Developing Hospitality Education in China: A Case Study of Guilin Institute of Tourism

Authors: Paul Penfold, Liu Wei, Adele Ladkin

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Paul Penfold
International School of Hospitality Studies
Nguyen Tat Thanh College
Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
Email: paulpenfold@ishs.co.uk
Phone: (84) 12250-99710

Liu Wei
Department of Foreign Languages
Guilin Institute of Tourism
Guilin, People's Republic of China
Email: lw13002@yahoo.com.cn
Phone: (86) 773 3691021

Adele Ladkin
School of Hotel & Tourism Management
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
Hong Kong SAR, People's Republic of China
Email: hmladkin@polyu.edu.hk
Phone: (852) 2766-6342

Abstract

The paper examines an attempt to develop a new hospitality management programme at the Guilin Institute of Tourism in China. Using a case study approach, the research explores the process of curriculum review, redesign and implementation of a new hotel management programme. Two areas are identified for discussion based on empirical data collection, the perceived importance of and satisfaction with different attributes relating to teaching quality and the overall programme. The views of two stakeholders are explored, students and faculty. The study concludes that Guilin Institute has made considerable improvements in programme content and delivery methods and that evaluation of this kind can offer significant improvements and lead the way for developing hospitality education in China.

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Introduction

With travel and tourism in the People's Republic of China expected to grow at an annual rate of 9.6 percent over the next decade, China will become the number one world destination for foreign tourists by 2020 (WTTC, 2008). It has also been predicted that by 2015, there will be around 200,000 lodging facilities of various kinds including about 10,000 star-rated hotels and over 500 five-star hotels across China (China Economic Net, 2008). The unprecedented growth of new hotels and developments in the tourism industry over the past decade in China has led to a sustained need for trained professionals – which in turn has created increasing pressure on its human resources' capacity. According to the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC, 2008), the industry accounted for 74.5 million jobs in 2008 - 9.6 percent of total employment in the country. However, with projections of 98.9 million people needed in the industry by 2018, China will be greatly challenged to recruit, train and develop enough people for the industry.

The growth in the Chinese tourism industry has been mirrored by an unprecedented growth in hospitality and tourism education programmes at tertiary and higher education institutions. Estimated numbers of hospitality and tourism institutions has grown from 354 (higher education institutions = 102, professional and vocational schools = 252 in 1993), to 936 (higher education = 192, professional and vocational schools = 744) in 1997 (Xiao, 2000). This figure rose to 494 higher educational institutions in 2002 offering approximately 200,000 student places (Zhang and Fan, 2005). Tang and Law (2006) state there were 1,336 post-secondary institutes in China with hotel and tourism management in their programmes in 2005. This numbers include all universities with independent schools or affiliated departments. Despite this, and although there is a huge demand for front line and managerial staff in the hotel industry and some 3.2 million job vacancies in 2007 for hospitality positions (China National Tourism Administration, 2008), there were still 1.2 million college graduates in China with no job offers (Xinhua News Agency, 2007). One of the challenges in meeting this demand is the ability of the universities, colleges and vocational training institutes to prepare more people equipped to meet future demands of the industry.

The research presented here takes a case study approach to examine a potential way forward for China's educational programmes to develop and reform. The case discussed is a new Hotel Management programme at the Guilin Institute of Tourism (GLIT) in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region.

Hospitality and Tourism Education in China

There is a well established body of literature that examines the development of tourism and hospitality education (Lashley, 2009; Morrison and O'Gorman, 2008; Ritchie, 2002; Lashley and Morrison, 2000; Tribe, 2001; Cooper and Shepherd, 1997). One of the key debates within this literature is the importance of developing education programmes that fulfil industry needs (Lashly, 2009; Shepherd and Cooper, 1994). The education–industry interface and industry input into the development of hospitality and tourism curriculum is seen as an important way in which educators can ensure they are developing future employees for the sector (Hearns, Devine, and Baum, 2007; Peacock and Ladkin, 2002). There can be no doubt regarding the considerable growth of hospitality and tourism education worldwide. Early developments can be seen in the

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UK (Airey, 2005; Walmsley, 2009) and other countries have followed suit (McKercher, 2002). Given the economic imperatives for much of the growth in the tourism industry, the development of tourism education programmes to fulfil industry needs has been seen as a major force behind the growth in tourism programmes (Walmsley, 2009). Cooper and Shepherd (1997) certainly accept that the purpose of tourism education should been seen as preparation for employment (Walmsley, 2009). This assumption is taken further by Dale and Robinson (2001) who note that with increasing globalisation and stakeholder involvement in tourism education, there is an emerging debate questioning if tourism degrees should be developed to enable graduates to be employed outside of the tourism industry, or should courses develop graduates for specialist positions in the industry. Certainly increased competition for employment makes these issues central to the development of tourism education.

