

Research in

HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT



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Academy of International
Hospitality Research



RESEARCH IN HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT

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Aims and Scope

Research in Hospitality Management (RHM) is a peer-reviewed journal publishing articles that make an original contribution to the understanding of hospitality and to the theory and practice of international hospitality management.

The journal has three main sections, reflecting the three major foci of its contributions. The first section, 'Hospitality Management Studies', includes articles related to the study of and the study for hospitality. The study of hospitality refers to studies about the essence and ethics of hospitality from a social sciences perspective, while the study for hospitality refers to a more disciplinary approach according to the quintessential managerial areas of Finance, Human Resources, Operations, Marketing & Sales, and Technology.

The second section, 'Hospitality Management Education', is devoted to articles about curriculum content and delivery methods for training and educating hospitality managers. Considering the size and scope of the hospitality industry, and the number of staff and students involved, studies on efficient, effective, and innovative ways of developing hospitality competencies are considered indispensable.

The third section, 'Student Research Projects', allows excellent student work to be published. Student work can relate to excellent BA dissertations or MA theses.

RHM also accommodates short communications, working papers, book reviews, and discussion papers

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Editorial

This double issue of *Research in Hospitality Management* embraces the full array of themes identified as an ambition for the journal (editorial Vol. 3.1). The study of hospitality, and the study for hospitality, suggests a wide agenda capable of attracting academic enquiry both for informing industrial practice and as a subject of interest in itself. Although the word hospitality was initially employed as something of a ruse designed to obscure the commercial imperatives implicit in bars, hotels, and restaurants, etc., it did also highlight the universal aspect of hosting in human society. The duty of the host to welcome and protect guests is a central feature of human morality throughout history and around the world. It is only in recent years, and in more affluent societies, that these obligations no longer have the central importance that they once did. Perhaps increased travel, together with the increased availability of commercial provision, has reduced dependency on private domestic hospitality and the moralistic obligations to be the welcoming host? That said, there is much that commercial hospitality providers can learn from these earlier social obligations and several articles in this issue of *Research in Hospitality Management* hint at lessons to be learnt.

The Hospitality Management Studies

My piece with Matthew Blain, *Hospitableness: the new service metaphor? Developing an instrument for measuring hosting*, reports on Matthew's work attempting to identify the qualities of hospitableness through a questionnaire. Fundamentally, the paper suggests that commercial organisations could benefit from employing individuals who possess and demonstrate the qualities of hospitableness, because it allows the possibility of providing service experiences to customers that build a competitive advantage compared with competitors. The issue being confronted by this paper is that there is no instrument for recognising the qualities of hospitableness in applicants for work in commercial contexts. The paper shares the experience of developing an instrument that aims to identify genuine or altruistic hospitality within respondents.

Roy Wood's contribution, *Snobbery and the triumph of bourgeois values: a speculative analysis of implications for hospitality* provides an interesting discussion of a topic rarely touched on in academic hospitality studies. Yet the activities of eating and drinking, and socializing in commercial hospitality spaces provide major fora in which the social performance of individuals and groups can be assessed, evaluated and approved or condemned. Wood's work shows that this snobbish assessment embraces more than performance and includes the language that is used to describe an array of human activities, as well as acts of consumption of industry commodities such as food and wine. Indeed the hotel and restaurant brands' language and imagery are suffused with appeals to snobbery and in-group insights that distinguish the snobbish knowledge of being 'in the know' when compared to social groups who are not.

Can brand personality differentiate fast food restaurants? Here a paper authored by Alisha Ali at Sheffield Hallam University and Vishal Sharma from PriceWaterHouse Coopers explores some interesting aspects of brand values associated with fast food chains. Clearly, one unifying feature of McDonalds, Kentucky Fried Chicken and Subway is that they are all uniformity dependent in that part of the attraction is that customers know what to expect in that the products and services on offer are highly standardised. The results demonstrated that even though the overall perceived brand personality was different for all three brands, no individual personality dimension characterised any of the brands.

Gaurav Chawla and Marcelina Wanjiru Ndung'u from the Swiss Management School, in *The ethics of all-inclusive plan: an investigation of social sustainability: the case of all-inclusive resorts, Jamaica*, argue that ethics and sustainability are commonly used catchphrases in the modern business world. As several hospitality entities go out of their way to provide the emergent pro-environmentalist guest with value added 'green' goods and services, others are forced to re-analyse their operational strategies to maintain competitive advantage. Specifically, the research recognises that sustainability is not limited to environmental practices, but also focuses on economic benefits and social development, yet this is rarely the focus of research. This research also considers the implication of these concerns within an all-inclusive business model that limits the rewards flowing from individual efforts and from the complexities arising from sustainability and flow of visitors to a destination, in this case Jamaica.

An investigation in purchasing practices of small food and beverage operators, authored by Michel Altan of NHTV, Breda, the Netherlands, and Christine Demen-Meier, EHL Ecole Hôtelière de Lausanne, Switzerland, explores the presence or absence of food and beverage purchasing skills amongst small hospitality firms. The research is informed by a detailed study of six small firms and in-depth interviews with the owner-managers. Findings suggest a reluctance to employ technology to support purchasing activities and a reliance on tradition indicators. Overall, the process organisation within small food service operators offers much room for improvement, as there are, currently, few or no

structured approaches to key processes such as negotiation, the evaluation of suppliers or matters of supplier development.

Joseph Hegarty's paper, *The cosmological aspects of food in material world*, raises some interesting philosophical issues. Whilst there are a number ways of using the word cosmology, and the degree of assertiveness associated with the narratives that these views project vary, cosmology does suggest that we need to conceive of the study of food within declared belief systems about the nature of matter and human existence. The way food and drink is produced, harvested, processed, stored and consumed is intimately interwoven with assumptions about human beings and their existence in the world. Indeed, it is not accidental that manners and norms about cooking and dining are often expressions of the religiosity and culture via which human groups differentiate themselves from others. This paper acts as an important stimulant for research into the cultural assumptions about food in different social contexts.

The role of employee wellness programme in the hospitality industry: a review of concepts, research, and practice by Tingting Zhang, Jay Kandampully and Hye Yoon Choi, all based in the Department of Human Sciences, Ohio State University, in the USA, highlights recent industry practice that recognises an oft asserted truth by academic researchers that employees are the cornerstone of the customer experience and thereby the means of gaining competitive advantage. Specifically employee wellness programmes and their related concepts, such as a corporate wellness culture, are key factors that can influence the success of hospitality businesses. Positive outcomes of employee wellness programmes, such as employee engagement, customer engagement, productivity, profitability, and so forth, emerge from this review of previous literature. In addition, this article presents several successful business practices associated with the employee wellness programmes implemented by leading hospitality firms, for managerial reference.

Hospitality Management Education

Sjoerd Gehrels' (Stenden University of Applied Sciences) paper, *Learning from the discourse of culinary entrepreneurship*, explores the chefs/entrepreneurs associated with the fine dining market in Holland. These operators can be seen as a variant of lifestyle entrepreneurs in that they are not driven primarily by the desire to maximise economic gain. Their commitment to this small but highly significant strand of the restaurant business is deeply linked to a desire to run a business venture that allows them to express their creativity via food preparation and service. The paper goes on to draw lessons from the interviewee profiles that can be used to inform students on hospitality management programmes who may be drawn towards this market segment.

Contrasting and comparing the expectations of Master's students and their temporary employers is the subject of *The conflict between industry host and masters students' expectations on students entering the hospitality industry* by Rajka Presbury, Janette Illingworth and Scott Richardson of the Blue Mountains International Hotel School in Sydney, Australia. The paper specifically explores their engagement during placement periods when students are working alongside employers so as to gain industrial experience and skills. The findings confirm findings from some of the projects in which I personally have been involved. Students, particularly those with a first degree not in hospitality, are often unaware of some of the dress, and behavioral, codes required of jobs within the sector. For their part, employers are not always aware of what a Master's degree programme entails and the skill sets being developed. In many cases, they themselves have limited post-school education.

Addressing sustainability in hotel management education: designing a curriculum based on input from key stakeholders by Frans Melissen and Maartje Damen, both of Academy of Hotel Management, NHTV Breda University of Applied Sciences, explores the needs of a sustainability programme as an element of the curriculum for future hospitality managers. Specifically, it suggests that the programme needs to provide students with an ethical framework that helps them develop a reflective attitude towards their own and others' actions and decisions. This framework should focus on generic values and norms, but also on envisioning practical social, ecological and economic consequences. The paper also suggests that students acquire the knowledge and develop the skills needed to envision and discuss consequences with involved stakeholders, as well as devise context-dependent solutions with them.

International joint degrees offer the possibility of internationalising the curriculum, enhancing intercultural skills for both staff and students and enhancing global job opportunities. *Joint degrees and engaging with a Europe of Knowledge: lessons from a UK perspective of a challenging collaborative endeavor?* by Jan Bamford, examines the challenges for staff and institutions engaging in developing a 'Europe of Knowledge' by offering a suite of international joint degree programmes in the business area. This case study of staff perspectives, and quality assurance assessment of joint degrees, offers insights into the challenges and the lessons that can be learned from this type of international curriculum development from the practitioner perspective. The research, therefore, is of general interest to academics and higher education institutions wishing to embark on collaborations to develop international programmes of study.

Student research papers

Work simulation is an important part of hospitality management courses. Whilst these programmes are not principally aimed at producing chefs and kitchen workers, an introduction to the kitchen-working environment is a core element of hospitality management programs. *Increasing students' safety-awareness in a teaching hotel*, by Jan Bossema investigates the development of safety awareness of students on food production modules. Specifically it shows how a planned instruction programme including simulations and films highlighting safety challenges can improve responses to safety incidents when they occur. It also suggests the need to extend this approach to other operational contexts within the curriculum.

Jan Schulp, Fabian Pettinga and Pepijn Meester's paper, *Game consumption and attitude toward hunting*, explores some interesting schisms, if not contradictions amongst restaurant customers' opinions and behaviours. Survey information collected by the Dutch Organization for Animal Protection claims that 97% of Dutch respondents to their survey are anti-hunting game. Yet a substantial number of respondents eat game, particularly around Christmas time. The survey reported upon here suggests that 52% of respondents eat game. The differences in these findings ensure that this paper is additionally interesting as an insight into how research methods can influence findings, particularly where respondents may not want to admit to behaviour for which they personally feel guilty, or might be unacceptable to others – in this case, eating wild animals that have been hunted and killed for their organoleptic enjoyment. Hence the low response rates to the postal questionnaire asking about game consumption!

Women entrepreneurship in developing countries: a European example, by Ina Beqo and Sjoerd Gehrels of Stenden University of Applied Sciences, reports on work exploring female entrepreneurship in Albania. Through a case study approach and in-depth interviews of eleven female entrepreneurs the paper aims to explore the experiences of these women and highlight potential pitfalls and difficulties, as well as share the successes so as to better inform would-be entrepreneurs in future. The paper clearly also offers up insights for government agencies and others who might be interesting in stimulating more entrepreneurial activity headed by women.

Professor Conrad Lashley

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Hospitableness: the new service metaphor? Developing an instrument for measuring hosting

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Over the last couple of decades the word hospitality has emerged from the shadow of being used to describe a cluster of commercial activities providing accommodation, food and drink experiences to guests for a fee. Hospitality describes a ubiquitous aspect of human behaviour. The need to protect and honour visitors has a tradition as long as human society and is practiced around the globe. The study of hospitality reveals that societies do have changing levels of obligation to be hospitable, and that many of the more advanced contemporary societies no longer practice the requirement to be hospitable with the same intensity that perhaps they once did. That said, philosophers and others suggest that in any given social context, there are differences amongst individuals in the commitment to being hospitable for the pleasure it gives them personally. They are not motivated by ulterior motives, personal gain, or the threat of punishment. Guests are unconditionally welcomed by hosts driven by altruistic motives. Whilst it has been possible to describe the behaviour of hospitable individuals, there has not been until now an instrument to measure the strength of genuine hospitality in individuals. This paper describes the development of a suite of questions designed to measure these qualities in individuals. This paper describes the development of the instrument and argues for the application of the instrument in wider array of tourist and other contexts than are described here.

Keywords: host, guest, hosting, researching hospitableness

Introduction

Whilst hospitality has been used as something as a public relations device to describe an industry providing commercial accommodation, dining and drinking services, there has been much recent academic interest in the cultural, historical and social meanings of hospitality and hospitableness, which have major implications for these and other service providers (Lashley et al. 2008, Molz and Gibson 2007, Lashley and Morrison 2000). Hosting has been used as a metaphor to describe a context when individuals enter a space which is not theirs, it is a space controlled by another. Host and guest relationships can be seen to apply in situations beyond bars, hotel and restaurants to include tour guides, air stewards, conductors and drivers on coaches, staff in museums and at attractions, and many more. Using this metaphor, the visitor, as a guest, is entering the host's space. Most significantly, the host is obliged to make the guests safe and to ensure that guests are unconditionally welcome. Whilst there are some obligations on guests, the chief responsibilities which concern us here lie with hosts. The welcome for the guest has to be unconditional. This approach is founded upon deep-rooted traditions of hospitality, and provides a model for building long-term customer loyalty beyond the somewhat simplistic advocacy of the 'service culture'. Furthermore and extending beyond these immediate contexts, 'Hospitality serves as a means of understanding society' (Lynch et al. 2011, 14).

Motives are central to this discussion of hosting and hospitableness. Telfer (1996, 2000) argues that some people may

have a higher innate propensity for hospitableness than others, and that these people may naturally be drawn to work in situations where they can welcome others. These individuals are being hospitable, in situations that are not immediately associated with hosting. At the point of service, the profit motive may be secondary to the more altruistic motives of hospitableness, such as the simple enjoyment of the act, or a desire to welcome others. She compares this to a hospital surgeon where it would be unusual for the medical practitioner to be thinking about his wage cheque when saving a life. Telfer argues, therefore, that genuine hospitality is driven by altruistic motives, contrary to Ritzer's (2004) assertion that the cash motive distorts motives. Genuine hospitableness can be found within hospitality, irrespective of the commercial context. People driven by these genuine hospitable feelings are drawn to work in a context which allows them to be welcoming to strangers.

This paper seeks to further explore these ideas. A literature search reveals a growing body of work on 'hospitality', but few authors study the nature of 'hospitableness' as a distinct concept. This research seeks to understand the traits of hospitableness through a motive-based model, and then uses this conceptual framework to inform the development of an instrument that aspires to measure individual hospitableness. It looks for answers to Telfer's challenge about the need to identify differing levels of natural propensity. It charts the development of the hospitableness instrument through

a number of iterations as it follows a process offered by Churchill (1979). This is tested for validity against a framework proposed by Cook and Beckman (2006) and through this the instrument demonstrated high levels of internal reliability. The paper shares the experience of developing an instrument which aims to identify genuine or altruistic hospitality. That said, the instrument has been developed and field tested in a relatively limited setting and needs wider use and exposure.

This paper initially identifies an array of motives to offer hospitality in different contexts, but is concerned principally with exploring hospitableness as manifested in situations where hosts clearly see hospitality as an act of giving and generosity motivated simply by a desire to be hospitable and to 'convert strangers into friends' (Selwyn 2000). Whilst much of the focus assumes these acts of hospitableness take place primarily in domestic settings, Telfer (2000) suggests there is no reason to assume that acts of hospitableness are unlikely to occur in commercial settings. Commercial organisations could benefit from employing individuals who possess and demonstrate the qualities of hospitableness, because it enables the possibility of providing service experiences to customers which build a competitive advantage compared with competitors. The issue being confronted by this paper is that there is no instrument for recognising the qualities of hospitableness in applicants for work in commercial contexts. The paper shares the experience of developing an instrument which aims to identify genuine or altruistic hospitality.

Hospitality and hospitableness

Telfer (2000) makes a distinction between hospitality and hospitableness. Hospitality she defines as involving the provision of food, drink, and accommodation to those who are not members of a household. She recognises that the provision of these might also occur in commercial settings but 'the central idea of the concept remains that of sharing one's own home and provisions with others' (39). At the same time there is an obligation, accepted by hosts, to care for and protect guests. In earlier times, these obligations have had a religious dimension. Religions across the globe, and through time, have made hospitableness an obligation, and a defining feature of religiosity. Frequently a common story involves god, or the gods (in multi-deity religions), arriving in disguise to check that hospitality is offered to all strangers irrespective of perceived status or origins. Where hospitality is denied to these would-be guests, the god(s) takes away the failed host's property. Whilst these religious strictures were important they represent an obligation which may be at odds with Telfer's notion of hospitableness because the host is behaving in a way that has been externally imposed and may be seen to have an ulterior motive. Guests are offering hospitality because they are obliged to do so. Telfer (2000) suggests that genuine hospitality is offered by hosts only with appropriate motives. Principally, 'These include the desire to please others, stemming from general friendliness and benevolence or from affection for particular people; concern or compassion, the desire to meet other's needs; and allegiance to what one sees as duties to be hospitable, a duty help one's friends or a duty to help those in trouble' (42). Hospitableness therefore involves hosts offering hospitality in a giving and generous way, without thought of repayment in kind or any other form of reciprocity. In this paper we term this altruistic hospitality as

'genuine hospitality'. It is the genuine hospitality that provides a model for recruiting hosts who will make visitor occasions successful in all contexts. Hence the hospitable tour guide or air steward will have the ability to make visitors or passengers welcome and safe, because they experience this desire as a genuine emotion.

Heal (1984) in her study of hospitality in early modern England suggested three principles of hospitality. 'A host receives all comers, regardless of social status or acquaintance. Hospitality is perceived as a household activity ... concerned with dispensing of ... food, drink and accommodation. Hospitality is a Christian practice sanctioned and enjoined by the scriptures on all godly men' (Heal 1984, 67). Heal also reveals that hospitality in early modern England was viewed as a noble activity, that the guest was regarded as sacred, and that in conformity to the religious imperative hospitality should be altruistically given. The origins of these cultural norms are well documented and have been traced back to ancient times by writers such as O'Gorman (2007). They inform the modern perspective of hospitality and hospitableness by contrasting classical views with those of our own society. It is likely that a study of modern day hospitality would find that much of the spiritual and noble motivation to be hospitable have receded, albeit that the basic behaviours of providing nourishment and shelter to invited guests remain.

Writing from the religious perspective, Nouwen (1998) begins his discussion of hospitableness by contrasting English understanding of 'hospitality' with that of Germany and Holland. He argues that the German word for hospitality 'Gastfreundschaft' literally translated means 'friendship for the guest' whilst the Dutch word 'gastvrijheid' translates as 'freedom for the guest'. This insight informs his definition of hospitality as 'primarily the creation of a free space where the stranger can enter and become a friend' (1998, 49), of allowing room spiritually, physically and emotionally for the guest. Nouwen argues that for 'hospitality to be genuinely given the host should voluntarily impoverish both their mind and heart'. He challenges the reader to reach back into their own experience and discover that the best hosts give us the 'precious freedom to come and go on our own terms' (1998, 74). He suggests that someone who is filled with 'ideas, concepts, opinions and convictions' (1998, 75) cannot possibly be a good host, nor can someone filled with 'worries or jealousies' (1998, 77). Hosting, he writes, is about listening, about allowing people to be themselves, and about giving them room to 'sing their own songs, speak their own languages, dance their own dances ... not a subtle invitation to adopt the lifestyle of the host, but the gift of a chance to find their own'; it is 'about inviting guests into our world on their terms' (1998, 78). He argues strongly that hosting is not about talking all the time or attempting to continuously occupy or entertain guests – this form of hospitality is oppressive and self-defeating. He concludes with an argument that despite this, hosts should always have a view – not one that is endlessly promoted in an attempt to persuade the guest that it is right, but as a stimulus for debate and interaction.

Derrida's work on hospitality uses a philosophical lens to discuss the question of genuineness. He notes that in French the word 'hôte' applies equally to guests and hosts, suggesting the inextricability of the two dimensions of the hospitable relationship, and their similarity. This perhaps

mirrors Nouwen’s work, where he comments that all hosts are at other times guests and vice versa (Nouwen 1998), and is also something O’Gorman comments on when he notes that the Greek word for ‘host’ is ‘xenos, which has the interchangeable meaning of guest, host, or stranger’ (2007, 18). Derrida extends considerable thought to the nature of ‘invited’ versus ‘uninvited’ guests, concluding that while cultural and historical norms make it possible for most ‘hosts’ to be hospitable to invited guests, it is only those that are also hospitable to the unexpected guest who are genuinely hospitable in what he terms ‘radical hospitality’ (2002, 360). He claims that where ‘I expect the coming of the “hôte” as invited, there is no hospitality’ (2002, 362).

Derrida goes on to argue that truly hospitable people are those who are ready to be ‘overtaken’, ‘who are ready to be not ready’; those who are prepared to be ‘violated’ ‘stolen’ or ‘raped’ (2002, 361). The choice of language here is particularly emotive, but perhaps deliberately so as Derrida tries to engender the idea of genuinely hospitable hosts allowing themselves to be ‘overtaken’ by their guests in every possible sense. However, this ‘overtaking’ sets up a paradox, with Derrida stating that the traditional reaction to such a violation of the ‘home’ is that of xenophobia ‘in order to protect, or claim to protect, one’s own hospitality’ (Derrida and Dufourmantelle 2000, 53), and that such xenophobia in turn restricts a person’s future ability to be hospitable. In this context, it is likely that the xenophobia Derrida refers to is to be interpreted in the widest sense to mean a fear of ‘guests, foreigners or strangers’.

In his study of ancient and classical origins, O’Gorman explores the religious and cultural ancestry of hospitableness, finding almost without exception that rules and norms have existed through history regarding the obligation to be hospitable to a stranger (whether invited or not). It is the echoes of these norms that Heal (1984) so clearly identified in early modern England. In Roman, Greek and Christian tradition, these obligations typically involved the provision of a ‘warm welcome, food, a comfortable place to sit, charming company and entertainment’, the reward for which was preferential treatment from the Gods. O’Gorman notes that this is graphically illustrated in Genesis 19:1–9 where only ‘Lot’ is spared from the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah due to his unswervingly hospitable behaviour. He discovers that reciprocity is a constant theme in early Greek and Roman hospitality, with guests not only expected to return the hospitality but indeed forming bonds and non-aggression agreements with their hosts that could be passed down through generations in the form of tokens (2007, 22). Within the first of his five dimensions of hospitality, ‘honourable tradition’, O’Gorman concludes that ‘reciprocity of hospitality is an established principle’ (2007, 28), and within the third, ‘stratified’, he notes that reciprocity of hospitality is ‘legally defined’. His work provides an interesting window through which to explore the conceptual framework, offering

insights into both behaviours (providing food, security etc.), and motives (conforming to cultural, religious and reciprocal expectations).

O’Gorman’s work contrasts directly with that of philosopher Elisabeth Telfer who attempts to distinguish between the types of motives involved in providing hospitality. She places altruistic (genuine) giving of hospitality higher on a moral scale than hospitality delivered with the expectation of reciprocity, although acknowledges that they are part of the same continuum. In the search for genuineness she dismisses the *behaviours* of hosting quickly, commenting that ‘if we want a general formula for these skills, it must be this: what good hosts are good at is making their guests happy. In other words, they know what will please them and are able to bring this about’ (Telfer 2000, 40). Arguably Telfer’s biggest assertion is that hospitable people may not be good hosts, but provided their *motivations* for hosting are genuine their hospitableness cannot be undone by a lack of skill in the physical components of hosting – providing food and drink, etc. This understanding is of particular relevance and goes to the heart of this research, suggesting that ‘hospitableness’ is simply about motives and perhaps not the two-dimensional conceptual framework initially considered that balanced motivation with behaviour.

Combing the work of Heal (1984), Nouwen (1998), Telfer (2000) and O’Gorman (2007) it is possible to detect a number of motives for hosts offering hospitality to guests. Figure 1 provides a graphical representation of this. Telfer identified the offering of food, drink and accommodation for some thought of ensuing gain as *ulterior motives hospitality*. It is assumed that the guest is able to benefit the host and hospitality is offered as a means of gaining subsequent benefit as an outcome of the hospitality offered. Writing in the early fifteen hundreds, Niccolò Machiavelli says, ‘Keep your friends close, but your enemies closer.’ In this sense, *containing hospitality* is motivated by a fear of the stranger, but advocates close monitoring by including the stranger in the household so as maintain surveillance. Wagner’s opera *Die Walkure*, involves Hunding offering Seigmund hospitality even though Hunding knows him to be an enemy. This provides an insight into both the obligation to offer hospitality to all, irrespective of whom they are, but also suggests the motive to monitor and contain the enemy. For some authors, *commercial hospitality* involves a financial transaction whereby hospitality is offered to guests at a price, and would be withdrawn if the financial payment could not be made. Hence some argue that commercial hospitality represents a contradiction and cannot deliver hospitableness (Ward and Martins 2001, Ritzer 2007). Telfer (2000) reminds us that this is a somewhat simplistic view because it may be that hospitable people are drawn to work in bars, hotels and restaurants, and offer hospitableness beyond the commercial transaction and the materialistic instructions from managers.

A number of writers suggest that hospitality involves reciprocity whereby hospitality is offered on the understanding

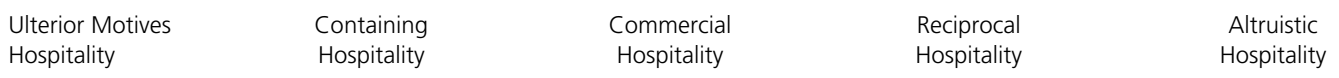


Figure 1: A continuum of hospitality

that it will be reciprocated at some later date. Hospitality practiced by elite families in Augustinian Rome was founded on the principle of reciprocity as an early form of tourism (Lomaine 2005). Affluent Romans developed networks of relationships with other families with whom they stayed as guests and then acted as hosts when their former hosts were intending to travel. Cole's (2007) work with the Ngadha tribe in Indonesia provides some fascinating insights into contemporary hospitality and tourism in a remote mountain community today. The tribe practices reciprocal hospitality through tribe members hosting pig roasting events for fellow tribe members. This *reciprocal hospitality* involves hospitality being offered within a context whereby hosts become guests and guests become hosts at different times as the pig roasting event passes round different families. Finally, *genuine hospitality* involves the offer of hospitableness as an act of generosity and benevolence, and a willingness to give pleasure to others. It is this form of hospitality which is the key principle here because it provides an ideal type, or a pure, form of hospitality, largely devoid of personal gain for the host, apart from the emotional satisfaction arising from the practice of hospitableness.

Research aims and objectives

The development of a research instrument which is being reported upon here represents the third phase of a research process. The first stage involved one of the authors engaging in participant observation, acting as both guest and host at a series of dinners amongst friends and acquaintances. The second phase involved the development and administration of a questionnaire aimed at identifying the personality traits which support the qualities of hospitableness. The conceptual framework proposed that hospitableness is a two-dimensional construct that can be measured on a scale from mechanistic behaviour through to the genuine/altruistic. A series of statements were drafted for each of the twenty sub-dimensions in the model that attempted to measure individual affinity either directly or indirectly to the elements of the framework (e.g. for the sub-dimension of 'put guests before yourself' a statement of 'I feel that it is important to put guests' enjoyment before my own' was applied).

For each sub-dimension three statements were created – two positively worded and one negatively worded in line with the best practice suggested by Lee-Ross (1999). By measuring each dimension in three different ways it is possible that a reasonable degree of validity and reliability can be established in the instrument. The statements were sent to individuals who participated in the participant observation phase research for comment regarding their 'face validity' (Furnham and Drakeley 2000) and the quality of the wording. Individuals were also asked to be mindful that the statements should be equally applicable to someone working in the hospitality industry as they are to the domestic host. Subsequent amendments were made before the question bank was used to create the hospitableness instrument.

For the delivery method two styles of instrument were considered – the first, 'dichotomous' questioning (Fisher 2007, 193), involved taking the statements and pairing the 30 from level one of the hospitableness model against the 30 that relate to level two of the model. Participants would then decide which statement from each pairing was 'more like me'. The second was an eight-point Likert scale.

The specific research questions for this document are:

- What is the appropriate conceptual framework that maps the dimensions of hospitableness?
- What are the sub-traits of hospitableness?
- To what extent can a reliable instrument be developed to measure the sub-traits of hospitableness?
- To what extent can such an instrument be validated as measuring traits of hospitableness against third party measures?

The conclusion reached in earlier stages suggested that the initial conceptual model of hospitableness as a continuum of behaviours to motivators was flawed. As thinking developed through the earlier phases, it became evident that motivators and behaviours are mutually exclusive – i.e., rather than forming a hierarchy where behaviours underpin motives, it is possible to score on both scales simultaneously. Consequently it was also possible to score highly on motivators even if an individual's behavioural skills were under-developed, or conversely to be able to demonstrate the behaviours of hospitableness even in the absence of suitable motivation. Re-examination of the conceptual framework led to the realisation that *behaviours* were less important in the development of a selection tool aiming to identify those with the highest disposition to hospitableness. This document begins with the assumption that it is *motives* that are the important factor to diagnose because these are hard to influence whereas it is 'almost always ... [possible to] ... train for technical prowess' (Meyer 2008). To answer research questions one and two, this document will therefore revisit the motives scale previously developed and challenge whether it is still valid or needs to be amended into a new conceptual framework.

Given the proposed evolution of the conceptual model during the development of this document, it has also been necessary to update or refresh the hospitableness profiling instrument developed earlier in order to answer research question three. This was in any case inevitable as the previous iteration ultimately proved to lack internal reliability when statistically tested. Despite this it is possible that the sections of the tool that did demonstrate reliability can be recycled into the final version provided the sub-traits or dimensions that they purport to measure still feature in the final version of the conceptual framework.

Developing the instrument

The design of the question bank for the second iteration of the Hospitableness Profiling Questionnaire (which this document reports on) initially followed a similar development path to the first questionnaire piloted earlier. In its previous guise the questionnaire initially followed a 'paired statement' or 'dichotomous' format (Fisher 2007), with respondents being asked to choose which of two statements was most like them or least like them.

This format was designed to support a conceptual framework that described hospitableness as a continuum, with the intention that the either/or question structure would allow the researcher to discern which side of the scale the respondent favoured. However, as it became evident that the two high-level dimensions from the early conceptual framework of hospitableness may not be range based, the conceptual framework was amended to show five mutually exclusive dimensions of hospitableness (ulterior motive,

containment, commercial, reciprocity, and altruism) and having made a decision to create an instrument to measure just one of these (altruism/genuine hospitality), the initial challenge was to define the sub-dimensions of the scale. To achieve this, key themes from the literature search were listed and grouped, with a name or category tag then applied to each grouping. Where similarity existed to pre-defined dimensions from the earlier hospitableness profiling instrument in the first questionnaire, this categorisation was carried across.

In total 12 sub-dimensions of altruistic hospitableness were proposed for the first draft, although with the risk acknowledged that the groupings of themes from the literature review was completed using an affinity diagram (Pyzdek 2003, 263) which is a subjective process based on opinion. The advantage of mapping specific themes to categories from the earlier instrument was that where question statements had shown positive correlations in previous reliability testing it has been possible to bring them forward to the new questionnaire. For some of the existing dimensions all three questions from the original triplet could be re-used, or in some cases just two. As in the first questionnaire the instrument continued to use a negatively worded question in each set of three as good practise borrowed from Lee-Ross (1999). Further questions were then developed for the gaps and new categories.

In total the 12 sub-dimensions produced a question bank of 36 statements (twelve times two positively phrased and one negatively phrased question) scored on a Likert scale. It was expected that question statements would continue to show a high degree of correlation in the new instrument, although regardless of this expectation they were retested during reliability trials together with the new items using Spearman's rho statistical analysis. The researcher arranged for the instrument to be reviewed by both the supervisory team and a small panel of participants drawn from the participant observation research conducted earlier.

The primary concern for reviewers during the question development process was 'face validity' (Furnham and Drakeley 2000). Reviewers were also asked to assess the question structure, highlighting questions that were imprecise or contained double concepts. For example, 'I love playing host because I enjoy entertaining people' was ultimately split into 'I enjoy entertaining people' and 'I love playing host for my family and friends' (two question statements). This redrafting process also allowed the word count to shrink, as did the removal of phrases that should have been located in the stem or the introduction to the questionnaire such as 'When hosting...' or 'In my view...'

The scoring remained on an eight-point Likert scale (from 0 to 7). This proved popular in the earlier instrument with anecdotal feedback suggesting it to be a format that people understood and found easy to use. This is important when assessing the instrument against Webster and Hung's (1994) test of 'practicability', which reviews the ease with which the instrument is deployed and completed by respondents.

The instrument was deployed over the World Wide Web using a commercial software platform. 'surveymonkey.com' allows users to create questionnaires in a variety of formats and that are hosted on the company's servers. The user is then able to email a link (web address) to participants who complete the questionnaire online. The advantage of this approach is that the proprietary software looks and feels professional,

and provides easy access for all participants who have access to a broadband connection. The software can also be set to follow rules such as disallowing the skipping of questions or the randomisation of questions (which would reduce the risk of bias). However for those who don't have web access it is possible to print hard copies of the survey to be completed by hand, and these can then be manually entered into the database of responses which the software collates. Although this precludes the use of a question randomiser for deployment into industry, it should be noted that the paper-based format is most likely to be the final deployment method due to restricted access to computer facilities in pubs, although as an alternative the use of hand-held devices could be considered or pre-surveys completed at home.

Churchill (1979) notes the reliability risks of any study where human beings are asked to respond to a survey. He comments that rating differences can easily be caused by the level of fatigue of the respondent, their mood or misinterpretations of the question statement. It is for this reason that the precision of wording in questions is so important, something that should be honed in the design phase of an instrument before deployment (Aladwani and Palvia 2002). However, errors are equally as likely to be caused by mechanical mistakes such as ticking the wrong box. One advantage of an online deployment is that the system will automatically prevent duplicate answers. A solution to this for paper-based surveys has yet to be found.

Thirty-three completed surveys were received and downloaded into spreadsheet software and prepared for import into the academic statistical analysis package SPSS. This involved moving question data back into sequential order (they had been previously been randomised/re-distributed by the deployment software), and converting the negatively worded question results (Lee-Ross 1999) into positive scores in order that correlation analysis would test like data. Subtotals were also added for each triplet. The data was then imported into SPSS and reviewed for correlations using bi-variate analysis. This meant testing each triplet of questions by analysing each statement against the other two in order to establish whether they behaved in a similar way. The findings from the survey deployment were disappointing with only one sub-dimension (desire to entertain) showing a three-way correlation between the question statements during statistical testing:

- I enjoy entertaining people
- I love playing host for my family and friends
- Hosting can be a bit of a chore.

This sub-dimension was also notable because it included a negatively phrased question that demonstrated a relationship with the other positively worded questions, whereas the general trend was for such statements to lack correlation to the others in their triplet. For example, in ten of the 12 sub-dimensions there were positive correlations with a 2-tailed 95% or greater significance between the pairs of positively worded statements. In contrast only six of the 12 triplets contained a negatively worded question that correlated to one other statement.

It had been hoped that a greater number of question sets would show internal consistency, the next stage then being to seek internally reliable triplets that would correlate against the sub-totals of others. However, this was not possible and in most cases the null hypothesis had to be accepted. The findings were particularly unsatisfactory because so

many questions had been carried over from the instrument developed earlier. Only those that mapped to the new conceptual framework *and* had shown a correlation were used and it had been a reasonable assumption given the 95% confidence level that the correlations previously demonstrated would be carried over. Six of the seven two-way correlations between positively worded statements that were carried over were still found to exist, although one did fail the test in the second instrument. However, of the two negatively worded statements that had previously correlated to both of their positively worded counterparts, neither maintained a relationship with more than one other statement.

In response to two failed instrument designs (the first questionnaire and this second instrument) a short study was undertaken to test the hypothesis that the problem was being caused by the tone of the negatively worded statements. The 12 negatively worded questions were re-written to be positively phrased. The questionnaire was distributed to 12 of the original second phase questionnaire sample group who were asked to complete the survey again. Although small, it was intended that the results would give an indication of whether or not the level of correlation was likely to change significantly as a consequence of the re-write before testing in a wider deployment. As with the main instrument design, the results were separated into triplets and analysed using Spearman's rho test.

The tests found that the number of correlations of negatively phrased statements to positively worded questions only increased from 7 to 9 (out of 24 possibilities). The size of the increase was disappointing and indicated that the hypothesis that the third question in each triplet did not work because it was a negatively phrased statement (in a survey about an inherently positive subject – hospitality) was incorrect. The null hypothesis was therefore accepted and the re-phrased survey did not proceed to further testing with a larger sample size.

Another interesting finding was that the number of correlations overall decreased in the instrument when it was completed with all of the questions being positively worded – from 17 to 15 correlations (out of a possible 36). Much of this might be explained by the small sample size of the second survey (suggesting less reliable results), but it is possible that the data may also have been impacted by the statements being answered in a different context. It is conceivable that an all positive statement bank generates a different response to each question compared to a bank where participants are moving backwards and forwards in their scoring between positive and negative. However, within the constraints of the research study, this phenomenon can only be sign-posted as a potential area for later study and it will not be taken further at this time.

Having failed at two attempts with the two questionnaires to design a question bank that could demonstrate internal reliability within each triplet of question statements (and by extension create consistency between sub-dimensions) it was necessary to re-think the approach. The number of statement correlations fell in the second questionnaire compared to the first and so it was reasonable to assume, based on past evidence, that another re-write might not necessarily improve the performance of the instrument. Conscious that the opinion of the panel of reviewers on both occasions had been that the question statements had face validity and that the re-writing

of negatively worded statements had failed to have a positive impact, there was not an obvious starting point from which to redevelop the instrument.

It was in this context that a counter-intuitive hypothesis developed that the instrument may potentially have a strong question bank but that the groupings of statements and subsequent alignment into categories had been incorrect. The existing design had been led by attempting to group together themes from the literature review using an affinity diagram, but as an opinion-based method it was conceivable that these groupings had been inaccurate. If so, the questions may have appeared against the wrong sub-dimensions, which in turn were leading to an unreliable output.

To test this, question statements from the original second phase survey were re-loaded in the statistical analysis package and Spearman's rho was calculated for every possible combination across the whole statement bank, looking for correlations with 2-tailed significance (i.e. the relationship could be positive or negative). The results were immediately of interest, with every statement showing correlations with numerous others outside their initial triplet of questions at both 95% and 99% confidence levels. It appeared that contrary to the original findings it might be possible to reject the null hypothesis and that the design flaw with the instrument may in part have been attributable to the arbitrary grouping of literature review themes.

It was then possible to re-design the question bank using a very different process to that of the first two attempts, with a manual intervention seeking to build 'buckets' of question statements that correlated against each other in a method similar to that used by Dienhart et al. (1992). Using this system it quickly became obvious that groups of more than three questions could be found and in some cases the number of inter-correlating questions was as high as seven. Conscious of the small sample size ($n = 33$) questions were sought with cross-correlations that showed as significant with 99% confidence. This reduced the number of statements and led to a decision about how many question statements should feature within each 'bucket'. The number that appeared to provide the optimum balance and that maximised the number of 'question sets' was four or five statements per group.

Some of the statements could sit in more than one question bucket (sub-dimension) as they correlated with a high number of others and this, combined with an uneven initial distribution, allowed a degree of re-allocation in order to balance each question set. To achieve this, once an initial distribution had been achieved the questions were then mapped back to the original literature review findings and consequent sub-dimensions that had inspired their creation. This led to a re-evaluation, of which themes from the literature should be grouped together with some being changed based on the new question groupings. These were then tested for face validity. Where questions did not appear to fit, a similar process was used for the allocation and re-allocation of questions, with each question location being tested for face validity against the other statements in the group. The result of this work was that final grouping of questions and literature themes became quite different from the initial conception although they appeared logical when reviewed as a whole. Once this had been achieved the five new sub-dimensions (groups of questions) were named.

The final stage of the instrument development was to test the consistency between each of the sub-dimensions (factors) identified. To achieve this, the scores for each of the four/ five statements were totalled by sub-dimension across the 33 responses. These sub-dimension totals were then analysed using Spearman’s rho test to look for correlations. The results were surprising, with three sub-dimensions showing strong correlations with 2-tailed 99% confidence. However the other two categories didn’t correlate at all. This meant that the final instrument design could only produce 13 questions (from a starting point of 60 in the second questionnaire) that genuinely offered internal reliability. To deploy such an instrument into industry would have the undoubted benefit of being quick to complete for respondents, but would carry the risk that it would lack face validity due the small number of questions. Respondents may also challenge how so few questions could be a reliable predictor of a personality trait. However, in context it should be noted that the development of the instrument for this document has focused on a single arm of a five-pronged conceptual model of hospitableness. These 13 questions are targeted at the dimension of ‘altruistic’ hospitableness and assuming a similar number of internally consistent questions could be developed for the other three dimensions of hospitable motives (reciprocal, containing, commercial and ulterior motive) it is reasonable to assume that the final question bank would comprise a minimum of 48 questions, a level that is likely to have a higher credibility with potential users of the questionnaire. The actual wording of the 13 ‘reliable’ questions can be found in the table below.

Although the question statements correlate within their sub-dimensions and the sub-dimensions correlate against each other, an easily identified risk with the questions is that due to high face validity it would be easy for a respondent to second guess the appropriate score in a selection process. This has not been an issue during development because the instrument has been completed without the added complexity of being used as a recruitment tool. However if people are asked to undertake the instrument as part of a job application, it may lead to disingenuous responses as job-seekers attempt to improve their chances of selection.

To counter this potential bias and mindful of the manner in which question scoring changed across all statements when negatively worded phrasing was removed, it was decided to deploy the instrument into industry for the final part of the

research with many of the non-correlating questions still in the questionnaire. Only those showing fewer than four correlations to other questions at the 99% significance level were removed. The rationale of deploying ‘failed questions’ was to help ‘disguise’ the critical few questions that aimed to profile the altruistic dimension of hospitableness in order to reduce the opportunity for cheating on the survey. By including the negatively worded questions it was also hoped that the risk of respondents simply scoring everything ‘high’ would be reduced. In addition, by providing the original context for the questions (i.e. most of the initial question bank) it was expected that there would be greater consistency in the results produced with the pilot data analysed above. The removal of the most poorly performing question statements leaves respondents with 32 questions to answer. The generation of an ‘altruistic’ hospitableness rating will, however, still be based on the 13 questions that showed internal consistency, with analysis of the others simply being conducted as a check of instrument functionality (i.e. do the rejected question buckets still show internal reliability?) and to see if further correlations emerge as the sample size increased over time. The larger question bank may also prove to have greater face validity with respondents and potential employers who might have felt that 13 questions alone would be insufficient to generate a true rating of hospitableness. This is an issue that would dissipate when question sets for the other three dimensions of hospitableness come on line in further research, as additional questions will be developed which could not only replace defunct ‘altruistic’ questions, but also augment the question bank overall.

The risk of manipulation remains a concern and if the instrument were to proceed to further development it would be beneficial to test a scoring structure that groups questions and creates a forced ranking system that would drive greater differentiation between preferences. This was not done at this stage of instrument development because the risk of answer management by participants did not become clear until discussions began about use of the profiling tool for selection purposes. Forced ranking would alleviate concerns expressed by a brewery that hosted the research over excessive face validity – an important consideration if the profiling tool were to be marketable in a commercial context where the response process might be either electronic or paper-based (assuming the brewery to be a proxy for other corporate clients).

Table 1: The final question bank

Desire to put guests before yourself	I put guests’ enjoyment before my own I do whatever is necessary to ensure that guests have a great time I always try to live up to my idea of what makes a good host The comfort of guests is most important to me
Desire to make guests happy	I get a natural high when I make my guests feel special I enjoy taking responsibility for the wellbeing of guests It means the world to me when guests show their approval of my hospitality It’s important to do the things that people expect of a good host I seek out opportunities to help others
Desire to make guests feel special	When hosting I try to feel at one with the guests I try to get on the same wavelength as my guests Guests should feel that the evening revolves around them I find it motivating to take accountability for other people’s welfare

Conclusion

Interest in hospitableness emerged in academic writing from two groups of academics writing independently. Within the community of people working as members of hospitality management teams, the authors have become increasingly interested in the study of hospitality as a human, social phenomenon beyond the management of the commercial context in bars, hotels and restaurants (Eksell et al. 2013, Lashley et al. 2008, Lashley and Morrison 2000). Apart from a suite of books, and a host of academic papers, a new journal has been created to provide a forum for research which recognises that 'the study of hospitality requires a more hospitable approach that is accepting of difference and presents an open face to its various intellectual representations' (Lynch et al. 2011, 3). Around the same time, other academics informed by social science perspectives (Molz and Gibson 2007: 6) began to employ hospitality and hospitableness as a metaphor for wider social interactions. They say, 'Hospitality is a profoundly evocative concept that reverberates with cultural, political and ethical undertones'.

The study of hospitality and hospitableness open up a discussion of the motives for offering and participating in hospitality. Philosophers (Telfer 1996, 2000, Selwin 2000) suggest that there may be an array of motives for offering hospitality and that genuine hospitality is only going to be present when the motives are genuine, based upon compassion and a concern for others without any concern for reciprocity or personal gain to the host. It is clear that this quality of hospitality is naturally spread across the population. Some individuals are more naturally prone to be hospitable than their fellows. This paper is informed by the recognition that genuine (altruistic) hospitality is openly described in the literature but until now there has been no instrument available for measuring the propensity to be hospitable in individuals.

This paper reports on the development of a suite of questions which are able to identify hospitableness. Informed by a qualitative research activity, researchers began working on an instrument which went through several iterations before arriving at questions that have internal consistency. The 13 questions identified are designed to measure an individual's concern to offer genuine hospitality which is essentially altruistic. The instrument suggested here embeds the 13 questions amongst a cluster of questions stemming from earlier iterations of the research instrument. This paper reports on the development of this single strand of the intentions to offer hospitality and suggests that similar research might be undertaken to identify reciprocal and calculative hospitality, etc. That said, the instrument developed here requires to be employed in a number of different settings and the authors hereby invite those interested to join in applying this across an array of hospitality, leisure and tourism settings.

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Snobbery and the triumph of bourgeois values: a speculative analysis of implications for hospitality

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This is a 'small' paper that offers a broad-brush view of the nature of bourgeois values and implications of the same for our understanding of certain aspects of hospitality. The argument is speculative, but assertive. Bourgeois values, it is suggested, are inevitably snobbish in nature and designed to both construct and maintain largely irrelevant 'cultural' differences between and within social classes. This generation of difference is integrally consistent with the capitalist mode of production, facilitating the creation of demand for essentially artificial needs and wants. In the context of hospitality, bourgeois values sustain a language of hierarchy that simultaneously creates a culture of aspiration while allowing enterprises to extract optimum economic value from carefully segmented markets.

