

## **Vocational vs. Academic Debate on Undergraduate Education in Hospitality and Tourism: The Case of Indonesia**

### **ABSTRACT**

*This study seeks to identify similarities and differences between the vocational and academic level bachelor programs within Indonesian hospitality and tourism education. Both the abilities and knowledge profiles of the graduates and the curriculum content are considered. These degrees were developed in 2008 following the government recognition for hospitality and tourism as a field of study. Formerly, these study areas were only offered at diploma levels with a strong vocational emphasis. The findings from archival and interview assessments indicate that although subtle differences exist in the content of vocational and academic bachelor offerings, they are largely indistinguishable. A more searching underpinning of the programs using a distinctive educational philosophy is suggested to guide the aims and objectives of the different degrees. Such a structured approach could serve as a guideline for the selection of course content and teaching and learning endeavors.*

*Keywords: Curriculum, Course Content, Vocational Bachelor, Academic Bachelor, Hospitality and Tourism Education, Indonesia*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The emergence of hospitality and tourism as an independent field of study in Indonesia began on March 31, 2008. It was manifested in the letters of Directorate General of

Higher Education of the Republic of Indonesia No. 947/D/T/2007 and 948/D/T/2008 that were addressed to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (now the Ministry of Tourism) to endorse the opening of tourism bachelor degree programs at two institutions operated under the Ministry: Bandung Institute of Tourism (STP Bandung) and Bali Nusa Dua Institute of Tourism (STP Bali Nusa Dua). This new status allowed Indonesia's hospitality and tourism schools to offer undergraduate and postgraduate programs, namely Bachelor of Tourism, Master of Tourism and Doctor of Tourism. Prior to 2008, hospitality and tourism schools in Indonesia were only granted permission to deliver diploma programs ranging from one year to four years with a vocational focus. The diplomas emphasized practical exercises rather than the theories and concept. The recognition from the government transpired as a response to the rapid growth of Indonesia's tourism sector that demanded and still requires tourism professionals such as scholars/researchers, tourism planners, and policy makers, to complement the skilled/operational workers (Andriani, 2014; Oktadiana & Chon, 2014).

Indonesia has many potential tourism attractions and destinations. The country is the world's largest archipelago with 17,500 islands and 247 million inhabitants. The population is composed of more than 300 ethnic groups and is very diverse in the culture and tradition, language, and religions (BBC, 2014). Bali is widely seen as the most popular place to visit for both foreign and domestic tourists; a perception that can be seen as undervaluing many other resources and sites across the archipelago. Partly as a response to this emphasis on one location, in 2012 Indonesia's Minister of Tourism designated 15 other destinations to be established across the country (Travel Daily News Asia, 2012). The growth of the tourism sector in Indonesia unquestionably demands a highly skillful and professional workforce to fill in numerous occupations for continued success and long-term sustainability. The creation of an effective workforce can only be built through proper education and training programs at various levels of education, ranging from certificate to postgraduate programs.

The government recognition of the status of hospitality and tourism education was defined by the 2008 decision. However, any distinctions between the vocational and the academic education were not specified. A study conducted by Oktadiana and Chon (2014) revealed that the program names and directions (i.e. vision, mission, goals/objectives) of the vocational and the academic bachelor programs were virtually equivalent and indistinct. In broad terms the goals and objectives of programs can be used as a guide for course designs, teaching and learning, assessment and evaluation (Davies, 1976; Diamond, 2008). The similarities of the goals and objectives between the academic bachelor degrees and vocational programs appear to have resulted in the same course content and learning process of the two camps. Further, the graduate profiles of both degree programs are continually being questioned. Ambiguities surrounding the competencies of the different graduates lead to a number of questions. How do graduates present themselves and how do employers know what kind of graduate will suit their situation? (cf. Dale & Robinson, 2001).

The problem is not confined to Indonesia. In China for instance, the indistinct position and styles of education amongst hospitality and tourism programs create an uncertain job market for the graduates (Gu, et al., 2007). ~~Resemblances~~ Similarities across the curriculum and the ambiguity of the objectives ~~for~~ of hospitality and tourism schools in Taiwan create similar challenges in accommodating the industry's needs (Horng & Lee, 2005; Liu, 2006). A well -defined and distinct curriculum is required as a main constituent of an educational program to produce well rounded and identifiable talent. In addition to being distinct from the hospitality offerings, tourism curriculum should be able consider the full social and environmental ambit of the phenomenon, and not just focus on the business side (Gu, Kavanaugh, & Cong, 2007).

