The relevance of the curriculum of selected Hotel Schools in South Africa in preparing students to successfully operate a commercial restaurant

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relevance of the hospitality curricula offered by universities of technology in South Africa, as sampled by the Cape Town and Central University of Technology Hotel Schools, in preparing students to be able to open and operate commercial restaurants successfully. Data for this research was obtained through qualitative and quantitative mixed methodology research methods. Interviews were conducted with thirty eight restaurateurs in Western Cape and Free State to determine what skills and knowledge would be required for graduating students in Hospitality Management to successfully open and operate a commercial restaurant. The information obtained from the restaurateurs was used to compile a questionnaire that was used to measure the skills and knowledge of a third year graduate cohort sampled from the hotel schools of the Cape Peninsula and the Central Universities of Technology respectively. The results obtained revealed that overall, third year graduates did consider themselves to have the necessary skills and knowledge to be able to open restaurants successfully.. The main problem that arose from the research was that students in general lacked self-confidence and tended to struggle to obtain the necessary finances. Recommendations from this research suggest that the University of Technology hotel schools should consider introducing more entrepreneurship and incubation programs in order to stimulate students and empower them to be more confident in participating in entrepreneurial activities, like opening their own restaurants, helping them to survive and grow their business during the start-up period when they are likely to be the most vulnerable.

Keywords: students, curriculum, business, operate, commercial restaurant

Source:http://universalwebsites.theknot.com.s3.amazonaws.com/UniversalWebsites/PageMainImage/4685024666836621/250
1963/36112352/med/reception.jpg

Introduction

South Africa (SA) has much to be proud of as a country, especially within the ever-growing tourism and hospitality industry. However the country is considered a developing country with an unemployment rate of over 23 % (Stats SA, 2012). It is with this in mind that the research focused on the probability of hotel school graduates successfully opening and operating their own businesses. Developing entrepreneurship and employment skills would in turn create more jobs and possibly in the long term, contribute to a decrease in unemployment levels in the country. The Culture, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport Sector Education and Training Authority (CATHSSETA) acknowledges that not only is the SA tourism sector the only sector that successfully increases employment opportunities (CATHSSETA, 2011), but is also one of the fastest growing sectors of the economy, as it alone is a multi-million rand enterprise, and through increases in tourism the need for food and beverage establishments has increased (CATHSSETA 2013). Statistics South Africa (Stats SA, 2009) recognizes that restaurants are one of the biggest contributors to the hospitality industry in SA. Similar trends are recognised across the world, as John and Harrison (2012) admitted that the strong hunger for restaurant growth contributed that countries like the United States of America (USA), restaurant industry's gross income which grew from $565 billion in 2009 to $660.5 billion 2012, an estimated 4% of the USA GDP. The provision of food and beverages forms a substantial part of the hospitality industry and impacts on the country's economy as a whole (Davids, Lockwood, Pantelidis & Alcott, 2008). This is reiterated by the South African Department of Commerce (SADC) which acknowledged the restaurant industry's importance to the nation's economy, with tourists spending more than R70 billion rand on food and beverages in 2012 (SADC, 2013).

Restaurants globally have opportunities to create more jobs; it was recorded that the hospitality industry was able to sustain 61 000 jobs in Britain by contributing an average of 4.2% of total investments to the countries (British Hospitality Association, 2010). The restaurant industry in the United States of America (USA) employed 13.1 million people in 2013, which is nearly 10% of the USA workforce (NRAUS, 2013a). Through direct jobs within the hospitality industry, employment was forecasted to grow from 2.15 million to 2.66 million by 2015; this forecast does not only show employment growth within the restaurant industry but also shows how the restaurant industry is able to contribute to economic growth (Orenhof, 2013). This growth rate could potentially create employment opportunities for many job seekers who are currently unemployed and whose skills-profiles match the needs of the hospitality sector (British Hospitality Association, 2010). In South Africa, restaurants are amongst the largest sub-sectors in the hospitality sector, providing 45 000 jobs and representing 7.6% of total employment within the hospitality sector in 2012 (Taal, 2012). The restaurant industry is expected to continue to thrive, showing a growth rate of 3% per year from 2013 onwards, with approximately 246 new restaurants being added per year (National Restaurant Association of South Africa (NRASA), 2013).

