



Hospitality higher education in Vietnam: Voices from stakeholders

Anh H. Le^{a,*}, Christine V. McDonald^b, Helen Klieve^c

^a School of Education & Professional Studies, Griffith University, Room 5.46 M10, Mt Gravatt Campus, Qld 4111, Australia

^b School of Education & Professional Studies, Griffith University, Room 5.38 M10, Mt Gravatt Campus, Qld 4111, Australia

^c School of Education & Professional Studies, Griffith University, Room 1.08 M15, Mt Gravatt Campus, Qld 4111, Australia



ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Hospitality education
Hospitality industry
Workplaces
Industry-education linkage
Student perceptions
Internships
Skills development
Vietnam

ABSTRACT

The tourism sector has become an increasingly important driver of growth and prosperity for many countries. Given the comparatively low contribution of the tourism sector to the economy in Vietnam, an in-depth exploration of industry aspects is worthwhile to consider. This study explored factors influencing effective hospitality higher education in Vietnam that support the on-going development of the industry through the availability of quality human resources. The study involved 26 in-depth interviews with industry professionals, hospitality academics, and hospitality undergraduate students. Three factors were identified, including (1) the current employment demand in the Vietnamese hospitality industry, (2) the suitability of hospitality programs in preparation for hospitality careers, and (3) the reality of Vietnamese hospitality workplaces for higher education students. The findings of this study provide insights into the current status of hospitality higher education in Vietnam, and offer evidence-based insights into key factors influencing contributions of higher education to an expanding hospitality industry.

1. Introduction

International hospitality and tourism has been widely recognised as a fast-growing, labour-intensive industry (Korpi & Mertens, 2004) that has the potential to make a significant economic contribution (Crotti & Misrahi, 2015; Truong, 2006). The interactions between tourists, and hospitality and tourism industry personnel, are an integral part of the tourist's total experience, and thus a critical element of success. These interactions typically take place in hotels, resorts, other lodging enterprises, and restaurants, which collectively constitute the hospitality industry. A key factor behind the success of the hospitality industry is the availability of high quality personnel to deliver, operate and manage tourist products.

One key role of hospitality education is to support the profession, requiring a close partnership between the hospitality industry and education providers (Tesone & Ricci, 2005; Zopiatis & Constanti, 2007). Through such a partnership, industry needs can be identified and addressed, via the provision of skilled staff with appropriate educational qualifications (Smith & Cooper, 2000). A competitive education system must respond to the needs and expectations of those involved, including industry employers, students, and educational providers (World Tourism Organisation [WTO], 2004).

In Vietnam, given the comparatively low contribution of the hospitality and tourism sector to the economy, namely 4.6% of 2013 GDP

(Crotti & Misrahi, 2015), a more in-depth exploration of aspects of the industry are worthwhile to consider. The hospitality industry in Vietnam is in an early stage of development, as is the education system that supports it. As the hospitality and tourism industry is by nature labour-intensive, one such aspect which exerts a major impact on the services delivered by the industry, is human resources. The potential economic contribution of the hospitality and tourism sector in Vietnam is well recognised (Crotti & Misrahi, 2015), with the current human resources preparation identified as a limitation (Ha, 2012).

Widespread concern has been expressed in the literature with regard to graduates' lack of skills and poor preparation for the workplace (Bodewig et al., 2014; Montague, 2013; Pham, 2008; Tran & Swierczek, 2009; Tran, 2013). Tran and Swierczek (2009) explored employers' needs and assessed graduate quality and skill delivery in university courses. Results indicated that graduate quality and skill delivery were reported to be generally below standard, with a particular concern focused on interpersonal skills for effective teamwork. Interpersonal skills, problem-solving skills, and learning attributes were found to be the most three important qualities assessed by the industry employers.

In a 2010 study, Nguyen and Robinson interviewed managers across industries and found that Vietnam has experienced an oversupply of low-level labour, at the expense of an adequate supply of skilled workers and managers. They found that university graduates possessed limited skills and capacities for problem-solving, critical thinking and

* Corresponding author at: Griffith University, 176 Messines Ridge Road, Brisbane, Queensland 4122, Australia.

E-mail addresses: leah.le@griffith.edu.au (A.H. Le), c.mcdonald@griffith.edu.au (C.V. McDonald), h.klieve@griffith.edu.au (H. Klieve).

English proficiency. Another study which included a large-scale survey of 234 recruiters and 3364 graduates from 20 universities in Vietnam (Huynh, 2011), found that 50% of graduates needed to be retrained to effectively work in industry due to a mismatch between graduate professional skills and recruiters' requirements. A recent survey by the Vietnam Student Association also reported 50% of graduates were unable to find a job in their area of specialisation, and re-training was required for a significant number of graduates (Giang, 2012). The employers' unfavourable evaluation of student performances highlights the need for Vietnamese tertiary education to review its educational program.

This study sought to explore factors that influence the effective delivery of tertiary hospitality education in Vietnam. An understanding of various stakeholders' perceptions and expectations of graduate knowledge and skills for hospitality careers will provide empirical evidence that contributes to the understanding of potential limitations in the readiness of students in Vietnam. In order for hospitality program development oriented towards industry requirements to be successfully implemented, insights into stakeholders' perceptions and expectations to develop agreement on required standards are imperative to improve the sector. More importantly, for this relationship to be effective, standards must align with workplace practices. Findings from this study will contribute towards improving Vietnam's tertiary hospitality education through its developmental orientations towards industry requirements.

2. Literature review

In this section, literature relevant to the study will be reviewed and discussed in relation to the Vietnamese context. Firstly, the relationship between hospitality education and the hospitality industry is considered, with a specific focus on the operation of internships that are included in this training provided. Broader implications for stakeholders (i.e., industry professionals, hospitality academics and students), and stakeholders' expectations and perceptions are then discussed. Finally, the context of the study, including an overview of the current operation of the Vietnamese tertiary hospitality education system, and a review of Vietnam's hospitality industry, is provided.

2.1. Hospitality industry-education relationship

One of the key roles of hospitality education is supporting the profession by ensuring the development of a strong skill base. Thus, the relationship between the hospitality industry and educational providers is critical (Tesone & Ricci, 2005). Hospitality education was originally developed from on-the-job training in hotels, and had a vocational focus that "emphasised the important links between an educated workforce and a strong economy" (Airey & Tribe, 2000, p. 277).

A large body of research lends support to the significance of hospitality industry-education collaboration (e.g., Barrows & Walsh, 2002; Jayawardena, 2001; Littlejohn & Watson, 2004; McHardy & Allan, 2000; Zopiatis, 2007). Internships, which are referred to as "structured and career relevant work experiences obtained by students prior to graduation from an academic program" (Taylor, 1988, p. 393) are examples of practices implemented in an attempt to link industry and education. Although higher education institutions have maintained their agreement, in principle, with industry regarding the inclusion of internship components in hospitality education programs, questions have been raised regarding the quality of the industry-education relationship (Zopiatis & Constanti, 2007). Few studies have addressed the quality of this relationship and the degree to which hospitality programs meet the requirements of industry (Lam & Xiao, 2000; Zopiatis & Constanti, 2007).

As a pioneer in the European hospitality industry, Switzerland has successfully explored the industry-education relationship via the systematic integration of theoretical components and industry internships

(Zopiatis & Constanti, 2007). Since the early 1920s, the development of educational programs in hospitality oriented towards industry expectations have been extensively adopted in the hospitality industry worldwide, and this orientation has been recently introduced in Asia (Shariff, 2013). In the early 1980s, hospitality educators and industry practitioners agreed internships should be an essential component of hospitality education programs to effectively prepare students for future work as industry professionals (Morrison & O'Mahony, 2003).

2.1.1. Internships and implications for stakeholders

Research suggests that internships can realise many benefits for all stakeholders, in a field where occupation-specific skills are critical. For employers, internships provide access to a pool of workers who are academically-trained at a low cost (Beggs, Ross, & Goodwin, 2008), typically enthusiastic and dedicated to the industry, and who bring fresh ideas to the workplace (Walo, 2001), thus helping to avoid staff turnover (Fell & Kuit, 2003). Internships also provide employers with opportunities to screen potential employees prior to making long-term commitments, and to have direct involvement in training future managers (Ju, Emenheiser, Clayton & Reynolds, 1998; Petrillose & Montgomery, 1997). Employer recruitment processes are therefore facilitated through internships by providing a more in-depth assessment of potential employees working as interns than via one-off job interviews (Yiu & Law, 2012). Research indicates that interns who were recruited later by the organisations where they completed their internship exhibit greater job satisfaction and more realistic expectations grounded in their experience (Hiltebeitel, Leaub, Larkin, & Morris, 2000).

For education providers, internships can strengthen links with industry. This can enhance collaborative research opportunities, raise an institutions' profile, and establish long term working relationships between industry and institutions to optimise future graduate employment opportunities (Bell & Schmidt, 1996; Walo, 1999). The enhanced link between industry and institutions can lead to improved curriculum provision (Leslie & Richardson, 2000), and the credibility of an institution may then be acknowledged by industry via enhanced student performance (Cook, Parker, & Pettijohn, 2004). In terms of student recruitment, the inclusion of an internship component can also provide an institution with a competitive advantage as research indicates that parents believe job search upon graduation can be facilitated via previous internship experience (Yiu & Law, 2012).

For students, internships provide opportunities to put into practice theoretical concepts learnt in their programs, gain a greater understanding of industry requirements, explore career choices, and develop important hands-on, work-related skills (e.g., Barron, 1999; Singh & Dutta, 2010; Velde & Cooper, 2000). Research on hospitality work internships has predominantly focused on skill development in internships (Maher, 2005), with findings indicating that participation contributes towards developing students' managerial skills (Walo, 2001), including leadership, human resources, oral and written communication, interpersonal communication, problem solving, teamwork, planning and decision-making (Molseed, Alsop, & Voyles, 2003).

Since the 1980s, an increased emphasis on internship components has been evident in hospitality higher education programs in an attempt to balance the theory-practice nexus, and develop the link between the industry and education providers (Zopiatis & Constanti, 2007). Nevertheless, differences in the quality of internships across institutions are evident in terms of program content, structure, and approach to professional experience (Downey & De Veau, 1987, 1988; Jenkins, 2001). After decades of widespread implementation, there remains no consensus on an appropriate model of hospitality internship that takes into account the unique characteristics of individual institutions' hospitality programs, in terms of program design, resources, overall mission, and balance between theory and practice. The content of hospitality programs has become a concern in terms of both standardisation and diversification, whereby one program can cover a very

broad range of knowledge and skills in a single course, whilst other programs cover these knowledge and skill areas across several courses (Wang, Huyton, Gao, & Ayres, 2010). This has implications for essential knowledge and skills in hospitality to be identified and consistently applied in higher education programs.

