

# The role of Stakeholders in Enhancing Service Quality in Hospitality Education: An Application of Stakeholder Theory

PRATIK GHOSH \* [callpratikghosh@yahoo.com]

DEEPIKA JHAMB \*\* [deepikajhamb14@gmail.com]

**Abstract** | With fierce competition in this arena, Institute of Hotel Management (IHMs) needs to balance the interests of all its key stakeholders by not only providing quality but also creating value. There is a need for the IHMs to measure the same provided to the key stakeholders so that their varied interests are dealt with and their role towards the institutes are aligned. This paper delineates the significance of the key stakeholders in the field of hospitality education delivered at the IHMs by validating the stakeholder theory from industry and academia. As the study is qualitative in nature, an exploratory design was opted for the research using experiential survey. The recruiters of top hotel brands, Directors, and Principals were interviewed to elicit their views on hospitality education delivered by IHMs. The findings from the expert interviews validate the stakeholder theory and the need for providing not only service quality but also superior value to the key stakeholders. The research is the first of its kind in hospitality education literature to integrate the opinions of industry and academia towards maximising the value of all key stakeholders in the domain.

**Keywords** | Service quality, value, hospitality education, stakeholder theory, students, faculty, industry

---

\* **Senior Lecturer** at Dr. Ambedkar Institute of Hotel Management, Chandigarh, India

\*\* **Associate Professor** at Chitkara Business School, Chitkara University, Punjab, India

## 1. Introduction

The word 'stakeholder' has been used profusely in organisations and business. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, Stakeholder is an entity that owns a stake in the business either in terms of a person or a group of people. It can also be related to an employer, employee or a citizen who is associated with the firm or society and depicts interest and responsibilities for its success. In a commercial setup, a stakeholder is someone who has a concern for the organization. They may include employees, employers, customers, shareholders, suppliers, communities, and governments. As stakeholders have different needs and interests, so the organisations strive to balance all their needs for the positive outcomes (CFI Education Inc., 2019). This study intends to appraise the role of stakeholders in enhancing service quality and value in hospitality education delivered by Institute of Hotel Management (IHM) throughout the country.

### Evolution of Hospitality Education

Ecole Hoteliere de Lausanne initiated the beginning of hospitality and tourism education way back in 1893 in Switzerland and to date is the top-ranked hotel schools in the world (Top Universities, 2019). Similarly, in USA Cornell University commenced the degree course for the undergraduates in the year 1922 (Barrows & Bosselman, 1998). In India, National Council for Hotel Management and Catering Technology (NCHMCT), established in the year 1982, is the primary monitoring and regulatory entity set up by Ministry of Tourism (MOT), Government of India to oversee the quality and administer the hospitality education delivered by the service providers in form of Institute of Hotel Management (IHM) spread across the length and breadth of the country. There are 21 central IHMs, 25 state IHMs, 01 Public sector undertaking (PSU) IHM, and 25 private IHMs pan

India from where about 12000 students graduate every year. Besides NCHMCT, some universities have also started offering undergraduate programs in hospitality management and tourism.

## 2. Literature Review

### Role of Stakeholders

Stakeholders ensure that the corporation works for the benefit of the larger constituency such as society and deliver benefits for them. Their role, in turn, makes the board accountable to the organisation for carrying various activities ethically and transparently. The importance of stakeholders can be depicted in sporting events too. One such example can be taken from the Sydney Olympics 2000 which strived for making it a green event with special care for environmental issues. It involved the stakeholders comprising of organisers, event managers, government and other agencies who supported wholeheartedly the environmental apprehensions (Kearins & Pavlovich, 2002). With regards to quality management, there is a need for an organisation to work with stakeholders within a societal boundary which will be empowered to affect the success of the firm. As stakeholders are from different backgrounds, the organisations need to balance and respect the role of stakeholders' interests (Foster & Jonker, 2003). A study involving the implementation of the environmental management system (EMS) in organisations of Australia and New Zealand indicated that stakeholders in the form of employees contribute positively to the successful implementation of EMS, whereas, suppliers' role is limited and silent (Zutshi & Sohal, 2004). In an analysis of Return to Work (RTW) situations, stakeholder interests suggest that friction is inevitable; however, it is possible to encourage stakeholders to tolerate paradigm dissonance while engaging in collaborative problem solving to meet

common goals (Franche, Baril, Shaw, Nicholas & Loisel, 2005). In a study involving stakeholders in an accountability environment of a programme funded by the government, there was a fall in corrupt practices and frauds once the key role players determined their roles distinctly (O'Connell, 2005).