The aim of this article is to establish the relevance of the current National Diploma in Hospitality Management: Food and Beverage as offered by University of Technology (UoT) hotel schools in South Africa, specifically the Cape Town Hotel School (CTHS), Cape Town which forms part of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) and the Central University of Technology Hotel School (CUT), Bloemfontein. It also seeks to ascertain whether or not the curriculum is relevant to the hospitality industry's requirements to open and successfully run a commercial restaurant. To ensure the relevance of the curriculum it is necessary to determine what skills and knowledge are required to open and operate a successful restaurant, whether there is a demand for graduates to open

restaurants, and whether those graduates can ensure the operation of a successful commercial restaurant. The graduates' perception of success together with knowledge of business operating skills such as supporting computing systems, financial and operational skills, ability to strategize and plan for the future, plan marketing strategies, and basic social skills would determine the relevance of the curriculum within the hospitality industry as well as graduate readiness for operating a successful business.

Restaurant business success rates and challenges

Many students entering hospitality programmes have a vision of owning their own successful business (Bilderback, 2008), but to operate a successful restaurant business is one of the hardest of business operations (Mealey, 2013a). Although there may be a high demand for restaurants globally, the number of restaurant failures remains on the increase; White (2011) stated that one out of every four restaurants closed during the first year of operation and that 60% of new restaurants will either close down or change ownership within the first three years of operation. Von Ulmenstein (2013) added that one of the main causes why restaurants have closed down in South Africa was excessive rentals restaurant owners are required to pay. Even though the hospitality sectors shows strong growth, it is estimated that one-third of new restaurants still went bankrupt or closed down due to reasons including undercapitalization, failure to identify a concept, or disillusionment of the owners (Cooper, Floody & McNeill, 2002). Stats SA reported that by June 2012 there had been 45 more voluntary and 12 more compulsory liquidations and insolvencies recorded compared to June 2011 (Stats SA, 2012). For the period January 2013 to September 2013 it was determined that 89 restaurants closed down in Cape Town alone (Von Ulmenstein, 2013). In order for a restaurant to achieve success, it needs a new concept which is viable and distinct within the marketplace, conveniently

located in areas with sufficient demand generators, and staffed by competent employees and management (Angelo, Camillo, Daniel, Connolly & Kim, 2008). Although the operating environment of a restaurant remains challenging, restaurants are more likely to be successful if management had undergone sufficient training to successfully react to all economic conditions to ensure that food, beverage and service provided is of a good quality and standard (John & Harrison, 2013).

A successful restaurant not only needs all the skills and knowledge that other small business owners need to succeed (Rainford & Bangs, 2001), but also good organizational skills, excellent inter-personal skills and proper academic guidance to ensure service quality excellence is always maintained. (International Hotel School (IHS), 2013). Poor management could be related to poor financial contributions, inadequate accounting records, limited access to necessary information or a general lack of good managerial advice (Parsa, Gregory & Terry, 2013). Studying and learning how to enter the restaurant business as well as dedication and a passion for hospitality are crucial to achieving success and through background research one can determine factors that could influence success of the restaurant in the midst of competition (Writing, 2013). However, although much of what is learnt in the restaurant business comes from hands-on experience. Thus graduates need to make the most of given opportunities and ensure they are sufficiently educated to exceed customer expectations (IHS, 2013).

