

TRENDS IN HOSPITALITY HIGHER EDUCATION: ANALYSIS OF EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN FIRST 15 QS WORLD UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract

Purpose - The changes caused by economic and technological development are present in all sectors of an advanced industrial society. The educational sector as such is not exempt from such changes; on the contrary, changes in the educational sector are becoming necessary.

The challenges in transforming the entire educational system affect all segments of the educational process, including curricula, learning materials, teaching practices, and educational stakeholders. The hospitality industry, as a part of the overall economy based on human resources due to its specificity, is different from other industries and as such has a direct impact on the design of the educational model for future hospitality employees.

Methodology - This paper aims to identify trends in higher education institutions for the hospitality industry, with a particular focus on analyzing the top 15 QS ranking world universities. The focus of the paper is to identify the challenges faced by higher education institutions specializing in the field of hospitality education and to analyze the educational programs that respond to the challenges and needs of the market. For the analysis of the collected data, the study used a qualitative methodology, employing a summative content analysis.

Findings - The analysis of the educational system of established universities in the field of tourism and hospitality provides insight into specific teaching models for the hospitality industry. The results of the research showed that the focus of universities is in the segment of a tailor-made specialization, an internship in high-quality hospitality brands, and subjects that have foundations in hospitality, management, food and beverage, and marketing.

Contribution - The research findings of this paper provide insight into the direction of further innovation of degree programs specializing in the hospitality field.

Keywords Education programs, Models and trends, Hospitality, Higher education

INTRODUCTION

Despite all the challenges and changes that the hospitality industry faces, it constantly shows its resilience and tendencies to grow and develop. As a service-oriented sector, it has distinctive characteristics in its business operations that require special skills and knowledge from students who are trained to work in the hospitality industry. Lade et al. (2020) stating Whitelaw et al., points that “these characteristics include the inseparability of production and consumption, the nature of guest relations, labor-intensive work, cultural diversity of staff and guests, and low barriers to entry into the industry”. Based on this, Lade et al. (2020) quoted Chapman and Lovell which defined that skills commonly associated with the hospitality workforce include “oral and written communication skills, ethics, problem solving, leadership, critical thinking, and strategic planning”. This means that the curriculum at the educational level “needs to be structured in a way that

allows students to engage with different perspectives related to their field” and acquire the necessary attributes to meet the demands of the industry (Lade et al., 2020). Blank and Chiesa (2011) argue that tourism-focused education levels have a direct impact on a country’s tourism competitiveness, which is why education plays an important role in tourism sector competitiveness strategies (Renfors et al., 2020).

1. HOSPITALITY HIGHER EDUCATION

In recent years, interest in the field of human resources training has increased for several reasons: 1) a greater awareness of the need for skilled personnel able to satisfy tourists looking for increasingly intense experiences; 2) greater attention by universities to collaborate with firms; and 3) the higher education system has recognized the importance of the tourism sector for both research and education activities (Varra, et al., 2021). Numerous authors (Vara et al., 2021; Chiru et al., 2012; Connolly and McGing, 2006; Cristou, 1999; Jaykumar, Leena and Kandappan, 2014; Lupu, Tănase, and Nica 2014; Ruetzler et al., 2014; Zopiatis and Constanti, 2007) try to identify gaps between the needs of the tourism industry and the knowledge acquired in educational programs in their research. “Hospitality education is specifically designed for tourism or hospitality students to develop highly skilled professionals with attributes such as global vision and leadership” (Kim and Jeong, 2018), public social awareness, innovation, and entrepreneurship (Hai, 2021). Sigala and Baum (2003) point out that enormous changes are taking place in advanced industrial societies, brought about by intended and unintended consequences of economic and technological development. In this context, the education sector is no exception, and significant changes are occurring in this area as well. Airey et al. (2014) point out that education in the hospitality industry is currently facing significant challenges due to the pressures of the global environment related to the changing needs of the industry, the dynamics of student markets, and the pressures on the academic workforce. All of this leads to the conclusion that the tourism and hospitality education sector is facing a transformation of the educational process (Sigala and Baum, 2003) that includes curricula, learning materials, instructional practices, and educational stakeholders. Baum (2001) points out that the hospitality industry has operational and workforce characteristics that distinguish it from other industry sectors and have direct implications for the provision of education and training. As Lade et al. (2020) noted, bachelor’s degrees in the hospitality industry often combine academic knowledge, professional skills, and competencies with some form of practical experience in the industry. Numerous authors have noted in their studies (Whitelaw et al., 2009; Airey et al., 2014; Kim and Jeong, 2018) particular mismatches between the goals sought in academic curricula and the professional skills required to work in the hospitality industry. Sigala (2001 and 2002) highlights that hospitality curricula and delivery mechanisms should increasingly promote and inculcate the development of information literacy and knowledge management skills. Sigala and Baum (2003) explain how students who possess these skills would be able to: “recognize an information need, identify and locate appropriate information sources, evaluate the quality of information received, organize and analyze the information, use information effectively, and share and disseminate information sources for problem-solving or knowledge-creating activities”. One of the distinctive features of hospitality education is the tradition of practical and craft training (Gillespie and Baum, 2000), which continues to have an extraordinary