The purposes of this study, therefore, are to identify graduate profile and course content of the vocational and academic bachelor programs within Indonesia's hospitality and

tourism higher education. The perspectives of educators, industry leaders, and students were considered to seek their key responses concerning tourism and hospitality curriculum and degrees in Indonesia. Previous studies about the content and structure of the hospitality and tourism curriculum have been conducted within developed countries and have been related to the Western paradigms of development (e.g. Gursoy, Rahman, & Swanger, 2012; Koh, 1995; Lin, 2002; Rainsford, 1997; Ring, Dickinger & Wöber, 2009). This paper seeks in part to advance hospitality and tourism education and curriculum studies from the Asian perspective by using the Indonesian context. It is anticipated that some aspects of the work are likely to be relevant to other countries facing similar issues as Indonesia.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Hospitality and Tourism Education in Indonesia**

The education system in Indonesia is built on the Indonesian Qualification Framework (IQF). This system acts as a reference for the construction of competencies for Indonesia's human resources. IQF is stipulated by the Directorate General of Higher Education, Ministry of Education and Culture Republic of Indonesia, and is based upon the Presidential Decree No. 8/2012. The framework comprises nine levels of qualifications, starting from level one as the lowest and level nine as the highest. The nine qualifications are grouped into three components; operator (levels 1-3), technician or analyst (levels 4-6) and expert (levels 7-9). The vocational and the academic bachelor programs are both categorized as level six. In principle, the former emphasizes the development of practical skills, while the latter focuses on knowledge and science (Oktadiana & Chon, 2014; Silitonga, 2013). The vocational bachelor, as specified by the Directorate General of Indonesian Higher Education,

is actually equivalent to the traditional academic bachelor in terms of the levels approach. Both types of bachelor degree require a total number of credit units between 144 to 160 credits to be completed within four years of study (DIKTI 2011).

The first hospitality and tourism study in Indonesia commenced in 'Akademi Perhotelan Nasional (APN)' or currently known as Bandung Institute of Tourism (STP Bandung) in 1965. The development of STP Bandung was soon followed by the inception of hospitality and tourism schools in other parts of Indonesia such as in Jakarta and Bali. The level of education was mainly a three-year diploma (Diploma III) with two major programs; (a) Hotel Management and (b) Tours and Travel Management. The vocational bachelor (Diploma IV or D IV in Indonesian) in this field was introduced in Udayana University, Bali, in 1989. A decade later, the first private higher institution in Jakarta, Trisakti Institute of Tourism, also opened a vocational bachelor program. Hospitality and tourism was recognized as a field of study by the Directorate General of Higher Education of Indonesia in 2008. The acknowledgement was a milestone for the hospitality and tourism education of the country after more than 20 years of struggle and debates from its educators (Oktadiana & Chon, 2014; Sodikin, n.d.).

Following the recognition, hospitality and tourism study programs increased by 12% in 2010. There were approximately 25 hospitality and tourism institutions offering vocational and/or academic bachelor programs. The growth, however, slowed due to several issues, such as a lack of strategic initiatives, changes in regulations, lack of integration among tourism and hospitality educators, and concerns with academic regulations, accreditation, nomenclature, and inadequate research activities (Oktadiana & Chon, 2014; Sofia 2013).

The tourism curriculum in Indonesia is somewhat inadequate in meeting the industry's needs. There are often discrepancies in what hospitality and tourism educational institutions provide and what the industry demands (Ernawati, 2003). Moreover, this type of

study area in Indonesia is still viewed as less academic and less prestigious than other traditional subject areas. Students choose hospitality and tourism study because it is perceived as a course that contains many practical activities and requires non-mathematical skills. There has been a strong orientation to study and work in practical and skills based employment. One of the author's previous studies in a prominent university in Jakarta indicated that 79.57% respondents from 137 students favored work in the kitchen and pastry departments, followed by the food and beverage service sector (18.98%) and then the rooms division department (17.52%) (Oktadiana, 2011).

### **Issues in Hospitality and Tourism Education**

Globally it can be asserted that the rise of the tourism industry promotes the development of hospitality and tourism education. The first hospitality school was established in Lausanne, Switzerland in 1893 to meet the early growth of tourism to this elite European destination. Such hospitality education was characterized by vocational focus and business-based programs. It was industry driven and sought to produce entry-level employees (Dredge, et al, 2012b; Goeldner & Ritchie, 2012; Inui, Wheeler, & Lankford, 2006). Tourism education was developed in a more impromptu fashion, and was generally established within traditional disciplines or as enrichment to the business studies with vocational orientation (Cooper, Shepherd, & Westlake, 1996). Research in hospitality and tourism began in the 1940s and early 1960s respectively. It became more refined in the 1970s, indicated by the growing number of academic journals and PhD outputs. The advancement of research outputs and activity led to the creation of body of knowledge specific to hospitality and tourism as a field of study; a move in part towards disciplinary status (Olsen, 2001; Weiler, 2001).

The expansion of hospitality and tourism education has been confronted by many challenges. Cooper et al (1996) argue that there are many issues which need to be addressed by hospitality and tourism educators due to the relative immaturity of this field of study. These include developing a core curriculum that recognizes the diversity of approaches to teaching, heightening education-industry relations, matching graduate numbers to job opportunities, initiating work placements, standardizing quality, and staffing issues. Other concerns include the vocational or applied focus of the study, perception of the study as non-essential activity, connection of the study with other disciplines, lack of academic credibility and recognition as a legitimate area of study, inadequate support from the stakeholders and community, course contents and delivery, graduate capabilities, interdisciplinary versus multidisciplinary approach, quality assurance, and accreditation standards (Dale & Robinson, 2001; Dredge et al., 2013; Goeldner & Ritchie, 2012; Pearce, 1993; Weaver & Lawton, 2010). What students need to learn, and what kind of knowledge and skills they should acquire, are also widely discussed by various scholars (e.g. Dopson & Tas, 2004; Lockwood, 1995; Pearce, 1993).

