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TOURISM EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN GREECE: A CRITICAL ASSESS OF THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN THE PROVISION OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR HOSPITALITY AND/OR TOURISM

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Abstract: In the present paper the provision of hospitality and tourism management education and training in Greece is assessed. There is an extended record of the educational establishments that provides hospitality management courses and their evaluation as well. The aspect of the supervised work experience, the provision of foreign languages courses and the distance learning programs are also examined and mentioned. The Greek educational system and the role of the public and private sector are evaluated additionally. Furthermore, there is made an appraisal of the future trends that potentially will influence the hospitality and tourism management education and training in Greece.

Key words: Greek educational system, tourism education and training, future trends.

Sažetak: OBRAZOVANJE I IZOBRAZBA ZA POTREBE TURIZMA U GRČKOJ: KRITIČKA PROCJENA ULOGE VLADE I PRIVATNOG SEKTORA U PRUŽANJU OBRAZOVANJA I IZOBRAZBE ZA POTREBE HOTELIJERSTVA I/ILI TURIZMA. U radu se analizira obrazovanje i izobrazba iz područja hotelskog i turističkog menadžmenta u Grčkoj, uz opširan pregled i procjenu obrazovnih ustanova sa studijskim programima hotelskog menadžmenta. Poseban je osvrt na pitanja provedbe praktičnog rada, učenja stranih jezika i ostvarivanja programa distance learning. Rad također procjenjuje obrazovni sustav Grčke, te ulogu javnog i privatnog sektora, uz ocjenu budućih trendova koji bi mogli utjecati na obrazovanje i izobrazbu za potrebe hotelskog i turističkog menadžmenta u Grčkoj.

Ključne riječi: obrazovni sustav Grčke, obrazovanje i izobrazba za potrebe turizma, budući trendovi.

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INTRODUCTION

The present paper is aiming to assess the provision of hospitality and tourism management education and training in Greece. An extended record of the educational establishments that provide hospitality management courses is going to be made simultaneously to their evaluation. Aspects such as supervised work experience, foreign languages and distance learning programs are also examined by mentioning the main establishments that offer professional development and training courses.

The outline of the Greek educational system is going to be mentioned by examine the role of the public and private sector that providing hospitality and tourism management education and training in Greece. Furthermore, an appraisal of the future trends that potentially will influence the hospitality and tourism management education and training in Greece is going to be examined.

THE GREEK TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

The economy of Greece and a significant part of its GDP is generated particularly by the tourism and hospitality industry. During the past twenty years, the hotel and tourism sector in Greece has surpassed other traditional industries. This development has created needs for trained and educated human resources in the management of hospitality and tourism business.

Consequently, tourism in Greece produces 18 per cent of the total Greek Gross Domestic Product (G.D.P) and provides employment for almost 8-10 per cent of the total Greek workforce (18-20% GDP and \approx 800.000 employees) during the peak summer months, according to the Association of Greek Tourist Enterprises (S.E.T.E., 2003, cited in Valachis, 2003). Due to its marketing efforts towards mass tourism, Greece has attracted more tourists that it has inhabitants in recent years and for many regions of the country according to Mousios (1999), tourism is one of the two major contributors to the overall local economy, alongside agriculture.

Nonetheless, Greek tourism industry faces a lot of problems, principally resulting from its hasty and uncontrolled growth in 1970s and 1980s. Along these lines, one of the main limitations the industry has been deterioration in the quality of hotels and other tourism infrastructure and services. The tourism authorities view the upgrading of the quality of standard of accommodation, transportation and services provided as a means of attracting higher-quality leisure and business visitors to Greece.

The Greek tourism is characterised of high levels of seasonality. More than 75 per cent of tourism demand is between May and September, with July and August accounting for 38 per cent of the total annual arrivals. There is tremendous pressure on resources to congregate and satisfy the demand, while the average spent by foreign tourists is along with the lowest in European countries (Mousios, 1999). According to Greek National Tourism Organisation (G.N.T.O) in 2000, June, July and August are the busiest months.

Another problem apart from seasonality is the international arrivals that focalised in a relatively small number of destinations, mostly on the southern Greek islands, while at the same time the domestic tourists prefer to visit other districts. As Mousios (1999) asserts that the less developed destinations are slowly being brought to

the attention of foreign markets, however, primarily through the special-interest market segment.