2.1.2. Industry expectations of hospitality programs and graduates

Several attempts have been made in seeking industry perspectives on work-related or professional knowledge and skills in hospitality (Connolly & McGing, 2006; Nolan, Conway, Farrell, & Monks, 2010; Raybould & Wilkins, 2006). So (2006) characterised the process of analysing knowledge and skills as an attempt by society to define its human resource needs. A model outlining knowledge, skills and personal attributes has been applied in several settings as a tool for managerial assessment, training, and recruitment (Foxon, Richey, Roberts, & Spannaus, 2003). This suggests the importance of identifying human resource needs through an understanding of industry expectations of work-related skills.

In relation to desired management knowledge and skill sets for hospitality managers and graduates, extensive research has been conducted (e.g., Chung-Herrera, Enz, & Lankau, 2003; Hefferman & Flood, 2000; Kay & Russette, 2000; Walo, 2001). Findings from these studies lend support for the need to develop knowledge and skills for both hospitality managers, and graduates. People skills are believed to be more important in academic hospitality management programs, than technical or occupation-specific skills (Christou, 2002). Research conducted on industry expectations found that the skills considered to be of prime importance for successful hospitality jobs include human resources skills (Chung-Herrera et al., 2003; Kay & Moncarz, 2004; Raybould & Wilkins, 2006), interpersonal skills (Annaraud, 2006; Nelson & Dopson, 2001; Raybould & Wilkins, 2006; Suh, West, & Shin, 2012), and problem-solving skills (Suh et al., 2012).

Raybould and Wilkins (2005) adopted the generic skills framework to identify graduate skills as expected by hospitality industry employers and perceived by graduates. Interpersonal skills, problem solving and self-management were identified by employers to be among the ten most important skills. These skills were also rated highly by the graduate participants in the study. Based on previous research on hospitality management skills, Suh et al. (2012) developed a measure of hospitality managers' and students' perceived importance of these knowledge and skill sets. The results of this study again confirm the previous research findings on the key importance of interpersonal skills for hospitality jobs.

For efficiency and profitability of a hospitality business operation, financial skills have become increasingly important for hospitality graduates and demanded by the hospitality industry (Goh & Scerri, 2016; Norton, 2014). However, there was a problem of hospitality graduates being able to have basic accounting/finance understanding. Results from Goh and Scerri's (2016) research on Australian hospitality students' attitudes towards accounting-based units indicated that students were concerned about their performance in these units due to the complexity of content and challenges of applying the content in the hospitality workplace contexts. This has important implication for institutions to enhance students' experiential learning of accounting.

In the Vietnamese context, widespread concern has been expressed in the literature with regard to hospitality programs in preparation of students for the workplace (Bodewig et al., 2014; Montague, 2013; Pham, 2008; Tran & Swierczek, 2009; Trinh, 2013). However, little research has addressed skill shortages in higher education in Vietnam. One of these few studies is a two-stage research conducted by Tran and Swierczek (2009) to explore employers' needs and assess graduate skill delivery in university courses. Surveying was extensively conducted with 251 department managers and 717 final-year students 1838 students in other years from four universities. Graduate skill delivery was reported to be generally below standard. In a recent study, Nguyen and Robinson (2010) interviewed managers across industries and found that

Vietnam has experienced an oversupply of labour, at the expense of an adequate supply of skilled workers and managers. They found that university graduates possessed limited skills and capacities for problem-solving, critical thinking and English proficiency. Another recent study which included a large-scale survey of 234 recruiters and 3364 graduates from 20 universities in Vietnam (Huynh, 2011), found that 50% of graduates needed to be retrained to effectively work in the industries due to a mismatch between graduate professional skills and recruiters' requirements.

Efforts to improve education require a collective response from three primary stakeholders, namely government agencies, universities, and industry (Jafari, 2002). In the case of Vietnam's higher education, whilst the general educational framework is governed by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), the core content of different disciplines is moderated at institutional level where collaboration between higher education institutions and industry sectors occurs. However, it has been difficult to facilitate this collaboration and accommodate competing interests of differing stakeholders in curriculum development in higher education. Whereas employers expect the development of practical skills from graduates, the content of current educational programs is heavily skewed towards the development of theoretical knowledge (Stephen, Doughty, Gray, Hopcroft, & Silvera, 2006; Tran, 2012; Tran & Swierczek, 2009).

2.1.3. Students' perceptions of hospitality workplaces

Recent studies have been carried out with higher education students, a group who are considered an important part of the workforce as they are taught to flexibly cope with the changing skill requirements or the rapid technological advances (Tribe, 2002; Zagonari, 2009) thus likely to form the management teams of the industry. Cook, Parker, and Pettijohn (2004) examined higher education students' attitudes towards specific elements of an ongoing internship program from 12 colleges and universities in the United States. After the internship, students reported appreciation of their experiences, and stated they had developed enhanced confidence and an improved ability to work with others. Other benefits students perceived from their internship experiences included a better understanding of organisational structure and functions, the ability to form realistic career expectations, a wider professional network, an increased ability to adapt to change, and improved leadership skills (Lee, 2008). However, research indicates a difference between students' expectations (before internships) and perceptions (after internships), which results in low levels of satisfaction towards internships (Lam & Ching, 2007; Singh & Dutta, 2010).

Several studies have reported a substantial number of hospitality graduates leave the industry due to low levels of job satisfaction, lack of motivation, and poor working conditions (Kusluvan, Kusluvan, & Eren, 2003; Shin & Lee, 2011), accounting for increased staff turnover and attrition of trained personnel in the industry. Kusluvan and Kusluvan's (2000) study, conducted with fourth-year tourism and hotel management students in Turkey, reported students' negative perceptions towards almost all dimensions of working in hospitality. In an Australian context, Richardson (2010) found that 50% of the students surveyed were contemplating careers outside the industry, with 92% of these participants citing their decision primarily resulted from negative working experiences in the industry. When comparing hospitality students' views at two universities in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, Jenkins (2001) reported students tended to develop unfavourable attitudes towards the industry as they progressed through their studies. In an Asian context, Jiang and Tribe (2009) investigated Chinese students' attitudes towards working in the hospitality industry and found that these students perceived hospitality professions short-lived. Factors impacting on their attitudes were related to individual characteristics, the nature of hospitality jobs, interactions with tourists, pre-internship practical training, and management practices at the hospitality organisations.

Despite high turnover problem reported of past generations

including Baby-boomers, Generation X and Generation Y, Generation Z expressed more positive view towards working in the hospitality industry (Goh & Lee, 2018). They were more motivated by the job satisfaction and career prospects of the industry (Goh & Lee, 2018) rather than financial gains (Barron, Leask, & Fyall, 2014; Richardson, 2009; Solnet, Kralj, & Kandampully, 2012). However, research into the future hospitality workforce has received little attention (Baum, Kralj, Robinson, & Solnet, 2016). Thus, it is of prime importance to understand to enhance the working experience of this future workforce.

Overall, research in different contexts indicates that students' career perceptions are impacted by industry internships and/or work experience, and maintaining students' satisfaction with their internship experience has been argued to be of crucial importance (Chen, Ku, Shyr, Chen, & Chou, 2009; Fong, Luk, & Law, 2014; Lam & Ching, 2007; Singh & Dutta, 2010). Research shows that internship experiences can enact a positive effect on both students and industry employers because they "can provide the 'bridge' necessary for new graduates even before they have completed their degree course whilst at the same time making a significant contribution to the employment organisation" (Heaton, McCracken, & Harrison, 2008, p. 278). When industry needs and requirements are successfully identified, sector-specific education disciplines can be developed, training skill standards established, and industry involvement in educational program design enhanced (Smith & Cooper, 2000). A competitive education system needs to identify and respond to the needs and expectations of those involved, i.e., industry employers, students, and educational providers (WTO, 2004). Therefore, on-going investigation and monitoring of stakeholders' views are needed to update and improve educational programs to realise the benefits of internships for students. This paper will report on such an investigation in the Vietnamese context.

2.2. Context of the study

In the Vietnamese context, the hospitality industry-education linkage involves hospitality enterprises, hospitality higher education students/graduates, and the higher education institutions where students are undertaking their studies. The network between the industry and the higher education system is complex and the relationships within this network involve different stakeholders, e.g., industry professionals, hospitality students, and hospitality academics. Tensions exist in the relationships between (i) hospitality enterprises and their existing or potential employees, i.e., student interns; (ii) hospitality enterprises and education institutes; and (iii) institutes and their students. Considerations of the network will provide insights to aid in understanding the Vietnamese social structure that links hospitality enterprises and higher education students/graduates.

2.2.1. Hospitality higher education in Vietnam

Higher education in Vietnam includes colleges, universities, and research institutes. Programs of studies provided by higher education institutions are primarily academically focused, although in some institutions vocational education has a secondary focus. Compared to an absolute vocational orientation in all vocational colleges, there are vocation-oriented programs in all higher education institutions with a lesser vocational focus in universities, with their level of focus highly dependent on the discipline focus of the university. For example, a discipline such as hospitality would include vocation-based components, whereas a discipline such as science would not necessarily include vocation-based components.

The current Vietnamese higher education sector consists of 223 colleges (awarding three-year diplomas), 163 universities (awarding four-year or five-year bachelor's degrees, and postgraduate degrees), and 76 research institutes (authorised to award doctoral degrees). In addition to a primary focus on academic education, the higher education institutions administrated by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) also share vocational education with vocational

colleges administrated by the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA). In terms of vocational education, MOET and MOLISA have overlapping responsibilities with regard to regulated functions, authorities and structural organisation (Tran, Le, & Nguyen, 2014). Hence, two vocational curriculum frameworks exist which institutions chose to deliver depending on their educational focus.

2.2.2. Hospitality industry in Vietnam

The tourism sector, in which the hospitality industry is a subsidiary component, plays a critical role in the world's economy, accounting for a significant share of global domestic product and employment, and providing significant potential for economic growth and international development (Blanke & Chiesa, 2009). The Asia Pacific is the world's second largest tourist destination and is forecast to maintain this position with estimated international arrivals of 397 million by 2020 (WTO, 2016).

To meet the growing number of visitors, various tourist accommodation establishments, including hotels and resorts, have been built in Vietnam with an accommodation growth rate of 20 to 34% between 2001 and 2007. This growth rate slowed in later years to approximately 8 to 14% between 2008 and 2012 (VNAT, 2016). In looking at the change in high end accommodation between 2013 and 2015, the number of 5-star establishments increased from 64 to 91 while the number of 4-star establishments increased from 159 to 215, both marked increases and around 40%. Though the percentages of state- and foreign-owned establishments have not been reported, the majority of 4-star and 5-star hospitality enterprises are owned by multinational companies. Multinational hotel companies, a generic term used to include all types of multinational-associated accommodation establishments, play a major role in the development and progression of the international tourism industry in developing countries (Kusluvan & Karamustafa, 2001). Multinational accommodation establishments include 4- and 5-star hotels, serviced apartments, and beach resorts.