Keywords: bourgeois culture, social class, snobbery, hospitality, food and drink consumption

Introduction: What is a bourgeois value?

This speculative, conceptual paper is intended to contribute, in a small way, to the activity of theorising about hospitality and hospitality management. The nature of bourgeois values is amongst many potential topics for analysis largely neglected by the traditional 'social sciences' (philosophy, economics, psychology, sociology). A bourgeois value is a value that, when articulated, seeks to obscure, by use of either specific language terms or particular actions of a euphemistic nature, some reality that offends against a perceived general sensibility or sensibilities.

Traditional accounts of the rise of the bourgeoisie suggest that their values are derived from emulating traditional élites, which, in Marxist terms at least, the bourgeoisie grow to displace and supplant. There are dangers in accepting this perspective uncritically. *First*, there is contemplative evidence suggesting otherwise – i.e. many bourgeois values often differ substantially from those of traditional élites. The single best example here is the place and equipment employed for the purpose of receiving human biological waste. The preferred bourgeois term (a portmanteau word covering both place and equipment) is 'lavatory' or 'loo' and the word 'toilet' is very much frowned upon as a lower class expression. In conventional accounts of this bourgeois preference, note is often made of the origins of the word lavatory in the Latin term for 'to wash' and allusion is made to the 'lavatorium', the room in monasteries where monks would wash their hands prior to eating. Knowing this, it rapidly becomes apparent that a lavatory is the last place to which a civilised person would retire in order to engage in excretion. In monastic terms, the word latrine or more specifically reredorter or necessarium would be appropriate but neither is easily transmogrified into an English word. Upon examining the etymology of the word 'toilet' it also becomes clear that this is an equally inappropriate term.

What we are to call this place of easement will no doubt remain a controversial matter.

Maintaining the 'lavatorial' theme, we have also noted that a bourgeois value can obscure something perceived as distasteful through action(s) as well as words. Thus we encounter the proletarian (and thus derided) practice of using a 'toilet set' comprising a fabric bath mat, a fabric cover for the upper toilet seat and a 'drip' mat placed around the base of the pedestal. Persons of refinement use a towel or nothing to stand on when descending from a bath/shower, a seat cover is unnecessary and therefore vulgar, and no gentleman, let alone a lady, would be so common as to 'drip' anything on the floor in the front of the pedestal.

The manner in which vocabulary in particular reveals class values is a recurring theme in Anglophone culture. Ross (1954), a linguistics professor, coined the terms 'U' and 'non-U' to refer respectively to class-based preferences for certain terms over others, 'U' terms being those of the upper class and thus preferred by the bourgeoisie. His work was popularized by Nancy Mitford (e.g. 1956; a list of certain U and non-U words can be found in *Wikipedia*, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/U_and_non-U_English [Accessed 29 October 2013]). The role of language in maintaining social difference has continued both as a focus of serious academic research (e.g. Bernstein 1971, whose work on restricted and elaborated linguistic codes remains influential) and more populist but no less well informed attention (e.g. Fox 2005).

A *second* guard against accepting explanations of the origin of bourgeois values as simple adaptations of those of traditional ruling élites is evidence from so-called 'figurational' sociologists who suggest that changes in value systems are not random but influenced by a 'civilizing process'. The term 'civilising process' (Elias 2000, Mennell 1985) refers

to behavioural trends towards greater levels of human self-discipline, self-control, and rising standards of shame and embarrassment in interpersonal interaction. Elias (2000) argues that these new standards of behaviour are largely the product of the secular upper class, but that they filter down the social order, not *simply* emulated but rather adopted in selective, slow and uneven ways. Crudely expressed, the figurational view is that values and behaviour 'function' to differentiate social groups/classes, from other social groups/classes perceived as being inferior.

A comedy sketch from the early 1960s BBC television programme *The Frost Report* illustrates this point (Feldman and Law, 1966). Three English men of descending height stand in a line: the tallest is upper class and dressed in the (then) stereotypical uniform of his tribe; next to him is a middle class man also stereotypically dressed. Finally there is a short working class man, also 'appropriately' attired. The upper class man states that though he has breeding he has no money. The middle class man has money but admits he is vulgar, which is why he looks up to the upper class man but down on the working class man. The working class man 'knows his place' and gets a pain in the neck looking up to the others. The specific allusion here is to the decline of traditional upper-class power and wealth (based primarily on the ownership of land) and the triumph of the bourgeoisie and bourgeois values (predicated on the ownership and management of industrial capital).

Other than the classical Marxism on which we depend for our understanding of the emergence of the bourgeois classes (the plural here is quite deliberate for it is recognized that no class is entirely, objectively, homogeneous), the figurational approach presents a ready source of understanding and evidence on the nature of bourgeois values and expression. It is often criticised for underrating the force of counter-civilising processes – those that work in the opposite direction to the civilising process and therefore limit or distort it (represented neatly in the comic sketch described above by the upper-class man's lament that he has no money thus on occasion is required to look up to the middle class man). Further, other social scientific concepts can help in understanding how bourgeois values are given expression (e.g. Georg Simmel on the social role of the flâneur, Thorstein Veblen (1899/2007) on the leisure class, and Bourdieu's excavation of class-based values in France (Bourdieu 1984).

To summarise thus far, two points can be made. First, whereas at least some (early) bourgeois values resulted from the emulation of those of traditional élites, the assumption that societies continually evolve requires acceptance of the idea that such values can be independently originated. Secondly, in many capitalist societies a (differentiated) bourgeoisie has become the quantitatively dominant social class and accordingly, following Marx, their values have become the dominant (if, internally, competing) values. Where the bourgeoisie has achieved numerical supremacy at the expense of both traditional élites and subordinate classes, the creation and maintenance of bourgeois values is an activity most vital *within* that class as the various segments within it battle to circumscribe a particular identity.

Snobbery, bourgeois values and hospitality

In most works of reference the phenomenon of snobbery is

defined relative to the term 'snob', 'a person who believes in the existence of an equation between status and human worth' (*Wikipedia*, last accessed 29.10.13) and 'One who tends to patronize, rebuff, or ignore people regarded as social inferiors and imitate, admire, or seek association with people regarded as social superiors' plus also 'One who affects an offensive air of self-satisfied superiority in matters of taste or intellect' (<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/snob> [Accessed 2 November 2013]). Snobbery, at best, is defined as 'snobbish behaviour' (*Chambers Dictionary*, iOS Application) and is thus a structured, hierarchical phenomenon and in most, though not all, definitions carries negative overtones.

As we have seen, it is unwise to assert that all bourgeois values are imitative of those of social superiors. It is easier to argue that all bourgeois values are to a greater or lesser extent snobbish in character as their single purpose is to establish a difference of superiority over others. Yet, at that lesser extent, it is necessary to recognise that a bourgeois value may appear normative and unexceptional. When Agatha Christie's Hercule Poirot comments that he has 'a thoroughly bourgeois attitude to murder' (in the novel *Cards on the Table*, 1936) he means that he disapproves of it and sees the function of society as to apprehend and punish murderers. There would be little dissent from such values among any class, let alone the bourgeoisie.

It is only as one ascends the gradient of such values that they become more contentious, especially where such values are required to subordinate biological necessities to cultural imperatives. We have already dealt with one example of this in the case of the toilet/lavatory distinction but the other self-evident case is one at the heart of hospitality/hospitality management, that necessary precursor to excretion, namely the consumption of food and drink. Indeed, in Ross's (1954, 135–139) original list of 39 items of 'U' and 'Non-U' vocabulary, some 25% have a direct link with such consumption and Ross (1954, 139) writing of the distinction between 'napkin' (U) and 'serviette' (non-U) notes that it is 'perhaps the best known of all the linguistic class-indicators of English'. Food and beverage (and especially wine) are powerful instances of phenomena that are routinely the subject of snobbery both generally, and in the 'professions' which attend them. Yet food and wine snobbery, like bourgeois values, are not popular topics of social scientific or hospitality research. With regard to the latter, reference to the academic journal database *Emerald* for a search of the key word 'snobbery' (as of 27.10.13) yielded 202 results of which 13 articles (6.4%) were about wine, one about food, one about tourism and one about the food industry. A similar search (also as of 27.10.13) of the *EBSCO Hospitality and Tourism Complete* database yielded nineteen results of which five and four articles respectively were directly concerned with food and wine snobbery.

With regard to wine we find that implicit hierarchies of the wine product are frequently articulated and contested – for example, French wines are better than all other 'nationalities' of wine. Then there is the 'appreciation' – actually evaluation – of wine which employs its own, often satirised, vocabulary ('a precocious little wine, impertinent but not rude, with a slight hint of blackberries and a propensity to surprise with a benign aftertaste') and can be formally accredited by qualifications, the most prized of which is a Master of Wine (MW). Of incidental note is that such processes of *faux* refinement are also evident with tea, coffee, mineral water and beer. UK marketing guru

Rory Sutherland (2013) beginning from the proposition that 'most wine is actually rubbish' draws on Freud's concept of the narcissism of small differences to argue that:

...trivial product variations are created to provide 'an ersatz sense of otherness which is only a mask for an underlying uniformity and sameness'. In other words, the absurd complexity of wine may be essential to its popularity. For the drinker to demonstrate status and connoisseurship, it is necessary for the category to be absurdly hard to navigate, so providing opportunities for contrived, hair-splitting distinctions that let the buyer advertise his own discernment (<http://www.spectator.co.uk/life/the-wiki-man/8925721/why-does-anyone-drink-wine/> [Accessed 7 November 2013])

The triumph of bourgeois values is even more evident with food than with wine. We can point, first, to French as the meta-language not only of haute cuisine but of hotel management more generally, a reflection of the dominance of France in culinary, cultural and diplomatic matters pre-revolution and for some time after. Mennell (1985) argues that the growth of the hotel and restaurant industry has encouraged culinary democracy, culinary pluralism and a corresponding decline in the prestige hierarchy of food which places French haute cuisine at its apex. Some of these claims seemed somewhat suspect even when inscribed in the 1980s (see Wood 1995). Although the role of French haute cuisine may have been diminished as both a model and exemplar, the production and consumption of elite food from other nations retains a disproportionate and excluding grip on public and private consumption, in the former the Michelin and similar restaurant rating systems providing the aspirational model for professionals and serious amateurs alike (for a more nuanced view of these issues see Lane 2010) in the latter restaurant reviews function to maintain bourgeois advantage in the exclusiveness of the system (see Williamson et al. 2009).

Secondly here, we can point to Elias's (2000) and Mennell's (1985) analysis of the differentiation of eating implements (both cutlery and crockery). Medieval convention favoured eating from a common bowl often with one's own personal 'cutlery', typically a knife. The 'refinements' we have seen since then have much of their origins in aristocratic adoption but the biggest leap in differentiation surely came with the rise of the industrial bourgeoisie so that we now have myriad types of pointless cutlery and crockery relevant to the consumption of particular types or categories of food, both artfully satirised by John Betjeman's poem *How to get on in Society* (1958, see for example <http://everything2.com/title/How+To+Get+On+In+Society>). [Accessed 9 November 2013].

Conclusions and implications

This paper has sought to enunciate some categorical observations about bourgeois values. Within the confines of a short discussion paper it is not possible to consider even a majority of the arguments contingent on these observations. It has been argued that the purpose of bourgeois values, which are by definition characterised by snobbery, is to maintain social difference through artifice, but this tells us little about why it is necessary to maintain such difference in the first place.

The answer of course is that bourgeois values sustain a view of the world as those who articulate such values would like it

to be, rather than as it is, thus embodying a self-serving retreat from social realism (Callinicos 1990). Accordingly, the implications of these values for the hospitality industry and hospitality management/education are more or less the same as they are for understanding the generic forms of these concepts. Bourgeois differentiation generates a range of essentially unnecessary, superfluous and *faux* alternatives (in the Poncian rendering of Occam's razor it offends against the principle that entities must not be multiplied beyond necessity) in products, services and 'lifestyles'. Such processes are vital to the maintenance of demand in capitalist economies. Pace, Lockwood (1960), who could not foresee the levels of differentiation of which capitalist production was capable when he famously commented that not all consumer goods are wanted for their status connotations ('a washing machine is a washing machine is a washing machine'), pointless differentiation designed to appeal to status consciousness is the very lifeblood of modern capitalist production.

In the language of strategic management, all firms require threshold capabilities – those that allow them to enter and operate at a minimum level in a given market. A hotel that did not offer a bed to sleep in might encounter difficulties in attracting guests, but beyond the bed, many 'budget' hotels offer varying combinations of some, all or none of the products and services historically associated with such establishments. Hotels, and many restaurants and other hospitality organisations, like other products and services, are differentiated by 'brand' a brand being part of a fundamentally hierarchic system of projected values supposedly related, objectively, to the range of products/services/facilities offered (and the price charged) but in reality, appealing to more complex arrangements of fundamentally ephemeral factors related to self-image, self-worth and status. As with food and beverage, the products and services offered embody, in the Barthesian sense, semiotic codes which communicate messages about the suitability (in terms of both financial resources and cultural capital – values) of an offer to various markets.

There will be many justifiable objections to what has been written in this paper. What is offered is, after all, a dilute and vulgar Marxist snapshot of what might, nevertheless, if properly developed, be a useful perspective on aspects of practice and performance in the hospitality industry. Like management as a subject in general (and unlike tourism 'studies'), academic hospitality management has failed to establish intellectual credibility as a subject area because many of its practitioners have resisted attempts to ground it in the wider 'real' world of historical, economic and social forces. It is indeed the case that those who do not know history are doomed to repeat it.

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Can brand personality differentiate fast food restaurants?

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This study examines brand personality as an approach to establish brand differentiation in the highly competitive fast food sector. A modified brand personality scale proposed by Musante et al. (2008) was used to develop a questionnaire which was distributed to customers to assess their perceived brand personalities for three well known fast food restaurants – McDonald's, KFC and Subway. The results demonstrated that even though the overall perceived brand personality was different for all three brands, no individual personality dimension characterised any of the brands.

Keywords: brand, brand personality, fast food, restaurants

Introduction

Intangibility is a critically inherent characteristic of the food service industry and even though certain core products are offered, the overall consumption is experiential in nature, which provides an immense challenge to marketers (Kotler et al. 2010). Within the food service sector, fast food restaurants (FFRs) are developing rapidly at a global level, which is characterised by low barriers of entry, including ease of access and low investment for many businesses (Mamalis 2009). Despite these favourable entry conditions, there is little room for error as the global recession has restricted consumer spending and limited access to financial sources for restaurateurs (Kim et al. 2011). One of the key strategies used by marketers to allow such businesses as FFRs to compete and survive is the development of associations with consumers through brand management. The concept of brand management involves creation of a strong brand, enhancing its awareness and adapting it continually to changes in the market (Keller 2003). Customers who have an understanding of a restaurant's concept and branding would be more inclined to become a patron than those who do not (Kim et al. 2011).

To build a strong brand, FFRs must not only deliver what the brand promises but also exceed customers' expectations and strive hard to establish a strong and distinguished brand presence (Kim and Kim 2004, Murase and Bojanic 2004). Competition with familiar brands, the uncertain nature of the fast food product quality, the difficulties of developing new products and the threat of substitution makes brand positioning, management and differentiation in FFRs highly important (Rekom et al. 2006). One of the key tools in influencing a brand's image and consumer association is brand personality, which is the set of human attributes that consumers associate with a brand (Aaker 1997). FFRs can use brand personality for establishing brand-consumer relationships and attract consumers on the basis of highlighting symbolic or non-functional attributes of the

brand as customers have often been observed to describe brands using associative terms of personality traits. Freling and Forbes (2005) observed that the ease and clarity with which customers identify a brand's personality is important in determining success of the brand.

The aim of this research was to assess customers' perceived brand personalities of three well known global FFRs brands and to examine the differentiation in these perceptions. Musante et al. (2008) presented a modified version of Aaker's (1997) model for the restaurant industry. These researchers were supported by the work of Austin et al. (2003), who argued that several of the 42 items on Aaker's (1997) Brand Personality Scale (BPS) were not applicable to restaurants. This study attempts to use the modified BPS developed by Mustane et al. (2008) to understand customer perceptions of these three FFRs brands. Specifically, this research aims to answer two key questions:

- Are there differences in customers' perceptions of brand personality between FFRs based on the modified model?
- Does brand personality serve as a differentiation factor between FFRs based on the modified model?

Literature review

The American Marketing Association (cited in Kotler et al. 2009, 250) defined a brand as 'a name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors'. Creating a strong brand name signals to the consumer the quality, value and symbolism of the product, eliminating purchase search time (Murase and Bojanic 2004). Even though competitors can imitate product design to an extent by introducing similar products, they cannot mimic the essence of a brand name and its value (Crimmins 2000). The creation of strong brands has a multitude of benefits which include ease of identification,

deeper customer loyalty, resilience in crisis management, increased profits, higher market share and favourable responses from the consumers (Freling and Forbes 2005, Kotler et al. 2010, Oh 2000).

Aaker (1999) suggested that consumers select brands with personalities congruent with themselves and their personal situations. Brand personality derives knowledge of how brands are used by consumers to construct and express their emotions (Heding et al. 2009). The primary function of brand personality is about relating to and aiding consumers in the process of their self-expression (Dubois 2000). The extent to which consumers use this method of constructing and expressing their identity is the point of reference that forms the basis for differentiation of one brand over other brands in the same product category. The rationale behind this lies in the premise that people seek associations with brands that portray images similar to their perceived self-concept and thus choose brands as a tool to express their personality (Freling and Forbes 2005, Musante et al. 2008). This implies that consumers use brand personality to experience its emotional benefits and 'self-express' their personality (Phau and Lau 2001). For instance the McDonald's personality has always been one of 'fun' as depicted by its cartoon characters (Siguaw et al. 1999).

Expression by the consumers could be one of three forms which include expressing one's own self, that is projecting an image of their overall personality (Belk 1988), portraying an ideal self or a desired image that one wishes to project (Malhotra 1988) or expressing a specific dimension or a singular characteristic of one's self (Kleine et al. 1993). In the context of brand management, therefore, creating brand personality is a way to differentiate brands, drive consumer preference and improve the financial objectives of the business (Heding et al. 2009).

Research framework: modified BPS

Aaker (1997), with the BPS, made a landmark contribution to marketing research to measure and assess brand personality in different industries through surveying respondents to list all possible traits that came to mind when thinking of specific brands. She asked a total of 631 subjects to rate 37 brands, which resulted in 309 personality traits which were then filtered down to 114 depending on consumers' ratings of how descriptive the traits were for brands in general (Aaker 1997, Musante et al. 2008, Siguaw et al. 1999). This was followed by a series of studies in which Aaker asked respondents how well these 114 traits matched with a set of 59 brands, which were selected from wide-ranging industries and also included some hospitality companies such as McDonald's, Holiday Inn and Marriott. From this analysis, a 42-item scale was developed to identify five personality factors which were excitement, sincerity, ruggedness, sophistication, and competence; with each factor consisting of a number of traits.

Even though not much research related to the restaurant industry has been carried out using the BPS there have been some notable contributions. For example, Jones et al. (2002) focused on the perceptions of KFC, McDonald's and Burger King in the UK and concluded that customers were clear on the overall brand image of all three restaurants but their work was limited to brand image rather than brand personality. Siguaw et al. (1999) tested the BPS to measure or identify consumer perceived brand personalities of various brands

across three restaurant segments whilst Austin et al. (2003) examined the application of BPS across brands within the same category in different restaurant segments. Murase and Bojanic (2004) undertook a similar piece of research but focused on cultural differences in the perceptions of FFRs brands. The findings from these researchers advocated for restaurateurs to undertake brand personality development, brand communication and management to give them a competitive position in the market. More recently, Opoku et al. (2008) concentrated on the brand personality of SME franchised restaurants on their websites, Lee et al. (2009) focused on the relationship between a restaurant brand personality and customer emotions, satisfaction and loyalty, whilst Kim et al. (2011) looked at the outcomes of brand personality in casual theme restaurants. Aaker's (1997) BPS model formed the theoretical framework of all of these studies.

Although the use of Aaker's (1997) BPS has been extensive and practiced through various industries, there have been some strong arguments against its effectiveness and applicability. Azoulay and Kapferer (2003) have questioned the relevance of the BPS in achieving its primary aim of measuring brand personality by observing that the BPS in essence is not a tool measuring brand personality; but instead it is more reflective of brand identity, of which personality is only an integral part. These researchers have further stated that the BPS integrates a number of facets of the brand's identity, only some of which can be classified as being personality facets. Batra et al. (2006) have criticised the BPS on the grounds that its construction was heavily attributed by category personality constructs instead of individual brands in a category. The BPS has also been criticised as not being of complete relevance in many settings such as that of measuring individual brand personalities within a product segment and not generalisable across all industries and within product categories across different samples and countries (Austin et al. 2003). Das et al. (2012) commented on the need for BPS modifications, citing studies where the BPS dimensions failed. For example, Siguaw et al. (1999) found little differentiation in the brand personality dimensions of casual dining restaurants whilst even though Lee et al. (2009) corroborated Aaker's (1997) five brand personality dimension, they found that some components such as sincerity and excitement differ for the restaurant sector.

Musante et al. (2008) observed that not all elements of the BPS were generalisable to the restaurant industry. As such, they proposed to examine the viability of creating a different version of the BPS that would be more applicable to the restaurant industry. They proposed a modified BPS, which was developed through a two-stage research process. The first stage examined the viability of reducing the 42-item BPS by eliminating items that may be less relevant in the assessment of restaurant brands. The second phase included an assessment of the internal reliability of the revised scale developed. Musante et al. (2008) eliminated the ruggedness dimensions of the original BPS and other attributes, which showed little or no relevance to the food service sector in the four other dimensions. The modified BPS proposed by Musante et al. (2008) consisted of four dimensions, namely, excitement, sincerity, sophistication, and competence, and 18 traits, as seen in Table 1. This created the foundation for the research framework of this study and was used for designing the research instrument.

Table 1: Personality dimensions and traits relevant to the restaurant sector

Competence	Sincerity	Excitement	Sophistication
Reliable	Honest	Trendy	Upper-class
Corporate	Sincere	Unique	Glamorous
Successful	Real	Up-to-date	Charming
Leader	Wholesome		
Confident	Original		
	Cheerful		
	Friendly		

Source: Musante et al. (2008)

Methodology

To develop an understanding of how customers perceive brand personality for FFRs, three chains were selected, McDonald's, KFC and Subway, due to their availability in the city where this research was conducted and their product differentiation. A questionnaire was designed based on the modified BPS. Questions were based on a Likert scale and requested respondents to rate how they felt each personality trait described the brand. The range varied from 1 to 5 with one being non-descriptive and 5 being highly descriptive. Demographic variables were also covered in the questionnaire to determine if this had any influence on personality perceptions.

The sample consisted of customers of these three FFRs. A user-survey method was the most appropriate to carry out this study as the consumers of a brand are the best source to enquire about their characteristics and attitudes towards the brand (Kotler et al. 2010). Permission was received from the store manager to administer the questionnaires to customers in one of these stores. This approach was different to other studies of brand personality in restaurants as they sought to primarily use students as their population (see for example Kim et al. 2011, Murase and Bojanic 2004). Using a convenience sampling approach, respondents were approached and provided with a questionnaire based on their willingness to participate. The key advantage of a respondent-completed survey was respondents were not inhibited by the presence of a third person while discussing their opinions and views and would thereby provide honest, unbiased information (Easterby-Smith et al. 2008).

To examine whether there was any bias in the consumers' response towards the brand of the outlet in which the questionnaires were being distributed, an initial 25 questionnaires were distributed. This analysis suggested a generic response towards all three brands without any particular brand being favoured. Questionnaires were then distributed to investigate the topic under consideration. A sample size of 120 (completed) responses was received, with 100 being usable. For an effective and generalisable social research, a sample between the range of 50 and 200 holds great value and reliability (Hair et al. 2007), hence the number of useable questionnaires was deemed sufficient to proceed with the analysis. Usability was determined on two parameters, familiarity with all three brands and completed questionnaires.

The collected data were analysed using SPSS and Cronbach alpha was used to determine the internal reliability. An overall score of 0.864 was achieved, which was an acceptable level of reliability and Hinton et al. (2004) indicated that scores of 0.75

and above are considered by most researchers as being highly reliable. The data were analysed using the descriptive statistics obtained under general linear multivariate analysis. This was similar to that used by other researchers studying brand personality of FFRs (Musante et al. 2008, Siguaw et al. 1999). The mean ratings obtained for the eighteen variables and thereby the four personality dimensions were used to assess the perceived personality of the three brands under study. This was done by conducting a comparative analysis of the scores obtained by each brand on the four dimensions by comparing these scores with those of the other two brands. Further analysis was done to evaluate the influence of demographic factors such as gender, age and ethnic origin on the perceived brand personalities of the three FFRs.

Results

Overall brand perception

McDonald's was perceived to be the most competent brand, receiving a mean rating of 4.06 whilst Subway and KFC had mean scores of 3.69 and 3.63. Subway was identified as the most sincere brand with a mean score of 3.55, which was marginally higher than McDonald's and KFC who scored 3.28 and 3.21 respectively. Subway was also identified as the most exciting brand with a mean score of 3.63, ahead of McDonald's (3.45) and KFC (3.27). Sophistication saw the lowest scores amongst all the three personality dimensions for the brands. All three appeared to be moderately sophisticated. However, Subway led in this dimension again with a mean score of 3.08 compared to McDonald's mean score of 2.90 and KFC's mean score of 2.78. McDonald's was thus the most competent brand of the three and Subway the most sincere, exciting and sophisticated.

KFC, however, with the lowest rating on each of the three brands, seems to display a poor personality in comparison to the other two brands being studied. Even though the brands did show a difference in an overall personality structure defined by the four personality dimensions, the low degree of variance between the scores of each dimension for all the brands was in itself marginal in most cases, thereby suggesting a lack of clear differentiation in the perceived personalities.

Personality dimensions

Competence

McDonald's was considered the most competent brand of the three brands and it received the highest scores amongst the three brands on all five-competence factors. McDonald's and Subway were perceived to be more reliable (3.81 and 3.73 respectively) than KFC, which was seen as moderately reliable (3.42). Second to McDonald's, KFC was considered more successful than Subway, whereas McDonald's was perceived as more corporate than the other two brands.

Sincerity

Subway was considered as the most sincere brand with all factors under this dimension scoring the highest than the other two brands. Subway scored relatively higher than McDonald's and considerably higher than KFC in being original and friendly. It scored considerably higher than both brands on being wholesome and real. A higher score in these factors

could be attributed to the warmth displayed in its store outlets along with the 'healthy' product lines. Subway is also perceived to be significantly more honest and cheerful than either McDonald's or KFC.

Excitement

McDonald's and Subway received similar scores (3.72 and 3.76) on being trendy, whereas KFC was considered not to be as trendy (3.32). In terms of uniqueness, Subway (3.54) was considered to be more unique than either KFC (3.07) or McDonald's (3.03), which was perceived to be the least unique of all. KFC was the least up-to-date (3.41) with a marginal lead by McDonald's (3.61) and relatively higher difference with Subway (3.73).

Sophistication

While Subway was seen to be the most upper class brand of the three, KFC seemed to be the lowest, but only marginally behind McDonald's. There was a similar perception towards the glamour quotient of the three brands. KFC was the least charming (2.83) marginally led by McDonald's (2.96) and significantly behind Subway (3.13).

Demographics

Respondents in this survey were 55% female and 45% male. Forty-four percent were White, followed by 27% being of Asian/Asian British ethnicity. Black/Black British accounted for 15% of the respondents whilst 8%, 5% and 1% of the respondents accounted for Chinese, Arab and Mixed ethnicity respectively. Thirty-four percent of the respondents were aged 21–25 years followed by 27% of the respondents aged 26–30 years. The age group of 16–20 years had 17% participants in the study with 11% participants in the age group of 31–35. Eleven percent of the respondents were 36 years old or above. There were no respondents under the age of 15.

Gender influence on perception

Perceptions for competence were highest and similar for both males and females with a mean rating of 3.77 and 3.81 respectively. Both sets also rated excitement (3.48 and 3.45 respectively) and sophistication (2.92 and 2.93 respectively) without much difference in perceptions. However, the males considered the restaurants to be relatively more sincere (mean rating 3.40) than females (mean rating 3.30). There was a generic similarity in the ratings by both genders without much variation in the perceived personality dimensions in the case of McDonald's and Subway. In the case of KFC however, there was a variance wherein the males rated KFC being more sincere than exciting with a mean score of 3.30 (for sincerity) whereas the females perceived it to be considerably less sincere (and more exciting) with a rating of 3.14.

Age influence on perception

Respondents in the age group of 41–45 perceived the FFRs to be much more competent (mean rating 4.33) than those in the age group of 16–20 (mean rating 3.52). The other age groups rated competence in the range of (3.59–3.98). Other dimensions such as sincerity (range 2.98–3.53) and excitement (range 2.89–3.64) played a key role in perceptual differences. The difference was the most for sophistication, which was, rated the lowest as 1.92 (age above 50) and the highest

as 3.16 (age 21–25). The perceived brand personalities for the three brands varied significantly with age. Unlike the gender influence in which males and females had given similar ratings to the three brands, people from different age group gave considerably different ratings to each brand. This signifies that on the basis of age, brands are perceived to have greatly varying and *differentiated* personalities.

Ethnicity influence on perception

Ethnic origin was an important factor in the brand personality dimension perceptions. In the case of sophistication, there was immense difference in the perception of White people (mean score 2.37) and Asian/Asian British respondents (mean score 3.51). The Asian and Chinese respondents also gave a higher rating to excitement (3.82 and 3.61 respectively) than the Black, Arab and White respondents (3.41, 3.26, 3.33 respectively).

When the three brands were compared, respondents from various ethnic origins seemed to give similar ratings to different personality dimensions of the brands with a few varying perceptions. For example, the Chinese respondents consider KFC as being more competent and exciting than sophisticated or sincere, whereas the Black respondents considered KFC to be less competent and rated all the dimensions relatively at the same level.

Conclusions

Summary and discussion

The purpose of this research was to determine customer perceptions of three FFR brand personalities using the modified BPS proposed by Musante et al. (2008). McDonald's was perceived as the most competent brand whereas Subway was the most sincere, exciting and sophisticated brand of the three. KFC did not lead on any of the personality dimensions and had a moderate rating for each of the dimensions. While the overall personality based on the ratings given to different personality dimensions showed that consumers perceived these brands to have varying personalities, none of the brands actually stood apart on any particular personality dimension. For example, even though Subway was seen as the most exciting brand among the three, it was not clearly differentiated on that dimension, as McDonald's was close behind.

It was determined that demographics played an important role in the outcomes of the brand personality projected by the FFRs. Consumers' emotional and psychological responses to products and brands seem to vary between different generations, social groups, nationalities and cultures (Demirbilek and Sener 2003). The role of the community or the culture in which the individuals develop is significant in creating behavioural and psychological constructs (Mooij 2010). In smaller communities, brands play a central role during the process of social interaction amongst consumers and build up a social context of consumption and thus overall brand image projection (Heding et al. 2009). The age group variance in perceptions was significantly wide, with the respondents from age group 16–18 having a totally different and contrasting approach towards a brand than those over the age of 50.

Similarly, differences in perceptions attributed to ethnic origin were significant as well. A culture can be seen as a magnified community and the approach of social interaction

works at a larger scale in this aspect (Heding et al. 2009). Since all the brands studied were global in nature and a considerable number of respondents could be essentially permanent residents of different countries, for example China and India, the perceptions would be a combined outcome of their service experiences of the brands in the two countries. Global brands thus need to depict an aspect of consistency in image building across cultures while localising to the market conditions of different countries (Gilbert et al. 2004). A varied product offering in different countries can also influence preference as in some countries a brand may provide a product offering which it does not in other countries; thereby highlighting cultural origins as a key factor in brand preferences and perceptions (Mooij 2010).

There are a number of factors that influence what a consumer perceives the brand to project. It is important to understand and evaluate these factors in light of the results obtained in the study. Rijswijk and Frewer (2008) observed that customers have an inclination towards 'healthy options' and the nutritional benefits have had a major influence in how food service firms design their products. The results of the study showed that Subway was considered to be the most wholesome brand amongst the three, along with being the most honest and up-to-date. These outcomes can be attributed to a direct relation between Subway's projection of the healthy lifestyle through consumption of its food. Clearly, in sync with the brand personality construct, people who are health-conscious, up-to-date and believe in a wholesome lifestyle would therefore choose Subway over the other brands more occasionally.

All three brands in this study were highly rated on their friendliness, which signifies the importance of employee-consumer relationship from the food service business point of view. The study shows that Subway was the friendliest brand followed by McDonald's and KFC. Brand engagement or the role of employees has a considerable impact on the perceived brand value, especially in the people-centred service industry (Buckingham 2008). Various elements of the sincerity dimension of the brand personality scale are related to emotional attributes, which can be greatly influenced by peoples' behaviour (Heding et al. 2009). FFRs, which need to process a number of customers with speed and efficiency, rely on scripts for establishing communication, and communicating with customers during service delivery is important in establishing the brand-consumer relationship (Schau et al. 2007). These researchers further state that this element distinguishes the FFRs from full service restaurants for providing low customisation in contact personnel judgement and this leads to uniformity in the service experience which has a positive influence on the customers brand perception. Friendly, honest, cheerful are aspects that consumers would relate more to the people aspect of the brands (Dubois et al. 2000).

Metaphors also play an interesting role in brand communications. Ang and Lim (2006) state that using metaphors has an influence on perceived brand personalities such that symbolic products are seen to be more sophisticated and exciting and less sincere or competent whereas utilitarian products get enhanced on sophistication and excitement and reduced on sincerity. In one of its advertisements, Subway projected the high level of customisation possible with a single item on its menu, right from bread choice to the selection of fillings and

sauses. This was a communication of the unique, wholesome and 'real' characteristics of the brand. KFC has been seen to essentially bring 'situational' advertisements (Mooij 2010) to highlight the features of its continually changing menu items projected in different situations using varying metaphors, for example 'adolescent crush' for its 'Krusshems'. These advertisements also project an image of being 'up-to-date' and 'trendy' as they highlight the continual upgrade in the offering. McDonald's has gone beyond the communication of product features to target the intuitive section (Rajagopal 2008) of a mental construct.

Managerial implications

As has been seen through the study, the three FFR brands involved, namely McDonald's, KFC and Subway, have been successful to an extent in creating unique brand personalities for themselves as evidenced through the use of the modified BPS. They have conveyed varying messages through the mix and match of various media including an array of communication strategies, employee involvement, brand and product designing and public relation management. It is therefore the role of brand managers to design a personality construct using various means available, which shows distinctiveness in the personality dimensions. This would depend on the target market that they wish to capitalise on, clubbed with the key propositions of the brand. On the basis of these two factors, brand managers need to create corresponding personality constructs that can be used by consumers as a means of establishing brand relationships, and thereby differentiate the brand from its competitors.

In the FFRs business, brands aim at catering to all segments of the market to expand the consumer base. This in most cases may not be avoidable due to the 'impulse' purchase behaviour heavily influencing this industry. However brand personality construct aims at classifying consumers into different groups within a segment. Thus the most critical role for managers when using brand personality as a differentiating strategy is to convey to the consumers the element/s of their brand personality most influential for the business – filtering out a section from a target segment.

This involves working on two areas. The first requires marketers to identify those aspects of the business on which their consumers perceive the other factors to depend. For some consumers price could be the main feature and for others it may be menu variety, the service setting or staff behaviour. Marketers need to identify the key or the independent features which then influence the other elements of a consumer's dining/purchase experience. This will develop and determine the essence of a brand. The brand essence would highlight to the management what the consumers expect most from a brand and would show an inclination towards establishing that in the brand image and personality. Determining the brand essence would then lead to the second stage of positioning and communicating the brand personality and specifically the key dimension of the personality. Age and ethnicity strongly influenced brand perceptions and it is critical that marketers capitalise on and be cautious of these variations while designing communication media. Various other factors that can influence consumer perception, such as designing the brand and its products, employee behaviour, co-branding strategies, corporate social responsibility and

others can be altered and systematically used to convey the desired associations that a brand wishes to establish with its consumers. If used tactically, brand personality can be used as a highly beneficial strategy to gain competitive advantage in the highly crowded quick service restaurant segment by creating a proposition of differentiation and unique consumer-brand associations.

Limitations and avenues for further study

This study was limited to capturing customer perceptions of three brands in one restaurant segment. It would be useful to apply the modified BPS across different restaurant segments to validate these results. Future efforts can concentrate on testing the modified BPS on a larger sample using more brands, representing a greater diversity and testing the same three brands in different countries to see whether culture is a moderating variable. Likewise, the research focused solely on the modified BPS. Another avenue stemming from this research would be to do a comparative analysis between Aaker's (1997) BPS and the modified BPS to see what differences exist. Moreover, Geuens et al. (2009) presented a new five-dimension brand personality measure, which are responsibility, activity, aggressiveness, simplicity and emotionality. It would be useful to test this BPS to see its relevance and applicability to FFRs. This study has brought to light the importance of demographic variables in how brand personality is perceived by customers of FFRs and further work can focus on isolating these demographic variables and determining their relationship to brand personality.

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The ethics of an all-inclusive plan: An investigation of social sustainability in the case of all-inclusive resorts, Jamaica

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Ethics and sustainability are commonly used catchphrases in the modern business world. As several hospitality entities go out of their way to provide the emergent pro-environmentalist guest with value-added 'green' goods and services, others are forced to re-analyse their operational strategies to maintain competitive advantage (Miao and Wei 2012). The all-inclusive system, a marketing paradigm that involves inclusion of all (or most) hotel services at one standard price, has been extremely popular since the 1970s. This system gained prominence with the advent of mass tourism, and is still very common in the Caribbean islands. However, this bundling system has not been scrutinised from a sustainability perspective. The research recognises that sustainability is not limited to environmental practices, but also focuses on economic benefits and social development (Elkington 1997). A review of recent scholarship in the sustainability domain reveals that the environmental dimension has been the key focus of research, while the social aspect of sustainability has received little attention (Bonini et al. 2010). This study therefore aims to address this gap and investigate social sustainability of all-inclusive system. The research is located in Jamaica, a popular destination for all-inclusive travel. Primary data was collected through semi-structured interviews with front desk agents at all-inclusive Resort X. Findings indicate that although employees value direct employment created by the resort, they resent some of the necessarily evils associated with all-inclusive system, such as lack of entrepreneurial opportunities, exclusion and subservience. Based on analysis of qualitative data, the paper presents a conceptual framework, the final outcome of this study. The conceptual model depicts four key dimensions of social sustainability on a hierarchical scale, based on importance attached to each of these by the respondents. The findings establish that employees and wider communities are increasingly expecting businesses to act responsibly. It is important to adopt a holistic and balanced approach to issues concerning business ethics and sustainability.

Keywords: sustainability, all-inclusive, ethics, business ethics, triple bottom line

Introduction

The principles of sustainable living are firmly entrenched within ethics, as ethical behaviours form the building blocks of human society. According to Aristotle, who laid the foundations of ethics over 2000 years ago, virtuous behaviour, such as generosity, justice and charity benefits the individual and society alike. But how can something as subjective and personal as ethics be defined? In a more general sense, ethics as defined by the Oxford English Dictionary refers to the distinction between right and wrong, thereby guiding behaviour. Clearly, this definition is very abstract. However, it can help us understand the concept of business ethics, commonly understood as morality and doing what is considered to be morally upright, fair and honest within a given business environment (Murphy et al. 2007). Although the study of ethics in an organisational context is not new, the field is constantly evolving and such issues are gaining prominence on the business agenda.

Likewise, issues concerning sustainability are fast gaining prominence as a key strategic objective. Sustainability has long been associated with environmental concerns and natural resource management (Mowforth and Munt 2009). John Elkington (1997) led the way in understanding sustainability as a multi-faceted concept and famously coined the term

'triple bottom line' (TBL), arguing that the performance of any business must be measured based not only on the profit (economic) dimension, but also planet (environmental) and people (social) bottom lines. The US Environmental Protection Agency (2013) further clarifies: 'sustainability permits fulfilling the social, economic and other requirements of present and future generations'. Evidently, socio-economic concerns are assuming heightened importance within sustainability discourse. A closer examination of sustainability's triple bottom line highlights some important points – most notably equity, opportunity, inclusivity, welfare and justice (Strock 2011, Elkington 1997). This value set is clearly grounded within business ethics. In other words, it is the ethical obligation of every organisation to contribute towards sustainable development. Ethics and sustainability can therefore be envisioned as two sides of the same coin. However, the social dimension of sustainability is a vastly underexplored study area. Issa and Jaywardena (2002) challenge this position too and state that for an organisation to be truly sustainable, the social dynamics of its operations need to be taken into account. With this reasoning, people/social dimension of sustainability is the key agenda this study aims to explore.

Miao and Wei (2012) rather controversially suggest that sustainability and hospitality cannot co-exist, given the hedonic nature of the industry. This is even more prominent with a marketing concept such as all-inclusive, whereby the traveller pays a one-off price and all services are bundled into the stipulated price, thereby encouraging gluttonous consumption. The all-inclusive package evolved in the 1960s in a bid to further promote mass tourism. The idea can rightly be articulated as the equivalent of 'readymade microwaveable meals' of the tourism industry. The concept of all-inclusive hospitality was borne from hedonistic consumption, in that travellers sought to satisfy all of their vacationing desires at the convenience of paying for those under a standard price. As the popularity of these packages increased over the years, so did their impacts on the TBL of the societies where such resorts operate. In case of Jamaica, as Bramwell (2004) and Boniface and Cooper (2009) note, the increased employment, tourist spending and foreign exchange earnings that all-inclusive hospitality brought have helped improve the livelihoods of many Jamaicans who were still trapped in poverty. Bramwell (2004) insists that benefits such as these have most certainly balanced against the associated problems of all-inclusive hospitality not just for the societies where these organisations operate, but also for the very tourists that these systems are serving. However, according to some critics, the all-inclusive system does more harm than good as far as the TBL is concerned and cannot possibly be sustainable (Issa and Jayawardena 2002). Given the very nature of this product, it is indeed difficult to visualise if the all-inclusive concept can be managed sustainably. This study pursues this line of enquiry, and investigates if the all-inclusive plan can be managed in a socially responsible manner.

Literature review

Sustainability

The earth belongs to each generation in its course, and in its rights no generation must contract debts greater than what may be paid during the course of its existence (Thomas Jefferson).

Few have captured the essence of sustainability as succinctly as in the above quote. Sustainability and sustainable development are ubiquitous terminologies, dividing academics, scholars and business managers on what these terms really imply. Both expressions are often used interchangeably and generally refer to the actions or activities of an organisation that 'meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (WCED 1987). Evidently, this definition is abstract and even paradoxical, as it highlights the need for simultaneous resource conservation and exploitation. Despite key shortcomings, it does bring about the general idea that sustainability is mainly concerned with prudent management of resources, and also inter-generational equity. In simpler terms, it refers to the capacity to endure, or for things to continue indefinitely. A review of scholarly work in the sustainability domain reflects that the earlier literature equates sustainability with ecological concerns (Mowforth and Munt 2009). For many, the same is true even today as sustainability is still commonly equated with 'greening' (or tree-hugging!) and restoring the environment to its original state, free from the effects of climatic change.

This view finds ample support from the US Environmental Protection Agency and Green Cross International, who contend that everything we need for our survival and wellbeing depends either directly or indirectly on the natural environment. For others, it encompasses the totality of the environment, including both the economy and the people within the environment. In the latter conceptualisation, sustainability seeks to improve the entirety of man's quality of life through maintaining the three tiers of economic, ethical and environmental reconciliation (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change 2009). These three tiers are commonly referred to as the triple bottom line (Elkington 1997), which advocates a balanced approach towards ecological, economic, political and cultural dimensions. Despite varying approaches adopted towards the definition of sustainability, the underlying underpinnings suggest the maintenance and upholding of all of the facets that make up the planet earth and its greater environment in supporting life. This all-encompassing and broad view forms the foundation of this paper too, although the social dimension of sustainability will be the key focus, as explained later.

Triple Bottom Line (Elkington 1997)

John Elkington, author of *Cannibals with forks: the triple bottom line of 21st century business*, is widely credited for presenting a holistic view of sustainability agenda. His conceptualisation, called the 'triple bottom line', is loosely based on the UN's Agenda 21 and is an accounting framework that challenges the popular view that the impacts of any organisation be measured strictly on the financial bottom-line (profit). Instead, this impact assessment needs to include social (or people) and environmental (or planet) bottom lines as well. Elkington advocates a balanced approach, implying that economic development be achieved with the purpose of social welfare and strictly within the confines of what the natural environment can sustain. In fact, this framework attaches expectations on businesses to create not only economic, but also social and environmental value. Planet 'P' concerns prudent management of natural capital, the environment, non-renewable resources and wider issues such as natural biodiversity. Profit 'P' is not limited to viability of the business (or the sector) itself, but also elaborates on how these profits are redistributed (for instance payment of taxes, fair wages, charities and donations). The people 'P' dimension advocates equity, welfare and better quality of life for humankind. The TBL clearly intends to capture an expanded spectrum of values and criteria for measuring organisational and societal success. By extension, the TBL model compels businesses to realign their strategies, to address stakeholders' expectations, rather than those of shareholders only.

However, the TBL remains one of the most widely criticised theories in contemporary literature. Sridhar and Jones (2013) challenge TBL rhetoric, claiming that it is so misleading that it might provide a smokescreen behind which firms can truly avoid effective social and environmental performance. Norman and MacDonald (2004) criticise the TBL from a uniformity and lack of practicality viewpoint, as they note that social issues are subjective, and hence cannot be objectively assessed in the same way as the profit bottom line, which has a common unit of measurement. The scholars further argue that the TBL really is unhelpful, owing to lack of integration between the three

stated dimensions. Measurement indeed is the most problematised aspect of the TBL (Milne and Brych 2011; Fauzi, Svensson and Abdul Rahman 2010) and this itself is paradoxical as the TBL was intended to be an impact assessment model. Richards and Palmer (2010) challenge the validity of TBL conceptualisation, and argue that an impacts-based model as such does not adequately address issues of sustainability. Therefore, they argue for an extension of the TBL into the quadruple bottom line, adding progress 'P' (Richards and Palmer 2010) to the mix. This highlights the need to not only conserve resources, but also to restore them. Their work, though, has not been widely accepted and even criticised for over problematising key issues at hand. Others such as Dryzec (2005) remain sceptical too and suggest that the sustainability agenda's global popularity is based upon its 'rhetoric of reassurance', where economic prosperity, social justice and environmental preservation can co-exist in harmony. Kagawa (2007) supports this view, and sets the environment against social and economic issues, and not essentially as complimentary. Despite these critical views, the TBL remains the most widely adopted framework of current scholarship on sustainability. The TBL is the guiding principle behind the development of ISO 26000 standards, the Global Reporting Initiative framework and other theoretical constructs such as a sustainability balanced scorecard (Cheng et al. 2010). Therefore this paper chooses to use the TBL conceptualisation, though one of the three dimensions, namely the people (or social) aspect of TBL will be the main focus of the study.