The stakeholders in the product market which require long term relationships to be pursued among them play an important role in monitoring more incentives (Cremers, Nair & Peyer, 2008). Another research concerning the development of town centre management projects in the United Kingdom inferred that the implementation of the planned tasks for the development necessitates the collaboration of key stakeholders and sharing the process of decision making among them (Nisco, Riviezzo & Napolitano, 2008). In an investigation involving film tourism, the key stakeholders identified were destination management firms, tourists, film industry and the local people. As these stakeholders were heterogeneous units, and they had varied interests and roles, their degree of inclusion in the process of planning differed significantly (Heitmann, 2010). The role of stakeholders can be witnessed in the information and technology domain too. The research involving stakeholders in the field of Technology integration solutions (TIS) showed decision-makers, management and staff play a unique role concerned with their domain knowledge for various TIS projects (Kamal, Weerakkody & Irani, 2011). Similarly, a study requiring the involvement of various stakeholders in the marine planning process in the United Kingdom, analysed that their interests in managing the same were different across local, regional and national levels. However, their inclusion is important for the planning process to succeed (Maguire, Potts & Fletcher, 2012). An exploratory investigation on the development of sustainable tourism in the least developed countries suggests that the differences in the goal of sustainability are attributed to external and internal stakeholders. As such, recognising their effects and impacts would tend

to lower the mutual duel and lead to better results on sustainability issues (Ellis & Sheridan, 2014).

In research dealing with measuring stakeholders' role in sustainable building retrofit decisions, it was decided to integrate the differences in goals among various stakeholders to form a level of retrofits which meet their common requirements such as saving energy, minimising costs and abiding by the policies (Menassa & Baer, 2014). Thereafter, a study involving the role of stakeholders in the collaborative mapping of services in ecosystems involving agricultural land and protected area revealed that high and low influence stakeholders have different perceptions of these services and this variation was used in the decision-making process of planning for landscape (Nieto & Soriano, 2015; Vashishth & Jhamb, 2021). The study involving empirical evidence related to statements of assurance reiterates that stakeholders play a key role in assurance programmes delivered by the companies wherein they are involved in-depth and their views are consulted in detail. Results of the empirical investigation make it possible to affirm that the assurers' propensity to involve stakeholders (especially internal ones) is confirmed (Manetti & Toccafondi, 2012). It is observed in organisations that decision making is a critical function and role of stakeholders is drawing a lot of attention to create value sustainably and ethically. This requires that the varied interests of stakeholders are balanced in a proper manner (Gooyert et al., 2017). According to the corporate guidelines, an entity that commences a project should take into account the interests of various stakeholders before and during designing the project (Nestic, Ljepava & Aleksic, 2018). As the contest among tourism destinations and corporate ventures are growing, the stakeholders must create distinct value for their customers (Almeida & Campos, 2020). Creating value in the tourism products is the focus of managers designing tourism services. Managers put value on these resources and offer tourism packages with different services for creating tourism products (Moreno-

Lobato, Costa & Hernández-Mogollón, 2020). According to Salvado and Joukes (2021), for maintaining attractiveness in a business, the key stakeholders must strive to enhance value-creation for its customers.

There are many more studies where stakeholders' role and their implications in managing different management scenarios have been well depicted. All these researches provide a common thread to ponder, that is, the interests of different stakeholders towards any issue would vary and therefore, the organisation, firm or entity should identify such stakeholders, strive to consider their influence, and collaboratively balance their needs.

### **Stakeholders enhancing Hospitality Education Service Quality**

The stakeholders in higher education concerned with its service quality are primarily addressed as very few studies about hospitality education service quality can be found in the literature. It is difficult to define service quality related to the educational system. There is a race amongst the institutions to secure global rankings and certifications; and at the same time, there is a dearth of study on these issues due to general disagreement amongst the stakeholders about their perception of quality (Kundu, 2017). The system has many stakeholders with different and conflicting requirements. For example, in the higher education scenario, stakeholders include faculty, students, parents, the industry, administrative staff as well as society. Internal stakeholders consist of faculty and non-academic staff whereas student, industry, parents and the society belong to external stakeholders. Under the circumstances of varied and different interests of these stakeholder groups, however, there are always some factors which may unite them and provide synergy towards the benefit of overall service quality in the system (Sahney, 2016). The needs of the indi-

vidual stakeholder availing the service led to the difference in service quality perceptions (Bitner et al., 2013; Ghosh & Jhamb, 2021). In the institutes, the perception of stakeholders regarding the curriculum, facilities provided in campus, academic delivery may vary considerably (Quinn, et al., 2009; Mota & Almeida, 2016). In a higher education setting, stakeholder-orientation is an accepted base by most researchers. As the higher education stakeholders are many, the service quality initiatives by universities should, therefore, strive to balance them based on their relative importance (Ho & Wearn, 1995).

The mention of quality in higher education is quite complex. The initiatives taken to improve the quality are further hampered due to the inability to define the stakeholders of higher education. Incidentally, most authors agree to the view that as an industry are the end-users of higher education, the efforts of rest of the stakeholders must be aligned with the end-user, that is, the service quality efforts of all stakeholders should be linked to the attributes that are inculcated in the students by imparting knowledge and skills as required to be successful in the industry (Quinn et al., 2009; Lopes et al., 2017). However, the current scenario has revealed differences between the quality of higher education imparted to the students and requisites of the employers in the industry. The stakeholders' perception of service quality is not one-dimensional and depends on various issues and contexts judged by them (Pedro, Mendes & Lourenço, 2018).