Despite the obvious importance and economic rationale for tourism education producing graduates to work in the tourism industry, there is a wider role for tourism education. Airey (2008a) notes that as tourism education matures, concerns are being raised that question this relationship that has become taken for granted. Tribe (2002) argues that although a vocational approach may focus students on preparing for tourism employment, it ignores tourism's wider impact on society. In a review of tourism education by Airey (2008b) argues that perhaps tourism education has reached maturation. It has gone beyond the study of an industry or as a training ground for employment to exploring the knowledge territory and making contributions to wider societal debates.

Although a comprehensive review of the developments in tourism education is beyond the scope of this research, the debates outlined above set the present study in context. In the case study presented here, tourism education is seen as a means to develop people to undertake employment in the industry. According to Zhang and Wu (2004, p425), "The current state of tourism education is not meeting the industry's expectation. Industry executives and managers are not satisfied with graduate performance…The current curriculum is outdated; it needs to be updated in line with industry expectations. Good, quality educators are rare."

Liu and Wall (2005, p689) conclude in one study that, "The Chinese, in becoming involved in this (tourism) industry, are typically hampered by their lack of familiarity with service skills, marketing, and tourism cultures." Cheuk (2005) found that the Chinese education system itself did not help the development of hospitality and tourism professionals. His view was that the tourism discipline was not recognized, teachers did not have the necessary practical experience or industry networks, and in addition, Chinese tourism institutes should "strengthen the cooperation with the industry, closely linking production, learning and research" (Cheuk, 2005, p21).

In an earlier study, Lam and Xiao (2000) concluded that poor curriculum design was a major problem for tourism education in China, and that graduates from tourism institutes and vocational schools do not meet industry requirements. This finding was supported in a later study which also indicated that university graduates were unwilling to enter the industry, and that there was a gap between what was taught and the "realities of the industry itself" (Zhang & Wu, 2004, p424). In summary, researchers seem to agree that reform of tourism education is sorely needed, and that higher education in China needs to be enabled to respond to socio-economic and labour

market demands (Li and Min, 2001). These reforms are slowly happening as the Central Government responds to the need for a skilled and well-educated workforce.

The Case Study

The merits of a case study approach are well documented (Yin, 2003). Case study research is a useful strategy for carrying out research which involves an empirical investigation of any phenomenon within a particular context, often using multiple sources of evidence (Robson, 1993). Certainly it allows for in-depth exploration of a particular issue, site, place etc, and is used in this context to explore an educational programme in Guilin. The case study presented here discusses the approach taken to the development of a new course in Hotel Management, and measures the success of the programme after its first year of implementation.

Guilin is one of China's primary destinations for overseas and domestic tourists, with over 12 million visitors to the city in 2008. Founded by Guilin City Council in 1985, Guilin Institute of Tourism (GLIT) has become one of three notable institutions in China for the education and training of tourism and hospitality professionals, providing over 55,000 graduates to the industry since its foundation. The development of a new hotel management programme at GLIT began towards the end of 2006, with the first intake of students being September 2007. The aim was to establish an internationally recognized hotel management diploma programme designed to meet the needs of the industry, raise quality standards and equip students for 21st century employment. With the support of the regional government and the Guilin City Council, the Institute received assistance from the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) to plan the programme. As part of this assistance, a leading institution with knowledge of hospitality and tourism educational development in China was commissioned by the UNWTO to work with GLIT to design, develop and implement the new programme.

The programme development process took two years and involved six phases, as described. The first phase beginning in early 2007, consisted of an audit and environmental scan to enable the Institute to better formulate strategy, benchmark what they were doing against international standards, respond to identified industry needs and align their strategies and policies to ensure successful education of undergraduate students for the burgeoning hotel and tourism industry in China. Within this audit was the review of an existing hotel management programme that provided the impetus for change. The second phase completed by mid-2007, constituted the design of the new programme and involved a comparative analysis of six world-class hospitality programmes to identify core subjects, gaps in the existing curriculum and unique features of the existing curriculum. The third phase beginning in June 2007 involved developing the skills of the educators themselves – curriculum design, syllabus development, lesson planning, assessment methods and classroom teaching. Existing staff received training to teach on the new programme. This lead to the fourth phase, from June-August 2007, designing the overall curriculum, schemes of work and detailed lesson plans. Phase five was the implementation of the new programme beginning in September 2007 (with three more cohorts of students joining in 2008, 2009 and 2010). The final phase was an evaluation and review of the new programme which took place in December 2008.

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Central to this programme development was the retraining of academic staff to enable them to engage in more innovative teaching approaches and encourage student-centred learning. The review and new programme development was concerned with exploring a whole range of issues, including curriculum review, the implementation of outcome-based educational approaches, establishing an international model of assessment, and exploring quality assurance mechanisms. Central to this was the opportunity to develop an educational programme that would enable students to enter the industry and subsequently raise the standards and professionalism through their vocational education.

