



DEVELOPING DEGREE PROGRAMME IN TOURISM IN TAMPERE UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

Stakeholders' perspective

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis examines the development possibilities of the Degree Programme in Tourism (DPT) in Tampere University of Applied Sciences (TAMK) from the different stakeholders' perspective. The focus development area is the curriculum of the study programme which is under renewal and will be established in 2013. The aim of the thesis is to produce concrete development ideas from the experiences and opinions of the internal and external stakeholders of TAMK. The internal stakeholders are represented by the students of the DPT, and the external stakeholders are the representatives of the local labour market. The possible cooperation between the stakeholders is investigated in order to bring working life closer to the students and studies and to benefit the local businesses. Primary data was collected from the internal stakeholders with group theme interviews and from the external stakeholders with a semi-structured questionnaire, as well as with a semi-structured elite interview. Secondary data included existing data such as scientific literature, statistics, notes, the Internet, researches and other available publications. In the thesis process, the theories of competencies and qualifications were used as well as the Learning by Developing model of Laurea University of Applied Sciences discovered by benchmarking.

The collected and analyzed data revealed the target areas of development. According to the internal stakeholders the improvements should be targeted to the working life relation of the studies; to the quality of education and the course contents; to the guidance received; and to the more practical approach in studies. All these would prepare the students better for the future working life. The external stakeholders stressed that the practical know-how and multidisciplinary skills are the requirements of the working life, and that the attention should be paid to the requirements imposed by the tourism industry trends in the Tampere Region in the DPT studies.

The results indicate that mutually beneficial changes to the curriculum and cooperation between the stakeholders can be made, in which case the studies would prepare the students with competencies to meet the qualifications of the working life. According to the writers' of the thesis the working life relation in the studies should be emphasized more and it would also be one area for further research.

Key words: Curriculum, developing, DPT, stakeholder, Tampere Region

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1 INTRODUCTION

The writers of the current thesis, Ulla Aalto and Elina Ala-Hallila, are studying in Tampere University of Applied Sciences in the Degree Programme in Tourism. The current Bachelor's thesis is a diploma work for the degree.

The topic of the thesis focuses on the development possibilities of the Degree Programme in Tourism from the different stakeholders' perspectives. One focus stakeholder group is the students of the class of 2007; it is the pioneer group in the aforementioned study programme, in which the writers of the thesis belong to as well. Valuable information can be acquired from the students' experiences and opinions for further development of the study programme and that way better prepare the students for the working life.

Other stakeholders covered in the current thesis are the representatives of regional working life and professionals in the field of tourism. Their knowledge and perspective of the required skills and the state of the tourism industry today provides an insight to which direction the degree programme should be developed.

The thesis strives to produce concrete development ideas from the stakeholders' perspectives. Targets of the development are the curriculum of the Degree Programme in Tourism, its courses, contents and teaching methods. The possibility of having cooperation between the study programme and working life is examined as well in order to provide more practical learning process for students and at the same time benefit the local business activities.

2 RESEARCH PLAN

2.1 Focus of the research

Progression in the modern society has resulted to changes in the operational environments. The modern society can be described as an information society. One of the characterizing features to such society is the changes happening in the working environments: cooperation and networking between organization and individuals is increasing; working tasks and structures are blurring; knowledge, continuous learning and innovations are highlighted; and vast ranges of skills and competencies are needed. (Gouveia 2002, 4-7.) In the context of higher education such development was answered with the reform of the universities of applied sciences (Ammattikorkeakoulu-uudistus, AMK-reform), as the demand for study programmes within the institutions derive from the changing nature of working life (Liljander 2002, 13).

Internationalization as another social phenomenon resulted into changing the whole European higher education system and creating a unified European Higher Education Area (EHEA). The latter is known as the Bologna Process. As a byproduct of the aforementioned internationalization in European higher education, English-taught degree programmes were established in countries where the native language was not English. (Maiworm & Wächter 2002, 17.)

The current Bachelor's thesis examines the actualization and the development possibilities of the new English-taught degree programme, the degree programme in tourism (later DPT) that was established in 2007 in the Tampere University of Applied Sciences (later TAMK).

The rationale behind the topic of the Bachelor's thesis was formed from empirical observation, as the writers of the thesis are part of the first graduating class of the DPT. From experience, the writers of the thesis concluded that the DPT has great potential and is worthy of developing to reach even a higher level. As a new degree programme, it can be assumed that it is yet to function to its full potential and improved procedures and practices are found with experience. Thus, it is imperative that the development possibilities of the DPT

are examined: competitiveness is improved; recognizability is increased; cooperation is regenerated; and operations of the degree programme progressed within TAMK. Furthermore, the new curriculum is created for 2013 at the time of the thesis process is being carried out, thus the aspect of topicality adds importance to the topic. As a part of the ambitions of the Bologna Process, common grounds for best practices for quality assurance are being established. Consequently, quality and its assurance is a current topic within European Higher education, thus contributing to the importance of the topic of the thesis.

As it was mentioned earlier, the thesis examines the realization of the new DPT and its development potential. In order to measure success and find better practices, a deeper understanding needs to be established of the perspectives and interests of the relevant internal and external stakeholders, in relation to the DPT. What is more, content and goals are essential to ascertain of the education in Finnish universities of applied sciences (Ammattikorkeakoulu, UAS in English, later AMK) generally, as well as of the degree programme in question.

The thesis aims to examine development possibilities of the DPT from the aforementioned approach and produce practical development proposals with the intention of serving as a reference base to the curriculum currently under renewing. Moreover, the aim is to have dialogue with the different stakeholders to form an understanding of their interests in relation to the DPT. Furthermore, the thesis aims to establish how the DPT should be developed from the different stakeholder's perspective in order to meet the needs of the industry, thus enhancing the employability of the students. In addition, the aim is to establish whether reoccurrences and commonalities can be seen between the different stakeholders' perspectives. If the results successfully indicate the direction towards which the DPT can be developed it would serve the local tourism industry as the studies would better prepare the future professionals.

2.2 Concepts and theories

One of the concepts of the current thesis is the stakeholders and their interest towards the study programme. TAMK, as any organization, has several

interested parties. The interested parties are known as internal and external stakeholders. The internal stakeholders of TAMK are the students, teachers, the Research and Development Services (later R&D) of TAMK and the City of Tampere. As the current thesis studies the development potential of the DPT, the students' perspective is focused on the students of the degree programme. In addition the focus is on the first graduating group of the DPT, being the only students that have experienced the whole life cycle of the DPT studies. The external stakeholders of TAMK on the other hand, are the labor market representatives, Ministry of Education, regional development organizations etc. The interrelationship of the above said stakeholders shall be explicated in the upcoming chapters.

The current thesis sets out to explore development possibilities of the DPT in the frame of the contents and goals of the AMK education, thus forming one of the concepts and the focal points. The main goals of AMKs are education, research and development and regional development. The education aims to answer the changing needs of the labor market and the need for degree programmes derive from the regional working life expectations. The goal of the studies is to prepare students with competencies required in the working life, as well as with skills for continuous development of such competencies. (FINLEX 2011.) Working life relevancy in the AMK studies is imperative, as the studies prepare students to operate as experts in the given industry. Hence working life connection during studies is a prominent element of AMK education.

In defining expertise, the theory of competences and qualifications are used. The aforementioned theory is widely used in studies about the relationship between higher education and working life. In addition, one of the main objectives of Finnish AMKs is to strengthen the competence of the students, thus the theory forms the basis to the topic of developing the DPT (ARENE 2006, 3). According to Ruohotie (2002, 109-111) there are vast amount of literature concerning the concepts of competence and qualifications, without a clear cut homogeneous definition of policy about the exact meanings. The definitions of the two concepts are vague and often associated together or even understood as synonyms.

In the current thesis the individual attributes which are gained through knowledge, skills, social intercommunication and experience are referred to as competence. The latter can be called as proficiency from the individual's perspective. (Taalas 1993, according to Koski 2001, 9-10.) With the competence, the individual can respond to the requirements of the working life. As well, in the current thesis competencies are referred to as the kind of professional competencies that are specific to a certain industry. However, it must be stated that such competencies are not necessarily only characteristic to one industry, instead can be applicable generally. Industry specific prerequisites change however rapidly along with the changes in the operational environments.

Qualifications on the other hand are defined in the current thesis as features that the working life sets to the individuals. In other words, qualification is proficiency from the employer's perspective. (Taalas 1993, according to Koski 2001, 9-13.) The two concepts operate as a theory, as the thesis strives to comprehend what kind of competencies students have developed through the study programme and moreover, what does the industry demand from its future professional.

The other theory for the current thesis is a model for standard of activity called Learning by developing (later LbD). The theory operates as an idea framework for increasing the working life presence in the DPT. The model was created in Laurea AMK and it aims to bring the working life closer to the learning by combining the main functions of Finnish AMKs: teaching, research and development and regional development (Degree Programme in Tourism 2011, 2). By bringing the industry closer to the studies, the intention is to improve the students' competence development and promote joint learning. The model has been rewarded by the Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council. The aim of Laurea AMK and with the model is "to develop and renew labor market competence through research and to produce innovations that make use of multidisciplinary competence to have an impact on our surroundings". (Degree Programme in Tourism 2011, 2.) The relevancy of the theory for the thesis comes from the frame in which the development of the DPT is opened up. LbD model shall be presented in chapter 3.

2.3 Research questions

The research questions in the current thesis are: 1. How should the DPT be developed from the internal and external stakeholders' point of view? 2. Could the study programme be developed in mutually beneficial way? 3. What kind of changes could the development ideas have on the DPT and the curriculum?

The research questions seek to investigate how the new study programme has been carried out: motivations and experiences of the different stakeholders; the functionality of the curriculum and its correspondence to the set requirements of AMK and working life; and eventually to find out possible cooperation and development suggestions. Endeavor of the current thesis research is to create and receive concrete examples and results.

2.4 Data and methods

The current research is mainly qualitative as it attempts to examine the quality, implication, motivation and attitudes concerning the DPT. Qualitative research - in comparison to quantitative research- typically seek to explore phenomena and analyze the data which is in non-numerical form such as texts, audiotapes and images. (Guest, Mack, McQueen, Name & Woodsong 2005, 3.) The main feature in qualitative research when analyzing the data, is not only to relate to the material, but to strive for constructing theoretically meaningful insights about the phenomenon (Eskola & Suoranta 1998, 62). The thesis is an empiric research that pursues to discover and concretize development ideas for the DPT and to improve the working life relations with the study programme. In other words, the current thesis research can be defined as an applied research. The element of participation is characteristic to qualitative research, which in the context of the current thesis is highlighted as the writers of the thesis are part of the graduating DPT course under study (Eskola & Suoranta 1998, 16).

Triangulation is implemented in the thesis as the study joins data from different sources, applying different methods and combining the input of two thesis researchers (Eskola & Suoranta 1998, 68). Thus, multitude of data was used in

the current thesis in order to obtain a holistic and realistic understanding of the thesis topic. Empiric research included interviews, field notes and summaries. Existing data utilized included literature and other published materials, statistics and researches.

Various data collecting methods were used when implementing the research. Primary data was collected from the internal stakeholders, which is the DPT students, with semi-structured group theme interviews and non-directive discussions. Flick (2009, 150) states that “subject’s viewpoints are more likely to be expressed in an openly designed interview situation than in a standardized interview or a questionnaire.”

Data was collected from external stakeholders in two ways. Labor market representatives were approached with semi-structured questionnaires. Semi-structured questionnaire enables to mix closed and open questions, which allow both qualitative and quantitative information to be gathered. Thus, the research has quantitative features as well. Closed questions can take the form of single or multi-response questions with only one possible answer, whereas open questions allow the respondents to reply in their own words. (Hague 2004, 100-101.) A semi-structured elite interview was conducted which permitted even more profound examination of the essential themes regarding the research questions. A semi-structured interview was carried out by following a list of predetermined questions compiled based on background research and analysis. However, such an interview technique enabled to depart from the predetermined themes when considered useful and relevant to the thesis topic.

Secondary data used in the thesis included such existing data as scientific literature, statistics, notes, material from the Internet, researches and other available publications in order to clarify the background to the phenomenon. Combining all the data enabled to obtain holistic view of the topic and to gather new information and perspectives.

Inductive analysis technique was implemented in the thesis study as the vast amount of data was investigated to produce new, concrete understanding of the topic. The analysis took place in two stages. The secondary sources were

acquainted to uncover points worthy of note regarding the thesis topic. Data reduction technique was implemented on the vast amount of secondary source data to overlook the irrelevant data to the thesis topic. After, the data was assorted by the relevance to the research problem to process metadata (information). Open coding was employed to conceptualize and label the secondary source data, thus forming the two main concepts related to the thesis topic: stakeholders and AMK studies. All the secondary source data relevant to the topic was assorted under the set categories. Then, by implementing axial coding, references were formulated between labels and sub-labels in order to understand the topic better and make out connections and rearrange the labels. Thus, for example the DPT studies and working life was re-placed under the same category. Last, selective coding enabled to make out two relevant theories against the metadata produced: theory of expertise (competencies and qualifications) and learning by developing. (Altinay & Paraskevas 2008, 171-173.) Numerous summaries were written between the phases.

The second stage involved the analysis of the primary data: interviews. Upon the first phase of the analysis of the secondary data, the need for closer examination of two stakeholder groups was established: students and industry representatives. After the data was collected and transcribed, thematic and comparative analysis methods were employed as the metadata produced from secondary and primary data, in addition with the theories were reflected with each other with a practical approach in order to produce concrete development suggestions in chapter 7.

2.5 Content of the research

The topic is presented comprehensively to the readers in the research plan chapter. The reasons leading to the conduction of topic in question are stated and the importance and the topicality explained. Furthermore, the different aspects of the topic are described and justified in chapter 2. The background of the main concepts, the definitions and the correlation to the thesis are presented next. Subsequently the research questions and aims to which the research

pursues to give concrete answers to are introduced. Finally, the methods used in the thesis process are presented with literature.

Chapter 3 explains the background of the Finnish AMK studies: the structure, main functions and goals of the AMK, as well as the relevance to the thesis topic. Moreover, the DPT studies are depicted to the reader stating the background, curriculum, structure of studies and aims of the degree programme. The first graduating class of the DPT is described, being the focus group of the thesis. The concept of an English-taught degree programme is defined shortly as the degree programme in question is such. In addition, relation of industry to higher education is described and the stakeholder relationship in relation to TAMK introduced.

The fourth chapter goes deeper into the focal areas of the current thesis. The theories of expertise (competence and qualifications) are introduced. In addition, AMK specific competencies are stated and future tourism industry operators skill demand described. Moreover, Learning by Developing model of Laurea is benchmarked and the relation to the thesis topic drawn.

Chapter 5 tackles the empirical data collected from the internal stakeholders about their experiences and perception about the study programme. The chapter partly answers to the first research question: How should the DPT be developed from the internal stakeholders' point of view?

The sixth chapter presents the results of the empirical study conducted with the external stakeholders. In addition, the results are reflected with the results received from the internal stakeholders and the vast review of the secondary data. Thus, chapter 6 answers partly to two research questions: How can the DPT be developed from the external stakeholders' point of view? Can the DPT be developed in a mutually beneficial way?

Chapter 7 brings together and sums up the results. The thesis findings are summarized and the research questions stated in the research plan chapter are answered. In addition, concrete development ideas are presented.

3 UNFOLDING THE CONCEPTS: AMK STUDIES AND STAKEHOLDERS

The AMK education system was established in 1990s to mend the insufficient parts of the higher education in Finland. What needed to be taken into consideration was to pay attention to the changes happening in the society and in the working life and to improve the quality of education that would prepare the students for professionalism in the different sectors. Beside the traditional academic education there was a demand for higher education that would produce workforce with expertise and multidisciplinary skills. After several phases of development and reform, AMK has regularized its position in the Finnish higher education system. (Rask 2002, 31-38.)

In addition to produce students with professional level skills, the main goals of AMK are to interact and cooperate with surrounding society, work communities and with other learning institutions as well as with research and development departments. Such collaboration with different units supports the regional development too. Research in AMKs is applied research by its nature and it is typically involved with the teaching to support the education and at the same time to serve the geographical environment and to support the regional business activities. (Rask 2002, 31-38.)

The chapter 3 gives backgrounds to the topic of the thesis by introducing TAMK and the DPT focus group to the reader. The curriculum and the structure of the studies will be described and English-language degree programmes are presented. The stakeholder relationship of TAMK is presented and the working life relation of the studies is tackled.

3.1 Tampere University of Applied Sciences

Tampere University of Applied Sciences (TAMK) have approximately 10 000 students which makes it the third biggest AMK in Finland. TAMK operates in addition to Tampere, in Ikaalinen, Mänttä-Vilppula and Virrat. From the beginning of 2010, Pirkanmaa University of Applied Sciences (later PIRAMK)

and TAMK unified their services and became one comprehensive educational organization, known as TAMK. (TAMK 2010.)

The united TAMK offers education in seven educational fields and has over 40 different degree programmes. The education focuses on technology, business, tourism and culture as well as well-being services. In addition to degree studies, TAMK offers versatile possibilities for continuing education in further studies and professional specialization studies. TAMK emphasizes internationalization in all its studies and it provides for students possibilities to execute part of their studies abroad by offering student exchange and training programmes, intensive courses and different kind of international projects. (TAMK 2010.)

The tasks of TAMK include applied research and development services (R&D), which supports, with cooperation and projects, the regional development and small and medium sized enterprises in the Tampere Region. The students of TAMK are given possibilities to participate to the projects of R&D services to improve the substance of the learning and to bring working life closer to the studies. The business idea of TAMK as a closely working life related AMK is to educate students with up-to-date know-how and to deepen their knowledge with research, development and innovation activities. The current thesis intends to determine whether the business idea has realized in the DPT studies. In addition, the working life relation to the studies is one of the issues considered. (TAMK 2010.)