Due to multiple stakeholders in higher education, it was desired to rank them according to their overall significance with regards to service quality. A survey was launched to identify and rank the stakeholders in higher education service quality in India and many more countries. In the study, faculty members were the principal respondents. It was revealed that students secured the first rank, the highest among all. The others that followed were employers, society, faculty, and families. The

reason for ranking was the prioritisation of stakeholders who had varied and different needs which many times contradict with each other (Owlia & Aspinwall, 1997).

The current scenario of hospitality and tourism education research paradigm has shifted to achieve the requirements of all key stakeholders – students, faculty and industry employers (Sahney, 2016; Barber, Deale & Goodman, 2011; Kim & Jeong, 2018). The regulators, controllers, and decision-makers of hospitality education need to persist on with consulting the key stakeholders, that is, students, educators and employers in their endeavours to develop and effectively evaluate the quality of the undergraduate programmes delivered through the institutes (Cho, Erdem & Johanson, 2006). The education scenario is experiencing an enhanced contest with diminishing resources and therefore seeking responsibility for institutions to be accountable and emphasise on academic standards and service quality in addition to creating value for key stakeholders (Dredge & Schott, 2013). The accountability of service providers as continuously overseen by the stakeholders led to scrutiny of service quality in education. The scarcity of research in this domain indicates the complexity and indecisiveness on the correct way to measure the service quality (Becket & Brookes, 2008).

As the hospitality industry is experiencing dynamic changes along with society and higher education in general, hospitality education is required to depict the relevance of the stakeholders. This necessitates the researchers in hospitality education to put forward their views regarding this aspect of hospitality education in the future (Hsu, Xiao & Chen, 2016).

## Problem Statement

Even though the hospitality education has gained popularity over the years in India, there is a need to measure the perception of key stakeholders, such as students, faculty and industry towards hospitality graduate programs delivered by IHMs in terms of quality offered and value created. As such, it is the need of the hour to validate the essence of stakeholder theory from the hospitality industry and academia perspective to ensure focused growth and development of hospitality education.

## 3. Theoretical Background and Conceptual Framework

### Stakeholder Theory

According to the stakeholder theory, there is an inherent association among business with its suppliers, investors, customers, employees, society and all others who possess a stake in the firm or entity. It has a capitalist view with a focus on generating value for all stakeholders in the organisation (Freeman, 2015). The theory propounds the importance of morals and ethics in managing the organisation and strives to identify the stakeholders and suggests the management adhere to the interests of these sets of people. Some of the recent researches on stakeholder theory have been delineated in Table 1.

**Table 1** | Recent Researches involving Stakeholders Theory

Year	Research using Stakeholders Theory	Authors
2017	Political stakeholder theory: The state, legitimacy, and the ethics of Microfinance in emerging economies.	Olsen
2017	Stakeholder dialogue as deliberation for decision making in health policy and systems: The approach from argumentation theory	Rubinelli and Groote
2016	Stakeholder theory and ethics	Boucher Bonnafous and Rendtorff
2016	Transaction cost economics as a constructive stakeholder theory	Ketokivi and Mahoney
2016	Toward a relational stakeholder theory: Attributes of value-creating stakeholder relationships	Kujala, Lehtimäki and Myllykangas
2016	How Friedman's view on individual freedom relates to stakeholder theory and social contract theory	Jahn and Bruhl
2016	Stakeholder theory seeing the field through the forest	Berman and Johnson-Cramer
2016	Does the theory of stakeholder identity and salience lead to corporate social responsibility? The case of environmental justice.	Beckman, Khare and Matear
2016	The demand of stakeholder theory for corporate governance	Moriarty
2016	Intra-stakeholder alliances in plant-closing decisions: A stakeholder theory approach	Fassin, Colle and Edward Freeman
2016	Understanding G2G e-government project impasse: a stakeholder theory perspective	Pandey and Gupta

Source: <http://stakeholdertheory.org/publications/>

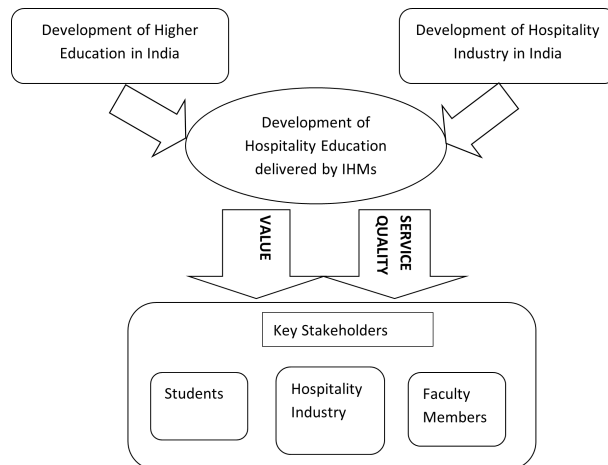
All these studies elicit the significance of stakeholders for the organisation and the need for said organisation or entity to balance their interests so that the service value of the key stakeholders can be maximised. This would lead to the collaborative environment which would pave the way for the organisational success. The present study would strive to validate the same through expert interviews from key stakeholders.

