

**MANAGEMENT OF A MALAYSIAN HOSPITALITY
ACADEMIC PROGRAMME:
A WORK-BASED LEARNING APPROACH**

LOI MIN WEI

ASIA e UNIVERSITY

2018

**MANAGEMENT OF A MALAYSIAN HOSPITALITY ACADEMIC
PROGRAMME:
A WORK-BASED LEARNING APPROACH**

LOI MIN WEI

**A Thesis Submitted to the School of Management
Asia e University in Fulfilment of the
Requirement for the Degree of
Master of Science (Management) by Research**

September 2018

ABSTRACT

Leading one of the Entry Point Project (EPP) of the Economic Transformation Plan, Malaysia Centre for Tourism and Hospitality Education (MyCenTHE) shared the concept of work-based learning academic programme to the higher education providers (HEP) and hospitality industry in Malaysia as a mean to improve hospitality education, producing targeted qualified output of 50,000 personnel annually. The concept is new to the Malaysian education system that is governed by Malaysian Ministry of Education with Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) as the guardian of tertiary education quality.

Work-based learning concept introduced by MyCenTHE programme structure is different from the specific standards and guidelines set by MQA, thus, changes in the management of hospitality programmes is expected and is challenging having to comply to the standards and guidelines. This research paper aims to find out “*How can the hospitality academic programme in Malaysia, in terms of programme delivery, be managed differently with the introduction of work-based learning (WBL)?*”

Qualitative research methodology is used for this research, utilising both descriptive and exploratory research methodology to study the topic, including the introduction of work-based learning, higher education quality, outcome-based education (OBE) and hospitality education in general. Interview with higher education provider, hotel establishments and participating students were conducted on the participant’s experience with work-based learning.

The research found that the introduction of work-based learning concept by MyCenTHE indeed has some influence on the hospitality and tourism education in Malaysia, however, the lack of clear guidance from MyCenTHE in managing work-based learning programme, even though it introduced the concept has resulted in the less successful implementation of the work-based learning hospitality academic programme. MQA published Guidelines of Good Practice: Work-based learning only in late 2015, with emphasis on assessment methodology, years after work-based learning is introduced. The guideline is also found not harmonise with Programme Standards: Hospitality and Tourism published earlier.

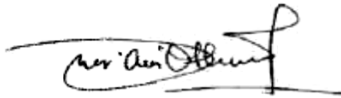
After much exploration, the research concluded that there is least impact of work-based learning methodology to the industry, or the management of the education programme because it is not adopted by higher education provider, thus, it does not bring significant change to the delivery of programme in Malaysia. However, the research strongly recommends the higher education providers, that has interest to pursue the delivery method, to make efforts to study and benchmark those institutions in foreign countries who have successfully implement work-based learning prior to their implementation.

APPROVAL PAGE

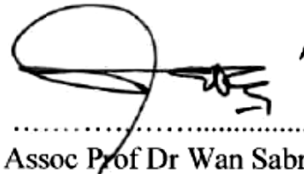
I certify that I have supervised/read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in quality and scope, as a thesis for the fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science (Management) by Research.



.....
Dr Ooo Yu Hock
Supervisor



.....
Assoc Prof Dr Nor'Ain Hj Othman
UiTM
Examiner



.....
Assoc Prof Dr Wan Sabri Wan Hussin
AeU
Examiner

This thesis was submitted to the School of Management, Asia e University and is accepted as fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science (Management) by Research.



.....
Assoc Prof Dr Wan Sabri Wan Hussin
Dean, School of Management

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis submitted in fulfilment of the Master of Science (Management) by Research degree is my own work and that all contributions from any other persons or sources are properly and duly cited. I further declare that the materials have not been submitted either in whole or in part, for a degree at this or any other university. In making this declaration, I understand and acknowledge any breaches in this declaration constitute academic misconduct, which may result in my expulsion from the programme and/or exclusion from the award of the degree

Name of Candidate: Loi Min Wei

Signature of Candidate:

Date: 26th May 2018

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would first like to thank my thesis supervisor Dr Oo Yu Hock at Asia e University for being helpful whenever I had question about my research or writing and steered me in the right direction whenever he thought I needed it.