3.2 Degree Programme in Tourism in TAMK

One of the main objectives in the current thesis is the study programme itself, DPT. The study programme was established in 2007 in the Pirkanmaa University of Applied Sciences (PIRAMK) that was later merged together with TAMK. DPT is an international English-taught study programme and was first pioneered as adult education. However, the adult education aspect is not tackled in the thesis even though the focus is on the first group, class of 2007 students. The difference between the adult education with the pioneer group and the standard education in the following years was that there were less contact hours per study credit and minimum of 2 years of work experience was required in order to be

accepted to the study programme. The duration of the studies is 3,5 years and 210 ECTS credits are required in order to receive Bachelor of Hospitality Management degree. (Pirkanmaan Ammttikorkeakoulu 2007, 8.)

In 2007 there were 133 applicants from 17 different countries, 30 were accepted to the interview out of which 20 received the position. The group consisted of 9 different nationalities: Finnish, Turkish, Japanese, Russian, Nigerian, Kenyan, Tanzanian, Ugandan and Iranian.

The emphasis of the DPT studies is on congress and business. The orientation of the studies was initiated by the city of Tampere as a part of its tourism strategy. "The aim is to provide students with abilities for working in demanding work tasks from customer services all the way to managerial level in tourism companies and societies both in Finland and abroad" (TAMK 2010).

As mentioned earlier, DPT is an international English-language-taught degree programme (later ELTDP). The number of ELTPDs has increased remarkably in higher education since 1990s in those European countries where English is not the domestic language. ELTDPs are positively enhancing competitiveness and recognizability of universities as they produce workforce with international skills to the labor market. (Maiworm & Wächter 2002, 11-13.)

The main purpose of the ELTDP is to meet the requirements of internationalization strategies of universities; to respond to the know-how demands of working life; and to achieve the goals of the national education policies (Niemelä 2009, 7). In Finland there are over 100 Bachelor-level ELTDPs altogether (Cimo) and also TAMK has taken the internationality factor quite well into consideration: there are currently one Master level and five Bachelor level ELTDPs, DPT being one of them. (TAMK 2010.)

In spring 2011 there was 10% growth from last year in applications received to the all the five ELTDPs in TAMK. DPT was the most popular study programme; 1119 applications were sent to ELTDPs altogether, 258 were for the DPT. (TAMK 2011.) On that account, the popularity of the DPT contributes to the

importance of the thesis: provide development ideas and enhance the quality of DPT.

3.2.1 DPTs in Finland

In addition to TAMK English- taught Degree programmes in Tourism leading to a Bachelor's degree are organized in the following Finnish AMKs: Kajaani University of Applied Sciences (KAJAK 2011), Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences (HAAGA-HELIA 2010) in the Porvoo unit, Laurea University of Applied Sciences in Kerava unit (LAUREA 2010), Rovaniemi University of Applied Sciences (RAMK 2010), Saimaa University of Applied Sciences (SAIMIA 2011), Keski-Pohjanmaa University of Applied Sciences (COU 2011) in the Pietarsaari unit.

The specific content, focus, orientation, goals and strategies of the studies in the different DPTs varies between AMKs according to the strategies of AMK and regional needs. The current thesis benchmarks other DPTs in order to scout out better practices. Learning by Developing-model of Laurea AMK is particularly examined.

3.2.2 Curriculum of DPT, TAMK

The DPT studies prepare the students to be able to work as professionals in the different sectors of tourism. The focus is on congress and business studies. The degree programme is 210 credits (cr) and it consists of common core studies (10cr), professional studies (140 cr), practical training (30cr), Bachelor's thesis (15cr) and elective studies (15cr). The figure 1 on page 18 presents the curriculum of the DPT. After successfully completing the studies, the student is graduating with the title of Bachelor of Hospitality Management which is quadrate with similar degrees in other EU countries. (TAMK 2010.)

		1. v	2. v	3. v	4. v
YPERUSOP	<u>COMMON CORE STUDIES OF PIRKANMAA UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES, 10 op</u>				
Y030-7	<u>Learning to be a professional, 5 op</u>	5			
Y029-7	<u>Communication skills, 5 op</u>	5			
CKOULAM	<u>PROFESSIONAL STUDIES OF DEGREE PROGRAMME, 140 op</u>				
C700	<u>Tourism environment, 10 op</u>	10			
C700A-7	<u>Introduction to tourism, 4 op</u>				
C700B-7	<u>Social environment, 3 op</u>				
C700C-7	<u>Tourism and law, 3 op</u>				
C701	<u>Operational environment, 10 op</u>	10			
C701A-7	<u>Internal environment, 2 op</u>				
C701B-7	<u>External environment, 5 op</u>				
C701C-7	<u>Profitability I, 3 op</u>				
C702	<u>Business management I, 12 op</u>	12			
C702A-7	<u>Business mathematics, 2 op</u>				
C702B-7	<u>E-business, 2 op</u>				
C702C-7	<u>Introduction to entrepreneurship, 3 op</u>				
C702D-7	<u>Basics of financial and management accounting, 5 op</u>				
C703	<u>Introduction to marketing, 5 op</u>	5			
C704	<u>English, 9 op</u>				
C704A-7	<u>English in tourism I, 3 op</u>	3			
C704B-7	<u>English in tourism II, 3 op</u>		3		
C704C-7	<u>Academic writing, 3 op</u>			3	
C705	<u>Swedish, 9 op</u>				
C705A-7	<u>Tourism in Swedish I, 5 op</u>	5			
C705B-7	<u>Tourism in Swedish II, 2 op</u>		2		
C705C-7	<u>Tourism in Swedish III, 2 op</u>			2	
C706	<u>Basic Finnish in tourism, 9 op</u>				
C706A-7	<u>Basic Finnish in tourism I, 5 op</u>	5			
C706B-7	<u>Basic Finnish in tourism II, 2 op</u>		2		
C706C-7	<u>Basic Finnish in tourism III, 2 op</u>			2	
C707	<u>German, 6 op</u>				
C707A-7	<u>Basic German in tourism, 3 op</u>		3		
C707B-7	<u>German in tourism, 3 op</u>			3	
C708	<u>Introduction to research, 8 op</u>				
C708A-7	<u>Introduction to research I, 5 op</u>	5			
C708B-7	<u>Introduction to research II, 3 op</u>			3	
C709	<u>Business management II, 17 op</u>				
C709A-7	<u>Leadership I, 6 op</u>		6		
C709B-7	<u>Marketing of tourism services and tourism communications, 6 op</u>		6		
C709C-7	<u>Management accounting, 5 op</u>		5		
C710	<u>Event management, 5 op</u>		5		
C711	<u>Intercultural communication, 15 op</u>				
C711A-7	<u>Intercultural communication skills, 5 op</u>		5		
C711B-7	<u>Cross-cultural communication and project management, 10 op</u>		10		
C712	<u>Tourist service management, 14 op</u>				
C712A-7	<u>Service activities and product development of tourist enterprises, 5 op</u>			5	
C712B-7	<u>Working in tourist enterprise, 5 op</u>			5	
C712C-7	<u>Marketing research, 4 op</u>			4	

C713	Hospitality for congress customers, 10 op				
C713A-7	Profitability II, 2 op			2	
C713B-7	Leadership II, 2 op			2	
C713C-7	Accommodation and catering services for conference and congress customers, 6 op			6	
C714	Nature and adventure tourism, 10 op				
C714A-7	Adventure tourism, 5 op			5	
C714B-7	Nature tourism, 5 op			5	
CVAPVAL	ELECTIVE STUDIES, 15 op			15	
CHARJ	PRACTICAL TRAINING, 30 op				
C720	Practical training 1, 15 op		15		
C721	Practical training 2, 15 op				15
COPIN	BACHELOR ´S THESIS, 15 op				15
Yhteensä		60	60	60	30

FIGURE 1. The curriculum of the DPT. (PIRAMK 2007.)

The core studies are set by TAMK to all its students regardless the study programme, whereas professional studies are preparing the students with skills and competencies needed in a specific industry. Some essential professional studies in DPT are congress studies and business, leadership and entrepreneurship, communication skills and tourism research, language and cultural studies. With elective studies, students can deepen their knowledge and skills in subjects that they prefer, for example languages. (TAMK 2010.)

In the first year of the DPT studies students gain knowledge about regulations and factors that are affecting in the tourism environment, comprehend the importance of profitability in business and absorb the service-oriented thinking. The second year of studies familiarizes the students with congress and conference services and deepens the knowledge of business profitability and service. Multicultural studies are executed as well. In the third year of studies management and leadership skills are improved and knowledge in the professional studies is increased. Students learn to make strategic choices and are competent to take part in the production and development of tourism services. Studies also include practical training which can be conducted in Finland or abroad. The teaching methods used in DPT studies are lectures, seminars, both individual and group assignments, virtual studies, project works and company visits. (TAMK 2010.)

The curriculum for the DPT is currently under renewal and the new curriculum will be established in 2013. The curriculum should respond to competency requirements and to the anticipations of working life and society; to provide the latest research information and to consider the development of the specific industry; and to identify the students starting level.

3.3 Industry developments effect on higher education

The need for study programmes of AMK and the direction of the education springs from the economic life and their needs (FINLEX 2010). Thus, the development of study programmes and their substance lives parallel to the changes in the operational environment.

Tourism industry is a substantially growing service industry sector globally, as well as nationally. Matka2020-report (2006), an undertaking of the Finnish Ministry of Education pursuing to investigate the tourism industry's educational needs for 2020, states that to maintain the competitiveness of the industry the educational formation should orientate with the anticipated direction of the sector (Havas, Jaakonaho, Rantanen & Sievers 2006, 6). The educational demands of tourism industry refer to quantitative development. The qualitative needs are affected by the developments in needs and expectations of consumers and travelers, as well as regional and national development. It can be better depicted as anticipating the future competence demand. (Leveälahti, Järvinen & Vesterinen 2009, 5.)

Difficulties lie in the perceptivity of the sector to exterior stimulus and unpredictability of the industry trends. However, competent professionals contribute to the competitiveness and success of the sector in Finland. The current thesis concentrates on the qualitative development of the study programme according to the relevant competence demands of the industry and how the study programme could react better to the changing nature of the industry.

3.4 Stakeholders of TAMK

One of the main concepts in the thesis is internal and external stakeholders. It is imperative to understand the stakeholder relationship as it affects to the operations of TAMK, as well as the potential development of its study programmes. A stakeholder can be defined as “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of a corporation’s purpose” (Freeman 2007, 6). Stakeholders and the organization, in this case TAMK, are in an interrelated relationship; one cannot exist without the other.

Internal (primary) stakeholders are those influencing in the organization’s immediate proximity, which in the context of the current thesis, is within the university. External (secondary) stakeholders are working in the outside environment. In the current thesis, as mentioned before in the chapter 2.2 (page 7), the internal stakeholders are students and teachers, R&D services of TAMK and the city of Tampere. It can be argued that the city of Tampere is an external stakeholder but in the thesis it is considered as internal stakeholder because of its position as an administrator of TAMK and the fact that DPT was created as part of the Tampere strategy. External stakeholders are the local tourism service providers, Ministry of Education, regional development organizations etc.

The current thesis concentrates on the unilateral interrelationship between the stakeholders; only those that are relevant to the topic are covered. Therefore, for example teachers’ wellbeing at work and other interrelationships are excluded. Moreover, the thesis intends to get a deeper understanding of only certain stakeholder groups; yet again the most relevant to the topic are dealt with more.

3.4.1 Relationship of the internal and external stakeholders with TAMK

The figure 2 and figure 3 (on pages 22-23) shed light into the interest of the internal and the external stakeholders in relation with TAMK.

Internal (primary) stakeholders	
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education that is of high quality, relevant to the working life needs and recognized labor market • Guidance, support and links to the working life • Different possibilities for internationalization
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfying work, possibilities to participate and influence • Competence development, possibilities for moving ahead, motivating tasks • Competitive and fair salaries • Safe working environment that flexibly takes into account the different life situations
Administrator, the city of Tampere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procedures and forms of activity that support the Tampere-strategy • Practical know-how based on current knowledge • Regional influence and promotion of entrepreneurship • Reaching quantifiable goals in terms of graduates and length of studies
Student association, TAMKO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible activity and clear policies • Open interaction and dialogue • Increasing influencing possibilities for students and faculty • Financial support

FIGURE 2. Internal stakeholders' interest towards TAMK (Adapted from Turku AMK 2004.)

The current thesis intends to gain deeper understanding of, on one hand the students' interest and expectations towards the study programme, and on the other hand their experiences of the DPT studies. Inadequacies and downsides that possibly arise from the students' perspectives are considered against the vast background research. Development possibilities of the most relevant aspects are considered. On that note, the positive aspects and good practices arising from the dialogue with the primary stakeholders are furthermore considered. Pros are analyzed in terms of whether they can be reinforced or implemented in different aspects of the studies. The internal stakeholders' perspective is presented in Chapter 5.

External (secondary) stakeholders	
Working life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competent staff and trainees • Possibilities for advanced training for staff • Practical expertise based on current knowledge • High quality and expertise level education • Research and development projects, product development

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> and innovations • Internationalization
Ministry of education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operating according set procedures, goals and development direction • Increasing R&D activity and external finance • Productive and high quality activity • New initiatives and innovations • Regional influence and promotion of entrepreneurship • Regional, national and international networking
Tampere Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaching quantifiable graduate goals • Active operations within the region and promotion of entrepreneurship • Practical expertise based on current knowledge
Regional development organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality projects • Bringing about expertise • Cooperative projects promoting regional development
Other higher education institutions in Tampere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education, R&D, supportive services and cooperation • Small and medium sized enterprise sector contacts • Joint projects and networks
Other AMKs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education, R&D, supportive services and cooperation • Joint projects and networks • Benchmarking best practices
Potential applicants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Realistic information about the education possibilities, learning environments, career possibilities and future work life
Entrepreneurial organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancing cooperation between entrepreneurs and TAMK • Expertise supporting entrepreneurship • Active operations in joint networks

FIGURE 3. External stakeholders' interest towards TAMK (Adapted from Turku AMK 2004).

Different publications are examined in order to gain understanding of the external stakeholders' view on the development of the study programme. Industry representatives are interviewed by a questionnaire to gain more understanding of the demands set by working life. In addition, an élite interview with a representative of the Tampere Region Economic Development Agency Tredea Oy is conducted. Tredea Oy is concerned with the tourism marketing of the Tampere Region, thus the interview providing valuable insight to the topic: main directions of advancement in tourism sector in the Tampere region is discussed and how such development should be taken into consideration in the

planning of a degree programme in tourism in Tampere. What is more, possible cooperation is discussed. The requirements emerging from the aforementioned dialogue are then analyzed in terms of how they could be proportioned in the development of DPT. External stakeholders' perspective is unraveled in Chapter 6. Reoccurrences and mutually beneficial development ideas are analyzed in Chapter 7.

4 FROM HIGHER EDUCATION TO WORKING LIFE PROFESSIONALS

Rapid changes in society have overruled the traditional composition of the working life where studying, working life and retirement have been following each other. Instead of this life path, it has been replaced with working life and studying and their alternation. The latter has awakened discussions about the relationship between education and working life since the requirements of needed skills and know-how in working life has changed, as well in the tourism sector. (Koski 2001, 5.)

Tourism is the biggest export industry branch in the world as well as significant growing service sector and it has developed remarkably in past years. Moreover, its development is difficult to forecast because tourism is sensitive sector for external changes and the tourism trends are continuously changing. (Havas, Jaakonaho, Rantanen & Sievers 2006, 6.) On that account, the tourism studies should emphasize on diversified skills and knowhow. This leads us to go deeper into the qualifications and competencies which were defined in the chapter 2 and to discuss more about the skills and know-how that the DPT students should possess.

4.1 Competencies and qualifications

Qualifications represent the practical know-how needed in order to work in the field of tourism, as the thesis seeks to shed light into the topics or courses that should be taught in the DPT. Competencies, on the other hand are more abstract attributes required to successfully cope in the working life. (Hövels 2001, according to Ruohotie 2002, 110). It must be stated however that such attributes and competencies evolve also in situations external to the AMK studies. Moreover, both competencies and qualifications may be necessary in a specific job or to manage the nature of the job, thus they can have a similar meaning.

In the current thesis, the theory of competence is used as it is the goal of the study programme: to produce competent tourism professionals. In the topic of considering the improvement possibilities of the DPT, the underlying question is how it could be improved so that it better prepares future competent industry operators. The relevancy of the qualifications theory has to do with the aforementioned dilemma. In order for the DPT to be improved so that it supports best the professional development of students, it should be determined what are the skills (qualifications) needed in the working life. In the figure 4, made by the writers of the current thesis, is visualized the role of competence and qualification.

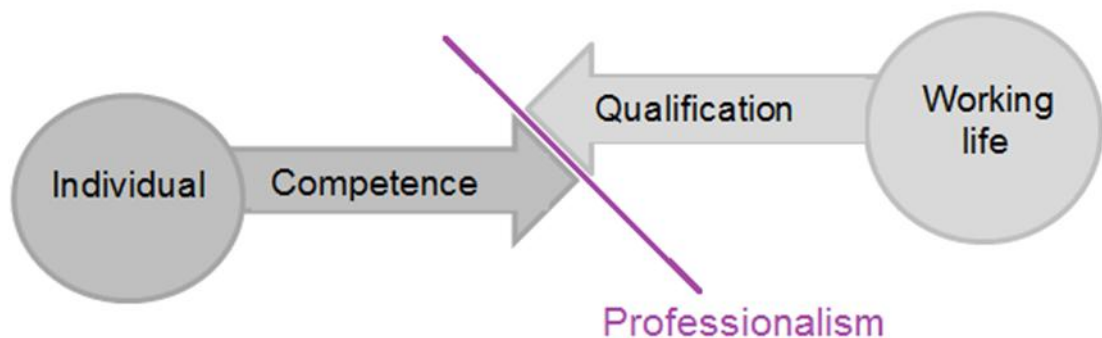


FIGURE 4. The role of competence and qualification

4.2 Competencies – the individual attributes

Competencies can be seen as individual attributes that are divided into three categories: formal competence, factual competence and competence in use. Formal competence is measured through individual's education and with achieved certificates. Factual competence, on the other hand, refers to the individual's capability to manage certain tasks and situations; these competencies are acquired through experience in studies, working life and in social life. Competence in use is also used as a synonym for expertise. It has dynamic interaction with the requirements concerning the individual as well as the work. In other words, the requirements related to the individual and to the

work can either enhance or restrict the potential that an individual uses the competence, such as individual's previous experiences, self-esteem or the nature of the work tasks. (Ellström 1998, according to Koski 2001, 11.)