There are both costs and benefits from the involvement of multinational hotel companies in developing countries (Kusluvan & Karamustafa, 2001). Of all contributions, the so-called 'soft technology' (i.e., human factors) transfer in the area of human resources training is considered to be the most important benefit from multinational hotel companies to host developing countries (UNCTAD, 2007), however there is little empirical evidence of the diffusion of knowledge and skills at the managerial level (Fortanier & Van Wijk, 2010; Kusluvan & Karamustafa, 2001). Key management positions are generally held by expatriates to maintain firm-specific advantages (Andriotis, 2002), and only lower level skill personnel are trained to assure service quality and performance (Kusluvan & Karamustafa, 2001), thus limiting the level of skills training delivered. The cost of foreign dominance in terms of expatriate employment can also jeopardise the employment opportunities for indigenous skilled labour. Large scale enterprises tend to import managerial labour and offer less opportunity for profit and control to local staff (Andriotis, 2002). With these recruitment practices existing in multinational hotel companies in developing countries, opportunities for promotion to higher managerial positions are unlikely to be available to local hospitality employees, providing a very limited career path for those studying hospitality management. This is particularly relevant in the Vietnamese industry where the current market shares of 4-star and 5-star accommodation establishments, mostly owned by multinationals, represents almost 63% of available beds (VNAT, 2016).

The previous review highlighted the importance of examining the interrelationship between higher education and industry needs, to ensure graduates are provided with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively contribute to the profession. Thus, it is important to assess the alignment between the education and training provided by higher education institutions, and the needs of the hospitality sector. Although the importance of hospitality industry-education relationship has been shown to be critical for students' professional learning, there is limited

research exploring the nature of this relationship in the Vietnamese context. This study contributes to this literature base by exploring factors influencing hospitality higher education in Vietnam. This aim was evidenced through the following research questions:

1. What are hospitality stakeholders' (industry professionals, academics, and students) perspectives of Vietnamese tertiary hospitality education?
2. What factors influence effective tertiary hospitality education in Vietnam?

3. Methods

To capture a rich understanding of Vietnamese hospitality higher education, this study involved a series of stakeholder interviews regarding the preparedness of students for work in the hospitality industry, and the knowledge and skills required for working in the industry. Interpretation of the collected responses then facilitated a two-fold objective. It firstly provided the capacity to view the alignment of Vietnamese hospitality programs against the varying needs of industry employers and students. Then, from a consideration of the views of students after their industry internships, it allowed the identification of factors that may influence effective tertiary hospitality education in Vietnam.

Given the advantages and disadvantages of each interview design, a qualitative semi-structured interview approach was considered most suited for exploring views and reflections on specific issues of research. This flexible approach is used for the purpose of "obtaining description of the [professional] life world of the interviewee with respect to interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena" (Kvale, 2007, p. 11). It enables researchers to further explore issues as they arise (as in unstructured interviews), whilst providing a framework for discussion of issues (as in structured interviews). Moreover, guided questions and freedom to provide opinions in this approach encourages participants to tell their story, which is beneficial when seeking reflections from participants' experiences and practices.

3.1. Participants

Criterion-based sampling was used to identify participants from three areas well positioned to provide insights into the research focus. Glaser and Strauss' (1967) concept of data saturation was taken into careful considerations. Two principles proposed by Francis et al. (2010) were used to specify data saturation. These include deciding (i) the initial analysis sample, and (ii) the stopping criterion. The initial analysis sample was varied for each participant group. Variability of code frequency appeared to be relatively stable by the tenth interview with industry professionals, the seventh with faculty academics, and the ninth with hospitality students. The sample size of this study was determined using Guest, Bunce, and Johnson's (2006) guidelines for non-probabilistic sample sizes. According to these guidelines, data saturation tends to occur within the first twelve interviews although basic metathemes can be present as early as six interviews.

In total, twenty-six interviews were conducted in this study, including (i) ten interviews with hospitality professionals at different management levels at hotels, resorts and restaurants where the majority of students attended internships, (ii) seven academics at faculties of hospitality/tourism at various higher education institutions in Vietnam, and (iii) nine hospitality students from various higher education institutions in Vietnam.

All of the selected hospitality professionals (see Table 1) were aware of the hospitality programs offered at higher education institutions and vocational colleges through direct interactions with student interns. Thus, they were well positioned to provide insights into Vietnamese tertiary hospitality education, through students' performances at hospitality workplaces where they undertook their internships.

This sample included professionals working in restaurants, hotels, and resorts at both high-end and medium-to-low-end markets. This was done to facilitate accessing a broad range of views across this group. Interviews in the restaurant and hotel sectors were conducted with industry professionals at relevant enterprises in HCMC and Da Nang, Vietnam. For the hotel and resort sectors, participants were drawn from two sources, including (1) internationally and nationally accredited acclaimed hotels and resorts, and (2) small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the south central areas including HCMC, Phu Quoc Island, Nha Trang City, Da Nang and Ba Na Hill. The areas were selected due to their well-developed hotel and resort facilities.

For industry academics, all selected academics (see Table 2) were actively engaged in the review and development of hospitality programs at their institutions, and indicated they held informed understandings of practices in the hospitality industry through their teaching experience and professional engagement in the industry. The higher education institutions (HEIs) selected in this study offer various disciplines/majors including hospitality-related majors, e.g., hotel and restaurant management. All the selected HEIs have been operating for approximately ten years or more. The hospitality-related programs offered at the HEIs have been well established over the operation period of each institution.

Finally, the interviewed undergraduate students were all undertaking degrees in hospitality-related programs, had recently completed their first and/or final industry internship(s) at the time of the interviews and had experienced their internships in two different departments of hospitality enterprises (see Table 3). They were therefore considered to be able to provide informed insights into diverse work-related matters across various hospitality enterprise departments. The choice of interviewing current undergraduate students rather than those who had completed their education as the target for student perspectives was based on viability. While it would be desirable to interview students who have completed their education, including those who had not had successful outcomes, this was seen as highly problematic, with the likely outcome being a biased sample of the more successful students. Therefore, it was deemed more important to access the potentially larger group that included those who have not had a successful internship experience, thus covering a greater diversity of students, and their experiences.

The interview process provided extensive detail of the internship experience with a high level of consistency of the themes covered by each group with the three perspectives adding to the rich perspective provided on the internship experience.

3.2. Data collection

In-depth interviews were conducted with hospitality students, hospitality academic representatives, and a diverse group of industry professionals. The interviews were conducted face-to-face at a venue chosen by the interviewees. Each interview was approximately 30–60 min in length to cover all the identified issues in the semi-structured interview protocol(s). Sample questions are provided in Table 4.

As discussed above, for hospitality programs to be effective, responding to the needs of the industry where graduates seek their employment is of vital importance (Christou, 2002; Mayo, 2002; WTO, 2004; Yildirim & Simsek, 2001). Hence it is imperative for educators to understand industry needs to best identify work-related knowledge and skills, and contemporary demands of the industry. Thus, the questions used in the protocol were aimed at three focus areas: (i) key issues of industry sector; (ii) expectations of student interns; and (iii) additional comments. The goal was to begin broadly by asking general questions about key sector issues, and knowledge and skills needed by service workers to meet these challenges. This was followed by a focus on soliciting their views on interns' abilities, their expectations of graduates' skills, and their opinions of the relevance between hospitality HE and

Table 1
Demographics of industry professionals.

Participant ID	Industry sector	Managerial role	Enterprise features	Location	No of participants
IP1	Hotel	Front office Manager	4-star	City	1
IP2	Resort	Deputy General Manager	4-star	Island	1
IP3	Resort Hotel	Front office and Human Resources Manager	4-star	Island	1
IP4	Resort	General Manager	SME*	Island	1
IP5	Resort	General Manager	SME*	Island	1
IP6	Resort	General Manager	4-star	Beach city	1
IP7	Hotel	Sales and Marketing Manager	5-star	City	1
IP8	Hotel	Human Resources Manager	4-star	City	1
IP9	Restaurant	General Manager	Fine dining restaurant chain	City	1
IP10	Restaurant	Sales and Marketing Manager	Fine dining	City	1
				Total	10

* Small and Medium Enterprise (SME).

Table 2
Demographics of hospitality academics.

Participant ID	Position	Faculty/Department	Role in program development	Years of experience	No of participants
A1	Dean	Hospitality	Leading role	5	1
A2	Lecturer	Tourism and Hospitality	Implementing role	6	1
*A3	Head and Lecturer	Marketing and Hospitality	Implementing role	10	1
A4	Coordinator and Lecturer	Tourism	Consulting and Implementing	8	1
A5	Lecturer	Tourism	Implementing	2	1
A6	Dean	Tourism and Hospitality	Leading role	4	1
*A7	Head and Lecturer	Tourism and Hospitality	Leading and Implementing	4	1
				Total	7

* Hospitality academics who were involved in both VET and HE hospitality programs.

the actual requirements at the workplace in relevant sectors – restaurants, hotels and resorts.

It was recognised that there are competing interests and dissatisfactions expressed among stakeholders involved in hospitality program development process, especially stakeholders from industry and educational institutions (Beddingfield, 2005; Hearn, Devine, & Baum, 2007; Jenkins, 2001; Purcell & Quinn, 1996; Rimmington, 1999; Zopiatis & Constanti, 2007). Thus, it was important to gain insights from these key stakeholders. The interview protocol for academics was aimed at three focus areas: (i) understanding of the hospitality industry; (ii) experience of hospitality program development; and (iii) additional comments. Responses to broad questions about the hospitality industry were used to inform understanding of industry and enable comparison of stakeholders' views in the analysis. Questions in the second focus area were intended to solicit academics' views on developing educational programs in hospitality, and their opinions on the programs' contribution to students' professional development. The last question was used to gain more information on issues relating to hospitality program development.

As they experience both the academic and industry environments,

students were considered to provide important practical insights into their professional development journey. Therefore, student participants were encouraged to informally share their professional learning from academic courses at HEIs and their internships in industry. The interviews with student participants commenced with questions regarding their experiences in their internships, where the researcher took a neutral position to elicit their responses and probe their experiences. Then the interview led into discussions of the hospitality programs they were undertaking, and their views on internships.

The protocol(s) were presented to participants at the beginning of each interview. Participants were advised that they did not need to follow the order of the questions, but to informally share their views of the questions outlined in the protocol. The interviews were recorded with the permission of the interviewees. As suggested by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), recording interviews enables researchers to focus on the contents of the interviews then feed in questions or clarifications where necessary to avoid distraction for interviewees due to researchers' continuous note-taking.

Table 3
Demographics of hospitality student participants.

Participant ID	Industry sector for internships	Sector features	Industry department/s for internships	Months of experience	No of participants
S1	Hotel	5-star	Food and Beverage	3	1
S2	Restaurant	Fine dining Japanese cuisine	Business centre	3	1
			Customer service/Food catering	9	
S3	Hotel	4-star	Food and Beverage	3	1
	Restaurant	Fine dining Vietnamese cuisine	Customer service/Food catering	6	
S4	Hotel	5-star	Food and Beverage	6	1
S5	Restaurant chain	Fine dining and drink club	Customer service/Food catering	6	1
S6	Hotel	5-star	Front office	9	1
S7	Hotel	4-star	Housekeeping	3	1
	Restaurant chain	Fine dining and drink club	Customer service/Food catering	6	
S8	Hotel	5-star	Food and Beverage	6	1
S9	Restaurant	Fine dining Chinese cuisine	Customer service/Hostess	3	1
				Total	9

Table 4
Sample questions of interview protocols.