Methodology

The audit undertaken during phase one of the project included an environmental scan which involved focus group interviews and extensive questionnaire survey with stakeholders involved in the project. Focus group interviews were conducted in six separate groups, including teachers, senior managers, 1-3 year students from the Institute, hotel industry managers, Tourism Board officials and alumni from GLIT. These took place in the Spring of 2007. This qualitative data helped to refine the questions to be used in the subsequent quantitative survey. Focus groups varied between 5-12 participants and interviewees were encouraged to express their ideas and concerns guided by the main questions. All the focus group interviews were recorded, transcribed in Chinese and then translated into English for analysis. The questionnaire survey was then prepared and distributed to these stakeholder groups, and included larger numbers of students and teachers in particular. The response to the questionnaires received in 2007 is shown in table 1.

Table: 1 Questionnaire Response Rates 2007

Group	Number of questionnaires distributed	Number of questionnaires received	Response rate	Number of valid questionnaires
Students	200	194	97%	141
Teachers	50	42	84%	24
GLIT Senior management	8	5	62.5%	3
Graduates	50	48	96%	46
International & local hotel managers	121	37	30.6%	28
Government officials	10	0	0	0

In December 2008, four months after implementation of the new programme, the researchers conducted a second round of focus groups and a repeat of the questionnaire survey conducted in early 2007. The aim was to evaluate the stakeholders' views on the importance of different aspects of the programme, their satisfaction with the new programme and to compare the responses to the original survey. In this second round, three separate groups of participants were involved, current students, newly trained academic staff teaching on the new hotel management programme and a small group of senior managers. Again, the focus group

interviews were followed by distribution of self-administered questionnaires. The response to the questionnaires received in 2008 is shown in table 2.

Table 2: Questionnaire Response Rates 2008

Group	Number of questionnaires distributed	Number of questionnaires received	Response rate	Number of valid questionnaires
Students	103	103	100%	91
Teachers	19	19	100%	13
GLIT Senior management	12	12	100%	5

This research reports on the data generated by the questionnaire survey in 2007 and again in 2008. The questionnaire sought information on the following three aspects, facilities, teaching, and the overall programme. The questions were identical for both rounds of data collection. The questionnaires consisted of two sections and contained 26 identical attributes in each section. The respondents were asked to indicate the perceived importance and satisfaction level with each attribute, measured by using a 5-point Likert scale (from "1=very important" to "5=not important", and from "1=very satisfied" to "5=very dissatisfied").

In the 2008 research, the questionnaires were distributed for students in the controlled environment of formal class time and supervised by the researchers so as to gain the maximum response. Ticehurst and Veal (1999) described this kind of approach to a questionnaire survey as a captive group survey and suggest that this method of questionnaire administration is "expeditious and less problematic than in less-controlled situations". The data collected from the survey were analyzed by mean scores. The other groups received their questionnaires directly, either by mail, email or fax, to complete in their own time.

Results

The evaluation of the existing hotel management programme undertaken during the environmental scan in January 2007 and the review of the new programme four months into its implementation in December 2008 yielded a large amount of data. As it is impossible to discuss all the data collected, the results presented here examine the views of two different stakeholders taken from the questionnaire data: students and teachers. Two elements are compared; the importance of, and satisfaction with, learning and teaching of the new and old programmes, and the programmes in general. Where applicable, the questionnaire data was supplemented by comments gained from the interviews and focus groups. The staff were the same for both years and had received training to teach on the new programme. The students were from two different groups, the 2007 cohort were from the old programme and the 2008 cohort were from the new programme.

The data for both the new and the old programme is presented in order to make comparisons. In the following tables, the results of the two surveys are compared. The data shows the differences between the mean scores for these two years. As previously stated, the questionnaire used a 5 point Likert scale to measure the interviewees' importance and satisfaction level for all these attributes, from "1=very important" to "5=not important", and

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from " 1=very satisfied" to "5=very dissatisfied". When comparing the mean scores for the same attribute in 2007 and 2008, the perceived importance and satisfaction level increases if the difference between the two mean scores is positive. On the contrary, the perceived importance and satisfaction level decreases when the difference is negative.