In order to manage in the set work tasks, certain industry specific skills and know-how are required as well as certain individual general features e.g. intelligence, character, motivation, attitudes and values (Ranta-aho 1999, 31 according to Kuusenmäki 2006, 12). Thus, it can be presumed that education and working experience are one of the essential elements within an individual's life contributing to the development of vocational competence. In the context of the thesis education refers to TAMK and the DPT. Possibilities of even closer working life presence in DPT studies are considered in the thesis due to the important contribution of the latter towards students' professional growth. However, it should be noted that developing the DPT does not itself ensure the students' successful development. As there are other elements contributing or hindering the competence, such as motivation as previously mentioned, even the best settings do not guarantee success. Figure 5, made by the writers of the current thesis, visualizes the development of competence.

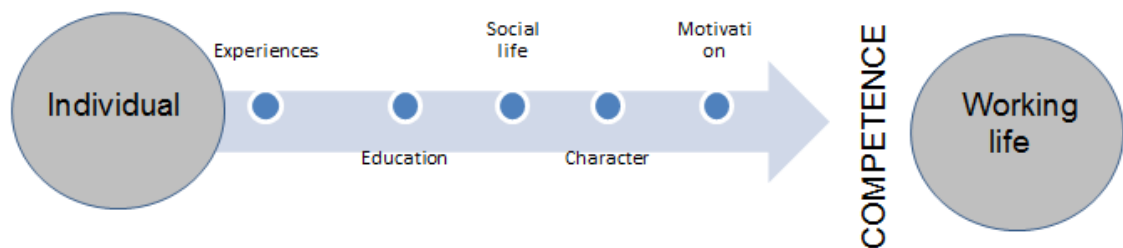


FIGURE 5. Individual's development of competence.

Evers, Rush & Berdrow (1998) classify four different competence areas which are required for individual's lifelong learning and employability. Those competencies are: life control skills, communication skills, people and task management skills and the skill of initiating innovations and changes. (Ruohotie 2002, 113.) These are explicated in the figure 6 on page 28.

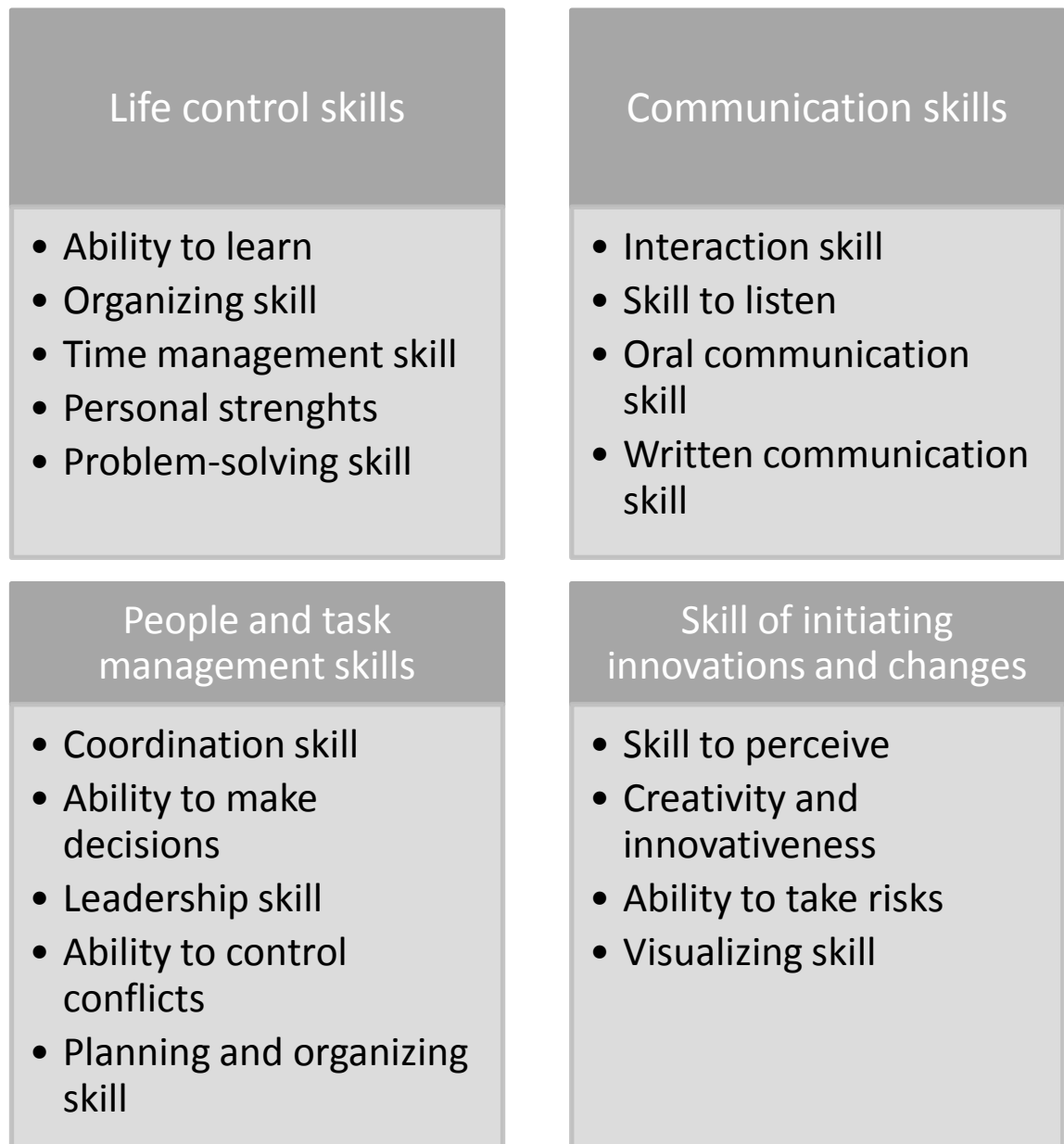


FIGURE 6. Competence areas required for individual's lifelong learning and employability (Adapted from Evers, Rush & Berdrow 1998 according to Ruohotie 2002, 113-117.)

In order to have people and task management skills and the skill of initiating innovations and changes one should possess the communication and life control skills, which are the basic competences (Ruohotie 2002, 114). Competences are developing over time as more experience in work and in life in general are gained.

4.2.1 Generic competencies of the AMKs

There is national and international agreement about the competencies that should be learned in the higher education: National Qualifications Framework, (NQF) and European Qualifications Framework (EQF). These frameworks were designed to make the curriculums more compatible, mobility of the students and teachers easier and to standardize the degree structures in national and international levels. (ARENE 2010.)

In AMKs the competencies are considered as broad entities of knowledge and knowhow, which describe the students' capability to manage specific task of certain profession, their potential and competence. In Finnish AMKs the competencies are classified as subject specific competences and generic competences. These competencies create the students' ability for cooperation, readiness for working life and vocational expertise. The generic competencies of AMKs are: learning competence, ethical competence, working community competence, innovation competence and international competence. (ARENE 2010, 7.) Below, figure 7 (continues to page 30) provides description of bachelor's level generic competencies.

Description of the competence, bachelor level	
Learning competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - is able to self-evaluate and develop one's competence and learning style orientation - is able to retrieve and analyze information and evaluate it critically - is capable of taking responsibility for collaborative learning and sharing knowledge in teams
Ethical competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - is able to take responsibility for one's own actions and for the consequences of these actions - is able to work according to the ethical principles of the subject field - is able to take other people into account in one's actions - is able to apply the principles of equality - is able to apply the principles of sustainable development - is capable of social influencing using one's know-how and based on ethical values
Working community competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - is able to operate as a member of a work community - is able to operate in communicative and interactive situations in working life - is able to utilize information and communications technology in one's subject field - knows the working life in one's subject field and is able to create

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> personal contacts in working life and to operate in professional networks - is capable of decision making in unpredicted situations - is able to apply the principles of organizational management and leadership in working life and has abilities for supervision tasks - possesses entrepreneurial skill
Innovation competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - is able to conduct research, development and innovation projects applying the existing knowledge and methods of the field - is able to work in projects - is capable of creative problem solving and development of working methods - is able to find customer-oriented, sustainable and profitable solution
Internationalization competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - possesses communicative competence necessary for one's work and for professional development in the subject field - is able to operate in a multicultural environment - takes into account the effects of and opportunities for internationalization development in one's own field

FIGURE 7. Descriptions of AMK bachelor's level generic competences (Adapted from ARENE 2010, 7-8)

4.2.2 Subject specific competencies of the AMK

A project (Ammattikorkeakoulujen osallistuminen eurooppalaiseen korkeakoulutusalueeseen –projekti, ECTS-project) undertaken by the Finnish AMK Rectors council (later ARENE) between 2005-2006, emphasizes on supporting the curriculum development work, sharing out best practices, defining the subject specific (study programme specific) competence goals and the follow-up of the recommendations set upon Finnish AMKs (length of semester, length of practical training etc.). (ARENE 2005, 2.)

The analysis behind determining the study programme specific competences is based on the outlines of the National and European Qualifications Networks and the outcomes of a previously conducted project (Tuning Educational Structures in Europe-project). (ARENE 2005, 2.) The analysis and the compilation of the study programme specific competencies are based on cooperation of different faculties of AMK, students with industry representatives.

Common working life readiness is similar despite the industry (generic competencies), but importance and distinctive features vary between professions, tasks and industries. The foundation for expertise and for different study programmes of AMK is in vocational special knowhow. (ARENE 2005, 03.) In the figure 8 below (continues to page 32), the study programme specific competencies are depicted; knowledge areas that future tourism graduates are intended to embody.

Description of the subject specific competencies/ Degree programme in tourism	
Service culture competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - comprehends hospitality as the essential value and success factor in the industry - is able to produce healthy, safe and cost-effective services to advance the wellbeing of customers - is able to consider esthetic and ethical point of views in service activities (premises and service products, communication) - understands the principals of consumer behavior and is able to utilize the knowledge in service development
Service system competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - is able to plan, produce and develop services according to the demands of the operational environment - is able to describe, direct and evaluate service processes (product development, activity's profitability, organization of work, guidance and development) - is able to develop services through product development and productization - understands the industry's safety regulations and is able to apply them in work
Service management competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - knows and understands company's strategies and is able to utilize them as a tool for guiding service activities - is able to plan, execute and evaluate one's own and the units daily activities - is able to organize work community's activities and utilize individuals', teams' and units' knowhow
Business knowhow competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - is able to analyze customerships from service businesses development's point of view - understands the essential concepts of business and possesses the principals of business-minded thinking -is able to predict the effects of alternative procedures to profit and competitiveness -is able to apply the principals of entrepreneurship as an entrepreneur and an employee -is able to operate in different networks and utilize and develop them
Competence of service environments for tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - is able to develop the service environment and networks of leisure and business travel - understands the effects of internationality, globalization and different cultures to service culture and the industry's development - is able to operate in different international service environments - is able to utilize the specific features of the national culture in the

development of tourism - is able to develop regional strengths and improve regional influence in the tourism sector

FIGURE 8. Descriptions of AMKs' bachelor's level subject specific competencies for degree programme in tourism (Adapted from Antikainen, Diiov, Fränti, Kylmä, Laasanen 2006, 1)

4.3 Qualifications –requirements of working life

In a wider scale qualifications can be seen as diverse skills, know-how and expertise that individual needs in society and in working life. They can be motoric skills, knowledge and information technology skills, attitudes, values, motivation, and social skills and so on (Raivola 2000, 167 according to Koski 2001, 9). In other words, qualifications are accurate descriptions of the knowledge, skills and attributes that the individual has and what the working life requires from the employees (Koski 2001, 9).

According to Nijhof (2001), there are four key-qualifications which are prerequisites for life-long learning and for successfulness in working life. Those key-qualifications are powerful skills, hybrid skills, core skills and transferable skills. Powerful skills equals to general skills that can be used in different contexts and in appropriate situations. Powerful skills are for example mathematical skills, communication skills, problem-solving skills, organizing and management skills. Hybrid skills are skills and cognitions which are integrated to each other in different ways and they cannot be developed separately. Hybrid skills are especially needed in the information technology era of today. In education hybrid skills are seen in the emphasis to the diversified skills. The skills which are necessary in order to achieve certain goals in life e.g. employment and success in work are called core skills. Aforementioned skills require constant updating. Transferable skills are consisted of cognitions as well as manual skills, which the individual offers to the work and build his/her professional competence. Transferable skills help to cope in new situations at

work and enable the professional mobility. These skills can be all-round or occupation specific cognitions. (Ruohotie 2002, 114-117.)

4.3.1 Qualifications and future forecast of tourism industry

As the DPT prepares the students to be the tourism professionals, working life sets the requirements for the future employees. Those requirements are easy to change since tourism as an industry is sensitive for development and transformation. Tourism demand is growing and new kinds of services are created to respond to the customers' needs which are more and more demanding and distinctive (Visanti 2002, 95 according to Elinkeinoelämän keskusliitto 2005, 46).

Know-how of the tourism operators can be divided into two groups: diverse know-how and specializing. In operative tasks employees are expected to transfer cognition and skills from task to another and to manage both technical as well as social skills. Customer service skills and language skills are essential features in the tourism basic level education. In managerial and professional level, in addition to the mentioned basic level skills, networking skills and domain-specific skills are expected. (Havas et al. 2006, 14.)

Harju-Autti (2003, 39) states that customer oriented service and product development as well as marketing and branding are the key trends in the tourism sector in the future especially because the industry is internationalizing all the time. Also information technology as well as development of the production and service processes with the help of new technologies play big role in the tourism sector in the future. (Elinkeinoelämän keskusliitto 2005, 46.) Internationalization is emphasized in tourism businesses in Finland in the future, even more as it is now since, in the market area, there are already many multicultural operators and the clientele is international (Elinkeinoelämän keskusliitto 2005, 47).

It is assumed that the number of applicable work positions for AMK tourism graduates is increasing 7% by the year 2015 (Elinkeinoelämän keskusliitto 2005,

47). On that account, DPT should prepare students with competencies that respond to the working life's qualifications and trends.

4.3.2 Qualifications required by tourism sector in Finland

Considering the topic of developing a study programme in tourism, one of the pivotal focuses should be on determining the qualifications demanded in the working life and in carrying out different tasks. In the tourism sector both diversified as well as specified special know-how are needed since the industry is constantly developing and sensitive for changes.

In the figure 9 below are listed competences that a future tourism professional should possess.



FIGURE 9. Competencies of a future tourism professional. (Adapted from Havas et al. 2006, 15-16)

The above sub-chapters shed light, on one hand into the principals of the theory of expertise (competence and qualifications) and on other hand to the correlation of industry and its developments with higher education and degree programmes. In addition to theoretical data, practical competence recommendations regarding curriculum development in AMKs and in the tourism degree was presented.

Moreover, future working life demands (qualifications) of the tourism industry were explained, as it is essential to determine what working in the industry requires as the DPT is preparing the students for future working life.

The goal of the AMKs is to reinforce students' competence. Thus, it can be concluded that the central focal point in the development of the new curriculum should be on defining the key competence goals intended to be achieved in the DPT, instead of building up a curriculum based on perhaps disconnected study modules and courses. In addition, focus should be on how such competence goals can be reached and best transmitted to students.

As the study programmes should be designed so that they meet the requirements (qualifications) of working life, it can be assumed that accurate results could be achieved with cooperation with regional industry representatives, thus actualizing the aspect of regional development. The input of industry proportioned with own goals and interests of TAMK, in addition with previous research could potentially create optimal curriculum consisting of set competence goals. Methods, learning environments and courses should be the sowed around the set goals, not the other way around.

4.4 Learning environment in AMK

Learning environment in Finnish AMK is typically described as open, working life related, project-oriented, poly-vocational, student-oriented and modern technology utilizing. Student is seen as autonomic and self-guided learner. Traditionally learning environment means the physical, cognitive and emotional surrounding where learning process happens. Learning is interaction between students and teachers and between students with the help of different operational ways and with learning assignments. (Nummenmaa 2002, 128-129.) According to Grabinger and Dunlap (1997) learning environment should include learning in authentic situations where student is encouraged to use own thinking and to be autonomous. Moreover, it should emphasize on multidisciplinary skills and learning should be evaluated in authentic contexts. (Nummenmaa 2002, 129-130.)

4.4.1 Learning by Developing model of Laurea AMK

In the current thesis, other degree programmes in tourism were benchmarked in the hopes of finding new perspectives for the development of DPT of TAMK. In Europe, benchmarking is a widely used mean to evaluate higher education and to find better practices. Exact definition for the concept benchmarking does not exist; instead there are several schools of thought in literature with slight differences. However, the following definition is presented as it can be considered most suitable for the purpose of the topic. "It is actually a matter of imitating successful behaviour" (Karlöf & Östblom 1993, according to Karjalainen 2003, 7).

