) are awarded by technological institutes (IUT) or by universities.

Research Methodology

This paper was using the conceptual analysis method to study the area of hospitality in high education in Malaysia and France as a comparative research study. This research was using the conceptual analysis to carry-out the comparative study. Starting by selecting samples from previous journals, articles, and related documents into the review and examine the outcomes of previous researchers. The major aim of conducting this research is to compare the similarity and variances of hospitality in high education in Malaysia and France. There are many kinds of available information that this research gathered the secondary data such as public records, previous studies, company documents, published data, government documents trade publications, and books.

Research Findings

It was found out that both countries (Malaysia and France) focus on the skills in the vocational level and in a tertiary level mixture of teaching method were used. Comparisons were made between both countries.

The rapid growth of international tourism in Asia and the Pacific has generated not only income for the countries involved, but also enormous employment opportunities in the complementary service industries. Hotel industry, therefore, had faced a shortage of skilled workers. To meet this demand the education institute emphasizes on hands-on training to be thought for the students.

Diploma in Hospitality Management (Hotel Management) course entails the teaching of both the knowledge required for becoming hospitality industry personnel and also practical hotel management skills so that students are exposed to real-life experience necessary for their chosen vocation.

The standard of the Diploma in Hospitality Management (Hotel Management) is equivalent to the 1st or even 2nd year of a relevant Bachelor Degree. Graduates can further their studies to relevant Bachelor Degree courses on advanced standing/ credit transfer.

Diploma graduates may find employment in hotels, resorts and in the recreational field throughout Malaysia, a country that thrives on tourism, thus meeting manpower needs in the field of hospitality management at the sub-professional level. Minimum Entry Requirement standard average state by the MQA is Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) as passes 5 credit subjects.

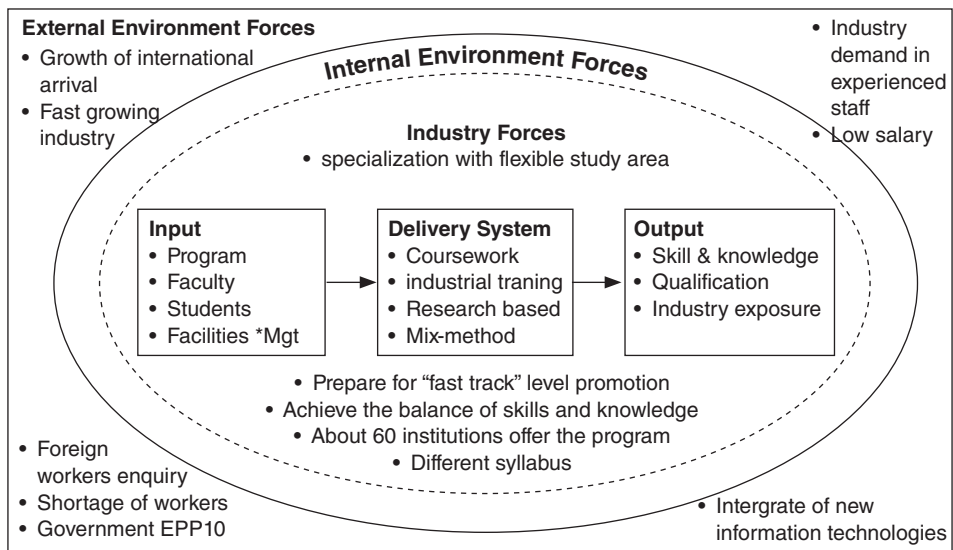


Figure 4. Malaysia hotel management programme

According to the MQA state in the Malaysian Qualifications Framework 2011, a diploma level education balances theory and practice or practical, and stresses on the installation of values, ethics and attitudes to enable students to: Use knowledge, comprehension and practical skills at work; Assess and decide, taking into account social, scientific and ethical issues with moderate autonomy; Be confident and entrepreneurial in pursuing their own careers; Be responsible members of society; Possess study skill in adapting to ideas, processes and new procedures for career development; Acquire team and interpersonal skills that are appropriate to employment; and Communicate effectively and to transmit information, ideas, problems and resolutions cogently to experts and non-experts.

While for a bachelors degree prepares students for general employment, entry into postgraduate programme and research as well as highly skilled careers. It enables the individuals to pair responsibilities, which require great autonomy in professional decision-making. The bachelors' degree is conferred on individuals who are able to: Demonstrate knowledge and comprehension on fundamental principles of a field study, acquired from advanced textbooks; Use the knowledge and comprehension through methods that indicate professionalism in employment; Argue and solve problems in their field of study; Show techniques and capabilities to search and use data to make decision having considered social, scientific and relevant ethical issues; Communicate effectively and convey information, ideas, problems and solutions to experts and non-experts; Apply team and interpersonal skills which are suitable to employment; and Posses independent study skills to continue further study with a high degree of autonomy.

Vocational-Technical education in Malaysia encompasses post-secondary education provided by Polytechnics, Community Colleges and Skill Training Institutes. Both Polytechnics and Community Colleges are under the supervision of the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) Malaysia. Polytechnics (Diploma & Adv Diploma) and Community College (Certificates & short courses).

The programs focus 75% practical and 25% theory with classroom assessment technique. Malaysian Qualification Framework (MQF) has developed competency standards for the polytechnic and community college graduates in ensuring the quality of technical and vocational education.

MOHE is currently working towards enhancing joint and international certification training programs to further enhance the employability of V&T graduates (Siemens Mechatronic Systems Certification Program). MOHE also embarked on international alliances with Shenzhen Polytechnic, China. The skill certification system uses a system with five levels, known as Sijil Kemahiran Malaysia or SKM (Malaysian Skill Certificate) which ranges from the operator (level 1) to manager (level 5).