Groups	Sample questions of interview protocols
Industry professionals	(i) What do you think about student interns' skills? How did they perform at their internships? Are they ready for internships? (ii) What did you expect from interns prior to their internships? (iii) What kinds of knowledge and skills are needed for graduates to start work in the sector? (iv) To what extent what has been taught at higher education institutions is relevant to the actual requirements at the workplace, particularly in your sector?
Hospitality academics	(i) How do universities prepare students with skills for work? (ii) How do universities respond to industry needs? (iii) What are some of the challenging issues facing academics in developing hospitality programs? (iv) To what extent universities contribute to students' professional learning in academic courses?
Hospitality undergraduate students	<i>Experiences during the internships</i> (i) What have positively contributed to your internship experiences? (ii) What might have negatively impacted on your internship experiences? (iii) Any other comments to help us understand your internship experiences? <i>Experiences with your hospitality programs</i> (iv) How have the hospitality programs you are undertaking prepared you for internships? (v) To what extent do these programs prepare you for hospitality profession?

Table 5
Industry professionals' views.

	Themes	No.	Selected interview transcripts
Expectations of students priors to internships	Attributes	10	"as long as they [student interns] have passion for working in hotels, other skills can be trained when they come in here" (IP9)
	Knowledge	5	"We do need interns to be familiar with reservation systems at lodging enterprises. I think it's easy these days for them to experience these systems before they start their internships at hotels or resorts." (IP3)
	Skills	6	"It is not about how you can greet guests but also how you interact with guests in a way they feel welcomed and comfortable during their stay at the resort." (IP3) "Difficult guests are worst but there are several ways to handle them and we need those [interns] with such skill." (IP5)
Perceptions towards student interns	Strengths	7	"The thing that we most appreciate about them [student interns] is that they don't mind any work given to them. They just went in and did their job." (IP10) "They are really hard workers, especially those who really wanted an opportunity to be employed later upon graduation." (IP6)
	Weaknesses	10	"They all thought that they would be managers or supervisors after they graduate. They were taught that way at universities I guess. They should be more realistic about real world scenarios." (IP8) "It was good to follow what was told but sometimes to get things done; they should be more flexible rather than relying too much on their supervisors' instructions." (IP2)
Views of hospitality HE programs	Lack of career orientations	8	"I think the teachers didn't tell them [students] hospitality work would be mostly at low skill level. They didn't accept the fact that they had to start from that level to move up the scale." (IP1)
	Limited inclusion of work-related components	7	"From interviewing student interns, I realised that they were provided with pretty good basic knowledge of the industry but limited work-related practices." (IP4) "I think universities should provide their students with training in work-related skills, e.g., familiarity with hospitality reservation system, which are basic and essential." (IP6)
	Occupation-specific and management knowledge	6	"I've been working with many tourism educational institutions and I realised that tourism education in our country is majorly themed under management – tourism and hospitality management." (IP7)

3.3. Data analysis

The interviews were fully transcribed for content analysis, and the process consisted of two coding cycles. The process started with first cycle coding (Matthew, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014) using a descriptive coding method (Saldaña, 2013) in which labels were assigned to data summarised in a word or phrase. This analysis process was applied to, and conducted separately, with the transcripts of each study group. The first cycle coding process resulted in the development of 26 lists of initial codes. In the second cycle coding (Matthew et al., 2014), pattern codes were generated for each list by grouping similar codes identified in the first stage, and the frequencies of emergence of each code were noted. These pattern codes were labelled 'themes' in this article.

3.4. Ethical considerations

This research was approved by the relevant University Human Research Ethics Committee. Prior to conducting the interviews, emails of invitation with attached informed consent package and semi-structured interview protocols were sent to target participants to gain permission and agreement to participate in the study. The informed consent package was prepared in both English and Vietnamese. The informed consent form was signed by each participant prior to taking part in the audio-recorded interviews.

4. Findings and discussion

This study sought to explore the factors influencing effective tertiary hospitality education in Vietnam. To accomplish this purpose, the study examined various stakeholders' perceptions and expectations to provide insights into current tertiary hospitality education, and hospitality

Table 6
Academics' views.

Categories	Themes	No.	Selected interview transcripts
Hospitality HE programs	Theory-practice gap	7	“Our [higher] education is aimed to have all-in-one, a bit of everything, which has resulted in graduates weak in both theory and practice. They couldn't either write a basic marketing plan or design a leaflet.” (A1) “Too much time has unnecessarily spent on management theories and non-disciplinary subjects mandated by the national framework.” (A5)
	Internship components as compromised content	6	“They are trying to develop industry-oriented programs by incorporating internship components originally developed in diplomas, which may impact on the sustainable development of [higher] hospitality education.” (A1) “We have 60 h allocated for each professional course but we have like 250 students so students have limited opportunities to practice their skills in these courses.” (A5)
	Others	4	“Almost every HEI wants to have hospitality major set up at their institutions even those who didn't have any experiences re business/hospitality education.” (A4) “There have been several cases where newly hospitality graduates were employed as managers but they are rare, not reflecting the common trend. We've found it hard to deliver the message to the students that they somehow have to start at the low skill level then move up the ladder.” (A5)
Program development/improvements	Restricted by national framework	5	“There is very limited time allocated to core subjects in hospitality in the first two years of a university program.” (A5) “The current hospitality programs are not effective because we have to align with the national framework on programs at HEIs.” (A6)
	Subjective initiative of leadership roles	3	“Any change in the programs or even just change in the content of certain course needs support and approval from the Dean before forwarding to the department of training of the university [HEIs]. Normally it is the Dean who initiates that change.” (A5)
	Limited facilities for professional courses	3	“We have concrete structures of basically three hotel departments but the appliances for these departments are too expensive. I mean those at 4–5-star standards. We don't have budget.” (A4)
	In need of qualified program development board	5	“It's easy to develop or design a hospitality program but it's hard to find qualified teaching team to deliver it.” (A7) “Some senior academics in the faculty were not formally trained in tourism and hospitality. Some came from social science background then upgraded their teaching eligibility with some business degree.” (A5) “We do have qualified academics but they're not active, neither in research nor in the industry.” (A3)
	Industry's misperception of HE	4	“We got complaints from the industry that HE students were not ready for work but the truth is they were not assigned the right jobs.” (A1) “Newly HE graduates are usually employed doing manual jobs. Unfortunately, VET students are much better because they were intensively trained with hands-on skills in vocational colleges.” (A3)

workplaces where student performances are assessed. Results from analysis of in-depth interviews with hospitality stakeholders – industry professionals, hospitality academics and hospitality undergraduate students – are provided in the following sections, followed by the discussion of factors influencing effective tertiary hospitality education in Vietnam.

4.1. Hospitality stakeholders' perspectives of Vietnamese tertiary hospitality education

4.1.1. Views of hospitality industry professionals (IP)

Three categories were elicited from the interviews with the professionals, including their expectation of students prior to internships, their perceptions towards student interns, and their views of undergraduate hospitality programs as shown in Table 5.

The findings indicated that among the three quality components, i.e., knowledge, skills, and attributes, considered necessary for a hospitality job, personal attributes were expressed by all industry professionals to be important, and a necessary pre-requisite for student interns. All professionals concurred that possession of certain attributes was critical for an individual to be successful in the hospitality industry. Positive attitudes towards working in the hospitality industry were viewed as a stepping stone to successful internships. A comprehensive understanding of three dimensions of hospitality businesses, i.e., understanding of services provided by the organisations, familiarity with reservation and booking software, and knowledge of western foods and beverages, was considered an effective starting point to enable positive experiences for both student interns and industry professionals. Additionally, professionals indicated that students required to be competent with customer service-related skills, English language

fluency and organisational skills for a successful internship. These professionals' responses indicated heightened concerns around student interns' preparation for, and initiative during, internships with a particular concern about the potential impact on customers from such interactions.

Findings also indicated that the industry professionals recognised and appreciated student interns' qualities contributing to successful internships. Many professionals acknowledged student interns' effort and initiative in completing work assignments, and their high level of engagement in the professional environment. On the other hand, concern was also expressed with regard to their limited abilities to engage professionally in the hospitality industry due to their unrealistic expectations and lack of professionalism. These attitudes were perceived to negatively impact on student internship experiences, and the willingness of hospitality enterprises in receiving interns. Additionally, student interns were not highly regarded by the industry as they were perceived to lack of practical work experience, job commitment and career planning.

Other findings suggest that the lack of understanding of career orientations in higher education hospitality programs resulted in student interns' unrealistic expectations of working in the industry. One of the perceived downsides of higher education hospitality programs was a heavy emphasis on management knowledge, with less emphasis on occupation-specific skills. It was a shared view among the industry professionals that awareness of career scenarios in the hospitality industry were essential, and that the nature of hospitality jobs was to be communicated to students from the early stages of their studies. Such awareness was needed to facilitate the interaction between student interns and the hospitality enterprises, in addition to enhancing interns' experiences during their internships. Work-related practices were

expected to be major components in a higher education hospitality program. Some professionals indicated their preference for practical components in hospitality programs at vocational colleges. The imbalance between theory and practice was perceived by industry professionals as a major weakness in higher education hospitality programs. This finding facilitates understanding of industry perceptions with regard to student interns' unrealistic expectations of work assignments during their internships.

4.1.2. Views of hospitality academics (A)

Derived from analysis of academics' interviews were several issues associated with the current higher education hospitality programs and program development. Some examples of these issues such as theory-practice imbalance, career orientations, and quality issues associated with teaching qualifications and program development academic board are presented in Table 6.

All hospitality academics concurred that higher education hospitality programs were heavily skewed towards the development of theoretical components, which hospitality academics stated has failed to equip students with the practical skills required by the hospitality industry. Limitations in generic, 'soft' skill development were also acknowledged as an issue that has broadened the gap between theory and practice. Many hospitality academics asserted that inclusive components of internships, i.e., training in basic skills for hospitality jobs, have become a growing focus in most hospitality higher education programs but the time allocation to internship preparation courses was a concern. Academics also reported that higher education institutions had little, and in some cases, no control over their students' industry internships. In this regard, one hospitality academic who was involved in both higher education and vocational hospitality programs indicated a different mechanism at vocational colleges regarding industry-education linkages. This finding provides further insights into industry preferences for vocational student interns reported in this study.