Students' Perceived Importance of Teaching Quality and Programme Attributes

The results regarding teaching quality and programme attributes for 2007 and 2008 are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Students' Ranking of Importance of Teaching Quality & Programme Attributes

Teaching Quality	Mean 2008 (1)	Rank	Mean 2007 (2)	Rank	Difference (2)-(1)
good delivery(pedagogy)	1.09	1	1.16	1	0.07
integration of theory and practice	1.20	2	1.27	2	0.07
teachers' interaction with students	1.24	3	1.43	7	0.19
teachers' knowledge up-to-date and comprehensive	1.25	4	1.32	4	0.07
teachers have industrial experience	1.27	5	1.28	3	0.01
teachers' use of case studies in teaching	1.35	6	1.40	6	0.05
teaching facilities	1.36	7	1.39	5	0.03
teachers' preparation for the class	1.43	8	1.54	9	0.11
teachers' helpfulness	1.48	9	1.59	10	0.11
assessment relevant to the course content and outcomes	1.49	10	1.69	11	0.20
guidance and instruction to students after class	1.58	11	1.72	12	0.58
teachers' qualification	1.60	12	1.51	8	-0.09
Programme Attributes					
up-to-date information	1.21	1	1.17	1	-0.04
useful for professional practice	1.27	2	1.26	2	-0.01
need for more tutors from the industry	1.37	3	1.47	7	0.1
useful for job seeking	1.42	4	1.30	3	-0.12
depth of knowledge	1.43	5	1.48	8	0.05
flexibility	1.43	6	1.35	4	-0.08
broad foundation of learning	1.44	7	1.42	5	-0.02
diversity(in hospitality courses and teaching method)	1.45	8	1.45	6	0
funding for field trips	1.51	9	1.51	9	0
hospitality content for year-1 students	1.52	10	1.80	14	0.28
programme administration	1.55	11	1.54	10	-0.01

timetabling	1.63	12	1.77	13	0.14
length of the internship	1.69	13	1.74	11	0.05
length of programme	1.71	14	1.76	12	0.05

*ranks based on ordinal scale

In both surveys, all the attributes have mean scores lower than 2, which indicate the students' perceived importance of all these attributes was very high. "Good delivery (pedagogy)" and "Integration of theory and practice" were the top two most important attributes among the 12 attributes in the two-year period. From students' feedback, most of the students implied that they could learn more when the teaching methods employed by teachers helped them better understand the subjects and made the class more interesting. Some of the students also expressed concern that some courses were boring. Besides good teaching methods, students asked for better integration of theory and practice. It should be noted that between these two surveys, a new campus on a rural green-field site around 30 minutes drive from the city was partly completed and teaching facilities were relocated from the city centre. As a result, the interaction between teachers and students declined as teachers had less time available for students after class.

For the majority of the attributes, table 3 shows all the attributes made a positive difference from 2007 to 2008, and each was seen as slightly more important in 2008 than in 2007. Only one attribute "Teachers' qualifications" had a negative mean score between the two years, showing a slightly decreased importance level for this attribute. The main reason for this may be the introduction of a stricter teacher selection procedure in the Institute. For example, teachers were required to have a certain level of foreign language capability, at least a Masters degree, and some years of industry working experience. As a result, students are less concerned about the teachers' qualifications. In the focus group interviews, the majority of students stated that most teachers were very competent and they learnt a lot from the teachers, not only the professional knowledge, but also from their industry experience and working practice.

In order to test for any significant differences between the two years in terms of student ranking for teaching quality, an independent sample t-test was carried out. There is no significant difference between the two years. (t-value = -1.182, p-value = 0.250).

For the different elements in the overall programme, the results are similar to the teaching quality section in that all the attributes are lower than 2, indicating the high perceived importance of these attributes by the students. "Up-to-date information" and "Useful for professional practice" were the most important factors for two years on the ranking column. Students believed that the hospitality industry changes very quickly and if they did not keep pace with the latest industry information, they would lose the competitive advantage in their job search after graduation. In the interviews, most of the students hoped to have more internship opportunities in large international hotel chains or tourist organizations. They expressed the view that this was the best way for them to gain updated industry information. Moreover, students showed a greater preference for more practical subjects in the curriculum and suggested that the programme should be less theoretical with teachers sharing more of their previous working experiences and real cases with them. This could help them to understand more of the working requirements when they graduated.

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The "Need for more tutors from the industry" and "Hospitality content for year-1 students" were the two greatest changes in ranking between the two years. Although students indicated they learned a lot of hotel and tourism management theories from the course books, they still preferred to have more teachers from the industry to share real work procedures, such as operating the latest check-in system, handling customers' complaints, and preparing financial statements. Chinese textbooks are often abstract and hard to understand compared too many Western texts, so if students can learn with real cases, they can more quickly master the required knowledge. Some students suggested that the programme should put more hospitality professional courses into Year 1 so as to give them more preparation time before the internship in the second year.

In order to test for any significant differences between the two years in terms of student ranking of the importance of the different attributes of the programme, an independent sample t-test was carried out. There is no significant difference between the two years. (t-value = 0.421, p-value = 0.677).

Teachers' Perceived Importance of Teaching Quality and the Programme Attributes
The results of the teachers' perceived importance of teaching quality and the programme attributes are shown in table 4.

In the teaching quality section, attributes in 2008 had a mean score lower than 2, ranging from 1.00 to 1.85, denoting that the teachers ranked all these attributes between "very important" and "important."