### Application of Stakeholder Theory in Hospitality education

Hospitality education has developed in the background of growth in both the hospitality industry and higher education (Airey, 2013). The dynamic hospitality industry offers two challenges; one being the need to hire quality human resources and the other being an advanced technological platform for guest satisfaction. On the other

hand, issues faced regarding the growth in higher education has reflected in two requirements of the institutions; one being reputable and the other being abreast with e-learning technologies for its students and faculty members (Hsu, Xiao & Chen, 2016).

The conceptual framework as depicted in Figure 1 has been developed keeping with the challenges offered by both the hospitality industry and higher education. The key stakeholders solicit modifications and alignments in the process of imparting hospitality education. Two significant roles are played by them; to add value to the strategic planning process of hospitality education through curriculum designing; and next, to use the quality management process to measure the performance of service providers (Cooper & Westlake, 1998). It is to be seen whether the IHMs reciprocate by delivering quality education and follows the stakeholder theory by balancing the interests and maximising the value of its key stakeholders.



**Figure 1** | Conceptual Framework  
Source: Adapted from Hsu, Xiao & Chen, 2016

## Research Design

The study intends to validate stakeholder's theory from point of view of two key stakeholders, that is, faculty and industry recruiters. As the study is qualitative in nature, an exploratory design is opted for the research. (Pantano & Priporas, 2016). The need for undertaking further quantitative research for measuring service quality in hospitality education required to be justified through qualitative methods due to the lack of previous researches in this area. Interviews with experts would lead to better understanding and elicit varied viewpoints for the problem (Maxwell, 1996).

## Data Collection and Analysis

A sample of General Managers, Human Resource Managers, Director (Studies) National Council for Hotel Management (NCHMCT) and Principals of IHMs were interviewed to elicit the contemporary issues on service quality of hospitality education and its relevance in the current scenario. The reason for expert interviews which were in-depth stresses on minimising space between interviewee and interviewers and offer mutual co-operation (Johns & Ross-Lee, 1998). Also, re-

searchers stated the efficiency of such interviews in supplying in-depth information (Stokes & Bergin, 2006). As the experts were chosen to represent the leading IHMs, hotel chains in India and abroad, purposive sampling was used. For hotel experts, the interviews were conducted when the team of recruiters visited for campus interviews at IHM Chandigarh in early 2020. Five leading hotel chains of India namely ITC, IHG, Hyatt, Oberoi and Leela participated in the interview process. Further Director Studies (NCHMCT), Principals and Head of Departments of five IHMs were interviewed at NCHMCT Noida. These included IHM Kolkata, IHM Bhopal, AIHM Chandigarh, IHM Gurdaspur and IHM Lucknow. Also, views from Director (Studies) from NCHMCT were taken. In total, information was elicited from 18 participants. These interviews with academia took place in the month from September – November 2020. The sample size is considered adequate for qualitative study which ranges from fifteen to twenty. (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). The questions which were put forward to the team of industry recruiters included, "What are the issues faced by you with the fresh graduates from IHMs in your hotels?", "Do you think the quality of graduates IHMs are supplying is matching with the needs of the hotel? What are the areas where the IHMs need to im-

prove to close the gap between the demand of the industry and quality of students passing out from the IHMs?”, “Will measuring service quality and value in hospitality education be important and relevant and beneficial to all stakeholders (students, faculty and industry primarily) of hospitality education? Why / Why not?” Similarly, the questions which were solicited from the Director (Studies) NCHMCT, Principals and HODs of IHMs again included, “What do you think about the service quality and value created by current hospitality education in our country at present from the perspective of faculty and academia?”, “Will measuring service quality and value in hospitality education be important, relevant and beneficial to all stakeholders (students, faculty and industry primarily) of hospitality education? Why / Why not?” On average the interviews lasted from 20- 30 minutes and included mostly open, clear and neutral questions to elicit in-depth information and avoid bias. The responses from interviewer were either noted or recorded. The content collected through interviews was further analysed with the help of NVivo qualitative software.

#### 4. Findings and Results of Expert interviews

##### Hospitality industry

The recruiters of top hotel brands including ITC, Taj, Oberois, Intercontinental Hotel Group (IHG), Leela and Hyatt were interviewed to elicit their views on hospitality education delivered by IHMs.