I would also like to thank the respective respondents who were involved in this research. Without their valuable input, the research could not have been successfully conducted.

I would also like to acknowledge Assoc Prof Dr Nor' Ain Hj Othman and Assoc Prof Dr Wan Sabri Wan Hussin as the examiners of this thesis, I am gratefully indebted to their valuable comments on this thesis.

Finally, I must express my very profound gratitude to my parents, to my spouse, and to my family members for providing me with unfailing support and continuous encouragement throughout my years of study and through the process of researching and writing this thesis. This accomplishment would not have been possible without them. Thank you.

Loi Min Wei

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	II
APPROVAL PAGE	IV
DECLARATION	V
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	VII
TABLE OF CONTENTS	VIII
LIST OF TABLES	X
LIST OF FIGURES	XI
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.2 Problem Statement	5
1.3 Significant of Research	10
1.4 Scope of Research	11
1.5 Objectives of the Study	12
1.6 Research Question	13
1.7 Terminology	14
1.8 Organisation of Remaining Chapters	17
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	18
2.1 Work-based Learning Adoption in Malaysian Education	18
2.2 Experiential Learning and Work-Based Learning	22
2.3 Malaysia Higher Education Quality	25
2.4 Outcomes-based Education (OBE)	31
2.5 Hospitality Education	37
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	43
3.1 Background of the Programme	43
3.2 Research Design	44
3.3 Source of Data	46
3.4 Sampling	49
3.5 Instrumentation and Data Collection	51
3.6 Analysis of Research Data	52
3.7 Framework of Research	53
CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION	54
4.1 Hospitality Academic Programme in Malaysia	54
4.2 Programme Structure	58

4.2	Programme Assessment	81
4.6	Partnership in Work-based Learning	103
4.7	Roles and Responsibility of Work-based Learning Coordinator	111
4.8	Limitation of the Study	118
CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION		121
5.1	Summary	121
5.2	Conclusion	122
5.3	Recommendation	127
REFERENCE LIST		129
APPENDIXES		137
Appendix I	Letter of Consent	137
Appendix II	Focus Group Interview Consent Form	138
Appendix III	Assessment Form in Guidelines for Good Practices: Work-based Learning (Sample 1)	139
Appendix IV	Assessment Form in Guidelines for Good Practices: Work-based Learning (Sample 2)	146
Appendix V	List of Malaysia Accredited Diploma in Hotel / Hospitality Programme based on Malaysian Qualifications Registry (MQR)	153
Appendix VI	List of Malaysia Accredited Advanced Diploma in Hotel / Hospitality Programme based on Malaysian Qualifications Registry (MQR)	159
Appendix VI	List of Malaysia Accredited Bachelor Degree in Hotel / Hospitality Programme based on Malaysian Qualifications Registry (MQR)	160

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
2.1	Malaysian Qualification Framework: Proposed Minimum Credits	28
2.3	Definition of Outcomes-based Education (OBE)	32
4.1	Programme Structure set in Programme Standards	66
4.2	WBL Day Release – Teaching Plan for a Course	72
4.3	WBL Block Release – Execution of National Dual Training System (NDTS) Training Programme	76
4.4	Comparison of Programme / Curriculum Design Standard Guideline.	78
4.5:	Sample of Mapping of Course Learning Outcome to the Programme Learning Outcome to the eight MQF Domain	85
4.6	Work-based Learning Assessment Methods	93
4.7	Tasks and Grading Instruments for WBL Assessment	94
4.8	Suggested Analysis for Diploma Level	96
4.9	Work-based Learning Programmes in Georgia	99
4.10	Work-Based Learning Activities in Minnesota	102