THE NEED FOR TOURISM EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The tourism industry is a labour-intensive service industry, depending largely on the availability of good quality personnel to deliver, operate, and manage the tourist product (Eaton and Christou, 1997; Amoah and Baum, 1997). The cooperation between the tourist and tourism industry human resources is an essential part of the entire tourist experience. Human resource aspects in tourism and hospitality are multi-dimensional. According to Christou (1999), the task of developing capable tourism and hospitality management human resources lies within the hospitality organizations and within the education system of the country.

With the intention of having a clear view of the nature of tourism and hospitality management education and training, it is vital to make a distinction the differences between the education and training. According to Baum (1995), universities and educational system of a country provide education while training is generally provided by the industry. Furthermore, as Riegel (1995) claims, education has been defined as a field of multidisciplinary study, which brings the perspectives of many disciplines, especially those found in the social sciences, to bear on particular areas of application and practice in hospitality and tourism industry.

At the same time, Wexley and Latham (1991:p 3) argued that "training and development refers to a planned effort by an organization to facilitate the learning of job-related behaviour on the part of its employees". The concept of training includes all formal learning actions, which may perhaps, or not lead to qualifications and possibly will be obtained at any time in a working line of business.

In reference with Amoah and Baum (1997), education programmes have appeared in response to the following needs for human resource development in a demanding environment:

- Keeping the industry abreast with the latest technology and trends;
- The availability of qualified replacement staff at all times;
- Raising the image of careers in tourism;
- Staffing new and growing tourist industries;
- Employment regulation;
- Reduction of foreign labour;
- Responding to increasingly demanding service and communications requirements of customers.

These are all indisputable components of what Baum (1995) define as sustainable human resource policies and practices in tourism. In addition, according to Goldsmith *et al* (1997), the reasons for training programs are the personal requests for training; observation by supervisors of a remedial upgrading or need; a new job; organisational problems of production. Furthermore, reasons for training programs occurred by the observation of symptoms such as (Sigala, 2002):

- Low productivity;
- High productivity costs;

- High labour turnover;
- Poor discipline;
- Poor control;
- Poor employees satisfaction;
- High absenteeism.

Moreover, there are some ongoing situations such as changing in organisational strategy. There are some innovative programs that require training programs such as:

- An expansion of business;
- Bringing new product;
- New technology;
- Organisation changes;
- HR planning needs.

As result to the above educational needs, Baum suggested (1995) that some of the most important key outcomes that are expected from hospitality education include:

- The attainment of service quality;
- Employee empowerment through well educated staff at all levels;
- Effective relationship marketing which depends heavily upon empowerment;
- Harmony, effective co-operation and teamwork within hospitality organisations, the industry as an entity, and the educational institutions;
- Preparation for vocational mobility within Europe, mainly through the improvement of language skills;
- The upgrading of hospitality operating standards;
- The recognition of the importance of sustainability of human resource policies for hospitality.

Equally, Clements and Josiam (1995) are in general agreement that there are a number of benefits to be had from training. These include:

- The improvement of employees' productivity;
- The improvement of employees' work quality;
- The improvement of customers' overall perception of an organisation;
- An increase in a business' profit level;
- An increase in employees' on-the-job skill;
- An increase in employees' level of self awareness;
- An increase in employees' job satisfaction;
- The attraction of new employees;
- The improvement in employees' attitudes;
- A reduction in labour turnover;
- A reduction in costs;
- The promotion of teamwork (Conrade *et al*, 1994).

THE GREEK EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

The Greek educational system is divided into three levels; primary, secondary and tertiary education. Although in the primary education it is not any leisure or tourism course offered, the Greek children and especially those in tourist areas have the opportunity to understand at little age the tourism process through their contact with the tourists. The secondary education is distinguished into two types; the General and the Technical-Vocational Lyceum. The role of General Lyceum had basically been to prepare students for the entrance examinations to state universities and the role of the Technical-Vocational Lyceum is to prepare students for professional life. The tertiary education is divided in the Universities and the Higher Technological Educational Institutes where the entrance is achieved by the General Hellenic Entrance Examinations (Christou, 1999).

THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

The responsibility for the strategic planning and regulation of the education system in Greece is line with the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs. The educational system in Greece is centralized, highly bureaucratic and as result not flexible enough to adjust to a constantly changing technological and economic environment.

The Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs is responsible for tertiary education in monitoring and funding the educational establishments exercise independence at higher level. According to the Country's Law, education and training constitutes a basic state mission. Education is compulsory for persons aged 6-15 years old. All Greeks are entitled to free education in public schools. Tertiary education, except the 'Laboratory of Liberal Studies' (L.L.S) is exclusively administered by institutions provided by public sector (Christou, 1999).

PUBLIC SECTOR HIGHER EDUCATION

According to the Greek constitution of 1974, all higher education institutions are financed directly by the state, by providing free of charge studies and textbooks. The institutions that provide tertiary education are the Universities and the Higher Technological Educational Institutions (H.T.E.I). The first lead to theoretical or philosophical degrees that are obtained after four to six years of studies depending on the discipline followed, while the second offers courses applied on professional disciplines ranging from three to four years of studies, having lots of similarities with the former British Polytechnic institutions.

There are seven Higher Technological Educational Institutions contributing to the hospitality and tourism management, located in Athens, Thessaloniki, Patra, Igoumenitsa, Amfisa, Larissa and Heraklio. The standards of studies are equivalent to that of European institutions offering a similar academic curriculum. The student's transfer between two of the above establishments is allowed and the credits are moved legally and recognised by the current establishment.

In conjunction with H.T.E.I, the Training Centres of Advanced Studies (A.S.T.P) which operate under the Ministry of Development - National Tourism

Organisation, offer hospitality and tourism degrees recognised by the state. There are two (A.S.T.P), one in Agios Nicolaos in Crete and one in Rhodes.

In addition to the Training Centres of Advanced Studies (A.S.T.P), there are the Schools of Tourism Education, which are also under the supervision of the Ministry of Development, providing professional education and training for the hotel, catering and tourism professions. The Schools of Tourism Education (S.T.E) offer a various number of degrees in their specialised schools. The degrees acquired, are these of Hotel Management, Tour Guiding, Travel Agencies, Animation, Catering and Confectionary specialisation. The same Schools are also offering educational and training classes for unqualified employees. Every Year, in several cities and towns, S.T.E. operates training classes for Hotel and Catering Industry employees.

There is also a number of private and public Institutes for Vocational Training (I.V.T) that offers courses in vocational training in hospitality and tourism management (I.E.K in Greek). Although many of these institutes are under the government's monitoring and funding, they are not recognised by the state, regarding the employment rights of the graduates. These institutes provide a wide range of degrees, very familiar to those of Schools of Tourism Education.

In the last few years, it has been observed an effort by the traditional Greek Universities to create Tourism and Hospitality Management Programmes. Amongst the eighteen Universities operating in Greece, only four of them offer Tourism and the Hospitality, particularly in Postgraduate level. The University of Aegean offers MSc in 'Planning, Management and Tourism Policy'; the University of Piraeus offers MSc in 'Tourism Management' and the University of Macedonia MBA in 'Tourism'. Furthermore, the Hellenic Open University in 'Tourism Enterprises Management' offers MSc degree.

PRIVATE SECTOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Although the majority of the primary and secondary institutes are provided by the state, there are lots of primary and secondary institutes provided by private establishments. According to Christou (1999) the Greek state authorities or the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs as educational establishments do not recognise these institutions, and they operate under the characterisation of 'Laboratory of Liberal Studies' (L.L.S). Moreover, the L.L.S are regulated and supervised by the Ministry of Trade and are not allowed to carry names that include the word 'university', 'college', 'polytechnic' or Higher Technological Educational Institution (Christou, 1999). The L.L.S offers educational programmes based on foreign colleges that have been adjusted to meet the Greek students and industry's needs. The students can continue their studies at a university abroad with which the '(L.L.S)' holds affiliation, especially in UK and U.S.A.