Issues concerning the tourism and hospitality curriculum can be found in various countries, such as in China and Taiwan. Tourism curricula at the tertiary level in China are commonly adopted from the Western perspective or from other disciplines or programs such as economics, management, geography, history, foreign languages, and agriculture and forest (Yang & Song, 2010-11, Zhang & Fan, 2005). These roots may result in curricula which are ineffectively developed due to confused educational objectives, and a mix of subjects offered (Lam & Xiao, 2000; Zhang & Fan, 2005). As another example, the tourism curriculum in Taiwan commonly replicates programs from elsewhere and may not address the industry's needs. The **task problems** of developing clear objectives for the different types of tourism and hospitality degree programs, **and** balancing general education and professional specialization

are ~~other~~ also common ~~problems that take place~~ in Taiwan (Horng & Lee, 2005; Liu, 2006). Such issues are very much aligned to the current situation facing Indonesia's hospitality and tourism higher education.

## **The Curriculum of Hospitality and Tourism**

The term curriculum has various definitions (Marsh & Willis, 2003; Morris & Adamson, 2010). Curriculum can be regarded as the planned learning outcomes of a school; as the learners' experiences; as the subjects learned by students for living in contemporary society; as a content; or as a set of performance objectives taught inside and outside the school environment (Marsh, 1997; Marsh & Willis, 2003; Morris & Adamson, 2010). Tribe (2005) suggested that the meaning of curriculum can be found in the learners' educational experiences and that the course contents ~~are~~ is the fundamental element of a curriculum.

Debates about curriculum content and the balance of courses in hospitality and tourism education have been enduring. Numerous scholars have proposed the structure for and the specific subjects to be included in hospitality and tourism courses (e.g. Koh, 1995; Lin, 2002; Ring et al., 2009; Shariff, 2013). Drawing from Tribe's concept of a philosophical practitioner, Dredge et al (2012a ~~b~~) suggest that tourism and hospitality curriculum should consist of "vocational, professional, social science and humanities knowledge and skills that promote a balance between satisfying the business demands and those required to operate within the wider tourism world" (p. 20 ~~2155~~). Bourn, McKenzie and Shiel (2006) maintain that employers nowadays seek high quality graduates who can make a positive contribution to the economic wellbeing, and are able to live and work in a global society. This means, students will not only have knowledge and skills in information and communication technology and speaking foreign languages, but they also should possess critical thinking



skills, the ability to deal with complex problems and uncertainty, and be culturally sensitive. Bourn et al. assert that teaching and learning activities should be designed to promote students' active engagement, creativity and innovation.

There is a need for hospitality and tourism higher education to develop courses and curriculum that emphasize the internationalization which encourages students to become responsible global citizens. Lin (2002) contends that hospitality curriculum should not merely focus on the technical skills, but also on the general management skills that are important for the long-term career of the graduates. Managers should have conceptual skills to deal with the complexity of hospitality operations. Therefore, there should be a balance between the liberal arts and specialized education. A similar concept was also proposed by Rimmington (1999) who believes that generic skills (transferable skills) and vocational skills (specific technical skills required for a job) are highly essential. The generic skills comprise communication, application of numbers, problem solving, **teamwork** ~~team-working~~, IT, personal values and attitudes (e.g. leadership, motivation, initiative, and discipline).

Linking together these issues and concerns, the present study sought clarification on stakeholders' views of the current hospitality and tourism education curriculum and degrees at the higher institution level in Indonesia. In this study these goals are pursued through an interview and the analysis of relevant archival resources and documents.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Participants**

Three groups of stakeholders were selected and involved in this study: educators, students, and industry people. A purposive sampling was employed in which the participants

were chosen by the researchers based on the participants' knowledge and experiences (Berg, 2007; Jennings, 2010). The targeted number of participants were 120 that comprised 40 participants for each category. It was perceived that the planned selection and different types of participants would be beneficial in providing valuable insights and in offering constructive input for this study (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Such a potential contribution arises from **two** ~~three~~ points. Firstly, data concerning Indonesia's hospitality and tourism education are limited. Secondly, the concept of vocational and academic bachelors was relatively new and not many people were aware of this issue. Indeed, the aims, content, and teaching and learning styles of these two types of bachelor programs are still continuously discussed.

The needs to involve employers/industry and students in curriculum development have been advocated by a number of scholars (e.g. Dopson & Tas, 2004; Gursoy, et al., 2012; Morgan, 2004). Marsh (1997) argues that students should be involved in curriculum-planning as they have expectations and rights. Opinions from the industry people are seen as valuable for understanding the needs of the industry as well as for determining essential competencies for a successful career (Kay & Russette, 2000).