influence on the entire educational process. As mentioned earlier, hospitality education plays an important role in preparing students to acquire professional and practical skills that are traditionally in demand in the industry in technical areas or in so-called socio-emotional areas, especially in terms of quality service delivery (Baum, 2002). Today, broader management and information processing skills are required, as well as a whole range of soft skills (Westwood, 2004; Ritzer, 2004). Varra (2021) points out that two new necessary concepts for higher skills in tourism have finally been discovered in the literature. "Aesthetic skills" (Nickson et al., 2003; Warhurst et al., 2000), defined as the ability to respond to fashion or, especially in luxury hotel structures, to have good conversations about politics, music, sports, or the like. "Cultural skills" identified by Ang et al. (2007) and Earley and Ang (2003) as an important skill to relate to different cultures. Although universities seem to have recognized the need to provide students with these skills and prepare them for the new demands of the knowledge age, their programs sometimes fail to meet these conditions. For this reason, it is necessary to investigate how the best universities in the world provide their students with the best hotel management skills. The aim of this paper is to identify and analyze the study programs of the best universities in the world in the field of hospitality education. Based on the analyzed data, it will provide insight into how educational programs can be designed in the future to provide a better education to students who want to work in the hospitality industry in the future.

2. METHODOLOGY

The main method for data analysis in this paper is content analysis. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) claim that "content analysis has a long history in research, dating back to the 18th century in Scandinavia". Holsti in Momanyi (2012) defines "content analysis as any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specific characteristics of messages". Numerous researchers evaluate "content analysis as a flexible method for analyzing textual data" (Cavanagh, 1997). Originally, content analysis was used either as a qualitative or quantitative method. Nowadays, qualitative content analysis is one of the many research methods used to analyze textual data (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). Downe-Wamboldt (1992) points out that the aim of content analysis is to create knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon under study. Chawla (2015), citing Weber, points out that the process of content analysis can help researchers identify or categorize themes. Chawla (2015) argues that advances in Internet technology have made corporate websites an important medium for communicating a company's initiatives and goals. According to Groschl (2011), the Internet is now an important channel for disseminating important corporate communications such as annual reports and consumer information.

Therefore, the primary data for this study was obtained from the official website QS TopUniversitas and the official websites of each college, which were used for further analysis. In addition, the content analysis and text mining software WordStat 9.0 was used. For the purpose of this analysis, a list of subjects of all analyzed universities in undergraduate hospitality management programs was compiled. In order to analyze the data as accurately as possible, the subject lists of all universities were studied in detail, and after the possibilities of misinterpretation of some data were identified, the process of coding certain synonyms was started (Wordstat 9, 2021). Only after the subject lists were matched and adequately coded was further data analysis conducted in the Wordstat software.