Upon benchmarking, LbD model of Laurea AMK was discovered. The model is part of pedagogical strategy of Laurea AMK and is implemented throughout different study programmes as an operational model. The model is originated from John Dewey's pragmatism and learning by researching (tutkiva oppiminen) of Lonka, Hakkarainen and Lipponen (Rauhala 2006, according to Mäki 2008, 25). LbD refers to developing based learning that is a model based on authenticity, partnership, experience and research aiming to create something new (see Figure 10 on page 37). It is described that the basis for such developing based learning is development projects that are genuinely working life relative aiming to renew practices.

The development projects rely on cooperation of teachers, students and working life representatives alike and, in its best, produce new competence and innovative solutions. (Pedagoginen strategia 2007, 6.) Thus, the model integrates the three tasks of AMKs imposed by law: research and development, regional development, and pedagogy. The model strives for competence which is evident in different methods of operating, thus allowing renewal of the labor market, competence and the field. (Degree Programme in Tourism 2011, 2.) The figure 10 on page 37 illustrates the LbD model and the values and goals that it is based on.

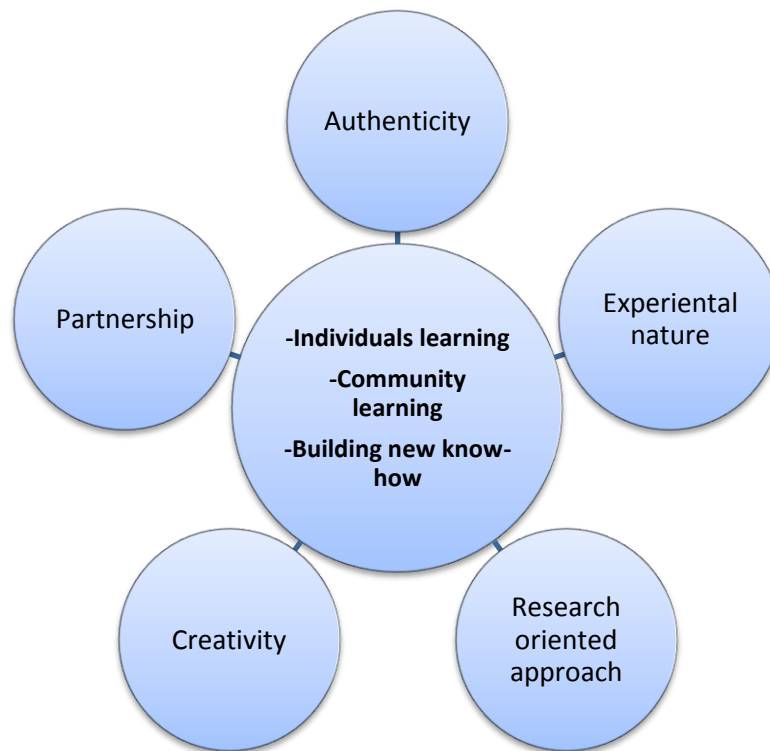


FIGURE 10. Learning by Developing model (Adapted from Illnes, Kolmos, Madritsch & Vyakarnam 2008, 1)

4.4.2 Learning in the LbD model

The approach in the model is rooted in working life as it highlights developing working life as the baseline for learning. Learning happens upon solving authentic working life challenges and problems with real working life cases, workshops and labs together with labor market operators and experts. The model takes working life cooperation in AMK studies a step further from the traditional form which is practical training and making theses for companies.

Internal and external networks are present in the studies, linked by cooperation carried out. LbD model and the development projects carried out integrate guidance, research and development in order to mold expertise culture to more working life based direction (Mäki 2008, 25). The model enables students' authentic learning; acquiring of working life know-how; application of experiences and knowledge; development of creativity and research orientation; and constructing and operating in working life related partnership networks (Degree Programme in Tourism 2011, 2). Teachers take part in the learning

process as well. Workplace partners develop their competence along with students. Labor market experts acquire additional professional core know-how, new standards of activity, better practices and innovations elevating knowledge levels (Mäki 2008, 28). Internal and external stakeholders work and learn together, utilizing each others' competence. The figure 11 depicts the learning process in the LbD model.

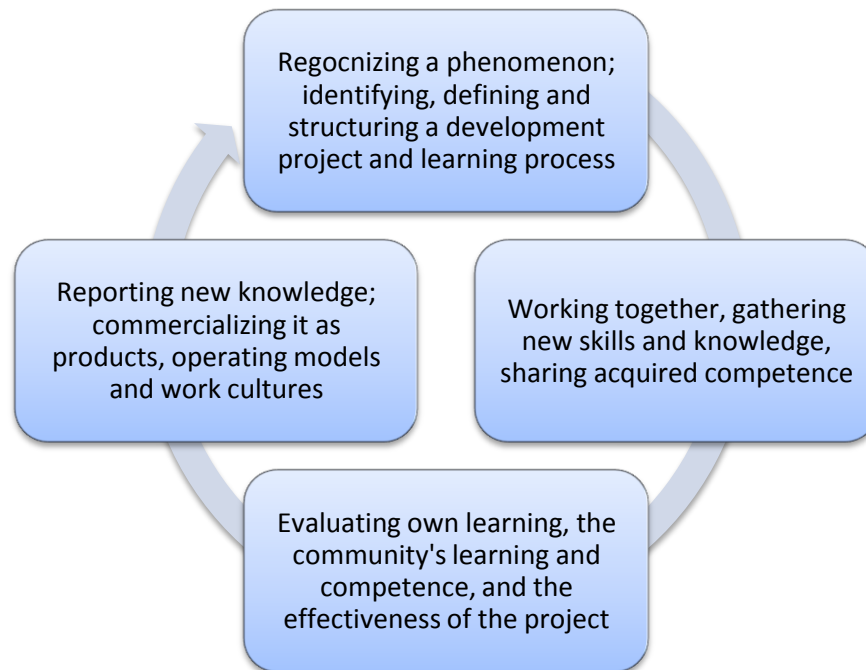


FIGURE 11. Competence development in the LbD Model (Illnes et al. 2008, 23)

4.4.3 Roles in the LbD model

Students are not merely receivers of information, instead are considered as partners in the equation of cooperation and learning along with teachers and labor market experts, participating in the research and development tasks. Such role requires critical thinking, problem-solving skills, self-directiveness, a proactive attitude and cooperation skills. (Degree Programme in Tourism 2011, 3.) In addition to being a partner, teachers' role in the cooperation equation can be described as specialist and a pedagogical leader guiding the students and linking the students learning to industry's needs. Industry representatives are not merely receives, instead take part sharing knowledge and expertise. (Mäki

2008, 27.) Scientific data and theories are used as tools to make understanding of the empirical data received.

Such a cooperation equation requires the capacity to embrace entirely new roles from the traditional ones, thus requiring not only changing practices, but also ways of thinking. Considering the development perspectives of the DPT in TAMK, implementing such a model entirely would be a large scale endeavor. However, interesting features can be pointed out and considered.

The above sub-chapters gave valuable insight into the development of DPT. Development projects entailing the input of internal and external stakeholders promote individual and community learning, thus benefitting larger set of people and instances involved and their interests. Consequently, fulfilling the stakeholders', most relevant to the thesis topic, expectations towards the AMK studies. In any case, the model strives to such results as a theory.

Genuine working life development projects implement the idea that expertise cannot be transferred from the teachers to students, but is developed from the responsibility of taking part in such endeavors. Taking part in projects linked to the operational environment allow students to develop competence and familiarize and develop qualifications needed in the working life, thus promoting better the students professional growth to experts. Referring to the recommendations of generic competencies and subject specific competencies of AMKs, such projects promote the development of many competence areas stated. Students' and cooperation partners' expertise is formed with a joint effort permitting the students to build an understanding of the working life during the studies. In addition, such cooperation allows students to make valuable contacts and productive networks with the industry that can benefit them in the future upon stepping in to the working life and thus contributing to the development of expertise level competence.

In the DPT in TAMK, some working life linked development projects were carried out in a smaller scale. Working life connection is highlighted as part of the business plan of TAMK (TAMK 2010). Thus, it can be suggested that the number of projects linked to the industry could be increased or done in larger

scale. Cooperation with the industry operators could be increased, thus making the study programme more working life relevant. Practical implementation of the information and theories learned would complete the learning process and competence development. Practical implementation would be conducted however with a research oriented approach, thus differentiating the studies from vocational school level education. By increasing cooperation with the industry, study programme could better respond to the changing nature of working life and the skills needed in them.

5 INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS' PERSPECTIVE

This chapter goes deeper into the perspectives of the internal stakeholders. We learn from the DPT students' experiences and opinions; how the DPT studies were carried out and what things could be done differently.

In the current thesis the aim is to find ways to develop the DPT to better answer to the needs and requirements of working life and to prepare students with required skills and know-how. In order to develop the DPT, it is imperative to know how the study programme has been implemented and experienced by the students. Therefore, the students represent internal stakeholders in the current thesis. In addition to the contents of the study programme and experiences of the students, their expectations, satisfaction and opinions were examined.

Since the main goal of the AMKs is to prepare skillful professionals for the working life, it is necessary to conduct this kind of study to get an understanding of the state of the DPT studies. With the help of the current thesis, the DPT can be developed and its orientation and content can be highlighted. The objective of the results of the current study is to describe the requirements of the education and working life and to propose concrete development ideas and give perspectives for the future education.

5.1 Internal stakeholders

The internal (primary) stakeholders in the current thesis are the DPT students. As it was mentioned before in the chapter 3.4.1 in figure 2 on page 21 the stakeholder relationships and their interests towards TAMK, the students expect education that is of high quality, relevant to the working life needs and recognized in labor market. They also want guidance, support and links to the working life as well as different possibilities for internationalization. The current thesis examines how these expectations have been met. TAMK has other internal stakeholders as well but only those that are relevant to the topic are covered, which is the students.

5.1.1 Theme interview in groups

The research method chosen for the internal stakeholders was semi-structured group interview. Semi-structured interview gives more freedom in the interview situation; it allows modifying the order of the questions according to the perception of the interviewer of what seems most appropriate in the context and flow of conversation. It also enables the interviewer to make probing questions, to give ideas or suggestions and to mirror and reflect. Probing questions are extra questions that can stimulate the interviewee to elaborate more on their responses. These are often used to prevent the interviewee of going off the subject. (Altinay & Paraskevas 2008, 108-114.)

The interviews were conducted in small groups. The idea was to create open dialogue and discussions about the themes in an open environment. In group interviews the interviewees get support from each other and they can together reminisce, bring up memories and encourage one another. This way the interview can produce more data than a typical interview. (Eskola & Suoranta, 2000.) In the current thesis the questions were categorized into six themes (see appendix 1), which gave a body to the interview and made it possible to cover the topics in the flow of the interview and in different order but still discussing all the themes. The themes in the interviews were the following:

1. Goals and objectives
2. Curriculum
3. Skills and competencies
4. Methods
5. Guidance and information
6. Future and career

The theme 1 is discussed in order to find out the students expectations, goals of the studies and their motivation behind applying to the study programme. This topic gives an idea to what kind of images the marketing of the DPT has set out to the students and what is their starting point before their studies. In the first theme it is also discussed if the expectations and goals changed during the studies and how well the expectations were met in reality.

The theme 2 concentrates on the curriculum. It goes deeper into the courses and the structure of the curriculum; the students' opinions about course topics and implementation of the courses are covered. The theme examines thoughts about the contents and what should have been more and which courses were useful. The theme gives an idea of the structure of the curriculum; is the orientation relevant and does it cover the industry sufficiently.

The aim of the theme 3 is to examine the competencies and skills learned in the DPT and the students opinions of how well the study programme prepared them for the working life.

The theme 4 concentrates on the methods used in the study programme. The teaching methods and implementation of the study programme are on the focus as well as the relationship between theory and practice. The theme also covers the opinions on the practical training and the possible cooperation with the working life.

In the theme 5 the purpose is to study the students' satisfaction with the guidance received from the teachers and information available in general in the TAMK.

The last theme, theme 6, is about the students' future and career; how valuable they rate the degree and what are their plans and goals after finishing the studies.

5.2 The study of the internal stakeholders

The internal stakeholders, in this case the DPT students, were interviewed with semi-structured theme interviews. The sample size for the interview was 14 international DPT students of the class of 2007, which is the pioneer group. Finally 10 students, including the writers of the current thesis, participated to the interviews. All of the interviewees showed great interest to the topic and enthusiasm to take part.

The theme interviews for the thesis were conducted in four groups consisting of two to four persons. The places where the interviews were organized were peaceful environments but still approachable and neutral. The themes and

some defining questions were listed on a paper which was used in the interviews. With the help of defining questions it was easier to control the interview to stay in the topic and to specify the themes. The specifying questions enabled to collect deeper analysis of the topics. All the interviews were recorded with a dictation machine which made it easier to transcribe them afterwards. The transcribing was done adapting the themes and defining questions. The duration of the interviews varied from 30 minutes up to over an hour.

5.2.1 Theme 1: Goals and objectives

First the interviews concentrated to find out the students' motivation for applying to the tourism studies in TAMK. Many of the students had already been working in the field of tourism and therefore wanted to get more theoretical background and a degree in it.

I have worked in the field of tourism for many years and I wanted to get an education in it. The aspect of internationality was very appealing...adult education so that I could work simultaneously... I wanted to be in managerial level in the field of tourism.

Only few interviewees did not have previous experience in the field of tourism and could not give any specific answer why they had chosen study programme in tourism.

Not sure if I had any goals but I just wanted to go abroad and get the education. Looking at the options, tourism seemed the best because I'm not interested in sciences or numbers; I'm more into languages and something more creative. Comparing the opportunities to what we have back at home in tourism education, this seemed the right choice.

Many of the international students mentioned that they had heard about the good quality of Finnish education and that they wanted to get an education in Europe, whereas the Finnish students were appealed by the international aspect of the studies and by the teaching language which was English. Four

students mentioned that the tourism field is wide and offers possibilities for many areas of work and in that way a good choice of study.

The most common expectation was to become a tourism professional or to have skills to work in managerial level. This can be reflected to the willingness to develop the personal attribute of formal competence which is measured through individual's education and with achieved certificates (Ellström 1998, according to Koski 2001, 11). According to the students, generally their expectations were not met in reality: the studies were basic, different kind of course contents and better quality was expected. Only one student said that the personal expectations were surpassed, all the rest were not satisfied with the studies. In relation to the figure 2 in the chapter 3.4.1 on page 21, the students as internal stakeholders of TAMK expect to receive education that is of high quality. Apparently the stakeholder relationship was not achieved in this sense.

I was interested in marketing and business but the studies didn't have much about them. Tourism offers many career options but I was disappointed in the studies, I was hoping more business studies.

I didn't know much about the tourism industry, so I was hoping to learn much about it. Eventually it wasn't like I had imagined. I thought we will learn all the different areas of tourism but the studies were just basics.

Education was all over the place, vague and wide degree, can be so many things what you become...you have to yourself focus on something during your studies, take initiative, focus your interests during your studies what best suite you, find out about things, use the resources TAMK has, and that way you can make something of it. If you just go to the classes, sit there and do the tests, it is very disappointing.

5.2.2 Theme 2: Curriculum

When discussing about the curriculum and courses of DPT with the interviewees, three courses were especially mentioned. Intercultural communication course was named as the best course by its content, relevancy, implementation and usefulness.

That was the best course. It was well organized, the teacher knew what she was doing and every student was part of the course. That makes the student to understand the subject better when he/she is involved to the course from the beginning to the end. Teacher also made us to evaluate ourselves.

Intercultural communication was one of the best and useful. That knowledge is used every day. You learned to understand the differences and where it comes from, you can apply it at work. I learned really about intercultural communication.

Other course that was mentioned was leadership. Interviewees said that it is very important and useful topic but the poor implementation and the insufficient content overshadowed the course. Interviewees would have wished for more in-depth view to the topic and more practical teaching method. In DPT the leadership course was divided into two courses, the other one was virtual course, and students felt like there was too much repetition and contents were shallow.

Leadership as a subject is very useful and important but the way the course was divided into two courses and the way how it was implemented made it less useful.

Entrepreneurship was mentioned as well. The topic was considered imperative and seen very useful in the future working life but again the implementation and content of the course degraded the students' assessment.

Entrepreneurship? Know memory about it, didn't do anything, it was more related to marketing. There could be a whole module about it, 2 or 3 courses...it's such a wide topic: legislation, practical stuff, taxation, contract, foundation...

I would have wished for better implementation, more practical approach and more emphasis on the topic. Those skills seem to be important in the working life.

Two students also liked the concept of the course called service activities and product development but at the same time they were disappointed that the problem of finding a teacher for the course made it confusing.

The abovementioned course topics – intercultural communication, leadership, entrepreneurship and service activities and product development – are all reinforcing the competencies that are needed in the working life of the future tourism professionals. Those requirements are for example interaction skills, knowledge of different cultures and language skills, business and management knowledge, innovativeness and creativity. (Havas et al. 2006, 92-93.)

Generally teachers were brought up many times when talking about courses of the DPT. One interviewee said that the successfulness of the course depends 90% of the teacher, one other mentioned that it is 50%.

All the courses we have had have been relevant to tourism. But the problem might lie in the teachers that we have, most of the times we haven't had professional teachers. In many cases they have the experience from the working life but they are not qualified teachers. They don't have teaching background and sometimes it makes the course confusing: what is this course all about?

Anyone in working life, business life is not competent teaching the students. They have no idea what they are doing, they can have knowledge about the business and the work, but they cannot communicate it to the students, they cannot explain the phenomena, theory behind it.

The topics that the interviewees found useful and important and would have wished to have more were human resources, entrepreneurship, leadership, product development, management, academic writing, marketing research and e-business.

Human resources we didn't have: how to manage people, how to allocate right talent to right place, legislation behind it, rules related to that, leadership courses...more theories about how to develop management skills, how to orientate yourself to certain kind of management.