The educators who participated in this study came from nine prominent hospitality and tourism schools in major cities/regions of Indonesia; Jakarta and its greater area, Bandung-West Java, Manado-North Sulawesi and Bali. They were senior educators with many years of teaching experience and involvement in the development of hospitality and tourism curriculum and/or study programs. The industry people were those who either held managerial positions or who owned hospitality/tourism businesses with their own solid working experiences. They were chosen due to their interest in hospitality and tourism education and their active involvement in the academic endeavors. It can be argued that people who have interest in the topic being studied are more inclined to participate (Szolnoki & Hoffmann, 2013). The students were chosen based on two criteria. Firstly, they must have

completed their internship or already had work experience in the hospitality and tourism sector. Secondly, they were senior year students. It was expected that senior students with work experiences would have adequate knowledge and be more capable in expressing their ideas.

### **Development of Instrument for the Interview Survey**

Surveys are suitable for descriptive study and to explore aspects of a particular situation (Kelley, Clark, Brown, & Sitzia, 2003). Personal interviews, based on a survey instrument, allow observation of the participants through close interaction. The other advantages of this mode are that it is clearly structured, flexible, adaptable, and can deliver representative results (Szolnoki & Hoffmann, 2013). This study used a purpose built questionnaire that contained a structured response format with single and multi-options as well as open-ended questions. The unstructured response format allowed participants to voice express concerns which were unanticipated by the researchers (Trochim, 2006). A scaled responses format was not utilized as this study did not simply seek participant agreement or disagreement on a certain attribute, or how important or unimportant an attribute was. The questionnaire was checked by four hospitality and tourism educators for its clarity and **validity validation**. To investigate the graduate profile and course content of the vocational and academic bachelor programs, the questionnaire comprised six attributes. The graduate profile was defined through three questions, namely key employment skills, the performance output, and the job level. The other attributes which include theory and practical components, internship, and course content, were developed to classify the content of curriculum.

Of the six attributes, key employment skills and course content were developed based on the existing literature and curriculum documents. The other traits were driven from several

discussions with educators, students, and industry people on several occasions including focus group discussions and meetings with an industry advisory council, and hospitality/tourism associations, and through contact with Indonesia's tourism higher education association. The key employment skills attributes consists of skills that are deemed important for hospitality and tourism career as advocated by numerous scholars (e.g. Christou, 2002; Kay & Russette, 2000; Sheldon, Fesenmaier, Woeber, Cooper, & Antonioli, 2008). They included communication skill, leadership and managerial skill, computer literacy, foreign language proficiency, analytical/creative thinking skill, and soft-skills (e.g. teamwork, and adaptability).

The course content attribute was classified into Management, Hospitality, Tourism, Computer Studies, Language and Communication, Marketing, Economics and Business Studies, Mathematic Studies, Legal/Law, Psychology and General. This content categorization was based on the list of subjects stated in the undergraduate curriculum of hospitality and tourism institutions in Indonesia, the United Kingdom, and Australia. The components of performance output consisted of operating, planning, innovating, conducting research, and managing tasks. The job levels specified included operator, supervisor/middle manager, manager/director, president director, CEO, and business owner. The theory and practical components contained the weight that is viewed as appropriate for the theoretical and practical activities between the two bachelor programs. The elements of internship comprised frequency and duration, and the work placement sites. The options of frequency and duration included a one-time internship for the span of six months, two periods for a total of six months, or three times for the six months cumulative effort. The sites of the work experiences covered a front-of-the house area (e.g. front office, food and beverage service, banquet, tour guiding), back-of-the house area in the operational field (e.g. kitchen, pastry, housekeeping, reservation), and back-of-the house area in the management field (e.g. sales

and marketing, accounting, human resources). Those components also encompass open-ended formats to complement the structured responses scheme.

Questions related to the skills, performance output, job level, and course content, employed a multi-option structured format as well as an unstructured response format. Multi-option structure format gave participants the flexibility to choose more than one answer, whereas the unstructured response format provided the opportunity for the participants to express their points of view and to elaborate their answers during the interview. The course component was determined by using a single structure format and unstructured response format in which the participants defined the depth and the breadth of the theoretical and practical components by selecting one best option and then proposing the weight for the two components. The internship was identified by using a combination of single structure format and multi-option format. The former was applied for the duration of internship and the latter for the area of internship. The interview questions that followed the structured format were mainly sought the rationale and explanations for the respondents' views.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

Data were obtained through personal interview surveys with the selected participants, and observation and comparison of curricula of hospitality and tourism higher education in Indonesia and other countries. Data were collected from December 2012 to the middle of March 2013. Content analysis was used to analyze the data. Content analysis is favorable for analyzing text from any types of documents and human communications in order to understand a particular phenomenon being studied through coding and identification of patterns or trends. This type of analysis can also be utilized in the quantitative and qualitative works (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Patton, 2002).