The South African economy creates the environment for opportunities for entrepreneurs to start-up businesses as barrier entries are low (Reconnect Africa, 2013). Opening a restaurant can also appear appealing and a passion for the product, industry experience, or an opportunity to purchase a business contributes to entrepreneurs opening businesses (Mealey, 2013b). As the restaurant business is in a highly competitive environment, serving good

quality food is insufficient (Joseph, 2013), new restaurateurs often lack the necessary business experience to manage their restaurants due to lack of experience in the field, making the business vulnerable to failure (Parsa et al., 2013). Restaurateurs often struggle to adapt and understand market trends which are constantly changing, as well as not having the passion or knowledge to balance business and personal demands (Parsa et al., 2013). Operating a successful restaurant is more complex than expected and restaurants often fail due to lack of education and industry knowledge (Da Silva, 2014). Also, consideration of purchasing an already established restaurant or a completely new start-up concept shows risks on both sides and restaurateurs must overcome challenges such as negative customer perceptions or high start-up costs and building a reliable reputation (Joseph, 2013). Restaurateurs often focus on the business plan and interaction on social media including Twitter and Facebook as useful marketing tools to track business performances and customer reactions (Schrambing, 2009).

Obtaining a diploma or degree does increase graduates' success rates, and people with a higher level of education are 25% more likely to secure a higher income post-graduation (StatsSA, 2013). However, having a qualification and experience does not necessarily guarantee success, but could indeed increase the likelihood thereof (Sutherland, 2013). Graduates are often in debt prior to completing their studies due to various socio-economic demands, and are often put in a negative position when starting their careers (Littlejohn & Watson, 2004). This personal debt is often viewed as a lack of financial responsibility from the bank's perspective, and can inhibit future entrepreneurs from securing a loan (Da Silva, 2014). Although graduate employment is promising, the restaurant industry often undermines the formal qualifications offered by universities, as they believe graduates generally lack experience within the workplace and are unable to show experience in

management positions (Parsa et al., 2013). Further arguments have suggested that both educators and industry should work together to make the restaurant industry more attractive through suitably preparing graduates' expectations and providing opportunities to develop skills and knowledge to build a long-term career (Watson, 2008).

To ensure the success of a restaurant, restaurateurs should be able to multi-task, solve problems effectively, and be able to implement proper control measures on food and labour costs, employee turnover, and ensure consistency in food and service (Angelo et al., 2008). Essential competencies for good management include ability to work under pressure, striving to achieve a positive working relationship with employees, developing good customer relations, effective communication skills, demonstrating poise, a professional appearance and being able to solve guest problems with understanding and sensitivity (LeBruto & Murray, 2013). Additional skills such as accountancy and numeracy, computer literacy, small business management, marketing and entrepreneurship are necessary to aid the implementation of effective strategies and support decision-making processes (Whitelaw, Barron & Buultjens, 2009). The understanding of all financial management procedures is essential to ensure capital growth and success (Sessoms, 2013). Additional attributes such as proper knowledge and skills of relevant computer systems deemed necessary to ensure effective cost controls, financial performances, and marketing measures, and to ensure quality service is provided by both back- and front-of-house (Harrison, 2013).

Hospitality schools' curriculum

Whitelaw et al. (2009) previously noted that industry and educators consider traditional management skills of prime importance and more emphasis should be given to teaching students how to apply problem solving, strategic planning, critical thinking and visionary leadership as part of the curriculum. Whitelaw et al. (2009)

state that the most essential subjects that should be taught in hospitality education include marketing, management, food and beverage management, human resource management, finance and accounting. On completion of a National Diploma in Hospitality Management in Food and Beverage Studies (NDFBM), graduates are deemed competent in basic managerial skills including communication, financial management, operations, management and cooking skills (SAQA, 2013). Graduates should have a basic understanding of restaurant infrastructure and procedures, describe and prepare the layout of food service areas, describe and perform basic skills relating to food, illustrate and perform the catering/guest cycle and explain, prepare, and render the required service related to a wide range of beverages (CPUT, 2013; CUT, 2013a).