Marketing research course was good: we did something useful to the students and to the company and we did everything ourselves from the beginning to the end.

I wish there would have been more management courses.

Practical training stimulated conversation. According to the act of universities of applied sciences “the aim of practical training is to familiarize the student under supervision especially to the practical work tasks pivotal to the professional studies and to the adaptation of skills and know-how in working life” (352/2003, 7 §).¹ All the interviewees found the practical training extremely useful, important and good learning process. Even though many had difficulties to get a practical training placement, in the end they had good experiences of it.

I can say that I'm a professional now after my studies, but that is because of the practical training. Training really motivates the student and teaches new things.

It wasn't hard for me: I did it in my home country. The second I did at my work place, but I know it was difficult to many students. Some other AMKs, the school is organizing for you the practical placement.

The international students of the DPT said the problem of finding the placement was in the Finnish language. Students stated that many of the employers were expecting them to have sufficient Finnish language skills in order to take trainees. Students wished to have more Finnish courses in the curriculum and to have them throughout the studies.

There were not enough Finnish language courses. It is difficult language and takes time to learn it. You need to know Finnish when you try to apply for a job in Finland.

I wasn't happy with the amount of Finnish courses. There should be more of them and continuously.

¹ ”Harjoittelun tavoitteena on perehdyttää opiskelija ohjatusti erityisesti ammattiopintojen kannalta keskeisiin käytännön työtehtäviin sekä tietojen ja taitojen soveltamiseen työelämässä” (352/2003, 7 §).

For making it easier to find a practical training placement, many of the students suggested that TAMK should have cooperation with companies which would be ready and willing to provide training placements. More marketing of the degree programme was wished, too.

There should be an instance between the students and the companies, so that during studies the student could start orientating or planning a career through that. For example R&D could play a role in that. They could help students with the studies by providing the contact and maybe get a practical training placement and other future possibilities.

Our study programme should be more marketed to the companies so they would provide practical training placements for students.

The DPT studies was emphasizing on business and congress studies. Almost all the students were not aware of this orientation and actually were surprised by it.

I didn't notice that our studies were emphasising on business and congress. We had courses and some projects about congress though...

I didn't know that the studies emphasized on congress studies, on business studies yes.

However, students agreed that business and congress studies are relevant orientation for the study programme considering that Tampere is strong congress city. Few mentioned that the orientation could be nature tourism.

It could be oriented to nature. It's cool subject, and nature is important selling point when selling Tampere to congress organizers. Also in my home country, nature is strongly related to tourism.

On the other hand, interviewees would have wished for more flexibility to their curriculum so that they could orientate and specialize themselves to different areas of tourism. The curriculum was seen as too fixed and broad but still covering only basics of the topics.

One orientation through the studies can be difficult because times and things in life are changing rapidly, it is better to leave

something open and find your orientation when you are in the working life.

We should have more options to orientate ourselves, it would help also in the future labour market.

In the DPT there are 15 ECTS reserved for the elective studies. Nearly all were satisfied with the amount of elective studies but they wished for more course options, also in wider range and in different fields and courses in English. In that way students could specialize and orientate themselves better.

I was satisfied with elective studies; I chose courses from different sector than tourism. There were also language courses like Italian, Spanish, French, but foreign students can't select those because the courses are organized only in Finnish.

I would have wished to have more options for the elective courses, it felt restricted.

Since DPT is an international study programme, the students were asked if they were satisfied with the regional aspect of the tourism or would they have wished for more international perspective to the subjects. One said that the information given can be applied everywhere, the rest would have wished to have more internationality in the topics. According to descriptions of AMK bachelor's level generic competences, presented on page 30, figure 7, internationalization competence was obtained to some extent. Students are able to work in a multicultural environment and they possess the communicative competence necessary for work and for professional development in the tourism field but they would have wished to pay more attention to the effects of and opportunities for internationalization. (ARENE 2001, 7-8.)

The studies were always concentrating on Tampere region and on Finland. Teachers sometimes asked how things are done in our home countries or our opinions about the things, but we should have had more international topics: for example assignment or projects about some other countries to see how it is done outside Finland.

The class was international but the topics were not international.

According to the students the level of the studies was relatively low. They would have wanted more intensity and challenge to the studies as well as deeper insight to the topics.

First I was interested to study, but at some point I started to feel like I'm not getting anything out of them (courses), they could have been more challenging.

Adult education and requirements was minimum 2 years of working experience, and to be a manager you have to know what everybody is doing, from cleaners to manager... I didn't expect to use so much time on the basic stuff, everybody should have known it and we would have taken it to the next level with the studies.

When making the thesis, it started to feel like you actually need to do something.

Also the quality of the studies suffered from one repeatedly mentioned problem which was the level of the teachers' English language skills. All of the students agreed that the implementation of the course and the knowledge given in the lectures suffered from the lack of sufficient language skills.

Some teachers were professionals and knew their stuff but because of the lack of language skills their professionalism didn't come through and failed totally. So they need to have a certain level in order to succeed in teaching.

Some level of command of English language should be required for teachers even though nobody was a native speaker of English and everybody can forget words, which is normal. However, we had teachers that did not possess the basic level and couldn't teach in English, they were not competent what so ever. They knew where they were going to teach and should be prepared for that.

5.2.3 Theme 3: Skills and competencies

The main task of AMK is to produce students with professional skills and with competencies that the labor market requires. The interviewees named the skills they felt they have gained in the DPT studies. All the students mentioned the following skills: team-working, problem-solving, (intercultural) communication and language skills. These are belonging to the competency categories of

individual's lifelong learning and employment (see figure 6, page 28). Those categories are life control skills, communication skills, people and task management skills and the skill of initiating innovations and changes (Evers, Rush & Berdrow 1998 according to Ruohotie 2002, 113-117.) The mentioned skills are applicable in all the areas of working life, not only in the field of tourism. It was also mentioned that there should have been taught more multidisciplinary skills as well as management and leadership skills.

We had only five Finnish students, all the others were foreigners... I have learned to work with people from other countries.

We also learned skills so that we could work also in other sectors; topics were widely covered.

Few students also mentioned that the personal growth increased their competence. Certain personal general features such as character, motivation and attitude are as important as certain industry specific skills and know-how in order to succeed in the given work tasks (Ranta-aho 1999, 31 according to Kuusenmäki 2006, 12). Here the students stated that the gained confidence improved their professionalism.

Confidence achieved through studies especially thinking about working life, for example confidence to apply a job etc. By meeting new people and giving all those presentations helped to gain confidence.

...The way you grown up as a person during the 3,5 years of studies...I learned about myself and got confidence.

Such opportunities like practical placement, working life skills and situations, exchange, project studies, cases with real-life companies are the ones that develop our confidence and gives substance to our professionalism, more of those.

Interviewees also discussed if they feel themselves professionals after conducting the DPT studies and the answers were varying. According to TAMK (2010), the students should be able to work in demanding tasks in the field of tourism, in all levels all the way to the managerial level. Half of the students said the managerial level was not reached. Other half said that some degree of managerial level was reached with the studies.

Difficulties to evaluate it. After the studies you have the skills to be a manager but you need time and practice in order to work as a manager. You can set up your own business and manage it; you have all your skills at your disposal.

To be a manager it means that you have to know how to get what you need and get it right, to have the tools of how to manage, and I think we have them.

5.2.4 Theme 4: Methods

The teaching and learning methods were discussed as well. On the webpage of PIRAMK it is said that in the DPT the “teaching methods are lectures, seminars, workshops, project work, assignments made for companies and company visits” (PIRAMK 2007). Students discussed which of the teaching methods were realized well and which worked the best for them and what should have been more. It came clear that group assignments were the most used teaching method. Lectures produced opinions for and against and virtual courses were found useless.

We didn't have many workshops or seminars, just lectures. We had quite many group projects...

The lectures we had could have been more efficient as they are important part of the studies. Some lectures were very good but then some were not good and they were little bit waste of time... Content was poor, execution was lame and not systematically organized, just some random things.

I didn't like the fact that leadership course was a virtual course, it felt more like a computer game and didn't make sense. It should have been done in normal class room teaching.

All the interviewees mentioned that they would have liked to have more methods where they could have used their own thinking, take part concretely to the assignments and projects and to have more hands-on methods. The use of learning diary was noted also as useful tool for learning. Students are more able to learn in the learning situation when they can reflect the subject to their own thinking (Kiviniemi 1991, according to Ruohotie 2005, 142).

When you can take part to the studies, you learn more; you can feel it and relate to it.

Hands-on studying is the best way to learn and we should have more of it.

I really found the learning diary useful.

We should have definitely had more hands-on projects... that is the best way to learn and also to bring the working life and the real companies closer to the students.

I have experience in working in a project where all the six group members were from different degree programmes. That was very good, enjoyable and useful method. I learned multiple skills.

The students also suggested that TAMK and specifically DPT should have more cooperation with companies. They expressed their willingness to do real-life cases and assignments for organizations. That could possibly produce practical training placements, bring working life closer to the students and be useful learning method. Earlier, in chapter 4.4.1 on page 36, presented LbD model could work as a tool for uniting the education and working life together, since it is a development project based on work that aims to produce new practices and requires cooperation between teachers, students and experts in the workplace. In the projects new competence and know-how are produced. (LbD Conference 2010.)

I would be interested in working in projects done with companies.

School loves to emphasize that they are so connected to working life, so that should be seen more.

Thesis and research and practical training were really good learning processes.

In general, practical training as well as thesis process was seen as useful learning methods. As it was mentioned in the Theme 2, students had difficulties in finding a training placement. Therefore sustainable cooperation with working life would help the students to network, get perspectives of the field of tourism and find out their own interest area and orientation. Possible cooperation could be in the form of field studies, company visits, practical training, thesis, projects and cases.

More practical training, or practical stuff in the form of project work or field studies. By that we see and learn the practical stuff since they are going to make us do the ground level stuff as trainees. Then they wouldn't have to teach it at school. Then it would be really beneficial if the second practical training would really be managerial level practical training.

Maybe companies should be informed better that there is such a degree, more cooperation should be made with companies so that people are aware of the degree and what it is all about.

With a defining question the students were asked about the relationship between theory and practice in the DPT studies. They considered if the studies should concentrate more on theory or on practice or how they should be balanced to give the best learning process. Students saw the balance of the two different approaches crucial; theory is the base for learning but it should not be left in to the basic level, deeper perspective to the theory is required. After having the theory and the background to the topic, the knowledge can be put to practice which helps to analyze the learned information (Kohonen 1989, according to Ruohotie 2005, 140). According to the students, theory was executed to some extent and there should have been more practical approach to the topics.

...First to learn the theory and then to put the theory in practice.

Theory is important even though it is connected to working life, school it is where you learn it, would have wished more theory behind, for example, nature tourism.

...in event management for example we took part in organizing a conference.

Theory is necessary because it makes this higher education and makes us think different way, that there is bigger thought behind matters. But if we don't implement theory in practical way, we cannot completely learn or understand the theory and it stays abstract and useless.

5.2.5 Theme 5: Guidance and information

According to the internal stakeholders' relation to TAMK, figure 2 page 21, students are expecting to get guidance during their studies and information

should be easily obtainable. Students agreed that they would have wanted to receive more guidance from the teachers

There was not enough talk about the future and working life, we should have that from the beginning of the studies...to talk about the possibilities and possibilities of orientation to reach a goal. Students can do that already but it is not so guided and encouraged.

We could have more elective studies but it should be guided and a plan should be made how we achieve or what is the path to a certain profession. For example if you want to achieve this or this, we recommend you to take these and these courses.

I think 15cr are enough for elective studies but there should have been more guidance to plan a career.

The information available in general in TAMK did not satisfy the students. The lack of information in English and webpage of TAMK were criticized. The majority of the interviewees said that they are not familiar with the services and possibilities of TAMK, for example R & D department.

I don't know about the R&D or their projects, or anything else about the school activities.

Some were happy with the how the information was distributed, some were not. In the old PIRAMK's bulletin board the information flow worked. In the new TAMK web page it is so confusing.

I'm not familiar with the R&D. I know that our school has it but I don't know anything about it. No one told about it to us and if they did, e-mails were mostly in Finnish.

What are lacking from our school are the seminars and workshops that would tell us how the job market is in Finland and in Tampere. It would be very important to have them so that the students could plan and foresee the future and their career plans. It would be very important to have the working life closer to the studies.

5.2.6 Theme 6: Future and career

The DPT degree was seen valuable in the future and in working life. However, all stated that the degree alone is not enough; work experience or further studying is needed. The international students rated the DPT very valuable in

their home countries, since similar level tourism studies are not available in certain countries.

I think that these studies require postgraduate studies, for example, master or some other specialization; this is not the top level yet.

It is valuable but you need something extra too, like working experience. The degree is good basis for further development and studies.

In our home country we don't have this level tourism degree, only in private schools. This degree is very valuable in my home country.

It is valuable but it depends where you want to work. Back in my home country it is a hot cake! We don't have tourism degree in there, just crappy colleges.

The fact that DPT was ELTDP was mostly highly appreciated and viewed as advantage in the future and in working life. One international interviewee mentioned said that it can hinder the employment in Finland as Finnish language skills are expected. On the other hand, a Finnish interviewee saw the ELTDP as a possibility to stand out from the other jobseekers in the field of tourism.

In Finland there are lots of restonomi (bachelor in tourism) and according to the industry one should differentiate you from others...by studying in English or by specializing in certain aspects to stand out from the crowd.

In Finland the studies conducted in English has more negative influence on getting a job. They expect me to speak Finnish; it makes it difficult to get a job. But outside Finland ELTDP is very positive.

English degree is highly appreciated in my home country.

It is very beneficial that we conducted the degree programme in English.

After graduating from the DPT, to the most of the students the future and career seemed unclear. Only three students had a goal or a plan for the life after studies; to do master's degree, be an entrepreneur and change the field of study.

I will probably do a master's so this is good basis.

Probably I will branch off from tourism industry and study business and entrepreneurship, I love human resources. Let's see how it goes.

I want to start my own business, but not in tourism sector.

To the rest the studies appeared broad area of study without a clear scheme or orientation. They felt that the skills and competencies gained through the studies are not sufficient or applicable. More help from the TAMK was required to get a clear image to what the studies prepare the students and to plan a career.

People always ask me back in my home country "so now after the graduation, where exactly can you work?" and I have no idea where I could work, except in a reception or as a waitress...where I can work? I have no idea.

In the description of the study programme it says that after the degree we can work in such and such professions. Why didn't we go through the tasks that you do in such professions and the skills needed, like what does a sales manager do in a hotel?

5.3 Discussion of the interview results

According to the students, there are many different aspects in DPT that needs to be taken under examination in order to better respond to their expectations and to better prepare them for working life. Various things can be learned from the students' opinions and experiences.

Features experienced as positive in DPT were the internationality of the class and the fact that the students have conducted a degree in English; practical training and thesis as learning processes; and intercultural communication course which was found extremely useful and good.

The reality of the DPT studies did not correspond to the students' expectations. Critique was pointed to the poor implementation of the courses and contents which were left to the basic level and without practical approach; to the teachers' insufficient command of English that detracted the teaching; to the

lack of guidance received from the teachers and TAMK; and to the vague aim of the studies which confused many of the students.

Figure 7, presented on page 29 in the chapter 4.2.1, described the competencies that students with Bachelor level degree should possess. Those were learning competence, ethical competence, working community competence, innovation competence and internationalization competence. To reflect the students' theme interview results to the descriptions of those competencies, certain congruencies can be found. According to the DPT students, the competencies of learning and internationalization were obtained as well as the competence of working community, but the latter only to some extent. Learning competence was achieved as the students mentioned the skill of working in teams and the ability to self-evaluate, which they would have wished even more. Internationalization competence was well achieved: the students are able to operate in multicultural environment and they have a command in intercultural communication. As it was mentioned before, working community competence was not fully reached. Students' longed for more entrepreneurial skills, organizational management as well as leadership skills.

The level of ethical competence did not come clear from the students' responses; additionally the interview did not elaborate the matter. According to the students, innovation competence which covers research and project work was not achieved adequately. Since the DPT is Bachelor-level education, the presented competencies should be obtained and covered during the studies as the students will be the future professionals in the working life.

These internal stakeholders' interview results will be combined together with the external stakeholders' perspectives in chapter 7 and concrete development ideas based on these results will be given in order to answer to the research questions mentioned in the chapter 2.3 on page 10.

6 EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS' PERSPECTIVE

The external stakeholders of TAMK and their relationship to TAMK were listed in the chapter 3.4.1 in figure 3 pages 22-23. However in the current thesis, closer focus is on the tourism industry operators. These include labor market representatives and representative of regional development organization of Tampere, Tredea Oy. The expectations, the theories described in chapter 4 together with background study operate as the idea basis for the study of the external stakeholders.

6.1 Labor market representatives

As mentioned before in chapter 3.4.1 in figure 3 page 22, the expectations of the labor market representatives in relation to TAMK, thus the DPT, are competent staff and trainees; practical expertise based on current knowledge; high quality and expertise level education; research and development projects; product development; and innovations and internationalization. The purpose of this part of the empirical study with labor market representatives is to determine the following: what are some of the perceptions of external stakeholders on how the DPT could be developed in relation to working life needs? This included establishing potential interest for cooperation with the degree programme.

As the writers of the thesis have learned through the studies that the tourism industry encompasses an extensive array of businesses and services, it can be assumed that the DPT students potentially seek employment from wide range of commerce after graduation. Thus, labor market representatives in the current thesis correspond to a variety of tourism industry service providers in the Tampere Region: hotel industry, airport services, conference services, industry developers, nature tourism services, event organizers, spa services and amusement park services etc. Service providers represented small and medium size enterprises (later SME) and larger enterprises. What is more, tourism strategy of Tampere and its top tourism products, as well as the orientation and goals of the DPT were considered upon selecting representatives. Maintaining the aspect of regional development, tourism service providers were restricted to Tampere Region, though; it is not to say

DPT graduates would not end up in other areas in Finland or abroad. In fact, it is very likely as the students come from around Finland and around the world.