3. RESULTS

QS World University Rankings is an annual publication of university rankings by Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) (QS Topuniversities, 2022). The QS system consists of three parts: the overall global ranking, the subject rankings, and five independent regional tables. Institutions are evaluated in six categories to capture university performance. The six indicators that drive the QS World University Ranking are: academic peer review (40%), faculty/student ratio (20%), citations per faculty (20%), employer reputation (10%), international student ratio (5%), and international staff ratio (5%) (QS Topuniversities, 2022). QS The European Commission's global surveys of academics and employers are used to assess the international reputation of universities in each subject. The indicators used to assess the impact of research are based on research citations per paper and the h-index in each subject. These are taken from Elsevier's Scopus database. An additional indicator is used for the cross-faculty area. International Research Network (IRN) sheds light on an institution's sustained international research collaboration. This indicator was introduced in 2022. QS also ranks universities by academic discipline, and for the purposes of this study, the academic discipline of Social Sciences, Hospitality & Leisure Management was approved. The table below shows the top 15 universities in the world for the field of Hospitality & Leisure Management in 2022.

Table 1. QS World University Rankings by Subject 2022: Hospitality & Leisure Management

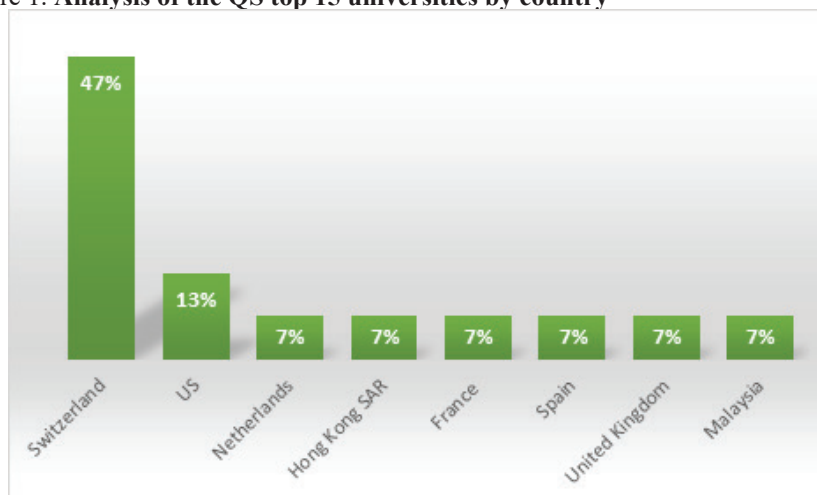
QS Rank 2022		QS Rank 2021	University	Country	Overall score
1	=	1	EHL Hospitality Business School	Switzerland	99.4
2	=	2	University of Nevada – Las Vegas	US	90.5
3	↑	4	SHMS – Swiss Hotel Management School	Switzerland	88.5
4	↓	3	Glion Institute of Higher Education	Switzerland	85.8
5	↓	4	Les Roches Global Hospitality Management Education	Switzerland	85.7
6	↑	7	Cesar Ritz Colleges Switzerland	Switzerland	84.5
7	↓	6	Hotel Institute Montreux	Switzerland	83.9
9	↓	5	Hotelschool The Hague	Netherlands	78.1
10	↓	9	The Hong Kong Polytechnic University	Hong Kong SAR	72.4
11	↑	19	Vatel, Hotel & Tourism Business School	France	69.0

12	↑	24	University College of Hospitality Management and Culinary Arts of Sant Pol de Mar, Barcelona	Spain	68.9
13	↓	12	Cornell University	US	68.4
14	↑	11	University of Surrey	United Kingdom	68.0
15	↓	13	HTMi Hotel and Tourism Management Institute Switzerland	Switzerland	66.1
16	↑	17	Taylor's University	Malaysia	66.0

Source: <https://www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings/university-subject-rankings/2022/hospitality-leisure-management>, April 2022.