ITC Ltd. Hotels Division stated that students need to develop social confidence and polish their soft skills and general awareness along with networking skills. This would help them to deal with the guests more effectively. There is an urgent need to recalibrate the syllabus not only according to the needs in different years of study but also according

to the changes and needs in the hotel industry. Also, to provide more experiential learning to the students, the current internship period should be increased from 17 weeks to 40 weeks spread throughout the three years. At the same time, industrial exposure to the faculty and academic exposure to the managers in the industry will make hospitality education more innovative, contemporary and valuable. (Interview with Principal, ITC Limited - Hotels Division, January 2020).

According to IHG team, the education should provide inputs to develop the emotional quotient of the students to handle guests effectively. Also, the leadership and supervisory programs in IHG would be based on DISC leadership profiles and these inputs should be included in hospitality education for developing these dimensions in the students to create value (Interview with Human Resource Manager, Holiday Inn New Delhi, January 2020).

Hyatt recruitment team stressed on the soft skills which are critical in the industry and as such, requires more attention in the overall curriculum. Also, loyalty, patience and attrition of recruits are the concern. The mindset of the students to start their career in hotels and the challenges therein should be inculcated as a part of their training in the institute. (Interview with General Manager, Hyatt Regency Chandigarh and Director of Human Resources, Hyatt Regency New Delhi, February 2020).

The team from the Oberoi group of hotels stated the importance of mindset building of the students for working in hotels. A strong orientation of the students to take up their career with hotels can be done in the IHM itself. The need for applying emotional intelligence is another issue which can make the students flexible with their technical knowhow. These inputs should be focussed to provide value to the curriculum. (Interview with Director of Human Resources, Oberoi Sukhvilas, February 2020).

The Leela recruitment team stressed the practical exposure and case study-based learning for the



students. They should be given quality inputs on Organisation Behaviour and Organisation development. Loyalty, attrition and patience remain the key challenge for the recruits. The students should be encouraged to acquire in-depth knowledge through both theoretical and experiential learning. (Interview with Human Resource Manager, The Leela Ambience Gurugram Hotel & Residences, March 2020).

### Hospitality Academia

Similarly, the Director (Studies) NCHMCT, Principals and HODs of 5 central IHMs were interviewed and their views were noted.

Principal IHM Kolkata advocated that there should be a comprehensive evaluation of service quality and value for money from the perspective of all stakeholders to provide direction to the hospitality education. It was said that hospitality education is unique as it provides opportunities for the students to different sectors in addition to the hotels such as banks, cruises, food retail, etc. As culture and outlook vary from place to place, it is difficult to compare Indian and global hospitality educational practices. (Video interview with Principal IHM Kolkata, September 2020).

According to the Principal IHM Bhopal, there needs a greater industry-academia interaction, practical exposure of students in industry, involving students in industry-based case studies, a better pay structure to keep the students motivated to work in hotels. Also, the faculty needs to be up to date by undergoing industrial exposure at regular intervals. His view was similar regarding hospitality education which is more practical based than traditional higher education (Interview with Principal IHM Bhopal, October 2020).

Principal, IHM Chandigarh was solicited to share his views. According to him, there is an urgent need to revamp the syllabus of the hospitality education delivered by IHMs. As conditions have

changed considerably from the past, education needs to be contemporary to match the industry demands. Also, the students need to be further challenged in their areas of preference. The industry also needs to make IHMs as their partners for minimising the academia-industry gap (Interview with HOD, IHM Chandigarh, October 2020).

Principal IHM Gurdaspur had advocated for the vast gap between the demands of the hospitality industry and the skill set of pass out graduates from IHMs. They need to be trained in more practical situations than merely learning the theoretical aspects. The infrastructure of IHMs is also a concern which needs to be upgraded to match the industry standards. There is an urgent requirement to evaluate the service quality along with the value of present education to improve the overall performance of IHMs in the country (Interview with Principal IHM Gurdaspur, November 2020).

The view of Principal IHM Lucknow focussed on joint measures to be taken by both the industry and academia to encourage exchange programmes amongst them. In this way, the latest trends, demand and expectations of the industry can be proliferated among the students. Also, the curriculum needs to be aligned with the demand of the industry to offer better value for money. As the hospitality industry is dynamic, there is a need of IHMs to upgrade the infrastructure and provide opportunities for the faculty to undergo industrial exposure at regular intervals (Interview with Principal IHM Lucknow, June 2020).

Director (Studies) expressed his positive view on the need to measure service quality of IHMs from the perspective of various stakeholders. It will be feedback for us and identify the areas on which we need to put our efforts and strategy to enhance the overall quality and value of hospitality education. Ministry of Tourism is already taking several initiatives in this area. All faculties of IHMs are being trained in Certified Learning Facilitator (CLF) or Qualified Learning Facilitator (QLF) Programme which is accredited by top hotel school in

the world, that is, ELH (Ecole Hoteliere de Lausanne). Also, the practice of filing annual returns by IHMs is made mandatory to identify the gaps and requirements of each institute so that the quality of hospitality education is maintained. (Interview with Director (Studies) NCHMCT, 14th May 2019).