Purposive sampling is implemented from the available population, as the certain service providers are considered more accessible and appropriate in terms of having sufficient knowledge to answer the questions imposed (Altinay & Paraskevas 2008, 96). In addition, purposive sampling is commonly used in studies when reaching out to company representatives (Heinonen, Mäntynen & Wrange 2003, 41). Moreover, the study does not seek to make generalizations; merely obtain perceptions of the external stakeholders and ideas, which are contrasted with the background study and internal stakeholders' views.

Interview is implemented as questionnaires, as it is considered effective and appropriate. Furthermore, the intention of the study was to ask pre-set identical structured questions from each representative of service providers. Questionnaire was implemented in Finnish as prior confirmation of responders' English skills was not able to be established.

Questionnaire was sent to 10 representatives and 5 responses were first received. After a reminder-round another 2 responses was received making the response rate 70 %. Sample size was relatively low, because the intention was purely to attain understanding of the impressions of the representatives. It can be presumed that larger sample size would not have been necessary as the goal is not to arrive to statistical facts and generalizations. The responses represent the impressions of an individual person whose own experiences and knowledge weigh heavily behind the answers, however without diminishing the importance of the answers. Commonly, in qualitative research saturation is received upon the 20th interview, however in some cases it is accomplished with less than 10 (Heinonen, Mäntynen & Wrange 2003, 59). In this context, 7 responses gave enough valuable insight, regarding the goal of the thesis, of the perceptions of the external stakeholders. In addition, the representatives were treated as a homogeneous group. Only one representative of selected areas of the regional tourism business was selected, thus no cross references was intended to be made with variables. Statuses of the respondents varied from middle management to managing directors, most of the responders being the latter. Consequently, it can be assumed that responders were sufficiently

knowledgeable to answer the set questions due to their background experience and gained status.

Questionnaire combined list-type closed questions, open questions and scale questions (see appendixes 2 & 3). Questions were formed based on the relevance to the stakeholder relationship and the thesis topic.

Questionnaire was implemented as an internet survey utilizing a free programme (<http://www.emailmeform.com>). Link was sent to prospective responders via e-mail. An accompanying note was placed in the e-mail. Responses were received and processed anonymously.

Results of the study are presented in the following sub-chapter. The goal of the thesis is to produce practical improvement suggestions for the development of DPT. Thus, practical approach was implemented in the analysis. The empirical data was reflected with the theories and the secondary data to bring about development suggestions in the results in chapter 7.

6.1.1 Responses of the labor market representatives

The respondents were encouraged to answer the questions based on their own experience. Thus, it should be noted that interviewees own area of expertise, tasks, status and experience weigh behind the answers. Consequently, the element of subjectivity applies throughout the answers as all the respondents represent different areas of businesses in the tourism industry. However, the latter does not depreciate the value of the responses in the context of the current thesis. Responses are reflected against the internal stakeholders' notions. The responses are presented in the following 3 themes:

1. DPT versus industry qualifications
2. DPT's approach to building competence
3. DPT's working life connection

The themes are based on the theoretical framework of the current thesis.

6.1.2 Theme 1: DPT versus industry qualifications

Respondents were questioned whether they were aware such education is organized in Tampere. Stakeholder relationship states that students except education that is recognized in the labor market (chapter 3.4.1 in figure 3 pages 21). Thus information related to the recognizability is important to obtain as regards to the development of DPT. It can be assumed that increased awareness of the degree programme and its goals among industry operators would promote students' possibilities to find practical placements and employment in the future. In addition, recognition of the DPT and its likely willingness to cooperate and contribute to the local industry and regional development would perhaps increase the compliance for collaboration with the degree programme. The figure below presents the results that indicate that majority of the respondents were aware of the existence of such tourism education in Tampere (figure 12).

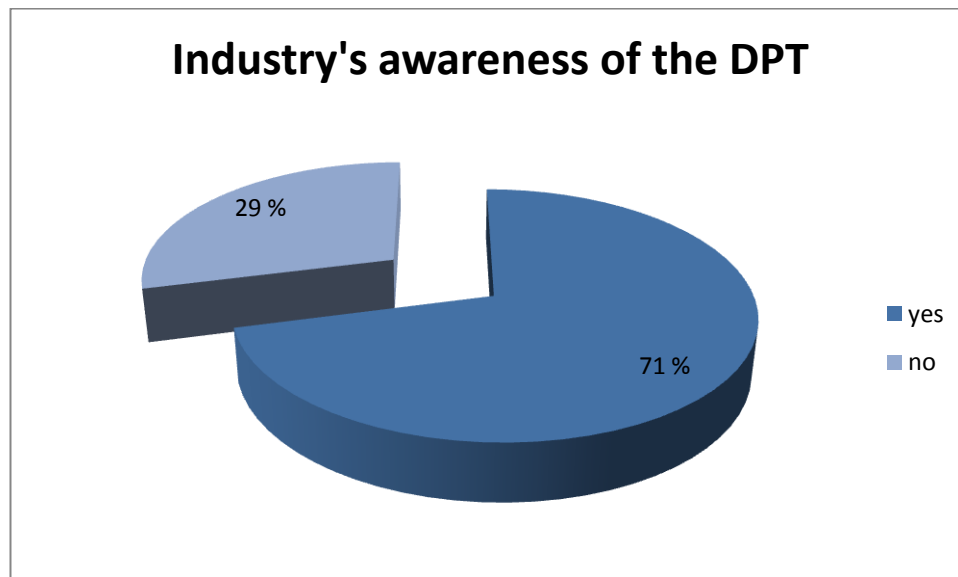


FIGURE 12. Industry's awareness of the DPT

Respondents were informed of the orientation of the DPT studies, congress and business studies, and probed about the relevance and appropriateness of the emphasis concerning the tourism industry of the region. Orientation of the degree programme is an important element to consider. It defines, at least in theory, the competence goals of the DPT to certain extent.

Majority of the respondents considered the orientation of the DPT to be appropriate in terms of the city profile and travel trends. Part of the purpose of the AMK studies is to promote regional development and answer to the current qualification demands of the industry, as defined in the concepts of the current thesis (FINLEX 2010). On that note, the responses indicate that DPT succeeds in the latter, in the context of the orientation. Many of the respondents indicated however that the other two Cs of the Tampere tourism strategy could be taken into account: children (families) and culture. In addition, two responses showed views that nature tourism should be taken into account in such a degree in Tampere. It should be mentioned that nature tourism is a theme covered quite extensively in the DPT (see figure 1, page 17). A few differing opinion arose in the responses.

...orientation should not be left upon few themes. Rather, engineer the degree programme open in terms of specialization, so that advanced special studies would be customized individually or for small groups. Towards the end of the studies, the aim would be that studies would be conducted by working in real tourism companies or organization, according the competence goals, thus highlighting students' voluntary working according to one's own goals and study guidance.

Other sectors should be taken into account also, especially Russian tourists.

There is a need for experts of experience business concept...

The respondents were also questioned about their own impressions on the skill requirements needed from a future tourism professional. The interviewees were given a small list of examples including both abstract competences and more practical skills. The list of skill stated was based on review of the secondary data, the selected theory and the responses of the internal stakeholders. It was highlighted that the list operated merely as an example. The examples facilitated correct interpretation of the question, thus demanding less analysis from the responders.

Many responses highlighted the importance of customer service skills and dealing with customerships. The latter includes finding needs and motivations; language skills, at least Finnish and English; creating solutions; productization; and reification as quality.

Customer interface is utmost important when examining the whole industry's regional development.

Reflecting on the competence theory, the aforementioned skills refer to the recommendations of the subject specific competence areas of a degree programme in tourism, in particular to service culture competence and service system competence (Antikainen, Diov, Fränti, Kylmälä, Laasanen 2006, 1.) In this context, the AMK subject specific competence recommendations meet the demands of the industry. Consequently, it can be concluded that such competence areas should be taken into consideration in the development of the new curriculum of the DPT, by considering means of strengthening such competencies.

Customer service requires the ability for interaction, to listen and to communicate, all of which relate to communicating. The latter, is the core basis for competence. In addition, it is the prerequisite for further development of competence. (Evers & Wolstenholme 2009, 29.) Internal stakeholders stated that communication skills were acquired successfully from studying in the DPT. Thus, readiness for development of customer service skills was gained; hence requirements for further development of students' competence were achieved in this context.

The other reoccurring skills were entrepreneurial skills and business know-how, as well as managerial and leaderships skills.

One must know how to operate as an entrepreneur even though working as an employee.

...Business know-how signifies understanding and applying certain laws and guidelines. The most important singular things are customer oriented approach and profitability of operations. Everything else is more or less accessory stuff.

Managerial skills and leadership skills.

Customer service skills are the most important, after which one's personal skills and situational leadership.

Reflecting the responses on the subject specific competences of AMK, results indicate that service management competence and business know-how are

considered important skill areas by the working life representatives (Antikainen, Diov, Fränti, Kylmälä, Laasanen 2006, 1.)

The skills mentioned by the respondents also relate to people and task management skills of the theory of four qualification areas of Evers, Rush & Berdrow (1998) which are required in order to promote individuals lifelong learning and employability (Ruohotie 2002, 113.) Thus, prerequisites exist for stronger emphasis and wider coverage of such skills in the curriculum, as students' employment in the industry is one of the prominent goals of the AMK studies.

In addition, the stakeholder relationship states in the chapter 3.4.1 on page 23 that promotion of entrepreneurial skills is expected by the city of Tampere and the Tampere Region. The students had expressed the desire for wider coverage of such skills. Therefore, emphasizing entrepreneurial skills in the DPT is relevant and would be mutually beneficial for internal and external stakeholders.

The other skills emerged in the responses of the labor market representatives were project know-how, team working skills, diverse basic skills in tourism, international skills, and internet marketing skills from tourism point of view. Thus, certain aspects regarding the competencies of service environments for tourism, including international skills, was given special importance (see figure 8, chapter 4.2.2, and pages 30-31). One respondent also highlighted factual skills which are attributes contributing more to the management of work tasks: flexibility, ability and motivation to constantly learn new things (Ranta-aho 1999, 31 according to Kuusenmäki 2006, 12).

It can be concluded that the skills needed from a future tourism professional according to the labor market representatives were strongly in compliance with the competencies required by a future tourism professional presented in the theory in chapters 4.3.1 & 4.3.2 (see pages 32-33). Thus, it can be concluded that the skills indicated by the industry representatives', should be given notice in the development of the curriculum

6.1.3 Theme 2: DPT's approach to building competence

As stated before (see chapter 3.4.1, page 22, and figure 3) labor market expects AMK education to produce practical expertise based on current knowledge. Thus, the next question dealt with responders' impressions of the equilibrium involving theory and practice in the studies. The goal was to identify impressions on which expertise is needed from future professionals.

All of the responses indicated that working life expects future professionals with skills ready to be implemented in practice. However, most responses showed that theory should be present in the DPT studies, but in lesser extent.

Theory without practice is powerless and practice without theory is blind. The important thing in understanding theories and models is the ability to apply them...

Maybe a little bit of both, but more practical experts...

In many of the responses the difference of AMKs and universities were stressed: practical skills versus theoretical skills.

AMK stresses at the moment practical knowhow, universities mission is to emphasize theoretical thinking. Both should have their own target group, so that same kind of skills and knowhow is not mixed. People are different and are looking for different education base.

...I don't think there is a need is a need to go to actual research (compare to scientific research conducted in universities). I stress more practice.

Practical experts without a doubt, theorists to the University of Lapland! Finland educates in general too many students for managerial level tasks.

It should be stated that the latter comment expresses a similar misconception as stated in the Matka2020-report. The perception among labor market representatives appears to be one that AMK education produces too many theorists and managers, instead of employees willing for ground-level work. AMK graduates succeed better in labor markets compared to vocational school graduates. Thus, the comment is merely a delusion as students, capable

handling managerial level tasks and able in academic thinking, often manage well handling practical tasks. (Havas et al. 2006, 13.)

It can be concluded that internal and external stakeholders agreed upon that DPT should increasingly develop practical skills of students, though not undermining the importance of the theoretical aspect behind. It can be assumed that the development of such skills could be achieved by increasing methods which involve students in conducting practical adaptation of the theoretical skills, for example doing practical tasks and in working life related development projects, including a research oriented approach appropriate for AMK level education. It can be also assumed that such methods would enhance students' innovation competence, being one competence area students responses indicated the education of the DPT is lacking in.

According to Havas et al. (2006, 15), future tourism industry professional's competencies should include diversified skills, however not dismissing special expertise. Therefore, the labor market representatives were inquired about their impressions on the latter. The aim was to establish their opinion whether DPT should underline diversified skills or specializing.

Most responses were received supporting the development of diversified skills which in education can be referred to as hybrid skills as previously mentioned in the current thesis (Ruohotie 2002, 114-117). A few responses indicated that specialization would happen in the future, either working life or post graduate studies. Responses also indicated that some level of specialization should be acquired through the DPT studies.

Diversified skills are a good basis. However, there could be some specialization areas, for example towards the end of the studies. However, every student can "specialize" according to one owns interest, if they are able to choose certain practical training placements and thesis topics.

Such statements are interesting in the light of the thesis results as they are in accordance with the views shared by the DPT students. Thus, it can be concluded that more guidance and assistance is in the DPT studies, so that

students get a better picture about the future professional prospects. More guidance should be applied in choosing elective courses, practical training placements and thesis topics as they are important elements contributing towards professional development. More intense guidance would develop a certain degree of specialization of the students, or better yet, differentiation. Assistance is needed more for finding good practical training placements, were students would genuinely be able to develop planned competence goals.

6.1.4 Theme 3: DPT's working life connection

As previously indicated in the current thesis (see chapter 2.2, page 8), working life connection is an essential component in the AMK education. According to the stakeholder relationship (see chapter 3.4.1, pages 22-23) working life expects competent staff and trainees, as well as research and development projects. It can be assumed that such prospects could be fulfilled by increasing the collaboration of the education and the industry. In this part of the questionnaire representatives were questioned about their potential interest towards collaboration with the DPT. It was stressed that the response was not binding. It can be assumed that such emphasis liberated the responder to answer according to potential genuine interest, not having to ponder whether collaboration is currently possible to realize. The goal was to merely discover whether there is interest towards collaboration with the DPT among the labor market representatives, for future reference to the developers of the new curriculum. The figure on page 70 indicates the cooperation interest of the labor market representatives with the DPT (figure 13).

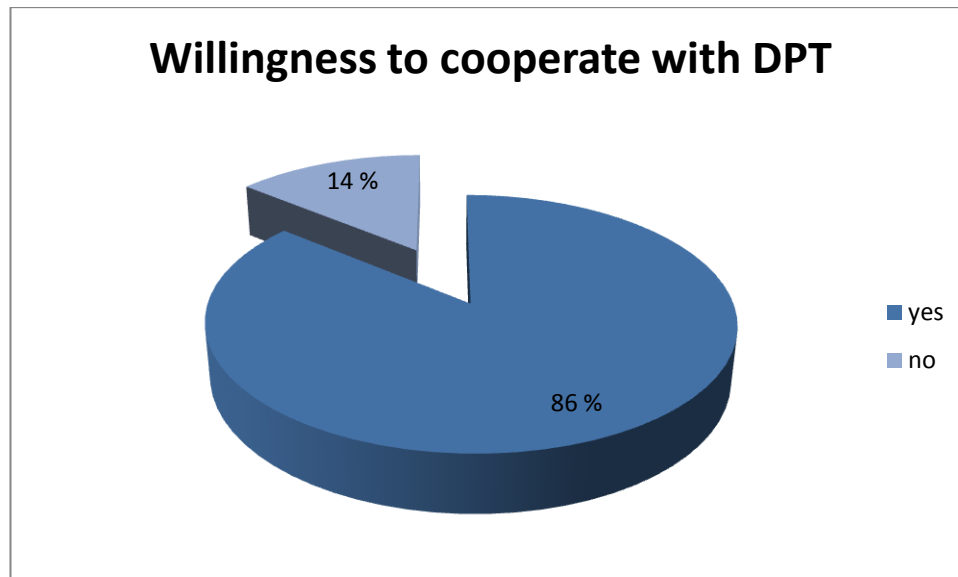


FIGURE 13. Willingness to cooperate with DPT

To the representatives indicating a positive response to the latter, additional question was imposed querying the type of collaboration they were interested in. A list of 5 options was given: practical trainings, company visits, development projects, 2 week field studies and thesis. In addition, a possibility for an open response was given for collaboration interest, additional to the ones already stated. The options were based on what TAMK and DPT indicates the studies to include. Moreover, they were based on the external stakeholders' expectations and what the students indicated to have interest towards, as well as the theory of LbD model.

The current thesis explores whether possibilities for partial adaptation of the LbD model is possible. The theory of the LbD model states that in order for the equation to be fulfilled the following elements are required: authenticity, partnership, experience, creativity and research (Pedagoginen strategia 2007, 6). Thus, the responses of the question regarding cooperation interest with the DPT indicate that one of the elements, partnership, would be likely to be achieved with the DPT and industry. Subsequently, the development project option was added to determine whether additional element of the LbD equation could be gained with the industry; research. The amount of positive answers received per cooperation options is illustrated in the figure on page 71 (figure 14).