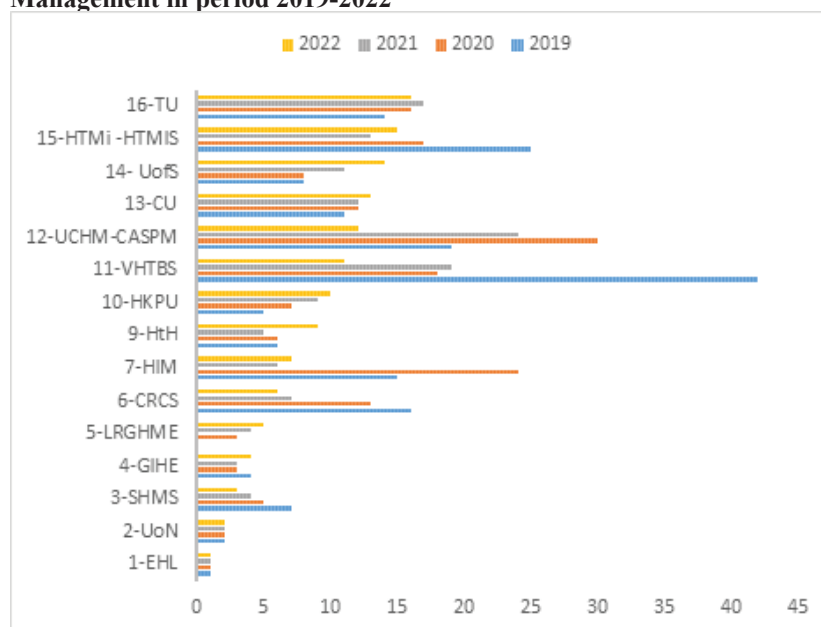
The highest rated university in hospitality education is EHL Hospitality Business School from Switzerland with 99.4 total points. According to the analyzed data, 47% of the universities ranked in the top 15 from QS are located in Switzerland (Figure 1), and two universities are from the US.

Figure 1. Analysis of the QS top 15 universities by country



Over the past four years, the ranking of institutions in the top two places has not changed. In 2019, EHL Hospitality Business School from Switzerland ranks first, while the University of Nevada from the United States remains second. According to the analysis of QS rankings, the greatest advances in 2022 were made by Vatel, Hotel & Tourism Business School from France, and University College of Hospitality Management and Culinary Arts of Sant Pol de Mar, Barcelona from Spain, which can be seen in the graphical representation in the continuation of the article.

Figure 2. QS World University Rankings by Subject: Hospitality & Leisure Management in period 2019-2022



Note: **EHL** - Hospitality Business School, University of Nevada – Las Vegas, **SHMS** – Swiss Hotel Management School, **GIHE** - Glion Institute of Higher Education, **LRGHME** - Les Roches Global Hospitality Management Education, **CRCS** - Cesar Ritz Colleges Switzerland, **HIM** - Hotel Institute Montreux, **HtH** - Hotelschool The Hague, **HKPU** - The Hong Kong Poltechnic University, **VHTBS** -Vatel, Hotel &Tourism Business School, **UCHM-CASPM** - University College of Hospitality Management and Culinary Arts of Sant Pol de Mar, Barcelona, **CU** - Cornell University, **UoFS** - University of Surrey, **HTMi – HTMIS** - Hotel and Tourism Management Institute Switzerland, **TU** - Taylor’s University

Such significant success of EHL University can be attributed to its high specialization in the education of students for the hotel industry. The distinctive feature of its education is that it combines practical experience and applied management techniques with academic rigor (EHL, 2022). Each student primarily participates in the preparatory year, which serves as a foundation for the rest of the educational process, acquiring basic knowledge of hotel and restaurant operations and providing a professional foundation for the management and strategy courses. One of the special features of the EHL educational program is the internship program in Ritz Carlton hotels and a tailor-made specialization. Through this special form of education and the extensive network ALUMNI, EHL brings students together with industry leaders and expert faculty to explore best practices, conduct research and implement innovations. Further analysis of the specificity of the programs offered by the top 7 ranked faculties reveals the specialization programs offered to students in different forms. The Swiss Hotel Management School (SHMS) offers a specialization in the last year of study, which is available in three areas: International Hospitality Management, International Hospitality and Events Management, International Hospitality and Design Management. Glion Institute of Higher Education offers an organized specialization-related field trip in addition to the specialization in the final year of study. Les Roches Global Hospitality Management Education students choose a specialization at the end of their studies in one

of the 5 areas offered: Hospitality Entrepreneurship, Digital Marketing Strategies, Hotel Financial Performance Management, Resort Development and Management, Sustainable Development and Practices. The same form of educational program is offered in the last year of study at the Hotel Institute Montreux, where students can also choose between 5 areas of narrow specialization: Financial Analysis & Wealth Management, Human Capital and Development, Management for the Senior Living Industry, Luxury Brand Management, Franchise Business Management. All the universities included in the analysis have programs with a duration of 3 to 4 years and the mandatory implementation of internships as a common element.