Table 4: Teachers' Ranking of Importance of Teaching Quality & Programme Attributes

Teaching Quality	Mean 2008 (1)	Rank	Mean 2007 (2)	Rank	Difference (2)-(1)
good delivery(pedagogy)	1.00	1	1.08	1	0.08
teachers have industrial experience	1.08	2	1.17	2	0.09
teachers' preparation for the class	1.15	3	1.21	4	0.06
teachers' knowledge up-to-date and comprehensive	1.15	4	1.17	3	0.02
teaching facilities	1.23	5	1.38	8	0.15
assessment relevant to the course content and outcomes	1.23	6	1.33	6	0.10
teachers' interaction with students	1.23	7	1.38	9	0.15
teachers' use of case studies in teaching	1.31	8	1.25	5	-0.06
integration of theory and practice	1.31	9	1.33	7	0.02
teachers' qualification	1.54	10	1.54	11	0
guidance and instruction to students after class	1.69	11	1.67	12	-0.02
teachers' helpfulness	1.85	12	1.54	10	-0.31

Programme Attributes					
need for more tutors from the industry	1.08	1	1.33	4	0.25
funding for field trips	1.23	2	1.38	6	0.15
up-to-date information	1.31	3	1.29	3	-0.02
flexibility	1.38	4	1.46	7	0.08
programme administration	1.46	5	1.50	10	0.04
diversity(in hospitality courses and teaching method)	1.54	6	1.38	5	-0.16
broad foundation of learning	1.62	7	1.46	8	-0.16
depth of knowledge	1.62	8	1.50	9	-0.12
useful for job seeking	1.69	9	1.29	2	-0.40
length of the internship	1.69	10	1.54	11	-0.15
useful for professional practice	1.77	11	1.25	1	-0.52
timetabling	1.92	12	1.88	14	-0.04
hospitality content for year-1 students	1.92	13	1.58	13	-0.34
length of programme	2.08	14	1.58	12	-0.50

*ranks based on ordinal scale

The situation between the two years is similar. The ranking for most of the attributes had the same or only slight changes, except for "Teaching facilities" which rose in the ranking from 8 to number 5. This is consistent with the results of the focus group interviews where most of the teachers expressed concerns about improvements to teaching facilities. After attending external training courses, the teachers learned many innovative teaching approaches that depended on modern classroom facilities, for example, multimedia and food and beverage laboratories. However, due to financial and government limitations, there was a shortage of multimedia classrooms and teaching laboratories available, which influenced the teaching methods used.

The attribute, "Teachers' use of case studies in teaching," dropped from 5 to 8 in the ranking. During external training, teachers identified many suitable case studies they could use in class. Some teachers also decided to get experience through part-time jobs in hotels or travel agencies in Guilin and develop their own personal cases for discussion in the classroom.

In order to test for any significant differences between the two years in terms of teachers ranking of teaching quality, a paired sample t-test was carried out. There is no significant difference between the two years. (t-value = -0.655, p-value = 0.526).

In the overall programme section, the teachers' perceived importance for most of the attributes is lower in 2007 than in 2008, therefore, the perceived importance of these attributes has decreased. The attributes, "Need for more tutors from the industry," "Funding for field trips," "Flexibility" and "Programme Administration" showed positive differences between the two years, which implies that the teachers' perceived importance of these four attributes had

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increased. Among these attributes, teachers were more concerned with the attribute, "Need for more tutors from the industry." This corresponds with the nature of the hospitality industry which requires students to learn more practical knowledge from experienced employees as their 'tutors.'

The attribute "Useful for professional practice" dropped from number one in 2007 to 11 in 2008. In the interviews, teachers explained that if the Institute could invite more tutors from the industry and gain more funding for field trips, students would learn about professional practice more effectively. As a result, there was less concern about this attribute. This may also explain the large decrease in the importance of the attributes "Length of programme" and "Useful for job seeking." Teachers indicated that when students had the chance to learn more practical and professional knowledge before their graduation, they were more likely to study longer and defer seeking employment. The above discussion shows that students and teachers have similar views in terms of the importance of teaching quality and the value of the overall programme.

In order to test for any significant differences between the two years in terms of teachers ranking of the programme, a paired sample t-test was carried out. There is no significant difference between the two years. (t-value = 2.140, p-value = 0.052).