All interviewers were on the same view that service quality and value of hospitality education need to be measured to improve the overall benefit to all stakeholders. These findings confirm our purpose of validating stakeholders' theory.

## 5. Discussion

There is keenness by the Ministry of Tourism towards studying service quality and value in IHMs as a committee of senior officers of Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India is formed comprising of Assistant Director General (Tourism), Govt. of India; Joint Secretary (Tourism), Govt. of India; Economic Advisor (Tourism), Govt. of India and Chief Executive Officer, NCHMCT. The committee met in April 2020 and discussed the affiliation norms of NCHMCT which is to be complied by all IHMs regarding infrastructure, existing syllabus, industry internship, campus recruitments and positions offered by the hospitality industry. Moreover, the Hon'ble Tourism Minister of the country recently announced all IHMs to be classified under INIs (Institutes of National Importance) in near future.

Earlier, a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was convened by the Secretary (Tourism), Govt. of India on 30th April 2019 at their office at Transport Bhawan, Ministry of Tourism, New Delhi. Participants including eminent industry professionals, alumni and Principals of IHMs discussed issues such as whether the industry is getting quality manpower from IHMs, why the passed out students are not industry ready and have to undergo an in-house training after the recruit-

ment, which are the other sources of quality manpower than IHMs, whether the industry would start their institutions with NCHMCT affiliation or not, whether IHMs getting repeat responses from recruiters every year, reasons for dearth of employment in spite of high demand for manpower in the industry, whether a change in curriculum is required, if the average Cost to Company (CTC) offered by the industry is adequate with the timings and responsibilities, initial difficulties faced bypass out students, the reasons for opting other service industries by 25% of pass outs, whether any area-specific program is required to be started by NCHMCT for IHMs, are affiliation norms of IHMs as per the industry standards and so on. It is very much evident that even the Ministry of Tourism is eagerly interested to improve the service quality and add value to the IHMs from the perspective of all key stakeholders, that is, industry, faculty and students, thus approving the very essence of stakeholder theory.

In recent years, several private players have entered the Indian hospitality education market in collaboration with reputable foreign institutions like École hôtelière de Lausanne (EHL), Switzerland and Vatel Hospitality School, France. Besides, leading hotel chains in the country have commenced their hospitality undergraduate programmes such as Welcom LEAD by ITC Hotel divisions and Golden Threshold Programme by the Taj group of hotels. Amid such considerable threats, IHMs inevitably need to meet the varied needs of their key stakeholders by delivering service quality and simultaneously balance their interests to create value. Unless the institutions of hospitality education and their regulators also reciprocate their role according to the stakeholder theory, the fate and success of IHMs will surely dwindle in the years to come.

## 6. Conclusion

The study strives to consolidate the importance of stakeholder's theory in the current hospitality education context. The literature depicts that stakeholder do play a significant role in aligning education according to what would benefit them. It identifies students, faculty and industry employers as the key stakeholders of hospitality education. These key stakeholders always demand alterations in the procedures of delivery and content of hospitality education. They seek to involve themselves as curriculum designers and performance evaluators of hospitality education service providers. The findings from the expert interviews confirm the stakeholder theory towards the need for creating service quality and value for all key stakeholders. As such, service providers like IHMs should reciprocate by focusing on providing not only superior service quality but also value to enable an overall competitive edge in the present scenario. This study points out that the value creation is equally important as delivering service quality by the IHMs and its regulator- NCHMCT towards the key stakeholders, which is the essence of stakeholder theory. The study also identifies how private players are entering the hospitality education arena in our country by collaborating with reputed foreign hospitality education service providers. The threat is further enhanced for IHMs as many leading hotel chains have started their hospitality undergraduate programs in the country. In light of all these developments, following stakeholder theory becomes even more decisive and evident for IHMs and its regulators.

## Limitations and Future Scope of Research

The study advocates delivering service quality and creating value primarily influence the interests of stakeholders. However, other factors such as the satisfaction of stakeholders and the image of

the service providers in the decision-making process are not being considered. Also, the expert interviews were limited to a few hospitality industry recruiters and faculty from academia. Next, student views as an important stakeholder are not considered in the present research. Moreover, the use of the 'theory of the common good' or 'agency theory' might approach the subject of study in a different way. Also, this research has not taken into account the effect of sacrifice on the value of stakeholders in terms of monetary price (a direct measure of the rupee price) and non-monetary price (time and effort) which is usually given up for acquiring a product or service.

In the future, the studies should be initiated from the perspectives of key stakeholders to measure the service quality and value delivered by IHMs through a suitable model. The model may also include the satisfaction of the stakeholders and their sacrifice in addition to service quality and value for facilitating greater understanding of the interrelationships among them leading to the stakeholders' decision making. Without reinventing the wheels, future research in this domain should measure the relative impact of these factors and guide the IHMs and its regulators for better utilising their resources.