The six attributes listed in the questionnaire were divided into nine categories to code the data obtained from the structured response format. The codes of HTUSKILL, HTUTHEPR, and HTUINTRN were subsequently assigned for the key employment skills of graduates, theoretical and practical components, and internship. Output of the graduates, the job level, and the course content were each coded into two classifications to indicate the vocational and the academic facets (HTUEODIV and HTUEOBAC for output, HTUEJDIV and HTUEJBAC for the job level, and HTUCODIV and HTUCOBAC for the course content). Each main code contains several items. Data were recorded according to the allotted codes and items. This can be illustrated in the context of skills attribute. The skill attribute that is coded HTUSKILL comprises six items; communication skills, computer skills, foreign language skills, analytical thinking/creative thinking skills, leadership and managerial skills, and soft skills such as teamwork. A coding scheme was formed to input a certain response to a particular item and code. For example, when a participant chose communication skills, this item will be marked as '1'. Deriving from Berg (2007) and Brotherton (2008), the pattern of data and its magnitude were specified by data quantification or counting the frequency of an item in each category. Excel was utilized to calculate the frequency counts to summarize the findings. Data obtained from the open ended questions or unstructured response format were coded during the analysis since the codes were not predetermined.

In the course of analysis, the group of subjects that were listed in the content attribute were reduced into eight groups. The reduction was due to the limited number of subjects recommended by the participants as well as following suggestions from some educators. Computer and Mathematics subjects were combined into one group since mathematics, statistics, research methodology, and computer are viewed as subjects related to the analytical skills (Shariff, 2013). Subjects related to the Law, Psychology, and General were pooled into another group as law and psychology correspond to the social science discipline (Morrissett,

1991). The eight new groups were then labeled Management, Hospitality, Tourism, Computer and Mathematic Studies, Language and Communication, Marketing, Economics and Business Studies, and Law, Psychology and General.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **The Participant Profiles**

Information concerning the participants' profile is presented in Table 1. A total of 103 participants involved in this study, representing 86% of response rate. The response rate is seen as appropriate for an interview survey where a 75% response rate is considered acceptable (Kelley, et al, 2003). The participants comprised 36 educators and 32 students of hospitality and tourism higher education, and 35 industry people. Males made up 47% of the total participants and females 53%. Overall, the education level of educators and industry people accounted for 16% diploma, 16% bachelor, 30% master and 7% doctor. The background of education were mainly hospitality and tourism (74%), followed by management and business (9%) and then other studies (17%) such as language, education, service management, social science, accounting and finance, psychology, communication, marketing, computer studies, science, and law. Most educators had a Master degree and more than 15 years of work experience. The industry practitioners mainly had a diploma or bachelor degrees and their work experiences ranged between six to 20 years. Several students already had other degrees and they took hospitality/tourism as the second field of study.

TABLE 1  
Profile of Respondents

Category	Students	Educators	Industry Professionals
Age range (majority of respondents)	17-26	37-46 and 47-56	27-36 and 37-46
Gender	80% female 20% male	40% female 60% male	50% female 50% male
Primary formal education (the highest)	University students	Master degree	Diploma and bachelor degree
Primary background of study (formal highest education)	Hospitality/ tourism	Hospitality/ tourism	Hospitality/ tourism
Length of work (majority of respondents)	1-5 years	16-20 years and more than 20 years	6-10 years and 16-20 years

### The Graduate Profiles

The results as shown in Figure 1 indicated that 87% of the total respondents were of the opinion that communication skills are very important for people working in the hospitality and tourism sector. This was followed by other skills such as teamwork and adaptability (soft skills), leadership and managerial skills, foreign language skills, analytical thinking/creative thinking, and computer skills. Others facets that were seen as essential include included personal grooming, attitude, personality, and functional skills. The importance of these skills, particularly communication, leadership, and analytical skills, are aligned with the previous studies (e.g. Christou, 2002; Lin, 2002; Kay & Russette, 2000; Millar, Mao, & Moreo, 2010; Sheldon et al., 2008; Stanciulescu & Bulin, 2012). Those skills are seen as transferable skills that are indispensable for career advancement (Rimmington, 1999). Although it has been widely agreed, gaps in generic skills such as communication and problem solving are commonly found amongst graduates (Baum, 2002). The ways in which such skills can be imparted in hospitality and tourism study is a prevalent issue that requires searching consideration.