A curriculum refers to an educational program required to develop and respond appropriately to all changes in an industry as well as understanding the educational process (Kelly, 2004). The South African Council of Higher Education (SACHE, 2013) aims to develop well-educated and skilled students who are able to compete effectively within the economy through creating a platform to integrate all higher education qualifications in the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) was established through the Department of Education (DoE) to ensure good development and implementation of the NQF (SACHE, 2013). Both hotel schools used in the study are accredited by bodies including SACHE, CATHSSETA and the DHE, under the Skills Development Act (No 97 of 1998). The qualifications are registered with SAQA and are listed on the NQF to ensure graduates are trained to the highest possible standards (CPUT, 2013; CUT, 2013a). South African hospitality programs offer subjects such as accounting, finance, management and marketing to prepare students for future careers (Rahman, 2010). CATHSSETA (2013) supports the vision that skills taught to students are the definite skills required by employers and communities to ensure graduates make

use of the skills learnt. Both hotel schools maintain appropriate relations with industry to ensure training provided is current.

A hospitality curriculum focuses on providing a foundation that aids students in developing generic and transferable skills, while industry exposes students to the practical aspects involved in operating a restaurant, to provide an opportunity for students to learn in real life (Whitelaw et al., 2009). To ensure that the training offered to the students is effective and relevant in the restaurant industry, training offered should ensure the application of classroom training is effective within industry, which is why most hospitality training programs require some form of practicum or internship as part of the curriculum. This can be achieved through various training opportunities and on-the-job training (Le Bruto & Murray, 2013). Both hotel schools in this study aim to provide students with the best possible career-orientated educational opportunities by making use of WIL (Work Integrated Learning), which enables students to work in industry to obtain not only practical experience but develop managerial skills as well. Other than an apprenticeship, where work is exchanged for training, co-operative education is based on a partnership between the institution and its external stakeholders whereby students are given the opportunity to apply the learning in real-life situations (CPUT, 2015).

Both hotel schools make use of practical restaurants and kitchens, situated on campus, and students are supervised by senior, qualified restaurateurs.

Subjects like Work Integrated Learning (WIL) and Food and Beverage Practical aims not only to promote excellent teaching and learning in a practical environment but instill student values such as accountability, responsibility, respect, trust and integrity (Janse van Rensburg, 2014; Seager, 2014). Practical subjects like WIL provide students with a career-orientated educational opportunities through placing students within a practical

environment in industry that encourages them to put academic knowledge into practice and learn how to combine content from other subjects into 'real life' situations (Seager, 2014). It is essential to understand how the hospitality industry works, and even though cooking is an art, running a restaurant is a business and it is for this reason that graduates should be able to perform basic managerial functions including accounting, cost control, menu planning, and have sufficient knowledge of management and people skills, culinary skills and sufficient understanding of the legal and hygiene aspects of running a restaurant (Thompson, 2013). It is with the latter in mind that the key subjects taught at both hotel schools include Hospitality Management, Financial Management, Food and Beverage Studies and Hospitality Industry Law.