Table 2. Analysis of the educational programs of the 15 best QS universities

#	UNIVERSITY	DEGREE	STUDY DURATION	INTERNSHIP	INTERNSHIP DURATION
1	EHL Hospitality Business School	Bachelor of Science in International Hospitality Management	4 years + preparatory year	✓	12 months
2	University of Nevada – Las Vegas	Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management	4 years	✓	2 months
3	SHMS – Swiss Hotel Management School	Bachelor of Arts in International Hospitality Management	3 years	✓	8-12 months
4	Glion Institute of Higher Education	Bachelor (BBA) in International Hospitality Business	3,5 years	✓	2 semester - approximately 6 months
5	Les Roches Global Hospitality Management Education	BBA in Global Hospitality Management	3,5 years	✓	12 months
6	Cesar Ritz Colleges Switzerland	Bachelor of International Business in Hotel And Tourism Management from César Ritz Colleges Switzerland*	3 years	✓	8-12 months
7	Hotel Institute Montreux	Bachelor of Business Administration in Hospitality Management	3 years	✓	4-6 months
8	Hotelschool The Hague	Bachelor in hospitality management	4 years	✓	49 weeks - approximately 1,5 month
9	The Hong Kong Poltechnic University	Bachelor of Science BSc(Hons) Scheme in Hotel and Tourism Management	4 years	✓	6 months
10	Vatel, Hotel & Tourism Business School	European Bachelor of Management in Hospitality & Tourism	3 years	✓	13-16 months
11	University College of Hospitality Management and Culinary Arts of Sant Pol de Mar, Barcelona	Bachelor's Degree in Hospitality and Tourism Management (UdG)	4 years	✓	14-16 months

12	Cornell University	Bachelor of Science in Hotel Administration	4 years	✓	1-2 months
13	University of Surrey	BSc (Hons) International Hospitality and Tourism Management	3 years	✓	optionally depending on chosen course
14	HTMi Hotel and Tourism Management Institute Switzerland	BSc International Hospitality Management	3 years	✓	66 weeks – approximately 2 months
15	Taylor’s University	Bachelor of International Hospitality Management (Hons)	3 years	✓	6 months

The duration of the professional internship varies according to the courses offered by the universities, but on average, it can be said that most faculties have a compulsory professional internship of 6 to 12 months duration, depending on whether the professional internship is carried out only in one academic year or is compulsory in all academic years. Vatel, Hotel & Tourism Business School and University College of Hospitality Management and Culinary Arts of Sant Pol de Mar, Barcelona, have the longest duration of the professional internship, with 13-16 months. These two universities have made the biggest jump in recent years in the QS ranking of the best universities for training hotel professionals.

In the further analysis of the data, the WordStat software was used, which allowed a more detailed analysis of the content of the programs themselves in terms of the subjects and areas that appear most frequently in the educational programs of the universities analyzed. In the continuation of the work, the number of occurrences of the keywords is defined visually, and the results of the data analysis show that frequencies such as: Management (124), Hospitality (103), Tourism (38), Food (31) and Marketing (30) occur most frequently.

Figure 3. Word frequency analysis – Word cloud



For further analysis of the program content, the most frequent phrases and their occurrence in the programs were filtered out.