In terms of program development, many hospitality academics indicated that the MOET framework placed a constraint on hospitality higher education program modifications. This mandatory national framework on higher education programs was perceived to be a competitive disadvantage in hospitality education. One of the most notable reflections was related to the quality of program development boards. Hospitality academics expected that a qualified program development board would ideally include both academically qualified and professionally qualified members. Interestingly, the most challenging issue for developing an industry-oriented program was reported to be the misalignment in views between the industry and hospitality academics in terms of expectations of higher education. In this study, the hospitality academics viewed higher education graduates to be overqualified for industry's needs, including the perception that most hospitality jobs required basic operational level skills, thus vocational students were perceived to be more competitive in terms of required work-related skills. These comments highlight that in undertaking internships higher education students were less prepared with specific skills for internships tasks than vocational students.

4.1.3. Views of hospitality students (S)

Two main categories emerged from the interviews with the undergraduate students relating to higher education hospitality programs and internship/work experiences (Table 7).

All students concurred that there was a mismatch between classroom learning and workplace requirements. Internship components were perceived to be ineffective due to the poorly arranged structure of field trips and internships, and the lack of input into the content of workplace learning, as well as support for students during their internships. In line with perspectives from the industry professionals, students also expressed their concern over the timing of internships. They were required to complete their internships in summer semesters during the peak season for tourism. As a result, limited guidance or

mentorship could be provided to student interns at hospitality enterprises during this high season due to the lack of availability of staff. The timing of internships in peak seasons was perceived to be a pressure for both student interns and industry. This has important implications for institutions in terms of program structure.

Students also expressed there were limited choices of hospitality work available to them during their internships, with catering jobs the dominant option. Additional issues of concern included excessive assigned work, an unsupportive working environment, and limited availability for guidance and mentorship. These factors highlighted the negative aspects of working in the industry as a student intern. As such, students did not perceive their work supervision positively, and expressed a lack of interest in, or expectation of, work supervision. These findings indicate heightened concerns about the impact of the negative internship experiences on student motivation and commitment to their continued learning at higher education institutions, and their future careers in the hospitality industry.

The findings from the interviews highlight the views of three primary groups of stakeholders involved in the development of hospitality programs. Interestingly, there were some commonalities across the views. For example, both hospitality academics and industry professionals expressed concern at the practical skills preparation of higher education students prior to their internships. Another important commonality was the comparison between higher education and vocational hospitality students in terms of their performances during work internships.

4.2. Factors influencing effective tertiary hospitality education in Vietnam

Findings from this study suggest three major factors requiring consideration for effective tertiary hospitality education in Vietnam, including (1) the current employment demand in the Vietnamese hospitality industry; (2) the suitability of higher education hospitality programs in preparation for hospitality careers; and (3) the reality of Vietnamese hospitality workplaces for tertiary students.

4.2.1. The current employment demand in the Vietnamese hospitality industry

Evidence in this study confirms the phenomenon of a lack of diffusion of knowledge and skills at the managerial level in multinational hotel enterprises in developing countries, with higher education students expressing concern regarding promotion opportunities in the Vietnamese hospitality industry. Students in this study perceived their future chances of being promoted to the managerial level as limited, and their opportunities to disseminate the skills and knowledge of management during internships to be virtually non-existent. This aligns with previous research indicating key management positions are generally outsourced to maintain firm specific advantages (Andriotis, 2002; Dunning, 1988), and only basic operational level skill personnel are trained locally to assure service quality and performance (Ascher, 1985; Dunning, 1988; Kusluvan & Karamustafa, 2001). This situation limits potential upskilling for local higher education trainees and graduates as they potentially transition from their academic learning environments into industry practice. Similar findings have been found in previous research on HRM strategies of multinational companies, with outsourcing strategies for management positions found to jeopardize employment opportunities in the local community (Fortanier & Van Wijk, 2010; Kusluvan & Karamustafa, 2001; Mowforth & Munt, 2003).

Results from this study highlight the tensions existing between the hospitality industry and higher education institutions. Such tensions have posed some constraints in the suitability of current higher education programs in preparation for hospitality careers. The tension was likely initiated by the shift to mass higher education in Vietnam. As Vietnamese higher education has taken rapid steps towards mass higher education with little transition (Hayden & Lam, 2007; MOET, 2016; Valley & Wilkinson, 2008), the large-scale expansion of higher

Table 7
Hospitality higher education students' views.

Categories	Themes	No.	Selected interview transcripts
HE hospitality programs	Theory-practice gap	9	“We don't know why we have to study those courses. There are obviously no opportunities for us to make use of such knowledge unless one day we get to management level. We may not remember anything by then.” (S8) “Except for customer service skills taught during internship courses like FO or F&B, I can see nothing else I could use at work.” (S5) “We didn't have the opportunity to learn anything about booking applications. They are used in any hotels, restaurants, even cafes.” (S6)
	Issues with internship components	7	“I don't know how to say but our simulated guest room and a real hotel guest room, even at 3-star hotels, are completely two different scenarios [laugh].” (S7) “That's okay to do this manual work because I think I have learned a lot but it would be more helpful to know about it in advance so I could be better prepared myself.” (S2) “We went on the field trips in a touring mood. No learning actually happened at that time. I feel it was really a waste.” (S9)
Internship experience	Limited choice of hospitality work	9	“Front desk positions are not normally available for trainees. If we're lucky, we may be allowed to work there doing some simple task like data entry.” (S1)
	Limited supervision/guidance	8	“They were so busy to show me anything so I tried to ask the senior interns there or worked things out myself.” (S3) “They asked me to do a lot of things without instructions or explanation. But I was required to complete those tasks in a short time otherwise I would be scolded for being slow and inefficient.” (S1)
	Lack of supportive environment	7	“I got fine for being 5-min late at work the other day.” (S7)
	Being overworked	5	“I had to work 9–10 h a day and 6 days per week.” (S1) “They thought I know everything because I'm a uni student so I was given all the tasks of a full-time staff without instructions.” (S8)

education has resulted in an oversupply of higher education graduates. In hospitality workplaces, higher education graduates compete with vocational graduates for the same basic operational level skill positions with limited higher-level positions available. Some research in developing nations has focused on the growth of over-education in unskilled jobs, which is underlined by the weak demand for skilled labour, and slow expansion of education-intensive occupations (Mehta et al., 2013). The hospitality industry is generally characterised as comprising a workforce with relatively basic level skills (Jenkins, 2001), and as such, entrants into these basic level skill jobs in the industry are likely to be sustained in these positions (Scherer, 2004). This situation poses a challenge for higher education credentials and employment outcomes in Vietnam, and the long-term contribution of higher education in this area. For such benefits to be captured, broader career pathways and opportunities are needed for higher skilled local workers, including positions with supervisory, managerial and policy and planning responsibilities.

The situation in the Vietnamese context also aligns with research elsewhere reporting the inability of many higher education graduates to apply their knowledge and skills in their workplaces (Elias & Purcell, 2004; Keep & Mayhew, 2004). This has important implications for a clear differentiation between vocational and higher education in terms of academic and professional preparation for students at relevant levels, and confirms the importance of a differentiated career path for vocational and higher education graduates, which is recognised by the hospitality industry. Attempts to develop and improve the education system are dependent on a collective response from three primary stakeholders, including government agencies, educational institutions, and industry (Jafari, 2002; Tran, 2015). However, research indicates the limited collaboration to accommodate the competing interests of these stakeholders (Jafari, 2002; Tran, 2015; Tran & Swierczek, 2009).

4.2.2. The suitability of higher education programs in preparation for hospitality careers

Evidence in this study revealed some constraints on the development of higher education hospitality programs in preparation for hospitality careers, including skill preparation in higher education programs compared to vocational programs, and the current labour force demand in the Vietnamese hospitality industry. In higher education hospitality programs in Vietnam, a focus on preparing human resources for the hospitality industry in terms of quantity, rather than addressing

industry demand for high quality human resources, is an ongoing concern (Nguyen & Chaisawat, 2011). Educational quality is recognised as a major issue (Do, 2009; IIE, 2004; Oliver, 2002; Tran et al., 2014) which can be influenced both by the formal design of programs, and also in the quality of delivery by teaching staff. In program development, the current standards for hospitality higher education have not been fully formulated and consistently applied in program development across educational providers (VNAT, 2012). In addition, there are quality related issues including the qualifications of teaching academics.

Findings from this study suggested that in some cases both teaching academics and program designers exhibited a lack of practical experience in the hospitality industry, which potentially impacted on higher education hospitality programs in terms of content and professional practices. The lack of integration of academic knowledge and industry experience of program development teams in this study suggested limitations in the theory-practice nexus of the implemented higher education hospitality programs. This finding aligns with research reporting the gap between theory in higher education hospitality programs, and practice in the industry (Jiang & Tribe, 2009). Previous research indicated that some higher education institutions experienced pressures of limited resources resulting in programs being delivered by teaching staff with non-relevant academic backgrounds (Cavlek, 2002, 2008). This is an important factor as research indicates the production of quality graduates requires highly qualified teaching staff with relevant academic qualifications, and sufficient practical experience in the discipline (Qiu Zhang, Lam & Bauer, 2001).

Evidence in this study also indicated a lack of differentiation between higher education graduates, and the vocational graduates, in terms of employment opportunities. The two levels of education and training, i.e., the vocational programs and the higher education programs, are expected to result in two largely differentiated employment pathways. However, the higher education students in this study were concerned about the role of their higher education qualifications in securing expected employment outcomes. This is a constraint on the development of higher education hospitality programs in terms of their relevance to the current demand in the hospitality industry. Research indicates the relationship between academic credentials and employment outcomes is complex (Brown & Hesketh, 2004; Elias & Purcell, 2004; Keep & Mayhew, 2004). Although higher education graduates are usually described as knowledge workers in policy, there exist

inequalities among graduates in their employment outcomes (Brown & Hesketh, 2004). Many graduates, who are not able to translate their knowledge and skills into employment in the industry, fail to get a return on their investment in higher education, resulting in positional differences among graduates (Brown & Hesketh, 2004).

Findings from this study indicate that vocational students acquire more developed basic operational work skills than their higher education counterparts, thus being preferred by the industry. Compared to the higher education programs, the vocational programs are based on students undertaking work in the industry without any expectation of training or mentorship provided by industry. Thus, as the program undertaken by vocational students explicitly trains students in developing skills for basic operational level jobs, rather than the broader academic curricula received by higher education students who are prepared with more strategic skills at supervisory/managerial level, vocational students are more aligned with industry expectations for basic operational jobs. Occupation-specific skills at basic operational level are taught in the first year of a vocational college program. These skills are formulated into practice-based courses, simulating scenarios in various areas of hospitality enterprises, including front office, food and beverages, as well as kitchen/cooking. The development of these skills is often not officially included in several higher education programs. Thus, vocational programs are more skill-oriented compared to the more theoretical orientation of higher education programs (Tran, 2012; Tran & Swierczek, 2009). This differs from the learning in more developed programs such as those delivered in Australia (Bilsland et al., 2014) or the United Kingdom (Busby & Gibson, 2010), where there is a focused industry initiative whereby individual enterprises implement specific targeted training programs for students.