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
2.1	Malaysia Qualifications Framework (MQF)	30
2.3	Relationship of Learning Outcomes at Different Level	34
2.4	Bloom Taxonomy	36
2.5	Keywords at Different Level of Bloom's Taxonomy	37
3.1	Framework of Research	53
4.1	Number of New Diploma Programmes offered in Malaysia	56
4.3	Number of New Bachelor Degree Programmes offered in Malaysia	58
4.4	Hospitality Management Diploma Academic Programme Structure (adopted from UCSI University, 2014)	61
4.5	Work-based Learning Hospitality Management Diploma Academic Programme Structure – Full-time	63
4.6	Sample of Work-based Learning Hospitality Management Diploma Academic Programme Structure – Part-time	64
4.7	Levels of Learning Outcomes	83
4.8	Relationship between internship stakeholders	105
4.9	Work-based Learning Coordination	113

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the research study and states the focus of the research study. The chapter will cover a brief background of the research study, problem statement, scope of research, objective of the research study, research question, research methodology, limitation of the research study and terminology.

1.1 Background of the Study

Tourism industry and hospitality industry are two unique industries that exist in most countries, especially in advanced and developing countries which are making income using their nature environment and tourism products. Hospitality industry co-exists with tourism industry to create better tourism experience for the tourist, thus hospitality industry serves as a very important industry for these countries. Malaysia is one of the countries that is currently actively promoting its tourism product and actively growing its hospitality industry to serve the tourist better. To enhance the tourist experience, tourism development is one of the areas that the Malaysian government has put in much effort in developing.

One of the many ways to develop tourism and hospitality industry is through education. By educating the younger generation, the nation aims to develop a stronger profession in the field. Similar to all other education field, hospitality education has always aimed to produce graduates that meet the hospitality industry need. Expecting that the graduates to be able to join the workforce without needing additional training. It is very common for hospitality academic programmes to introduce internships at the end of the

academic programme to induct students into the real working world because the nature of the industry is more hands-on than theoretical. In general, the experience is more valued as compared to theoretical knowledge in the field of hospitality when it comes to employment.

Work-based Learning (WBL) programme in hospitality education is introduced in 2011 by Malaysia Centre for Tourism and Hospitality Education (MyCenTHE). The programme targets to provide students with more industry exposure while they are pursuing tertiary education; to ensure they can grasp the essence of working in the hospitality field prior to joining the workforce so that they are ready for the dynamic industry upon graduation.

Malaysia Centre for Tourism and Hospitality Education (MyCenTHE) is a centre that is set up under one of the 131 total projects under the Malaysian government's Economic Transformation Programme (ETP) (Wong, 2012). According to Wong (2012), the objective of Malaysia Centre for Tourism and Hospitality Education (MyCenTHE) is to ensure the prevalence of successful career opportunities within emerging tourism, hospitality, culinary and events industries. In terms of the hospitality industry, Malaysia Centre for Tourism and Hospitality Education (MyCenTHE) is envisioned that it will be contributing to a growth of annual output of hospitality personnel to 50,000 by 2020 (Performance Management & Delivery Unit, 2013b).

The president of Malaysia Centre for Tourism and Hospitality Education (MyCenTHE), Dr. Wong Kong Yew believed that work-based learning (WBL) is a good model especially in overcoming the conventional academic programme, in

equipping the students with real workplace experience and employability skills (Wong, 2012). Prior to the introduction of work-based learning (WBL) hospitality academic programme by Malaysia Centre for Tourism and Hospitality Education (MyCenTHE), the tourism and hospitality academic programmes in Malaysia are offered as traditional learning programme where students attend theoretical classes with some amount of hands-on practical training in a simulated environment monitored by the instructor. In the traditional learning programme, students are only exposed to the industry at the end of the higher education academic programme for four to six months after completion of all theoretical courses.