Table 3. Analysis of the most frequent phrases in educational programs

PHRASES	FREQUENCY	NO. CASES	% CASES	LENGTH	TF • IDF
Food and beverage	24	12	80,00	3	2,3
Hospitality industry	14	8	53,33	2	3,8
Tourism and events	12	2	13,33	3	10,5
Foreign languages	10	10	66,67	2	1,8
Human resources	10	10	66,67	2	1,8
Management hospitality	10	7	46,67	2	3,3
Real estate	10	3	20,00	2	7,0
Internship	9	9	60,00	2	2,0
Financial accounting	8	8	53,33	2	2,2
Project management	8	7	46,67	2	2,6
Managerial accounting	7	7	46,67	2	2,3
Digital marketing	6	5	33,33	2	2,9
Food and beverage management	6	6	40,00	4	2,4
Food and beverage operations	6	5	33,33	4	2,9
Management food and beverage	6	4	26,67	4	3,4
Financial management	5	5	33,33	2	2,4
Hospitality and tourism	5	2	13,33	3	4,4
Revenue management	5	5	33,33	2	2,4
Tourism and hospitality	5	2	13,33	3	4,4
Cost control	4	4	26,67	2	2,3
Foreign languages hospitality	4	4	26,67	3	2,3
Hospitality and events	4	3	20,00	3	2,8
Hospitality marketing	4	4	26,67	2	2,3
Management information	4	4	26,67	2	2,3
Management principles	4	3	20,00	2	2,8
Minor future	4	1	6,67	2	4,7
Research methods	4	4	26,67	2	2,3
Corporate social responsibility	3	3	20,00	3	2,1
Culminating experience	3	1	6,67	2	3,5
Data analytics	3	2	13,33	2	2,6
Decision making	3	3	20,00	2	2,1
Employment law	3	3	20,00	2	2,1
Event experience	3	2	13,33	2	2,6
Fine dining	3	2	13,33	2	2,6
Food and beverage management food	3	3	20,00	5	2,1
Hotel operations	3	3	20,00	2	2,1

Management introduction	3	2	13,33	2	2,6
Organizational behavior	3	3	20,00	2	2,1
Real estate development	3	2	13,33	3	2,6
Restaurant operations	3	2	13,33	2	2,6
Services marketing	3	3	20,00	2	2,1
Sustainable development	3	3	20,00	2	2,1

Note: TF*IDF - Term frequency weighted by inverse document frequency

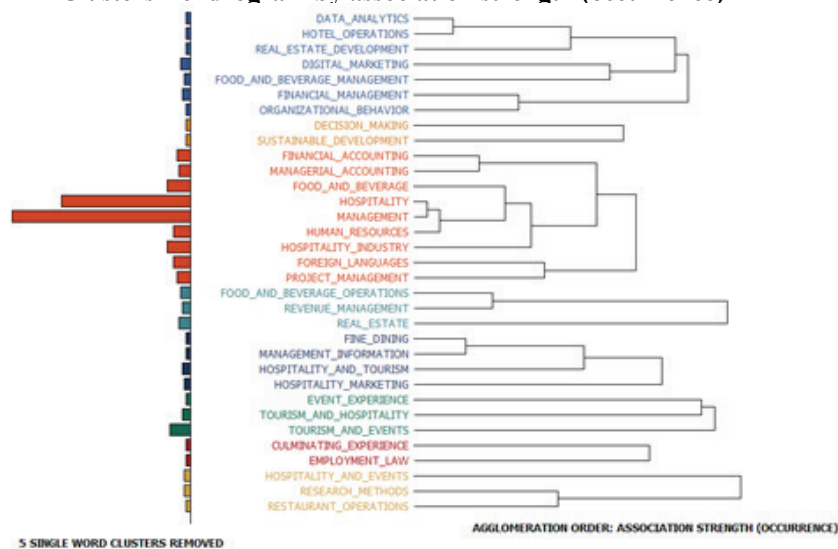
It is obvious that the phrases: Food and Beverage, Hospitality Industry, Tourism and Events are among the most common in the educational programs of the universities studied. Also, the phrases food and beverages (80% of cases) and hospitality industry (53% of cases) have the highest percentage of cases in which this phrase occurs. In the next phase of the analysis of the educational programs, the thematic structures were studied, which were conceived as topics shown in the table below.

Table 4. **Topic modelling analysis of QS top 15 educational programs**

Topic	Keywords	Freq	% cases
Hospitality industry tourism and events	Hospitality; tourism; events; industry; digital; entrepreneurship; hospitality industry; tourism and events; hospitality and tourism; tourism and hospitality;	127	93,33%
Real estate	Estate; real estate; real; development; finance;	23	26,67%
Food and beverage	Food; beverage; operations; food and beverage; food and beverage operations; food and beverage management;	57	100,00%
Human resources	human resources; resources; human; managing;	17	73,33%
Foreign languages	Foreign; foreign languages; languages;	10	66,67%

The analysis identified 5 relevant thematic structures, of which Hospitality Industry Tourism and Events had the highest frequency (127) of all terms listed in the keyword column in 93% of the cases. The dendrogram below shows that categories such as hospitality, management, food and beverage, hospitality industry, human resources are the most combined categories clustered in a high association strength.