SUPERVISED WORK EXPERIENCE

There is another aspect of education and training that are worth mentioning. According to LeBruto and Murray (1994), the 'sandwich undergraduate' course or 'supervised worked experience' (SWE) is a serious part of the training process that it should be considered with care. The intention of the sandwich courses is to apply and

amalgamate the theory that has been taught through the classes with the practical working experience (DiMicelli, 1998; Hogg, 1994; LeBruto and Murray, 1994)

In cooperation with the educational establishments employers around the world have adopted the theme of supervised work experience (Fitzgerald and Cullen, 1991; LeBruto and Ford, 1995; Partlow, 1996; Harris, 1997). In the case of Europe, it is commonly known as 'industrial placement period' or more frequently as 'supervised work experience' while in North America is usually known as 'internship'. Petrillose and Montgomery (1998) note that the most accepted of the experimental learning models in North America are internships. Nevertheless, according to Downey and DeVeau (1988) study on internship programmes has proved important gaps in expectations among industry and hospitality educators.

The principal function of experiential learning during a period of supervised work experience provides students with valuable work experience with an appropriate employer in the hotel and catering industry. Additionally, according to Cargill (1996), students have the opportunity through internships to expand analytical and leadership skills along with the concept of a productive worker. As well, Dresh and Gregory (1989) supporting the above argument, believe that students develop more realistic expectations of the working world, universities are up to date with the trends and demands of the hospitality industry and industry professionals are aware of the particular objectives of education.

SWE links the gap between educational theory and the practical aspect by applying it in a hospitality enterprise. Wisch (1989) states that SWE can aid students in learning how to cultivate communication, tolerance and interpersonal skills. The hospitality industry can assist in training the next generation of managers by working closely with educational institutions to blend theory and practice as Hill and Reed (1983) report.

In the case of Greek educational system, sandwich courses are provided from both private and public educational institutions as compulsory working experience in order for students to graduate. The Higher Technological Educational Institutions (H.T.E.I) required six months of compulsory sandwich course while the Schools of Tourism Education (S.T.E) two months training work in the industry for the summer period, after finishing the school year. There is a number of private and public Institutes for Vocational Training (I.E.K) that offer courses in vocational training in hospitality and tourism management as well, where the compulsory sandwich course last two months.

According to Christou's (2001) survey of the H.T.E.I of Thessaloniki students concerning SWE, both positive and negative reflections according to the quality of the SWE were observed. Most of the students argued that the sources of disappointment had to do with the underpayment, long hours of work and the perceptions of the employers who consider them as cheap labour. Although many of the examined student expressed the opinion that the assignment was good regarding the hotel operation skills, in the case of the managerial and administrative skills as well the supervising remained the least. However, according to the same survey, lots of students argued that the SWE contributed up to a standard or high level to the development of key management competencies. This level was considerably higher than that of the period of traditional study at the school.

CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Another aspect apart from the sandwich undergraduate courses is the life-long learning or continuous professional development. Harris (1997) asserts that the need for both public and private educational and industrial organisations of lifelong learning is crucial. Continuous professional development goals are the constant upgrading of knowledge, updating of professional skills throughout an individuals working life and as a concept of lifelong learning (Christou, 1997). Haywood (1989) argued that students must be prepared for continuing learning and active participation in the transformation of their lives and careers.

The University of Macedonia in Greece offers Professional Specialisation Programmes aiming at the provision of additional education to the trainees. The trainees are likely to be university's graduates, employees and jobless in their effort to enrich their competitive advantage. The University of Macedonia provides a wide range of vocational, tourism and general management courses specialised in finance and strategic management.

DISTANCE LEARNING

A significant development in the field of education was the creation of the Open University. Distance learning (DL) can offer such potential students an affordable, flexible and good quality educational alternative. As a result of this, DL programmes in tertiary-level tourism education are in increasing demand in the Greece and European Union alike (Christou and Prinianaki, 1999).

Although this educational method has a long history in other European Countries, this has only been recently introduced in Greece with the Hellenic Open University in 1998. The Hellenic Open University has its chair in Patra and offers MSc degree in Tourism Enterprises Management with duration of at least 2.5 years.

Despite the importance of this new educational system, the majority of the traditional students are less interested in following such kind of education rather than the industry professional whose aim is to improve their competitive advantage. However, the idea of continuous professional development and continuous self-improvement tend to become more socially acceptable (Christou and Eaton, 1997). Moreover, the lack of tourism and hospitality education programmes both at undergraduate and postgraduate level in relation to the on going industry needs, makes distance learning in Greece essential (Christou, 1999).

FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT EDUCATION IN GREECE

The fact that Tourism in Greece has developed rapidly and the undertaking of the Olympic Games in 2004 in Athens, make the knowledge of foreign languages imperative. Greeks nowadays are distinguished for studying foreign languages by speaking at least one language, especially English. In most schools and departments of the Primary education a well as in the General and the Technical-Vocational Lyceum, foreign languages are compulsory courses for students.