The industry exposure is normally known as industrial training or industrial placement. The concept of work-based learning (WBL) hospitality academic programme, on the other hand, has aim to provide the students with longer duration of industry exposure where students are exposed to the real working environment as soon as possible, which is different from the programme structure of the traditional hospitality academic programme and it is also somewhat different from the programme standard set by Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA). Unlike the conventional academic programme, work-based learning (WBL) academic programme get students involved and attached to the industry at the very beginning of their studies. By doing that, the programme expects the students to be able to appreciate lessons taught by the lecturers and can gain a deeper understanding of the curriculum and their responsibilities (Wong, 2012).

The concept of work-based learning (WBL) is relatively new in Malaysia and the academic programme was offered by one of the hospitality and tourism management

faculty in one of the local university when it is first introduced by Malaysia Centre for Tourism and Hospitality Education (MyCenTHE). A diploma academic programme in the field of hotel management is identified and offered as a pilot programme (Wong, 2012). The pilot programme introduced longer length of industry placement within the academic programme, in between theoretical courses; where students will be working at the industry twice for a semester, interchanged with other semesters where the focus is put in theoretical classes within the duration of the diploma academic programme. It was supported by the industry player and positive feedbacks were received (Wong, 2012).

It was not until later in 2012 that when Malaysia Centre for Tourism and Hospitality Education (MyCenTHE) decided to bring the work-based learning (WBL) academic programme to a more comprehensive level that it faces some difficulties in expanding further the concept of work-based learning (WBL) delivery method. The quality of tertiary education in Malaysia is governed by two authorities in general, namely Ministry of Education and Malaysia Qualifications Agency (MQA). Ministry of Education grant operating licenses and Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) focuses on quality assurance and accreditation of academic programmes with a set of policies and standard guidelines.

The Malaysian Qualifications Agency's (MQA) main role is quality control and assurance of higher education through the enforcement of Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF), making sure that higher education providers (HEP) refer to Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF) as the reference point for the criteria and standards for the academic programmes offered (Malaysian Qualifications Agency,

2013b). Higher education providers (HEP) are given the freedom of developing and designing their academic programmes curriculum based on what they want to deliver to the industry. The academic programme developed by higher education provider (HEP) is later submitted to the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) for assessment, approval and later accreditation. This allows Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) to monitor and oversee the quality and standards of the national higher education sector.

The Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) introduced programme standards for the respective discipline of education starting from the year 2009, including Programme Standard: Hospitality and Tourism which was published in the year 2012 (Malaysian Qualifications Agency, 2013c). The Programme Standards: Hospitality and Tourism are very much based on standard guidelines of how hospitality and tourism education should be, including the hours of students' exposure to each category of courses. On top of that, higher education providers (HEP) are also being tasked to adopt the Outcome-based Education (OBE) concept for all academic programmes offered. Thus, the effectiveness of measuring the learning outcomes of the students during the industry placement is also impacted by the significant increase of industry placement element with work-based learning (WBL) delivery method.

1.2 Problem Statement

The essence of work-based learning (WBL) programme is to incorporate both theoretical study and work experience into the curriculum, which indirectly has an impact to the number of hours where the students are required to be placed at the industry working to earn their experience.

While industry needs are important to be met in producing competent graduates, the higher education provider (HEP) is also bound by guidelines and policies in Malaysian education system. The guidelines and policies are respectively set by the Ministry of Education Malaysia and Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) with the intention of ensuring students' learning outcomes are met according to the Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF) and Outcomes-based Education (OBE) guidelines adopted by Malaysian education system. The two education governing bodies also ensure that academic programme, especially the tertiary education programme, is designed based on the programme standard introduced for the respective field of study.