4.2.3. *The reality of Vietnamese hospitality workplaces for tertiary students*

Findings from this study highlighted the mismatch between higher education students' expectations on entering the industry, and the realities of working in the industry. These findings have been reported in previous studies (Jenkins, 2001; O'Leary & Deegan, 2005; Raybould & Wilkins, 2005), and this mismatch may consequently result in graduates leaving the industry. Since student expectations may be re-aligned through internships (Harris & Zhao, 2004), this also has important implications for collaborative efforts between the industry and higher education institutions to enable these expectations to be re-aligned in a positive manner. This issue can be addressed via career orientations at institutions, and re-arranged internship practices in the industry. In other words, students should be adequately prepared at institutions to transition into the hospitality work environment. They should be presented with realistic view of the conditions of working in the industry so that they can accurately envision the benefits and demands of a hospitality career.

Other findings indicated that higher education students' desire to work in the hospitality industry were weakened by their internship experiences. The majority of hospitality opportunities available to student interns were basic operational level skill jobs, including catering assistants, kitchenhands or room attendants. In addition, results also showed that student interns were expected to commit to a full-time workload, without clarification of associated learning opportunities. This finding aligns with a number of studies investigating the impact of internships on career intentions and motivation to work in the hospitality industry (Busby & Gibson, 2010; Divine, Linrud, Miller, & Wilson, 2007; Kusluvan, Kusluvan, & Eren, 2003). The higher education students' resultant low level of commitment to the industry found in this study aligns with other research in the Netherlands and China indicating hospitality students' ambitions for future careers tends to decline as they gain experience, and become aware of the actual circumstances of working in the industry (Blomme et al., 2009; Jenkins, 2001; Wang & Huang, 2014).

Industry expectations for student interns and/or graduates did not differentiate between higher education institutions and vocational

colleges, and these expectations appeared to be focused on the immediate needs of workplaces. These expectations also appear to be shaped by the reality of hospitality workplaces where most of the available jobs require workers with well-developed basic operational level skills. In this sense, industry employers may view vocational education as more effective in providing education and training at this level in terms of immediate work-readiness; however, it does not recognise longer-term needs of the developing sector. As such, undertaking industry internships did not result in the expected learning outcomes for higher education students.

Evidence from this study suggested that internship components which were supposed to bridge theory and practice often failed to achieve their objectives due to the absence of a mechanism in which higher education institutions consulted with industry in their curriculum planning, resulting in a lack of clearly defined roles and responsibilities for both stakeholders. The lack of industry-education collaboration in Vietnam (Ashwill, 2010; Bilsland & Nagy, 2015; Tran, 2012), leveraged higher education students' negative internship experiences since there was no mechanism for students to debrief, and reflect on their experiences. The lack of opportunities for critical reflection negatively impacted higher education students in this study, in addition to higher education institutions having no control over the content delivered during industry internships. As a result, the skills targeted during the internships were basic operational level skills, and while important for an appreciation of hospitality services, provided limited practical extension to students' academic learning at higher education institutions.

The inclusion of adapted internship components that are not underpinned by a well-grounded rationale linked to the overall program structure, runs the risk of these programs being downgraded in terms of educational quality. Interestingly, in viewing the design of internship programs, it was also revealed through interviews with hospitality academics in this study that internship components in Vietnamese higher education institutions were not considered in the original program design, but subsequently added during the implementation stage to demonstrate institutional attempts to balance the theory-practice nexus. While the need for a link between the theory and practice components of the higher education program is recognised, and widely applied in most hospitality higher education programs, a well-structured design of such programs is essential for the longer-term contribution from such a component.

5. Conclusion

This study confirmed the lack of industry-education linkage in the field of hospitality in the Vietnamese context. It identified the key factors behind an enhanced contribution of higher education to an expanding hospitality industry. The findings demonstrated that there were conflicts of interest among hospitality stakeholders, including the industry, higher education institutions, and higher education students. The industry-education relationship was found to be predominantly economically driven, with the operation of the hospitality industry dominated by preferences for students sourced from vocational education in relation to satisfying the immediate needs of the workplaces, i.e., students with well-developed basic operational level skills. The results of this study have important implications for the three stakeholder groups, and for policy makers. Students' negative perceptions, associated with their internship experiences in different aspects of hospitality workplaces, currently appear to result in detrimental consequences for higher education students, with many not planning on remaining in the hospitality sector. This has both short-term and long-term implications for hospitality employers, hospitality educational providers, and Vietnam's higher education system. These implications result in immediate workforce issues, limiting the higher-level skills available in the sector, and pressures on the higher education system to contribute to an increase in the international competitiveness of its

sector – thus having implications for government and policy makers.

6. Implications and recommendations

As research highlights the importance of involving the three primary stakeholders (the industry, students and institutions) in the development of hospitality programs, an understanding of their different needs, expectations and interests is essential to close the gaps (if any), and find common ground. Findings from this study highlight that there are indeed gaps in views and competing interests among these stakeholder groups. This section provides a discussion of the implications for stakeholders and policy makers, followed by recommendations for future research directions.

For the industry employers, preferences for interns with well-developed basic level skills may result in the employers' failure to prepare, recruit and retain highly skilled graduates for the future, and reinforce the practice by multinational companies of sourcing higher level skill staff from international bases, thus not developing skills and generating employment for Vietnamese graduates. The lack of highly skilled and motivated local personnel may have a negative impact on service quality, potentially resulting in negative consequences on customer satisfaction and loyalty, and ultimately impacting on the economic competitiveness of the sector. In addition, without a shift in approach the current practice of outsourcing highly skilled hospitality staff to work in high-end hospitality operations is likely to continue, with associated long-term costs and implications for Vietnam. Interestingly, some research has suggested that increased exposure to hospitality/tourism working environment tends to bring about positive change to student commitment to the industry (Bednarska & Olszewski, 2013); however, the results of this study indicated that such change is not currently occurring in Vietnam, due to student perceptions of their limited future career paths in the industry.

Additionally, most enterprises were not aware of either the types of educational programs the students were undertaking, or the differences in content and career orientations between higher education and vocational programs. In this study, industry professionals were critical of the level of skill preparation in higher education programs. This has important implications for higher education institutions to plan internships involving greater awareness and negotiated roles and responsibilities between industry and higher education institutions. In this regard, internships in Vietnamese higher education hospitality programs are at an early stage of development in which communicative and collaborative links between the industry and higher education institutions are under-developed (Tran, 2012, 2014; Valley & Wilkinson, 2008). There is an opportunity for Vietnamese hospitality higher education to reflect on, and learn from, successful practices in more advanced systems, such as work-related learning in Australia (see Nagy, Bilsland, & Smith, 2013), or work placement in the United Kingdom (see Busby & Gibson, 2010).

For policy makers, students' reduced motivations to study due to the current industry-education mismatch may be an indication of the inefficiency of government expenditure on hospitality higher education. Results in this study indicated the limited opportunities for more strategic skill jobs in the hospitality industry for higher education students. These findings suggested that the operation of the hospitality industry is shaped by industry preferences for vocational education students, a group who are considered to be work ready for the positions available. As the hospitality industry in Vietnam is in the early stages of development, effective linkages between industry providers, and higher education and vocational institutions, are still being established. Further, while significant high-end hospitality services are delivered by multinational providers, these groups appear to have limited involvement in the preparation of future workers, with many of their more skilled positions being recruited elsewhere.

As patterns of labour market entry and job quality are underpinned by the occupational structure of the labour market (Gangl, 2002),

results from this study posit a heightened need for policy interventions in the Vietnamese hospitality industry to bring about positive change to the occupational structure of the hospitality labour market. Since national institutional settings, with regard to the education/training system and the employment system shapes the structure of opportunities for entrants into the labour market (Kerckhoff, 1995), it is important that these interventions are formulated to support higher education students, and protect higher education graduate work rights in the hospitality industry.

Recent changes in educational policy anticipated to take effect in 2017 in which MOLISA will be the sole governance body for vocational education, and MOET for higher education (Ha, 2016), will require research to be conducted to assess the effect these changes may exert on tertiary hospitality education in Vietnam. This study provides a timely assessment of the views of students, academics and industry representatives before that change occurs, with future studies need to assess changes in the system. Future studies could identify additional factors impacting on the sector, and develop and implement methodological tools to measure the degree of impact of these factors on the Vietnamese hospitality higher education system. These studies could provide evidence-based recommendations for resolving issues associated with these impacts, with the ultimate aim of influencing government policies mediating hospitality industry-education relationships.

7. Limitations and future research

The sample of industry professionals, hospitality academics and tertiary hospitality students was predominantly obtained in Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC), located in South Vietnam. As such, the findings of this study are not generalisable to a wider population nor they can be representative of the non-hospitality stakeholder population. However, the findings are suggestive of possible patterns in HCMC and other regions across Vietnam. On the other hand, this exploratory study is a pivotal step in proving insights into stakeholders' perspectives as well as salient beliefs about the researched problem. To generalise the results to a larger population, one future area of research is to conduct quantitative surveys to empirically test differences among the three stakeholder groups.

Acknowledgement

This research has not been funded by any organisations. This is part of the doctoral research conducted by Dr. Anh Le, under supervision of Dr. Christine McDonald and Dr. Helen Klieve in the School of Education and Professional Studies at Griffith University.

References

- Airey, D., & Tribe, J. (2000). In C. Lashley, & A. Morrison (Eds.). *Education and hospitality search of hospitality: Theoretical perspectives and debates*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Andriotis, K. (2002). Scale of hospitality firms and local economic development—Evidence from Crete. *Tourism Management*, 23(4), 333–341.
- Annaraud, K. (2006). A comparison of skills necessary for successful careers for American and Russian hospitality students upon graduation. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education*, 18(4), 33–44.
- Ascher, F. (1985). *Tourism: Transnational corporations and cultural identities*. UNESCO: Paris.
- Ashwill, M. (2010). Vietnam: A rising star on the US higher education scene. *World Education Services*, (6), 23.
- Barron, P. (1999). The theory and practice of industrial placement: An analysis of hospitality students' experiences. In J. Molly, & J. Davis (Eds.). *Proceedings of the Annual National Research Conference* (pp. 120–130). (Adelaide, Australia).
- Barron, P., Leask, A., & Fyall, A. (2014). Engaging the multi-generational workforce in tourism and hospitality. *Tourism Review*, 69(4), 245–263.
- Barrows, C. W., & Walsh, J. (2002). "Bridging the gap" between hospitality management programmes and the private club industry. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 14(3), 120–127.
- Baum, T., Kralj, A., Robinson, R., & Solnet, D. (2016). Tourism workforce research review taxonomy and agenda. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 60, 1–22.