Students' Satisfaction with Teaching Quality and the Programme Attributes

The results for year 2007 and 2008 regarding student's satisfaction with teaching quality and programme attributes are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Students' Ranking of Satisfaction with Teaching Quality & Programme Attributes

Teaching Quality	Mean (2008) (1)	Rank	Mean (2007) (2)	Rank	Difference (2)-(1)
Teachers have industrial experience	2.03	1	2.19	1	0.16
Teachers' preparation for the class	2.34	2	2.50	5	0.16
Teachers' use of case studies in teaching	2.40	3	2.43	2	0.03
Teachers' interaction with students	2.43	4	2.87	11	0.44
Teachers' qualification	2.49	5	2.45	3	-0.04
Teachers' knowledge up-to-date and comprehensive	2.54	6	2.49	4	-0.05
Good delivery(pedagogy)	2.59	7	2.59	6	0
Teachers' helpfulness	2.70	8	2.79	10	0.09
Assessment relevant to the course content and outcomes	2.87	9	2.77	9	-0.10
Integration of theory and practice	3.07	10	2.70	8	-0.37
Teaching facilities	3.34	11	2.65	7	-0.69

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Guidance and instruction to students after class	3.49	12	3.33	12	-0.16

Programme Attributes

Hospitality content for year-1 students	2.55	1	2.68	2	0.13
Length of the internship	2.65	2	2.82	7	0.17
Diversity(in hospitality courses and teaching method)	2.67	3	2.79	4	0.12
Flexibility	2.77	4	2.90	10	0.13
Programme administration	2.79	5	2.67	1	-0.12
Length of programme	2.84	6	2.93	12	0.09
Useful for professional practice	2.88	7	2.80	5	-0.08
Broad foundation of learning	2.88	8	2.78	3	-0.10
Useful for job seeking	2.93	9	2.84	8	-0.09
Depth of knowledge	2.95	10	2.91	11	-0.04
Up-to-date information	3.02	11	2.81	6	-0.21
Timetabling	3.09	12	2.86	9	-0.23
Need for more tutors from the industry	3.18	13	3.08	13	-0.10
Funding for field trips	3.29	14	3.30	14	0.01

*ranks based on ordinal scale

In terms of teaching quality, in 2007 11 out of 12 attributes have mean scores between 2 and 3, while in 2008 three attributes have mean scores over 3, indicating that students are not satisfied with these three attributes. "Guidance and instruction to students after class" was the attribute students were most dissatisfied with among the 12 attributes. The main reason given was the relocation of the campus from the city to a new site in the rural area. Teachers were unable stay in the campus after class to give more guidance and instruction to the students because they need to return to the city by the school buses early in the evening.

The attribute "Teaching facilities" received the largest negative difference which shows that the students' satisfaction level from 2007 to 2008 has decreased the most. In the focus group interviews, most students said they hoped to have more classrooms with more advanced multimedia facilities as soon as possible. Sometimes, there was a shortage of classrooms because of the high demand for classroom space due to an increase in student numbers in the Institute. "Integration of theory and practice" also showed a higher negative difference between the two years. Students interviewed felt that some courses were too abstract to understand and had too many complex terms to remember. In the classes, teachers often explained the meanings of the terms without enough examples or cases. As a result, the students did not have a deep understanding of theory.

However, there were some significant improvements. "Teachers with industrial experience" was the top students' attribute for satisfaction over the period. The Institute has a good relationship with the hotels in Guilin and many past graduates from GLIT have become managers or senior staff in good hotels. GLIT invites these managers to the Institute to give guest lectures, and they often brought examples and experiences to share with students. "Teachers' interaction with students" was the biggest positive difference in the study. After implementing the new teaching methods - including tutorials and practicum, students had more opportunities to interact with teachers during class time. For example, teachers facilitated group discussions and gave advice or suggestions for student group work. This made a positive difference for the attribute "Teachers' helpfulness".

In order to test for any significant differences between the two years in terms of student's satisfaction with the teaching quality, an independent sample t-test was carried out. There is no significant difference between the two years. (t-value = 0.297, p-value = 0.769).

In terms of programme attributes the students' satisfaction level for attributes "Up-to-date information" and "Timetabling" decreased the most from 2007 to 2008, as shown by the largest negative differences between these two years. Most of the students indicated that it was harder to keep in touch with the outside world because the campus had moved to the suburbs. For timetabling, students emphasized that they wanted to have more courses related to hotel and tourism management, and cut some public courses, such as Politics and Philosophy. Besides, they hoped to have more chances for field trips and hotel visits to learn about real hotel operations. For the attributes "Need for more tutors from the industry" and "Funding for field trips" these were still not deemed satisfactory by the students. Students asked for more resources to be given for field trips and industry visits.

Students also gave high satisfaction ratings to other attributes. For example, they were very satisfied with "Length of the internship" and "Hospitality content for Year-1 students". "Flexibility" and "Diversity" also had a high satisfaction level. In GLIT, every student needed to do an internship in the second semester of year 2 or the first semester of year 3. Normally, students were able to choose their favourite hotels or travel agencies after attending a number of interviews.
Although this hotel management programme was very new, students thought the teaching curriculum and classroom organization was flexible and diverse. Activities in class, and communication between students and teachers in, and outside class, were better than in the standard classes. GLIT invested more money for equipment and other facilities for this new programme, and there was also a website discussion board where students could communicate with teachers and raise questions after class. All these contributed to the students' high satisfaction level with the programme.