## References

- Airey, D. (2013). Forty years of tourism education and research. *Poznan University of Economics Review*, 13(4).
- Almeida, S. & Campos, A.C. (2020). Leveraging customer value through co-creative experiences: a look into hotel businesses. *Journal of Tourism and Development*, 33, 137-150.
- Barber, N., Deale, C. & Goodman, R. (2011). Environmental sustainability in the hospitality management curriculum: Perspectives from three groups of stakeholders. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education*, 23(1), 6-17.
- Barrows, C. W., & Bosselman, R. H. (1999). *Hospitality management education*. Psychology Press.
- Becket, N. & Brookes, M. (2008). Quality management practice in higher education-What quality are we actu-

- ally enhancing?. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sports and Tourism Education (Pre-2012)*, 7(1), 40-54.
- Bitner, M. J., Pandit, A., Zeithaml, V. A. & Gremler, D. D. (2013). *Services marketing: Integrating customer focus across the firm*, 6/e. McGraw Hill.
- Cho, S., Erdem, M., & Johanson, M. M. (2006). Hospitality graduate education: A view from three different stakeholder perspectives. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education*, 18(4), 45-55.
- Cooper, C. & Westlake, J. (1998). Stakeholders and tourism education: curriculum planning using a quality management framework. *Industry and Higher Education*, 12(2), 93-100.
- Corporate Finance Institute (n.d.) Stakeholder vs Shareholder, Retrieved from <https://corporatefinanceinstitute.com/resources/knowledge/finance/stakeholder-vs-shareholder>
- Cremers, K. M., Nair, V. B., & Peyer, U. (2008). Takeover defences and competition: the role of stakeholders. *Journal of Empirical Legal Studies*, 5(4), 791-818.
- De Gooyert, V., Rouwette, E., Van Kranenburg, H. & Freeman, R.E. (2017). Reviewing the role of stakeholders in operational research: A stakeholder theory perspective. *European Journal of Operational Research*, 262(2), 402-410.
- De Nisco, A., Riviezzo, A. & Rosaria Napolitano, M. (2008). The role of stakeholders in town centre management: guidelines for identification and analysis. *Journal of Place Management and Development*, 1(2), 166-176.
- Dredge, D. & Schott, C. (2013). Academic agency and leadership in tourism higher education. *Journal of Teaching in Travel & Tourism*, 13(2), 105-129.
- Ellis, S. & Sheridan, L. (2014). A critical reflection on the role of stakeholders in sustainable tourism development in least-developed countries. *Tourism Planning & Development*, 11(4), 467-471.
- Foster, D. & Jonker, J. (2003). Third-generation quality management: the role of stakeholders in integrating the business into society. *Managerial Auditing Journal*, 18(4), 323-328.
- Franché, R. L., Baril, R., Shaw, W., Nicholas, M. & Loisel, P. (2005). Workplace-based return-to-work interventions: optimizing the role of stakeholders in implementation and research. *Journal of occupational rehabilitation*, 15(4), 525-542.
- Freeman, R. E. (2015). Stakeholder theory. *Wiley Encyclopedia of Management*, 2, 1-6.
- García-Nieto, A. P., Quintas-Soriano, C., García-Llorente, M., Palomo, I., Montes, C. & Martín-López, B. (2015). Collaborative mapping of ecosystem services: The role of stakeholder' profiles. *Ecosystem Services*, 13, 141-152.
- Ghosh, P. & Jhamb, D. (2021). How is the influence of hotel internship service quality a measurable factor in student interns' behavioral intentions? Mediating Role of Interns' Satisfaction. *Journal of Teaching in Travel & Tourism*, 1-22.
- Heitmann, S. (2010). Film tourism planning and development—Questioning the role of stakeholders and sustainability. *Tourism and Hospitality Planning & Development*, 7(1), 31-46.
- Ho, S. K. & Wearn, K. (1995). A TQM model for higher education and training. *Training for quality*, 3(2), 25-33.
- Hsu, C. H., Xiao, H. & Chen, N. (2017). Hospitality and tourism education research from 2005 to 2014: Is the past a prologue to the future?. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 29(1), 141-160.
- Johns, N. & Lee-Ross, D., (1998). *Research methods in service industry management*. Cengage Learning EMEA.
- Kamal, M., Weerakkody, V. & Irani, Z. (2011). Analyzing the role of stakeholders in the adoption of technology integration solutions in UK local government: An exploratory study. *Government Information Quarterly*, 28(2), 200-210.
- Kearins, K. & Pavlovich, K. (2002). The role of stakeholders in Sydney's Green Games. *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management*, 9(3), 157-169.
- Kim, H. J. & Jeong, M. (2018). Research on hospitality and tourism education: Now and future. *Tourism management perspectives*, 25, 119-122.
- Kundu, G. K. (2017). Quality in higher education from different perspectives: a literature review. *International Journal for Quality Research*, 11(1).
- Lopes, H., Remoaldo, P., Silva, S., Sanchez-Fernández, M. D., Ribeiro, V., & Ribeiro, J. C. (2017). Perceptions of residents and of other local and regional stakeholders regarding tourism development and their potential contribution to the creation of new tourism experiences in Boticas. *Revista Turismo & Desenvolvimento*, 27/28(2), 105-108.
- Maguire, B., Potts, J. & Fletcher, S. (2012). The role of stakeholders in the marine planning process—Stakeholder analysis within the Solent, United Kingdom. *Marine Policy*, 36(1), 246-257.