People 'P' of sustainability

The social pillar of sustainability is a widely contested theme too, as there is little agreement on what social sustainability actually constitutes (Vanclay 2004). Social dimension has always been circumscribed by the other two, and is often viewed as a financial burden (Omann and Spangenberg 2002). Earlier texts on the social dimension provide a rather simplistic view, limiting it to employment creation and poverty alleviation (Gladwin et al. 1995; Elkington 1997). The 'people' facet of TBL is concerned with social justice for the local community where an organisation operates. In some texts, this 'P' is referred to as 'ethics' (Norman and McDonald 2004; Crand and Matten 2007) and is concerned with the moral code that businesses are expected to adhere to. This includes positively contributing to the growth of the local community through just and beneficial labour policies that encourage employment of competent locals, while ensuring that no sections of the community are marginalised, and policies that improve the general living standards. Community relations, education, training, lifelong learning, building social infrastructure are all key agendas under this pillar of sustainability (Omann and Spangenberg 2002; ISO 26000 2010). All these are aspects of business ethics that encourage mutually beneficial relationships between businesses and the local communities in which they operate. Global Reporting Initiative (2014) include a wide variety of stakeholders and issues within this pillar of sustainability, including fair labour practices, adherence with human rights, anti-corruption, ethical marketing and customer safety. Focus on the 'people' facet of TBL theory is especially necessary for hospitality entities because the hotel sector by nature is people intensive as people provide both the production capacity of hospitality goods and services (human capital)

and are also the consumers of hospitality product (as guests). In addition, this dimension of sustainability discourse continues to be an underexplored research area. Hence, the social / people aspect of TBL is the foundation for this study.

Sustainability and the hospitality industry

There is an evident shift within business models of the global hospitality industry as the hotel sector is making strong efforts to minimise the damage due to its operations. Kazim (2007) argues that operators, especially those of luxury hotel chain properties, express concern for and interest in reducing the ecological footprints of their operations. A simple online search reveals sustainability plans and policies of major industry players such as Marriott International, the Carlson Rezidor group and Hilton hotels, among others. The prime focus of these reports does seem to be variable, with the Marriott group (2013) concerning themselves the most with social issues (human rights, employee welfare and customer satisfaction), while the Carlson Rezidor hotel group considers environment as its key agenda (Rezidor 2013). Shangri La Hotels (2013) view sustainability as maintaining luxury services, which need not 'cost the earth'. At the same time, Hong Kong and Shanghai Hotels Limited (2013), widely known for the Peninsula brand, consider corporate governance as the key to unlock business opportunities presented through sustainability. Sustainable management of hospitality operations has indeed become a strategic imperative as consumers and governments are increasingly demanding that hotels adopt a balanced approach while embracing responsible practices (Kovaljova and Chawla 2013). The balanced approach is not simply about environmental conservation but the entirety of the environment, including the ethics of hotel operations and its impacts on the community's economic and social wellbeing (Miao and Wei 2012). Evidently, the industry is progressively (albeit slowly!) turning green (Enz 2009). In fact, it is not uncommon that mission and value statements or even the product offerings in entirety are now built around the concept of sustainability, as is the case with Green House Hotel (UK), whose business principle is to 'spoil the guests without spoiling anything else'. Legrand et al. (2009) postulate that the hotel sector is one of the prime polluters and places very high demands on natural resources. It is therefore imperative that the sector does assume ownership of and responsibility for its impacts. The industry is making efforts, but is still less than strategic in its approach when dealing with issues of sustainability (Chawla in press). Many measures are a common part of hotel operations these days, including recycling, waste management, voluntary work, donations and other philanthropic activities, water saving technologies, staff development and local sourcing. However, all-inclusive bundling of services is a unique case, and therefore the focal point of this study.

Methodology

The predominance of positivist research traditions in hospitality research is mainly due to the fact that the industry does not have a well-founded research background. Much of the methodology used today is borrowed and based on natural science research whose main aim is to examine and predict behaviour and the general cause and effect nature of research problems (Bryman and Bell 2003). Indeed hospitality and leisure based research has been heavily criticised for following

positivist traditions, and not providing enough insights (Finn et al. 2000). This study, however, aims to investigate the social discourse of TBL and has chosen to adopt an interpretivist philosophical research tradition. Subjective issues within social sciences cannot be appropriately analysed using the rigid structure of positivism (Veal 2006; Walle 1997). By extension, this paper will adopt a qualitative focus. Qualitative research methods are especially useful in articulating the meaning that people attach to events they experience, and when striving to understand social processes in context (Zikmund et al. 2010). In general, a qualitative approach is warranted when the nature of research question requires an in-depth understanding of what is going on from the standpoint of the respondents. Social sciences, particularly hospitality have been challenged as being too quantitative and not providing enough insights into the issues (Riley and Love 2000), crucial for a study of this nature.

This paper adopts a case study strategy and Resort X was purposely chosen as it claims to be '100% super inclusive' making it a poster child for the all-inclusive system. Case studies are much favoured in tourism research as they allow focus on the complexities of social facts, enabling the researcher to gain deeper understanding of the context, the phenomena and the relationship between variables (Beeton 2005). It must be acknowledged here that this limits the external validity, and the results might only be indicative. Resort X employs 621 staff members in total, of which front-office agents were selected to participate in the study. This was done as they are in constant interaction with the guests, and therefore are bound to experience the impacts of the all-inclusive system first hand. Additionally, all respondents belonged to the local community where Resort X is located. A total of 45 agents were employed in the department in summer 2013, all of whom were included in the sample. As one of the researchers was employed at the resort at the time, collection of primary data was convenient and face-to-face interviews were conducted with all front-desk agents. According to Saunders et al. (2009), for any study to provide generalisable results with a high degree of confidence and a tolerable margin of error, a sample size of 30 and above is normally required and is assumed to produce a normal distribution of results. A pilot study was conducted with the training manager at Resort X and her intern assistant. It was largely successful and the respondents agreed that the questions were neither leading nor long and monotonous. Semi-structured interviews were chosen as the data collection method as the questions prepared offered a framework/guideline, but provided a possibility for further inquiries and a better understanding (Denscombe 2010). Summarising, coding, categorisation (Saunders et al. 2009) was the main analytical procedure. Themes and patterns were developed, and relationships were established based on emerging patterns. Verbatim quotes were included in the analysis to capture the voices of the respondents and to reduce researcher bias, thus making the findings more reliable. The emergent themes allowed for development of a conceptual framework, presented as Figure 1 in the next section.

In order to ensure reliability and validity constructs, the researcher provided structured but open-ended questions that were definite and concise. Pilot testing ensured that there were no issues of vagueness in the questions asked. Semi-structured

interviews allowed the researchers flexibility to address main themes, but also to probe emerging issues in depth. This adds to the validity of findings too. The researchers chose to use the entire population to collect data as opposed to just a section of the population (sample), and therefore the findings are more representative.

Analysis and discussion

The interviews started with more general questions, assessing respondents' understanding of business ethics. Although many seemed rather unaware, the majority quoted appropriate synonyms, reflecting that they had a sound understanding of ethical responsibilities of a business. The most widely used terms to explain ethics in business were morals, responsibility, values, fairness, justice, and distinction between right and wrong. As literature establishes, business ethics imply welfare of the wider organisational stakeholders (Murphy et al. 2007). However, some participants refuted this rather simplistic understanding of this complex agenda, and highlighted the subjectivity of the matter. This is evident by quotes below:

*But then who decides for us what is right or not?
It is not a very common practice today, is it?'*

Clearly, there is increased awareness, and greater interest in such issues, as supported in the literature (Chawla, in press). However, far from being a straightforward agenda, the same has been problematised given the subjectivity of underlying issues. Subsequent discussions focussed on four key elements of people 'P' of the TBL – namely employment, social infrastructure, remuneration and discrimination. Each of these will now be discussed in detail.

Employment

The respondents presented a much divided view on this all-important agenda. Interviewees expressed their overwhelming support for the all-inclusive system for its capacity to support large-scale employment, given the very nature of business model. By extension, the all-inclusive mechanism was branded as ethical, as it supports livelihoods and income. This line of inquiry finds support in the ISO

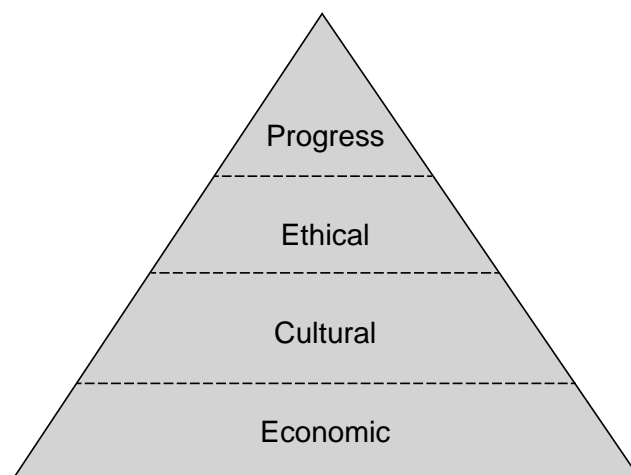


Figure 1: Conceptual model depicting four levels of the social aspect of sustainability

26000 (2010) sustainability standards too, as income generation and job creation are seen as the most positive socio-economic contributions of any business. However, further probing presented a very grim scenario, as participants voiced that the system was equally exploitative, as it did not really present developmental opportunities to the locals or promote entrepreneurship within the community (as guests really did not need to leave the resort). Some respondents expressed their views very strongly on the matter:

We are (still) treated as modern day, unworthy slaves.

They want us to remain like this, so they can continue exploiting us.

These statements are profound given Jamaica's past association with the slave trade, and demonstrate strong feelings, as it is evident that the nature of jobs offered (mostly low-level positions) can dent the pride and confidence of the locals. These issues have also been discussed extensively by Collins (2000), who argues that employment must improve human life. People attach meaning to their lives through their work, and are increasingly looking for association of self-worth through their jobs (Smola and Sutton 2002). In this respect, the all-inclusive system seems to be antithetical to principles of ethics and sustainability.

Social infrastructure

As was the case with employment related questions, the respondents confirmed that the community has benefitted through Resort X's investments into social infrastructure. These include developing and maintaining roads (mostly for the benefit of the visitors, but are also used by the locals), providing electricity and funding schools. Particularly noteworthy are some initiatives such as Resort X Foundation, which collects donations from guests and invests these to provide free education to children from the local parish. Bramwell (2004) has reported similar findings, as the author confirms that all-inclusive tourism has brought some benefits to Jamaica. The author even controversially suggests that the benefits balance out the problems associated with the nature of all-inclusive travel. Omann and Spangenberg (2002) also argue that building social infrastructure, thereby improving quality of life, is a key concern for any socially responsible organisation. However, some respondents held an opposing view, and many opined that they were robbed of their tips and gratuities, under the pretext of social infrastructure development. The Foundation, in their view was used as a smokescreen, and the resort itself took no interest or responsibility to this cause. Instead, all funds were drawn from either guests or employees. Some particularly strong opinions emerged, as respondents retorted:

They simply choose to harness all such resources and keep it for themselves.

They strip you of your tips in the name of charity.

The quotes above indicate a clear gap as far as this dimension of sustainability is concerned.

Remuneration

The discussions took increasingly negative turn, as the topic of remuneration came up. The questions evoked strong (mostly negative) reactions from the respondents. Despite the fact that Resort X is a key employer in the area, the all-inclusive system fared worst on this indicator, as a majority of respondents felt

that the system was very unfair and unethical. The analysis reflects that three prime concerns were voiced in terms of remuneration, these being poor wages, prohibition of tipping and substandard commissions. As tips are typically part of the hotel price, participants felt that their hard work was under rewarded in this mechanism.

It hoards all the money we slave so hard for.

The system steals from us.

Key indicators of socio-economic aspect of sustainability as per GRI (2014) reporting guidelines are fair wages and compensation and moral labour practices. In essence, the all-inclusive mechanism does not promote any of these.

Discrimination

Friction was even more evident as issues concerning discrimination were discussed. The respondents univocally expressed their concerns on this matter, and felt that the system encouraged a glass ceiling, as the locals were only hired at low level positions, and the intention was to keep them in these subervient positions.

It [all-inclusive system] does not allow us to be promoted. Those positions are only for foreigners.

The resort is reclusive.

Others freely expressed that as the idea behind the all-inclusive agenda is to keep the money in the hotel, the locals did not really benefit as the opportunity to provide services to the tourists did not exist. These quotes reflect a clear lack of integration with the local community, and this is a prominent feature of the all-inclusive system. Crand and Matten (2007) postulate that an ethical organisation must ensure that none of the stakeholders are marginalised, and that employment (primary, secondary and tertiary) and entrepreneurship opportunities are created and supported. Empirical evidence suggests that the all-inclusive system works against these principles of social sustainability.

Although cultural issues were not explicitly discussed through the interviews, there were overtones within most discussions, and hence this is an important finding that will be elaborated upon in the next section. This finding is hardly surprising, as UNESCO's Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001) argues that cultures are the fourth pillar of sustainable development. To summarise, conflicting views and discussions presented above clearly demonstrate that the impending issues concerning the people dimension of TBL can be viewed from competing perspectives. Our empirical findings suggest a lack of balance between varied aspects of the social dimension of sustainability.

Discussion

Based on the analysis presented above, it is evident that the respondents are much divided in their views. In their evaluation, by virtue of providing mass employment due to the service style of all-inclusive resorts, the system can be judged as ethical (ISO 26000 2010). However, other issues extend the discourse further, and the ethical dealings of the all-inclusive system have been questioned. Based on the issues discussed and the reactions of respondents, this paper offers a conceptual viewpoint (please refer to Figure 1), while presenting a hierarchical structure for articulating social issues, as investigated through the lens of people P of the TBL. The ordering

is reflective of the weighting respondents attached to each of these issues. The bottom two layers can be articulated as business imperatives, and the top two reflect the greater expectations the community has from the business. The four levels must not be viewed as exclusive (as indicated by dotted lines), and clear overlaps will be evident.

At the base of the pyramid, socio-economic dimension has been placed, as respondents attach great importance to these. Economic welfare is critical, as respondents place high value on provision of employment, especially in a remote, under developed area. This is a key agenda, and provision of employment itself is seen as ethical and responsible behaviour. However, it is crucial that all-inclusive resorts consider not only provision of jobs as important, but also the type of employment offered, and the level at which locals are employed (also supported in Chawla, in press). Provision of competitive wages and remuneration, capable of supporting basic needs and providing better standards of living must be a part of ethical business dealings. Lastly, jobs must be meaningful, and not degrading. The socio-economic dimension must be an integral part of the business strategy (GRI 2013).

Cultural issues have been depicted on the second level of the pyramid, as indigenous communities attach great importance to their cultures. UNESCO (2001) supports this finding, and places culture as an integral dimension of sustainability. Werbach (2009) advocates this view too, and argues that true sustainability has four coequal components – the triple bottom line and cultures. Though discussions about cultures were not an agenda this study aimed to pursue, it emerged as a key theme through discussions with participants. The respondents not only value and take pride in their culture, but are also keen to preserve it. A few respondents believe that all-inclusive resorts serve this dimension rather well, as the resorts try hard to contain tourists within the confines of the property itself, and therefore the local community is not impacted by their foreign way of life. However, most participants were extremely critical, and opined that the all-inclusive system posed a serious threat to the socio-cultural fabric of the destination. Quotes from respondents presented below demonstrate this:

It has tainted our culture. We all feel more Westernised.

Guests do not learn anything from the locals.

There is no cultural exchange.

I've said it [Jamaican greeting] so many times to the guests, that it no longer feels culturally significant to me.

... the longer I work here, the more I feel like I'm losing my culture. And to hear the guests repeating our words with such disregard!

The all-inclusive system seems to prey on the desperation of the locals to find employment, while many aspects of their work is in conflict with the local Jamaican culture and way of life. An ethical organisation must be sensitive to these issues, and must provide for culturally meaningful work.

Based on responses from participants, ethical concerns occupy the third level of the pyramid. Here, the concerns reflect wider expectations employees have from hospitality enterprises (Carroll 1991). Hotel businesses could go the extra mile to demonstrate their involvement in the community (Valor 2005). Typically, anti-discrimination policies would feature in the ethical dimension (for instance, restricted access to the

beach and the glass ceiling were some of the key concerns voiced by respondents). Supporting infrastructure within the local area is another expectation the respondents have from the management. Respondents also expressed their concerns about environmental degradation as a direct consequence of tourism-related activities, and expect managers to assume responsibility for the same. Overdevelopment is a prime concern, as resorts aim to build all possible facilities to better market the all-inclusive package. Communities view themselves as collective shareholders within the natural capital, and businesses must be willing to accept their responsibility in this regard. Branco and Rodrigues (2007) support these findings, as the authors argue that such social issues deserve moral consideration.

At the highest level of the pyramid, progress-related issues have been depicted, as the respondents clearly indicated that they do not only expect Resort X to manage themselves ethically, but also to contribute to social mobility (also refer to Richards and Palmer 2010). This could be achieved, for instance, through supporting local entrepreneurship by creating a supply chain within the community. Developmental opportunities may also be created within the company by providing training, and offering suitable promotions to the locals, thereby affording them a better quality of life. In addition, welfare could also be invested in by supporting social infrastructure such as health and education. At this level, the organisation must be willing to make contributions to the welfare of the community, provide opportunities for lifelong learning and help create a positive image for the destination as a whole, as this can further stimulate growth for all concerned stakeholders. It must again be highlighted that these four levels depicted in the model are not mutually exclusive, and many critical issues could rightfully be placed at multiple levels.

Conclusions

Willard (2002) argues that the TBL stipulates that organisations conduct their business in a manner inclined towards a reciprocal social structure, in which the wellbeing of corporate, labour and other stakeholder interests are interdependent. However, this case study demonstrates that this does not seem to be the case with all-inclusives. This business model has often been criticised from a social responsibility perspective. The system has been responsible for promoting mass tourism and uncontrolled overdevelopment in many places. However, it is becoming increasingly evident that this needs to change. It is time that the sector willingly embraces responsibility in response to greater stakeholder expectations. As is evident through this research, employees are not only pressurising businesses to manage themselves ecologically, but also to assume social responsibility (Werhane and Freeman 1999). The results indicate that the social dimension of sustainability is a complex agenda. The hospitality sector needs to adopt a strategic and holistic view of social responsibility, and this must be a prime business focus. The hierarchical model presented earlier also indicates that key stakeholders have expectations from business at various levels, and this must be a prime concern in strategy making. The way forward for the industry is to create shared value (Porter and Kramer 2011) for its stakeholders; the future viability of the industry is grounded in how well this is achieved.

Limitations and recommendations for future research

The paper adopts a case study approach and this is a key limitation. A larger-scale study would be required to test the validity of the conceptual model presented above. Likewise, primary data has been collected from only one group of stakeholders. Future research in this discipline could adopt a multiple stakeholder approach. This paper adopts a purely qualitative position, and there is scope for future researchers to adopt a quantitative approach to testing the main findings.

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An investigation in purchasing practices of small F&B operators

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The food and beverage (F&B) purchasing function is operating in a rapidly changing environment, whereby professionalisation and efficiency become key. This paper aims to identify generic skills that are most important for small F&B operators when it comes down to purchasing and supply management. Factors facilitating as well as hindering purchasing maturity are discussed. The focus lies on six single-site independent restaurants in the UK, supported by the presentation of the findings from in-depth interviews with the owners or managers. In this methodological context, the skills of buyers in small F&B operations are described through a 7-dimensional conceptual framework including: procurement planning, the structural organisation of the purchasing function, the process organisation, human resource systems, controlling structures, relations with supplier and finally sustainability. The study of these activities provides clear insights into the purchasing function developed by F&B operators, paving the way to the development of maturity grids outlining families of skills required in this specific sector of activity. Such tools can help operators developing a structured purchasing function in order to improve efficiency of processes as well as the evaluation of-and relationship with suppliers.

Keywords: supply chain management, F&B operations, restaurants UK, purchasing maturity, purchasing skills, food and beverage

Introduction

Numerous categories make up the foodservice market, such as independent consumer foodservice, home delivery or takeaway, cafes and bars where food is also provided, fast foods, full service restaurants, self-service cafeterias, street stalls or the pizza consumer foodservice. In this paper, the terminology as developed by Mintel (2014) and Vasquez-Nicholson (2010) will be used to categorise the foodservice operations under scrutiny: single site independent restaurants in the profit sector that can be traditional restaurants with full table service or themed restaurants serving specialties like regional dishes. This type of operation can be qualified as micro or small SMEs, with respectively up to 9 or 49 employees, in line with the definition developed by the European Commission as enforced as from January 1998 (DTI 2001). The foodservice sector was badly affected in the UK by the recession and experienced some of the highest levels of insolvencies and administrations (Mintel 2014). This observation is not helped by the fact that indicators of global food prices show primary food commodities have doubled and sometimes even tripled in price since 2006 (Martindale and Lillford 2008). These challenging conditions in the market have had a positive impact on the professionalisation of the supply chain of food operators, forcing the latter to work on issues of quality, traceability, delivery and sustainability. However, the impact on small F&B operators is unclear when it comes down to the approach to purchasing. This research aims to develop an in-depth understanding of the degree of maturity of the purchasing function in small UK F&B operators. Starting from the premise that purchasing in F&B operations must become

supply management, existing purchasing maturity models will be contextualised to small F&B operators. The research objectives are twofold:

- to determine whether specific purchasing skills as developed by large foodservice operators and ensuing maturity models are of relevance to small F&B operators today or in the future
- to identify factors that might hinder small F&B operators in developing a certain degree of purchasing maturity.

Investigating the purchasing function in small F&B operators is paramount as numerous changes are taking place in the purchasing profession: relationship marketing becomes increasingly important in buyer-supplier relationships, as well as the exchange of information and overall rationalisation of the supply base. This process is facilitated by technological tools, changes in organisational culture and overall attitude of management. These components have become core research areas over the past decade (McIvor et al. 1997, Zsidosin and Ellram 2001, see Björklund 2010). Core skills of F&B buyers identified in this paper may constitute a foundation for the development of an instrument to assess and further develop the level of maturity of purchasing in F&B operations. Such instruments can then be used to develop job descriptions (Tas 1988), providing the basis for training and career development.

Literature review

Restaurants have reacted to the recession and increasing food prices by discounting and using vouchers, or work on operational aspects such as using central ingredients and re-negotiating prices with suppliers. But although

micro-companies and SMEs have a potential for greater flexibility and resilience to respond to innovative trends (European Commission 2007), such responsiveness is often associated with increased business risk that is expressed by 6 components: (1) limited resources for research and development activities, (2) lower bargaining power and influence, (3) lower possibilities for market-building, (4) a high burden to satisfy environmental and hygiene demands, (5) limited access to high-qualified specialists, and finally (6) financial vulnerability (Martindale and Swainson 2008). Apart from merely describing the purchasing activities of small F&B operators, identifying the underpinning factors guiding specific activities lies at the core of the present research. Developing an understanding of supply chain management practices of larger foodservice operators is helpful in this regard, as it provides insights into what the future or 'best practices' within small operators might entail. Looking at a broader picture when studying food SMEs in Europe, Henschion and McIntyre (2005) emphasise the need for the adoption of supply chain management (SCM) practices at the various stages of the chain and new product introductions. Supply chains have been defined by Christopher (1992) as: 'a network of organisations that are involved through upstream and downstream linkages in the different processes and activities that produce value in the form of products and services in the hands of the ultimate consumer'. In line with the approach of Kraljic (1983, 109) to supply chain management, purchasing in F&B operations must become supply management. Consequently, developing an understanding of the level of maturity of small F&B operators implies looking at the 'level of professionalism in the purchasing function' (Rozemeijer et al. 2003, 7). This is usually achieved using maturity models describing several stages organisations must go through in order to achieve better performance (Schiele 2007). Models assessing maturity levels in purchasing strongly lean on skills required of F&B buyers, with the assumption that greater maturity is associated with better performance. Such models tend to describe various stages that an organisation is supposed to go through in order to achieve more efficient service delivery. Considering the skills required as outlined in maturity models, it is relevant to contextualise the concept of skills within a broader framework pertaining to the purchasing function. The function is a concept that does not necessarily identify a position, as it can exist with or without a specific post. And pretty often, it is the independent restaurant owner who will perform the procurement, amongst other functions. Whatever the position of the buyer in the organisation of the company, it is the purchasing activities within the function that matter and that are investigated in this research.

The dimensions of the purchasing function

The various dimensions of assessment used in this research are routed in a 7-dimensional profile of purchasing, taking into account specificities of F&B buyers and covering: (1) procurement planning, (2) the structural organisation of the purchasing function, (3) the process organisation, (4) established human resource systems, (5) purchasing controlling structures, (6) relations with supplier and finally (7) sustainability. The first 5 dimensions used in this research are in line with the maturity grid developed by Schiele (2007), and also integrate the 6 steps of the purchasing process as identified

by Cichy (2012): identification and expression of the need and the obligations, search for suppliers and assessment of the proposals, choice of suppliers and contract negotiation, order and project management, performance evaluation and finally impediments related to relations, organisation and storage. The last two dimensions of assessment of the maturity model (6 and 7) are based on the challenges F&B operators face today and having an impact on the way these operators manage their purchases and overall supply chain. Table 1 below provides an overview of the seven dimensions pertaining to the maturity of purchasing as investigated in this research.

The seven dimensions used in this research to analyse purchasing maturity do already integrate specificities of foodservice operations and are discussed here below:

- (1) Procurement planning, referring to the sourcing decisions made by the operator. Such activities include external market analysis (Burt and Doyle 1994) or the development of product specifications (Barry et al. 1996). One key development when considering procurement comes down to the use of information technology (IT), increasing the availability of information on product movement within the supply chain (Prasad and Tata 2000). Tools such as the Efficient Consumer Response (ECR) have facilitated a transition towards data management, supported by an improving co-operation between trading partners in delivering value for customers. Such exchange of information between buyers and suppliers is facilitated by electronic data interchange (EDI) that can ultimately lead to new product development (NPD) and the creation of value for consumers. Apart from the EDI, Dawson (1994) also refers to the collection of sales data at the retailer's point of sale (EPOS) as a key technology that facilitates supply chain firms' co-ordination. Radio-frequency identification (RFID) provides another example of improvement supported by technology, potentially leading to cost reduction and increased supply chain visibility (Heim et al. 2009), although it implies significant investment from operators. Quite interestingly, there appears to be a strong relationship between the size of the company and the level and type of use of IT. In line with Morrell and Ezingard (2002), smaller companies face problems to benefit from IT use due to a lack of financial resources and relevant capability (in Bourlakis and Bourlakis 2006). The use of IT systems by small F&B operators is merely documented in the literature at this stage and subject to investigation in this research.
- (2) The structural organisation of the purchasing function: understanding how purchases are actually structured within small F&B operators is a relevant indicator of the degree of maturity. No specific organisational structure is advocated in this research, but the aim is to look at 'who does what' when it comes down to purchases.
- (3) Although the positive impact of developing clear sourcing strategies on performance has been demonstrated in other sectors of activity (Carr and Pearson 2002, Cousins 2005), this research aims to identify what processes small F&B operators have actually developed to conduct their purchasing activities. Considering maturity profiles, processes related to supplier development and selection (Keough 1993) or supplier training (Bhote 1989) are of

Table 1: Maturity of purchasing

1. Planning
Demand planning: Assessment of demand and process
Pooling planning: IT support and Mandates
Environmental scanning: Process & resources for market analysis
Innovation planning: Technology identification & roadmaps
2. Organisational structure
Structure and mandates: Are responsibilities for purchasing defined? Mandates
Strategic integration: Board meeting & involvement in make-or-buy decisions
3. Process organisation
Sourcing strategy: Process supplier selection & responsibility
Supplier selection: Contract management, Negotiation
Supplier evaluation: Communication with supplier, Process & performance
Supplier development: Optimisation on-site visits to suppliers, Phase-out process with suppliers, Process of supplier development
Supplier early involvement in NPD: NPD process, Standardisation
Supplier involvement with other functions: Involvement marketing, TQM and risk management
4. HR
Job description & competencies: Functions, Technical competencies
Pers. selection & integration: Selection & integration training plans
Performance appraisal and career development: Career development & feedback, Target agreements
5. Controlling
Controlling system: Measurement figures & definition of target results
Controlling processes & structure: Measuring controlling process, Responsibility
6. Relation with suppliers
Evolution of the org. with external suppliers, Informal relationships, Perceptions towards brands, Type of relationship with suppliers
7. Sustainability
Application of CSR practices, importance of issues pertaining to sustainability

Source: based on Schiele (2007)

relevance. Sanchez-Rodriguez (2009) suggests that strategically oriented supplier development practices could help the supplier in creating value for the buying firm in four dimensions: product quality, delivery, direct product costs, and process costs (Ulaga 2003). When considering product (quality) in terms of food innovations, it is useful to stress the role of emergent technologies in providing nutritional solutions to obesity, malnutrition and calorific deficiency (Hawkesworth et al. 2010).

- (4) Understanding which human resource systems in procurement are developed by F&B operators is essential, as a professional approach to purchasing is considered an important antecedent to strategic purchasing (Ogden et al. 2007).
- (5) The analysis of controlling structures in purchasing is guided by the strategic importance of supply measures to support decision making, improve financial as well as operational performance. The latter will imply the development of metrics on all levels within companies (Carter et al. 2005), aligned with overarching financial measures like return on investment (ROI), return on assets (ROA), etc. (Carter et al. 2005, Carter 2009). External validation of the purchasing and supply measurement system is becoming more often conducted by finance personnel or auditors external to the firm. Predictive measures for purchasing and supply are also likely to be developed further in the future, whereby measures of future supply quality or delivery performance are defined (Carter et al. 2005). Such systems require software to collect data along the supply chain, combined with more user-friendly interfaces.
- (6) Analysing relationships between operators and their

suppliers will make it possible to position them on a spectrum between purely transactional exchanges and vertically integrated firms, with numerous alternatives between both extremes. As the bargaining power of buyers in the commodity food service market is high, it is unlikely strong co-operation between parties is developed. However, and as emphasised by Fearne et al. (1999), co-operation between parties has become a critical success factor. Aghazadeh (2004) further emphasises that long-term success relies on the quality of the customer-supplier relationship established so that they will develop successful relationships. The disadvantage for buyers of developing strong relationships along the supply chain relates to increased levels of dependency on the supplier, the necessity for the buyer to practice new negotiation skills and a diminished focus on comparing prices with other suppliers. Buyers and suppliers involved in the purchase of commodity products may be linked through an inventory management system, but the linkages may not pervade any other aspects of their business (Fearne et al. 1999). To temper slightly the emphasis on co-operation, it is also helpful referring to Spekman et al. (1998), who consider that not all trading relationships should be collaborative. However, opportunities do exist for those willing to accept the challenge of working together in a partnership. By learning together, developing new products and together generating improved returns on investment (Fearne and Dedman 2000). Consequently, major retailers have been seeking to deal with fewer, larger, more technically efficient and innovative suppliers over the past two decades (Fearne and Dedman 2000). As such,

both supply management and relationship marketing activities are critical elements to a firms' competitive advantage (Sanchez-Rodriguez 2009). Effectiveness along the value chain implies effective communication between all partners involved within, as well as a certain degree of trust. Traditional criteria suitable to the purchasing function have of late been supplemented by qualitative factors such as the suppliers' organisational culture, feelings of trust, management attitude along with top management compatibility (McIvor et al. 1997, Zsidisin and Ellram 2001 in Björklund 2010). Complementing this approach, a recurring suggestion in the literature is the observation that (F&B) buyer-supplier relationships are undergoing a paradigm shift from transaction-oriented to relation-oriented, with relationship marketing becoming an increasingly important organisation concern for business (Sanchez-Rodriguez 2009).

- (7) Social and environmental changes have become topical at present and are pushed by a developing regulatory environment. Examples of the latter influencing behaviour in terms of operators' F&B purchases are waste management regulations, carbon reduction strategies (measured through food miles) or improved food labelling, as a poor diet is linked to several health conditions including heart disease, diabetes, cancer, and obesity (Curry 2002). In the UK, the Food Safety Agency (FSA) has supported a voluntary labelling campaign for convenience food. However, consumers do not seem to be responding to the nutrition information available on packaged foods (Nayga 2008), and small foodservice operators do not face legal obligations when it comes down to food labelling. Considering broad corporate social responsibility (CSR) issues, Martindale and Swainson (2008) highlight three critical elements for future successful application of innovation in F&B manufacture: efficient water use due to its limited availability, supply chain efficiency (defined as the carbon footprint) and finally an increased understanding and definition of how consumers experience the taste of F&B products. But apart from manufacturers, small F&B operators also have to carry a high burden to satisfy environmental health regulations (Revell and Blackburn 2007) and hygiene demands related to food security (DEFRA 2006). SME operators perceive compliance with environmental regulations as a costly issue (Smith and Kemp 1998, Petts et al. 1999), and this might apply to small F&B operators. Considering the UK's construction industry, Revell (2006) also concludes that financial returns from eco-friendly measures are not considered to be significant enough to justify the investment in money, time and resources.

Methodology

The data for this study was collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews with the owners and managers of six small UK F&B operations. In-depth interviews are considered to be the most appropriate method for collecting data, allowing for an in-depth exploration of the operator's motivations and beliefs. A small sample of six respondents was selected using judgmental sampling, precluding a statistical interpretation of the results obtained. The cases were

selected as they were considered to be particularly informative (Neuman 2005), being exemplary by nature and making a significant contribution to the study. Four operators are located in London and two in Sheffield. A qualitative approach was chosen, rooted in the tradition of exploring the thoughts, beliefs and feelings of respondents (Strauss and Corbin 1991). In order to overcome resistance to acceptability of the qualitative approach used in this study, each operator under scrutiny in this research has been studied alone, before moving on to a cross-case analysis whereby comparisons and contrasts were used (Eisenhardt 1989, Stake 1994). Since all operators in this research operate in a similar context and are faced with comparable external issues and constraints, they are deemed sufficient and appropriate to compare and contrast findings and establish replication. Looking at replication between respondents (whether this be literal or theoretical), a strong framework is of utmost importance – and provided by the proposed grid initially based on the maturity framework developed by Schiele (2007). An overview of the characteristics of each operator is added in Table 2 below. Data adequacy was looked for by compiling enough data to explain or account for any variation and when saturation had occurred. In terms of obtaining external validity this research aims to establish analytical generalisation, whereby generalisations to a wider population other than the six F&B operators should be treated as indicative rather than definitive.

The semi-structured interviews lasted between 45 minutes and 1 hour each. The interview schedule was developed based on the seven dimensions outlined above. Table 1 above provides an overview of the key dimensions discussed in the interviews. These dimensions were used for coding the interviews transcripts. The development of themes and categories was completed using the NVivo 9 software. In accordance with Yin (2003, 116), pattern matching and explanation building were used as key data analysis techniques. The resulting analysis extrapolated and outlined the key activities conducted today in the food operators' purchasing function, as well as activities that are likely to develop in the future. During the cross-case analysis, these seven dimensions helped to identify similarities and key differences based on the profile of the respondent, type of operation or location of the company.

Results

The results are structured along the seven dimensions of the proposed model discussed above: (1) Planning, (2) Organisational structure, (3) Process organisation, (4) HR, (5) Controlling, (6). Relation with suppliers and finally (7) Sustainability.

(1) Planning

Within all operators participating in this study, purchases are conducted by the head chef who actually designs the menus, often in close collaboration with the restaurant owner. Purchasing/demand and 'production planning' are often combined, depending on the experience of both manager and head chef. This process is not documented. Demand can be derived from the forecast, which is essentially based on past sales (eventually with a top-up factor projecting potential growth). In restaurant A1, it is the owner's husband who does

Table 2: Profile of the respondents

Code	Number of seats	Type	Location
A1	30+	Scandinavian	London
A2	30+	Bar & Grill	London
A3	60+	Bistro	London
A4	100+	Fine dining	London
A5	40+	Traditional UK	Sheffield
A6	35+	Traditional UK	Sheffield

both the accounting (and reception and handling of invoices) and forecast of demand. The forecast is based on the results of the previous year, with a top-up of 5–10% growth, as illustrated in the quote from A2:

'Um ... my husband does (the forecast). It is based it on, you know, previous ... previous years. Plus, we add ten percent for growth, five to ten percent for growth at the moment'. Other factors come into play when estimating the potential demand: particular events in the market as well as the effects of the economic situation. When considering the use of technology for pooling planning, most F&B operators use hospitality property management systems (PMS) systems to manage customer orders. The use of IT systems to enhance the purchasing process is not perceived to be of added value at this stage. Several reasons hinder the implementation of such systems today:

- Most employees lack a sufficient degree of IT literacy to learn using such systems quickly enough
- The industry functions on well-established routines and cultural norms, where implementing new systems is often perceived as 'rocking the boat'
- Current software systems in the market are considered not to be flexible enough in dealing with supplier rotation and the large diversity of purchasing orders.

There appears to be a certain willingness to learn more about IT systems in the purchasing process in the future, eventually fully interfaced with traditional PMS systems used in F&B operations. However, the software will need to demonstrate a high degree of flexibility in its use and be extremely user-friendly, finally offering value for money for the operators. IT systems for ordering provided by the supplier are not considered to be a determining element in the supplier selection process. An alternative option would be to see the development of an online platform that centralises requirements from small operators in order to benefit from economies of scale. Such a system is currently not developed in the UK. Environmental scanning is not a documented process, but rather an informal process conducted by the owner and sometimes based on the input of the kitchen chef. Market research goes from structured approaches for benchmark analysis (A4) up to informal chats with customers (A5). Information from such analysis is integrated in the forecast. Going more in-depth into the analysis of data available, the owner of A4 considers that in the future it will become important to look at yield per product. When looking at the way operators keep track of technology trends and knowing software for purchasing is not on top of their priority list, it appears that purchasing reactively follows other operational procedures (e.g. use of Micros/EPOS systems). Sticking to

traditional processes is the rule, leaving little room for innovation planning.

(2) Organisational structure

Considering whether operators have established a purchasing organisation with a clear structure and mandates, it appears tasks are properly divided between owners (negotiation), kitchen chefs (food purchases) and restaurant managers (purchases of beverages). The experience of the chef is a determinant factor when it comes down to supplier selection. For beverages, it is the restaurant manager that tends to select the supplier and negotiate prices directly. This is illustrated in the quote from A2's owner below:

'She [the manager] ... she tends to do that. She tends to do that [supplier selection for beverages]. Um ... but if we're getting into a price negotiation then we'll deal with it as a team'.

Key selection criteria for picking a particular supplier are: quality of the food and price (value for money offered). According to A2, it is likely that large suppliers will need to work on service-related aspects in the future in order to achieve differentiation, whilst small suppliers need to focus on customising products according to the operator's specific requirements. Day-to-day purchases are conducted by the manager or kitchen chef. They both report to the owner of the restaurant when problems arise with suppliers (issues about the prices requested or payment terms). As such, the owners deal directly with make-or-buy decisions, being at the heart of strategic decisions taken in the business. A close collaboration between owners and staff on the floor leads to smooth exchange of information and implications of all parties in 'make-or-buy' decisions.

(3) Process organisation

In terms of selection of suppliers as part of the sourcing strategy, this is generally conducted by the head chef – sometimes by (or in collaboration with) the restaurant manager. Most operators do not conduct an extensive evaluation of tenders, comparing products and process in a detailed manner. No contracts are used; most often the relation with suppliers is established through credit agreements. The suppliers' market, especially for commodity products, tends to be highly fragmented and does not force buyers into formal contractual agreements to ensure a steady delivery of goods. Another reason lies in the (relatively) small volumes bought as well as the fact that some suppliers find it hard to manage their admin properly (suppliers from A3). This issue is illustrated in the quote from A3:

'Interviewer: OK. Do you think that you would get better conditions if you sign a contract or is it not an option? Hm ... I don't know. I'm guessing that what matters to them is that we order a lot. Um ... and I'm thinking that most suppliers aren't themselves very good in administration. So, I'm not sure if contracts would be such a great thing for them'.

There is no uniform and systematic approach when conducting price negotiations. Negotiations are usually conducted by the owner/manager. Day-to-day management of the supplier relationship is then left to the manager or head chef. Considering the evaluation of suppliers, results are not collected in a formal and structured manner. Feedback

to suppliers tends to be rather informal, and when dissatisfied small operators find it convenient to switch suppliers (especially for commodity products). Supplier evaluation is often based on the (subjective) feeling of the owner or manager, eventually supported by elements such as prices charged, food costing or spillage. Supplier development is supported by site visits to suppliers (at least the ones delivering fresh products). This sometimes facilitates discussing product specification (A2), but most respondents consider knowing the suppliers make it much easier to handle problematic issues when occurring (issues pertaining to quality or delivery of the goods). The 'relational' aspect is considered to be less relevant for suppliers delivering commodity goods. Neither training nor workshops with suppliers are organised. The phase-out process with suppliers is facilitated by the fact that few contracts are signed between buyer and supplier. However, it is more complex for drinks (e.g. wines), as switching supplier might pose an issue of product continuity and force the operator to redesign its menu. Common reasons for phasing out a supplier are issues with quality, delivery times or competitive pricing. Overall, operators consider pressure on suppliers must be maintained and A2 even considers it is rather normal to switch suppliers after a while, just to obtain the best value for money. It is the manager that ultimately decides about phasing out a supplier. New product development is not often developed with suppliers. Only restaurant A1 has developed a product together with its supplier (a specific type of sausage), after the chef gave its supplier the recipe. This process of co-creation remains an exception for small independent operators and requires a strong relationship between both parties. The involvement of small operators in NPD does not follow a documented path, and tasks and responsibilities are not outlined. As the buyer (the chef or restaurant manager) communicates directly with the owner who defines the overall marketing approach, purchasing is acquainted with marketing strategies. Quality management (more specifically supplier certification) is a determinant factor coming into play when selecting a particular supplier.

(4) Human resources

Developing a specific purchasing function can, according to A4, only be fulfilled if it is financially viable. The operators involved in the present study are too small to see a purchasing manager generating sufficient savings to develop that post. Consequently, key purchasing functions are not described in a generic way. Considering technical competencies, the operators do not have staff specifically trained in purchasing, but often rely on the experience of the owners or chefs. Operators/owners who have been in industry for a while and have worked in larger operations before have a much more structured approach to purchasing than operators who have always worked in smaller units. The level of education also comes into play, with operators having a BSc degree looking at operations from a more conceptual point of view (e.g. A3, A2, and A4 versus A5). No training plans are available when it comes down to the purchasing function. The owners/managers often rely on the experience of the head chef or manager to manage the daily purchases. Training in A5 focuses mainly on employees (up)-selling of products, as illustrated in the quote below:

'I expect them to actually be able to sell!.'

(5) Controlling

Small operators only work with a limited set of measurement figures (food costing, spillage, GP), and sometimes do not make use of all (IT) tools and numbers they have at their disposal (e.g. A3). All operators focus on food cost as a measure of efficiency when it comes down to purchasing and operational processes. Profit gain calculations when changing suppliers are not conducted. Weekly meetings are the norm, with a discussion focusing on F&B cost control and a comparison of sales with the forecast. Developing more precise measures at this stage does not appear relevant for the operators. On a day-to-day basis, the performance of suppliers is measured in a rather 'subjective' manner – as illustrated here:

Interviewer: How do you measure the performance of the suppliers? Subjectively, because it could be something like delivery time, or the price, or the quality ... but it's just about feeling and ...

One single operator (A2) works with an accounting software/package that facilitates budgeting and continued analysis. This is partly due to the fact the owner has worked within larger companies before, where such systems are the norm. An external accountant, however, does focus on the financial side of tax reporting for several of the operators interviewed.

(6) Relation with suppliers

There is no systematic development of relationship, as it depends on the input of both buyer and supplier. Personal contacts are important and should be facilitated, although small operators do not structure their contacts/relation with suppliers in a formal manner. An operator like A1 considers training and advice provided by some suppliers (e.g. wine and coffee) as a key element in developing strong and helpful relationships. Overall, contacts with large suppliers offering commodity products tend to remain transactional, while a relationship with small suppliers offering specific products often burgeons and contributes to differentiation of the operator's offering. Apart from the formal agreements between buyers and suppliers, small operators put forward key 'soft' elements that enable building up a strong but rather informal relationship with some suppliers: communication, interaction, commitment, trust and keeping promises. Although product characteristics and overall value for money proposed form a prerequisite for successful relations, several factors are leading to successful relations between F&B buyers and their suppliers:

- The competencies of the suppliers (e.g. product knowledge, timely delivery, experience in the field, understanding and ability to express the needs of F&B buyers)
- The personality and relational characteristics of the supplier (e.g. keeping a close and frequent contact, personal relationships, proactive attitude)
- Overall characteristics of the supplier (e.g. flexibility, willingness to take into account the constraints the F&B operator works with).

F&B operators do not have in place formal supplier development processes. The ability to forecast sales and communicating this to suppliers is not an element that particularly strengthens the relationship with suppliers, and is not common practice amongst the respondents to this study. All

small operators use brands, essentially for drinks and coffee. Different types of relationships are developed with different types of suppliers. Long-term relationships help sort out such issues that may develop with suppliers. The relationship the company has with smaller suppliers goes much further, up to common product design in some cases (e.g. A2). The manager of A3 is increasingly involved in product specification. The visits that suppliers pay to the restaurant form an opportunity to discuss such issues, as illustrated in the quote below:

'Um ... well, sometimes we invite them in. Or, sometimes they come in as well to ... to ... because they are curious as well and then we try to take care of them when they come in. Yeah. For example, for the meat as well, they would come in ... and, um ... we could ... we often re-discuss, for example, certain cuts of the meat and then we would taste and then we would have a chat with them so ... and now we are getting more and more involved with this, with the Chef as well.'

A strong and long-term relationship with a supplier is definitely considered as valuable for the F&B buyer. The competitiveness between suppliers is flexible in the UK, where numerous F&B buyers work with a couple of suppliers for each product category and shift easily between them when a more competitive and sustainable price/quality offering is submitted.