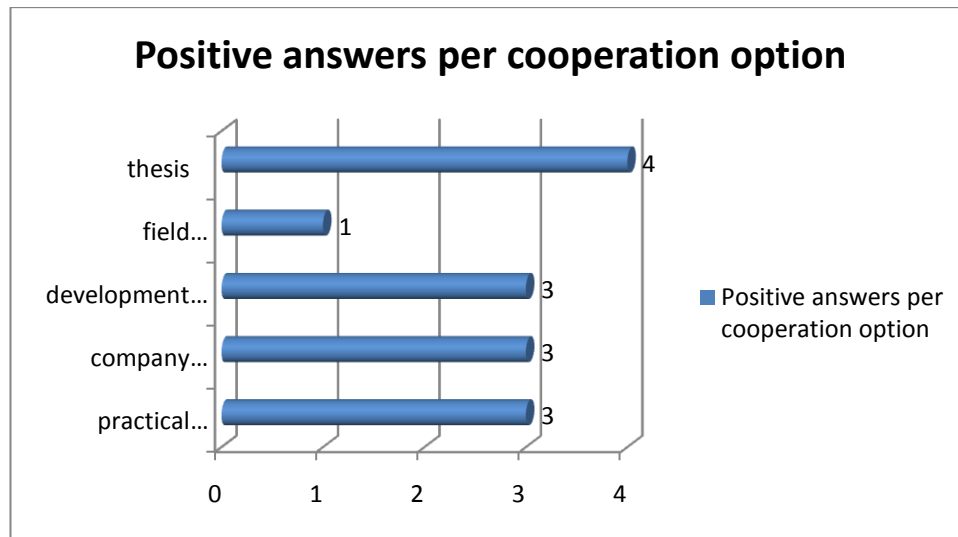


FIGURE 14. Positive answers per cooperation option.

The respondents were most interested in having cooperation in the form of commissioning theses, as well as development projects, company visits and practical trainings (see figure 14 above). Thus it can be concluded that responses indicate the potential and interest for increasing cooperation between DPT and working life, from both internal and external stakeholders' perspective.

In addition, the responses indicate that the elements of authenticity and research of the LbD model could be achieved with increased cooperation with the working life, partly completing the required elements to implement the LbD model. Authenticity is acquired from practical real-working life related projects and research from the approach implemented with the projects. One of the remaining elements, creativity, is achieved from the new knowledge and competence and new ways of working potentially produced implementing such model, thus leaving only experience from the equation. Experience refers to sharing competence and knowledge between students, teachers and industry representatives and taking part in the learning process. (Raij 2005, 27.) It can be assumed that the remaining element could be achieved in practice by creating concrete possibilities where DPT students meet the industry, for example workshops, labs and seminars, thus enabling the adaptation of the competence development of the LbD theory.

Continuing to the next question, the representatives indicating a positive response to the option of practical training and 2 week field studies, additional question was imposed. First, the interviewees were however pointed out that DPT class includes foreign students, whose Finnish skills are not developed yet. This statement was included even though in the accompanying letter and throughout the questionnaire DPT was depicted as an English-taught degree programme. It was presumed that such aspect was perhaps still not considered. Then, they were asked whether they would be willing to collaborate with such students. Practical training placements can be hard to come by, as the empirical study of the internal stakeholders revealed. For foreign students, it is yet problematical due to language barriers. But yet, practical training is a vital component contributing towards the professional growth of the students. Additional response option was added for representatives indicating a negative answer, hence giving a possibility to elaborate the answer.

All of the respondents expressing interest towards taking on interns or student conducting field studies indicated that they would be willing to employ such foreign students. However, one of the respondents emphasized the importance of such student bringing additional value for the given company. The respondent gave an example about personal experience working with a Russian trainee whose Russian knowledge had a major contribution to the business operations. Such results are interesting in the light of the responses of the internal stakeholders, who expressed difficulties finding training placements. It can be concluded however, that assistance and increased cooperation between DPT and working life would enhance the possibility of foreign students and Finnish students alike, to acquire a good practical training placements.

The last question dealt with the impression of the regarded value of the degree in working life. DPT degree in this context is considered as formal competence, as the respondents were questioned about their perspectives on the value of the degree as an educational achievement (Ellström 1998, according to Koski 2001, 11). In addition to formal competence, the international aspect of the DPT is considered regarding the responses.

Representatives were asked to scale to which extent they agreed with the statement placed: degree acquired from the DPT is considered valuable when

applying for a job. In order to give more value to the responses, same statement was included about the Finnish language DPT. The stakeholder relationship (see figure 3, pages 22-23) states, that internationalization is one of the expectations of the labor market representatives. English-taught degree programmes are perhaps the most representative products of internationalization in higher education. Thus, the last question provided interesting examples of perceptions on such internationalization. The answers show how the respondents related to the given statement. Figure below depicts how many answers each rating options received (figure 15).

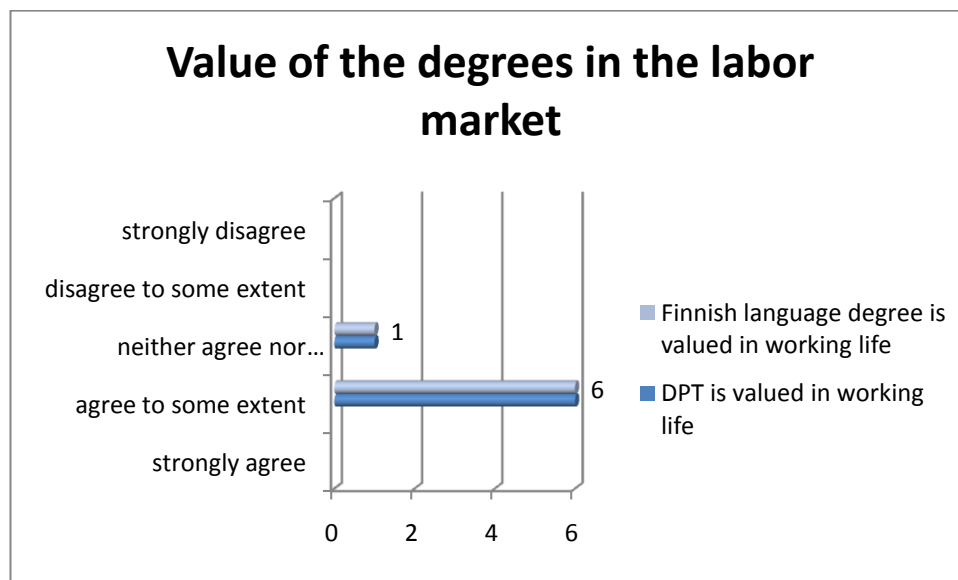


FIGURE 15. Value of the degrees in the labor market

The answers show that the respondents did not have any distinctions between the perceived values of the two degrees as formal competence (see figure 15). The respondents were not aware of any difference between the two degrees, besides that in the DPT the studies are conducted in English and the group is international. Thus, it can be concluded that merely the language and international aspect does not increase the perception of the value of the degree. Differentiation should be achieved with other aspects in the DPT studies. Nonetheless, it can be assumed that increased marketing and cooperation with the industry would elevate the profile of the DPT in the labor market.

6.2 Representing tourism industry operators: élite interview

An élite (expert) interview was conducted as a part of the empirical study of the external stakeholders, in order to deepen the understanding of the industry operators' perceptions. Thus, systematizing élite interview was employed as it was conducted to gain supplementary perspectives beside the study conducted with labor market representatives (Bogner and Menz 2002, 36-38 according to Flick 2009, 166).

Meuser and Nagel (2002, according to Flick 2009, 165) state, experts "are integrated into the study not as a single case but as representing a group". Experts generally, as in the current thesis, collaborate with a larger set of people or networks, thus potentially enabling an entry to a larger contact base (Gillham 2005, 54). Consequently, opening a dialogue with such expert was considered potentially worthy of note in terms of the thesis topic and for future reference for the developers of the DPT.

Expert in the context of the current thesis is a representative of Tampere Region Economic Development Agency, Tredea Oy, particularly in charge of the tourism development. The stakeholder relationship states (see chapter 3.4.1, page 23) that the expectations of regional development organizations are for TAMK, thus for DPT, are high quality projects, bringing about expertise and cooperative projects promoting regional development. The expert was chosen due to the specific and extensive understanding of such matters contributing towards reaching the goals of the thesis topic. It can be also presumed, that in the context of the thesis, the expert can provide insights with additional value, due to the vast experience in the field.

Semi-structured interview was conducted (see appendix 4). As the conversation proceeded, such an interview technique enabled the possibility to ask additional questions when considered relevant or jump to another topic, if the context implicated so. The questions were constructed around different themes and based on the stakeholder relationship as well as referring to the empirical study conducted with internal stakeholders. The themes discussed entailed: industry trends, affects to DPT, working life connection, skills and the value of DPT. The

interview was conducted in the premises of the Tredea Oy and recorded with a dictation machine for later transcribing and summarizing.

6.2.1 The responses of the élite interview

As it has been concluded previously, degree programmes should live somewhat in congruence with the changes of the industry. The interviewee was requested to enlighten the writers of the thesis about the current trends and central points in the tourism of Tampere. A summary of the main points are introduced below.

Tampere has all-year-around versatile tourism and is not depended on singular seasonal: events take place throughout the year, thus strengthening and increasing the appreciation of the tourism industry in Tampere. The interviewee has defined that the industry in Tampere stands on strategy of 3 Cs: congress, culture and children. Emphasis varies depending on the season. The strategy will remain so in the future, but mainly serves national travelling. (Tredea Oy, Interview.)

The majority of travelers are domestic, whereas the share of foreigners in terms of overnights has decreased. Thus, growth should be sought after from international tourism, as recently the development has been negative. Where the amount other nationalities in Finland has decreased, the share of Russian tourists has increased. (Tredea Oy, Interview.)

In terms of the future of the industry, the accessibility is substantially improving, especially in the forthcoming summer when there is a record amount of flight connections to Tampere from Europe. Consequently, the challenge is how to keep the inbound tourists in Tampere; more opportunities bring more challenges. Tourism production should be developed so that such products are made available that meet the demand, thus bringing challenges for international tourism and industry experts. More market knowledge should be acquired, in order to live according to the developments of the industry, thus bringing challenges to the tourism education. (Tredea Oy, Interview.)

The latter, gave an indication to make headway to the next theme: how such developments should be answered in the tourism higher education? The answer is summarized below.

Higher education should walk hand in hand with the industry even more, although there is already improvement with practical trainings and theses that students conduct. However, there is still room for improvement as it is absolutely necessary. The curriculums should be more linked to working life, including cooperation with industry operators. All though it must be stated that it is not always easy as industry people are strongly held up in their own businesses. It would be also extremely positive if students could be involved with previously mentioned market research, as more knowledge is needed. In addition, as the DPT involves having international students, their potential knowledge of the international markets could be utilized. The interviewee also stated the importance of language skills. (Tredea Oy, Interview.)

It can be concluded that the general perception by different stakeholder groups is that working life should be yet closer to the AMK education, thus DPT. Next, the interviewee was inquired how the aforementioned could be in practice achieved. The answer is summarized below.

There is lots of room for development in bringing the education closer to the industry on both sides. Cooperation should be optimized. Interviewee stated the willingness for cooperation between DPT and Tredea Oy, especially with the marketing department. There is constantly marketing projects undertaken regarding countries with direct connections to Tampere, in addition with St. Petersburg, where students could be utilized. The potential exists also with direct tourism service providers in Tampere. (Tredea Oy, Interview.)

The next question entailed the orientation of the DPT studies: is the orientation of DPT still relevant? It was specified that the orientation derives from the 3 Cs strategies. The aim was to receive a viewpoint on the matter from an expert of the field, an industry developer. The summary of the main view is presented below.

The orientation can be considered relevant, considering tourism in Tampere. In higher education, consideration should be on the employment prospects of the students. Under such orientation, congress and business studies, many themes and incidental services can be fitted. Thus, it can be considered appropriated. Whereas, concentrating too much on e.g. nature tourism could be considered inappropriate, even though commercial utilization in the field is important.

Tampere is an urban nature city between two lakes, but considering the future employment of tourism students, it has a minor role. (Tredea Oy, Interview.)

Next theme discussed was competencies in the DPT curriculum. The interviewee was asked what kind of skills should be developed in such a degree programme. In addition, diversified skills and specialization was discussed. The summary of the response is given below:

Language skills are essential in the tourism industry. In addition, one should know what the industry comprises of from business point of view and how it is created and all aspects relating to it, including customer service and handling customerships. Thus, social and communication skills can be considered important also. The rest depends of the goals of the degree programme and the employment aims of the students. Most students however do not perhaps know what professions the education is preparing them for. The latter is not necessarily a bad thing, all though it can be assumed that the studies could be more motivating for the student if they had a clearer view of the professional possibilities in the future. (Tredea Oy, Interview.)

Regarding diversified skills and specialization, diversified skills are perhaps more important. In most SMEs, the only profitable way of operating is to have employees that are able to balance between different tasks. With specialization the problem is that one learns to look at things from one perspective. Working in bigger companies usually requires a certain level of specialization. Even so, diversified skills are essential as it enables the circulation of the employees between tasks. (Tredea Oy, Interview.)

The last theme discussed related to the value of the degree in working life. The answer is summarized below:

According to the interviewee, such degree is highly valued in working life, as it is quite long, demanding and involves a preliminary elimination increasing the stature, thus differentiating students already from the mass. However, personal attributes affect tremendously and a lot is depended on oneself in life and in working life. According to personal experiences, working with tourism students

of TAMK has been however very positive and such cooperation could be continued in the future willingly. (Tredea Oy, Interview.)

6.2.2 Comparing the interview results

Similarities can be detected from the answers of the internal and external stakeholders. The responses showed that the most frequent elements emerged have to do with increasing the presence of working life in the DPT studies; orientation of the DPT and the competence goals of the DPT. Regarding the value of the DPT in labor market, differences can be distinguished.

Both internal and external stakeholders expressed interest and importance for increasing cooperation between the degree and industry. Such cooperation would promote regional development and assist the degree to develop with the changes of the industry. In addition, cooperation would enhance the possibilities for acquiring practical training placements and ultimately reaching employment. Moreover, working life related development projects would enable students to put scientific knowledge and theories learned into practice, thus contributing to the development of practical skills. In addition, such cooperation would enable the partial implementation of the LbD model.

Students had expressed the wish for having more international topics in the courses. The potential of Tampere attracting international tourist is growing, thus imposing challenges for tourism developers, such challenges, where the contribution of DPT students could be utilized. By that, the international aspect and regional development would walk hand in hand. External stakeholders mentioned the growing importance of Russian tourists. Reflecting on the latter, such a development could be taken into consideration in the tourism education. To start with, Russian language education could be provided in English in TAMK.

The results of the study of the internal and external stakeholders revealed the importance of certain skills and competencies in the DPT curriculum. The analysis of the results revealed also that such competencies and skills match the competence recommendations of AMK bachelor's level education and study

programme specific education. In addition, they were in accordance with the requirements of a future tourism industry professional presented in the theoretical part of the thesis. In the light of such results, it can be concluded that the developers of the new curriculums could consider ways and methods to yet fortify such competencies and skills, so that DPT satisfies the interest of larger set of stakeholder groups and meets the qualification needs of the industry.

The internal and external stakeholders shared, to some extent, similar views on the development of diversified skills in the DPT. Correspondence were detected also in the perception that a certain level of specialization should be acquired through the DPT studies, by increasing career, elective course, project work, practical training and thesis guidance. The internal stakeholders expressed quite strong views regarding the lack of career path guidance. Students' concern for future professional life often becomes current towards the end of the studies, quite naturally so. However, by which point one cannot affect to any studying regarded decisions already made. Thus, it can be concluded that stimulating such thought by teachers among students earlier in the studies would be beneficial. TAMK should also increase the flow of information to students about the various opportunities able to be utilized through the university.

Regarding the orientation of the studies, strong views were not expressed. The orientation was considered appropriate, but lot of importance was not given to the whole aspect. Students' answers revealed that the orientation was not successfully implemented as the set competence goals did not reach the awareness of the students.

Concerning the perceived value of DPT, differences were detected. Where the internal stakeholders considered the degree to be valued in the labor market, working life representatives expressed quite neutral perspectives on the matter. The elite interview revealed however that the DPT is perceived from another point of view as valuable and prestigious. The interviewee had personal experiences with DPT students. It can be concluded that positive experiences working with tourism students contribute to the positive perception of the value of the DPT. Thus, increased marketing and promotion of the degree would increase collaboration possibilities and elevate the profile of the degree.

7 CONCLUSIONS

The current thesis presents development suggestions for the faculty involved in creating the new curriculum for the Degree programme in Tourism (DPT). The thesis study is conducted for the Research & Development Services (R&D) of Tampere University of Applied Sciences (TAMK) by Ulla Aalto and Elina Ala-Hallila, students of the degree programme in question.

The results indicate that DPT studies should include education, research and development and regional development. In addition, the DPT should live with the changes of the industry and the main goal should be fortifying students' competence and expertise. In addition, the competence goals should be in accordance with the qualification demands of the tourism industry. As the goal of the thesis is to provide realistic development ideas for the DPT the study of the secondary data indicated that the intake of different stakeholders should be included.

The writers of the thesis conclude that DPT succeeds in many aspects of the education. However, the development of certain aspects should be considered, as the DPT plays a major role in the development of expertise of the students. The development ideas are a joint production based on the vast study of the secondary data and the empirical study conducted with internal and external stakeholders.

7.1 Perspectives of the internal stakeholders

According to the internal stakeholders, cooperation with working life should be increased. In addition, study and career guidance should be increased and the opportunities TAMK offers to its students made better available to the DPT students. Competence goals of the DPT and its courses should better come through in the studies. Certain competence areas that are in accordance with the national and international framework of recommendations presented in the theory should be given more emphasis in the DPT studies. In addition, the

development of the education provided should be a concern to some extent with TAMK, in terms of faculty English-language skills and pedagogic competence.