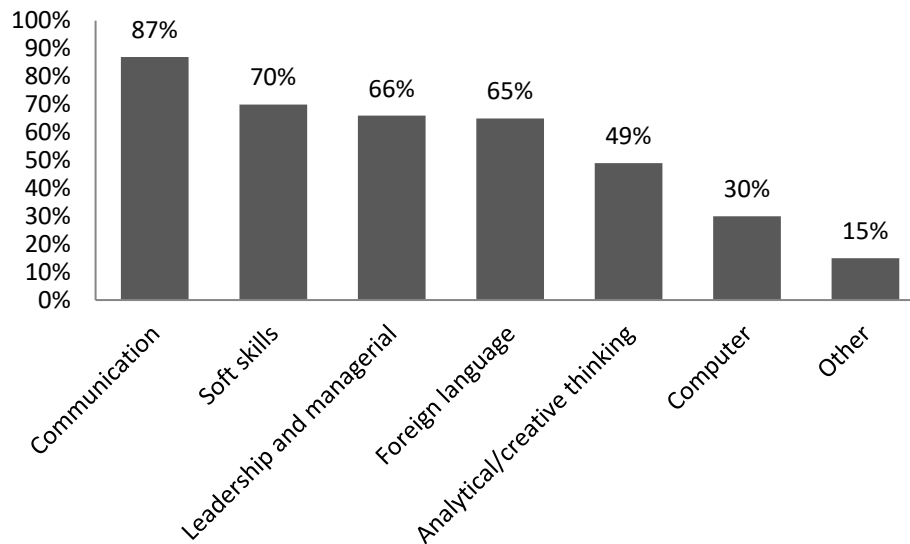


FIGURE 1. Required Skills for Working in Hospitality and Tourism

The performance outputs of the vocational bachelor graduates, as claimed by the participants, incorporate capabilities for carrying out operational and managerial tasks. The academic bachelor graduates are expected to be innovative and be able to plan and perform managerial jobs. It can be argued that the vocational bachelor graduates are directed to handle the day-to-day business operations, whereas those from the academic programs are intended to perform strategic management activities. It is quite intriguing, however, to find that the job level or position for the vocational bachelor graduates is simply at a supervisory or a middle managerial level. The top managerial level is recommended for the academic bachelor graduates. Having said that both programs require four years of study, this career issue may provoke a debate on the existence of the vocational bachelor programs. One may argue that supervisory or middle managerial levels are more appropriate for the graduates of three-year diploma programs. Moreover, there may be fewer students interested in taking a vocational bachelor program as it is considered less prestige in term of career and image.

## Course Content

Two aspects underpinning the course content of the vocational and academic bachelor programs were indicated in the findings. The first aspect is the component of theories and practice. Participants believed that in-depth theories should be emphasized for the academic bachelor students, while the hands-on practical activities should be accentuated for the vocational bachelor students. The concept of a high level of practice and less theory in the vocational education is closely aligned with its primary purpose for preparing students for the employment (Curry & Wergin, 1997). The respondents' answers to the further question about the proportions of theory and practice were rather indeterminate. Many simply stated more than 50% theory for the academic bachelor strand and more than 50% application for the vocational path. Some argued that 50% to 70% theories should be applied for the academic program and on the contrary, 50% to 70% practice for the vocational type. The participants were hesitant to further determine and explain what they meant by more than 50%. This can be inferred that although it is agreed that theories should be more in-depth in the academic bachelor stream and practical experiences in the vocational bachelor mode, the selection and organization of content as well as the teaching and learning activities require more attention.

The second aspect of the finding concerns the subjects to be taught for each bachelor program as shown in Table 2. The results showed that a number of comparable subjects are indicated in most of the subject areas of both programs. In the Marketing subjects for example, five subjects were proposed by the participants to be included in the curriculum of vocational and academic bachelor programs. They were hospitality and tourism marketing, introduction to marketing, marketing communication, consumer behavior, and event marketing. This suggestion was also applied in other subject areas although there were some subjects that were specifically directed more to a certain program. For instance, academic

English was viewed as more important for the academic bachelor students, while English for the specific purpose was highlighted for those studying in the vocational programs.

The participants suggested that functional skills and knowledge in Hospitality such as cuisine, patisserie, rooms division, and MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions), should be largely offered in the vocational path. The Hospitality subjects designated for the academic bachelor mode should convey more general knowledge and skills in the topics of hotel management, event management, and trends and issues in tourism. For the group of Tourism subjects, it was advised that the academic bachelor students learn the strategic, the social and the economic aspects of tourism such as tourism planning and development and tourism economics. The vocational bachelor students on the other hand, should be given more specific and applied tourism topics such as sports and recreation management, and festival, event, and cultural tourism. In the Management and Economic and Business parts, the academic bachelor students are expected to have more in-depth knowledge in certain aspects, such as finance management, strategic management, feasibility study, and micro- and macro- economics. In addition to the selected subjects, the respondents also recommended public speaking, leadership, international law, labor law, and tourism attraction management for both bachelor programs.

TABLE 2  
Courses Content of Vocational and Academic Bachelor Programs

Group of Subjects	Vocational Bachelor Subjects	Combined Subjects of the Vocational and Academic Bachelor	Academic Bachelor Subjects
Management	Supervision	Principles/Introduction to Management Human Resources Management Organizational Behavior Accounting	Finance Management Strategic Management Feasibility Study
Hospitality	Cuisine Patisserie/ Pastry Rooms Division Introduction to MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions)	Introduction to Hospitality Industry Food and Beverage Management Hygiene, Safety, and Security	Hotel Management Event Management Current Trends and Issues in Hospitality and Tourism
Tourism	Festivals, Event and Cultural Tourism Tourism Geography Sports and Recreation Management	Introduction to Tourism Industry/ Management Tourism Management	Economics of Tourism/Tourism Economics Tourism Planning and Development Destination Management
Computer and Mathematics Studies		Introduction to IT Management Information System for Hospitality Industry Research Methodology Introductory Business Statistics	
Language and Communication	English for Specific Purpose	Business Communication Mandarin Managing Cultural Diversity/ Intercultural Communication	Academic English
Marketing		Hospitality and Tourism Marketing Introduction to Marketing Marketing Communication Consumer Behavior Event Marketing	
Economics and Business Studies		Entrepreneurship	Macroeconomics/ Microeconomics for Tourism and Hospitality
Law, Psychology and General		Psychology of Service Hospitality and Tourism Law	Design Thinking