The teaching of foreign languages is compulsory also in the Higher Technological Educational Institutions (H.T.E.I) in the Department of Tourism Management and in the School of Tourism Education (former School of Tourist Professions).

Despite the English language, Greek educational establishments are also providing the study of languages of the countries, which are first in the list of the tourist visitors in the Greek tourism destinations. For example, apart from English, which is compulsory for many other reasons, Germans, French and Italian are taught in the Greek educational establishments. The last few years, there has been an increase in Eastern European flows in Greece and especially in Northern Greece. Consequently, many of the educational establishments, including both private and public, started to bring in to their curriculum the Russian language in order to increase their competitive advantage (Valachis, 2003).

EDUCATIONAL SEMINARS

Various institutions, the majority of which are funded by the EU, have organised a number of educational seminars. EU and the private or public organiser share the expenses of these seminars. For example, 'Leonardo da Vinci' and 'Socrates' are seminars addressed to unemployed, unskilled people and employees who already worked in the tourism and hospitality industry.

Educational seminars are usually organised either by private organisations or non-profit establishments. The non-profit organisations, which offer educational seminars, are the Hellenic Business Administration Co. (E.E.D.E), the Chamber of Hotels (X.E), the Hellenic Productivity Centre (EL.KE.PA), the Hotel Owner Association and the Institute of Tourism and Hotel Research. Further number of seminars are organised by (O.A.E.D), The Greek Workforce Employment Organization.

Moreover, the last years a great number of hospitality and tourism management courses offered by various Centers of Professional Training (K.E.K. in Greek) where the students are subsidized for their participation on the programmes. These centers are funded by the European Union as a part of the European initial to promote competitiveness across the European countries.

TRAINING PROVISION IN THE GREEK HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM INDUSTRY

The small scale of these businesses tends to suggest that they are family owned* and ran. Setting them up will not be costly, nor will it require much in the way of specialist qualifications. The result of this is that there are relatively few organisations that could be said to operate at the leading edge of good practice as for example, in terms of people management policies and practices (Keep and Mayhew, 1999). Additionally, businesses comprising the tourism and hospitality industry are fragmented and weakly organised.

Table 1* Size and Hotel Category

• Hotel Size • Category	Family	Small	Medium	Small-Medium
5*	0.1%	0.1%	0.6%	0,2%
4*	5.5%	5.4%	12%	6.4%
3*	9,2%	20,6%	36%	17,5%
2*	49%	60,6%	49,8%	53,8%
1*	20,6%	10,7%	1,5%	14%
Total	3548	3011	1075	7634

(Institute of tourism Research, ITEP, 2000)

Although some hotels provide training to their employees', major problems identified by employees associated with the training provision which influence the effectiveness of the training process. These problems have to do with the structure and the frequency of the training programs, the lack of management commitment and facilities, the use of training methods, the high seasonality, the evaluation of training and the employees' diversity (Zermpini, 1999; Goldsmith and Smirli, 1995). The need for greater co-operation between educational establishments and hospitality industry is the major prerequisite in order to improve the quality of the training provided.

FUTURE ASPECTS IN THE GREEK HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

According to Christou (1999) survey about the hospitality management education in Greece, it seems that graduates of hospitality management courses in Greece are not fully prepared for the requirements of the hotel and tourism industry. Therefore, it could be assumed that the provision of the hospitality management education in Greece does not in a manner fully meet the current needs of the industry. If in the future the existing system remains as it is now, the gap between the industry's needs and the results accomplished by the education will probably increase (Christou, 1997).

Moreover, there are some factors according to Christou (2000) will potentially influence the future of the tourism and hospitality management education in Greece, identified as external factors related direct or indirect with the industry. These factors are distinguished into two categories: changes that are connected with the industry's environment and those which are related to the changes in the greater hospitality management education and training environment.

The globalisation of economy and the flexible employment in conjunction with the frequent transfer between the companies and countries also consist factors that will influence the human resource of the country. The sustainability, the safety and the quality of the tourist product are additional factors mentioned by Christou (1999). Finally, another factor that has already influence the Greek tourist product is the Olympic Games 2004 in Athens, which increased the requirements for qualified workforce.