7.2 Perspectives of the external stakeholders

According to the external stakeholders, the students of the DPT should gain versatile knowledge of the tourism industry, but also gain a certain level of specialization according to students' own interest, by choosing certain elective courses and practical placements. Practical expertise is expected from students of DPT with theoretical framework in the background. External stakeholders indicate that the qualification requirements of future tourism industry professional are in accordance with the qualifications that the theory indicated, but also with the national and international competence recommendations. Thus, the writers of the thesis conclude that such competencies should be fortified. In addition, external stakeholders emphasized the importance of customer service skills. The demand for knowledge of Russian markets could be also considered in the education of the DPT.

7.3 Mutually beneficial development

The writers of the thesis conclude that DPT can be developed in a mutually beneficial way. Cooperation with the degree programme with working life should be increased as interest lies with both stakeholder groups. It can be suggested seminars and workshops to be organized where the industry meets the DPT students. Elements needed for the competence development process presented by the theory of Learning by Developing model exist; hence certain degree of adaptation could be implemented in the DPT. Perspective of both stakeholder groups are in accordance regarding important competence areas, therefore such competencies could be emphasized more in the DPT. By that, the DPT would increase the odds of the students' employability and provide experts based on current needs for the industry. In addition, both stakeholder groups indicate the importance of enhancing students' practical expertise, but not forgetting research oriented approach. Thus, it can be concluded that

methods enhancing such development should be considered in the DPT. Additionally, increased career and study guidance, as well as dialogue with the labor market can be assumed to increase students possibilities to find appropriate practical training placements and ultimately employment. From the external stakeholders' point of view, such development would assist companies to find competent trainees and employees.

7.4 Ideas on the Curriculum

The writers of the thesis suggest that the intake of both stakeholder groups should be taken into consideration in the curriculum development in the following aspects: orientation, competence goals, courses, methods, structure, guidance, practical training, theses and services of TAMK. Regarding the orientation, employability of the students should operate as a standard. Orientation, however appropriate, results to be poorly implemented as the goals do not come through to the students. It can be concluded that focus should be on defining competence goals and the relation to students' employability and building the substance around that. Alternatively orientation could be left open and students could orientate depending on personal interest, by choosing certain elective courses, professional studies, practical placements and theses topics.

The goals of the study programme should come through clearly to students, so that they have a realistic view of the career prospects of the future. Such aspect should be taken into consideration in the description of the study programme, courses and guidance.

Review of the topics, content and the implementation of courses is needed. Certain topics were considered more useful than the others by both stakeholder groups, thus requiring more emphasis and wider coverage. The students indicated that the level of studies should be more demanding, thus it can be concluded that such statements can be considered in planning the content and the implementation of the courses. Moreover, better practices could be adapted from courses considered successfully realized and useful. In addition, focus

should be on improving the availability of courses in English and allocation of the courses. The latter refers to students' wish for having Finnish courses scattered throughout the academic years, as well as request to have the academic writing course earlier in the studies.

The writers of the thesis suggest that such methods which require practical and research oriented attendance of the students in real working life context should be increased. On the other hand, methods considered not that useful by the students could be considered implemented less, in the context of the thesis being virtual studying.

Regarding the structure of the curriculum, the writers suggest a project study entity is added as part of the studies. Project studies would able students to take part in, for example, undertakings of the R&D or projects in the operational environment individually, in small groups or as a whole class. In addition, it is suggested that cooperation is done with other English-taught degree programmes of TAMK in form of projects, thus promoting the development of diversified skills.

It can be concluded that the academic and career guidance should be more systematic, personalized and in-depth to stimulate students' thought orientation to future and working life. In addition, guidance and assistance is needed in planning competence goals for practical training and obtaining suitable placements, as well as choosing useful thesis topics. It can be suggested that the first practical training would go by the name of customer service training, as it was an important qualification mentioned by the external stakeholders. Consequently, any type of working experience should not be approved for the first practical training, as it has been until now. What is more, the awareness of the possibilities TAMK offers to its students should be brought closer to the students' attention in the early stages of the studies. In practice, the latter could be achieved by bringing representatives in to the class to speak, developing the electronic bulletin board of TAMK and providing more information in English. The writers wish to especially emphasize the importance of bringing awareness of the possibilities of the R&D department to the students.

Writers of the thesis conclude that the thesis process is completed successfully. The integration of the perspectives of the different stakeholder groups, the adaptation and application of versatile data sources and methods appropriate for the goal of the thesis enhance the reliability of the results. However, the results are not imposed as absolute truths. Instead, the thesis results should be reflected with own studies conducted by TAMK, other researches or theses related to the topic and the vast expertise and experience of the faculty of TAMK. In addition, it is suggested that further research is conducted about the possibilities of integrating working life closer to the studies.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix 1:1(2)

Developing the Degree Programme in tourism in Tampere University of Applied Sciences: Stakeholders' perspective

Students' theme interview in groups

Theme 1: Goals and objectives

- Motivation
- Expectations before studies
- Expectations vs. reality

Theme 2: Curriculum

- Topics
- Courses
- Structure of the curriculum
- Implementation
- Orientation
- Practical training
- Elective courses
- International topics
- Level of the studies

Theme 3: Skills and competencies

- Skills
- Competencies
- Professionalism/managerial level

(Continues)

Theme 4: Methods

1:(2)

- Good/bad methods
- What more/less
- Practical training
- Theory vs. practice

Theme 5: Guidance

- Guidance, help received from teachers
- Information in general available in TAMK
- Familiarity of TAMK's services and possibilities (e.g. R&D)

Theme 6: Future and career

- Value of DPT
- Value of being ELTDP
- After graduation: plans, goals

- Any other thoughts or comments?

Appendix 2:1(3)

Hei!

Olemme Tampereen ammattikorkeakoulun (TAMK) kansainvälisen englanninkielisen matkailun koulutusohjelman kaksi opiskelijaa, Ulla Aalto ja Elina Ala-Hallila. Teemme opinnäytetyötä koulutusohjelman kehittämisestä eri sidosryhmien näkökulmista, yhteistyönä TAMKin T&Kn kanssa. Opinnäytetyön tuloksia hyödynnetään uusien opetussuunnitelmien suunnittelussa.

Haluaisimme haastatella teitä koskien opinnäytetyötämme ulkoisen sidosryhmän yhtenä edustajana. Vastauksenne antaisi meille arvokasta tietoa opinnäytetyöhön ja matkailun koulutusohjelman tulevaisuuden suunnitteluun.

Kyselylomake sisältää 9 kysymystä joiden vastaamiseen menee noin 5 minuuttia. Vastatkaa oman mielikuvan mukaan. Vastaukset käsitellään anonyymisti. Jos koette että ette ole oikea henkilö vastaamaan kyselyyn, voitteko ystävällisesti välittää viestin edelleen yrityksenne.

Kyselyyn pääsette vastaamaan tästä linkistä: <http://www.zmd.org/e/>

Kiitos etukäteen!

*Ystävällisin terveisin,
Ulla Aalto ja Elina Ala-Hallila*

Kyselylomake
Developing degree programme in tourism
The stakeholder perspective

Vastaajan asema yrityksessä _____

1. Oletteko tietoisia että Tampereella järjestetään kansainvälistä englanninkielistä matkailun koulutusta (Degree Programme in Tourism Tampereen Ammattikorkeakoulussa)? *(Valitkaa sopiva vaihtoehto merkitsemällä X.)*

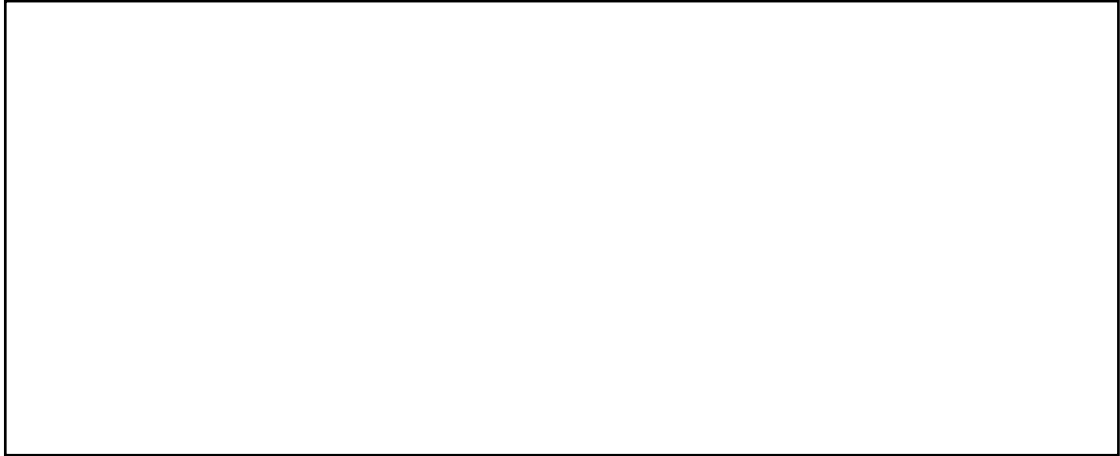
- Kyllä
 Ei

2. Koulutusohjelman on suuntautunut kongressi ja business-opintoihin. Onko tämä oman mielikuvan mukaan sopiva suuntautuminen Tampereen ja Tampereen seudun matkailua ajatellen? Voisiko suuntautuminen olla jokin muu? *(Vastatkaa alla olevaan kenttään.)*

(Continues)

2:2(3)

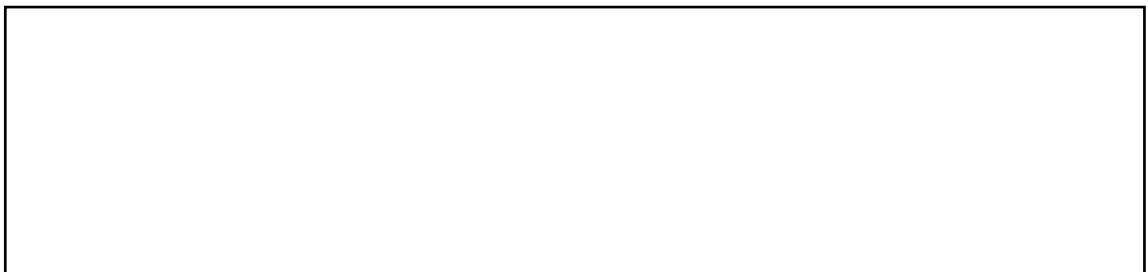
3. Kertokaa oman mielikuvan mukaan minkälaista osaamista tulevaisuuden matkailualan ammattilaisen tulisi omata työelämässä? (Vastatkaa omin sanoin tai vaikka ranskalaisilla viivoilla tärkeimpiä osaamisalueita alla olevaan kenttään. Tässä muutama mainittuna **VAIN ESIMERKKINÄ**: johtajuustaitoja, projektiosaamista, kansainvälisiä taitoja, kyky sopeutua ja reagoida muutokseen, tiimityöskentelytaitoja, liiketoimintaosaamistaitoja, yrittäjyys etc.)



4. Oman mielikuvan mukaan, tulisiko ammattikorkeakoulutason matkailun koulutusohjelman valmistaa käytännönsaajia tai teoreettiseen ajatteluun kykeneviä osaajia? Vai tulisiko koulutusohjelmassa painottaa molempia taitoja ja missä suhteessa? (Vastatkaa alla olevaan kenttään.)



5. Tulisiko oman mielikuvan mukaan kansainvälisen englanninkielisen matkailun koulutusohjelman opinnoissa painottaa erikoistumiseen tai monialaiseen osaamiseen? (Vastatkaa alla olevaan kenttään.)



6. Olisiko yrityksenne kiinnostunut tekemään yhteistyötä kansainvälisen englanninkielisen matkailun koulutusohjelman kanssa?(*Valitkaa sopiva vaihtoehto merkitsemällä X. Vastaus Ei sido mihinkään.*)

- Kyllä
 Ei → (*Jos vastasitte ei, siirtykää suoraan viimeiseen kysymykseen 9*)

7. Minkälaista yhteistyötä yrityksenne olisi kiinnostunut tekemään kansainvälisen englanninkielisen matkailun koulutusohjelman kanssa? (*Vastatkaa merkitsemällä **KAIKKIIN** sopiviin vaihtoehtoihin X. Vastaukset EIVÄT sido mihinkään.*)

- Työharjoittelut
 Kahden viikon kenttäopinnot yrityksessänne
 Opinnäytetyöt
 Yritystoimintaanne liittyvä kehitysprojekti
 Yritysvierailu
 Muuta → mitä?

JOS MERKITSITTE X:N KOHTAAN TYÖHARJOITTELUT TAI KENTTÄOPINNOT, JATKAKAA KYSYMYKSEEN 8. JOS ETTE, SIIRTYKÄÄ VIIMEISEEN KYSYMYKSEEN 9

8. Kansainvälisessä englanninkielisessä matkailun koulutusohjelmassa opiskelee ulkomaalaisia opiskelijoita. Olisitteko valmiita ottamaan työharjoittelijoita tai kenttäopintoja suorittavia opiskelijoita joiden suomenkielen taidot eivät ole vielä kunnolla kehittyneet? (*Valitkaa sopiva vaihtoehto merkitsemällä X. Vastaus Ei sido mihinkään.*)

- Kyllä
 Ei → Miksi?

9. Arvioikaa oman mielikuvanne mukaan seuraavat koulutusohjelman tutkinnon arvostukseen liittyvät väittämät. (*1-täysin eri mieltä, 2-jokseenkin eri mieltä-, 3-ei samaa mieltä, eikä eri mieltä, 4-jokseenkin samaa mieltä, 5-täysin samaa mieltä*)

Arvioikaa MOLEMMAT väittämät merkitsemällä X.	1	2	3	4	5
Kansainvälisen englanninkielisen matkailun koulutusohjelman tutkinto on arvokas työnhakutilanteessa					
Suomenkielisen matkailun koulutusohjelman tutkinto on arvokas työnhakutilanteessa					

Appendix 3:1(3)

Hi!

We are two students, Ulla Aalto and Elina Ala-Hallila of Tampere University of Applied Sciences (TAMK) in the international English-taught degree programme, the degree programme in tourism. We are doing our thesis about the development of the degree programme from the different stakeholders' perspective, in cooperation with TAMK's Research & Development Services. The results of the thesis will be utilized in the development of the new curriculums.

We would like to interview you, as a representative of the external stakeholders, regarding our thesis. Your answers will provide us valuable information for our thesis and for the development of the future curriculums.

The questionnaire contains 9 questions which take about 5 minutes to answer. Reply according to your own perspective. Responses will be processed anonymously.

If you feel that you are not the correct person to answer the set questions, kindly forward the message to someone appropriate in the company.

You can access the questionnaire in the following link: <http://www.zmd.org/e/>

Thank you beforehand!

*Kind regards,
Ulla Aalto and Elina Ala-Hallila*

Questionnaire

Developing degree programme in tourism

The stakeholder perspective

Respondent's status in the company _____

1. Are you aware that international English-taught tourism education is organized in Tampere? (Degree Programme in Tourism in the TAMK)? *(Indicate the appropriate answer by marking X.)*

Yes

No

2. The degree is oriented in congress and business studies. According to your perception, is this an appropriate orientation regarding the tourism in Tampere and the region? Could it be something else? *(Answer to the field below.)*

(Continues)

3:2(3)

3. According to you own perception, what kind of skills working life requires from its future tourism professional? (Answer in your own words by listing most important skills to the field below. Below, some skills are mentioned AS **AN EXAMPLE ONLY**: leadership skills, project working skills, international skills, adaptation skills and abilities to react to changes, team-working skills business skills, entrepreneurship etc.)

4. According to you own perception, should AMK level tourism education prepare practical or theoretical experts? Should the degree programme emphasize both skills? In what proportion should the skills be emphasized? (Answer to the field below.)

5. According to you own perception, should the international English-taught degree programme emphasize diversified skills or specialization? (Answer to the field below.)

3:(3)

6. Would your company be interested conducting cooperation with the international English-taught degree programme in tourism? *(Indicate the appropriate answer by marking an X. The answer is not binding.)*

- Yes
- No → *(If you answered no, please move directly to final question 9)*

7. What type of cooperation would your company be interested in doing with the international English-taught degree programme in tourism *(Indicate ALL the appropriate answers by marking X. The answers are NOT binding.)*

- Practical training
- 2 weeks field studies in your company
- Theses
- Development projects regarding business activities of the company
- Company visits
- Something else → what?

IF YOU MARK X TOPRACTICAL TRAINING AND 2 WEEKS FIELD STUDIES, CONTINUE TO QUESTION 8. IF NOT, MOVE ON TO THE FINAL QUESTION 9.

8. There are foreign students studying in the international English-taught degree programme in tourism. Would you be ready to take on trainees or students conducting 2 week field studies, whose Finnish language skills are not developed yet? *(Indicate the appropriate answer by marking X. The answer is NOT binding.)*

- Yes
- No → Why?

9. Please evaluate according to you own perception the following statements regarding the value of the degrees in working life. *(1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree to some extent-, 3-neither agrees nor disagrees, 4-agrees to some extent, 5-strongly agrees)*

<i>Evaluate BOTH statements by marking X.</i>	1	2	3	4	5
The international English-taught degree programme in tourism is considered valuable when applying for a job					
Finnish-taught degree programme in tourism is valuable when applying for a job					

Élite interview**24.03.2011**

Interview with the representative of the Tampere Region Economic Development Agency, Tredea Oy

Principal structure of the interview:

1. What kind of phenomena and trends are happening in tourism industry of Tampere and the region?
2. How should such developments be taken into consideration in the development of the DPT?
3. Students are interested to have the working life yet closer to the studies. How that could be achieved in practice?
4. The DPT studies have an orientation of congress and business studies, according to the 3 Cs tourism strategy of Tampere: congress, culture and children. Is such an orientation still appropriate or could it be something else?
5. What kind of skill development should be emphasized in the DPT?
6. Should the DPT emphasize diversified skills or specialization?
7. How could a student of the DPT differentiate oneself from other graduates with bachelor in tourism (restonomi)?
8. Do you consider the DPT to be valuable in working life?