Table 1. Overview of key subjects as taught by both CTHS and CUT

Subject	CTHS Overview	CUT Overview
Hospitality Management	- Understanding business ethics - Demonstrate and execute the human relations skills (both technical and personal) for effective use in the business environment - Use the code of conduct (decision-making, delegation and leadership skills) to contribute to the growth of the business and develop an environment of fair and consistent application (Collier, 2014)	- Demonstrate a basic understanding of broad supervisory and basic management principles and concepts as well as the ethics applicable to the hospitality industry - Demonstrate a basic understanding of the internship between the different components of the hospitality and tourism industry (Rass, 2013).
Financial Management	- Demonstrate an understanding of the basic hospitality accounting principles and Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (GAAP) - Know the different types of ledgers and when they are used - Understand and prepare reconciliations used in month-end accounting procedures - Understand the use and purpose of control accounts (Davids, 2014).	- Explain why it is important for hospitality managers to understand the basic theory and practice of accounting - Explain the use of Generally Accepted Accounting Practices (GAAP) - Describe the components and interrelationship of the different categories of accounting (Couglan, 2014).
Food and Beverage Studies	- Understand basic restaurant infrastructure and procedure in order to carry out basic food and beverage service - Prepare and describe the layouts of foodservice areas - Describe and perform basic service skills relating to food - Perform and illustrate the catering/guest cycle - Demonstrate basic theoretical and practical knowledge of the origin, production methods and service skills related to alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages - Explain, prepare and render the required service related to a wide range of beverages (Naku, 2014)	- To prepare and describe basic layouts of food service areas - Describe and perform basic service skills - Demonstrate basic theoretical and practical knowledge of the origin, production methods as well as service and control skills related to alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages (Mavuso, 2014).
Hospitality Industry Law	- Experience a clear introduction of the South African Labour Law - Understand the Basic Conditions of Employments Act (2002) - Have a good understanding of the Labour Relations Act (2002) - Develop knowledge about the Unemployment Insurance Fund	- Discuss the impact of the Liquor Act (2003)(), the Tobacco Controls Act (2007) and the South African food legislation on hospitality enterprises - Discuss the different business structures available to entrepreneurs - Identify the different legal requirements (licenses, signage, Receiver of Revenue)

	- Demonstrate the understanding of the Occupational Health and Safety Act - Have a clear understanding of skills development and Affirmative Action (Kerr, 2014)	required to manage a hospitality enterprise, as well as insurance options available to entrepreneurs - Interpret and implement the legislation applicable to the management and development of human resources in the hospitality workplace - Explain the effect of common law and the Labour Relations Act (2005) on the hospitality industry (Coetzee, 2014).

Source: Author's construct

The above-mentioned subjects, as offered by both CTHS (2014) and CUT (2013b) for the three year curriculum, are regarded as essential for a graduate to be able to operate a restaurant successfully. Both CTHS and CUT offer curriculums which revolve around developing potential managers with sound operational background, whereby the learner will be capable of applying a variety of analytical and operational skills. Learners who follow the program demonstrate the learning outcomes that are identified in each subject to achieve a qualification registered at SAQA Level 6, with a minimum credit value of 360 on the NQF. However although academic instruction includes restaurant management skills, graduates still tend to lack confidence as well as the required leadership and entrepreneurial skills (Whitelaw et al., 2009). SACHE (2013) admits that the current education system does not always produce graduates who have the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to meet industry demands in respect of economic and social development within SA and this causes a mismatch between industry demands and graduate attributes. The need for more people with advanced knowledge and abilities goes beyond the demand of economic development of the country's wellbeing and it is for this reason that more experienced graduates are needed with strong disciplinary and professional capabilities to aid in creating jobs in the future (SACHE, 2013).

Methodology

Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) recommended that a research design could be used to analyse the field of the object to the study. This research was conducted at three levels and the research methodology therefore is discussed in three phases namely: 1) analyses of the research field; 2) the objectives of the research that was to be conducted; 3) the different behaviors and habits of the research agents. Both qualitative and quantitative research methods were used in this particular study.

Qualitative data was collected (during phase 1) through a literature review and interviews with focus groups. Seven participants were used in a focus group and ere asked similar questions, but were also required to give their input regarding which questions were regarded as necessary for the interview schedule. These interviews were held at the CTHS and at the CUT hotel school, lasted 30 minutes and discussions were recorded as input data. The focus groups comprised of senior restaurant managers, students who graduated with a NDFBM and had opened a restaurant, members of the two Hotel School Boards, and students currently studying to complete the NDFBM.

In phase two the researchers made use of a standard interview schedule that was pre-tested during a pilot study, which consisted of five restaurant managers to allow the researchers to regulate diverse answers in conducting interviews with restaurateurs. The interview schedule consisted of 45 open-ended questions to allow the restaurateurs to provide their personal valued input regarding each question, and to allow the researchers to obtain a clear understanding of what skills and knowledge were required to successfully open and operate a commercial restaurant. A total of 50

restaurateurs' were approached of whom 38 responded, a 78% participation rate. Of the 38 restaurants, 15 restaurants were part of a franchise and 23 were privately owned restaurants. Each restaurateur signed a letter of permission to use the data for study purposes.. Due to the nature of the research, ethical clearance was obtained by faculty of business and management sciences, CPUT, Ethics committee on 18 September 2013. The researchers ensured that the aims and objectives of the research were respected through ensuring that knowledge obtained was reliable, objective, correctly accounted for and used in a fair and confidential manner. Both hotel schools and restaurant industry give consent to conduct the research and were promoted in a positive light, participation was optional.