Figure 4. Clusters Dendrogram by association strength (occurrence)



The analysis of the educational programs of the 15 best QS universities in the world in the field of Hospitality & Leisure Management has shown that the diversity in the conception of the educational content, the innovative realization models of the study programs and the focus on a narrow specialization of the students are the keys to achieving the best results. The research has shown that all the universities studied offer identical programs in the areas of professional practice, foreign languages, educational areas related to the hospitality industry, management, finance, marketing, food and beverage. Educational areas in which the specificity of each university is recognized are visible in the design of customized specialization, the possibility of personalized internship and the dynamics and type of educational programs.

CONCLUSION

Hospitality education is of great importance today, as it is responsible for developing young professionals who will rebuild the global economy of tomorrow. The sudden changes faced by the pandemic, together with a whole series of technological innovations, have created a tourism that is very different from that of recent years. It has become a pressing concern to understand how today's hospitality students must be educated to be prepared and equipped to succeed as leaders in the sector tomorrow (EHL, 2022). This is a turning point and a great opportunity to innovate, transform, and embrace digitalization (Rousseau, 2021).

The education system must rethink its methods of tomorrow. New models and teaching methods for hospitality professions must keep pace with changes in the marketplace. Educational frameworks and programs must be flexible and dynamic to adapt to the real needs of the sector. As every time we have been affected by major changes so far, the world has found a new way to adapt, and the changes that resulted from

major global milestones became an integral part of normal operations once they were adopted. The changes brought to the education system by the COVID -19 pandemic and the new generation of students will not be the “new normal,” they will simply become “normal.” Perhaps it helps to think along the lines that the education system needed a change because of the impending generational shift, the pandemic has only accelerated that process and forced us to adapt quickly and without much resistance. According to QS Topuniversities (2022) there is no going back to the old and the trends of the “new normal” will be implemented in all aspects of our lives. Given the dramatic pace of innovation in technology, new teaching models and techniques in higher education, and consequently new areas of education, are an inevitable sequence of events, and it is important to track how the best universities respond to the challenges and how they present their changes in a way that best resonates with students. Currently, it has become evident that educational programs for the acquisition of practical skills, integrated into the curriculum, are becoming an important milestone for the quality of education of students as future employees in the hospitality industry. Carefully designed models of practical classes that are comprehensively aligned with the business of hotel facility with an adequate work time have proven to tip the scales in achieving better educational program outcomes. Involving real-world professionals in the design of programs and involving top hotels in the implementation of professional practices is the only right way to educate students and develop their knowledge and skills. Apart from practical skills, the analysis of competencies required for the hotel industry highlighted soft skills, aesthetic skills, and cultural competencies as necessary. To enable the acquisition of these skills, the universities studied have included specific courses in their curricula. Thus, for the acquisition of soft skills, courses such as Professional Communication, Oral Communication, Team Leadership, Business Writing, and Personal Development can be singled out from the programs studied. For the development of aesthetic skills, the universities studied offer courses such as Aesthetic Expressions, Luxury Brands, Luxury Hospitality and Luxury Management. A significant number of the best universities organize international internship programs to provide their students with encounters with different cultures, thus creating the necessary conditions for the development of cultural skills, in addition to numerous courses focused on cultural diversity in the hospitality industry. Educational institutions will certainly move in the direction of innovative study programs that adapt the practical part of teaching to students, tailored specialization, highly personalized study programs, specialization according to student preferences, programs adapted to the needs of employers and allow the acquisition of specific knowledge and skills. Models and trends in higher education in hospitality need to move toward transformative education, where practical teaching in the real sector is the foundation of the curriculum. Real-world skills that enable students to concretely apply business knowledge with the possibility of high specialization are essential. It is necessary to build a resilient education system that meets all the challenges and needs of modern hospitality personnel.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Analyzing educational programs in terms of the availability of information through college websites is a major challenge. Notwithstanding the increasing commitment and need to incorporate information technologies in communicating with students, some universities have not published detailed programs of their educational offerings. It is definitely recommended for further research and analysis to compare programs in terms of teaching load and ECTS credits. It would also be significant to analyze the learning outcomes projected by each program.

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