In order to test for any significant differences between the two years in terms of student's satisfaction with the programme, an independent sample t-test was carried out. There is no significant difference between the two years. (t-value = 0.326, p-value = 0.747).

Teachers' Satisfaction with Teaching Quality and Programme Attributes

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In terms of teachers satisfaction with teaching quality in the environmental scan of 2007, all the mean scores of the attributes were lower than 3 for the teaching quality section, which indicates that teachers had high satisfaction for all the attributes. The results are shown in table 6.

Table 6: Teachers' Ranking of Satisfaction with Teaching Quality & Programme Attributes

Teaching Quality	Mean (2008) (1)	Rank	Mean (2007) (2)	Rank	Difference (2)-(1)
Teachers' use of case studies in teaching	2.54	1	2.50	7	-0.04
Teachers' preparation for the class	2.54	2	2.17	1	-0.37
Teachers' interaction with students	2.62	3	2.50	8	-0.12
Good delivery(pedagogy)	2.77	4	2.25	3	-0.52
Teachers' knowledge up-to-date and comprehensive	2.77	5	2.42	5	-0.35
Integration of theory and practice	3.08	6	2.42	6	-0.66
Teachers' qualification	3.15	7	2.25	2	-0.90
Assessment relevant to the course content and outcomes	3.15	8	2.54	9	-0.61
Teachers have industrial experience	3.15	9	2.33	4	-0.82
Guidance and instruction to students after class	3.31	10	2.88	12	-0.43
Teachers' helpfulness	3.31	11	2.63	10	-0.68
Teaching facilities	4.00	12	2.63	11	-1.37
Programme Attributes					
Broad foundation of learning	2.69	1	2.71	10	0.02
Flexibility	2.77	2	2.63	9	-0.14
Length of programme	2.85	3	2.54	7	-0.31
Useful for professional practice	2.85	4	2.58	8	-0.27
Diversity(in hospitality courses and teaching method)	2.92	5	2.46	2	-0.46
Useful for job seeking	2.92	6	2.42	1	-0.50
Length of the internship	2.92	7	2.46	3	-0.46
Depth of knowledge	3.08	8	2.54	6	-0.54
Up-to-date information	3.15	9	2.46	4	-0.69
Timetabling	3.15	10	2.75	12	-0.40
Hospitality content for year-1 students	3.23	11	2.50	5	-0.73
Programme administration	3.31	12	2.79	13	-0.52
Need for more tutors from the industry	3.92	13	2.71	11	-1.21

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| Funding for field trips | 4.08 | 14 | 3.21 | 14 | -0.87 |

*ranks based on ordinal scale

In the second survey of 2008, the mean scores for all the attributes were higher compared with 2007, which indicated greater dissatisfaction levels in this section. Only five attributes received mean scores lower than 3. The mean scores for all the other attributes were higher than 3, and for the attribute, "Teaching facilities" the mean score was 4, showing the high dissatisfaction level for this attribute. In the 2008 interviews, many teachers agreed that the moving of the campus was a big problem in this aspect. GLIT was the first institute in Guilin to relocate to the suburbs under the new city development plans, and all the facilities had to be constructed in a very short time period, including all the teaching buildings, library, students' dormitories, canteens, and other necessary infrastructure for students. Many teachers expressed concern that not all the classrooms are equipped with the necessary electronic teaching facilities, which made it inconvenient for their teaching. So they rated this aspect very unsatisfactory in the questionnaires and asked the administrators to improve the situation. The changes have presented some challenges for the teachers and adjustment is likely to take time.

The attributes, "Teachers' use of case studies in teaching" and "Teachers' interaction with students," improved in the ranking although the mean scores have not changed greatly. Many teachers found that students liked the use of case studies when they learn hotel operations, especially some cases from the teacher's previous working experience. During the experience sharing process, the interaction between students and teachers is strengthened. For attributes, "Teachers' qualifications" and "Teachers have industrial experience," the ranking dropped several levels. Many teachers' explained that the main reason was that they have less opportunity to go back to the industry to update their industry experience because of their heavy teaching workload. They hoped that the institute could invite some hotel managers or related government policy-makers to offer lectures to update teaching staff with new procedures and information.

In order to test for any significant differences between the two years in terms of the teacher's satisfaction with the teaching quality, a paired sample t-test was carried out. There is a significant difference between the two years. (t-value = 5.506, p-value = 0.000).

In the programme section, only one attribute, "Funding for field trips," received a mean score over 3 in 2007, and in 2008, the mean score was over 4 as previously shown in table 6.