A quantitative approach was followed during phase three as the information obtained from phase two was used to compile a structured questionnaire that consisted of open and close ended questions to measure the capabilities of the third year hotel school graduates of the CPUT and CUT. A second pilot study that consisted of ten students was conducted to ensure that the questionnaire is relevant and clear and a structured questionnaire was used as it was considered the most efficient way of measuring and capturing the data ., due to large numbers of graduates and logistics.. In completing the questionnaires, third-year students were required to assess their own skills and knowledge compared to the required skills and knowledge recorded on the interview schedules.

Through implementing a quantitative methodology, the researchers were able to form a meaningful comparison of responses across all participants, because all the participants' skills and knowledge were measured in the same manner to ensure that the assessment was consistent. The results were recorded on the Statistical Package for Social Science (STSS) 20 program to obtain relevant statistical results.

The researchers made use of constructed validity measures to ensure that the research had meaning and to enable the researchers to answer the research questions accurately. In order to achieve content validity the researchers searched all restaurant industry and curriculum related publications to ensure that in-depth research was conducted; and conducted interviews with only those who had experience in their field of specialisation. The researchers also went through a process of pre-testing the interview schedule and the questionnaire by using a pilot study to ensure that no discrepancies occur. Reliability testing was used by the researchers through testing two universities in two different provinces to obtain a bigger research field.

Findings

The questionnaire given to the third year graduates of CPUT and CUT was used to test the students on their confidence based on their education, to open a restaurant and to determine how much thought each student had actually given to the idea.

The data obtained is presented in themes as follows:

- Student perceptions of success: the majority of students possess the necessary perception about business success, but most students were not sure how to go about determining the likelihood of a business being successful, which puts them at risk of making the wrong decisions in choosing a business venture.
- The use of supporting computer systems: the majority of students do feel confident in using operating computer skills programs such as Micros, Opera, Excel and Word, but most students do not feel competent in operating programs like Fidelio, Pastel, GAAP, Pilot, or any general payroll systems.
- Financial skills: most students felt competent in aspects of financial skills, like calculating food costs,

compiling a balance sheet and stock control, but most students also stated that they did not feel competent in convincing potential investors to invest, and conducting a feasibility study.

- Operation skills: most students feel confident in applying general operations skills, including time management, prioritizing tasks correctly and compiling menus. The only operational skill that most students felt unsure of was compiling a relevant wine list.
- Strategy skills and future planning: This revealed that the majority of students feel competent in applying strategic skills like implementing strategies to ensure that the business maximizes profits, and creating a competitive advantage.
- Marketing strategies: Most students feel competent in applying marketing skills, such as compiling a marketing plan, identifying the target markets, and setting a bench mark for a business.
- Social skills: most students feel competent in having sufficient social skills, providing traditional service skills, having sufficient people-skills, dealing with customer complaints, and the necessary problem-solving skills, being able to work in a team, communicate effectively and having both good personal orientation and leadership skills.
- Student perception of the necessary requirements in opening a restaurant: This theme revealed that even though the students have given the idea of opening a restaurant thought, the majority of students had failed in planning how they would go about obtaining the necessary finances to open the restaurant.

Even though the results demonstrated that the curriculae offered by CPUT and CUT are relevant, the results also suggested

that insufficient emphasis is placed on mentoring students to developing 'a plan of action' for opening their own restaurant. Students showed an aspiration to open their own business; 78% of students had a desire to open a restaurant, but 68% of students did not know how to go about obtaining the necessary finances. The results strongly suggest that, on average, 75% of students consider themselves having the necessary skills and knowledge to successfully open and operate a commercial restaurant, but graduates in general lack the skills to prepare properly for their business venture.