(7) Sustainability

Looking at the application of CSR practices, it appears that the purchase and sale of organic products is not common practice amongst operators participating in this study. Restaurant A1 is most active when it comes down to CSR-related issues, with a website outlining the business's approach, local sourcing and fair-trade purchasing. The other operators do not have clearly defined CSR-policies or objectives. Little or no information about CSR aspects is provided to consumers, and the operator's main focus lies on the traceability and aspects of seasonality. This is predominantly dictated by financial imperatives and issues of health and safety. The approach of the A5 owner is outlined below:

'I like to know the welfare of ... of our meats, and chicken, and things like that. But organic ... not so much so. I'd like to ... I try to use as much local products as we can. But that's difficult being in Sheffield because we're eighty miles from the sea.'

Overall, compliance with CSR and certifications is essentially dictated by (1) legal obligations (referred to as Westminster) and (2) a reliance on the certification of the supplier. Societal issues such as obesity are considered as worrying, but such matters are not taken into account when working on menu design and completing purchases. The main driver for consumers when coming to A2 lies in the fact they can see how the food is processed on-site – trust is a key component, and is considered to be more important than an organic label. The owner's approach is illustrated in this quote:

'But the point being with our customers, we can have organic items but it's not what is the main driver. The main driver is that, well ... you know, they can see into the kitchen, we're making a lot of this stuff here and um ... it's kind of a trust element that's more important than the label.'

Interestingly, these legal constraints are closely monitored by the operators (e.g. by reading industry journals or attendance at fairs) – but not one of our respondents has developed a proactive attitude when considering the implementation of CSR practices. On the short to medium term, F&B buyers are willing to develop CSR practices within their company (e.g. energy savings, specific product purchases) as long as this does not lead to incremental costs that will not be supported by customers. Considering other elements such as menu labelling, the information displayed on the menus is usually limited to what is legally required (nut or shell fish content). There is some confusion with buyers about the distinction between key terms related to CSR: local sourcing, organic products, fair-trade, Max Havelaar, etc. A body clarifying and eventually uniting these concepts might be the way forward (A4). There are no specific CSR-related key performance indicators in place.

Conclusion and recommendations

Environmental scanning is not a documented process as outlined by Burt and Doyle (1994), and little or no use of purchasing-related technology is used to enhance existing processes. Operators are reluctant to invest in technology, confirming the approach of Morrell and Ezingard (2002), but focusing on the limited allocation of resources and relevant capability as outlined by Bourlakis and Bourlakis (2006). This situation hampers the efficient exchange of information with partners along the supply chain, in line with Prasad and Tata (2000). Procurement planning lies in the hands of the manager or head chef, depending on their practical experience. Operators prefer using existing processes such as Micros or EPOS. Purchasing tasks are divided between owners (negotiation with suppliers), kitchen chefs (food) and managers (beverages). Although clear sourcing strategies impact positively on performance (Carr and Pearson 2002, Cousins 2005), a uniform and systematic approach could be developed in order to improve efficiency of processes, evaluation of suppliers along with supplier development (Keough 1993, Sanchez-Rodriguez 2009).

Small food service operators have difficulties in responding to innovative trends, being restrained by limited resources, financial vulnerability because of small profit margins and limited resources for research and development activities (Martindale and Swainson 2008). However, their bargaining power is significant as they can easily switch between suppliers – but at the detriment of building up relationships. Small F&B operators have merely developed a structured purchasing function in their business, although its relevance has been demonstrated by Ogden et al. (2007). However, tasks related to purchases are properly assigned amongst owners (negotiation and solving issues with suppliers), managers (beverages) and kitchen chefs (food). Overall, the process organisation within small food service operators offers much room for improvement as there are, currently, little or no structured approaches to key processes such as negotiation, the evaluation of suppliers or matters of supplier development (Bhote 1989, Sanchez-Rodriguez 2009). This is despite the positive impact of developing clear sourcing strategies, as demonstrated by Carr and Pearson (2002) or Cousins (2005). Productivity is measured using traditional indicators such as food cost, but

overall it is a rather subjective process that does not consider individual supplier performance as suggested by Carter et al. (2000). Several respondents indicated that cost-effective and user-friendly software to manage purchases in small operations does not exist in the market, and show willingness to purchase this type of product if developed in the future. Contacts with large suppliers offering commodity products tend to be transactional, while relationships with small suppliers offering specific products often develop and lead to differentiation. In line with Spekman et al. (1998), not all relationships developed by operators are collaborative. Core relationship marketing constituents such as trust and commitment or communication are essential in developing relationships with suppliers (McIvor et al. 1997, Zsidisin and Ellram 2001). These apply to the small food operators under scrutiny in this study, who systematically deal with the same suppliers, delivering unique products in the market. Such relationships can lead to common product design between the suppliers and the buyer. However, contradicting the statement of Sanchez-Rodriguez (2009), talking about a paradigm shift towards relationship marketing does not apply to small food operators.

Operators do not have clearly defined CSR policies or objectives, and no CSR-related indicators are used. This confirms the findings from Hillary (2000) and Revell and Blackburn (2007), indicating that foodservice operators in small firms are oblivious of the importance of sustainability and have a poor environmental performance. Foodservice operators take into account legislation focusing on sustainability as a driver to implement changes to their operations, with regulation being a key stimulus for improvements on environmental issues (Rutherford and Spence 1998). This is a somewhat reactive approach to manage environmental improvements, partly due to the intense pressure experienced by operators. In line with the research of Revell (2006) focusing on SMEs in the UK's construction industry, foodservice operators do not perceive the financial returns from eco-efficiency measures to be significant enough to justify time and resources to pursue them. The perception from operators is that customers cannot be won by embracing environmental practices. On top of this and confirming the findings from Smith and Kemp (1998) and Petts et al. (1999), compliance with environmental regulations is considered by operators to be a costly issue.

A limitation to the current study is due to the use of a judgmental sampling approach and the selection of a specific type of small food operators in one single and rather specific industry. Although it is not the aim of this research to generalise findings to a wider population, it might be helpful to further develop a proposed maturity model based on its findings and use a probability-sampling approach to support these. This study provides clear insights into the purchasing function developed by F&B operators and can be used for the development of maturity models specifically targeted to small food service operators. Such a model is a tool that can easily be communicated and shows clearly what needs to be undertaken in order to see improvements (Schiele 2007), positioned in an evolutionary process whereby F&B operators should develop their activities in a more sophisticated manner.

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The cosmological aspects of food in the material world

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There is a general tendency today to believe that all truth worth knowing is to be found in the various branches of the physical sciences. If this were so, there could be no place for a philosophy of matter, or by extension the cosmological aspects of food. In order to vindicate cosmology and its extension from the charge of futility it will be necessary to determine: what cosmology is, what it does, and to explore the cosmological aspects of food, and later to perform a similar task for science; in this way only can it be shown that there room for both a culinary philosophy, and a culinary science, including the world of food, each with its own problems and its own methods of investigation.

Keywords: philosophy, cosmology, anthropology, social consensus, culture, cooking

Introduction

The purpose of an introduction to any paper is to outline its scope and utility. This task is exceptionally important in addressing the cosmological aspects of food, because food is one of life's great, sustaining and ubiquitous pleasures, and the genre of culinary arts and hospitality education is the vehicle for the study these phenomena. I am indebted to Fr. Edwin Rabbitte, OFM, for his lectures and his book *Cosmology for All*, for the inspiration, after a considerable lapse of time, to link cosmology and food in the material world. For nearly forty years, I've been teaching, researching, writing, and talking about food, usually with people who disagree with me, about 'the meal-experience', as well as the 'business' of operating successful restaurants. I have come upon the cosmological aspects of food only very recently.

Cosmology is understood as the philosophy of matter. Chemistry and physics are the sciences that deal with matter. To many people in the culinary arts field 'science' and 'philosophy' are mysteries, barriers to learning, and an inhibiting authority rather than a facilitator of the means and methods for learning.

Today, there is a general tendency to believe that all truth worth knowing about matter is to be found in the various branches of the physical sciences. If this were so, there could be no place for a philosophy of matter, or by extension the cosmological aspects of food. This paper should end here.

The reason it does not is because of my most recent reading of KC Chang's (ed.) (1977) *Food in Chinese culture; anthropology and historical perspectives*. Therein, I came across a section heading in the chapter by EN Anderson Jr and Maria Anderson titled *The cosmological aspects* (376) which in turn drove me to research this phenomenon – cosmology. 'Cosmology', according to Rabbitte (1956), in his little book *Cosmology for all*, 'is understood as the philosophy of matter'.

Anthropologists tell us that in virtually all traditional cultures, a cosmology is what gives its members their fundamental

sense of where they come from, who they are, and what their personal role in life's larger picture might be. Cosmology is whatever picture of the universe a culture agrees on. Together with the picture-upholding, the picture-is, a story that is understood to explain the sacred relationship between the way the world is and the way human beings should behave. Other cultures' stories may not have been 'correct' by modern scientific standards, but they were valid, for and in, their own time and by their own standards, and they had the power to ground people's codes of behaviour and their sense of identity within a larger picture. This sense of identity may be part of what has been lost in our contemporary society.

For example, if we were to ask a modern audience of people interested in cosmology, but untrained in it, to close their eyes and visualise the universe, some will report seeing endless space with stars scattered unimaginably far apart, others will see great spiral galaxies, and others will see an exotic scene such as the rising of an ember-red moon over an unknown planet. They do not realise that these are merely snapshots on a given scale of the universe – no more representative of the universe as a whole than is a single molecule of DNA or a moonrise over your own backyard. The strange fact is that in modern Western culture, people have only the vaguest idea how to picture the universe, and certainly there is no consensus on it.

The lack of social consensus on cosmology in the modern world has caused many people to close off their thinking to the larger issues, and long time scales, so that small, immediate matters dominate their consciousness. Of course, modern people know much more about many things than members of isolated, traditional cultures, but we are not so different in our basic needs from people millennia ago. We have to get our sense of context somewhere. It is worth looking at earlier cosmologies and the cultures in which they held sway in order

to understand how deep and in fact how inextricable the connection is.

The thing is that food and culinary arts sit as a lesser genre in the education firmament to philosophy, sciences, the arts, literature and human drama.

This has always astonished me, as culinary arts and gastronomy affect all of us, everyday, and indeed several times a day, for all of our lives. Today, the fact that food is a vital part of the chemical process of life is to state the obvious, but we frequently fail to realise and acknowledge that food is much more than vital to human existence (Hegarty, 2014).

So why is this field of endeavour not – the most sought after? After all food was once all that concerned us humans. That makes food the most important material in the world.

I believe that the utilitarian aspects of food and cooking being 'necessary' for survival may have inhibited the academic study of culinary arts and gastronomy. For their survival needs, all men and women everywhere would eat the same foods, to be measured only in calories, fats, carbohydrates, proteins, and vitamins. But clearly this is not the case – people of different backgrounds and ethnologies eat very differently. Thus is the importance of culinary arts and gastronomy established.

Food is agriculture, horticulture, biology, psychology, transport, human connection, animal connection, waste, health, medicine, nurture, nature, science, and also gastronomy – 'all that pertains to the nourishment of man' (Brillat Savarin).

Indeed Lévi-Strauss (1965) observes that just as there is no human society which lacks a spoken language, so also, there is no human society which does not in one way or other process some of its food by cooking. Therefore, cooking is a means by which nature is transformed into culture. Edmund Leach emphasises this point by stating;

In that we are all men (women) we are all part of nature, in that we are all human beings we are all part of culture. Our survival as men (women) depends on our ingestion of foods (part of nature); Our survival as human beings depends on our social categories which are derived from cultural classification imposed on elements of nature...

Food is an especially appropriate mediator because when we eat, we establish in a literal sense, a direct identity between ourselves (culture/civilisation) and our food (nature).

Along the road to civilisation and technological prowess we humans appear to have lost our imagination, but not totally, and not all of us, but most of us. And as we live in the equivalent of a large termite nest, only with wifi, and Nintendo, most of us hold sway. That is worrying because I've come to the conclusion that the sway-holding most of us are not that imaginative, or at least not when it comes to creative, intellectual thought.

The lack of social consensus on the cosmology of food in the modern world has caused many people to close off their thinking to large issues and long time scales, so that small immediate matters dominate their consciousness. We have to get our sense of context somewhere. It is worth looking at earlier cosmologies and the cultures in which they held sway in order to understand how deep and in fact inextricable the connection is.

Cosmology a 'special metaphysics'

Cosmology comes from the Greek word *kosmos* which, according to the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary means 'the world or universe as an ordered system' or 'order, harmony, a harmonious system'. Cosmology then, means the theory of the universe as an ordered whole, and of the general laws which govern it. In philosophy, it is taken to mean that part of metaphysics which deals with the idea of the world as a totality of all phenomena in space and time. According to Greek thought, *cosmos* came out of *chaos* – 'the formless void: a state of utter confusion and disorder' – by differentiating the various elements. The concept is often associated with *cosmogony*, 'a theory, system, or account of the generation of the universe'.

In social anthropology, the meaning of cosmology has broadly followed the dictionary one, and is closely connected to the empirical study of religions. To a large extent the two words have been used interchangeably, depending upon theoretical fashions and the predilections of the anthropologist. Some have used it to mean no more than religion. Edmund Leach (1982, 229), for example, defined it as 'the system of beliefs and practices which social anthropologists commonly refer to as primitive religion'.

Philosophy is the metaphysical study of reality, that is, the study of reality from the point of view of 'being'. It is divided into 'general metaphysics' which studies 'being' in general and its essential properties, and 'special metaphysics', which studies the different classes or 'modes' of being considered separately. Special metaphysics comprises two main branches: 'rational psychology', or the metaphysical study of the organic or living world, and 'cosmology' or the metaphysical study of the inorganic or purely material world.

Cosmology then is a branch of metaphysics – more precisely, of 'special' metaphysics. To understand, therefore, the nature and scope of cosmology, it is necessary to know something about the relation that exists between 'general' and 'special' metaphysics.

Seen from its source, metaphysics may be described as an effort of the human mind to attain by reflection to a knowledge of the intimate nature and ultimate signification of things, especially of man himself. This effort is rooted in the most profound structure of man's nature; it is truly 'existential', since it springs from the nature of man's existence as man. For man, in the consciousness he has of himself experiences his existence as an existence that is called upon to realise itself as a 'liberty', or person. Hence it is that the questions inevitably arise: what is man? And what is the meaning of his existence? As long as man cannot answer this question, he cannot realise himself as a 'liberty', for liberty in its deepest sense is precisely the power that man has to accept consciously the meaning of his existence as man, and to conform his activity to this meaning. Thus, there is a close link between metaphysical reflection and human liberty; this is why the metaphysical question becomes most acute in those situations in which man is brought face-to-face with the meaning of his existence as a free person – e.g. in times of moral crisis, or at the moment of death, when the obligatory character of certain acts, or the meaning of life itself as a whole is questioned. Though it has its origin in a peculiarly human problem, however, metaphysical reflection bears from the very first, and always, on existence or being as a totality – it transcends every partial

view of the real. The reason for this is the profound ontological similitude which binds all existents together and which causes man himself to experience his existence as an existence-in-the-world. Thus, the study of the intimate nature and ultimate meaning of human existence is inseparable from the study of the contents, structure and meaning of existence as a whole. However, precisely because metaphysics is a peculiarly human problem, metaphysical reflection is necessarily conditioned by the 'situation' of man in the world, i.e., by the finitude or limitations characteristic of man. For example, it is believed that humans have been using fire for hundreds of thousands of years, yet archaeology does not tell us exactly when our ancestors began to do so. The inability of the archaeological evidence to tell us when humans first controlled fire directs us to biology, where we find two vital clues. First, the fossil record presents a reasonably clear picture of the changes in human anatomy over the past two million years (Wrangham, 2009). Now in the first place human thought is not a creative thought. Man is the source neither of himself nor of the world: he experiences his existence as a 'fact' as something 'given', and this existence is an existence in a world that is also a 'fact', that is 'already there' or is 'given'. For this reason metaphysical reflection must start with and nourish itself continually on 'experience', that is, contact with the real. And, in the second place, this experience itself, being essentially a human experience is profoundly limited: it is never the experience of the real as a totality, of being as such, but always experience, partial and progressive, of 'individual' or 'particular' beings.

To conclude, we can now state the relation that exists between general metaphysics, or the study of being as such, and special metaphysics, or the study of particular beings considered separately. On the one hand we cannot study the structure and meaning of being in general or as a totality, except in the measure that this being is manifested in the particular beings of our experience; and, on the other hand, we cannot study the structure and meaning of particular beings except in the light of the totality of being in which these beings participate. Hence, general and special metaphysics are closely akin: both are animated by the same intention (to discover the meaning of being or reality), and both have the same starting point (the concrete, individual beings of experience), but whereas general metaphysics aims at discovering the meaning of being as a totality, special metaphysics seeks to discover the basic structure or essence and the ultimate signification of particular beings – of living beings (psychology) or of the material world (cosmology).

Nature, scope and method of cosmology

Cosmology therefore, as a branch of philosophy, is the metaphysical study of the material world. Its aim is to discover, by an effort of reflection, the manner of being or the 'essence' of this world and its signification and place in the totality of the real. This reflection, like all metaphysical reflection, must be based on experience, or contact with the real; hence cosmology presupposes that our intellect is capable of entering into contact with the mode of being that is proper to the material world. This contact is made in our everyday life of sensation, in scientific experiment, and in our action, in general, on the material world.

Note that *scientific experience* is included as pertaining to the experimental basis of cosmology. It would be naive

to think that the 'familiar' world of everyday experience is more 'objective' than that of science, and that therefore it is sufficient to analyse the data of 'common-sense' to construct a cosmology. This does not mean, however, that our common-sense knowledge of the material world is false, but that it is confused. Its greatest fault, from the point of view of cosmology, is that it does not so much tell us what the material world is in itself as how we react to or behave in that world. For it must be remembered that the function of sense-knowledge as such is primarily biological: its chief purpose is to enable us to live our lives in the material world, not to know that world exhaustively. Science, however, aims at a much more objective and more comprehensive knowledge of the material world: it seeks to discover what the world is in itself, rather than how we see and behave in it. Hence the use it makes of objective measuring-processes, by which it endeavours both to eliminate the subjective element introduced into reality by the knowing subject and to reach to those aspects of the material world that are inaccessible to sense-knowledge. It may be objected that such a method can, in the final analysis, attain only to the *metrical* aspect of the material world. We shall have occasion to return to this later, but it may be remarked here that the aspect of the world discovered by science is at least more objective and more comprehensive than that discovered by sense-knowledge alone, and that it therefore enables us to form a more objective and ever richer idea of the material universe.

The outline followed in this paper is as follows. In the first section we describe, as concisely as possible, what science is and what it does, in order to show the distinction between the scientific and the philosophical approach to the material world. In later sections we give what may be called a 'phenomenological description' of the material world, i.e., a description of it – its characteristic properties, its diversity, and its activity – such as it manifests itself to the intellectual consciousness in everyday experience and in the more technical experience of science. Finally, we endeavour by an effort of metaphysical reflection based in this description to discover all we can concerning the mode of being or 'essence' of the material world and its signification or place in reality as a whole.

The world of physical science

The same material world which forms the subject matter of cosmology is studied also, by the various branches of natural or experimental science. The 'natural sciences' are those which deal with the phenomena of the material universe. They are called 'experimental' both because they are based on sensible experience and also and especially because they *refer constantly* to this experience as the *sole* criterion of the validity of their conclusions. The natural sciences comprise the physico-chemical sciences, which treat of phenomena of inorganic nature, and the biological sciences which treat of phenomena of organic or living nature. Hence the importance, both for the philosopher and for the scientist, of distinguishing clearly between the problems proper to each of these two divisions of human knowledge. In the introduction we described the nature scope and method of cosmology. We shall now perform a similar task for sciences, but only in so far as is necessary to determine the precise import of its statements about the material world and to show that these statements leave the ultimate or philosophical problems untouched.

Our enquiry may be summarised as follows; the fundamental aim of science is the reduction of the sequence of natural occurrences to order, with a view to the calculation and prediction, and ultimately to the control, of the phenomena of nature. As a system of knowledge science is characterised chiefly by the method by which it collects its data (scientific 'facts'), and by the manner in which it *synthesises* and *explains* these data (scientific 'laws' and 'theories'). Thus science is constructed not merely by observation and experiment, but also by reflection on the data thus acquired. In *all* cases, however, the conclusions of science must admit of experimental verification; this is the very touchstone of scientific truth. However, reference needs to be made here to what have become known as the *research paradigm wars*, a description of research methods of contrasting persuasions, which have become known as Positivism/scientific and post-positivism – the basis of the natural sciences. It presents a quantitative perspective (Pawson 1999, 30, Kane and O'Reilly-de Brun 2001, 24–43). Phenomenology, another paradigm presents a qualitative perspective. A third paradigm is critical theory which holds that there is an objective world which the observer can stand apart from and investigate. But whose world is it? Is it the world of the philosopher, the chef, the restaurant owner, the customer, the food writer, or the culinary educator?

Academic elites have had charge of the research agenda, setting the questions, funding the research and interpreting the results. This challenges the purpose of research which aims to empower people to set their own action agendas. The term "paradigm" was introduced into the literature by Kuhn (1970, 175–182) who intended to convey the idea that research gets organised not just through rational adoption of particular strategies and methodologies, but rather, that all the contributory ideas get wrapped up into an overall "vision", or "creed" or "doctrine" about the correct way to do research. Thus, methodology, Kuhn points out, can itself become a kind of dogmatism which includes identifying good practice, and thereby excludes, by vilifying alternative approaches as misguided, wrong-headed, dim-witted and so on.

Each of these schools of thought pays homage to a contrasting set of first principles, and over the last forty years the extent to which the qualitative revolution has overtaken the social sciences and related professional fields is most striking (Denzin and Lincoln 1994, ix). Prior to that, the general approach to research was positivist, (hard science) that is, it placed an emphasis on numbers and statistics, experimental design, and survey research. The aim of the positivist researcher is to seek generalisations and 'hard' quantitative data. The influence of the positivist scientist paradigm continues to be strong and pervasive shaping expectations of what constitutes 'proper', 'valid', and 'worthwhile' research. Barry Troyna described it thus in 1994:

There is a view which is already entrenched and circulating widely in populist circles ..., that qualitative research is subjective, value-laden and therefore, unscientific and invalid, in contrast to quantitative research, which meets the criteria of being objective, value free, scientific and therefore valid (1994, 9).

The social sciences originally adopted the methodologies of the physical sciences. Today, researchers in many fields including culinary have opened up to ethnomethodology,

unstructured interviewing, conversational and textual analysis, documents and historical studies and many other theoretical paradigms of research. The interpretative researcher accepts that the observer makes a difference to the observed and that reality is a human construct – the researcher's aim is to explore perspectives and shared meanings and to develop insights into situations, e.g., restaurants, kitchens. Data will generally be qualitative and based on fieldwork, notes, transcripts of conversations/interviews.

For this and the following sections (see Renoirte, transl. Coffey 1950, 101–174, also Rabbittie 1955, 17–34). The first step in research is the collection of data. This science does by a method which is peculiarly its own and which, in the scientists' view, endows scientific knowledge with qualities which make it superior to everyday sense knowledge. These qualities are objectivity, communicability, and verifiability.

A critical examination of our everyday sense knowledge shows that it is always, to a greater or lesser extent personal and subjective. Sensation is a complex reaction of the knowing subject to the action of external objects on his sense-organs. In this reaction it is impossible to separate what comes from the knowing subject and what from the external object; there is always *something* of the knowing subject in sensation – a subject, for example, with different senses than mine would perceive the external world differently. Hence it is that sense-knowledge, as such, is incommunicable and unverifiable by others, for, since it is impossible to compare the lived impressions of different subjects, it is strictly impossible to know if different subjects have the same sensation when confronted with the same material object, and so we cannot ever be absolutely certain that the words each uses to describe these objects have the same *meaning* for all. For example, many books contain maps of the tongue that claim that the tip recognises sweet and so on. To witness that all tongues are different, all you have to do is ask a group of individuals to stick their tongues into sweet or salty water, and record the results (This 2009, 7).

Now science claims that its knowledge, unlike sense-knowledge, is impersonal and objective, and hence communicable and verifiable by all. It bases this claim on the fact that it has, by its method, 'depersonalised' sense-knowledge and made it strictly objective by excluding from it as far as possible, the influences of the psychological dispositions personal to the knowing subject. Science has done this in effect by substituting strictly material processes for our sense-organs, and scale or pointer readings for our sense-impressions. For example, for everyday, uncritical knowledge the heat of a body is defined by the particular sensation I get when I touch it. This sensation is strictly personal to me; no one can ever verify it, for no one but myself knows what I sense when I feel warm. Clearly, this knowledge tells me much more about myself than about the external world; when I say for example, that a body is 'hot', what I really mean is, that it is such that, when I touch it, I get a sensation which I call 'heat'. The scientist on the other hand, defines the heat of a body by the pointer reading on a thermometer which he places in contact with that body. The observation of this reading is wholly independent of the scientist's own sensation of heat: whether the body 'feels' hot or not is of no interest to the scientist; he speaks only of the pointer reading given by the thermometer and not of his personal sensation of heat. Hence it is that his knowledge is

impersonal and so communicable and verifiable, for no matter what may be the sensation experienced by the scientist who, on touching a body says it is hot, all know the meaning of and can verify his statement that the heat of a body is so many degrees of temperature. Examples of the differences between common-sense and scientific knowledge or data could be multiplied indefinitely, and especially in the field of culinary and gastronomy. Such common-sense data as the sound, weight, colour, etc., of bodies are defined by the different sensations contact with these bodies provoke in us in different domains of perception, on the basis of which we attribute to them qualities or properties of different kinds or at least different intensities. The scientist, however, having established that certain material instruments give different pointer readings when suitably arranged in relation to the bodies in question, and that these different readings are concomitant with the variations of sensations of a different type, elects to redefine the properties, hitherto defined by sensations, by the use of appropriate instruments. And so he defines sound by the vibrations recorded on a phonograph, weight by the elongation of a spring-balance, colour by the angle of refraction of light in a prism....

The method, therefore, by which science collects and defines its data or "facts" is the utilisation of suitable material instruments. Scientific properties are *defined* by the measuring process by which they are known; hence *any* body which can be subjected to the appropriate measuring process possesses the physical property which this process defines. Again, since different bodies are defined in terms of their properties (for we say 'what kind' a body is by enumerating its properties) it follows that, for science bodies are defined in terms of the numbers given by the pointer reading of the measuring-process to which the bodies in question can be subjected. For example science defines hydrogen as a gas which liquifies at such a temperature, has such a density, emits such a light etc. this definition simply means that the name hydrogen is given to that particular thing which, when subjected to the measuring processes defining fluidity, temperature, viscosity, wavelength of light etc., gives the numbers indicated in the definition. This does not mean, of course, that a body *is* merely an aggregate of numbers, but that it is 'something' which science, for its own purposes *defines* by property measurements.

Science and philosophy

Among science's claims, is its claim to be an exact observational and experimental investigation of nature – its methods, it states, is *exclusively* observation and experiment. Hence, the self-imposed limitations of science as a form of knowledge are, first, that its explanations can never be *complete* explanations, for they can be valid only for a partial or abstract aspect of reality, viz., that aspect that can be, directly or indirectly, observed and measured, and secondly, that its explanations can never be ultimate explanations, since, by the very nature of its method, science *begins and ends* with a sensible 'given' which it regards as *outside* the domain of scientific intelligibility.

The second of these limitations requires, perhaps, some explanation. Science begins by assuming the existence of an external world which has different properties (which science defines by the use of different measuring-processes) and which is constantly changing (changes which science formulates as

laws). If this 'given' science endeavours to give a complete mechanical explanation – i.e. science accepts mechanism as a working hypothesis, and as the *only* working hypothesis. In other words, science endeavours to explain the actual diversity and change of the material world in terms of elements (waves, particles etc.) that are imagined to an existence of the *same kind* as that possessed by the objects if sense-perception. It does not matter that these elements are for the most part *inaccessible* to sense-perception – they are always thought of as having properties the *same in nature* as those possessed by perceptible bodies. Thus science takes the sensible order not only as the *starting point*, but as the *goal* of its inferences. In this sense scientific explanation is essentially *descriptive* – it answers the questions 'how'? Rather than the question 'why'? Hence it is that all scientific explanations lead in the end to a question or hypothesis and that no matter how far science progresses there will always be another question to ask..

Philosophy on the other hand claims to study the *integral* real – not merely the 'here and now' of everyday sensible experience, still less merely 'concrete facts' of positive science, but the real in all its richness and concreteness. The method to which it appeals is not therefore experiences only, either sensible or scientific, but metaphysical reflection on *global* experience. In this way philosophy claims to attain to *ultimate* causes and so to offer *complete* explanations. Thus, the scope of philosophy is all-embracing, extending to – and beyond – the existence of the science itself, for one of the questions the philosopher must ask himself is how and why nature is amenable to scientific formulation. We may conclude this paper with a word of caution. It should be clear from what has been said that cosmology cannot under any circumstances be taken as a substitute for the experimental study of nature carried out by science. As a branch of metaphysics, the aim of which is to interpret nature, cosmology is incapable of adding a single 'fact' to the sum of ascertained 'facts' about the universe. The suspicion with which cosmology was for so long viewed by positive science was, in the beginning at least, due to the fact that cosmology, in the form of Aristotelian 'physics', claimed that the experimental investigation of facts of nature also belonged to its domain – i.e. the 'philosophy' of nature was also the 'science' of nature. In the present day this claim is no longer made, but the danger now is that cosmology may be regarded as valueless, precisely because it is incapable of adding to our store of facts about nature – in other words, the danger is now that the 'science' of nature may also be regarded as the 'philosophy' of nature. But cosmology, as a branch of philosophy, is not concerned with the accumulation of facts but with the interpretation of certain previously ascertained facts. These facts are discovered by experience of the material world, an experience which includes scientific experience, hence it is that the cosmologist must use the conclusions of experimental science, not with a view to incorporating them as such into philosophy, but as a means of acquiring an ever richer and more objective knowledge of material reality. Indeed a philosophy worthy of the name must take account of all the general conclusions of science in regard to the nature and genesis of the inorganic, the organic, and the human, though it must always critically examine these conclusions in order to determine their value for interpretation of the essence and ultimate meaning of the real.

The aim of cosmology then is to discover not merely the profound nature or essence, but also, the ultimate signification or meaning of material being, i.e. the place or function of this being in the totality of the real. For, as we saw in the introduction, metaphysics transcends all partial aspects: it bears from the first and always on being as a totality. And in particular beings only as pertaining to that totality.

When we consider the universe as a whole, we find that this whole is a complex whole, comprising many different levels and structures from inorganic matter up to and including man. From the metaphysical point of view these structures form a hierarchy of perfection or 'degrees' of being, based on an order of increasing 'interiority' or individuality. The most elementary structure of reality is that of inorganic matter; this, as a spatio-temporal exteriority or dispersion, constitutes, metaphysically speaking, the lowest level of perfection in the visible universe. Above the level of inorganic matter are the various levels or 'degrees' of life. Now life on whatever level it be considered, manifests itself as a real and active synthesis, i.e. the reduction of a diversity to a unity. The lowest level of life – vegetative life – utilises inorganic matter, and reduces the diversity of this matter to the unity of an organism. The next level of life – sensory or animal life – utilises in its turn vegetative life: sensory life can take place only in and by the organism, and the properties of sensory life presuppose and include those of vegetative life. Here the synthesis or the reduction of diversity to unity is much greater than the vegetative life, for in sensory life the quantitative diversity of the organism is unified in qualitatively simple sensation. And finally, the highest level of life known to us in nature – the intellectual, volitional or spiritual life of man – presupposes and utilises a very highly developed form of sensory life. Here the reduction of diversity to unity reaches its maximum, for in human life the sense-knowledge and sense-affections of purely animal life are transcendently unified in the ideas and values of the higher spiritual self. In many of the folk religions of the ancient world there is no clear distinction between the

sacred and the secular, or between this world and the other world; there is simply one universe. And it is natural that food should be viewed as a critical part of the most demanding and difficult communication of all – communication with the invisible portion of the world. Another paper would be required to engage with the topic of the use of food in religious practice.

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The role of employee wellness programme in the hospitality industry: a review of concepts, research, and practice

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In the hospitality industry, employees are critical to firm success, through their intimate interactions with customers to create memorable experiences and relationships. A nascent strategy adopted by many hospitality firms seeks to increase employee engagement and commitment through employee wellness programmes. Despite growing recognition of the concept of wellness in the workplace, limited studies discuss the topic systematically. This nascent research stream requires a better understanding of the role of wellness programmes and their influences on employees, customers, firms, and society. Therefore, this study offers a detailed review and synthesis of key concepts and existing knowledge in the industry, which produces a framework for further research, as well as managerial implications.

Keywords: corporate wellness, corporate social responsibility (CSR), employee engagement, customer engagement, profitability, health promotion

Introduction

In the highly competitive hospitality industry (Wang et al. 2014), customers have long been the central focus of hoteliers and restaurant managers (Van Doorn et al. 2010), whereas consideration of employees as key success factors has emerged only relatively recently (Mirvis 2012). Yet hospitality services inherently require frequent, intimate interactions with customers (Tsai et al. 2012), and employees have an important role in ensuring the achievement of customer satisfaction (Tsai 2013), which leads to repeat business and customer loyalty (Van Doorn et al. 2010). Employees act as brand ambassadors (Veleva et al. 2012) and deliver on the value that may be locked in other corporate resources (e.g., financial, physical, technology) by conveying a corporate or brand image to consumers (De Roeck et al. 2013, Kuokkanen et al. 2009).

Because they recognise the importance of employees for delivering superior service (Gollan 2012, Saks and Gruman 2011), researchers and practitioners explore various means to improve employee satisfaction (Argenti and Forman 2004, Kuokkanen et al. 2009) and engagement (Saks and Gruman 2011). For example, many firms hope to enhance employee commitment through employee wellness programmes (Smith and Duffy 2013). Wellness refers to practices aimed at facilitating people's ability to adopt healthy behaviours, abandon unhealthy lifestyles, and ultimately attain optimal health (i.e., good balance of physical, emotional, social, spiritual, and intellectual health) (Employee Health Promotion 2014, Jack and Brewis 2005, Smith and Duffy 2013). The concept of workplace wellness also has grown in popularity worldwide (Byrne et al. 2011). According to a Hewitt Associates (2010) survey, 88% of the more than 500 US companies surveyed indicated their commitment to instituting long-term wellness programmes for their employees, which represented a 25%

increase compared with 2007 (Employee Health Promotion 2014).

Despite these increased practices by business (Carnethon et al. 2009), few studies discuss employee wellness programmes with a systematic view (Watson and Gauthier 2003). This nascent area of study requires a clear summary of what aspects have been studied, what remains unknown, and what the future research agenda should include. To fill this gap, this study provides a systematic review of key concepts and research findings; it also presents several case studies of industry practices related to employee wellness programmes. In turn, it reveals several important implications for individual workers, firms, and society. Specifically, the next section identifies concepts related to employee wellness programmes and their outcomes, both theoretically and empirically, from the perspective of employees, companies, customers, and society. After reviewing business practices pertaining to three existing employee wellness programmes in the hospitality industry, this article concludes with some research priorities and key managerial implications.

Literature review

Employee wellness programmes and health promotion

As demonstrated by reports that nine of ten large companies in the United States offer employee wellness programmes (Gemignani, 1997), these care practices have become very common in workplaces (Byrne et al. 2011), though programme scopes vary widely. For example, some workplaces offer employees fitness centres, health education programmes, health testing, or incentive/disincentive programmes targeted at health behaviours (e.g., dieting, smoking) or outcomes (e.g., lowered cholesterol, body fat) (Carnethon et al. 2009, Pelletier

2009). Generally, action plans for initiating employee wellness programmes include (Employee Health Promotion 2014): (1) surveys of the health status and needs of employees, (2) identification of suitable programmes and interventions, according to the survey findings, (3) implementation and promotion of chosen wellness programme, (4) incentives to motivate participation; (5) measures of programme impact (Burton et al. 2005), and (6) adjustment or modification of programmes in response to the outcomes. Company policies and procedures can be established to support employees' participation in the worksite wellness activities (e.g., flexible work hours) (Carnethon et al. 2009). Ultimately, though, the goal of any employee wellness programme is to transform employees' unhealthy lifestyles into healthy ones, through a combination of efforts that enhance their awareness, change their behaviour, and develop supportive environments for positive health practices (Sorenson and Quintilliani 2009). Of these three components, a supportive environment likely has the greatest impact for producing lasting changes (Sorenson and Quintilliani 2009).

Academic studies often refer to wellness programmes as health promotion programmes, and researchers categorise health promotion as a form of social marketing (Cugelman et al. 2011). Various social marketing scholars have studied health promotion, mainly from a social welfare perspective (e.g., Mistry et al. 2012, Titterton 2006, Wong et al. 2010) or in relation to community campaigns (Coulon et al. 2012, Kaplan and Stone 2013). Fewer investigations establish relationships between health promotion and the economic gains it offer firms. To address this link, the current research considers the role of health promotion and its impact on hospitality businesses.

Positive outcomes of employee wellness programmes

The positive outcomes of wellness programmes for hospitality businesses can be classified into three levels: individual (employees and customers), corporate, and society. Employees, as targeted participants of wellness programmes, represent the direct beneficiaries of the campaigns. When they launch employee wellness programmes, companies tend to provide better health insurance coverage for employees (Aldana et al. 2005), create a supportive environment for nurturing healthy lifestyles (Person et al. 2010), and improve employees' overall health conditions (Watson and Gauthier 2003). Employees thus receive many benefits related to improving their health and living conditions (Kruger et al. 2006; Racette et al. 2009). Furthermore, employees who benefit from such programmes exhibit greater interest in and passion for their jobs (O'Rourke and Sullivan 2003), such that they become engaged employees (Saks and Gruman 2011). Customers, who interact closely with employees and serve as co-producers of the service (Argenti and Forman 2004), also benefit from wellness programmes, because they enjoy a higher probability of interacting with engaged, passionate employees who deliver better services (Saks and Gruman 2014). Accordingly, customers likely are more satisfied when they have been served by an engaged employee who is passionate about her or his job (Deng et al. 2010).

In turn, among the many factors that influence customers' positive word of mouth (Van Hove and Lievens 2007) and repatronage intentions (Hollebeek 2011), satisfied customers

likely generate positive feelings about the company (Deng et al. 2010), which encourages a long-term relationship and customer loyalty (Hollebeek 2011). Both customer loyalty and positive word of mouth help secure greater profitability (Cheng et al. 2013) and revenue growth (Brodie et al. 2011) for firms, which is crucial for their corporate sustainability (Ang 2011). In this sense, firms are key beneficiaries of employee wellness programmes (O'Rourke and Sullivan 2003). For example, Johnson & Johnson estimated that its wellness programmes, implemented since 1995, have helped more than two-thirds of its employees quit smoking and reduced the number of employees who suffer from high blood pressure by more than half (Berry et al. 2010). With these trends, Johnson & Johnson saved a cumulative \$250 million on health care costs over a decade; the return on every dollar spent on the wellness programmes was \$2.71 (Berry et al. 2010).

Previous researchers also identify, empirically or theoretically, several tangible benefits that companies might gain from employee wellness programmes, such as increased productivity (Patterson et al. 2004), employee trust (Gilson 2006), commitment (Makrides et al. 2007), and citizenship behaviours (González and Garazo 2006), as well as reduced turnover (Mosadeghrad 2014) and absenteeism (Ho, 1997). Thus firms acknowledge that maintaining the health of their employees can influence their corporate success (Mokaya et al. 2013). In line with Rosen's (1986, 100) suggestion that 'Healthy people make healthy companies', with greater profitability and returns on investment, industry practitioners appear to concur that healthy people and relationships are central to business success (Pelletier, 1993). This consideration is particularly important in the hospitality industry, because of its challenging working conditions (e.g., night shifts, long working hours, work pressure (Economics 2002). Up to 80% of hotel employees indicate health-related problems related to their work (Economics 2002). The need to understand the role of health promotion programmes thus is especially acute in the hospitality industry, to provide practical implications for practitioners and researchers. Table 1 lists the key studies that have identified consequences of employee wellness programmes that benefit the company; Figure 1 also depicts specific benefits achieved through employee wellness programmes.

Employee wellness programmes implemented by various organisations can have beneficial impacts on society at large (Guzik and Guzik 2013). Employees come from families, whatever form they take, and healthy employees generally bring more happiness to their families, which in turn affects the community and society as a whole. In this sense, sound employee wellness programmes may lead to greater societal happiness. Furthermore, wellness programmes that succeed in one organisation can be applied for the benefit of employees in other firms and the entire community (Saini and Mukul 2012; Whitehead 2005).

Employee wellness programmes and corporate wellness culture

Healthcare costs are high, for both firms and their employees (Stave et al. 2003). No company can afford unlimited, comprehensive healthcare coverage for all their employees (Naydeck et al. 2008), which suggests that relying on companies to offer health insurance coverage is not sustainable in the long term (Stave et al. 2003). Corporate wellness programmes offer an

effective means to manage health care costs, as an operational issue (O'Rourke and Sullivan 2003). Unlike traditional health-care benefits, these programmes focus on prevention and the goal of a healthy workplace (O'Rourke and Sullivan 2003). Employee health promotion initiatives might include offering employees an attendance bonus, instead of paid sick days, each year; rewarding them for their successful completion of an alcohol or smoking cessation or weight-loss programme; granting hiring and promotion preference to employees with healthy habits; or promoting alternative, complementary health therapies such as chiropractic, acupuncture, yoga, and massage. Medical research has demonstrated that people who use such complementary health treatments maintain healthier lifestyles, take fewer medications, are more productive, and have lower absenteeism than the average worker (Cahill and Lancaster, 1996; Wardle et al. 2012). A corporate wellness culture seeks to promote the notion of self-care (Godfrey et al. 2011), such that to promote wellness, firms provide employees with sufficient tools to manage their own health, while offering support and resources. In contrast, traditional health care programmes for employees tend to fail because of the increased healthcare costs involved (Naydeck et al. 2008).

Employee wellness programmes and corporate social responsibility (CSR)

Implementing employee wellness programmes might be a form of corporate social responsibility (CSR), focused on employees (Porter and Kramer 2004). Socially responsible corporations launch various wellness programmes for employees to facilitate their voluntary behavioural changes or improve the overall wellbeing of the workforce (Carroll and Shabana 2010). The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (2004) reports a close relationship between worksite wellness programmes and CSR, according to 11 in-depth case studies of European corporations that have integrated their wellness activities in their overall CSR agenda. Because strong worker wellness can be attributed to a company's social actions, wellness programmes are integral to CSR. Therefore, we propose that companies that offer employee wellness programmes practice CSR. In turn, as previous studies indicate, firms with sound CSR practices can enhance their corporate image among employees (Mirvis 2012).

In the hospitality industry in particular, firms operate in highly competitive environments (Wang et al. 2014), which makes it difficult for them to maintain their competitive advantages. As service providers, hospitality businesses cannot achieve this goal without the assistance of their employees (Xin and Mattila 2013). Therefore, employee attitudes and behaviours relate closely to hospitality firms' performance. Previous studies of human resource and stakeholder management examine employees' attitudes and behaviours using constructs such as organisational trust (Lin 2010), organisational commitment (Ali et al. 2010), or job satisfaction (Valentine and Fleischman 2008). Sound CSR, such as that associated with a company that ensures health and safety at work, can enhance such positive perceptions among employees (Mirvis 2012), in line with social and legislative expectations that corporations act in socially responsible ways (Petersen 2008). For example, the World Health Organization (2007) stresses the need for corporations to promote employees' wellness: 'the development of the health promoting workplace will be a prerequisite

for sustainable social and economic development' (Petersen 2008, p. 118). Similarly, the Luxembourg Declaration on Workplace Health Promotion in the European Union (2007) emphasised that an employee wellness programme is 'a modern corporate strategy' (Battel-Kirk et al. 2009, p. 14), vital to social legitimacy and effectiveness. In the face of high absenteeism and turnover rates, due to stress, burnout, and other health problems related to job demands (Baum, 1998; Blaxter, 1990), employee wellness programmes constitute an important CSR approach, by which employers can contribute to their employees' health and well-being, and to society as a whole. Figure 2 summarises these connections among employee wellness programmes, CSR, and a corporate wellness culture.

Successful business practices

Marriott International's Takecare Wellness Initiative

If you take great care of your employees, they'll take good care of the guests and the guests will return again and again. (John Willard Marriott, founder of Marriott Inc.)

The founder of the Marriott hotel chain proposed a basic wellness programme in the 1930s, when the company existed solely as a root beer stand and restaurant. When the cook failed to show up to work one day, JW Marriott decided to initiate a programme to help keep his employees healthy and happy. He hired a doctor to provide healthcare; a few years later, he added a surgeon to the payroll.

Today, these programmes are greatly expanded. Since 2010, Marriott International Inc. has provided its 'Takecare Wellness Initiative' for employees of all of its 16 hotel brands around the world (Marriott International Inc. 2012a). The Initiative is rooted in Marriott's basic philosophy of taking care of its associates (Marriott 2011); it provides employees with various tools and resources to manage their health and achieve their goals (Marriott International Inc. 2012b), including free smoking cessation programmes, preventive care, comprehensive health assessment, and access to free health coaches (Marriott 2011). A designated network of hotel-based wellness champions supports worksite health challenges and delivers resources and assistance to associates, to nurture their healthy lifestyles (Marriott 2013). Both the health coaches and wellness champions provide suggestions and information about how to make the best use of the healthcare programme and benefits, as well as advice on how to use Takecare Wellness programmes (Marriott 2011). Each hotel and resort also personalises the programme to fit the needs and health status of the employees at that hotel.

The Takecare Wellness Initiative originally was introduced through Marriott's Living Our Core Values programme (Marriott International Inc. 2012b), which also highlights Marriott's clear recognition that many of its employees are working parents. To ensure a pleasant working environment, or 'corporate wellness culture,' Marriott thus offers family-friendly Takecare Wellness Initiatives that help employees maintain a sound balance between work and home, while still granting them opportunities to advance in their careers.