However, the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA), whose role as the governing bodies of academic programme standards, has very specific guidelines and standards set for hospitality academic programmes. The guidelines and standards set by Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) are observed to have more emphasis on theoretical knowledge and measurable learning outcomes through specific assessments. The programme standards and guidelines are rigid to ensure the standard of the academic programme is maintained. The programme standards provide guidance on how a higher education academic programme in the specific field should be structured, at the same time also stated the specific weightage of credit hours for the different categories of courses that are offered in a programme.

Based on Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) Programme Standards: Hospitality and Tourism, there is a limit set for each category of courses in an academic programme, including industrial placement that provided industry exposure. It is

believed that having too many specific guidelines to adhere to may confine the creativity of higher education providers (HEP) in attempting to offer programmes with more industry exposure to produce more competent graduates. For example, the industry needs the graduates to be more confident and skills competent which requires more hands-on practice and industry experience, while the programme standard limited the maximum duration of industrial training at 12 credit hours, which is equivalent to only 24 weeks of industrial training.

In the case of Malaysia Centre for Tourism and Hospitality Education (MyCenTHE) introduction of work-based learning (WBL) academic programme, the increase in student learning time allocated to industry exposure has exceeded the allowable credit hours for industry placement. Work-based Learning (WBL) delivery method is one of the pedagogy that is new to Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) and the proposed duration for industrial placement is more than the maximum duration set in the Programme Standards: Hospitality and Tourism. While highlighting the goodness of industrial exposure, the academic programme structure does not meet the programme standard set by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA). However, by maintaining the industry placement element within the given credit hours allocation does not meet the essence of the ideal work-based learning (WBL) academic programme structure.

When all the academic programmes offered by Higher Education Provider (HEP) needs to get approval from Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA), in attempt to meet the requirement of the programme standards, many institutions were indirectly halt from adopting the work-based learning (WBL) academic programme structure, even though

it has received many positive feedbacks from the industry and has high possibility of producing more competent graduates to the industry.

There is observed to be a gap between what Higher Education Provider (HEP) wanted to achieve and the programme standards that is set at the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) as the doorkeeper of quality academic programme. Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) has a standard set of programme standards set for the hospitality and tourism academic programmes in the tertiary. The work-based learning concept introduced by Malaysian Centre for Tourism and Hospitality Education (MyCenTHE) is not aligned with the programme standards set by Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA).

One obvious disagreement when compared between the programme standards and the work-based learning concept is the duration of industrial placement. The credit hours limit for industrial placement is at 12 credit hours, stated clearly in the programme standards (Malaysian Qualifications Agency, 2012), equivalent to 24 weeks of industrial placement, while on the other hand, Malaysia Centre for Tourism and Hospitality Education (MyCenTHE) has its industrial placement for 2 full semesters, assuming 1 semester is equivalent to 17 weeks (as per general guidelines of semester week of Malaysian Qualification Agency), 2 full semesters of industrial placement is equivalent to 34 weeks. 34 weeks of industrial placement is obviously 10 weeks more than the maximum limit allowable based on the programme standards. In brief, Malaysia Centre for Tourism and Hospitality Education (MyCenTHE) has challenged the standards set by Malaysia Qualifications Agency (MQA).

Based on the records in Malaysia Qualification Agency's (MQA) record, a new guideline known as "Guideline of Good Practice: Work-based Learning" is made available in 2015 (Malaysian Qualifications Agency, 2015a). The new guideline does not replace nor supersede the existing programme standards: Hospitality and Tourism that is made available in 2012. With the addition of guidelines of good practices: work-based learning, higher education provider now should adhere to two guidelines from Malaysia Qualifications Agency. Thus, the problem observed is how it is possible for a Higher Education Provider to offer work-based learning (WBL) academic programme and manage it to ensure the programme meet both the industry need and the standards set by Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA).

Comparatively to the Malaysian Qualification Agency (MQA) that provided various programme standards and guidelines of good practice, Malaysia Centre for Tourism and Hospitality Education (MyCenTHE) does not provide more guidelines besides the work-based learning hospitality academic programme structure. When refers to the materials (MyCenTHE websites, cluster leaders' website, brochures), there is no guideline in managing work-based learning hospitality academic programme, even though it is the spearhead in introducing the specific academic programme structure.