Many students tended to misinterpret the true sacrifices of running a business as only 44% were willing to work shifts at night, over week-ends, or on public holidays. All the restaurateurs who participated in the interviews indicted that in order for a restaurant to obtain true financial success it needs to be open when customers were able to access it (Eichel, 2013;Meiring, 2013) andSnyman, 2013).

There were a fair number of students who had an idea of opening a restaurant, and obtaining a manager to manage the business; but 68% of the students who indicated finding a manager, did not know how to analyze business or financial reports, which puts them at risk of not being able to see the financial risks that their idea involved. The researchers strongly feel that in order for a graduate to be able to successfully operate a restaurant, he or she should be willing to be present at the restaurant most of the time to manage the business.

The results obtained from the questionnaires suggested that students do have the right perception of business success, know how to use supporting computer systems and implement financial, operational, strategy, marketing and the requisite social skills. But even though the training provided by CPUT and CUT is sufficient, more emphases should be placed on mentoring the students to give the idea of opening a restaurant more though and stronger planning. This will

empower them even more to be successful entrepreneurs.

The researchers considered the possibility of hotel schools aiding South Africa in creating more jobs, through helping and boostingtheir restaurant entrepreneurial students in successfully opening their own commercial restaurants. In return, this would help create more jobs and assist South Africa in achieving their mellenium goal of developing 5 million new jobs by 2020 (Jordaan, 2014).

Recommendations

The researchers found that most of the students failed to start up their own restaurants as they either leave the industry or decide to work for bigger companies where they have a relatively secure source of income. During a conference held in Cape Town by Startup South Africa (Jordaan, 2014), it was indicated that South Africa is aiming to develop 5 million new jobs before 2020 and it was recognized that entrepreneurs had the ability to assist. Jordaan (2014) argued that academic institutions can contribute in enabling more entrepreneurs to open their own businesses through developing a culture that have initiate and are not scared of taking risks.

- Ndgama (2014) added that it is not enough for graduates to have a "bright idea", but this idea should be developed into a business venture that is financially liable. The researchers recommend that academic institutes should aim to develop the entrepreneurial and business skills of the students by encouraging them to develop their own business plan and a 'plan of action' in making their dream a reality.
- More emphasis, in the curriculum, should be placed in teaching students' personal financial skills and the ability to generate and save money effectively as well as the impact of poor spending habits and the effect on business success.

- Ndgama (2014) added that to achieve successful entrepreneurial and business skills, industry-related businesses need to provide more support to academic institutions. This can be done through industry involvement in the day-to day presentation of subject matter through guest speakers or by providing opportunities for students to experience relevant industry exposure through job shadowing and mentorship.
- To encourage more students to achieve their dreams, restaurant entrepreneurship programs should be made available for students who want to open their own restaurants. These programs are to act as a pilot program that follows and develops into incubation programs.
- Both hotel schools should form stronger linkages with companies such as Red Door and Business Place which can in turn assist them during the above-mentioned incubation programs.
- Restaurant owners from industry can also assist in mentorship and guidance for prospective graduate entrepreneurs.

Conclusion

The researchers are aware that the South African government is aiming to decrease the high unemployment rate and promote economic growth. Given the potential that the South African tourism and hospitality industries hold, the government can achieve their ideals through connecting the relevant links. Based on the research conducted, the researchers also strongly feel that restaurants in SA have the ability to assist government in reaching their ideal employment goals, as restaurants have the ability to create jobs employees with different levels of experience and knowledge.

The results obtained from the research strongly suggest to the researchers that universities of technology such as CPUT and CUT should partner with government

to consider the possibility of providing support though mentorship or incubation programs to third year graduates who in return would then be able to successfully open and operate commercial restaurants and employ others in the process.

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