In addition to the eight subject groups, the participants also stated the importance of an internship. The inclusion of internship in the hospitality and tourism curriculum content has been advocated by various scholars such as Chen and Shen (2012), Koh (1995), Rainsford (1997), and Ring et al. (2009). Internship is generally aimed to offer experiences for students to work in a real workplace and as a bridging between what the schools delivered and what the industry expected (Hsu, 2012). In this study, the participants favored two

periods of involvement for a total of six months internship for both bachelor programs. In the vocational education, the range of internship duration between six months to one year is commonly applied (Lee & Chao, 2008 as cited in Chen & Shen, 2012). The working area of internship as asserted by the participants can be classified as front-of-the house and back-of-the house in operation and management sites. The front-of-the house and back-of-the house operations are principally assigned for the vocational students since they are expected to perform day-to-day operations and more likely having direct guest contacts. The back-of-the house management was mainly projected for the academic bachelor students where they would do more administrative and managerial tasks.

Content as one of the key curriculum components should be in line with the curriculum conceptions or images (Morris & Adamson, 2010). There are five images that influence what should be achieved by an educational institution: academic rationalism, social and economic efficiency, learner-centered, social-reconstructionism, and orthodoxy/ideological transfer. The content of academic rationalism that emphasizes intellectual and cognitive skills should be constructed on the knowledge, skills, and values of the academic disciplines. Social and economic efficiency is aimed to produce manpower. The content is designed to equip students with skills and knowledge required for an employment. Student-centered is intended to enhance students' personal and intellectual development. Knowledge and process of learning are the focus of content for this conception. The content of social reconstructionism is generally stressed social issues and social needs as this notion promotes changes, reformation, and criticism. The focus of orthodoxy/ideological transfer in values, beliefs and culture of a society requires content that underlines religious, political or patriotic events (Morris & Adamson, 2010). The choice of image or conception will reflect the aims of the programs that serve as vital guidelines in education endeavors (Davies, 1976). The purpose of education, as asserted by Tyler (1949), is the first focal point that should be

addressed by an educational institution. A well-defined, clear, and specific **objective objectives** will determine what a curriculum should be and how it should be organized (Marsh & Willis, 2003).

Ben-Peretz and Connelly (1991) assert four approaches in the selection of content. The first approach stresses the theory, key concept, and the method of inquiry. This principle applies to a program **corresponding** ~~corresponds~~ to a scholarly discipline. The second perspective emphasizes social life and vocational pursuit, student-centered, and life skills. The third orientation deals with the unified knowledge, in which content focuses on theories and topics drawn **from** ~~on~~ various disciplines. The fourth course of action is the non-disciplinary knowledge that is not derived from the scholarly disciplines such as arts, conversation skills, specific skills and practical wisdom. It is important to note that “any specific content items may serve different instructional goals and conversely any given goal may be served by different content items” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1991, p. 330).

Following Ben-Peretz and Connelly (1991) and Morris and Adamson (2010), it can be observed that the vocational bachelor stream is established with a purpose to produce skilled and knowledgeable people for the enhancement of the service sector of Indonesia’s tourism industry. The social and economic efficiency, therefore, could be the primary choice of the curriculum approach. This view can be eclectic with a combination of the student-centered conception to promote students’ personal development. The content of vocational curriculum should emphasize skills and knowledge development that are necessary for an employment, and focuses on the concrete experiences. The academic bachelors program arguably is aimed to produce people with higher-order thinking to create planning and strategies for the sustainability of Indonesia’s tourism sector. The conception for this type of education can be strongly grounded upon academic rationalism and social reconstructionism. The content

should favor intellectual and cognitive skills development, and the social issues related to tourism. Theories, key concept, and unified knowledge should be accentuated in this content.

Building on these study findings, a preliminary model of the vocational and the academic bachelors' course content can be proposed. As presented in Figure 2, the content-specific focus of the vocational bachelor program is on the hospitality subjects, whereas the academic bachelor highlights the tourism subjects. In other words, hospitality subjects are more dominant than tourism subjects in the vocational bachelor strand. On the contrary, tourism subjects are preeminent in the academic bachelor stream. There are, however, some overlapping subjects that cover both programs. The other subject areas consisting of management, economics, business, mathematics, computer, language, and social, are conceived as common knowledge subject areas. These subjects appertain to both bachelor programs with different emphasis. The academic bachelor strongly incorporates strategy, analysis, and evaluation, while the vocational bachelor attends to applications and practices. Non-disciplinary knowledge such as communication skills, teamwork, and leadership skills are deemed important to be integrated in the course content of the two programs. These types of knowledge can be obtained from the internships or the work-place experiences.

It can be concluded that the focus of content for the vocational style is on the skills and knowledge for employment, while for the academic mode is on the unified knowledge and cognitive skills that stresses theories and concept, and trends and issues in tourism. Both modes require concepts and practical activities in the knowledge building although at different levels affairs of magnitude. As asserted by Young (2013), how the knowledge is acquired implicates concepts and practical activities. The former denotes 'to know something' and the latter refers to 'do something or skills' by using the concept to explain or to solve problems. Subjects are the organization of knowledge that is derived from disciplinary concepts and attend to the epistemic access for the students. Curriculum serves as

a tool to extend the epistemic activity or knowledge building beyond what students experience in their daily lives (Young, 2014).