- Manetti, G., & Toccafondi, S. (2012). The role of stakeholders in sustainability reporting assurance. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 107(3), 363-377.
- Maxwell, J. A. (1996). *Qualitative research design*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage
- Menassa, C. C. & Baer, B. (2014). A framework to assess the role of stakeholders in sustainable building retrofit decisions. *Sustainable Cities and Society*, 10, 207-221.
- Moreno-Lobato, A., Costa, C. & Hernández-Mogollón, J.M., (2020). Value creation in the Cultural Routes of the European Council through the design of military tourism products. *Revista Turismo & Desenvolvimento*, 34, 53-64.
- Mota, K.C.N. & de Almeida, J.V., 2016. Higher education in tourism, hospitality and leisure in Brazil: analysis of the panorama of the courses offered facing the contemporary context. *Revista Turismo & Desenvolvimento*, 26, 65-77.
- Nestic, S., Ljepava, N. & Aleksic, A. (2018). Stakeholder management in reverse supply chains-the ranking of reverse supply chains entities upon requirements' fulfilment. *International Journal for Quality Research*, 12(4).
- O'Connell, L. (2005). Program accountability as an emergent property: The role of stakeholders in a program's field. *Public administration review*, 65(1), 85-93.
- Onwuegbuzie, A.J. & Leech, N. L. (2007). A call for qualitative power analyses. *Quality & Quantity*, 41(1), 105-121
- Owlia, M. S. & Aspinwall, E. M. (1997). TQM in the higher education-a review. *International Journal of Quality & Reliability Management*, 14(5), 527-543.
- Pantano, E. & Priporas, C.V., (2016). The effect of mobile retailing on consumers' purchasing experiences: A dynamic perspective. *Computers in human behavior*, 61, 548-555.
- Pedro, E., Mendes, L., & Lourenço, L. (2018). Perceived service quality and student's satisfaction in higher education: the influence of teaching methods. *International Journal for Quality Research*, 12(1)
- Quinn, A., Lemay, G., Larsen, P. & Johnson, D.M., (2009). Service quality in higher education. *Total Quality Management*, 20(2), 139-152.
- Reichheld, F. F., & Sasser, W. E. (1990). Zero defections: Quality comes to services. *Harvard business review*, 68(5), 105-111.
- Sahney, S. (2016). Use of multiple methodologies for developing a customer-oriented model of total quality management in higher education. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 30(3), 326-353.
- Salvado, J.O. & Joukes, V. (2021). Build sustainable stakeholders' interactions around Wine & Food heritage. *Revista Turismo & Desenvolvimento*, 36(1), 93-112.
- Smith, A.K., Ayanian, J.Z., Covinsky, K.E., Landon, B.E., McCarthy, E.P., Wee, C.C. & Steinman, M.A., (2011). Conducting high-value secondary dataset analysis: an introductory guide and resources. *Journal of general internal medicine*, 26(8), 920-929.
- Stakeholder theory (n.d.) About the Stakeholders theory, Retrieved from <http://stakeholdertheory.org/about/>
- Stokes, D. & Bergin, R. (2006). Methodology or "methodolatry"? An evaluation of focus groups and depth interviews. *Qualitative market research: An international Journal*, 9(1), 26-37.
- Top Universities (n.d.) QS World University Rankings, Hospitality & Leisure Management, Retrieved from <https://www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings/university-subjectrankings/2019/hospitality-leisure-management>
- Trivellas, P., & Santouridis, I. (2016). Job satisfaction as a mediator of the relationship between service quality and organisational commitment in higher education. An empirical study of faculty and administration staff. *Total Quality Management & Business Excellence*, 27(1), 169-183.
- Vashishth, A. & Jhamb, D. (2021). Why Should Employers Hire People with Disabilities? A Review of Benefits for the Hospitality Industry. *Revista Turismo & Desenvolvimento*, 35, 9-21.
- Woodruff, R. B. (1997). Customer value: the next source for competitive advantage. *Journal of the academy of marketing science*, 25(2), 139-153.
- Zutshi, A., & Sohal, A. (2004). A study of the environmental management system (EMS) adoption process within Australasian organisations— Role of stakeholders. *Technovation*, 24(5), 371-386.