Many teachers in the interviews did not give a low rating for this attribute as they understood that the whole programme needed further investment, and that GLIT had made considerable efforts to achieve this. But from the teachers' standpoint they wanted to have more field trips so that students could have more chances to be updated on hotel operations. Most teachers believed that funding for the programme would improve in the near future. Also, many teachers hoped to get more tutors from the industry, in line with students' expectations. Tutors from the industry can help students understand what they have learned in the classroom.

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In order to test for any significant differences between the two years in terms of the teacher's satisfaction with the programme, a paired sample t-test was carried out. There is a significant difference between the two years. (t-value = 6.142, p-value = 0.000).

The new hotel management programme used the newly developed curriculum and new textbooks, and the new programme was seen as more flexible and diverse, not only for the course curriculum, but also for the teaching methods and teaching materials. With external support, many teachers from the programme had the chance to go to Hong Kong for an intensive training programme. Through the training, teachers learned more international teaching methods, and shared the experience of how to engage students in active learning. However, the training opportunity was only available to a few teachers and other teachers hoped to receive similar training in the future.

From the evaluation of the new hotel management programme in 2008, students and teachers showed their overall satisfaction with the programme's development. The main concern for students was the internship. Because of the strict Chinese visa policies, it is a hard for Chinese students to apply for a work visa if they get the chance to do their internship overseas. They believed overseas working experience was an important element for finding a good job after their graduation. As for the teachers, they focused on the value of the external training programme. GLIT cannot afford for all the teachers to undertaken external teacher training, but instead has invited visiting academics to come to GLIT to teach about hospitality management and pedagogy. Collaboration is seen as a crucial way forward.

Conclusions and Discussion

Based on the above results, most of the attributes in the questionnaires had a mean score between one and two in 2007 and 2008 (apart from the attribute "Length of programme" with a mean score of 2.08 for the perceived importance by the teachers in 2008). All the attributes were perceived as "important" and "very important" by both the students and teachers. Many teachers and students also indicated that some attributes were still quite important for them, however after one year some improvements were visible. Therefore, they did not need to put a high importance level on these issues any more.

For the satisfaction rating, the students' mean scores ranged from 2.19 to 3.33 in 2007 for satisfaction with teaching quality, and the result was almost the same for 2008, ranging from 2.03 to 3.49. For satisfaction with the programme, the students' scores ranged from 2.68 to 3.30 in 2007 and 2.55 to 3.29 in 2008. From these numbers, it is clear that the students' satisfaction level remained fairly constant from 2007 to 2008.

The teachers' mean scores ranged from 2.17 to 2.88 in 2007, in terms of satisfaction with teaching quality, and from 2.54 to 4.00 in 2008. For satisfaction with the programme, the teacher's scores ranged from 2.42 to 3.21 in 2007 and from 2.69 to 4.08 in 2008. For the teachers, the satisfaction level with the teaching quality and the programme became more diverse between the years, with the most negative responses arising from the teaching facilities as previously discussed. As not all teachers on the new programme has been re-trained, there were clearly some areas in the new programme that the teachers felt less satisfied with than previously.

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Broadly, the new programme has been well received and for the most part has offered improvements in the educational product. Both students and teachers have commented on the improvements. However, there are also challenges as both students and teachers adjust to the new way of operating and new teaching approaches and certain aspects are yet to be delivered.

This new hotel management programme is unique in China as far as we know, and is a bold attempt to revitalise the curriculum and respond to new educational ideas. The programme challenges certain traditional methods and approaches which may be perceived as a threat by some who see the traditional teaching and assessment processes being undermined. In the main, however, it is seen as an opportunity to raise the standards and professionalism of the tourism and hospitality industry. For a government institution to be able to change the curriculum, implement outcome-based approaches, introduce interactive teaching, run tutorial classes and put in place an international model of assessment and quality assurance is a huge achievement. Despite some initial uncertainties about aspects of the new curriculum model, students and most academics and administrative staff have been enthusiastic, and have effectively implemented the new programme in a relatively short time frame.

There are still challenges to be overcome, in particular how to make the programme cost-effective, hiring of enough suitably qualified and experienced teachers and satisfying Ministry of Education requirements. GLIT are also considering how to expand the model from a pilot programme in one department to the rest of the Institute, which will have a much greater impact on the future direction of tourism education in this part of mainland China. The research shows that students especially see the programme as a means to becoming proficient in hotel management with a view to securing a good job after graduation. This is a reflection of the programme aims in preparing graduates for an industry that is expanding rapidly, becoming more upmarket and more internationalized

There is a sense of expectation about the future of education in China as the nation reaches new heights in diplomacy, space exploration, research and innovation. This project is very timely for China's growth and economic development, as the model is breaking new ground, challenging traditional education methods and providing a well-designed and workable model for hospitality and tourism education in China. The barriers are not insurmountable, but need to be recognized and overcome in order for the Guilin Institute of Tourism, and hospitality and tourism education in particular, to benefit from the foundational work of this project.

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