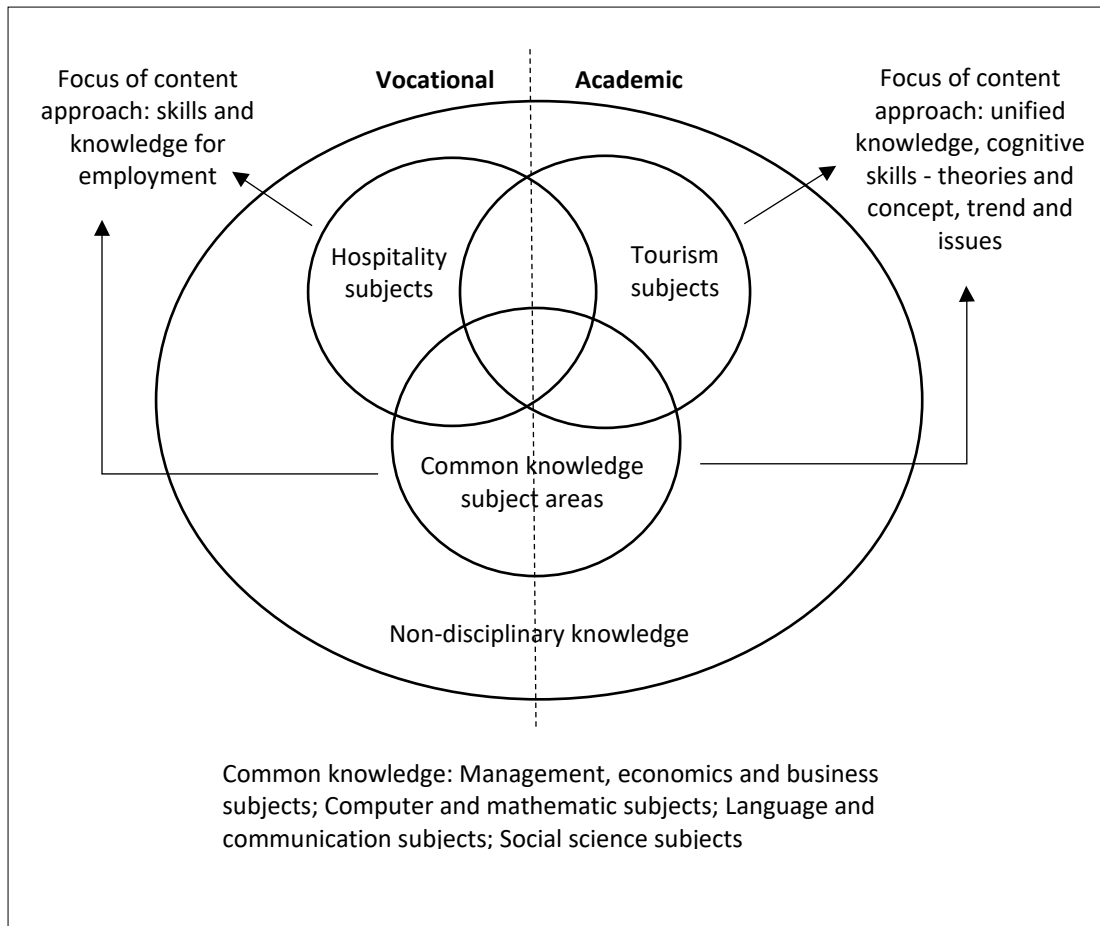


FIGURE 2. A Proposed Model of the Vocational and Academic Bachelors' Course Content

## CONCLUSION

The results of this study revealed that the graduate profiles and the course content of the vocational and academic bachelor programs in Indonesia could be differentiated although there are only minor current differences. Seminal questions from educational philosophy that seek to understand and clarify the aims and objectives of the degrees need to be asked as the fields and programs evolve. Clearer aims and objectives will serve as better guidelines in planning, selecting, and applying the course content, the methods of instruction and learning



approaches, and the assessment. The information provided in this study sheds light on the important issues to be considered for developing curriculum of the hospitality and tourism vocational and the academic programs. In particular it has identified ways in which subjects maybe shared while stressing the need for the **distinct** ~~distinctive~~ incorporation of degree specific subjects in line with the fundamental philosophy of a more academic (tourism) or more vocational (hospitality) orientation

This study has some limitations which also lead to some potential directions for future research. Firstly, the sample size of this study was modest. Future study, if a survey is used, may involve larger populations of students and educators and industry personnel to strengthen the findings and to include a stronger comparison of perspectives from different group of participants. Secondly, participants from the industry could involve more people from the tourism sector as the present sample had more personnel from the hospitality/hotel worlds. In future study, it should also be beneficial to raise further questions concerning the underlying educational philosophies held by those who influence and are influenced by the tourism and hospitality curriculum in Indonesia and beyond.

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