In order for an academic programme to be recognised or accredited in Malaysia tertiary education, the academic programme is to be accredited by Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA). There are two levels in programme accreditation; the first level is provisional accreditation indicating that the programme has fulfilled the minimum requirement, the second level is full accreditation to denote that the programme has met all the criteria and standards set for that purpose and in compliance with the Malaysian

Qualification Framework (MQF) (Malaysian Qualification Agency, 2013a). Having compared the respective standards and guideline set by Malaysian Qualification Agency (MQA) and the work-based learning concept introduced by Malaysia Centre for Tourism and Hospitality Education (MyCenTHE), it is observed that there is issue in higher education providers to offer hospitality academic programme in work-based learning approached and at the same time compliance to the respective Malaysian Qualification Frameworks (MQF), programme standards and guidelines of good practices.

1.3 Significant of Research

It is important for the issues of the work-based learning concept programme structure is not aligning to the programme standards and other guidelines set by Malaysian Qualifications Agency to be discussed when it is affecting the quality of education in the higher education sector for hospitality and tourism education. Hospitality and tourism education is vital in sustaining the quality of the tourism industry, especially in a developing country such as Malaysia.

There are to date not many studies or research on the work-based learning approach in tertiary education, especially in the field of hospitality and tourism education in Malaysia. This research will contribute empirically by being one of the research conducted to match the hospitality and tourism academic programmes in terms of work-based learning approach to the programme standards and guidelines set by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA).

This research will benefit the relevant stakeholders that are involved in the development of hospitality and tourism education. The higher education providers will benefit with the insights of the various programme concept, standards or guidelines, and thus, developing an academic programme that fits its purpose while meeting the standards. Therefore, this research contributes to the development of hospitality and tourism education in providing the industry with more skilled taskforces that are properly trained and equipped with appropriate knowledge with quality.

1.4 Scope of Research

In this research study, the concept of a hospitality academic programme utilising Work-based Learning (WBL) delivery method is investigated on the ground where there is the need to comply with the programme standards and guidelines of good practices provided by Malaysia Qualifications Agency and the Outcome-based Education (OBE) concept adopted by the Malaysian Higher Education system.

The research study is relatively new in the context of Malaysia, and there have not been many higher education providers (HEP) that have adopted the work-based learning (WBL) programme concept introduced by Malaysia Centre for Tourism and Hospitality Education (MyCenTHE). This case study will be performed focusing only on the work-based learning programme (WBL) concept that is being introduced and recommended by the Malaysia Centre for Tourism and Hospitality Education (MyCenTHE).

The study will not analyse in detail the other work-based learning programme structure which has been adopted by the respective polytechnics, community colleges in Malaysia as the programmes offered by the respective institutions are focus towards

technical, vocational education training (TVET) programmes where the skills are adopted by students via short courses, that also served as a pathway for connecting students from post-secondary to working in the industry.

The research study refers to the resources published by other researchers in the relevant field of education and management, so that comparison and analysis can be performed in terms of work-based learning (WBL) delivery method which has been practiced by higher education providers (HEP) in the other countries, including the United States of America and European countries which have adopted Work-based Learning (WBL) concept in their education long before Malaysia. The resources include journal articles found in *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, *Journal of Workplace Learning*, *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, and *Education + Training*. Other resources include also the respective quality assurance documentation from various countries that adopted work-based learning, namely, Malaysia, United States and United Kingdom.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this research study is to investigate the concept of work-based learning (WBL) delivery method introduced by Malaysia Centre for Tourism and Hospitality Education (MyCenTHE) and the programme standards set by Malaysia Qualifications Agency (MQA) to find out how both influence the management of hospitality academic programme in Malaysia.

The specific objectives of the study are: