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ACADEMIC PAPER

A comparison of student and industry perceptions of the event management curriculum in Korea

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Abstract

As the event industry has grown, the event management curriculum has become an increasingly important issue in higher education (HE) in Korea. This empirical study compared student and industry practitioner perceptions of the event management curriculum in Korea. Findings showed that event marketing and planning were the focal points of event management education. Findings also revealed significant differences in perceptions of the event management curriculum between students majoring in event management and industry professionals. Implications for the academic community are discussed.

Keywords: event management; curriculum; event marketing

Introduction

Event management in higher education (HE) has developed within several disciplines including tourism, advertising, sports and arts (Lee, 2007). The goal of event management education is to produce educated and knowledgeable industry professionals for the future

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who can grow and mature in the event industry. To achieve this goal, the event management curriculum should strive to blend theories and practice thus preparing a workforce for careers in the event industry. It is therefore imperative to involve industry professionals and students majoring in event management in the process of curriculum planning and development.

In Korea, event management is still a relatively new phenomenon, which has featured at the college level for less than 10 years (Cho & Kang, 2005; Lee & Kim, 2006). Since its inception at Kyonggi University in 1998, degrees and diplomas in event management have been awarded at five 4-year course universities and six 2-year course colleges. These degrees and diplomas are closely linked with those of hospitality and tourism. Approximately 1,500 students are currently enrolled in various event management institutions (Lee & Lee, 2006; Lee, Lee, & Kim, 2007). Despite the proliferation in the numbers of programmes and students in event management, there appears to be growing support for the view that event management is still a speciality or focus area within hospitality and tourism management, rather than an independent discipline, partly because of its relatively short existence in the history of Korean HE. Some even argue that event management has evolved from the hospitality and tourism perspectives associated with operating and managing hospitality properties and tourism destinations (Lee & Kim, 2006). On the other hand, others view the discipline of event management from the perspective of business administration (Getz, 2000). However, despite these differing viewpoints on the position of event management in HE, more researchers and educators have become actively involved in studies and projects relating to event management including, for example, those looking at the economic impact of events and festivals (Burgan & Mules, 1992; Della Bitta, Loudon, Booth, & Weeks, 1977; Gazel & Schwer, 1997; Gelan, 2003; Jones, 2001; Kang & Perdue, 1994; Lee & Taylor, 2005; Long & Perdue, 1990; Madden, 2002; Murphy & Carmichael, 1991; Pyo, Cook, & Howell, 1988; Tang & Turco, 2001), the sponsorship of events (Cunningham & Taylor, 1995; Kim, 2006; Mount & Niro, 1995; Park, Seo, & Jung, 2005; Peterson & Crayton, 1995; Seong, 2005), the segmentation of the event market (Espelt & Benito, 2006; Formica & Uysal, 1998; Seo & Choi, 2006), the arts and cultural aspects of events (Axelsen & Arcodia, 2004; Garcia, 2004; Yeoman, Robertson, Ali-Knight, Drummond, & McMahon-Beattie, 2004), and event management graduate employability (Arcodia & Barker, 2003a, 2003b; Beaven & Wright, 2006; Harris & Jago, 1999; Royal & Jago, 1998). This work in event management has helped to identify the boundaries of the discipline (Lee, 2007).

University curricula, particularly in hospitality and tourism, can be seen as clusters of attributes that fulfil the needs of two major stakeholders: students and industry partners. Likewise, with the proliferation of event management programmes over the last 10 years in Korea, the need for a common event management curriculum encompassing these important attributes has been accelerated by the impetus from both industry and the public involved in education (students and parents). To address these issues, this study aimed to provide some insights into the event management curriculum from the perspectives of its important stakeholders: industry professionals and students majoring in event management. The review of extant research in general hospitality and tourism management indicates that there has been relatively little research in this area. In the field of event management, only a few studies have specifically investigated employer attitudes to the event management curriculum (Arcodia & Barker, 2003a; Beaven & Wright, 2006). Apparently separated from the perspective of hospitality and tourism management, the event management body of knowledge (EMBOK) research provided an overview of the knowledge system supporting the event industry and advocated the development of a knowledge framework (Silvers, Bowdin, O'Toole, & Nelson, 2006). In line with these findings, this study compared student and practitioner perceptions of event management curricula. Each group (students and industry professionals) was further divided into two sub-groups, resulting in a four-group comparison (industry managers/directors, industry junior staff, 4-year university students and 2-year college students), to provide detailed information for educators and administrators in event education.

Literature review

All stakeholders in the academic community in Korea (students, industry, and educators/administrators) are currently in transition: environmental change within the event industry has created a need for new skills and knowledge. Accordingly, current event management curricula must be reshaped to meet these changing needs. At the same time, the curriculum must also offer a broader strategic outlook, dealing with every facet of event activities.

Role of industry

Hospitality and tourism curricula have been essentially vocational and designed around industry needs, giving students an understanding of operational issues and a set of wider subjects which affect the industry (Botterill & Tribe, 2000). In general, hospitality and tourism education educators and researchers have examined the skills and capabilities required by the industries to better train and educate future industry professionals (Geller, 1985; Hales & Nightingale, 1986; Lefever & Withiam, 1998). Such studies concluded that current hospitality and tourism curricula needed to be updated, reflecting a more realistic view of the industry. Industry professionals have also indicated their preference for recruiting students with appropriate technical skills and knowledge (Lefever & Withiam, 1998).

Likewise, for event organisations to be competitive in the market it is necessary for them to recruit highly educated and trained employees. In the light of this assertion, industry professionals' perceptions of current event education are critical in developing an effective curriculum. Yet only a few studies in event management have examined this potentially fertile ground. In an empirical study which investigated potential employers' attitude to arts and event management graduate employability, Beaven and Wright (2006) revealed that potential employers in the arts and event industry place considerable emphasis on students' industry experiences and have high expectations that new graduates of arts and event management programmes will have gained substantial hands-on industry experience. In a survey of 42 special event practitioners, Royal and Jago (1998) identified that planning and organisational knowledge was very important to the profession. This finding was supported in another empirical study (Arcodia & Barker, 2003a) which content-analysed 105 web-based job advertisements to identify current employer requirements for event management graduates. Their study revealed that the most frequently cited skills required for event managers were organisational and planning skills. This finding indicated that employers looked for people who were highly organised, able to plan and co-ordinate, and able to manage multiple tasks and time. Specifically, computer knowledge and skills were cited as the most practical skills required by employers (Arcodia & Barker, 2003a).

Despite such obvious industry needs, there is a contradiction inherent in event management curricula. While institutions and educators say they are offering vocationally oriented education for students, the industry may not derive full benefit from graduates with event education because event management curricula often fail to reflect the needs of the industry (Stuart, 2002). Thus, event management curricula should be designed to achieve a fit between academia and industry requirements and eventually benefit graduates of event management programmes in their search for jobs in the event industry (Arcodia & Barker, 2003b).

Role of students

Understanding student perceptions of courses is critical in assessing course offerings and designing new curricula (Jeong, Horton, & Oh, 2004). In that regard, students are clearly key stakeholders who can provide valuable inputs that affect educators' decision making in curriculum development. Student perceptions of event management courses may help educators and administrators of event education fine tune the various policies, procedures and practices of existing event management curricula and eventually enhance the quality of event education. Obviously, the mission of event management education is to develop highly skilled and competent future industry professionals. To achieve this goal, educators and administrators in event education should actively work to incorporate the thoughts and

suggestions of the industry and event management students into the curriculum (Kang, Wu, & Gould, 2005).

Methodology

Questionnaire development

Developing the questionnaire for this study required a series of steps. In the first stage, a total of 151 event-related courses were identified from the websites and school catalogues of 11 institutions offering degrees and diplomas in event management in Korea. As many of these courses overlapped in terms of course content, several courses offering similar content were eliminated following thorough content analysis of each course by researchers. In addition, in order to study a set of common event management courses, particular area-specific courses that were offered at only one institution were deleted in the screening stage. As a result, a total of 43 event management courses were identified for the main survey. To help the target respondents (students and industry professionals) understand the contents of each course, brief course descriptions were also provided in the questionnaire (see Appendix 1). The final set of curricular items were then separated into four major study areas based on suggestions in previous literature (Allen, O'Toole, McDonnell, & Harris, 2005; Getz, 1997; Goldblatt, 1990): event concept and management; event operations and practices; major event areas; and supporting areas. In the main survey, respondents were asked to measure the importance of each event management course on a 5-point Likert-type scale, 1 (*very unimportant*) to 5 (*very important*).

Data collection

The purpose of the study was to explore two major stakeholders' (students and industry professionals) attitudes to event management education and compare their perceptions of the event management curriculum. To provide detailed insight into student and industry demands and changes, each group was further divided into two sub-groups, resulting in a four-group comparison: industry-managers/directors, industry-junior staff members, 4-year university students, 2-year college students. For the survey of industry professionals, 22 event planning companies participated in this project through postal or on-site surveys. The target industry population of this study included event organisers, who are mainly responsible for planning and operating various events on behalf of host bodies on a contract basis and recruiting college graduates in event management or other relevant disciplines. The survey was conducted in winter 2008. A total of 167 usable responses were collected from the industry side, including 100 responses from the manager/director group. Students majoring in event management were also surveyed in event management classes at six different institutions (two universities and four colleges) during the spring semester 2008. Eleven instructors in these institutions helped researchers collect responses by distributing and collecting surveys to students in their lectures. After eliminating unusable responses, a total of 128 and 95 usable responses were collected from universities and colleges respectively. In all, 390 usable responses from four different groups were analysed.

Data analysis

Data analysis comprised three stages. First, descriptive statistics were used to identify mean values of 43 curricular variables. Composite means for four major study areas were also calculated for overall group comparison. Independent sample *t* tests on curricular variables and major study areas were then conducted to search for any significant difference in the perceptions of industry professionals and students regarding the importance of each curricular item. Finally, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to determine if any of the observed differences among the four different groups was significant. A post-hoc test was conducted to identify which means were significantly different. The Scheffe test was employed because it allows all possible paired comparisons and because the sample sizes for all groups being compared were different (Lee & Geddie, 2006). Before conducting statistical analyses (independent sample *t* test and ANOVA), the normality of all curricular variables was thoroughly checked using Skewness and Kurtosis, since the significance of *t*-statistics and *f*-statistics is based on the normal distribution assumption of each variable (Lee

& Jang, 2007). Logarithm transformation was applied to improve the normal distribution of a few curricular variables.

Results

Descriptive profile of respondents

Table 1 shows the descriptive profile of respondents. Of 167 respondents from the industry side, males accounted for 63%. Specifically, among the respondents in the industry managers/directors group, 70% were males, while the respondents in the industry junior staff members group were almost equally spilt between male (52%) and female (48%). On the other hand, the discipline of event management was more popular among female students than male students. Of the 223 student respondents, slightly more than 65% were female. The dominance of female students in event management programmes was more apparent in two-year college programmes, where 74% of the 95 student respondents were female. In terms of age distribution, approximately 74% of the respondents from the industry manager/director group were in the age group 30 to 39, while the age group of 20 to 29 accounted for 73% of respondents from the industry junior staff group. Among students, not surprisingly, nearly all respondents (99%) were in the age group 20 to 29.

	Industry professionals		Students		Cumulative (%)
	Managers/ directors (%)	Junior staff members (%)	University (%)	College (%)	
Gender					
Male	70 (70)	35 (52)	52 (41)	25 (26)	182 (47)
Female	30 (30)	32 (48)	76 (59)	70 (74)	208 (53)
Total	100 (100)	67 (100)	128 (100)	95 (100)	390 (100)
Age					
-19	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (1)	1 (0.1)
20 - 29	17 (17)	49 (73)	127 (99)	94 (99)	287 (74)
30 - 39	74 (74)	18 (27)	0 (0)	0 (0)	92 (24)
40 - 49	9 (9)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	9 (2)
50+	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (1)	0 (0)	1 (0.1)

Table 1: Profile of survey respondents

Descriptive comparison

The mean importance values of 43 curricular items in four major study areas are presented in the second column of Table 2. Composite means of all four major study areas indicated that both students and industry professionals perceived that courses in event concept and management (overall mean = 4.11) were more important than courses in other major study areas. In particular, both students and industry professionals chose "Event planning" (students 4.59, industry professionals 4.58) and "Event marketing" (students 4.36, industry professionals 4.53) as the two most important courses in event management curricula. Also, both groups perceived that courses in major event areas were less important in event management curriculum (overall mean = 3.65). (Note: "Wedding planning" had a mean of 3.55 for students and 2.51 for industry professionals, and "Government and political event planning" had a mean of 3.43 for students and 2.78 for industry professionals). In a two-group comparison (students versus industry professionals), student perceptions of the importance of event management courses were higher than industry perceptions in three out of four major study areas: event operations and practices; major event areas; and supporting areas. Compared with students, industry professionals more heavily emphasised courses in event concepts and management.

Events management courses	Group means			t	Sig.
	Students (n = 223)	Industry (n =167)	Overall (n = 390)		
Area 1: Event concept and management (m = 4.11)					
Introduction to the event industry	3.95	3.86	3.91	1.23	.22
Strategic event management	4.02	4.01	4.01	0.15	.88
Event marketing	4.36	4.53	4.43	2.71	.01*
Managing event services	4.12	4.12	4.12	0.02	.99
Communications: clients and concepts	4.13	4.24	4.17	1.47	.14
Event budgeting and financial management	3.81	4.05	3.91	2.73	.01*
Risk and crisis management	3.99	4.11	4.04	1.50	.13
Event planning	4.59	4.58	4.59	0.17	.86
Project management	4.07	4.37	4.20	3.90	.00*
Event sponsorship	4.04	3.86	3.97	2.25	.03
HR management in the event industry	3.67	3.62	3.65	0.59	.56
Advertising and public relations	4.40	4.07	4.26	4.64	.00*
Composite means	4.10	4.12	4.11	0.49	.63
Area 2: Event operations and practices (m = 3.89)					
Event operations	4.29	4.37	4.32	1.04	.30
Event initiation: bid and proposal	4.36	4.57	4.45	2.91	.00*
Art and science of contract negotiation	3.82	4.07	3.93	2.82	.01*
Venue management	3.95	4.01	3.97	0.74	.46
Event programming and design	4.17	3.91	4.06	3.78	.00*
Managing event ceremonies	3.74	3.69	3.72	0.58	.57
On-premise catering	3.46	3.13	3.32	4.06	.00*
Event logistics	3.63	3.66	3.64	0.28	.78
Event innovations: A/V and event production	3.57	3.54	3.55	0.29	.77
Event volunteering	3.59	3.32	3.47	3.07	.002*
Work-based professional practicum	4.21	3.77	4.02	5.19	.00*
Event site inspection	4.33	4.02	4.19	3.75	.00*
Composite means	3.93	3.84	3.89	1.81	.07
Area 3: Major event areas (m = 3.65)					
Festival management	4.10	3.86	4.00	3.24	.00*
Meetings and conventions management	3.99	3.96	3.98	0.36	.72
Sport event management	3.85	3.78	3.82	0.88	.38
Exhibition and trade show management	3.79	3.95	3.86	2.03	.04
Corporate event management	3.87	4.22	4.02	4.39	.00*
Sales and promotion event	4.03	3.99	4.01	0.41	.68
Entertainment and party planning	3.39	2.77	3.13	6.71	.00*
Online event management	3.61	3.23	3.45	4.42	.00*
Wedding planning and consulting	3.55	2.51	3.11	11.43	.00*
Government and political event planning	3.43	2.78	3.15	6.96	.00*
Composite means	3.76	3.50	3.65	5.05	.00*
Area 4: Supporting areas (m = 3.67)					
Project and research methodology	4.18	4.16	4.17	0.39	.70
Understanding arts and culture	4.00	4.00	4.00	0.06	.95
Event information systems	3.68	3.54	3.62	1.63	.10
Introduction to the hospitality industry	3.85	3.36	3.64	6.36	.00*
Travel and tourism industry	3.92	3.23	3.62	8.46	.00*
Hotel and lodging management	3.81	3.20	3.55	7.23	.00*
Laws and ethics	3.51	3.27	3.41	2.81	.01*
Management information systems (MIS)	3.54	3.44	3.50	1.16	.25
Economics	3.50	3.46	3.48	0.42	.68
Composite means	3.78	3.52	3.67	5.04	.00*

Table 2: Group comparison: industry professionals versus students

Note: 5-point Likert-type scales were used and given the following corresponding values: very unimportant (1); neutral (3); very important (5). *Significant at the .01 level.

Events management courses	Group means				F	Sig.	Post-hoc
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)			
Area 1: Event concept and management							
Introduction to the event industry	3.97	3.69	3.91	4.00	2.69	.05	N/A
Strategic event management	4.11	3.85	3.98	4.07	1.88	.13	N/A
Event marketing	4.62	4.40	4.37	4.35	4.95	.00*	3,4<1
Managing event services	4.20	4.00	4.12	4.13	0.89	.44	N/A
Communications: clients and concepts	4.30	4.15	4.08	4.19	1.64	.18	N/A
Event budgeting and financial management	4.20	3.82	3.72	3.93	6.27	.00*	3<1
Risk and crisis management	4.14	4.07	3.91	4.09	1.78	.15	N/A
Event planning	4.63	4.51	4.43	4.81	7.50	.00*	3<4
Project management	4.39	4.33	3.92	4.27	9.64	.00*	3<1,2,4
Event sponsorship	3.89	3.82	3.88	4.26	6.15	.00*	2,3<4
HR management in the event industry	3.76	3.42	3.59	3.79	3.54	.02	N/A
Advertising and public relations	4.09	4.03	4.34	4.49	8.21	.00*	1,2<4
Composite means	4.19	4.00	4.02	4.20	6.41	.00*	3<1,4
Area 2: Event operations and practices							
Event operations	4.40	4.31	4.19	4.43	2.85	.04	N/A
Event initiation: bid and proposal	4.62	4.51	4.12	4.69	16.60	.00*	3<1,2,4
Art and science of contract negotiation	4.04	4.10	3.68	4.01	5.55	.00*	3<1,2
Venue management	3.93	4.12	3.79	4.17	6.15	.00*	3<4
Event programming and design	3.93	3.88	4.15	4.21	4.96	.00*	1,2<4
Managing event ceremonies	3.71	3.66	3.62	3.89	2.41	.07	N/A
On-premise catering	3.06	3.24	3.40	3.55	6.85	.00*	1<4
Event logistics	3.71	3.58	3.45	3.87	4.15	.01*	3<4
Event innovations: A/V and event production	3.57	3.49	3.43	3.75	2.60	.05	N/A
Event volunteering	3.24	3.45	3.52	3.68	4.71	.00*	1<4
Work-based professional practicum	3.73	3.82	4.08	4.38	11.60	.00*	1,2<4
Event site inspection	3.94	4.13	4.19	4.52	8.69	.00*	1<4
Composite means	3.83	3.86	3.80	4.10	8.49	.00*	1,2,3<4
Area 3: Major event areas							
Festival management	3.83	3.90	4.10	4.11	3.58	.01	N/A
Meetings and conventions management	3.96	3.97	3.94	3.93	0.33	.80	N/A
Sport event management and marketing	3.80	3.75	3.93	3.93	0.90	.44	N/A
Exhibition and trade show management	3.90	4.03	3.68	3.95	4.05	.01*	3<2
Corporate event management	4.33	4.06	3.70	4.11	13.60	.00*	3<1,4
Sales and promotion event	4.08	3.87	3.95	4.13	1.94	.12	N/A
Entertainment and party planning	2.59	3.03	3.36	3.44	18.50	.00*	1<3,4
Online event management	3.16	3.34	3.66	3.55	7.52	.00*	1<3
Wedding planning and consulting	2.36	2.75	3.48	3.65	47.70	.00*	1,2<3,4
Government and political event planning	2.67	2.94	3.37	3.53	17.90	.00*	1<3,4; 2<4
Composite means	3.49	3.56	3.71	3.83	10.10	.00*	1<3,4; 2<4
Area 4: Supporting areas							
Project and research methodology	4.14	4.18	4.07	4.34	2.66	.05	N/A
Understanding arts and culture	4.04	3.94	3.91	4.11	1.37	.25	N/A
Event information systems	3.50	3.61	3.52	3.89	5.01	.00*	1<4
Introduction to the hospitality industry	3.37	3.34	3.91	3.78	13.90	.00*	1,2<3,4
Travel and tourism industry	3.12	3.39	4.04	3.76	28.20	.00*	1<3,4; 2<3
Hotel and lodging management	3.14	3.28	3.96	3.60	21.80	.00*	1<3,4; 2<3
Laws and ethics	3.30	3.22	3.52	3.48	2.77	.04	N/A
Management information systems (MIS)	3.45	3.43	3.48	3.63	1.06	.36	N/A
Economics	3.46	3.46	3.54	3.44	0.29	.83	N/A
Composite means	3.50	3.54	3.77	3.78	8.52	.00*	1<3,4

Table 3: Multiple-group comparison

(1) Industry managers (n = 100); (2) Industry junior staff (n = 67); (3) University students (n = 128); (4) College students (n = 95). Note: Respondents were asked to indicate how they would rate the importance of the curriculum on a 5-point scale in which 1 = very unimportant and 5 = very important.

The numbers in the parentheses in the column heads refer to the numbers used for illustrating significant differences at the last column titled Post hoc. *Significant at the .01 level.

The second column in Table 3 summarises the mean importance values of curricular items for four different groups. In all major study areas, the composite mean values for college students were higher than for other groups. Comparative analyses indicate that industry managers and directors tended to emphasise courses in event concept and management (composite mean = 4.19), while industry junior staff's perceptions of event operations and practices curricular items were relatively high (composite mean = 3.86). Specifically, industry manager/director perceptions of the importance of "Event marketing" (4.62) were higher than those of the other three groups, while university students' perceptions were higher than the perceptions of the two industry groups for "Major event areas" and "Supporting areas". In particular, university student perceptions were higher than the perceptions of the other three groups for "Meeting and convention management" (3.94) and "Online event management" (3.66). In supporting areas, university student perceptions were also higher than the other groups' perceptions for "Travel and tourism industry" (4.04), "Introduction to the hospitality industry" (3.91) and "Hotel management" (3.96).

Two-group comparison

To determine whether any statistically significant differences existed between the student and industry perceptions of the importance of curricular items, independent sample *t* tests were conducted. As presented in Table 2, significant mean differences between the two groups were found for 21 curricular items. In comparing individual curricular items, industry perceptions of curricular importance of event concept and management courses such as "Event marketing", "Event budgeting and financial management" and "Project management" were significantly higher than students' perceptions. Students' perceptions were significantly higher than industry perceptions for most other study areas, particularly major study areas such as "Festival management", "Party planning", "Online event management", "Wedding planning" and "Government events". To understand overall perception differences in major study areas between the two groups, composite means of major study areas were also compared. Results showed significant mean differences in two major study areas: "Major event areas" and "Supporting areas". Student perceptions of curricular importance were significantly higher than industry professionals' perceptions in both study areas.

Multiple-group comparison

To examine the more detailed implications for the event academic community, student and industry groups were divided into two sub-groups, resulting in a four-group comparison (see Table 3). Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to find any significant difference in the perceptions of curricular importance among the four groups. As presented in Table 3, significant mean differences among the four groups were found in 25 curricular items across all four major study areas. In particular, significant mean differences were found in most courses in "Event operations and practices", where 9 out of 12 curricular items showed significant mean differences.

Because the significant *F* values in Table 3 only indicate that the population means among the four groups were not equal, a post-hoc test was conducted to identify which means were significantly different. As presented in the last column of Table 3, significant mean differences were found mostly between student and industry groups. In comparing "Event marketing", for example, industry managers/directors' perceptions of curricular importance were significantly higher than those of both university and college student groups. Also, the significant *F* value in "Event budgeting and financial management" was found in the mean difference between industry managers/directors and university students. Overall, industry managers/directors' perceptions of curricular importance were significantly higher than university student perceptions in the area of "Event concept and management". College student perceptions were significantly higher than those of all the other three groups in the area of "Event operations and practices". Also, the perceptions of both student groups were higher than the perceptions of industry managers/directors in both "Major event" and

“Supporting” areas. Notably, significant mean differences between the two student groups were found in seven curricular items, indicating the significantly different perceptions of curricular importance of four-year university students compared to two-year college students. In particular, the mean difference between these two students groups was significant for “Event operations and practices”, such as “Event initiation: bid and proposal”, “Venue management” and “Event logistics”. Unlike the two student groups, no significant mean differences existed between two industry groups.

Discussion

The results of this study comparing multiple-group perceptions of event management curricula provide the event academic community with insights into possible changes and reshuffles in a future event management curriculum. First, “Event concept and management” was the most important study area in event management education from the perspectives of both industry professionals and students. Specifically, both groups chose “Event planning” as the most important course among 43 event management courses. This finding supports previous literature which revealed that the most important skills required for event managers were event planning and organising skills (Arcodia & Barker, 2003a; Royal & Jago, 1998). Industry perceptions of important curricular items were significantly higher than student perceptions for “Event marketing”, “Event budgeting and financial management” and “Project management”. This finding indicates that the event management curriculum needs to provide students with more marketing and financial management skills for the event industry. Even so, it is interesting to note that industry professionals perceived “Advertising and public relations” to have relatively low importance. This result indicates that the industry tends to look at an event as a promotional tool, expecting the “advertising effect” through the event. Thus, educators and administrators in event management education need an approach that enables them to understand an event as a promotional tool and to design event management curriculum using on that understanding.

Second, in the area of event operations and practices, industry professionals perceived “Event initiation: bid and proposal” and “Art and science of contract negotiation” as important events management courses, while students chose “Event programme and design”, “On-premise catering” and “Event volunteering” as important components of the event management curriculum. This finding suggests that industry professionals tend to give top priority to obtaining business through an effective bidding process and an attractive proposal. They think that there is no difference among competitors in programming, design, catering, and staffing or volunteering. The key difference for them lies in the abilities and skills of proposal development and contract negotiation. Future event management curricula need to include more specific courses on bidding techniques and the development of attractive proposals. Another interesting finding in this study was that there was a significant difference in the perceptions of work-based courses (“Professional practicum” and “Event site inspection”) between industry professionals and students. Beaven and Wright’s (2006) empirical study revealed that employers in the event industry place considerable emphasis on students’ industry experiences and thus look for graduates with substantial hands-on industry experiences. In this study, however, these work-based courses received only lukewarm attention from industry professionals. Instead, students’ perceptions of these courses were more positive than those of industry professionals. This finding implies that industry professionals understand that the current environment for event education in Korea has not grown to a point where the event curriculum provides students with ample opportunities to practise event skills and knowledge in real workplaces. Since the industry understands the importance of work-based courses, and students in particular want to gain more hands-on industry experience, educators and administrators in event management education need to make more systematic efforts to draw co-operation from industry partners in co-ordinating work-based courses for students.

Third, among major event areas, “Corporate event management” was chosen as the most important event area by industry professionals. Considering that corporate events are major revenue generators for most event organisers in Korea, this result is quite understandable. However, industry professionals perceived other event areas, such as “Festival

management”, “Party planning”, “Online events” and “Wedding planning”, as significantly less important than students. In general these events are relatively small and less frequently handled by the respondents. However, they require highly specialised skills and knowledge, which makes it difficult for event organisers to build common knowledge and skill bases. Due to these unique characteristics, many major event planning companies tend to ignore these special event areas. Although special event courses may appeal to certain student groups, these courses in event management curricula need to be realigned toward grouping similar contents into a few general event courses.

Finally, as for the “Supporting areas”, industry professionals did not perceive hospitality and tourism-related courses to be as important as students did. This finding suggests that industry practitioners tend to consider event management as an independent discipline separate from hospitality and tourism management. They believe that the relationship between the event industry and the hospitality and tourism industry is not substantial in terms of core business. In the light of this, event management curricula containing many hospitality and tourism core subjects as supporting or foundation courses need to be reshaped towards reducing general hospitality and tourism courses and increasing courses that tie together the event industry and the event academic community.

Overall, many findings of this study showed a significant gap in the perceptions of the event management curriculum between industry practitioners and students. It is the responsibility of educators and administrators in event management education to reduce this gap, and thus produce more qualified industry professionals for the future. Structural changes within the event industry suggest the need for a more focused education in selected subject areas, such as event planning, event marketing and event initiation, which would enable students to build their competency on a core of important skills and knowledge required in the event industry. Therefore, it is desirable for the academic community in events to reshape event management curricula constantly to help students prepare for employment in the event industry.

Conclusion

University curricula in almost all disciplines have been changing, adding or removing courses from the overall thrust of programmes. Event management curricula intended to serve the industry and potential students must also mirror the environmental and demographic changes within the industry. In the light of this, this investigation of major stakeholders’ perceptions of event management curricula must continue to enhance the connection between the event industry, students and the event academic community. However, it is clear that today’s event management curricula in Korea place more emphasis on the requirements of traditional hospitality and tourism degrees than on the vocational skills and knowledge required for the various activities in the event industry. The future event management curriculum should be reconstructed to meet the challenges of the fast-growing event industry and ensure the outcome that graduates of event management programmes will be better qualified for their professional careers in the event industry.

This paper has presented key findings on major stakeholders’ perceptions of the event management curriculum. Event marketing and planning were the focal points of event management curricula for both students and industry professionals. However, the findings also indicate that significant differences exist in perceptions of curricular importance among students and industry professionals. The reason for this gap can be found in another fundamental difference between what should be delivered and what actually is delivered in current event management education. The role of the academic community is to fill this gap by incorporating the thoughts and suggestions of the industry and event management students into the curriculum and by eventually bridging the two parties with contemporary event education.

Although this study achieved its objectives, it possesses several weaknesses which provide opportunities for future research. First, the study did not include another major stakeholder, the academic community including educators and administrators, and their perceptions of the

event management curriculum. However, it was noted that as event management is a relatively new discipline in Korea, the total number of educators and administrators in event management is extremely small compared with the size of the other two stakeholder groups, students and industry professionals. Future research may therefore consider adopting a qualitative approach in comparing the three groups' perceptions of the event management curriculum.

Second, it is recognised that the sample was collected in Korea, and the results cannot therefore be taken as conclusive or applicable to event management education in other countries. Thus, further research efforts to include international aspects of the event management curriculum and comparison of various stakeholders' perceptions in the wider international field will provide invaluable insights and more general implications for all stakeholders. Another weakness arose owing to the lack of differentiation of curriculum between four-year degree programmes and two-year diploma programmes. One could argue that since this study used a combined curriculum for the survey, students (both four-year university students and two-year college students) may have been new to some courses which were unavailable at their institutions and were therefore unable to assess the importance of those courses. In future research, the choice of event management courses should be in line with its target sample.

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Appendix: Event management course descriptions

Course title	Course description
Area 1: Event concept and management	
Introduction to the event industry	General understanding of the concept of various events, event business and industry
Strategic event management	Studying the strategic approach to an event, event business and industry, including various business strategies and event business environment analysis
Event marketing	Studying event marketing, including research methods, segmentation and target market, positioning, marketing mix and consumer behaviour
Managing event services	The overall service management required to provide satisfaction to participants and visitors in various event areas
Communications	Understanding and practising communication related to promotion and utilising an event as a communication tool
Event budgeting and financial management	Studying methods and techniques for planning budgets for various events, management of cash flow, analysis of profit and loss, accounting and settlement of accounts
Risk and crisis management	Describing the concepts and techniques available to event organisations in their efforts to manage pure risk and crisis. Also, providing techniques to manage costs associated with risks as they affect event management
Event planning	Studying the creation of the ideas necessary to plan and design a programme, the human resources, marketing, administration and financial issues related to an event
Project management	Systematic design and management of a special event project, with an emphasis on the planning, co-ordinating and evaluating of the project
Event sponsorship	Studying the process of sponsorship, including the concept, the analysis of benefits, proposal and sponsorship contract
HR management	Studying the policy and process of HR management: job analysis, recruiting, education and training, and evaluation in the event industry
Advertising and public relations	Creating various advertisements to promote an event and understanding the effects of advertising promotion
Area 2: Event operations and practices	
Event operations	Understanding and practising the processes required for event production and operation and acquiring knowledge and techniques
Event initiation: bid and proposal	Practising the skills and techniques necessary for preparing a proposal and presentation
Arts and science of contract negotiation	The lobbying and negotiation skills needed to produce a contract for event execution and the techniques, methods and other things to consider
Venue management	The practical knowledge needed when choosing and managing venues for various events
Event programming and design	An introduction to the theories and practice of design and programme production for events, including design conceptualisation and design style
Managing event ceremonies	Understanding and practising the procedures and protocols required to execute various ceremonies
On-premise catering	Understanding the types of catering utilised when holding an event and acquiring practical knowledge and techniques for its planning and operation
Event logistics	Acquiring the practical knowledge and techniques required for various facilities and the management of equipment involved in operating an event

Course title	Course description
Event innovations: audio-visual and event production	Acquiring the practical knowledge and techniques required for installing various special effects; understanding tools, hardware systems and special effects
Event volunteering	Planning, motivating, educating and training, and evaluating event volunteers
Work-based professional practicum	Practising the related skills and techniques in the temporary position of on-the-job or internship in the event industry for a certain period of time
Event site inspection	Participating in an event as a temporary operational member of staff through on-site education
Area 3: Major event areas	
Festival management	Understanding the concept, planning, organisation and management of a local festival, and acquiring the knowledge and techniques for its operation
Meetings and conventions management	Understanding the concept, planning, organisation and management of a conference of an association, enterprise or governmental organisation, and acquiring the knowledge and techniques for its operation
Sports event management	Understanding the concept, planning, organisation and management of sports events, and acquiring the knowledge and techniques for their operation
Exhibition and trade show management	Understanding the concept, planning, organisation and management of a trade exhibition, and acquiring the knowledge and techniques for its operation
Corporate event management	Understanding the concept, planning, organisation and management of an event organised by an enterprise for an internal or external purpose, and acquiring the knowledge and techniques for its operation
Sales and promotion events	Understanding the concept, planning, organisation and management of an event utilised in sales promotion, and acquiring the knowledge and techniques for its operation.
Entertainment and party planning	Understanding the concept, planning, organisation and management of a personal event such as an anniversary ceremony, banquet or party, and acquiring related skills and techniques
Online event management	Understanding the concept, planning, organisation and management of an event in cyberspace, and acquiring related knowledge and techniques
Wedding planning and consulting	Understanding the concept, planning, organisation and management of wedding event, and acquiring related skills and techniques
Government and political event planning	Understanding the concept, planning, organisation and management of a government-related or political event and related knowledge and techniques
Area 4: Supporting areas	
Project and research methodology	Acquiring the necessary knowledge for performing market research and statistical analysis of event-related market segments
Understanding arts and culture	Acquiring basic knowledge required in the field of international arts and culture for the planning and management of a cultural event
Event information system	Acquiring the knowledge and techniques required for designing and applying an internal and external information system necessary for the planning and administration of an event
Introduction to hospitality industry	Understanding the hospitality industry and its activities related to the event industry, and studying industry characteristics
Travel and tourism industry	Understanding the tourism phenomenon that occurs in relation to a festival, conference, concert or other special event areas, and acquiring the necessary knowledge to design travel and tourist programmes
Hotel and lodging management	Understanding the hotel business as an event venue for various events (individual and business) and the business relationship between hotels and event companies
Laws and ethics	Understanding and acquiring knowledge-related laws and regulations required for the planning, management and operation of an event and studying the ethics for ethical administration
Economics	Acquiring the knowledge to analyse and understand the economic environment when planning an event and its influence on other industries

*Course descriptions were translated into Korean for respondents

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