Both its corporate wellness culture and the Takecare Wellness Initiative have earned Marriott widespread accolades. For example, in 2012, *Working Mother* magazine named it the

Table 1: Consequences of Employee Wellness Programmes from the perspective of company benefits

Author/Year	Journal	Constructs	Method	Context	Key findings
Hochart and Lang (2011)	<i>Population Health Management</i>	1. Risk category 2. Blood pressure 3. Total non-fasting cholesterol 4. Body mass index	Experimental	Employee groups that participated in the programme for 3 consecutive years	Worksite wellness programme affected the employer culture and helped healthy employees stay at low risk, while reducing risk levels for those at moderate or high risk.
Baicker et al. (2010)	<i>Health Affairs</i>	1. Wellness programmes 2. Medical spending. 3. Absenteeism	Meta-analysis	Prior peer-reviewed meta-analyses of employee wellness programmes	1. Medical costs decreased about \$3.27 for every dollar spent on wellness programmes 2. Absentee costs decreased about \$2.73 for every dollar spent.
Jensen (2011)	<i>Perspectives in Public Health</i>	1. Healthy worksite food environment (through interventions), 2. Productivity-enhancing effects	Systematic literature review	Systematic search of literature on worksite intervention trials and observational cross-sectional studies	A healthy worksite food environment (through interventions) enhanced productivity.
Loeppke et al. (2008)	<i>Population Health Management</i>	1. Employee health risks 2. Health conditions 3. Productivity	Survey	543 employees who completed a health risk assessment in both 2003 and 2005	Integrated population health enhancement positively affected productivity and employees' health risks.
Kaspin et al. (2012)	<i>Population Health Management</i>	1. Wellness interventions 2. Economic outcomes. 3. Health-related outcomes	Systematic review	PubMed, ABI/Inform, and Business Source Premier databases, as well as <i>Corporate Wellness Magazine</i>	Improved economic outcomes were associated with health care costs, returns on investment, absenteeism, productivity, workers' compensation, and utilization, in addition to decreased health risks.
Anderko et al. (2012)	<i>Preventing Chronic Disease</i>	1. Community prevention 2. Clinical prevention 3. Public health infrastructure and training 4. Research and surveillance focused on workforce wellness	Conceptual	General employees	Worksite wellness programmes have cost benefits. saving companies money in health care expenditures and producing positive returns on investments.
Dulebohn et al. (2009)	<i>Human Resource Management Review</i>	1. Context of employer-sponsored benefits 2. Benefit satisfaction 3. Pensions 4. Health care 5. Work family benefits	Literature review	General employees	Five benefit topics were identified as emerging issues for further research.
Henke et al. (2012)	<i>Health Affairs</i>	1. Health spending 2. Return on investment	Comparison study	Medical and drug cost trends of Johnson & Johnson employees compared with those of employees working in a similar industry and firm size	In 2009, average annual per employee savings were \$565, which equaled about \$1.88–\$3.92 saved for every dollar spent on the programme.

Table 1: (cont.)

Author/Year	Journal	Constructs	Method	Context	Key findings
Goetzel et al. (2005)	<i>Journal of Occupational & Environmental Medicine</i>	1. Worker demographics 2. Job categories 3. Risks 4. Medical expenditures	Case study design	Dow Chemical Company's employees	Successful health risk reduction efforts brought about significant returns on investment to the company.
Yen et al. (2010)	<i>International Journal of Workplace Health Management</i>	1. Return on investment 2. Comprehensive worksite health programme	Time period analysis and historical trend analysis	Employee population	The returns on comprehensive worksite health programme were greater than the programme investment.
Morrison and MacKinnon (2008)	<i>Healthcare Management</i>	1. Stakeholder engagement 2. Employee participation, involvement 3. Organizational culture 4. Direct medical economic outcomes 5. Indirect costs 6. Humanistic outcomes 7. Clinical outcomes	Literature review and interviews	Review of scholarly sources and key informant interviews	1. Employees who participated in wellness programmes over a three-year period showed an almost 50% reduction in annual insurance claims. 2. Workplace wellness programmes had a substantial effect on absenteeism, presenteeism, and productivity.
Naydeck et al. (2008)	<i>Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine</i>	Elements of the Highmark Wellness Programme	Survey	Participants of wellness programmes vs. risk-matched nonparticipants	Lower future health care costs and a positive return on investment were achieved through the application of well-designed worksite health promotion programmes.

best company for hourly workers, and the National Association of Female Executives recognised Marriott as one of the top companies for executive women (Marriott International Inc. 2012a). These awards reflect Marriott's commitment to help take care of its associates, as well as the benefits of doing so for the company.

Disney's Center for Living Well

Although only one element of a vast corporation, the Disneyworld Resort in Lake Buena Vista, Florida, is also the largest single-site employer in the United States, with nearly 70 000 employees (or in Disney terms, 'cast members'). It attracts approximately 52.5 million visitors annually. To serve all these visitors, Disney depends heavily on the daily performance of its cast members, which means that the health and wellness of employees is critical to the company's success. All Disneyworld employees have access to health benefit packages that include various medical, dental, and vision coverage options, as well as an on-site gym, free health screenings, personal health assessments, flu vaccinations, physical activity programmes, discounted weight-loss programmes, healthy food options in cafeterias and vending machines, and a

customised wellness website. Specialised care and support groups are available to cast members with chronic illnesses, such as diabetes. In addition, cast members can access various types of preventive care.

As a part its preventive care initiative, Disney offers resources to cast members and their dependents, including a state-of-the-art, on-site health and wellness center called the 'Center for Living Well,' which opened in 2008. Located behind Epcot, this Center is a one-stop health and wellness shop that includes labs and facilities for basic radiology, pharmacy, and urgent care. It also provides behavioural health and wellness tools and resources to promote the long-term health and wellness of participants. In implementing these services, the Center for Living Well strongly emphasises confidentiality: The design and layout proactively minimise the chances that cast members will encounter colleagues while waiting for services, and the room designs carefully protect patient identities. A low buzzing sound carries throughout the rooms, creating just enough noise to reduce the risk of private medical conversations being overheard by others.

The architectural design of the Center for Living Well also aims to encourage participation. Disney designers cleverly

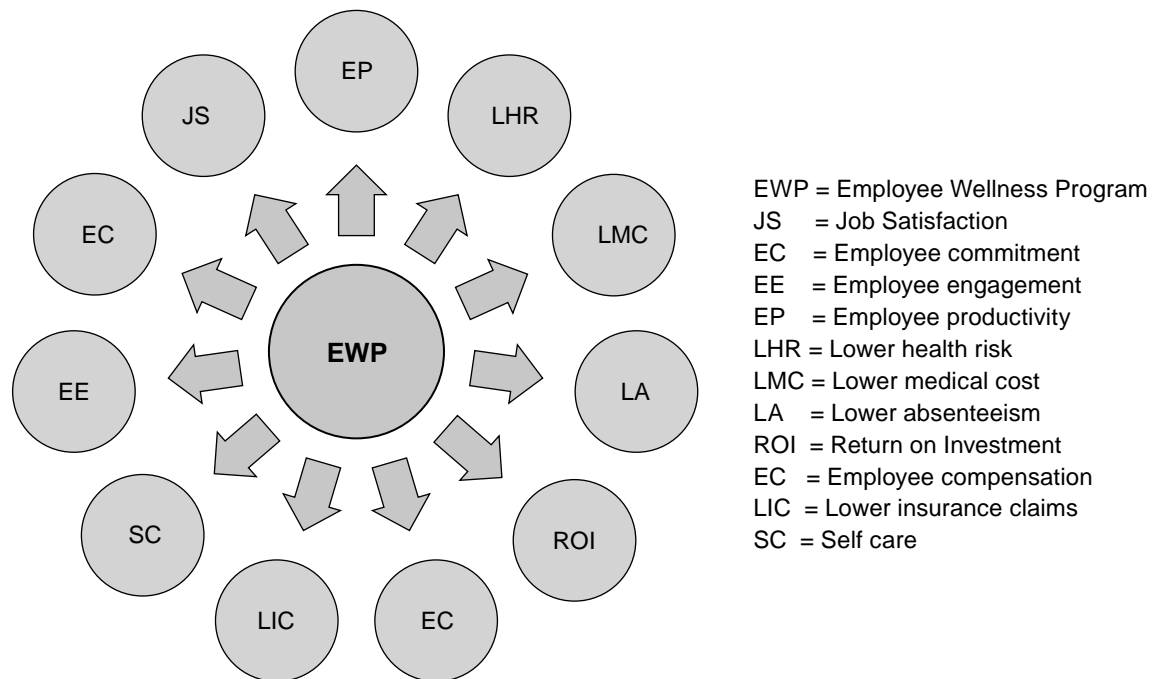


Figure 1: Outcomes of Employee Wellness Programme for company's benefits



Figure 2: Inter-relationship between employee wellness programme, corporate social responsibility, and corporate wellness culture

carved 'hidden Mickey' signatures and inspirational messages into every mural on the clinic walls. Acknowledging the international status of the cast members, these inspirational messages appear in English, Creole, Haitian, Spanish, and Vietnamese, among others. Informational signage at the Center also is displayed in multiple languages; the health staff members not only speak various languages but also have ready translation resources available. Such structural tactics help Disney reach out to engage cast members, though it also has implemented several more direct engagement strategies, including a rewards programme that grants cast members up to \$300 for their participation. Cast members can earn rewards when they meet certain health goals: Those who attain a body mass index of less than 27 or a blood pressure reading of less than 140/90 earn \$150.

Such initiatives mean that Disney largely inspires its cast members to take proactive approaches to their own health and wellness. According to Disneyworld President Meg Crofton, the Center itself 'is a beautiful, warm, inviting place with a focus on helping our cast members think about wellness' (Zanolla 2008), such that in this 'inspirational place ... You walk in there and you can't help but leave thinking, "you know what? I'm going to get on that wellness journey myself".' Similarly, the president of worldwide operations for Walt Disney Parks and Resorts Al Weiss commented, 'There is a lot of momentum around our wellness journey, and we will continue to engage our Cast Members in new and innovative health and wellness opportunities'. Recognising that investing in the health and wellbeing of its people is a smart strategy, Disney and its Center for Living Well combine the best in medical care, pharmacy services, and technology to create a superlative healthcare experience.

Jamba Juice

Jamba Juice strives to promote a healthy, active lifestyle in all that we do as a company. (James D.

White, Chairman and CEO, Jamba Juice Company)

As an active lifestyle company, Jamba Juice operates and franchises stores that offer freshly squeezed juices, whole fruit smoothies, and other healthy menu items. Since its start in California in 1990, the chain has opened 783 outlets globally. In addition, Jamba Juice offers retail products for consumers to enjoy at home, through selected retailers and in some Jamba outlets. In being named, for its second year, as a healthy employer, Jamba Juice was expressly recognised for its innovation and leadership in employee wellness programmes.

The company's underlying concept is to promote healthy living, through a balance among physical activity, good nutrition, and community involvement. Accordingly, the firm

asserts that the key to its internal health is its employee's health and wellness. Jamba Juice thus encourages employees to adopt various wellness practices; provides extensive medical and dental benefits; and offers rewards and incentives to employees who actively participate in wellness programmes. These incentives are extensive and varied, including:

- CEO Health Challenge Programme, which grants participants discounts on various health care benefits, such as gym memberships, and provides opportunities to win rewards (e.g., iPads, gift cards)
- Commuter discount programme, which provides incentives to get employees to use bicycles to commute to work. The company also provides secure indoor bicycle storage for those who use bicycles as alternate vehicles for commuting
- Access to locker and shower facilities at headquarters
- Dedicated lactation lounge for nursing mothers employed there
- Access to a variety of personal health services at a discounted rate
- Employee discount meal programme at workplace
- Pay-for-performance programme with semiannual bonus eligibility
- Paid time off eligibility to allow employees to participate in health related volunteer activities
- Orientation to health issues on their website to help new employees to understand various support mechanisms at the firm
- An intranet site dedicated to employee training, recognition, and engagement in health related activities
- Telecommuting options to alleviate the stress associated with daily commuting.
- Sponsorships of employee teams at various events, such as the Rock N' Roll Marathon Series, San Francisco Marathon, and JPMorgan Chase Corporate Challenge. In the 2012 WIPRO San Francisco Marathon, more than 150 Jamba Juice employees ran, winning the award for the most employees of any company to participate in the event, as well as a second place finish for the corporate team in the half marathon.

Such efforts have earned Jamba Juice Company recognition for promoting health and wellness among its employees. Several news publications collaborated with a wellness-focused research company to identify innovative leaders in employee wellness programmes, and Jamba was among the firms cited. It also won a silver award in the 2012 Health at Work competition, which assesses firms on their comprehensive wellness programmes, promotion, participation rate, and achievement of measurable results. As Vice President of Human Resources Kathy Write explains, 'We strive to promote a healthier world for generations to come'.

Research Priorities

As people pay increasing attention to their health and quality of life, wellness and health promotion have emerged as prominent topics for discussion. Employee wellness programmes not only help reduce healthcare costs but also encourage employees' emotional attachment to their company, customer service performance, and, ultimately, the company's profitability and productivity. However, previous investigations of wellness have adopted mainly social marketing and welfare perspectives, with limited research addressing the business context. A wide range of studies

will be necessary to resolve this literature gap. In particular, the current analysis suggests the following list of topics that demand further research:

- Employee engagement with employee wellness programmes
- Comparative studies of the impacts of various employee wellness programmes on individuals, companies, and society
- Employee-to-employee interactions and their impacts on participation in employee wellness programmes
- Generational differences among employees and their influences on employee wellness programme designs and participation
- Corporate social responsibility and employee wellness programmes
- Corporate culture and employee wellness programmes
- Management style and employee wellness programmes
- Emotional impact of employee wellness programmes
- Innovation in employee wellness programmes
- Technological innovation and employee wellness programmes
- Social networks and employee wellness programmes.
- Service innovation and employee wellness programmes
- Opinion leaders and their effects on employee wellness programmes
- Online social interactions and their effect on employee wellness programme.

Managerial implications

Employee wellness programmes and their related concepts, such as a corporate wellness culture and CSR, are key factors that can influence the success of hospitality businesses. Positive outcomes of employee wellness programmes, such as employee engagement, customer engagement, productivity, profitability, and so forth, emerge from this review of previous literature. In addition, this article presents several successful business practices associated with the employee wellness programmes implemented by leading hospitality firms, for managerial reference. In turn, it offers four main insights.

First, this review should stimulate hoteliers and restaurant managers to recognise the importance of employee wellness programmes, corporate wellness cultures, and CSR, in terms of their benefits for individuals (employees and customers), firms, and society. Hospitality employees have strong, specific wellness needs, because of their challenging working conditions. Launching employee wellness programmes demonstrates the organisation's interest in its employees, which can produce fruitful returns for the firm.

Second, this article lists some useful techniques and action plans for establishing an effective employee wellness programme. Wellness involves more than just physical health; it also encompasses emotional, spiritual, and intellectual health, which contribute to achieving optimal health among employees. Emotional health techniques, alternative and complimentary health modalities, and corporate wellness cultures thus must be included, to facilitate the success of an employee wellness programme and help companies gain positive returns on their investments in it.

Third, though this study focused on the hospitality industry, key points related to wellness programmes likely generalise to other service industries, such as tourism, airlines, retailing, and information technology, or even to manufacturing. Managers

in various industry settings could tailor the findings provided herein to their particular situations to implement effective wellness programmes, build a corporate wellness culture, and engage in CSR.

Fourth, most prior research has focused on the effects of wellness programmes on social welfare and the community. This article instead notes the commercial benefits available from wellness programmes for businesses. Therefore, this study should help inspire social markets and public policy makers to derive effective methods to attract business organisations to join their social campaigns.

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Connecting entrepreneurship and education

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The aim of this research is to explore the contextual characteristics of a particular group of Dutch restaurant owners, the successful culinary entrepreneurs (SCEs), to examine how these contextual characteristics might be used in a hospitality education. This very small segment of the Dutch restaurant business (0.2–0.5% of the total restaurants) is known for its strong commitment to competitiveness, and delivering quality service and products. No previous research in the Netherlands has embarked on a search for connecting this specific category of practitioners to education. The main instrument for the research was in-depth interviewing. Six retired and four practising restaurant owners and a connoisseur of the business were interviewed. The transcripts of the recorded interviews were analysed, applying a constructivist grounded theory approach (Charmaz 2006). The research generated a grounded theory on the SCE social construct and the central theme 'Living the business'. The grounded theory informs future practitioners, i.e. students, about how they can prepare for possible future business ventures in the culinary restaurant business. Furthermore, it confronts future practitioners with the notion of context and value systems that need to be considered in order to successfully engage in and sustain a career in the culinary restaurant sector. The findings from this research confirmed the importance of providing students in hospitality management education with input about professional development that is connected to a core segment in the hospitality industry.

Keywords: successful culinary entrepreneurs, contextual characteristics, grounded theory, hospitality management education

Introduction

This research seeks to identify what made a certain category of entrepreneurs successful in their business. From the analysis of the entrepreneurs' factual information and discourses, a contribution is generated for hospitality management programmes. The starting point of this research is grounded in the researcher's reflexive considerations while working in some of the leading Dutch culinary restaurants. There was a potential contribution to be made by exploring successful entrepreneurs' life stories and their perceptions of what brings them success, where they make important decisions, how they learn, and how a balance can be found between professional and personal life. The researcher's experience and learning generated by the years working for successful, small, upper segment culinary restaurant owners (SCEs) generated respect for the qualities they held. The SCEs are entrepreneurs in the restaurant luxury segment, in which providing hospitality and the enjoyment of high quality food and beverages is viewed as part of a special culture. In this culture 'hospitableness' is one of the central themes. The philosopher Telfer (1996) refers to hospitableness as depending on devotion and a spirit of generosity rather than on skill.

The following question initiated the research: 'Is it possible to research the upper segment restaurant entrepreneurs' worlds in order to explain some of the important contextual characteristics they share, and the way they deal with their environment and feed this information into the practice of hospitality management education?' A fair amount of scepticism towards the possible findings of such research was apparent. The contextual characteristics of entrepreneurs in

this restaurant practice and the way they deal with the people and issues around them might have been rooted in unethical foundations. Knowledge about the contextual characteristics of the successful entrepreneurs in the upper segment restaurants is very limited and mostly of a descriptive or anecdotal nature. Exploring the grounding principles that brought these successful entrepreneurs to the point they are now would be interesting and valuable. To define the category 'small upper segment culinary restaurants', the Michelin Guide, is considered to be the most important database in the Netherlands.

Michelin is the oldest restaurant assessing institution in Europe and has been publishing about restaurants and travel since 1900. Despite the growing number of restaurant quality assessing institutions, Michelin has kept its position of being the most reliable among them. Habets (2007) underlines that the Michelin awards still are the most trusted and desirable. In 2011, Michelin qualified 316 culinary restaurants in the Netherlands combining 98 with one to three stars, and another 218 that received a so-called Bib Gourmand (Restaurantgids Dinersite 2011). In Europe, quality gastronomy is synonymous with the Michelin Guide (Johnson et al. 2005), and it is a respected institution among chefs, restaurateurs, culinary experts and the dining public. Critical remarks about Michelin indicate that the institution has not always been consistent and objective and clear cases of mistakes have happened (Van Craenenbroeck 2011). Despite the criticism, Michelin is still the most prominent organisation for providing an external benchmark to measure the success of upper segment culinary restaurants in terms of product and service quality. The central

aim of the research is to explore how the contextual characteristics of successful small upper segment culinary restaurant owners (SCEs) potentially can be used in hospitality management education.

Literature review

Lee-Ross and Lashley (2009, 69) assert that 'the hospitality entrepreneur does not have to be totally original to be creative ... most creative business ideas are simply modifications of others'. In addition, Bessant and Tidd (2007) refer to entrepreneurs' typical motivation as being a high need for achievement. Interestingly, most entrepreneurs cite making money as a secondary reason for starting their own business. Simon (2006) catches the spirit of opening a restaurant by saying that is more than 'just opening a restaurant' but much more a lesson about business and about life. The appeal is to be creative and to set oneself 'apart from the crowd', to take risk and to be passionate about what one does, whatever it is one does. For Cannon (2005), the restaurant entrepreneur should be a hospitality minded person that enjoys dealing with people and the relationship building that follows from that. Lee-Ross and Lashley (2009, 175) add to this: 'truly hospitality behaviour ... is motivated by genuine needs to meet the needs of others and hospitableness'. Sweeney (2004) asserts that a restaurant owner's best chance of success would be to focus on his or her own background, experiences, and generation. Looking at the value small restaurants can have for a society, Miller (2006, ix) postulates that a small restaurant is one of the few places where '... the owner's hard work and love of excellence show'. The entrepreneur's message should be about: giving friendship, calm and graceful service and artfully prepared food of the highest quality. Good theatre performance as a metaphor for successful restaurant operating fits with Goffman's (1959, 80) notion that 'The legitimate performances of everyday life are not "acted" or "put on"'. In order to be offering a legitimate performance in the restaurant as a theatre, the actor must be in full control of his role and perform it with the greatest dedication. Achieving emotional harmony, where behaviour is congruent with the actual emotions ('not bad acting') is the desired state (Lashley 2008).

There is scarce research specifically about the contextual characteristics of SCEs, although examples are present. Balazs (2001 2002) explained that French three Michelin star restaurant chefs, in most cases also owners, fulfil a multitude of roles in their restaurant. Balazs distilled 'leadership lessons' from the three Michelin star chefs, but, surprisingly, did not come up with the notion of applying them to hospitality management education nor inserted critical observations. Gillespie's notion about the essence of culinary restaurant entrepreneurship reconfirms that culinary restaurant entrepreneurs, 'most likely are not going to be remembered for their money and astute business sense, but for their productive, original and artistic contributions to the hospitality industry' (Gillespie 2001, 173). Entrepreneurs in small upper segment culinary restaurants operate their businesses in a very competitive environment as Johnson et al. (2005, 171) describe: 'belonging to the rare species of individuals who are able to take on the dual role of businessperson and creator at the same time'. Prices of the meals in culinary restaurants are high and the pressure to perform is extremely high. A part of the contextual

characteristics of successful entrepreneurs relates to personality traits, i.e. energy, health, emotional stability, intelligence and capacity to inspire. Another important part of the restaurant entrepreneur's contextual characteristics lies in the values domain, which consists of personal and ethical values. England (1967) found that personal value systems influence the way a person deals with business while conversely the personal value system is influenced by organisational life. Rokeach (1973, 7) defined human values as 'a prescriptive or proscriptive belief, wherein some means or end of actions is judged to be desirable or undesirable', and this affects the preferences on which people act. Schwartz (2006) identified that motivational types of values hold in many different nations and cultures. Age, life stage, gender and education have been identified as having an influence on peoples' value priorities. Personality traits and personal values are interrelated (Olver and Mooradian 2003), and the former are defined as endogenous basic tendencies tied to underlying biophysical response systems; they are strongly heritable, surprisingly immune to parental and social influences, and remarkably stable throughout adulthood. Personal values are considered to be learned beliefs and guiding principles. When looking at the relationship between personality traits and personal values, Olver and Mooradian conclude that personality and values both capture distinct and differential characteristics of the individual.

Concerns about entrepreneurship have certainly been raised throughout times. Kets de Vries (1985) warned that the same creative energy driving an entrepreneur comes from the destructive internal needs that can ruin a career or a company. Jones and Spicer (2009) warn that the broader context often used in current literature about entrepreneurship mostly does not extend much beyond related disciplines or fields of study. Jones and Spicer consider the entrepreneur to be one of the fantasies of economic discourse, which according to them may need to be unmasked. Closely connected to entrepreneurship is the negative influence on family and personal life stipulated by Wright and Zahra (2011). Entrepreneurs' drive to work hard and sustain the business create tensions in families, which multiply if they try to manage their family members in the day-to-day business. Dominant personalities in entrepreneurship are a potential threat to marriages and other personal relationships, whereas the pure labour intensive nature of entrepreneurship per definition leaves little time for personal lives. There is not a lot of evidence suggesting that successful small upper segment culinary restaurant entrepreneurs' contextual characteristics are currently used to enrich education. It became clear from the literature that in order to properly explain the potential influence that Dutch SCEs' contextual characteristics could have on hospitality management education, an original and grounded research approach would be needed.

Research design

In this research successful small upper segment culinary restaurant owners (SCEs) and one respondent who knew the community of SCEs from close by were asked about their experiences and perceptions by means of in-depth interviews. Charmaz's (2006) constructivist grounded theory facilitated the construction of theory in combination with the reflexive position of the researcher. The research was in line

with Hammersley (2002), who defines the outcomes and importance of this type of highly context-specific research as providing 'moderate enlightenment'. It puts the outcomes of the research in a context of consideration, and takes away strong generalisation claims. The sample was chosen based on two variables to define success: (1) Recognition in terms of service and culinary achievement, and (2) Business achievement. For the first indicator of success, the most reputable quality assessing publication, the Michelin Guide, was taken. Business success would best have been assessed by looking at revenue, value generation and the realisation of profit objectives, but this was virtually impossible to assess because the owners would not allow insight into their figures. A related indicator of business success is sustainability of the company, and if it is able to be sustained for over ten years it would be appropriate to call it successful, business wise. The choice and size of the sample and the number of interviews followed the notion of theoretical data saturation (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

Findings

In the analysis of the interview transcripts, simultaneously theoretical memos were written in which the contemplation materialised, triggered by the interviewees' story lines. Interviews of one to three hours with six retired and four practising SCEs and a connoisseur of the business were executed. Constant comparison between the interviews and with the literature brought saturation into the analysis. The SCEs were no clearly definable individual personalities but were people within their social context. Their lives were the result of a complex set of person-related factors, people around them (partner, family, staff and others), activities and circumstances. The choices they made were in many cases influenced by certain happenings or people. In the process of simultaneous data gathering and analysis, slowly but steadily the social construct of the SCE started to emerge. Also the influence that this phenomenon could have on hospitality management education started to make sense. Analysing the SCEs' personalities to see what made them who they were was an important element in the coding. The information obtained from the first eight individual interviews formed the basis for defining code labels and categories that captured the SCEs' worlds. After tentatively formulating the social construct of the SCE, three additional interviews were done more explicitly to engage in theoretical sampling (Birks and Mills 2011) in which the findings were compared and validated. Figure 1 shows the overview of codes and the overarching categories in which they were mapped.

Each of the categories, 'issues/happenings/themes', 'personality', 'activities', 'management related' and 'value system', is of a rather different nature but they all could be found in the stories of the entrepreneurs interviewed. The categories were then elevated to a more abstract level by looking at the core of the process. Clearly the SCEs came into this world and brought their, by 'nature given', characteristics. The category 'personality related' could then be seen as the individual, the starting point which conceptualised in the theme of 'constituting'. The second category captured the codes which signified that the SCE was continuously 'valuing' the world around him, while moving through life, and making decisions. The individual SCE

talked about how he engaged with the issues, happenings and themes around him, which fitted the theme: 'facing'. In this process of facing the world around, the individual used and further developed his value systems. In the dominant part of his life, running his restaurant and dealing with the people in that context, the SCE is involved in management; he is 'managing'. The themes, 'constituting', 'valuing', 'facing' and 'managing' characterise the essence of the SCE's 'being', which is active, moving and fluid. It is not a static, pre-defined format that can be replicated without careful reflection and contemplation. It is a dynamic process, but it can be analysed in order to learn from it, and to see what went right, what went wrong and what did not go at all. The process followed Saldana's (2009, 12) suggestion to progress from the coding to the eventual theory. The analysis via categories and themes, moved from the 'real' and 'particular' captured in the coding process to the more 'abstract' and 'general' in the theory of the SCE social construct and 'living the business'. In Figure 2, the abstracting from the codes to categories, and then to themes and theory is visualised.

Constituting

The literature suggests that personality as a starting point for entrepreneurs significantly influences their decision making (Littunen 2000, Morrison 2001, Legoherel et al. 2004, Lee-Ross and Lashley 2009). Among the personality-related behaviours of SCEs is the enormous focusing by the entrepreneurs in this category. There seemed to be the capability to allocate enormous energy in order to achieve a particular goal, but as a consequence this can have effects such as anxiety and restlessness that potentially negatively impact the entrepreneur. Crucial in the perception of personality-related challenges is the way SCEs deal with them. The culinary restaurant segment puts a high demand on the people working in it, and may serve as a good 'environment' for people with high energy levels. It became clear that a range of personality-related elements could be put under the same heading referred to as 'drive', which is considered as the on-going urge of the SCE personality to establish a place in life through his profession, and to be good or preferably the best. As another distinctive characteristic, a strong personal work discipline was mentioned, as one respondent expressed it: '... I think that discipline, in many ways, has to be one of the major qualities. I think that SCEs are extremely disciplined in many respects ... they will not be swept away easily, they just cannot have that happen ...'. Furthermore, the SCE has a distinct need for freedom and independence. It was interesting to see that some of the entrepreneurs deliberately set out to have strong people with them in the key positions in their restaurants. They did so in order to be able to take on responsibilities outside the restaurant. One entrepreneur mentioned: '... freedom is vitally important for me ... plan your own day, implement your own priorities and of course you have tasks, meetings and responsibilities, things that have to be done, but freedom means reducing issues to accessible chunks, in the sense of "okay, that I can still handle", but you know it is about deciding yourself when to do something ...'. He admitted that if he not have been so insistent on his freedom and taken one of the key positions in the restaurant, it might have made his restaurant more successful and given him more profits. This finding conforms with what Rokeach (1973, 1979) found as one of

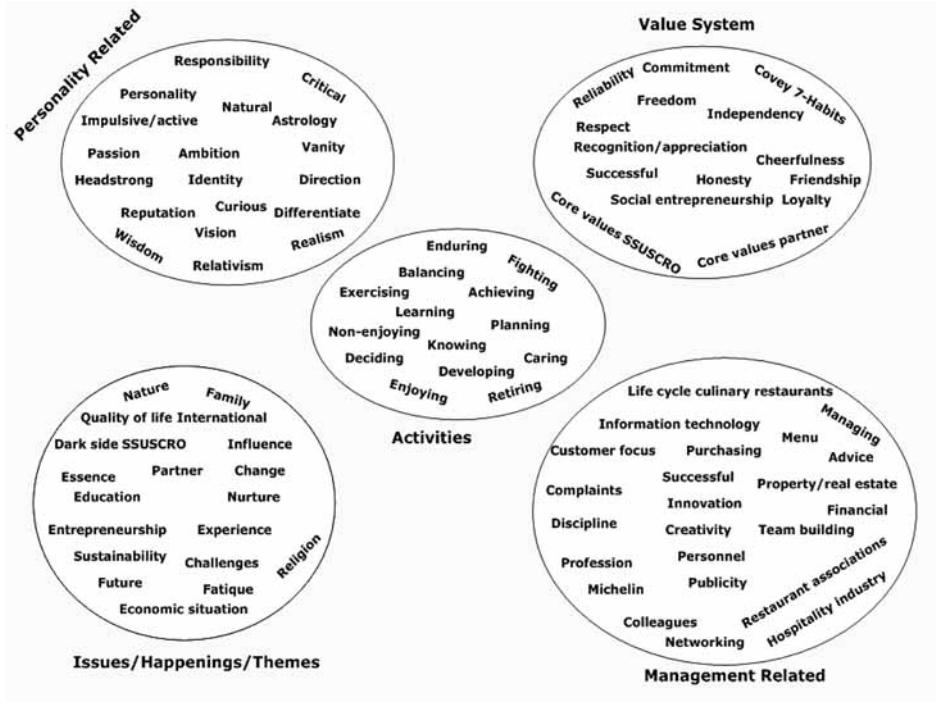


Figure 1: Semi-abstract map of codes and categories

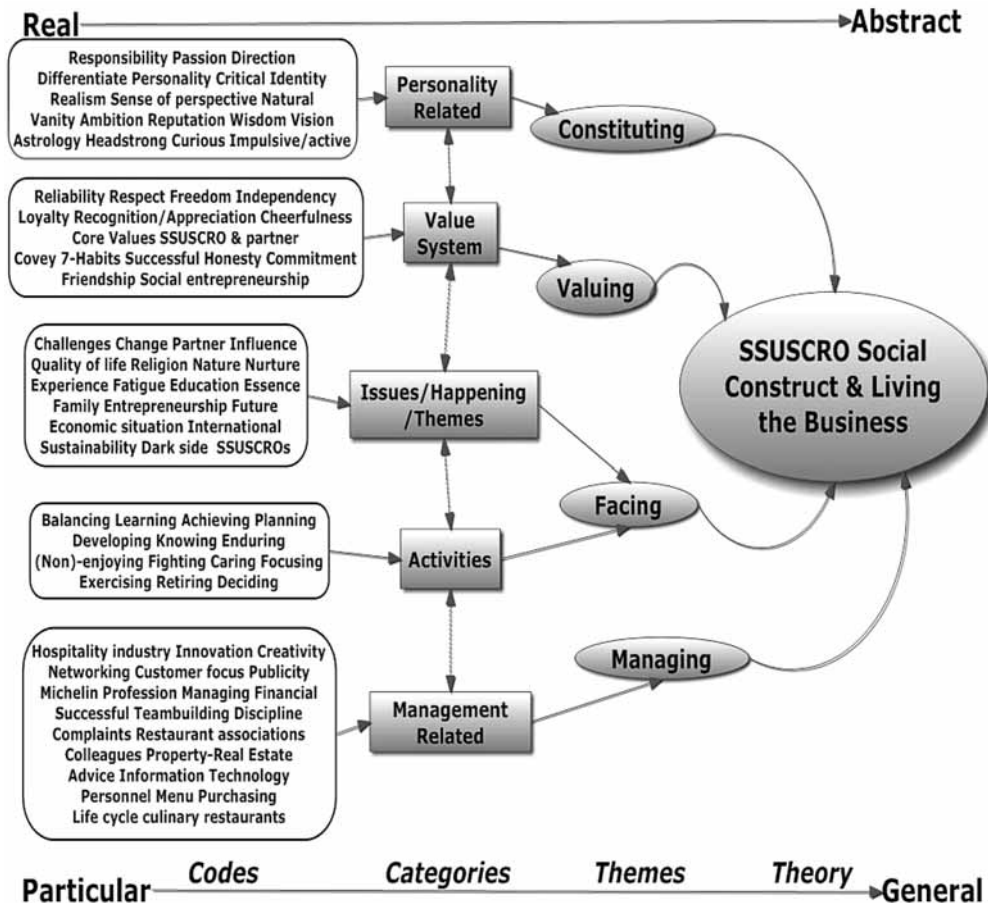


Figure 2: From codes to theory (SSUSCRO mentioned as the original term for SCE)

the dominant values of entrepreneurs in small businesses.

Getting to grips with reality and choosing a critical perspective in the upper segment

Another important aspect of the SCE is the insistence on 'keeping their feet firmly on the ground'. Despite this sense of level-headedness, many SCEs also seemed to like spending money which has an element of ambivalence to it. Where does this drive to spend money come from? Is it the luxury life-style that SCEs see from their clientele or is it more related to their personality? The notion of entrepreneurs spending money connects to Jones and Spicer's (2009) critical assessment of the tendency among entrepreneurs to have excessive patterns of spending and in many cases wasting more than average resources. Jones and Spicer assume that entrepreneurs feel to be entitled to such spilling of resources because that is part of their position as an entrepreneur. The successful entrepreneurs who know how to sustain their business over a long period of time are 'down-to-earth' with a strong sense of realism which can be found in their statements; as one said: '*... very important in entrepreneurship in a Michelin star restaurant: some see it as having a star status. But if you see it like a star status, without a shadow of a doubt, you will fall flat on your face. Never forget, high trees catch a lot of wind ...*'. Other SCE's personality characteristic are: a sense of putting things into perspective, cheerfulness and aspiring for quality of life. SCEs demonstrated a sense of perspective when it came down to their highly rated Michelin star restaurants, accommodating rich clientele. One, when asked what he would convey to future professionals, i.e. students, said: '*... very important in our profession is the cheerfulness. It is obviously a feast. You really need to see the cheerfulness and the relativity of what we are doing ...*'. SCEs are not only extremely focused and driven to perform, but as a balance should also possess the characteristic of putting the serious nature of their profession into perspective. The SCEs are critical individuals and express their critical stance towards many issues they deal with in business and life. Comments were made about successors, and the situation in the hospitality industry in general in terms of customer focus. Some entrepreneurs critically assessed colleagues who were financially not successful. The majority of the SCEs were criticising the needs and mentality of the contemporary younger generation who worked in their restaurants. They mentioned the perceived lower level of endurance and high aspirations by saying: '*... they just want a big car and to be traveling around the world, even before they properly started working ...*'

Valuing

Following one's values, overcoming challenges and keeping the business alive. Most SCEs talked quite openly about their values and acknowledged the impact these had on their lives and business. They knew what is important for them, and what not and were persistent in this, which fits findings of Lindsay et al. (2005), asserting that values tend to be enduring, do not easily change over time and are instilled in people from an early age onwards. The SCEs confirmed that particular values should be intrinsically present in hospitality professionals in order to be effective in the sector. These intrinsic values make it more relaxed and less forced for them to work in the sector. The interviewees mentioned: loving, caring, respecting

and being considerate, in line with what Lashley (2008, 13) calls 'hospitableness'. Emenheiser, Clay, and Palakurthi (1998) found that it is the perception of recruiters when hiring for upscale restaurants that service attitude is the most important characteristic for future staff. An important theme in the stories of the SCEs was 'challenges', and how they dealt with them. One entrepreneur talked about his dyslexia, which made him repeat classes at secondary school and forced him to leave a hospitality management degree programme after one year. He described as the learning effect: '*... the good side of the situation was that I learned from the challenges how to fight and acquire a good sense of endurance ...*'. Another one voiced his feelings about dealing with challenges in his culinary restaurant when referring to the diminishing market: '*... to face this, you have to armour yourself. I am thinking continuously about where I can make changes. You cannot close your eyes for the situation. It is your responsibility, to make sure that everything turns out well in the end ...*'. Facing and dealing with challenges is one of the essential contextual characteristics that sets the 'real' SCE apart from the entrepreneur that does not 'survive'. The SCE's capacity to do this is in line with what Parsa et al. (2005, 316) determine as why restaurants become successful or not: 'it is the restaurateur's responsibility to prepare for impending external "weather" conditions'. A realistic conclusion is that challenging economic conditions are re-appearing regularly, and therefore it is the SCE responsible to face the economic challenges.

Influencing the SCE

In the early years, and later on in life, the SCE is influenced by people around him. Some people from within the work context have a major influence on the choices SCEs make in their lives and businesses. Some influential people provide a desirable example, but others influence in a negative way. Several entrepreneurs referred to their family background, as having been of influence on their choices to go into the restaurant business, which Danda and Reyes (2007) refer to as 'familiness'. Another important and decisive format influencing the existence and life of the SCE, is the way in which the individual is connected to his partner. Without an effective symbiosis between two people, the phenomenon of SCE cannot be sustainable. The top-performing SCEs were examples of combinations in which entrepreneur and partner were cooperating effectively. There is some anecdotal evidence suggesting the value of 'partners as couple' in a culinary restaurant. Starchefs (2012) refer to this notion as: 'culinary couples – demonstrating that the whole is greater than its parts!' Kets de Vries (1985, 3) warns about the negative effects that obsessed entrepreneurial personalities may have on family relations such as marriage: 'Obsession with one's work and making the company successful leaves little time for family. Intense entrepreneurial personalities could also challenge marriages, frequently leading to their demise'. If there is no partnership between a couple as entrepreneurs present, an alternative could be found in the role of long staying loyal senior employees. In a number of culinary restaurants there were examples of these particular 'partnerships' in which employees fulfil a life-time role, socially contextualised in connection to the entrepreneur. A connected issue within the situation of having partners in restaurant entrepreneurship lies in the way they manage to achieve a work-life balance. For

future professionals i.e. students of hospitality management programmes there should be a thorough consideration of the work-life balance, preferably before they start in entrepreneurship. There is a distinctly dark side of SCE life involved, which does not surface in a lot of publications. Having grown up in a traditional SCE family, one of the entrepreneurs acknowledged not having always appreciated the situation by saying: '... *Look, I think we did not come out of our upbringing without any damage. I think, I am normal and my brothers are normal. Still, you notice that we did not have a normal family life ...*' . His wife added to this: '... *Well, not a lot of love, not a lot of parents ...*' . The perceived inadequacy of parents taking care of their children is not uniquely connected to the SCE construct but it is definitely present, and influences the perception and outcomes of it.

Doing the right things right and getting towards the end.

SCEs follow their value system as the main driver for their actions. There is not a homogeneous pattern of things the SCEs like to do, but there are commonalities. Going abroad both for work as well as for holidays was enjoyed by most. The entrepreneurs defined visiting their peers' Michelin star restaurants as a value adding activity. The primary aim of visiting these restaurants was to look for benchmarks, in order to compare their own business to, and to find new ideas for their restaurants. An extreme example was provided by one entrepreneur who, with his wife, wrote a book about their visits to all 54 three Michelin star restaurants in Europe. Some SCEs resented the, in their eyes, bureaucratic nature of the educational sector. One said: '... *so little is made of it. There are few teachers who have the "drive", who do something extra for their pupils. Something that irritates me, is when there is a meeting, the time is taken from the pupils ...*' . Another assessed the quality of the people in education as not being up to standard, and as a result education is always behind the real world. The dislike for education by restaurant practitioners makes it challenging to establish a connection. Five other code labels that connected to 'facing' by SCEs are: 'learning', 'developing', 'focusing', 'fighting' and 'enduring'. It became clear that there is a common awareness of fatigue when SCEs get to the end of their careers. One talked about it: '... *I said, when you get older the flexibility gets less ... specifically because of the complexity of all these emails, flowers and ... cooking. But, anyway, as long as I stay healthy, I will keep on doing this ...*' . A concern was raised here; if an entrepreneur does not have a plan for if he were to become ill or worse, it would leave all the people working in the restaurant without a job and harm them. Retiring is definitely an issue, and should be discussed in hospitality management education. When asked about the proper retiring moment and age, there were essentially two types of answers: (1) To plan a particular age for retiring and to work to realise this plan, (2) Not to have a particular plan and as a consequence to keep on working. Research about retiring of entrepreneurs like the SCEs is scarce. Noll (2012) confirms that many restaurant owners have shied away from retirement plans because of the cost, and Mealey (2012) adds that restaurant owners should figure out how they want to save for retirement.

Managing

Managing costs and traffic and working, changing and sustaining.

SCEs identified three major indicators of 'success': (1) Michelin's appreciation, (2) financial results and (3) delivering good entrepreneurship. One of the interviewees explicitly stated that the element 'financial results' was absolutely the most important indicator for success in business, despite possible appealing restaurant awards such as given by Michelin and others. The conclusion was clear that either by education or experience, entrepreneurs need financial management skills and knowledge in order to become and stay fully successful. An important question was: 'how can a viable and sustainable culinary restaurant venture be realised?' Some luxury international hotel chains, host Michelin star restaurants. Multi-national hotel corporations have the management structure and the finances needed to sustain operations like Michelin star restaurants. Another potentially viable format is the 'chef-owner working together with partner'. In this situation there may be hotel rooms attached to the culinary restaurant but no substantial hotel activity. There was the general perception that in the future it would no longer be possible to operate the two and three Michelin star restaurants without having sponsors.

Focusing on the big picture and the details and getting the money in and out

Balazs (2001) came to the observation that the great three Michelin star chef-owners in France combine an overall 'helicopter-view' with a strong attention to detail. Balazs referred to this as follows: 'They are both "micromanagers" and "general managers", constantly on the outlook for minor details that need correction, while never losing sight of the "big picture"' (2001, 140). The SCEs confirmed that the nature of culinary restaurants success is most certainly in the details of the services and products offered. For the entrepreneur, it is tempting to be 'on the spot' to make sure the details are secured. On the other hand, there is the notion of an entrepreneur having to look at the 'big picture' of his restaurant. Some entrepreneurs benefited from financing by people who knew their qualities, and who showed commitment to invest in their businesses. The credibility of the entrepreneur before starting his own restaurant is leading in this process. One entrepreneur said about this: '... *We had very pleasant shareholders. They did not begrudge us and they also told us: "we have done this to help you and not to get rich from it" ...*' . Creating a network of friends who would also be the regular guests in the restaurant, is an important notion for future entrepreneurs, which could benefit them. Some contemporary applications of 'crowd funding' show resemblance to this creating of a network in order to finance a restaurant business.

Being successful or not and shining stars not always found

It was interesting and important to take notice of the definitions and explanations mentioned about successful culinary restaurant entrepreneurship. One entrepreneur asserted that it would be better to take over a business that one can still develop instead of buying a successful culinary restaurant that is at the top of its life cycle. The investment in such an established successful business will be very difficult to earn

back. Owning real estate or property is important for SCEs. Some explained that it is not just about owning real estate, and stipulated that as an entrepreneur, one should have a solid return on investment from the daily operations. Many restaurant owners manage to survive for a long time with a very low return on investment because they 'live out of their business'. Daily revenues and return on investment are, however, crucial for sustaining, and in combination with owning the property contribute to operating a successful culinary restaurant. The SCEs, especially the older ones, explained that the culinary restaurant industry has changed dramatically over the past three decades. Being distinctive is much more difficult than some years ago. Chefs get their Michelin stars at a much younger age, products from all over the world can be acquired easily and television presents an array of culinary programmes, which have influenced the market. People know more about the process and products, and this has liberalised the culinary sector. Better educated customers put a higher claim on the capacities and knowledge of the entrepreneurs. From the testimonies of the SCEs, it became clear that Michelin stars are a desirable target to achieve. There is, however, a dark side to the SCE phenomenon and stars do not always shine. In the culinary restaurant business, people work long and irregular hours, and that has an impact on their personal lives. The dark side of the SCE construct is something to warn future professionals about.

Being in a people business and profiling and connecting

One respondent commented that Michelin should not only be assessing the quality of the food but also the way culinary restaurants deal with their staff. Another added that a Michelin star restaurant does not mean, the owner has a star status and that he should be respectful to his staff. Almost all interviewees confirmed the notion of staff being the important element in a successful operating culinary restaurant. There are two elements involved in the preference of staff to work in Michelin star restaurants. One is the CV-building effect, which aims at getting good restaurants on to one's résumé, in order to be more employable. The other element is much more profound, where it suggests that the practitioner has seen and experienced the benchmark of high quality standards. The assumption here is that having worked (and lived) in a high quality context raises the potential to evaluate and deliver high quality work output oneself. The importance for culinary restaurants to generate publicity and stay in the spotlight in order to attract customers was highlighted by the SCEs. If customers, however, expect the SCE to be active and visible in the restaurant, it will disappoint them if they don't see him because he might be out for external publicity generating activities. It became clear that there is a changing composition of SCEs in the profession from around 50% manager-owners to dominantly chef-owners. The connection between colleagues in the world of the SCEs is strong, when listening to the accounts they produce about each other. Virtually every interviewee knew colleagues and could describe their personality and contextual characteristics.

SCE social construct and education

The findings show that SCEs, rather than just being individual people, fit into a 'social construct' that is composed of several elements. The SCE social construct at the core has

the individual, the person, the entrepreneur mostly closely connected to a partner. The entrepreneur faces life and acts upon the experiences, happenings and issues in which process his value system is leading. He engages in the profession of managing the culinary restaurant. The SCE social construct has aspects to offer to hospitality management education and in that sense expands on the research of Balazs (2001, 2002) who first suggested to extract leadership lessons from the French three Michelin star SCEs. Looking at the findings, a central theme emerged: 'Living the Business', which is about people who commit a dominant part of their lives to building a world in which they can sustain. Their world is for a dominant part centered around the culinary restaurant in which they unleash their thinking power, psychological resources, creativity, and managerial competencies. Running a culinary restaurant can only be done if it is lived as a comprehensive existence, and not just as a means to get income. As one entrepreneur said: '... when properly done, a culinary top restaurant is a goal in its own right ...'. SCEs emphasised that it is crucial that somebody who works in a culinary restaurant 'lives' the values and behaves from 'within', meaning that there should be an intrinsic connection to the way the hospitality is delivered. Only by having this 'inner connection', it will be possible to execute the profession in a relaxed, non-forced manner and to sustain in it. In the conclusions section an explanation will be offered on how the SCE social construct and 'Living the Business' can potentially influence and benefit hospitality management education.

Conclusions

The grounded theory built from the data in this research cumulated in the SCE social construct and its central theme of 'living the business'.

The personality related elements and the influence from the SCE's socialisation in life are the constituting factors. The phases of constituting and valuing are conceptualised by the term 'see', which symbolises the paradigm of the SCE. The phases of facing and managing are conceptualised in 'do' and follow how the SCE sees the world and his part in it. From 'see' and 'do', the SCE 'gets', to what is considered here the social construct of a successful culinary entrepreneur. The SCE social construct with its central theme of 'living the business' can potentially influence hospitality management education.

Special people in a special business

The personalities of SCEs, although individually different, show common features. They are extremely active, which is beneficial for working in a sector such as culinary restaurants. People possessing enormous drive will be able to put more than average levels of energy into the process. It will, however, be of the utmost importance that there is a 'balancing factor' in the SCEs' life, such as a partner or (a combination of) other people to liaise with in their work environment. SCE personalities show a passion for their work, which is driven by an urge to achieve, and to be recognised for that. Contrastingly, most SCEs see the nature of success in perspective. They know very well that business comes and goes and they realise that basic processes affect the environment for their restaurant business. SCEs are critical people who like to evaluate the culinary restaurant business, their own restaurants, their colleagues'

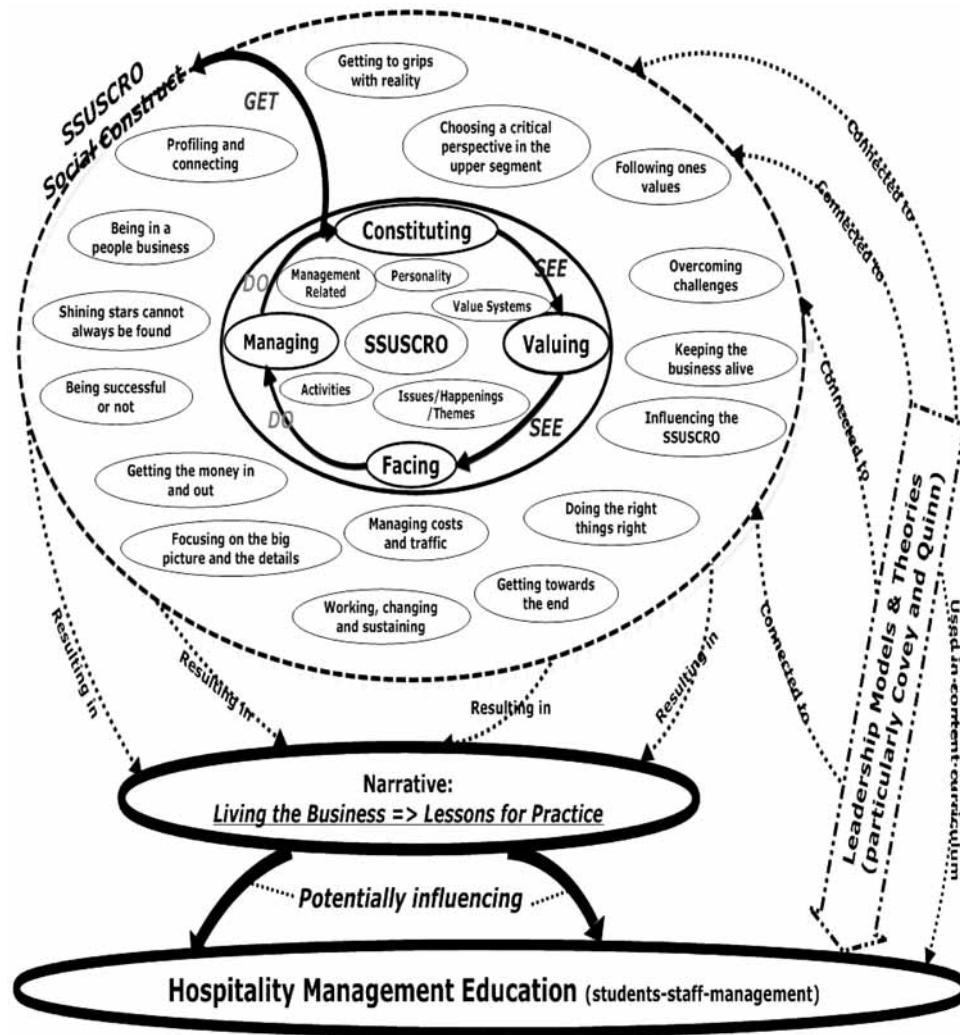


Figure 3: SCE construct and hospitality education (SCE and SSUSCRO account for the same concept)

personalities, and education in the field of hospitality. Creating a balance is one of the keys for sustainable entrepreneurship because there is in most cases a particular thin line between private and business life. The successful restaurant entrepreneurs came to grips with the ever existent tension between the private and work domain, but reaching a balance did not happen without sacrifices. The number of frightening examples in the SCE world of less successful entrepreneurs and staff members who destroyed their family lives was substantial. Enjoying a notion of freedom or independence is important for SCEs. They generate energy from the idea of not having an employer who will tell them what to do. SCEs trade gladly the perks of employment, such as a steady salary, vacation rights and pension, for independent entrepreneurship. Customers, or 'guests' in the upper segment of the hospitality industry, expect to see 'hospitalableness' in the person who is providing the 'hospitality experience'. Gehrels and Dumont (2012, 76) referred to this as a 'show' or 'wow-effect' that is needed to generate an unforgettable experience. Guests will expect great value, while 'value for money' has also become crucial in this luxury sector. There is no educational programme that

prepares people to become a SCE. Most of them have a mix of formal education, experience and 'learning by doing'. It is difficult for SCEs to delegate a majority of their responsibilities to their staff because by the nature of their profession they are expected to see and manage the details. This paying attention to both detail and the bigger picture was confirmed by Balazs (2001, 2002). Michelin and other restaurant assessing media are feared by the SCEs because getting the stars, and into the quality rankings is very important for the business. Michelin stars have an impact on the restaurant's potential to generate revenue, which is recognised by potential investors. Every SCE, in his own words, defined being successful as the combination of (1) financial rewards generated by their revenues, (2) getting the recognition and appreciation of the external quality assessing bodies such as Michelin, (3) the appreciation of loyal customers, and (4) knowing themselves to be good entrepreneurs. The findings of this research suggest that the direct involvement of SSUSROs in hospitality management education may be valuable.

Recommendations for practice, education and further research

Hospitality management programmes educate students to be employed in a diversity of hospitality management related fields. Although the culinary restaurant sector only constitutes a relatively small proportion of the total Dutch hospitality industry, it is the segment where customer quality demands and prices are high. This means that practitioners, and particularly entrepreneurs, within the culinary restaurant sector are faced with a challenging profession. They need to perform at a high level in order to sustain and to be successful. The increasingly available information about culinary products and the media presence of chefs would make it tempting to choose a career in the culinary restaurant sector or one that is closely related. As a result of the growth in the number of Michelin star restaurants, it is becoming more important to provide information and learning materials about this segment to students on hospitality management programmes. Future practitioners, i.e. entrepreneurs, need to be knowledgeable beforehand about all the contingencies in seeking a specific career in the culinary restaurant sector. A SCE needs to properly understand the 'stage' on which the performance of providing hospitableness is set. It will be certainly easier to accept the role setting in which there is a distinction between the 'guest' and the 'host' if one has a full understanding of it before going into this type of business. Getting recognition, appreciation and the reward of successful business is realised by offering the ultimate guest experience and SCEs need to be unconditionally committed to getting their customers to pay for the meal and wines at their restaurant. Hospitableness is key for the SCE and connected to this is the concept of turning restaurant guests into friends. In line with Meyer (2006) was the indication that staff is another one of the crucial factors for successful culinary restaurants. With the right, extremely motivated and loyal people, great achievements can be made. An interesting and worthwhile expansion on the findings of this research would be to do similar research among other specific groups of practitioners in the hospitality industry to get more in-depth knowledge and understanding about their contextual characteristics and social constructs. Such research would provide a further understanding of practitioners in different industry segments, which could potentially influence hospitality management education. Another direction for further research, would be to undertake similar research with an equivalent sample in other countries in the world.

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The conflict between industry hosts and master's degree students' expectations on students entering the hospitality industry

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This paper reports on a qualitative study that sought to determine Australian industry hosts' expectations and perceptions of hotel management master's degree students on their placement in the industry, and the expectations of students when entering industry placement. The empirical dataset for this qualitative study was collected through student and industry focus groups and individual semi-structured interviews with master's students and managers of hotels in Sydney, Australia. The technique used for analysing the data was progressive comparative analysis, after which a constant comparative methodology was applied. The conclusions outline common themes and issues identified by students and their hosts and highlight a need for educators to better prepare both students and hosts.

Keywords: work integrated learning, industry placements, master's programmes, hospitality, education, hotel

Introduction

Background/Context

Hospitality education focuses on preparing students for management positions in hospitality (Barrows and Bosselman 2000) and is a field of multi-disciplinary study incorporating perspectives of many disciplines; especially those found in the social sciences and in business. Today hospitality education is part of the wider tourism industry, drawing large numbers of domestic and international people into the study of tourism, hospitality and hotel management, and generally committed to professionalising the industry of which it is a part.

While there are literally hundreds of hospitality programmes available today, it is only for the last three decades that hospitality education has been provided at university level. Mostly this has been due to tremendous growth in the Australian hospitality sector since the boom in the 1980s. The need for qualified managers mushroomed during this time and the industry could not produce nearly enough trained managers to serve its own needs (Barrows and Bosselman 2000).

One of the unique characteristics of hospitality management education is its professional orientation. Programmes develop and capitalise upon associations with professionals in the hospitality industry as a means of enhancing student learning and this unique characteristic has a major impact on curriculum design. Many in the industry are currently debating the issue of how best to balance the demands of the hospitality industry for knowledge and skill to run a business versus the critical theoretical and analysis push by academics.

In making a decision to undertake a master's programme in hospitality, students are motivated by a combination of factors of varying importance. It has been identified that for international students considerations include destination, language, affordability, lifestyle, programme, institution

and entry requirements. Mostly, however the core motivation prompting study overseas was the prospect of improved career opportunities and future promotion to management positions (Davidson and King 2012). Similarly, Davidson and Tideswell (1998) found that both international and domestic students in Australia identified employment related factors as the most critical factors determining the choice of programme.

Australian graduates generally do well with respect to overall employment outcomes but their performance in the workplace has come under significant scrutiny in recent years with some industries complaining that many graduates lack the necessary practical skills to perform in the early years of transition into employment (Pensiero and McIlveen 2006). Questions have been raised on how well degrees in hospitality prepare students for the work environment (Nolan et al. 2010) and there are some suggestions that graduates are 'overqualified, but under experienced' (Raybould and Wikins 2005, 213). Nolan et al. (2010) articulate that hospitality and tourism management education aims to equip students with the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in the hospitality industry, yet the industry stakeholders are expressing concern on the fit between the education provided and the needs as expressed by industry. Part of the problem is attributed to the education providers who are accused of poor curriculum design (Raybould and Wilkins 2005).

Anecdotal suggestions are that employers have been resistant to providing employment opportunities to master's students whom they view as lacking practical experience and local knowledge (in the case of international students), while these same students come looking for positions with high expectations that their master's degrees will give them better employment opportunities.

It is against this background that a further investigation was considered worthy to determine what expectations and perceptions exist of hotel management master's students by their hosts, as well as the expectations of those students when entering industry placement.

Literature review

The tertiary sector plays an essential role in supporting and enhancing appropriately skilled and developed human capital in order to assist overcoming the challenges faced by the industry as a whole. As Nolan et al. (2010) state: hospitality and tourism management education aims to equip students with the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in the hospitality industry, yet industry stakeholders are expressing concern about the fit between the education provided and the needs of the industry. Part of the perceived problem is suggested to be due to poor curriculum design by education providers (Raybould and Wilkins 2005) who focus on building skills such as critical thinking, problem solving and interpersonal skills, but pay little attention to the skills needed by graduates to work in the industry. Although these skills are important, many have commented that they are only of use later in the graduates' career (Nolan et al. 2010). Skills needed to work at the operational level or entry management level have generally been found to be lacking in hospitality graduates.

It would seem that a formal qualification, as well as the aforementioned skill sets, is essential to the successful entry of any students into the industry. 'The employability of graduating students can be viewed both from the perspective of the employer and of the student. Both groups expect certain skills, attributes, knowledge and understandings to have resulted from the education and training that universities or training colleges provide' (Junek et al. 2009, 121). The most rewarding experience graduates can receive when undertaking internships, work placements or work experience within the industry, is one which encourages the desirable attitudes and values needed to obtain the level of knowledge and skills expected of industry, and gaining of the practical skills and experience that industry finds most advantageous in the early stages of a student's employment.

Experiential learning literature underpins the importance of professional placements in a graduate student's career progression. Employment is an excellent opportunity for the student to develop knowledge and skills and for the employer to assess suitability for long-term future positions. Industry employment allows students to develop their professional skills, define their career objectives, and learn about the different organisations and opportunities available to them. Industry placements in the curriculum bring together the related traditions of practice and research: the first is the tradition of vocational learning and the second the more theoretical work advocating experiential learning. In higher education, work placements offer students the unique opportunity to combine professional experience with their university qualifications. More recently, the terms work-based learning and work-related learning have become well established and understood simply as learning that takes place in the workplace; a placement undertaken by a student as

part of their programme of study is one type of work-based learning (Procter 2010).

Industry training or internship forms an important part of many undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes and exemplifies commitment to the scientist-practitioner model. As such, it provides recognition that academic learning needs to be supplemented with applied learning. Although postgraduate students in many cases have identified their vocational preference, work placement provides students with a range of opportunities to explore occupations and their own suitability for their chosen profession (Carless and Prodan 2003).

Business schools that prepare future managers in different disciplines are responsible for closing the gap between skills acquired by its graduates and the skills required by the global markets. Schools offering internship programmes also benefit through increased cooperation between themselves and the businesses participating in the programme. Further, the opportunity exists to augment the curriculum with the practical experience gained by student interns (Ebied 2004).

It has been noted that typical hospitality education provides graduates with a good breadth of knowledge, but not all of the skills required to operate effectively in industry (Johns and McKechnie 1995). Key findings of the *Employer satisfaction with graduate skills* report by DETYA (2000) were that industry most valued the following areas in business graduates: academic achievement in a suitable discipline, time management skills, written business communication skills, oral communication skills, interpersonal skills, team working skills, problem solving skills and comprehension of business processes. However, Walsh and Taylor (2007) state that there is often variance relating to skills requirements across organisations but employment and transferable skills are consistently acknowledged as being crucial (Scott and Revis 2008). Additionally, as Harkison et al. (2011) comment, there is a distinct dichotomy in an industry that appears to place little value on hospitality degrees, and students who value the degree, and associate its completion with more earning capacity and an acceleration in their career prospects.

A challenge faced by many graduates is management expectation. Managers expect new graduates to be equipped with a certain level of operational experience so they can immediately perform in their new roles. This is in conflict with graduate skills, which are largely academic, and graduates may not possess the required operational skills to be able to do their job (Raybould and Wilkins 2005). Managers may fail to see the higher order conceptual and analytical abilities graduates possess from their academic study, and may not implement appropriate strategies to convert such learned themes in a practical sense, into operations.

Success is dictated by industry, and it is the expectations of industry that need to be fulfilled for success to be truly recognised. In order to do this hotel companies' expectations must first be determined. Research in this area suggests that industry values experienced employees over those with a degree, which is in contrast with the general expectation that degrees offer graduates an advantage in their chosen area of work (Jameson and Holden 2000). Although the industry is reliant on good employees, it is not safe to assume that qualified employees are the best recruits, and data on the profiles of senior managers suggest that age, work experience

and gender are also significant influences on career prospects (cited in Harkison et al. 2010). Graduates often perceive that opportunities to use their learned course knowledge are limited, and as a result their academic skills are not being valued in the workplace. This is attributable to them having to gain specific operational knowledge and practical workplace skills to perform in their new role rather than utilising the knowledge gained during their studies (Raybould and Wilkins 2005).

It is the intention of this research to determine industry expectations of hotel management students when they enter their placement in the industry and what graduates expect from their industry placement. Previous research has indicated that students have numerous expectations of their professional life after graduation and on how their work environment and work life will be. Students expect that they will soon achieve a management position but most managers see graduates as inexperienced for such a role and recommend they seek to gain operational skills at the beginning of their work careers (Harkison, Poulston and Kim 2011). Students also expect to work in an environment where employees are understanding and supportive of each other and where people are committed to their jobs, and where the physical surroundings create a good working environment (Waryszak 1999). However, it has been found that the experiences of students at work generally do not meet their expectations. After undergoing a placement, students have been found to be more pessimistic about the industry than those who had not yet gone on a placement (Waryszak 1999). Some students were reportedly hostile about their experiences while some felt that they had been unprepared for conditions in the workplace. Frequently, students expressed frustration and disappointment with their experiences during their placements and questioned their significance (Nolan et al. 2010).

The hospitality industry has a reputation for low pay, having too many repetitive tasks, low status in the general community, and little job security (Weaver 2009). However there is evidence that suggests that a high percentage of entrants to the industry do so not with the aim of accumulating money but for personal reasons such as travel opportunities and general job enjoyment prospects (Weaver 2009).

Employers have very definite views on the skills they require of graduates. In one study by Raybould and Wilkins (2005), employers were asked to rank skills in order of importance and the top five skills identified were:

- Dealing effectively with customers' problems
- Working in an ethical and professional manner
- The ability to work effectively and calmly during crisis situations
- The ability to use empathy when dealing with customers and other employees
- The use of listening skills.
- A similar study by Nolan et al. (2010) identified the top five skills as:
 - Good customer and client skills
 - Teamwork skills
 - Working in a professional and ethical manner
 - Controlling costs in line with forecast and budgets
 - Working well under pressure.

Other skills that have been identified are cultural awareness, flexibility, reliance, financial management competency,

computer skills, language skills, open mindedness, teamwork skills (Nolan et al. 2010, Velo and Mittaz 2006). However, it is generic and transferable skills that are most sought after in the industry, and these fall into the categories of communication, problem solving, information management, teamwork and leadership, self-management, conceptual and analytical skills, adaptability and learning, and interpersonal skills (Raybould and Wilkins 2005).

Project design

By far the most important aspect in the choice of methodology for this research was that it would be useful, and that the activities have a clear practical value from which the researchers could learn and benefit. Researchers were motivated by their general interest in hospitality industry graduates and therefore a methodology grounded in the pragmatic paradigm was adopted. It was further decided that the qualitative research approach would be most suitable as the nature of the study was based on sensory aspects such as how people feel, their reactions, perceptions and understanding (Veal 2006).

The research undertaken for this study used a combination of secondary and primary data collection. Secondary data collection consists of a thorough search of the literature to gain a clear picture on expectations of students entering the hospitality industry, and industry when they accept a student for work placement. Primary data were collected via an in-class focus group activity with 18 students who were about to go on placement. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with 12 students who had already received industry placements. All students were aged between 20 and 25, all had specifically chosen to study hotel management, and the group was a mix of nationalities including Australian, Canadian, Russian, Chinese, Nepalese, Indian, Pakistani, and Vietnamese. A separate focus group was organised for hotel managers who had currently or previously agreed to be hosts for the students involved in the study and semi-structured interviews were conducted with these hotel managers. Six hotel managers participated in the focus group and all six were interviewed. All hotel managers were in a senior position (heads of department or general manager) and came from International Hotel groups.

Focus groups and interviews were conducted in an open manner and encouraged honest opinions and the relating of personal experiences. Both the focus group and interview data were analysed via a thematic analysis to identify patterns and themes. Specifically, a comparative methodology was applied (Blaikie 2000, Hayes and Fitzgerald 2006), a methodological technique derived from grounded theory whereby the information that has been gathered is coded into emerging themes (Glasser 1999, Glasser and Strauss 1967, Grbich 1999). The data was progressively revised until it was apparent that no new themes were emerging and the themes were then categorised to form patterns of meaning. Throughout the study the researchers maintained a research journal to facilitate the development of ideas and reflections. To limit the impact of researcher bias, observations were compared with the participants' responses in discussions with the career development managers of the school, and the academic team responsible for teaching in the Master of Hotel management degree.

Project significance

Knowledge gained through this research will assist both academics and career counsellors to better prepare students before they enter industry placement. A better understanding of student perceptions will facilitate a better understanding by both the academic institution for which the researchers work and institutions with similar programmes, and assist and contribute to future curriculum development. The views of the industry is helpful for both curriculum design, student preparation for industry placement, as well as building schools' relationships with its industry partners.

Results and discussion

Focus groups and interviews with students and managers conducted for this study uncovered a number of themes which are presented and discussed below.

Student expectations

Analysis of student interviews, the study journal and the constant comparison technique identified several expectations such as: *To enhance skills and hospitality experience; To be trained and developed and improved; To be treated with respect and to experience a good working environment; To be seen as future employees; To learn leadership skills; To see professionals at work.*

Students generally felt that industry placement was an opportunity to learn the hotel business, and advance both personally and professionally. Discussions with students were predominantly about an opportunity to learn from the experience, to be assisted in this learning by managers, and to be taken seriously as potential hotel professionals. Examples of student statements are: *'My personal expectation as a student is to be provided with an opportunity to learn and grow in a position as well as within myself, whilst doing my job to the utmost of my ability', 'To learn and gain experience and be treated like a real employee, not just a student that is used to do the less attractive jobs', 'Students expect to work in an environment where employees are nice to each other and support each other and where people are committed to their jobs, and where the physical surroundings create a good working environment', 'Students expect that the managers will give them the opportunity to work in all the departments, and that staff and managers are friendly and cooperative and students expect that this training will enhance their knowledge and managerial skills', 'As a master's student I understand that industry will expect us to have a certain level of knowledge and ability to assert ourselves in our given roles. Whilst not all of us will have the experience necessary, as long as we are willing to learn and show our passion for the industry and need for growth, industry will provide the support'.*

Other expectations from students were that industry would teach them the *'right knowledge'*, which was found interesting as if academic studies did not do that and somehow the industry would impart this *'knowledge'* to them. However the literature suggests the aim of placement is to enable students to experience the practical implementations of different methods and theories relevant to hotel management, so at least this was possible.

The researchers considered by far the most important discussions with students centred around the working environment and on how they expected to be treated. Discussions gave rise to the fact that students expected to be taken seriously, to be respected, to be part of a team, to enjoy the atmosphere, and to work in a friendly environment. The literature has alluded to the poor pay and remuneration conditions in the hospitality industry, of which the students are very aware. However students are not disturbed by these reports, and have joined the industry for the more social aspects it brings to their working life. Perhaps this is why they place such value on the working environment and friendly atmosphere.

Industry expectations

The discussions with industry partners revealed primarily a positive opinion of students undertaking the degree and that the students generally performed better as they are able to make the connection between theoretical and practical work. The consensus was that the subjects taught are broad, and thus students get a good overview and balance of subjects in general business and specific hotel knowledge. Reflective reviews by managers are exemplified in this statement: *'They [students] had a broad skill base, an understanding of the industry, and hands-on experience and could apply themselves to the situation at hand'*. However the discussions also indicated that the challenge is how to get the master's students to the next level of maturity and experience. This was summarised by the statement: *'The fact that they go out on IP is great but there is a need to actually tailor what they do in IP depending on their previous experience and not approach it as if one size fits all, and pushing responsibility back to the employer'*. Not surprisingly it was discovered that only a few managers actually knew the difference between a master's hotel student and an undergraduate and there were no different expectations of master's students. For many it was clear that they viewed IP as a learning opportunity and that they had no, or very little, additional expectation of master's students. Indeed most made the link between master's and bachelor's level and made it clear they have no preconceived notions or expectations of master's students and did expect them to have similar (low or non-existent) levels of experience in the hospitality and tourism industries. Generally both masters' and undergraduate students were perceived as not yet being skilled enough to undertake supervisory roles but was a general belief that this level of competency would be reached during their actual placement.

The interviews with hotel managers disclosed the practical nature of the hotel business and confirmed the view that graduates needed to have industry experience. To the question *'What do you expect of hotel management graduates'*, comments were: *'that they have practical experience', 'that they have an understanding of the diversity and differences between hotel types', 'that they would have an appropriate understanding of the industry and the company they would be working for', 'a suitable personality', 'ability to adapt to the constantly evolving industry', 'work effectively in a team and be passionate and committed to the industry', 'we need problem solvers', 'identify future problems and how to avoid them', 'we expect that already have skills and knowledge, it is very difficult to train from zero, we want people who a job ready', 'when we take people for placement*

they have to be better than the ordinary', 'to come with new ideas, solve problems and implement systems, not just the daily basis to be future leaders', 'achieve projects and to help the business', 'to add value to our business', 'to get productivity from them', 'generally our expectations are to be ready, flexible, have a positive attitude and that the student fits in with our hotel', 'it's about how they treat the customers'.

Three main issues were identified: the first was a general perception that grooming standards of master's degree students were relaxed and in some way this was also reflected in their attitude and in the way that they performed their duties. Although this subjective perception cannot be and was not substantiated by any clear examples, it stood out as a general concern.

The second general perception was essentially that none of the employers thought that having a master's qualification meant that students were ready to walk in to a supervisory role. One industry manager encapsulated the varying views with: *'I have experience with good and bad students; I would expect more of a master's student and until today I didn't know the difference between a master's and bachelor's student. In my department backpackers sometimes have better skills for operations; you can push them to the limits, they are hard workers, whereas the students complain. Respect doesn't come just because you are a master's student, a master doesn't give any recognition in Australia. If you are a hard worker you can move faster. You keep the ones you can rely on even with the 20 hours' restriction. However, they have immigration issues; in some cases they want the job just to get the residency'. Additionally there was a strong feeling that a six-month placement was not enough: 'For us, the experience is that six months is too short, and while this sounds funny, the students themselves consider it too short because it takes them, let's say, a good three months to settle in – who goes where, what is what, and where do we get ourselves into. Then after, say the first three months, they've settled in, and have their feet on the ground and they know exactly what they can and cannot do – but then, for the second three months, you can see they want to contribute and from that perspective, they are contributing but only for that three-month period and then they're gone. But I do think that as a hotel, you have an opportunity to really assess an individual because they are young dogs; 'is this something for me, or maybe is that something for me?' And they also start to look around – 'hey, I've seen this in Rooms Division and I like what I see'. Within a 12-month period, you could place people in various other parts of the hotel so their horizon even extends further. We are looking for longevity; if we are investing in someone we want our investment back. By the fifth month of placement they are right where you want them to be, and it's difficult to keep them on board afterwards with the 20 hour student working visa restriction. Six months is not enough.'*

The third issue was that master's degree students have expectations regarding visas and access to work in Australia after their study has been completed but a common issue amongst employers is that they do not feel these students are generally ready for a managerial role. The problem here (in regards to visas) is that while many employers would be happy to offer a role/position to students that have completed IP with them, often the positions that they are offered (or would

otherwise be offered) do not meet the criteria for a 457 visa as required to stay and work in Australia. This was related to the amount of money that someone applying for a 457 visa needs to earn and the fact that most if not all master's degree students are not viewed as being capable as managers upon the completion of their degrees.

Student perceptions

Students, on the other hand, held very different views, with most feeling that industry placement was an opportunity to be introduced to an employer. Observations made by students included: *'I am sure that I would not have such a job in hospitality had I not come through the school', 'I got a lot of help from my school and my practical classes prepared me for the job', 'I got the role through the expo held at the school'.*

The students felt that this opportunity prepared them for future jobs and built their confidence. Some general comments were: *'It really helped me in my learning; I am now far more prepared', 'I feel really confident now to get a job in my country', 'I am prepared now for the recruitment process', 'The school and then the placement helped me to be ready for the future and especially in managing myself', 'Now I have experience it's easy to get a job'.*

Lastly, students felt that this opportunity would help them in the future because they now had connections. This was confirmed by comments such as: *'I got a reference from the manager and I can use that to apply for other jobs with the same group', 'I am staying at this job until the end of my master's and then maybe stay with the chain here or somewhere else'.*

Implications

The results indicated that a formal qualification is beneficial in developing the skills essential for a hotel management career. This is comforting and important for formal hospitality studies in general. The information gathered in this project can be used to formally advise students of the importance of what they are studying, and that the graduate attributes specified for the course are respected and sought after by potential employers. The study has highlighted the importance of balancing operational and business skills for hotel graduates. Hospitality course curricula should focus on developing managerial skills, complimented by the development of operational and personal skills through practical work experience. A structured work placement period is a strongly supported method for developing those skills, although some consideration may need to be given to a longer placement time for master's degree students, especially those with little previous experience in hospitality. This research has highlighted some very specific expectations from students pertaining to the working environment whilst they are on placement, and how they (the students) would like to be treated. For the educators involved prior to industry placement, this finding was of great importance and also highlighted the need to follow up with the students in the early months after their entering such placement. A more frequent monitoring of the students on placement (by phone or email) is an important role for their career development.

The findings of this project have emphasised the need for even further engagement with our industry partners. Discussion of the responsibilities the industry has in assisting students in

the transition from academia to work is very important and must be maintained, and the differences between master's and undergraduate courses and students must be better articulated. For the long-term benefit of those involved, it is essential to continue the debate concerning skills training and education within the hospitality industry.

Limitations

This research is context bound and the findings cannot be generalised. The findings may have comparative value and will add to the building blocks of research into industry and student expectations for the workplace. Further research, with a broader industry involvement, and a larger pool of students over time will be necessary to yield more comprehensive results.

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Addressing sustainability in hotel management education: designing a curriculum based on input from key stakeholders

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This paper reports on combining generic reference points that can be distilled from literature with the analysis of 18 face-to-face interviews with relevant stakeholders as input for designing a sustainability course within a (higher education) hotel management curriculum. The train of thought presented here shows that by using this input as design parameters for a curriculum, education could serve as a crucial catalyst and change agent for a societal transition towards sustainable development. It shows that this is also true and relevant, maybe even especially, for the hospitality industry. Subsequently, it is explained that for the specific hotel management education addressed in this paper to fulfil this role, the sustainability course incorporated in its curriculum needs to combine various components and approaches. It needs to provide students with an ethical framework that helps them develop a reflective attitude towards their own and others' actions and decisions. This framework needs to focus on generic values and norms, but also on envisioning practical social, ecological and economic consequences. Therefore, it also needs to help students acquire the knowledge and develop the skills required to envision and discuss these consequences, also with involved stakeholders, and (jointly) devise context-dependent solutions.

Keywords: hospitality industry, sustainable development, education for sustainability (EfS)

Introduction

This paper reports on the findings of a research project dedicated to exploring the views of key stakeholders with respect to addressing the topic of sustainability in hotel management education. The objective of the project was to collect relevant input for designing a course dedicated to sustainability within a (higher education) hotel management curriculum; the international hotel management curriculum of NHTV Breda University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands. The reason for doing so was twofold. First of all, as is also shown in the remainder of this paper, sustainability represents a topic that is highly relevant for the hospitality industry and, thus, future hospitality professionals need to be equipped to deal with this challenge. Second, at the time of conducting this research project, NHTV's Academy of Hotel Management was redesigning its international hotel management curriculum. One of the outcomes of the early stages of this redesign effort was to include a course dedicated to sustainability in the 'new' curriculum.

The research project reported on in this paper was based on combining generic reference points that can be distilled from literature with 18 face-to-face interviews with relevant stakeholders regarding NHTV's hotel management education: students, lecturers and hospitality professionals. This paper presents these generic reference points, the results of the interviews, and how (combining) both helped to define specific reference points for the design of a course dedicated to sustainability. Finally, the contours of the resulting course, which is now an integral part of the 'new' international hotel management curriculum of NHTV Breda University of Applied Sciences, are presented.

Background

The relevance of furthering sustainability or, more precisely, the need for sustainable development within and of our society needs no further explanation or justification. What's more, higher education could play a key role in realising the societal transition required to achieve this. So-called 'education for sustainability (EfS)' has been identified as a priority within the context of sustainable development (Littledeyke et al. 2013). Higher education can serve as a catalyst and change agent to promote the type of social learning that is needed for this transition (Barth et al. 2007, Stephens et al. 2008).

Sibbel (2009) suggests that, to actually contribute to sustainable development, higher education needs to assist students in developing the capacity to apply systems thinking and to base decisions and actions on accounting for the full range of economic, ecological and societal costs and benefits associated with those decisions and actions. A curriculum should also create 'a greater awareness of social and moral responsibilities' (Sibbel 2009, 79) in future professionals. Consequently, sustainability education should not just focus on practical applications, such as technology-based solutions for energy and water use reduction, but should also encompass ethics and an ethical foundation for decision-making related to sustainability (Biedenweg et al. 2013). Simultaneously, sustainability education must help students to develop the interpersonal, intrapersonal and change agent skills (Svanström et al. 2008) needed to engage in dialogue with relevant stakeholders and to devise practical – context-dependent – solutions and

approaches. Interestingly, addressing sustainability based on these generic reference points not only furthers sustainable development, but also higher education itself. Based on its need for contextualisation and trans-disciplinary debate, the topic of sustainability provides an avenue for reflection and jointly creating solutions, for students and educators alike, which not only contributes to sustainable development but also to improving the quality of learning processes in higher education (see e.g. Wals and Jickling 2002).

Whether or not the hospitality industry is going to play a crucial role in furthering sustainability remains to be seen. It is part of a wider context, i.e. tourism, in which involved stakeholders are clearly struggling to 'arrive at a consensus for concerted action' (Weaver 2011, 13) and to (successfully) address all relevant social-ecological-economic interactions (see e.g. Bramwell and Lane 2005 2012, Moriarty 2012). With respect to the specific industry named after the concept of hospitality, it is important to note that hospitality and sustainability represent two concepts that, so far, have had a rather problematic 'relationship'. Some progress has been made, especially with respect to the ecological imperative of sustainable development, by implementation of so-called 'green practices' and 'green' certification schemes. However, these initiatives are often ad hoc and usually not truly embedded in overall business strategies (see e.g. King et al. 2011, Melissen 2013, Tzschentke et al. 2008). Furthermore, hospitality businesses' reporting on environmental and related (Corporate Social Responsibility, CSR) activities does not necessarily reflect actual performance and practice, especially for global hotel chains (Font et al. 2012, de Groisbois 2012). With respect to those related activities, it is important to note that actual progress regarding the social component of sustainable development is limited (see e.g. Kusluvan et al. 2010). Overall, it seems the hospitality industry is still very much struggling to find ways to apply a systems perspective to addressing sustainability (Melissen 2013).

However, all this certainly does not have to mean that the hospitality industry is a 'lost cause'. A number of individual businesses have shown that significant progress can be made (see Melissen 2013). What's more, it seems that many of the barriers to making progress reported by others – those that have not (yet) made significant progress – 'rest largely in myth and lack of knowledge' (Ricaurte 2012, 5). Finally, a review of the specific characteristics of this industry reveals that it is actually well positioned to play an important role in furthering sustainable development. As Melissen (2013) explains, hospitality businesses have a direct and significant impact on the (local) social, economic and ecological systems in which they operate, for instance through employing local residents, providing/procuring services and products to local buyers/ from local suppliers, and the (negative or positive) effects on the local ecosystem. As indicated above, sustainable development requires systems thinking, dialogue, change agents and context-dependent solutions and approaches. Therefore, 'the nature of the hospitality industry – a wide variety of people-oriented companies and organisations, ranging from influential and powerful global hotel chains to locally operating, often independent, businesses that are very much intertwined with local communities – only reinforces its relevance' (Melissen 2013, 820).

Combining the current state and nature of the hospitality industry with the role of higher education in furthering sustainable development clearly highlights the need for addressing sustainability in hospitality management education. In fact, this paper is certainly not the first to address this issue. For instance, Millar and Park (2013) examined the perspectives of hospitality managers on sustainability in hospitality education through conducting 11 in-depth interviews. They conclude that hospitality managers appreciate the need for addressing this topic, especially by focusing on the multidimensional nature of sustainability beyond merely focusing on environmental aspects. In fact, current hospitality managers seem to view hospitality students as potential change agents and important (future) contributors to defining sustainability and sustainable business processes in practice. This notion is especially interesting when compared to Barber et al.'s (2011) findings based on a survey on perceived importance of sustainability education amongst three stakeholder groups: students, educators and professionals. Whereas all three groups agree that sustainability is an important topic to address in hospitality education, 'there are differences in environmental attitudes and behaviours as well as what topics should be included in the curriculum and how the courses should be taught' (Barber et al. 2011, 15). That is why the authors conclude that students, educators and professionals should work together as of the early stages of curriculum design for hospitality education to be successful with respect to furthering sustainability. The work by Boley (2011) confirms that there is agreement amongst stakeholders that sustainability should be incorporated in hospitality education, but differences in opinion on how to do so. That is why 'research should move away from the importance of teaching sustainability within hospitality ... management towards more of a focus on the implementation and assessment of how sustainability is taught' (Boley 2011, 28/29).

In line with these suggestions, the remainder of this paper focuses on establishing specific reference points, beyond the generic guidelines mentioned in this section, for addressing sustainability in hospitality education. The subsequent sections discuss the set-up, the outcomes and the implications of a research project that focused on involving students, educators and professionals in the early design stages of a sustainability course within the international hotel management curriculum of NHTV Breda University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands.

Method

To involve stakeholder groups in the design of this sustainability course, students ($n = 6$), educators ($n = 6$) and professionals ($n = 6$) were interviewed. All interviewees were asked to share their views on sustainability, the relevance of sustainability for the hospitality industry and the way this topic should be addressed in hospitality education in general, as well as NHTV's international hotel management curriculum in particular. To ensure that findings would be as specific and as relevant as possible for the design of this particular sustainability course, the set-up of this research project and the interviews followed the principles of the interpretative constructionist research paradigm (see e.g. Rubin and Rubin 2005). Students were randomly sampled out of second-year

NHTV international hotel management students, whereas both educators and (management level) professionals were purposively sampled (out of teachers involved with NHTV's international hotel management education and the industry network of NHTV's Academy of Hotel Management respectively) to grand valuable and relevant outcomes.

A semi-structured format for the interviews was developed based on the objectives of this research project and relevant literature (see previous section). Test interviews ($n = 3$) were conducted and those resulted in a slight modification of the format. The same final format was used for all 18 interviews that this paper reports on. All interviews with students and educators were conducted at NHTV's premises. Interviews with professionals were conducted either at NHTV's premises ($n = 2$) or in the working environment of the professionals involved ($n = 4$). The interviews lasted between 40 and 75 minutes. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed by the (same) interviewer using F4 software and checked by the second author of this paper to ensure accuracy. All interviews were conducted in Dutch and quotes presented in this paper have been translated from Dutch to English.

In preparation for and prior to the interviews, all interviewees were sent and asked to read the text on the current state and characteristics of the hospitality industry in relation to sustainability, as included in the previous section of this paper. This provided context for the interviews and was intended to serve as a catalyst for discussions on the relationships between hospitality, sustainability and education. If an interviewee had not read the text prior to the interview, the contents were presented to the interviewee by the interviewer at the start of the actual interview. As indicated above, the interviews were semi-structured, using the following topics/questions as a guideline:

- Introduction and explanation of the research process and objectives
- Discussion on the introductory text
- What is sustainability?
- Discussion on social, ecological and economic aspects of sustainability and the relevance for and link to the hospitality industry
- What are or should be the implications of all this for hospitality education and NHTV's international hotel management curriculum?

The transcripts and research diary of the interviewer were analysed using NVIVO 10, resulting in 16 different codes divided into three main themes, using the coding basics of Bazely and Jackson (2013). These were then used to create the narrative presented in the next section.

Results

Even though answers to questions varied greatly, sometimes even within one stakeholder group, some specific patterns and shared views could be observed within specific stakeholder groups, as well as differences between the views of different stakeholder groups. These are described below and illustrated with key responses of individual interviewees.

One of the most interesting differences in views with respect to sustainability related to what is often referred to as the prisoner's dilemma or social dilemma (see e.g. Dawes, 1980).

Some interviewees seemed to 'accept' that a (fully) sustainable world is simply not realistic, nor is sustainable hospitality.

... hospitality is polluting in nature, but [then] every economic activity is. Everything you do is. Even sports, theatres, shops, hotel schools. Wherever people come into action, which is something we have to do, is pollution.

Others indicated that while 100% sustainable development might not be realistic (yet), every step towards a more sustainable society is valuable.

To be honest, I started some sustainable initiatives for commercial reasons. However, I also believe in participating, even though you are just a small hotel, participating in contributing to sustainable development [for instance] when it comes to energy. We cannot continue using oil ... forever.

Ultimately, it seemed that interviewees, regardless of the particular stakeholder group they were a part of, could be divided into two main groups: (1) those that focus on the fact that creating a fully sustainable society is a daunting objective and tend to get demotivated by that 'observation' or even use it as an 'excuse' not to act themselves, and (2) those that focus on the positive effects of (combined) individual/small steps in the right direction and are motivated to contribute themselves as well.

With respect to the hospitality industry itself, all three stakeholder groups agreed that the current state of the industry is not sustainable (yet) and there is a need for (further) action. One of the main reasons for the current state of the industry that was mentioned is that sustainability does not seem to be a logical or natural part of the DNA of hospitality businesses and/or hospitality professionals (yet). Consequently, actions taken so far are usually more the result of competitive or legal pressures than based on an intrinsic motivation to become more sustainable.

Every chain will do something. They have to When you do nothing, you can be sure to miss out on business, there is an expectation that you do something with sustainability. [However] it is not the DNA of hospitality professionals to think of sustainability.

Interestingly, some of the students added to that observation that guests are an important part of the equation as well. They felt that most guests do not base their selection of hotels on, for instance, the carbon footprint of that hotel. Educators highlighted another barrier to more sustainable operations in the hospitality industry: the specific characteristics of this industry. They indicated two possible reasons for a lack of innovation, also with respect to sustainability: (1) the hospitality industry is a service industry and these industries, compared to product/manufacturing industries, tend to represent late adopters when it comes to innovation, and (2) the hospitality industry employs a lot of poorly educated people, which also hinders innovation.

This lack of innovation and reluctance to adopt more sustainable practices was further addressed by the interviewees in relating to comfort and luxury as key aspects of hospitality. One of the professionals clearly worded the complications linked to these aspects as follows:

I think every hotelier would like to save energy and become more sustainable. However, if this means a decline in comfort [offered to guests], the

product or the quality, tension arises. For example, air conditioning in a hotel room is obviously not very sustainable, it costs a lot of energy, but for the comfort of the guest, who is paying a certain amount [of money] for his/her stay, it should be there.

Whereas all three stakeholder groups agreed that something needs to be done, professionals and students often quickly followed that up by mentioning these types of barriers to further action. In contrast, most educators focused on the need for a systems view and embedding sustainability in the identity and strategy of hospitality businesses as the logical next step. Somehow, most educators felt that hospitality and sustainability need not be mutually exclusive and focused on looking for ways to create 'sustainable hospitality' or 'hospitable sustainability'.

In all interviews, the interviewees were challenged by the interviewer to think about the future of the hospitality industry in relation to sustainability. A number of professionals stressed that the hospitality industry cannot afford to continue to engage in sustainability initiatives for the 'wrong' reasons, especially based on the people-oriented nature of this industry. However, some professionals predicted that embedding sustainability in the DNA of hospitality will not happen easily.

Until management sees tangible advantages of integrating sustainability in every aspect, I believe it is going to be a long journey before it is completely embedded in the culture and DNA of the hospitality industry.

Interestingly, when thinking about the future, students clearly indicated that they themselves would prefer to work in companies that have a clear vision with respect to sustainable development.

The manager should be convinced that the sustainable way is the way they should operate ... it is something that should be integrated within the entire company, not just the 'front'. You should be a role model as management team ...

In fact, for many students this not only relates to (the environmental side of) sustainability.

I think you should use the same values for everyone. When you think your employees should do everything possible to keep guests happy, then you as a company should do everything to keep your employees happy.

In a number of interviews, these discussions then evolved into a discussion on ethics and the ethical foundation for sustainable practices. Especially the educators indicated that sustainable development requires more than knowledge and skills.

... I believe we should emphasise the ... ethical dilemmas and considerations more. Because learning a trick ... is not going to work. That is in my perspective short-term ... Therefore, it is not really about the skills we teach, nor the knowledge, even though this is important, but it is more about the attitude.

Interestingly, a number of educators actually seemed to think that professionals and students lack a sense of urgency.

Then you see that the sense of urgency is not high enough. The heart of the matter is not known to people, [they think] it happens in Africa, not here.

However, most students explicitly stated that they would like to contribute to a societal transition towards sustainable development, but that they simply lack the knowledge and

skills to do so. Similarly, most professionals acknowledged that the hospitality industry needs to change and engage more in sustainability initiatives, and for the right reasons. However, in most interviews, the interviewees seemed to be unable to move beyond stressing that the current state of the industry is hindering progress.

This is typically something in the hospitality industry, in a hotel it [i.e. responsibility for sustainability] is placed at the technical department, or housekeeping. Those are the two departments where sustainability is on the agenda. ... someone in the F&B department, or someone in the financial office or HR department, they will do much less. Yes, they might turn off their computer, or their printer. However, do they see the advantages?

Finally, with respect to how to address sustainability in hospitality education, educators once again stressed the need to focus on a systems/holistic perspective. Educators mentioned the following topics as most important to include in the curriculum: ethical decision-making, long-term perspectives and financial skills to translate vision into action. However, most of them indicated that the crucial role of education is to create awareness.

... for example, that tourism has a great impact ... as well as the hospitality operations within that [sector] ... as well as social impact. And that you have to deal with countries that are disadvantaged compared to the 'first' world. That broad perspective. Awareness, because for students it is difficult to generalise ... that ethical aspects are a significant part too.