- Beddingfield, C. (2005). Transforming the ROI of your graduate scheme. *Industrial and Commercial Training*, 37(4), 199–203.
- Bednarska, M. A., & Olszewski, M. (2013). Students' attitudes towards career in the tourism industry—implications for tacit knowledge management. *Journal of Entrepreneurship, Management and Innovation*, (1), 119–134.
- Beggs, B., Ross, C. M., & Goodwin, B. (2008). A comparison of student and practitioner perspectives of the travel and tourism internship. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education*, 7(1), 31–39.
- Bell, B., & Schmidt, C. (1996). Field practicums: What influence on graduate careers. Practical experiences in professional education. *Research Monograph*, 123–134.
- Bilsland, C., & Nagy, H. (2015). Work-integrated learning in Vietnam: Perspectives of intern work supervisors. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education*, 16(3), 185–198.
- Bilsland, C., Nagy, H., & Smith, P. (2014). Planning the journey to best practice in developing employability skills: Transnational university internships in Vietnam. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education*, 15(2), 145–157.
- Blanke, J., & Chiesa, T. (2009). The travel & tourism competitiveness report 2009. *World Economic Forum*.
- Blomme, R., Van Rheede, A., & Tromp, D. (2009). The hospitality industry: An attractive employer? An exploration of students' and industry workers' perceptions of hospitality as a career field. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Education*, 21(2), 6–14.
- Bodewig, C., Badiani-Magnusson, R., & Macdonald, K. (2014). *Skilling up Vietnam: Preparing the workforce for a modern market economy*. World Bank Publications.
- Brown, P., Hesketh, A., & Williams, S. (2004). *The mismanagement of talent: Employability and jobs in the knowledge economy*. Oxford University Press.
- Busby, G. D., & Gibson, P. (2010). Tourism and hospitality internship experiences overseas: A British perspective. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sports and Tourism Education (Pre-2012)*, 9(1), 4.
- Čavlek, N. (2002). The influence of vertically integrated travel concerns on education and training in tourism. *Rethinking of Education and Training for Tourism*.
- Čavlek, N. (2008). Tourism education through experienced learning: A case of Ithas. *An Enterprise Odyssey. International Conference Proceedings* (pp. 358). University of Zagreb, Faculty of Economics and Business.
- Chen, F. C., Ku, E. C. S., Shyr, Y. H., Chen, F. H., & Chou, S. S. (2009). Job demand, emotional awareness, and job satisfaction in internships: The moderating effect of social support. *Social Behaviour and Personality: An International Journal*, 37(10), 1429–1440.
- Christou, E. (2002). Revisiting competencies for hospitality management: Contemporary views of the stakeholders. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education*, 14(1), 25–32.
- Chung-Herrera, B. G., Enz, C. A., & Lankau, M. J. (2003). A competencies model: Grooming future hospitality leaders. *The Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 44(3), 17–25.
- Connolly, P., & McGing, G. (2006). Graduate education and hospitality management in Ireland. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 18(1), 50–59.
- Cook, S. J., Parker, R. S., & Pettijohn, C. E. (2004). The perceptions of interns: A longitudinal case study. *Journal of Education for Business*, 79(3), 179–185.
- Crotti, R., & Misrahi, T. (2015). The travel and tourism competitiveness report 2015. Growth through shocks. *World economic forum: Geneva, Switzerland*.
- Divine, R. L., Linrud, J. K., Miller, R. H., & Wilson, J. H. (2007). Required internship programs in marketing: Benefits, challenges and determinants of fit. *Marketing Education Review*, 17(2), 45–52.
- Do, T. N. Q. (2009). Contact hours in Dutch and Vietnamese higher education: A comparison. *Higher Education: The International Journal of Higher Education and Educational Planning*, 57(6), 757–767.
- Downey, J. F., & De Veau, L.T. (1987). Coordinating the hospitality internship. *The Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 28(2), 38–41.
- Downey, J. F., & De Veau, L.T. (1988). Hospitality internships: An industry views. *The Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 29(3), 18–20.
- Dunning, J. H. (1988). The theory of international production. *The International Trade Journal*, 3(1), 21–66.
- Elias, P., & Purcell, K. (2004). The earnings of graduates in their early careers. *Researching Graduate Careers Seven Years On. Research paper no. 4*. ESRC/IER. University of West of England and Warwick University, Warwick Institute for Employment Research.
- Fell, A., & Kuit, J. A. (2003). Placement learning and the code of practice rhetoric or reality? *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 4(3), 214–225.
- Fong, L. H. N., Luk, C., & Law, R. (2014). How do hotel and tourism students select internship employers? A segmentation approach. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education*, 15, 68–79.
- Fortanier, F., & Van Wijk, J. (2010). Sustainable tourism industry development in sub-Saharan Africa: Consequences of foreign hotels for local employment. *International Business Review*, 19(2), 191–205.
- Foxon, M., Richey, R. C., Roberts, R., & Spannaus, T. (2003). *Training manager competencies: The standards* (3rd ed.). Syracuse, NY: ERIC Clearinghouse on Information and Technology.
- Francis, J. J., Johnston, M., Robertson, C., Glidewell, L., Entwistle, V., Eccles, M. P., & Grimshaw, J. M. (2010). What is an adequate sample size? Operationalising data saturation for theory-based interview studies. *Psychology and Health*, 25(10), 1229–1245.
- Gangl, M. (2002). Changing labour markets and early career outcomes: Labour market entry in Europe over the past decade. *Work, Employment & Society*, 16(1), 67–90.
- Giang, H. (2012). President Rolls Royce Vietnam: 'What do you bring along to us?'. *Vietnamnet*. Retrieved from <http://vietnamnet.vn/vn/giao-duc/44352/chu.tich.rolls.royce.vn.ban.mang-toi.gi.cho.chung.toi.html>.
- Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *Discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Routledge.
- Goh, E., & Lee, C. (2018). A workforce to be reckoned with: The emerging pivotal generation Z hospitality workforce. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 73(July), 20–28.
- Goh, E., & Scerri, M. (2016). "I study accounting because I have to": An exploratory study of hospitality students' attitudes toward accounting education. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education*, 28(2), 85–94.
- Guest, G., Bunce, A., & Johnson, L. (2006). How many interviews are enough? An experiment with data saturation and variability. *Field Methods*, 18(1), 59–82.
- Ha, V. S. (2012). Country presentation: Vietnam tourism master plan to 2020. *Paper presented at the 6th UNWTO Asia-Pacific Executive Training on Tourism Policy and Strategy, Bhutan*.
- Ha, N. (2016). The Government assigns MOLISA as the sole governance body of vocational education. *Tuoi Tre Online*. Retrieved from <http://tuoitre.vn/tin/giao-duc/20160907/chinh-phu-giao-bo-ldtbxh-quan-ly-giao-duc-nghe-nghiep/1167532.html>.
- Harris, K. J., & Zhao, J. (2004). Industry internships: Feedback from participating faculty and industry executives. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 16(7), 429–435.
- Hayden, M., & Lam, Q. T. (2007). Institutional autonomy for higher education in Vietnam. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 26(1), 73–85.
- Hearn, N., Devine, F., & Baum, T. (2007). The implications of contemporary cultural diversity for the hospitality curriculum. *Education + Training*, 49(5), 350–363.
- Heaton, N., McCracken, M., & Harrison, J. (2008). Graduate recruitment and development: Sector influence on a local market/regional economy. *Education + Training*, 50(4), 276–288.
- Heffernan, M., & Flood, P. (2000). An exploration of the relationships between the adoption of managerial competencies, organizational characteristics, human resource sophistication and performance in Irish organizations. *Journal of European Industrial Training*, 24(3/4), 128–136.
- Hiltebeitel, K. M., Leaub, B. A., Larkin, J. M., & Morris, T. W. (2000). Job satisfaction among entry-level accountants. *CPA Journal*, 70(5), 76–78.
- Huynh, K. (2011). Students in Ho Chi Minh City are weak in soft skills. *From Vietnam Talking Point*<http://talk.onevietnam.org/students-in-ho-chi-minh-city-are-weak-in-soft-skills/>.
- Institute of International Education [IIE] (2004). *Higher education in Vietnam update - May 2004*.
- Jafari, J. (2002). Tourism education and training models, getting to the core of destination planning and management. *TedQual*, 1, 29–34.
- Jayawardena, C. (2001). Challenges in international hospitality management education. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 13(6), 310–315.
- Jenkins, A. K. (2001). Making a career of it? Hospitality students' future perspectives: An Anglo-Dutch study. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 12(1), 13–20.
- Jiang, B., & Tribe, J. (2009). 'Tourism jobs – Short lived professions': Student attitudes towards tourism careers in China. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education*, 9(1), 4–19.
- Ju, J., Emenheiser, D. A., Clayton, H. R., & Reynolds, J. S. (1998). Korean students' perceptions of the effectiveness of their internship experiences in the hospitality industry in Korea. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 3(1), 37–44.
- Kay, C., & Moncarz, E. (2004). Knowledge, skills, and abilities for lodging management. *The Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 45(3), 285–298.
- Kay, C., & Russette, J. (2000). Hospitality management competencies: Identifying managers' essential skills. *The Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 41(2), 52–63.
- Keep, E., & Mayhew, K. (2004). The economic and distributional implications of current policies on higher education. *Oxford Review of Economic Policy*, 20(2), 298–314.
- Kerckhoff, A. C. (1995). Institutional arrangements and stratification processes in industrial societies. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 21, 323–347.
- Korpi, T., & Mertens, A. (2004). Training and industrial restructuring: Structural change and labour mobility in West Germany and Sweden. *International Journal of Manpower*, 25, 90–103. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/01437720410525018>.
- Kusluvan, S., & Karamustafa, K. (2001). Multinational hotel development in developing countries: An exploratory analysis of critical policy issues. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 3(3), 179–197.
- Kusluvan, S., & Kusluvan, Z. (2000). Perceptions and attitudes of undergraduate tourism students towards working in the tourism industry in Turkey. *Tourism Management*, 21, 251–269.
- Kusluvan, S., Kusluvan, Z., & Eren, D. (2003). Undergraduate tourism students' satisfaction with student work experience and its impact on their future career intentions: A case study. *Managing Employee Attitudes and Behaviours in the Tourism and Hospitality Industry*, 135–151.
- Kvale, S. (2007). In S. Kvale (Ed.). *Doing interviews*. London: Sage.
- Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2009). *Interviews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Lam, T., & Ching, L. (2007). An exploratory study of an internship program: The case of Hong Kong students. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 26(2), 336–351.
- Lam, T., & Xiao, H. (2000). Challenges and constraints of hospitality and tourism education in China. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 12(5), 291–295.
- Lee, S. A. (2008). Increasing student learning: A comparison of students' perceptions of learning in the classroom environment and their industry-based experiential learning assignments. *Journal of Teaching in Travel & Tourism*, 7(4), 37–54.
- Leslie, D., & Richardson, A. (2000). Tourism and cooperative education in UK undergraduate courses: Are the benefits being realised? *Tourism Management*, 21(5), 489–498.
- Littlejohn, D., & Watson, S. (2004). Developing graduate managers for hospitality and tourism. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 16(7), 408–414.
- Maher, A. (2005). Work experience: The career advantages. *Twentieth Annual Placement*