BROAD CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It could be assumed that the provision of the hospitality management education in Greece does not fully meet the current needs of the industry. According to Valachis (2003), in the Greek tourism and hospitality industry, a stronger link between the education programmes and the industry is essential. The weakness of the tourism and hospitality education in Greece is the absence of a link between the education and industry (Christou, 1999). The majority of the courses offered by both private and public establishments were created without the cooperation of the industry (Valachis, 2003; Valachis, 2005). The development and implementation of a specific tourism education policy, is also essential to bring tourism education closer with national tourism policies. The above recommendation has been made as well by Amoah and Baum (1997).

The development of tourism in Greece has been rapid since the 1960's. The tourism industry for Greece is the most important source of foreign exchange, the major contributor to the country's gross domestic product and the largest provider of employment (S.E.T.E., 2003). The main resource of the tourism industry is the hospitality sector (Papanikos, 2000). The provision of hospitality services is labour intensive and requires highly skilled employees. The provision of quality hospitality management education at a tertiary level is strongly linked to the development and success of the industry. However, there is a strong indication that the current hospitality and tourism education system needs revision that will lead to major adjustments and improvements (Papanikos, 2000).

According to Valachis (2003) concerning the essential competencies that are important for a hospitality career, it could be assumed that the provision of the hospitality management education in Greece does not fully meet the current needs of the industry. According to the S.E.T.E. (S.E.T.E., 2003, cited in Valachis, 2003: p.7), if in the future the existing system will remain in its current form, the gap between the industry's needs in qualified human resources and the efficiency of the educational system to come up to these needs will probably increase.

The same research disclosed that the forms of teaching and learning might also need to be revised (Valachis, 2003; Christou, 1999). The vast majority of the courses are delivered in Greece in the traditional lecture form. New forms of learning like role-playing, case studies, simulations, games, out of class assignments and internships might need to be introduced as similarly claimed by Christou (2002). It should also be examined if it is necessary to introduce more sophisticated forms of teaching that discussed similarly by Christou (1999), such as laboratory sessions that allow students to study the relationship between theoretical concepts and working experience that provides an external laboratory for implementing and experiencing the potential of management.

According to Valachis (2003) and Valachis (2005) research findings, the curricula of the hospitality management educational establishments in Greece are more concentrated on their local market rather than on preparing employees for an international career. Although most of the respondents of the research were satisfied with the skills and competencies necessary for an international profession that they developed during their studies, they revealed less satisfaction about theoretical knowledge that they acquired during their studies.

The issue of the centralised and bureaucratic Greek educational system, which blocks any individual effort by the institutions to redesign their curricula and their programme of studies, is mentioned in the same research findings (S.E.T.E., 2003, in Valachis 2003: p.28; Valachis, 2005).

In order to overcome this difficulty, it is suggested that the institutions should operate more individual and free from the governmental bureaucratic system, but always under the public founding (Valachis, 2005). Additionally, the respondents had never been asked to evaluate their educators or the curricula, apart from the respondents of the H.T.E.I of Thessaloniki. They had been asked to evaluate the curricula of their institution in line with a European Union Programme (E.P.E.A.E.K) in an effort to gain information concerning the curricula's of the H.T.E.I (Christou and Karamandis, 1999).

AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

An area that needs further research according to the findings of this study is the field of foreign languages. The fact that respondents recommended Russian as the language to be included in the curricula due to the potentials that Eastern European tourist market has, should be studied in depth by academics and the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs, which is responsible for the strategic planning and regulation of the education system in Greece (Valachis, 2003).

Furthermore, because of the globalisation of the economy and the growing cultural diversity both for the industry and students, the curricula of that programmes should be 'international' in design, delivery and deliberations rather than 'local' or 'domestic' (Valachis, 2005). As a result, Valachis (2003) suggests that the academics and the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs, should study these trends in the global economic and cultural environment and take the proper decisions for the hospitality management education in Greece.

Moreover, an effort to define what skills and competencies a hospitality management graduate may need due to the diverse nature of the hospitality industry should be examined by the academic as well. Consequently, Valachis (2003) argues that the hospitality management programmes should provide graduates with the essential competencies that the industry demands and for that reason, the curricula and the programmes should be adopted to these changes of the industry's needs.

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