Interestingly, both professionals and students acknowledged the need to address awareness, but not so much awareness for/amongst themselves, but how to do so for/amongst employees and guests respectively. Similarly, whereas educators continued to stress how hospitality education should educate future professionals about the relevance of sustainability, professionals and students stressed that they were fully aware of the relevance, but not quite sure how to turn this into action in practice. That is why professionals stated repeatedly that they hope education can 'create' new professionals that dare to challenge the status quo and have the skills, knowledge and attitude to look for and find new solutions and approaches. Students, in turn, actually seemed willing to take on this challenge, but stressed that they need help (from educators) to be able to do so successfully. This can best be illustrated by a final quote from an interview with one of the students:

[What I need is] to know what is really important, because I experience[d] being overwhelmed by it [all]. Because everything intertwines with everything and one needs to think about it in the smallest details ... it is really hard to keep a good overview.

Discussion and implications

The results described in the previous section confirm some of the generic reference points established in the background section of this paper. The relevance of sustainability for the hospitality industry is clearly endorsed, as is the crucial role of education in preparing future professionals for dealing (successfully) with this topic. Also, all stakeholder groups agreed to the fact that sustainability needs to be addressed

based on a systems perspective and education should not merely focus on the environmental aspects of sustainable development. The findings presented above also support the notion put forward by Millar and Park (2013) that hospitality professionals view students as potential change agents that could help define sustainability and appropriate solutions and approaches in practice. Finally, all stakeholder groups indeed stressed the relevance of an ethical foundation for furthering sustainable hospitality; embedding sustainability in the identity and strategy of a hospitality business/manager was repeatedly identified as being crucial to (long-term) success.

However, the findings presented in the previous section also highlight some specific differences between the perspectives of involved stakeholders – educators, students and professionals – beyond those already mentioned in the background section of this paper. Interestingly, educators seemed to question the level of awareness of students and professionals and, especially, their sense of urgency with respect to furthering sustainability, also within the hospitality industry. The interviews with students and professionals, however, did not indicate a low awareness level, nor a low sense of urgency, but rather a ‘call’ for help and assistance from educators to (learn how to) devise relevant, context-dependent solutions and approaches based on the realities of today’s hospitality industry. All three stakeholder groups acknowledged the need for paying attention to ethical decision making and long-term perspectives. However, whereas educators stressed the relevance of education as ‘place’ for reflection and developing ‘appropriate’ norms and values, students and professionals indicated they would also like to focus on (jointly) creating solutions or, at least, developing the skills and knowledge needed to do so. In fact, based on the findings presented in this paper, one might argue that students and professionals are (already) aware of the need for and motivated to contribute to sustainable development within the context of the hospitality industry, more so than most educators seem to realise. Therefore, hospitality education not only needs to address the relevance and complexities of sustainable development, but also focus on practical – context-dependent – solutions and approaches. The characteristics and specific nature of the hospitality industry, as discussed in the background section of this paper, only reinforce this. In other words, addressing sustainability in hospitality education should be based on a ‘think-global-act-local perspective’, as suggested by one of the interviewees in this research project. An exclusive focus on the former and ignoring (the skills and knowledge needed for) the latter could very well result in hospitality education demotivating future professionals and alienating current professionals, instead of serving as a catalyst for the transition that all stakeholder groups wish for.

Therefore, the specific reference points mentioned above have been used to (re)design the sustainability course within NHTV’s international hotel management curriculum. The resulting three-year course has been set up to provide students with an ethical framework that helps them develop a reflective attitude towards their own and others’ actions and decisions. This framework not only incorporates generic values and norms, but also a focus on ‘envisioning’ practical social, ecological and economic consequences on all levels of the global-local nexus. The required knowledge and skills to envision and discuss these consequences, also with involved

stakeholders, constitute the second main component of this course. Finally, three key questions that are jointly addressed by students and lecturers, through deployment of a variety of teaching methods – including group presentations, case based learning and debates – and throughout the three years that this course runs, are:

- What are current best practices in industry, what makes these a ‘best’ practice, and (how) could this practice lead to even ‘better’ results?
- What is your role as (future) professional in furthering sustainable development and how can you successfully fulfil this role?
- How can sustainability be incorporated in daily operations and business models for hospitality businesses?

Addressing these questions helps students in developing the required knowledge and skills to devise context-dependent solutions. A full account of all details of this course lies beyond the scope of this paper. However, those interested to learn more are warmly invited to contact the authors.

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Joint degrees and engaging with a Europe of Knowledge: lessons from a UK perspective of a challenging collaborative endeavour

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International joint degrees offer the possibility of internationalising the curriculum, enhancing intercultural skills for both staff and students and enhancing global job opportunities. This paper examines the challenges for staff and institutions engaging in developing a 'Europe of Knowledge' by offering a suite of international joint degree programmes in the business area. This case study of staff perspectives and quality assurance assessment of joint degrees offers insights into the challenges and the lessons that can be learned and the lived reality of this type of international curriculum development from the practitioner perspective.

Keywords: international joint degrees, international collaboration, Bologna Process, international quality assurance

Introduction

The significance of the growth in joint degree programmes has been highlighted as an issue that is worthy of attention (Guttenplan 2011), European policy supports their development, (Leuven Communique 2009) and yet institutions offering international joint degrees appear to be polarised in a few countries, France, Germany, UK, USA and Spain (Kuder and Obst 2009). The Institute for International Education (IIE) promotes the importance of joint and double degree programmes, stating that universities are looking to such programmes as a way to offer students international experiences following a survey report of 180 higher education institutions, (Kuder and Obst 2009). The claim is that they promote diverse language and 'cultural fluencies', which will prepare students for successful careers. The possibility of students gaining transferable skills important in the global job market and gaining certificates which evidence qualifications in more than one country's higher education system would appear to make such programmes of study attractive to both institutions and students. Culver et al. (2012), when looking into the added value that such programmes could offer graduates, found this to be the case and that further study of these types of programmes needed to be undertaken. The aim of this paper is to present an exploration of some of the challenges and lessons for institutions wishing to offer such programmes of study. This is achieved through the use of a case study of a suite of joint master's programmes offered in the UK and France. Data was gathered through twelve in-depth interviews with practitioners, managerial, teaching and administrative staff from both institutions. An interview with the International Director of another institution in France which also offered joint degrees was also undertaken in order to give the findings greater validity and to explore the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) position from the experience in another institution. Participant observations were also undertaken as well as an analysis of the UK's QAA's reports on

institutional collaborative provision. Asgary and Robbert (2010) acknowledge that there is a dearth of research on international dual awards. This paper attempts to address this research gap through an in-depth examination of practitioner experience of collaboration on international joint awards, thus highlighting some lessons that can be learnt from such collaborations. Whilst the difficulties in generalising the findings from a case study of only two institutions are acknowledged, it is hoped that some insight will be given into the realities and challenges for institutions and individuals participating in such interlinked collaborative programmes.

The case focused on three joint master's programmes delivered in London and France in the business subject field, specifically in marketing communications, tourism and finance. The two institutions were very different in terms of size, quality processes, funding arrangements and make-up of the student body. Differences in location were also notable, with the English institution situated in an urban environment and the French situated in a small town in rural France. The French institution was one of the group of elite French business schools known as *Grandes Écoles*. The paper considers the challenges of offering international joint degrees around the key themes arising from the literature and the data; these were: the policy context, quality assurance, the international competitive environment for higher education, the need to develop a relationship between staff, and international branding and the motivations for engaging in such collaborative programmes.

The importance of considering joint degree programmes and the policy context

Dale (2010) offers us some insight into the development of a Europe of Knowledge, which joint degrees represent, and the call by the European Union (EU) for higher education (HE)

institutions in Europe to create opportunities for students' mobility. This mobility drive is evidenced in policy documents such as the Prague and Berlin Communiqués, 2000 and 2003 respectively, as well as through EU initiatives such as Erasmus Mundus, which have influenced higher education institutions' international activities. The continuing importance of the policy agenda and institutional engagement with this agenda within the European Higher Education Area is further evidenced in the Leuven Communiqué (2009). Leuven set a target of mobility within Europe of 20% of graduates by 2020 (the 20/2020 target). It required that institutions establish partners in another country within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) in order to facilitate the mobility of higher education students. One way to achieve this is through the establishment of joint degrees with a partner institution. However, this may be considered to be one of the most ambitious modes of collaboration because of the expectations of a 'joint' curriculum delivered across institutions and across national borders.

The implementation and discussion of this policy is evidenced by the Trends reports, commissioned by the European Universities Association. Crosier et al. (2007) in Trends V indicated that many institutions in Europe have experimented with the development of joint programmes or that they are intending to do so. They found that the majority of joint programmes are in the second cycle (i.e. master's level). Their report underlines the importance of joint degrees for the Bologna Process and the need for the analysis of the joint degree experience at master's level. Crosier et al. state that:

At this stage, it would seem reasonable to suggest that joint programmes are playing a significant role in constructing the European Higher Education Area, by giving institutions opportunities to work together and learn from each other. (Crosier et al. 2007, 31)

With the launch of the EHEA in 2010 and the recognition of internationalisation as an important driver of change in the context of Bologna (Sursock and Smidt, Trends 2010) joint degree programmes can be seen as encouraging inter-university collaborations.

Recent reports produced by the Institute for International Education (2011) on joint double degree programmes and the AACSB (Association for the Advancement of Collegiate Schools of Business, 2011) on internationalisation highlight the importance of such programmes as a focus for future institutional international approaches to student education.

From a UK perspective, Sweeney (2010, 11) refers to the need to develop a 'culture of mobility', which arises as a consequence of the Bologna Process. He states that this mobility culture should encompass the setting up of joint degrees with partner institutions outside the UK. Further, when

considering the need for the development of opportunities for mobility, a flexible and innovative approach to the curriculum is required. It is certainly the case that curriculum development which relies not just on cross-institutional collaboration but also cross-country collaboration is underscored by both innovation and flexibility at both an institutional and individual level.

The definition of a joint degree

The existing literature evidences a lack of clarity over the terms 'double diploma' and 'joint degree'. The term joint degree has been used by the London institution to denote a course where two degree titles are achieved for a course that is jointly delivered by two partners. There are variations in the usage of the term and it is often used interchangeably with the terms joint awards, dual awards and double diplomas. The difference in usage of the terms in France where double degree is often used to denote an advanced entry articulation agreement with an overseas partner is an example of how institutions can interpret and operate differently within a national context.

The joint curriculum model that is the focus for this paper necessarily presents more challenges and requires more transparency and communication between the institutions. Schule (2006, 3) defines the terms in the following ways:

*Joint degree: a single diploma issued by two or more institutions offering an integrated study programme.
The single diploma (bachelor, Master, Doctor) is signed by the rectors of all participating universities and recognised as substitute of the national diplomas [sic].
Double degree: two nationally recognised diplomas issued separately by the universities involved in the integrated study programme.*

Schule (2006) makes the comment that the legal environment in Europe has prevented truly joint degree programmes, in the sense that one institution always has to be responsible for the award. He argues that joint degrees need to operate outside national regulatory frameworks, as diplomas would have to be issued jointly by institutions, which is not possible in the current environment. Schule (2006) identifies the positive aspects of JDDs with regard to joint curriculum development and the possible difficulties for joint degree programmes. His checklist is perhaps the most comprehensive analysis for institutions wishing to consider this type of collaborative venture. In contrast, Davies (2009) defines joint masters as being 'a Masters delivered by two or more HEIs awarding single or multiple diplomas' (2009, 12), providing an accessible definition which is relied on here.

The structure of the joint degree courses in this case is illustrated in Figure 1. In order to achieve two master's awards,

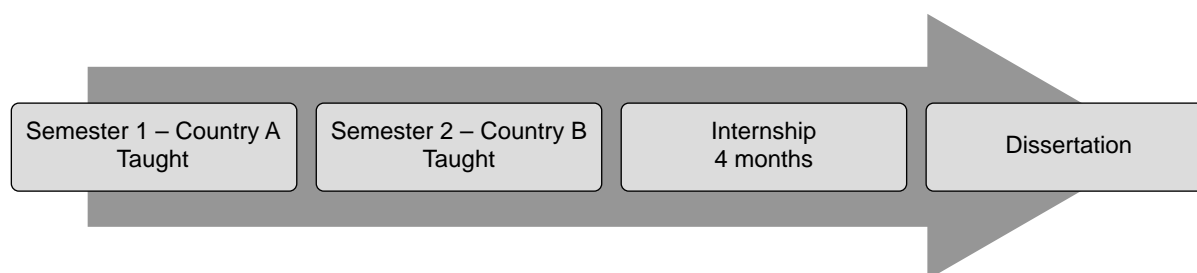


Figure 1: Joint degree course structure

all elements of the courses had to be completed. The regulatory frameworks of each institution were applied where the course was delivered – therefore one taught semester and the dissertation in the case of the London institution and a taught semester and the internship in the case of the French institution. This illustrates both the joint nature of the curriculum but also its separateness, as two sets of regulations were employed in this case. The delivery of half of the courses' teaching as well as the credit awarded is dependent on the 'other' institution.

The current environment for joint degrees

The focus for much of the curriculum collaboration between institutions in Europe seems to be at the postgraduate rather than the undergraduate or doctoral levels. This is highlighted by the Bologna Trends reports and the recent AACSB (2011) report. Davies (2009) echoes this in finding that joint programmes of study are more likely to be offered at master's level and are likely to grow in popularity because of the demands of the market. His findings indicate that a large majority of higher education institutions surveyed were planning to develop more joint degrees. This is also noted in the AACSB (2011) report.

The drivers for institutions engaging in this type of activity appear to be largely centred around globalising initiatives but there is some indication of variations in primary drivers. Schule (2006) acknowledges that certain types of institution in Europe, such as the *Instituts Supérieurs de Commerce* also known as *Grandes Écoles* (Blanchard 2009), have used double degrees in order to increase their competitiveness (2006, 4). Schule states that institutional profiles need to be given careful consideration since, for example, the differences between a professional approach to education and a theoretical approach could prove significant. The competitive environment, branding and market environment for schools of business in France, when these joint master's degrees were developed was quite different to the UK environment for post-92 institutions. At the start of the collaboration the differences were acknowledged by the partners, but they were considered to be a strength, offering each institution the potential to benefit from attributes that they could not offer, such as location (Forte and Bamford 2008).

One of the key areas of concern is the application of ECTS credits, established by the Bologna Process. An example is the possible difficulty in measuring and equating credits for differing workloads in institutions. This concern arose during the original negotiations, the formal quality approval of the courses and seemingly during the administration of the courses as a constant issue to consider. Schule states that this can become a 'major obstacle to international mobility unless the participating universities show a flexibility not built into the ECTS system' (2006, 28).

When acknowledging that joint master's degrees are not problem-free, Davies (2009) observes that national frameworks compound the challenges with regard to a lack of clarity in information and a clear understanding of the challenges, the difficulties posed by variable entry points, credit weighting, workloads and learning outcomes. This can result in 'ad hoc compromise and approximation' (2009, 54).

One of the challenges witnessed and commented on by interviewees was in relation to ECTS credits and the differences

in achievement expectations at each institution. For the programmes in this study there were a different numbers of subjects studied at each institution and there was an apparent difficulty in the translation of grades from one system to another. In London, assessments were marked out of 100 and in France they were awarded marks out of 20. On the surface this does not seem problematic but it became apparent that very few of the students achieved an overall distinction from the London institution – only three students achieved an overall distinction in their Master's over a sample of 98 students over all three courses in one year. The evidence suggests that students did not receive a distinction for a 15/20 grading and yet it is equal to 75% in the UK, with 70% being a distinction classification. The aggregation of grades across a number of modules across two institutions meant that students simply did not achieve the higher band of grades. The institutions thus had to renegotiate grade equivalences, as more flexibility was required in their translation and in marking standards between the two institutions.

This seems to evidence the approximations referred to by Davies (2009). It reinforces the need for a careful consideration of the difficulties in working across national education systems as there is an impact on the student experience and both institutions learnt the importance of the need for transparency. These differences and difficulties were commented on by tutors in interviews as a frustrating aspect of the programmes and were a source of continual compromise.

The quality assurance position

Quality assurance is raised by Culver (2013) as a challenging area for international joint degrees. An aspect of this quality assurance is commented on by Schule (2006) with regard to the issue of two awards being given for one programme of study. He cites the Coimbra Group's² position of concern at not being able 'to catch two fishes with one hook'. There is certainly a question of ethics to be raised with regard to the issue of an award of two master's diplomas for the same work. However, this conflicts somewhat with how such courses are situated within the 'market', where the promotion of such courses relies on the possibility of students gaining a double diploma. Observation of both institutions' marketing activity demonstrated that there was an emphasis placed on this achievement and that it became a marketing tool. This raises a question with regard to the demand of the market taking precedence over ethical concerns in this sort of collaborative activity. Certainly, this particular aspect of such programmes of study raises questions with regard to issues of quality which may ultimately undermine the credibility of the joint double master's awards. Schule's (2006) solution to the problem of the possibility of a wilful misrepresentation on the part of students with regard to their qualifications is that the diploma and diploma supplement should clearly state that the award is part of a double diploma and in this case the diploma supplement highlighted this.

The position with regard to the responsibility for ensuring quality as far as UK institutions are concerned is expressed by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) in their Code of Practice on Collaborative provision:

The Code is based on the key principle that collaborative arrangements, whenever and however

organised, should widen learning opportunities without prejudice either to the standard of the award or qualification or the quality of what is offered to the student. Further, the arrangements for assuring the quality and standards should be as rigorous, secure and open to scrutiny as those for programmes provided wholly within the responsibility of a single institution. This remains the case even when the partner organisation is itself also an Awarding Institution, as with joint or dual awards (Paragraph 7, 1999 QAA code of Practice, cited in the QAA, 2008: 4, Outcomes From Institutional Audit Report).

The phrasing in this paragraph leaves some questions with regard to monitoring the delivery of programmes (or part of the programme) overseas and how far this can be achieved within other national frameworks of practice. The tone of the 2008 report is clear in expressing concern with regard to learners in collaborative partnerships being put at risk where there is distance from the UK awarding body. In addition this position is reinforced by the QAA with regard to the reliance on a partner's reputation as being insufficient from the perspective of quality (2008, 13).

With regard to the joint curriculum aspect to joint degrees, the QAA's position would appear to place some doubt on the UK institutions' ability to accredit work done by students in a partner institution in another country without moderation of that work by the UK institution. An example of this can be seen in a QAA collaborative links report (QAA 2006) on one UK institution which failed to demonstrate that the quality concerns of the QAA had been met with regard to its postgraduate double master's activity with a French partner. The report demonstrates that the issue of quality and transparency – which, in that instance, could not be seen to be evident in the crediting of work done in another institution – are an important aspect of maintaining the standards expected of postgraduate higher education in the UK. This reinforces notions of international higher education being constrained within national frameworks of delivery.

The report's tone is unambiguous in the allocation of responsibility of quality to UK institutions. It illustrates and reinforces the theme of transparency and effective management of collaborative partnerships and that the monitoring of academic standards for British degrees must be maintained by British higher education institutions. The wording of the report indicates that a reliance on the Bologna implemented ECTS credit scheme is not sufficient to meet the QAA criteria and, from a UK perspective, UK external examiners need to confirm standards of marking in order to ensure that the standards of UK postgraduate education are being met. The tone of the report is reflected by Culver's (2013) conclusions on the difficulties in achieving quality assurance in multi-country degree programmes. Whilst Beerkens (2004) aids in understanding the nature of collaborative networks of higher education institutions, the view that these networks have become so important that the nation state is losing its grip on higher education institutions and that international benchmarks are necessary (2004, 19) has not yet come to pass. The discussion above reflects the continued importance of nation state frameworks for higher education. These rarely allow for only one diploma to be awarded jointly from different institutions. Schule (2006) and Guruz (2011) both comment

on the difficulties with regard to this despite the introduction of the European Association for Quality Assurance (ENQR) in 2008, national legislation would be needed to overcome the difficulties of issuing a joint diploma.

The need for compatibility between the institutions

The way in which the institutions interact with each other is an important aspect of the student experience in facilitating the joint degree as a holistic international higher education experience. The dimensions of difference involved have the potential for enhancing the experience and producing additional educational benefits but care needs to be taken in communication, transition and aiding in negotiating the different *modus docendi* (mode of teaching) of each institution. The maintenance of communication between the institutions and a suitable, transparent support network are fundamental aspects of the student experience.

Beerkens (2004) underlines the importance of the compatibility of the higher education institutions involved in a collaboration, to the extent that it is a precondition for the collaboration to succeed. With reference to the relationship of the institutions in this case, one of the course leaders had the following comments to make on the way in which these two institutions engaged in the collaboration:

A clear lead from the top has encouraged the development of the relationship. The lead is based on a personal friendship but also a recognition of the financial imperatives which characterise any joint initiative. Each director has helped the relationship by appointing a liaison person at each institution and although the personalities may have changed in the course of institutional reorganisation, the recognition of the value of the relationship remains as strong as ever ...

Hence, the importance of the role of institutional liaison. I have described this role as the 'catalytic converter' in the relationship as problems can occur in other parts of the relationship which have to be resolved post hoc. It is also becoming clear that the role has an internal development dimension – explaining why and how the relationship adds to the strength of both institutions. The education is delivered according to the rules determined by the host institution and mutual standards are accepted.

[Course Leader, French institution]

The QAA place a strong emphasis placed on the importance of a liaison tutor in terms of making sure of the quality and equivalence of experience in educational terms of each institution. What is interesting to note here is the importance given to the 'financial imperatives' in the comments, thus tending to confirm – if only from the French perspective – the link to financial drivers for institutions engaging in international education. The QAA Code of Practice (2004, 11, paragraph A6) warns institutions against financial or other temptations that may compromise standards. In the quote from the course leader above, the financial basis for the relationship is underlined by the use of the words 'financial imperative' but reinforced with the use of the word 'value'. Beerkens' (2004) identification of the need for 'chemistry' between the actors would appear to be reflected in both the tone and the words

of the interview abstract above and in comments made by other staff. The cultural differences between each institution were noted and led to cultural learning at both institutions. The second interview excerpt offers another example of the comments in relation to the importance of the role of institutional liaison.

The importance of global branding?

Both the French institution in the case study and many of the high ranking *Grandes Écoles* have sought accreditation from AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business) and EQUIS (European Quality Improvement System accredited by the European Foundation for Management Development, EFMD) in order to market themselves internationally. According to AACSB, seeking accreditation has a direct relationship with internationalisation activity

The AACSB report on the Globalisation of Management Education (2011) provides some useful insights into business schools' motivation for engaging in international activity. AACSB acknowledges that in 2004 the primary reason for deans to internationalise was the heightened educational experience of the students. However, in the 2011 report it states that financial motivations have increasingly played a more important role in 'forming strategic program alliances' (AACSB 2011, 14). It underlines the importance of international accreditation as being as much about 'the pursuit of excellence (along globally recognised standards of quality) as it is about branding and positioning in the globalizing worlds of business and higher education' (2011, 70). Staff from both institutions commented on the institutional motivations for engaging in joint degree study, although the driving forces of finance and international branding were more strongly expressed by the French institutions' staff. Students were made aware of the 'elite' branding of the institution at an early stage of their studies. The AACSB also states that one of the purposes of international accreditation is to eliminate the need for 'potential collaborative partners to understand the differences between national accreditation schemes' (2011, 70). This seems to be a rather bold claim as it presumes that international accreditation is more important than national accreditation, which is not a line that the QAA appears to have adopted.

The course leader from the French institution expressed the following views on international benchmarking with regard to both institutions:

The French institution is in the process of positioning itself as a quality destination for students in its national market using international accreditations (AACSB, EQUIS). Depending on various French student publication surveys, the school appears between 11th and 18th position amongst the Grandes Écoles of which there are 39. Last year it appeared in the top 40 European management programmes in the FT classification. The London institution has a different profile and is considering accreditation with AMBA. It boasts a maximum rating of 24³ in teaching quality excellence and 3A research assessment exercise rating in the Tourism subject. [Course Leader, French institution]

These comments with regard to international branding display that both league position and global branding were important to the French institution, but also that they expected their partners to reflect similar ambitions. Interviews with the London institution staff also demonstrated the important role of the accrediting bodies on the operations of both institutions whilst acknowledging that the approach of the French had an influence on institutional strategy in this area as they had been encouraged to apply for membership status of AACSB.

Participants' views on the motivations for the collaboration

The motivational aspirations of the French school in offering joint degree programmes were echoed in the staff responses at the London institution. The internationalisation motivation identified in the Trends reports (Culver et al. 2007, Sursock and Smidt 2010) was made reference to by many of the staff but the globalising influence of such programmes seemed to dominate the strategic thinking. This is illustrated in the following comments in response to a question to the decision maker at the London institution:

The French school is a business school of some standing in the European scene, and it has to be said that their reputation was significant in my decision to progress this relationship. That being said, its genesis I think relates to the fact that I take the view that in the world in which we're currently living, globalisation being the way that you might describe that world, it's extremely important that students get exposed to alternative ways of looking at business and management practice. So the idea of a collaboration with the French school in the course area was attractive to me because I think it allowed those students to have that exposure to ways of looking at business and management practice. So I think that was the primary motivation for the collaboration, and we've attempted to develop similar models with other institutions in different parts of the world. [Manager in the London institution]

The interview data from the French staff illustrated a difference in approach to international collaboration, to international activity in general, as well as to the administration and promotion of such programmes and the motivational aspects of engaging in such activity.

So I think it is a good idea to have a joint degree, a double degree programme, because I want to send the students abroad because I want them to realise how we have to learn and they have to know how to be independent, which is not the case in France ... [Course leader at French school and tutor at other GEs]

There was a clear desire to provide the opportunity for engagement with 'others', and a reflection that the *Grande École* system does not allow for the development of independent learning. When asked about French students' views on difference, French tutors responded that there is a negative attitude amongst French students to different pedagogies and that an experience of an 'independent study pedagogy' would be beneficial.

A comment from an International Director at a French school illustrates the different approach with regard to teaching and learning, most specifically learning outcomes:

... the profs are the doyens, the knowledge base, espousing their own research and their own professional experiences to the students ... And so the idea that you will have checks and balances in a curriculum that ascertain whether the learning outcomes have been met don't exist. [International Director of French GE]

The point about learning outcomes is important as it illustrates a fundamental difference in approach to British universities. Whilst the ENQR requires that institutions in Europe now frame their courses in a learning outcomes format, this comment underlines that this is a different approach from French institutions and a challenging approach.

It is clear from the QAA report that the status (taken here to mean league table positioning) of an institution does not circumvent the requirement of UK quality processes, for example, the requirement of external examining of partners' courses. This reinforces a preference for UK institutions of strictly adhering to the UK quality procedures and does not aid with dealing with difference. The Bologna position is one of harmonisation, so, likewise, it does not deal with difference and provides institutions with little guidance on addressing issues of difference. The comments made with regard to learning outcomes above are just one example of the differences which directly affect students and how they negotiate with the institutions.

Institutional culture

When asked about the different cultures of each institution, a manager in the London institution made the following comments:

[Laughing] I don't know whether culture has much to do with it. I think that reputation has something to do with it and I think that finances have something to do with it. I've already mentioned that we've had to modify our thinking on the financial side to reflect the financial realities as they impact on the French School. I think the French school are collaborating with us largely because of our position or our location. They want to offer their students a London experience and they think that is attractive to those students. We want to offer an experience to our students which is international, perhaps rural France wouldn't be the obvious location. But what we're offering them is an experience of a business school which is accredited by EQUIS and by AACSB which has some cachet and some value to our students I think. [Manager at the London institution]

The interesting aspect of this interview excerpt is the interviewee's laughter in relation to the mention of culture, perhaps demonstrating that the issue of cultural interactions had not featured in the internationalisation strategy of the London institution despite the recognition of cultural differences between the British and the French at other times during the interview. In addition, the word 'value' is used with regard to branding by international bodies, something that does not address the student experience. The importance of the

location of London is also underlined here, which is seen in balance with the benefits of elite branding.

The response from some French staff was that the cultural difference between the institutions had an impact on students in terms of the rules and norms of behaviour and much of this was related to the fact that the cohort of students recruited to the dual awards came from the ESC⁴ programme and that MSc programme resided administratively under the ESC structure, despite its international students which were recruited by the London institution. The difference in the French students' background and approach was a factor in some of the administrative difficulties, as students from France came from an integrated programme of study and students joining the course in London were new to the course.

When specifically asked about the cultural differences of the institution, the following response was elicited from one of the course leaders in France:

It would appear the university treats the business school as 'another partner': in some instances with little difference from a franchise college. My institution probably sees itself as 'privileged' and certainly equal partner for two reasons: the course has been very successful financially and the business school has invested heavily in raising its profile nationally and internationally. [Course Leader for French school]

Here a clear acknowledgement is made of the difference between the two institutions which creates a gap that needs to be bridged. There appears to be a critique of the London institution's approach, which again underlines the need for the clear channels of communication and development of transparency referred to by Davies (2009). The comments also underline the difference in approach to the administration of the course at each institution. These differences in administrative approach require clear communication between partners in order to preserve the sustainability of joint degree programmes.

Concluding comments

The findings indicated that for the joint degrees in this case, the challenges of difference needed to have been given further attention as well as ethical issues, such as the need for more transparency. The research therefore holds some general interest for academics and higher education institutions wishing to embark on collaborations to develop such programmes of study. The claims that the AACSB, make about joint degrees appearing to represent the future for international higher education activity emphasise the importance of understanding the challenges that such programmes involve.

The need for transparency underlines the need for an ethical context to international higher education which requires further consideration both from institutions but also from policy makers. There is certainly a tension with regard to the pull of market forces in the international higher education environment and from a UK perspective the warnings from the QAA with regard to the temptations of financial benefits. In this case it seems that financial benefits provided an incentive for the institutions to develop the joint degrees.

The different *modus docendi* (mode of teaching) at each institution also enhanced the separateness of each institution rather than 'jointness' and highlighted the issue of difference

which had an impact on student achievement. The separateness of each institution was further entrenched by national frameworks of quality monitoring and regulations which provide the structures for master's education that institutions must follow in order to maintain governmentally set standards of quality.

The future will surely see a growth of joint degrees. The continued marketisation of higher education, increased use of technology and the influence of Erasmus Mundus and EU policy will inevitably result in a rise in these types of programmes where the education experience is a shared process between one or more higher education institutions and the students. If these courses are to be useful educationally, more work will need to be done to ensure greater integration in the design and delivery of the courses.

Notes

- ¹ British national higher education quality awarding body.
- ² A network of 40 European Universities formed in 1985 consisting of some of the most prestigious and oldest universities in Europe.
- ³ The 24 is a reference to the 24/24 the London institution received from the QAA.
- ⁴ The *École Supérieure de Commerce* Programme (ESC) programme is normally three years following two years of *classes préparatoire* after the Baccalaureate. It is the main programme of study offered in all *Grandes Écoles* that are members of the *Chapitre des Grandes Écoles*.

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Increasing students' safety awareness in a teaching hotel

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During the past years the attention for safety and health at work has increased, partly through the influence of European law and labour agreements and by acknowledging the huge economic impact of accidents and calamities. It is notable that companies are more and more aware that it is necessary to put more energy into promoting safety awareness among their staff. Since the International Hospitality Management School is training students for future leading positions within the hospitality sector, it is of the utmost importance that safety competences are included in the curriculum. Particularly the four-star teaching hotel, which is run by students under supervision of practical instructors, offers a perfect context for training these safety competences and increasing students' safety awareness.

The following problem statement was taken to guide the research: What is the impact of safety training on the safety competences (knowledge, awareness and behaviour) of students working in the kitchen of the teaching hotel? In total, 140 students from the first, second and third years have been involved in this study, which was conducted in the kitchen department of Stenden Hotel. The results of this study indicate that training does improve safety competences of students. Since this study was limited to the kitchen, we recommend replication in other departments and other institutions. Next we suggest additional research to figure out which educational format is most effective and efficient in bringing about a significant change in safety awareness and safety-related behaviour.

Keywords: Safety, awareness, responsibility, influence, training, unconscious capability

Introduction

While Stenden works hard in order to organise industrial safety as optimally as possible, the question of how students experience this remains.

How aware is the student of this industrial safety and how is it organised? How aware is the student of the danger during a fire or evacuation? Is the student informed about all safety measures present in the building?

Stenden is an internationally oriented institute for higher education with five locations in the northern part of the Netherlands. These locations are Assen, Emmen, Groningen, Meppel and Leeuwarden. Stenden also has four locations abroad. These locations are Doha (Qatar), Bangkok (Thailand), Port Alfred (South Africa) and Bali (Indonesia). For this research the main location of Stenden was used, which is situated in Leeuwarden. There are approximately 8 000 students and 700 employees at this location.

Stenden has to meet the necessary requirements set by the Arbo law resulting from the 'Arbeidsomstandighedenwet, article 3'. These requirements cover the organising and executing of industrial safety, escape route indications (icons), evacuation maps and accessibility for government helpers (fire department, police, ambulance) and the guidance of these helpers.

The Arbeidsinspectie monitors the Arbo law and is able to enforce compliance with the law. If the legal obligations are not met, Stenden can be given a fine.

All symbols and the language have been done in English. Students are required to inform themselves (through

module books) of available safety resources within Stenden University. The resources are described in article 11 of the Arbeidsomstandighedenwet.

Stenden Hotel

The research for this study was executed within Stenden Hotel in Leeuwarden. Here students obtain practical working experience and the hotel is part of the HBO study 'International Hospitality Management', one of the institutes of Stenden University in Leeuwarden. This four-star hotel is part of the International Hospitality Management (IHM) School and is meant to provide students with practical working experience and training facilities. The practice education is integrated in the first three study years and students need to attend practice in all the different departments within Stenden Hotel, known as the Food and Beverage department and the Rooms Division department. It is operated by students under supervision and with coaching by practical instructors.

Since Stenden Hotel is a real company, employing students to serve real guests, who pay with real money for real services and products, aimed at creating a superior hospitality experience, the wellbeing of both guests and staff is of the utmost importance to the operational performance of the business. A necessary prerequisite is to create and maintain a safe working environment for the students.

Since safety to a large extent depends on the behaviour and attitude of staff members themselves, it is important

to investigate the students' awareness about safety in their working environment and their own impact (influence) on it.

In practice:

An important part of the IHM study is the daily management of a four-star hotel in practice. Here they are exposed every day to a number of dangers. These dangers vary from a near crash to an evacuation which follows after an evacuation signal.

The accidents and calamities that have happened in the kitchen over the years are fainting, epileptic attacks, cutting and burn wounds. In the period 2008–2010 there were five cutting and four burn wounds, one epileptic attack and one respiration problem (Quality Stenden Hotel ISO 9001, 2009). These cases were of such nature that students were referred to hospital for further examination.

Research showed that none of these students sustained permanent injuries due to these accidents (Document 'Melding en registratie ongevallen en beroepsziekten' Arbo 1998).

While major calamities were held off, it is of the utmost importance that all cases which are not normal are directly reported to the practical instructor. This concerns both human and material irregularities. All practical instructors within Stenden Hotel are BHV certified and know how to act adequately during calamities. All facilities with respect to safety and required by law are correct and are checked every year by the authorities. But in what way is the student aware of all of this and what influence does the student himself have on this?

It is notable that companies are more and more aware that it is necessary to put more energy into promoting the awareness of safety regarding their staff. Unfortunately, information from the Arbeidsinspectie shows that this awareness of safety leaves a lot to be desired (Dijkhuis 2009).

For Stenden Hotel it is very important to give a lot of attention to this awareness. When looking critically at this matter, the question could be if students are aware of the dangers they are exposed to every day. Here we approach the following research question.

The research question

'How should Stenden Hotel make their students more aware of their own impact on a safe working environment?'

The desired behaviour should be that they will report everything that is not normal directly to the nearest practical instructor. In case there is no practical instructor available, the students should know how to make use of the means of safety which are available. This can be of crucial importance during a calamity.

A study will have to ascertain whether students are aware of this and, if this awareness is there, what the level of awareness and the behaviour after that will be. A problem statement was developed for this.

Problem statement

What is the impact of safety training in combination with experience of a critical incident on the knowledge, awareness and behaviour (safety competence) of students working in the kitchen of SUH?

The study which follows was built and developed on a conceptual model.

Conceptual model

The conceptual model is built up out of 4 phases:

- **Phase 1:** First prior knowledge has to be measured based on policies and procedures in a real-world kitchen situation. This will be done by means of a questionnaire.
- Behaviour (action, reaction) will be measured by means of a video intervention. A simulation of a business calamity will take place (a big flame in the frying pan).
- **Phase 2:** On the basis of these results a course of training will be developed. This will be offered to a new group of students during their first practical day. By means of the training a change in behaviour is expected to take place. Students should change from unawareness and incompetent behaviour to more aware, competent behaviour.
- **Phase 3:** Through the training a change in behaviour will take place. Students will pass from unaware, incompetent to aware, competent behaviour.
- **Phase 4:** In this final phase the behaviour of the students will be evaluated. This evaluation could lead to adjustments for the next training session in order to obtain a higher level of output after the training.

Method

As pointed out in the conceptual model, knowledge and a change of behaviour had to be measured, therefore the research was divided into a video intervention and afterwards a questionnaire.

From both methods the data were measured in both a pre-test and a post-test phase. With the data of the pre-test phase, a training course was developed which was presented to a new group of students. These students took part in the post-test phase under the exact same conditions. The difference that arose in the data was measured and analysed.

The kitchen of Stenden Hotel was used for this purpose. The practical modules for IHM students consist of 10 weeks, both in week 1 and week 5 when new groups of first, second and third-year students start.

Week 1: the pre-test phase started; a video intervention took place during the practical lessons, and approximately 25 students will take part in this. Afterwards the student completed a questionnaire. The post-test phase took place in week 5.

Prior to this phase, training in industrial safety was given. During this training an explanation was given in the field of: types of safety, awareness, (re)sources.

Next the students were shown a short movie with a 'shocking piece of film' of a business accident (Canadian Accident Prevention Commercial Extra Brutal, 2007). In order to make students aware of the consequences in case they do not act adequately in unsafe situations, the choice was made to use shocking image fragments. At the end, everything regarding industrial safety was pointed out to the students during a guided tour in the kitchen (fire detector, escape routes).

Video intervention

In order to start this intervention, MOC Friesland (Mobiel Oefen Centrum Friesland), a professional organisation who also provides BHV training for Stenden University, was approached in order to help with organising a safe and

controlled intervention. The intervention consisted of a fixed protocol which was exactly the same for each group of students.

The calamity was: 'Fire in the frying pan'.

Before starting the calamity a video camera had to be installed a few hours before the students were present, so as to prevent suspicion among the students. A practical instructor (the author of this research) prepared a meal together with the employee of the MOC. During this preparation both the practical instructor and the employee of the MOC left the floor, but at a distance the employee of the MOC made sure that there was a flame in the frying pan. For this a special burning gel was used which burns spontaneously at a certain temperature.

The practical instructor and the MOC employee monitored events from a distance, in order to ensure safety, and see what the reaction of the students was.

After that the video images were analysed with respect to: the time between the start of the fire and the first handling; the time between the fire and the warning of a BHV'er (practical instructor); what actions were taken; and how many students were actually involved in (fighting) the fire.

Note: The video recordings made were reviewed by one practical instructor. This gives a one-sided picture of the observation which could lead to a distorted image.

Questionnaire

As indicated in the conceptual model (fore)knowledge, knowledge of resources, knowledge of available information, awareness and experience with accidents were tested by means of a questionnaire. The goal of this test was to create a clear picture of the students' level of safety awareness.

Measures /sample profile

For this questionnaire a total of 140 students were approached. All these students completed the questionnaire correctly. Valid percentage: 100%.

The questionnaire contained three questions with the following answering possibilities: 1) not good, 2) average, 3) good, 4) excellent. These questions refer to the feeling students can have during work in the kitchen. With the possibility of choosing 'yes' and 'no' the student could indicate what their actual knowledge was at that moment in time.

Two questions offered the student the possibility to indicate exactly what action they would take during a calamity. Four possibilities were given per question. Since the IHM is an international institute of higher education, all questions were in English. The fact that more languages are spoken within the school was not taken into account. The language during the video intervention was English.

Note: In the pre-test phase of the video intervention more practical instructors were present during the investigation than with the post-test phase. This may have influenced the behaviour of the students (Hawthorne effect).

Result

Video intervention pre-test

The results of the video intervention were analysed and reviewed by one person (the practical kitchen instructor).

During the calamity 21 students were present in the kitchen. Five of the students were standing with their backs to the stove, ten students were working on the other side of the kitchen and four students had a clear view of the part of the stove where the calamity took place. Two students were walking around, one of whom stood next to the place of the calamity.

In the first phase of the outbreak of the fire (a severe development of light grey smoke) there was no one who responded.

During the outbreak of the flame in the frying pan only one student reacted with the words: 'Hello! There is a fire ... is that normal?' These words were directed to a practical instructor who was further away in the kitchen. Since this instructor did not respond directly, the student walked away from the fire and did not take any action. Another student walked past the fire, looked at it but did not act either. Not one of the students involved acted adequately during this calamity. Here and there students laughed a little while the fire started to get more and more serious. All students had a wait-and-see attitude. The fire was extinguished by the practical instructor in a professional way. The results comparing the indicators: there was no handling (see page 10); no one warned a BHV'er (practical instructor); no action was taken and no students were actually involved in fighting the fire.

Video intervention post-test

One week prior to the video intervention students followed a lecture in the field of industrial safety and how to act in case of a calamity. The goals of this lecture were 1) to make students aware of the dangers and how they can show desired behaviour regarding adequate handling during a calamity and 2) to make students aware that they need to report all situations that are not normal (both equipment and human) to a practical instructor.

At the moment of the calamity 18 students were present in the kitchen, 5 of whom were near to the calamity.

During the first phase (a severe light grey development of smoke) a slight commotion broke out and students consulted with each other. Before the actual outbreak of the fire a practical instructor was warned directly. He was able to extinguish the fire at an early stage.

Before the fire could set flame it was extinguished from the first development of smoke, five seconds after the first development of smoke to be exact. The practical instructor was already warned at the first development of smoke. One student was in the direct neighborhood of the calamity and three of them were in the background.

Questionnaire

From measuring three of the indicators (Table 4) the following conclusions can be made:

Although there was a very slight increase (shown in Table 4), there was no significant difference in safety awareness between pre-test and post-test ($t = -1,120$; $df = 138$; $p = 0.264$).

There was a significant difference in the 'current safety awareness' between the pre-test and the post-test ($t = -3.386$; $df = 124.031$; $p = 0.001$). As shown in Table 4, the largest significance between the pre-test and

Table 1: Type of test

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Pre-test	70	50.0	50.0	50.0
	Post-test	70	50.0	50.0	100.0
	Total	140	100.0	100.0	

Table 2: Academic year

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	1st year	93	66.4	66.4	66.4
	2nd year	41	29.3	29.3	95.7
	3rd year	6	4.3	4.3	100.0
	Total	140	100.0	100.0	

Table 3: Age and gender of students

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	16–18	44	31.4	31.4	31.4
	19–22	81	57.9	57.9	89.3
	23–28 >	15	10.7	10.7	100.0
	Total	140	100.0	100.0	
Valid	male	53	37.9	37.9	37.9
	female	87	62.1	62.1	100.0
	Total	140	100.0	100.0	

post-test was the 'quality of information concerning safety' ($t = -4.516$; $df = 136.787$; $p = 0.000$).

As shown in Table 5, there is a significant relationship between knowing the location of the evacuation plan and the moment of measurement. As shown in Table 2 as well, many more students know the location of the evacuation plan after the intervention (84%/70) than before (23%/70).

Table 6 shows that after the intervention more students were aware of what they should do during a calamity (pre-test 60%/70, after the intervention 81%/70). There were fewer students who undertook action themselves (pre-test 36%/70 after the intervention 17%/70). The number of students who did not know what they should do decreased (pre-test 4%/70, after the intervention 1%/70). These values do not show a significant difference

There is a significant relationship between knowing the location of security resources and the moment of measurement. As shown in Table 7, many more students knew the location of the evacuation plan after the intervention (70%/70) than before (17%/70).

Discussion

During the past years attention to safety and health at work has increased, partly through the influence of (European) law and Arbo covenants. Therefore it is of the utmost importance that Stenden Hotel is aware of this looking at the target group with which is worked with. The training IHM educates people who will at a certain moment in time fulfill an advisory role within the hospitality sector.

This study shows that 57.9% of all students who took part in the investigation were between 19 and 22 years old.

Within this age category (28%) is where most accidents happen during work in the hospitality sector (CBS 2009).

Another fact is that 60% of the students pointed out that they would inform the practical instructor during a calamity and 36% pointed out that they wanted to extinguish the fire themselves. The video intervention in the pre-test, however, demonstrated the opposite. No one took any action; they adopted a wait-and-see attitude. This was also supported by the fact that only 17% of the 70 students questioned did not know where all security resources are located.

Now the research question is approached: 'How should Stenden Hotel make their students more aware of their own impact on a safe working environment?'

First, the students must be aware of the elements involved in industrial safety. The goal here is to have students go from unawareness to awareness in unsafe situations.

The fact that many of us act unconsciously does not take away the fact that we should act consciously as well. 'Wanting something consciously' is not a synonym for 'exercising your own free will' – so from the fact that people often have no knowledge of their motives does not follow that free will is an illusion.

Acting voluntarily is indeed possible and can overrule unconscious motives (Kolk 2009). According to Kolk, attention is the key word.

The attention of students during training was gained from the shock effect of the displayed video fragments. Showing the serious consequences in the absence of adequate handling during an unsafe situation had a lot of impact on the students.

The goal was that the student, during an irregular situation, will act in a desired way and is able to do so as a result of the

Table 4: Pre-test and post-test scores on three indicators

		How safe do you feel in the kitchen?	Current safety awareness	Quality of information concerning safety
Pre-test	Mean	2.91	2.56	2.13
	N	70	70	70
	SD	0.558	0.605	0.588
Post-test	Mean	3.01	2.86	2.60
	N	70	70	70
	SD	0.496	0.427	0.646
Total	Mean	2.96	2.71	2.36
	N	140	140	140
	SD	0.528	0.543	0.659

Table 5: Knowledge of the location evacuation plan

	Location evacuation plan		Total
	no	yes	
Pre-test	16	54	70
Post-test	59	11	70
Total	75	65	140

Table 6: Response to a scenario

	What would you do in case a pan catches a big flame?			Total
	i don't know	I will notify the practical instructor about it and stay away from the fire	I will try to stop the fire myself	
Pre-test	3	42	25	70
Post-test	1	57	12	70
Total	4	99	37	140

Table 7: Awareness of location of security resources

	Location of security resources		Total
	yes	no	
Pre-test	12	58	70
Post-test	49	21	70
Total	61	79	140

training. The primary goal of the training is that the students will report all matters that are not normal in both a human and material way directly to a practical instructor. Another goal of the training is to have students become instinctively competent. In the post-test phase this produced significant differences.