- Advisors for Tourism and Hospitality Conference, London.*
- Matthew, B. M., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook*. Sage Publications.
- Mayo, C. (2002). *Essential competencies and critical performance measures needed by hospitality and tourism management graduates*. Master's thesis Delaware State University's School of Management.
- McHardy, P., & Allan, T. (2000). Closing the gap between what industry needs and what higher education provides. *Education + Training*, 42(9), 496–508.
- Mehta, A., Felipe, J., Quising, P., & Camingue, S. (2013). Where have all the educated workers gone? Services and wage inequality in three Asian economies. *Metroeconomica*, 64(3), 466–497.
- Ministry of Education and Training [MOET] (2016). *Documents on Vietnam Higher Education*. From <http://www.moet.gov.vn/?page=6.12&type=documents&view=2030>.
- Molseed, T. R., Alsop, J., & Voyles, J. (2003). The role of the employer in shaping students' work-related skills. *Journal of Employment Counseling*, 40(4), 161. Morgan, 2004;
- Montague, A. (2013). Vocational and skill shortages in Vietnamese manufacturing and service sectors, and some plausible solutions. *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources*, 51, 208–227.
- Morrison, A., & O'Mahony, G. B. (2003). The liberation of hospitality management education. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 15(1), 38–44.
- Mowforth, M., & Munt, I. (2003). *Tourism and sustainability: Development, globalisation and new tourism in the third world*. Routledge.
- Nagy, H., Bilsland, C., & Smith, P. (2013). Exporting work-integrated learning to Asian environment. *Proceedings of the International Conference on Managing the Asian Century* (pp. 3–12). Springer Singapore.
- Nelson, A. A., & Dopson, L. (2001). Future of hotel education: Required skills and knowledge for graduates of US hospitality programs beyond the year 2000-part one. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education*, 13(5), 58–67.
- Nguyen, H., & Chaisawat, M. (2011). The current situation and future development of hospitality and tourism higher education in Vietnam. *Journal of Tourism, Hospitality & Culinary Arts*, 3(2), 57–67.
- Nguyen, P., & Robinson, A. (2010). Managing continuous improvement in Vietnam: Unique challenges and approaches to overcome them. *Quality Management Journal*, 17(2), 27–41.
- Nolan, C., Conway, E., Farrell, T., & Monks, K. (2010). Competency needs in Irish hotels: Employer and graduate perspectives. *Journal of European Industrial Training*, 34(5), 432–454.
- Norton, A. (2014). *Mapping Australian higher education 2014–15*. Carlton, Victoria, Australia: Grattan Institute.
- O'Leary, S., & Deegan, J. (2005). Career progression of Irish tourism and hospitality management graduates. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 17(5), 421–432.
- Oliver, D. (2002). The US community college model and Vietnam's higher education system. *Paper presented at the Texas Tech University Vietnam centre's 4th triennial symposium*. Texas: Lubbock.
- Pettilosse, M. J., & Montgomery, R. (1997). An exploratory study of internship practices in hospitality education and industry's perception of the importance of internships in hospitality curriculum. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education*, 9(4), 46–51.
- Pham, T. H. (2008). Higher education in Vietnam: A look from labour market angle. *Hanoi: Vietnam Development Forum*.
- Purcell, K., & Quinn, J. (1996). Exploring the education-employment equation in hospitality management: A comparison of graduates and HNDs. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 15(1), 51–68.
- Qiu Zhang, H., Lam, T., & Bauer, T. (2001). Analysis of training and education needs of mainland Chinese tourism academics in the twenty-first century. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 13(6), 274–279.
- Raybould, M., & Wilkins, H. (2005). Over qualified and under experienced: Turning graduates into hospitality managers. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 17(3), 203–216.
- Raybould, M., & Wilkins, H. (2006). Generic skills for hospitality management: A comparative study of management expectations and student perceptions. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 13(02), 177–188.
- Richardson, S. (2009). Undergraduates' perceptions of tourism and hospitality as a career choice. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 28(3), 382–388.
- Richardson, S. (2010). Generation Y's perceptions and attitudes towards a career in tourism and hospitality. *Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality & Tourism*, 9(2), 179–199.
- Rimington, M. (1999). Vocational education: Challenges for hospitality management in the new millennium. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 11(4), 186–192.
- Saldaña, J. (2013). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (4th Edition). Sage Publications.
- Scherer, S. (2004). Stepping-stones or traps? The consequences of labour market entry positions on future careers in West Germany, Great Britain and Italy. *Work, Employment & Society*, 18(2), 369–394.
- Shariff, N. M. (2013). Reforming hospitality education to fulfil the industry expectations: A case of Universiti Utara Malaysia. *Academic Research International*, 4(2), 243.
- Shin, S. H., & Lee, T. J. (2011). Degree of motivation of international hospitality students in their work place. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sports and Tourism Education (Pre-2012)*, 10(1), 135.
- Singh, A., & Dutta, K. (2010). Hospitality internship placements: Analysis for United Kingdom and India. *Journal of Services Research*, 10(1), 85–99.
- Smith, G., & Cooper, C. (2000). Competitive approaches to tourism and hospitality curriculum design. *Journal of Travel Research*, 39(1), 90.
- So, K. H. (2006). An investigation on new approaches to curriculum design for the knowledge-based society. *The Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 24(3), 39–59.
- Solnet, D., Kralj, A., & Kandampully, J. (2012). Generation Y employees: An examination of work attitude differences. *Journal of Applied Management & Entrepreneurship*, 17(3), 36–54.
- Stephen, W., Doughty, P., Gray, P. J., Hopcroft, J. E., & Silvera, I. F. (2006). *Observations on undergraduate education in computer science, electrical engineering, and physics at select universities in Vietnam*. Washington: Vietnam Education Foundation.
- Suh, E., West, J. J., & Shin, J. (2012). Important competency requirements for managers in the hospitality industry. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education*, 11(2), 101–112.
- Taylor, M. S. (1988). Effects of college internships on individual participants. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 73(3), 393–401.
- Tesone, D. V., & Ricci, P. (2005). Attributes of entry-level employees: Hospitality and tourism managers seeking more than knowledge and skills. *Journal of Applied Management and Entrepreneurship*, 10(2), 3–10.
- Tran, T. T. (2012). Graduate employability: Interpretation versus expectation. *Paper presented at the Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia (HERDSA) Conference, Hobart, Tas., Australia*.
- Tran, T. T. (2013). Limitation on the development of skills in higher education in Vietnam. *Higher Education*, 65, 631–644.
- Tran, T. T. (2015). Is graduate employability the 'whole-of-higher-education-issue'? *Journal of Education and Work*, 28(3), 207–227.
- Tran, L. T., Le, T. T. T., & Nguyen, N. T. (2014). Curriculum and pedagogy. *Higher education in Vietnam: Flexibility, mobility and practicality in the global knowledge economy* (pp. 86–107). Springer.
- Tran, Q. T., & Swierczek, F. W. (2009). Skills development in higher education in Vietnam. *Asia Pacific Business Review*, 15(4), 565–586.
- Tribe, J. (2002). The philosophic practitioner. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 29(2), 338–357.
- Trinh, T. H. M. (2013). Education association between universities and enterprises in Vietnam. *Journal of Economy-Law, Vietnam National University Hanoi*, 24, 30–34.
- Truong, Q. (2006). Human resource management in Vietnam. In A. Nankervis, S. Chatterjee, & J. Coffey (Eds.), *Perspectives of Human Resource Management in the Asia Pacific*. Sydney: Pearson.
- United Nations Conference on Trade and Development [UNCTAD] (2007). *FDI in tourism: The development dimension*. New York and Geneva: United Nations.
- Valley, T. J., & Wilkinson, B. (2008). Vietnamese higher education: Crisis and response. *Memorandum: Higher education task force*. Harvard Kennedy School.
- Velde, C., & Cooper, T. (2000). Students' perspectives of workplace learning and training in vocational education. *Education + Training*, 42(2), 83–92.
- Vietnam National Administration of Tourism [VNAT] (2012). *Shortage of high quality human resources in tourism industry*. From <http://vietnamtourism.gov.vn/english/index.php/items/10953>.
- Vietnam National Administration of Tourism [VNAT] (2016). *Tourist accommodation establishments (200–2015)*. From <http://vietnamtourism.gov.vn/english/index.php/items/10262>.
- Walo, M. (1999). The latest win-win strategy in recruiting hotel staff. *Hotel Management*, 12(7), 32–33.
- Walo, M. (2001). Assessing the contribution of internship in developing Australian tourism and hospitality students' management competencies. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education*, 2(2), 12–28.
- Wang, S., & Huang, X. (2014). College Students' perceptions of tourism careers in China: Implications for the industry and education providers. *Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality & Tourism*, 13(3), 211–233.
- Wang, J., Huyton, J., Gao, X., & Ayres, H. (2010). Evaluating undergraduate courses in tourism management: A comparison between Australia and China. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sports and Tourism Education*, 9(2).
- World Tourism Organisation [WTO]. (2004). *WTO recommendations to governments for supporting and/or establishing national certification systems for sustainable tourism*. From <http://www.world-tourism.org/sustainable/doc/certification-gov-recomm.pdf>.
- World Tourism Organisation [WTO] (2016). *Tourism statistics*. From <http://www.e-unwto.org/toc/unwtotfb/current>.
- Yildirim, A., & Simsek, H. (2001). A qualitative assessment of the curriculum development process at secondary vocational schools in Turkey. *Journal of Career and Technical Education*, 18(1), 19–31.
- Yiu, M., & Law, R. (2012). A review of hospitality internship: Different perspectives of students, employers, and educators. *Journal of Teaching in Travel & Tourism*, 12(4), 377–402.
- Zagonari, F. (2009). Balancing tourism education and training. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 28(1), 2–9.
- Zopiatis, A. (2007). Hospitality internships in Cyprus: A genuine academic experience or a continuing frustration? *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 19(1), 65–77.
- Zopiatis, A., & Constanti, P. (2007). "And never the twain shall meet": Investigating the hospitality industry-education relationship in Cyprus. *Education + Training*, 49(5), 391–407.



Dr Anh Le is currently a lecturer and research fellow at Griffith University in Australia. Her research interest focuses on curriculum development in tertiary education, with a particular interest in the process of building knowledge through scholarly engagement with industry in mix-sector higher education institutions. She has diverse experience, in teaching and curriculum development, across various disciplines in higher education sector, with postgraduate qualifications in Education, Linguistics, Tourism and Hospitality, and Health and Community.



Dr Klieve currently lectures in research methodology within the School of Education at Griffith University. In this role she teaches research methods in the PG and Doctoral Programs and supervises Post Graduate and doctoral students. She adopts a strong mixed methods approach to her research with particular expertise in survey design and analysis. Her current research is focussed around the contribution of education in the context of social disadvantage and social justice.



Dr Christine McDonald is currently Program Director of the Doctor of Education program at Griffith University in Australia. In her role she is involved in helping international doctoral candidates conceptualise and refine their research projects. Her collaborative research with international researchers has resulted in the publication of a variety of studies, including research investigating the tertiary education context in Vietnam and Saudi Arabia, and global studies of textbook representations.