BTS (Brevet de Technicien Supérieur or Higher Technician Certificate) in Hotel and Restaurant Management were taught in 156 institutions (including public colleges, private schools and professional training centres), it follows a national syllabus ensuring that all graduates have covered the same curriculum, irrespective of their place of study. The BTS normally lasts two years, but students without prior vocational qualification in Hospitality must do a preliminary year, in effect, making the BTS in Hotel and Restaurant Management a three-year course.

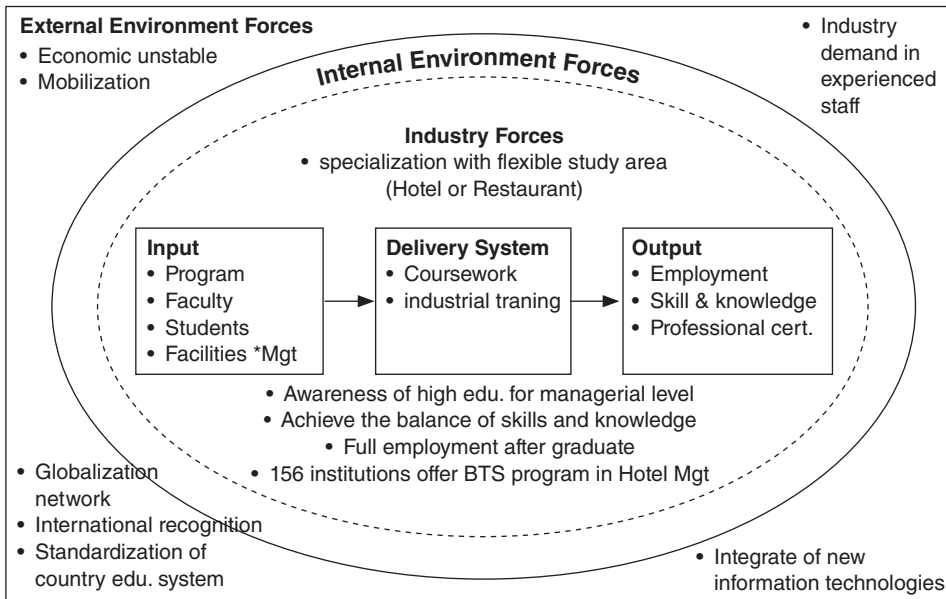


Figure 5. France hotel management programme

The programme is built on 32 hours of classroom contact and interactions per week, with the following breakdown for the first year as an illustration: 2 hours of French; 2 hours of first foreign language; 2 hours of second foreign language; 2 hours of economics; 2 hours of human resource management; 1 hour of law; 8 hours of finance; 2 hours of marketing; 2 hours of applied sciences; 3 hours of gastronomy; 3 hours of food and beverage studies; 2 hours of professional communications; and 1 hour of professional maintenance.

There is no system of option or possibility for combined studies and joint fields, no flexibility at all, except in the final year when students decide to focus either on Hotel Management or Restaurant Management. This stage the student has a training course as well in a hotel or large catering company. At the end of the training, they would need to prepare a thesis on which they work according to their specialization. The total credit hour of the 2 years programme is 120.

Discussion and Conclusion

Both Malaysia and France education in Hospitality was influenced by the external and the internal environment factors because the progress of the programme closely relates to the tourism industry. By meeting the demand of the industry that emphasize on skilled workers, both Malaysia and France education provider had planned the programme structure by collaboration with the industry player to expose the student of the working environment. Nevertheless, training the fresh graduates should lie on the hotel company due to the difference in policies, job requirements, and ethical for the hotel. It is non-logical to expect the education provider to produce graduates that meet all the requirements for all the hotel's company. Training such as on-job-training needed to give to the fresh graduate to get the overall understanding of the hotel premise and the job requirements.

In Malaysia almost all the education programs been delivered in teacher/ lecturer-centred method. Nevertheless, the transformation of this education method is getting its awareness among the higher education institutes, especially in the private institutes. The student-centred method of teaching is generating creative thinking among the students. Below table shows the characteristics of Lecturer-centered and Student-centered teaching method.

Lecturer-centred	Student-centered
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The focus is on the instructor – The focus is on the subject forms and structure – Instructor talks; students listen – Students work alone – The instructor monitors and corrects every student utterance – Instructor answers students questions about the subject – Instructor chooses topics – The classroom is quiet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The focus is on both students and instructor – The focus is on the subject user in a typical situation – Instructor models; students interact with the instructor and one another – Students work in pairs, in group – Students talk without constant instructor monitoring; instructor provide feedback when question arise – Students answer each other' questions – Students have some choice of topics – The classroom is often noisy and busy

The hotel industry is getting globalization in current decades. This gives the opportunity to meet people from various countries with different cultures. The demand for the hotel education also became increasing not only for the local student but internationally. This phenomenon happens both in Malaysia and France. Competition among the education providers also keeps increasing wanted to get the share of the market. The growth of new universities and colleges that focus on

providing hotel education develop the curriculum to meet the student's need in specialist option. Qualified lecturers and experienced instructors were getting their acquirement for the quality of the curriculum.

The future of tourism and hospitality industry shows a positive sign. Hotel education at tertiary level in Malaysia having significant growth and the same situation also happen in France. Collaboration between the education provider and the industry players need to continue to ensure students and graduates employment and batter career perspective.

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