After the training, 81% of the students indicated that they would warn a practical instructor in case of a calamity and 70% of them knew the location of the security resources. This is proven by the video intervention after the training. Before an actual fire started in the frying pan, students reacted adequately and warned the practical instructor, who could take action and prevent the fire from happening.

It is shown that training students in this way has a positive impact on industrial safety. This is very likely, but keep in mind however that no significant difference was shown in the feeling of safety which a student has! In both phases of the investigation, the students indicated that they felt safe. One cannot automatically draw the conclusion that the

student will show appropriate behaviour while having this feeling. Students are obliged to inform themselves regarding all available safety means and escape routes (module books, Bello intranet, school emergency plan, 2009), however, this does not happen in practice. Up to 23% of all students who took part in this investigation did not know the evacuation plan. Only after the training did 84% know the location of safety features.

Students are strongly influenced by the behaviour of others. They tend to need a leader, but this does not mean that they always follow the right leader. Therefore it is important that practical instructors are experts and will take the lead during calamities. They are able to urge the students to use the escape routes and to gather themselves at the appropriate places (Arbo verslag, nr. 5, 2003).

It is of the utmost importance to keep informing and training students with respect to safety. In order to take safety within Stenden Hotel to a higher level and to guarantee this safety, it is important to not train students only once but to

repeat this regularly. The power of repetition is to repeat an observation in order to emphasise the fallibility of knowledge.

This has two reasons: first to learn new knowledge and second to expand adequate knowledge (Lenin 2000). The frequency of this depends on several factors: the time available within the educational concept and the financial means. The degree of urgency and the setting of priorities for this will have to be further investigated.

From the data of the study it is possible to conclude that training of every grade and all associated functions is important since the study showed that one grade does not control more information than another grade. At the same time it was not shown significantly that students behaved with instinctive competence during the calamity. This will have to be investigated further.

The investigation took place in the kitchen department of Stenden Hotel. Of course it is very important that training be given in every department. In total practical students will have to be trained three times per department. Handing out a small BHV certificate after obtaining a positive result for a small BHV examination could stimulate students to give more attention to this topic. Maybe there is a possibility to insert this topic in the regular educational programme. This connects with the campaign Healthy Workplaces 2010–2011. The spin-off of this campaign might make a positive contribution to the image of Stenden Hotel.

In the meantime, recording of unsafe situations during these lessons can be used as an instrument for feedback to students. At the same time, these recordings can also be used as a training tool during the annual repetition of BHV trainings for practical instructors. Of course, safety is not specifically meant for one target group (students) but for everybody. Being aware of your own influence in regard to this is of the utmost importance and not only in the working environment. Reacting alertly and adequately can be of vital importance. Prevention is better than cure.

Note

For more information regarding the video intervention and the images, please contact Mr J. Bossema by e-mail; bossemajan@gmail.com

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Game consumption and attitudes to hunting in the Netherlands

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In the Netherlands, per capita game consumption is low, but during autumn and Christmas, many consumers eat game, once or twice. Restaurants supply a big share of this game. Anti-hunting activism is a potential threat for the supply of game and therefore, to this part of restaurant business. The Dutch Organisation for Animal Protection (Dierenbescherming) claims that 97% of the Dutch population is opposed to hunting. This seems contradictory to the modest but widespread game consumption. The present paper explores this contradiction. By conducting street interviews, 276 usable questionnaires were obtained. 52% of the respondents consumed game, 48% didn't. Roughly a third of the respondents were opposed to hunting, another third were pro and the other third were neutral. Opponents of hunting were more numerous among respondents not eating game. Reasons for not eating game were the perceived complexity of preparation, cost and difficulty in buying game, not liking the taste and vegetarianism. Restaurants were the dominant places for game consumption, indicating that the perceived complexity of game preparation limits home consumption. Possible explanations for the contradiction between the present research and the report ordered by Dierenbescherming are explored. Differences in methodology and lack of information about hunting possibly play an important role. The paper concludes with recommendations for the restaurant industry.

Keywords: animal protection, restaurant offerings, meat eating, anti-hunting activism, consumer opinion survey

Introduction

Although in industrialised countries practically all food comes from agriculture, many people want to eat 'something from the wild' like mushrooms, wild vegetables, and game. The intensity of this eating from the wild is different per country – the Dutch are among the smaller consumers of wild foods (Schulp et al. 2014), but at least they eat some game.

The restaurant industry plays an important role in game consumption. In autumn, many restaurants offer special game arrangements. Just one successful example is the East Gelderland region, Achterhoek, where around 25 restaurants have been cooperating for 33 years in offering game arrangements. Availability of game is important for this segment of middle- and high-class hotel restaurants. In 2006, Blauw Research published a report ordered by the Dutch animal protection organisation Dierenbescherming. They reported that 97% of the Dutch population considered hunting as a recreational activity as unacceptable. Hunting for other purposes was considered slightly less unacceptable, but as a whole the attitude of the Dutch toward hunting was reported to be very negative. This is not completely astonishing for a country where the Partij voor de Dieren (Pro-Animal Party) is represented in Parliament.

Dierenbescherming is a powerful organisation with a membership of 180 000 and with influence with government and a variety of industries. The organisation explicitly states the objective to put an end to hunting as a recreational activity (www.nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/De_Dierenbescherming). The

commission to Blauw for the report therefore is in line with this strategic objective.

All the same, the very high anti-hunting scores reported by Blauw raised the suspicion of the authors, considering the numerous restaurant offers of game arrangements, especially in autumn and winter, and the offering of game in supermarkets during November and December, even in discounters like Lidl (personal observation). It is unlikely that restaurants and supermarkets make so much effort for just 3% of the Dutch population. Also, the endeavour of animal protection organisations aiming at a complete abolition of hunting should be a concern to restaurants that offer game arrangements. In this article, we therefore present a countercheck on the attitude towards hunting of the Dutch. We complement this with a survey on game consumption and based on the results we provide recommendations for the restaurant industry on how to cope with the reasons of many potential customers not to eat game and with the threats posed by anti-hunting activism.

Literature review

Many factors come into play when explaining the low consumption of game in the Netherlands (henceforth NL).

A first possible reason could be the low hunter participation in NL. The number of hunters in NL is the lowest in the EU, expressed as a percentage of the population: in 2010, 0.17% of the Dutch were hunters, as contrasted with 0.43% in

Germany and 12.45% in Italy (Schulp et al. 2014: 299, Table 3). Also, the hunting regulations in NL are very strict. Only six species can be hunted on a regular basis: hare, pheasant, partridge, mallard duck, rabbit and wood pigeon (Flora & Fauna Law, Ch. 5, 1.2, Title II, Hunting). In the interest of agriculture, forestry and fisheries, and to regulate the population, people with a hunting license are allowed to kill certain quantities of animals after acquiring an exemption from the relevant authorities (Flora and Fauna Law, Ch. 5, 1.3). Species for which these exemptions are frequently granted are roe deer, red deer, fallow deer, wild boar, the majority of goose species, mute swan and widgeon.

In NL, hunters are, with very few exceptions, amateurs or volunteers. Professional hunters are rare. Some of them are gamekeepers, employed by a group of sportsmen with a large hunting area; some are employed by nature protection organisations as foresters. The 28 000 hunters in NL are cooperating in approximately 300 Wildbeheerseenheden (WBE, Game Management Units) that make arrangements about quantities of game to be shot for regulation of population size, damage prevention and other non-consumption related hunting activities. These activities are performed as voluntary work; all the costs are borne by the members of the WBE. (www.knjv.nl). The majority of Dutch hunters are members of the Royal Dutch Hunters' Association (KNJV).

The hunters' activities result in an amount of home produced game of between 459 000 kg (Schulp et al. 2014, 301, Table 5) and 600 000 kg (Op den Beek 2013, 79). This is not nearly enough to provide the game consumed by the Dutch; much of the game consumed is imported. The most recent figure for game consumption in NL is 12 000 000 kg p.a. (Op den Beek 2013, 79). Included in this figure is an unknown amount of meat from farmed animals like red deer, fallow deer and sitka deer (Reinken 1995). From the data of Schulp et al. (2014), game consumption of only 7 million kg p.a. can be calculated. The difference between Op den Beek and Schulp et al. can be partly explained by the less recent data Schulp et al. used.

The modest production of game meat in NL certainly cannot be blamed on a shortage of game animals. The country has the highest density of hares in the EU and the density of roe deer is average (Schulp et al. 2014, 296). These authors do not mention the numbers of waterfowl (ducks, geese), which are considerable, e.g. 2 million hibernating geese.

The consumption of game may be modest, but apparently it appeals to many consumers, especially restaurant visitors, as something special, just once or twice a year. Among game eaters, the attitude toward hunting generally is positive (Ljung et al. 2012).

The attitude toward hunting and to eating animals in general demands some attention. For a broad theoretical concept explaining human eating habits, especially about eating meat, the idea of Harris (1985) is very useful: 'Good to think is good to eat'. To vegetarians, clearly killing animals for food is not good to think, and therefore, dead animals are not good to eat. Singer supplies a further ethical underpinning of this stance (Singer 1975, 2000). Briefly, because animals can suffer, just like humans, inflicting suffering upon animals is wrong. Singer is not specific about slaughtering or hunting: all killing of animals is equally objectionable.

Pollan (2006) describes in chapter 18 in great detail his first hunting experience and his ambiguous feelings about

hunting, even if he is a convinced omnivore. In chapter 17.4 he proposes that many people have even worse feelings about hunting than about eating slaughtered meat, although farmed animals generally are much worse off in terms of animal wellbeing than game is.

Fischer et al. (2013) deal with this subject on a broader basis. Using interviews with both hunters and non-hunters in different East African and European countries, they analysed attitudes toward hunting. They suggest that moral arguments play an extremely important role in the legitimation and delegitimation of hunting practices through discourse. In particular, study participants referred to the motives of hunters as a factor that, in their eyes, determined the acceptability of hunting practices. Moral argumentations exhibited patterns that were common across study sites, such as a perceived moral superiority of the 'moderate' and 'measured', and a lack of legitimacy of the 'excessive'. Respondents used implicit orders of hunting motives to (de-) legitimate contested types of hunting. For example, hunting as a subsistence activity is acceptable to most respondents, but many respondents reject hunting for food in cases where other sources of meat are available. Hunting as a method for regulation of game populations is acceptable as long as the hunters do not start 'playing God'.

In the matter of eating animals, Korthals (2004) takes a middle stance: he considers husbandry as a contract between man and domesticated animals: man provides food, protection and decent living conditions, and in exchange, man is ultimately entitled to eat the animals. He objects to intensive husbandry because it is, in his eyes, a breach of contract: animals get a rotten life and are eaten all the same (2004, 123–125, 137). Korthals does not deal with the acceptability of hunting.

It may be game meat, it may be slaughtered meat, in NL, as in most industrialised countries, vegetarianism is on the increase. Vegetarians are estimated at 800 000, approximately 5% of the population (Heinrich Böll Stiftung 2014). Dutch statistics about vegetarianism are hard to find. The figure of the Heinrich Böll Stiftung may be on the conservative side.

Both the report of Blauw Research (2006) and the present countercheck stand in the context of hunting, meat consumption and game consumption in NL.

The report of Blauw Research (2006) was created from a sample of 1 278 persons approached for an on-line survey; the response was 502; the response rate, therefore, was 39%. Blauw Research first asked the respondents' opinions about reasons for hunting, and then, reasons acceptable to them. Table 1 summarises the answers to these questions.

The respondents reacted with statements about hunting and in their judgments about government policy relative to hunting and game management, most were rather negative towards hunting. All these questions were introduced properly, so that the respondents knew what they were being asked about. It is remarkable that regulation of the population size (supposedly in the interest of the animals) is considered as the most acceptable reason for hunting. All reasons that are in the interest of humans, including traffic safety, are considered as much less acceptable, and hunting for pleasure as practically completely unacceptable. Blauw

Table 1: Existing and acceptable reasons for hunting (n = 502)

Reason	Percentage of respondents who think that this reason exists	Percentage of respondents who think this reason is acceptable
Regulation of population size	73	65
Prevention of damage to agriculture	58	40
Recreation	57	3
Consumption	33	14
Traffic safety	18	28
None of the above	–	21

Research applied a detailed differentiation of the respondents, based on gender, educational level and age.

Methodology

We used the method of questionnaires completed by the researchers – actually a form of extremely short and very structured interviews. This method will yield a high response rate, although the rate of non-response cannot easily be measured.

The questionnaires were taken in busy streets in the provincial capitals Groningen and Leeuwarden on three Saturdays in June 2014. In contrast to Blauw Research, we registered no respondent characteristics (gender, age, level of education) in order to keep the interviews as brief as possible. The structure of the questionnaire will become clear from the ‘Results’ section, because we closely follow this structure in presenting the results. The original interviews were conducted in Dutch. In this way, we collected 276 usable questionnaires. Population size was set at 100.000, which resulted in a sample size of 271 for 90% reliability. The 276 usable questionnaires, therefore, were enough.

The questionnaire starts with factual questions on the self-reported behaviour of the respondents concerning the consumption of game. Only the last question addresses the opinion of the respondents.

Data analysis limited itself to simple counting of the answers and calculating the different responses as percentages of the entire population or as a percentage of the categories ‘Eaters’ and ‘Non-eaters’.

Results

The first question was: ‘Do you ever eat game or game products?’

The result of this question is in Table 2, indicating that approximately half of the respondents (occasionally) eat game and the other half don’t.

Respondents who answered this question with ‘Yes’ are subsequently indicated as ‘Eaters’, the others as ‘Non-eaters’.

Table 3 summarises the frequency of game consumption. It is clear that for most ‘Eaters’ it is a matter of just once a year. The high frequency in seven respondents was caused by a high rate of ready-bought game pâtés and similar game containing products.

As for places of game consumption: the restaurant is dominant (Table 4). Not many game eaters venture home eating, possibly because it implies home cooking. ‘Elsewhere’ includes eating at friends, parties, etc.

The ‘Non-eaters’ answered the question for their reasons not to eat game as summarised in Table 5.

The reason ‘too difficult’ refers to game recipes in cookery books that indeed tend to be on the complicated side.

Table 2: Do you eat game?

Response	Number of respondents	Percentage (n = 276)
Yes (‘Eaters’)	144	52
No (Non-eaters’)	132	48
Total	276	100

Table 3: Frequency of game consumption

Category	Frequency of game consumption, approximately	Number of respondents	Percentage (n = 276)
Eaters	Weekly	7	3
	Monthly	33	12
	Yearly	104	38
Non-eaters	Never	132	48
Total		276	100

Table 4: Where do ‘Eaters’ consume their game? (n = 144)

Place of consumption	Number of respondents	Percentage of game eaters (n = 144)
At home	11	8
In restaurant	87	61
In restaurant and at home	32	22
Elsewhere	14	9
Total	144	100

Table 5: Reasons for ‘Non-eaters’ not to consume game

Reason	Number of respondents	Percentage of non-eaters (n = 132)
Too difficult	18	14
Too expensive	15	11
Don’t like the taste	18	14
Vegetarian*	37	28
Other	44	33
Total	132	100

* Vegetarian: respondents who do not eat dead animals. Not further specified into vegans, etc.

'Expensive' refers to the (partly real, partly perceived) high cost of game. 'Don't like the taste' refers to the high flavour intensity of most game. Generally, the taste of many modern consumers is for tender meat with low flavour intensity. For instance, breast fillets of chicken are preferred over the legs. 'Vegetarian' is a self-explanatory reason for not eating game: if don't eat dead animals or even any animal product, you will not eat game either.

'Other' reasons were very mixed. To some respondents, it simply never occurred to them that you could eat game. Others had no idea where to buy it or how to prepare it.

The last question was about attitudes toward hunting. Table 6 gives the figures for the whole sample of respondents.

From this table, we can conclude that the opposition to hunting is considerable but by no means dominant.

When considering the attitudes in the groups of eaters and non-eaters, clear differences become visible (Table 7).

Opposition to hunting is strongest in the category 'Non-eaters'. Surprisingly, in the category 'Eaters', 20% are opposed to hunting. Apparently, to them the link between game and hunting is not clear. In spite of their game consumption, a considerable minority of the 'Eaters' is indifferent to hunting rather than positive.

Equally surprising is the high percentage of the 'Non-eaters' who are not opposed to hunting: either neutral or even in favour. This attitude might be explained as: 'hunting is fine with me as long as I don't have to eat the brutes – because 'I don't like the taste or cooking is too difficult'. On the other hand, the number of those who are opposed to hunting (72) is greater than the number who declared to be vegetarians (37 respondents, see Table 5); therefore, 35 non-eaters are opposed to hunting but do eat other dead animals.

Discussion

The present research reveals that opposition to hunting is not nearly as great as the report by Blauw Research (2006) states. This must be due to several differences in methodology. For a start, Blauw created a representative sample of

1278 persons first. These people were approached on-line and asked to complete the survey, but the decision to do so was beyond the control of Blauw Research. With the response rate being only 502 persons, 39% of anti-hunt respondents may be over-represented among these 502 people. In the present research, the percentage of anti-hunt respondents is 37% (Table 6); therefore, this might be a likely explanation.

The present research did not have to deal with the problem of non-responses. Of course, as long as an interviewer was busy with one respondent, dozens of potential respondents were passing by, but this cannot be counted as non-response.

Another difference between Blauw and the present research is in the nature of the questions. In the present research, we started with questions about facts: eating game at all and frequency and place of eating game. Only after these questions, were the 'Non-eaters' asked about their reasons not to eat game. Only the final question asked for an opinion: 'Are you for or against hunting, or are you neutral?' Here, we got the amazing figure of 20% of the 'Eaters' who declared themselves to be opposed to hunting. For this we do not have a decisive explanation. It might be a kind of socially desirable answer, leading to this inconsistency, much like a character from a Dutch comic: 'Of course I want to be a vegetarian all day, just not during dinner' (Studio Jan Kruis 2007: 24).

This is in stark contrast with the approach of Blauw: starting immediately with opinions and continuing to ask for ever more detailed opinions instead of facts. In this way, the danger of socially desirable answers is immanent.

However, the main weakness in the approach of Blauw is this: in line with the strategy of Dierenbescherming, they start immediately with a question about hunting as a recreational activity ('shooting for fun'). This question smacks of framing: people are inclined to adapt themselves to the usage presented to them (Rijksoverheid 2014) and the question is likely to bring about indignation about hunting in general. Although many respondents are somewhat more lenient about other objectives for hunting, the tone has been set: hunting is wrong (see also Fischer et al. 2013). Meanwhile, the respondents have never been informed that the hunters perform all the more acceptable forms of hunting as volunteers, in their spare time and at their own expense. In NL there is no 'hunting for pleasure'. The whole research is based upon a wrong assumption.

The present research gives a more realistic picture of the attitude toward hunting than Blauw Research has provided. All the same, there is no room for self-satisfaction among hunters, wholesalers of game and restaurant owners. The opposition to hunting is considerable and is backed by very powerful and well-funded organisations that have the ear of politics and the media. A further handicap for the hunting and game consuming community is the small volume, both in terms of kilograms and the amount of money involved and certainly also in terms of the number of hunters (Schulp et al. 2014).

In the present sample, vegetarians may be over-represented: they make up 13% of the sample, which is well above the 5% given by the Heinrich Böll Stiftung (2014). The high level of game meat consumption and the high level of support for hunting therefore cannot be explained by an underrepresentation of vegetarians.

Table 6: The attitude toward hunting of the whole sample ($n = 276$)

Attitude	Number of respondents	Percentage ($n = 276$)
In favour of hunting	89	32
Neutral toward hunting	86	31
Opposed to hunting	101	37
Total	276	100

Table 7: The attitude toward hunting, differentiated between 'Eaters' and 'Non-eaters'.

Attitude	Number of respondents		Percentage of the category	
	Eaters ($n = 144$)	Non-eaters ($n = 132$)	Eaters ($n = 144$)	Non-eaters ($n = 132$)
In favour of hunting	63	26	44	20
Neutral toward hunting	52	34	36	26
Opposed to hunting	29	72	20	54
Total	144	132	100	100

Limitations and recommendations for further research

The present research builds upon interviews taken in the north of NL. Even if the interviews were conducted in an urban setting, the presence of country-based people might have influenced the results. It is not to be discounted that in the strongly urbanised Western part of the country results could have been different.

Interviewing restaurant owners who focus on game dishes might be a valuable complement to the present research.

Recommendations for industry

The present research provides insight into the reasons for the limited game consumption of many 'Eaters' and for the reasons of most 'Eaters' to consume their game in restaurants rather than at home. This probably mirrors the opinions of part of the 'Non-eaters' that game preparation is difficult. Organising workshops for 'Easy Game Cooking', demonstrating that a game stew is just as easy to prepare as a beef stew, might be a worthwhile activity for restaurants, at the same time strengthening the relationship with the customers and stimulating them to taste the more complex preparations in the restaurant.

The problem 'I don't like the taste' is less easy to solve. It is worth trying actively to educate the customers, making them try game pâté, for example, so that they grow gradually accustomed to the taste, and hopefully learn to appreciate it.

Some 'Non-eaters' did not know where to obtain game. Partly, this problem is solving itself due to supermarkets that in season have game on offer. In order to stimulate the consumption of local game, hunters might exert themselves to become more visible, especially when they have difficulty in getting a good price for their game.

Finally, the KNJV will hopefully be in a position further to extend their information activities to the general public and to highlight the advantages of game, both from a gastronomic and nutritional perspective.

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Women entrepreneurship in developing countries: A European example

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This research investigates women small business entrepreneurship in Albania. The purpose is to provide contextual information to potential future (women) entrepreneurs about how to get into business and overcome challenges. The 11 interviewed Albanian women entrepreneurs explain how they survive a difficult patriarchal society. Contemporary developments in Albania are explained and a comparison is made of recent entrepreneurship research. The results of the research show seven themes: (1) strong relationship between previous experiences and the decision to become self-employed, (2) influence of educational and family background on women's motivation and career development, (3) gender issues relating to start-up and operating of businesses, (4) major impact of gender on financial related issues, (5) differences in creating networks between men and women, (6) perceived negative career influence because of being women, and (7) similarities with the contextual characteristics of successful Dutch entrepreneurs as found in recent research (Gehrels 2012). Overall conclusion: Albania is developing but still has challenging conditions for women small business entrepreneurs. Further research is suggested in other developing countries.

Keywords: women entrepreneurship, small businesses, Albania, gender challenges

Introduction

The second OECD Conference of Ministers responsible for SMEs (2004) stipulated the need for researchers to address women entrepreneurship in small and medium-sized enterprises. Attention is needed for the matter because women entrepreneurship has been identified as an enormous untapped source for future economic growth. Furthermore, the participation of women in entrepreneurship has traditionally been significantly lower than that of men. As a group, women – and their potential contributions to economic advances, social progress and environmental protection – have been marginalised (OECD 2012).

Sixty to ninety percent of all companies in the tourism industry sectors' 'hotels' and 'travel agencies' can be categorised under SMEs or even micro-enterprises (Keller 2005). It is therefore fair to say that the issue of women entrepreneurship in SMEs is very important for the tourism industry and its further development. The OECD (2004) concluded that better qualitative information, besides better statistics, is needed to profile women entrepreneurs. Research into the barriers to start-up and growth will create more awareness of the enormously important role of women entrepreneurs for the future of worldwide economy and the tourism industry in particular.

Since SMEs are also considered as the major drivers of economic growth in developing countries, it makes it even more interesting to look at women entrepreneurship in countries like Albania (Europe's poorest country). The issue of entrepreneurship for women in Albania remains challenging, and limited research is available (UN Women Jobs 2013). Beqo (2008) looked into women entrepreneurship in her home country, Albania, and came up with findings about the

situation based on the perceptions of 11 women entrepreneurs in the capital city of Tirana. These entrepreneurship narratives are compared here to materials that became available after the initial research took place. The purpose of this research paper is to provide more, although moderate, enlightenment about one of the most closed countries in Europe and its business climate for women small-business entrepreneurs.

Literature review

The role of women in society has evolved over time and the male-female relationship has changed significantly over the past decades. Historically, women's responsibility was to look after the children and to take care of the household, which in today's society, fortunately, is no longer the sole case (McClure 2009). At the beginning of the 20th century more job occupations became open to women. The first policewoman was appointed in Los Angeles in 1910. Even though it was still uncommon for married women to have jobs at the beginning of the century, WWII changed this significantly. Women had to work while the men were in the war away from home and this further progressed after the ending of the war (Lambert 2012).

One of the acknowledged reasons for women to become self-employed is the glass-ceiling phenomenon. Most of the time, women start their own businesses after they have encountered institutional barriers and gender discrimination in their previous work positions. Hisrich and Brush (1983) reported that 42% of entrepreneurial women become involved in a new venture due to job frustration in their previous position. Women choose to become entrepreneurs more often than men, and as reasons they cite a better work-life balance

and economic necessity as the main motivations for starting a business (OECD 2012).

A woman entrepreneur is defined as a female who has initiated a business, is actively involved in managing it, owns at least 50% of the firm and has been in operation one year and longer (Buttner and Moore 1997). According to this definition, it is clear that to qualify as a woman entrepreneur the willingness is needed to start an activity, to be able to manage it and to be involved in it. Related to the changes in the global market and the continuous flow of information, the importance of networking has to be taken into account. Women are sometimes excluded from informal networks and consequently lack access to real-time information through the grapevine (Buttner and Moore 1997). Both women and men benefit similarly from associations created by their networks, although women's networks differ from men's networks in the sense that women consider personal and emotional connections more important than men.

Another important point to consider is the motivation of women to be self-employed. Monaci (1998) identified as the dominant factors that influence motivation of women entrepreneurs to be between 'compulsion' factors ('starting out of necessity') and 'attraction' factors ('seeing entrepreneurship as an opportunity'). As one of the 'attraction factors' self-employment can be seen as a way to supplement an inadequate household income. Women search for opportunities such as self-employment in order to increase the level of income which otherwise may be insufficient to meet their needs. Women get attracted to entrepreneurship because of the flexibility it can give to balancing work and family responsibilities. Entrepreneurship provides a channel for women deciding to leave dependent employment in organisations where they often have frustration in their work and lack of opportunities to progress. On the other hand, 'compulsion' factors can relate to a search for independence and autonomy in work, and for professional self-fulfillment. Entrepreneurship for women means more economic freedom, asset and property ownership, decision-making, and therefore greater economic empowerment (UN Women Jobs 2013).

The entry of women into entrepreneurship seems to be a complex mix of constraints and opportunities, of external impulses and subject aspirations. The main sector preferred and attracting women entrepreneurs is the service sector (Bruni et al. 2005). The tendency for choosing the service sector is not random but has particular reasons:

- women mostly have knowledge of and experience in the service sector
- when they lack specific technical skills it tends to keep women from starting businesses in the manufacturing and high tech sectors
- because of difficulties in obtaining financial resources, women choose low capital activities, like those in the service sector.

Fay and William (1993) consider the idea that the greater need of women to balance work and family commitments may make entrepreneurship more appealing than salary generating work to some women. Even though self-employment often requires long workdays, it can also offer the possibility for greater flexibility in structuring the day, which is similar to findings among Dutch small business entrepreneurs (Gehrels 2012). This can be considered an important factor, which

influences the decision making for those women who have family and are willing to achieve their goals as well. In contrast, Bruni et al. (2005) define gender as a linguistic artifact, a theoretical framework, a feminist invention, an effect or a consequence of a system of difference, as well as a quasi-object whose meaning is enacted in appropriate situations.

This research into women entrepreneurship focuses on Albania, a parliamentary republic in southeastern Europe. Albania was a communist country for more than 50 years, in which Enver Hoxha's dictatorship was the most consistently Stalinist of the socialist regimes in Europe and together with that of Romania, the most brutal. Centralisation was maximal, politically and economically. Zickel and Iwaskiw (1994) explained the way of governing in Albania as where isolation from the outside world was achieved through a combination of enormous restrictions on movement and a government stranglehold on the dissemination of information. The Marxism feminism school makes a strong claim about the relationship between a woman's domestic labour and her market labour. This is a key determinant in understanding the disadvantaged economic position of women compared to men in Albania as a Stalinist society (Butler 2003).

According to INSTAT (2005), Albania has the youngest population in Europe. More than 39% is under 25 and the median age is 31.2 (CIA 2013). It is the poorest country in Europe (ranked 120 on a world level) with the highest level of unemployment and the lowest GDP per capita income. The communist government's first priority on coming to power in 1945 was restraint of private ownership. Collectivisation of land began in 1946; by 1967 private agriculture and properties had been eliminated. To fulfill its second most important objective of full employment, it was necessary to disguise unemployment by over staffing. Much of the surplus was carried by the agricultural sector in which 50% of the workforce worked. Industry was primarily based on mineral extraction and consumer goods manufacture. In the last months of communist rule in early 1991, there was almost total economic breakdown (Zickel and Iwaskiw 1994).

At the end of 1995, according to INSTAT (2005), private enterprises run by women constituted 21% of the total compared with 79% conducted by men. The percentage of women owners is growing and at present women own 25.7% of businesses (UN Women Jobs 2013). The percentage of business ownership in Albania is significantly lower than commonly in developed countries. For example, in the UK 48% of female entrepreneurs own businesses in the service sector, compared with 36% of male entrepreneurs (Small Business Service 2003).

The largest number of registered businesses is in the capital Tirana with 31% and a smaller percentage in the other nine cities (Bezhanj 2001). INSTAT (2005) notes that 85% of businesses are in urban areas and 15% in rural. The women's businesses are concentrated in commerce, services, and less in other sectors. The reasons for the high percentage of women in commerce and services are connected to the system of privatisation in the early 90s that passed the shops or property to the shop assistants, who were mainly women. This system has been further developed into family business with their spouses. Women working in the service sector, especially those with a university degree, are more professionalised to offer their services on a private-business basis (Bezhanj 2001).

Education is one of the values that has traditionally been looked up to in Albanian society, especially by women since the communist regime. Albanian women in general have higher educational standards than men.

In recent years, significant progress has been made in developing the national legislation to promote the protection of women's rights as basic human rights, and encourage equality between men and women in economic and public life. The Albanian government has legally sanctioned equality between men and women as a subject of law, and women now enjoy equal treatment while having equal rights and obligations. As far as international documents are concerned, the Constitution, in Article 122, Section 2, states expressly the supremacy of ratified acts over domestic laws that are at variance with these acts or agreements (Fullani 1999). According to the Ministry of Work and Social Affairs (2005), the platform of the Albanian government on the equality between men and women for the period, 2002–2005 has the following major directions: (1) gender equality in power and decision making; (2) economic and social affairs; (3) health, and (4) education. Even with the existence of legislation on women's rights today, Albania still is going through a transitional period. The present lack of political mechanisms to effectively enforce existing laws has resulted in drastic gender inequality, which directly affects the efficiency of the economic development process. Gender stereotypes and traditional mentalities, especially patriarchal ones, defend the structural inequality between men and women and the unequal power relations between them.

Violence against women may appear in the workplace as well. This kind of violence, even though in many cases not recorded in judicial decisions, exists in many forms. As Bezhani (2001) stated, the reluctance of women to denounce this kind of violence has to do with the fear of losing their jobs, as it is known that over 85% of managers at workplaces are men. It is a fact that women by having fewer possibilities in finding a job position try to maintain what they have despite the discrimination towards them. Economic violence is another form of abuse in which women are the major victims. Traditionally men have controlled and dominated the financial income of the family, and have enjoyed the power of making financial decisions in the family. The patriarchal mental picture of Albanian society and the evaluation of women as untrustworthy figures affect money matters. The current practices and approaches of men in many cases and areas create the mentality that property belongs to men and that a woman cannot enjoy the right to property, even though such a legal right in fact exists. This is a dangerous suppression of women's substantive rights, which hinders women's entitlement to ownership (Bezhani 2001).

Positive signs of Albania becoming more open and accessible for the rest of the world can be found in the past few years. Tourists visiting Albania claim to experience an unexpectedly open atmosphere, improved infrastructure and entrepreneurship in the service industry, making a strong effort to please their customers (Janssen 2013). The American Hotel and Lodging Educational Institute (AHLEI), the world's biggest provider of training courses for the hospitality industry, became active in Albania between 2011 and 2013 with the help of USAID. In order to improve professionalism in Albania's hospitality sector, AHLEI established working partnerships with the University

Marin Barleti (UMB) to set up diploma programmes in tourism and with the Destination Management Organization (DMO) to offer certified hospitality training programmes for working professionals (AHLEI 2013). In line with positive signals coming from Albania, the UN Women in July 2013 started an application procedure for an international consultant (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP 2013). who is expected to promote women entrepreneurship in Albania.

Methodology

To explain the nature of women entrepreneurship in Albania, we considered a sample of 11 women entrepreneurs in the capital Tirana. Tirana was chosen because the chances for finding entrepreneurs who would be able and willing to speak to the researcher could be expected in an urban environment. Semi-structured interviews were done in 2007 by the female native Albanian researcher in order to have a trustworthy interview setting in which the women entrepreneurs would be willing to share their experiences. In Table 1 below, age, education, marital status, family composition (children), and type of small business of the 11 respondents are given.

The transcripts of the interviews were analysed one by one and themes were generated through reading and re-reading. The themes were put into a structure to identify their meaning and relevance. In 2013 the co-author of the research went back to the literature which included research among entrepreneurs in the Netherlands (Gehrels 2012). He compared the Albanian women entrepreneurs' narratives to the contextual characteristics of successful Dutch small business entrepreneurs. Furthermore, recent publications were consulted to investigate what the current situation was in Albania. Finally, an international expert on Albania was interviewed to verify the findings. This second round of investigation was aimed at putting the original interviews into a broader perspective.

Results

The 11 interviews generated seven important themes.

- (1) A strong relationship exists between Albanian women's previous employment experiences and the decision to become self-employed.

This relationship is derived from the negative atmosphere that the women faced while being employed. Respondent 2 expressed the feeling in detail:

The women had to work very hard ... at home and with their children. Working schedule started at 6 a.m. ... So working ... was very hard because at the same time I had to send my kids to the nursery at 5.30 a.m. and leave them with the guard or cleaner of the nursery as the nursery used to open at 6 a.m. After that I used to ride the bicycle to work which was few km from my house. Work was asked on 8 formats during the 8 hours shift so I could not leave anything for tomorrow because I would be labeled a deserter and could end up in prison for agitation and propaganda up to 10 years. If you could not finish the job you would be given a warning and if it happened for a second time it could have penalty consequences. The stress working at that time was immense. [Respondent 2]

Table 1: Respondents

	Age	Education	Marital & children	Small business
1.	32	university degree (UD), law	Married & none	Consultancy in law
2.	44	UD, engineering	Married & 2	Constructing firm
3.	34	UD, economics, finance	Divorced & 1	Fashion atelier
4.	40	UD, economics/ planning/commerce	Married & 3	Insurance agency
5.	26	UD, foreign languages	Married & 1	Language centre
6.	21	UD, electronic engineering	Married & 1	Consultancy: licenses & brands
7.	29	UD, chemical engineering	Married & 1	Decorating & colour advising
8.	43	UD, medicine	Married & 2	Medical service centre
9.	30	UD, design	Married & 1	Beauty parlor
10.	37	UD, history, geography	Married & 2	Coffee bar & kindergarten
11.	30	UD, economics, business	Married & none	Advisor in home appliances

Important and vivid issues such as low salary, long working hours and insufficient time which could be dedicated to family and children, made it unpleasant for the women to be employed. Another respondent who owns two small businesses explains the motives to start her own businesses like this:

My sole motivation in opening my first business was to go out of the house and work ... to have my own money and to be independent economically ... for my second business it was passion to take care for kids and to teach them. [Respondent 10]

Entrepreneurship appears to be almost like a necessity, although there is also the pull factor of being able to build a more balanced life in terms of family commitments.

(2) Educational and family background influence women's motivation and career development.

The women entrepreneurs interviewed considered it indispensable to have at least a university degree in order to obtain the skills needed to be able to perform independently and successfully in the market. Respondent 1 made an appeal about the matter to all females:

I would like to make an appeal to all females in general and the new generation in particular to dedicate more time to education because it's the door that will open the opportunities for independence and self-respect as well as respect from others. [Respondent 1].

Secondly, family business inheritance, guidance and trade tradition, inspired and motivated the women entrepreneurs in this research. However, more than just for inspiration they evaluate their families as an enormous help in their success. This logic originates from the tradition in Albanian society, in which the phenomenon of collectivity among family members is visible and strong, as described by this woman:

I see my business as the main tool to maintain my family as well as to invest for my children's future in education and life. At the same time I see my business as a strong family business which I will pass on to my children. [Respondent 2]

On the other hand, the women's motivation for being economically independent especially from their spouses visualises and marks the influence and pressure by men, and the desire and needs of women to minimise this influence in order to live a harmonious life. Thirdly, it became clear that some of the women entrepreneurs benefitted from some international exposure of either studying or working abroad, or in

international contexts. Respondent 1 even encouraged her husband to take the opportunity for getting work experience abroad despite the fact it meant they would see each other rarely:

Yes, I know the value that I have gotten from a foreign diploma, in Albania, and this is why I encouraged him [her husband] to take this initiative. [Respondent 1]

(3) There are gender issues in Albania relating to start-up and operating of businesses.

Arbitrary taxes are imposed by the Tax Institution in Tirana, at which the employees are mainly men. The mistreatment was described as follows:

Whenever I went there, they would see me as a female and they would go forever with my documents. For example, when I needed to pay the taxes they would immediately charge the maximum taxes. [Respondent 3]

This is usually done in order just to exploit the women entrepreneurs by considering them as weak and without protection and this shows how gender influences the professional development of women entrepreneurs. The fact that they, as a solution to the problem, try to find a man figure to get along with the employees in order just to get a fair treatment means that they find it impossible to fight for the right themselves. The same scenario as described applies to the License Institution. In their private lives, women entrepreneurs do not hesitate to build a family and have children. Most of them have argued with their spouses, who in the beginning showed scepticism about their abilities to enter the entrepreneurial field. One respondent remembers:

At the beginning it was difficult not to see myself as a slave but as a female. [Respondent 10]

These arguments most of the times were the biggest challenge to face, not only in the beginning but also on the long run. Husbands of women entrepreneurs started appreciating them and their professional aptitude only after seeing the financial wellbeing coming from their wife's business, as this respondent stated:

... my husband ... is still surprised that everything is the fruits of my own work and determination ... [Respondent 7]

It stipulates the strong personalities of the women entrepreneurs if one realises how they persisted in their efforts, despite the enormous challenges they faced.

- (4) The impact of gender on financial related issues is obvious and vivid.

Finance and specifically acquiring the start-up capital is a big challenge for any entrepreneur starting a new business. In Albania the banks give loans only through mortgage on owned objects like houses, cars, etc. Because of being in a patriarchal society, the properties that a family owns are always registered in the name of the man of the house, meaning in the name of the spouse, thereby leaving starting women entrepreneurs without any financial possibilities. Respondent 11 states about this:

Then again it was my brother who was working and he took the credit from the bank. At those moments I was very angry because ... how can it be that I can't take the credit ... for the starting of my business?

[Respondent 11]

To overcome the situation, the Albanian women entrepreneurs looked for capital to be acquired from family relations, like the respondent mentioned in the example, or by saving every penny they could earn themselves.

- (5) The creation of female networks is not done in the same way as male networks.

It is important to note that networks created by women were suggested to them in most cases by their parents or spouse. The women entrepreneurs generally preferred women networks as Respondent 2 explained:

I feel more comfortable when I work with women but in my line of work there are more men than women. I feel satisfied when a deal or work relation has to do with women. For example when the finance manager is a woman, our communication goes more smoothly, the payments are done on time without reminding ...

[Respondent 2]

The women entrepreneurs usually accepted the suggested networks and built a strong connection with them because of the trust generated by the personal support from their source of information. In addition, the unavailability and non-existence of alternatives most of the time pushed them into creating connections with male networks as these are the dominant ones in the market. Some women entrepreneurs actually preferred to work with men and explicitly had a lower appreciation for dealing with other women in creating their networks.

- (6) Women entrepreneurs consider gender to have a negative influence on their career.

The women entrepreneurs in this research see their position in Albanian society and in the business environment in general as awkward and under stressful conditions, as this respondent described:

Most of females here are discriminated related to males because they [the husbands] think that we are their property. [Respondent 7]

Nevertheless, concerning their success, women feel changes in their position compared to men, which generates greater appreciation for them. In their perception, however, it will take another few years to narrow the gap. On the other hand, controversially, women seem to have been producers themselves of this aggressive society towards them and their emancipation. Respondent 6 defined the feeling as follows:

The females themselves are a product ... of this society ... they ask to be treated the same but they do not treat themselves the same ... I do not blame them but in some cases they are responsible for it themselves.

[Respondent 6]

In order to express their force, capability and determination, they defined themselves not as successful women but instead profile more like men. This phenomenon of trying to resemble the dominant part of society occurs because of the patriarchal nature and pushes true women's influence in the wrong direction in order to achieve empowerment. This situation emphasises the ongoing strong influence of men within Albanian society.

- (7) Similarities with successful entrepreneurs' contextual characteristics (Gehrels 2012).

Interestingly, there appeared to be significant overlap between the concepts and theoretical themes as Gehrels found in his research into successful Dutch entrepreneurs and the Albanian women entrepreneurs. The elements of strong will, determined and persistent individuals highly connected to their direct social environment, a strong striving for independence as well as the ability to face challenges successfully were shared. Differences appeared in the sense that the Albanian women entrepreneurs managed to overcome the enormous pressures of a highly traditional and 'women discriminating' patriarchal societal structure. Successfully dealing with the remainders of the former Stalinist communist environment presented the entrepreneurs as extremely strong individuals who face and manage their lives. Comparing their stories to the entrepreneurs in the Gehrels (2012) research confirms that these Albanian women entrepreneurs are true examples of small business initiative and entrepreneurship.

Finally, it can be said that gender strongly influences the entrepreneurship participation of women within the Albanian service industry. There are two major factors: work setting and social/personal factors. Obviously differences in pay between men and women, discrimination in hiring practices, lower access to financial and loans services and violence in the work place make employed women consider other ways to escape the workforce and to build up their career. Furthermore, the other major factors influencing women entrepreneurs' entrance into the market are: the difficult situation in terms of ownership rights for women and balancing professional with family life. Educational background (having a degree) and family inheritance are seen as important drivers for entering the market and success of women entrepreneurs.

Conclusion

It is important to mention that the aggressive working environment, unfair and risky, pushed and sometimes forced Albanian women to think about alternative ways to develop their careers, such as becoming self-employed. The findings on this issue confirm the phenomenon mentioned by Hisrich and Brush (1983) where they found that women become involved in their new venture due to the job frustration generated in their previous positions. Hence, the decision to become self-employed looks like a necessity and a forced choice. On the other hand, as Fay and Williams (1993) stated, the greater need of women to balance work and family commitments may

make entrepreneurship more appealing than employed work to some women. Entrepreneurship then also becomes a mode to balance professional and personal lives.

Secondly, according to INSTAT (2005), women in general have a higher education level than men, which is confirmed in the sample of this research. All the eleven interviewees were highly educated and held university degrees. They acknowledged the importance of education to their career developments. The biggest obstacle that the women entrepreneurs had to overcome was the challenge to get funding for their new enterprises. Mostly parents, friends and family members were the sources providing them with the starting capital. Getting funding from official institutions proved to be virtually impossible because of the high interest rates and substantive paperwork needed to get through the application process.

Thirdly, several authors have referred to the situation that traditionally men have controlled and dominated the financial incomes of families. Thereby the men have the mentality that property belongs to them, and this denies women's right of ownership. This was confirmed by the research, as the majority of women entrepreneurs did not consider taking loans from banks or were not able to do so. In general, women interested in becoming entrepreneurs have few possibilities or none to be able to achieve economic independence. Choosing networks for the majority of these women is strongly related to the recommendations coming from parents, friends or important persons in their lives. This finding confirms what Buttner and Moore (1997) distinguish to be the main difference between male and female networks. Overall it can be said that the success and positioning of women entrepreneurs are strongly influenced by the sum of early experiences relating to generating awareness, education, work experience and value systems and the driving powers of the particular individual (Gehrels 2007)

The Albanian women entrepreneurs in the research were definitely influenced because of being women. The challenges faced in employment pushed them to entrepreneurship. Low salaries, long working hours, mistreatment and insufficient time for family and children were the main factors motivating them to become self-employed. The change was more a necessity than a choice. All interviewees held university degrees, which allowed them to base their careful decisions on balancing pros and cons. Women in Albania find themselves severely discriminated against by men. Becoming entrepreneurs gave women a more independent position in terms of finance and power in the relationship with spouses who usually resisted their wife's business intentions. After observing the financial benefits, spouses became more cooperative. Albanian women entrepreneurs' experiences follow what can be found in the literature and because of the extreme male dominated society in Albania they are very interesting to research. The interviews confirmed the extremely traditional and conservative values of Albanian men. This pattern is alive in many other countries in the world. Albanian women who want to start a business have to be resourceful to get financing because the banks will only sign off against property, which traditionally is owned by men.

Entrepreneurs in this research indicated that they to connect to networks, preferably women led, suggested by parents and family. In the absence of alternative (womens') networks they entered the male networks that dominate the market.

Developments in Albania appear to be moving in a positive direction when looking at the information found in recent publications. Women entrepreneurship is expected to increase in the coming years thereby benefitting from the growing exposure of Albania and the further interest of both international political organisations and commercial parties. The situation in Albania at face value is not yet as suggested in recent US research (McGrath et al. 2010): "... findings show that ... successful women and men entrepreneurs are similar in almost every respect ...".

It was interesting, though, to see that the Albanian women entrepreneurs shared many contextual characteristics with the successful entrepreneurs in the Gehrels (2012) research, but adding extra strong qualities of determination and perseverance to deal with the dark side of a communist and traditional heritage.

Recommendations

Further research is needed to uncover the nature of women entrepreneurship in other areas than the Albanian capital. Most certainly, research should be undertaken in other developing countries to compare how women entrepreneurs deal with their environment and personal situations. Because of the predicted positive impact that women's entrepreneurship will have on the SME sector and particularly in the service and tourism industry, the continuation of research efforts like in this case example is needed. The direct value of disseminating the results of this research lies in providing information to potential women entrepreneurs in other (developing) countries.

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